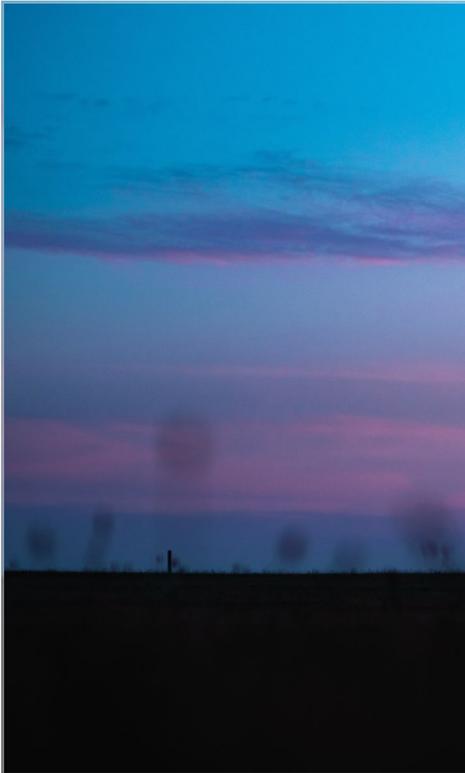


BRIEFING

# Take Action

Keeping the faith  
Christian perspectives on sexual  
& reproductive health





“Christians promote full knowledge and broad services to support sexual and reproductive health, in keeping with the dignity of the human person.”

Sexual and reproductive health matters can be contentious. They generate strong feelings and can provoke disagreements. But, what unites people are common positions on basic human needs, aspirations and values of human dignity.

The Bible says all human beings are created in the image of God with inherent dignity and value (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, Christians promote policies and approaches that elevate the value of life and show respect and concern for all humankind.

Whilst Christians may differ in the way they apply the Bible in their lives, there is a broad consensus concerning matters of sexual and reproductive health. In general, Christians promote full knowledge and broad services to support sexual and reproductive health, in keeping with their responsibility to steward creation (Luke 14:28-30, I Timothy 5:8, Genesis 1-2).

The 'Faithful Affirmations' provided in this brief are by religious leaders, theologians and human rights experts.

# Sexual & reproductive health: Christian perspectives

As Christians, reproductive health is an element of good stewardship of our sexuality and a critical process towards responsible parenthood.

Christians value all that is good, including the body and human sexuality (Genesis 1:31). Christians celebrate the human body and the gift of sexuality.

From the beginning, sex was gifted by God for multiple purposes, including companionship/intimacy and procreation (Genesis 1; Song of Solomon). It is designed to be consensual.

Reproductive health is a very crucial part of our overall health and is a central feature of human development. **In order to act responsibly, people should be enabled to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health**, rather than be kept in ignorance or coerced. For this reason, Christians approve of age-appropriate sex and sexuality education. Access to safe services, and accurate comprehensive information about sexual and reproductive health need to be made available to adolescents and adults alike, to facilitate informed decisions about their own lives and those of others.

In guiding the people of Papua New Guinea on reproductive health and the making of healthy lifestyle choices, the Church should emphasise age-specific and appropriate sexuality education among children, pre-teens, teenagers and young adults.





## SAFER MOTHERHOOD

Christians view children as a heritage from the Lord and the fruit of the womb. Ensuring that families and communities are healthy is an essential aspect of a Christian's calling as a steward of God's creation.

Maternal health therefore, should be a priority, since poor service provision puts the health and wellbeing of women and children at risk.

The Book of Genesis 38:28 records the use of midwives and the Church should encourage every pregnant woman to seek competent medical care from qualified health workers and institutions.

In emergency situations, Christians are admonished to ensure that pregnant women who need urgent care receive quality services from qualified health workers and facilities at the right time.

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"And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the **midwife** took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying: 'This one came out first.'"

**Book of Genesis 38:28**



**Comprehensive  
sexuality education**

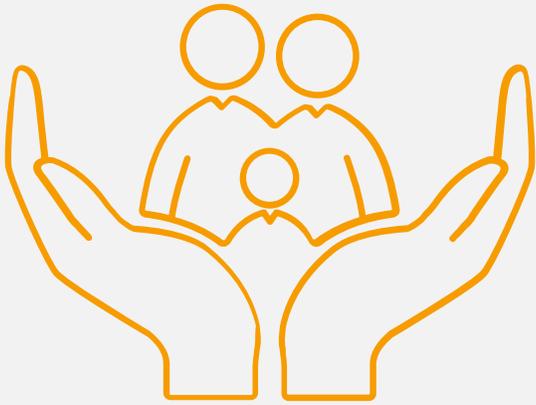
**Gender  
education**

**Social and  
emotional  
learning**

**Building respect, responsibility  
and relationship skills**

## **IT'S ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programmes develop the knowledge, skills and values young people need to make informed, responsible and respectful decisions about their lives. It includes core components of social and emotional learning and gender education.



**Planning is very critical to every human endeavour, more so the family.**

## GOD IS THE FIRST FAMILY PLANNER

Christians celebrate the birth of every child as gift from God. Children are a blessing, but procreation is not an absolute obligation to be pursued regardless of consequences. Parents ought to consider their physical, psychological, social and economic conditions, and their ability to provide for their children's health, education and wellbeing. They should discuss together the number, spacing and timing of their children.

Christians believe that planning together for healthy families is an essential aspect of following God and they believe in responsible parenthood.

Family planning is also important for promoting maternal and child survival thereby reducing the painful task of raising motherless children in our communities. It will be a colossal loss if the death of women during pregnancy and childbirth is not averted.

The Church, therefore, should seize opportunities to educate on reproductive health and family planning matters. The Church can also partner with existing health structures and provide information on where to access appropriate services.





Christians celebrate the equal dignity of the sexes (Genesis 1:27). God created females and males as equals and as helpmates for one another.

Christians support gender equality and have a duty to reduce inequality and discrimination by empowering women and girls. Christians reject practices and policies that prioritise, or promote the domination of, one sex over the other.

**EQUALITY**



# TAKE ACTION



- **Promote** full knowledge and services to support sexual and reproductive health.
- **Emphasise** the importance of age-specific and appropriate comprehensive sexuality education.
- **Seize opportunities** to educate on sexual and reproductive health and family planning.
- **Promote equality.**

Church  
leaders



- **Advocate** for your right to sexual and reproductive health information and services.
- **Actively reject** attitudes, ideas and behaviours that discriminate against girls and women.
- **Insist** on comprehensive sexuality education for all young people - both in school and out of school.

Young  
people



- **Recognise** faith-based organisations and institutions as important partners in Papua New Guinea.
- **Urgently** invest in family planning and sexual and reproductive health programmes, which are under-resourced.
- **Invest** in comprehensive sexuality education programmes.

International  
community

