

Theological Statement in the 2005 Constitution Concerning Same-sex Relationships

Introduction

The theological basis of this statement is grounded in belief in God as confessed in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." God is therefore understood as the source of all things.

The statement says that its theological position is illuminated by two principal sources: first, Scripture; and second, theological reflection concerning God. On that basis, the 2005 Constitution presents the Church's position that same-sex sexual relationships are contrary to its theological and Christian understanding and are sinful.

It identifies three theological foundations for this position:

1. a holy life before God;
2. the doctrine of the Christian Church;
3. the God-given ordering of man and woman.

1. A Holy Life

Holiness is described as an experience arising from the relationship between humanity and God. God imparts holiness to humanity; humanity does not confer holiness upon God. The statement refers to Leviticus 11:44; 18:22; 19:2; and 20:13 and teaches that human holiness is to reflect the holiness of God. Humanity is therefore called to remain pure and faithful to God by doing what God wills, thereby living a holy life before God.

God created the human person as an embodied being of spirit, mind and body. The statement interprets the creation of woman as God's provision that the man should not be alone and understands man and woman as related bodily, mentally and spiritually.

Its biblical and doctrinal foundation for marriage is Genesis 2:24: a man leaves his father and mother, is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh. It links this with the blessing of procreation in Genesis 1:28. On this basis, the statement concludes that holy sexual union is to take place between a man and a woman within marriage.

2. Doctrine of the Christian Church

Christian faith confesses Christ as the full revelation of God in human life—body, mind and spirit—manifested in history from His birth to His ascension. The Church is understood as the people called together in faith in God through Christ, with their life and work ordered by that faith. Referring to 1 Corinthians 12:12–30, the statement describes the Church as the visible Body of Christ, with Christ as its Head, and as a people called to put on the new humanity created in righteousness and holiness.

It then draws on Ephesians 5:22–30, relating Christ and the Church to its understanding of marriage between husband and wife. The relationship is interpreted in the light of the Church as the Bride of Christ: the wife is called to submit to her husband as the Church is related to Christ as Head, while the husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself sacrificially for it.

The statement again relates this to Genesis 2:24 and understands the “one flesh” union as the union of husband and wife, a man and a woman.

3. The God-given Ordering and Responsibility of Man and Woman

The statement refers to Genesis 1:28–29 and describes the authority given to the first man and woman over creation as a responsibility of stewardship rather than unrestricted ownership.

Stewardship is understood as caring for another’s property so as to preserve and develop its dignity and value. Human beings, male and female, are described as the crown of God’s creation and as responsible for protecting that dignity according to the will of God, who remains the Creator and Owner.

The 2005 text then makes a claim associating same-sex relationships with AIDS and describes AIDS as a major cause of death. This is reproduced here only as a faithful translation of the historical source; it should not be read as a contemporary medical assessment.

The statement further cites 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 concerning the human person as the temple of God and the indwelling of the Spirit.

Conference therefore adopted the following constitutional provision, expressed in the 2005 text under the heading concerning relationships it regards as contrary to nature and Christianity:

Persons engaged in such same-sex relationships are not to be accepted as Catechumens, Lay Preachers, Ministers, or employees of the Church unless they have repented and ceased the conduct described in the provision.