

Southern Gables EFC, Littleton, CO | January 30-February 1



## Welcome and Introduction

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### Welcome

Welcome to the 2013 Theology Conference, Sex Matters: The Theology of Human Sexuality. We are grateful you have been able to join us. We have and continue to pray that the Lord might use this Conference in significant ways in our lives and in the life and ministry of the local church.

### The Moral Issue of the Day

Human sexuality is the contemporary moral issue of the day. One simply cannot ignore it, and as Christians, we don't want to ignore it because we want to be faithful proclaimers of the Word of God. Moreover, it is a significant way in which the truth of God's Word is being questioned, challenged, undermined and denied.

There is, however, another side to this. The cultural pressure is so strong that it makes it a challenge to speak about or into this issue today, especially if what you speak is counter-cultural, against the grain of the prevailing, acceptable belief about a biblical view of human sexuality. It would certainly be easier to say nothing, to keep any discussion about it internal, to become separatist, but I do not believe it would mean being faithful. We confess we would rather get on with more important things of life and ministry. But it is important for us to be reminded that this is a vital aspect of life and ministry. We know that. It is why you are here. We need to be equipped to know how to do that more effectively and fruitfully, and to that end we pray.

### A Few Illustrations

Let me just list a few key issues that have occurred recently, which are not intended to be scare tactics or to illustrate by using only the worst examples to make my point. These are simply representative, and the examples could be multiplied.

- Chick-fil-A was at the heart of a firestorm last summer because Dan Cathy, president and COO, made a statement that the company supports a biblical view of marriage as between a man and a woman.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly and encouragingly, Dan reached out to the Shane Windmeyer, nationally recognized LGBT leader in higher education and executive director of Campus Pride, and as a result of this relationship, Campus Pride no longer boycotts Chick-fil-A. From my perspective, what Dan did was a case of welcoming but not affirming.
- This past December I read of the forthcoming update (May 2013) to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5, which includes the replacement of the expression “gender identity disorder” with “gender dysphoria” for those who believe they born the wrong gender. In response, Dan Beals notes that “once again [we observe] an attempt by psychologists to de-pathologize these issues. It can't be a 'disorder'. Because that would indicate it is wrong or abnormal.”
- More recently, Louie Giglio, founder of Passion Conferences and pastor of Passion City Church, Atlanta, GA, was invited to give the benediction at the presidential Inauguration. Once it was discovered that he had preached a biblical message on the sin of homosexual practice about 20 years ago, the outcry of inviting someone like him was contrary to everything our inclusive culture embraces. He graciously bowed out. Many questions surround this – should he have even accepted, should he have stayed the course, did he do the right thing?
- Just a couple of weeks ago I read in our local Minneapolis *StarTribune* of the ordination of a transgendered man, having undergone the transition from female to male three years ago.<sup>2</sup> In another section of the same paper, it addressed “Generational LGBTQIA.” Here is the main point of that article: “If the gay-rights movement today seems to revolve around same-sex marriage, this generation is seeking something more radical: an upending of gender roles beyond the binary of male/female. The core question is not whom they love, but who they are – that is, identity as distinct from sexual orientation.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Shane L. Windmeyer, “Dan and Me: My Coming Out as a Friend of Dan Cathy and Chick-fil-A,” *Huffington Post*, the Blog, HuffPost Gay Voices (January 29, 2013): [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shane-l-windmeyer/dan-cathy-chick-fil-a\\_b\\_2564379.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shane-l-windmeyer/dan-cathy-chick-fil-a_b_2564379.html) Windmeyer is a nationally recognized LGBT leader in higher education, bestselling author, and executive director of Campus Pride.

<sup>2</sup> Rose French, “Transgender man will be ordained in Minneapolis,” *StarTribune* [“around the metro”] (January 19, 2013), B.1-2. Shannon T. L. Kearns will be ordained today (January 19, 2013) into the North American Catholic Church, which has no relation to the traditional Roman Catholic Church. Kearns, 32, grew up in Pennsylvania in a “fundamentalist evangelical church.” While earning a master of divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York, Kearns transitioned from female to male. Three years ago Kearns moved to the MSP area.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Schulman, “Generational ‘LGBTQIA,’” *StarTribune* (“variety”) (Saturday, January 19, 2013), E.4-5. “Those who feel they don’t identify with traditional gender roles are creating their own.” The acronym refers to the following: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex (anatomy is not exclusively male or female), Asexual (absence of sexual attraction) or Ally (friend of the cause).

And lest we think this is only an American or Western issue, here is another AP report: “Nepal to Issue ‘Third Gender’ IDs,” Associated Press (January 22, 2013): [http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS\\_NEPAL\\_GAY\\_RIGHTS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2013-01-22-06-45-38](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS_NEPAL_GAY_RIGHTS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2013-01-22-06-45-38) Here is how the article begins: “KATMANDU, Nepal (AP) – “An official says Nepal's government will begin issuing citizenship certificates with the category "third gender" for people who do not wish

- In February's edition of *Christianity*, a British publication that came out last week, Steve Chalke, founder of Oasis Global and Faithworks and Stop the Traffik coalition and sr. pastor of Oasis Church, London, affirmed same-sex marriage, specifically "permanent and monogamous homosexual relationships."<sup>4</sup> Late last year he "conducted a dedication and blessing service . . . of two wonderfully gay Christians," and wrote a liturgy for this kind of service.
- This, by the way, is the same Steve Chalke who wrongly claimed that the penal substitutionary view of the atonement was "cosmic child abuse."<sup>5</sup> Though there is much to be said about both of these issues, there is a relation between them which is found in biblical interpretation and which pastoral and practical implications, not all good. I just heard from one of our pastors this morning that one couple in the church, who serve as leaders, gave him a copy of Chalke's article and said, "It states where we are at."
- And just yesterday we learned that the "Boy Scouts may welcome gays."<sup>6</sup> Though they claim this will be left up to each local council to determine its own policy, you can be assured that if this policy change happens it will only be a matter of time before it becomes a mandate. That is the concern, and it is not without warrant.

### Another Moral Issue – Premarital Sex and Cohabitation

Lest we conclude this is only a LGBTQIA – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex and asexual (or ally) – issue, think of the many who are engaging in heterosexual sex outside of marriage. Many are living with a Gnostic view of the body, that is a body and soul dualism. As human beings, we are embodied, and the body is intrinsically good, not merely instrumentally good. The latter, notes Robert George, "entails a metaphysical dualism of the person and the body that is rationally untenable . . . a particular understanding of the human person as an essentially non-bodily being who inhabits a nonpersonal body. . . . the 'person' is the conscious and desiring 'self' as distinct from the body which may exist (as in the case of pre- and post-conscious human beings) as a merely 'biological,' and, thus, sub-personal, reality." In contrast to this secular view, Christians see human beings as "dynamically unified actors –of being, that is embodied persons and not persons who merely 'inhabit' our bodies and direct them as extrinsic instruments under our control, like automobiles. We don't sit in the physical body and direct it as an instrument, the way we sit in a car and make it go right or left. . . . The human person is a unity of body and soul – both being intrinsic parts of the person. As the doctrine

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to be identified as male or female. Activists hailed the decision, saying it was an achievement for gay and transgender rights. . . . Nepal's Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that the government should issue "third gender" citizenship certificates but it took five years to implement the decision."

<sup>4</sup> Steve Chalke, "The Bible and Homosexuality: Part One," *Christianity* (February 2013): <http://www.christianitymagazine.co.uk/sexuality/stevechalkeextended.aspx> Chalke engages in (re)interpretation of a few key texts based on a trajectory hermeneutic (think of William Webb's "'redemptive movement' hermeneutic" or "'trajectory' hermeneutic") rooted in Jesus' teaching and practice of "inclusion."

<sup>5</sup> *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 182.

<sup>6</sup> Oren Dorell and Cathy Lynn Grossman, "Boy Scouts may welcome gays: an about-face could let local troops have final say," *USA Today*, January 29, 2013, A, 1.

of the resurrection makes clear, human beings are saved and exist in eternity as bodily persons, not as disembodied souls.”<sup>7</sup>

S. M. Hutchens concludes that young people cannot engage in this sort of behavior without serious implications. We cannot live as if bodies and souls are not related and thus a man and woman can have sex apart from marriage and remain unaffected. This belief and behavior has had serious consequences among young people. Hutchens concludes that those who have become sexually involved “outside of marriage are permanently damaged in the same way as an amputee is. The nature of their problem is not of the kind that will respond to the equivalent of aspirin and bed rest – or even to many tears. A part of them has been removed and carried away to dissolve beyond their reach. While grace may provide a good prosthetic in this life, and gives full healing in the next, the Christian faith does not allow them to believe they have lost anything less than the fundamental, personal, metaphysical integrity that ‘one flesh’ implies.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Cultural Sea-Change**

All of these issues, and more, reflect the cultural sea-change we are experiencing. We have all acknowledged that we will in a postmodern, postChristian day. But I sense we have known that intellectually. With these cultural issues, and the speed with which they are happening, kind of like a moral tsunami, I think many are for the first time beginning to feel and experience palpably some of the implications of what they – we! – had for many years only known abstractly. These shifts require a different way of thinking, engaging, and speaking, without compromising the Word of God or Christian faithfulness.

### **Our Conference Focus: God’s Good Design, and Implications of the Fall**

All of this and more had an influence on the planning of this Conference. We had originally thought of just addressing the issue of same-sex marriage, and I believe we would be warranted in doing so. But that misses the big picture, which consists of God’s good design, not just one deviation or perversion of that design. This is what led to this broader framework. I also thought it would be important to address the deviations from God’s good design more broadly, not just the sin of same-sex marriage. It must be addressed, but so must other sins. We live in a day that when morality is addressed, the sin of homosexuality and same-sex marriage must be addressed or one’s silence will be heard as support of it. But then when one does communicate it over and over, which is necessary as it is the moral issue of the day, then one will be criticized for having only one note that is played incessantly on our moral instrument.

As we ponder our theme, there are major issues related to human sexuality: creation, male and female, image of God, marriage, singleness, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, GLBTQIA, GID, pornography, cohabitation among young (including evangelicals), older people living together and not married so as not to lose benefits, and such as these, as Paul would say. Moreover, how will pastors respond as custodians of the state when they may be asked to perform same-sex unions? Should the pastor serve the dual role of civil and ecclesiastical in marriages? Should churches no longer perform weddings, but leave that to the state? This question is being raised quite often.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert P. George, “A Clash of Orthodoxies,” *First Things* 95 (August/September 1999), 33-40.

<sup>8</sup> S. M. Hutchens, “Interlocking Hearts,” *Touchstone* 26/1 (January/February 2013), 20.

This is a very complex issue. It touches on all of the following: cultural, biblical, theological, scientific, sociological, pastoral, experiential. But this complexity does not mean there is question about this in the Word of God. We need to go back to God's Word, be reminded of what He says, listen and learn about these issues, learn to get to the heart of these issues in the lives of people, and be equipped to stand firmly on God's truth with humility and courage, knowing that God knows and cares and desires wholeness, according to His original design, not the personal whims and wishes of men and women.

By God's grace, we will focus on the important issue of human sexuality, and address the contemporary pressure points with a specific application to the ethical issue of same-sex marriage. We will do so from an interdisciplinary, integrative format, learning from speakers who are experts engaging in faithful public ministry rooted in the Bible.

### **Speakers**

Here are the speakers and the disciplines they represent, following the order in which they will speak.

Systematic Theology – Ben Mitchell, Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy, Union University, Jackson, TN

New Testament – Robert Gagnon, Associate Professor of New Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA

Personal – Wesley Hill, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Trinity School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA

Psychology – Stan Jones, Provost and Professor of Psychology, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

Medical – Daniel Beals, Chief, Division of Pediatric Surgery and Urology, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL

I am grateful to the Lord because it is only His providential hand that allowed us to get the speakers we did. They are key individuals who are on the front-lines of addressing this issue from an Evangelical perspective, seeking to educate and equip the church to know the Scriptures, to discern the times and to engage lovingly with those who struggle or out-right pursue the life and lifestyle. These men are committed to authority of God's Word, both believing and living the faith, i.e. orthodoxy and orthopraxy, and the flourishing of people.

Our prayer for attendees is that the Lord will use this Conference to inform, educate and equip you to address these issues in a biblically faithful, theologically informed, and pastorally sensitive manner, all the while standing firmly on the Word of God.

### **A Final Reminder and Exhortation: In Christ We Stand Against Principalities and Powers**

One final important matter – We need to understand that as we engage in this topic in particular, we are engaging in a stand for truth against the principalities and powers and the unique way they are affecting and influencing people and culture (Eph. 6:10-18). We acknowledge the reality of the spiritual battle in Article 8 of our Statement of Faith: "With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil." Here is a small example of what has happened. I don't want to make too much of this, but neither do I want to be naïve; the spiritual forces of evil are real.

Last week Dan Beals informed me that he was unable to be at the Conference due to a urgent neck/spinal problem that needed surgery sooner rather than later. His surgery is tomorrow. He has sent a video recording of his lecture, a second best to a person's presence.

Yesterday President Hamel informed me that he is unable to join us for one of the panel due to a serious cold that has only progressively gotten worse.

This morning Ben Mitchell, another one of our plenary speakers who was going to give the two opening messages, called to inform me he cannot make it. A pain in his hip became debilitating such that he is unable to walk. Ben is still able to deliver his two messages, but will do so through other means besides physical presence.

This is what I shared as I asked people to join in prayer for this Conference: "I do not doubt the fact that the enemy does not want this to happen. Though these matters are frustrating, God is the sovereign one who is working his plan and greater good through this. As one helping to organize this conference, I am not sure what that greater good is, but I trust God fully!" To which President Hamel replied, "I am convinced more than ever that we picked the right topic. I see all this as a confirmation and expect God to show up!" Having just celebrated the incarnation of the second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, we remember this truth: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the work of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8b).

## **Schedule**

Please take look at your Conference notebook, page 48, and we will look through a slightly changed schedule. Because we believed it would be a challenge to listen to two consecutive messages through audio alone, we will follow Ben's first message, "Human Sexuality: The Cultural and Ecclesiological Landscape," with Stan Jones' lecture on "Science, Social Science and Sexual Orientation," which would have been tomorrow. Lecture three, our final lecture of the day, will be Rob's first lecture: "Jesus' View of Marriage." Tomorrow morning we will begin with Ben's second message, "The Theology of Human Sexuality."

1. We will have time for corporate worship and prayer. It is important that this Conference be grounded in this way.
2. Eight Lectures are scheduled – 7 will be 60 minutes each; 1 will be 90 minutes (Wesley Hill).
3. There will be two panels, responding to a few questions asked by the moderator, and then an opportunity for you to ask questions of messages (60 minutes each).
4. There is one breakout Session with 4 options (75 minutes).
5. As a conclusion to the Conference, our focus will be on application by discussing a document written by the Spiritual Heritage Committee with the intent of helping our local Free Churches think through this issue: "A Guide for EFCA Churches in Forming Same-Sex Marriage Policies."
6. Finally, it is a very full schedule, as there is much that we want to address so that we can most effectively and fruitfully equip you as leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ. There is a great deal for us to learn. All of our speakers are key individuals who are addressing this issue on the front-lines. There is much truth from the Scriptures and a great deal of wisdom from the trenches of ministry that we need to hear and learn from them. Another reason for the full schedule is that we are intentionally and purposefully addressing this issue in an interdisciplinary and integrative manner. All of the speakers are addressing this topic rooted in God's Word, using their unique God-given discipline to shed broader light to this topic from God's Word enabling us to

understand it better, so that we can better equip God's people, we will gain insights to minister to people with pastoral sensitivity without compromise, and we gain wisdom and discernment to engage in culture being wise as serpents and as shrewd as doves.

Let's pray.



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MULTIPLYING HEALTHY CHURCHES  
AMONG ALL PEOPLE