

Kieryn:

I'm Kieryn.

Eve:

I'm Hannah. This is Kitchen Table Cult.

Kieryn:

Where two Quiverfull escapees, talk about our experiences in the cultish underbelly of the religious right.

Eve:

Hey, Kieryn.

Kieryn:

Hey, Hannah.

Eve:

How is it going?

Kieryn:

It's going. I did the essay. I finished it-

Eve:

Yay.

Kieryn:

...two hours before class. And I got there, and then the professor was like, "Yeah, so I'm collecting them next Wednesday."

Eve:

What a loser.

Kieryn:

I'm so angry. And my entire class was so angry, because we'd all crammed over the three day weekend, to get this done. And because the library wasn't free on Wednesday, it's due next week.

Eve:

Gross.

Kieryn:

Yeah, so that was yesterday.

Eve:

I just submitted 25 pages about courtship and Grove City dating drama. So we'll see what my little writing tutorial group thinks of that.

Kieryn:

That should be really exciting. My essay, I made a narrative about the day my parents decided to homeschool me. And it was excruciating to write, because it was like the meat of the story is not in the details about the ants on the sidewalk. But what you want, is the ants on the sidewalk. So, fine.

Eve:

So we're going to talk about this later, right?

Kieryn:

Yes. This'll be a thing later.

Eve:

Okay, good. Well, speaking of Grove City, my friend, Emily is going to join us. Emily, you want to introduce yourself?

Emily Maust Wood:

Hi, my name is Emily Maust Wood. I met Hannah at Grove City, when we were freshman. We were both English majors. And I am still a fan of Hannah. I work in communications, for nonprofits, as a consultant.

Eve:

And then we have one other special guests this evening, Chris.

C Stroop:

Hi. Yeah, this is Chris Stroop. Actually, ex-evangelical writer, and scholar, and Twitter personality, with a PhD in Russian history.

Eve:

But what are we all here to talk about?

Kieryn:

Yeah, I was just going to ask you. Why are we here? What happened? What-

Eve:

What happened? I don't know. Some Christians were dumb on the internet, again.

C Stroop:

Again.

Kieryn:

Oh my gosh.

Eve:

Somebody is wrong on the internet.

Kieryn:

Somebody is wrong on the internet, and we need a panel to deconstruct it. Because they are extremely wrong on the internet.

Eve:

Emily and I were talking about this before you guys got on. But we feel a little guilty about bringing attention to this, because not a lot of people have picked up on this story yet. And that should probably be where it stays. But it's so bad, so if we bring extra attention to it, to make sure everybody knows how bad it is, that's great. But also, if we bring extra attention to it, I feel guilty about that.

C Stroop:

I was thinking a little bit about that as well, because this is not exactly the Nashville statement, right? It's not your A-list superstar, celebrity pastors. But on the other hand, it is people with some influence. People affiliated with various ministries. Founders Ministries seems to have organized it. And I think, this is actually a remarkable document, in a way, for how very explicit it is, relative to at least some other evangelical texts. Particularly, about race. So it's really a kind of important piece of evidence for linking evangelicalism to white supremacy in America.

Eve:

Yeah. I think that, that is probably why this is super valuable. It's like my experiences in the South, versus in California. And I know this is going to be controversial. But having grown up half in California and half in Richmond, Virginia, I find that in Richmond, people are very, very racist, but they're not very overt about it. And so, it's hard to pin them on it. And the racists I met in California, were much more open about it. Because they didn't have this culture of hiding it, and playing nice. And the social niceties around it, were less ingrained. And so, this is really nice for us to have, in terms of documentation, because we have evidence of all of these things that we knew to be true for forever. And now they've just handed it-

Kieryn:

They're just signing their names on it. They're like, "Yes, this is the thing, exactly."

Eve:

We were working on this for a year, and then they just tweeted it out.

Kieryn:

I was scouring the internet for, here, look, they said the thing, and it's just there. Their signature is on it. It's everywhere.

Eve:

That's so nice. So gal, why don't you break down whose in this? Who is this document written by?

Kieryn:

So the first name that stood out to me, was James White. Because he is, at least currently, the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, which is the homeschool curriculum that I had, from the time I was in fifth grade, until I graduated. So they run a huge publishing company, and are hugely influential in the homeschool community, because of the workbooks that they create. On the other-

Eve:

Some private schools use their stuff. I've seen their materials everywhere.

Kieryn:

Yeah. They're surprisingly mainstream. And so, this dude is on the core founding group of the people who signed this, is, writing the books that your children are educated by, and publishing them.

Eve:

Who is the other name?

Kieryn:

The other one was Voddie Bauchum, which is a black, Quiverfull pastor, dude, person, who my parents were fans of, when they discovered him. And it was the only person that they'd seen mirrored at the time, who was Quiverfull and believed like they did. So I was just like, "Oh yeah, my parents' favorite Quiverfull dude, right up here."

C Stroop:

John MacArthur stood out to me. And that's probably the name that would stand out to a pretty large number of people, as there have been some scandals surrounding the Master's University, speaking of California, where-

Eve:

Isn't it the Master's College?

C Stroop:

Is it college or university?

Emily Maust Wood:

I think it was-

Eve:

I think it's the Master's College.

Emily Maust Wood:

I believe it was changed to the Master's University.

Eve:

Oh.

Emily Maust Wood:

Creeping on him today. That's what I found out.

Eve:

Everybody's upgraded themselves.

C Stroop:

Everybody's becoming a university now. Asbury's a university.

Eve:

[crosstalk 00:06:59] Okay. So, they upgraded their Master's University.

C Stroop:

But anyway, he's also a radio personality. He's president of that university. And so, I guess he's an A-lister.

Eve:

He's also a big name for bought Bible commentaries. You see his name in various additions of the Bible, published. Crossway Books, I believe, coordinates with him, if I'm not mistaken.

Emily Maust Wood:

He has hundreds of books. Yeah. And he has... There's a John MacArthur study Bible.

C Stroop:

He's got top billing among the signers. I'm looking at the Social Justice Statement page now, which doesn't surprise me. Because I figure, he's probably the most well known celebrity among these names. I don't know if anyone else is really an Evangelical celebrity. Exactly. It depends on what circles you run in.

Eve:

Anyone else jump out to you guys, from the founders?

C Stroop:

Only because of Twitter, this guy, Justin Peters. He's a huge asshole. And I've been watching him argue with people in recent days. And I've been watching Tori Douglass, for example, try to school him on racism. And he's totally denying that there's, he's ever seen any racism in any of his churches. It's-

Eve:

He's white, right?

C Stroop:

... Yeah. It's pretty incredible. Oh. And, he recently started really pushing back and trolling. And he introduced this white dude, who actually, literally, fought in the so-called police anti-terror unit in Rhodesia, as his African American friend. He said "African American friend." For a guy who fought on behalf of apartheid, and then became a pastor in Florida.

Eve:

Oh my God.

C Stroop:

He's still alive. Yeah.

Eve:

So, you're going to send us a link to that, so we can include it in the footnotes for this episode. Right?

C Stroop:

Yeah. I can do that. Nate Sparks just did a thread on this guy's background with-

Eve:

Wow.

C Stroop:

... Rhodesia. We were looking into it last night. It's pretty incredible.

Eve:

Great. Well, let's take a quick break. And then, we're going to start doing a code switching translation of what this statement says, and the dog whistles that are embedded in it.

Eve:

So Kiernyn?

Kiernyn:

Yes.

Eve:

I hear you have a joke.

Kiernyn:

Yeah. So, I was reading the statement this morning, and I was getting really angry. And I was venting to my friends about it. And one of my friends was like, "So how do we get these people to do another Jonestown?" And I was like, "Well, they have communion every Sunday." Cyanide and happiness has a completely new meaning.

C Stroop:

Oh my God.

Kiernyn:

So.

C Stroop:

Well, I saw in replies on Twitter, about the Social Justice Statement, when I, guess it was in the replies of a thread by Justin Peters, who was promoting it the other day. Someone saying that the gospel is a Hill worth dying on. And I couldn't help saying, "Yeah, you all go ahead and die on that Hill." And there won't be any evangelicals left after that, because the youth are rejecting the gospel of bigotry.

Eve:

Gospel of bigotry. All right. Well, let's deconstruct this gospel of bigotry. They have all of these talking points. They have a couple of blog posts that they wrote, in addition, that frame the statement. And then, they go through in your classic, creed style. They affirm something, and then they deny something.

C Stroop:

The blog posts are so self-important too. I just got to say that. They're ridiculous. On June 19th of this year, I had the privilege of meeting in the iconic Herb's House Coffee shop in Dallas, with 13 other men, to discuss our common concerns about some teachings and practices, being advocated in the name of social justice. And it's in quotation marks.

Eve:

Just to be clear, this guy wasn't meeting at a coffee house with a woman. Because that might look bad.

C Stroop:

That would violate the Billy Graham rule. Or the Mike Pence rule. What are we calling it now?

Eve:

Billy Graham rule. The Mike Pence rule. The mother rule. So what do you see? Let's start at the beginning. This blog post about it, that they give off, by John MacArthur, called No Division In The Body, is really, I think, probably the most interesting place to start.

C Stroop:

I was reading, just to be clear, one from Tom Ascol. But yeah, you go ahead and talk about John MacArthur.

Eve:

Yeah. So, I think, it's a good preview for what we're going to get. It talks about racism in coded language. It talks about victim mentality in coded language. And it gives a super sketchy definition of intersectionality. Which, I am studying women in social movements right now, for an elective at my school. And we're going through Kimberle Crenshaw's definition of intersectionality. And this is not the definition of intersectionality.

C Stroop:

What's his definition?

Eve:

Well, it's in the footnotes of this article. Let me pull it up and you can read it. The definition that he gives for intersectionality is, the idea that victimhood and oppression occur on a variety of levels, and these may overlap or intersect. So, a single individual may have multiple claims to victim status. Since victimhood is what is supposed to validate a personal opinion in these postmodern times, the more layers of oppression someone can claim, the more entitled that person is to speak about issues such as justice and racial discrimination, power and oppression, privilege and inequality. In other words, victimhood is now seen as empowerment. And the more privilege a person is thought to enjoy, the less authority that person has to render an opinion. You guys are all making faces like you're about to puke.

Kieryn:

I just, [inaudible 00:13:54]. That's what I was taught. Not that explicitly. They didn't have that much thought about it. But that's what I grew up in, and it's awful and horrifying, seeing it written out on the internet.

Eve:

Okay. So here's what I don't get. The whole idea of suffering for the sake of the gospel. And the more you are a victim for the sake of what you believe, the more empowered you are, and the more reward you'll get in heaven. Isn't that a tenant of Christian faith? How does this... Why are they pushing back on that?

Kieryn:

Because you're not suffering for God. You're not suffering for being too Christian. So it's a bad. So it's, you're just, whatever. It's not Holy. So it doesn't matter. Because my parents were also very much of the like, "No, we must, the most, we have to be the most persecuted person around." That's what's Holy and good. Is we have to be the most persecuted, and be suffering the most. And we make choices to ensure that. And that was fine and Holy. But if actual tragedy happened to someone, and they needed help. Well, they're just terrible.

Eve:

Well. And I think that goes along with this whole subculture. That is really unspoken of the bootstraps Americana mindset of, "Well, if you're poor it's because you didn't work hard enough."

Kieryn:

Yeah. And basically a bunch of the statement goes on to reiterate that.

Eve:

Let me just read-

Kieryn:

In different words.

Eve:

... the definition of intersectionality, that Kimberle Crenshaw created. She and the... There's a collective, a feminist collective, that came together. Women of color. And they put together this definition, and really have founded a lot of the work around intersectionality, in social theory. So intersectionality, this



is the actual definition, is an analytic framework, which attempts to identify how interlocking systems of power, impact those who are most marginalized in society. Intersectionality considers that various forms of social stratification, such as class, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, and gender, I think, just basically might interact.

Eve:

So, it's like the lines where you are placed in society, based on your education, and the money your parents have, and the amount of privilege your skin color gives you. And all of these moments of realizing where your limits are socially, because of where you come from. And how they place you in the middle of this grid. And it's not something you can necessarily overcome. A lot of that is predetermined by the biases within society. The systemic oppressions that society is built on. So it's not about getting a prize, to be able to have authority to talk about something. The statement sounds like a white dude got told by a black woman to shut up and listen.

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

And he decided to go give himself biblical definitions, or justification to talk back, instead of sitting down and listening.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I was thinking that too, while you were reading the actual definition of intersectionality. That his definition seems very much like a whiny white guy, who has just been told, his opinion isn't God's gift to earth.

Eve:

And just a footnote here, for our self-proclaimed feminist listeners. You can't say you're an intersectional feminist. Intersectional is a lens, by way you orient yourself in the world. It doesn't mean, it's not an identity. It's not something you can claim.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

It's just like, you understand that sometimes these systems bump into each other, and have doubled ramifications.

Kieryn:

Everything stacks. That's all.

Eve:

So, Chris, do you want to talk about the finer points in this statement?

C Strop:

Sure. I think when you immediately look at the statement itself, and just look at the way they introduce it, there's something very interesting there. In view of questionable, sociological, psychological, and political theories, presently permeating our culture and making inroads into Christ church. We wish to clarify certain key Christian doctrines and ethical principles, prescribed in God's word. That's very striking to me, because it seems to be presenting a dichotomy between sociology and psychology, and Christianity, which-

Eve:

And I think the reason that is, is because they're so set on reading the Bible, literally, without any sort of historical context for any passages. Without any sort of cultural analysis for themes that come up. They want to be able to take the Bible as it is, and just cut and paste, to apply to everyday life here. But you can't read that document, without understanding the context in which it was written. And they're trying to double down on that point.

C Stroop:

Yeah. And I think, there's no consistent way to read the Bible. Entirely. Literally. Any way. Or to try to. Everybody picks and chooses, right? So the further you read down through that statement, the more evident it becomes, that what they really desperately want to defend or accost, is white supremacist patriarchy. And if psychology and sociology are a threat to that, then psychology and sociology be damned.

Eve:

Let's talk about this idea of racism, biblical. You've got the Imago Dei statement in point two, which says, "We deny the God-given rules, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, sex, or physical condition, or any other property of a person, either negates or contributes to that individual's worth, as an image bearer of God." So that's trying to set up the yes, All Lives Matter.

C Stroop:

Yeah, exactly. It sounds very nice, right? It kind of sounds like, Paul saying Christ is neither Jew, nor free. Jew, nor free. Jew, nor Greek. Male, nor female. Slave, nor free. But in the context of actual sociological realities, this kind of supposed equality is actually erasing a lot of inequalities. It's not a robust notion of equity.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

And I think, one of the things to keep in mind with this statement, is all of these signers, are the kind of people who've had a lot of privilege in their lives. All of these people who've written this, are coming from the position of having to recognize their privilege. And if they want to, and step aside to give space to other voices. That's... When you have all the power, equality feels like oppression.

Kieryn:

Yep.

Eve:

So as soon as you start handing over your privilege to actually level the playing field, they feel like they're losing control, and losing their resources. So that's part of why, I think, this doubling down is happening.

Kieryn:

Yeah. The statement, to reiterate what Chris said, is written, so it sounds an awful lot like, it doesn't matter what you look like or where you come from. But what it actually means, is you can't count any of these things as something that affects you.

C Stroop:

Should we all break it into Michael W. Smith, Colorblind, now? (singing)

Eve:

Right. Because All Lives Matter guys. So, you don't have any reason to be butthurt about this, because Jesus loves you just as much as he loves me. So, why are you complaining?

Kieryn:

Yeah. Obviously, there's nothing stacked against you. The field is already leveled, because this doesn't matter. Because it doesn't affect me.

C Stroop:

It's slick to start that way though. Because this sounds pretty innocuous. A lot of people are not going to pick up on anything, until you get deeper.

Kieryn:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eve:

Right. And that's why we're trying to unpack it. Because there's a lot of hell in here. Point three is about justice. True justice can be culturally defined. Standards of justice are merely socially constructed. Can be imposed on, with the same authority, as those that are derived from scripture. I think it's really interesting. They're picking up on the language.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right.

C Stroop:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eve:

They're using the term, social construct.

C Stroop:

Oh, they're denying it. That's under the denial. But, yeah.

Eve:

But they're saying that they're acknowledging, that standards of justice can be socially constructed, and therefore we're denying it.

Kieryn:

They're acknowledging it.

Eve:

They're using the language. Yeah. They're acknowledging it. They're giving that ground to that definition. They're using these terms, which makes them seem woke. If you're just reading this at a cursory glance, you wouldn't pick up on that. Because John MacArthur is using the word, Social Construct. [crosstalk 00:23:47]

Kieryn:

Right. That's what stood out to me too. Is there was a lot of this, is the language that we're using in the discourse. And they're using it to then be like, "This is fake." But they're also using it. Which doesn't mean nothing.

Eve:

Right. Who is known? I've known so many guys who've done this. Whereas, as soon as I, they start interacting with me, and understanding feminism a little bit, they start using all of the labels incorrectly, to try to like beat me up with it.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

To keep me in line. It's really common. And this idea of justice has to be defined by the Bible. And defined by scripture. What are these definitions of biblical righteousness? What are the kinds of things that are implied by this statement?

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. Well, Hannah, I think it goes back a lot to what you were saying about how American Christians are functioning without historical context. So if you're reading your Bible without historical context, and not seeing that things that Jesus did were extremely radical, and extremely justice oriented, and extremely scandalous. If you don't see that, then you can just throw out the social context of the Bible, and then keep saying that you think social context doesn't matter, right? Because if it didn't matter then, it doesn't matter now. You just deprived-

Eve:

Right.

Emily Maust Wood:

... Just pull it. All of us are existing. Like you said, in a historical vacuum.

Eve:

Right? So for example, Paul sent Onesimus back to his owner. There's a letter in the New Testament, where the apostle, Paul, is sending a slave back to his owner, to apologize for running away. That's in the New Testament. That's New Covenant stuff. And so, that's justice, according to scripture.

C Stroop:

Yeah. And when you read, we affirm that societies must establish laws to correct injustices, that have been imposed through cultural prejudice. That sounds like, maybe they're supporting affirmative action or something. But, I don't think they are. Presumably they're maybe, trying to get credit for supporting the end of slavery. We see a lot of conservative Christians these days. Eric Metaxas, recently on Twitter, claiming that it was Evangelicals, who somehow, did the civil rights movement. All by themselves. Without even black people.

Eve:

Eric Metaxas has always been really bad at history.

C Stroop:

Yeah.

Emily Maust Wood:

He's not for the brand.

C Stroop:

He thinks that Dietrich Bonhoeffer's main concern was abortion.

Eve:

It wasn't?

C Stroop:

He wrote one paragraph on it. So obviously, that's the Hermetic Key to his entire corpus.

Eve:

Oh my goodness. I had no idea.

C Stroop:

But anyway, this whole thing about correcting injustices that have been imposed through cultural prejudice, I think, reads a lot differently, when you realize, and we do have the public opinion polls on this, that white Evangelicals considered themselves to be the most persecuted and oppressed demographic in America. They think that they're discriminated against, more than Muslims.

Kieryn:

Sometimes people don't say, "Merry Christmas."

C Stroop:

God. How vile?

Eve:

Kieryn, your family was particularly strong in this point. You want to speak to that perspective?

Kieryn:

Oh. About wanting to be the most persecuted all the time?

Eve:

It's a contest, isn't it?

Kieryn:

Yeah, it is. Yeah. Oh yeah. So no, my parents-

Eve:

Did they have to hide their para level.

Kieryn:

Yeah. My parents bragged about being below the poverty level. They saw everything as, being as perpetually suffering as you could be, meant, you had more points in heaven. So the more that you sacrifice. The more that you gave up. The more homes that we had lost to foreclosure. Because we were paying someone's rent. The more we would be rewarded in heaven. So my parents, if there was ever a time that we weren't persecuted, they were like, "Oh my God, we're doing something wrong."

Eve:

Right. Yeah. And that's where I'm getting at. With these people who, if you're disagreeing with them on Twitter, with this Christian pastor or whatever-

Kieryn:

That proves them right.

Eve:

... They're going to double down. Because yeah, God is affirming my decision by allowing me to experience the bl-

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Eve:

affirming my decision by allowing me to experience the blessing of persecution.

Kieryn:

Right. Yeah. And my parents would often seek that out. They would make those situations happen.

Eve:

I think we've covered a lot of the next point, point four, God's Law, but if anybody has anything to add. I think this is laying the ground for reminding everybody that scriptural literalism is important so that we can tell the gays to go fuck off later.

Kieryn:

Right, because then we go into the next point where that's the first thing.

Eve:

So gay people don't exist? Oh wait.

Kieryn:

Neither do trans people by the way. Heads up you guys, I don't exist.

Eve:

Kieryn.

Kieryn:

I'm fake. You're not hearing me right now.

Eve:

Am I hallucinating you?

Kieryn:

Yes. This is a hallucination that everyone is participating in right now. I don't currently exist.

C Stroop:

Kind of like Christ on the road to Damascus.

Eve:

I think he was doing mushrooms. Not talking to make your-

Kieryn:

It makes so much more sense if you read it with, oh, these people are on drugs. Like that one story in the Old Testament with the bones dancing. I'm like, "He was just tripping balls." That's it.

Eve:

I dated someone for a bit who was like, "Yeah, you know, every religion just started because somebody hallucinated on something at some point and nobody else had done it. So they believed him."

Kieryn:

Yeah, so gay people.

Eve:

So all people are connected to Adam both naturally and federally. Now this is great because later they say-

C Stroop:

Federally.

Kieryn:

Yeah, I was like, "What?"

Eve:

Any person-

Kieryn:

Federally?

Eve:

We deny that any person is morally culpable for another sin. So I am born with a sin nature because Adam sinned-

C Stroop:

Born to play.

Eve:

I cannot be held responsible for the fact that some of my ancestors might, at some point, had participated in owning slaves in the United States.

Kieryn:

This entire point contradicts itself eight different times.

Eve:

It's kind of beautiful.

Kieryn:

It says one thing. And it's like, but not this thing, but then exactly that thing, four times. I was trying to make sense of it.

C Stroop:

I mean-

Kieryn:

Really, they just want to shit on gay people.



C Stroop:

The Bible itself both says that children are punished for the sins of their parents and that they're not. So, you know-

Eve:

So which verse are you going to listen to today? It's going to be different tomorrow.

Kieryn:

It depends on how angry you are at the person.

Eve:

And just want somebody-

Kieryn:

And how much you like them.

Eve:

If any of our listeners are true grammar nerds, I would really love to have someone diagram 0.5, the sin section, and see if you can do it because it really doesn't hold together.

Kieryn:

It's so hard. It's so hard to read.

Eve:

So this is kind of largely saying that... I think what this goes back to is this very classic white, modern, liberal idea of my grandparents were racist. My great grandparents were racist because everybody back then was racist. But I haven't actively oppressed a black person.

C Stroop:

Also, my grandparents were still very good people.

Eve:

My grandparents died. They were teachers that gave to the community. They volunteered at the library. And sure, they said the N-word, but didn't everybody? So this section, you cannot be held collectively guilty for your ancestor's sins is really trying to say, "I haven't actively oppressed any black people. So, why should I repent at being racist? Why should I care?"

C Stroop:

Yeah, except for Adamson. Which conveniently applies to everyone equally.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

Aren't black people sinners too? It's really bad.

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah. I call this section the, "but I didn't own slaves starter kit."

Kieryn:

Yes.

Emily Maust Wood:

The Jesus addition.

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

Emily, what was it that your husband said earlier today about this whole statement?

Emily Maust Wood:

Oh, one second. I will find it.

Eve:

It was good.

Emily Maust Wood:

I wrote it down. I believe he said, "According to this, Jesus was a distraction from the gospel."

Kieryn:

That's amazing.

Emily Maust Wood:

Because of his service. Yeah. You know, human.

Kieryn:

Well, obviously.

Eve:

So section six is the gospel.

C Stroop:

Classic fundamentalism with an extra helping of substitutionary atonement.

Eve:

Again, let's make this look so familiar that everybody else just breezes by all of the other pieces. I think this is your spot of quote-unquote "normalcy" to keep everybody satiated.

Kieryn:

Well, that last one was a bit odd. So here's a palette cleanser. This one's pretty basic. What's the next one?

Eve:

So the next one-

Kieryn:

Salvation.

Eve:

Salvation?

Kieryn:

I mean that one's also kind of-

Eve:

The last sentence is really the one that gets to me. "We further deny that ethnicity excludes anyone from understanding the gospel, nor does anyone's ethnic or cultural heritage mitigate or remove the duty to repent and believe." So there's two pieces in this if you want to translate this. One is doubling down on colonialism and colonial missionary work. Every culture is invalid and is obligated to repent of their sins no matter what their religion of origin is. Missionary work is still super valid even if colonialism is not in vogue anymore.

C Stroop:

Some cultures just suck. Because they're not Christian.

Eve:

I know, it's so disappointing.

Eve:

They really should know better.

Kieryn:

Right?

C Stroop:

They need our help.

Eve:

Let's all go build a school and make people wear clothes. Anyway. We're scared of tits. The other half of this is saying that... I think that there's no reason to allow someone's experience of oppression to prevent you from continuing to try to colonialize them with the gospel.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

It doesn't matter if we've oppressed these people and committed genocide, they still need Jesus, because they're still wrong.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. There's no reason to reevaluate or take a step back, or God forbid apologize to someone.

C Stroop:

But he who is without genocide cast the first stone.

Emily Maust Wood:

No, no.

Eve:

Well, I'm leaving the field. The church 0.8, again, kind of a palate cleanser, kind of classic fundamentalism. This is what gets to me is the first half, the "We affirm" is traditional almost all of the time. It's the, "We deny" statement that follows-

Kieryn:

That's what got me.

Eve:

That gets you.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

So what do you see in this one guys?

C Stroop:

Under "We affirm," there are a couple of interesting parts, right?

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah, the obedience, right?

C Stroop:

Yeah. "We affirm that when the primacy of the gospels maintained that this often has a positive effect on the culture, in which various social ills are mollified." So the only way to address social ills is just preach the gospel. "We affirm that under the Lordship of Christ, we are to obey the governing authority as established by God and pray for civil leaders." Makes me think of Jeff Sessions invoking Romans 13 to justify putting brown kids in cages.

Kieryn:

Well, as soon as someone in leadership did something that they deemed God didn't approve of, they would be like, "Well, we're supposed to resist the government if it's against God because God's law's higher."

C Stroop:

Yeah. Like being black-

Eve:

Can someone please tweet Eric Metaxas about this point and check him on-

C Stroop:

He blocked me.

Eve:

But Bonhoeffer tried to kill the governing authorities.

Kieryn:

That part's irrelevant.

C Stroop:

Well, he tried to kill the wrong ones. He should have waited for Barack Obama, the Antichrist.

Eve:

Oh, I forgot. Yeah, that's right. He was born in hell. So this last sentence in the "We affirm" the obedience to governing authority really sets the stage for the law section later. That really gets heinous. It's beautifully constructed, I will give them that. How about the "We deny" section? What do you have?

Kieryn:

Yeah. So the "We deny" is interesting because, well, I'm just going to read it because it'll make sense either way.

Eve:

Yeah, go for it.

Kieryn:

"We deny that political or social activism should be viewed as integral components of the gospel or primary to the mission of the church. The believers can and should utilize all lawful means that God has

providentially established to have some effect on the laws of a society. We deny that these activities are either evidence of saving face or constitute a central part of the church's mission given to her by Jesus Christ, her head." I forgot that the church was her. Why do we gender this?

C Stroop:

No, totally.

Kieryn:

Anyway.

C Stroop:

Bride of Christ.

Kieryn:

"We deny that laws or regulations possess any inherent power to change sinful hearts." So basically they're trying to deny that a theocratic takeover of the government is part of their plot.

Eve:

I think they're also trying to say that participating in the Antifa and Black Lives Matter are valid expressions of faith.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

C Stroop:

Yeah. That's more of what I see. "We deny that laws or regulations possess any inherent power to change sinful hearts." That doesn't mean you don't want to have Christian laws and regulations.

Kieryn:

Right. It's actually really interesting because they're treading this fine line of we don't condone political acts, but we don't condemn them either.

Eve:

So basically what you're saying, this is the poor people who vote Republican because they support not taxing the rich, because what if they're going to be rich one day?

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

Okay. So this is the Christians who are voting against their interests because they want to have power some day.

C Stroop:

Yeah. There's a whole other subtext here too though, which is that if you deny that laws or regulations possess any inherent power to change sinful hearts, you're saying only God can change people's sinful hearts, right? This is an extremely dark view of human nature which leads precisely to support for a kind of authoritarian punitive justice system because all those people who aren't going to be real Christians, they're not going to be kept under control any other way.

Eve:

Emily, what is our local Anabaptist see in this? Do you see them supporting the death penalty with this statement?

Emily Maust Wood:

Anabaptist? No.

Eve:

No, no, no. I'm saying you as an Anabaptist, what do you see in this statement? Do you see the statement as affirming?

Emily Maust Wood:

Oh, what they're saying.

Eve:

The death penalty and stuff like that?

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah, I think so. I think that what you've said so far is true that it's used selectively, right? It's there when you want it, it's convenient. You have to say both things so you can have it both ways. So when you want a consequence like death or war or lots of death for what you see as doing the wrong thing, then you have to give yourself the permission to do that. But then you also want to deprive other people of any kind of wiggle room to do what they wanted to do, right?

Eve:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. It's having it both ways.

C Stroop:

Yeah.

Eve:

I will say the one nice thing that this paragraph gives us is that if any violent pro-life protestors come out of any of these churches, we can say that they're heretics.

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

That's not really any kind of bone but it is an observation.

Kieryn:

No.

Eve:

All right, let's talk about heresy 0.9. Chris, you want to take it off? What do you see?

C Stroop:

Let's have a look here. "We further affirm that heresy often involves the replacement of key essential truths with variant concepts or the elevation of non-essentials to the status of essentials." So this sort of hearkens back to this idea that we just want to have the gospel and none of that social justice stuff, which is obviously extraneous-

Kieryn:

Clearly.

C Stroop:

"To embrace heresy is to depart from the faith once delivered to the saints and thus be on a path towards spiritual destruction." This was kind of trying to establish extreme biblical authority inerrancy, I suppose.

Eve:

I love the phrase, "Weight-bearing doctrines of the redemptive core of scripture." That's the best interpretation of the, "I'm the gluten-free person at the Thanksgiving buffet, so I'm going to avoid stuffing because I don't like it."

C Stroop:

Now that is a cross to bear.

Eve:

This is your classic, "I am going to double down on my right to pick and choose from scripture as biblical and if you deny me that you're a heretic."

Kieryn:

Well, that's basically what the deny statement is.

Eve:

And again, this is setting the stage for later statements for what you can do with heretics. This is setting the stage for... This is so great because it's so contradictory where it's this entire statement is a non-essential.



Kieryn:

Right?

Eve:

By their definition of non-essentials, which non-essentials for those who are not familiar, it commonly uses these doctrines that Christians can disagree on but still be Christians.

Eve:

So you talk about infant baptism versus adult baptism, or communionist transubstantiation or not, and these are things that are non-essentials. The things that are essentials are, "We believe in God and the Trinity, and Jesus died for our sins, and we're all sinners, and we all need Jesus to die for our sins so that we can repent and receive his grace, and the Holy Spirit will inhabit us, and anything that you find in your classic Apostle's Creed or Nicene Creed those are the essentials, and that's why those creeds exist. The statement on social justice is not a creed. So, therefore it's a non-essential, but by referencing non-essentials, they're covering their asses so that they can call us an essential later.

C Stroop:

But Hännah, I think you're forgetting that Justin Peters tweeted that they didn't want to have to write this statement, they were forced to, by all of us social justice assholes.

Eve:

That's an acronym I haven't heard before. What is a social justice asshole?

C Stroop:

Well, that was my paraphrase.

Eve:

Oh, okay. Why do they hate social justice warriors, Chris?

C Stroop:

I mean, because they're shitty old, straight white men who don't want to give up any power.

Eve:

Isn't this phrase, social justice warrior, something that came out of MRA organizations and chat groups?

C Stroop:

I think it probably does. The SJW as a slur probably does have its origins in the manosphere. I'm not 100% sure of that, could be 4chan, could be Twitter.

Eve:

But I remember-

Kieryn:

I remember it from Gamergate.

Eve:

Yeah, Gamergate. I remember seeing it around Gamergate with white dudes really being resistant to anyone telling them what they couldn't say.

C Stroop:

Yeah, that happens a lot. The whole ridiculous free speech obsession.

Eve:

Men on the internet.

C Stroop:

Let me see if I can find this specific tweet. I don't know if it has SJW in it, but yeah, that's how I was remembering it.

Kieryn:

The intention was there. The implication was there.

C Stroop:

It was totally there.

Eve:

I think the-

Kieryn:

Oh my God. Okay. But the next one though. I just skipped ahead to the sexuality and marriage one.

Eve:

All right.

Kieryn:

And went to the part where they reject an entire subset of Christians-

Eve:

Let's let the hallucination speak.

Kieryn:

So, hi. Welcome to the hallucination time. The sexuality and marriage portion, first of all, I'm just going to read it. "We affirm that God created mankind, male and female, and that this divinely determined distinction is good, proper, and to be celebrated." So sidebar, intersex people do not exist.

Eve:

No, no keep going. The next sentence gets to that.

Kieryn:

Yeah. "Maleness and femaleness are biologically determined at conception and are not subject to change." So they believe science says intersex people don't exist. I have news.

Eve:

Wrong.

Kieryn:

I have news. "The curse of sin results in sinful disordered affections that manifest in some people as same-sex attraction."

Eve:

I love that they said affections.

Kieryn:

"Salvation grants sanctifying power to renounce such dishonorable affections as sinful, and to mortify them by the spirit." So shame-

Eve:

It doesn't say-

C Stroop:

But hey, don't forget that sociology and psychology, and presumably science, in general, are wrong when they don't agree with the bible.

Eve:

We only believe the DSM-1 that says it's a disorder.

Kieryn:

"We further affirm that God's design for marriage is that one woman and one man live in a one-flesh covenantal sexual relationship until separated by death."

Eve:

Wait, does that mean that they have to be permanently, coitally enjoined until they die? Or-

C Stroop:

Well, they're not dead Mormons.

Eve:

How does this one flesh thing work? I do not understand.

Kieryn:

They didn't go into details. "Those who lack the desire-

Eve:

This was not part of my pre-marital counseling.

Kieryn:

"Or opportunity for marriage are called to serve God in singleness and chastity. This is as noble a calling as marriage." That's the affirm. So they affirm that intersex and trans people do not exist. And that queer people are just a result of sin.

Eve:

And if you really insist on doubling down on your queerness, the only way you can be a Christian is if you remain celibate forever.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

Okay.

Kieryn:

And then we get to denying. "We deny that human sexuality is a socially constructed concept. We also deny that one sex can be fluid. We reject gay Christian as a legitimate biblical category. We further deny that any kind of partnership or union can properly be called marriage other than one man and one woman in lifelong covenant together. We further deny," they say that twice, "that people should be identified as "sexual minorities" in quotations, "which serves as cultural classification rather than one that honors the image-bearing character of human sexuality as created by God." So they deny the existence of gay Christians as existing at all. They deny anything outside of a heterosexual marriage as existing at all. And they deny that trans people exist.

Eve:

And this is where you see their definition of law earlier play coming back. They deny that a partnership or union can be called marriage. So it was basically saying if the government has decided to allow gay marriage, we won't recognize that.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

C Stroop:

And we'll try very hard to get the government to not-

Eve:

Right.

C Stroop:

Recognize that.

Eve:

It's covering their asses in case they get the chance to be in power, and then they can reinforce their laws the way they want and have it be consistent with this statement.

Kieryn:

Well, wasn't there a bit where people wanted a one man, one woman as a constitutional amendment for marriage too? I feel like I remember that in 2010.

Eve:

I'm sure that was-

Kieryn:

That was a thing because Massachusetts had legalized gay marriage, and then everyone lost it. And they campaigned for a constitutional amendment to say marriage was between a man and a woman.

Eve:

I remember this being something that was covered in World magazine a whole lot when I was coming home for visits from Grove.

Kieryn:

So sorry, queer Christians, I guess you don't exist but you can join the club because I also don't exist.

Eve:

Yeah. We're going to go party in hell.

Kieryn:

We're just the nonexistent club.

Eve:

We're going to party in hell.

Kieryn:

It's fine.

Eve:

We'll send you an invitation by owl or something and it'll be fine.

C Stroop:

This is all just so unoriginal. Why do you even need to deny that gay Christians exist after the Nashville statement?

Kieryn:

Apparently they felt it needed to be reiterated.

C Strop:

They really did. I found that tweet from Justin Peters from September 4th where he says so sanctimoniously, "None of us wanted to have to write this. We wish it had not been necessary but it is. This is the threat-

Kieryn:

Sucks to be you.

C Strop:

"Of our day to the gospel. I'm so grateful for all of the men who stood together to answer this threat, and for all others, men and women who are with us."

Eve:

Bless his heart.

C Strop:

He didn't say SJW, but he was thinking it.

Eve:

I think part of the reason they probably feel that is the Nashville statement didn't cover a lot of this stuff. And a lot of the Nashville statement signers are not signing this. They want to double down on the stuff that maybe they couldn't get into the Nashville statement. That's my speculation.

C Strop:

I do want to point out that some of the superstars associated with the Nashville statement, though, absolutely believe things like feminism is heresy. And if you go through Russell Moore's own website, you'll find that he has said that explicitly. And yet he's this media darling, and everyone thinks he's this wonderful moderate man who just wants to be a nice Baptist and be able to discriminate in a nice way.

Eve:

Well, Mike Farris is a nice moderate man who also believes that gays don't exist at Patrick Henry college.

Kieryn:

I have news. I have some news.

Eve:

I have met them. I swear I wasn't tripping.

Kieryn:

Yeah. So, gay people don't exist. Just so we're all clear. Next up.

Eve:

Complementarianism. I absolve myself from talking about this because otherwise I'm going to bust a gasket and talk for three hours. So, Kieryn.

Kieryn:

Oh my God, Complementarianism.

C Stroop:

They're doubling down on the biology bullshit. Obviously, science is not on their side but, "God created mankind, both male and female, with inherent biological and personal distinctions between them and that these created differences are good, proper and beautiful. Though there is no difference between men and women before God's law or as recipients of his saving grace. We affirm that God has designed men and women with distinct traits and to fulfill distinct roles." So wait a minute, doesn't that mean there is a difference-

Eve:

Hang on.

C Stroop:

between men and-

Eve:

They're saying-

Kieryn:

Don't apply logic.

Eve:

Look, I am attracted to people who have dicks, but this is saying that dicks are beautiful and-

Kieryn:

All right.

Eve:

Has anybody seen one?

C Stroop:

Well, it didn't exactly say that dicks are beautiful. It said that these inherent differences, which might be understood in a very abstract and platonic way for beautiful.

Eve:

Oh, but wasn't Plato a heretic?

Kieryn:

But, again, also with the Bioessentialism and the very binary... What do you do if you're intersex? You don't, what?

Eve:

Jump off a cliff.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

C Stroop:

And yeah, I've had crushes on people with penises, but I would tend to agree with you that they're not the most beautiful form of genital. Anyway.

Eve:

Okay. "These differences are most clearly defined in marriage and the church, but not irrelevant in other spheres of life. In marriage, the husband is to lead, love, and safeguard his wife, and the wife is to respect and be submissive to her husband and all things lawful." So she can only rebel if he's trying to make her break the law. Wait, does this mean that marital sex is illegal? I mean, marital rape?

Kieryn:

Because it doesn't exist because the woman is supposed to always be sexually available for her husband and if she isn't then it's her fault.

Eve:

Oh, so it's if he's trying to assassinate Barack Obama then she can't submit to him?

Kieryn:

No, I think that's God-ordained.

Eve:

Okay. In the church, qualified men alone, which qualified men mean... This is a callback to all of these statements about what qualifies a man to be a pastor.

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

It means that his wife has to be submissive to him. He has to be married and he has to be-

C Stroop:

Has but one wife, no-

Eve:

One wife-

C Stroop:

No rebellious children-



Eve:

So if any of his kids are gay-

Kieryn:

Oh my God. I just realized I disqualified my dad from being a pastor.

C Stroop:

Yes.

Kieryn:

By existing.

Eve:

Oh my goodness, I'm so proud of you-

Kieryn:

I'm so proud of myself right now. Okay. My day got better.

Eve:

Okay. "So qualified men alone are to lead as pastors, elders, bishops, and preach to and teach the whole congregation. We further affirm that the image of God is expressed most fully and beautifully in human society when men and women walk in obedience to their God-ordained roles and serve according to their God-given gifts."

Kieryn:

Which we all know what this means, right?

Eve:

Yeah. Why don't you break it down?

Kieryn:

Yeah. So women are to be homemakers who raise their children and serve their man and are available to him whenever he wants. And men are just basically supposed to be the providers and whatever.

C Stroop:

I was recently interviewing a historian of international adoption who looked at how Holt International came about after the Korean war, and it was the first organization to really institutionalize international adoption in the United States. And she told me about looking at their original application form to adopt a child from Korea and there's so much complicated stuff here but I'll just focus on... there's just a whole lot of really weird details. But I'll just focus on this, the application form is half a page long. It wanted the husband's name and job, the wife's name without job because she was obviously supposed to be a homemaker. And then the rest of it they were just supposed to write about their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and if Holt liked it, here's a child from Korea.

Kieryn:  
Holy shit.

C Stroop:  
Who doesn't have American citizenship and won't get it because that was a loophole in the law that wasn't fixed until this century, and it's not even totally fixed yet.

Kieryn:  
Oh my God.

Eve:  
Let me just pour one out for all of the dead children from that law. So the other thing that this reminds me of is C.J. Mahaney, the co-founder of Sovereign Grace Ministries, or now Sovereign Grace Churches, the church group that I grew up in. And when he wrote his book on marriage, there's a section where he talks about the women must make themselves available to their men at all times. And he has this aside where he talked about it.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:56:04]

Eve:  
Side where he talks about. He talked about it in so many sermons. I've heard this man say these words so many times, where he talks about how his wife had hip surgery.

Kieryn:  
Oh my God.

Eve:  
And never denied him his needs.

C Stroop:  
Wow. He's an asshole.

Kieryn:  
That is so gross.

C Stroop:  
And yet they're shocked that-

Eve:  
And everybody's like-

C Stroop:  
Abuse is prevalent in these churches.

Eve:

And everybody's like, "Wow, Carolyn is such a hero with the faith."

Kieryn:

Oh my God.

Eve:

And he's like, "My wife, who's beautiful. And I, whom I do not deserve." And we're like, "No shit." Okay, Emily, you want to read the we deny section.

Emily Maust Wood:

We deny that the God ordained differences in men's and women's roles disparage the inherent spiritual worth or value of one over the other, nor did those differences, in any way, inhibit either men or women from flourishing for the glory of God.

Eve:

What the hell does that mean?

Emily Maust Wood:

What?

Eve:

Is that even a sentence.

C Stroop:

When they want to control people it's always for their own good, it's for human flourishing.

Eve:

Oh, right. So it's like bonsai trees that can only flourish if they've been broken and bound to each other?

C Stroop:

We're all not flourishing. Just so you know.

Eve:

My life-

Emily Maust Wood:

You're lying if you say you're not.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

My life sucks so much now that I'm not in the church and not having daily migraines and panic attacks and stuff. It's great.

C Stroop:

Now that I have guilt-free masturbation.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

It's been-

Eve:

Yeah, now I can have sex whenever I want, if I want it. And it's awesome. Except I don't exist.

Kieryn:

Right. It's great being [crosstalk 00:57:42]

Eve:

I thought you were experiencing being back in your body, Kieryn.

Kieryn:

I thought I was too and then I read this [crosstalk 00:57:49] and apparently I'm not.

C Stroop:

Well as Tori Amos said-

Kieryn:

What is reality?

C Stroop:

The happy phantom has no right to bitch.

Eve:

All right. So point seven, race and ethnicity.

C Stroop:

Oh boy.

Kieryn:

Oh God.

Eve:

Who wants to read this pile of steaming crap?

Kieryn:

Emily hasn't read yet or has but very shortly.

Emily Maust Wood:

I don't know if I want like a recording of my voice saying these words.

Emily Maust Wood:

We affirm God made all people from one man. Though people often can be distinguished by different ethnicities and nationalities. They're ontological equals before God, both in both creation and redemption. Race, in quotations, is not a biblical category but rather a social construct that often has been used to classify groups of people in terms of inferiority and superiority. All that is good, honest, just and beautiful and various ethnic backgrounds and experiences can be celebrated as the fruit of God's grace. All sinful actions and their results, including evils perpetrated between and upon ethnic groups by others are to be confessed as sinful, repented of and repudiated. [crosstalk 00:03:04].

C Stroop:

Except for genocide. It's like God ordained and-

Eve:

But we're not supposed to repent the sins of our fathers.

Kieryn:

Yeah but this is an entirely separate point. So that one doesn't apply.

Emily Maust Wood:

It's on a different slide.

Eve:

No, but it's the same thing!

Emily Maust Wood:

A new slide over.

Kieryn:

Yeah. Yeah.

Eve:

Oh, but racist-

Kieryn:

Only some of them [crosstalk 00:59:20] and the other ones don't.

Eve:

I was admiring the beauty of the weaving of this statement before and I resent all those remarks.

C Stroop:

But this is definitely an interesting example of their appropriation of that use of language. Like social construct because for them that's like, "Yes, all lives matter."

Eve:

Yeah. Ethnic backgrounds can be celebrated as the fruit of God's grace but we all sin. So let's repent of it and wipe the slate clean.

Kieryn:

Yeah. We'll just forget all of the bad things that happened. It's fine.

Eve:

I love that race is not a biblical category, even though it's absolutely in the Bible. Like it is something that is talked about a whole lot and was used during the Civil War to justify race-based slavery.

C Stroop:

You can argue that of course, in the historical context, in the ancient world, they didn't have exactly the same concept of race as was developed through The Enlightenment and then developed in the horrible race science of the 19th Century and so forth.

Eve:

Right.

C Stroop:

Which is what we have the legacy of.

Eve:

Which is why no Southern Baptist can sign the statement because otherwise they'd be having to go back on the reasons that the Southern Baptist church exists.

Kieryn:

Fascinating. I forgot about that.

Eve:

If a Southern Baptist signs a statement will he exist afterwards?

Kieryn:

No, he'll be in the ether like we are.

Eve:

Does that mean they'll be queer?

Kieryn:  
Probably.

C Stroop:  
Gayness is catching you know.

Eve:  
Watch out Emily.

Kieryn:  
You might catch it.

Eve:  
All right. We deny.

Kieryn:  
We deny that Christians should segregate themselves into racial groups or regard racial identity above or even equal to their identity in Christ. We deny that any divisions between groups of people from unstated attitude of superiority to an overt spirit of resentment, have any legitimate place in the fellowship of the redeemed. We reject any teaching that encourages racial groups to view themselves as privileged oppressors or entitled victims of oppression. While we are to weep with those who weep, we deny that a person's feelings of offense or oppression necessarily prove that someone else is guilty of sinful behaviors, oppression, or prejudice.

C Stroop:  
They finally tell us how they really feel.

Eve:  
So how much do you think that they paid [Voddie Baucham 01:01:45] them to sign this statement as a black man?

Kieryn:  
He's their token black dude friend is like, "Look, our black friend."

C Stroop:  
But Trump has like five black pastors.

Eve:  
And Ben Carson.

Kieryn:  
I feel like everyone has their token person, like the token gay, the token trans, the token black friend.

Eve:

Is it still true? I remember hearing this statistic in the '90s but I don't know if that's actually the case today, but is it still true that Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America?

C Stroop:

As far as I know.

Emily Maust Wood:

Pretty much, yeah.

Eve:

So let's talk about that because that's a clear... Christians do segregate themselves into racial groups.

Kieryn:

Yes, on Sunday.

C Stroop:

Nothing from an unstated attitude of superiority to an overt spirit of resentment. So they're saying, "Okay, we white people shouldn't think we're superior because we're white. We're just superior because we're more Christian than other people." But you know, this overt spirit of resentment is obviously targeted at people who are seeking racial justice.

Kieryn:

Yep.

Eve:

I just think is such a silly anecdote, but I just keep thinking about Aretha Franklin's ongoing service and how little I saw about it on social media, from white Christians. All of the people of color who I follow on social media were tweeting about it and posting about it and commentating and grandstanding and live watching and they were present for that. And the white people didn't pay attention at all. And that's just like a clear illustration of how racially divided the church in America is. And that's just our most recent factual evidence of it. So if all these white guys are making the statement, what are they trying to absolve themselves of?

C Stroop:

Being Southern Baptists. Which is perfectly good, nice thing to be. Who cares that it was founded on the right of missionaries to be slave owners or slave owners to be missionaries.

Eve:

I love that they're using the term social construct again to describe race. I mean they're not wrong. Racism is a social construct that is incredibly deeply ingrained in our society and systemically reinforced and must be fought against in order to change. But I guess if Jesus likes you then it doesn't matter. So like that's the fix you need.



Emily Maust Wood:

Right.

Kieryn:

Right.

C Stroop:

It's interesting they use that in the affirm section but then in the deny section they dispense with privilege. There's no such thing as this privilege.

Kieryn:

Yeah, it's not [inaudible 01:04:41]

Eve:

But they used the term privilege before in the statement. In other statements they've talked about privilege and use that term as a real term. How is this different? Why is this different?

C Stroop:

Because white people don't have privilege, stop it.

Kieryn:

It reads to me an awful lot like they're trying to absolve themselves of something.

C Stroop:

Without admitting that they have anything to absolve of.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

Right, without admitting they had fault. Yeah.

C Stroop:

Yeah.

Eve:

Me think the lady doth protest too much.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right, it's finally-

Kieryn:

We're not racist. The people who are angry at us for being racist are racist.

C Stroop:

We deny that a person's feelings of offense or oppression necessarily prove that someone else is guilty of sinful behaviors, oppression or prejudice.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right.

Kieryn:

So if you think someone's being racist to you, that doesn't mean they're racist. Is basically what they're saying.

Emily Maust Wood:

I was just going to say, these are the people that demand that other people perform their trauma for them. Like prove to me that these things have happened to you so that I can take you seriously and think about doing something for you.

C Stroop:

And then they reject all the evidence that is submitted. They moved the goalposts.

Eve:

Emily, I know this is... If you're not comfortable talking about this don't, but I know this is something that you've had to deal with a lot lately with your Lyme diagnosis and with something as mild as that, how do you feel? What kind of things have you experienced that make you see this in an interesting light?

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. So even as someone with a decent amount of privilege and social capital, if you show up and say, "This thing is wrong, or people are hurting me or this thing's hurting me and I need your help." People demand that you explain everything to them. And it's just this emotional... I just leave those encounters feeling so drained and it's just kind of stress that it gets stuck in your body, you know what I mean? And just your whole body reacts to it. And I think that's, for me, just such a tiny picture into what people have lived with their whole lives. And for me, this has been what, 15 months? But this is like grating on me and for other people, it's been their whole lives.

Eve:

Right and that's your experience as a college educated white woman.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. And if I-

Eve:

In a church that accepts you as someone who's on the worship team and involved and committed. And your parents have been there and you've proven your commitment, you're not new.

Emily Maust Wood:

And with a decent amount of over the counter pain meds, I can show up as someone without an illness.

Eve:

Yeah. You can pass as normal.

Emily Maust Wood:

I can numb it right to perform.

Eve:

Yeah. So if that's the case for someone like you, how much worse does it get? The further you get into this? This is what my whole op-ed on divorce was about where it's these churches require abused women, abused partners, to prove their abuse and to prove the validity of their pain. And to perform their pain for other people in order to be recognized as being worthy of a, quote unquote, biblical divorce-

Emily Maust Wood:

Right, this sentence, oh sorry.

Eve:

That's just cruel and unfair.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right? This sentence basically says that Jesus thinks that the default position of the church should be skepticism toward people who say they're being hurt, especially by the church.

Kieryn:

Which is like so not the thing that Jesus actually exemplified at all.

Eve:

So what did Jesus actually exemplify? Let's just remind ourselves for a second. What did Jesus-

Kieryn:

He was the dude who saw people stoning a woman and stood up for her.

Eve:

He was the guy who had a Samaritan woman saying "My kids are hungry." And he was the guy who had a woman say, "I'm bleeding for 12 years" and healed her. And the guy who, an oppressor came to him and was like, "My man servant is dying." And he healed the man's servant, he was helping these people.

C Stroop:

Okay, I'm going to be a buzz kill here and say that also-

Eve:

Please be a buzzkill.

C Stroop:

Is said to have said things like, "Let dead bury their own dead." And, "Anyone who does not hate his mother and brother can not follow me." Called a Samaritan woman, a dog, though then she kind of shamed him and he kind of was like, "Oh yeah, I guess even the dogs do eat the crumbs and I feel bad now." But the Jesus of the gospel, there's no way he's sinless. That's bullshit.

Kieryn:

No.

Eve:

No but the thing is he would have had a problem with this statement.

C Stroop:

Probably. I mean, the Jesus of the gospels, bracketing the historical Jesus, I suppose so. But I still think that guy had an authoritarian streak and he totally could have gone in a Jim Jones direction given enough time.

Eve:

Sign in happiness kids.

Kieryn:

Great.

Eve:

Okay. So with the next point, culture. What does the culture?

C Stroop:

We affirmed that some cultures operate under assumptions that are inherently better than those of other cultures because of the biblical truth that informed those worlds views that have produced these distinct assumptions.

Eve:

Wait, so white supremacy is biblical basically.

C Stroop:

I mean, European civilization is just subjectively Christian so it's better. It's not because Europeans deserved it. It's just because they believed.

Kieryn:

We got to the end.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right.

Kieryn:

Obviously.

Eve:

Like America is the new Israel, God's city on a hill. They're the 13th tribe. It's fine you guys.

C Stroop:

Those elements of a given culture that reflect divine revelation should be celebrated and promoted. So wear a sombrero for Cinco de Mayo. Okay, I put that part in. But the various cultures out at which we have been called, all have features that are worldly and sinful. And therefore those sinful things-

Eve:

Like premarital sex.

C Stroop:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

I mean.

C Stroop:

And not wearing clothes sometimes.

Eve:

Oh tits. [inaudible 01:11:09] got her tits.

Kieryn:

Bodies are terrifying.

C Stroop:

And therefore those sinful features should be repudiated for the honor of Christ. We affirmed that whatever evil influences to which we've been subjected via our culture can be and must be overcome through conversion and the training of both mind and heart through biblical truth.

Eve:

So basically a colonialist British Empire is the ideal we should all be striving for.

C Stroop:

I mean, there's a reason that Justin Peters calls the former, police terrorists, anti-terrorist unit Rhodesian guy, his African American friend. Right.

Eve:

This man is white, let us just emphasize this point. This man is white. Okay. We deny that individuals and subgroups in any culture are unable, by God's grace, to rise above whatever moral defects or spiritual deficiencies that have been engendered or encouraged by their respected cultures. It's like they all have iron deficiencies or something.

C Stroop:

See if Rhodesia had just been allowed to keep being Rhodesia, all those white Christians there would finally have converted all those black communists.

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah. Those communists they're trouble.

Eve:

I think that also if we just give the Salvation Army enough clothes and they give it to missionary groups, then nobody will be nude in the Ecuadorian regions. And cause climate change isn't real, none of us are going to be suffering from heat anyway. And clothes are totally, morally the high ground.

Kieryn:

Clothes are very important. People could stumble. Can you imagine the damage to people's purity?

Eve:

I mean, nobody wants to go to hell, the real party's there.

C Stroop:

I don't know. It sounds a lot better than heaven from what I've read.

Eve:

Okay. So like evil influences, we have been subjected via our culture like spiritual deficiencies, moral defects. We've all been joking about these things, but can you bring to mind anything politically relevant that they might be talking about? What are they referring to?

Kieryn:

A lot of it they think that people who have abortions are morally deficient, they think that queer people are morally deficient, they think that trans people are morally deficient. Anyone who deviates from their cis-hetero normative, very evangelical Christian ideal.

Eve:

Oh, so this is opening the door for people like Mary Pride who were ex-feminists to come into the fold.

Kieryn:

Yes. Cause if you're willing to drop all of that then you know, fine. But you have to be, chaste and celibate and never be queer or anything.

Eve:

Okay.

C Stroop:

Yeah. She actually wrote that there's no justification for the state ever taking anyone's children away.

Eve:

Mary Pride?

C Stroop:

Yeah. No matter whether abuse is present or not.

Kieryn:

Oh my God.

Eve:

Wait, Mary Pride is returning to her feminist roots? Let me clutch my pearls. Oh no. I left them at my husband's house a long time ago.

Kieryn:

Oh no, what are you going to do?

Eve:

I don't know. That's interesting. It's funny because I think the border crisis with the children being kept in cages is something that preys on the heartstrings of the women who have been advocating for pro-life measures for a long time. And so is going to rub evangelical women the wrong way. I think, that given the like well-established trends of complementarianism and submission that there'll be shut up, but it's good that they care. I think. They don't really care, it just makes them feel uncomfy.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

Okay. Racism. We affirm that racism is a sin rooted in pride and malice and must be condemned and renounced by all who would honor the image of God and all people. Such racial sin can subtly or overtly manifest itself as racial animosity or racial vainglory.

Kieryn:

What?

Eve:

I'm just going to make a face at that word, racial vainglory.

Kieryn:

Is that a real word?

Eve:

Vainglory?

C Stroop:

I kinda like the word vainglory.

Eve:

It's a great word but they're not referring to Nazis with racial vainglory and they should be.

C Stroop:

Yeah. I mean, I do not think it means what they think it means.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I feel like that's not the correct... I don't think they're using it right.

Eve:

Okay. Such sinful prejudice or partiality falls short of God's revealed will and violates the royal rule of law, the law of love. Sorry. We affirm that virtually all cultures, including our own at times, contain laws and systems that foster racist attitudes and policies.

Kieryn:

Wow.

C Stroop:

Yeah. Sometimes black people are angry at white people. That's totally part of our culture.

Eve:

But that's not anything that we had to do with and we're not responsible for it. And the history of this country has nothing to do with it. And everything's fine racially cause you guys can fucking vote. So like shut up.

C Stroop:

That's definitely the subtext that I read in there.

Kieryn:

Yeah, that's the subtext I get too. It's like, well yeah it's this way, we know we suck sometimes, shush.

Eve:

So it's basically sloughing off the systemic history of racism onto human fallibility and saying like, "Yeah, but wouldn't you guys have done this too?"

Kieryn:



Wait, what is the systemic of what you speak [Hannah 00:01:17:28]? How do you know what's in everybody's heart?

Eve:

I don't know it's in everybody's heart but I know every cop believes in it. All right. We deny that treating people with sinful partiality or prejudice is consistent with biblical Christianity. We deny that only those in positions of power are capable of racism or that individuals of any particular ethnic group are incapable of racism. We deny that systemic racism isn't any way compatible with the core principles of historical evangelical convictions.

C Stroop:

Sorry. No, please go on.

Eve:

I mean, they're writing the jokes not me. We deny that the Bible can be legitimately used to foster or justify partiality, prejudice or contempt toward other ethnicities. We deny that the contemporary evangelical movement has any deliberate agenda to elevate one ethnic group and subjugate another. What?

Kieryn:

Well, right because it's not ethnic, it's religious. [crosstalk 01:18:35]

C Stroop:

The black people are all leaving their churches because they voted for Donald Trump.

Eve:

We have Voddie Baucham and Ben Carson it's fine.

Kieryn:

Right? It's fine.

Eve:

And they're not in the sunken place at all. We emphatically deny that lectures on social issues or activism aimed at reshaping the wider culture are as vital to the life and health of the church as the preaching of the gospel and exposition of scripture.

C Stroop:

Okay. That's fucking hilarious because we're always like, "The culture, you guys, the culture we have to change the culture."

Kieryn:

But also, what does that have to do with race? This entire like two sentences is just them being angry at social justice.

Eve:

Look, I just really want to have the emails that led up to this statement be leaked somewhere because this sentence is clearly throwing shade at something specific that happened behind closed doors.

Kieryn:

Yes. That entire section.

Eve:

All right. The next sentence. Historically, such things tend to become, what? Distractions that inevitably lead to departures from the gospel and all millennials leaving the church because you're hypocrites.

C Stroop:

Woo hoo.

Kieryn:

Distractions!

C Stroop:

I'm a xennial but hey.

Eve:

Okay. Represent, I guess. Okay. Break this down. We sort of started to, but this is really the point of this entire thing. Like this was-

Kieryn:

Was just leading up to here.

C Stroop:

It's getting increasingly shitty and increasingly explicit. Right? Now they're like, "Systemic racism is not a thing go away."

Eve:

This is the meat in the sandwich.

Kieryn:

Right, yeah. This is we found the lead, it was slightly buried.

C Stroop:

It's only 14 sections into a 16 section thing.

Kieryn:

Well, the next two is like an appendix. No, an addendum, sorry. And then history and information by Tom Ascol.

C Stroop:

Oh yeah.

Kieryn:

Which, I don't really care what he has to say.

Emily Maust Wood:

But what does that say?

C Stroop:

You guys, I met with 13 men in a coffee shop. This is important.

Kieryn:

Yeah. Well, I mean, no [crosstalk 01:21:03]

Eve:

Are you Jesus and his 14 apostles?

Kieryn:

14 men in Herb's House coffee shop in Dallas, Texas.

Emily Maust Wood:

This is the second communion.

Eve:

The second last supper.

Emily Maust Wood:

Second last supper.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

C Stroop:

Well they're all going to die on this hill.

Kieryn:

This is the one right before the [crosstalk 01:21:20] apocalypse but they think the tribulation is coming next. Yeah. But oh my God, they're basically just like, "One, we think that basically stop calling us racist." We're not racist, stop calling us racist is basically what this can be summarized into. Surely thinks systemic racism is not compatible with the gospel but that doesn't exist so it's fine.

Eve:

Sure we think that like abuse is not compatible with the gospel, but it can exist. So it's fine. [crosstalk 01:22:07] If such a thing were to happen in our midst, we would clearly stand up for it.

C Stroop:

But the people speaking out are the problem.

Eve:

The people speaking out are angry and anger is a sin.

Emily Maust Wood:

That's kind of an old trick.

Kieryn:

And bitterness is the worst sin. And can you really trust anything anyone says when they're angry and bitter?

C Stroop:

Except all sins are also equal so therefore your anger cancels out my abuse. The End.

Eve:

Emily, what were you going to say?

Emily Maust Wood:

I just going to say, it's such an old trick to say that the people who are talking about their pain are the people who are causing pain. You like step on someone and then when they complain about it, you're like, "Well, it was peaceful here until you said something."

Kieryn:

Yeah, that's exactly what's happening.

Emily Maust Wood:

It seemed to be the whole page is just... I don't care what their intentions are at this point. It's just a mass gaslighting and then saying, "And if we addressed the fact that you're hurting, it would be a distraction for the church."

C Stroop:

[inaudible 01:23:02] are original. Very wow. So surprised.

Kieryn:

This is my shocked face.

Eve:

All right, so we have gone through this whole thing. And I think it's interesting that they put that racism bit at the end. It's clearly the thrust of this entire thing. And they're clearly counting on people to read

through the first five sections of it and be like, "All my friends are signing so I'm going to sign too. Cause I've gotta take a stand for the church cause we are the most [crosstalk 01:23:33] persecuted group in America. So I'm going to post this on Facebook and get people to sign." And like nobody reads through it and understands the context.

C Stroop:

Who's gonna read all those scrolls of text. Just like sign because it's cool. Cause all your friends...  
[Crosstalk 01:23:44]

Eve:

Only people-

Kieryn:

And the people who do read all the way through and sign are the ones that were already there to begin with.

Eve:

Has anybody recognized anyone who signed it?

Kieryn:

I keep searching for my parents. I haven't seen them yet.

Eve:

I keep searching for various exes. Nobody's signed it yet, which is.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:24:04]

Kieryn:

[inaudible 01:24:00]

Eve:

I keep searching for various exes. Nobody's signed it yet, which is good-

C Stroop:

I recognize [crosstalk 01:24:05].

Eve:

... because I feel like that means that I have an influence.

C Stroop:

I recognized Biggus Dickus and-

Eve:

Who is Biggus Dickus?

C Stroop:

No, I mean some of these troll signatures are-

Eve:

Didn't [Lucifer Dong Branger 01:24:16] also sign it?

C Stroop:

And you all are gay and...

Eve:

And then [Hugh Jerection 01:24:24]?

C Stroop:

Yeah.

Eve:

We don't necessarily endorse troll-signing this.

C Stroop:

I do.

Eve:

But we're not going to say anything if you do.

Kieryn:

Oh my god.

C Stroop:

But no, I did not recognize anyone that I actually know so far.

Eve:

Okay. I guess that's a mercy of some kind.

Kieryn:

And it seems to have topped out at 47-40 so far. This morning when I was checking it, I was checking it in math and it was still going up, like every time I refreshed, and I was horrified.

Eve:

Guys, the village I lived in, in Kyrgyzstan, was like 9,000 people.

Kieryn:

Oh my god.

Eve:

That's so few people.

C Stroop:

They seem to have deleted a lot of the troll signatures as well. So I think they kind of got on top of that.

Eve:

Oh, RIP. Okay. So let's-

Kieryn:

I mean, I guess it was on the internet for like a day. They learned.

Eve:

Let's turn to this from a different perspective. I know a lot of, like me, Karen, and Chris are all post-Christian in our experiences of spirituality and our ourselves in the world. Emily, you're still a Christian. Reading this, what does this make you feel? How do you respond to this? What do you wish people knew about your faith and the statement?

Emily Maust Wood:

Well, it's interesting timing. Isn't it? It's finally starting to become sort of unfashionable to sidestep issues of social justice in evangelical circles. And, I don't know. I can't guess at people's intentions exactly, but it's interesting that they're pivoting from defense to offense and saying not just that it's okay that we're not addressing people's pain, but we're actually better Christians for it. So that is unsurprising, but disheartening. Good to see that there aren't that many people assigning onto this one, I guess.

Eve:

Yeah. How do you see this connecting with the Trump administration right now, and Pence's role in it, and his position as a conservative Christian who is supposedly with high morals?

Emily Maust Wood:

Well, I think that this piece is... I mean, it seems respectable. Right? Like they went through all of these pretty basic... this format of giving the affirmations and then denials. It's just kind of walking your way through it and getting people ready, and then just dropping this bomb at the end. But the whole way through just having... It's just a respectable version of the same kind of thing that's been simmering here for, what, centuries. Right? So if you can say a horrible thing nicely, it's okay. Right?

Eve:

Do you think this is a statement that many of your friends or people in your community would sign or even consider signing? Do you think they know the difference? Can they see through it?

Emily Maust Wood:

I hope so. That's a good question. It depends. I'm sort of straddling a lot of worlds right now. So I think that some of them will see this, the same people who would see, say, colorblindness as the best posture

to take would possibly sign onto something like this thing saying, "We're all equal. And, so therefore your differing experience is irrelevant, or untrue, or can be dismissed, or should be dismissed, so that we can be equals." Right?

Eve:

Right.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Emily Maust Wood:

You have to defend the illusion in order to preserve an image of relative peacefulness for you. Right?

Eve:

So peacefulness seems to be the thing that they value. And I think that, what this is, the statement seems to be reacting to is a lot of anger on the behalf of oppressed minorities in the church who are starting to talk about their experiences. And the church... and, hey, my experience seems to be allergic to anger. And, so is that your experience too? Do you feel like that's true to what you see?

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah, it's interesting. So a lot of people are sort of neutral to my work, and when I talk about it, because I kind of came out of the womb having a problem with everything and fixing things. So it's kind of like carrying an inordinate amount, apparently, is my MO. So most people can brush me off until I start naming instances of injustice or daring to suggest maybe something that you do could make life better for somebody else, and maybe you were supposed to do that thing. And then that becomes difficult for them.

Eve:

Let me contextualize Emily for a second here for everybody. One of my first internships during college was for crosswalk.com. I was helping manage some of their backend media staff, and they were looking for people to write book reviews and articles. And there was this one book that, I forget who wrote it, but it was this short little book about social justice and being a Christian.

Emily Maust Wood:

I think it was Everyday Justice. I think it was for the quad actually.

Eve:

Yeah, it was everyday justice.

Emily Maust Wood:

Can't remember.

Eve:



And the one thing that she talked about, which she talked about three or four different things, but one of them was about how all of these chocolate companies are employing child slaves. And that's fairly commonly known in your more liberal circles, but what homeschool evangelical mom is going to stop buying Nestle at Costco?

Kieryn:

Yeah. No.

Eve:

And I was looking for someone to do a review of this book cause I was assigned to, and I was like, Emily. Emily is the person who's going to be appropriately angry about this, to write this review, to talk about this.

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

And I feel like that's kind of going back to what you were saying about how it can kind of seem reasonable to some people, at least in the first part. I think that's what's so insidious about it is they put all of the more kind of reasonable-seeming stuff out in the front. And if you don't already know, it seems reasonable and pretty straightforward if you're coming at it from a perspective of being reasonable. If you come at it from a perspective of being a reasonable person, you're like, "Well, sure. Yeah." Like, "Race doesn't matter. I love you equally. It's fine." And it seems embracing, but it's not.

Eve:

Kieryn, like the version of us that signed the whole modesty survey agreement-

Kieryn:

Yeah. Yeah.

Eve:

... would have signed this.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

We would have signed this at 15 and 16 for sure.

Kieryn:

Because it seemed like we were saying, "Yeah. Like, you have experiences, but, like, we're all the same when it comes to God." But what it's actually saying is different.

Eve:

And what we also thought we were saying about that in particular was like, "You shouldn't be sexualizing us." And like, "Modesty is important, but it's also your responsibility," but that's not what it was saying at all. And, so this, it's, again, that you get these moments of convoluted logic and language that, if you look at one piece of it, you would totally agree with it, but you have to read the whole thing. And if you're just skimming it, you're just going to sign on and not even think about it.

C Stroop:

It's remarkable how explicit it does get by the end, but it really takes some time to build up to that. It's also remarkable to me how little they directly reference scripture. I mean, they've got all those scripture references on the bottom that you can go look up. Right? But mostly they're not, it's-

Eve:

But what actual theologian would affirm that those scriptures mean the things that they're connecting them to? Those are not real footnotes.

C Stroop:

R. C. Sproul?

Eve:

Yeah.

C Stroop:

Just a guess.

Eve:

I don't think... You know, in my experience R. C. Sproul doesn't exist. It's fine. Now, okay. So, Emily, when you talk about your job with other Christians, when you tell them you work with development for NGOs, and you talk about these social justice issues that you're so passionate about, what kind of response do you get? The defensive tone of the statement makes me assume that everybody in the church is just walking on eggshells around people who care about social justice. Is that your experience?

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah. I mean, for the most parts there are some things that I feel uncomfortable talking about, or I think that [crosstalk 01:33:40].

Eve:

Can you define neutrality? You mentioned neutrality seems to be the goal.

Emily Maust Wood:

Well, like I said earlier... Right. So it's the commitment to not knowing. Right? So I can sort of allude to kind of a problem that I'm addressing at work, but if I get really specific, or I implicate that a decision they're making, like buying Costco chocolate, or supporting, say, policies that would deny healthcare to poor people, then that's-

Eve:

Or trying to make your church facility accessible to disabled people.

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah. Right. Right. So those kinds of... You start to get pushback as soon as you start suggesting that you shouldn't actually be doing something. Which is odd, because, I mean, this is exactly what this statement is lining up, isn't it though, that, "Yes, these things are problems. But if we were to do something about it, it would be distracting from the real work, or, like, not even work, the status of being a believer." Right?

Eve:

I feel that's even the most benign way to interpret it. And a less benign or generous reading would be, "These problems are all coming from those other people, not us."

Emily Maust Wood:

Right.

Kieryn:

Yeah. It is interesting, because it is kind of victim-blamey, where it's like-

Emily Maust Wood:

Yeah. For sure.

Kieryn:

... "Well, the people who are, like, bringing attention to these really should not be." Is sort of the implication in some places.

Eve:

Okay.

C Stroop:

Hashtag how to evangelical.

Eve:

So, assuming that you're a Christian who takes beef with a statement and thinks that social justice issues are valuable, what would you recommend they do to educate themselves, to become aware, to counteract the statement, to counterbalance the statement? What would you say to people who want to care, but see this going around in their communities and don't know what to say?

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. I've asked myself that every day with some form of this. So sometimes when these statements are released, there's a counterstatement by church leaders who disagree. But the thing about a statement like this is that it's anti social justice. So, the people who are going to disagree with it are already out there disagreeing by being busy, doing social justice things. So I'm not sure whether to expect a formal response in that sense, but...

Emily Maust Wood:

I mean, it sounds simple, but just keep making noise. Figure out you can be angry, and you can be a rebel, and you can figure out what kind of approach works with your people. Try to figure out how to be a good advocate and ally. But I do think that a lot of people watching, a lot of Christian people, possibly younger people predominantly, they do sense that something's wrong. They're seeing it. And they need information. They need someone else to just stand up and say no to these kinds of things. And they need to start learning. Right? Subscribe to newsletters by marginalized people and follow people on Instagram, and don't say anything for, like, three, twelve months. Just listen for a while and [crosstalk 01:36:52].

Eve:

Follow Black Twitter and listen.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Emily Maust Wood:

And then, yes, and don't say anything.

Eve:

I will just follow up on that with a comment for our listeners who grew up in the evangelical. We've been trained to see anger as something to be afraid of and something that's toxic and dangerous. And from my own experience, I love anger so much as an emotion. It's one of my most controlled emotions. But the reason I love anger is because it's the canary in a coal mine. It's the moment when-

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

... I get angry, and I don't know why, I need to examine why. In psychological terms it's a secondary emotion. It means that it's covering up for some other emotion that I've been ignoring. And so, when I'm angry about something, I need to examine why. And usually it's a signal to protect myself. It's a signal to get safe. It's a signal that something's wrong, and I need to pay attention. And so if you are feeling angry about this statement, if you were experiencing anger about how your church is responding to social justice issues, listen to that. Trust your gut there, go beyond the anger, and look at the underlying emotions. What are you afraid of? What are you protective of? What are you feeling? And listen to that and examine them.

C Stroop:

Yeah. Anger, conflict, doubt, all those things you're supposed to press down in evangelical subculture. Right? Conflict is supposed to be avoided at all costs. Doubt is an immediate threat to your entire identity and ego, and it's going to be a source of conflict if you talk about it. So you don't talk about it. And you pretend it doesn't exist.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. And that makes you incapable of holding any space for someone else's anger. I talked to a lot of white people who, when they finally realize what's been happening in front of them, they feel that anger and that grief, and they ask me how to get rid of it, like how to just siphon it off. Like, "No." Like, "This is, like, your first step. Like you were, like, just beginning. This is, like, nascent steps you have to take if you're going to walk through it."

Eve:

This is the raid siren.

Kieryn:

You have to sit with it.

Eve:

This is the raid siren. You have to respond.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Emily Maust Wood:

Right. But you're right. If you don't know what to do with anger or grief, it's terrifying, because you don't have coping mechanisms. Right?

Eve:

The church doesn't give space for it.

Emily Maust Wood:

Even have space for your own. No.

Kieryn:

No.

Eve:

And I think that's what the statement is really about. This is a way for the evangelical church to see the grief and anger of the people who have been hurt within the church who really want to stay in the church and are talking to their leaders and are asking for help and support. And this is their way of shutting them down.

C Stroop:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

This is their way of doubling down on all of the oppressions that have hurt these people. And so, if you are someone who is responding to the statement by trying to get the help from your leaders, look at the power differentials, look at the money, look at what you're not allowed to talk about, and get the hell out of there if they're not listening to you. Because your experiences are valid.

C Stroop:

Hashtag empty the pews. But yeah. I mean, I think that that's exactly right. This is the moment of church to... It's a moment of pretty intense confrontation. I mean, we've been using hashtag campaigns like empty the pews in church to draw attention to abuses and evangelicalism. It's also a moment in which there have been a number of reports of African Americans leaving predominantly white churches or churches with white pastors when they get shut down, wanting to talk about racism and wanting to talk about how they feel about all these white evangelicals supporting Donald Trump. And they don't, of course, want to have to face any of that. So they produce statements like this, which Justin Peters would like to remind us, he didn't want to do it. He had to-

Kieryn:

We made him. Yeah.

C Stroop:

... for the gospel.

Kieryn:

We made him by existing. Really. We forced his hand on it.

Eve:

Yeah. And I think this is part of why, I'm just going out on a limb here, people like Emily who have a heritage of Anabaptist roots... The Anabaptists were founded in protest to oppression. There've been some bad actors like [Yoder 01:41:39] in these groups. But their heritage is civil disobedience and passive unrest and resisting abuses of authority. And so these are the people we need to be looking to. These are the heritages that we have in the church, that if we want to look for examples, historical examples, of how to resist oppression and how to act well as Christians, these examples exist. You just need to look for them. But people like the Southern Baptist church that doubled down on racism, and that's why they exist, are not the places to look for that.

Kieryn:

God, no. I think that's what makes me the most angry as a former Christian is seeing this still happen and seeing people sign things like this that are just objectively racist, objectively against queer people. It gets really obvious. And that is just not representative of what I understood Jesus to be. And it makes me really angry. Even though I'm not a Christian anymore, it still makes me angry.

C Stroop:

Yeah. I mean, I also tried arguing for a more inclusive, progressive Christianity from the inside. Right? Because that's how Jesus also seemed to me. But now I'm like, Jesus could have been Jim Jones.

Kieryn:

Right. That's the other thing too.

Eve:

I try to, if you look at the records of my old blog, Wine & Marble, I tried to stay within the faith. And I still think that there's a possible feminist interpretation of the scriptures. Just-

Kieryn:

I love the queer Christians-

C Stroop:

Womanists, liberationists, [crosstalk 01:43:34].

Kieryn:

... who are doing Christian things. I don't-

Eve:

Yeah. Liberation theology. Yeah, there is a legitimate academic canon of work for people who are trying to incorporate these kinds of ideas and trying to decolonize the church. It's possible, but it's really, really hard, and I really just didn't have the mental health spoons to keep doing that.

C Stroop:

I mean, certainly coming from a typical-

Kieryn:

I appreciate everyone who's doing that work, but I cannot.

C Stroop:

Same.

Eve:

Sorry. You both said the same thing at the same time.

C Stroop:

But, I mean, when I watched the liturgy for Reverend Pinckney, who was gunned down by Dylann Roof, and watched this expression of Black Christianity, I mean, that was a beautiful and very moving thing. So when you see that kind of Christianity, I mean, it's impressive.

Eve:

It's possible. It really is possible. There are so many marvelous, liberal theologians who have set an example for social justice activism to exist within the faith, in the faith context. And it's just so disappointing to me to see people doubling down on the literal interpretation of scripture as the limiting point to their ability to bring in other people to the faith. That's where this all starts. It's like, interpreting the Bible literally as opposed to using higher criticism, seeing it as a historical document, these arguments have been happening since the end of the Renaissance. This is not new stuff, and we're still

debating about it, and still using it to justify racism, and still using it to justify oppression of minorities. And, I'm sorry, but a lot has happened in the world since then. Can we just get our shit together?

C Stroop:

Well, Saint Augustine, who was a complete asshole and really obsessed with sex, didn't even believe that the seven days of creation were seven literal days. That is a fundamentalist response to modernity.

Kieryn:

Yep.

Eve:

And this gets back to the original point. The ahistorical nature of American Christianity, where it thinks that it's privileged enough to exist within a vacuum. And it doesn't have to reference history or pitfalls in the church before them, or anyone who might come after them, and abuses the theology of the priesthood of the believer to just consider themselves in their individual actions and abstain from participating in any larger movements or any larger concerns in terms of oppression, or bias, or privilege. It's really toxic, and it's just going to hurt. I mean, it is hurting the church, and it's going to continue hurting the church. And this is why people like us are leaving the church.

C Stroop:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And, I mean, when it comes to trying to do a justice from within the church, personally I just got really burnt out on having to couch everything in theological language when really we should just be able to appeal to our common fundamental humanity.

Eve:

I was happy to couch everything in theological language, but they wouldn't listen to me from the get, because I was a woman.

C Stroop:

Yeah. Well, I mean, they didn't listen to me either, but obviously they were more likely to, because I was read as male.

Eve:

The odds were good, but the goods were odd.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

C Stroop:

Well, that's always... Yeah, well...

Eve:

All right. I'm going to credit to my younger sister for that phrase. And thank you guys for all joining us. I know this has gone long. I know you guys have listened through a lot. It's a slog, and this is a deep dive,



and thank you Emily and Chris for your time. Hopefully we'll be able to have you guys back at some point.

Emily Maust Wood:

Thanks Hannah.

Kieryn:

It was so good having you on. It was great.

C Stroop:

Thanks Karen. Thanks Hannah. I really enjoyed joining you all tonight, and thank you as well, Emily, for... It was nice to connect with all of you. So, yeah.

Emily Maust Wood:

Thanks everybody.

Kieryn:

Check out our podcast next week. Join us on Patreon. Subscribe all the things.

Eve:

Karen and I will be following up on their paper and talking about educational neglect in homeschooling.

Kieryn:

Should be exciting.

Eve:

All right.

Kieryn:

Bye.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:48:41]