

Frank, Thanks

Last Saturday in San Rafael CA, I was privileged to be among those who memorialized Frank Worthen, father of ministries like Desert Stream.

“Frank possessed a profoundly Christian heart---as the Hebrews understood ‘heart.’ His good mind could apprehend the meaning of things, and his love laid hold of what is best and true about God’s creation. Frank fused wisdom and compassion; he gave us a glimpse of Jesus’ heart.

Frank loved California; he honored her history--some of it Christian (Mission San Rafael!), and all of it about people leaving their old lives and taking up a new vision or job or self. While others waited for California to quake and fall into the sea, he cherished CA, and believed that Jesus could shine through created things like the Palace of Fine Arts. To Frank, beauty conveyed an aspect of Jesus’ truth. So Frank’s heart never closed to San Francisco. He still believed for her.

Frank loved people, especially people with gender identity issues. Yes the Bay Area led the world in misinterpreting same-sex attraction and in creating over 50 ungodly gender selves, and yes, Frank always held out hope in the Bay Area for the real self in every LGBT-whatever pilgrim. Frank knew only Jesus could summon that self from the slumber of sin.

You see, Jesus did that for him, thoroughly. Jesus woke him up from his sleep unto death. Jesus made him alive through this Church of the Open Door, one of the brave churches that sprouted up along the CA coast like wildflowers in the ‘Jesus-people’ revival. Jesus made Frank new, and his youthful vision for how Jesus can make anyone new never dimmed. It grew more clear and merciful over time. He gathered a remnant from around the world, grateful faces that enhanced his vision; and his sight was refined by the rebellious majority who tried to gouge his eyes out, including former spiritual sons and daughters.

Jesus gave Frank a share in His heart. He faced resistance peacefully, aware that he battled for souls. God gave him spiritual sight about this battle. While Exodus was dying and Frank and Stephen Black and Anne Paulk started Restored Hope Network, Frank prayed to Jesus for direction and received an awesome vision of St. Michael the archangel –warrior prince of the heavenly host—who upon a huge steed plunged a lance through the devil in the form of a dragon.

Rev.12: 1-12 shows us what Frank saw: St. Michael leading the host of heaven to combat a furious Satan intent on destroying Mary, Jesus and all who would be saved by Him. This vision of a violent unseen battle being waged for souls reveals Frank’s mission. It highlights the enemy who employs gender identity confusion to divide and disrupt the saints, the tyrant who vents his rage by scrambling the Church’s witness of Jesus’ love for persons enslaved to lies about their gender.

That vision of St. Michael also points to Frank’s witness of transformation for persons with SSA. Rev. 12: 11 declares that the dragon is overcome by the ‘blood of the Lamb and the word of our

testimony.' Jesus entrusted this simple revolutionary plan to Frank. Others were called to do so in that same season; only Frank endured the necessary testing, took up the sword in the Spirit of St. Michael, and plunged it in the enemy's side by declaring that the problem of homosexuality was no match for the saving love of Jesus.

God calls us to continue that battle—to push back the devourer by declaring the sufficiency of Jesus' blood through the word of our testimonies. We are wise to honor the one who came before us. We express thanks by continuing the fight.

I close today by drawing a parallel between Frank and another angel, the angel Gabriel who announced to Mary that God had chosen to dwell with man through her womb, a plan unlike any other, which required her consent. Today, Sat. March 25, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates this feast of the Annunciation. I want to honor Frank for the Mary-like role he played in saying 'yes' to Gabriel and to God. Against all odds. He endured shame for the joy set before Him. As Mary became the human hinge for our salvation, we honor Frank today as the flesh and blood guy who first declared for us freedom from SSA, freedom for a life full of Jesus. Frank said 'yes', and that has made all the difference."