



Sexuality and Marriage Affirmations and Denials

A statement by the Celebration Community Church Elders

March 13, 2022

1. SEXUALITY

We affirm that God created human beings as his image-bearers in two sexual kinds—male and female. The differences between male and female biology and anatomy are God-ordained, normally identifiable at birth, and determinative for self-conception as male or female (Gen 1:27-28; 2:24-25). This gift of differentiated sexuality is to be celebrated and evident in the course of everyday life in diverse, gender-specific expressions of biblical masculinity (the potential to be husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers in a family, the church, and society) and femininity (the potential to be wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters in a family, the church, and society) (Gen 2:5-9; 2:18-20; Titus 2:1-8; 1 Cor 11:3-16).

We deny that practicing a transgender,¹ non-binary,² or gender-fluid³ lifestyle is consistent with God's purposes in creation and redemption. Furthermore, adopting a transgender, non-binary, or gender-fluid self-conception, or approval thereof, is contrary to God's purposes in creation and redemption (Gen 1:27-28; Deut 22:5; 1 Cor 6:20; 11:3-16; Eph 4:22-24). However, those who experience such dysphoria⁴ are not beyond the forgiving, healing, and transforming power of the Gospel and the joy of living in submission to the will of God in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 6:9-11; Titus 2:11-14).

2. MARRIAGE

We affirm that God designed men and women to unite in marriage, which is complementary (involving one of each differentiated sex, male and female), comprehensive (involving all of life, including sexual union), exclusive (monogamous and faithful), permanent (until separated by death or Christ's return), enjoyable (a

God-given gift for companionship), and generative (designed and oriented toward bearing and rearing children, biological or spiritual) (Gen 1:28; 2:18; 2:24-25; Matt 19:1-10; 28:18-20). Through this covenant union, a husband and wife display for humanity the relationship between Christ and his church (Eph 5:32). In keeping with their differentiated sexuality in nature and redemption, husbands and wives fulfill distinct functions within marriage (Eph 5:22-33).

We deny that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual,⁵ bisexual,⁶ polygamous,⁷ or polyamorous⁸ relationship (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Heb 13:4). Marriage is not simply a legal human contract but a covenant made before God (Gen 2:24-25). We deny that the divinely ordained differences between husbands and wives in marriage render them unequal in dignity or worth (Gen 1:27; Gal 3:28). But neither are such differences a result of sin or a tragedy to be overcome (Gen 2:18-23; 1 Cor 11:3-16).

3. SEXUAL SIN

We affirm that all sexual intimacy and activity is the exclusive privilege and responsibility of a husband and wife (Gen 2:24-25; 1 Cor 7:3-5; Heb 13:4). God's revealed will for all people is chastity⁹ outside of marriage and fidelity within a marriage (1 Cor 7:1-9, 36). We acknowledge that because of sin, every human being is born sexually perverted, creatively and destructively seeking sexual fulfillment in ways that ignore the Creator, reject his design, and distort his intent. This distortion includes heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual immorality (1 Cor 6:9-10, 18; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; Col 3:5-6; 1 Thess 4:1-8). We rejoice that the Gospel offers forgiveness and new life to those who repent of sexual immorality and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. (1 Cor 6:11; Col 3:7-11).

We deny that any form of sexual immorality is acceptable to God, including fornication,¹⁰ adultery,¹¹ bisexual behavior, homosexual behavior,¹² incest,¹³ the use of pornography, sexual abuse, and entertaining or excusing the desires that lead to such behaviors. We deny that such sexual desires are part of the natural goodness of God's creation, or that they put a person outside the hope of the Gospel (1 Cor 6:9-11, 18; Gal 5:19-24; Eph 5:3-14; Col 3:5-11; 1 Thess 4:1-8).

¹ Transgender is an umbrella term to describe individuals whose self-conception and/or lifestyle do not match their biological sex at birth.

² Non-binary is an umbrella term to describe individuals whose self-conception and/or lifestyle do not fit into the binary of the differentiated sexuality of male or female.

³ Gender fluid is also an umbrella phrase to describe individuals whose self-conception and/or lifestyle do not conform with their biological sex at birth.

⁴ Dysphoria (or gender identity disorder) is an umbrella term to describe the discomfort or distress an individual may experience because of a felt mis-match between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

⁵ Homosexuality describes someone who has a romantic or sexual attraction toward someone of the same biological sex.

⁶ Bisexuality describes someone who has a romantic or sexual attraction toward both biological sexes, male and female.

⁷ Polygamy is the practice of having more than one husband or wife at the same time.

⁸ Polyamory is the desire or practice of having more than one romantic or sexual relationship at the same time, usually with full knowledge and agreement of all involved.

⁹ Chastity is the practice of abstaining from all sexual activity.

¹⁰ Fornication can broadly refer to any sexual activity outside of marriage, but sometimes is used to specify pre-marital sexual activity.

¹¹ Adultery is voluntary sexual activity between a married person and a person who is not his or her spouse.

¹² 1 Corinthians 6:9 uses the different Greek terms for both the active (*arsenokoites*) and passive (*malakos*) partners in homosexual activity, condemning both as sinful.

¹³ Incest refers to sexual activity between two people of close relation.