

**Statement
on Marriage,
Gender,
and
Sexuality**

Current events

- **Attack against states like Georgia & North Carolina**
- **Target - the Minneapolis-based retailer**
- **The University of Tennessee**

Four common responses

1. **Angry combativeness** - calling for a crusade
2. **Political engagement** - transformation by means of election of the right politicians.
3. **Disillusioned withdrawal** - taking a sabbatical
4. **Pious disengagement** - retreat into apolitical Christian subculture (Monastic alternative) (political engagement is a distraction from evangelism and spiritual growth).

- **We believe that all persons have been created as male or female and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27).**
- **We recognize that male and female are biologically different but equal in personal dignity as created in the image of God.**

**We believe that the term “marriage”
has only one meaning sanctioned
by God: the uniting of one man and
one woman in an exclusive union,
as delineated in Scripture
(Genesis 2:18-25).**

We recognize that the relationship and institution of monogamous marriage has been the central, social building block for the common good of human society from the time God instituted it.

When a culture fails to honor God's plan for marriage countless individuals, particularly women, children, and the underprivileged, suffer significant emotional and material hardships.

We believe that God intended marriage to be a complimentary relationship of companionship between one man and one woman based on a covenant of love, mutual care, responsibility and permanence (Malachi 2:13-16).

We view marriage as a person-to-person fusion of male and female, celebrated by physical union in the consummation of a God-formed bond (Gen. 2:24-25; Matt. 19:4-5; Jn. 4:16-18).

We affirm the words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the only preeminent Head of this Church, that, “at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ (Matthew 19:4-5).

**We believe that the union of marriage
is intended by God as a lifelong
commitment between one
man and one woman**

**(Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18,
Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9,
Ephesians 5:31-33).**

Genesis 1:26-27

26 Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth.”

27 God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:18-20

18 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him.”

19 The Lord God formed out of the ground every living animal of the field and every bird of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

20 So the man named all the animals, the birds of the air, and the living creatures of the field, but for Adam no companion who corresponded to him was found.

Matthew 19:3-6

3. Then some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful to divorce a wife for any cause?”

4. He answered, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female,

5. and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?

6. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Matthew 19:7-9

- 7. They said to him, “Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?”**
- 8 Jesus said to them, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not this way.**
- 9 Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”**

Seven points
Before talking
about
Marriage,
Gender
and
Sexuality

1. It is possible to disagree with someone's opinion about marriage, sexuality and gender without rejecting his person.
2. Tolerance on these matters is only a virtue when there is disagreement. Tolerance is most evident when we strongly disagree but treat each other with respect.
3. Tolerance is unnecessary where there is forced agreement on ways of thinking and talking about marriage, sexuality and gender. Coercion removes the need for tolerance because it is intolerant of different opinions.

“Our institutions have increasingly been defined in terms of encouraging liberation from limits rather than cultivating a conscientious honoring of limits.”

“The minimization of neighborliness, respect, reverence, responsibility, accountability, and self-subordination — this is the culture of which our present leaders and heroes are the spoiled children.”

“In our limitless selfishness, we have tried to define ‘freedom’ as an escape from all restraint” (Ken Myers, Mars Hill).

4. If there is a Creator who has revealed His purpose and will for us, we should pursue His will with humble confidence that we flourish best when we live in it.
5. Humans are beings of dignity made in the image and likeness of God and capable of making choices about morality and lifestyle.
6. Beliefs on matters of marriage, sexuality, and gender should be formed by seeking the best understanding our Creator's will.
7. Living consistently with the Creator's will on marriage, sexuality and gender will be a struggle for *all people* because we are fallen beings whose desires conflict with the will of God.

Our back-story

Our delusional escape from life under the authority of our Creator turned into a pursuit of self-determination.

We reject limitations and boundaries that are not self-determined.

We prefer independence and autonomy over dependence and submission to an authority outside of ourselves.

Our irrational bid for absolute freedom of the self has resulted in bondage and corruption of all that is good.

Ever since the choice was made to reject the rule of our Creator, all people born of Adam's race have inherited a nature that is bent toward self-rule and corruption.

We are a people living against ourselves as we foolishly believe we are living for ourselves.

The fall of humanity was a rejection of limitations and a bid for self-rule - disguised as freedom from restraints (Genesis 3:1-6).

“The account of Creation resounds with the establishment of boundaries. Almost all human cultures have pursued the task of defining and governing boundaries in human behavior. Every culture survives by the power of its institutions to bind and loose men in the conduct of their affairs.”

“The story of modern Western culture, however — a culture built around the ideal of the sovereign self — is a story of the abandonment of restrictions and restraints in the name of human freedom.”

“The demand for absolute liberty of personal choice; the power of each of us to choose and act upon what he or she desires and believes is at the root of our cultural demise. This is the powerful deception that enslaves us.”

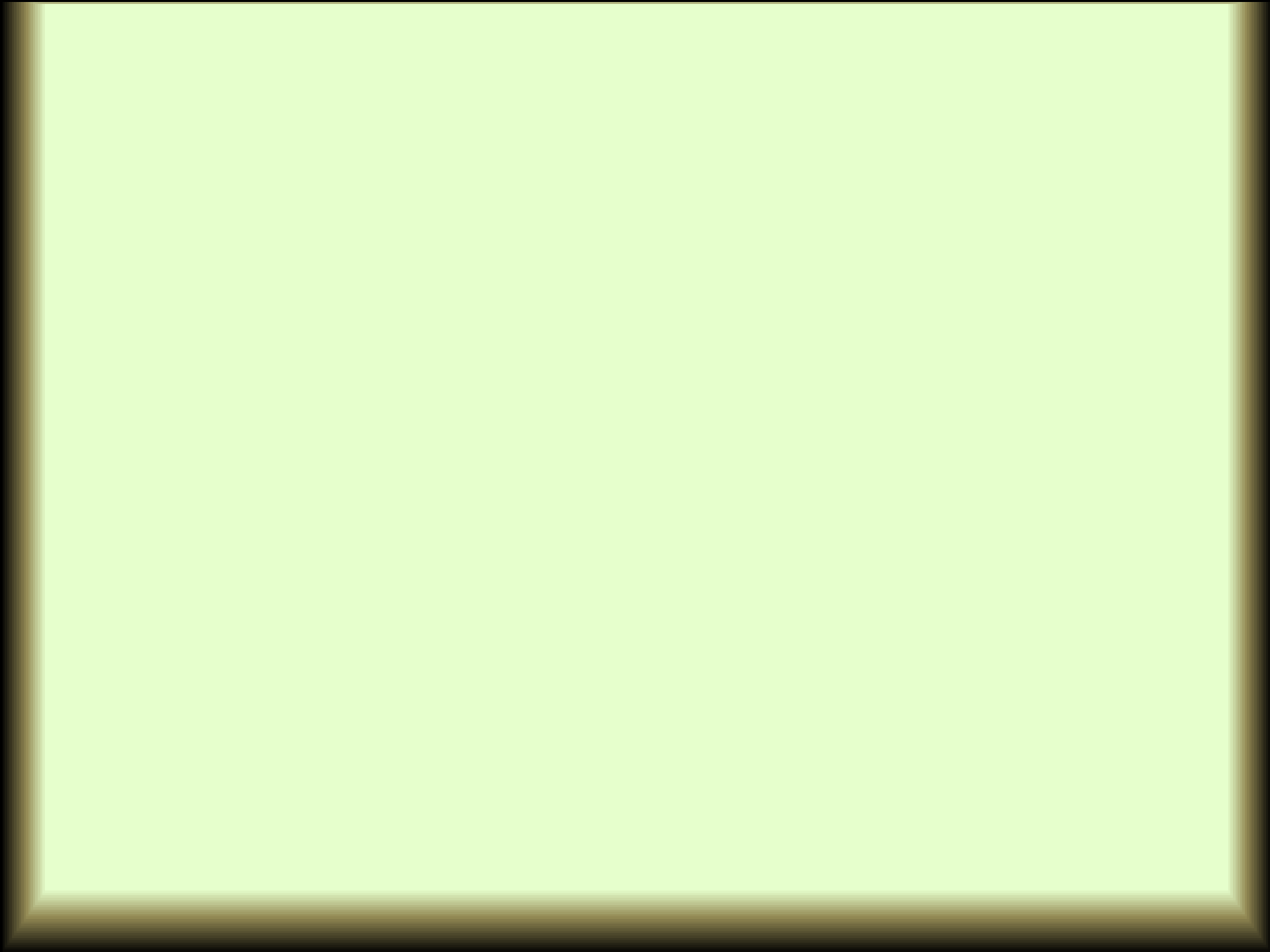
“And when we embrace freedom without truth and life without limits, we become dangerous to ourselves and to others.”

“The kind of freedom that provides for our well-being requires restraints to protect us from destructive forces within us and around us.”

**“We are free, not merely because we can choose, but only when we choose well”
(David B. Hart).**

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2015 Supreme Court decision (Obergefell v. Hodges) legalizing gay marriage

- The landmark decision that the constitution guarantees a right to same-sex marriage reversed an entire piece of the history of our nation and firmly located gay rights in the category of civil rights.
- The court weaponized a militant activist group with all they need to demand sweeping changes in the public life of the nation.

- The social consequences will become increasingly disruptive and ultimately result in multiple conflicts between religious freedoms and the sexual preferences of a very small percentage of Americans (preferences that five justices granted as belonging to the federal legal status of civil rights).
- Religious institutions may soon have to bend their will to the State and renounce their beliefs or be made to suffer for them.

C. S. Lewis

“Chastity is the most unpopular of the Christian virtues. There is no getting away from it: the old Christian rule is, ‘Either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence.’ Now this is so difficult and so contrary to our instincts, that obviously either Christianity is wrong or our sexual instinct, as it now is, has gone wrong. One or the other. Of course, being a Christian, I think it is the instinct which has gone wrong.”

“Finally, though I have had to speak at some length about sex, I want to make it as clear as I possibly can that the center of Christian morality is not here. If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: the pleasure of putting other people in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing and spoiling sport, and back-biting; the pleasures of power, of hatred. For there are two things inside me, competing with the human self which I must try to become. They are the Animal self, and the Diabolical self. The Diabolical self is the worse of the two. That is why a cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But, of course, it is better to be neither.”



Our back-story

Humans were created as volitional and moral beings – able to choose between right and wrong. Humans were also created as dependent creatures meant to flourish within established boundaries and limits.

Life within the limits is freedom; Life outside of them is bondage. God originally gave us a good dwelling place where we could flourish in lives that are blessed in every way. But God put a boundary in place to protect us and to allow us to exercise the gift of choice.

God warned his unique creatures that a choice to reject his boundary would result in the ultimate limitation: death.

This explains much of the human story (Romans 5:12).

Romans 5:12 - "... just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

“Remember the whole way by which he has brought you these forty years through the desert so that he might, by humbling you, test you to see if you have it within you to keep his commandments or not. So he humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna. He did this to teach you that humankind cannot live by bread alone, but also by everything that comes from the Lord’s mouth.”

“Increasingly unable to discern how our liberated actions impacted others — neither recognizing our debts to the past nor our obligations to the future — we see ourselves as wholly free agents shorn of history or future” (Alexis de Tocqueville).

Quest for life without limits, for unbounded possibility, is enslaving us to a kind of dehumanized society that is chained to passions that are destroying true freedom.

“We live in an age whose chief moral value has been determined, by overwhelming consensus, to be the absolute liberty of personal volition, the power of each of us to choose what he or she believes, wants, needs, or must possess...” (David B. Hart).

Our demand for freedom without limits has contributed to profound short-term thinking and devolved into forms of self-serving individualism that threaten the stability and future of our communities and, perhaps even, our nation itself.