

Biblical Truth and the Definition of Marriage

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:24

Our Biblical Heritage concerning the definition of Marriage is not a recent development but is rooted in the foundation of the Word of God, biblical convictions that were also reaffirmed in the time of the Reformation. As Menno Simons declared...

We acknowledge, teach and assent to no other marriage than that which Christ and His apostles publically and plainly taught in the New Testament, namely of one man and one woman (Matt 19:4)...

I have likewise asserted that in this Kingdom and under this King no other marriage is in effect save that between one man and one woman as God in the beginning ordained in the case of Adam and Eve, and as Christ has once more formulated it that these two shall be one flesh, (Matt 19:5,6)... Menno Simons in Foundations of Christian Doctrine p.200, 217

Our Declaration for Today

Believing the biblical definition of marriage is limited to the covenantal union and relationship of a man and a woman in a conjugal commitment to one another, an ongoing relationship into which these two persons, free from all others, enter willingly and become one in shared intimacy, a state of matrimony intended to be maintained for as long as both shall live; it is an arrangement that serves not only people of faith who believe it is a pattern established by our Creator, but is also an arrangement that has proven essential, adequate and useful for all civilized cultures whenever it has been followed in any period of history.

We are bound for conscience' sake to declare our biblical understandings, convictions and beliefs which mandate the following policies and practices in our churches, in our congregational life, in our family situations, and in our pastoral counsel.

Therefore it shall be the stated policy and practice of our congregation:

- To permit and perform only those weddings which unite a man (defined as born male; Genesis 1:27) and a woman (defined as born female; Genesis 1:27), in the biblically described pattern of matrimony, whether or not the wedding is performed in the church building or on church property.
- To permit or host in our church facilities only such weddings and marriage related activities, such as showers, receptions, anniversary celebrations, etc., which relate to marriages that comply with the biblical pattern of matrimony, i.e., one man and one woman as described above.
- To recognize and accept as married persons, for the purposes of church membership, of holding church offices or of carrying out of any of the church's ministries, only those whose marriages fit God's design and intention of one man and one woman, "according to God's Holy Ordinance."

These enumerated policies and practices, and others similar to them, are based on our convictions that the Bible, the written Holy Scriptures, consistently represent marriage as the joining together of two persons, of differing genders, male and female. These representations were and are intended for the entire human race, for the good of all societies, not only for those who may consider themselves a particular religious group or a "people of God".

We advocate for the preservation and maintenance of the historical traditional definition of marriage, not merely for our own convenience but because we are concerned for the well-being of all society, for the “common weal.” We hold these convictions not as mere “traditionalists” or as those resistant to change, but as those who believe history demonstrates the validity and functionality of marriage as a male-female union.

We respect civil law as necessary for the maintenance of a civil society to the extent that it does not usurp or redefine the role of God’s natural law or His created order, neither of which can be overturned or annulled by legislation or a court’s ruling. When the laws of society contradict the laws of God, we “must obey God rather than man.”

A society may tolerate other forms of inter-personal relationships including sexual expression and governing bodies may choose to modify or grant civil and legal privileges in such matters as property, or inheritance rights, but definitions of morality and redefinitions of marriage are qualified by more than the mandate of a court or the action of an electoral process. The freedom of conscience, especially in religious matters, must also be given due consideration and respect in a free society.

Our heritage includes the provision and promise of the Founders of our nation that convictions based on religious values would be granted the freedom of exercise and expression. We are grateful for those who preserved these promises in the Constitution’s Bill of Rights. We had hoped that the sovereignty of the people when expressing their desire to retain the historic traditional definitions of marriage would continue to be respected by the courts of the land. But we must be guided by our consciences, shaped by the Authority of a higher Lawgiver. And we also agree and declare with many others, as expressed, for instance, in *the Manhattan Declaration* (2009): that while “we honor justice and the common good,” we cannot “bend to any rule purporting to force us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family. We will fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar’s. But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God’s.”

Our spiritual heritage is based on the continuing Authority of Scripture and its teachings, evidenced, for example, in Menno’s declarations...

Dear sirs, fear God, judge rightly. The Truth of God can never be changed, can it, into seduction and error because of the lies of the devil. Oh, no! The Word of our God shall stand forever.

We seek nothing else upon earth...than that the true foundation of the truth, the praise of Christ, and the obedience of His Word;

We teach and exhort to obedience to the emperor, king, lords, magistrates, yea, to all in authority in all temporal affairs and civil regulations in so far as they are not contrary to the Word of God. Rom 13:1-3

The Spirit, doctrine and life of Christ will not deceive us for His Word is truth and His commandments eternal life. God’s promises stand fast and immovable and will nevermore fail the [believer].

Truth will remain truth forever.

Menno Simons in Foundations of Christian Doctrine pp 199, 200, 201, 208



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