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Same Sex Marriage Statement

Historic Convictions of FIEC

FIEC holds to the traditional Christian ethic:

1. Sexual intimacy is a gift from God and is to be enjoyed exclusively within the context of marriage;

2. Marriage is, by definition, heterosexual.

These convictions are derived from the clear teaching of Scripture: in both the Old and the New Testament, marriage is painted in a positive light, and homosexual activity, along with all other sexual intimacy outside of (heterosexual) marriage, is declared by God to be sinful. Nowhere in the Bible is there an expectation that marriage can exist between two or more people of the same sex.

Old Testament Background

In the beginning God created Adam and Eve – one man united to one woman (Genesis 2:18-25). It is to be noted that sexual intimacy was part of the pre-Fall relationship between the man and the woman and is a gift to humankind. Reading through the rest of the Old Testament, it is apparent that the model set forth in Genesis 2 is the God-given pattern for marriage (e.g. Genesis 24, Song of Songs, Proverbs 31:10-12). Wherever sexual activity occurs outside of marriage it is presented in a negative light, and the Mosaic Law expressly forbids adultery (Exodus 20:14) and fornication (Exodus 22:16), as well as homosexual sex (Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13).

New Testament Confirmation

It has been pointed out that not all the commands of the Mosaic Law are carried over into the New Covenant; for example, the food laws are rescinded (Mark 7:19), and the New Testament commands loving church discipline, as opposed to the death penalty, for those who wilfully and persistently break God's laws.

The New Testament, however, upholds the teaching of Genesis on marriage; Jesus when asked about divorce refers to Genesis 1-2 (Matthew 19:5-6), showing that he understands marriage to be a one-flesh relationship between a man and a woman. Further, the presupposition in Paul's teaching is that marriage entails a husband-wife relationship (Ephesians 5:22-33). Again, all the references to homosexual sex are negative and indicate that it is sinful (Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:8-10).

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Reaffirmation of FIEC Convictions in the Current Climate

Despite pressures from society, FIEC churches will continue to uphold the traditional biblical view that:

1. sexual activity is a gift to be enjoyed only within (heterosexual) marriage and that, outside of this setting, it is sinful;
2. marriage involves a man and woman, bound together in covenant relationship – a relationship that cannot be redefined. At the same time, we will always seek to make clear
3. the forgiveness and grace that extend to all repentant sinners – including those for whom sexual sin has formed a major part of their backgrounds.

Implications for Practices of FIEC Churches

In line with the above reaffirmations,

1. we will seek to uphold traditional biblical sexual ethics in both our teaching and our practices within our local churches and with individuals associated with the CIO in a manner and subject to any conditions determined by the board from time to time;
2. none of our churches or individuals associated with the CIO in a manner and subject to any conditions determined by the board from time to time would in good conscience be able to perform, bless or host same-sex marriage or wedding ceremonies;
3. recognising that many Christians struggle with sexual temptation (whether same-sex attraction or heterosexual), we will prayerfully foster, within our churches, gracious support of one another in such struggles.