

How The Church's Silence Is Hurting Young People

Read Time: 4 Minutes 42 Seconds

For the last 40 years, with rare exception, I have been teaching in (and leading) ministry schools on a weekly basis, having the joy and privilege of pouring into the next generation of leaders. I now spend five days a month in Texas, teaching three days at a school in Dallas and two days at a school in Fort Worth. This week, after speaking about the church and LGBTQ issues and people, one of the deans made a striking comment to me: "The church's silence has hurt these people." She was absolutely right.

I devoted the class this past Monday to the subject of the church's calling to make a positive impact on society, to function as salt and light.

On Tuesday, I spoke about our calling to reach out to the LGBTQ community with compassion while resisting the agenda with courage.

And on Wednesday, I took questions from the students, about 600 in number and coming from more than 40 different nations.

Unfortunately, I was not able to respond to all the students, since so many had important and relevant questions to ask. So I stuck around for a few minutes afterwards, interacting with them one on one.

A young woman said to me, "I came out of the very things you have been describing. I was gender-fluid, omni-sexual and polyamorous."

When I asked her age, she said she was 18. That is the world we live in today.

An older man said to me with pain in his voice, "Please pray for my daughter. She now identifies as a man. She has changed her name, she is taking hormones and she had her breasts removed."

He told me she was 23 years-old and had the mastectomy at the age of 21. Can you imagine how this father feels?

With his wife, he welcomed their precious daughter into the world, probably bouncing her on his knees and singing songs to her when she was a baby, only to see her make these tragic, self-destructive choices.

She was once their precious little girl, perhaps wearing cute frilly dresses for fun. Now she has mutilated her body and identifies as a man.

I encouraged him to watch the In His Image documentary that I had the privilege of hosting for American Family Studios. It gives hope to family members praying for their struggling ones, as well as hope to the struggler. And he gave me a piece of paper with her name on it, asking again for my prayers.

As I walked back to my on-campus apartment, one of the school deans wanted to talk with me. She thanked me for addressing these subjects, since they are so relevant to the students.

And then she said those words that were so striking: "The church's silence has hurt these people."

Just a few minutes earlier, I had polled the student body, which, to repeat, is from more than 40 nations. I asked them how many of them had a friend or loved one who identified as somewhere on the LGBTQ spectrum. The vast majority raised their hands.

And during the Q&A time, they asked many relevant questions.

How should they relate to a trans co-worker who now goes by a new name? What do they say about people who are biologically

intersex? How can our churches hold to biblical values and still be safe spaces for those who identify as LGBTQ? How can we be compassionate without compromise?

One of the students used to work in a Christian school. She explained that a little girl in the school was being raised by two lesbians. One day, the girl was talking to another girl about her two mothers.

She asked her schoolmate, "Do you think they are going to hell?"

The other girl said, "Yes," and the teacher backed her position.

Was this the right thing to do? If so, how does this affect the little girl? What does it say to her two mothers? Or should a Christian school not even allow a student to attend unless the family is in order? Or is this the opposite of being Christlike?

Virtually every time I have spoken on the LGBTQ subject and fielded questions, there is a long line of people waiting to speak with me, many of them crying as they wait.

Should they attend their son's same-sex wedding?

Their daughter wants hormone therapy to prepare to transition, threatening suicide if she cannot get the shots. What should they do?

A husband and father of four has left the family for another man. Is there any hope he will return?

Should a family allow their daughter and her girlfriend to stay at the house during the Christmas holidays? If so, must they stay in separate rooms?

What should a dad say to his 15-year-old son, a committed Christian, who is struggling with same-sex attractions?

This is just the tiniest sampling of the kinds of questions I hear—and I have been hearing such questions for many years now.

For pastors and Christian leaders *not* to address these issues is to hurt the people they love. And if they themselves do not feel equipped to address these issues and help their people, it is incumbent on them to find others who can. The resources *are* available, as are the speakers and the counselors. They just need to be sought out or invited.

The young generation in particular needs guidance. They have been bombarded for years by anti-God, anti-biblical voices and values. They are confused. They are grieved. They are hurting. They are seeking. They are looking for clarity with compassion and for guidance with grace. Who will give them what they need?

This is where pastors and Christian leaders must come alongside and help, equipping the parents and grandparents too. To fail to speak, whatever the reason, is to fail to serve the Lord and to fail to serve the flock.

I appeal to each of you: please don't hurt your people by your silence.

Let me also be a resource to you in the most practical, hands-on way.

Just take a minute and download the brand new AskDrBrown Ministries app on Apple and Android and explore the resources there. In fact, if you scroll down on the app to "Consider This," you'll find two helpful, animated videos, "Can You Be Gay and Christian?" and "Why Don't More Pastors Speak Out?"

Or just search through our articles and videos by subject. We are here to help!

Let's stand strong together and make a difference for the

Lord. Let's help those who are hurting. There is no excuse for silence.

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Dr. Michael Brown () *is the host of the nationally syndicated Line of Fire radio program. His latest book is "Revival Or We Die: A Great Awakening Is Our Only Hope." Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.*