

Homosexuality offers opportunity for Christians to speak the truth in love

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LEWISVILLE—Some Christians may feel their values are under attack in a culture that seems bent on achieving homosexual rights and legalizing same-sex marriage, but a Texas Baptist theologian and cultural analyst believes churches should instead look at opportunities for ministry.

Jim Denison “I would like us to see it as an unprecedented opportunity—an incredible opportunity—that the church has today to speak the truth in love,” said Jim Denison, founder of the [Denison Forum on Truth and Culture](#).

Families of people engaged in a homosexual lifestyle offer one area for ministry, Denison told a seminar sponsored by [Denton Baptist Association](#). Family members of homosexuals need love and support, he insisted.

“What you most of all don’t want to do is cast blame on the parents,” he said. Some Christians are quick to label the families of homosexuals as dysfunctional, because it allows them to convince themselves they and their families are exempt.

“What kind of guilt does that place on somebody who is already dealing with the issues in the family?” he asked. “Now, we’re coming along and judging them because they have a child who is gay. We don’t want to do that. We don’t want to be the army that buries its wounded.

‘We’re all broken’

“Our job is not to diagnose whatever the situation is—whether it is this, heterosexual sin or substance abuse or whatever the issue is. We’re all broken; we’re all bent. The question is: How do we show God’s love without endorsing that which hurts the person—and making clear what we’re worried about is what hurts the person?”

Churches should recognize ministry to homosexuals is not easy, he acknowledged. “Know that many will consider our position on homosexual activity to be bigoted and intolerant. We must earn the right to be heard, building relationships as the basis for biblical conversation.

“It is so important in any ministry to someone who is in a different worldview than you are to first understand their worldview. You start by building a bridge to where they are.”

People who see sexual orientation as “no more your fault or something that you can change than your skin color” likely will view any opposition to homosexual behavior as bigoted, Denison noted.

“For a growing percentage of the public, that’s how they see this issue. Start by understanding that,” he said.

“The way to respond to a culture that says your faith is irrelevant—if not dangerous—is by proving your love in action. It is earning the right to be heard. It is meeting felt need to meet spiritual need. It is Jesus opening blind eyes to open blind souls.”

Get involved in helping

Denison offered advice to churches: “Find the most positive, kind, loving, gracious thing you can do relative to homosexuality short of endorsing homosexual behavior, and do it. Get involved in helping AIDS patients. Get involved in helping to make sure there is not unfair discrimination against homosexuals. Do practical things to defeat the assertion that you are

homophobic, bigoted, intolerant, narrow-minded KKKers. Make practical strategies to earn the right to be heard.”

Christians also need to make their motives clear, he added.

“We are opposed to homosexual activity because God’s word teaches this position. And we are concerned about those who practice such activity given the physical, emotional and psychological harm it can produce,” he said.

“It is not that I’m better than you are, not that I’m less sinful than you are. It’s that I care about you. I care about you from a physical, emotional and psychological standpoint. And the reason God prohibits homosexual behavior is because he knows how damaging it is—the same reason God prohibits heterosexual adultery, the same reason God prohibits whatever God prohibits. It’s not because he’s a cosmic killjoy; it’s because he made us and knows us.”

Christians need to affirm all people are worthy of dignity, respect and safety, Denison said, stressing, “Gay bashing is always wrong.”

Distinguish between orientation and behavior, and make clear that “all sexual relations outside heterosexual marriage are unbiblical,” he said.

Offer hope

Finally, offer hope, he urged. After the Apostle Paul listed homosexual activity in a list of sins in 1 Corinthians 6, he went on to say: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God.”

“Stay in the relationship, no matter what the other person does,” Denison said. “We want to be people of *agape* (unconditional love). We want to be the hands and feet and arms and legs and eyes and ears of Jesus that is

offering the kind of community and hope and grace that the world needs—homosexual or heterosexual.

“And all the while, know that the Holy Spirit wants to manifest the love of God even more than you do. This isn’t just on you. Don’t run out of here to try to learn to be better. This is you asking God to show you his love for this person. This is you exhibiting God’s grace through you.”