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A Pastoral Response to Gender Confusion: Caring for Those Caught in the LGBTQ Religion

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As US embassies around the world wave the Pride flag, there is no denying that LGBTQ has become the American culture's center of gravity. Twenty years ago, the main American religion was prosperity. Now it is the LGBTQ movement.

How do pastors respond to the LGBTQ worldview? Or, more particularly, how do pastors shepherd their people to think rightly about the issues this movement raises? Here are five practical ways pastors can help their congregations navigate the LGBTQ culture:

1. Treat It like Another Religion

Twenty years ago, the LGBTQ movement was about individual autonomy. They trumpeted individual rights (such as visiting a partner in the hospital, sharing insurance plans, etc.). I fear that too many Christians—especially those who have been in ministry for a few decades—still perceive the LGBTQ world as being concerned with those issues. It isn't.

Today the LGBTQ movement has grown from concerns over individual rights to a full-on attack on Christianity. It is a rival religion. It has its own god (self-identity), its own

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

language (that of critical theory and intersectionality), and its own priests (schoolteachers and university professors). There is a conversion rite (coming out), confirmation, and the taking on of a new identity. There is even penance for previous sins. The only thing missing is forgiveness.

Pastor, ask yourself: *How do I preach about other religions?* Whatever your answer is, apply it to this issue.



Look, we make doctrinal distinctions in our preaching all the time. We often separate Catholicism from Christianity by highlighting justification by faith. We challenge the Mormons' and Jehovah's Witnesses' views of Christ. We contrast the Trinity with Islam. These are likely normal practices in our preaching.

The truth is, LGBTQ is more prominent in our culture and worldview than those other religions. It occupies more cultural space. But the LGBTQ religion is less about justification. Thus contrasting faith and works doesn't adequately address this movement.

Instead, the primary issue is personal identity. Who is autonomous the individual or the one who made the individual?

I encourage pastors in their preaching to draw attention to texts that highlight the nature of mankind and describe who we are and why we are here. Then contrast today's identity culture with what the Bible says about identity.

Of course, part of this new religion is sexual ethics. Pastors should be very clear about what the Bible says about sexual ethics, homosexuality, and gender. But the heart issue the LGBTQ worldview presents is that of identity—the question it raises is who makes man? Draw attention to that.

2. Be Familiar with the Worldview this Religion Presents

Pastors can sometimes shy away from understanding the LGBTQ world because of how dark and sinful it is. Distance from its practices is a good and holy desire.

But ignorance of the dominant worldview in our culture is not sustainable. A good place to go is Carl Trueman's [*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*](#). Trueman's book sheds light on the worldview behind the LGBTQ movement, helpfully showing its history and tracing how it came to occupy center stage in our world.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

And here a point of contrast is in order. I watched a recent Christian evangelistic video from a ministry I love and saw how it critiqued the LGBTQ worldview. It treated it like it was a form of relativism or post-modernism. It went after it for its claim that “what is true for you is true for you, and what is true for me is true for me.” In fairness, that was the dominant approach in non-Christian culture... 20 years ago! The transgender movement used to say, “I’m a boy to me, so you have to respect my reality.” Of course, that is logically absurd, and relativism is not sustainable as a worldview.

3

Which is why it is no longer the dominant worldview in the LGBTQ movement. They’ve moved beyond claiming, “2+2=5 for me” and are now in a place where they declare, “Math is evil, but not as evil as Christianity.” They assert their worldview as morally superior and our worldview as morally evil. That is the opposite of relativism.

3. Understand That They Are after the Students

The target audience of the LGBTQ movement is the kids in our congregation. The proponents of this religion are not operating in a “live and let live” environment but are seeking to expand their territory into every square inch of culture, particularly the schools.

It is the norm for public elementary schools to celebrate Pride Month. Students are taught in elementary schools to question gender in general, and *their* gender in particular. In high school, the reach of the LGBTQ movement is dominant. Five years ago, it would have been unusual for a girls’ sports team to encounter a boy presenting himself as a girl. Now that is typical. And by the time they get to college, students are often LGBTQ themselves, “LGBTQ allies,” or evil.

Now, for pastors, many parents in your congregation are unaware of this. They are operating like it’s still 2012. They just don’t understand the pressure their kids are under at home, at the pool, or at soccer. But if the kids are in church, it helps to have clear age-appropriate teaching on this from the pulpit and from youth pastors. Lay down the markers for your students. Help them understand that they are pawns in somebody else’s war. Give them a grid for good and evil because they are not going to get it at school.

4. Defend Genesis 5:1–2

Every false religion is an attack on God and his word. The LGBTQ religion is no different. Some religions are hostile to Jesus (Judaism), some to the cross (Islam), and some to justification by faith (Catholicism). Other worldviews reject creation (evolution) or revelation (liberalism).

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

At the heart of the LGBTQ religion is a rejection of Genesis 5:1–2. That text declares at least two truths that are anathema to their worldview: that God created mankind, and that he made them male and female. Each of those is radically incompatible with the LGBTQ vision for the world.

In fact, I'd argue that these are the main truths that are behind specifically the transgender movement. That movement attacks the idea that God determines gender.



A person can reject that God made them, but they cannot outrun their gender. It is, in some ways, the most basic thing about a person.

Obviously, the transgender movement is logically defunct. They reject gender as binary, but then a person claims they feel like they have the wrong body to match their gender. But logical integrity is not their goal: their goal is to erase the fingerprints of God on their life.

Pastors need to defend the truths of Genesis 5:1–2. Return to them, preach them, and teach them. I'm not saying every sermon needs gender distinctions in it. If a pastor has a hobby horse they ride all the time, the horse gets tired and people get bored. I've encountered pastors who say things like, "Now, I never talk about politics from the pulpit, but..." and proceed to talk about politics every week. I'm not suggesting that with gender. But I do think strategic sermons, key illustrations, and practical applications on the LGTBQ worldview will help equip your congregation to understand what's at stake. It's no longer about whether or not gay people can have their partner visit them in the hospital. It is about defending God's word.

5. Be Clear, Bold, and Persuasive

There is a tendency on this issue to choose our words so carefully that we end up being confusing. We can make so many caveats to simple pastoral questions that people are left honestly confused by what we mean. "Should I call a transgender person by their preferred pronouns?" can't be answered with a mealy-mouthed answer. This issue demands clarity.

But it also needs persuasion. It is true that no matter how small your congregation is, if you have college or high school students you are going to have someone questioning their beliefs on this issue. Meet them where they are at. Invite them to compare the two religions. The God of the Bible loves them, but the god of gender identity hates them. The

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

God of the Bible made their body, while the god of gender wants to cut up their body. The God of the Bible sacrificed himself for their sins, but the god of gender wants them to sacrifice themselves for “gender.” The God of the Bible offers a path to happiness and flourishing, while the god of gender offers them a life of self-loathing and pain. Most importantly, the God of the Bible wants to forgive them, whereas the god of gender wants to harm them.

5

That’s the kind of truth that can save a person from the clutches of false religion.



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