



Comments on the Nashville Statement

There are many in our midst who walk with Christ but who see their faith in highly dogmatic propositions. It seems the role of issuing declarative statements of belief are, to these, both a means to defend the Gospel as well as to convince dissenters to reconsider their thinking. The result is lines of division that fuel dissent and antagonism, the effusive statements of love notwithstanding. Reducing the Gospel of Christ to such propositional beliefs undermines the central call of Christ to his disciples to live as a witness to God's love, represent the Holy Spirit's invitation to full salvation, and reflect Christ in living. Rather, public release of such sterile statements forces intellectual agreement or disagreement and usurps the role of the Spirit to convict. Christian faith is much more than that. The Truth we seek is more than a proposition, it is a person. The pursuit of that truth involves right living in relationship as much as right thinking about propositions.

While there is much in the Nashville statement that is intellectually and doctrinally good, the sad effect of the release is the disunity among Christians that it creates and the poor witness to Christ's love and desire for all people to conform to His full image. The WHC and many Wesleyan Holiness denominations and others have released sound and grace-filled statements on human sexuality that provide thoughtful guidance without the need of the Nashville statement. We pray that the misrepresentation of the passion of Christ for the sins of the world by this statement may be mitigated by faithful, humble, Christ-followers reflecting Christ in daily living in communities across the land. Many who grieve over the effect of its release remain uncompromisingly committed to the centrality of Christ for life and salvation; the authority of the Scriptures in all matters of truth and life; and the call of God to represent God's holy nature and reflect Christ well.

Kevin W. Mannoia