

World Vision's Big Mistake

"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God." –Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision

In a remarkably convoluted announcement this week, one of the largest humanitarian agencies in the world embraced homosexual marriage as normal and acceptable for its employees. The current president of World Vision's U.S. operations, Richard Stearns, revealed that the board of directors was "overwhelmingly in favor" of "changing the employee conduct policy to allow someone in a same-sex marriage who is a professed believer in Jesus Christ to work for us."

I, along with millions of Christians who believe God's Word is the reliable standard revealing how we are to live, was shocked! It is difficult to comprehend how a group of Christian leaders could spend considerable time in discussions and prayer and make such an unbiblical decision. Did they just cave into the ever-increasing pressure from those who deny or change God's Word into a lie? All believers will face similar fierce assaults on their faith and convictions.

Two days later, they reversed their decision. In a statement admitting "a mistake," they vowed to return to their employment policy of enforcing "faithfulness within the biblical covenant of marriage between a man and a woman."

If the initial announcement had come from UNICEF or Amnesty International, there would only be a collective yawn. But given that it came from a longstanding, reputable Christian organization with deep ties to evangelical speakers and entertainers, it came as quite a shock to many. Along with us, many leaders in the church voiced their opposition to the decision.

Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote, "The worst aspect of the World Vision U.S.

policy shift is the fact that it will mislead the world about the reality of sin and the urgent need of salvation. Willingly recognizing same-sex marriage and validating openly homosexual employees in their homosexuality is a grave and tragic act that confirms sinners in their sin—and that is an act that violates the gospel of Christ.”

Bob Pierce left World Vision and founded Samaritan’s Purse in 1970. Franklin Graham, who was heavily influenced by Pierce and succeeded him as the head of Samaritan’s Purse, said, “World Vision maintains that their decision is based on unifying the church—which I find offensive—as if supporting sin and sinful behavior can unite the church.”

I agreed with his assessment. Supernatural unity only occurs when we become one with the Father. It is not simply drawing a consensus among men. And it is certainly not drawing a consensus that defies God’s Word.

According to the Old and New Testaments, homosexuality is a sin and “contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel” (1 Tim. 1:10-11, NIV). In Romans, Paul described homosexuality as a “degrading passion” (Rom. 1:26, NASB), not an equivalent to marriage. He says that those who practice it are given over to a “depraved mind” (v. 28). He also had equally strong words to say against those who “give hearty approval to those who practice” these things (v. 32). World Vision’s short-term approval briefly put them at odds with biblical truth.

Jesus claimed that the world hated Him because He testified that its works are evil (John 7:7). By proclaiming homosexuality evil, we may be hated by some too. World Vision’s realignment will bring them far more vitriol from unbelievers than the outcry they received from believers. Yet we must align ourselves with Scripture, not the world’s ever-changing ideas of right and wrong. For the believer, there can be no unity with the world’s ways of thinking unless those

thoughts line up with God's truth.

Churches and ministries across the country will be forced to face the pressure World Vision faced. Will we stand firm on God's Word, or will we confirm people in their sin and their false identity? Confirming sin through organizational policy is drastically different than hiring those who have come out of any sinful lifestyle, repent, and are seeking to follow the Lord.

Many churches and ministries employ people with dark pasts and who may continue to battle with weakness, but they don't redefine it as appropriate or acceptable. God chose and commissioned the apostle Paul, but only after a massive change of direction occurred in his life. This is the redemptive part of Christianity. God's standard must move us; we must never move the standard!

Our organization, LIFE Outreach, would certainly consider hiring a recovering homosexual or an individual battling any form of compulsive behavior who desires to step into God's truth and forsake the ways of the world. But we would not knowingly hire anyone who defiantly lives a life in direct contradiction to God's Word. That would be blatant disobedience on our part. We could not claim to be a Christian organization if we built a team that consciously and purposely disregarded God's Word and moral standards.

There are many former homosexuals who need a safe place for restoration and discipleship. But any church or organization that forsakes the truth cannot be that place of refuge for those coming to God. Our Father's heart breaks for all those trapped by any destructive, sinful practice. Our hearts should break for them too.

Normalizing or trivializing any sin is not love; it is spiritual compromise. God will not bless this—ever. Openly rebelling against God's Word, against the laws of nature and

of God cannot be justified. No practice could be more obviously unnatural than the same-sex union.

Trying to justify it as normal and natural is impossible. It is as foolish as wiring two male or female electrical or Internet plugs together and wondering why there is no power or clear signal. It is against the natural. It is beyond foolish. It is, in fact, rebellion. We are to love them as we should any family member who battles a challenge or weakness. But we must not openly approve what God calls sinful or inappropriate.

I am grateful for all of the work World Vision has done to help hungry, hurting people around the world. Their bizarre week of wavering could hamper their efforts, which would be tragic. But we should never forsake someone's eternal spiritual condition while trying to help their temporary earthly condition. If we are to share life, we must not embrace the bondage of sin.

LIFE Outreach has supported some of World Vision's past disaster efforts, and we extend forgiveness and pray important lessons have been learned. I hope and pray that Christians who support them and work for them will be led by His Spirit so they can continue to alleviate suffering while holding to the pure and undefiled Word of the living God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pressure from the spirit of darkness will continually intensify in the attempt to conform believers and organizations to the image of the world. Suited up in the full armor of God, Christians must stand firm against the "schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) in Holy Spirit power, love and truth.

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