



# POSITION PAPERS

## INTRODUCTION

SEPTEMBER 2022

At Mariners Church, we believe it is important to hold biblical truth with conviction and kindness. For this reason, we have crafted several position papers that lay out our perspective on sensitive issues that can be controversial in the church and the culture. In putting together these papers, we proceeded with the following parameters guiding our thought process.

### **1. Practice should flow out of clarified theology.**

While theological reasoning may appear toilsome, it is essential to root practice in carefully reasoned theology because every practice is already rooted in some kind of existing theology. Ultimately, what a person believes to be the highest truth or greatest good will shape his or her values and actions. As Christians, we believe that God determines what is right and good. Therefore, the decision is never to have theology or not, but to determine what kind of theological framework will inform our practice.

### **2. Clarity is kindness.**

There is no benefit in a church hiding its views on significant, current social issues. Rather, the church and the community benefits when the church provides clear, compassionate answers to potentially painful questions. This is true both in that these answers may help people experience God's best for them and in that these answers represent the obvious intent to be honest about the church's beliefs, preferring to build relationships around openness, not ambiguity.

### **3. Maintain awareness of theological abuse without forfeiting theological confidence.**

History has demonstrated that leaders inside and outside of the church can use their positions of authority along with religious language and loyalty to oppress others and to promote self-interest. It is possible to hold the "right" biblical position in the wrong way, leading to un-Christlike actions. We do not want to read the Bible in ways that marshal God for "our side" in a contested area of theology; instead we want to read the Scriptures in community and with respect for the great Christian tradition, so that we may align ourselves with His will. We aspire to sober-mindedness as we follow the model of Christ who led with love and empowered the church. Human failures, though they are many, should not decrease our confidence in God's vision for the world and the church.

#### **4. Theological differences are respected, and submission is honorable.**

We recognize that many people will disagree with the theological positions articulated in these papers. We seek to acknowledge other perspectives and respect people who hold to other views. At the same time, we believe it is wise and fair for those who aspire to leadership in our church to recognize and cheerfully align with the positions that have been considered and affirmed here.