

The Female Pastor Battering Ram Making a Run at the Church Door Again

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

The Female Pastor Battering Ram Making a Run at the Church Door. . .Again.

Tom Ascol joins us today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit listener supported radio ministry. We are able to broadcast on the radio station, website or app on which you are listening today because of the support of listeners like you. When you make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner or order resources, you are helping us impact listeners with biblical truth and the gospel. So thank you. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

In 1 Timothy 2, the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote to the younger pastor Timothy regarding the authority structure that God established for the church. It says, *"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."* That's from 1 Timothy 2:11-14. This passage of Scripture and others, like the following chapter in 1 Timothy 3 establishes that pastors and elders in the church must be men of exemplary character. That is under assault today as an all out battering ram like push is being made for many directions to integrate women as pastors in professed Bible believing churches.

Take the Southern Baptist Convention or SBC for short, which is the largest Protestant denomination in America with 47,000 member churches. The SBC recently "disfellowshipped," as they call it, its most prominent church, Saddleback in southern California, because its former pastor, none other than Rick Warren, appointed three female pastors at the church and then a husband and wife co-pastor team to replace him. This may sound like the Southern Baptist Convention holding the line on clear biblical teaching, but not so fast. Rick Warren has vowed to appeal the decision at the upcoming SBC annual meeting on June 11th and 12th in New Orleans, where many expect the so called messengers or attendees to vote on this matter.

Frankly, there is nothing to vote on when God's Word makes it abundantly clear both in doctrine and historic practice that pastors are to be men. While there are many other complementary and important roles for women in the church, to be very clear, this issue of female pastors is not about capability, but about trust in and obedience to God's authority for the authority structure he has established in the church and also the home.

Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, and President of Founders Ministries, an organization "committed to encouraging the recovery of the gospel and the biblical

reformation of local churches" is our guest today on The Christian Worldview. You may remember that Tom finished second in last year's Southern Baptist Convention presidential vote, and has been a voice of fidelity to God's Word and the Gospel. Before we get to that interview, you may be asking why have we focused over the last several years on the denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, with which we are not affiliated? The answer is this. Because the SBC with well known pastors like Rick Warren, influential seminaries like Southern Baptist Theological Seminary led by Al Mohler, which sends pastors all across the country to churches, and political advocacy entities within the SBC like the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the ERLC, formally led by Russell Moore, who is now the editor in chief of Christianity Today, the SBC is a bellwether on where professing Bible believing Christianity is heading.

So be aware. You and I are currently in the midst of an all out campaign to to transition professed Bible believing churches away from male only pastors to include female pastors. This is a perennial attack by Satan to undermine the church, to weaken the body of Christ, and cause it to disobey God. This issue of female pastors has been and remains the number one most asked question on got questions.org, which has received literally 10s of 1000s of questions about the Bible. Why is that? Because male only pastors, that doctrine of Scripture, offends the flawed human reasoning of our day. We need to not be persuaded by reasonable sounding words of underminers of the faith, but stand firm on what God has spoken.

For instance, in 1 Timothy 3, *It is a trustworthy statement: If any man aspires to the office of overseer, (that's pastor/elder) it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity, but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the Church of God?* So with these passages in mind as our foundation, let's get straight to the interview with Pastor Tom Ascol from Grace Baptist Church in Florida.

Tom, thank you for coming back on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. It's always something we look forward to, having you on the program. There was a significant event that took place this week with the death of Pastor Charles Stanley, just a beloved preacher over the decades from Atlanta. What are your thoughts on Pastor Charles Stanley and his legacy and the fact that he died this week?

Guest: Tom Ascol 07:08

God certainly used Charles Stanley wonderfully well, just to show the power of the Word. He was a faithful man of God who tried to honor the Word every time he preached. He was committed to do and say whatever he believed the Bible was calling to do or say.

And there's one example that stands out in my mind over this because, I disagreed with some of his views early on in my ministry. When I had come to believe the sovereignty of God in salvation and the doctrine of unconditional election, that was a real revolution in me. I had to rework a lot of things when I began to see that in Scripture. I remember hearing a sermon by Dr. Stanley on Ephesians 1:4 in which he said, "You know, God looks down through the corridors of time and picks whoever he sees is going to choose him." I disagreed with that strongly, but about 10 years later, he preached that same text and he said, "Now look, I want to explain to you that this doesn't mean that God just foresees who's gonna choose him and then He chooses them. We don't understand it. But this says

that God predestines people that He's going to save." I remember, as a younger pastor thinking, "Well praise God, this man has preached this before, he's worked through this text, he's working through it again, and now his views have changed according to the text and he's willing to say it."

So back in those days, there were cassette tapes, that we used to distribute sermons. I made a cassette tape and the front side had the early sermon, the back side had the later sermon, 10 years later, and handed them out to a set of Baptists, and said "Look, here's what a man of God who's tried to be faithful to the Scriptures has done as he's continued to humble himself before the Word." That to me was a great example, and still is. I thank God for his life and legacy, for the way God used him at a pivotal time in the American Evangelical scene, particularly Southern Baptist Convention scene, to stand for the inerrancy and authority of the written Word of God, and I'm grateful for him.

Host: David Wheaton 09:04

Yes, so am I. His preaching had an impact on me. I used to hear him on the radio all the time. I think it was in my early 20s, mid 20s, and so forth. He was a very practical preacher, very gracious. Certainly a loss for the church here, but a gain for heaven.

Tom Ascol with us today here on The Christian Worldview. The Southern Baptist Convention of which your church is a church and fellowship I guess you could say, with the convention. Your church is Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida. The annual meeting is coming up for the Southern Baptist Convention on June 11th and 12th in New Orleans. Megan Basham, a Christian journalist, has written a column in advance of this over the issue of the Southern Baptist Convention considering the integration of female pastors into their ranks.

She started her article this way. She said, "Home to some 47,000 churches and 13 million members, the Southern Baptist Convention status has the largest Protestant denomination in the US due in part to its loose structure, rather than a top down hierarchy. It's more of a casual association of churches who agree on doctrine and then pool their money to fund mission seminaries and various charitable endeavors. Its leaders have no power to tell churches what to teach, where and how to operate, who to hire. The only authority they have is to manage the billion dollar plus in unrestricted funds they receive and set the terms for who gets to be a member." Now onto the issue. In May of 2022, Mike Law, pastor of Arlington Baptist Church, a small church in Virginia, sent an email to the executive committee of the SBC. He asked this. "Is a church that has a woman serving as pastor deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention?" Law explained that his understanding was that a church with a woman pastor would not qualify for what the SBC calls, "friendly cooperation," because that requires a faith and practice that closely identifies with the, Baptist Faith and Message, the name for the Southern Baptist Convention statement of faith.

He said that churches that affirm homosexual behavior in marriage have been disfellowshipped for falling, a following of the Baptist faith and message in the past. Why would this point of doctrine, that women could be pastors be any different? He finished by thanking the committee for it's service, and looked forward to their answer. He would never get an answer. So most of the general public Tom, and many Christians today consider this issue of male only pastors to be a position that is very antiquated. We're way beyond that now. It's, let's move on to more important issues. Rick Warren at the Southern Baptist Convention last year stood on the floor in his sort of famous speech as it's known, called it a secondary issue, female pastors. How important of an issue is this male only pastors and why is it important?

Guest: Tom Ascol 12:08

Well, it's important because the Bible is not equivocal on it. I mean, the Bible is very, very clear about how a local church is to be led. It's to be led by qualified men who are received in a congregation as gifts from God. So a congregation recognizes them. They are to be appointed as overseers, as elders as bishops. Those are three different words that the New Testament uses for the same office. And the Apostle Paul is crystal clear. This is evident in other places. But the tour de force argument is found in 1 Timothy chapter 2, when he specifically says in verse 12, that He *does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet*. You can't fulfill the work of a pastor and obey that verse if you're a woman. You just can't. There have been all kinds of exegetical gymnastics that people have employed to try to get around this. But until you take this verse out of the Bible, you can't have women pastors in local churches. The question is a small part of a much larger, more important question, and that is, are we going to take God at His Word, and believe whatever it says, and do and follow wherever it leads, regardless of cost or consequences?

In our day, the last 50 years or so, those costs and consequences, culturally speaking, have escalated significantly, and now you risk being canceled or going to be called a misogynist. Everything but a Christian, if you simply stand and quote what the Bible says about this issue. So it is vitally important for our maintaining a commitment, the integrity of a commitment to the full and final authority of God's written Word.

Host: David Wheaton 14:08

Very well said. Tom Ascol with us today here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Recently, Rick Warren, who has been spearheading this issue, said this on a radio interview that he did with none other than Russell Moore of Christianity Today. He used to be with the Southern Baptist Convention, Russell Moore. Here's what Rick Warren said with regards to if this issue of female pastors doesn't get integrated into churches now, this is what's going to happen.

Audio Sound bite: Rick Warren 14:38

I'm concerned about now. I am convinced, we'll never fulfill the Great Commission with half of the church sitting on the bench. I believe the Great Commission was given to everybody. Everybody has to go, everybody's to make disciples, everybody's to baptize and everybody has to teach. That's what the Great Commission says, and Jesus authorized men and women to do it. And I don't think we're ever going to complete it. We should quit calling ourselves Great Commission people if we're not going to obey the whole thing. I believe millions of Southern Baptists women's talent and their spiritual gifts are being wasted. If the Southern Baptists don't want them, I'll take them. I'll take them and I'll help them find a place to serve and glorify God with the spiritual gifts they were given.

Host: David Wheaton 15:27

So Rick Warren's saying the Great Commission can't be completed unless we have female pastors. That's what he just said in that soundbite. What are your thoughts on that particular argument, Tom? Maybe mention one or two other arguments that you commonly hear that are persuasive to people but that are biblically wrong.

Guest: Tom Ascol 15:45

He argues too much. It's sophistry, quite honestly. You know, I love Rick. I know him a little bit, so I don't want to denigrate anything about him personally, but that is a silly, silly argument to suggest that half of our team is being benched. Okay, then does that mean that we should have six year old

church members being elders and pastors in churches? I mean, it's just foolish. He makes his argument too broad. Pastors, they have a specific role to fulfill in the church.

They are not the church, and every member of a church has a role to fulfill. 1 Corinthians 12 is quite clear on that. Just because the eye is not the hand, he can't say, well, since I'm not the hand, I'm not going to do anything. I mean, that argument is just thrown out the window in Rick's logic. We don't deny the fact that every Christian is responsible to represent Christ, to cooperate in getting the gospel to the ends of the earth, to make disciples throughout all the nation's. That's exactly what we're called to do, but that does not mean then that every Christian or that every adult Christian, or that women along with men are called to be pastors. It's a sleight of hand that he's pulling there. Most men are not going to be pastors in churches. They're not called to be pastors.

Why is that? Because there are qualifications that are set forth in terms of both gifting, not just gifting, but character, and requirements that God saw fit to include, which in God's wisdom, in His world that He created male and female image bearers to represent Him in the world, He limited to men, not all men, qualified men. So again, the argument sounds impressive to those who maybe are not familiar with that kind of sophistry, but it is completely empty and no thinking Christian who's familiar with the Bible will be taken in by it.

Host: David Wheaton 17:49

Our guest today is Tom Ascol, the pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida. We have much more coming up with Tom, right after this break here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: So Many Lions, So Few Daniels 18:00

Have faith in God. Don't be intimidated by lions. If the world says back down, don't do this, fling open your windows, pray openly, so to speak. That's what Daniel did. Don't be ashamed. Don't be intimidated. A blind anemic, weak kneed flea on crutches has more chance of defeating a herd of 1,000 wild stampeding elephants, than this world has of stopping the will of God. There's nothing they can do to stop God's will and if you're a Christian, you have aligned yourself with God's will.

That was evangelist, Ray Comfort, exhorting believers to stand firm and speak boldly, just like Daniel. Ray's new book, So Many Lions, So Few Daniels is 192 pages, softcover and retails for \$16.99. You can order the book for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 19:59

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. We are talking today about the push for female pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention. Our guest is Tom Ascol, the pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Florida. Tom, what are some other arguments that you hear in favor of female pastors that are just biblically wrong?

Guest: Tom Ascol 20:41

Pulling examples from scripture of women who did amazing things and who served quite well, Deborah in the Old Testament is a classic case. But nowhere in the story of Deborah, I think it's Judges 5, where she's going to fill in because a man refuses to do the job, do we have Deborah held

up as one who is exemplifying female leadership in the people of God or female elders in the New Testament expression of God's people. Then you have Phoebe in Romans 16:1 who is called a servant or a diakonon of the church in Cenchrea. So people have said, well, there's Phoebe, she was obviously serving as a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. Well, we can debate that, because there have been women deacons in Orthodox churches, in different times, so I'm not so concerned about that.

What I am concerned about is the feminists who have come in after that and said, so then deacons, as we know, lead churches, and they were rulers in churches, they were pastors and preachers of churches, which is again, an argument that is going far beyond the text anywhere in Scripture. Phoebe was definitely a servant, a recognized servant in the churches in Cenchrea. Paul definitely commended her for her work and her faithfulness to the church at Rome. Then in that same passage, and I'm kind of familiar with this right now because just last week, I preached through this section of Romans 16.

We had Junia, who is also commended to the church at Rome. Junia, Junius, would be the male version of that, and that's determined that it's most likely not male, it is a female, together, most likely with her husband, commended to be foremost among the apostles. Well, as you see there, Junia was an apostle, so we can have female pastors, because we had a female who was an apostle. But the word apostle, like the word deacon, has a technical and a non technical sense. So you have others, like Epaphroditus who are called apostles. They're apostles not because they were one of the 12, because they have apostolic authority, because they're the foundation of the church going to Ephesians 2:20, but because they were messengers, that's what the word means. It's a non technical usage of this word, messengers, that were sent out much like our missionaries would be today or evangelists from local churches to go on specific missions. The arguments that are used to try to justify women elders, women pastors, women overseers in churches, they're all very, very thin. Some of them don't even warrant the language of being thin, because it is made up and it is imported into the texts. You don't get it out of the text when you simply try to understand the basic meaning of the words that the Holy Spirit inspired the authors of the New Testament to write. So it's a specious argument and it's not convincing at all.

Host: David Wheaton 23:41

Well, thank you for going into detail there. Because I think this reasoning does require going directly to Scripture, and then dealing with some of the cases that are often used to say, well look at this particular case, as you just addressed in your last answer. Tom Ascol with us today here on The Christian Worldview.

Now, on the other side, those who hold to a biblical view on male only pastors within the church often use what is called a slippery slope argument. In other words, homosexuality in the church is worse than female pastors, because what happens is that when denominations and churches start integrating female pastors down the road, they start integrating homosexuality into the church as well.

So Tom, is that really a good argument? In other words, does the integration of female pastors actually lead to the acceptance of homosexuality within the church, because there are those who say that will be rebuffed by saying, "well, there's been several denominations who have female pastors, who have not integrated homosexuality into their churches or denominations.

Guest: Tom Ascol 24:43

Yes, and that's certainly true. I would like to take that argument back and say, how do you get to where you are? The way that people get to female pastors today varies, but it all stems from overturning, ignoring, reinterpreting these basic passages of the Bible. Once you do that, if you're going to be consistent, then you're going to have a really difficult time to keep not just homosexuality but also transgenderism and everything else out of the same lane that moves toward church leadership and church acceptance.

We see this happening time after time. One of the big arguments is, "well, women are gifted. Some of the best preachers I've ever heard are women." Okay. What happens when you find a really eloquent transgendered person? A really eloquent homosexual person that is gifted? Are you not going to let that person use their gifts?

They say they love Jesus. There's this thing, David, I'm sure you're familiar with, called trajectory hermeneutics. It says the right way to read the Bible is in its early context, ancient Middle Eastern context, or ancient Greek Roman context, in the New Testament. So of course, Paul would say this about women because women had a low status in the first century. But you see what he did? He said, All women are to learn. That's a major step forward. Certainly it was. So we take the trajectory of what is being said there about women, they were on a trajectory. Paul only went as far as he could go in his day and we need to take the next logical step in the trajectory and that puts us now on equal ground.

The exact same argument is used by, I've read them, several homosexual advocates, who say, "Well, what is being forbidden in Old and New Testament is not homosexual faithfulness in relationships, but homosexual rape or homosexual promiscuity." They are using the same type of hermeneutic. So whatever you use to justify getting you to the place where you can say, yes, what Paul means in 1 Timothy 2:12 is that women can be overseers and exercise authority over men. That hermeneutic, if it's going to be applied consistently, the people who want homosexual pastors or transgender pastors are going to beat you to a pulp for your inconsistency. That same hermeneutic will ultimately lead down that road. Some people by God's grace happily don't follow that consistently, but it's only because they're happily inconsistent. So absolutely. It's not just a slippery slope. It's a part of the same cloth, and you may not work your way all the way through. It's logical, necessary, required implications, but you can be sure your children will.

Host: David Wheaton 27:26

Just to follow up on the slippery slope you're talking about, Tom. Here's another paragraph from the column by Megan Basham. In early 2020, she writes, Saddleback Pastor, Chris Clark, and his wife, Elisa, co founded a Saddleback chapter of Embracing the Journey, ETJ, a ministry for parents of LGBTQ children with longtime Saddleback members, Doug and Shawna Habel. By the end of 2021, an Embracing the Journey newsletter revealed that Saddleback was hosting four ongoing ETJ support groups and one small group. While Embracing the Journey does not specify whether it affirms LGBTQ lifestyles and identities, its founder of ETJ, Greg McDonald, sits on the board of Renovus, another faith based nonprofit that does assert that homosexuality and transgenderism are compatible with Christianity.

The two organizations Renovus and Embracing the Journey are closely linked. How do you explain, Tom, that Christian leaders and pastors who were once seemingly Orthodox on these two particular

issues of male only pastors and against homosexuality and transvestism, I guess you could call it, How to understand how there's a departure from obvious biblical commands, and they're jettisoned?

Guest: Tom Ascol 29:01

Well, David, sometimes I think we forget that there is a devil, and that he is active, and he desires to destroy everything that God is doing in the world. He would destroy God himself if he could do so. God's given him great leave to exercise his efforts during this era. If we would wake up and read the Bible with sensitivities to the activity of the devil and his demons, I think we would be less surprised at some of these things.

Think about Peter, in Caesarea, Philippi in Matthew 16. "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God", and Jesus commended him, *men of flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but my Father, who is in heaven*. Then five minutes later, when Jesus said, I'm going to Jerusalem, I'm going to suffer, I'm going to be killed, I'm going to be raised from the dead, Peter said, Jesus can I have a word with you and takes him aside. He says, this is never gonna happen. I'm not gonna let it happen. And remember what Jesus said to him. *Get behind me Satan*. Here's an apostle, that justice testified, that wonderful apostolic confession that the Church of Jesus Christ is going to be built upon, that Christ alone is the Son of God and is Lord, that now Jesus is revealing to us has had his mind warped by Satan. If it can happen to Peter, who are we to think that it couldn't happen to us or any other religious leader?

It's the same thing we see in Acts chapter 20 when Paul is speaking to the elders at Ephesus for the last time. They're in Miletus on the beach. I've thought about that scene sometimes. It must have been a very poignant moment when he says, I know these are men most likely he appointed as elders in that church at Ephesus. He says, *I know after I leave, fierce wolves are going to come in among you, they won't spare the flock, and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away disciples after them*. I just shudder to think being a part of that eldership and thinking who is he talking about?

But God had shown him that even these men appointed by an apostle from among them, there were going to rise up those who would be like ravenous wolves, false teachers that would lead people astray. So there's a devil in the world who hates us, his demons are constantly working for his purposes to steal, kill, and destroy.

Our own sin in us is not a lesser grade, lesser quality than the sin that used to dominate us, and we've got to mortify it daily, and then we have the world who's constantly telling us, "you're a bunch of old fogies. Are you kidding me? Get with the times. You're not gonna let women be pastors? You don't love homosexuals? Love is love, you know."

I mean, all this stuff. If we're not taking seriously the call to stand firm, to take on the full armor of God, and withstand the evil day, then yes, we're going to be swayed, we're going to be moved down a path contrary to what the Word says. It's happened throughout history. It happened with the apostles. It happened in apostolic churches, it's happening today, and it will happen until the Lord Jesus returns.

Host: David Wheaton 32:00

Tom Ascol with us today here on The Christian Worldview. He's the pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida. We have all the links to his church and his various ministries, Founders

Ministries, which he directs, at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. We'll pause briefly for some ministry announcements, and then return to talk more about the push for female pastors within the SBC with our guest today, Tom Ascol. I'm David Wheaton and you are listening to The Christian Worldview. Here's Christian journalist Alex Newman, on why some of our fellow citizens are destroying our historic values to enact a great reset to globalism.

Featured Resource: The Great Reset DVD 32:39

They have no loyalty to the United States. In fact, I think many of these people at the highest levels absolutely despise the United States, partly because it has been a historically Christian nation. It has taken the gospel to every corner of this planet like no other nation in all of human history. As I mentioned earlier, it's founded on these biblical principles. It's really a lot of the principles that are at the core of our republic. These came directly out of Scripture and our founding fathers made that crystal clear in their writings.

You can order Alex Newman's 80 minute DVD presentation on how globalists are attempting a great reset for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Resource: So Many Lions, So Few Daniels 33:29

Have faith in God. Don't be intimidated by lions. If the world says back down, don't do this, fling open your windows, pray openly, so to speak. That's what Daniel did. Don't be ashamed. Don't be intimidated. A blind anemic, weak kneed flea on crutches has more chance of defeating a herd of 1,000 wild stampeding elephants, than this world has of stopping the will of God. There's nothing they can do to stop God's will and if you're a Christian, you have aligned yourself with God's will.

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Host: David Wheaton 34:36

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Our topic today is about the push for female pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention. Our guest is Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Florida. Tom, one more paragraph from this article from Megan Basham back to the Southern Baptist Convention issue.

She said on February 21st, "the Credentials Committee of the convention made a move so unexpected, not only did the New York Times, People Magazine and NBC, to name just a few, pick up on it, so also did the British outlet, The Guardian. The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention announced it was disfellowshipping Saddleback Church. Southern Baptists on both sides of the debate immediately expressed confusion over the timing. SBC leadership had dragged their feet on the question of Warren's church for nearly two years since Warren put these three pastors in leadership there and the husband and wife team to co pastor the church. Why would they abruptly oust Saddleback so close to the convention? Why not let the issue lie until June when they can make a report to those who come to the convention, called the messengers? Even more sensible, why not

put Pastor Mike Laws amendment (I reference him earlier) up for a vote and let the convention decide the principle that should apply not just to Saddleback, but to the hundreds of other churches that were flouting the statement of faith and integrating female pastors? Then the executive committee member, Mike Keahbone, immediately following the announcement seemed to give the game away, Basham writes. Saddleback now has the option to appeal, which appears likely, he said. That appeal would happen on the floor of the annual meeting in New Orleans and be decided by the messengers, those who attend the convention. This was the heart of the room when the decision was made, to let the messengers of the SBC decide on this issue of Saddleback.”

So it seems odd if the Southern Baptist Convention is going in the direction of integrating females into pastoral roles and if Saddleback is brought back into the SBC fellowship by a vote at the annual meeting, well, that's just an invitation for all the other SBC churches who are doing the same thing to do more of the same. It seems that the integration here of female pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention is almost like a coordinated pre planned process that is taking place, Tom. Let the people decide is what they're saying. Well, that's a very convenient way of having those who come to the convention who are on your side vote on this issue. What's beyond this move to let the messengers decide at the annual meeting?

Guest: Tom Ascol 37:25

Color me skeptical, because if the leadership of the SBC really wanted to let the messengers decide, they would do what Bart Barber, the current president and Jared Wellman, who's the chairman of the executive committee, the most powerful committee in the convention, who is presumably going to be the new president of the executive committee. He's a CEO, that's a full time job. He'll work around the year. After Mike Laws amendment came out last year, it was referred to the executive committee, Jared and Bart said, We are committed to letting the messengers decide on this. The Baptist Press, which is the PR arm of the executive committee, had as its headline that this amendment, this motion, to have an amendment to our constitution that specifically forbids any kind of women pastor in our churches that would affiliate with the SBC.

That was in the headline. And Bart and Jared said, Yes, we're going to let the messengers decide, we're committed to that. Well, if they were committed to that, sincerely, then they would make sure that this amendment gets to the floor in June at the annual convention, and the messengers get to vote on that, but I doubt that's going to happen.

In fact, I think that there are other things at play here, just as Mike Keahbone gave it away, and others, soon after the announcement was made that the Credentials Committee had voted to remove Saddleback. Well, sure enough, Rick Warren comes out, “we will contest this in the appropriate way at the appropriate time. I do plan to appeal this.”

Last year at the annual convention in Anaheim, though he wasn't even a messenger as far as I could tell, and he was given six minutes, much longer than any other messenger is allowed to speak, by the platform to make his case. And he got a standing ovation from most of the room.

So Rick knows how to read a room, he knows how to win a room. I'm not going to be surprised if he does the same thing in New Orleans trying to win the room. If he can win the vote to overturn the Credentials Committee decision, then this is a closed issue. You won't be able to bring up Saddleback again on charges, that they're not in friendly cooperation because they have women pastors, and that

will be a coup d'etat for these interests that want to see the SBC continue running down this leftward road that it's been on for the last several years.

Host: David Wheaton 39:45

The follow up question Tom, is, Grace Baptist Church is a member of the SBC. Is there a tipping point in your own mind if the convention re-fellowships I guess you could say, Saddleback Church or this issue of female pastors, because it's much broader throughout the convention accepted? Is that a trigger for you to say, look, we no longer want to be a part of this, supporting it and so forth, or do you feel like your best way to enact change is actually to be on the inside of the convention?

Guest: Tom Ascol 40:17

Well, that'd be a decision for our elders and congregation to make, but I can tell you, it's been a discussion for years, and there are ways to be Southern Baptists that do not cost you financially more than a nickel. You know, if you wanted to give a nickel to the International Mission Board, you can still be part of the SBC.

As Megan put in her article, it really is a very loose association, so our concern has always been, what's the trajectory of the SBC? Up until about six, seven years ago, we could honestly say, it looked like the trajectory had been far better than it was in the 70s and 80s. There was a conservative resurgence by God's grace, the Conservatives gained the ascendancy and began to make sure we had nothing but Emeritus, those who affirmed the Bible's authority, leading all of our institutions and agencies, so praise God for that. But there has been this subtle drift that's now not so subtle at all.

So the big question for us is, is there a path back that seems worthy of our time and energy to try to link arms with other churches to see a reformation, a recovering biblical fidelity in all these areas in the SBC? I tell you that's getting harder and harder, because so many good churches have left the SBC, especially over the last two years. But even before that, and if this scenario that we just described, plays out in New Orleans in June, then I think that Exodus will become even more massive. So our church as well as others will have to make that decision, and we're not married to the SBC. I think we're the best kind of SBC church, and that is a church that realizes the SBC is not all that big a deal. It isn't all that important, but it does matter, because it is the largest Protestant denomination in North America, and as Meg said, it does have a billion dollars worth of tithes and offerings that are being resourced to something.

Though that will begin to dwindle, it's not going to quit, and the SBC will either be by God's grace turned, and become a force for great good, as it has been at different times in this nation and around the world, and maintain the good things it's already doing, or it will become increasingly a force for evil, and just playing along with and platforming these causes and these ideas that are contrary to the Word of God.

I would love to see, if we can do it, uniting with other churches to see the SBC continue being a force for good and become a force for greater good, and not be a force for evil, even in ways that it's already become in certain situations.

Host: David Wheaton 42:48

Let's pray toward that end. I mean, after all, this is Christ's Church, and we want the church to be honoring to him. Tom Ascol with us today on The Christian Worldview. Final question for you, Tom.

This issue we discussed today of the Southern Baptist Convention, considering this issue of female pastors really seems to be part of the bigger war against what someone described as the patriarchal system of the Bible. That male headship in the church, in the home, that there's a real push back against that, of course, in broader society, but now within the church as well.

We've done recent programs on the attacks toward those who are complementarian in their understanding of Scripture as you are. Pastors like John MacArthur as well. Julie Roys, the Christian journalist who's written articles heavily against him, and Rachel Denhollander, who is involved a lot with the Southern Baptist Convention, trying to root out accusations, allegations of abuse going on from men toward women, and others on the internet. You see this all the time.

There is a bigger war going on against the patriarchy. That's kind of the social justice word in broader culture, but they may not say that as much in the Christian realm. That's really what it is. So talk about as we conclude today, what listeners should be aware of about what's going on in this bigger war against the patriarchal system, and how it is connected to the prevailing worldview in our broader culture.

Guest: Tom Ascol 44:21

There's no doubt that there has been an abuse of power by men in leadership in every sphere of life, including the church, and we just need to own that. Where there's sin, we need to own it. Where there's crimes, we need to own it. We find a crime, call the police. Find sin, you call the church, call the elders and get that dealt with inside of the church. So that's there.

The fact that that has been there, and sometimes in very egregious ways, this whole movement of wanting to flatten out society that says any kind of authority is wicked, because it's always going to lead to abuse and you got the oppressors who are going to always try to hold down the oppressed. This is at its roots, a Marxian, Carl Marxian view of the world, and as some of his disciples said, our ideas, this way that culture ought to be, is going to march through the institutions of the West, and they've done it. Congratulations to them. We now have a Marxist world in which anyone who, according to their dictates, has been at the top of the cultural ladder with their hands on the levers of power, they are suspect, in fact, they're evil. They need to be overthrown, and those who are the oppressors in that role, need to become the oppressed, and so that's bled in, that's the cultural air we're breathing.

It's come into the church. So we've lost sight of the fact that this is God's world, God built the world with hierarchies. God built the world with differences. He made men to be men, women to be women, they're not the same. Yet they both bear his image, because that's what He determined humanity would be. He made parts of the earth mountains, parts of it seas. He made the sun, the moon, the stars, they're not the same. That is true in every area of life. So in the church, God decided that men who are qualified should lead it. In the home, God decided that the husband is to be the head of the wife. These are God's rules. We're just living in a day that does not like that kind of authority.

Again, I want to own where those in authority have mishandled it and abused it. They're responsible for that. That's to be abominated, but we can't throw out authority. Authorities good. I think of David's last words, it's recorded in 2 Samuel 23. When he says, *My God has spoken to me; the spirits come to me.* And he said, *When a person rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, that that is like dawning on them with morning light, like sun that shines on a cloudless morning, like rain that causes*

grass to sprout on the earth. In other words, authority exercised well, is a blessing. It's beautiful. It's good.

We've lost sight of that. So it behooves pastors, elders, husbands, and anyone in authority to exercise authority the way that Christ has delegated it to us, because we're all under the monarchy of Jesus Christ. If we can communicate that, then perhaps we can help people to find some ground to stand on to resist this Marxist idea that oh, no, no, no, you know, it's time for a revolution and we've got to overthrow all the people who have been oppressing us, because they are fascists, and we will be the Anti Fascists. You can see it in the streets for the last four years especially in our nation, and that spirit is coming to the church, and we must resist it with everything we can, using the sword of the Spirit, and what God has clearly revealed to be his will.

Host: David Wheaton 48:05

Tom, this is why we so appreciate you and your ministry of Founders, your church, because against the prevailing winds of society, and the trends to move against what God's Word says clearly within the church, you have stood on the authority of the Word of God. We're so thankful for your witness, Tom. We appreciate again, your coming on The Christian Worldview today. We wish nothing but God's best and Grace to you, and Grace Baptist Church.

Guest: Tom Ascol 48:35

Thank you, David, and God's blessings on you as well. Appreciate all that you are doing.

Host: David Wheaton 48:40

I so appreciate Pastor Tom Ascol. What a graceful and truth filled man. Again, you can get links to his church and Founders Ministries by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. I just want to play another soundbite from that interview that Rick Warren did with Russell Moore of Christianity Today. Just listen to what he says here as he considers whether to go to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting this year.

Audio Sound bite: Rick Warren 49:09

In my heart of hearts, I just want to walk away from it. You don't want to be where you're not wanted okay. But I don't think I can do that. I think that's a selfish thing to do. I think I need to stand up for the pastors who are scared to death by this inquisition, and I think I need to stand up for the millions of godly Southern Baptist women whose gifts and leadership skills are being stymied. So I'm going to most likely appeal it. Not for my benefit. We don't need it. We don't need the Southern Baptist Convention. They need the 6,000 purpose driven churches that are in the Southern Baptist Convention in our fellowship, but we don't need the convention. But it would be for the benefit of others, not for us.

Host: David Wheaton 49:56

In other words, I'm the champion. I need to stand up for pastors terrified by this Inquisition. The inquisition being perpetrated by those who hold to the historic, biblical structure of the church for male pastors only. Then finally, I don't need the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention needs the 6,000 purpose driven churches that basically Rick Warren started.

You know, when the fruit of one's mouth is pride, there's a bad root on the inside. Romans chapter 16, is an apt response to what this man is pushing. Paul writes, *Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned; and turn*

away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ, but of their own appetites, and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

So I urge you today, trust what God has said in Scripture on this particular issue of men only as pastors in churches. Don't be persuaded by the underminers with the smooth and flattering speech. How God designed the structure of the church is worth fighting for. Listen to this passage which ties the authority structure in the home that God established to the relationship of Christ with his body, the church. *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, (there's authority), so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. This is how the authority in the home and the church should operate. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to himself the church in all her glory.*

May we see the authority structure that God has designed in the church, in the home, as for our good, and His glory.

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