

## No More Becoming

Leanne Payne used to quote Charles Williams' line: 'Hell is an image that knows no more becoming' in reference to persons who stall in their growth as persons and cease to aspire to more.

That came to mind as I read a review on the latest ex-ex-gay film 'Pray away'. You've heard it all before—Christians with sexual identity issues who vie for chastity then relent to the broad path of LGBT+ options. Instead of going quietly into the night, they live to blast everyone who supported their previous commitment.

This docu-melodrama takes the now tired genre ('I tried, I lied, now I vilify') to new lows of irrationality. Catch these soundbites:

Witness 'defectors from the religious right' in a 'sobering account of toxic homophobia' driven by 'barbaric notions of forcing people to live a lie' through 'soul crushing behavior modification programs'! Gasp as they are 'fed a diet of internalized self-hatred while having their trauma shaped by manipulative religious leaders into a testimony'! Wince at their 'self-harm rituals'! Marvel that 'he never lived an honest day in his life' though 'her body never allowed her to keep lying'! Discover 'the bitter truth about a morally and psychologically unsound practice'! Be afraid, be very, very afraid!

Enough already. Besides the Hollywood Reporter's over-the-top review, this genre's limited appeal is founded on persons making new decisions about their sexuality then revising history, e.g. remaking pretty good Christian caregivers (I am one and I know most of them) into creatures from the black lagoon. The ex-ex-gay stars become winsome victims reveling in their great escape, and 15-minutes of fame.

I contend that these now repentant rainbow devotees are in conflict, and that their conflict expresses itself in such historic revision. It is a tried and true defense mechanism: 'underneath it all, I am not sure if I am right about this gay superhighway so I am compelled to demonize all the old reminders of my previous path, in this case, the orthodox Christians who cheered me on what is difficult and counter-cultural'. Jesus called it 'the narrow way that leads to life.'

Sad. My wife Annette said it best: 'What do these men and women have now? The freedom to sleep with their roommates?' I know the depth of same-sex attraction but deeper still, the awesome adventure of becoming the man of God's design. It is more conflictual to buck the way of the Cross for 'gay' liberties than to surrender to the One who loves me most. Hell is an image that knows no more becoming.