

Offensive

Adjective: causing someone to feel deeply hurt or angry.

Noun: an organized campaign to achieve something.

Jesus' healing ministry satisfies both definitions of 'offensive.' His authority to restore lives enraged the religious while establishing the rule and reign of His Kingdom among the admittedly sick.

Jesus knew that healing would separate wheat from chaff. Why else would He say poignantly (in the Gospel reading for the third Sunday in Advent): 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news preached to them. BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO TAKES NO OFFENSE IN ME' (Matt. 11:5)?

Happy are the healed, joyful are the childlike who take Jesus at His Word and who step out continuously to welcome wholeness. I had the privilege of preaching at Shabach Fellowship in Los Angeles last week—a mostly African-American Pentecostal Church where Living Waters has flowed for twenty years; throughout the service, gifted healers laid hands on persons in need. Jesus honored their faith in Him as Healer and I witnessed broken hearts mending before my eyes. I left joyfully expectant—awaiting Jesus' arrival while welcoming His healing Presence now.

For every expectant soul is a dour one, disappointed, offended at Jesus' claim to heal. Sad are those who rail against Jesus' wonder-working power. Times haven't changed since Jesus blessed the unoffended. Not in my world of persons seeking wholeness in their sexual identities. The very claim that Jesus can heal the 'homosexual' now meets with derision—hurt—rage—embittered unbelief.

Perhaps it's the depth of desire, an unwillingness to give up sexy idols, or maybe bitterness at the Church for mishandling our cries for mercy.

One thing is for sure: the assumption that LGBT+ identification is 'broken' now enrages the establishment—religious, psychological, political. Add 'healing' to the mix and you've got a Molotov cocktail aimed straight at our ministries. Offended people aren't fun.

Meanwhile, Jesus heals the broken. He is King of wholeness who reconciles persons to the original goodness of their powers of life and love. In other words, Jesus frees captives while the 'whole' want to criminalize change. California tried this last year with AB 2943. And woke up Bethel Church in Redding California, from which has come a timely and exciting 'offensive'—the CHANGED movement.

Founded by excellent friends Elizabeth Woning and Kenn Williams, CHANGED mobilizes young adults to share publicly how God's love led them to seek change in their sexual identities. Many of

us from DSM/LW were featured in CHANGED, their book highlighting persons for whom Jesus became the perfect Lover and mirror of their true selves (Find out more at contact@changedmovement.com). Transgressive is the message that God loves and redeems persons from LGBT+ backgrounds: 'I believe CHANGED is offensive because people don't want to address the shame that underlies the homosexual experience...we would rather self-protect than expose the brokenness,' says Woning.

From the offense shines Jesus' healing authority. Beautiful is the exchange of sin and shame for original dignity. Woning again: 'Stories of lives redeemed from an LGBT+ identity expose God's mercy, holiness, power, and grace, as well as His beautiful Kingdom order.' This is the whole Gospel. Offensive.

'Blessed are those who take no offense in ME,' says Jesus. Joyful are we who once blind now see Him, once deaf now hear His healing Word; we who staggered in sexual sin now walk on level paths. We who died to our solutions have become His answers. We have become His offensive as we embody the Word of life.

Please take time to watch our new video and become '[Chaste Together](#).'