Written by **Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.** on June 18, 2015

Southern Baptist Leader: Prepare for Civil Disobedience Over Gay Marriage Ruling

A prominent Southern Baptist pastor is warning Christians that they should prepare to "practice civil disobedience" if the Supreme Court should mandate recognition of same-sex marriage in all 50 states.

Jack Graham (shown, left), head of the more than 40,000 members of the Prestonwood Baptist Church in suburban Dallas, Texas, called on his flock and other American Christians to be prepared for massive social and spiritual repercussions should the Supreme Court rule in favor of gay marriage.

"We want to stay in the system," said Graham, as reported by Todd Starnes. "We want to work in the system. We want to support our government. We want to obey its laws."

Unless, of course, that tack fails. Starnes reports, quoting Graham, "But there's a coming a day, I believe, that many Christians personally and churches corporately will need to practice civil disobedience on this issue."

Dr. Graham has served two terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest American Protestant denomination, with 16 million members, and as president of the SBC Pastor's Conference.

Graham's strong stance is echoed in a statement on the issue released June 17 by the current and 16 former Southern Baptist Convention presidents.

On behalf of his colleagues, current SBC President Ronnie Floyd (shown, center) read the statement at a press conference held in Columbus, Ohio:

> As Southern Baptist Christians, we are committed to Biblical faith and ethics. As a result, this body of Believers stands on the authority of Scripture and God's Truth as central to our lives.
>
> What the Bible says about marriage is clear, definitive and unchanging. We affirm biblical, traditional, natural marriage as the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. The Scriptures' teaching on marriage is not negotiable. We stake our lives upon the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
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> Consequently, we will not accept, nor adhere to, any legal redefinition of marriage issued by any political or judicial body including the United States Supreme Court. We will not recognize same-sex "marriages", our churches will not host same-sex ceremonies, and we will not perform such ceremonies.
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> While we affirm our love for all people, including those struggling with same-sex attraction, we cannot and will not affirm the moral acceptability of homosexual behavior or any behavior that

> deviates from God's design for marriage. We also believe religious freedom is at stake within this critical issue — that our first duty is to love and obey God, not man.
>
> Therefore, we strongly encourage all Southern Baptist pastors, leaders, educators, and churches to openly reject any mandated legal definition of marriage and to use their influence to affirm God's design for life and relationships. As the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination with over 16 million members, we stake our very lives and future on the Truth of God's Word.
>
> We also join together to support those who stand for natural marriage in the corporate world, the marketplace, education, entertainment, media and elsewhere with our prayers and influence, and resources.

How far are Graham and his fellow Southern Baptists prepared to go in rejecting the Supreme Court's same-sex marriage mandate? Graham told Starnes:

"I hope we never live to find out what that looks like," Graham told me. "There are many Christians today who are preparing if necessary to go to jail."

While the commitment to their understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and biblically-based morality is admirable, Graham and members of his faith need not result immediately to acts of civil disobedience.

Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules, there is another remedy, a remedy described by Thomas Jefferson as the "rightful remedy": nullification.

Understanding that the states created the federal government will help state legislators and citizens appreciate the constitutional propriety and potency of the principles of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 penned by James Madison and Thomas Jefferson.

The states created the federal government and reserve the right to resist the exercise by Congress of any powers not specifically granted to it by the states in the Constitution. For too long, Congresses, presidents, judges, and bureaucrats have "worshipped and served the creature [the government] more than the creator [the states and the people]."

Jefferson, James Madison, and others would encourage states to demand that the government of the United States — including the Supreme Court — cease the constant abuse of power and confine its activities within those boundaries drawn by state representatives in the Constitution and later agreed to by separate ratifying conventions in the states.

Not included within those boundaries is the power to substitute the will of a majority of black-robed oligarchs for the will of the people of the states.

If nullification is to be successfully deployed and defended, state lawmakers must remember that the Constitution *is a creature of the states* and that the federal government was given very few and very limited powers over objects of national importance. Any act of Congress, the courts, or the president that exceeds that small scope is null, void, and of no legal effect. No exceptions. James Madison said it best in *Federalist* 45: "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."

There are those, however, who argue that there is a limit on the states' power of nullification. When the Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of an act, however, nullification of that act is no longer an option.

In light of recent decisions by "conservatives" on the Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of ObamaCare, for example, it is no wonder that many Americans doubt that states maintain the right to nullify a congressional act after the Supreme Court has ruled on its constitutionality.

Thomas Jefferson had something to say in the mattter. In 1804, he wrote that giving the Supreme Court power to declare unconstitutional acts of the legislature or executive "would make the judiciary a despotic branch." He noted that "nothing in the Constitution" gives the Supreme Court that right.

Even Abraham Lincoln recognized the lack of constitutional authority for the Supreme Court's assumption of the role of ultimate arbiter of an act's conformity with the Constitution.

Lincoln said that if the Supreme Court was allowed to be the final word on the law, then, "the people will have ceased to be their own masters, having to that extent resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal."

The Southern Baptist Convention and Dr. Graham retain the natural right to resist the federal government's exercise of unconstitutional power and to follow the dictates of their consciences.

These Christians will effect greater and more lasting change, however, if they focus their substantial resources on reminding adherents that defining marriage is not one of the few and defined powers delegated to the federal government. Therefore, that power is retained by the states and the people, as guaranteed by the 10th Amendment.

Finally, another weapon in the arsenal of liberty and faith is the appeal to the U.S. Congress to exercise their constitutional power to restrict the jurisdiction of the federal courts — including the Supreme Court — leaving them powerless to hear cases relating to the definition of marriage (and abortion, for that matter).

Photo: AP Images