

A Word of Warning to a Gay-Approving Nashville Church and Beyond

"The greatness of Christianity did not arise from attempts to make compromises with those philosophical opinions of the ancient world which had some resemblance to its own doctrine, but from the unrelenting and fanatical proclamation and defense of its own teaching." –Adolf Hitler, from Mein Kampf

The Saturday headline in our statewide Tennessean newspaper heralded, "Church Backs Gay Marriage." This story is causing quite a stir.

Reading the article, the reader gains the impression that this development is simply part of the "larger transformation that's been happening in the U.S." "Younger Christians increasingly accept lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and find themselves at odds with churches that don't." A lady was quoted, "We thought we'd never find a church that's loving and progressive in the Southeast."

The newspaper quoted the pastor as saying they are a congregation of "about 1,800." When I went this Sunday, their two-service attendance was actually about 550.

Time Magazine covered the story this week with the headline, "Nashville Evangelical Church Comes Out for Marriage Equality." They report this church has become "one of the first evangelical megachurches in the country to openly stand for full equality and inclusion of the LGBTQ community" The pastor says, "Pastors are coming to him quietly and undercover from all over town to talk with him about how to have this conversion in their own evangelical churches. We are on the front edge of a movement that means so much."

Wow! The rest of us Christians and those serving in leadership better jump out in the street and wave our arms frantically to catch the LGBTQ bus so we don't miss out on this momentous moment.

Not so fast! As I've experienced recently with my loving showdown with Ellen DeGeneres and Anderson Cooper making comments about me on national TV, things are not always the way the media present them (see my video open letters to Ellen and Anderson).

The church in the spotlight is near my home. I went over there to request a friendly conversation with the pastor, plus gave him two booklets I've written on homosexuality. I've not yet heard from him. As previously mentioned, I attended their church service on Sunday to listen to his sermon.

People I met in their facility were friendly to me. They even gave me a gift coffee mug. I don't doubt the sincerity of the pastor and his support team, but I do believe it's essential we look at this from a biblical worldview.

On related questions concerning Christianity and homosexuality, I refer you to my website to view an educational video entitled "Is Gay Okay? 10 Things Everyone Needs to Know." Here I'd like to bring a loving yet scriptural word of warning to those in this church and for others looking over the horizon and wondering if this is for them.

3 Warnings Not to Be Ignored

When I lived in Washington, D.C., I bi-weekly taught the Scriptures to over 2,000 primarily young people gathering 10 minutes from the White House. Our favorite verse that appeared on the masthead of our stationary was Colossians 1:28, which talks about Christ, "whom we preach, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present them perfect in Christ Jesus."

Warnings are a positive thing because they help us avert disaster! In Revelation 2-3, Jesus examined seven churches and gave warnings to five of them because of their drifting from the truth. To a local church at Thyatira He warned them to stop tolerating a prophetess whose teachings were misleading them in the area of sexual immorality. Sound familiar?

Paul, the apostle, tearfully warned the leaders in Ephesus that the church of God was “bought with His own blood” and that after he left “savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!” (Acts 20:28-31).

During your lifetime, aren't you glad caring people warned you at pivotal times?

Could God be doing a similar thing in this present hour to protect His people from the avalanche of gay propaganda that is seducing God's people, leaders, and our children and grandchildren?

1. Warning to God's people. As I began work on the previously mentioned video to equip God's people on the LGBTQ agenda, a leader in our church told me that if I went ahead with this it would be a “deal breaker” for me in terms of my involvement in that church. My appeal then as it remains today is that we cannot downplay the seriousness of this issue in our culture today. It is the tip of the spear and leaders must be courageous enough to speak the truth in love and equip their people so they'll stand strong and not be swept away.

I just sent out a sermon given by Dan Scott, Pastor of Christ Church of Nashville, alerting and equipping his congregation of what's coming down the pike. In it he said, “The Episcopal Church USA has already fallen into this apostasy. The Presbyterian Church USA is wobbling toward it. The Evangelical Lutherans have nearly fallen into it as well.”

He continued his warning, "These churches are still filled with millions of believers. But the denominations are no longer legitimate expressions of orthodox Christianity. They have been seduced away from the gospel by the homosexual culture—hedonistic paganism—refined narcissism—whatever one wants to call this perversion of Christian belief they've embraced. Whatever you call it, the apostasy is deeply at odds with 'the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.' We cannot follow these churches!"

We must teach our people that immorality in any form—adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality and the like are all prohibited in the Bible. "Porneia" is the all-encompassing New Testament Greek term for all sexual involvement outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

Biblically forbidden and once-culturally taboo expressions of sex now are celebrated, promoted and accepted in our mainstream culture. Our enemy's schemes have infiltrated the church, which is to be holy with sex taught as a gift from God to be enjoyed within the boundaries of divine design.

Bible teacher Tim Keller says it best, "God put guardrails around sex because it is the most delightful yet also most dangerous of all human capacities."

According to God's revelation, practicing homosexual activity is morally wrong—just as adultery and fornication—and clearly contradicts God's order for human relationships and family. Biblically faithful leaders and the people of God must charitably communicate that for a person to call oneself an authentic Christian and remain a practicing homosexual is to engage in a lifestyle that is a direct contradiction of the unchanging Word of God.

2. Warning to God's pastors. "My brothers, not many of you should become teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater judgment" (James 3:1).

Pastors have an awesome responsibility for which we will one day give an account before Almighty God. One man can influence multitudes for right or wrong. The extreme example: Adolf Hitler.

After 42 years of full-time ministry, my overriding concern is the glory of God, care for God's people, winning the lost, and sparing leaders from shipwreck and scandal. God means what He says when he tells us, "Do not give the devil a foothold" (Eph. 4:27). In other words, don't open a door in your personal life with compromise or mixture because it can destroy your life, as well as that of your spouse, your children and the flock that has been entrusted to your care.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12 that he "knew a man in Christ over fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knows ... " (v. 2). Indulge me here as I speak somewhat cryptically.

I know a man in Christ who a number of years ago repeatedly compromised in sexual immorality and committed adultery with numerous women in his church. This led to a tragic divorce. The man later married one of these women.

This man was dismissed and went on to start another church alongside of a helper who was gay and later acknowledged his homosexuality. Eventually the pastor began to open the doors for inclusion of gays and lesbians in the full life of the church, including the sacraments of marriage, communion and leadership positions and he presided at a same-sex marriage.

Finally, he stood before his congregation and said his second marriage was ending; that divorce was imminent. Before exiting from the service he said, "I'm not gay or bisexual—not that there's anything wrong with that!"

People who care about this man and his wives and his children pray that he will come to his senses before he is shipwrecked and does further damage by influencing God's people on the

broad road to destruction.

“What men build with their gifting, they tear down with their character.” Character is made by what you stand for and reputation by what you fall for.

3. Warning for posterity. When I visited the Nashville church in question, what struck me and hurt me the most was seeing impressionable and vulnerable young people walking around, absorbing false teaching that can shape the rest of their lives. I could have burst into tears as I pondered what happens to future generations who hear heretical teaching; see examples contrary to godly leadership; and watch a pastor in the pulpit repeatedly point out and affirm a gay man who is in a same-sex “marriage” relationship.

God’s requirements for church leadership are outlined in the New Testament and state clearly the man must be “the husband of but one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2), not one gay partner. Yet this church says leadership is now open to include gays.

“Full privileges are extended now to you (gays and lesbians) with the same expectations of ... holiness ... fidelity ... godliness” What message is being sent to observing children and young people?

“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matt. 18:6).

If churches do not remain faithful to biblical standards on sexuality, the younger generation will drift further into the throes of confusion regarding sexual identity, the sanctity of marriage and the institution of family as God ordained it.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that the church is the conscience of society. When God’s order is disregarded, it

leads to the downward spiral explained by Paul to the people of Rome who experienced eventual decline:

“Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves. They turned the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged the natural function for what is against nature. Likewise the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men with men doing that which is shameful, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not proper” (Rom. 1:24-28).

Here’s the deal: “Marriage is to be honored among everyone, and the bed undefiled. But God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers” (Heb. 13:4). May all of us heed this warning and model for a generation both a declaration and demonstration of God’s unchanging truth.

Larry Tomczak is a best-selling author and cultural commentator with more than 41 years of trusted ministry experience. His passion is to bring perspective, analysis and insight from a biblical worldview (see ‘Is Gay OK? 10 Things Everyone Needs to Know’ now on YouTube). He loves awakening people to today’s cultural realities and responses needed for a restored, influential church. Please visit .