

LifeWay may pull Peterson books from shelves over LGBT views

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Editor's Note: Eugene Peterson issued a clarification and retraction the day after the RNS interview appeared. Read the follow-up article by clicking [here](#).

NASHVILLE—Customers who want to buy a copy of *The Message* version of the Bible soon may have to purchase it—or any other books by author Eugene Peterson—somewhere other than LifeWay Christian Stores.

LifeWay Christian Resources—the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention—announced it would discontinue selling any books by Peterson if he confirms a published interview about same-sex relations accurately reflects his views.

In an [interview](#) with Religion News Service columnist Jonathan Merritt, Peterson voiced an accepting view of same-sex relationships and said he would be willing to perform a same-sex wedding ceremony.

“I wouldn’t have said this 20 years ago, but now I know a lot of people who are gay and lesbian, and they seem to have as good a spiritual life as I do,” Peterson told Merritt. “I think that kind of debate about lesbians and gays might be over.

“People who approve of it, they’ll probably just go to another church. So, we’re in a transition, and I think it’s a transition for the best, for the good. I don’t think it’s something that you can parade, but it’s not a right or wrong thing as far as I’m concerned.”

When asked if he were in the pastorate today and a gay Christian couple asked him to perform their same-sex wedding ceremony, Peterson said he would do it, according to Merritt's column.

LifeWay responds

Within a few hours after Merritt's article appeared online, [Baptist Press](#)—information service of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee—reported LifeWay Christian Resources no longer would sell any books by Peterson if he confirms “he does not hold to a biblical view of marriage.”

“LifeWay only carries resources in our stores by authors who hold to the biblical view of marriage,” a prepared statement from LifeWay said. “We are attempting to confirm with Eugene Peterson or his representatives that his recent interview on same-sex marriage accurately reflects his views. If he confirms he does not hold to a biblical view of marriage, LifeWay will no longer sell any resources by him, including *The Message*.”

Peterson, pastor of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Md., for 29 years, is the author of 30-plus books, including *The Message*, which has sold more than 16 million copies worldwide.

First Hatmaker, now Peterson?

If LifeWay pulls Peterson's books from its retail store shelves, it won't be the first time it has excluded an author based on views about homosexuality.

Last October, LifeWay quit selling books by bestselling Bible study author Jen Hatmaker after she voiced approval for same-sex marriage—also in an [RNS interview](#) with Merritt.

At the time, [LifeWay announced](#) it discontinued selling her resources

because Hatmaker “voiced significant changes in her theology of human sexuality and the meaning and definition of marriage—changes which contradict LifeWay’s doctrinal guidelines.”

Compiled from reports by Religion News Service and Baptist Press.