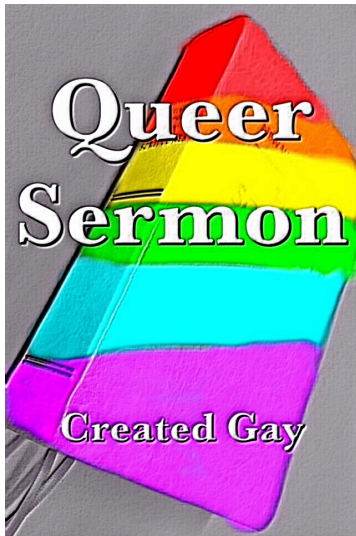

CREATED GAY



Lay Down Being Right

by Gary Simpson

There is a very thought provoking article on the Freed Hearts Internet blog website titled "7 Deadly Sins Parents Commit Against Their Transgender Kids". The last major point in the blog post is that parents are to love their children. The author quotes John 15:13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Susan Cottrell, the author of the blog, notes that we may need to lay down our preferences and pride.(1) I am going to use Susan Cottrell's thought as a jumping off place and I may go in a direction she would not go.

When I think of laying down my life for others, I tend to think of Jesus, who according to a Scripture and according to Christian tradition lay down His life for humanity. Jesus is the example I grew up hearing about in church. I also tend to think of people who literally give up their lives for others, people such as the men and women in the military, police constables and fire fighters. My mind also turns to ministers, members of religious orders and to missionaries, because those are the people who were described as giving up their lives when I was young.

Many people lay down their lives for others. They enter careers that are widely considered to be an occupational calling. Money is not what drives them to enter the line of work. Touching lives is their heartfelt passion. The health, allied health, teaching, counselling and social service occupations are a few of the professions that are a real calling for many people. People who find a deep spiritual passion at work often give up more lucrative careers, so they can make a difference.

For many other people, laying down their lives for others involves non-paid work. They might pour out their lives into the lives of their children or to the lives of other people's children. In our church we have people who satisfy a passion to touch lives through doing practical things to assist people in need, things such as making sandwiches for those who need a meal.

Public policy and public service are a calling for some people. There are politicians and social activists who share a passion to help people by creating public policy that helps make society a much better place. These political and policy gurus give up their lives in a slightly different manner.

You may have heard the saying about driving a car and traffic laws, "You can be right, dead right." The saying tries to help us understand that we may have the right to take a certain action in traffic but insisting on taking that right might result in an accident. There are times when life is like traffic.

We need to give up the right to be right, when there is something much more important than being right.

You know there really are things more important than being right - hard to believe, but some things really are more important than being right. When I was in my teens and twenties being right was much more important to me than it is now. I can think of times when my being right and making sure people knew I was right was just the wrong thing to do. And there were a few times when I would give so much to have been wrong. I remember telling a person that if you take that action you will die. I wish so much I was wrong. To have been wrong that one time. To have been wrong that one time and to have not needed to go to a funeral.

Possibly the most difficult thing we can do is to lay down being right, to give up the quest to look wise and to be right, so we can love. There are Christian churches and Christian lay and ordained leaders who are on a spiritual quest to know the correct doctrine and to follow every command of God found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. I have met people who prided themselves on being able to win debates about the Bible and doctrine. Many of these well meaning people can see the moss on a trees in God's forest that we call the Word, but they are unable to see the depth and breadth of God's relentless and inclusive love.

In the news are people who want the right to refuse to perform any work for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. These people believe that they know what is theologically right and by insisting on discriminating against people that they believe are making mistakes, their religion loses the vital life, love and passion of the risen Christ.

There are Christians who are of the impression that queer Christians have no clue about a few passages in Genesis, Leviticus and Corinthians say. Some of these wonderful people contact me, citing a text out of context, without realizing I have probably studied the text in more detail and for more years than they have. They think that emailing me the text will automatically turn me straight and send me to heaven. They seem incapable of accepting the fact that I have a different theological understanding of what the passages mean and that I believe God's relentless love includes the queer tribe. When they realize I am not agreeing with them, I am often damned to hell. In the process of insisting that they are right, the love of Christ in their lives is dead to the queer community.

As a community, God's queer tribe has a few difficult and painful things to do. For our own sakes we need to forgive those who have deeply wounded us, while remembering and understanding what happened. We need to change the world view some churches and society gave us and love ourselves. And we need to know when we can give up the right to be right when laying down being right is the loving thing and the life-giving thing to do.

I'm going to conclude by asking a question. Is God calling you to lay down being right?

Notes

- (1) Susan Cottrell. "7 Deadly Sins Parents Commit Against Their Transgender Kids – In Memory of Leelah Alcorn." *Freed Hearts*. 31 December 2014, 17 January 2015. <<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/freedhearts/author/scottrell/>>.