



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

Manna University does not routinely offer collective comments on political and social issues due to the diversity within our membership and their churches. However, recognizing that the protection of religious freedom under the United States Civil Rights Acts is being questioned in a growing number of discussions about discrimination and faith-based institutions, we believe it is important to state our official position and assert that affirmation of this position is inherent in our university.

1. Our [Tenets of Faith](#) are grounded in historic Christian orthodoxy which is, in turn, grounded in the teachings of the Bible as broadly and consistently understood in the mainstream of protestant Christian tradition. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God. Therefore, everything we say and do must be under the guidance and authority of Scripture. Our integrity depends on consistent application of commonly understood biblical truths.
2. We are persuaded that the matter of human sexuality and gender is fundamental to biblical cosmology, not merely biblical morality. Beginning with the Genesis account of Divine Creation and continuing consistently throughout all of Scripture's canon, God's original and ongoing intent and action entails the creation of humanity manifest as two distinct sexes, male and female. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
3. While due to human sin and brokenness, our experience of our sex and gender is not always that which God the Creator originally designed, we yet affirm God's capacity to heal and transform our brokenness. In light of this foundational understanding of creation, fall, and redemption, we do not affirm the resolution of tension between one's biological sex and one's experience of gender by the adoption of a psychological identity discordant with one's birth sex. We have developed institutional policies and make institutional decisions in light of these convictions in matters such as employee hiring and retention and in student admissions, retention, and community life.
4. We uphold the sanctity of marriage as God-ordained, a special, exclusive lifelong union between one man and one woman, within which sexual relations are honored and affirmed

by God as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We share the conviction that all sexual unions outside of marriage as thus defined deviate from the Creator's design and are sinful and thus ultimately detrimental to human flourishing (Eph. 5:21-33). 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 man and a woman. In dealing with sexual sins outside of marriage, we must be attentive to Scripture and therefore consistent in applying campus employment, admission, and community behavioral standards policies to all expressions of sexual identity and behavior. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

5. We affirm the dignity of all human beings and we deplore all forms of sexual harassment and violence. The Bible calls upon us to respect people even though we may disagree with them. We will demonstrate civility and compassion as we engage in dialogue with those whose beliefs, self-identification, and behaviors deviate from biblical standards. We call upon our associates to seek to embody the gentle and patient love of Christ for all.
6. We will also separate the value and identity of each person from the behavioral choices one makes. We must never reject people, but only those actions that Scripture defines as immoral. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11). We rejoice in the fact that God welcomes, embraces, forgives, and heals all people who respond to His grace. We must also extend the same grace and forgiveness to those we may discipline for violating campus standards for biblical living. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Manna University.
7. We will be vigilant in defending our rights as faith-based organization, as expressed in the federal constitution of the United States. While some within the educational community may not always agree with us on specific positions, we believe everyone, including the extended society have a stake in preserving basic freedoms and we, therefore, encourage them to join us in defending these basic rights.
8. It is our desire to respond to this current challenge with resolve and sensitivity. We stand for the clear moral teaching of the Bible while demonstrating compassion for those with whom we may disagree. Just as Christ had a "love morality" that was combined with a "law morality," may we also find that healthy balance as we seek to represent our Lord in the higher education arena and the larger society.