

A Pastoral Note

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Grace and peace. The Briarwood Statement is a prayerfully developed distillation of Biblical truth focused upon equipping the Lord's people to "speak the truth in love," specifically and effectively to those who are in the seemingly unbreakable bondage of homosexuality and experiencing its inevitable consequences of shame, brokenness and hopelessness.

The Briarwood Statement was produced through a patient and deliberative process which was saturated with prayer and dialogue under the oversight of the Briarwood Session and then they unanimously adopted it. The objective was in light of the present theological confusion and missed ministry opportunities to provide a discipleship tool whereby the Lord's people would be equipped and enabled to "contend for the faith" without being contentious and "defend the faith" without being defensive. The desired outcome being a thoughtful and loving communication of the Gospel to those yet ensnared by this sin's guilt and power, and also to believers who may be dealing with the entangling remnant of the sin of homosexuality from which Christ has redeemed them—some of whom, praise the Lord, are on this specific journey of grace within our own fellowship at Briarwood.

We serve Christ together with a God-given Mission to evangelize everyone, everywhere, everyday, in everyplace with the Gospel of grace in Christ and then disciple them patiently and persistently within the Body of Christ as they grow in the grace and knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. This Gospel first communicates the "bad news," which informs us that we are sinners in need of salvation and we cannot save ourselves. Then the greatest words of the Bible...BUT GOD! The Good News is the God of Glory and Grace, who takes us right where we are by the Holy Spirit through Christ to the glory of the Father, promises to never leave us where we are. What is impossible with man is not only possible with God, but has been secured through Christ and by His Spirit.

Therefore, together with theological clarity and ministry compassion, let us indiscriminately bring the Gospel to the lost and to each other so that those who hear by the power of the Spirit might leave the futility of trying to psychologically, cosmetically, and culturally remove the shame of their sin, including homosexuality, and come to Christ, who is the Friend of sinners but who is no Friend to sin, and who can save you from any and all of your sins—homosexuality being no exception. Praise God, His Grace in Christ is greater than all of our sins and any one of our sins. The same answer for any sin is found from the same Savior of sinners.

For Christ, the Gospel and His Church,



The Briarwood Statement

(As adopted by the Session of Briarwood Presbyterian Church at its stated meeting on June 18, 2019)

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." ~ Hebrews 4:15-16

A Theological Ministry Statement on Homosexuality with 10 Affirmations and Denials

In a culture increasingly obsessed with sexuality, marked by rebellion against God's design for the gift and enjoyment of sex as set out in His Word and the resulting sexual brokenness, our desire is to equip Christians to minister with clarity, conviction and compassion to those struggling with homosexual thoughts, desires and actions.

For this purpose, we offer the following Briarwood Statement with the accompanying 10 Affirmations and Denials. We intend the Briarwood Statement to serve as both a clear theological statement of truth amidst the unnecessarily confusing language prevalent in our culture and, at the same time, a practical ministry tool that communicates truth in love.

The Briarwood Statement is not meant as a full theological treatment of homosexuality generally nor is it focused on the related but separate issue of gender identity. Instead, the Statement is designed to acknowledge the deep struggle and sense of bondage that those in sexual sin can experience while affirming the authority, sufficiency and preeminence of Scripture through the power of the Holy Spirit as the only true and ultimate source of hope and deliverance.

Our objective in this Statement is to address these issues faithfully and move people intentionally to Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is merciful and gracious.

The Theological Governing Principle

Everyone is born with a sin nature¹ which inevitably manifests itself in sinful thoughts,² desires³ and actions,⁴ corrupting all aspects of human sexuality, none of which are beyond the transforming power of the Gospel.⁵

¹Genesis 3:1-7; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:18,23 (i.e., original sin)

²Genesis 6:5; Psalm 10:4; Mark 7:21 (i.e., indwelling sin)

³Genesis 3:1-7; James 1:14,15; Mark 7:21-23 (i.e., indwelling sin)

⁴Romans 1:24-32; Mark 7:21-23; Galatians 5:16,17 (i.e., actual sins)

⁵Romans 1:16 (i.e., Gospel transformation)

Affirmations

Denials

1	<p>We affirm that each of us is born a sinner and this sin nature will manifest itself in actual sins including sinful heterosexual and/or homosexual thoughts, desires and actions. <i>Gen. 3:1-7; Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; Matt. 5:27,28; Mark 7:21-23; Rom. 3:9-18,23; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; James 1:14,15</i></p>	<p>We deny that any supposed genetic link to homosexuality would make homosexual thoughts, desires and actions morally acceptable or normative. <i>Gen. 3:1-7; Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; Matt. 5:27,28; Mark 7:21-23; Rom. 3:9-18,23; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; James 1:14,15</i></p>
2	<p>We affirm that all homosexual thoughts, desires and actions are sinful. <i>Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:8-11</i></p>	<p>We deny that homosexual thoughts, desires and actions are the worst possible sins, or the unpardonable sin, or beyond redemption, forgiveness, and transformation as with any other sin. <i>Matt. 12:31; 1 Cor. 6:9-11</i></p>
3	<p>We affirm that a Christian's identity is solely and exclusively in Christ alone. <i>Acts 11:26; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 5:16,17; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 3:1</i></p>	<p>We deny that Christians should identify themselves by any sin in general, or by sexual sins in particular, including identifying as a "gay Christian." <i>Eph. 5:3; 2 Tim. 2:19</i></p>
4	<p>We affirm that, while the term Same Sex Attraction (SSA) is often used by Christians to explain their struggle with homosexuality, the use of this term should be addressed within the Biblical categories of language that distinguish between temptation on the one hand and sinful thoughts, desires and actions on the other hand. <i>Mark 7:21; Rom. 7:15; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 5:16,17; James 1:14,15</i></p>	<p>We deny that the use or non-use of the term SSA should presumptively be a test of Biblical orthodoxy. <i>1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:14; 1 John 4:1-3</i></p>
5	<p>We affirm the need for clarity, intentionality, and community within the church and family as we minister and disciple in a culture that celebrates and promotes experimenting with sinful sexual behaviors in general and homosexuality in particular. <i>Rom. 1:21-32; Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 10:8; 1 Cor. 12:12-23; Eph. 6:4</i></p>	<p>We deny that the Gospel and the means of grace through the power of the Holy Spirit are incapable of progressively delivering Christians from a sexually obsessed lifestyle and culture. <i>Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 1:15-20; Heb. 7:25</i></p>
6	<p>We affirm that any teaching that declares homosexual thoughts and desires are not sinful unless acted upon to be contrary to Scripture. <i>Rom. 6:11,12; Rom. 7:5; Eph. 2:3; James 1:14,15; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 Pet. 2:11</i></p>	<p>We deny that homosexual thoughts or desires are non-sinful impulses, sexual disabilities to be managed or indicative of a morally neutral sexual orientation. <i>Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11,18</i></p>
7	<p>We affirm that many Christians who experience homosexual thoughts and desires sincerely identify such thoughts and desires as unwanted. <i>Rom. 7:14-25; Gal.5:16-25</i></p>	<p>We deny that a Christian is not culpable or accountable even for unwanted sinful sexual thoughts and desires. <i>Mark 7:21; Rom. 7:14-21; Gal. 3:22</i></p>
8	<p>We affirm that every Christian is called to flee temptation, repent of sin and mortify the sinful desires of the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit through the God-given means of grace. <i>Matt. 26:41; Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Cor. 10:13,14; Col. 3:5,6; 1 Tim. 6:11,12; 2 Tim. 2:22</i></p>	<p>We deny that sexual sins in general and homosexual sins in particular are to be accepted, managed, redefined, redirected or reordered. <i>Isaiah 5:20; Rom. 6:11-14; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5,6</i></p>
9	<p>We affirm that all Christians, including those who struggle with homosexual thoughts, desires and actions, are delivered from the penalty and power of sin and therefore are free from all condemnation. <i>John 8:36; Rom. 8:1,31-39</i></p>	<p>We deny that Christians who struggle with homosexual thoughts, desires and actions should suffer in silence or retreat into a subculture rather than into the Body of Christ. <i>John 13:34,35; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:4; Heb. 10:19-25</i></p>
10	<p>We affirm that God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, completely delivers some Christians from particular sins—including homosexual thoughts, desires and actions—miraculously and instantaneously, while others He progressively delivers through the ordinary means of grace with varying and uneven degrees of progress until they are made perfect in heaven. <i>Rom. 6:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 5:26,27; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:2,3</i></p>	<p>We deny that Christians will achieve sinless perfection in thoughts, desires or actions this side of eternity. <i>Rom. 7:21; Phil. 3:12; 1 John 1:8</i></p>

BPC Affirmations and Denials Scripture Passages

We affirm that each of us is born a sinner and this sin nature will manifest itself in actual sins including sinful heterosexual and/or homosexual thoughts, desires and actions.

Gen. 3:1-7; Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; Matt. 5:27,28; Mark 7:21-23; Rom. 3:9-18,23; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; James 1:14,15

GENESIS 3:1-7 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" (2) And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, (3) but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (4) But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (6) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (7) Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

GENESIS 6:5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

PSALMS 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

MATTHEW 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' (28) But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

MARK 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, (22) coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. (23) All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

ROMANS 3:9-18 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, (10) as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; (11) no one understands; no one seeks for God. (12) All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." (13) "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." (14) "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." (15) "Their feet are swift to shed blood; (16) in their paths are ruin and misery, (17) and the way of peace they have not known." (18) "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

ROMANS 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10 (9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

JAMES 1:14-15 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

We deny that any supposed genetic link to homosexuality would make homosexual thoughts, desires and actions morally acceptable or normative.

Gen. 3:1-7; Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; Matt. 5:27,28; Mark 7:21-23; Rom. 3:9-18,23; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; James 1:14,15

SCRIPTURE IS THE SAME AS AFFIRMATION

We affirm that all homosexual thoughts, desires and actions are sinful.

Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:8-11

GENESIS 1:27-28 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

GENESIS 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

LEVITICUS 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

LEVITICUS 20:13 If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

ROMANS 1:26-27 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

1 TIMOTHY 1:8-11 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, (9) understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, (10) the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, (11) in accordance with the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted

We deny that homosexual thoughts, desires and actions are the worst possible sins, or the unpardonable sin, or beyond redemption, forgiveness, and transformation as with any other sin.

Matt. 12:31; 1 Cor. 6:9-11

MATTHEW 12:31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 (9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

<p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>We affirm that a Christian’s identity is solely and exclusively in Christ alone. <i>Acts 11:26; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 5:16,17; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 3:1</i></p> <p>ACTS 11:26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.</p> <p>1 CORINTHIANS 1:2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:</p> <p>2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-17 (16) From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer. (17) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.</p> <p>GALATIANS 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.</p> <p>1 JOHN 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.</p>	<p>We deny that Christians should identify themselves by any sin in general, or by sexual sins in particular, including identifying as a “gay Christian.” <i>Eph. 5:3; 2 Tim. 2:19</i></p> <p>EPHESIANS 5:3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.</p> <p>2 TIMOTHY 2:19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."</p>
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<p>We affirm that, while the term Same Sex Attraction (SSA) is often used by Christians to explain their struggle with homosexuality, the use of this term should be addressed within the Biblical categories of language that distinguish between temptation on the one hand and sinful thoughts, desires and actions on the other hand. <i>Mark 7:21; Rom. 7:15; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 5:16,17; James 1:14,15</i></p> <p>MARK 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,</p> <p>ROMANS 7:15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.</p> <p>ROMANS 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.</p> <p>4 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (13) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.</p> <p>GALATIANS 5:16-17 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (17) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.</p> <p>JAMES 1:14-15 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death</p>	<p>We deny that the use or non-use of the term SSA should presumptively be a test of Biblical orthodoxy. <i>1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:14; 1 John 4:1-3</i></p> <p>1 TIMOTHY 6:4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,</p> <p>2 TIMOTHY 2:14 Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.</p> <p>1 JOHN 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.</p>
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We affirm the need for clarity, intentionality, and community within the church and family as we minister and disciple in a culture that celebrates and promotes experimenting with sinful sexual behaviors in general and homosexuality in particular.

Rom. 1:21-32; Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 10:8; 1 Cor. 12:12-23; Eph. 6:4

ROMANS 1:21-32 For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (24) Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (26) For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (28) And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

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ROMANS 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-23 (12) For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (13) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (14) For the body does not consist of one member but of many. (15) If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. (16) And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. (17) If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? (18) But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. (19) If all were a single member, where would the body be? (20) As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (21) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (22) On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, (23) and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,

EPHESIANS 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

We deny that the Gospel and the means of grace through the power of the Holy Spirit are incapable of progressively delivering Christians from a sexually obsessed lifestyle and culture.

Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11; Eph. 1:15-20; Heb. 7:25

ROMANS 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 (9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

EPHESIANS 1:15-20 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, (16) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, (17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, (18) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might (20) that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

HEBREWS 7:25 Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

We affirm that any teaching that declares homosexual thoughts and desires are not sinful unless acted upon to be contrary to Scripture.

Rom. 6:11,12; Rom. 7:5; Eph. 2:3; James 1:14,15; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 Pet. 2:11

ROMANS 6:11-12 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

ROMANS 7:5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

6 EPHESIANS 2:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

JAMES 1:14-15 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

1 PETER 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

1 PETER 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

We deny that homosexual thoughts or desires are non-sinful impulses, sexual disabilities to be managed or indicative of a morally neutral sexual orientation.

Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11,18

MARK 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 (9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

We affirm that many Christians who experience homosexual thoughts and desires sincerely identify such thoughts and desires as unwanted.

Rom. 7:14-25; Gal.5:16-25

ROMANS 7:14-25 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. (15) For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. (16) Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. (17) So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. (19) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. (20) Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (21) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. (22) For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, (23) but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (24) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

GALATIANS 5:16-25 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (17) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, (20) idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, (21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

We deny that a Christian is not culpable or accountable even for unwanted sinful sexual thoughts and desires.

Mark 7:21; Rom. 7:14-21; Gal. 3:22

MARK 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

ROMANS 7:14-21 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. (15) For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. (16) Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. (17) So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. (19) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. (20) Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (21) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

GALATIANS 3:22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

We affirm that every Christian is called to flee temptation, repent of sin and mortify the sinful desires of the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit through the God-given means of grace.

Matt. 26:41; Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Cor. 10:13,14; Col. 3:5,6; 1 Tim. 6:11,12; 2 Tim. 2:22

MATTHEW 26:41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

ROMANS 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13-14 (13) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (14) Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

COLOSSIANS 3:5-6 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (6) On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-12 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. (12) Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 TIMOTHY 2:22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

We deny that sexual sins in general and homosexual sins in particular are to be accepted, managed, redefined, redirected or reordered.

Isaiah 5:20; Rom. 6:11-14; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5,6

ISAIAH 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

ROMANS 6:11-14 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (13) Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (14) For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

EPHESIANS 5:3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

COLOSSIANS 3:5-6 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (6) On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

We affirm that all Christians, including those who struggle with homosexual thoughts, desires and actions, are delivered from the penalty and power of sin and therefore are free from all condemnation.

John 8:36; Rom. 8:1,31-39

JOHN 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

ROMANS 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? (33) Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (36) As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." (37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (38) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We deny that Christians who struggle with homosexual thoughts, desires and actions should suffer in silence or retreat into a subculture rather than into the Body of Christ.

John 13:34,35; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:4; Heb. 10:19-25

JOHN 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (35) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

ROMANS 9:33 as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame."

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27 (12) For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (13) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (14) For the body does not consist of one member but of many. (15) If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. (16) And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. (17) If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? (18) But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose. (19) If all were a single member, where would the body be? (20) As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (21) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (22) On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, (23) and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, (24) which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, (25) that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. (26) If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (27) Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

EPHESIANS 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.

HEBREWS 10:19-25 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, (20) by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, (21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

<p>We affirm that God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, completely delivers some Christians from particular sins—including homosexual thoughts, desires and actions—miraculously and instantaneously, while others He progressively delivers through the ordinary means of grace with varying and uneven degrees of progress until they are made perfect in heaven. <i>Rom. 6:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 5:26,27; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:2,3</i></p> <p>ROMANS 6:12-14 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (13) Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (14) For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.</p> <p>1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 (9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.</p> <p>2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.</p> <p>EPHESIANS 5:26-27 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.</p> <p>1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 (23) Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>1 JOHN 3:2-3 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like him, because we shall see Him as He is. (3) And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.</p>	<p>We deny that Christians will achieve sinless perfection in thoughts, desires or actions this side of eternity. <i>Rom. 7:21; Phil. 3:12; 1 John 1:8</i></p> <p>ROMANS 7:21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.</p> <p>PHILIPPIANS 3:12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.</p> <p>1 JOHN 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.</p>
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