

Homosexuality and the Church

If you have been following this column for the past eighteen years, you would be aware of my views on homosexuality. Just the topics of the articles I have written on homosexuality would provide some insight on my views: "Gays Are Not Our Problem," "Overcoming the Homosexual Lifestyle," "Condemnation or Compassion," "Facing My Deepest Fears," "God Loves Homosexuals," "Learning to Love Homosexuals," "Let's Make Him Straight," "Homosexuality: Hope or Dilemma." These articles can be found on my website www.soencouragemenet.org. I have received many positive responses from homosexuals who are seeking a way out and some negative responses from those who wish not to change their lifestyle. A golden thread running through all of these articles is that adults are free to choose their lifestyle, even though I think the choice might be wrong.

My concern is how involved is the Church in pressuring the government to control the lifestyle of anyone, including adult homosexuals. It is my view that there should be no law preventing freedom of expression, as long as that freedom does not violate religious liberty and human rights.

I humbly believe that I have the right to share my views as a Christian with anyone. However, it is wrong from me to impose my beliefs on people. My lifestyle should expose my beliefs and not impose them. The way I verbally share my own Christian beliefs must not be coercive nor condemnatory. Similarly, the government is not to create laws that infringe upon the rights of others. This includes and is not limited to the freedom to worship the God you want to and share your beliefs about that God to others. It is the freedom not to worship and not to have any kind of religious belief. It is the freedom to smoke, drink, be a homosexual, commit adultery, gambling, etc. I do not participate in smoking or drinking. I am not a homosexual nor do I commit adultery. I also teach that others should avoid these kinds of behaviors. However, is it wrong for a government to legislate how one should live by creating laws that violate my rights to believe what I want to. The role of the government is to make sure that human rights are not violated. Destruction of lives, theft, incest, rape, violence of any kind, are to be illegal in any country.

When the church insists that the country have laws that express "Christian values" it might be barking up the wrong tree. While many national laws are similar to Biblical principles, Biblical laws are not by default national mandates. In 2011 I wrote: "I am even happier that by constitution The Bahamas do not require its residents to be Christians. On the other hand, the Constitution guarantees the right and freedom of each individual residing in The Bahamas to live according to his or her conscience. In other words, The Bahamas is a secular state and not a Christian one."

If Biblical laws are by default national laws, then all stores are to be closed on Saturday because it is my belief that Saturday is the Sabbath. Also, all people are not to eat pork. That should be the law of the land. Are you getting my point? Is it hard for us Christians to accept that a homosexual has the freedom to be a homosexual? Is it hard for us Christians to accept that a government should not limit the right of loving and living together to only heterosexual adults? While on one hand I am not pro-homosexual and have a challenge with the term "marriage" applying to homosexual couples, yet I must admit that my views are not to become a national, legal mandate, because it violates one's personal freedom of expression. In the Bible we have no evidence of homosexuality being legal or illegal. Although we do get the idea that the homosexual lifestyle was the norm in many ancient cultures. We only read about the way Christians are to live and positively influence others.

Here is more of what I wrote in my article "I am Happy We Are Not a Christian Nation": "Today,

many Christians who are fed up with the social ills in society are being misled to think that the government must provide some spiritual guidance for the people. They are also saying that since we profess to be a 'Christian nation,' we should have no alcohol saloons, illegal drugs, strip joints, pornography channels, dance halls, etc. While I do wish these were not in our country, the real problem is not the presence of these things but the inability for Christian leaders to promote godly Christian living, and to teach personal censorship instead of national censorship. Too many preachers are themselves engaged in shady lifestyles, social impropriety, and religious and political gerrymandering. Too many community leaders who claim to be Christian are accomplices in crime and shady business. . . . We are too pre-occupied with the discussion of whether or not we are or should be a Christian nation. That is not my concern. I am more concerned that the people live Godly lives and that true Christians accept that all have a right to choose how they will live, what they will watch on TV, the music they will listen to and places they will go. That is the freedom we are guaranteed by our constitution. What Christians must do then is to stop condemning and start modeling godly living. The true Christian will teach religious tolerance and the acceptance that we are a pluralistic society. That means everyone respects every one of all Christian faiths and other faiths and not faiths such as Islam, Bahai, Christian Science, Rastafarianism, atheism, agnosticism, etc."

I should also say again that the church must realize that the homosexual has the right to be a homosexual and the right to live according to his or her beliefs. Do not pressure the government to do otherwise. That will make the state a "religious state" and I do not think we really want that. True religious freedom and civil liberty is a hard nut to swallow for many Christians. I ended my article in 2011 this way: "Religious freedom is all about being able to decide how you want to live and not having the state dictate to you. I am truly happy The Bahamas is not a Christian nation. Let's keep it that way."

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