

# Could This ‘Exceedingly Dangerous’ Book on Gay Christians Lead Believers Into Apostasy?

A new book’s “exceedingly dangerous” assertions that homosexual orientation and **gay marriage** are consistent with a high view of the Bible is nonsense. So says Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. and four of his colleagues in a new e-book.

*God and the Gay Christian? A Response to Matthew Vines* released this morning, the same day as the official release of Vines’ volume, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*, which has garnered significant attention in the days leading up to its release.

Vines, a 24-year-old former Harvard student, weaves his personal biography of growing up as an evangelical Christian and “coming out” as a homosexual to his parents and now former home **church**. In the process, Vines left Harvard in order to study the Bible’s claims about **homosexuality**, which later resulted in the publishing of his book.

“Not every book deserves a response, but some books seem to appear at a time and context in which response is absolutely necessary,” Mohler told *Southern Seminary News*. “The kind of argument that is presented by Matthew Vines, if not confronted, can lead many people to believe that his case is persuasive and that his treatment of the **Bible** is legitimate. I think that it’s very important that evangelicals be reminded that the church has not misunderstood Scripture for 2,000 years.”

Published by SBTS Press, *God and the Gay Christian?* is a 100-page critique of Vines, edited by Mohler, who also contributes a chapter. Other contributors are James M. Hamilton Jr., professor of biblical theology; Denny Burk, professor of biblical studies; Owen Strachan, assistant professor of Christian theology and church history; and Heath Lambert, assistant professor of biblical counseling. Burk, Strachan and Lambert teach primarily for Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Seminary.

Mohler's chapter provides an overview critique of Vines' argument, while Hamilton primarily addresses Old Testament claims, Burk deals with New Testament claims, Strachan looks at the church history assertions and Lambert answers the question whether there is such a thing as a "**gay Christian.**"

Vines' special contribution to the debate, according to Mohler, is his claim to having a "high view" of Scripture, even while relying upon a "world of very liberal biblical scholarship" as his primary sources.

"Evangelical Christians have enough biblical instinct to trust only someone who comes with a high view of Scripture," Mohler says. "But this is a warning to us that not all who claim a high view of Scripture actually operate by a high view of Scripture."

That there are some evangelicals "just trying to get out of this cultural pressure-cooker by finding the most convenient, persuasive off-ramp they can find" is of deep concern to Mohler. Vines' book "could be for some of those wavering evangelicals the kind of off-ramp for which they've been searching. However, it's a fatally flawed argument. And it will take them into a non-evangelical identity," he says.

Vines' argument is "exceedingly dangerous," Mohler continues, "because if we do not know what the **Bible** teaches on homosexuality, and if the church has misunderstood that vital

issue for two millennia, then what else has the church misunderstood about the gospel? If we can't trust the **Bible** to tell us what sin is in order to tell us why Christ's death was necessary, then we really don't know what the gospel is. And if you can read the Bible the way Matthew Vines reads it, then biblical theology is impossible. I cannot imagine greater challenges facing the church than these."

Also troubling, according to Mohler, is the fact that Vines' publisher—Convergent Books—is closely related in organization and leadership to evangelical publisher WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group.

"What is new is the packaging of the argument and the fact that this is being published—at least to some extent —within evangelicalism by an imprint associated with WaterBrook Multnomah that is targeting itself toward the evangelical community," he says.

"It's very distressing that the president of Multnomah, who is also the president of Convergent, is not only defending the publication of this book," Mohler says, but the publisher also claims Vines believes in the "inerrancy and the divinity and the correctness of Scripture," according to *Baptist Press*.

Mohler responds, "That's a very troubling assessment from someone who has major responsibility in evangelical publishing."