

A declaration on marriage, children and the Bible

Truths we believe, confess and defend:

1. Marriage is God's design for one man and one woman, instituted by God and confirmed by Christ (Genesis 1:26–28 and Matthew 19:4–6).

2. Marriage, parenthood and children belong inseparably together. If churches introduce ceremonies and liturgies for 'same-sex marriages', then it **inevitably** means that they consider sex and gender as insignificant. It also means that they accept and bless planned fatherlessness or motherlessness for children. Marriage without the right to have children is unthinkable and is not possible to implement.

3. Jesus is our example, so all Christians are called to meet lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and other sexual minorities with respect and compassion. It is possible to meet anyone in a friendly and Christlike manner, with Christian compassion, without giving in to the demands to deconstruct God's creation order and commandments regarding marriage, parenthood and children. Our ideal is to "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15) and communicating "grace and truth", as Jesus did (John 1,14.17)

4. Children have a God-given right to have their own mother and father. No church has a biblical mandate to introduce a theology where father, mother and their families are defined as superfluous and irrelevant. This would be the inevitable result in churches which adapt to a gender-neutral theology.

5. Children are a gift, not a right or a commodity that can be ordered in the international and commercial fertility market. The rights of the child must carry more weight than the demands or wishes of the adult.

6. The people of God cannot go along with politicians when they redefine the father as an unknown 'donor'. Churches should reveal that certain laws are built on a foundation of lies when they introduce laws which define a 'co-mother' (or

a similar word) as a valid sufficient replacement for the father.

7. Churches can never adapt to an ideology that promotes trading in sperm and eggs, donors and surrogate mothers. Instead, the church must be a prophetic voice standing up for the child, following the example of Jesus.

8. It is neither intolerant nor prejudiced to think that marriage is for a man and a woman, and that children have an innate and divine right to their own mother and father. Quite the opposite: it means that you are taking biology, the child and the Bible seriously.

9. If we treat differently certain types of intimate relationship which are inherently unequal – two-sex relationships which can produce children, and same-sex relations which cannot -- we are not discriminating. In actual fact we are making an objective and well-founded distinction. Furthermore, it is the children who are being discriminated against when they are denied their right to have both their mother and father, and all the relatives of the parent who is missing.

10. The child's perspective should guide Christian theology of the family and the child. This lines up with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC). See for instance Article 7.1. Churches do not show compassion for the child if they redefine marriage and teach that the planned absence of father or mother is compatible with God's will and design for children and the family.

Discussion questions

- A. Read the declaration in your group.
- B. Let each person choose the three points they think are most important, preferably with a reason why. Which five points are most important for the group?
- C. What other topics could also be included in a declaration like this?
- D. Which of the ten points do you think carry the least weight and could possibly be left out?
- E. How would you answer common objections to the message of this Declaration?