

## Father-Figure?

'All I wanted, something special, something sacred in your eyes; I will be your father-figure...'  
George Michael

The pop singer died on Christmas, the day Christ was born afresh in the hearts of faithful ones. Michael's broken heart gave out as Jesus offered us broken ones the Father's heart. 'When you were children, you were slaves under the world's system. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son...so we could receive our full rights as sons and daughters. Because we are now His children, He sends us the Spirit of His Son, who cries out "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer slaves but sons...' (Gal. 4:3-7)

Few represent enslavement to the world's system better than George Michael. He gifted us with infectious pop hooks and videos, while slowly taking his own life in homosexual addiction and drug use. Some claim that homophobia drove him to cruising bathrooms and smoking crack but I say it is the nature of the world's system itself; the holy longing for Father twisted into enslavement to eroticized 'father-figures.'

Guilty, sure—sensitive people 'get' dehumanizing practices. But bad feelings do not break chains. Drugs dull the ache but cannot take it away. Neither do 'gay-affirming' laws (spoiler alert: male 'gay marriages' make few if any claims to monogamy) or the likes of Madonna and Elton John whose effusive eulogizing of George Michael suggest their own guilt.

In the glare of a man struck down by a world that enslaves estranged sons of God, we are all a little guilty. We choose to no longer even use the language of slavery to describe the divided life Michael lived. We fear that the 'gay feds' will brand us 'haters' or worse, 'reparative therapists.' Even churchmen qualify the truth that Jesus transforms the 'gay-identified' into sons and daughters of the Father.

So we mute the power of Christmas. We turn down the relevance of Jesus' descent into the muck in order to reclaim children of dignity, who summons what is real and true from the rubble of our lives and who stokes His refinement of us by His Spirit. We are now artful dodgers; we so nuance St. Paul's words that we reduce the Holy One to a 'father-figure' rather than the Lord of all.

George Michael postured himself as a 'father-figure' in a vain effort to secure the love he needed. But his world was a cruel, unforgiving one that tempts men only to torment them. His light burnt out. May his tragic end bring us to our knees and provoke us to manifest the One who makes sons and daughters out of slaves.