

Gender Fundamentalists

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Abstract

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Article

Many of us in the LGBT community are painfully aware of the religious fundamentalists who have such a wonderful time coming up with lies and fear tactics to throw out to the uneducated masses. They know full well that a great deal of those Americans will believe anything they are told, if you follow it up with "Praise the Lord." Of course, their true God is the Almighty Dollar, which they get in abundance from those people who don't know any better.

We hear a lot about the Islamic fundamentalists and how they are such a threat to America. In many ways, they are ranked amateurs compared to the Christian fundamentalists here in the US. Oh yes, we hear of gays being executed in the country that has no gays, Iran. I'm sure that every time that happens, Beverly LaHaye, ChairMAN of the Concerned "June Cleavers" for America, salivates, hoping we get a Republican President who will support that as well. I'm sure she would like it if President Eddie Haskell "gave us the business." (The "June Cleaver" comment is not to put down the beloved character in "Leave it to Beaver," but to emphasize the time period their mindset is in.)

Not to make light of it, but the Christian fundamentalists are a dangerous group of people, even if there weren't any gay people for them to hate. Mike Huckabee's comments on wanting to change the Constitution to reflect God's laws instead of the Founding Fathers' wonderful ideas is a prime example of the danger this group of Americans can be.

But, I didn't title this article "Christian Fundamentalists." There are plenty of others who can talk intelligently on that subject. My article is on a growing number of transsexual women who use their post-operative status as a symbol of their superiority over any other gender-different people. I can guarantee that as soon as this article sees the light of day, they will rise up out of their holes and swoop down on me like the creatures in the movie, "Pitch Black," with Vin Diesel. I'm not afraid of the dark.

My interest in this started several years back when I heard of the term, "Women Born Transsexual." I am aware that this subject has been broached by some good writers, such as Gwen Smith in her article called "What's in a Name?" (The link is no longer working.) Also, Marti Abernathey wrote a wonderful piece called, "Don't Let The Door Hit Ya In The @!#!".

Those who identify as “WBT” no longer see themselves as being a transsexual, stating that “surgery made me female.” They can identify however they like, but if all the facts are taken into account, SRS/GRS/SAS cannot make any male-born individual into a female. It’s just not biologically possible. (I don another layer of Kevlar.) In a 1000 years, an anthropologist will lay out the bones of a WBT and say, “Male, age . . . Oh, wait, this was a Woman Born Transsexual. My bad.” Yeah, right.

The person who invented the term Women Born Transsexual, Susan Cooke, has an interesting history. She had been involved in various rights movements in the 60’s, cutting her teeth on Civil Rights and anti war issues. She took on many issues back when some of us were still trying on our sister’s clothes. I have had several conversations with her and grown to respect her viewpoint. Today, she openly opposes the Iraq War and is advocating for environmental issues.

Susan every once in awhile speaks up when these issues come up for discussion. I’m sure I will hear from her after she reads this. But, through all of our conversations, I get the impression that she wants to focus on other things, leaving others to take on the WBT fight. These others are the “Gender Fundamentalists” I wish to focus on.

One of the things I notice these Gender Fundies like to do is bitch about what Virginia Prince said nearly 50 years ago. What is the relevance of that today, in 2008? Many in our community see Virginia Prince as a pioneer, but the things she said in the late 50s and early 60s are about as relevant as the space race and 45 RPM records. Gee, Virginia is nearly 100 years old! Give the lady a break.

The WBT people blame Prince for “inventing” the word “transgender,” but in reality, it was a collaborate effort. They say that you don’t change your gender, because it is in your brain. Changing your body is changing your sex. I tend to agree with that. However, the word “transgender” has come to mean a lot more than transversing gender norms. It now covers anyone who changes their gender expression from their birth gender, either permanently or temporarily. This includes the Gender Fundies. The WBT people say they don’t accept the word and the rest of the world shouldn’t either. They have come up with screens and screens of words on the Internet trying to justify on why they are right, but never once do they show the courtesy to allow others to use it.

Their hatred for the word would be the same thing if Ford Motor Company said they don’t like the word “automobile” because it is not correct. Since a human has to operate the vehicle, then there is nothing “auto-matic” about it. They want to call them, “manualmobiles” and they will chastise anyone else who calls cars the hated A-word.

I also noticed that several of the so-called stealth WBT people have been equally vocal and condemning of HRC and Barney Frank on blogs and lists as the rest of us have. Yet, they happen to mouth the exact same words that Frank used in justifying keeping transgender people out of ENDA. That is about the shower issue. I have even heard some say that a person with a penis is still a man. They don’t either understand or care that their comments are what Frank uses to keep us AND THEM out of ENDA. I remember bringing up to Frank in one of our face-to-face confrontations about the situation where a Female-to-Male, with a full beard, hairy flat chest, balding head goes into a woman’s shower because he still has a vagina. How do you think the women would react when he walks in? Frank admitted he had never thought of that. The “Women” Born Transsexuals also forget about the men in our community, because they just don’t seem to understand them. The existence of trans men throws their whole “logic” out the window. When confronted with their existence, the WBT people dodge the question.

Speaking of chastising people, this has become the standard operating procedure for many who identify as WBT. If you don't have an aftermarket vagina or plan on getting one soon, then you're nothing more than "fetishists" or "perverts." They also resort to calling people "transgenderists," as if the word will hurt others like it hurts them. I have to really laugh at that one.

It doesn't matter if a person cannot get surgery for medical reasons, or that the finances are not in place. If you don't follow the strict teachings of those "self appointed leaders" in the WBT movement, then they are, she-males, transvestites, crossdressers, or just "Mr." I've been called "Mr. Helms" many times, which also makes me laugh, because I wasn't born with the last name of "Helms."

I used the "self appointed leaders" term in the previous paragraph because this is something else that the WBT people like to harp on. Marti Abernathy covered this very well in her article. What they don't seem to understand is that the majority of the leaders in the transgender movement have been appointed, elected or hired by others who feel they can do the job. It is true that I co-founded the Transgender American Veterans Association, but to remain President, I have to face an election every two years. Many others, like Marti, are considered leaders because they actually go out and help the community. WBT people don't have a history of ever doing that, except for Susan Cooke. Another interesting phenomenon I have noticed is that the WBT people are the first to scream (and I do mean scream) for respect, but never once have I heard any of them show even an ounce of respect to anyone else, for any reason. The only ones they "respect" are the people who are exactly like themselves. Deviate just a little and heaven help you. Respect works both ways, at least in the real world.

Part of my research into this segment of our society, I opened up and read various web sites having to do with the phenomenon known as the "Harry Benjamin Syndrome" (HBS.) This appears to be a made up "condition" that is not found in the DSM4, so the APA doesn't recognize, and it is not a real medical condition, so the AMA doesn't recognize it. Some of those people pushing HBS as an "intersex condition" in hopes that it would somehow legitimize it, but you won't find it mentioned anywhere on the web site for the Intersex Society of North America.

So, what is HBS really? The closest analogy I can come up with is that it's like the local ethnic restaurant that is really a front for organized crime. "Yo! Iffin' youz got HBS, then youz part of da 'family'." Okay, okay. So, my Italian background dribbles out every once in awhile. Suddenly, I'm hungry for my mother's lasagna.

In most cases, HBS has become a front to try and provide some form of legitimacy for people who are basically homophobic and transphobic transsexual women. I came across a wonderful web site from a person who had seen the inside of the HBS society first hand and discovered how they acted toward others. She even discovered the sudo-science they use to justify their hateful rhetoric. The woman, Laura Amato, confronted one of the HBS's self appointed leaders, Charlotte Goiar in an open letter. Some of what I wrote here came from Laura's writings. Laura is a person who has embraced the HBS concept, but took out all of the hate and would like it to be recognized in the proper fashion. She would like one day to see HBS become a true recognized condition. This is a very brave woman for going against the hateful beliefs of the other HBS people.

Laura points out that the people who created the term "Harry Benjamin Syndrome" took the name of

Harry Benjamin without permission. This condition that has been created using his name is not anything he came up with. It is almost as bad as the Christian fundamentalists evoking the name of Jesus when advocating their hate. Harry Benjamin was no Messiah for transsexuals. Some even point out that his writings were not very complimentary toward transsexuals. But, that's no excuse for hiding behind his name, using it as a shield, while they lob out their hate grenades.

One should note that any transsexual woman who considers themselves a lesbian or bisexual are also called fetishists and perverts by the hard core HBS people. The same for those transsexuals who stay married to their spouses after finishing transition. This shows a strong homophobic attitude. I have to laugh sometimes when I hear on a Yahoo Group list one of these women saying, "I'm not a transsexual any longer and I live a stealth life." Yet, there they are, name as plan as day, on a transgender discussion group. So much for stealth.

If you want to follow all of links I listed here, then I warn you that it is a lot of reading. I feel that it is important to know where these people are coming from. I suggest people be cautious when reading the opening pages to any WBT and HBS web sites, especially new people.

In Laura's letter to Charlotte, she points out another problem that has occurred with new people visiting the HBS Yahoo Group. Whenever a new person signs on and starts asking questions, the members of the group automatically start attacking that person and call them various nasty names. In the early stages of a transsexual's transition, they are vulnerable and emotional, afraid of doing something wrong or being found out.

There is a lot of fear in those early days. To be chastised by so-called experts can be a very emotionally scarring experience. Laura knows of some who have attempted suicide multiple times. This is why she has a website where she and others provide help to trans people attempting suicide because of these people. Another resource for help is the Transgender Help Line at 877-427-3230. This is maintained by long-time activist Ann Marie Knittel.

I want to emphasize that even though I'm shining a not so complimentary light on the WBT and HBS people, I want to make it perfectly clear that I am all for people wanting to identify any way they wish. The problem I have is when people think that their identification is the one and only right way and anyone who disagrees with them or even wants to discuss it is called all kinds of nasty names. When another person's hatred toward other gender different people causes someone to take their life or even attempt to then I will have a problem with it. I have to bury three of my friends who have committed suicide in the nearly 11 years I have lived as Monica. We don't need trans people - our peers - pushing others to follow my friends' paths.

Now that this article is done, watch the comments on the various blogs and you will see first hand how nasty some of these people can be. This article is like honey to bees. They cannot resist commenting. By their own words, they will validate everything I have written here.

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