



A Statement on Human Sexuality: Homosexuality and Same-Sex “Marriage”

Adapted from the EFCA’s Spiritual Heritage Committee’s May 2013 statement

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The challenges of our day

Never have the sexual ethics of our culture been more confused and contorted. Divorce is rampant; co-habitation before or instead of marriage has become normal; new technologies have made pornography immediately accessible; and the once inconceivable notion of same-sex "marriage" is now recognized by law in all 50 states. The need for a clear voice from the church on these matters is critical, both for the health of our own church community and for our faithful witness to the world.

Due to the incredible surge of interest in affirming homosexuality in recent years, even within Christian churches, the elders of Creekside Church have a burden and a pastoral desire to offer a statement to particularly address the subject of homosexuality and same-sex "marriage." We desire to set forth a Biblical vision of human sexuality as a good gift of God with Scripture as our ultimate authority. The divine design for sexual expression within the commitment of marriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the well-ordering of human society and is integral to human flourishing. We desire to articulate this ethic as moral truth binding on us all while recognizing our need of God's grace and forgiveness in the ways that we all fall short of this divine ideal.

God’s design for relationships and marriage

Our views of this issue flow from our commitment to God (Dt. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-38) and to His Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. Dt. 32:45-47; Matt. 4:4). *The Bible clearly teaches the enduring truth that marriage consists of one man and one woman.* From Genesis to Revelation, the authority of Scripture witnesses to the nature of biblical marriage as uniquely bound to the complementarity of man and woman. This truth is not negotiable. The Lord Jesus Himself said that marriage is from the beginning (Matt. 19:4-6), so no human institution has the authority to redefine marriage any more than a human institution has the authority to redefine the gospel, which marriage mysteriously reflects (Eph. 5:32).

We affirm God's creation of and purposes for male-female relationships and sexuality

God created human beings as male and female (Gen. 1:27). The complementary, relational nature of the human race as "male and female" reflects the created order given by God when He created human beings "in His image" (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1, 3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jms. 3:9; cf. Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10). It is with joy in our Lord that we are to receive the gift of being either male or female.

Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for sexual behavior: monogamous marital relations between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:5-8; cf. Heb. 13:4) or sexual celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7; Matt. 19:12). Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them.

In Scripture monogamous heterosexual marriage bears **a significance which goes beyond the regulation of sexual behavior**: the bearing and raising of children, the formation of families, and the recognition of certain economic and legal rights, all of which are important. Marriage between a woman and a man is emphatically declared in Scripture to create a "one flesh" union (Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:5), which in turn signifies the mystery of the union between Christ and His body, the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). This means that the foundational understanding of marriage is as a covenant grounded in promises between a man and a woman which finds its divinely intended expression in the "one flesh" union of husband and wife, and between the "one flesh" union of husband and wife and God (cf. Prov. 2:16-17; Mal. 2:14; Eph. 5:31-32).

We acknowledge that all sexual activity outside of marriage is a result of sin

All of human existence, including our sexuality, has been deeply damaged by the fall into sin (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23; 5:12). We all are sinners, broken in some measure by this fall. Though Christians are rescued, reconciled, renewed and in process of being transformed, this brokenness also affects us in that we groan, as the whole creation, eager to experience final redemption knowing at present we live in a not-yet-glorified state (Rom. 8:22-23).

We Christians who attempt to follow biblical mandates on sex and marriage are not immune to expressing our own sexuality in sinful ways, for "all have sinned and fall short of God's glory" (Rom. 3:23). We must always be mindful of this and humbly relate to others accepting that we all are fallen creatures.

Not all agree on the source of homosexual attraction, whether it arises out of social, genetic, or a combination of factors. In any case, we believe such attractions (along with every sinful desire) are a result of life in a universe broken by the effects of disobedience to God. From Cain onward, every one of us has been born into sin and in need of the forgiveness and redemption that comes from the gospel.

We must carefully distinguish between same-sex attraction, sinful lust, self-selected identification, and sexual behavior. Temptation, including sexual attractions, is not sin. It is not a sin to be tempted in the area of same gender sex. Sin is yielding to temptation in heart or deed. Jesus Himself was tempted, yet without sin (Matt. 4:1-11, Heb. 4:15). He sympathizes with our weaknesses, and He promises to provide a way of escape in every temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

The Scriptures have much to say about sexual behavior, from the beautiful affirmations of the Song of Songs to the clear prohibitions found throughout the Bible (e.g., Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 6:9-10, 15-18; Gal. 5:16-21; 1 Thess. 4:3-8). The Apostle Paul affirms that among believers “there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality” (Eph. 5:3). All homosexual behavior is specifically condemned as sin in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Gen. 19:4-11 [cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-7; Jude 7]; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-25; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11). This includes both male and female homosexual activity, both the more passive and more active roles in homosexual practice, and all varieties of homosexual acts.

The Christian’s attitude towards homosexuals

In all these implications we must never compromise the biblical standard for sexuality while at the same time we must treat everyone, including those who struggle with same-sex attraction, with gentleness, compassion, and love, while pointing them to the only hope any of us have, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We will be “welcoming but not affirming”.

All human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and respect because each of us bears the image of God. Homosexuals deserve this dignity and respect no less than any other, and we at Creekside desire to demonstrate this in our thoughts, speech, and behavior. Speech, including humor, which demeans anyone, has no place in the Christian community.

We in the Church must seek ways to reach out in love to those in our society who identify with any form of sin, including homosexuality.

Homosexuality among Christians

The church is to be a new community that resembles a family of brothers and sisters united in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit displaying deep relationships of love (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Rom. 12:10; 1 Tim. 5:1-2).

We in the church must seek ways to minister to and support those among us who struggle with same-sex attractions, and help those who have family members or others close to them involved in homosexuality. We sympathize with those who struggle with same sex attractions, and with their families, but as we empathize, we encourage behavior that follows the clear divine teachings of Scripture. In view of this, celibacy and singleness are to be affirmed within the church family for those with homosexual attractions.

A believer's fundamental identification should be first as a person “in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:4-10; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11). The gospel is full of grace and truth. It is an offer of grace and forgiveness to sinners as well as a call to live a holy life. It empowers us in the struggle to resist sin, including the sin of homosexual practice (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 4:20-24; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Tit. 2:11-13).

If you have any questions about Creekside’s position on marriage and sexuality, please contact any of our elders.