

Marrying Truth and Love:

Preparing for and Speaking about LGBTQIA+

Rev. Gregory Lyon | gregory.lyon@wlc.edu

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SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

[Please note: this document is intended as to be a summary only of the more detailed exposition created by the WELS Conference of Presidents and adopted by them on October 21, 2019. We encourage readers to consult the more comprehensive statement. It can be found [here](#).]

God's Word declares that God created humanity with a twofold sexuality, "Male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). He created male and female to unite them in marriage and bless them with children (Gen 2:20–24; Matt 19:6). Our tragic fall into sin, with all the corruption that it entails, has changed neither the basic truth of creation as defined in Scripture nor God's purpose for humanity. Therefore, sexuality is not a social construct and cannot simply be changed by human will, desire or feeling. Sexuality is a gracious gift of God, fundamental to human nature and foundational to society.

A distinction must be made between the essence of humanity itself and the sin that is inherent in all of us. Sin pollutes our whole being: our thinking, feeling, and willing. This remains true of Christians. In fact, the power of indwelling sin makes the Christian's life one of constant inner struggle. As Paul writes "What I do is not the good I want to do; no the evil that I do not want to do, this I keep on doing" (Rom 7:19). It is a struggle that defies our understanding (Rom 7:15) and leads to that heart-wrenching cry, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24). The only solution is not to rely upon our own powers, but to find solace in God's pardoning grace alone, "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom 7:24; see also 8:1).

As Christians, we rejoice in our Creator's design. He has wonderfully fashioned us as human beings, "giving us our bodies and souls...and all our members"(Ps 139:13-14). We gratefully embrace our identity as creatures of God, precious in his sight (Gen 1:26-27; Ps 139:17).

As Christians, we accept the purpose and truth of Jesus' incarnation is to set us free from sin by his redeeming love. Jesus gives the Christian a new identity in himself, set free to be what God has made us to be and to confess him in the world, body and soul (Ro 6:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Co 6:19).

As Christians, we delight in our exalted status as a holy people in whom God dwells by his Spirit (Eph 2:22; 1 Co 3:16; 6:19). By his Spirit, God renews his image in us day by day (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

As we struggle against sin and live by faith in Christ, we are encouraged by these descriptions of our identity. We are encouraged by the thought that the new birth of faith flows into the new life of faith. This means we are not only freed from sin's guilt, but we are also freed from its absolute power to control and determine our conduct (Rom 8:9; 6:14, 18, 23). The Spirit works in us the new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Through God's grace, he liberates us to live a new and holy life (Rom 6:1–7, 12–13). With the power of the Spirit, we call out to God as our Father in all

needs and distresses (Rom 8:15). With the power of the Spirit we “put to death the misdeeds of the body” (Rom 8:13) and are able to live lives dedicated to God (Rom 6:22).

We affirm these biblical truths and pledge to act in accordance with them. We will avoid affirming or encouraging any action that is out of step with these beliefs. With the compassion of Christ, we will walk with those who struggle with contrary thoughts and help them in their struggle against sin, yet not in such a way as to condone or affirm it.

BULLET POINT SUMMARY OF STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

1. God created a twofold sexuality, male and female. This twofold sexuality is fundamental to human nature and foundational to society. It is not a social construct that can be changed by human will, desire or feeling.
2. Sex is a gracious gift from God intended for male and female within the bonds of marriage and to bless them with children.
3. Sin infects God’s whole creation and pollutes our whole being: thinking, feeling and willing. Sin does not, however, change the essence of humanity itself.
4. In our painful struggles, we are encouraged by our identity as God’s created, redeemed, and sanctified humanity.
5. We are freed from sin, not by our own will or power, but solely through the pardoning grace of God, through Jesus Christ.
6. Lives lived by faith in Christ are lives of struggling against sin.
7. In Christ, our bodies are his temple, we are freed from sin’s power and control, and freed to live a new and holy life.
8. We will avoid affirming or encouraging actions that are out of step with these beliefs and with the compassion of Christ, we will walk with those who struggle with contrary thoughts and help them in their struggle against sin.

Glossary of Terms

From *Human Rights Campaign* www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms

Ally | A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other (e.g., a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community).

Asexual | Often called “ace” for short, asexual refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little or conditional sexual attraction.

Biphobia | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who love and are sexually attracted to more than one gender.

Bisexual | A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.

Cisgender | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Coming Out | The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others

Gay | A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Gender identity | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender non-conforming | A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do.

Genderqueer | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

Homophobia | The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

Intersex | Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.

Gender binary | A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.

Gender dysphoria | Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender-expansive | A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

Gender expression | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Gender-fluid | A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Lesbian | A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

LGBTQ+ | An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer” with a “+” sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities used by members of our community.

Non-binary | An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do.

Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

Outing | Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender or gender non-binary identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

Pansexual | Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

Queer | A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Questioning | A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Same-gender loving | A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

Sex assigned at birth | The sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

Sexual orientation | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

Transgender | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transitioning | A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

Resources For Study

Emerging Gender Identities: Understanding the Diverse Experiences of Today's Youth by Mark Yarhouse and Julia Sadusky

Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality by Nancy R. Pearcey

Wonderfully Made: A Protestant Theology of the Body by John W. Kleinig

You Are Not Your Own: Belonging to God in an Inhuman World by Alan Noble

Formula of Concord: Article I on Original Sin. Note the insistence on the essence of humanity (body and soul) still existing in a post-fallen world and the truth that we are still God's creation in the post-fallen world.

On the Incarnation: Athanasius with a Preface by C.S. Lewis. This is not a light read but the importance of the physical body is certainly present in Athanasius' theology.

The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender www.centerforfaith.com/resources. The resources available here are not all resources that we would stand behind theologically but the pastoral papers offer plenty as a means towards guiding thoughts from a biblical view of human sexuality.

WELS "Statement on Human Sexuality, Personhood, Identity, and the Historic Christian Faith"
<https://synodadmin.welsrc.net/download-synodadmin/en-cristo/?wpdmdl=3422&ind=1574366466395>

Read the book of Colossians, 1, 2, 3 John with an eye on the history of the Gnostic heresy. Some commentary on Gnosticism can be found in the People's Bible Commentary Series introductions to these books.

"Virgins in Hell" by Dr. Wade Johnston <https://www.1517.org/articles/virgins-in-hell>