

God is not a homophobe!

Rev. Bill Senyard

I am very tired of—in fact, I resent being called a homophobe, just because I am a Pastor of a Christian congregation—just because I am a follower of Jesus Christ. The term is not at all representative of my feelings toward the individuals or their life style choices. In fact, I am very confident that the term does not describe God's heart either (as reflected perfectly by the incarnate God- Jesus Christ). I have no doubt that Jesus would plunge into the very thick of things—he probably would even walk along side of gays and lesbians in the 'pride' parades—not communicating approval of their choices—in fact, not condoning pride of any kind--but to communicate something far more important and devastating. First He would proclaim publicly his love for them as human beings, each bestowed with dignity-- in some mysterious way the shadowed reflection of the image of God. And if that weren't surprising enough, He would also offer freely—no strings attached-- something far, far greater. He would—without an ounce of judgment toward them as persons-- look deep into the very soul of the dissatisfied and fractured man or woman and offer them something that is as far different as it is greater—the same love, intimacy, wholeness, personhood, sense of purpose and identity that they have been struggling to find—the same that He offers to fractured people like me.

That's the point isn't it? All of us in different ways have been looking for love (and identity and value) in all of the wrong places. Down deep—way down deep—this is not news to us. In our quiet moments, the dissatisfaction is numbing. Someone has called this our 'noisy conscious'. We are far more alike than we often think.

Wouldn't this be good news? To have someone as important—and as credible--as Jesus come near and love gays and non-gays far more than they love themselves? And if the truth were known, he doesn't stop there--he offers to people more love than we even knew existed. If this is indeed true, then even the most embittered, wounded, skeptical, angry and offended among us would have to admit that this is really good news. It certainly is a good place to begin meaningful dialogue! No matter what our story is—there is a meta-story that is better than we can imagine.

So why all of the name-calling? I think maybe that the problem can be found in other phobias. To butcher the Bard, 'Methinks they doth protest too much!' I think that other 'phobias' should be accounted for. Maybe there are homophobes out there. No doubt. But I wonder if maybe, within the gay community, there are 'evangelical-phobes' around. This is a fear of evangelical Christians—and with all due respect to my brothers and sisters in Christ, this fear may far too often be warranted. All the more concerning to me is the presence of 'evangelaphobia'. This is that fear, way deep in a dissatisfied person's soul, that there is such amazing good news out there that they have resisted and despised for so long. If it is there, then they come to realize that they have been playing the fool—or worse-- for so many years. This is that debilitating fear that what they have been doing and defending with all of their being for months, years or perhaps decades has been wrong. That is a devastatingly scary thought for most.

But what if it is true? Who wouldn't be willing to give up a counterfeit to gain the real McCoy? It is sure worth thinking about and dialoging about. I welcome gays to come as-they-are and see. Homosexuality is like so many other infractions against God, creation and mankind in that it is a counterfeit of God's real desire for the individual. It, like so many other fruit of our corrupted and beat up hearts (the list is extensive but includes such things as judgmental spirit, criticism, unforgiveness, gossip, slander, hypocrisy, bigotry, not loving and worshipping God, not receiving God's love and honor, indifference, people pleasing, idolatry, lack of love for others, lack of love for self, pride, anger, selfishness, greed, coveting, lust, adultery, pornography)--is a tragic selling short--far short of the glorious loving and being loved that God purposed us for. Why would anyone cling to dirty rags when glorious robes are offered?

To the gay and lesbians who are sincerely looking for love – Biblically in all the wrong places, this should be seen as real good news. Honestly ask yourself in a quiet moment, “Have you found the love, glory, honor, and wholeness that deep down you know is there for you somewhere?” Have you felt healing for the wounds, use, abuse, fears and betrayals—the congregate dehumanizations of your past? This is the time for severe honesty. If not—if this life style choice has betrayed you as well, then honestly consider taking Christ seriously when He says, ‘Come to me all who thirst and drink freely’. Come as you are. What else can you do? But get ready for a wild ride. You will be given wholeness and love far greater than you ever experienced as a gay or lesbian.

The choice is yours. Like in the movie Matrix, I put before you a red pill and a blue pill. One is a path of Biblical faith. It will be an amazing ride, beyond your wildest expectations. You will be changed! The other pill is a return to the status quo-- your life as it is now. No change. Which will you choose. The honor of choice is yours.

‘But, the cost is too high. I would have to deny who I am.’ God is not an ogre, requiring harmful sacrifices of us. No, when He prescribes sacrifice, it can indeed and often is painful and costly, but it is not absurd, or tragic. Greater life comes out of sacrifice in the God-community. Resurrection life comes after death. Yes, we are all called to sacrifice our orientations. What were we thinking? Jesus modeled a life of sacrifice. He gave up the comforts of heaven for the greater good. It will not be easy. We need the God-community to assist us—to come lovingly alongside of us. But, Jesus calls us to enter into that spirit of obedience and sacrifice—all of us. Jesus said it clearly,

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

God is not a homophobe... and neither am I.