

CONCERNING MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

Affirmations and Denials (Topic No. 16)

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Article I

We affirm that sexual distinction is a part of the essence of humanity and marriage.¹

We deny that members of the same sex can be married, in God's eyes.²

1. Gen. 1:27-28; 2:20-25; Mat. 19:4-5
2. Gen. 2:20-25; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Mat. 19:4-5; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11

Article II

We affirm that marriage is designed to be a life-long union.¹

We deny that marriage is less than a life-long union or that it is simply a temporary state based upon faithfulness to a mutual contract between partners.

1. Ex. 20:14,17; Mal. 2:14-16; Mat. 19:4-6

Article III

We affirm that companionship is integral to the marriage relationship.¹

We deny that companionship is the only purpose of marriage.

1. Gen. 2:18; Mal. 2:14

Article IV

We affirm that sexual intercourse is an integral part of marriage. Indeed, according to scripture, it is an obligation of marriage, a debt which must be paid to one's spouse, because it is the seal of marriage's essential quality, the "one-flesh" union of a man and a woman.¹

We deny that marital partners should remain sexually abstinent, except by reason of physical handicap or mutual, voluntary consent for temporary spiritual devotion or service.

1. Gen. 2:24 with 1 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 7:3-5

Article V

We affirm that procreation of children is normally an integral part of marriage, and that children are to be received as desired issue of a marriage and welcomed as blessings of the Lord.¹

We deny that marital partners should remain permanently childless by choice or that marital partners should attempt, by unscriptural means, to limit the hand of God in granting children to them.²

1. Gen. 1:28; 4:1; 28:3; 30:1; Psa. 113:9; 127:3-5; Prov. 17:6
2. Same as 1.

Article VI

We affirm that the covenantal marital relationship is symbolic of and of the same essence as Christ's relationship with His Bride, the Church ("True Israel") of all ages.¹

We deny that the marital relationship has no transcendent model or symbol.

1. Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 21:2, 9

Article VII

We affirm that commitment to God has priority over all other familial commitments.¹

We deny that the marital relationship takes precedence over the partners' relationship to God.

1. Deu. 33:8-9; Mat. 10:37; Luke 14:26; Col. 3:18

Article VIII

We affirm that the marriage bond is broken at the death of either partner.¹

We deny that the marital relationship continues beyond death.²

1. Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39
2. Mat. 22:25-30

Article IX

We affirm that the call to celibacy may be a gift of God for the purpose of increased devotion to God's service.¹

We deny that celibacy makes one holy or, in itself, elevates the celibate's holiness above that of other saints² or that a married person may practice celibacy.³

1. 1 Cor. 7:7, 32-35
2. 1 Cor. 7:7; 1 Tim. 4:1-3
3. 1 Cor 7:3-5

Article X

We affirm that the Bible condemns adultery, fornication,¹ incest,² homosexual behavior,³ rape,⁴ bestiality,⁵ and physical and emotional abuse.⁶

We deny that the Bible accepts or is indifferent concerning these and all other sexual sins.

1. Ex. 22:16; Psa. 50:16-18; Mal. 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:9; Heb. 13:4
2. Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:11-12, 17, 19-21; Deut. 22:30; 27:20, 22-23; Ezekiel 22:11; 1 Cor. 5:1
3. Leviticus 18:22-24; 20:13-16; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11
4. Deut. 22:25-27

5. Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16; Deut. 27:21
6. Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 19:18; 24:20; Deut. 19:21; Micah 2:9; Matthew 5:21, 27, 43; 22:39

Article XI

We affirm that God prohibits believers from entering into marriage with unbelievers.¹

We deny that scripture requires that believing spouses who come to the faith subsequent to marriage must leave or divorce unbelieving spouses who desire to remain in the marriage.²

1. 1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14
2. 1 Cor. 7:12-14

Article XII

We affirm that, as Christ is the head of man, the husband is the head of the wife; as the Church is subject to Christ, the wife is to be subject to her own the husband.¹

We deny that a husband may exercise tyranny over his wife or subject her to any role that diminishes her divinely ordained position as a complementary partner for her husband in the cultural mandate.²

1. 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24
2. Gen. 1:27-28; Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Pet. 3:7-8

Article XIII

We affirm that the effects of the Fall of mankind into sin include: impure and guilty sexuality, unjust domination in the marital relationship, and increased pain in childbirth.¹

We affirm, nevertheless, that the essential authority of the husband as federal head of the wife existed in the marital relationship prior to the Fall.²

We deny that the results of the Fall include God placing the wife under the headship of her husband.

1. Gen. 3:16; Micah 2:9; Rom. 1:22-32; 1 Pet. 3:7-8
2. 1 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9

Article XIV

We affirm that God hates divorce.¹

We deny that man may lawfully "put asunder" what God has "joined together" or that divorce is part of God's perfect plan for humankind.²

1. Mal. 2:16; Luke 16:18
2. Mat. 19:6-9; Rom. 7:2-3

Article XV

We affirm that there are no more than two biblical grounds for divorce: (1) fornication, narrowly defined as to include nothing more than sexual sin outside of marriage,¹ and (2) the desertion of a believing spouse by an unbelieving partner or desertion by a partner living in such a state of unrepentant sin as qualify him or her to be viewed as an unbeliever in the eyes of the Lord and the Church.²

We deny that spouses may scripturally divorce for any reason other than those stated by Christ in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 and by St. Paul in I Corinthians 7:15 (as rendered in the original Greek, certain modern translations being unreliable).

1. Mat. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18
2. 1 Cor. 7:10-15

Article XVI

We affirm that men and women are commanded by God to repent of marital sins and to forgive and reconcile with their marital partners upon scriptural grounds.¹

We deny that God ever commands divorce.

1. 1 Cor. 7:10-15; Mat. 6:12; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13

Article XVII

We affirm that new male Christians in polygamous societies should not divorce their wives.¹

We deny that believers are permitted to newly enter into polygamous relationships.²

1. Exo. 21:10; Micah 2:9
2. Mat. 19:5; Mark 10:8; Eph. 5:31; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6

Article XVIII

We affirm that remarriage is permitted by God for persons divorced under biblical grounds¹ and for surviving partners of spouses who die.²

We deny that divorced persons who marry and subsequently divorce other spouses may then remarry their original spouse.³

1. Mat. 5:31-32; 19:9
2. Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39
3. Deu. 24:1-4; Jer. 3:1