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Does Silence Strengthen the Hands of Evildoers?

Our response to a pastor's wife who supports Target Stores

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. --John 15:19

Jaci is a pastor's wife, mom, and serial blogger. She notes her husband shepherds 42 parishioners, but from what we can tell, *her* sphere of influence may extend a bit further. Concerning her recent blog-*buster* defending Target Stores, the merchandising behemoth with the controversial new public restroom policy, Jaci (pronounced Jackie) says she stopped counting the worldwide internet responses—good and bad—somewhere beyond a million!

Jaci informs us that she is a born-again believer, conservative in her political outlook, still shops at Target, and has stopped identifying with the Republican Party. Note: If we suspected that Jaci is a shill for the left, her views would be of less interest in this venue. But because we believe she sincerely desires to be a peacemaker, and does want to enlarge the kingdom of heaven, our interests and concerns are heightened by her curious suppositions.

This young mom says "...the whole country has lost their minds... The left feels the need to protect the transgendered community, and the right feels the need to protect their values."¹ Herein, the reader is informed that the left protects *people* while the right is focused on *values*.

Values notwithstanding, mom says she and her four young girls are going to continue to shop at Target because Target has *always* been a liberal company as are many of the mega merchandisers that Christians flock to. No argument there. But we might suggest that if the retailer is serving us meat (or coffee) that has been offered to idols—and then so informs us, perhaps we have something to consider for the sake of those with a weaker conscience (1Cor 10:27-28).

Another reason Jaci supports Target Stores, is because she believes companies should not be fined or forced to close for "maintaining their values." Here, here. But facts are pesky things. We are unaware of any "red state" (Republican-led) government calling for punitive damages against the nationwide merchant. However, we can name "blue states" where every legal channel possible has been exercised against small merchants who have quietly declined to offer goods or services that war against their conscience. Especially businesses engaged in weddings and pharmaceuticals!

At last week's Washington State Republican Party convention in Pasco, delegates affirmed a party plank that should assuage Jaci's concerns regarding *values-minded* Republicans. It reads:

"Our freedom of religion ensures the individual's right to practice the religion of their choice, not only privately, but publicly. A citizen shall not be punished, persecuted or prosecuted for exercising this right, and businesses shall not be required to perform services which violate the religious beliefs of their owners."

Simply put, Republicans oppose any government action against Target's restroom policy.

Democrats, on the other hand, favor government force to change social policy. In Washington State, five consecutive Democrat governors have abused the power of their office by punishing small businesses for their religious beliefs. Most recently, an Olympia grocery-pharmacy and a Kennewick florist are in the government's crosshairs. Further, Democrat President, Barack Obama, has ordered the nation's schools and other public facilities to comply with a radical new locker room policy or risk losing federal dollars.

Shifting gears, our blogger friend writes, "Transgender people have never hurt my children. But believe it or not, a whole bunch of church people have." Not knowing the details, we are unqualified to challenge her personal experiences and exceptions as a mom and church leader. But since the door to firsthand experience has been opened, we turn to one of our pastor-advisors for the Christian Coalition. Regarding his pastoral encounters with the transgendered community, he has this to say:

"Some years ago, Karl (not his real name) came to our church to check us out. He suffered from gender-confusion issues, but was not interested in help—only acceptance.

Even with long locks, his bearded face revealed he was unmistakably all man. To congregants, he preferred to be known as "Karla." Although his attire was usually recognizably masculine, he was most frustrated when kindly but firmly denied access to the ladies powder room. Regardless of outward adornments, in all honesty, he would be a pitiable looking woman. Period.

Karl's main focus was to join a womens' Bible study. While my wife took special interest in him, Karl made it abundantly clear he was not looking for help or change. Karl wanted the congregation to change. He expected to be treated as a woman—and a lesbian at that. He reasoned that since he had no desire for sexual relations with men, but thought of himself as a woman, he concluded he must be a lesbian. Though for quite some time (perhaps a year) much love and sympathy was extended to him, *Karla's* spirit found no place of satisfaction in our fellowship.

Coincidentally, Karl's 14-year-old son came to our church at the invitation of a school friend. The young man became an integral part of our dynamic youth group, eventually giving his heart to Jesus. Today, according to his *Facebook* posts, he is married, has children, and actively serves the Lord."

Our pastor-advisor adds that there is a distinction to be made between someone who comes to church as a candidate for change, and someone who comes to change the church. As born-again believers have discovered, salvation requires no-less-than "unconditional surrender." Straight, gay, or transgender.

The final argument that Jaci serves up is that when Christians engage in boycotts or initiative campaigns, it is hurtful and does not grow the church. Instead, it perpetuates the notion that many Christians are "homophobic," and as a result, the lost acquire no desire for Jesus. This is much like suggesting that Jesus was condemned to death by a crowd that would have been sympathetic to Him were it not for the mean-spiritedness of His disciples. Never happened! Jesus said, *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you* (John 15:18).

Most of us, if honest, do not want to confront the sinful excesses of our culture any more than Jonah wanted to prophesy against Nineveh. Who needs to be disliked more than we already are? Nevertheless, there are clear biblical admonitions to consider. Jeremiah, for one, has this to say about downplaying sin:

Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah (Jer 23:14).

Rick Forcier

¹ Lambert, Jaci, faithit.com/jaci-lambert-straight-conservative-preachers-wife-target-transgender-bathrooms/