

Should 'Gay Christians' Work in Children's Ministry?

There's no lack of controversy over gay pastors—and even so-called “gay Christians”—in the church today. But a recent incident in Lubbock, Texas is rekindling the debate over whether or not gay men should serve in children's ministry.

During a planned field trip, Casey Stegall, a 22-year-old college student who calls himself a gay Christian, introduced some teens from a Christian children's home at which he works to his gay “fiance.” He was accused of engaging in public displays of affection with his partner. Stegall denies it but nevertheless was terminated.

Children's Home of Lubbock, a nonprofit ministry in west Texas that's been serving children since 1954, swiftly fired Stegall for essentially sanctioning homosexuality in a Christian ministry that's working to bring “hope, healing, a sense of worth and value to the lives of fatherless, abused and neglected children.”

“As a faith-based, church-related outreach providing welfare services, if you will, to children and families, there is a set of biblical values that we adhere to and live by,” Lynn Harms, president of Children's Home of Lubbock, told the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. “When you are implementing life training and so forth—particularly with children—to put a confused message out there is counterproductive.”

Although Stegall has gone public with a story of “injustice,” Harms is sticking to his biblical values. He told the *Journal* that Stegall's lifestyle is not in line with the ministry's interpretation of the Bible, and modeling that lifestyle in front of the children is not acceptable. These values, he said, were explained to Stegall during his job orientation.

“If you want to try to force our culture to meet your expectations, that’s not going to go well,” Harms said. “I don’t feel like the culture here has to meet an individual’s desire for the world to be different.”

Harms isn’t singling out homosexuals, and the ministry does not have a policy that discriminates against hiring homosexuals. He told the *Journal* that presenting a lifestyle that is damaging to kids also could include aggression and other manifestations of ungodliness. So was Harms right to fire Stegall? Should homosexuals be working in children’s ministry to begin with?

This is a matter on which churches disagree. Some think that inviting gays to serve in ministry opens them up to more opportunities to receive the kindness of God that will ultimately lead them to repentance. Others believe anyone practicing any sin—from drunkenness to fornication to thievery—should be excluded from active ministry.

What is God’s view? Paul lays out requirements for deacons in 1 Timothy 3, and Leviticus 21 outlines the rules for priests, but what about people who are not in leadership positions? Is it OK for gay men to serve in children’s ministry? Should lesbians serve in the nursery? Should “gay Christians” be ministering to the next generation?

No.

People who are practicing a lifestyle of sin—any sin—should not be ministering to our youth. Whether or not they put their sin on display to children is not the issue. Anyone willfully practicing a lifestyle of sin is not in the right spiritual condition to take leadership over the souls of others. That goes for rock-star pastors falling into adultery and financial scandals just as much as it does homosexuals working in kid’s ministry. The good news is anyone can come back to the feet of Jesus, repent, and become a world-changer and history-maker

for Christ.

What say you?

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