



A Pastoral Letter

To: All the saints at Yio Chu Kang Chapel

Dearly Beloved,

We write to you on a subject that has featured prominently in the public square – the subject of homosexuality. Specifically, we wish to state our Biblical convictions and provide pastoral guidance on the church’s response to this issue. The elders of the church consider that this pastoral letter is needful and timely.

We unanimously (1) proclaim the hope of new life in the gospel; (2) issue a call to personal holiness to all members of the church; and (3) affirm the church’s availability to be used by the Lord to extend His love to anyone who struggles with this issue. This letter explains our Biblical convictions on this subject, which by its very nature is controversial. Our pastoral experience affirms that the truth – however difficult to accept – brings grace and often leads to inner conviction. We believe that only the truth will bring true freedom. We urge all the faithful to listen to and live out the truth with grace and, professing it with love, act with Christ-like attitude toward all people.

In our study of Scripture, we are convicted that it is authoritative and clear in bearing witness to His will regarding human sexuality. You may be aware that in 2003, we had issued a statement on the church’s position on homosexuality. This letter reaffirms that position and elaborates on our pastoral commitment, as follows:

I. Summary of Our Biblical Convictions

1. God’s creation order purposefully includes gender and its expression (i.e. sexuality)

- The Bible affirms that “So God created man *in His own image*, in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created them” (Gen 1:27). We therefore believe that (a) human beings are created in the image of God; and (b) He purposefully created us in two genders (male and female), equal in worth but not interchangeable.
- The significance of such deliberate design is evident in the Bible. Maleness and femaleness enrich and complete our personhood in the way God intended.

2. God’s Design of Marriage and Family

- God’s decision to create a female counterpart (Eve) to the male (Adam) was not an afterthought. As female, Eve fulfilled three essential criteria: (1) she was God’s choice to complement Adam; (2) she was a suitable help to him; and (3) she was a necessary partner to him for the propagation of the human race. Here we see in the divine order a differentiation in the roles of both genders.
- The institution of marriage and family was consequently designed and established for the benefit of humankind. In the creation account, God brought the woman (Eve) to the man (Adam) and He blessed their union (Gen 1:26-28 and 2:21-25). God made **one man** for **one woman** and united them in marriage.
- Jesus affirmed the institution of marriage as sacred (Matt 19:4-9). When asked about divorce, Jesus pointed to the creation account and taught that “*what therefore God has joined together, let no man separate*” (Matt 19:6b).

- The covenant made between a man and a woman in marriage is therefore sacred. In fact, the exhortation given to the husband and the wife is that their relationship should reflect the covenant relationship between Christ and the church (Eph 5:21-33), a binding commitment of faithful love and mutual support.
- The marriage institution provides for the family to be formed as a nucleus, as described in Genesis 2:24. In this regard, *"become one flesh"* has clear reference to the exclusive sexual union between the husband and wife, leading to the procreation of offspring. It should be noted God gave the command to the first human couple to *"be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over"* all of creation (Gen 1:28).
- Marriage is thereby the institution established by God for sexual union exclusively between the husband and the wife and is the only form of partnership approved by God for sexual relations and procreation (Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:31).
- The Bible also affirms singleness as God's gift for some people. Jesus placed singleness as equally worthy as marriage (Matt 19:12). Paul exhorted singles and the unmarried that *"it is good for them to remain single"* (1 Cor 7:7-9), if they have the gift. Whether single by choice, or through such circumstances as divorce or widowhood, the single person can find fulfillment in significant friendships without being involved in a sexual union. Such intimacy is an affirmation of maleness and femaleness and addresses basic human needs for wholeness of personhood among single people.

3. Sexual Conduct that Deviates from God's Design

After the fall of Adam, humanity has transgressed God's design and has deviated in many ways, including idolatry, extreme self-

love, addictions, and self-destructive sexual practices that the Bible has prohibited, such as:

- Fornication (1 Cor 6:9; Heb 13:4);
- Adultery (Exod 20:14; Matt 5:27-29);
- Incest (Lev 18:6-18; Deut 27:22-23);
- Homosexuality (1 Cor 6:9; Rom 1:24-27); and
- Bestiality (Exod 22:19; Deut 27:21).

The Bible warns God's children that *"sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you"*, including *"filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking"* (Eph 5:1-5). Pornography is also recognized as part of sexual immorality that must be avoided at all cost.

All forms of sexual immorality are directly opposed to what God has ordained and commanded, and all who disregard God's warning will one day be judged by the holy and righteous God.

Christians must avoid all forms of sexual sin. The Holy Spirit lives within every Christian and the body is meant for the Lord and not for sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:13). As God's redeemed people, purchased by the blood of Christ, our bodies belong to God and not to ourselves. If we continue to live sexually immoral lives, we are separating ourselves from God and will not share in His inheritance (1 Cor 6:9).

4. Homosexual Conduct is Also a Violation of God's Moral Will

There are specific Scriptural prohibitions against homosexuality and its practice.

The Bible teaches that homosexual practice is sin (Lev 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:24-28, 1 Cor 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:9-11). In Romans chapter 1, Paul wrote that homosexual activity was the result of a perversion of God's design for human sexual relations. That is, instead of sexual relationship between a man and a woman in marriage, people of the same sex

burned with sexual passion for each other and thereby incurred God's wrath.

We reject the arguments of those who claim that the Biblical texts if properly understood, do not prohibit homosexual practices. On the contrary, we believe that these people have not only misapplied God's teaching but have ignored the argument from God's design which has been carefully recorded for us in His word.

5. Some Do Struggle with Homosexual Orientation

We believe that homosexual orientation in itself is not sin, but one of many expressions of original sin that plagues all of humanity.

Those to whom homosexuality has no appeal may not be able to relate to that tendency. We however must be sympathetic to the people who struggle with this issue. We are bombarded with all sorts of temptations – pride, wrath, covetousness and sexual misconduct. It is not a sin to be tempted. But when we yield to temptation, then we have actually committed sin.

Jesus Christ has given to all believers His Holy Spirit to empower them to live victorious lives. As Christ's disciples, let us continue to receive His grace daily to do His will and to overcome sin of every kind.

6. Summary of YCK Chapel's Stand on Homosexuality

- a) We recognize that all of us are sinners, and that the only true hope for sinful people – whatever our particular weakness – is in Jesus Christ. We affirm God's love and concern for all human beings, whatever their particular weakness (Rom 3:23, 24).
- b) We affirm that marriage is an institution created by God in which one man and one woman enter into an exclusive relationship for life. Marriage is the only form of partnership approved by God for sexual relations. Homosexual practice is forbidden and incompatible with God's

will as revealed in Scripture (Gen 2:24; Mark 10:6-9; Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:31).

- c) We affirm that sex is a gift of God, to be enjoyed within the bonds of marriage between a man and a woman (Gen 2:21-25, Matt 19:4-6, Eph 5:31-32 and Heb 13:4).
- d) We affirm that homosexuality falls short of God's original design in the following ways: (a) in the area of complementarity, inherent in the divine creation design; and (b) in the area of procreation, since homosexual relationships by their very nature are not able to fulfill God's mandate for humanity to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth.

II Our Pastoral Responsibility and Ministry

We maintain that as stewards of God's grace:

1. We will teach the whole counsel of God, including God's perspective on immoral sexual conduct which includes homosexuality. We will guard the truth of God's Word, protect God's people from error, and confront the world when it tries to "squeeze us into its mold".
2. We will teach and continue to practice God's design for family and proactively mentor singles, courting couples, married couples and parents to be aligned with God's design.
3. We will tell all people about the good news of the gospel: that Jesus died in our place and rose again so that we might be set free from the curse of the law and be saved from the wrath of a holy God.
4. We will remind all who have come to confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, that a person discovers and lives out their true identity through pursuing a right relationship with our Creator, rather than resorting to self-definition and self-expression.

5. We will affirm all who come in broken-hearted repentance, that God's grace and His forgiveness is available. We will let them know that in Jesus Christ there is redemption unto eternal life and power to live a changed life. He will make new what has been broken.
6. We will reach out to those who struggle with homosexual orientation and temptation and desire to channel their passion to Christ and allow God's spirit to transform them. We will come alongside them and demonstrate God's love to them.
7. We call everyone in our grace community to live a life of personal holiness and sexual purity. We will shepherd, minister, pray, comfort, counsel, support and encourage all our brothers and sisters who are struggling with all kinds of sinful sexual orientations, whether single or married, to live godly and God-honoring lives in order to fulfill God's perfect design.

We exhort all the saints in YCK Chapel to humbly live under our Creator's design and, walk daily in His grace and experience the joy in fulfilling that glorious design.

Yours in Christ,

Elders of Yio Chu Kang Chapel

7th June 2013

** All Scriptures quoted are based on the ESV.*

III Let's Hear and Experience the Good News

Dearly beloved, God loves every person He has ever made (John 3:16). Jesus, Son of God, came to this world to give new life to all who would believe in Him. Jesus has paid the price for our sins past, present and future, and we are free of judgment on His account. The gospel is truly a message of hope – the promise of abundant life with a purpose and meaning that can be found in Him alone.

As a church, we are stewards of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and our joyful work is to give of this life-giving treasure to every person in our community. Our testimony is that abundant life in Jesus will be found by all who sincerely seek and persevere in the truth. But while on earth, the reality is that we will be engaged in a battle against sin. Victory over sin is found in full reliance on Jesus.