

Northwest University's Student Magazine

TALON



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THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE GOES UNDER MICROSCOPE

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Photo by Johnathan Swayne



Northwest University held a symposium titled Theology of Marriage and Family, Male and Female. Pastors in the community and NU faculty joined with students to discuss marriage and family.

More than one hundred pastors and prominent church leaders from around the state met in Butterfield Chapel Tuesday to address how the Church should respond to the shift in the cultural view of marriage.

"Next to the church, the marriage and family unit is the greatest organization on earth. Just as we have a biblical theology of the church, so too exists God's theology of marriage and family," wrote Wayne Goodall, PhD, Dean of the College of Ministry at NU, in the postcard invitation to the event.

Guest speakers included Glenn Stanton, PhD, Director of Family Formation Studies at Focus on the Family and author of the book *Loving My LGBT Neighbor*, Jim Hayford, PhD, pastor at a Foursquare Church in Federal Way and Scott Dudley, PhD, pastor of Bellevue Presbyterian.

NU students were invited to attend an open forum in the evening led by a panel representing a variety of fields. The panelists were David Hymes, PhD, David Thomas, PhD, Sarah Drivdahl, PhD, Goodall and Stanton.

Campus pastor, Phil Rasmussen said, "Students are asking questions and need straight forward, informed, answers. We don't want to be a university that shies away from tough issues. The subject is on the forefront of our culture."

Panelists gave brief summaries of their respective research and knowledge of sexual identity and marriage. Hymes discussed Old Testament theology of marriage and Thomas discussed New Testament theology. Drivdahl spoke from a biological and psychological standpoint.

"We have to go back and wrestle with the fact that these are real people," Drivdahl said. "It is so easy to have these philosophical debates about things and not wrestle with the fact that we are talking about our friends and our children and people we really love and care about."

An open question and answer time began once the panelists had concluded. Students asked questions regarding gender identity, same-sex marriage, relating and ministering to LGBTQ individuals and the role of church leadership.

According to Rasmussen, the purpose of the forum was to help students be informed and give them a biblical perspective on the issue. Additionally, the forum served to bring the community together and start an open and honest conversation.

This has been the subject of many conversations at NU over the last few months as [students and faculty](#) react to a local church's public announcement of its full inclusion of LGBT staff and leaders.

"I thought it was really good and I definitely appreciated the fact that we are opening this conversation," said Alexa Lindseth, junior. "It's just something that has been so avoided."

"There was definitely a willingness and an openness to understand and a foundation of love and compassion for people of different orientations," said Isaac Lund, junior. "However, I think we spent a lot of time trying to reassure ourselves of the position of our tradition and not a lot of time talking about other opinions and perspectives that we will have to face."

While many students found the forum to be beneficial in opening the door for further discussion, some found that it did not necessarily add anything new to the conversation or challenge students with a different perspective.

Rasmussen hopes this symposium opens the door for more forums and panels in the future. "Personally I would like to see a relevant issues forum once per semester," he said. "It would be great to form a team to help organize it."

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