

Stellingen [Theses] by Dr. H. Dooyeweerd on The Meaning of Marriage¹

1. The marital community, like every other form of society, has an inner nature and structure that belongs to the individuality structures of temporal reality.
2. The individuality structures are fundamentally different from the modal structures of the law spheres, as they do not merge into abstract aspects of reality. Instead, they are structures of an individual whole, which, as such, functions in all law spheres without distinction but in which the aspects are grouped in a typical way.
3. This typical grouping leaves the temporal order of the modal aspects completely intact but assigns to one of them the typical role of a destination function and to another that of a foundational function.
4. The typical destination function, in its inseparable connection with its typical foundation, is an inner structure, a function of the community form, which must lead the internal life within the latter according to its typical order. It is principally the goal to which the form of society may eventually be subordinated. The structural functions of the various forms of society are of a normative nature.
5. Based on its typical destination and foundation, marriage can be defined as an unbreakable love community between man and woman, grounded in the biotic sexual community, and never as a mere natural institution serving procreation.
6. The propagation of the human race can at most be considered a cosmic goal, never part of the inner nature of marriage. This cosmic goal, as such, falls outside the internal structural law. However, a family community without children is inconceivable. There is a close so-called enkaptic intertwining between marriage and family, but this cannot merge the internal structures of these two communities, leaving the sovereignty of each in its own sphere completely intact.
Besides the intertwining with the family community, marriage also shows numerous intertwinings with other societal structures, such as those of the state and the church. The forms of origin and existence of marriage are the knots of all these intertwinings.
7. Universalistic sociology is as incapable of grasping the inner structure of marriage as individualistic sociology. The Aristotelian-Thomistic view of the so-called natural nature of marriage, which has also strongly influenced the scholastic-Reformed marriage conception, has caused much confusion in Christian marriage views due to its teleological universalistic orientation. It has also created difficulties in the field of marriage morality, which do not exist for a healthy scriptural view.
8. It is notable, however, that recently even in Roman Catholic circles, a reaction against the scholastic conception can be observed, which opens important perspectives for the Christian view of marriage.
9. In contrast, the view of Emil Brunner (*Das Gebot und die Ordnungen*) calls love as the foundation of the marital relationship a "shifting ground," is to be rejected in principle.
10. Marriage must never be severed from its intertwinings with other societal structures. The civil institution is not dependent on the realization of the internal structural principle of marriage for its existence. The disdain for civil marriage in romantic

¹ 1941k. "[De zin van het Huwelijk](#)." Eleven theses, published in preparation for the annual study conference of the Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte, 6 Jan. 1942. *Correspondentie-bladen van de Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* 6.4/5 (Dec. 1941): 111f.

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literature was based on a misunderstanding of the nature of marital love and a disdain for marriage as a divine institution.

11. Christ's statement regarding the principal indissolubility of marriage refers only to the internal structural law of this community, as it was given according to the creation ordinance. It should not be applied indiscriminately to the civil and public legal intertwining relationships of marriage.