



## **Position Statements on Social Issues**

*Approved at Annual Convention Meeting, 4 November 2015*

### ***Marriage and Family***

The first institution of human society established by God is the nuclear family, where a man and leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife in a lifelong commitment. The Scripture presents marriage as a faithful relationship and covenant union between one man and one woman for as long as they both shall live, where love, encouragement, and sexual intimacy are shared, and joy and safety are experienced. Only marriage between a man and a woman fulfills the original plan of God for a complementary relationship, as described in Genesis 2:18. From this husband and wife relationship come children who are to be raised in love, discipline, and protection, and are matured through the teaching and encouragement of the Lord, with the Bible as the foundation. There should be no defilement in the marriage bed; sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage and is to be enjoyed between husband and wife. According to God's command sexual intimacy is not to be experienced with other people outside of marriage, nor between engaged couples before marriage. The Scripture commands both husband and wife to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21), so both man and woman have obligations to one another to love and respect the other. They are both of equal value in the eyes of God. The husband is described as "head of the wife, as Christ is head of the church" (Eph. 5:23), that headship is not a license to abuse but a command to protect, lead, and love, with all due respect directed to the wife. The wife is called to respect and submit to the loving authority of her husband. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church.

Genesis 1:27-28; 2:21-25; Exodus 20:14; Psalm 68:6; Proverbs 5:15-20; Malachi 2:14-15; 4:5-6; Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Hebrews 13:4

### ***Homosexual Behavior and Same Sex Marriages:***

Out of His love and for His glory, God created human sexuality as a tender expression of love and intimacy between husband and wife. The Bible consistently teaches that marriage is a God-ordained covenant union between one man and one woman for as long as they both shall live. Secular definitions of marriage contrary to God's definition will prove to be harmful to individuals, families, and society at large, and are dishonoring to God. There are many complex reasons a person may have homosexual desires. However, homosexual behavior, whether man to man or woman to woman, is consistently identified as sinful behavior in Scripture and is not in accordance with God's original plan for human sexuality. Likewise, same sex marriages are morally wrong because they promote homosexual behavior and redefine marriage and family. They are a contradiction to the husband-wife male-female complementary relationship and undermine God's original creation. They also can prevent God's design for every child to grow up in a home with a mother and a father. As followers of Christ we pledge ourselves to minister lovingly and redemptively to individuals and families dealing with these issues. All people, regardless of their sexual behavior, are to be loved and valued.

Genesis 19:1-11; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 22:5; 23:1; Judges 19:16-24; 1 Kings 15:12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-10

### ***Abortion:***

We affirm a high view of the sanctity of human life, including fetal life, and the obligation to protect those who cannot protect themselves. We reject abortion as a means of birth control or family planning. The Scripture describes human life and personhood beginning at conception in the mother's womb. Human embryonic life by definition also means human personhood and carries with it the right for that life or that person to live, summoning both father and mother to protect the unborn child. Except in cases of where the mother's life is in danger and an abortion would save her

life, abortion is morally wrong. We also choose to minister lovingly and redemptively to those with unwanted pregnancies and to those who have had abortions, and we condemn acts of violence against abortion clinics.

Genesis 25:21-26; Exodus 20:13; Exodus 21:22-25; Job 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:39-44

### ***Human Trafficking:***

Every person has a right to self-determination under the providence of Almighty God. All people should be free from enslavement and forced coercion into any work situation. To enslave a human being against his or her will, except in the context of crime and legal punishment, is a fundamental moral wrong. It is contrary to the rule of our Savior, "As you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). It is especially morally repugnant when the weak and the young are forced to work against their wills – whether in sweatshops or in brothels.

Leviticus 19:18, 34; Matthew 5:43; 7:12; Luke 6:31; Ephesians 6:9; Philemon 15-16

### ***Prostitution:***

God created human sexuality as a joyous expression of intimate love between husband and wife. Prostitution, whether legalized or illegal, is morally wrong because it is a corruption of God's original design of sexual intimacy being reserved for marriage. Whether prostitution is enforced by physical force or by psychological manipulation and economic needs, it is demeaning to both males and females who are created in the image of God. It results not in the elevation of women as entrepreneurial free agents but rather results in their subjugation, debasement, abuse, mistreatment, and economic enslavement. We furthermore acknowledge in today's world that much of prostitution involves the enslavement or manipulation of underage boys and girls into the sex trade, with devastating and lifelong effects upon their lives.

Proverbs 6:24-29; 7:6-27; Joel 3:3; 1 Corinthians 6:9,12-20; Ephesians 5:3, 8-13

### ***Pornography:***

Pornography is morally wrong. It promotes lust and sexual immorality; it perverts and corrupts God's plan of sexual intimacy as an intimate expression of love between a husband and wife. It is not victimless. The business emotionally demeans and often physically damages the women and men who are in the photographs and films, and it promotes addictive behavior and a harmful "re-wiring" of the brain of the pornography addict.

Job 31:1; Proverbs 4:25; 17:24; Habakkuk 2:15-16a; Matthew 5:27-30; 2 Peter 2:14; 1 John 2:15-17

### ***Workers' Rights:***

We believe that every human being is made in God's image and as such is worthy of respect and fair treatment in their work compensation. The Scripture says, "The worker deserves his wages" (1 Timothy 5:18). This means that just compensation should not be withheld from the earner. Workers are also under obligation to work hard, to respect employers, to honor contracts, and to avoid laziness. Whereas employers, also according to Scripture, in accordance with the legal authorities, are entitled to spend their money the way they choose and make independent contracts with individual workers, market fairness should be considered and a just compensation or living wage should be paid to all.

Genesis 1:27; Leviticus 19:33-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Proverbs 3:27-35; Proverbs 11:1; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 10:7; 1 Tim. 5:18; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 4:21; James 5:1-6