

American Council of Christian Churches
76th Annual Convention, October 24-26, 2017
Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina
Resolution on Same-Sex Attraction

Among professing evangelicals there is a growing acceptance of homosexuality. *Time* magazine reported that “support for gay marriage across all age groups of white evangelicals has increased by double digits over the past decade, according to the Public Religion Resource Institute, and the fastest change can be found among younger evangelicals.”¹ While gaining support from those outside the movement, compromising evangelicals are divided. Rallying behind men like Matthew Vines, one side actually believes it is possible to practice committed homosexual relations while genuinely professing Christianity.²

Others denounce homosexual behavior, but they imply that same-sex attraction (SSA) is not sinful, as long as attraction stops short of action. The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC) has posted a statement online entitled, “Homosexuals and the Christian Fellowship.”³ The statement courageously denounces the act of homosexuality and clearly calls those engaged in its practice to repentance.

Less clear, however, was its distinction between those who engage in homosexual acts and those “who are homosexual simply because of their orientation, which is just one particular form of the same sinful orientation we all have.” That phrase confuses the concepts *sexual orientation* and *fallen sinfulness*. It is better to affirm that all mankind, made in the image of God as male and female, commanded to be fruitful and to multiply, are by virtue of that creation equally heterosexual in sexual orientation and identity, though also equally fallen in sin. Creation made mankind heterosexual. The fall made him a sinner, but it did not change his sexual identity or orientation. Every sinner is made with a heterosexual sexual orientation just as every sinner is made to have dominion over the animals (Gen. 1:26-28). Heterosexuality is an indelible reality of man’s creation in the image of God.

The CCCC statement, while correctly condemning “every expression of that [homosexual] orientation [as] sinful,” mistakenly condemns as “unbiblical” any prejudice against this one form of man’s sinful nature. Paul, however, exhorts believers to “mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). The believer must condemn every form of the sinful orientation of fallen human nature in himself and others. The CCCC statement fails to give proper emphasis to the sinfulness of this inordinate desire opposed by Paul, and it forgets to call its readers to put to death that desire.

Following the second great commandment and the example of the Good Samaritan, the believer must renounce prejudice against his neighbors, not because he renounces a prejudice against their sinfulness, but because he believes they are created image-bearers, disbelieving any false claim to a homosexual identity or orientation they might sinfully and inaccurately profess. This is one reason he shares with them the gospel that saves from sin, including homosexuality.

Wheaton College exhibited similar confusion in 2014 when it hired Julie Rodgers to assist the campus chaplain ministering to students with homosexual desires. That same year, Rodgers said: “[God has] used my gay way of being for His glory rather than making me straight.”⁴ Genesis teaches that God made Miss Rodgers “straight.” Wesley Hill,⁵ Bekah Mason,⁶ and Stephen Moss⁷ have also written as though a same-sex attraction were an irreparable sexual orientation rather than a pleasurable sinful desire that can be changed by the power of God’s grace.

Scripture explains that sins are both attractions and actions, the products of both a fallen nature and a transgressing life. The seventh commandment explicitly forbids the act of adultery. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared that this commandment extends beyond the act to include attraction: “But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28).

James reminds his readers that temptation to sin starts with the sinful desires of the heart, which entice them to act in disobedience to God’s law (James 1:14-15). Sin is pleasurable for a season (Heb. 11:25), but the pleasurable nature experienced from sin is not a part of God’s original creation. The pleasure can create an intense addiction, proclivity, or behavioral orientation, but these developments are lawless violations of God’s design that need the correcting power of redemption. The only sexual desire that is not sinful is the desire expressed between a husband and wife (1 Cor. 7:1-5;

Heb. 13:4). The defeat of same-sex desire must follow true conversion as the defeat of any other sinful addiction, sexual or otherwise. The new life of conversion bears fruits of sanctification through the renewing of the mind using the tools of prayer, meditation on God's Word, and accountability through spiritual mentoring and the local church's ministry (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; 2 Pet. 3:18).

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches at its 76th annual convention, October 24-26, 2017, at Faith Free Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC, resolves to warn Bible-believing churches and institutions against the subtle compromise of accepting same-sex attraction as harmless, and to speak the truth in love to those experiencing this sinful desire in order to help them find spiritual transformation and victory over the lusts of the flesh. We shall trust the sufficiency of the promises of Scripture in the battle we all face with sinful desires and addictions: "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7); "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9); "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

¹ Elizabeth Dias, "How Evangelicals Are Changing Their Mind on Gay Marriage," *Time Magazine* (January 15, 2015): <http://time.com/3669024/evangelicals-gay-marriage/>.

² Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (New York: Convergent, 2014).

³ "Homosexuals and the Christian Fellowship," Conservative Congregational Christian Fellowship, <http://www.cccusa.com/about-us/position-papers/homosexuals/>.

⁴ Julie Rodgers, "Can the Gay be a Good?" Spiritual Friendship Blog (October 23, 2014): <https://spiritualfriendship.org/2014/10/23/can-the-gay-be-a-good/>. Julie has since left Wheaton and has changed her position to align with full support for "Christian" homosexuality ("How I Was Moved to Support Same-Sex Marriage in the Church," Julie Rodgers Blog (February 4, 2017): <http://julie-rodgers.com/how-i-was-moved-to-support-same-sex-marriage-in-the-church/>).

⁵ Hill is a professor at Trinity School for Ministry and another writer for the Spiritual Friendship Blog ("Dr. Wesley Hill," Trinity School for Ministry, http://www.tsm.edu/dr_wesley_hill/ and Spiritual Friendship Blog). Hill advocates celibacy for what he calls "same-sex attracted" believers, believing himself to be one of these (<https://spiritualfriendship.org/author/wahill/>). Hill also spoke at Lancaster Bible College in the fall of 2015. Daniel Spanjer, "Reflections on Dr. Wesley Hill's Visit to LBC," *Echo Magazine* 15, no. 2 (Winter 2015): 27-28. See <https://www.lbc.edu/Assets/PDFs/Echo/winter2015.pdf>.

⁶ Bekah Mason, "Finding My 'True Self' As a Same-Sex Attracted Woman," *Christianity Today* (June 23, 2017): <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2017/june/finding-my-true-self-as-same-sex-attracted-woman-obergefell.html>. Mason is assistant principal of Christian Academy of Louisville and doctoral candidate at the nearby Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Southern Baptist Convention). "Meet the Secondary Administrators," http://caschools.us/Websites/caschools/files/Content/5774270/MEET_THE_2016-2017_SECONDARY_ADMINISTRATORS.pdf.

⁷ According to 2014-2016 online articles, Moss was a member of Memorial Presbyterian Church (PCA) and a student at Covenant Theological Seminary in St Louis, MO. Scott Sauls, "Meet My Same-Sex Attracted, Evangelical Christian Seminary Student Friend," Scott Sauls Blog (June 2014): <https://scottsauls.com/2014/06/introducing-sex-attracted-evangelical-christian-seminary-student-friend/>; Moss, "5 Ways that my PCA Church is a Place to Belong for LGBT Christians," pilgrim days Blog (August 10, 2015): <http://www.stephenmoss.com/2015/08/a-place-to-belong-finding-home-in-body.html>; and Moss, "Loving Myself as a Celibate Gay Christian (Part 1)," pilgrim days Blog (September 5, 2016): <http://www.stephenmoss.com/2016/09/loving-myself-as-celibate-gay-christian.html>. PCA minister Scott Sauls hosted Moss at his church (Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN) for a "Same-Sex Attraction Forum" in April 2015. "Same Sex Attraction Forum," Christ Presbyterian Church, <https://www.christpres.org/same-sex-attraction-forum/>.



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