

Bishop Jakes, Could You Clarify Your Stance on Homosexuality?

Editor's note: Charisma News reached out to Bishop Jakes' offices several times over the weekend seeking an interview. His office did not respond as of the time Dr. Brown's article was published.

Bishop Jakes, with real interest, I watched your interview with Marc Hill, and the one thing that was clear was that you did not answer with clarity.

Given your stature as one of the most influential Christian leaders in the country, and given the fact that headlines now read, "T.D. Jakes Comes Out for 'Gay Marriage' and 'LGBT Churches,' Says Position is 'Evolving'," and, "Bishop T.D. Jakes says Black church changing stance on LGBT community," I appeal to you to remove all ambiguity and state clearly what you believe.

According to the Scriptures, is homosexual practice sinful in God's sight?

Can you be in an active homosexual relationship and be a true follower of Jesus at the same time?

Do you affirm LGBT churches?

From my vantage point, Mr. Hill was seeking to get clarity from you on these kinds of issues, but your answers appeared to be intentionally ambiguous.

At best, your comments left your hearers in the dark; at worst, they gave the impression that you now support same-sex "marriage."

Surely this is not a minor issue, and surely a shepherd has a responsibility to the sheep. What, dear sir, do you believe?

When Mr. Hill asked you if you felt that the black church could co-exist with the gay community, you responded, "Absolutely. ... I think it is going to be diverse from church to church. Every church has a different opinion on the issue and every gay person is different. And I think that to speak that the church—the black church, the white church or any kind of church you wanna call it—are all the same, is totally not true."

Does this really answer the question he was asking? It seems apparent that Mr. Hill was asking (to paraphrase), "We know that black churches are largely conservative on the issue of homosexuality, so can the gay community and the black church really co-exist?"

To say that every church is different and every church has an opinion on the subject is to say nothing. We all know that some churches are gay affirming and some are not, and we know that churches have all kinds of opinions on different subjects.

But the reason Mr. Hill was asking this question was because he was looking for you to make clear what you believed about these issues. And just because a church has an opinion does not mean that there is any biblical support for that position.

You further counseled professing gay Christians to find a church that supports their views, as if there is no right or wrong and as if the goal of the church is to make everyone feel comfortable, regardless of their lifestyle, their morality and their beliefs.

I thought the church was called to bring people to Jesus, to stand for righteousness, to care for the needy, to shine like light in the darkness, to declare God's will and to live it out. And don't you have a responsibility as a leader to warn

people about deception?

You said, "LGBT's of different types and sorts have to find a place of worship that reflects what your views are and what you believe like anyone else."

That's the counsel of a servant of God? "Regardless of what you believe, just find a place that agrees with your views and makes yourself at home"?

You explained, "The church should have the right to have its own convictions and values; if you don't like those convictions and values [and] you totally disagree with it, don't try to change my house, move into your own ... and find somebody who gets what you get about faith."

Of course, I concur with you that churches need to have freedom to practice their faith, and if someone doesn't like what a particular church believes he or she should go elsewhere.

But what, sir, do you believe? Are there any moral or spiritual absolutes? Are there right things to believe and practice and wrong things to believe and practice?

You stated your belief that homosexuality is a "complex" issue, but would you say that adultery is also a complex issue? How about fornication? Polyamory? Does the Word indicate that the question of the morality of two men or two women having an intimate sexual and romantic relationship is "complex"?

You said, "Paul spends a lot of time wrestling back and forth, trying to understand should a woman wear a head covering, should you cut your hair. I mean, they grappled back then and we're grappling now because we're humans and we are flawed and we're not God."

With all respect to your knowledge of the Word, where, pray

tell, does Paul “wrestle back and forth” with these issues? When did he “try to understand” what was right and appropriate in that day and age? When did he “grapple” with the questions?

To the contrary, in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, he was dogmatic and clear, allowing no room for disagreement on these subjects, ending his teaching by saying, “If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God” (1 Corinthians 11:16; how we interpret and apply this passage is one thing; to claim Paul was “wrestling” with these issues is another thing entirely).

Yes, it’s true that we’re flawed humans. But God is not, and that’s why He gave us His Word, warning us plainly in numerous passages that certain people would not inherit His kingdom.

If you believe the Bible is unclear when it comes to homosexual practice, would you kindly say so, taking a minute to explain why you hold to that view? Or if you believe God’s Word is clearly for (or against) homosexual practice (even in committed relationships), could you simply state that for the benefit of your hearers?

You are an extraordinarily eloquent speaker and a very sophisticated thinker, and I cannot believe that you could not give us clarity on your views in a few short sentences if you chose to. The question I’m left asking—and many others are also asking—is, “Why, sir, won’t you make yourself clear?”

I agree with you that all of us need room to grow in our faith and understanding, but are there no hills to die on, no absolute certainties of the faith, no moral boundaries that cannot be crossed?

You characterized your position on homosexuality as “Evolved and evolving,” adding, “I think that where I am is to better understand we, the church, bought into the myth that this is a Christian nation.”

Bishop Jakes, what has your position evolved from and what is it evolving to? What did you previously believe and what do you currently believe?

These are public questions of national concern, and surely public answers are called for.

You did state clearly your belief that we have “bought into the myth that this is a Christian nation,” by which you apparently mean that as Christians, we have expected the whole nation to live by our convictions and beliefs, as if this was always our national identity and heritage.

But is it a myth that America was founded on Christian principles and that our founders presupposed that Christian religion would be the foundation of democracy and morality? Is it a myth that, throughout our history, we have overwhelmingly professed to be Christian in large majority? And may I ask how the question of whether America is or is not a Christian nation relates to Mr. Hill’s question of your own view of homosexuality?

Is it that difficult to say, “I believe according to Scripture that homosexual practice is sinful in God’s eyes, but I don’t believe I have the right to enforce that belief on others because of the separation of church and state”—if that is, in fact, what you believe?

You stated, “[O]nce you get past [thinking America is a Christian nation] ... Once you begin to understand that democracy, that a republic actually, is designed to be an overarching system to protect our unique nuances, then we no longer look to public policy to reflect biblical ethics.”

Really, sir? Would you have used this same argument in the days of slavery and stated that we should not “look to public policy to reflect biblical ethics”? Would you apply this to pro-life legislation today, or to laws against human trafficking or rape or mistreatment of minorities? Was it not

with good reason that Dr. King quoted biblical prophets like Amos when he challenged America's sinful public policies, calling for justice to roll down like water and righteousness like a never failing stream?

It is one thing to advocate for a theocracy, which I absolutely do not. It is another thing to abdicate our calling to be salt and light.

You said, "If we can divide—or what you would call separation of church and state—then we can dwell together more effectively because atheists, agnostics, Jews, all types of people, Muslims, pay into the government. ... We need a neutralized government that protects our right to disagree with one another and agree with one another."

Once more, Bishop Jakes, how does this address the question of your position on homosexuality? And does a "neutralized government" make no laws concerning marriage or morality? Should the government also accommodate polygamy because Mormons and Muslims pay into the government?

Again, I do understand part of the point you were making, but ultimately, your comments avoided addressing some of the questions Mr. Hill was asking you (or, at least, that your listeners wanted answered), they offered no clarity as to what the church's role is in society, and they affirmed the rightness of everyone's choice rather than stating that, as a minister of the gospel, you believe there is a straight and narrow way.

Do you?

(We contacted Bishop Jakes for clarification but did not receive a response as of this writing. However, after this article was written, another ministry sent us a new Facebook post from Bishop Jakes in which he states he was shocked that he was misunderstood and that he does not endorse same-sex marriage. We request that he makes that statement plainly to

the Huffington Post and to Marc Lamont Hill, who recorded the video interview.)

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