

CCCNZ Summit 2026

AN OPEN INVITE TO AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB? BIBLICAL SEXUALITY IN A CHANGING CULTURE

WHAT I HOPE YOU'LL TAKE AWAY:

- Clarity about how our culture puts biblical sexuality under pressure.
- Conviction that churches must display both welcome and exclusivity.
- Counsel on how to care wisely for same-sex attracted people.

OUTLINE

Four Questions to Think About

Four Facets of a Biblical Perspective

Two Traits of a Christlike Church

Group Talk on Scenarios

Three Scripts to Follow

A Collection of Tips and Paradigms

A Few Further Resources



Four Questions for Consideration

(I hope you can say yes to each!)

#1. Do you understand that LGBT ideas and practices are not the only differences that Christians have with elements of western culture?

- *This keeps the issue in perspective.*

#2. Are you prepared to accept that not every visitor or interested person or church youth is going to want to stay or commit to your church?

- *People leave for all sorts of reasons.*

#3. Do you understand that
unwanted sexual attractions often
do not change?

- *No one is exempt from temptation to
sin – but struggles differ from person
to person*

#4. Do you understand the experience and outlook of the particular person you are discipling or welcoming?

- *What do **they** think about their sexuality? That's what matters to this person.*

SCENARIOS

Group discussion: What are the ways in which your church might encounter people affirming LGBT sexuality?

| 5 minutes

SCENARIOS: FEEDBACK

How might you respond?

What stands to be lost or gained by response?

| Real-life lessons learned?

| What might you do different next time?

A CLEAR VISION OF BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

*And how it differs from progressive western
culture*

Creation

Fall

Redemption

Consummation

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The Creator is the definer of humanity.
We honour God by conforming to
reality as he has made it, rather than
redefining reality to suit ourselves.

“Expressive Individualism”
Carl Trueman: *Strange New World*

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The world as it is, is not as God made it. Scripture teaches that humanity is fallen and disordered. Not every human desire is natural and good.

Online article: “The Importance of a God-Centred Doctrine of Sin”

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The call to salvation includes a call to holiness. The privileges of redemption comes with the responsibilities of discipleship.

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Fall

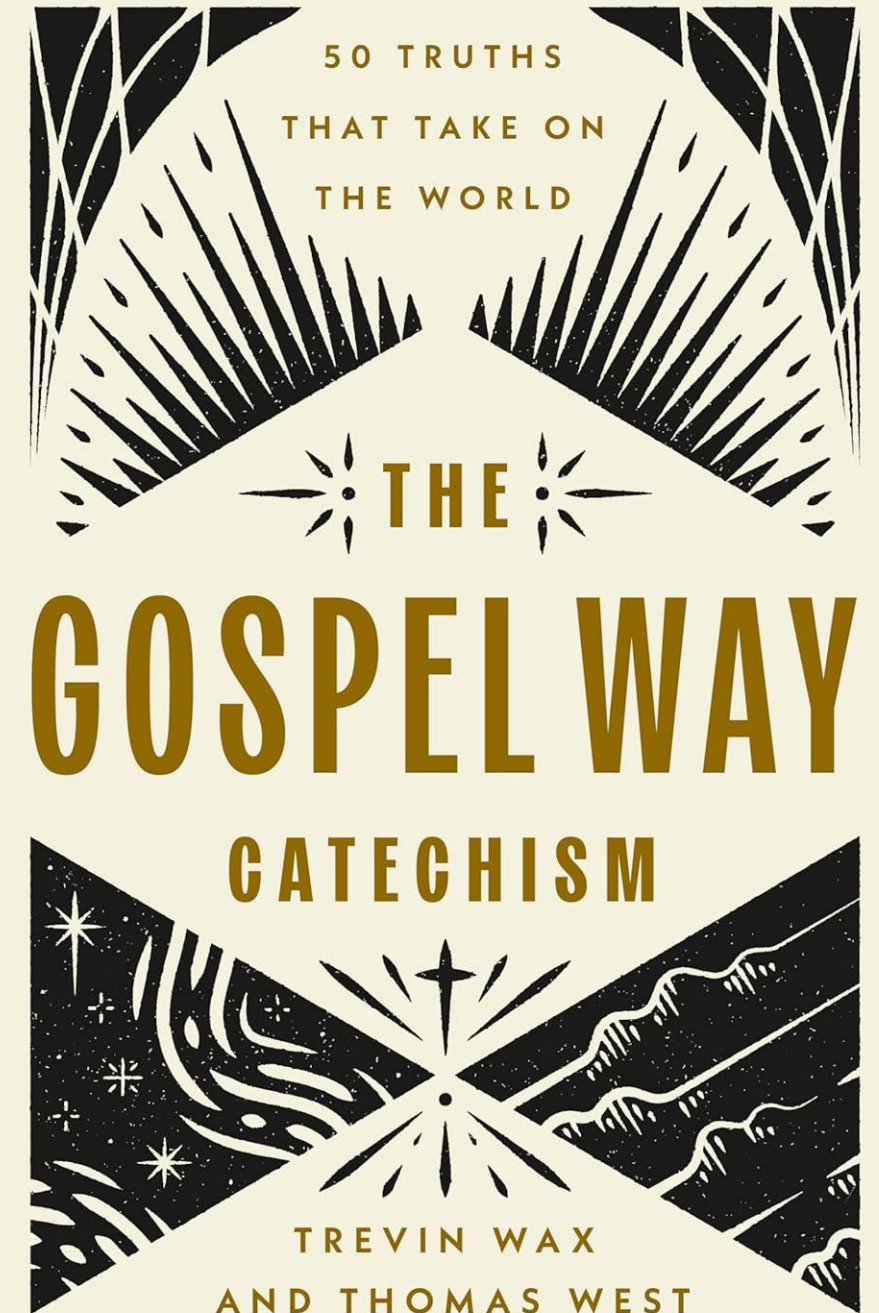
Redemption

Consummation

We look forward to a changed reality
where struggle is resolved and sex isn't
even part of the picture!

Matt. 22:30; 2 Cor. 5:2-4; Psalm 17:14

All this shows the importance of “Counter-Catechesis”: Christian intellectual and spiritual formation that is deliberately countering the alternatives!



TWIN EMPHASES IN THE N.T.

CHURCHES ARE TO BE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE

- Luke 14:23 – “so that my house might be filled”
- Luke 15:1-2 – “all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him
- Romans 15:7 – “welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you”
- 1 Cor. 6:9-10 – “such were some of you”

CHURCHES ARE TO BE HOLY AND EXCLUSIVE

- Matthew 18:15-20 – exclusion for the unrepentant “brother who sins”
- 1 Peter 1:14-18 – “be holy, as I am holy”
- 2 Cor. 6:14-17 – be holy, because God is among us
- 1 Cor. 6:9-10 “such were some of you”

Matthew 5:13-16 | Salt & Light

an exclusive community, with open doors

TIPS AND PARADIGMS FOR PASTORAL CARE AND DISCIPLESHIP.



The Importance of parsing different kinds of same sex experience

- Attraction
- Orientation
- Identity

These shouldn't be collapsed together. Pointing out the differences can help people work through their experience



Sensitivity and Support within the Church

- Some of the most common question SSA Christian teens ask . . .
- Their usual options . . .
- How can we support?
 - a. Make it easier to talk about.
 - b. Honour singleness
 - c. Church as family – build strong community
 - d. Don't reinforce cultural stereotypes about gender.
 - e. Make good pastoral support clearly available.

The “Scripts” concept: three patterns of response to same-sex attraction



The “Condemning Script” Says...

1. Same-sex attracted people are inherently broken, morally corrupt, usually perverted.
2. Same-sex attraction inevitably leads to homosexual sex, which is shameful, unacceptable and destructive to society.
3. People who are homosexual or gay choose to be so.
4. Homosexuals are bad for the community, should be monitored, shunned, and/or punished Homosexuals often become child abusers.
5. God forgives all sin, but homosexual sin is particularly bad.
Homosexuals can only be forgiven/accepted by becoming heterosexual.

The “Gay Script” Says...

1. Same-sex attractions are naturally-occurring or ‘intended by God’.
2. Same-sex attractions are the way you find out who you “really are” as a person.
3. Sexual attractions are at the core of who you are.
4. Same-sex behaviour is an extension of that core.
5. Self-actualization of your sexual identity (i.e. matching behaviour to ‘true’ identity) is crucial for your fulfilment.

An Alternative Script: “Identity in Christ”

1. Same sex attractions do not signal a categorical distinction among types of persons, but is one of many human experiences that reflect the disordered creation we are part of.
2. Same-sex attractions may be part of your experience, but they are not the defining element of your identity.
3. You could choose to integrate your experiences of attraction to the same sex into a “gay” (i.e. affirming) identity.
4. On the other hand, you could choose to centre your identity on other aspects of your experience, including your biological sex, gender identity, etc.
5. The most compelling aspect of personhood for the Christian is one’s identity in Christ, a central and defining aspect of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Beliefs to Challenge:

- If I experience SSA it means I must be gay/lesbian/bisexual.
- God made some people to be straight, others to be gay.
- Same-sex feelings come from the core of who I am, and will never change.
- If I have these desires I should act on them because they are core to who I am.
- To deny my feelings is to negate who I am and leads to unhappiness.
- A person's greatest joy or need is sexual fulfillment.
- I will never be happy as a SSA person if I do not have a SS romantic/sexual relationship.
- Wholeness is an absence of struggle or tension.

Truths to Uphold

- “The most important thing is to be in relationship with Jesus and live with him, rather than having our unwanted feelings/issues removed.”
- “I am more than my struggle. My identity is built on Jesus and not on my sexual feelings.”
- “I don’t have to be ashamed or afraid of my struggle...personal struggles are not unique to SSA people.”
- “My struggle can be seen as a gift because it helps me to be aware of and appreciate my need of God and it motivates me to deepen my relationship with God.”
- “God’s creative intention for sexuality is that it be an expression of love between a man and a woman in life-long marriage.”

The “Sexual Identity Therapy” Framework

- Developed by Mark Yarhouse & Warren Throckmorton, 2006.
- Endorsed by the American Psychological Association (APA) because they recognise the importance of religious/traditional values to many clients.
- Aims to help people who *don't* want to live a lifestyle that matches their sexual orientation, but rather wish to build their identity and lifestyle around their values (e.g. Christian faith).
- Also used by some discipleship/support groups.
- Google to find PDF online or email me for copy.

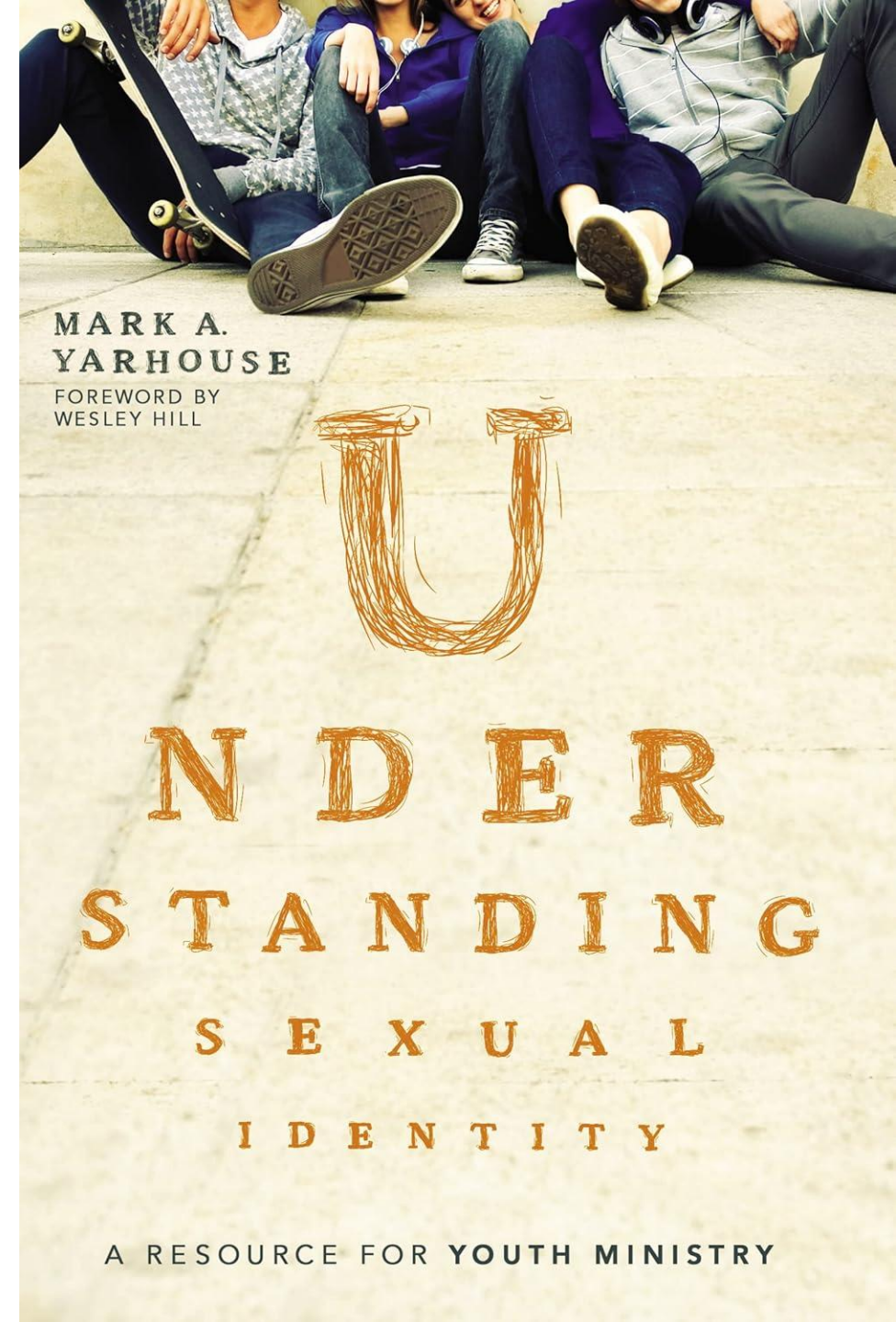
THE IMPORTANCE OF A CLEAR VISION OF DISCIPLESHIP AND CHRISTIAN MATURITY IN OUR CONTEXT



- *Does your church have a plan for inducting new members?*
- *Does it take their background values into account?*

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Bibliography handout
- This book and others by Mark Yarhouse – researcher on gender and sexual identity from a Christian college in USA. Growing number of popular-level books



An open invite to an exclusive club?
Biblical sexuality in a changing culture

FINAL
Q & A?

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