



Statements of Faith and Position Statements on Contemporary Challenges to the Biblical Orthodox Christian Faith

The story of the Kingdom of God is such great news! While the [Gospel Tool](#) is not an official creed of our church, we invite you to read and savor its description of the overarching story of the Bible. From cover to cover, it is a story of the King and His Kingdom which includes such hope for us made possible in Jesus, for restored relationship and our role in His ongoing story. If you would like to talk more about this, we would love to hear from you!

Foundationally, we believe that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule for faith and life.

Creedal Foundation

We affirm three creeds—the [Apostles' Creed](#), the [Nicene Creed](#), and the [Athanasian Creed](#)—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places

Confessions

We hold to three confessions—the [Belgic Confession](#), the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and the [Canons of Dort](#)—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God.

Expressions of Faith

We also recognize the following Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, adopted by the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) as contemporary testimonies: the call for unity, justice, and reconciliation of the [Belhar Confession](#) and the witness of [Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony](#).

To learn more about our beliefs and faith, you are invited to explore the [Our Faith webpage](#) on our denominational website.

Leadership in Gold Avenue Church

All staff and office bearers (Ministers, Elders, Deacons and Commissioned Pastors) at Gold Avenue Church will yearly indicate acceptance and agreement with the doctrine of the CRC including:

- Our Statements of Faith;
- Our positions concerning several key issues facing the Church today: Christian marriage, sanctity of human life, human sexuality, and Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation.

Four Statements Concerning the Contemporary Challenges to the Biblical Orthodox Christian Faith

1. Statement affirming that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation
2. Position on the sanctity of human life
3. Position on Marriage
4. Position on Human Sexuality

1. Statement affirming that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.

We affirm that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and the only way to God the Father.

We affirm that there is no other name given under heaven by which humanity must be saved.

We stand in opposition to any creed, ideology, practice or rituals that promote any other way to God the Father and to salvation than in Jesus Christ alone.

We are committed to the work of evangelism and mission that is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, that brings the good news to all near and far that Jesus Christ is the only way of Salvation.

Our commitment is that all people, everywhere will hear the word of God and may choose life in Jesus Christ.

For those who die without having heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ or have heard and rejected this way of life, we affirm that they are in the hands of a loving God who knows the depths of the human heart. We recognize that while Christians over the ages have had different opinions over the eternal fate of such people, we affirm that this is in the hands of God the Father and that whatever the outcome, it will be only through the Father's means of Jesus Christ. If judgment, it will be through Christ, if life, forgiveness and redemption also through Christ.

As for us, our task is to proclaim Jesus Christ to the world as the only way of Salvation.

2. Position on the sanctity of human life

Because the CRC believes that all human beings are image bearers of God, it affirms the unique value of all human life. Mindful of the sixth commandment—"You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13)—the church condemns the wanton or arbitrary destruction of any human being at any stage of its development from the point of conception to the point of death. The church affirms that an induced abortion is an allowable option only when the life of the mother-to-be is genuinely threatened by the continuation of the pregnancy.

The church calls believers to show Christian compassion and to offer support to those experiencing unwanted pregnancies as well as to those who have undergone abortions. Further, it calls believers to speak out against the atrocity of abortion, to promote action and legislation that reflect the teaching of Scripture regarding the sanctity of human life, and to reject all violence against those who perpetrate abortion.

Additional Statements on Abortion:

Recognizing the horrific nature of rape and the complex circumstances facing a rape victim, she is not necessarily morally culpable if she takes a morning-after pill. The focus of ministry in such circumstances should be on the compassionate care for the woman.

We, as a ministry and as individuals, are committed to the reality that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life and that his grace, love and forgiveness extends to all those who have in any way failed to live up to the biblical ideal.

3. Position on Marriage

Marriage is an institution created by God. It is a covenant relationship established by mutual vows between a man¹ and a woman² united by God. Permanent unity in marriage is possible in Christ and is demanded of Christ's disciples who are married.

Additional Statements on Marriage:

We affirm that God created human beings as male and female and that together they reflect the image of God.

We affirm the biblical definition that Christian marriage is between one man and one woman.

We reject all other definitions of Christian marriage as inconsistent with God's revealed will for humanity.

4. Position on Human Sexuality

God created men and women to bear his image in the world as gendered³ individuals whose sexuality is meant to be expressed and enjoyed only within the covenant of marriage, between a man and a woman.

There are many ways that living in a broken world, along with the effects of sin and our own sinful nature, can result in brokenness and sexual temptation. Being tempted is not a sin. Allowing one's mind to dwell upon and think about the temptation through lust or fantasy, as well as acting on temptation, is a sin.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America conducted a thorough study of Human Sexuality and made several significant decisions in 2022 in an attempt to be very clear about what constitutes sexual sin, unchastity. There are many sexual sins: sexual violence

¹ A biologically born male

² A biologically born female

³ God created men and women to bear his image in biologically gendered ways. It is a sin which violates God's created order to attempt to change genders.

within or outside of marriage is a sin, as is lust, pornography, fornication (pre-marital sex), adultery (sex with someone other than one's spouse), polyamory (having more than one sexual relationship with the knowledge and consent of all partners), and sex with a person of the same gender.

Homosexual sex violates the Seventh Commandment and is included when Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 makes the statement that "God condemns unchastity."⁴ *Please read the Appendix: The Bible's Clear Teaching on Homosexual Sex as Sin**

Whether one is experiencing temptations regarding an inappropriate heterosexual attraction or a same sex attraction, we maintain that God helps us to take our thoughts captive and resist any and all forms of temptation to sin as we humbly confess our need for His grace. We are a church of people who all stand in need of God's grace and are eager to encourage and pray for one another in the area of sexual holiness. We love and serve all our members, those who are attracted to the same sex and those who are attracted to the opposite sex.

Regarding same sex attraction, we continue to affirm the following statement of pastoral advice recommended to Christian Reformed Churches by the Synod of 1973:

Homosexuality is a condition in which a person is sexually oriented toward persons of the same sex, and for which the person may bear only a minimal responsibility. Persons of same-sex attraction may not be denied community acceptance solely because of their sexual orientation and should be wholeheartedly received by the church and given loving support and encouragement. Same-sex oriented Christians, like all Christians, are called to discipleship, holy obedience, and the use of their gifts in the cause of the kingdom. Opportunities to serve within the offices and the life of the congregation should be afforded to same-sex oriented Christians as well as to heterosexual Christians.

Homosexualism (that is, explicit homosexual practice), however, is incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Scripture. The church affirms that it must exercise the same compassion for same-sex oriented persons in their sins as it exercises for all other sinners. The church should do everything in its power to help persons with same-sex orientation and give them support toward healing and wholeness. A synodical report titled Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members is available at www.crcna.org/SynodResources

⁴Synod 2022 affirmed that same sex union and activity has always been included in what the Heidelberg Catechism describes as unchastity. As such, belief that these things are sinful has always held confessional status.

*Appendix: The Bible's Clear Teaching on Homosexual Sex as Sin

While the Old Testament gives clear guidance about God's design for sexual relationships, including multiple prohibitions of various acts of sexual immorality (Gen. 19:1-19; Judges 19:1-29; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13), the New Testament affirms God's design and guidance for sexual relationships in a manner that is clear, consistent, and compelling. Following is a summary of that guidance, written by a CRC Study Committee, and approved by Synod 2023, in response to those who have been trying to revise God's guidance:

“With regard to the testimony of Jesus, revisionists often appeal to his silence on this subject, arguing, “If homosexual activity is so bad, why didn't Jesus say anything about it?” Careful reflection reveals how weak this argument actually is. First, *all* Jewish writings from the ancient world uniformly rejected gay and lesbian behavior. It is highly unlikely, therefore, that Jesus as a Jew differed from that view. Second, Jesus never says anything against other sexual sins such as prostitution, incest, pederasty, or bestiality. Yet no one concludes from Jesus' silence that he was tolerant of such behaviors. Third, in Mark 7:21-23 Jesus lists several things that defile a person, and at the head of the list is the plural term “sexual immoralities.” Jesus, as a rabbi who knew the Old Testament well, was likely referring to many different sexual sins forbidden in texts like Leviticus 18 and 20—texts that condemn *all* kinds of unlawful sexual relations, including homosexual relations (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). Fourth, in answering a question from the Pharisees on divorce, Jesus cites not just Genesis 2:24, which would be sufficient to answer their question about divorce, but also Genesis 1:27: “‘Haven't you read,' Jesus replied, ‘that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’” (Matt. 19:4-5; see also Mark 10:6-8). The fact that Jesus included this Old Testament quote in his answer reveals that he considered sex difference (“made them male and female”) to be important and that Jesus did, in fact, expect marriage to be between a man and a woman. The appeal to Jesus' silence, therefore, is contradicted by the available evidence.

With regard to the testimony of Paul, there are three key texts in which homosexual conduct is explicitly addressed. The two shorter texts are 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. The first text addresses homosexual activity by using two Greek words: *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*. Some revisionists claim that it is impossible to determine the precise meaning of these two Greek words with certainty, and therefore we should not draw any conclusions about homosexuality from them. More revisionists claim that these two Greek words refer narrowly to *abusive* forms of homosexual activity—namely, man-boy relationships (pederasty) and prostitution. According to this view, Paul is rejecting the exploitative nature of these specific kinds of homosexual acts that were common in his day. The second text, 1 Timothy 1:10, also uses the term *arsenokoitai*. It is commonly claimed that 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 cannot be used to condemn the consensual, monogamous same-sex relationships found in our contemporary age.

This interpretation suffers from at least three major problems. First, if Paul had in view only exploitative same-sex relationships like pederasty, he could have easily made this clear by using any one of several Greek words that refer specifically to man-boy relationships. The fact that Paul did not use any of these terms, all of which were commonly known and used in the writings of his day, suggests that the apostle was not

thinking only of abusive forms of homosexual activity but of any type of homosexual activity.

Second, there is the allusion to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in Paul's use of the word *arsenokoitai* in both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. The standard academic Greek lexicon defines this word as "a male who engages in sexual activity with a person of his own sex" (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [University of Chicago Press], p. 135). Since the two Leviticus texts deal with *all* types of same-sex acts, not just exploitative ones like pederasty and prostitution (note Lev. 20:13, which explicitly states, "*both* of them have done what is detestable"), Paul's use of this word indicates that he is thinking of the Mosaic law in which any kind of sexual relationship between two males is forbidden. In fact, in 1 Timothy 1:8-9, just before he mentions *arsenokoitai*, Paul refers twice to the "law," suggesting yet again that he has the Old Testament comprehensive prohibition of homosexual intercourse in view.

Third, the pairing of the two words *malakos* and *arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6:9 is significant. There is widespread agreement among scholars that the first term refers to males who allowed themselves to be penetrated by other males, while the second term refers to males who penetrate other males. This consensus is reflected in the NIV 2011 and ESV translations, which both have exactly the same textual note on this verse: "The words *men who have sex with men* translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts." Paul, by pairing these two words, is referring not narrowly to pederasty or prostitution but comprehensively to both the passive and active partner in any same-sex relationship.

The third key text that refers to homosexuality in Paul's writings is Romans 1:24-27, and this is the most important of the three because of its length, its explicit reference to both gay and lesbian conduct, and its argumentation. Revisionists commonly argue that the apostle is not addressing all forms of homosexual activity but only a specific type of homosexual conduct characterized by excessive desire and a lack of self-control. Straight women were so filled with sexual desire—that is, lust, the argument runs—that they had sexual relations with other women. Similarly, straight men were so filled with lust that they had sexual relations with other men.

However, the problem that the apostle identifies involves not one of wrong *degree* (excessive desire) but of wrong *object*. The preceding verses of Romans 1:19-23 deal with the sin of idolatry, and Paul's argument here does not involve degree (as if normal idolatry is acceptable but excessive idolatry is wrong) but object: people worship created things rather than the Creator. Similarly, the sin of lesbian and gay sex discussed in 1:24-27 does not involve degree (the idea that normal desire for same-sex sex is acceptable but excessive desire or lust is wrong) but object: women are having sex not with men but with women, and, conversely, men are having sex not with women but with men.

Further, the revisionist interpretation is contradicted by Paul's key argument in these verses: homosexual activity is wrong because it violates God's *created order* for male-female relationships. The word "unnatural" (Rom. 1:26) refers not to heterosexuals acting against their natural desire for the opposite sex but to homosexual conduct that

violates one’s *created* nature—God’s design for men and women established in creation. That Paul does, in fact, have the Genesis creation account in mind is obvious from his multiple allusions to it in Rom. 1:24-27. Paul’s argument, therefore, is clear: sexual acts between a female and another female or between a male and another male are “unnatural” and wrong, because such conduct goes against one’s *created* nature.

A survey of relevant biblical texts shows that *Scripture teaches in a clear, consistent, and compelling way that homosexual acts of any kind are sinful and not in agreement with God’s will.* The debate about same-sex sex, therefore, is not a situation in which there are two equally valid interpretations of the biblical evidence. Although a variety of revisionist arguments have been made, none of them are convincing but, rather, ought to be judged as what even self-proclaimed progressive scholars declare to be “strained and unhistorical” and evidence of the “extraordinary maneuvers” involved in the attempt to reread Scripture.

Scripture’s clear prohibition of homosexual acts is accompanied by its equally clear exhortation to empathize with, love, and bear the burdens of all who struggle with sexual sin. Since the church, including the CRCNA, has all too often ostracized, shunned, or ignored some sisters and brothers, and not treated them as equal and valued members of the body of Christ, the church’s response to homosexuality must begin with confession. The church’s response must continue with good teaching about human sexuality, including the reminder of the important distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual activity, as well as the dangers of promoting the false expectation of orientation change. The church must demonstrate in a myriad of concrete ways to those who are same-sex attracted that it is a grace-saturated community that equips all of its members, both heterosexual and homosexual alike, to walk in sexual holiness.”⁵

[Position statements on other contemporary topics](http://crcna.org) can be found at crcna.org.

 - REVISION HISTORY -

Reason for Change	Approval Date
Initial release	12/17/2020
Updated Position on Human Sexuality, incorporating material from Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality report, adopted by Synod in June, 2022.	06/05/2023

⁵ (Excerpted from the Executive Summary of the Report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality pp.7-9)