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# Pepperdine Faith Statement Sparks Alumni Pushback Over Marriage Views and Faculty Tenure Fears

*A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.*

**KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY**

*"Pepperdine Believes,"*

*(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)*

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

## The Story - Part One

Pepperdine University's expanded statement of faith has run into open pushback from its own faculty and alumni, weeks after it was announced. The new statement, called "Pepperdine Believes," affirms historic, orthodox Christian beliefs about human sexuality, and its FAQ says sexual relationships are "designed by God to be expressed solely within a marriage between husband and wife." Staff and former students say the wording puts jobs and tenure at risk, and the row broke into the open in November 2026, with JubileeCast reporting on the backlash on 20 November.

The statement is not a small tweak. President Jim Gash announced it on 8 October 2026, and it is the first expansion of Pepperdine's faith statement since 1970 - more than half a century in which the university's public statement of belief stayed as it was.

Pepperdine is a Christian university, and its leaders plainly wanted to put its convictions about marriage and sexuality in writing, in language nobody could mistake. The problem is that plenty of people inside the university read that language and felt it was aimed at them.

Here is the part that has calmed some nerves and inflamed others: nobody has to sign it. The university has said no member of staff or faculty is required to put their name to the statement. That should, in theory, take the sting out of it.

In practice, it has not. Faculty members say a statement can shape hiring, promotion and tenure decisions without anyone ever being asked to sign a thing - and that is exactly what they are afraid of.

### Pepperdine Believes: Marriage Views At The Centre Of The Row

Among the faculty voices raised is Prof. Joshua Bowman, a maths professor, who has pushed back against the statement. His concern, shared by colleagues, is that the university's new language on marriage and sexuality could be used to judge staff whose views or lives do not fit it.

Tenure - the job security that lets academics speak freely and teach without fear - is the heart of the worry. If a faith statement becomes a test, even an unspoken one, then the freedom that tenure is meant to protect starts to look very thin.

Alumni have joined in, too. A group calling itself "We Are Pepperdine" has pushed back on Instagram, carrying the argument beyond the campus and into the open, where former students, parents and donors can all see it.

## The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

### PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

## READ THE FULL STORY

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