

While Denominational Activists Affirm Homosexuality, Megachurch Pastor Says Black Churches Must Do This

Most churches in America were birthed in an era when consensual sex between two persons of the same gender was a criminal offense, same-sex marriage was illegal, and homosexuality was viewed as deviant behavior. Until 1974, the American Psychiatric Association literally classified homosexuality as a mental illness. However, the old adage is true: "Time brings about a change."

In the dawning of this new millennium, homosexuality has burst out of the closet and into the mainstream of American life and society. Satan has strategically and successfully sought to secure sanctioning for same-sex marriage in every sector of American society. The same-sex marriage quest for acceptance is now knocking at the door of God's sanctuaries, seeking a seat at the leadership table under the banner marked "justice" and "equality."

To deny the LGBT gay-rights movement a place at the table is considered by "welcome and affirming churches" to represent discrimination, bigotry, homophobia, theological ignorance and/or Bible idolatry. Curiously, when President Obama, Bill and Hillary Clinton and Jesse Jackson stated during the 2008 presidential campaigns that they believed marriage was exclusively defined between one man and one woman, none of them were called or viewed as bigots or biblically ignorant.

The number of denominations, churches, affinity groups and

divinity schools granting the LGBT community a seat at the table is increasing. However, the, traditionally orthodox, Bible-believing, conservative evangelical wing of the church, including the National Baptist Convention, with which Cornerstone Baptist Church, which I pastor in Arlington, Texas, is affiliated, has not recognized the LGBT community as a valid social or denominational category for three primary reasons:

- We believe that the Bible teaches that all sex outside of God's plan for marriage is sin, an historical tradition held by the church and most societies on the planet for more than 5,000 years;
- We believe that the Bible teaches that no person is born a homosexual or with a homosexual orientation;
- We believe that the Bible speaks clearly, unequivocally and eternally regarding homosexuality, and strongly condemns same-sex relationships—married or unmarried—in addition to forbidding fornication and adultery.

For evangelicals to change their position on homosexuality, the Bible would have to change; and obviously that is not going to happen.

Over the past 40 years, how did we move from homosexuality being medically diagnosed as “mental illness,” homosexual acts classified as a felony and same-sex marriage being illegal, to all of this behavior being “welcomed and affirmed” and approved under the banner of “justice” and “equality” by every sector of society, except evangelical churches that still adhere to God's plan for sexuality and marriage based on a biblical worldview?

Reportedly, major high-profile charitable foundations have donated several million dollars to gay-friendly, black-led, nonprofit, educational, ecclesiastical and “social justice”

entities, in order to persuade the African-American community to accept homosexuality. Lee Daniels, who also is black and gay, is the creator of *Empire*, the popular prime time hip-hop “family” drama series on the Fox network. He was bold and brazen enough to admit to *The New York Times* that the purpose of *Empire* was to “blow the lid off homophobia” in the African-American community, primarily through the depiction of the hostile relationship between the show’s lead character and his gay son.

Consequently, black church leadership are beginning to see “leaks in the dam,” related to compromise on same-sex-marriage. We recently witnessed Bishop Yvette Flunder—the face of the “I’m Black, I’m Gay, I’m Christian and I’m Proud” Movement—introduce her legal female spouse in a worship setting to an enthusiastic applause from a primarily “welcome and affirming” audience in the Baptist World Center on the campus of American Baptist College (ABC), at the headquarters of the National Baptist Convention USA Inc. This was truly an historic hour in a black Baptist worship context—one that I’d thought that I would never, ever see.

ABC President Dr. Forrest Harris’ adamant stand in support of gay marriage is in defiance of The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), the national agency that has granted accreditation for the next 10 years, based on the School’s affirmation of the following statement: “We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.” Gay marriage advocacy and the infallibility of Scripture cannot be reconciled.

Currently, same-sex marriage has been sanctioned in 37 states, more often by activist courts overturning popular votes or state legislators. It is a very high probability that by late June of this year, the Supreme Court of the U.S. will provide a federal sanction of same-sex marriage in every state in the nation. The only hope that same-sex marriage does not become the law of the land this calendar year is that the Church

comes together across racial and denominational lines, and holds a Solemn Assembly, seeking God's face to Divinely intervene and prevent this from happening. Nevertheless, the Church needs to be prepared to address our position on homosexuality regardless of the outcome of the pending Supreme Court decision.

The major social question with such spiritual, theological, ecclesiastical and political ramifications that America faced the first 200-plus years of her existence—that took a war to partially resolve—was the question of civil rights for people of color.

The next major social question that America and her churches will face the next two centuries and beyond, if the Lord tarries His coming, is the question of whether the LGBT community can or should be recognized by churches and in every realm of society as a distinct social category deserving the same kind of constitutional and ecclesiastical rights to which people of color are entitled? Resolving this question will not result in another civil war, but I predict it will produce a social/ecclesiastical war the likes of which we've never seen.

According to fellow Dallas pastor Pete Briscoe, "The quintessential challenge for churches and ministries today, is how to be a grace-based institution in our combustible culture." Recognizing that all people are created in the image of God, the controversies surrounding homosexuality are not about "being," but rather about "behavior."

The difference between the rights of the people of color, and the non-rights for the LGBT is this: This is not a color issue, it is a character issue; this is not a justice issue; it is a righteousness issue.

Will we let Lee Daniels, Bishop Flunder, Dr. Forrest Harris and corporate America change our minds? Heavens no! However, Christ ministered in both grace and truth. The evangelical

church must not share only share truth with the homosexual, but also administer grace. God help us to do so!

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