

Lady Gaga: You Were Born This Way, but You Need to Be Born Again

Lady Gaga is not just a gifted singer, songwriter and musician. She is also a cultural icon, and some of her top songs contain powerful cultural messages.

As I pointed out in my new book, *The Power of Music: God's Call to Change the World One Song at a Time*, some of her songs address subjects like the shooting of Trayvon Martin ("Angel Down") and Hollywood's obsession with women's looks and sexuality ("The Fame").

Most notably, her song "Born This Way," which set the record for the quickest song to reach one million downloads, contained a very personal message: "I want to write my this-is-who-the-[expletive]-I-am anthem, but I don't want it to be hidden in poetic wizardry and metaphors. I want it to be an attack, an assault on the issue because I think, especially in today's music, everything gets kind of washy sometimes and the message gets hidden in the lyrical play."

Lady Gaga was shouting from the rooftops: "God makes no mistakes."

And so, whatever your ethnicity, whatever the color of your skin, whatever your sexual orientation or gender identity, you can be assured that you were born this way.

Being gay or straight or bi or trans is exactly the same as being black or white or being from the Middle East or Asia.

That's how you were born, and you should take pride in that fact.

So sang Lady Gaga, and tens of millions around the world

joined in the song.

That's why her powerful rendition of *The Star Spangled Banner* at Super Bowl 50 was considered to be a great victory for the LGBT community. She was their spokeswoman, a voice for the oppressed and the marginalized.

As one headline proclaimed, "Lady Gaga's Fabulous, Super Gay Super Bowl National Anthem. Campy, theatrical and [obscenity], Lady Gaga's super gay, super patriotic 'Star-Spangled Banner' at the Super Bowl is a sign of the times. Of changing, acceptant times."

In that same spirit, Gaga also wrote the song "Americano" against the backdrop of California's Proposition 8 in 2012 (the battle over gay "marriage"). As she explained (and as I cite in my book), "I am singing about immigration law and gay marriage and all sorts of things that have to do with disenfranchised communities in America."

Now, in 2019, Lady Gaga has spoken out once again, this time at a concert in Las Vegas. Before her adoring fans, she said, "To Mike Pence, who thinks that it's acceptable that his wife works at a school that bans LGBTQ, you're wrong. You're the worst representation of what it means to be a Christian."

Lady Gaga said, "To Mike Pence, who thinks that it's acceptable that his wife works at a school that bans LGBTQ, you're wrong. You're the worst representation of what it means to be a Christian."

She continued, "I am a Christian woman, and what I do know about Christianity is that we bear no prejudice, and everybody is welcome. So you can take all that disgrace, Mr. Pence, and look yourself in the mirror and you'll find it right there."

Of course, she has the story about Karen Pence's school completely wrong. It is simply holding to biblical and historic Christian standards, forbidding certain behaviors

rather than certain people.

And, certainly, it's easy to point a finger at some of Lady Gaga's performances—especially some of her more infamous music videos—and say, “That's not exactly Christian.”

But my intent here is not to bash. Rather, it is to clarify and to reach out.

So, Lady Gaga, on the off chance you (or one of your fans) is reading this, allow me to explain.

As far as being decent human beings, Mike and Karen Pence have a great reputation, as friends of theirs have told me.

They are not associated with any scandalous behavior—financially or sexually—and it is commendable, rather than contemptible, that the wife of the vice president has gone back to teach at a children's school. How common is that?

As for the Christianity of Mike and Karen Pence, in your view, it represents oppression and discrimination. In your view, it crushes the already-marginalized and tramples on the already-rejected.

From the viewpoint of the Pences—and hundreds of millions of Christians worldwide—it represents the extraordinary love of God, the indescribable compassion of the Savior, the matchless demonstration of the Lord's grace.

It speaks of a perfectly holy God who has the right to destroy each and every one of us. But instead, in the person of His Son, He comes into our world and—who could imagine this?—dies for our sins. That is what we call the gospel.

In the famous words of John's Gospel (and perhaps spoken by Jesus Himself), “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). Or, in the words of the angel Gabriel in Matthew's Gospel, “You shall call His name JESUS, for He will

save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

And that is the point you seem to be missing, Lady Gaga.

Jesus actually saves us. Changes us. Transforms us. Delivers us.

He not only reaches out to us right where we are. He not only forgives us freely when we come to Him for mercy. But He sets us free from our sins. He changes us from the inside out—meaning, to the core of our being.

We are no longer the person we used to be. Our habits change. Our desires change. We change. Even as we struggle and fall short, we see growth and transformation.

I was a heavy drug user from the ages of 14-16, playing drums in a rock band. And I loved the life I was living. God, however, was displeased with it, making me realize my guilt and then forgiving me and changing me. But I quickly learned that substance abuse was not my big issue. The big issues were inside my own heart. And that is the power of the gospel.

You see, God’s standards remain the same.

The same when it comes to marriage being the lifelong union of one man and one woman. The same when it comes to sex being a sacred gift for married couples only. The same when it comes to a host of other moral issues.

Mike and Karen Pence are simply agreeing with God’s standards while offering mercy, hope and forgiveness to all.

In short, you and I were born the wrong way. We were born with a sinful nature. Disobedience came naturally to us. Pride and selfishness were ingrained. Lust and lying did not have to be manufactured.

Yes, all of us were born that way. Which is why Jesus taught, “You must be born again! You must be born from above!”

That is what Mike and Karen Pence understand. And that is the true Christian message.

It is one of hope, of compassion, and of longsuffering. And it would make for an amazing new song.

I'm praying that one day, you would be able to sing, "Born a brand-new way!"

The love that you would discover, the peace and deep sense of fulfillment and the joy in the midst of conflict, would surpass anything you have ever known. And it would help bring freedom and life to millions of your followers.

Isn't that what you want most of all?