

For your information, inspiration and intercession, please study this ICCP Discussion Document from the Reformation 500 Church Consultation in Wittenberg, Germany, October 2017. Click [here](#) to see the broadcast and livestreamed presentations held at the **Global Reformation Conference** in July 2019.

If you have any suggestions on how these may be improved, or to communicate the support of your church, mission, or ministry, write to the [International Church Council Project](#) .

## **ARTICLES of AFFIRMATION and DENIAL**

### **Article I**

**We affirm** that sexual distinction is a part of the essence of humanity and marriage.<sup>1</sup>

**We deny** that members of the same sex can be married, in God's eyes.<sup>2</sup>

Gen. 1:27-28; 2:20-25; Mat. 19:4-5

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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.

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

## **Article III**

**We affirm** that companionship is integral to the marriage relationship.<sup>1</sup>

**We deny** that companionship is the only purpose of marriage.

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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.

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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.<sup>2</sup>

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

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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

## **Article VII**

**We affirm** that commitment to God has priority over all other familial commitments.<sup>1</sup>

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

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.<sup>1</sup>

**We deny** that the marital relationship continues beyond death.<sup>2</sup>

Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39

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.<sup>1</sup>

**We deny** that celibacy makes one holy or, in itself, elevates the celibate's holiness above that of other saints<sup>2</sup> or that a married person may practice celibacy.<sup>3</sup>

1 Cor. 7:7, 32-35

1 Cor. 7:7; 1 Tim. 4:1-3

1 Cor 7:3-5

## **Article X**

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

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

Ex. 22:16; Psa. 50:16-18; Mal. 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:9; Heb. 13:4

Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:11-12, 17, 19-21; Deut. 22:30; 27:20, 22-23; Ezekiel 22:11; 1 Cor. 5:1

Leviticus 18:22-24; 20:13-16; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11

Deut. 22:25-27

Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16; Deut. 27:21

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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.<sup>2</sup>

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

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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.<sup>2</sup>

1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

Gen. 3:16; Micah 2:9; Rom. 1:22-32; 1 Pet. 3:7-8

1 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9

## Article XIV

**We affirm** that God hates divorce.<sup>1</sup>

**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.<sup>2</sup>

Mal. 2:16; Luke 16:18

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,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

**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).

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

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.<sup>1</sup>

**We deny** that God ever commands divorce.

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.<sup>1</sup>

**We deny** that believers are permitted to newly enter into polygamous relationships.<sup>2</sup>

Exo. 21:10; Micah 2:9

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 grounds<sup>1</sup> and for surviving partners of spouses who die.<sup>2</sup>

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

Mat. 5:31-32; 19:9

Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39

Deu. 24:1-4; Jer. 3:1

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See also:

[Ulrich Zwingli and the Reformation in Switzerland](#)

[1. The Authority of Scripture](#)

2. [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

3. [The Essentials of a Christian World View](#)

4. [The Kingdom of God](#)

5. [The Omniscience of God and Human Freedom](#)

6. [The Pelagian Controversy](#)

7. [The Judicial and Substitutionary Nature of Salvation](#)

8. [The Trinity](#)

9. [The Eternal Fate of Unbelievers](#)

10. [The Lordship of Christ](#)

1 1. [The Unity of the Body of Christ](#)

12. [Church Discipline](#)

[13. Culture, Contextualization and Missions](#)

[14. Civic Duties](#)

[15. Biblical Economic Systems](#)