

At Risk

'If our Gospel is hid, it is hid toward those who are perishing' (2 Cor. 4:3).

An outraged congregant railed at Pastor Patrick on the eve of our Gender Matters conference at his church: 'This isn't one of those "pray away the gay" groups, is it?' Unflinchingly, the good pastor responded: 'Yes, our church believes in the power of prayer for all broken persons seeking Jesus.'

Worldly Christians—more influenced by snide soundbites from the Internet than by the Kingdom of God—now contribute to the din of unbelief and popular 'born- that-way-can't change-anyway' prejudice that surround persons with gender identity problems.

In failing to extend God's Kingdom to those at risk, worldly Christians risk the loss of that Kingdom. Their light dims, the snap of their salt dulls.

Hopefully, the overreach in the California legislature of AB 2943 gives all Christians the chance to wake up and forego this compromised, guilt-by-assimilation mindset toward persons with same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria. Together, let us burn off lies by reigniting these three truths:

First, persons most at risk in their gender identities need the Kingdom of God more than state-mandated identity formation, e.g. you must embrace your 'gay' or 'trans' self. Only the Father through the Son and by His Spirit can confirm true identity. This is the business of the Church and the cure for the fractured heart.

Second, persons most at risk in their gender identities are helped far more than they are hurt by the Church. In the same breath that we acknowledge our failures, we declare it libelous to frame faith communities as rife with fraudulent 'conversionists' who impose impossible burdens on the vulnerable. I work with hundreds of churches in California where I witness humble groups who welcome all persons who know they need the Savior. California is especially adept at providing multiple onramps for seekers to receive blessing, belonging and transformation through Jesus represented well in His yielded members.

Third, persons most at risk in their gender identities are not well-served by the lie that drives AB 2943, namely, that persons who seek change in their desires will hurt themselves because change is impossible. That is patently untrue: not just questionable science but fraudulent science. In 'Ex-Gays?' (IVP, 2007), the impressive book that details the best 'longitudinal study on religiously mediated change in sexual orientation', Drs. Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse make clear that people can and do experience change in their sexual desires and identity, and that seeking such change does not incur harm. Check it out.

The bias against change for an 'at risk' people now drives the psychological community which

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fuels the LGBT+ political caucus that leads the California legislature by the nose. Persons most at risk lose options that could set them free.

Christians, wake up. Arise out of your risky state--your agreement with popular lies. Burn again with the truth, endowed with power, to secure at risk persons in holy love.