

*The Christian World View of  
The Family*

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**With contributions by members of the  
The Family Committee of  
The Coalition on Revival**

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Note on editorial process:

Professor Rekers was a co-chairman of the COR Family Committee in the 1980's that met in person to collaboratively write the initial draft of this manuscript, but Dr. Jay Grimstead has remained in final editorial control of this document that was subsequently substantially revised by persons who had not met with the COR Family Committee.

### *The Christian World View of the Family*

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## What is the Coalition on Revival?

The Coalition on Revival is a network of evangelical leaders from every major denominational and theological perspective who share a vision for and a commitment to revival, renewal, and reformation in Church and society in America.

People of Anabaptist, Arminian, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Wesleyan denominational backgrounds are all represented among COR's leaders. Pre-, a-, and post-millennialists are cooperating with each other, sharing the exciting task of getting God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven insofar as that is possible between now and whenever Christ comes back to Earth. Charismatics and non-charismatics, covenant and dispensationalist theologians, have joined arm in arm in prayer and hard work to see revival, renewal, and reformation in the Christian Church and the American culture.

COR's vision is to see Christians everywhere doing all they can in the power of the Holy Spirit to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), in every aspect of life. Toward that end, we have developed a series of worldview documents that set forth what we believe are the fundamental and essential points of the total Christian world and life view. The COR worldview documents state what we believe are the biblical principles for all spheres of human life including theology, evangelism, discipleship, law, civil governments, economics, education, family, medicine, psychology and counseling, arts and media, business and professions, and science and technology. We believe that the COR worldview documents state where the entire Church must stand and what action it must take to accomplish its task in the remaining years of the Twentieth Century and on into the next century.

COR steering committee members from all walks of life were joined by many hundreds of other interested Christian scholars, pastors, and laymen in developing the COR documents during many series of workshops and conventions. Each document therefore, reflects input from theologians, philosophers, professionals in their respective fields, pastors, and lay Christians. We have sought to avoid denominational and theological bias in the documents; our aim has been to focus on principles so fundamental that we are convinced no Bible-believing Christian who studied the major questions related to each sphere of life would come to a contradictory conclusion.

COR views itself as a "Bible obedience, holiness movement" that crosses denominational and theological lines. The next step on its agenda, now that its basic documents are complete, is to disseminate them widely and to educate hundreds of thousands of Christians on how to make Christ Lord of absolutely every aspect of life. We plan to do that through publications, and through seminars, and training workshops in the major cities of America and Canada. COR will also work in cooperation with other Christian networking groups to help unify the pastors in major population centers around the vision of mobilizing their people to "Get God's will done in their city as it is in heaven" to whatever degree that is possible before the return of Christ. We believe America can be turned around and once again function as a Christian nation as it did in its earlier years. We believe that wherever the pastors of any city in the world join together in unity to make Christ Lord of every sphere of life, and, with Spirit led strategy, mobilize their people into a unified spiritual army; that city can and will become "a city set upon a hill" and be "a place where righteousness dwells."

## About the 17 World View (Sphere) Documents

COR developed the 17 World View Documents, which set forth what we believe are fundamental and essential Biblical principles governing 17 major areas or *spheres* of human life and activity: law, government, economics, business and professions, education, art and media, medicine, science and technology, psychology and counseling, Christian unity, local and world evangelism, discipleship, helping the hurting, educating Christians about social and political moral issues, revitalizing Christian colleges and seminaries, marriage and the family, and pastoral renewal. These documents offer Christian leaders concise and comprehensive Biblical principles of how to apply the Truth of the Bible to all spheres of life and ministry. Each document includes short, creed-like statements of affirmation and denial that we believe state non-negotiable Biblical truths for that sphere of reality.

The 17 World View Documents were developed within 17 different committees made up of leaders with experience and expertise in the 17 different fields over an intensive three-year period of dialogue, critique, editing, and finally, a consensus conviction. Sixty of COR's National Steering Committee members with over 300 other theologians, pastors, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and Christian workers made up the 17 committees. COR sends forth these documents to the Church at large with the prayer that they may be used by God's Spirit to get God's will done on earth, as it is in heaven—to whatever degree that is possible prior to the Return of Christ.

## Preface

The family is God's chosen institution for bringing children into the world and for nurturing and training them. It is the fiber from which all godly human institutions are woven, and the fabric of both Church and society will disintegrate if its very fiber is torn.

Today the family *is* being torn apart by many sins and societal pressures.

1. Many individuals outside the Church, and even some inside it, have come to accept divorce for any and every reason.
2. Careerism and materialism have become respectable idols, replacing living for God and His purposes for family life for many fathers and mothers, needlessly forcing many mothers out of the home and into the labor market, while genuine economic pressures force many more there of necessity because of lack of charity and justice from others.
3. The radical feminist movement has damaged the morale of many women and convinced men to relinquish their Biblical authority in the home.
4. Some important parental rights and responsibilities have been eroded by the law, the courts, and some forces in public school education, and by governmental policies that deprive the family of many of its traditional Biblical functions.
5. The media often indoctrinate uncritical viewers with distorted, anti-family values.
6. Until recently we have supported government schools and other humanistic institutions of higher learning uncritically, though they often deliberately teach and effectively endorse the anti-family practices of "social parenting," abortion, euthanasia, consenting adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, and so on.

As a result, many families suffer from aimlessness and disarray. Family breakup, disregard for the needs of children and older family members, the unbridled search for self-fulfillment, easy divorce, lack of commitment and stability, and the resulting increase in poverty-stricken female-headed households all endanger family life.

But across our nation God is raising up a revival of concern for and commitment to families. More and more Christians desire to obey God's plan for human relationships and social structure. Christians also are discovering that full-orbed, Biblical family life is the divinely mandated alternative to ever-increasing socialism and institutionalized living.

Therefore, we present the following affirmations and denials as a compass that, in stormy cultural weather, can give Christians a sound Biblical foundation on which to confront effectively the spirit of the age and live by God's blueprint for family life.

# Statements of Affirmation and Denial

## *Origin and Definition of the Family*

1. We affirm that God established the family when He joined Adam and Eve in marriage and instituted their relationship as a life-long covenant and commitment to God and to each other (Genesis 2:22-24; Isaiah 49:15); that the marriage and other family relationships can fulfill their complete intended potential only as each member is individually reconciled to God and sanctified through the work and Lordship of Jesus Christ; and that God ordained the family as a social institution designed to reflect His image on the earth, to bring the earth into submission to His plan, and to be fruitful and multiply (Ephesians 5:22,23; Genesis 1:27,28).

We deny that the family is merely a social contract or a relationship of convenience invented by humans without accountability to God, and that Christian marriage should be hedonistically self-centered (Hebrews 13:4; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:21; Psalm 127:1; Proverbs 18:22).

2. We affirm that the Biblical definition of family is the nuclear family of a heterosexual married couple with its natural and adopted children, together with family branches consisting of all nuclear families descended from common ancestors. (The Bible also uses the terms clan, tribe, and nation for these larger groups. See the varying uses of the Hebrew word *mischpachah* [e.g., Judges 18:2; Amos 3:1].)

We deny that the Bible countenances any other definition of the family, such as the sharing of a household by homosexual partners, and that society's laws should be modified in any way to broaden the definition of family or marriage beyond the Biblically understood definition of heterosexual marriage, blood relations, and adoption.

3. We affirm that God intends each Christian family to work wholeheartedly for the advancement of His Kingdom; that this purpose is accomplished by a oneness between husband and wife, through having and raising children as Christians, home-based evangelism, hospitality and other home-based mercy ministries, and training Christian leaders as godly heads of households as a prerequisite to their holding church offices (Genesis 1:27,28; Matthew 28:18-20; Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; 1 Timothy 2:15-3:13; 1 Corinthians 7:21; Psalms 127, 128).

We deny that the home is merely a "filling station" where family members meet their own needs, and that family functions should be transferred to other institutions, to the detriment of God's plan and human freedom.

4. We affirm that each family, being different in circumstances, individuals, and gifts, has unique purpose and meaning in God's plan (Philippians 1:27,28; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

We deny that any family member may rightly pursue self-centered, individual goals at the expense of genuine family needs; that God's basic plan, including His design for families to be productive for His Kingdom, no longer applies in this day and age; and that some families exist to which God's plan does not apply.

## ***Sanctity of Sexuality Reserved for Marriage***

5. We affirm that God designed the beautiful blessing and spiritual union of sexual relations to be reserved exclusively for a man and a woman within marriage (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9; Proverbs 5:15; Romans 1:27; Galatians 5:20,21; 1 Timothy 4:1-3).

We deny that premarital and extramarital sexual relationships, promiscuity, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, exhibitionism, pornography, adult-child sexual relations, prostitution, and sex-act entertainment, and other sexual deviations should be sanctioned or accepted as “normal” or legal, even if done alone or by consenting partners or alone; and that any sexual behavior that deviates from the norm of a loving, marital heterosexuality can be considered a mature, untreatable, or acceptable life-long pattern, even if the individual involved does not wish to change.

6. We affirm that celibate singleness may be God’s purpose for an adult, providing for effective service or ministry; that such a calling is always marked with God’s grace so that sexual purity can be maintained; and that such single persons are whole persons in God’s creative order (Matthew 19:10,11; 1 Corinthians 7:7,8,25-27,32).

We deny that singleness should be a hedonistic phase of adult development during which a person selfishly serves only his own interests; that singleness must be unhappy, unfulfilled, or reserved for the physically unattractive; and that singleness indicates homosexual tendencies.

## ***Roles and Relationships in Families***

### *The Man: His Headship*

7. We affirm that in God’s order of Christian family government Christ is the Head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman as Christ is the Head of the Church, having given Himself in love for her redemption; that the husband must look constantly to Christ for direction; and that the husband’s headship requires commitment to his wife, unselfish sacrifice for her, a spirit of a servant, reinforcement of her unique qualities, and active love in nourishing, cherishing, and providing for her (Ephesians 5:21-25; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 20:28; Colossians 3:18,19; 1 Timothy 3:11,12; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:34,35; 1 Peter 3:7).

We deny that the husband ought to exert his authority over his wife by words or actions that demean her dignity as a person of equal value and worth before God; and that a man can serve his family better by attending to his own needs first than by putting his family’s needs first.

8. We affirm that the husband has final say in any family dispute, insofar as he does not violate Biblical principles; that a husband’s headship is irrevocable; and that if the husband is incapacitated, the wife may exercise his authority as his deputy, not as his replacement (Ephesians 5:22-6:4).

We deny that a husband must earn the right of headship; that he may be deposed by his wife; and that he may deny his headship in order to evade the responsibilities that attend it.

### *His Authority*

9. We affirm that a man's authority as head of his wife is delegated to him by God; that this means that his legitimate authority over his wife is limited by what God's Word allows him; and that all authority is established by God and no one and no social institution has the right to exert any authority contrary to God's laws or the bounds God has set for the man's office in the family (Romans 13:1; Ephesians 5:22-33).

We deny that headship gives a man the right to command his wife to sin; that wives must obey their husbands when that requires disobeying Scriptural teaching; and that wives ought to use Biblical limits on husbands' authority as opportunities to quibble and undermine their husbands' authority (1 Peter 3:1-6); and that God desires a man to lord it over his family in an unloving and unbiblical manner (Colossians 3:19,21; Ephesians 6:4).

### *His Work*

10. We affirm that an able-bodied man must make every reasonable effort to support his family continuously (1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 3:17-19); that the wife may augment the family's income through effective management of resources or, with the husband's consent, by home business (Proverbs 31:10-31); and that in cases of family financial crisis, the wife may, with her husband's approval, accept temporary outside employment, but that the family should view this as bondage, strive to liberate itself, and petition God for liberation (1 Corinthians 7:21-23).

We deny both that any man should force his wife to abandon her calling in the home for the sake of mere financial gain unnecessary for minimal physical survival, and that the wife should volunteer to do so (1 Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 5:5); that the trappings of middle-class lifestyle are necessities that justify forcing the wife to work outside the home (1 Timothy 6:8); and that providing for the physical necessities of his family excuses a man from overseeing the affairs of his household, providing spiritual guidance and material assistance to his wife, providing for physical needs of elderly, incapacitated, or involuntarily poor parents or parents-in-law, or overseeing the spiritual and moral development of his children (1 Timothy 3:4; 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:28,29).

### *His Spiritual Leadership*

11. We affirm that a Christian man, as head of his family, should nurture its members spiritually and morally; that he should protect his family, pray diligently for their protection, and seek regularly the Lord's blessing for them (1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Peter 3:7); and that he should educate his children spiritually and lead them in the way of godliness by direct and constant instruction, leading in worship, remaining accessible and lovingly involved with them, and mirroring Jesus Christ by his example (Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; Ephesians 6:4; Psalm 34:11; 78:5,6).

We deny that God allows a man to willfully abandon to his wife, the Church, or any other person or institution the responsibility for teaching his children regularly about God, and praying for their protection.

12. We affirm that when there is no Christian husband to head the family spiritually, the woman of the house must assume the responsibility as God enables her (e.g., Lydia, Acts 16:15, and Lois and Eunice, 2 Timothy 1:5, cf. Acts 16:1).

We deny that the family is merely a collection of individuals who must fend for themselves physically, spiritually, or morally.

***The Woman: Her Submission***

13. We affirm that God calls the wife to submit willingly in loving obedience and respect to her husband as the Church submits herself to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18); and that wives with non-Christian husbands are called by God to be a testimony to their husbands by their gentle, submissive obedience, and not to weary them with constant criticism (1 Peter 3:1-5).

We deny that the wife should undermine the headship of the husband; that submission requires a wife to relinquish her own moral responsibility, to perform any sinful act, or to refrain from practices commanded by God in obedience to her husband's unbiblical demands (1 Peter 3:6); that submission prohibits a wife from respectfully and lovingly rebuking her Christian husband as a sister in the Lord (Ephesians 5:21; Colossians 3:16); that it is wise for a wife to continue to rebuke her husband after he has clearly heard her once; and that the Bible's teaching regarding a woman's submission applies to any relations other than to her husband and to teaching men in the Church.

***Her Work***

14. We affirm that a mother's primary duty is to nurture her minor children; that the wife's responsibility is to manage the home and make it a center of ministry (1 Timothy 5:10,14; Titus 2:3-5; Proverbs 31:10-31); that Christian media therefore should not glamorize outside careers for mothers with minor children; and that the Church ought to commend godly wives and mothers who work at home as role models.

We deny that married mothers of minor children should seek male economic provider roles; that Christian wives should put the world's idea of self-fulfillment through careers before the calling of God (Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34,35; Luke 9:23-26); that following God's commands in this area exploits women; and that only women with outside careers are "working women" while others are social and economic "parasites."

***Parents and Children***

15. We affirm that children are a blessing from God of worth beyond human capacity to measure, and should be welcomed joyously into the family as precious gifts from Him; that children belong to God alone, with the parents being their God-ordained stewards; and that God gives parents the primary responsibility and authority for the education and physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being of children (Genesis 33:5; Psalm 78:1-8; 127:3-5; Proverbs 17:6; 1 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:1-9).

We deny that parents should adopt the secular culture's anti-child spirit that promotes abuse, neglect, exploitation, parental absence or inaccessibility, lack of supervision, social parenting in lieu of family rearing, excessive age segregation and peer influence of children, use of children's needs as political pawns, education of children as social experimentation, and governmental usurpation of parental responsibility; and that children should be treated as an evil to be aborted or prevented, a financial burden to be resented or limited, or the property of either the parents or the state.

16. We affirm that parents should mirror the righteousness, justice, mercy, and love of God in discipline, training, and nurturing their minor children (Proverbs 22:6; 29:15; 1 Samuel 3:13; Psalm 78:1-8; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15; 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:1-4).

We deny that the state has a right to undermine or remove the righteous, Biblically-mandated authority of parents, or to claim or usurp—from parents who have not been convicted of physical child abuse or neglect—the role of primary educator of, provider for, or protector of children.

17. We affirm that God commands all children to honor their parents and minor children to obey them in the Lord; that Scripture gives parents the right and responsibility to enforce obedience through discipline, including corporal punishment (Deuteronomy 5:16; 2 Samuel 7:14, cf. Proverbs 3:11,12; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15); and that training in godly obedience is the foundation of personal self-government and of all civil governments of free men and women.

We deny that the family should be a democracy; that lovingly enforced obedience harms a child; and that civil government has a right to define wisely-administered corporal punishment as “child abuse” or to allow children to “divorce” their parents.

### ***Raising Children to Maturity***

18. We affirm that the goal of Christian parenthood should be to present children to the Lord as responsible, spiritually mature adults by the time they reach full physical maturity (Luke 2:41,42).

We deny that adolescence should be artificially prolonged beyond full physical maturity; that teenagers have the right to be irresponsible and self-centered; and that their elders should expect or allow such behavior from them.

### ***Grandparents and Aged or Incapacitated Relatives***

19. We affirm that the family must provide loving emotional, spiritual, and physical care for its dependent elderly or incapacitated members, and must respect them, acknowledging their years of experience and potential to teach wisdom to those who are younger (1 Timothy 5:4-8; Matthew 15:1-9); that God has a purpose for grandparents and other aged relations (Galatians 6:10); and that grandparents are responsible first to teach their adult children how to teach the grandchildren, and second to assist in ensuring that this actually happens (Psalm 78:1-8).

We deny that society ought to abuse or ignore elderly or incapacitated family members, to count them as valueless or a mere burden, or to hasten their deaths through “euthanasia” or any other means; and that old age should be a time for selfish individual pursuits.

20. We affirm that relatives incapacitated due to age or other disability are entitled to find rest and care in the homes of their children or other near family members if at all medically or physically possible, and that Christians should provide for their incapacitated relatives (1 Timothy 5:4,8,16), and for unrelated elderly persons in distress (James 1:27).

We deny that elderly people should be viewed as a nuisance and be rejected from residing with their children because they are a burden or an inconvenience (cf. the Book of Ruth); and that elderly people of reasonably sound body and mind should expect others to support them in idleness or selfish pursuits (1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10).

### ***Marriage: Choices and Commitments***

21. We affirm that the man who desires to marry should consult wise counsel, including that of his family (Proverbs 15:22), and choose his wife under God's guidance for her godly character and suitability as a partner in his calling (Genesis 2:18,20-21; Proverbs 18:22; 31:10-31; 1 Corinthians 7:28,36).

We deny that Christians should marry non-Christians, and that sexual attractiveness or other carnal considerations should dictate a Christian's choice of a mate (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14-13; Proverbs 31:30).

22. We affirm that marriage vows are a solemn and sacred covenant between both marrying parties and God; that it is deplorable when these vows are not enforced by law or by the Church and so have lost meaning; that Scriptural sanctions ought to be exacted upon those who unbiblically break marriage vows; and that the Church should work to restore the full recognition of marriage as a binding legal covenant under God.

We deny that Church and state have no responsibility for enforcing the vows they administer.

### ***Divorce and Remarriage***

23. We affirm that, in marrying, a Christian agrees to bear the spouse's imperfections; that these imperfections therefore cannot be construed as reasons for divorce; that there may be one innocent party to a divorce, but never two; that God's forgiveness can extend to any sin related to a divorce; that God's forgiveness is granted to those who humbly repent before Him and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; that repentance may require reconciliation with an unjustly divorced spouse or other tangible proof of a change of heart; and that the Church must require proof of repentance before restoring the divorced person to fellowship.

We deny that there is any Biblical basis for "no-fault" divorce; that society and law should sanction "no-fault" divorce on demand; and that God requires the Church to restore fellowship to those who show no sign of repentance or willingness and effort to make restitution to the injured spouse.

24. We affirm that since God's name is invoked in a Christian wedding, such a marriage cannot be broken without bringing shame on the name of God (Matthew 19:6; Exodus 20:7; Matthew 5:33-37); that God's intention for marriage in creation was one man for one woman until death separated them; that the destruction of marriage relationships is a breach of covenant displeasing to God; and that although Scripture presents grounds for it God still hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

We deny that terminating a marriage in divorce glorifies or pleases God.

25. We affirm that marriage is for life and that no one should enter it lightly (Matthew 19:9,10); and that Scripture recognizes only one clear ground for divorce (the partner's adultery, Matthew 5:27-32), and one other possible ground (the partner's desertion, which may be understood as a form of adultery, 1 Corinthians 7:10-15), and that only those divorced for these reasons may rightly remarry.

We deny that anyone divorced for any reason other than these can be considered to have undergone a Biblical divorce.

26. We affirm that when divorce occurs, we must extend compassion to the unjustly divorced party if there is one, and our forgiveness and the forgiveness of God where appropriate (Matthew 19:5-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-13).

We deny that divorce was ever an intention of God in creation, and that divorce should substitute for sustained, even life-long, concerted efforts to solve marital conflicts, to forgive one another, and to serve and provide for one another's needs.

### ***Broken Families***

27. We affirm that the Body of Christ should show great compassion and support to broken families with minor children, whether the absence of a parent is due to death, divorce, desertion, or single parent adoptions, and that God's grace, strength, forgiveness, and shepherding are always available to those who humbly and repentantly seek Him (Hosea; Proverbs 5:18; Ephesians 5:23,24,32; Mark 10:2-12; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Romans 7:2; Matthew 5:2; 19:1-12; James 4:1-3).

We deny that single parent families are inevitably doomed to failure, and that the family of God can justifiably reject or shun a Christian who is the victim of a divorce or is bereaved, except where church discipline has been carried out in a Biblical manner and the person has not repented.

### ***Adoption***

28. We affirm that adopting a child can be a special calling from God; that adoption can be a blessing for the family and the adopted child; and that Christians considering adoption should consider the physically handicapped and unattractive child (1 Samuel 16:7; Galatians 2:6; James 2:1).

We deny that adoption should be an automatic response to infertility, to the desire to avoid pregnancy, or to any other parent-centered reason; and that infertile couples are second class citizens in God's Kingdom (Genesis 15:2; 16).

### ***Unwed Parents and their Children***

29. We affirm that God has given children to their own parents; that the Church should usually encourage parents to keep and raise their own children; and that in those tragic instances in which an unwed pregnant mother has decided that she cannot or will not keep and raise her own child, the Church may rightly and wisely recommend that she give sole custody to the child's willing father or give the child up for adoption.

We deny that the Church should automatically counsel unwed parents to put their babies up for adoption instead of encouraging them first to consider how they might meet their responsibility for their own flesh and blood.

## ***Family Relationships***

30. We affirm that all family members, like all other human beings, are fallen and imperfect and need forgiveness and redemption by God and forgiveness by fellow family members, and that Christians should strive to show the same courtesy to family members that they show to those outside the family (James 2:8,9), displaying love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control toward family members (Galatians 5:22,23).

We deny that family members should behave self-righteously or withhold forgiveness from each other, and that a Christian has any less need for self-control and courtesy at home than in the world outside (Galatians 5:13-24; 1 Corinthians 13).

31. We affirm that the Biblical concept of love includes nurturing, supporting, comforting, caring, touching, and verbalizing inner respect as acts of love among family members; that family members should love, encourage, support, protect, comfort, respect, forgive, and tenderly care for each other; and that family members should take the time to express affection and respect for one another physically and verbally (1 Corinthians 13; Mark 10:14; Ephesians 6:4; Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 27:11).

We deny that family members should take each other for granted or deprive each other of needed love.

32. We affirm that the family under God is an organism working together toward common goals; that God gives family members differing roles and abilities; that those in authority in families may, recognizing differences in roles, gifts, and abilities, call on the talents or wisdom of those under them without compromising their authority (*e.g.*, a husband may defer sometimes to the wisdom or judgment of his wife without compromising his headship); and that a parent may accept the sensible suggestion of a child without compromising parental authority.

We deny that the family is a dictatorship (1 Peter 5:2, by analogy); that one member of a family should manipulate, overwhelm, or repress another by treating him or her as a non-person or ignoring needs and gifts; and that a husband or wife weakens his or her authority by deferring to the sanctified judgment of those underneath him or her (Proverbs 12:15).

33. We affirm that the results of both sin and godliness affect succeeding family generations, and that Christian parents must therefore strive to give children a more Biblical foundation for life than they had themselves so that the Church may grow and not decline (Deuteronomy 5:9,10,16; Jeremiah 35:18,19; Psalm 78:1-8; 51:5; Lamentations 5:7; Exodus 20:5; Acts 2:39).

We deny that parents have little or no impact on the lives of their children and subsequent generations.

34. We affirm that the governing principle of all family interaction should be a righteous, Biblical love exercised through the power of the Holy Spirit and given regardless of performance, attitude, or circumstances, and that this love is expressed by putting other family members' needs before one's own (John 15:12; 13:35; 1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:14; Philippians 2:1-4).

We deny that selfish attitudes of individual family members — which destroy marital oneness, disrupt family unity, lead to the neglect of spouses' or children's needs, and interfere with ministry to others — are ever right.

## *Sins Against the Family*

### *Abortion and Infanticide, Euthanasia, and Discrimination in Medical Treatment*

35. We affirm that all human life is holy and has intrinsic, God-given value — beyond human ability to measure — because it bears God’s image, regardless of race, age, gender, prenatal status, or physical or mental handicap (Matthew 6:25; 10:31; Genesis 2:7; 9:5,6; Psalm 139:14; Jeremiah 1:5).

We deny that the value of human life is to be measured by its “quality;” that abortion on-demand, infanticide, euthanasia, or discrimination in medical treatment against the handicapped, the very young, or the very aged is ever right; and that any race or gender has greater intrinsic value than any other.

36. We affirm that every human being begins life from the moment of conception; that the zygote, embryo, and fetus should therefore be entitled to full protection of law (Psalm 139:14,15; Jeremiah 1:5; Exodus 21:22-25); that killing the zygote, embryo, or fetus through abortion or any other form of violence is murder; that removal of the zygote, embryo, or fetus from the womb is justified only when leaving the child inside the mother would cause death for both mother and child; that the Church should encourage research to improve the chances of survival for a baby so removed; and that no baby should be deprived of nourishment or necessary medical care after birth for any reason (Deuteronomy 5:17).

We deny that either the mother, the father, the civil government, or any other person or institution has a moral right to decree the death by abortion of any child for any reason, be it social, economic, psychological, etc.

37. We affirm that elderly men and women have value in God’s eyes and have the same God-given right to life as other people, and that “euthanasia”—taking the life of a person through either positive action or neglect—is therefore murder.

We deny that human life is to be valued by its utility in society; that elderly people, even those most severely incapacitated, are valueless; and that elderly people should be used for medical experiments without their consent.

## *Family and Church*

38. We affirm that children of believers should receive their basic spiritual instruction from their own parents, with the help of older family members and the Church; that children of nonbelievers should be provided the opportunity to receive spiritual instruction by the Church with parental approval; that adults receive their preparation for church roles through successfully managing their own households; and that single adults can benefit from being welcomed in church family groups as a means of ministering and being ministered to (Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; 1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6; 2:3-5; Psalm 68:6).

We deny that churches should try to replace Christian parents or the home in training; that church programs should interfere with Biblically based family life; and that churches should encourage institutionalized child care for children with two able-bodied parents.

39. We affirm that churches should seek to establish elders who are scripturally qualified as reasonable models of Christ in family relationships, who are able to train others in family headship, who regularly invite their flocks into their homes, and who are responsible for training those families under them in qualities that will enable them to become church leaders (1 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 1:6-9; Ephesians 5:25-33; 6:4).

We deny that institutional training alone is sufficient qualification for leading Christ's Church; that training for leadership should exclude a man's family; that families are an impediment to ministry; and that churches should demand or expect married men to spend excessive time away from home (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6; 2:3-5).

### ***Family and State***

40. We affirm that God gives the family civil responsibilities, including bearing, nurturing, training, and providing for children, as well as providing physical necessities for, protecting the lives of, and otherwise taking care of incapacitated family members, and helping the needy of the community through hospitality and acts of mercy; and that each Christian family should strive to fulfill these responsibilities itself, and if it needs help it should look first to family branches and then to the Church (Genesis 1:27,28; Deuteronomy 5:19; 6:7; 11:19; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 5:4,8,16; 3:2; Proverbs 31:20).

We deny that the state has a right to undermine or remove the righteous authority of parents in a family or to claim the role of educator, provider, or protector for children or other family members, except in cases of judicially proven abuse, neglect, or abandonment, or upon the family's request.

41. We affirm that God grants the magistrate the power to punish evil acts and to encourage good behavior; that crimes occurring within the family should be justly punished; and that the state should promote a social, economic, and physical environment conducive to family life (Romans 13:3,4).

We deny that the state has the right to set extrabiblical standards for who may marry, who may have children, how children are to be disciplined and educated, or how husbands and wives or other family members may relate to each other; that God grants civil governments the right to strangle family economic freedom through ruinous taxation (including robbing widows and orphans by inheritance taxes), oppressive land use laws, or favoritism for large corporations; and that the state should legalize or fund abortion, infanticide, or euthanasia.

42. We affirm that sexual abuse and parents' willfully depriving their children of shelter, clothing, food, sleep, or essential medical care, thus endangering their lives and physical health, should be treated as unlawful assault or attempted murder and the offenders punished accordingly by civil government and disciplined by the Church.

We deny that the state has a right to impose unrealistic standards on families; that the so-called offenses of "emotional neglect," "emotional abuse," "educational neglect," etc., which form the bulk of substantiated reports of "child abuse and neglect," are in fact crimes against children; that the state has any right to administer criminal penalties or usurp custody in neglect cases except when a child's life or physical health is obviously endangered; and that the state should ever administer criminal penalties or usurp custody in cases where the only accusation concerns mental health, since the state should not mandate what

particular beliefs and attitudes are healthy or acceptable. We further deny that involuntary neglect caused by poverty or other uncontrollable circumstances should ever be treated as a crime, and that even sinful families are helped more by the threat of removing their children rather than by prayer, godly instruction, and loving assistance.

43. We affirm that rape is a sin and a crime no matter who the victim is, but especially when perpetrated against a child, and that rapists should be prosecuted and punished as criminals (Deuteronomy 22:23-27; Leviticus 18).

We deny that incest is merely a social “taboo;” that either so-called “non-violent rape” or “date rape” is non-criminal; that parents should be condemned as sexual abusers in the absence of compelling evidence; that civil government should indulge in “witch hunts” against sexual abuse, soliciting anonymous reports or accusing people without compelling evidence; that civil government should plant mistrust of parents in the minds of innocent children (Deuteronomy 18:15); that parents who show affection to their children should be treated as criminals; that parental hugging, kissing, and other forms of affection that do not involve sexual stimulation are sexual abuse; and that rapists should get counseling, probation, or light jail sentences instead of their Biblical punishment.

44. We affirm that the scriptural penalty for genuine crimes against children falls solely on the perpetrator, not on other family members or the victim.

We deny that children should be removed from the non-offending spouse’s custody.

45. We affirm that Biblical spanking may cause temporary and superficial bruises or welts that do not constitute child abuse, but that proven brutality to a child resulting in permanent disfigurement or serious injury should be punished by law (Exodus 21:23,24; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13,14).

We deny that the right and responsibility to discipline ever give parents the right to seriously injure their children.

## A Call to Action in the Family

### *General Actions*

Because of the preceding convictions, we call upon all men and women who name Christ as their personal Savior and Lord to join us in:

1. examining earnestly these affirmations and denials in the light of God’s Word to see if they are true, and informing us directly of those points in which they believe we have departed from Scripture, evidence, or logic;
2. re-examining our own family theories and practices and asking God to show us where we are falling short;
3. repenting of all known sins, confessing and forsaking them, asking forgiveness both of God Himself and of all those who have been offended, and then making all possible restitution;

4. praying for God to fill all of His people with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in order that we may bring our personal lives and our family theories and practices into closer conformity to His revealed will on a permanent and consistent basis;
5. seeking guidance from our brethren and local church authorities as to how we can mutually support and influence one another to make our family practices glorifying to God.

Having dealt with our own personal sins and failures, and placing ourselves accountable to God and His Word and to the brethren, we now commit ourselves to:

1. influencing any known Christians or Christian associations with whom we work to consider seriously our affirmations and denials with the goal of enlisting their responses;
2. influencing those in the field of the family who agree with our affirmations and denials to implement these proposals in their work;
3. mobilizing and networking our Christian resources and working in concert with the other professional spheres both inside and outside COR, to see the behavior of the Body of Christ and our nation changed to approximate more closely the view of reality and morality presented to us in the Holy Scriptures.

### ***Specific Actions***

To these ends, we commit ourselves to the following specific actions:

1. making this document available, with a short reading list of pertinent books by Biblical authors, to every Bible-believing church in the world, and encouraging the leaders of local churches to train their flocks in these essential, Biblical family principles;
2. applying church discipline wherever a congregation's members are engaged in sins relating especially to the family, such as fornication, easy divorce, non-submission of wives, abuse of headship by husbands, spousal abuse, disobedience of children, child abuse, non-support by the husband, desertion, abortion, incest, homosexuality, or deliberate childlessness for any reason other than a special call from God;
3. urging church boards to request the resignations from leadership of all pastors, elders, evangelists, church and parachurch staff members, Christian musicians, and other leaders who do not meet the scriptural requirements for leadership in the Body of Christ (1 Timothy 3), particularly in managing their own households well, or who have undergone unbiblical divorce and have not proved contrition and repentance, until their lives are aligned with Scripture;
4. urging all Christians to unite at city, state, and national levels in opposition to any ungodly attempt by civil government to take over God-ordained parental rights over their own children. (Any and every constitutional and Biblical means must be taken by individuals and by the institutional church to oppose any attack on the essential, watershed, basic right of parents to conceive, control, educate, rear, guide, and discipline their own children. Churches must be willing to lose their tax exempt status over this issue, and Christian parents must be willing to be jailed if necessary, in fighting this ultimate power grab by devotees of idolatrous statism.);

5. taking whatever actions we can, within our Biblical and Constitutional limits, to realign county, state, and federal legislation regarding family issues in order to make it conform to the Bible's view of reality and morality, especially by pursuing the resumption of strong laws regarding children support, adultery, homosexuality, prostitution, sex act entertainment, pornography, sexual abuse, incest, rape, abortion, infanticide, and divorce;
6. urging pastors, elders, and church staffs to persuade and teach fathers that God holds them accountable for developing the spiritual maturity and Biblical understanding of their own children and that they may not delegate this duty primarily or entirely to the Church or to Christian schools;
7. guiding and assisting, and urging churches to guide and assist, fathers in fulfilling their function as spiritual heads of their families;
8. challenging the Church to re-think its view of care for the elderly, and urging that children and grandchildren take first responsibility for caring for their disabled elderly in their own homes and as members of their own families before resorting to retirement homes;
9. teaching that when children are abandoned or orphaned, or their parents are in jail, they should preferably be cared for by relatives, friends, or the Church rather than by civil government, institutions, or foster care;
10. calling evangelical churches to account whenever they unbiblically and inexcusably accept easy divorce, "no-fault divorce," and remarriage, and urging them to adopt Biblical attitudes and practices (The divorce rate among those attending evangelical churches is growing much closer to that among the secularized. A massive campaign must be launched to educate congregations, to call the unbiblically divorced and remarried to repentance, to exercise church discipline in cases of unbiblical divorce and remarriage, and to help re-establish divorced pastors — who must step down from their pastoral ministry — in alternate careers. Revival and reformation will not come until the Church solves its ungodly divorces and reverses its rampant divorce rate.);
11. helping each local church to establish, by itself or in cooperation with other local congregations, its own crisis pregnancy center and anti-abortion program (This is no less an obligation for Christians in America today than was Christian opposition to the Holocaust under Hitler in Germany, even at the risk of imprisonment and death.);
12. calling the evangelical Church to educate parents and their teenagers in knowledge, wisdom, respect, and responsibility for their sexuality in order to prepare young people for godly marriages and to reverse the trend toward fornication among Christian teenagers.