

the offer saying perhaps it might be a good thing for people to see how some people in Tennessee had reacted to their presence. Otherwise, Soulforce's visit to Lee was without incident. Here is what some of the activists, current and former Lee students, and an administrator had to say about it.

Equality Rider Angel Collie, age 20, had this to say about his participation: "This has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life. It's been great to find that we have allies on these campuses. Our goal is just to shine light on these dark situations where people are living in fear and let it be known that it isn't valid, that God loves you too."

Rachel Powell, age 19, also an Equality Rider, said this: "This has been amazing. We've been able to connect with so many Christians who have accepted us. The students here have been very welcoming."

Former Lee student Andre Stith, age 22, stated, "I've come out to support the message because Lee can be a very hard place for a homosexual to thrive and to be themselves, there is a lot of pretending that it doesn't exist. Hopefully, this can shed light on a dark situation."

Stith, who is gay, continued, "I was involved in several groups on campus, but I felt like I was pretending to be someone I wasn't. I had to leave; I felt that I couldn't thrive as a homosexual at Lee."

Scott Sanders, a pastor at New Covenant Church in Atlanta Georgia, came to lead a prayer vigil on the second day of the group's visit. Sanders said, "I heard about what was happening and decided to lend my support. I am very proud of Lee. From what I've seen they've been able to open their hearts, if not in support of, at least in tolerance of these young people."

Eighteen year old Lee Student Susanna Harris said, "I'm very happy that they're here. It's been very liberating. I don't believe that they are being sinful, their sexuality is just part of who they are."

Aaron Powell, age 23, and also a Lee Student said, "I haven't been on campus much the past few days, but every time I've seen them, there's been a crowd around them debating what the Bible says. I really don't understand."

"They obviously have a right to be here. I'm glad that everything has gone smoothly and though I disagree with them, I feel that we have a responsibility as Christians to show them love," said 21-year-old Lee student Matthew Propest.

Mario Hood, 21, and a Lee student said, "Honestly I don't have a problem with them being here and having dialogue. From what I've seen most of them aren't even Christians because they don't use the Bible as their rule of law. This is a good opportunity for us to show them what the Bible really says about sexuality."

Lee University Assistant Vice President of Student Life and sponsor for the Student Leadership Council, Dr. Mike Hayes, had this to say: "I feel very positive about the past two days. Our students responded with a great deal of graciousness. This has been good for us to be able to show people Christ's love without compromising his standards. It has also been good for people to see our campus and realize that Christians are not the bigots they are often portrayed to be."



Equality Rider Angel Collie



Pastor Scott Sanders from Atlanta, Georgia.

## OP/ED

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