



12/11/2023

## OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

The position papers (Official Statements) adopted by Open Bible Churches are expressions of conscience outside the parameters of the Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Covenants of Ethics.

### ABORTION

We affirm the Bible as the highest authority on the value of all human life. The Bible makes it clear that God is directly involved in creating life in the womb (Psalm 139:13; Job 31:15; 33:4). The Bible provides examples to show us that God knows us and has a plan for our lives even before we are born (Psalm 139:16; Jeremiah 1:5; Genesis 25:22-23; Luke 1:13-17). God's Word also tells us that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:3; Psalm 128:3). In light of these truths, we conclude that abortion is contrary to the will of God and neither the life of the unborn child nor that of the mother should be taken lightly.

Scientific advances in recent decades have helped us better understand what the Bible has taught us for centuries: the life growing inside a pregnant woman is distinct from her and individually unique. Science also tells us that the unborn are without question genetically human. Life begins at conception rather than at birth. Abortion, therefore, ends a human life. In the extreme case where the life of the unborn child threatens the life of the mother, the doctor has two patients and should try to save both lives if possible.

Abortion often traumatizes those who have undergone the procedure, leaving lifelong emotional scars and guilt. Though abortion is a sin, it is important to extend God's grace and compassion to those who have chosen to abort their unborn child or were involved in the decision-making process to abort that child and are now repentant and seek His forgiveness.

Adopted 1980; Amended 1984, 1985, 2023

### CREATIONISM

God is a timeless, uncreated, omnipotent, and moral being. It was through the Word of God that time, space, and all physical creation began to exist (John 1:1-3).

Both the Bible and the natural, observable order of our universe give evidence to the fact that life was started by God the Creator. We affirm that God made creation (Genesis 1:1), both miraculous in dimension and natural in order, comprehensible to humankind (Romans 1:20).

Scientific discoveries affirm the Bible's narrative about God's design of a finely tuned, life sustaining, and finite universe.

Humans are unique from the rest of creation in that we are the only beings created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Although we have a physical body that will one day die, we also have a non-physical soul that will live for eternity.

Adopted 1982; Amended 2023

### GAMBLING

Gambling in many forms is pervasive and its overall impact is dangerous. Gambling can have detrimental effects on an individual's self-control, wellbeing, and ability to make sound financial judgments. Even gambling that is viewed as recreational enjoyment can become addictive, which can lead to bankruptcy, family dissolution, deterioration of mental health, and a host of other adverse consequences. Communities that host gambling establishments are vulnerable to an increase in substance abuse, alcoholism, theft, violence, suicide, disregard for human life, fraud, and other social breakdowns and illicit activities.

The Bible encourages us to practice godly financial stewardship and self-control (Proverbs 21:5; 2 Peter 1:5-6); to beware of the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10), and to trust God, not games of chance, to meet our needs (Matthew 6:33; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Philippians 4:19; Proverbs 28:19-20). The practice of gambling is not consistent with these biblical standards.



There is a risk factor in all forms of gambling. Because it is inconsistent with biblical principles of good stewardship and faith in God to meet our needs and because it can have such a negative impact on both individuals and society as a whole, we strongly discourage any form of gambling.

Adopted 1983; Amended 2023

## HUMAN SEXUALITY

God created human beings in His own image, distinctly crafted and biologically identifiable as male and female at birth (Genesis 1:27). Thus, sexuality has been essential to our identity from creation; complementary sexes by divine design. This physical distinction enabled God's plan for sexual relationship, which is foundational to gender identity. All attempts of whatever sexual nature to blur, confuse, or alter God's design for sexuality and sexual identity are sin.

Amended 2023

### Covenantal Relationship

Marriage incorporates more than a physical sexual union. It is intended to be a biblical, covenantal relationship committed to and blessed by God. When God declared, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18) He created woman. This initial model of God-ordained unions brought completeness to Adam and Eve on every plane, including sexual. New Testament covenantal relationship reflects the sacrificial nature of Christ's commitment to the Church (Ephesians 5:25-27), transcending tradition, culture, and governmental contractual definitions of marriage. Jesus gave definition to this covenant when He taught that sexual relationship is to be exclusively reserved for and fulfilled within the lifelong, faithful union between one man and one woman in holy matrimony (Matthew 19:4-6). Sexual relationships outside this one man one woman covenantal union before, during, or after holy matrimony, are sinful in the eyes of God (Hebrews 13:4).

Sexual desire, which leads to sexual intimacy, is a gift from God. He gives us sexual intimacy for the following reasons: <sup>1</sup>

1. God gives us sex as a one-flesh union that consummates a marriage.  
Genesis 2:24 states, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." This passage provides the essential model for marriage. The act of leaving one's father and mother connotes a change of status in the community; being united to one's spouse is a commitment that embodies that which the rest of Scripture calls a covenant. "One flesh" refers directly to the physical union that sets the couple's relationship apart from all other relationships. When people have sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse, they have engaged in a life-uniting act without life-uniting intent. Although an actual marriage has not taken place, they have entered into an intimacy God intended only to consummate a marriage. This act violates not only the partner but also God's intention for sex.
2. God gives us sex for procreation.  
We read that after creating humans – male and female – in His image, "Then God blessed them and said, 'be fruitful and multiply'" (Genesis 1:28, NLT). God intended that humans come into the world through the most intimate, committed, loving union possible. Sex is by nature procreative, and children should be recognized as a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127). This does not mean a couple must intend with every sexual act to have children. From the beginning, God established multiple purposes for sex and granted humans a stewardship role over His creation, so there is legitimacy in family planning that includes the use of contraceptives but not abortifacients. Sex is a responsible act only in a relationship in which the couple is willing to care for any children that can come from that union.
3. God gives us sex as a way to express love to our spouse in the covenant relationship of marriage.  
Sex is not the only way husbands and wives say, "I love you," but it is a primary vehicle for mutually expressing love. Sexual intercourse and other forms of physical intimacy communicate love and enable the couple's love to mature holistically. Self-knowledge and knowledge of the other is enhanced through maturing sexual intimacy. Sex as an expression of love in marriage is so essential to the covenant relationship that Scripture states, "The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:3-4, NLT).
4. God gives us sex for enjoyment and pleasure.  
God created us to experience not only eternal pleasures in the next world (see Psalm 16:11) but also physical and emotional pleasures as part of His created order in this world. Indeed, male and female bodies were created with parts specifically purposed to bring sexual delight.



God gave the good gift of sex for very specific purposes: consummation of marriage, procreation, love, and pleasure. A morally legitimate sexual act occurs in the context of these divinely given purposes, which can come together only in the covenant marriage of a man and a woman.

### **Celibacy of Singleness**

We acknowledge that there are many who are not and may never be married. For some this is by choice (1 Corinthians 7:32-37). For others physical limitations or other circumstances make it difficult or impossible for them to enter into a Christ-honoring, biblically defined marriage (Matthew 19:10-12). In order to be biblically faithful these individuals choose to be celibate. The Church should lovingly honor the decision of individuals who have chosen to honor Christ in the celibacy of singleness.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from: The National Association of Evangelicals. (2012). *Theology of Sex*. Adopted 2015

### **Redemption Brings Wholeness**

People who are unaware of or have not embraced a redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ may commit sexual sins, confused and encouraged by our culture to do so. When Jesus saved a woman from being stoned because she had been caught in the act of sexual intercourse outside the union of marriage He asked her, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more” (John 8:10-11, NLT). This same sin-cleansing grace of Jesus is available to all people who have committed sexual sin; repent and commit to the purity of God’s biblical plan for sexuality. Jesus can deliver from guilt and heal emotional scars caused by sexual immorality and restore wholeness to the soul. The church should follow Jesus’ example and extend loving compassion to people ensnared in any aspect of sexual sin while inviting them to experience His cleansing and redemptive embrace.

Adopted 2015

### **LEADERSHIP AUTHORITY**

God, the Master Designer has created a world of order evident throughout all of creation (Genesis 1:26). By His design, He has installed leaders who bear responsibility for specific arenas of His creation, and He gives these leaders the authority to fulfill their responsibilities. We witness this structure in earthly relationships such as a husband and a wife, a parent and a child, an employer and employee, a governmental leader and the community, and a church leader and church.

We are subject to these God-given leaders whether in our families, our government, or the Church. In turn, these leaders are subject to those in authority over them. We are all subject to God’s final authority. This order is necessary to create functional relationships within organizational and governing structures. Without order nothing of value is accomplished (Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 5:21-30).

Accountability to God-ordained authority “as unto the Lord” brings blessing (Deuteronomy 5:16; Colossians 3:18-25). Disrespect of it brings judgment (Leviticus 20:9; Numbers 12, 14, 16; 1 Samuel 15:23; Romans 13:2). Honoring God-ordained authority requires faith in God to both raise up and remove leadership. Such faith draws a person to desire accountability to God-sanctioned leadership. He or she will strive to help their leaders fulfill their responsibilities before God.

The Bible exhorts us to honor those in authority over us (Romans 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 2:17). Honoring those in authority over us is contrary to the worldly mindset that tempts us to put ourselves and our own interests before those of others; it requires humility. We should avoid the faulty mindset of James and John, Jesus’ disciples who were vying for anticipated roles of authority in heaven (Matthew 20:20-28). Jesus admonished them, saying, “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, . . . the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

At times, when leadership is contradicting God’s directives or lacks leadership capacity to serve in that role, a person must exercise their conscience and conviction (Daniel 3, 6; Acts 5:29), but this direction should be based on discernment and evidence of wrongdoing or demonstrated lack of leadership capacity, not simply disagreement with leadership decisions and direction. We should not discount leaders because of imperfections; we all have imperfections.



We should pray for and honor leaders despite their imperfections as long as they are not contradicting God's directives. Submission to God-ordained leadership honors God. We should make every effort to help our leaders accomplish their work with joy (Hebrews 13:17). If we are humble enough to submit to them now, God will lift us up in His time (1 Peter 5:6).

Adopted 1995; Amended 2023

## **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

Marriage is God-given, sacred, and good. It is a holy union between one man and one woman in which they covenant with one another and with God to build a loving, faithful, and lifelong relationship. Marriage is designed by God for the purpose of companionship and to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church, and it is the context God has given us for sexual intimacy which often results in children and multiplication of humanity (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 22-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:21-33).

### **Biblical Foundation**

Christians should marry other Christians, modeling a spiritually unified, harmonious marriage to their children and to others (2 Corinthians 6:14). A healthy Christian marriage and family wherein biblical values can be passed down from generation to generation is foundational for a healthy society, and therefore should be nurtured and protected. Families rooted in God's life-giving Word present a living model of a loving God offering an invitation for salvation in Jesus Christ to all. We strive for these life-giving principles to permeate every arena of life (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21; Proverbs 22:6; Isaiah 59:21; Luke 1:17; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 2:1-7).

### **Divorce**

Divorce breaks the God-ordained covenant between a man, woman, and God and taints the reflection of the image of Christ to the Church and to the world (Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Although Moses was allowed to grant and regulate divorce because of the hardness of people's hearts (Matthew 19:7-8), the biblical reality is God hates divorce (Malachi 2:13-16). Nonetheless, it should be clearly understood that God loves and values all people equally.

### **Reconciliation**

Key characteristics of the heart of God are grace, forgiveness and reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). Throughout His Word, when God's people violated His covenant with them, He extended forgiveness and reconciliation when they expressed true repentance. Accordingly, every effort should be made to bring reconciliation to a struggling marriage. These efforts may include spiritual counsel and professional counseling, and it will always require a heart of repentance, grace, and forgiveness.

### **When Divorce is Scripturally Permissible**

Despite God's clearly stated plan for marriage and His hatred of divorce, His Word speaks specifically to occasions when divorce is permissible.

- Fornication (sometimes translated "sexual immorality") by a spouse (Matthew 5:32)
- When an unbelieving spouse abandons a believing spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15)
- Divorce prior to salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

### **When Remarriage is Scripturally Permissible**

God planned for marriage to be a lifetime covenant. Since two become one in marriage, creating a unique, intimate relational bond, divorce without biblical grounds and remarriage is adultery and marriage to a person not having scriptural grounds for a divorce is adultery. The Church must promote and protect the sanctity of the oneness bond found only in marriage (Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3). However, we believe that remarriage after a previous marriage is permissible under the following circumstances:

- The death of one's spouse (Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, 39; 1 Timothy 5:14).
- Those whose spouse has been unfaithful (Matthew 5:31-32).
- Those whose unbelieving spouse has abandoned the marriage (1 Corinthians 7:15).
- Those who were divorced prior to salvation (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-8).



## Overarching Scriptural Principles

Overarching principles of Scripture such as protecting the oppressed and healing the wounds of the broken-hearted give hope to those whose marriages have been shattered (Psalm 9:9; 10:17-18; 34:18-19; 103:6; 147:3; Isaiah 1:17; Luke 4:18-19; 1 Timothy 5:8). While Scripture may not address every particular situation specifically, we believe that the entirety of Scripture gives foundation for consideration of other factors which may allow for divorce and remarriage.

- Those who are divorced due to being personally abused or due to the abuse of family members by their spouse (Psalm 10:17-18; 103:6; Jeremiah 22:3; Isaiah 1:17; Luke 4:18-19)
- Those who've made every effort to remain married, honor and respect the sanctity of marriage, but were deserted by their spouse, even if the deserting spouse professes to be a Christian (1 Timothy 5:8). The Lord loves, cares for, and heals the brokenhearted, as should the Church (Psalm 34:18; 147:3).
- Those who are sincerely repentant of past sin related to divorce and demonstrate, as in Ephesians 5:21-25 and 1 Peter 3:1-7, an evident and heartfelt honor and respect, for the sanctity of marriage (Matthew 12:31; Acts 3:19; Acts 13:22-23 (See the story of David in 2 Samuel 11-12 and his repentance in Psalm 51); 1 John 1:9).

Since Scripture gives no absolute statement about divorce and remarriage if physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse has entered the marriage or family relationship, issues of separation, divorce, and remarriage should be prayerfully considered with the aid of pastors, counselors, and local law officials.

God has revealed the power of covenant love to us through the relationship of Christ to His Church. With this as our standard and in the power of God's Spirit, our marriages should strive to reflect that same honor, beauty, intimacy, holiness, and grace in the world.

Adopted 2005; Amended 2023

## NON-TRINITARIANS

There is only one God, but He shows Himself to us as three persons united in one Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Trinity. Any requirement to jointly lead worship services with those who hold non-trinitarian beliefs is contrary to our Statement of Faith.

We strongly support any pastor or chaplain who chooses not to participate in the communal conduct of worship with non-trinitarian religious leaders. In areas of ministry apart from worship gatherings a pastor or chaplain is free, as his or her conscience directs, to cooperate with other leaders to enhance the wellbeing of the community.

Adopted 1993; Amended 2023

## EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia, sometimes referred to as assisted suicide or mercy killing, is a significant bioethical issue confronting America and the world. The debate regarding this matter often involves the idea of one's "right to die," revealing the ever-increasing level of moral relativism within our society. We oppose all forms of euthanasia, whether or not administered by a physician.

The Bible clearly states, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13, NIV). The fact that a patient wishes to end his or her life does not nullify the commandment. These issues are even more profound as the matter of life and death involves not only our relationships with one another on the human level, but also the relationship between each of us and God. We believe life is a gift from God (Genesis 2:7) and that human life has absolute, not relative, value. While we firmly believe in mercy and compassion, that belief does not give license to intervene in God's role, determining life and death.

We know as Christians that "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21), but we believe that it is wrong to impose our will over God's with respect to advancing that day. It is in His timing, and we must instead look to our Lord Jesus Christ to sustain us.

The Hippocratic Oath states that a physician's duty is *primum non nocere*, "first, do no harm." As Christ followers, we firmly oppose any attempts to justify euthanasia, with or without consent, and appeal to the medical profession to do all in its power to continue to find ways to assist patients without the use of euthanasia.



The debate surrounding euthanasia has expanded to allowing the procedure for mental health issues in addition to medical ones. The possibility of someone ending a life based on temporary or treatable issues is unconscionable. We support end of life care and hospice, including palliative care and mental health treatment. We resolutely oppose the hastening of death through euthanasia.

We extend deep empathy and compassion for anyone who is considering ending their life and for medical personnel who want to help these greatly hurting people, but euthanasia is not the answer. Hope and eternal life are found in the name of Jesus Christ, and we pray that all in need will find comfort and strength in and through Him.

Adopted 1997; Amended 2023

## **RACISM**

We reject all forms of racism and related forms of discrimination by which systems, policies, actions, and attitudes create unequal or unjust opportunities for people based on race or ethnicity. We strive for racial reconciliation and will consistently endeavor to strengthen the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Because the Bible declares that we are all made in the image of God and our worth is found in Him alone, we respect, value, and include, as does God, all races and ethnicities without prejudice. We stand on the truth of the Word of God that ascribes the creation of all humankind to our Heavenly Father (Genesis 1:27).

We adhere to the biblical truth that states we are all one in Christ (Ephesians 2:13-14) and that God has called us all to love one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:20). Because of this call, we will consistently demonstrate love, acceptance, and compassion for each human being regardless of race or ethnicity. We are committed to the message of reconciliation and as believers in Christ will show no partiality (James 2:1).

Racism in all its forms, personal and systemic, is a sin and to be resisted by the body of Christ; every member of the body of Christ must speak boldly, act resolutely, and stand firmly against racism.

Adopted 2005; Amended 2023

## **THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP**

The history of the Pentecostal movement and of Open Bible Churches is brimming with anointed women called to serve Christ and the Church. Many dynamic women, both single and married, have contributed significantly to the growth and development of Open Bible in the United States and abroad. This history testifies to the fact that God honors the public ministry and leadership of women.

The Old Testament consistently endorses the ministry and leadership of women. It tells the stories of Ruth and Esther as well as Abigail (1 Samuel 25) and Deborah (Judges 4 & 5). Also recorded is the ministry of women prophets such as Miriam (Exodus 15:20) and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14). The prophet Joel clearly indicates there is no distinction between male and female in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days (Joel 2:28-29).

The New Testament continues affirmation of the ministry and leadership of women. Dorcas and Lydia were models of women in ministry (Acts 9:36, 16:14). Philip's four daughters were prophets (Acts 21:8-9), Phoebe was a deacon (Romans 16:1), Junia was listed as "outstanding among the apostles" (Romans 16:7), and Euodia and Syntyche were leaders of house churches (Philippians 4:2-3). Women were noted to have prayed and prophesied publicly in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5.

The Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 demonstrated that God is no respecter of persons in regard to gender. Biblical interpretation reveals all seven ministry gifts of Romans 12:6-8 (prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy) are given to both males and females, and all the nine spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, and interpretation of tongues) are also given to men and women.

Two often-quoted passages in the New Testament seem to contain a prohibition against the leadership of women: 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12. Since these must be viewed in context with Paul's other statements and practices and that of the New Testament Church as a whole, they could hardly be considered absolute, unequivocal prohibitions of the leadership of women. We adhere to the scholarly argument that these are teachings dealing with specific, local problems needing correction.



We celebrate the ministry and leadership of women at all levels. We do so after examining biblical passages that address the role of women in the first century Church in their cultural and historical contexts and by applying sound principles of Bible interpretation to contemporary practice in our churches. Since every believer's gifts and anointing should make way for his or her ministry, men and women alike must be diligent to study the Scriptures and embrace God's calling on their lives. We have been blessed by the ministry and leadership of women, and we are committed to honoring and championing these women.

Adopted 2003; Amended 2023

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Christ followers should be guided by the Bible in considering what we partake of and put into our bodies. The Bible describes our bodies as the temple of God; His Spirit lives in us (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). The apostle Paul repeats this description and adds that because God bought us for such a high price, His Son's death, we do not belong to ourselves but to Him, our Creator and Redeemer. For that reason, we must honor God with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) as a reflection of His holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16).

We are addressing two primary kinds of substance abuse that can bring harm to our bodies. First, there are substances like tobacco and recreational drugs that have been medically proven to cause ill effects on our bodies. Second, there are substances sometimes not considered harmful such as food, alcohol, over-the-counter medications, and prescription drugs that if taken excessively can bring great harm to our bodies. The Bible is clear that intoxication and gluttony are sinful and harmful to our lives (Proverbs 23:2, 21; Romans 13:13; Ephesians 5:18; Philippians 3:19).

The following exhortations ought to be our guide in preventing substance abuse in our lives and its impact on those in our influence:

- We must realize that although a substance may be "permissible," it may not be "beneficial" and can actually lead to bondage (1 Corinthians 6:12). Christ offers us freedom in every area of life, not the bondage that results from indulgence.
- The fact that we will all stand before God one day ought to temper our daily decisions. Additionally, we are also to walk with a sensitivity to other Christ-followers who may hold to a different conviction than we do so that we do not offend or cause another person to stumble (Romans 14:12-23).

In light of the reality of substance abuse and the devastation it causes, the Church has a responsibility to recognize brokenness that comes as a result of our selfish and sinful choices and to be an instrument of education, deliverance, healing, and restoration for individuals and families in our communities. As Christ followers we need to understand the trap of addiction which makes overcoming substance abuse so difficult. We must be actively involved in the transformation of people impacted by substance abuse.

Adopted 2015; Amended 2023

## UNITY

Jesus prayed for all believers to walk in unity, that all would be one, for He knew that this would testify to the world of the Father's love and of the life He gives (John 17:21-23). Unity is not sameness or likeness. Rather, unity in the body of Christ is founded in our mutual identity in Christ Jesus as children of God (Galatians 3:26-29), and rooted in a shared love for Jesus, His Word, and His mission.

The Church is built of individuals who vary in age, race, background, and cultures (Colossians 3:11-12). While we celebrate this breadth of God's creation, unity transcends our individual distinctions. It is imperative to make every effort to keep the "unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), and to live in harmony with each other and avoid divisions in the Church (1 Corinthians 1:10). Commitment to unity is reflected through Christian love, genuine respect, and humility toward one another.

Jesus taught that unity between believers, as modeled by the unity of the Father and Son, provides a basis "that the world may believe that you sent me" (John 17:21). Thus, unity is a testimony of Christ's reality to the world. Unity also provides a foundation for blessing from God: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! . . . For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life evermore" (Psalm 133:1, 3).

Adopted 1995; Amended 2023