



## “Let him who is without sin cast the First Stone”

And Jesus also said, “Go and sin no more.” John 8

### Feature Article

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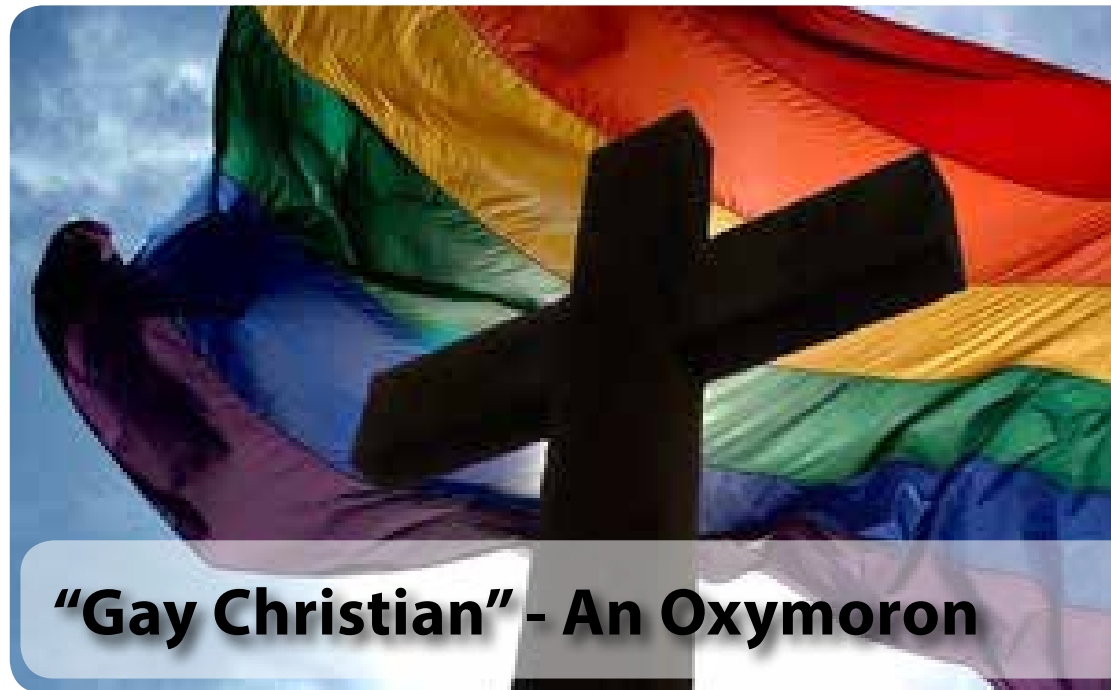
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## “Gay Christian” - An Oxymoron

by Kent Paris

There is a serious error that is growing in the ranks of *Evangelicalism*. It has already permeated mainline *Protestantism*. It is a *Trojan Horse* in the Body of Christ—one that must be addressed. It carries the potential to change the Gospel we believe, teach and preach into a different gospel (Galatians 1:8), which is NOT the Gospel, but heresy. The implications are extremely sobering.

For the most part, the move to embrace the unbiblical term ‘*Gay Christian*’ has been a well-intended effort to express love, to accept and be supportive of persons who experience same-gender attraction who have self-identified as being *gay*.

For those of us who are old enough to remember the reactionary, unloving, rejecting, even cruel responses to *gays* that

‘Bible-believing’ Christians often gave, this *change of heart* seems to right a wrong.

For 30-somethings and younger who have been so effectively propagandized by the gay agenda in our culture, *welcoming, accepting* and *affirming* ‘Gay Christians’—even those living together, those in civil unions or so-called *marriages*—just makes sense. And they are pushing hard for changes in this regard.

It is perhaps the most confusing, charged issue the contemporary Church is grappling with. After all these persons are our friends, our neighbors, our sons and daughters, our brothers or sisters, even parents. It is an emotional, complex, convoluted dilemma Church leadership and Christians at large are facing. It is difficult to remain objective, to be thoughtful, and to do the serious, honest study of God’s Word when the overwhelming voice of our culture and a

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### New FSM Website is near!



## THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is produced by First Stone Ministries (FSM). Since its founding in 1976, FSM has been an independent nondenominational, Christ-centered, para-church organization. Prior to 1991 First Stone was only a part-time ministry; however, we are now a full-time ministry with ordained ministers and discipleship staff and are governed by a Board of Directors to ensure financial and ethical accountability.

We are a Restored Hope Network member ministry.



Our primary purpose is to lead the sexually and relationally broken into a liberating relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Discipleship and restoration in every area of one's life is stressed; however, there is detailed emphasis on overcoming all forms of sexual brokenness including homosexuality, sexual abuse and addiction to pornography.

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growing number of voices within the Church are adamantly calling for a shift in belief. But we simply MUST do so for the future of the Church is at stake.

Our words truly matter! We must be wise and discerning in their use. It is supremely important when it comes to homosexuality that our reference point for the terminology we use is that revealed by God through revelation (the Bible), that which has always and only been understood and taught by orthodox Jews and Christians for thousands of years when it comes to sexual morality/immorality.

We need to remember that the novel *gay theology* that has sought to reframe and displace traditional exegesis and interpretation of any and all passages having to do with homosexuality is less than fifty years old. The move to welcome, accept and affirm practicing *homosexuals* into the Church is a recent development that represents a radical departure from biblical revelation. This reality in itself should cause Christian leaders serious pause. And yet, a new *grace* theology is infiltrating portions of the Church and many are succumbing to deception and being led astray.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the apostles would excommunicate every leader teaching this heresy from the Church. The apostles did not faint from declaring God's Truth in the midst of cultures where sexual immorality was normative and belief in pagan gods abounded. They did not *dumb down* the Gospel so they wouldn't offend anyone or be viewed as *haters*. Needless to say, the Gospel of Jesus was NOT politically or religiously correct! Nor were the apostles concerned that proclaiming the Truth and teaching the full counsel of God might adversely affect *Church growth*, building programs and the level of weekly giving. They jealously guarded the content of the Gospel and pronounced a divine curse (*anathema*) upon those who preached a *strange* gospel.

They viewed sexual immorality as something very serious because they understood the Scriptures—God's self-revelation, they had been taught by the Lord Himself, and by the Holy Spirit after His ascension. They understood beyond any doubt that God the Father, Creator of Mankind condemns sexual immorality in the strongest possible terms because it runs

absolutely counter to His nature and will. Our gender and the expression of our sexuality are intrinsic to being created in the Image of God, male and female. We simply were not created for sexual immorality. Overstepping these boundaries and engaging in sexual sin has profound repercussions (spiritual, psychological and physical).

There are a growing number of books being written for the Christian community espousing novel and unbiblical teaching regarding homosexuality. Some utterly dismiss that same-gender sex is sinful and see no conflict in being a Christian and engaging in sexual relations with others, period. Some affirm gay relationships but encourage *committed*, monogamous relationships. And there are a few voices like that of Wesley Hill, who believe that celibacy is the only option for '*gay Christians*'.

I read Wesley Hill's *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) several years ago and I'm frequently asked what I think about it. He is a graduate of Wheaton College here in Illinois. I had already read a similar book entitled *Love is an Orientation* by Andrew Marin (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2009), which I adamantly disagree with. Both miss the mark in numerous ways.

Hill's book is an open, honest sharing of his life experience struggling with same-gender attractions growing up as a devout Christian. He references the lives of others he has related to, as well as noted Christian authors like Henri Nouwen—who also struggled with same-gender attraction.

I appreciated much of the content of the book, especially parts discussing the relationship between a body of believers in a local church and how those in our midst who struggle with same-gender issues need acceptance and loving support as we all do (sinners saved by grace). I totally agree. He is clear about the sinfulness of homosexual practices and about the call we all have to follow Christ in obedience. If we are single, then we are to live chaste, celibate lives, abstaining from sexual immorality.

However, I take issue with him and many other Christians who have opted to wed the name **Christian** with *gay*, *lesbian* or *homosexual*

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(much less, fornicator, adulterer, idolater, drunkard, thief, murderer, et cetera) as one's identity. In this respect, I believe Wesley has adopted a serious error that is fraught with problems. While he also uses the phraseology that I have for decades, "*a Christian struggling with homosexual attractions*," he liberally speaks of himself and other Christians who struggle with same-gender attractions as *gay Christians, homosexual Christians or lesbian Christians*.

You know me. I have deep compassion for the struggle; I understand it. I appreciate the vexing toll it takes on many dear brothers and sisters who love God and want to follow Christ in obedience. I have counseled with well over 2,000 people over the decades struggling with same-gender issues. Many of them have prayed and hoped for "change" year after year. With an earnest heart and childlike faith they've read books, attended conferences, gone to the altar, been prayed for, anointed with oil, gone through *deliverance* sessions, or various sorts of counseling but may not have experienced the change (or depth of change) they so hoped for. Somehow they must reconcile that. I would never deny that reality. But the conclusions they come to are critically important.

It has mattered greatly to me since my conversion to Christ at age 19 and my earliest years interacting with folks in EXODUS (1976 to 2009) about the words we use to describe ourselves—and our experience. Let's look for a moment at one of my favorite passages.

*"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor those submitting to male homosexuals (sodomites), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And these things are what some of you were, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."* (1 Corinthians 9-11)

This passage is profoundly important theologically. The conversion spoken of here by the apostle Paul, effected by God through the work of Christ and the Spirit, is what removed them from being among the wicked, who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. It is not difficult to mine the inherent imperative implied here: *"Therefore, live out this new life in Christ and stop being like the wicked."*

The word **"But"** is incredibly pivotal here because it gives additional force to the statement *"Once you were, but now you're not"*. The three verbs are metaphors of salvation, each

expressing a special facet of their conversion: They had been **washed** from the filth of their former lifestyles; they had been **sanctified**, set apart by God for the holy, godly living that stands in dark contrast to their former wickedness.

Though formerly unjust, they had been **justified**, so that now—right with God—they may inherit the Kingdom that before they could not. The word, **"were"** is a Greek imperfect that means in essence that these particular sins were habitual in nature—they were life-dominating sins.

Paul throws in the word **"But"** implying that at a point in time, God did something that ushered in tremendous change. It changed their frame of reference—their sense of **identity**. Paul speaks of the regenerate as **identity**. Paul speaks of the regenerate as new creatures in Christ.

*"Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:16, 17)

Dr. Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse writes: *"We need a reference point for our lives. If we have no yardstick to determine who we are, no basis, no foundation, then we will find confusion... we will only be able to define ourselves by our feelings, or by the voices and norms of our culture. We need an anchor—something that secures us, something steadfast that can be counted on. We need a reference point outside of ourselves, our feelings, our fallen, limited thinking and consciousness."*

The Scriptures are the reference point for our lives. We must be very careful not to move beyond the revelation and teaching of the Holy Scriptures. We are a people who are predestined to become conformed to the image and likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29, 30). Our true identity is in Him; we are who HE says we are, quite apart from any feelings, attractions, sexual desires and struggles we may presently experience.

Our lives are deeply influenced by the mental picture we carry around. If *homosexual, lesbian or gay* is a person's tag, or if we tag them as such, we've overlooked the central biblical theme of JESUS being our point of reference.

It's worth noting that there are few instances in the Scriptures of labeling. One example is the passage from 1 Corinthians we read, but the overall emphasis is that of the Prodigal Son. The Father's view was that his son, who was lost, was now found. You don't hear the Father saying: *"Rejoice with me! My son, the fornicator and drunkard has been saved!"* Rather, we hear, *"We*

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*had to be merry and rejoice for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, was lost and has been found."*

Dr. Lawrence Hatterer has written, *"The homosexual does not exist—only persons who fantasize, feel, and act homosexually exist."* That's a powerful statement! Not only is sexualized identity clinically unsound, it is personally thwarting. One aspect of a person's life simply cannot characterize the whole.

Dr. Melvin Hugen states: *"Quite apart from the moral implications of homosexual behavior, there is something very wrong and very unhealthy about identifying oneself in terms of one's sexuality."*

I applaud Wesley Hill's commitment to celibacy and his agreement with God's Word that same-gender sexual acts are sinful; however, I think he is terribly mistaken and ill advised to wed the words *gay, homosexual* or *lesbian* with Christian. It falls seriously short of the identity we are to embrace in Christ and sends the wrong message.

I believe a biblical view of human identity in Christ calls us to a higher reality. The coupling of the two terms (*gay* and *Christian*) is antithetical to Scripture. Imagine coupling some of the other words Paul uses as a joint description of one's identity: Christian homosexual, Christian adulterer, Christian idolater, Christian liar, Christian coveter, Christian alcoholic, Christian blasphemer... you get the point.

A person may struggle with a great many things in their thought life and affections. We are sinners saved by grace through faith in Christ and the finished work of the cross in which we glory. We are people destined to be like Him. Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus and find our true identity in Him.

Let us be careful not to fall prey to terminology that reflects our fallenness and old nature that is passing away and let us put on the new man in Christ. This does not deny any struggle we may have or the need to continue to work on them. We do well to heed the words of Proverbs 23:7 *"For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he."*

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## 'Gay Christian' and 'Spiritual Friendship?'

*First Stone Ministries fully embraces the "Restored Hope Network Official Position" on so-called 'Gay Christian' and 'Spiritual Friendship'. It is unfortunate that we are living in a day where there are so many unclear messages that obscure Biblical Orthodoxy about the healing of the sexual sinner in the Church and of the transformative grace to assure such freedom. The so-called 'Gay Christian' message is established by a mixture of distorted psychology and a poor representation of Biblical grace. While we support those who continue to embrace Christ's commandment of self-denial and their willingness to remain sexually pure, there are many people who label themselves "celibate gay Christian". People in this group often seek primary fellowship with those who are living in varying levels homosexuality, they may engage in sinful sexual behavior and who even accept and promote emotional idolatry as friendship. Most of those who are calling themselves "celibate gay Christian" are actually not called to celibacy but communicate that they are in fact a suffering abstainer of their uncontrollable same-sex desires and lust. These "gay Christians" are seeking to make legitimate a condition of fallen humanity that the Lord Jesus calls us to forsake. With several decades of experience in helping people overcome homosexuality, seeing what does and does not help, First Stone Ministries and the Restored Hope Network reject these trendy ideas as unwise to say the least as they promote and give acceptance to the homosexual condition as inalterable. These trendy ideas are inviting many to fall into the bondage of uncontrollable homosexual temptations and sexual behavior. Please read the following position statement that was unanimously voted in by the membership of the Restored Hope Network on June 25, 2015.*

## The Restored Hope Network Official Position on the 'Gay Christian' and 'Spiritual Friendships?'

Restored Hope Network (RHN) respectfully disagrees with anyone who continues to identify as both 'homosexual' and Christian. Identification with Christ can and must displace an identity based on disordered desires. The New Testament repeatedly calls believers to repent of old identifications and to cleave to the new, true source of one's identity—Christ Jesus Himself (Rom. 6: 11, 12; 8:6-14; Gal.

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## Upcoming Events

**Caddo Co. Bapt.  
Assn. Conf.**  
Aug 30

**Clarity Conference**  
Sep 17-19

**Living Waters**  
Oct 1 - Spring 2016

**PFOX: SAFE Exit  
Conference**  
Oct 2-3

**NARTH Conference**  
Oct 23-24

**DSM Living Waters  
Training**  
Oct 23-30

**Ward's Chapel Bapt.  
Church - Atoka, OK**  
Nov 6-8

**Metropolitan Bapt.  
Church**  
Nov 8

**Overcomers Network  
- Men's Conf.**  
Nov 12-15

**FSM Christmas Party**  
Dec 12

# 2015 CLARITY CONFERENCE

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## WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT **HOMOSEXUALITY**

**September 17-19, 2015 | Oklahoma City, OK**

Today we live in a culture that is constantly trying to paint grey areas onto what The Bible has clearly painted as black and white. Much of what Christian people believe and think about current events is based on emotion and experience rather than Biblical truth. The Clarity Conference is an annual event that is designed to bring Biblical clarity to contemporary issues. As pastors and ministry leaders we should be able to preach and teach the truth of God's Word, in love, and lead our churches to do the same.

This year we will be addressing what the Bible says about homosexuality. A lack of understanding in the totality of God's Word on this issue by both the church and the homosexual community can make the church an enemy to those who are living a homosexual lifestyle. This should not be so. It is time for the church to bring clarity, truth, and love to a very difficult issue in our world today. This will be a three day conference addressing the Old and New Testament scriptures regarding homosexuality as well as practical ministry application.

**Registration is now open at [CCOK.TV](http://CCOK.TV)**

### Speakers include:



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2:20). Paul in particular reminds 'homosexuals' to forego their 'gay' selves when he declares to believers: 'such were some of you' in light of having been 'washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God' (1Cor 6:9-11). Yet many Christians today claim to be faithful to both God and their 'homosexual natures.' 'Gay' Christians tend to fall into two categories: first are persons who are open to homosexual erotic unions, behaviors clearly prohibited by scripture (see RHN doctrinal statement). The second group is comprised of 'gay' persons who claim to be celibate. These celibates appear to be faithful to scripture and church tradition but actually foster the 'gay' self by encouraging same-sex attracted persons to 'come out' to their faith communities and to form 'spiritual friendships' with others, even covenanting in exclusive homo-emotional unions.

RHN advocates for healthy same-sex friendship as a key to transformation. However, RHN believes that claiming to repent of sinful behavior while cultivating homosexual selves and desires in exclusive homo-emotional 'spiritual friendships' is unscriptural and unwise. Such an approach reinforces a 'gay' identity and orientation, which undercut God's purposes for our sexuality. Identification with Christ cannot be separated from these purposes. Jesus' command to love our neighbors applies to our self-definitions and relational choices. That requires a realignment of our fallen natures to Christlikeness.

The Bible defines humanity as created in God's image as male and female (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:18-25). Faithfulness to God involves faithfulness to one's gendered self and the command to live interdependently with the opposite gender (Matt. 19: 1-6; 1Cor. 11: 11, 12). Any Christian who advocates for 'gay' selves and friendships frustrates the prospect of growing in that gender duality; in truth, 'gay Christians' encourage gender dis-complementarity, which endangers God's will for our humanity (Rom. 1: 18-25).

RHN believes that God calls all persons to gender complementarity: married, single and celibate, whatever their sexual inclinations may be. RHN upholds God's call upon certain persons to live celibate lives, and understands celibacy as God's

call on persons He asks to serve His Kingdom without domestic burdens (1Cor 7: 7, 35-37). We disagree with the implication of 'gay' Christian celibates that persons with same-sex attraction automatically receive God's call to celibacy, much less a 'gay' celibate call. God calls all to gender complementarity.

Many Christians base their 'gay' identification upon the depth of their same-sex inclinations. Yet such identification prevents the renewing of the mind that can open one to new ways of thinking, feeling, and relating. While RHN realizes that one may experience same-sex desires to varying degrees over a lifetime, we contend that one can also discover new desires by reordering one's thinking and acting (2Cor. 10:3-5).

After all, we are turning toward the Author and Redeemer of our lives; His transforming love is deeper than our desires. He asks us to forego any identification or behavior that stands in the way of the transformation He desires for us. 'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will' (Romans 12: 2).

The world and worldly Christians now view same-sex attraction as synonymous with a 'homosexual' orientation, which can be defined as an intrinsic, immutable part of one's humanity that must be recognized, protected, and even celebrated. RHN disagrees. We contend that this concept of sexual orientation is a false cultural construct that is at odds with biblical truth. Sexual desire is something that we feel; it does not define who we are. God made humanity for more and can redeem us accordingly. Jesus calls the faithful to forego worldly thinking on the topic in order to realize 'the more' that God intends for humanity.

In light of the new creation, Paul implores Christians 'to see none from a worldly point of view' (2Cor. 5:16). RHN refuses the worldly perspective of 'gay' Christians due to the new creatures we have become in Him. 'God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God' (2Cor 5: 14-21). We encourage all who turn to Jesus to identify with Him and so become righteous in the whole of their humanity.



## How do I respond to my gay-identified loved one with truth?

First, take responsibility for your own sins so you can approach them without compromise.

If you have offended your loved one, ask for forgiveness and be a representation of Truth in the way you live your life—this may take a season of working out your own repentance.

Our actions and attitudes of being a representative of holy love can be the very best way to respond to your

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loved one's homosexuality or struggle with same-sex attraction. The quote attributed to St. Augustine and St. Francis, "Preach the Gospel all day long, and if necessary use words" can be helpful when considering how you live your life in the public's view. We only become trustworthy to the extent we take into account and live out godly ways ourselves. Living in this manner provides us ample opportunity to share the Truth in love.

Second, pray for the opportunity to present the Gospel. God opens doors we cannot.

Third, eventually sharing the Gospel requires using words. Start by studying key Scriptures so you can handle them accurately. You may need equipping and training to present the Gospel. It's not just homosexuals who need to repent so don't make

homosexuality the first topic they must address in coming to the knowledge of the Gospel. Our unbelief and unrepentant sin-nature is the barrier to life with God and so there are many other sins you can reveal in making an appeal for the need of the sacrifice of Christ's work on the Cross for their salvation. Receiving the Gospel (Good News) is what they need. Upon salvation, the Holy Spirit will eventually convict of all the remaining sin.

Finally, we all need to be equipped beforehand to present the truth about the brokenness and sin of homosexuality so as to be a support to your loved one in their repentance. We have many articles, full of scripture, on these topics with which you can start.



## Support Groups



Living Waters is an in-depth, Christ-centered program for people seeking healing in areas of sexual and relational brokenness. A healing, teaching and discipleship study that addresses the reality—we are all broken in our ability to love others well. The goal of First Stone Ministries' support groups are to lay a foundation for relational and sexual wholeness in our lives. Living Waters meets on Thursday evenings from 7-10pm.

Living Waters 2015-2016 program year begins on October 1st.

Applications are online and are being accepted **NOW** for our October 1st start date. For more info, please visit our website.



### Parents, Family & Friends

groups@firststone.org or call 405-236-4673.

Our Parents, Family & Friends group meets each month on the 1st and 3rd Friday from 7-9:30pm, except for holidays and any conflicting FSM events. If you have someone in your family or friendship circle and need support from other Biblically-grounded people, we encourage you to request an interview for possible admission to this group. If interested, email

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*Details on page 5.*

**Speakers include:**

