

Since then pressure has increased against Christian churches who refuse to accept lesbians and homosexuals into their church memberships or staffs. An example of this is the Revoice Conference that presented homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism, as normal and that they should be accepted by Christians.

REVOICE: REDEFINING THE BIBLICAL STANCE ON MARRIAGE

The first Revoice conference was held July 26-28, 2018 at the Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri. (The second Revoice conference is scheduled to be held at the same church in St. Louis in June 2019). The conference included a number of speakers, testimonies, and break-out sessions. According to the conference's 2018 website, the purpose of Revoice was about "supporting, encouraging, and empowering gay, lesbian, same-sex -attracted, and other LGBT Christians so they can flourish while observing the historic, Christian doctrine of marriage and sexuality."

This conference is about empowering and encouraging homosexuals and lesbians to continue in a lifestyle that the Bible condemns? And not only that, to help them flourish in it? If you are a Christian, you can already tell just from the conference's mission statement that the conference leadership and attendees had no intention to observe the "historic, Christian doctrine of marriage and sexuality" as so stated. If they did, they would not have held the conference in the first place.

Understanding who is behind the Revoice movement will provide insight into why this conference was held in the first place. Nate Collins, the founder of the conference, once taught New Testament interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. According to the website of the Center for Faith, Sexuality and Gender where he is now employed, Collins is married to a woman but also claims he is a homosexual who is sexually attracted to men.

Christianity Today interviewed Collins right before the first Revoice conference in 2018. When asked about why the world "queer" was used on the Revoice conference website, this is how Collins responded.

The word basically points to the experience of people who live on the margins, who don't experience their gender or their sexuality in purely binary ways, and they don't want to feel limited to that. What we want to accomplish at Revoice is, again, giving space for people who find value in that language to participate in the conversation, to attend, to even have a workshop, because we sense the need for their voice at the table . . . I want there to be consensus about these matters. So that means trying to be a big tent for a certain group of people of participate and come together. (Mark Galli, July 25, 2018, "Revoice's Founder Answers the LGBT Conference's Critics," *Christianity Today*, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/july-web-only/revoices-founder-answers-lgbt-conferences-critics.html>).

In the Bible, does the Lord ever say that men had to have a consensus on morality to determine a position, or anything else for that matter? In my Bible, Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the LORD: I change not. . ." The Lord doesn't care whether people debate anything He has said. What He says goes, and that's it. End of discussion. This includes anything He said about homosexuality. The Lord has already made His position clear on this subject.

In the same article, Collins said, "Our first value is explicitly the historic Christian teaching about marriage and sexuality. And, so anybody who adheres to that is welcome at Revoice and, I would say, should find some kind of a home there."



Peter LeBarbara



Stephen Black

Oh, really? That would be news to Stephen Black of First Stone Ministries in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Peter LeBarbara of Americans For Truth About Homosexuality. Stephen runs a ministry that helps homosexuals, lesbians, and others suffering any type of sexual dysfunction to come to salvation in Jesus Christ and leave that lifestyle behind. Peter LeBarbara reports on the radical agenda of the LGBTQ movement. Both Stephen and Peter are Christians, both believe that marriage is between one man and one woman as so stated in the Bible, and both were barred from the Revoice conference. They signed up but their registrations were rejected.

TARGETING BAPTIST CHURCHES

I know what some of you are thinking right now. “This may be happening in other denominations but it will NEVER happen to Southern and Independent Baptist churches.”

Think again. Baptist churches, within the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist churches who are members of other denominations, and independent evangelical churches are becoming more accepting of homosexuals into their churches.

Texas is considered a very conservative state. But in November 2016, Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas voted to accept homosexuals not only into church membership but also in positions of leadership including ordination of pastors and performing same-sex weddings. Senior Pastor George Mason said he was shocked that 250 of the 1,500 church members would actually leave the church over this issue, calling it “the biggest misjudgment of my ministry . . . my miscalculation was that I knew that there would be a lot of people who would vote ‘no’ on this. What I didn’t know was they would leave over it.”

Duh.

Pastor Mason defended the decision to accept homosexuals into the church, stating that while some people have left, others have joined. “I think to put such a fine point on saying churches that choose to include LGBTQ persons fully or to affirm them are sort of the litmus test to whether you’re going to decline or you’re going to continue to grow I don’t think that’s fair.” (Chelsen Vicari, December 20, 2017, “What’s Happened Since a Texas Baptist Church Affirmed Homosexuality?”, Juicy Ecumenism: The Institute on Religious & Democracy’s Blog, <https://juicyecumenism.com/2017/12/20/whats-happened-since-texas-baptist-church-affirmed-homosexuality/>).

In 1999, the Georgia Baptist Convention expelled two churches, Oakhurst Baptist Church and Virginia Highland Baptist Church, in the Atlanta area over the churches’ softening their stance on homosexuality. The First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon, Georgia used to be a member of the Southern Baptist Convention. At some point, the church left the SBC and joined the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In August 2017, the church voted overwhelmingly to accept homosexuals into their

church. The pastor, Rev. Scott Dickson, explained the reason for the vote. “We are one of a growing number of CBF congregations who are grappling with this question of inclusion in one way or another . . . I’m grateful for the congregation traveling together to this point, and it is an important point, but it comes with some tenderness. We will continue to heal together as we move forward” (Gerald Harris, August 29, 2016, “Macon’s First Baptist Church of Christ “A Leap Into Oblivion,” Christian Index, <https://christianindex.org/macons-first-baptist-church-christ-leap-into-oblivion/>).

GracePointe Church, a previously evangelical church, was located in Franklin, Tennessee until it voted in 2015 to extend church membership to homosexuals and lesbians. Again, some members left the church over this change. Rev. Stan Mitchell, who founded the church, now describes the church as “progressive” and told The Tennessean that “its progressive Christianity may be better suited to those living in an urban environment.”

Rev. Mitchell explained, “That kind of radical inclusion, especially for the Bible Belt, is off-putting to some and endearing to others. The people that it cost us . . . they have plenty of places to go to church. The people that it gained us do not have that many options” (Holly Meyer, June 28, 2017, “Church that Supported Same-Sex Marriage to Leave Williamson, Move to Nashville,” USA Today Network - Tennessee, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/williamson/2017/06/28/gracepointe-church-move/433470001/>).

The GracePointe Church website, <https://www.gracepointe.net>, boldly states their new statement of faith, which is quoted in part below.

We Are A Progressive Christian Church

We may be a little different than other churches you might visit, and we hope you feel it when you join us in person, watch a message online, or listen to a podcast. We are an inclusive spiritual community seeking to live out a more just and generous Christianity.

Here at GracePointe, we think that faith is less about doctrines and dogmas demanding total agreement, and more about a life to be lived, enjoyed, and share with others.

What unites us is a growing awareness that life is a gift and love is the point. We want to learn how to love better, and share that with the world.

We welcome the entire human family regardless of race, age, creed, physical abilities, marital or economic status, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

A “more just and generous Christianity”? So, Jesus Christ shedding His blood on the cross for our sins and rising again is not enough? If doctrine is not important and Christianity is all about “a life to be lived, enjoyed, and shared with others” why not just skip church and join a country club or the local Rotary or Lions service clubs? It sounds like you would get as much out of being involved in one of those organizations as GracePointe Church.

Few Baptist organizations have the courage to do what the Kentucky Baptist Convention did in 2018. They expelled a number of churches in their state organization that decided to accept homosexuals and lesbians on to their church staffs. While the expelled churches weren’t very happy about this, Paul Chitwood, executive director of the KBC, stood firm.

Chitwood declared that the vote to expel these churches was “a call to those congregations to safeguard biblical teaching and maintain their historic relationships, understanding that the Bible

speaks clearly on the issue of homosexuality and that they would not want to support groups that embrace unscriptural lifestyles” (November 13, 2018, “KY. Baptists Cut Ties With Dually Aligned Churches,” Baptist Press, <http://www.bpnews.net/51951/ky-baptists-cut-ties-with-dually-aligned-churches>).

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCHES BETRAYED

But, you say, surely the Southern Baptist Convention is still solid as a rock when it comes to supporting the biblical view on sexuality and marriage.

Uh, not so much.

As early as 2014, Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, was already, as the late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher used to say, “going wobbly” on homosexuality. In October 2014 at the annual Southern Baptist Convention, Mohler apologized “for denying the reality of sexual orientation” and then said that a person’s sexual orientation can change. According to the article in The Wall Street Journal, “Southern Baptists, Gay Community Break Bread at Conference” by Tamara Audi, published on the Wall Street Journal’s website on October 30, 2014, a SBC pastor closed the conference by saying “no one goes to hell for being homosexual” (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/southern-baptists-gay-community-break-bread-at-conference-1414691923>).

Mohler wrote the foreword to the 2015 book, *Transforming Homosexuality*. Three of the chapters in this book are titled “Myths About Change,” “A Biblical Path to Change,” and “How Evangelicals Can Change.” While in his foreword Mohler wrote that the current worldview of homosexuality is “directly at odds with the gospel of Jesus Christ” and that the “New Testament reveals that a homosexual sexual orientation, whatever its shape or causation, falls out of line with the Creator’s purpose for humanity” he also added this:

The Bible reveals that God conforms believers to the image of Christ, doing that work within the human heart that sinful humans cannot do themselves. The Bible reveals that believers are to grow into Christlikeness, knowing that this growth is a progressive process that ends with their eventual glorification at the end of the age. In this life, we know a process of growing more holy, more sanctified, and more obedient to Christ. In the life to come, we will know perfection as Christ glorifies his church

. . . Christians know that believers among us struggle to submit their sexual desires to Christ. This is not something true only of those whose desires are homosexual. It is true of all Christians. Yet we know that those believers who are struggling to overcome homosexual desires have a special struggle - one that requires the full conviction and support of the body of Christ. We will see the glory of God in the growing obedience of Christ’s redeemed people. And, along with the apostle Paul and all the redeemed, we will await the glory that is yet to be revealed to us (Denny Burk, Health Lambert, September 28, 2015, *Transforming Homosexuality: What the Bible Says About Sexual Orientation and Change*, page 9, <https://www.prpbooks.com/blog/2017/07/r-albert-mohler-jr-s-foreword-to-transforming-homosexuality/>).

I’m not sure what most people’s reaction would be to these statements by Mohler, but I find them to rather wishy-washy and trying to straddle the fence between what the Bible says about homosexuality and what the LGBTQ+ community thinks.

The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists has a website, <http://www.awab.org/call-to-dialogue-with-sbc-leadership-on-marriage.html>, that urges Baptists to sign a petition on this website to send a message to the Southern Baptist Convention leadership. The statement this organization wants Baptists to affirm is quoted below in part:

As faith leaders who represent Baptist communities, institutions and fellowships throughout United States, we write to express our strong desire to enter into dialogue with the Southern Baptist Convention, your leaders and local church pastors on the topic of marriage . . . We, the undersigned, welcome an opportunity to build bridges with those who disagree with us on marriage equality. As Baptists from across the manifold expressions of our tradition we honor and respect the freedoms inherent in our Baptist tradition, freedoms which allow us to hold divergent opinions on scriptural interpretation. However, our tradition also demands that we engage in dialogue across these differences in order for the Spirit to enter the space between us and shape us into a more Christ-like fellowship.

I searched for a date that the website was published or created but could not find one. However, I found the following paragraph at the top right on the AWAB site:

AWAB Board Chair Rev David Weasley and Executive Director Rev. Robin Lunn participated in this conference by bringing our Welcoming & Affirming Baptist Voice to the table over these three days (October 27-29). As a part of our witness in Nashville we delivered this statement and all of the signatures collected to date to the ERLC leadership. You can still sign and share this with others . . . Help us let the SBC and the world know that there are Baptists who believe same sex marriage is a blessing to all marriages.

Having been a member of Southern Baptist churches in the past, I can confidently state that most Southern Baptist church members have no idea what happens at the annual SBC convention. Life Site News reported in July 2018 on the shocking cave to the homosexual agenda that occurred at the 2018 Southern Baptist Convention in “Southern Baptist Floundering Against LGBT Agenda, Pro-Family Forces keep Fighting.” The following lists some of the things that happened at or right before the SBC 2018 convention.

- Dr. Paige Patterson, a theological SBC conservative leader, was fired at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and his keynote speech at the 2018 annual SBC convention was cancelled.
- A resolution that emphatically stated “RESOLVED, the Southern Baptist Convention rejects as heresy any claims that God makes people homosexual . . .” was not allowed to come to the floor of the convention for a vote. According to the article, the “Convention adopted over a dozen left-leaning and Social Justice-type resolutions . . . and the convention chairman ended the convention to stop the above resolution from being voted on.”
- Rev. Tom Littleton has been very active in exposing the underground pro-LGBTQ+ agenda percolating within the SBC. Rev. Littleton attended the 2018 convention simply as a member of the press and tried to interview Al Mohler and Russell Moore, also a leader within the SBC. The next day, according to the Life Site News article, Rev. Littleton was forcibly escorted out of the convention building by the police.
- The SBC elected Rev. J. D. Greear as the new SBC president. The Life Site article describes Greear as “a moderate pastor who caters to millennials . . . As Bryan Fischer of American Family Radio points out, Greear often goes out of his way to be accommodating to

homosexuality in his messages. Greear has told his congregation to ‘love our gay neighbor more than we love our position on sexual morality’ - which seems to many to be completely unbiblical.”

- The article raises a disturbing link between SBC leaders and the pro-LGBTQ Revoice Conference also held in 2018. The article linked to an article on the website of Blue Collar Saints: Taking Back the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints. The article, “Trusted SBC and PCA Seminaries Producing LGBTQ Activists,” is too long to be quoted here but the evidence presented against Al Mohler, Russell Moore, Tim Keller, and others is especially alarming. You can read the article at <http://bluecollarsaints.org/2018/05/14/trusted-sbc-and-pca-seminaries-producing-sexual-minority-activists/>).

You may think that this softening toward the LGBTQ+ agenda has not affected SBC churches yet. You would be wrong. For example, a couple who had been a member of my church, Fairview Baptist Church (Independent Baptist), decided to move 50 miles away to be closer to family. They joined a local SBC church after being assured by the pastor that he would not compromise on homosexuality.

In the past year, the couple noticed that their SBC pastor was not as strong concerning the biblical stance on homosexuality as he had been in the past. Consequently, the couple made the decision to return to Fairview Baptist Church, even though it meant a two-hour commute. They knew pastors Paul Blair and Dan Fisher would never compromise biblical truth.

GOD’S VOICE CONFERENCE RESPONDS TO REVOICE

The God’s Voice conference was held to answer the Revoice conference and the push to force churches to accept homosexuals, lesbians, and sexual “identities” of all stripes into their church membership and staff positions. Rev. Kevin Clarkson was pastor of First Baptist Church, Moore, Oklahoma, a huge church in the Oklahoma City area and had wanted to be the host church for the event. However, some young millennials on his staff threw a fit about hosting the conference. The backlash from these millennials was so strong that Rev. Clarkson was forced to back down. Rev. Clarkson has since resigned as senior pastor of the church.

Since homosexuality and ministries that provide Christian counseling to homosexuals and lesbians is not something that I am familiar with, I was interested in attending the conference to learn what Christian experts had to say about this subject.

What made the God’s Voice conference so powerful is that almost all the speakers were former homosexuals and lesbians who had found freedom in Jesus Christ. They all refuted the lie that the world is pushing right now, that homosexuals and lesbians are happy in that lifestyle and cannot ever live lives as heterosexuals, that they are born that way and cannot change.

Speakers at the conference included Peter LeBarbara, Rev. Tom Littleton, who was expelled from the SBC’s 2018 annual conference, and Stephen Black of First Stone Ministries.

Stephen Black, who I just mentioned, has much to say about this subject in his book, *Freedom Realized*. Stephen was a homosexual who eventually gave his life to Jesus Christ and now runs First Stone Ministries. He counsels many who want to leave the homosexual lifestyle. Black emphatically holds up the Bible as God’s Word as the standard on every issue, including morality and sexuality, and rejects the pro-LGBTQ “gay Christian” agenda that is sweeping through more and more churches

that were previously strong, evangelical churches. He refuses to equivocate on these issues. In his book on page 136, Black quotes I Corinthians 6:18, "Flee fornication," and then goes on to say:

The Apostle Paul used the word "flee" for a reason. Sexual sin is very dangerous and very damaging to the soul, and humans should flee from it as fast as humanly possible. Teaching acceptance of "gay Christianity" is equally dangerous. "Gay Christian" advocates teach lies; they are blind and deceptive guides keeping the souls of many in bondage to same-sex lust. From these teachers we should flee. Jesus' way is to submit the soul through faith to His amazing sacrifice on the cross resulting in righteousness. (Romans 10:10). A true faith in God embraces inward holiness of thoughts. His divine call for salvation is to a new lifestyle of turning to Him for the joy of a deep intimate relationship with Christ as Creator. This requires us to die to all self-promotion of the fallen Adamic nature of the flesh (orientations) and its desires, which includes same-sex attraction, homosexuality, and all forms of sexual sin and brokenness. The grace of God is transformational. He always makes a way of escape from temptation for those who are completely His. This is a litmus test to see if in fact you are truly born again. Do you desire to live purely in your thought life every day? Do you desire transformation? (See 2 Corinthians 13:5).

Black's more than 70% success rate in counseling those involved in all types of sexual dysfunction is proof that Jesus Christ transforms lives! Black makes it very clear that human beings, whether heterosexual, lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or anything society can come up with, can only find true freedom, liberty, joy, and satisfying human relationships in Jesus Christ.

The prophet Samuel said in I Samuel 12:23 said, "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right." We must pray for those trapped in the LGBTQ lifestyle, that they will come to the Lord and find true *freedom realized*.

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