

Problems At Andy Stanley's North Point Church?

By Christine Pack



Dr. Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, recently wrote an article concerning the problematic trend of "megachurches" in evangelical Christianity, in which pastors attempt to oversee enormous churches with multiple sites, and members in the thousands, through the savvy use of technology and multi-media. In his article entitled [*Is The Megachurch The New Liberalism?*](#), Dr. Mohler specifically mentioned megachurch pastor Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church in Atlanta, GA and creator of the [Catalyst conferences](#). Andy Stanley, according to Dr. Mohler's article, recently gave a message in which he described a situation at North Point where a woman, her ex-husband and her ex-husband's male lover were in a conflict. The strangest part of this story is that the issue with which Stanley took exception was the fact that the ex-husband's male lover was not yet divorced from his wife, and yet was serving in leadership at North Point. Presumably, the man's adultery was the issue, but not, apparently, his unrepentantly homosexual lifestyle. From the article:

"(Andy) Stanley told the two men that they could not serve on the host team so long as the one man was still married. He later told of the former wife's decision not to live in bitterness, and of her initiative to bring the whole new family structure to a Christmas service. This included the woman, her daughter, her former husband, his gay partner, and his daughter. Stanley celebrated this new 'modern family' as an expression of forgiveness." ([online source](#))

(Incidentally, this story of the wife, the ex-husband, the ex-husband's male lover, etc., etc. was presented by Andy Stanley *with graphics*. This was no off-the-cuff account that just spontaneously occurred to Andy Stanley. The graphic below was obviously prepared well in advance of this sermon. I smell an agenda. Is open homosexuality going to be the Next Big Thing in Evangelicalism?)



Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church - Atlanta, GA
(To view this graphic, go to the [Christian sermon series](#), Part 5, 24 minute mark)

For myself, I was thoroughly shocked and appalled when I read about this recent message by Andy Stanley. I know a number of people, solid Christians, who attend North Point, and speak highly of the teaching there. Andy Stanley is generally well-regarded here in Atlanta where he grew up and where his father (Charles Stanley) has also been a pastor for a number of years. So I would say that I am somewhat predisposed to be favorably inclined toward Stanley. And yet, by his teaching, it seems he is drifting down the path of ear-tickling liberalism that so many before him have done.

Not convinced? Then I offer Exhibit B for your consideration:

Andy Stanley's North Point has a document that must be filled out and signed by adult volunteers seeking to minister to students if they wish to be considered for ministry. There is, however, some very curious language in this "covenant" document. [The following is taken directly from the covenant:](#)

Regarding Sexual Behavior

We teach that sex was created by God as an expression of intimacy between a man and woman within the context of marriage. Volunteers who embrace lifestyles or behaviors that conflict with this teaching will eventually find themselves having to pretend to be something they are not or believe something they don't. In an effort to protect you from a potentially awkward situation, we ask the following:

- If you are involved in a sexual relationship and are not married, we ask that you not volunteer in family ministry at this time.
- If you are pursuing a same sex relationship, we ask that you not volunteer in family ministry at this time.
- In the spirit of being a good role model, if you are single and living with a member of the opposite sex, we ask that you not volunteer at this time. We do not want to put you in the awkward position of having to explain your arrangement if members of your group visit your home.
- If you are married and are currently involved in a sexual relationship outside of your marriage, we ask that you not volunteer at this time. ([online source](#))



Our commentary: In the section of this covenant regarding sexual behavior, there is no call for repentance for those in willfully sinful sexual situations, no mention of church discipline, just a caution for those in sexual sin not to volunteer for ministry because of the "potentially awkward situation" it might create. But what about protecting those same people from the potentially *fiery* situation they might face, if they don't repent before a high

and holy God? Is this what pastors are called to do.....protect people from potentially awkward situations?

***"But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."
(Revelation 21:8)***

Taking into account the troubling message recounted by Dr. Al Mohler in the first part of this article, as well as this North Point covenant statement for volunteers to sign, my question is this: has Andy Stanley abdicated his right to serve as an church leader?

"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:6-9, my emphasis)

"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:1-4)



Our elders are called to guard and teach the flocks entrusted to them, and also to lead them by example. What we need today are sober-minded, Godly men who take seriously their charge before God to not only guard and teach their flocks, but to also exhort them to righteous living before a high and holy God to whom they will one day give an account. We need leaders who, if need be, will discipline their members engaging in unrepentant sexual sin, not coddle them in their sinful passions and tickle their ears with man-centered language aimed at quelling the conscience. Where are such men? And more to the point of this article, does Andy Stanley still qualify for the role of elder/overseer?

Update: Andy Stanley recently released a response to Dr. Al Mohler's article:

"We are requesting that everyone watch the entire series: *Christian*.* It concludes this Sunday. It's 8 parts. That's a lot of content to wade through. But I figure that's better than a sound bite or an interview." ([online source](#)) My concern: how do you frame up that scenario with the woman, her ex-husband, the male lover (who is still married to HIS wife), etc., in a way that makes sense unless a clear call for repentance is given? It certainly wasn't in the sermon that Dr. Mohler accounted. And if it was given, but in a later message, why wouldn't you give the call for repentance in the same sermon where the scenario was presented?

*This entire 8-part series by Andy Stanley can be listened to in its entirety [here](#).