



## National Council of Churches of Singapore

新加坡基督教全国教会理事会

Majlis Kebangsaan Gereja-Gereja Singapura

திருச்சபைகளின் தேசிய மன்றம்

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### **NCCS Response to the Repeal of Section 377A of the Penal Code and the Enactment of Article 156 of the Constitution**

1 The National Council of Churches of Singapore (NCCS) notes the legislative amendments enacted at the Parliamentary sitting on 29 Nov 2022, namely, the repeal of Section 377A of the Penal Code and the enactment of Article 156 of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore.

2 We refer to our earlier statement “Response to Government’s Decision on the Repeal of Section 377A” issued on 21 Aug 2022.

3 The NCCS continues to be concerned about the possible repercussions of the repeal of Section 377A. As highlighted in our earlier statement, we urge the Government to remain watchful on possible moves to restrict the right of religious groups and individuals to “profess, practice and propagate” our religion (to use the language of Article 15 of our Constitution). If necessary, we hope the government would be swift to take legislative and administrative steps to counter these moves and preserve religious liberty as currently practiced in Singapore. In this regard, NCCS appreciates Minister K Shanmugam’s assurance that the law ministry was looking at ways to deal with the harm caused by cancel culture, and Minister Masagos Zulkifli’s assurance of religious freedom for individuals to practise as their own religion states in relation to this issue.

4 With regard to the constitutional amendment to protect the definition of marriage against legal challenge, our preference is for the Government to adopt the more robust safeguard of expressing the current definition of marriage within the Constitution, as recommended in our earlier statement. However, we appreciate and support the enactment of Article 156, which shields the current definition of marriage as that between a man and a woman (and laws and policies formed on this basis) from being struck down by the judiciary on the grounds that they violate the provisions of Part 4 of the Constitution.

5 We are also reassured by the statement made by our Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong that the current government is committed to upholding family-centred policies and that “the overall tone of our society will not change” with the repeal of Section 377A (Interview with CNA, 22 Aug 2022).

6 The NCCS remains fully committed to the stability and flourishing of our nation and will continue its endeavours to enhance the health of marriages and the well-being of families in Singapore.

7 Therefore, we encourage our churches to spare no effort to spiritually form our members, such that they will imbibe ever more deeply the Christian narrative, see things according to the Christian perspective and make decisions according to our Christian values. This is our best defence against the counter-narratives and perspectives that daily confront us from a variety of sources. As an integral part of our Christian witness, we should also continue to show love and offer empathetic help to those with same-sex attractions or who are in homosexual relationships, as a visible sign of God’s love and concern for them. Finally, let us never cease to offer our earnest prayers for this small nation-state that we call home.