

How Does Growing Apostasy Prove That Christians Are Getting Closer to the Truth?

There's a bizarre argument I'm hearing these days which basically goes like this. "Look at how many churches are embracing homosexual practice. This proves we're getting closer to the truth." To the contrary, all it proves is that more and more churches are apostasizing. The logic behind this argument is as wrongheaded as it is unbiblical.

First, to argue that greater acceptance of homosexuality by churches is proof of spiritual growth is like arguing that greater acceptance of obesity by doctors is a proof of medical progress. The reverse is actually true.

Second, the Bible often warns us against compromise and apostasy, both moral and creedal. And in every generation, there have been heretics who have departed from the faith. Should we therefore celebrate every heretical doctrine and practice as proof of our spiritual maturity?

Jesus warned His disciples, saying "See that no one leads you astray" (Matt. 24:4b, ESV). He also said, "And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24:11-13).

What is to be celebrated, then, is not apostasy but faithfulness, not deception but steadfastness, not moral laxity but moral firmness. And while the words of Jesus may have more specific application to certain times in history, there is certainly a general application to our day, in which "lawlessness" has greatly increased. Today, just about anything goes, and that is not something to celebrate.

Last month, the gay activist organization Faith in America announced its plans to call on the Southern Baptist Convention to remove homosexual practice “from the sin list.”

“Ultimately,” they said, “we at FIA believe LGBT people should be removed from the sin list. We know interpretations and new revelations come to light. We believe the church will one day stop diminishing the lives of those who are LGBT and we strive to help this come to pass. We are optimistic people and see the glass 75 percent full!”

So, they are encouraged by what they have seen in recent years, as more and more churches in America and Europe are dropping homosexual practice “from the sin list.” Soon enough, they believe, the whole church will follow suit. To paraphrase (but in my words, not theirs!), “We’re encouraged by the increasing apostasy we see in the church, and we’re expectant that one day, the whole church will be completely apostate.”

The facts are as follows.

First, as I’ve stated repeatedly, “no new textual, archeological, sociological, anthropological or philological discoveries have been made in the last fifty years that would cause us to read any of these biblical texts differently. Put another way, it is not that we have gained some new insights into what the biblical text means based on the study of the Hebrew and Greek texts. Instead, people’s interaction with the LGBT community has caused them to understand the biblical text differently.”

The truth, then, hasn’t changed. Instead, some professing Christians have departed from God’s unchanging truth because of personal relationships and cultural decline.

Second, most church groups that have removed homosexual practice from the sin list are in numerical and spiritual decline. In contrast, most church groups that are holding to biblical truth and practice, especially overseas, are growing

numerically and spiritually.

Third, the embrace of homosexual practice cannot be separated from the larger cultural embrace of the sexual revolution. This includes an increase in sex out of wedlock, babies born out of wedlock, pornography and divorce, along with the embrace of all kinds of sexual perversions. That's why the same society that celebrates same-sex "marriage" is increasingly celebrating polyamory, polygamy and consensual adult incest. (I've documented this in many articles and several books. See, conveniently, the relevant chapters here.)

This points to spiritual and moral regress, not progress.

Fourth, the idea that the whole church will one day embrace homosexual practice is as certain *not* to happen as the idea that the whole church will one day deny Jesus. Forget about not holding your breath. Don't even think about holding your breath.

It's certainly possible that, in some locations, increasing parts of the church will fall away, and this will be marked by numerous moral and spiritual compromises. But the notion that the whole church will fall away is completely self-contradictory, since if there is a true church, it has been established by Jesus Himself. And it was He who said that He would build His church and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18b).

But it is not only theologically ignorant to imagine that the church worldwide will one day embrace homosexual practice. It is also missiologically ignorant, since wherever the church is growing worldwide, it is growing with a conservative message and morality.

I truly believe that the leaders of groups like Faith in Action mean well and believe they are doing God's work. That makes their self-deception all the more tragic. {eoaf

