

Why the Rejection of the Nashville Statement on Sexuality Is a Rejection of the Bible

If a group of astronomers issued a major document stating that the earth revolves around the sun and the moon revolves around the earth, it would be greeted with a shrug of the shoulders. Who didn't know that? Why, then, has a recent statement by Christian leaders affirming the basics of biblical sexuality been greeted with such protest from other professing Christian leaders? It is because these other "Christian" leaders have rejected the authority of the Word of God.

For those who haven't read the Nashville Statement, the Babylon Bee, a Christian satirical website, actually sums things up well, and with some well-placed sarcasm: "It says some really controversial stuff for Bible-believing Christians, like that God made Adam and Eve as (trigger warning) male and female, that marriage was created by God to be the union between one man and one woman, that He loves people with gender dysphoria and same-sex attraction even if He doesn't approve of all of their actions, and that He offers His grace and mercy to sinners of all stripes."

Yes, just the most basic of the basics, reaffirming what the church (and synagogue) have believed about marriage and sexuality for two millennia and offering grace and mercy to all. That's why, when I was asked to be one of the initial signatories, I signed on without hesitation. What was there to disagree with?

Yet in response to the Nashville Statement a headline on the *Huffington Post* declared, "Hundreds Of Christian Leaders

Denounce Anti-LGBTQ 'Nashville Statement.'" The *Post* called the statement "divisive and bizarrely-timed," noting that it "drew harsh criticism from many other Christians, members of the LGBTQ community and even the mayor of Nashville."

Need I tell you that this article was penned by Antonia Blumberg for the *Post*'s "Queer Voices" section?

Of course, LGBT activists and their allies will condemn a statement that reaffirms God's standards for marriage and sexuality. Why should that occasion surprise?

Likewise, a September 1 op-ed piece in *The New York Times* stated that, "This week, an influential group of evangelical Christians publicly doubled down on intolerance in a message about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people that represents a renewed commitment to open bigotry."

Yes, "The Nashville Statement's harm is more than symbolic. The hateful beliefs it endorses have real-life, devastating consequences."

And who is the author of this article? Eliel Cruz, a self-described "leading bisexual activist."

Are you seeing a pattern here?

The problem is not with the Nashville Statement. It is with the Bible, since the statement only reaffirms what the Bible clearly teaches, namely that: 1) God made humans male and female; 2) marriage, as intended by God, is the lifelong union of a man and a woman; 3) homosexual practice is always sinful in God's sight; 4) God offers forgiveness for all human beings through the cross of Jesus; and 5) those who struggle with same-sex attraction or gender identity confusion can be welcomed into the body of Christ like any other struggling individual, as long as they do not celebrate or affirm that which is wrong.

And that's why a counter-statement, called the Nazareth Statement, issued by LGBT "Christian" leaders and their allies, affirms all the talking points of LGBT activism, including:

- That "our wide spectrum of unique sexualities and gender identities is a perfect reflection of the magnitude of God's creative work" and that is wrong to limit God's creative intent "to a gender binary or that God's desire for human romantic relationships is only to be expressed in heterosexual relationships between one man and one woman."
- That it is wrong to argue that "God intended human romantic relationships to be limited to one man and one woman."
- That is unhealthy to force "individuals to embrace a gender identity that matches the cultural assumptions based on their biology."
- That one cannot judge Christian orthodoxy based on views about homosexuality but that is not Christlike to hold to traditional Christian teaching on homosexuality or to refuse "to openly dialogue with LGBT+ people."

Talk about turning the Bible upside down!

According to this counter-statement, gender is what you perceive it to be, your biology doesn't determine your gender, men can have God-blessed sex with men and women can have God-blessed sex with women, provided it is "covenantal," and it is unchristian to uphold Christian standards of marriage and sexuality.

That's why I say that people who have a problem with the Nashville Statement have a problem with God and His Word. It's that simple.

There is, however, one more angle to discuss, and that is the connection to Donald Trump.

You might ask, "What in the world does President Trump have to do with this statement on sexuality?"

It appears that some Christian leaders are upset with the statement because some of the signers endorsed Trump or serve on his advisory faith council, as if this somehow disqualifies a biblical statement from being biblical. What kind of logic is this? And what of the fact that other signers were strong Trump critics? And what of signers like Rosaria Butterfield and Christopher Yuan, both of whom came out of homosexual practice and are compassionate gospel witnesses with a non-political message of reconciliation?

A misleadingly-headlined article in the *Washington Post* reads, "Why even conservative evangelicals are unhappy with the anti-LGBT Nashville Statement."

Yes, "'Had white evangelical leaders ... withheld support for Mr. Trump after the infamous 'Access Hollywood' tapes, maybe their opposition to same-sex marriage would be viewed ... as a principled, rather than a bigoted, position,' said Skye Jethani, a prominent Chicago-area pastor and author."

With all respect to Rev. Jethani, virtually every evangelical leader I know expressed disgust with those tapes, some of those leaders spoke directly to candidate Trump about them (and in strong terms), and all agreed that this was an ugly part of his past that he himself regretted.

And does Rev. Jethani really believe that liberal Christians, LGBT activists, and the secular media would have greeted our statement on biblical sexuality any differently today if none of us had voted for Trump? Does he really think that we were not already mocked and vilified for the principled, biblical stand we had taken for many years prior to this?

The Babylon Bee asks the question, "Who has signed the Nashville Statement?" The answer? "A whole mob of fringe, hate-filled bigots with zero credibility, such as John Piper,

J.I. Packer, Mark Dever, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, Al Mohler, Russell Moore, Francis Chan, and Matt Chandler. Just look at that list of theological lightweights—couldn't they at least have gotten some people who've proven themselves as faithful witnesses of Christ?"

In contrast, the *Washington Post* quoted from almost no nationally recognized conservative evangelical voices, despite its bold headline.

The Bee also notes, with full sarcasm, "That those supporting the Nashville Statement are not doing so because they believe the Word of God, but because they are homophobic, neo-Nazi white supremacists who worship Donald Trump—which makes sense, as long as you don't think about it for longer than about three seconds."

Precisely so.

I'm all for dialogue with professing LGBT Christians, and I have often apologized for the church's past failures in our treatment of those who identify as LGBT. And I constantly preach on the need for a baptism of love for those who identify as LGBT.

But love and truth go hand in hand, which is why the Nashville Statement should be affirmed by all those who love Jesus, love the Bible and love the LGBT community.