

PIVOTING TO SURRENDER

A WARNING FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

Your vocabulary word for the day is *pivot*. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, as a verb, *pivot* means, “To turn, as if on a pivot.” It means to change direction.

In common usage, a pivot can usually indicate a major and fundamental change. That is exactly what has taken place with regard to one of the nation’s largest adoption and foster care ministries. Just consider this two-word phrase in a breaking *Religion News Service* article: “Bethany pivoted.”

“Bethany” refers here to Bethany Christian Services (BCS), which had been one of the nation’s largest evangelical agencies involved in adoption and foster care. The “pivot” points to its policies regarding LGBTQ issues. BCS recently announced that it would now place children in same-sex households and with other families identified as LGBTQ. This can only be described as a watershed pivot—a pivot away from orthodox Biblical Christianity and toward the aims of the sexual revolution and its new morality.

Make no mistake: This is exactly the pivot that is increasingly demanded by the moral revolutionaries. **They will not equivocate or relent until every operational commitment to an orthodox Christian understanding of marriage and sexuality is eradicated from the public square.** This means that every institution, school, ministry, denomination and individual who would participate in the marketplace must capitulate their beliefs.

Bethany’s surrender exemplifies the growing cultural pressures from the LGBTQ community and the looming threat of the Equality Act. The moral revolution is now firmly established in the Democratic majorities in Congress and in the White House, where President Biden is proudly leading the charge for what are presented as LGBTQ rights, but would actually mean a near total restructuring of society. **The consequence is a legislative agenda designed to coerce Americans into the celebration of the LGBTQ agenda.**

The story of Bethany Christian Services is a tale of the head-on collision between sexual revolutionaries and



by R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Christian organizations and ministries that resist the new moral orthodoxy of modernity. Across America we already see the clash between Christian foster care/adoption agencies and the LGBTQ movement. Bethany Christian Services, at least in official policy, defined marriage in Biblical terms. The agency placed children only in qualified Christian homes. Bethany believed that children deserved a loving home environment marked by a covenantal marriage union between one man and one woman. This meant that BCS and other

agencies operating as Christian entities with Christian commitments would not partner with same-sex couples in the foster care or adoption process.

In recent years, **cities like Philadelphia or states like the Commonwealth of Massachusetts anathematized these Christian charities, informing them that if they refused to serve the LGBTQ community, they would no longer be allowed to continue as a ministry.** As soon as same-sex marriage was legally approved in Massachusetts, the state took action to coerce its largest adoption and foster care agency, Catholic Charities—simply because the Catholic charity refused to contradict Catholic teaching. Catholic Charities made the choice to remain Catholic in conviction, and Massachusetts made the choice to serve the LGBTQ demands—even at the expense of losing a historic child care provider.

The case of Bethany Christian Services, however, marks a national policy change. Ruth Graham of *The New York Times* reported that under the new policy the agency will begin to “provide services to LGBTQ parents nationwide, effective immediately.”

Language matters, and **the word parents has meant for nearly all human history something that is now deliberately confused and subverted.** The moral chaos of the sexual revolution has shifted the entire way we think about the family.

The attempt to redefine what it means to be a parent, a mother, a father and a family is an attempt to redefine civilization. It’s just that ambitious.

Bethany Christian Services has now surrendered to ➤

the sexual revolution and the attempts to reshape the family into a new form that violates God's good design. In 2018, BCS altered its local policies in the city of Philadelphia when the city authorities put pressure on Christian-based adoption agencies to provide services for same-sex couples. BCS capitulated then, and now they have submitted to the demands of the LGBTQ movement at the national level.

Their 2018 capitulation is all the more astounding given the fact that the Supreme Court will rule in the coming months on the Philadelphia case. There is reason to believe that the Supreme Court will rule in favor of the Christian charities and adoption agencies in the city, but BCS went ahead and changed its policies.

In other words, Bethany Christian Services surrendered even before the battle began.

Love of Christ and obedience to His commands has led Christians throughout the centuries to care for the most vulnerable in society. Christians believe in helping children, and in the case of adoption, placing children in homes with a mother and a father to receive the love and nurture that comes from that God-designed familial environment.

Now, such commitments run contrary to the prevailing mores of the culture, and Bethany Christian Services has sent a clear signal of surrender. **They capitulated and abandoned their core Christian convictions in order to stay open for business.**

Nate Bolt, Bethany's senior vice president of public and government affairs, told *Religion News Service* that "this decision implements consistent inclusive practices for LGBTQ families across our organizations. We've had a patchwork approach for the last few years." In other words, the geographic location of BCS ministries determined whether or not it would commit itself to Biblical orthodoxy.

The official statement released by Bethany Christian Services stated, "Christians of mutual good faith can reasonably disagree on various doctrinal issues about which Bethany does not maintain an organizational position." This was a way for them to try and thread the needle. It is slick language that is, on its face, self-evidently true. An adoption agency does not need to take a position on eschatology, the rapture or the millennium.

What they cannot do, however, is abdicate their responsibility to state, without equivocation, the clear teaching of Scripture when it comes to the family. **The Christian church, regardless of denominational ties, has for two millennia been clear on the institution of marriage and the family.** If you claim the Name of Christ and claim to

operate as a Christian adoption agency, you have no choice but to declare definitively where you stand on the question of marriage, sexuality and gender.

Theological clarity on this point, furthermore, is crucial because this agency exists, first and foremost, for serving children. One person serving BCS said that "serving children shouldn't be controversial." Indeed, it shouldn't—but in this moral context, you cannot escape the controversy. This is no minor doctrinal dispute—this is about whether or not you are willing to jettison clear Biblical teaching in order to remain culturally relevant and whether or not you will place children in God-designed, God-ordained environments.

Bethany Christian Services buckled under the pressure. Try as they may to walk the tightrope, there is no middle ground between the moral revolution and Biblical orthodoxy. Christians must understand this: Pressure is mounting on all fronts and it will confront every single Christian institution, school, congregation, denomination and ministry.

The moral revolutionaries will come with rhetoric designed to lead your institutions into full retreat and surrender.

They will tell you: "Think about how many more students your school will be able to teach if you adopt our policies on gender and sexuality." They will coerce you with, "We will not partner with your ministry if you continue to hold these convictions—so, in the name of serving others, just abandon

your beliefs about homosexuality and transgenderism."

This pressure, however, is a recipe for the absolute dissolution of Christianity in the United States. **It is an attempt to erase our witness not only in the public square, but even within the confines of our own ministries.**

Every Christian and every Christian ministry will come to a reckoning—we must all decide here and now where we stand. Will we pivot or will we hold fast to faithfulness and the hope of the Gospel?

Let me be clear as to where I and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary stand: **"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15, NKJV).**

The demand to pivot will undoubtedly come—but we will not surrender before the fight. We will see the fight through, all the way to the end. If we have to leave the buildings to the bats, so be it. **We will shut it all down before we surrender our commitment to Christ, to the Gospel and to the unfailing truth of God's Word.**

By God's grace, this is where we must stand. We are about to find out which institutions, schools, churches and denominations will stand—and who will "pivot" and abandon the faith. ■

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