

On Sexuality and Personal Identity, Resolution 5, The Southern Baptist Convention, Birmingham, Alabama, 2019.

“**T**he Friendly Atheist” blog notes that, the Southern Baptist annual meeting took place “on the heels of multiple stories about how sexual abuse thrived in Southern Baptist churches” – *even among pastors*. What’s ironic is “Resolution 5”, passed by SBC’s heterosexually privileged delegates who meet their own needs for sexual intimacy, albeit with some apparent falls. “Resolution 5” is a *graceless attack* on “Side-B” folks, i.e., the seriously Christian gay men and lesbian women who commit to lifelong celibacy.

They acknowledge their *same-sex orientation* and know that “ex-gay” promises were and still are destructive hoaxes. So, they’re committed to lifelong celibacy.

But the SBC upsets itself over these devout Christians’ *identifying* as “gay” or “lesbian”. Well, that *is* their constant, subjective, sexual orientation! The SBC isn’t alone in venting disapproval. The Presbyterian Church in America’s leadership similarly attacks PCA *celibate* “gay and lesbian” Christians.

The SBC’s gripe list against their *celibate* same-sex oriented sisters and brothers in Christ is prefaced by: “WHEREAS, All persons are made in God’s image and should seek to glorify Him in every arena of their lives, including their self-understanding and identity...”

“WHEREAS, The Lord calls His people to pursue lives of holiness as a reflection of His holy character, Christians are instructed to acknowledge, honor, and live according to God’s design for sexual relations solely within the covenantal union of marriage between one man and one woman for life.” The celibate, same-sex oriented Christians agree. That’s *why* they’re *celibate*.

The SBC claims, in self-serving understatement: “WHEREAS, Many in our culture assume the satisfaction of sexual desire is indispensable to human wholeness and flourishing ...” “Many”? Isn’t *this* what *most* SBC folks assume for *their* lives, and what *they* go after? But this is selfishly ignored when the SBC blames *celibate* gay men and lesbians for “affirm[ing] fallen sexual desires as a defining mark of personal identity”. Side-B folks *voluntarily* cope with *involuntary and unchangeable same-sex orientation* that parallels *involuntary and unchangeable opposite-sex orientation* of heterosexuals by committing to *celibacy*. The SBC demands that Side-B *dispense* with *the* “indispensable” need for “human wholeness and flourishing” in “satisfaction of sexual desire” and *dispense* with their honestly voiced continuing *sexual orientation*.

“WHEREAS, Some brothers and sisters in Christ have tried to affirm God’s design for sexuality while embracing a personal identity as a ‘gay Christian’ or a ‘sexual minority’ ... etc.” Are others allowed to call themselves “Southern Baptists” to distinguish themselves from the “race-mixing” Baptists up North? The SBC objects to Side-B’s honesty, complaining it “affirms a sinful desire as a marker of personal identity, and may imply that one’s sanctification would preclude the possibility of deliverance from same-sex sexual desire”. What *isn’t descriptively and experientially accurate* in Side-B’s self-identity? What can’t a heterosexual grasp here, with just a bit of honest empathy?

“WHEREAS, The Bible does not label a Christian’s identity based on past actions or present temptations, but on present

justification and future glorification.” What about the “*ex-gay*” claims and testimonies? They were *not* experientially or descriptively accurate and yet Southern Baptists have touted “*ex-gay*” claims for years. What about all the SBC talk of “*saved sinners*”?

The SBC states, in tone-deaf disdain, denial, dishonesty, duplicity and doubletalk: “Be it RESOLVED That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention ... recommend that Christians refrain from describing themselves or embracing a self-identity in ways that suggest affirmation of sinful desires or unbiblical social constructs, and be it further RESOLVED, That we call on all Christians who struggle against same-sex attraction to forsake any self-conception or personal identity that is contrary to God’s good and holy purposes in creation and redemption; and be it further RESOLVED, That we commend the faithful witness of Christians who experience same-sex attraction, who remain chaste out of faithfulness to Christ, and whose costly obedience Jesus promises to reward.” Oops! Did the SBC, in an attempt to sound kindly, identify these folks by their continuing same-sex orientation?

“Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm that God’s grace provides both pardon and power so that a follower of Jesus Christ can mortify sinful desires and walk in a manner worthy of the gospel (which *is* what Side B folks are committed to); and be it finally RESOLVED, That we call on Southern Baptist churches to call sinners to repentance while ministering, encouraging, fostering hospitality, and extending Christlike love toward those brothers and sisters who experience same-sex attraction.” Oops again! No reference to these folks, even in alleged hospitality, can ignore their daily challenge.

That Side B Christians value fellowship with others who share their sexual orientation and commitment to celibacy, fails to ring a bell with married SBC delegates who virtue signal a supposed “ministering”, “encouraging”, “hospitality”, and “Christlike love” while *attacking* and demanding that, in addition to celibacy, they must stop even calling themselves by terminology that correctly reflects their daily experience of themselves.

Perhaps a bell would ring if these SBC delegates *truly tried to identify* with these they call “brothers and sisters”. It’s really not difficult to do with Jesus’ clear guidance for extrapolating from how *we, ourselves*, want to be treated and then treating *others* that way. Jesus said, this, his call, summed up all of the Law and the Prophets. (Matt 7:12)

In Jesus’ parable of his final separation of “sheep and goats”, he tells them all that, it was *he* whom they fed, clothed or attended to, or didn’t, in their dealing with “*the least*” among them. (Matt 25:32ff) There will be shock at having never connected these dots.

