

Manhood and Womanhood Affirmations and Denials

We live in an age with much confusion about what it means to be a man and a woman as God intended. The questions surrounding the nature of biblical manhood and womanhood, and how men and women are to live in God's world, are more pressing than ever.

We hope to approach this subject with humility and love. We are all broken people, and we all stumble in many ways (James 3:2). We acknowledge the pain and struggle that can surround these issues. Our hope is to articulate our beliefs in a way that does not condemn but rather invites people to joy in Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this statement is to clearly affirm and deny what we, the Elders of Community Bible Church, believe and do not believe about the complementarity of men and women, specifically in regard to the created order, marriage, and the church.

The scope of these affirmations and denials is intended to be broad in theological vision. We recognize that we cannot answer every specific question, nor can we apply these truths to every situation. Rather, we hope to provide a clear picture of what we believe and do not believe in order to lay the groundwork for applications in specific contexts.

Articles Concerning Manhood and Womanhood

Articles 1–4: Creation

Article 1: God's Good Design

We affirm that God created mankind in His image as male and female with equal personhood and worth, and that He commissioned them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and to rule and subdue it together. We also affirm that differences between men and women are part of God's good design and plan (***Genesis 1:26–28, 31***).

We deny that male and female are indistinct from or interchangeable with one another, or that the differences are inconsequential.

(Genesis 1:26–27, 2:21–24; Matthew 19:4–5).

Article 2: Sexual Difference

We affirm that when God created human beings, He established a male-female binary that is normatively displayed at the chromosomal level of human biology.

(Genesis 1:27, 2:18–25; Matthew 19:4; 1 Corinthians 11:8–12).

We deny that any so-called gender identity that contradicts the biological markers of male and female assigned by God can be legitimately chosen or changed based on personal preference, subjective feeling, or societal norm (***Psalms 139:13–15***).

We also deny that any human condition resulting from the Fall removes or cancels the image of God in any individual or puts anyone beyond God's call to salvation and

saving grace.

Article 3: The Fall

We affirm that because of the Fall, sin has marred the sexual experience of humankind, resulting in various disorders (such as intersex conditions and gender dysphoria), which display the brokenness of creation (***Genesis 3, Romans 8:20–23***).

We deny that the presence of various disorders is evidence that God intended other modes of existence outside the male-female binary and that such disorders or dysphoria ever legitimize behaviors contrary to this divine intention. (***Genesis 1:26–28, Matthew 19:4–5***).

Article 4: Masculinity and Femininity

We affirm that men are to display uniquely masculine ways of being and that women are to display uniquely feminine ways of being in every sphere of life, which are fitting to God’s good design in creation, even if the expressions of masculinity and femininity may vary in limited ways from culture to culture (***1 Corinthians 11:13–16, 16:13; 1 Timothy 2:8–13; 1 Peter 3:3***).

We deny that these masculine and feminine ways of being can be reduced to mere social constructs, while also denying that they should include unhelpful cultural stereotypes that are not in obedience with the Bible.

Articles 5–10: Marriage, Family, and Singleness

Article 5: Definition and Purpose of Marriage

We affirm that God created and intended marriage to be the loving, lifelong union of a man and a woman, and that marriage is the only proper context for sexual intimacy. We affirm that one of the purposes of marriage is procreation; nevertheless, a husband and wife may still glorify God even if they are unable to have children

(***Genesis 1:28, 2:24; Song of Solomon 2:7; Matthew 19:4–6; Luke 20:34–36***).

We deny that any union between two men, two women, more than two people, or any other unbiblical arrangement constitutes a legitimate marriage.

Article 6: Marriage Roles

We affirm that God, in His wisdom, appointed unique and complementary roles within marriage, according to creation, and as a type of the relationship between Christ and the church (***Genesis 2:15, 18; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Peter 3:1–7***).

We deny that the distinct, God-given roles of husbands and wives or of fathers and mothers are inconsequential, interchangeable, or indistinct from one another.

Article 7: Husbands

We affirm that, as Christ is the head of the church, a husband is the head of his wife and should display sacrificial and loving headship in marriage, bearing a particular accountability before God in the leadership of the home (***Ephesians 5:22–33, 1 Peter 3:7***).

We deny that a husband's headship is inherently oppressive to his wife. We deny that either spouse should ever domineer, manipulate, neglect, or abuse the other spouse, and we deny that these behaviors should ever be overlooked or permitted when brought to the attention of church leaders.

Article 8: Wives

We affirm that, as the church submits to Christ, a wife should submit to her husband and should display joyful respect and help in marriage.

(Ephesians 5:22–33, Colossians 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1–6).

We deny that a wife's submission is a result of sin's corruption of God's design. We also deny that either wives or husbands should follow their spouses into sin.

Article 9: Singleness

We affirm that just as marriage is a gift from God, singleness is also a gift from God to be enjoyed as an excellent path for faithful and fruitful service in the body of Christ. (***1 Corinthians 7:6–8, Matthew 19:10–12***).

We deny that singleness should be given less respect or honor as a way of life in service to Christ. We also deny that singleness should be used as an excuse for sinful behaviors.

Article 10: The Telos of Marriage

We affirm that the ultimate point of marriage is to picture the relationship between Christ and the church, which will be consummated when the church, Christ's bride, will be united to Jesus in glory, at which point marriage will cease to exist in its earthly form. (***Luke 20:34–36, Ephesians 5:31–32***).

We deny that earthly marriage is the ultimate goal of the Christian or that one must pursue marriage to portray the Gospel with one's life.

Articles 11–13: The Church

Article 11: Unity in Christ and Calling

We affirm that men and women share equally in the manifold blessings of salvation through Jesus Christ and that he commissioned them to make disciples of all nations.

(Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 2:17–21, Galatians 3:28).

We deny that men and women’s unity in Christ removes God-given distinctions between the sexes in the home, church, and society.

Article 12: The Office of Elder

We affirm that the office of Pastor/Elder in Christ’s church is to be occupied by faithful men, whose work includes shepherding the flock, guarding faithful doctrine, and teaching God’s word in corporate worship gatherings and other contexts. ***(1 Timothy 2:12, 3:1–7; Titus 1:6–9; 1 Peter 5:2–3).***

We affirm that the New Testament teaching on male Pastors/Elders is rooted in the order of creation. ***(1 Corinthians 11:8–9; 1 Timothy 2:13–14).***

We also affirm that Elders should seek the valuable perspectives and contributions of women in the church for the sake of the faithfulness and fruitfulness of both women and men ***(Romans 16:3, Philippians 4:2–3).***

We deny that the prescription of male Pastors/Elders is intended for only one specific culture or time period and not universally binding.

Article 13: Spiritual Gifts

We affirm that God has given men and women various spiritual gifts to glorify Him, love and serve others, and build up the body of Christ.

We affirm the apostle Paul’s instruction that a woman should not teach or exercise authority over a man ***(1 Timothy 2:12)*** and also that there are biblically appropriate contexts for women to ***teach (Acts 18:26; 1 Corinthians 11:4–5, 12:27–31; Colossians 3:16; Titus 2:3–5).***

We affirm that the gifts and ministry of women are essential to the church.

We deny that women are less gifted than men, and we deny that giftedness is an entitlement to an office or certain responsibilities in the church.

Adapted from documents created by Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota – Feb. 6, 2021

Ethnic Harmony Affirmations and Denials

The Elders of Community Bible Church (CBC) recognize that the issue of ethnic harmony has become a source of some significant confusion and division. We lament that many people have experienced the painful effects of ethnic partiality and injustice.

We are all broken people, and we all stumble in many ways (James 3:2). We seek to humbly put ourselves under the Word of God. We pray that the Word of Christ would dwell in us richly ***(Colossians 3:16)*** and that the love of Christ would control us completely ***(2 Corinthians 5:14).***

We are eager to maintain the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace ***(Ephesians 4:3)***, and we have

a fervent longing to love one another by speaking the truth in love (***Ephesians 4:15***).

We believe that this cause of love and clarity requires both affirmations and denials. We have tried to speak clearly and concisely about what we affirm and what we deny are the biblical teachings concerning ethnic harmony.

Therefore, the aim of these affirmations and denials is to rightly represent, to the best of our study and understanding, the instruction of God’s Word concerning ethnic diversity and harmony. The God we serve and who designed ethnic diversity has unparalleled authority over how we are to respond and reflect His love and character with regards to ethnic harmony.

Article 1: The Image of God

We affirm that God created every human in His image with equal worth in His sight (***Genesis 1:26–27, 5:1–2, 9:6; James 3:9***).

We deny that humans can treat other humans unjustly without offending their Creator. God does not show partiality or favoritism (***Deuteronomy 10:17, 2 Chronicles 19:7, Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11, Galatians 2:6, Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 3:25, 1 Peter 1:17***), nor should we (***Proverbs 18:5, 24:23, 28:21; James 2:1–13; cf. Jude 16***). Therefore, ethnic partiality is sinful.

Article 2: Race

We affirm that we all share one race—the human race. We share the same bloodline. We all have the same original parents, Adam and Eve (***Genesis 3:20, 5:1–2; Acts 17:26***).

We deny that the modern category of *race* conforms to what the Bible says about humans. According to contemporary usage, *race* is primarily physical or biological—focusing, for example, on skin color, facial features, and hair texture.

The category of *ethnicity* matches more closely what the Bible says about humans. Ethnicity is primarily cultural—that is, it includes shared physical characteristics and ancestry but also includes characteristics such as culture, language, and geopolitics.

We acknowledge that it is important to understand the role that the term *race* has played in our nation’s history and throughout the world. The concept of race is part of a painful past; it is a social construct that has been used in the service of oppression with ongoing implications of superiority and inferiority. We deny that Christians should uphold divisions along racial or ethnic lines. *Racism* is sinful because it dishonors God by exhibiting an explicit or implicit attitude, belief, or practice that values one ethnic group over another.

Article 3: People Groups

We affirm that God’s global plan to save sinners includes people from every ethnic group. (***Genesis 12:1–3; Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 10:9–43; Romans 1:5; Galatians 2:11–16; 3:8, 14, 16, 28–29; Colossians 3:11; Revelation 5:9, 7:9, 14:6***)—both Jews and Gentiles (***Genesis 12:1–3; Deuteronomy 7:6–8; Matthew 28:18–20; Galatians 3:8, 14, 16, 28–29; Colossians 3:11***).

We deny that any one people group has more value in God's sight than another. We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things *for the joy of all peoples* through Jesus Christ.

Article 4: Inter-ethnic Marriage

We affirm that God approves of inter-ethnic marriage (*e.g., Numbers 12, Ruth 4:13–22*). Opposing the concept of inter-ethnic marriage manifests deep-rooted ethnic partiality.

We deny that God approves of interfaith marriage—that is, marriage between a believer and an unbeliever (*1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1*).

Article 5: Our Neighbors

We affirm that we must love our neighbors across ethnic lines—even when such love is counter-cultural, costly, and *inconvenient* (*Luke 10:25–37*).

We deny that ethnic groups should perpetuate antagonistic us-versus-them relations.

Article 6: Church Unity

We affirm that the church must maintain the unity (including ethnic harmony) that Christ powerfully created (*Ephesians 2:11–3:6, 4:1–6; Colossians 3:11*). We affirm God's calling on all Christians to love one another as Christ loved us by means of kindness, forgiveness, and humble self-sacrifice. (*Ephesians 4:32, Philippians 2:1–8; Colossians 3:12–15*)

We deny that any self-defining characteristic is more significant than our identity in Christ.

Article 7: Ethnic Diversity in the Church

We affirm that the church should prize and welcome the ethnic harmony that Jesus purchased with his blood because that glorifies God.

We deny that ethnic diversity should be an end in itself that we pursue at any cost. We deny that diversity should be treasured above biblical fidelity and sound doctrine.

Article 8: Justice

We affirm that the church must love and do justice, which entails treating all peoples from all ethnicities justly and encouraging its members to pursue justice in society. Justice is making righteous judgments according to the standard of God's righteousness (*1 Kings 3:28, Proverbs 29:4*). We recognize that individuals and groups with power have often exploited the vulnerable for their own gain (*Exodus 1:5–14, James 5:1–6*) and that sinners can create unjust systems (*Esther 3:7–14, Psalm 94:20–21, Isaiah 10:1–2*). We should examine suspected examples of

systemic injustice on their own merits, seeking to destroy ungodly strongholds and taking every thought captive to Christ (**2 Corinthians 10:4–5**).

Although worldly systems of thought can make accurate observations, we reject all systems of thought that view relationships primarily through the lens of power—that is, those with more power are inherently oppressors, and those with less power are inherently oppressed (**see Colossians 2:8**).

We deny that only those with more power can be guilty of showing ethnic partiality. Any person of any ethnicity can be guilty of showing ethnic partiality (**cf. Acts 6:1, James 2:1–13**).

Article 9: Political Engagement

We affirm that when pursuing justice in society, Christians should distinguish between clear biblical commands and issues that require wisdom. For a clear biblical command, there is a straight line from a biblical or theological principle to a political position (**e.g., the Bible forbids murder, so we oppose abortion**). For an issue that requires wisdom, there is a multi-step process from a biblical or theological principle to a political position (**e.g., immigration policy**). Fellow church members should agree on what the Bible clearly commands, and they should recognize Christian freedom on issues that require wisdom (**Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8**).

We also affirm that believers should consistently hold their kingdom citizenship as primary over their citizenship in any nation on earth (**Philippians 3:20, Ephesians 2:19, Hebrews 11:13–16**).

We deny that we must completely agree on issues that require wisdom in order to be fellow church members. Such issues include tax policy, government spending priorities, accounting for ethnic disparities, presenting American history, specifying systemic injustices, and analyzing policing and America’s judicial system. Christians should respect fellow church members who have differently calibrated consciences on such political issues.

Further, insisting that Christians agree on such issues misrepresents Christ to non-Christians. Consequently, we reject any attempt to fuse together one’s national/political identity with one’s Christian identity in a way that equates or conflates allegiance to country with allegiance to God.

Article 10: The Mission of the Church

We affirm that the mission of the church is the Great Commission: “Make disciples of all nations” by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and by teaching them to observe everything that Jesus commands us (**Matthew 28:19–20**).

God has commissioned local churches, acting corporately, to teach everything Jesus commanded and to equip saints for their various ministries (**Ephesians 4:11–12**). While Christians care about alleviating present earthly suffering, we care especially about alleviating eternal suffering by *verbally proclaiming Jesus* as Savior and Lord and calling all to repent and believe (**Acts 14:27; Romans 10:14–17, 15:18; 1 Corinthians 15:1–2, 11; Colossians 1:28**).

We deny that doing justice is equivalent to the gospel (**1 Corinthians 15:1–2**). Good works are the fruit of regeneration and conversion (**Titus 2:14, 3:14**). We also deny that the church’s corporate mission is identical to the mission God has given individual believers. God has not commissioned local churches, acting corporately, to advocate across the whole range of issues that comprise the work of government.

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The Gift of Tongues

We believe today's "speaking in tongues" (ecstatic utterance) is not to be identified with the first century gift of the supernatural ability to suddenly speak foreign languages, either in essence, practice, purpose, or effects.

The gift of tongues was a divinely bestowed supernatural ability to speak in a human language that had not been learned by the one speaking it. According to the Apostle Paul, when believers exercised the gift of tongues in church, they were to speak one at a time, and only two or three were to speak in a given service. Furthermore, when tongues were spoken in the church, they were to be interpreted by someone with the gift of interpretation so that the others might be edified by the God-given message. In this way, tongues did not serve as a private prayer language, but rather—like all spiritual gifts—as a means by which one might serve and edify the body of Christ.

Applicable Verses: 1 Cor. 12:7, 1 Corinthians 13:8, 1 Cor. 14:5, 13, 27

The Gift of Healing

While God can and does heal, such healings must be judged on their own merit. Much of what is defined as “healing” today bears little resemblance to the healings recorded in the Gospels and the book of Acts, which also included raising the dead. We believe God can and does heal according to His will and purposes. God is not limited in any way from healing anyone at any time. God alone is the One who exercises supernatural healing power. No human being, living today, possesses the supernatural power within themselves to heal others or themselves. The apostles and some of the disciples of Jesus Christ were given the spiritual gift of healing in the early church to affirm the message of the Gospel was from God. As such, we do not believe the spiritual gift of healing is functioning today because the full canon of Scripture is complete. We do believe that God still performs miracles today and still heals people. Believers are called by the Scriptures to pray for the sick in faith believing that God, in His power and will is more than able to heal every form of illness. God answers prayer for healing in His own timing and by His own power and methods. God can and does bring resources of healing (medicine, skilled clinicians, relief, etc.) to bear in the lives of those who are suffering in response to faithful, effective prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. God, in His will and purposes does not always heal in the way we pray or hope; however, we are called to trust God and praise Him whether healing is manifested or not.

Applicable Verses: Mark 16:14-20, Luke 9:1-9, Acts 5:12-16, Acts 9:36-42, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31,

The Gift of Prophecy

Regarding the issue of prophets and prophetess in the modern church, the Elders of CBC believe that when the Canon of New Testament revelation was complete, the prophetic office was no longer necessary and ceased as a gift to be exercised in the church. Like the Apostles, prophets were given to lay the revelatory foundation of the church. Once that foundation was established, the work of the Apostles and prophets of the church was complete.”

Applicable Verses: Romans 12:3-6, 1 Corinthians 12:4-9, 1 Corinthians 12:11, 1 Corinthians 12:18, 1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, 27, 33, Ephesians 2:10, 4:12, 1 Peter 4:10-11, Acts 2:1-13, Matthew 9:18-34, John 11:43, 44, Acts 3:6-9, James 5:14-16, Rev. 22:18-19

Divorce

Although marriage is a gracious gift from God, and designed by Him to last a lifetime, we believe it is still subject to the curse of the fall. God hates divorce because He loves people. He hates divorce because it always involves unfaithfulness to the solemn covenant of marriage that a man and a woman have entered into before Him.

Divorce by its nature brings pain and harmful consequences to the couple, their children, their families, friends, and community.

We believe that God can and does heal and restore even the most broken of marriages. We also believe that God wants to restore broken marriages so that married couples can faithfully reflect the Gospel love Jesus Christ has for His Church.

Applicable Verses: Jeremiah 32:27; Malachi 2:16, Matthew 9:6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Remarriage

God loves marriage, He hates divorce, permitting it only where there has been sexual immorality, or desertion by an unbeliever (actual or functional abandonment of the marital covenant). A believer who was faithful through a divorce that had biblical grounds is also free to marry again.

Applicable Verses: Romans 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39, Mark 10:11-12, Matt. 5:23-24, 1 Cor. 7:11