

John Piper, James Dobson and John MacArthur Join Hands to Stand Against Apostasy

Hundreds of evangelical leaders joined digital arms to stand against same-sex marriage with the “Nashville Statement.”

“This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus and unashamedly proclaim His way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?” according to the preamble, which was signed by leaders like James Dobson, John MacArthur and John Piper, among others.

The statement continues:

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for He made us for Himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God’s design for His creation and His way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us

the greatest good. God's good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said He came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ's church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

The statement, associated with The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), was released earlier this week. It's rapidly gaining attention as the Christian manifesto on human sexuality.

"The spirit of our age does not delight in God's good design of male and female. Consequently, confusion reigns over some of the most basic questions of our humanity," Denny Burk, president of CBMW, says. "The aim of The Nashville Statement is to shine a light into the darkness—to declare the goodness of God's design in our sexuality and in creating us as male and female."

Burk continues: "It is our prayer that this statement might provide help for churches and Christian organizations that are looking for biblical guidance on how to address homosexuality and transgenderism. We also aim to foster a coalition of like-minded evangelicals to stand together for the challenging days ahead. Finally, we wish to influence a rising generation of evangelicals who are under pressure to abandon Scriptural teaching about marriage, gender and sexuality."

Social media users had varied reactions to the statement.

The #NashvilleStatment is not a representation of all of us. I am a Christian, and I support the rights of humans. Love is love.

– lindsay davison (@TheLindus) August 30, 2017

"WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior."

– Daniel Karlson (@Karlson_kid) August 30, 2017

The content of the #NashvilleStatment, however, is true no matter what cultural/political/environmental context.

– Joseph DeClercq (@JosephThomasD) August 30, 2017

#NashvilleStatment is embarrassing. This. Is. Not. How. You. Win. People. To. Christ. You are shaming and dehumanizing.

– Laureina (@Cpnwildchild) August 30, 2017

The statement is broken up into the preamble with 19 articles.

Piper addressed on a recent blog why he signed the statement:

The realities of homosexuality and transgenderism dealt with in the Nashville Statement were barely on the horizon of the Danvers Statement. Rationale #5 of the Danvers Statement flagged "the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality." And the final affirmation (No. 10) prophetically affirmed, "We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches and the culture at large."

Those "destructive consequences" have arrived. The Nashville Statement addresses them. I hope you will read it with care. We may pray that in this manifesto the world will hear a prophetic and gracious summons to submit to Christ, and that the church will hear a call to stand strong in the beauty and truth that God has given us in his word.

Here is the statement in full:

PREAMBLE

“Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...” –Psalm 100:3

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing

ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God's design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God's good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ's church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

ARTICLE I

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

ARTICLE II

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

ARTICLE III

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

ARTICLE IV

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

ARTICLE V

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

ARTICLE VI

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex

render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

ARTICLE VII

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

ARTICLE VIII

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

ARTICLE IX

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality—a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

ARTICLE X

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

ARTICLE XI

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his imagebearers as male and female.

ARTICLE XII

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

ARTICLE XIII

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender selfconceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

ARTICLE IV

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as

Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure. WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.