

Is This 'Progressive' Theology Destroying the Church?

So-called "progressive" Christians love to bash conservative Christians. They call us "dinosaurs." They mock us as "outdated fundamentalists." They taunt us as "Bible bashers." They claim to be the enlightened ones, and they celebrate their departure from the traditional church. But the reality is that they are simply following the spirit of the age, swimming with the current cultural tide rather than against it. In the name of conformity to Jesus, they are being conformed to the world. How ironic.

On Saturday night, while working on a major book project at my computer, I noticed a tweet from a "progressive" pastor. I had reached out him to several times before, but always without response. He wrote, quite out of the blue, "When hopelessly phobic people of faith like @DrMichaelLBrown claim that God is against 'homosexual practice.' #ThatsNotAThing"

As soon as I spotted the tweet, I replied, "Hey John, I've reached out to you on several occasions, always without response. Rather than engage in baseless (and silly) name-calling, let's have a mature, scripture-based, minister-to-minister dialog. You're welcome on my show any time. Why not?"

For the record, he still has not replied to my invitations—not once, ever—and I continue to reach out to him. But despite his lack of response, I decided to engage some of his followers. Talk about enlightening!

The first thing that became immediately evident was this. There was virtually no substantive interaction. Instead, there was mockery and insult and misrepresentation, making me wonder out loud, "What's so scary about the truth?"

It started out of the gate with this pastor maligning me as hopelessly phobic (for reaching out to the LGBT community with the truth of the gospel while opposing radical LGBT activism). And, remarkably, while the Bible consistently and categorically opposes homosexual practice (meaning, same-sex relationships and sexual acts) a pastor—yes, a pastor—came against me for standing with God’s Word.

How dare I—how dare you—do such a thing? How dare you agree with Scripture? How dare you affirm that the Lord’s ways are best? That is so 1950s!

Rather than interact with a single thing I said, this pastor later posted, “Michael thinks LGBTQ people can NOT be LGBTQ. Michael thinks you can pray the gay away. Michael preys upon already marginalized people. Michael thinks other people’s bedrooms and body parts are his business. Don’t be like Michael.”

Now, you would think it would trouble a pastor to post blatant falsehoods about other people, but when you’re “progressive,” you’re morally superior, which means you are the judge of the motives of others. You determine what they really think and believe, despite what they say and do. In the name of not judging, you are now the judge!

Of course, the issue is not what “Michael” thinks but what God says. That’s why, later in the night, I posted this: “To all professing LGBT Christians and their allies: Please give me just ONE explicit verse in the Bible where God sanctions same-sex relationships. Just one. You know already there are clear verses saying the opposite.”

Not a single one gave me a single supporting verse. How telling!

In direct response to the pastor’s tweet, I wrote, “John, by God’s grace, I know MANY ex-gays and lesbians who are so thankful for new life in Jesus. And I continue to have

fruitful ministry around the world, NOT focused on LGBT issues. I have simply responded to biblical deception and radical activism. You have accommodated sin.”

How did he reply? He tweeted, “No you don’t. You know people who you and others have badgered into modifying their behavior to stay in community. You’ve squandered your time here and you’ve caused irreparable harm to already marginalized people. That’s on you.”

Are you detecting a pattern? This “progressive” pastor has the right to misrepresent me publicly because, well, he’s progressive, so it must be right. He has the right to put words into my mouth (like “pray away the gay”) and make inane and ridiculous comments (such as the bedroom remarks), no matter how farfetched they may be.

But since, in his eyes, I’m a Bible-bashing religious fundamentalist and he’s a liberated progressive, his perceptions are the truth. Who cares about facts? Who cares about Scripture?

Not only so, he claims the right to deny the very real stories of thousands of ex-gays, people who, with God’s help, have left homosexual practice and gay identity behind. They do not exist. They cannot exist. If they did, it would cause his house of sand to collapse in an instant. It would mean that Jesus can change anyone.

So, in the name of standing with the marginalized, he casts out and mocks the most marginalized group in America today: ex-gays. This is the heart of Jesus? This is pursuing righteousness? This is practicing mercy?

The “progressives” also fail to realize that they are joining forces with those who want to take away rights, who want to silence Christians, who want to impose their ideology, who want to penalize all dissenters. (Yes, I’m talking about LGBT extremists and their allies, sometimes known as the pink mafia

for a reason. I, and many others, have documented this steadily for years.)

And when it comes to fealty to the Word of God, the Twitter interaction proved extremely interesting.

A professing gay Christian tweeted with joy about his upcoming wedding to his partner, telling me the Scripture he would use at the event. When I came back to him with other Scriptures about same-sex relationships, he told me plainly that the Bible was not his final authority and that God was bigger than a book. Fascinating!

When I challenged a zealous supporter of “gay Christianity” when she simply repeated the standard, LGBT theological talking points, she told me I was obviously not a scholar. How dare I set the record straight? How dare I share the fruit of decades of serious academic study of the Scriptures (in their cultural context and in their original languages, with due attention to the Spirit’s intent)? How dare I rely on the best research by the best scholars? How dare I burst her bubble?

Of course, when I asked her for a verse to back her points, she had none. When I presented her with verses that rebutted hers, she had vacuous talking points and nothing more.

But she was progressive, and I was not. Of course she was right. Of course I was not a scholar.

What I experienced over the course of hours of interaction with scores of different people was a steady tide of condescending, name-calling, biblically bankrupt, and morally hypocritical rhetoric, and all of it devoid of a single substantive response.

So, these folks can have their “progressive” religion (although I pray they’ll see the light). I’ll stay with the Jesus of the Bible, the Jesus who liberates and transforms, the Jesus who doesn’t affirm us in our sin but delivers us out

of it.

He was good enough for the last 2,000 years. He'll be good enough for eternity.