

Declaration of Doctrine and Policies Concerning Sexuality

Introduction

Since the mid-twentieth century, rebellion against God's divine pattern of sex within the loving union of lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual marriage has become widespread, and those attacks are increasingly perpetrated in concert with the civil magistrate. Thus for the protection of the Christian church's conscience and the purity of the Faith once for all delivered to the saints, it has become necessary for Christians to declare our Scriptural convictions and commitments concerning sexuality and marriage. These convictions and commitments are testified to by God's natural revelation and they are explicitly commanded by God's special revelation of Holy Scripture. Prior generations of Christians and non-Christians alike lived under the beneficial constraints of laws written to protect civil society from sexual relations outside these commands of Scripture. Western law reinforced God's law concerning sexual relations and His Order of Creation of Adam first, then Eve. For this reason, the church had no need to adopt doctrinal creeds or statements concerning sexuality. Now though, with the heathens' attack growing ever more intense and becoming institutionalized by the power of civil authority, the time has come for the church to declare her allegiance to God's law of male and female, and to do so specifically, forthrightly, and with confidence in the wisdom and kindness of God. He is the One who made us. We did not make ourselves. He is the One who created us male and female, pronouncing His creation "very good" only after He had made man and woman.

1. "In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. God created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created."¹ God formed the first male, Adam, from the dust of the ground. He made the first female, Eve, from Adam's rib² and presented her to Adam to be his helpmeet. Adam called his wife "Woman, because she was taken out of Man."³ God named the race *adam* after the first man Adam.⁴

¹ Genesis 5:2. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are to the New American Standard Bible (1995).

² "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God." 1 Corinthians 11:11-12.

³ Genesis 2:23.

⁴ See Hebrew word translated as "man" in Genesis 1:27, and throughout the Old Testament.

2. From the beginning, God gave Adam authority over Eve and responsibility for her. This authority and responsibility are inseparably joined together. Eve was created to be a “help meet” for Adam,⁵ that is, a help fitting for Adam. God’s decree of father-rule is the necessary outworking of the authority over Eve and responsibility for her that He placed on Adam. Man is to love and take responsibility for woman by leading her and laying down his life for her, providing a living illustration of Christ’s sacrificial leadership of His Bride, the Church. This estate of male responsibility and authority is not a consequence of the Fall, but was ordained by God in the beginning: “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”⁶ God’s subordination of the woman to man in no way diminishes the woman’s perfect equality with man in essence, worth, and honor.
3. God’s bifurcation of mankind into two and only two sexes, male and female, is an act of His creative will and power and continues through the generations since Adam, our first father.
4. God forms each person in his mother’s womb and creates the unborn child male or female.⁷ From the moment of conception,⁸ males are distinct from females, and females are distinct from males.⁹

⁵ Genesis 2:18 (KJV).

⁶ 1 Timothy 2:12–14.

⁷ See Psalm 139:13–16; Genesis 5:2.

⁸ Because all truth is God’s truth and God is not a man that He should lie, what God reveals through His Creation never contradicts what He reveals in His Word. Thus, genetics and other scientific disciplines, when not abused or corrupted for sinful purposes, can declare truth. It is proper then to recognize that a man conceived and born a man is genetically male, and a woman conceived and born a woman is genetically female.

⁹ This is not to address the extremely rare case of intersex children born with a variety of conditions, including: Not XX and Not XY, Hypospadias, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Ovotestes, etc. “Intersex” is a medical diagnosis of atypical male or female anatomies not to be confused with those born with typical male or female anatomies who claim a “transgender” or “transsexual” identity. The suffering of those born with physical anomalies must not be used to justify the rebellion of those who repudiate the sex God made them. All such abnormalities and genetic deformities (e.g., deafness, blindness, etc.) along with illness of any kind, pain, suffering, and death itself, are a result of the Fall as described in Genesis 3, and pass through God’s sovereign hand as He gives to each man both good and adversity. Exodus 4:11; Job 2:9–10.

5. What God has decreed as each one's sex at the moment of conception, either male or female, is His gift and must be received with gratitude, each man living out his manhood and each woman her womanhood, in humble reliance upon God's grace.
6. God's created order of man and woman was established while man was in a state of perfection before the Fall. God's creation of Adam first, then Eve, is the origin of Scripture's condemnation of woman exercising authority over man and is further delineated by Scripture's declaration that man is the glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.¹⁰ This order of creation, then, is a universal truth for all mankind.
7. The proper conception of "sexual identity" is a matter of being and obeying the genetic sex God made us, either male or female. Genetic sex and sexual identity cannot be separated, and they remain bound together throughout one's life. Sexuality does not admit of gradations. You are either male or female, not part male and part female. Nor are there a great multitude of sexual identities. There are only two, male and female. Any attempt of a man to play the woman or a woman to play the man violates God's decree, attacks His created order, and constitutes sin so serious that God Himself pronounces it an "abomination."¹¹
8. This sin includes transvestitism and any efforts, including chemical or surgical, as well as behavioral (e.g., effeminacy), to reject and efface one's sex and to adopt characteristics of the opposite sex.
9. This sin also includes the conscription of woman as a military combatant or the placing of woman in harm's way as a law enforcement officer. Following the example of Christ Jesus who gave up His life for His Bride, the Church, man is to lay down his life in defense of woman.¹² As life-giver,¹³ woman has always been honored by man's defense of her and her children. A civil magistrate defaces woman's sexuality by placing her in the uniform of a

¹⁰ "For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." 1 Corinthians 11:7-9.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 22:5. See also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

¹² See Ephesians 5:25.

¹³ See Genesis 3:20.

combatant¹⁴ and commanding her to take up arms. Further, given woman's comparative physical weakness in the face of male enemies, such magistrates place their homeland at unnecessary risk. Finally, female military combatants of childbearing age often (whether known or unknown) place at risk unborn children, which is an act contrary to the just war principle of avoiding needless loss of life. Therefore, Clearnote Church, Bloomington, condemns the use of women as military combatants, the conscription of women into the armed forces, and any requirement for her to register for conscription into military service.¹⁵

10. All the sins mentioned above are violations of the separate nature and callings of Adam and Eve, man and woman. Through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, there is full forgiveness for each of these sins.
11. It is a particularly necessary and vital ministry of the church today to proclaim this forgiveness and to teach and help those who repent of these sins to live faithfully as the man or woman God made them.
12. As the household of faith, the church is privileged to assist parents in training boys to be men and girls to be women. This training is not simply Christian discipleship but is also part of the Church's proclamation of the Gospel for the salvation of mankind.
13. Being committed to such evangelism and discipleship, Clearnote Church, Bloomington, limits participation in any program or activity that is limited to men (e.g., a men's Bible study or a men's retreat) exclusively to males.
14. Participation in any program or activity of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, that is limited to women (e.g., a women's Bible study or a women's retreat) is exclusively limited to females.
15. Access to facilities of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, that are designated for use by men (e.g., a men's restroom) is exclusively limited to males.

¹⁴ See Deuteronomy 22:5. In the text, "that which pertaineth to a man" (KJV) refers to the clothing and weapons worn by men for combat.

¹⁵ See Constitution and Bylaws of Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA) (Spartanburg, SC), art. XIII ("Selective Service") (updated May 28, 2017). See also "Man's Duty to Protect Woman," Majority Report of the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly Ad Interim Study Committee on Women in the Military, 2001, <http://pcahistory.org/pca/01-278.html>.

16. Access to facilities of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, that are designated for use by women (e.g., a women's restroom or nursing/cry room, etc.) is exclusively limited to females.
17. Recognizing the church's own sins and failures in obeying God's commands of sexuality and recognizing that sinners on the road of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ often enter the church bound in deep patterns of sexual sin, it is not our expectation that sinners will respond to the preaching of the Law and the proclamation of the Gospel with immediate and full repentance. For this reason, wise and compassionate pastoral discretion is necessary to apply the rules set forth in this Declaration, especially concerning access to facilities. In certain instances the higher law of love will preclude swift and rigid enforcement of rules. For example, if a female has transitioned to a male in appearance, it may be best that she not use the bathroom of her birth sex until she has been presented with pastoral counsel concerning God's calling of manhood and womanhood and she begins to learn of Jesus' Lordship over her sexuality and the implications it has for her sexual identity and its public expression. In this case, the female would be asked not to use the men's restroom, but instead a single-stall restroom available to either sex.
18. Marriage is instituted by God as the union of one male and one female,¹⁶ which union is intended to be monogamous¹⁷ and lifelong.¹⁸ This relationship, with these limitations, was established while man was in a state of perfection before the Fall¹⁹ and is established for all members of the human race. Marriage is an honorable estate that God Himself made, and it symbolizes to us the mystical union which is between Christ and His

¹⁶ "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." Mark 10:7-9.

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

¹⁷ "You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14.

¹⁸ "So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man." Romans 7:3.

¹⁹ See Genesis 2:18-24.

Church.²⁰ For centuries, Christians have recognized the following vital purposes of marriage: “Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.”²¹ This holy estate Christ made beautiful by His presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee.²²

19. When sin entered the race, marriage was sorely affected.²³ God therefore created laws to govern the violation of His established pattern, while not changing the pattern.²⁴ Since marriage is a lifelong and monogamous union, God forbids divorce except in two circumstances: (1) when one spouse

²⁰ “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.” Ephesians 5:25–32.

²¹ Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. 24 (“Of Marriage and Divorce”), para. 2. Westminster Confession of Faith hereinafter abbreviated as “WCF.”

²² See John 2:1–11.

²³ “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ He said, ‘I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.’ And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’” Genesis 3:6–11.

²⁴ “He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.’” Matthew 19:8.

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” Matthew 5:18.

abandons the other,²⁵ and (2) when a spouse engages in sexual immorality—what Jesus referred to as the sin of *porneia*.²⁶

20. More broadly, in His Law God forbids any deviation from the established pattern of marriage and from His gift of sexual union to be enjoyed by a married couple. These forbidden deviations include lust for anyone but one's spouse, pornography,²⁷ masturbation (including simulated copulation with any inanimate object no matter how lifelike),²⁸ fornication,²⁹ adultery,³⁰

²⁵ Abandonment or "wilful desertion" (WCF 24.6) is not limited only to cases of one spouse's unjustified departure and refusal to be reconciled to the abandoned or injured spouse. A state of willful desertion also exists if the offending party's conduct is so egregious that the injured party is forced to leave the marital home and reconciliation is impossible due to the nature or seriousness of the sin and the offending party's persistent impenitence. As in any other case involving the Scriptural permissibility of divorce, the board of elders will judge whether the offending party's sin justifies the injured party in separating and seeking dissolution of the marital bond. Two resources we commend in considering cases of divorce are: "Marriage, Singleness, Divorce, and Remarriage," statement adopted by the session of Church of the Good Shepherd, June 2, 1999, available at <http://clearnotebloomington.com/position-papers>; and "Divorce and Remarriage," Report of the Ad-Interim Study Committee on Marriage and Divorce to the Twentieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1992, <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf>.

²⁶ See "Marriage, Singleness, Divorce, and Remarriage," pp. 3–4. See also WCF 24.6.

²⁷ "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matthew 5:28.

²⁸ "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority* of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you." 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8.

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Galatians 5:16.

²⁹ "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Hebrews 13:4.

³⁰ "You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14.

polygamy,³¹ incest,³² pedophilia,³³ homosexuality,³⁴ and bestiality.³⁵ Because the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, it is impossible to catalogue fully all forms of sexual immorality and degradation.

21. God offers the free gift of forgiveness for these sins through repentance and faith in Jesus, and He has called the Church to proclaim that repentance and forgiveness, seeking the healing of those harmed by these sins.³⁶

³¹ “And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, “FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH”? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” Matthew 19:4–6.

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife . . .” 1 Timothy 3:2.

³² “If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.” Leviticus 20:12. See also all of Leviticus 20.

³³ “He said to His disciples, ‘It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.’” Luke 17:1–2.

³⁴ “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” Leviticus 18:22.

³⁵ “Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.” Leviticus 18:23.

³⁶ “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:11.

“The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And freedom to prisoners.”
Isaiah 61:1.

“A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF,
AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT,
UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY.”
Matthew 12:20.

22. Presently, there is widespread disregard, even scorn, for the divine standard of sexuality and marriage as revealed in Scripture. This disregard, which is found both in the world and in many churches, endangers the family (our basic social unit) and causes much suffering to the innocent, especially children. When found in the Church, it brings shame to the name of Christ.³⁷
23. A pastor, officer, leader, teacher, employee, or member of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, shall not solemnize a marriage or officiate at a wedding in any place or under any circumstances that violate God's Law or His established pattern of marriage between one male and one female, which union is intended to be monogamous and lifelong. Recognizing the universal application of God's Order of Creation and the resultant Scriptural command that wives submit to their husbands, any wedding solemnized by a pastor of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, will include in the wife's vows her promise to "obey" her husband. This promise to "obey" will also be required in any wedding permitted by Clearnote Church, Bloomington's Board of Elders to be held on church property or in a church facility but officiated by a pastor unaffiliated with this congregation.
24. The property or any facility of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, shall not be used for a marriage ceremony, wedding, or related event that violates God's Law or His established pattern of marriage between one male and one female, which union is intended to be monogamous and lifelong.
25. All ministries of Clearnote Church, Bloomington, including educational ministries for youth, shall adhere to and abide by this Declaration.
26. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible rule of faith and practice and the only authority that may bind the conscience.
27. This Declaration does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs and practices. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of authority for all that we believe and do. For purposes of Clearnote Church, Bloomington's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Board of Elders is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

³⁷ "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die." 2 Samuel 12:14. This text demonstrates dishonor coming to God's holy name and suffering coming to the members of a man's family—both caused by the sin of the father.

"For 'THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,' just as it is written." Romans 2:24.