

## *Courage, Clarity, and Charity: A Phoenix Declaration*

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# **Arizona Christian leaders offer definitive response to pro-gay clergy**

## **Group counters No Longer Silent with reaffirmation of traditional view**

PHOENIX—Nearly twice as many Arizona Christian leaders have signed a declaration upholding the traditional position on homosexuality as have signed an opposing declaration highlighted at a June 8 press conference.

So far, over 260 Christian leaders in Arizona, representing 149 churches and organizations, have signed “Courage, Clarity, and Charity: A Phoenix Declaration,” which upholds the traditional Christian view that homosexuality is not consistent with “God’s design for human sexuality.”

The declaration was released at the same time that the group No Longer Silent: Clergy for Justice issued their “Phoenix Declaration,” which supports the acceptance of homosexuality within the Christian faith, claiming that homosexuality is “not a sickness, not a choice, and not a sin.”

No Longer Silent’s declaration, originally issued in January 2003 but featured again at a press conference last week, currently has 141 signers, according to their web site.

The 264 signers of the “Courage, Clarity, and Charity” declaration hail from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds and include United Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Pentecostals, and many others.

“We are not sponsoring hate nor are we bigoted in calling for honesty in biblical interpretation,” said Pastor Jeffrey Niell of Emmanuel Covenant Church, co-author of the “Courage, Clarity, and Charity” declaration, responding to No Longer Silent’s claim that views contrary to its own are prejudiced and amount to a “tragic, violent, and destructive hatred.”

“Indeed, it is out of a desire to show mercy and extend grace that we call attention to the biblical warnings concerning this sin and its destructiveness to persons made in God’s image,” Niell said. “We have offered to engage in friendly dialog or debate with members of No Longer Silent, but they have been strangely silent.”

Niell encouraged Christian leaders from around the state to sign the “Courage, Clarity, and Charity” declaration if they have not already done so. “We are interested in the demonstration of a united stand for that which the Bible teaches and has been interpreted to teach for centuries,” he said.

The “Courage, Clarity, and Charity” declaration can be read and signed online at [www.phoenixdeclaration.org](http://www.phoenixdeclaration.org). The site also provides a list of the declaration’s supporters and a link to the text of No Longer Silent’s declaration.

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