

The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

THE TRAIN IS LEAVING THE STATION:



Andy Stanley's departure from Biblical Christianity

by Albert Mohler

It's not like we have not seen this coming. In the coming days, Andy Stanley is set to host the "Unconditional Conference" at a campus of North Point Community Church in the metro Atlanta area, and the website for the conference bills it as a "two-day premier event" especially designed for parents of LGBTQ+ children and ministry leaders.



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“You will be equipped, refreshed, and inspired as you hear from leading communicators on topics that speak to your heart, soul, and mind,” it promises. One statement stands out in the description: “No matter what theological stance you hold, we invite you to listen, reflect, and learn as we approach this topic from the quieter middle space.”

The promise of “the quieter middle space” might appear attractive, given the volatility of cultural discourse on LGBTQ+ issues, and a conference designed to help parents of LGBTQ+ children and ministry leaders work through these issues in clearly Biblical terms would be a welcome development. But the advertising for the Unconditional Conference indicates clearly that this event is designed as a platform for normalizing the LGBTQ+ revolution while claiming that the conference represents “the quieter middle space.” In truth, there is no “middle space” on these issues, and it is no longer plausible to claim that such middle space exists.

Scheduled speakers for the event include two men who are married to other men, at least according to current civil law. Biographical background on speakers Justin Lee and Brian Nietzel indicates that both men are in what are now

described as “same-sex marriages.” Lee is well known as a platform speaker who argues for the legitimacy of “monogamous same-sex relationships.” Nietzel presents seminars on “restoring LGBTQ+ faith.” Just to be clear: This is not “the quieter middle space.”

Another major speaker is David Gushee, a prominent intellectual who has been honest about his own change of mind on the moral status of LGBTQ+ behaviors and relationships.

In the “definitive edition” of his book *Changing Our Mind*, subtitled as a “Landmark Call for Inclusion of LGBT Christians,” he traces his own pilgrimage to eager LGBTQ+ advocacy. In the book, Gushee states that he will “grant the historical claim that the Church has believed that same-sex acts and relationships are always wrong.” But the book traces his change, over time, to a position in which he clearly asserts that the Christian church has been historically wrong on this issue. In his book and in other presentations, Gushee is clear about his position, his reasoning, his reading of the Bible, and his conclusions.

I appreciate his honesty and the clarity with which he makes his argument. Furthermore, I am pretty confident that Gushee would



REFORMATION

Solas



When the medieval church lost her way, the rediscovery of these fundamental doctrines during the Reformation helped the church regain her footing.

1

SCRIPTURE ALONE is authoritative for the faith and practice of the Christian life. Scripture is the perfect and only standard of spiritual truth, revealing infallibly all that we must believe in order to be saved and all that we must do in order to glorify God.

2

GRACE ALONE

3

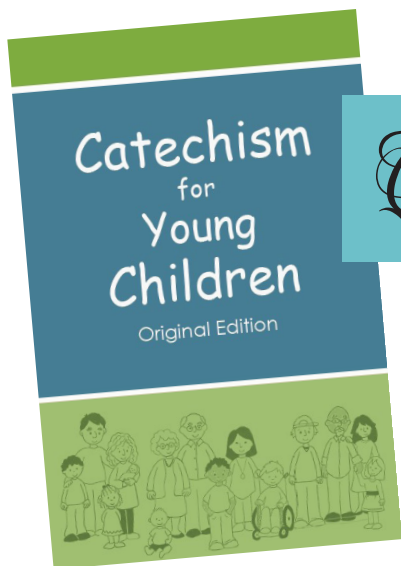
FAITH ALONE

4

CHRIST ALONE

5

TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY



Question 48:

What is meant by the Atonement?

Answer:

Christ's satisfying divine justice,
by his sufferings and death,
in the place of sinners.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6

When the Lord allowed Abraham to offer up a ram instead of his son Isaac, God demonstrated to His people that He would accept one life as a substitute for another. Of course, the greatest substitute God has ever provided is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was offered up to redeem His people two thousand years ago.



God the Son made *atonement*, a covering, for His people by perfectly obeying God's law in His life and paying the penalty for their sins in His death. ♦



at the corner of

River & Rhett



Beginning Monday, September 18, the City of Greenville began work on replacing the old, overloaded sewer main that runs along Rhett Street. Second Presbyterian Church ties into this sewer main that has needed replacement for many years as development is increasing in this area. The old sewer main is 50–100 years old. Rhett Street will be closed during the day until the work is completed in mid-October. ♦

**O
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B
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R**



BIRTHDAYS

1

Nancy Clay, Providence Spell, Jonah Windt

2

Brice Pratt, Ginny Zeigler

3

Mae Gamble, Barbara Stueben

4

Mark Diggs, Donna Siemen

6

Evelyn Boudreau, Jack Hoopes II, Jake Korol

7

Judy Brigman, David Lichtenfelt

This Week

Morning Sermon

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

A LIGHT SHINING

Mark 4:21–25

Evening Sermon

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

ASTONISHED BY THE APOSTLES

Acts 4:13–22

Sunday, October 1

- 8:30 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 9:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 10:00 A.M. Membership Class (*Room C-209*)
- 10:00 A.M. Sunday School
- 11:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP

Monday, October 2

- 6:30 A.M. Men's Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 9:30 A.M. Rafiki Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 6:00 P.M. Diaconate Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Tuesday, October 3

- 10:00 A.M. WIC Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)

Wednesday, October 4

No Wednesday night meal, activities, or service

- 7:00 P.M. Chancel Choir

Thursday, October 5

- 9:30 A.M. Precepts Bible Study (*Conference Room*)
- 6:45 P.M. Mission to Main

Friday, October 6

- 12:00 P.M. Men's Luncheon and Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 6:00 P.M. GCRT Banquet (*Gym*)
- 7:00 P.M. GCRT Service (*Sanctuary*)

Saturday, October 7

- 9:00 A.M. GCRT (*Sanctuary*)

**Greenville Conference on
Reformed Theology (GCRT)**

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday Services



Upcoming Events

spcgreenville.org/calendar

October 2

Diaconate Meeting

October 6-8

Greenville Conference on Reformed Theology

October 9

Session Meeting

October 15

Communion in the Evening Service

October 21

Church Picnic at Gamble home

GRACE ALONE.

GREENVILLE CONFERENCE ON REFORMED THEOLOGY



DR. IAN HAMILTON is President of Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Newcastle, England. He is also a Trustee of the Banner of Truth Trust and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

DR. NEIL STEWART is the senior minister of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina. He holds a degree from Reformed Theological Seminary and previously pastored PCA congregations in Georgia and rural Mississippi.

DR. RICHARD PHILLIPS is the senior minister of the historic Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina. He is the author of forty-five books and frequently speaks at conferences on the Bible and Reformed Theology.

OCTOBER 6-8

Register for FREE at
spcgreenville.org/gcrt

agree that the issues at stake in this debate reflect the deepest issues of conviction and our understanding of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and how we read the Bible. What we face here is an honest disagreement over fundamental convictions.

As Gushee writes, “I am instead asking whether devout gay and lesbian Christians might be able to participate in the covenantal-marital sexual ethical standard—one person, for life, faithful and exclusive, in a loving nonexploitative, non-coercive, reciprocal relationship, that is the highest expression of Christian sexual ethics—which, in fact, a goodly number are already doing. I can’t find a compelling reason to say no anymore.”

Andy Stanley, one of the most influential pastors in the United States, has been moving in this direction for years, often by suggestion and assertion but clouded by confusion and the deliberate avoidance of clarity.

That is about as clear a statement as we might imagine. It is absolutely free from evasion or confusion. Add to that declaration the fact that the Unconditional Conference will include two men married to other men as speakers or presenters. None of this is hidden, but it is falsely presented as “the quieter middle space.” But, as Gushee has

acknowledged (and lamented), the Christian church has clearly and consistently (and until recently, virtually unanimously) understood the Bible to forbid all same-sex sexual behaviors and to authorize sexual expression only within marriage as the covenant union of a man and a woman.

This conference is not really “quiet,” nor is it “middle space.” It is structured as what most evangelicals would quickly recognize as a departure from historic normative Biblical Christianity.

Andy Stanley, one of the most influential pastors in the United States, has been moving in this direction for years, often by suggestion and assertion but clouded by confusion and the deliberate avoidance of clarity. Back in 2018, he called for the church to be “unhitched” from the Old Testament, arguing that the Old Testament should not be understood as the “go-to source regarding any behavior in the church.” There goes “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22). But, in truth, there goes the entire Old Testament. A few years before that, in a 2012 message Stanley seemed to argue that adultery is a sin but told of two men in a relationship with no suggestion that the same-sex coupling was forbidden by Scripture.

Announcements

Membership Class

Even though the class started on September 10, you can still attend! This no-obligation class meets for eight weeks. It is open to anyone interested in learning more about our beliefs or joining our church. Gather with others and our minister, Dr. Phillips, as we explore together our church distinctives. For more information or to register, please visit our church website: spcgreenville.org/signup.

Baptism Sundays

If you are a member of Second Presbyterian Church and would like to schedule a baptism for your child, please contact the church office for one of these dates: October 15, November 5, or December 10. Baptisms can take place at either the 8:30 or 11:00 Morning Service.

Baby Shower for Ely & Rachel O'Donald

All ladies are invited!

Saturday, September 30 @ 4:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall
Registry: Walmart, Babylist (*expecting a girl!!*)

Westminster Class Luncheon

When: Sunday, October 1, immediately after 11:00 service
Where: Fellowship Hall
What: Bring a generous portion of a side dish or dessert to share.
Meat and drinks will be provided.
Who: Westminster Community members
Contact: Johnny Mann

Replenishing Our Widows' Fund

Honor widows who are truly widows. | Timothy 5:3

Second Presbyterian Church established the Widows' Fund for the substantial (and often ongoing) needs that come upon some who are widowed and live to an old age. (This is different from the Sympathy and Service fund which meets the short-term needs of all of our members). The reserve balance in this fund has been slowly but steadily declining over the past months. If you are able, above your tithe and other giving to the church, to give to rebuild this fund, please consider making a monthly gift to the Widows' Fund. We praise our God for His abundant provision for those who look to Him.

Fall Church Picnic

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 21, from 11:00–3:00!

Jacob Gamble Home: 55 Meddabrook Drive, Greenville

More details coming in next week's newsletter.

CALL TO ALL BAKERS! Bill Watkins and the Kairos Prison Ministry team need cookies for the upcoming 4-day class on basic Christianity that will be held at Perry Correctional. This is the first one since COVID! While only 30 inmates are in the class, all 1000 inmates during the weekend receive bags of cookies with Bible verses and visits from the Kairos ministry team. Please bake as many dozens as you feel led to do and bring them to the kitchen at Second Church on Sunday October 1, 2023. Please package them in disposable containers such as shoe boxes. Please avoid using aluminum foil or zip lock bags. If you have any questions, call Bill Watkins at 864-304-4737.

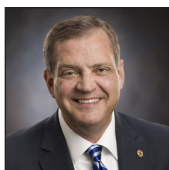


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When the message became controversial, Stanley did not clarify the situation at all. More recently, in another message Stanley dismissed Biblical texts against homosexual behavior as “clobber” verses and said, “If your theology gets in the way of ministry—like if there’s somebody you can’t minister to because of your theology—you have the wrong theology.”

This is not a misunderstanding. This is a trajectory that points to the Unconditional Conference and two speakers married to other men on the platform. This is a clear and tragic departure from Biblical Christianity.

The conference has not been held yet. No doubt there will be a good deal of conversation once it has been held. Maybe the conference will surprise us and Stanley will present a resounding affirmation of Biblical authority and the Christian church’s longstanding convictions concerning sexuality, marriage, and gender. But that would require a reversal of Stanley’s trajectory and a bold correction of his platform guests. To state the obvious—that is not what is advertised. He has been working in this direction for years now. Sadly, it looks like the train is about to leave the station. ♦



Albert Mohler Jr. is president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College and editor of *WORLD Magazine* Opinions. He is also the host of *The Briefing* and *Thinking in Public*.