

## Cultivating Gay Christians

I came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ amid the afflicting power of homosexual attraction and conduct. In those years, shame veiled such struggles. I was fortunate to find Christian guides who helped me to discover Jesus as the basis for a new and true humanity.

Today, we arise out of shame and into the evolving community known as LGBTQ. Such a community may appear to afford some a kind of corporate identity and defense against a heterosexist world. What it actually does is bar Christians from the grace (and clarity of identity) that could be theirs.

Sadly, many of our best Christian institutions, Fuller Seminary and Wheaton College among them, now sponsor LGBTQ groups. Bowing to the pressure of insistent 'gay' alums, these institutions have broken ties with Scripture and Church tradition in regards to human sexuality.

(Please note that such groups do not represent the majority of those schools' faculty and students. The craftiness of an aggressive few finds access through naïve, weary administrators. Please pray for opportunities to engage constructively with those powers-that-be. Badly conceived precedents can end!)

I know from my solid Fuller education that there is no biblical theological base for 'self-identified' LGBTQ members. In his Doctrine of Creation (CD III), Karl Barth upholds the "radical duality of male and female as the root of all other fellowship...The command of God shows humanity irrefutably that man can only be genuinely human with woman, and woman with man."

Fuller Professor Emeritus Dr. Ray Anderson furthers this thought: "To deny the fundamental distinction of sexual orientation with regards to one's own identity as male or female is to conceal the imago dei itself." (On Being Human)

In other words, every human being is under the divine command to work out his or her salvation as male and female in relation to each other. Any community that seeks to define itself outside that duality defies a genuine theological anthropology. Such 'humanity' is self-prescribed rather than defined by the Creator. In Barth's words, "a flight from one's gender is a flight from God."

The LGBTQ 'self' is a recently devised social construct. Speaking of the 'gay self' in particular, Dr. Mark A. Yarhouse makes the distinction between homosexual attractions and identity. He writes: "A gay identity reflects a modern sociocultural movement that has formed an identity around experiences of same-sex attraction. It is not merely a synonym for SSA... Rather, 'I am gay' is a self-defining attribution that reflects this socio-cultural movement." (Round Peg, Square Hole)

'Gay' identification is only one way in which a person with SSA seeks to resolve his/her sexuality.

It is a willful, moral decision that serves to deepen and strengthen one's homosexual desires. Is that among the goals of these institutions—to cultivate gay Christians?

That is expressly what LGBTQ groups do. Curious, vulnerable Christians gather with self-identified 'gays' and other sexual 'minorities.' Unlike groups I led at Fuller, these groups do not encourage the seeker to repent unto healing but rather to embrace and integrate his/her skewed sexual identity.

I have only compassion for Christians with SSA. But I resist absolutely the push to gather on the basis of the 'gay self' in order to further orient one's life around a disordered set of desires. Resolving these desires could be undertaken instead by committed Christians who rightfully invite any person with LGBTQ leanings into a community seeking redemption.

That is the ministry of Jesus Christ, "to open for us the hermeneutical horizon for authentic personhood"; in the words of Ray Anderson, "we go to Jesus to learn about Adam." And we go to church to discover this Jesus who reconciles us to the Father's best for our lives. Anderson again: "The church must know the difference between order and disorder and be wise enough to contextualize disorder with grace and truth."

Christian LGBTQ groups cannot be considered ordered, grace-filled, or truthful. May the Church arise into the real community of transformation for the broken who turn to Jesus. May those institutions that profess to build the Church turn from any group that cultivates 'gay' Christians.