



ELDER POSITION STATEMENTS

Approved by the Elders
November 09, 2019

" And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in the knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:9-10

- Elder's Position Statements -

- on Contemporary & Theological Issues -

Our Statement of Faith establishes our doctrinal foundations. These Elder's position statements are intended to further clarify the beliefs of our leadership concerning contemporary issues in culture and theology, and to affirm the teaching position of our church ministries. Our goal is to speak the truth in love, with compassion for all.

1. Sanctity of Life

We believe that human life is a sacred gift from God and must be respected from the moment of conception (fertilization) until natural death. We believe that the intentional, willful termination of a pregnancy (abortion) at any time after conception constitutes the taking of unborn human life and is not an appropriate procedure except in the very rare instance when proceeding with the pregnancy would bring death to the mother. Accordingly, even abortions for reasons of birth defects, gender selection, birth control, population control, or in the tragic instances of rape or incest, and acts of encouraging, facilitating, or paying for such abortions, are inconsistent with Scripture and the glory of God (Psa. 139:13-16).

We oppose active intervention with the intent to produce death (euthanasia), whether for the relief of suffering, economic considerations, or convenience of the person, family, or society.

We do not oppose the withdrawal or failure to institute artificial means of life support in patients who are clearly and irreversibly deteriorating, in whom death appears imminent beyond reasonable expectation of recovery.

2. Sanctity of Marriage

We believe marriage is ordained by God from the time of creation and serves as a picture of the eternal relationship between Jesus Christ as the bridegroom and his Holy Church as the bride (Eph. 5:22-33). Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value but are distinct by divine design. As part of God's good created order, men and women have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and in the church. As Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the husband ultimately responsible to sacrificially love, lead, and protect his wife. We also believe God does not view either marriage or singleness as an inherently favored status, but calls each to a time and season directed by Him.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a biological man and a biological woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, sex outside of marriage, homosexual behavior, promiscuity, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

3. Gender

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). We believe that men and women are spiritually equal before God and both are made in God's image. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to change the identity and/or appearance of one's sex by hormones, surgery, or any other means (Rom. 1:18-32).

4. God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

The Bible teaches both the roles of God's sovereignty and human responsibility in conversion. God convicts the lost person of sin

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"

Genesis 1:26

(John 16:7-11) and draws them to repentance (John 6:44). But conversion cannot occur without a response of faith (Acts 16:31). Paul portrays the Lord as having absolute control over all that happens (Rom. 9:14-24). But the very next chapter insists in equally strong terms that God reaches out to all people and holds them accountable (Rom. 10:8-21). We can't fully explain how these two doctrines fit together - we simply accept them as God's truth. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 1:27

5. Genesis and Creation

We believe that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. We hold a high view of creation, while recognizing that throughout history, believers have adopted a variety of interpretations regarding the details within the opening chapters of Genesis. Without insisting on a particular scientific view, we believe the sovereign and eternal God created by his Word all that exists within this universe, that at the end of the six morning-and-evening days, this creation was perfect and complete, and that the rebellion and disobedience of the first man resulted in the corruption and ruin of that perfect creation. Further, we believe that after the Fall, God launched His plan of redemption by which He is reversing the curse of disobedience and bringing believing people back to a restoration of the initial goodness of creation.

The story of Scripture from those foundational chapters of Genesis through the end of the Bible is one of the redemption of those who believe and trust in this eternal God, later revealed in the person of Jesus. By holding to this worldview, we reject any evolutionary worldview that suggests the universe, through chance and natural selection, improved or progressed through time towards a higher or more advanced state. In short, God

created it good, we ruined it with evil, and God is restoring it back to good.

6. Statement on Race

We believe that all people, regardless of race or ethnicity, share equal dignity and worth in the sight of God (Gen. 1:27). Therefore, any distinction or bias on the basis of race is antithetical to the Gospel and a sin. We long to see racial reconciliation and unity. We desire all people to worship and serve the Lord together as joint heirs in this world. God's love for all people spurs us to spread the Gospel to every nation, tribe, and tongue. In the coming Kingdom, God will assemble "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb ... crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev. 7:9-10)

7. Women in Ministry

We believe that God created people in His image, male and female, giving them equal value, gifting, and honor (Gen. 1:27). Throughout history, some have devalued women in the church. We reject this corruption of God's design. Scripture does not assign lesser dignity or standing to women. Jesus honored and included women in His ministry (Luke 8:1-3) and examples like Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28) and Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2) show the significance of women using their gifts and abilities to build up the church. Scripture reserves the role of pastor/elder for

qualified men (1 Tim. 3:1-7, 1 Tim. 2:12-14), but consistently upholds men and women as joint-heirs and equal partners in the Gospel.

8. Speaking in Tongues

We believe the Holy Spirit seals (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30), empowers (Acts 1:8), and indwells (Romans 8:9-11) every believer in Jesus. Each believer is also equipped by the Spirit with gifts, given according to God's sovereign will, for service in the Kingdom. Scripture gives no indication of the need to pursue a second blessing of supernatural gifts of the Spirit given subsequent to salvation. Speaking in tongues is described in the book of Acts (chapters 2, 8, 10, and 19) as the instantaneous ability to speak another language, and was given at foundational moments in the preaching of the Gospel to confirm the inauguration of the Church (Hebrews 2:1-4).

9. Divine Revelation

We believe the canon (collection) of Scripture is complete and sufficient for all believers (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-19). While we believe the Holy Spirit guides and directs believers (Acts 13:4; 20:28), we reject any claim that the Lord has given direct and authoritative revelation or prophecy to any believer that contradicts, supplants, or adds to the authoritative canon of Scripture.

10.Proprosperity Gospel

We believe that as followers of Christ, believers may be asked to share in the fellowship of his sufferings (Philippians 3:10; 2 Timothy 3:12; Acts 5:41). The teaching that believers are guaranteed opulence, excellent health, and material gain from their faith stands in opposition to the teaching of Scripture. Likewise, we reject the teaching that poverty and/or illness is caused by a lack of faith. Godly people will experience affliction, as demonstrated by many examples including Job, Paul, and the Lord Jesus.

The Elders are responsible for the content of these position statements. Additional statements may be added as warranted by our rapidly changing culture.