

# THE NASHVILLE STATEMENT FORTIFIED

## Preface

This is a critical revision of the Nashville Statement presented by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood on August 29, 2017. (The original statement can be found at [https://cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The\\_Nashville\\_Statement\\_Initial\\_Signatories\\_List.pdf](https://cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The_Nashville_Statement_Initial_Signatories_List.pdf).) As far as possible, we have maintained the style and grammar of the original statement, wanting to focus on the substance of the content itself. For explanations of changes to the original text, please see the notes included below.

Our purpose is to correct the statement only in ways absolutely necessary to bring it into conformity with the Bible's teaching on sexuality. In many places, we have left the statement unaltered, believing it to be in accordance with God's Word. Our corrections focus in areas where evangelical Christians have sought to avoid, soften, revise, or deny Scripture's doctrine of sexuality.

Our revision is not intended to be an exhaustive confession on biblical sexuality. It is only intended to correct and sharpen the Nashville Statement in the areas it already addresses. There are a number of biblical truths concerning sexuality which were absent from the original statement, which we have also left unaddressed or unexplained in our revision. One such absence is the biblical command of marriage to those who "burn" (1 Corinthians 7:9). Another area not addressed

is how Christians should respond to this very public rebellion against God's order. We know the drafters of the original statement cannot say everything every time, nor can we. Still, we believe these additions helpful and necessary.

We offer this revision with the prayer that it may serve the church well in calling all men to repent of sexual sin and return to the blessed union of husband and wife that God ordained in the state of perfection in the Garden of Eden when God presented Eve to Adam and he sang out in joy: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Scripture adds this blessed postscript:

*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. —Genesis 2:23–25*

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## REVISED TEXT

*And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE." —Matthew 19:4*

### Revised Preamble

Nearly two decades into the twenty-first century, followers of Jesus Christ mourn the rebellion of the Western world against the God who created us in his own image and likeness. West-

## ORIGINAL TEXT

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

### Original Preamble

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

ern man refuses to give praise and glory to the Father Almighty who made us and tenderly cares for us.

Our rebellion is most intense at the point of his bifurcation of mankind into male and female. Attempting to deny that from the beginning he made each of us male or female, we reject the sexual calling God has assigned us, instead embracing individual preferences and identity politics. Men and women repudiate this station that God assigned to us, and their rebellion dishonors God, bringing on them the suffering that always accompanies wickedness.

The church has encouraged this rebellion against God’s creation order of man and woman by refusing to teach and defend God’s distinct callings for man and woman. We have failed to teach or apply them inside the home and church, and we have denied God’s design and commands are universally binding on all men and women.

We call the church to repent of our fear and timidity and to renew our commitment to God’s Word, declaring once again the true history of the world and God’s creation order of male and female. Scripture declares there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all.

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.

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.

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**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original Preamble speaks of the sexual degradation the Western world is drowning in as something Christians have had forced upon us and must be called to oppose. In fact, this sexual degradation is, in significant ways, the church’s responsibility, and the Preamble has been rewritten to confess that truth and our sins.

### Revised Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be an ordered, covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife. Through physical, emotional, and spiritual union and love, marriage points to the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a disordered, homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract and that a marriage vowed in repudiation of God’s law is lawful.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original Nashville Statement fails to state the one foundational truth about the sexes that was first revealed and from which all other truths flow. God made Adam first, then Eve, placing Eve under Adam’s authority (1 Tim. 2:11–15). Marriage is “ordered” by God and its essential details are subject to his law.

### Revised Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God’s revealed will for man is chastity outside of marriage and chaste fidelity within marriage.

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

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The use of “man,” rather than “people,” honors God by referring to the human race as he named us. Especially in a document meant to defend Biblical manhood, womanhood, and sexuality, we must confess God’s truth using God’s words.

Chastity and fidelity require more than external cleanliness involving the use of body parts. Jesus condemns the man who looks at a woman with lust in his heart (Mt. 5:27–28). Whether fighting heterosexual or homosexual temptations, a man must fight against the sins of the eyes and heart—not just the sins of the body. This is not to confuse temptations and sins, but rather to define evil desires as sins.

### Revised Article 3

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. This distinction began when he created Adam first, of dust from the ground, then Eve from Adam’s rib. We affirm that man is the glory of God and woman the glory of man, her head.

### Original Article 1

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.

### Original Article 2

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.

### Original Article 3

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.

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**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement affirms the ontological equality of man and woman without also confessing man’s headship. The order in which God created man and woman has ongoing application for the relationship between the sexes, as taught in 1 Corinthians 11:1–9. In an egalitarian age it is not faithful to confess the equality of Adam and Eve without also confessing Adam’s headship.

#### Revised Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God’s original creation design and are meant for God’s glory and man’s good, fruitfulness, and dominion.

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

#### Original Article 4

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.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** “Human flourishing” obscures God’s specific commands to Adam and Eve and to all their descendants to be fruitful and multiply and to subdue and rule the earth (Gen. 1:27–28).

#### Revised Article 5

WE AFFIRM that our inward self-conception and outward gender identity must conform to the sex God assigned us at conception, and thus we are to live in obedience to his call evident in our reproductive organs.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the union God has decreed between biological sex and self-conception and gender identity.

#### Original Article 5

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.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement omits gender identity lived out loud as an essential component of obedience to God’s decree of manhood or womanhood for every individual. A person’s inward self-conception, outward gender identity, and reproductive organs should be unified in recognizing, declaring, and living out the sex God assigned at conception. Reproductive organs are God’s sure and certain evidence of each person’s call as man or woman. In obedience to that call, a man should neither perceive nor present himself as a woman (and vice versa).

### Revised Article 6

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.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** No change was made to Article 6.

### Revised Article 7

WE AFFIRM that inward self-conception and outward gender identity as male or female are defined by God’s holy purposes in creation as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting an effeminate, homosexual, or transgender inward self-conception or outward gender identity is consistent with God’s holy purposes in creation.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement is silent concerning outward gender identity. Please see explanation of changes to Article 5.

Redemption made no change to God’s holy purposes of manhood and womanhood in creation. Ascribing to redemption any definitional effect on sexuality risks introducing unnecessary ambiguity and indeterminacy, or worse, it establishes a perch from which to argue that God’s redemptive purposes somehow superseded his creative purposes.

### Revised Article 8

WE DENY that people who experience sexual attractions for the same sex can, without repenting of those attractions, live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God, and walk in purity of life. We also deny that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God’s original creation.

WE AFFIRM that repentance from these sinful attractions is

### Original Article 6

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.

### Original Article 7

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.

### Original Article 8

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

a grace of the Holy Spirit offered to all sinners, and that faith and repentance place a person inside the hope of the gospel.

the natural goodness of God’s original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement fails to declare the sinfulness of same-sex attraction. The faithful Christian gladly submits both his heart and body parts to holiness and leaves no room for the enemy to gain a foothold. Further, no other form of sexual attraction (so far) is permitted a neutral zone where lust is silently condoned as long as there remains an absence of physicality. For example, no one would (yet) say people who experience sexual attractions to children (or animals or other people’s spouses) may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God . . . . The only remedy for such attractions, which merit God’s wrath and punishment, isn’t a silent truce, it’s repentance, mortification, and faith.

**Revised Article 9**

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 or continued lust. We also deny that, in the eyes of God, all sexually immoral desires are equally corrupt.

**Original Article 9**

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.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement makes no distinction between different degrees of sexual sin. Scripture pronounces certain sins abominations, such as homosexuality, bestiality, and incest, thus indicating that they are of greater gravity and depravity than others.

The original statement should also have made clear that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality does not justify such lust. In other words, neither sexually immoral behavior nor lust are ever justified.

**Revised Article 10**

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of effeminacy, homosexual immorality, and transgenderism, and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness, barring a man or woman from the kingdom of God.

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

**Original Article 10**

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.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement omits effeminacy from the list of sins that must be disapproved. The unrepentant effeminate will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9–11). Our duty in living out the sex God assigned us also requires repentance from effeminacy, a sin that walks hand-in-hand with homosexual intercourse.

### Revised Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak in a way that demonstrates the truth and love of our Lord Jesus 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 image-bearers as male and female.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** Today, speaking the “truth in love” has come to mean speaking only as much truth as is compatible with inoffensiveness. Modernity's hidden presumption is that love never causes offense. However, God's words about sexuality are not unloving because God's truth and love live in perfect harmony with each other.

### Revised Article 12

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 any sexual sin and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The revised statement replaces “all sexual sins” with “any sexual sin” to emphasize God's power to forgive the most perverse sin.

### Revised Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake effeminate, homosexual, and transgender inward self-conceptions and outward identities, and joyfully to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception and identity as male or female.

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

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** The original statement omits effeminacy from the list of sins to be forsaken. Please see the explanation of changes to Article 10. The original statement also omits “outward identities” as a component of a person's integrated sexuality. Please see the explanation of changes to Article 5. Our obedience in living out our sex is not a burden to carry with begrudging forbearance, but a gift to be obediently received and joyfully lived.

### Original Article 11

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 image-bearers as male and female.

### Original Article 12

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.

### Original Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions 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.

### Revised Article 14

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 given 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.

### Original Article 14

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.

**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES:** Jesus Christ actually gives—not just makes available—forgiveness and eternal life to those who repent and believe. Thanks be to God!