Courage, Clarity, and Charity

A Phoenix Declaration

January 2003

As Christian ministers standing in the stream of historic Christianity and rooted in the Evangelical heritage, we believe it is time to speak with courage, clarity, and charity to the issue of homosexuality that is besetting the Church at large. Confessing the Bible to be the authoritative word of God (Isaiah 40:8; Luke 4:31-32; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), we believe that God has spoken clearly and sufficiently to the issue of human sexuality. In accordance with this belief, we must state that homosexuality in its varied forms, whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered, is out of accord with God's design for human sexuality and is sinful, therefore, in the eyes of God (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25; 19:1-28; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; 2 Peter 2:6-8). The only remedy for this, and all other sin, is found in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11). As ministers of this glorious gospel of God's grace, who are striving after faithfulness to God and His word, we state the following as a call to the Church to return to faithfulness in a spirit of repentance.

Courage

In our time, many who are recognized as clergy are calling for and promoting a revision of the historic Christian understanding of God's word concerning homosexuality. This teaching is out of accord with the Bible and leads the flock of Christ astray. Such teaching arrogantly overturns God's holy standard dealing with human sexuality. Love for Christ and His Church compels us to speak truthfully about that which is false. Courage is needed to refute those who would call evil good and good evil. The example and teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles show clearly that false teachers are to be exposed and refuted so that the Church is protected (Acts 20:28-31; Romans 16:17-18; Titus 1:9; 2 Peter 2:1-3). In an age that tolerates everything but the truth, courage is needed to speak the truth in love in an uncompromising manner.

Clarity

The Bible provides a clear and consistent teaching in opposition to homosexuality. Modern attempts to subvert this clear teaching are without substance. The Word of God must not be held prisoner to alien philosophical or cultural agendas. If allowed to speak with its own authority, the Biblical teaching is seen to be utterly opposed to homosexuality and its attendant practices. Furthermore, the historic testimony of Christian interpretation is in perfect harmony with this position. Contrary to popularized agendas, the Bible and those who have officially taught Christianity throughout the ages have recognized the sinfulness of homosexuality. The interpretations of such teachers as Athenagorus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Augustine are unanimous. The modern attempt to revise the Biblical teaching, claiming Biblical and interpretive support, is a theological and moral novelty.

Charity

Love for neighbor compels us to remind those who are caught in the depths of sin that God in His holiness will not be mocked—He will bring judgment against sin. It is not an act of oppression or hate to point out the Divine condemnation of homosexuality. Rather, it is an act of kindness. We are opposed to the ill-treatment that many people in favor of homosexuality have experienced, yet we deny that our disagreement and presentation of the Bible's teaching with regard to this subject constitutes ill-treatment, hatred, or bigotry. In speaking the truth about the nature of homosexuality and God's opposition to it, we simultaneously hold forth the message of God's grace. God can and does forgive those who forsake the sin of homosexuality. God can and does bring freedom from bondage and cleansing of conscience to those who turn to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 3:21-26; 6:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 10:19-22). It is false compassion to accept and affirm those who are unrepentant in homosexuality. Charity demands that we speak the truth about God's holiness and His gospel.

We, as ministers, pastors, elders, or para-church organization leaders in the state of Arizona, sign our names in support of the document *Courage, Clarity, and Charity: A Phoenix Declaration*.

Print Name	Title/Position	Signature

Name and City of Church or Organization: _____

Contact Person & Phone # (used for internal purposes only): _____

Mail signature pages, complete or incomplete, to CCC Phoenix Declaration, P.O. Box 87707, Phoenix, AZ, 85080-7707, or fax pages to (623) 516-7575. You may also register your name via the Internet at www.phoenixdeclaration.org.