

Andy Stanley Was Really Right and Really Wrong

I really appreciate Pastor Andy Stanley's call last month for Christians in America to live like real Christians, and I absolutely agree with him that if we do, in just one year's time the nation would be positively affected.

But he was way off in his call for Christians to take one year off from the culture wars, as if the only way we could live like real Christians was to refrain from engaging the culture. Quite the contrary.

Some of his other comments were even more dangerous.

But first, the positive.

Despite headlines on gay websites proclaiming, "Atlanta pastor rejects anti-gay rhetoric of his dad" and, "Megachurch pastor rejects his father's bigotry: Jesus would want you to bake a gay wedding cake," Pastor Stanley did issue a clear call to holy living in a California pastors conference in April.

He said, "If all the Christians for just one year ... would quit looking at porn ... would quit smoking weed, would quit having premarital sex, would quit committing adultery, would pay their taxes and every church just foster one kid; in one year our nation would feel different."

Preach it, Andy!

That's Gospel 101, and that's what is called holiness.

The terrible shame, of course, is that this even needs to be said. But it does, since our churches (and often pulpits) are filled with so much immorality and compromise.

He explained, "Because there are so many Christians. So

basically, if we would just be better Christians, everything we would like to see changed for the most part would change.”

Exactly.

That’s why I’ve said for many years that America is messed up because the church of America is messed up, and the church here is messed up because the leaders are messed up.

That means if repentance begins with us (leaders and believers), the nation will be positively affected.

That’s called the salt retaining its saltiness and the light shining clearly.

Pastor Stanley also said that the church should be the “safest place on the planet” for gay youth, which could be taken in one of two ways.

If he meant that a kid should feel safe to confide in youth leaders or pastors that he or she is same-sex attracted, that’s absolutely true. They should be able to do so knowing that they will be loved and cared for just the same—as they seek to follow Jesus and pursue holiness.

If he meant that a practicing homosexual teenager should feel safe in church, that’s absolutely false. That young person should feel the loving conviction of the Holy Spirit, leading to freedom and new life in the Lord.

Could this be why Pastor Stanley omitted “practicing homosexuality” from his list of sins? Based on his comment that he met with gay members of his church, asking them if they wanted him to include gay illustrations in his book on sex and dating, one should fear the worst.

Quite explicitly, he stated, “There is not consensus in this room when it comes to same-sex attraction; there is not consensus in this room when it comes to gay marriage. We just can’t continue to look into the filter of our politics at our

spirituality. It's got to be the other way around—and specifically when it comes to this issue.”

He could not be more wrong.

First, truth is not determined by consensus.

Often in history, it was only one person or just a small group that faced down a sinful consortium and refused to go along with the compromised crowd.

Now we are supposed to question the unambiguous teaching of the Word because of a supposed lack of consensus. In other words, if enough people apostasize, then we should reconsider what the Bible says.

This is terribly misguided and very dangerous theology.

Second, the reason we stand against the redefining of marriage and the normalizing of homosexuality is not because we are bringing our politics into our spirituality but because we are bringing our spirituality into every area of life, including our politics.

I am not a political conservative. I am a moral conservative, and that because of God's Word.

Third, Pastor Stanley said, “Serving people we don't see eye to eye with is the essence of Christianity. Jesus died for a world with which he didn't see eye to eye. If a bakery doesn't want to sell its products to a gay couple, it's their business—literally. But leave Jesus out of it.”

Really? I thought we were to include Jesus in everything rather than leave Him out of some things.

Plus, the issue here is not one of serving a gay couple but of participating in something that causes us to violate our conscience, like a Christian photographer asking two men to pose in a romantic kiss for their “wedding” pictures, or that

same photographer doing a porn shoot in order to serve the world, or that same photographer shooting a fund raiser for a new Planned Parenthood abortion clinic.

But worst of all is his call for Christians to “take a break” for one year from the culture wars.

Would this include our fighting for the lives of the unborn? Or combating human trafficking? Our seeking to improve the education system?

Or is it only issues having to do with homosexuality, in which case we should sit idly by if the Supreme Court makes a disastrous decision on marriage in June, or when our kids come home from school crying because of the latest gay indoctrination assembly they had to sit through, or when yet another believer is fired from his or her job for having a politically incorrect viewpoint?

Take a year off? Perhaps the same counsel could have been given to Christians fighting against other social ills in the past, including slavery and segregation.

Pastor Stanley is one of the most influential pastors in America, but with statements like these, he is doing far more harm than good.

We should all lift him up to the Lord in prayer.

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