

PROCREATION

(The following statement was adopted by the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation)

God is the Creator of all human life (Gen. 30:2; 1 Sam. 2:5f; 2 Kgs 5:7; Acts 17:25,28) and desires to create spiritual life in all sinful human beings, that everyone come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). Married couples should reproduce in observance of the following Biblical principles:

1. The command of God to be "fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28; 9:1,17; 35:11; 1 Tim 5:10,14; AC XXIII, #5 & 8, Trigl. p. 612; AP XXIII, #7-8, Trigl. 365-73; LC 6th Comm, # 207, Trig, p. 6394).

2. Children are a blessing from the Lord (Gen 1:28; 15:2-5; 17:5f; 24:60; 33:5; 48:9; 49:25; Lev 26:9; Deut 28:4; Josh 24:3; Ruth 4:11f; Psalm 107:38; 127:3-5; 128:3-6; 147:13; Prov 5:18; 17:6; LC 4th Comm, # 105, Trigl. p. 6115).

3. It is God who opens or closes the womb (Gen 16:1-2; 17:15-19; 20:18; 21:1-2; 25:21; 29:31; 30:2-6, 23f; Deut 32:18; Lev 20:20f; Judges 13:3; Ruth 4:13; 1 Sam 1:19f; 2:21; Job 10:8-12; Psalm 22:9-10; 113:9; 139:13-16; Eccles 11:5; Isa 8:18; 43:1,7; 44:2,24; 49:1,5; 66:9; Jer 1:5; Lk 1:36f, 57f; Heb 11:11).

4. Having children is a good work for Christians (1 Tim 2:15; AP XXIII, #32, Trigl. p. 3736).

5. Christians are to be mindful that they are not only to be fruitful and populate the earth, but they are to bring up their children as Christians and thus populate heaven (Prov 3:21f; 4:3f, 20-22; Mk 10:13-16; Acts 2:38f; Eph 6:1,4; Heb 2:10).

6. In Scripture barrenness is regarded as an affliction (Gen 11:30; 15:2; 16:2; 18:11f; 25:21; 30:1,22f; 1 Sam 1:2,5-7,10f; Prov 30:15f; Luke 1:7,24f,58).

7. There are many examples in Scripture of fruitful parents among the godly (Gen 3:20; 4:1,25; 5:4; 24:60; 30:1-24; Judg 13:2f; Job 1:2; 42:13-16).

8. The Word of God prohibits us to "put asunder" marriage (Matt 19:4-6), including its purposes (1 Cor 7:2,5; Gen 2:24).

9. The Bible exhibits the wrath of God upon those who defy His will (Gen 38:8-10; Exod 21:22; Rom 1:18).

10. God desires that we put our trust in Him in all matters, also in His will and ability to provide for the children that He gives us (Exod 23:20,26; Psalm 30:7; 37:25f; Phil 4:13; 1 Pet 5:7).

Pastors should counsel families both publicly and privately to observe these principles. The churches and ministers should not take it upon themselves to investigate the private practices of their members (Eighth Commandment). Refusal to reproduce should be treated first by patient instruction and counsel. Nevertheless, when a situation becomes a public scandal then

evangelical discipline is in order (Matt 18:17).

While we allow for exegetical differences and exceptional cases (casuistry), we must also maintain and teach the principles relating to this issue (Matt 28:20; Acts 20:27). Such was the united teaching of Dr. Martin Luther and the "Old Missouri" fathers (C.F.W. Walther, F. Pieper, A.L. Graebner, C.M. Zorn, W.H.T. Dau, J.T. Mueller, W. Dallman, F. Bente, E.W.A. Koehler, L. Fuerbringer, T. Engelder, Th. Laetsch, G. Luecke, W.A. Maier, M.J. Naumann, et al) and LCR leaders such as P.E. Kretzmann and W.H. McLaughlin.

The reasons given to justify the prevention of conception are often based upon myths, selfishness, materialism, hedonism (love of pleasure), convenience, usurpation of God's prerogative, or humanistic reasoning and generally indicate a distrust of the Almighty God and His Word.

NOTES

1. The unmarried are not to reproduce, since they are unable to engage in legitimate sexual intercourse.
2. God created man for procreation, Gen. 1:28 ... No man's law, no vow, can annul the commandment and ordinance of God.
3. First. Gen. 1:28 teaches that men were created to be fruitful, and that one sex in a proper way should desire the other. For we are speaking not of concupiscence, which is sin, but of that appetite which was to have been in nature in its integrity, which they call physical love. And this love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance. But since this ordinance of God cannot be removed without an extraordinary work of God, it follows that the right to contract marriage cannot be removed by statutes or vows. The adversaries cavil at these arguments; they say that in the beginning the commandment was given to replenish the earth, but that now since the earth has been replenished, marriage is not commanded. See how wisely they judge! The nature of men is so forced by the Word of God that it is fruitful not only in the beginning of the creation, but as long as this nature of our bodies will exist; just as the earth becomes fruitful by the word, Gen 1:11: 'Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed.' Because of this ordinance the earth not only commenced in the beginning to bring forth plants, but the fields are clothed every year as long as this natural order will exist. Therefore, just as by human laws the nature of the earth cannot be changed, so, without a special work of God, the nature of a human being can be changed neither by vows nor by human law (that a woman should not desire a man, nor a man a woman).
4. Therefore, He also wishes us to honor it (matrimony), and to maintain and conduct it as a divine and blessed estate; because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should (legitimately) live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God.

5. To this estate of fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction above all estates that are beneath it that He not simply commands us to love our parents, but to honor them. He separates and distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them at His side.

6. ...that woman is saved by the conjugal works themselves, by conjugal intercourse, by bearing children and other duties (?). But what does St. Paul mean? Let the reader observe that faith is added, and that domestic duties without faith are not praised. If they continue, he says, in faith. For he speaks of the whole class of mothers. Therefore he requires especially faith, by which a woman receives the remission of sins and justification. Thus the duties of the woman please God on account of faith, and the believing woman is saved who in such duties devoutly serves her calling.