

Albert Mohler: Christians and Mormons May Go to Jail Together

While **Mormons** and evangelical Christians fundamentally disagree about the gospel, they should work together to address common threats to **religious freedom**, R. Albert Mohler Jr. said in an address Monday at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

"I am not here because I believe we are going to heaven together, but I do believe we may go to jail together," said Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, at the Latter-day Saints' premier educational institution, named for Mormonism's second president. According to Salt Lake City newspaper *Deseret News*, about 400 faculty and students attended Mohler's address.

"I do not mean to exaggerate, but we are living in the shadow of a great moral revolution that we commonly believe will have grave and devastating human consequences," Mohler said in the address, "A Clear and Present Danger: Religious Liberty, Marriage and the Family in the Late Modern Age."

Mohler's lecture was the third of a "Faith, Family and Society" series at BYU. The lecture series is sponsored by several offices at the university and has featured previous addresses by Richard Land, former president of the **Southern Baptist** Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and George Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God denomination. In January, evangelical apologist Ravi Zacharias will speak at BYU in the same series of lectures.

Mohler is scheduled to address a nationally televised, campus-wide forum on Feb. 25 at BYU, *Deseret News* reported.

While expressing his “great privilege to know friendship and share conversation” with LDS leaders, Mohler said such friendship is not “in spite of our theological differences, but in light of them.”

Mohler said he accepted the BYU invitation “because I intend with you to push back against the modernist notion that only the accommodated can converse.”

Still, he was frank in asserting **theological** differences between evangelicals and Mormons.

“I come as a Christian theologian to speak explicitly and respectfully as a Christian—a Christian who defines Christianity only within the historic creeds and confessions of the Christian church and who comes as one committed to the **gospel** of Jesus Christ and to the ancient and eternal Trinitarian faith of the Christian church. I have not come as less, and you know whom you have invited,” he said, according to a prepared manuscript of the address posted on Mohler’s website.

Near the end of his address, Mohler further elaborated on the doctrinal differences with Mormons.

“I am not here because I believe we are going to heaven together. I do not believe that,” he said. “I believe that **salvation** comes only to those who believe and trust only in Christ and in his substitutionary atonement for salvation. I believe in justification by faith alone, in Christ alone.”

Because of his “love and respect” for Mormons, Mohler said “as friends, we would speak only what we believe to be true, especially on matters of eternal significance. We inhabit separate and irreconcilable **theological** worlds, made clear on the doctrine of the Trinity perhaps most clearly. And yet here I am, and gladly so. We will speak to one another of what we most sincerely believe to be true, precisely because we love and respect one another.”

The common moral concern of Mormons and evangelicals, Mohler said, is the “moral revolution” on homosexuality that is “without precedent in human history in terms of its scale and velocity.”

With that revolution comes a threat to religious freedom, he said, noting several examples of legislative actions and court decisions impinging on religious liberty for the sake of sexual expression and liberty.

“The conflict of liberties we are now experiencing is unprecedented and ominous,” Mohler said. “Forced to choose between erotic liberty and **religious liberty**, many Americans would clearly sacrifice freedom of religion. How long will it be before many become most?”

Mohler noted the moral revolution and “disestablishment of marriage did not begin with the demand of same-sex couples to marry. The subversion of marriage began within the context of the great intellectual shift of modernity.”

In that shift, he said, marriage became “redefined in terms of personal fulfillment rather than covenant obligation,” “romanticized ideal of personal fulfillment” replaced duty, matrimony is mere choice and personal expression and “companionate marriage was secularized and redefined solely in terms of erotic and romantic appeal—for so long as these might last.”

Mohler insisted, “Once marriage can mean anything other than heterosexual union, it can and must mean everything. It is just a matter of time.”

He added, “We can point to others who have been the prophets and agents of this self-injury to society, but we must recognize that we have all contributed to it, in so far as we have embraced essentially modern understandings of love, romance, liberty, personal autonomy, obligation and authority.”

The **Bible** instructs Christians, Mohler said, to “work for the good and flourishing of this earthly city, even as I work to see as many as possible also become citizens of the heavenly city through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Mohler said he was “honored to come among those who, though of a different faith, share common concerns and urgencies” and he is “unashamed to stand with you in defense of marriage and family and a vision of human sexuality integrity. I am urgently ready to speak and act in your defense against threats to your religious liberty, even as you have shown equal readiness to speak and act in defense of mine.”

He concluded, Christians and **Mormons** must together “push back against this age as hard as it is pressing against us. We had better press hard, for this age is pressing ever harder against us.”