

Vimeo Declares War on Gospel Transformation

If Jesus has changed your life and set you free from homosexual practice, your testimony is not welcome on Vimeo—not now, not ever. And if you see homosexuality as another aspect of sexual brokenness, something for which Jesus died and something from which you can be healed, your opinion is not welcome on Vimeo. Case closed, door shut, end of subject. In the words of Dr. David Kyle Foster, director of Pure Passion Ministries and himself a former homosexual, “This is pure religious bigotry and censorship.”

Last December, Vimeo contacted Foster to inform him that some of Pure Passion’s videos had been marked by a moderator since “Vimeo does not allow videos that harass, incite hatred or depict excessive violence.”

They instructed him to “remove any and all videos of this sort from” from his account—he had 850 videos on Vimeo—and let him know that his account would be reviewed in 48 hours. If his ministry failed to remove the allegedly offensive videos, then “your videos and/or your account may be removed by a Vimeo moderator.”

But Foster’s ministry is not the first to be unfairly censured. In 2015, Vimeo unpublished an announcement for an upcoming “Hope Conference,” with featured speakers including Janet Mefferd and Joe Dallas, both respected Christian leaders, with Dallas especially well-known for his ex-gay testimony.

The conference was sponsored by Restored Hope Network, which is an association of ministries that help people deal with unwanted same-sex attractions – Note to the world: Not everyone enjoys being attracted to the same sex—yet this Hope

Conference was deemed offensive and inappropriate since it proclaimed that, in Jesus, there was hope for change and transformation.

Then, to add insult to injury, early last year, Vimeo shut down Restored Hope's entire account. Every single video. Gone.

Vimeo also shut down the account of NARTH, the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, which is an association of psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors and therapists who have had the temerity to stand up to the PC establishment and who refuse to celebrate LGBT activism. For such a horrific ideological crime, their Vimeo account is no more.

Foster was quite aware of Vimeo's history, but he was not about to do so without a hearty protest, and on Dec. 12, the same day he received the initial warning from Vimeo, he wrote back:

You must have the wrong account. We are an award-winning Christian ministry that only posts content that helps people, not hurts them. We never defame anyone. We never incite hatred or depict violence of any kind. Our message has been one of love from start to finish.

Our videos help sexual abuse victims, people who have been sex-trafficked, those who are addicted or in any other condition that causes them distress. We are constantly receiving professional awards and commendations from people who have been helped by the world-class experts who populate our videos.

Please cite any video that does otherwise and we will have a second look. It would be a shame to remove the hundreds of videos that help people in very desperate circumstances – some of whom have even claimed to have been prevented from suicide by the messages of hope that we produce.

The next day, Melissa B., a “Trust and Safety Coordinator,” responded:

It seems that a number of your videos go against the Vimeo Guidelines of:

“We also forbid content that displays a demeaning attitude toward specific groups, including: Videos that promote Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE).”

By this logic, Alcoholics Anonymous would not be welcome on Vimeo, since their videos would be demeaning towards alcoholics; or weight-loss videos would not be welcome, because they shame the overweight; or testimonies of effective debt reduction strategies would not be welcome, because they shame those in debt; or testimonies of Christian converts from Islam would not be welcome, because they shame Muslims—just to give a few examples out of thousands.

In reality, all these videos are welcome on Vimeo, because none of them cross the forbidden line of saying: If you’re not happy being gay (or bisexual or transgender), God has a better way.

This is absolutely forbidden! (Do you understand why I’ve been saying for more than a dozen years that those who came out of the closet want to put us in the closet?)

Foster wrote back again:

Again—you have the wrong account.

We help people, and we are not a promoter of reparative therapy. Nor do we support or recommend forced or coerced healing of any kind. Our videos simply allow people who are struggling with sexual brokenness of any kind a place to tell their story. These are often people who have been sexually abused or otherwise traumatized and giving them a voice can sometimes rescue them from self-harm.

There is nothing in the videos you cited that encourages reparative therapy or that demeans anyone. We do not allow people in our videos who speak demeaningly or disparagingly of anyone. In fact, we provide life transforming hope for people who are at risk of harming themselves because of people who have mistreated them or cast doubts on their personal journey.

The testimonies of people who have been significantly helped by our videos is practically endless. Why would anyone want to censor such a voice for the broken and helpless?

In response Melissa wrote:

Thank you for the further explanation. You will not need to remove your videos at this time.

Please do keep our Guidelines in mind for any future uploads.

Unfortunately, on March 16, the cycle started again, with Vimeo giving Foster one week to remove offending videos, and when he wrote back to them, explaining that the matter had been resolved, he received an email from Sean M. who explained:

Your statement equating homosexuality to “sexual brokenness” betrays the underlying stance of your organization. To put it plainly, we don’t believe that homosexuality requires a cure, and we don’t allow videos on our platform that espouse this point of view.

Please remove any and all videos that discuss homosexuality as a condition requiring healing. We also consider this basic viewpoint to display a demeaning attitude toward a specific group, which is something that we do not allow.

You can see why Foster described this as “pure religious

bigotry and censorship.”

Vimeo is forbidding you from agreeing with the Bible when it comes to human sin and brokenness.

Vimeo is forbidding you from preaching the gospel of transformation when it comes to homosexuality.

Vimeo is engaging in blatant, unapologetic, aggressive anti-Christian censorship.

Foster wrote to me privately, pointing out that Vimeo allows “videos of terrorists and pornographers.” He added:

Put “jihad” in their search bar and you get 2,233 selections.

Put “lust” + Vimeo in a Google search and one option is a porn filmmaker site, among 288 other sites containing 2,872 videos.

Google “rape” + Vimeo and you get 2,817 videos.

Google “teen rape” + Vimeo and you get at least one rape video

They have “sugar daddy” dating sites (one a gay video), plus all kinds of gay porn videos. You can watch some of Allen Ginsberg’s speech glorifying NAMBLA on Vimeo, all kinds of “sex on Vimeo” and “porn on Vimeo” videos that, from the thumbnails, are completely pornographic. Where is their concern for the girls and boys who have been sex-trafficked for such videos?

So, Foster protested once more to Vimeo:

I don’t understand this. We have always been highly respectful of every group that is mentioned in our videos, and by no means do we demean anyone.

The homosexuals whose personal testimonies we have featured have all testified to multiple levels of sexual brokenness, as do many that you’ll find featured in articles on Huffington Post, The Advocate, The Dr. Phil Show, Oprah, and

many other gay-affirming venues, including childhood sexual abuse, porn addiction, etc. I'm not sure why you feel that homosexuals talking about what has happened to them is in any way threatening or demeaning of others.

Vimeo responded by further explaining that, "Referring to homosexuality as a 'dysfunction of sexual brokenness' or 'sexual distortion' is not OK, nor is reference to 'the fact that God can transform the life of anyone caught in homosexual confusion'."

To repeat: This is forbidden on Vimeo!

The Vimeo rep even said that, "I understand the desire to not be lumped in with the more vocally hateful anti-gay activists, and I can see nothing based on the videos I have reviewed that suggest an overtly vitriolic approach. However, even respectful advocacy of SOCE is something that we do not allow on our platform."

To paraphrase: "Dr. Foster, we know you're not hateful, but don't you dare proclaim your testimony of transformation in Jesus, and don't you dare imply that there is anything wrong with being gay. Not a word!"

Foster wrote back once more to Sean at Vimeo, writing from a personal, pastoral and professional level, arguing his case with clarity and conviction, also exposing all kinds of inconsistencies in the Vimeo policies. And while Sean did engage the email (to an extent), his bottom line was this: "I've never suggested you were less than kind at an individual level to specific homosexuals. That said, Vimeo disagrees wholeheartedly with the notion that homosexuality is a form of brokenness, or something that requires healing, or something that people need to seek freedom from."

Then, on March 24, all 850 videos—every single one of them—were removed, and the Pure Passion account was shut down.

This is an outrage, and it needs to be addressed. Here's what you can do today:

1. Write to Vimeo and ask them to restore immediately the account of Dr. David Kyle Foster and Pure Passion, stating politely that this is tantamount to religious censorship and bigotry. If you can say something positive about the ministry through your own experience, do that as well
2. Subscribe to Pure Passion's YouTube channel, which, at least for now, has not been shut down. There you'll find videos from speakers like Kay Arthur and John Bevere addressing issues of sexual addiction and pornography, videos exposing the horrors of sex-trafficking and videos of ex-gays.
3. Consider getting a copy of Foster's powerful *Such Were Some of You* DVD.
4. Share this article with a friend.
5. Pray that the message of freedom and liberty in Jesus—from all brokenness and sin—would be proclaimed even more loudly and powerfully in the days ahead. May Vimeo's efforts to silence a powerful ministry (along with other excellent ministries and organizations) result in the amplifying of this ministry's message. {eo}