



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 8, 2018

Christian Speaker Denied Speaking Opportunity in Oklahoma

"I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian — for me — for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union. God's in the mix."



It would not be surprising if those were the words of a Christian minister, but those were actually the words of Senator Barack Obama in 2008. While his remarks are not now considered to have been sincere, but simply said out of political necessity during his initial campaign for president, they would have been largely non-controversial by any American president or public figure until very recent years.

Yet, the belief that marriage is the union between a man and a woman — a view publicly stated by even liberal icon Barack Obama as recently as less than ten years ago, is now held as so bigoted that a person stating them is not allowed to speak on a modern college campus — even a campus in "conservative" Oklahoma.

Following what has been called "bullying" by an LGBTQ group, the invitation to noted Christian speaker Ken Ham to speak on Darwinian evolution at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond has been rescinded. Stockton Duvall, the president of the UCO student body, explained that the student association had worked with the student group Valid World Views to bring Ham to campus early next month.

Apparently, some students on the campus do not believe the college is an appropriate place to express certain views they do not like. Duvall said he was bullied by the group to revoke the speaking invitation for Ham. "I want to be very clear on this, there have been members of our campus who have tried to bully me in my decision. While none of the examples have involved members of the administration, there is definitely something that must be done to address this issue. I am not the first person to be personally attacked by a very vocal group on campus that has little tolerance for opposing views."

Paul Blair, the pastor of Edmond's Fairview Baptist Church, said he would have Ham speak at his church instead, remarking, "The group that always cries out demanding tolerance and accusing others of bullying, it seems that they are the ones that are accused of bullying and not tolerating others."

Ham's intended talk at UCO was to have been on issues involving the controversy on Darwinian evolution, not same-sex marriage. Ham, a creationist, is president of Answers in Genesis. He has opened an Ark Encounter exhibit he created in Kentucky, which is lit up each night in rainbow colors. The Ark Encounter is a reproduction of the biblical Noah's Ark, using the dimensions described in the Bible. Ham said, "The rainbow is a reminder that God will never again judge the wickedness of man with a global flood."

While Ham had no intention of addressing the same-sex marriage issue in his talk at UCO, apparently the LGBTQ group took offense at his comments made last July at the Ark's opening, when Ham said, "The rainbow itself wasn't designed to be a symbol of freedom, love, pride or the LGBTQ movement.... Sadly, people ignore what God intended the rainbow to represent and proudly wave rainbow-colored flags in defiance of God's command and design for marriage."



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When the LGBTQ group began what Duvall called its “bullying” to prevent Ham’s presentation against the Darwinian evolution theory, Duvall suggested a compromise: Ham could sign a statement that he agreed not to discuss that topic even if it came up during the question-and-answer session. Ham refused, saying, “I wasn’t prepared to do that because I believe there should be freedom of speech and that’s what the university should allow. I don’t attack these people. I don’t hate them. I wasn’t going to talk on them or deal with that in my presentation, but if it came up in question time I would want the freedom to answer those questions.”

Apparently, freedom of speech is not highly valued by some like the LGBTQ group at UCO if it differs with their viewpoint. Charles Johnson, UCO’s vice president of university communications, stressed that the university does believe in “the civil expression of diverse thought,” promising to “continue to support the student-centered culture we value and promote at the University of Central Oklahoma.”

It is not surprising that “the civil expression of diverse thought” has been denied at yet another American university. What is particularly troubling is that a group has actually succeeded in censoring free speech at a college located in the heart of the Bible Belt. As Ham said, “I think it’s going to be eye-opening to a lot of people.”

Image: screenshot from answersingenesis.org



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