

My name is Daren Mehl. I was created by God as a heterosexual male, was deceived to believe I was a gay man, lived as a homosexual for many years, and then Jesus Christ set me free from the death of that lifestyle and set me free from the desire to be sodomized by men or to sodomize other men. I am now a licensed minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and provide spiritual and pastoral care to anyone who seeks to align their beliefs and behaviors to the teachings of Jesus Christ. I believe HF2156 will harm me and those who seek to leave the LGBTQ cult community if it is passed and becomes law in Minnesota. I also believe it is wholly unconstitutional abridgement of my free speech and practice of religion.

To understand the claims I have about HF2156 you must understand my journey of faith in Jesus Christ. Let me briefly tell my testimony of Jesus Christ:

Having been relentlessly teased by girls and boys in elementary and high school as a sissy, pansy, girly boy, gay, queer, and other pejoratives, I began to embrace the thought that perhaps they were right, I was gay. So I did what is common among many bullied people, I took the humiliation of being called gay and made it my identity, believing it would rob them of their strength and lose its power over me. However, in hindsight, adopting the homosexual identity became a power over me that lead me away from Jesus Christ. And so I found I chose homosexuality as an identity.

Even though I was a confessing Christian at the time of choosing a homosexual identity and behaviors, I couldn't reconcile that choice with the teachings of Jesus Christ. So for a time I chose to merge them into a vain imaginary 'gay Christian' identity. I tried this identity and belief merger by ignoring what I read in the Bible where sodomy is called a sin and that practicing homosexuals do not inherit the Kingdom of God. I also adopted an imaginary belief not found in the bible, but taught to me by the LGBTQ church, that I was created gay by God and couldn't change and didn't need to because it was a gift from God. With these in mind I hoped perhaps I could reconcile the two otherwise as I lived this way for 8 years.

I attended gay affirming church and had several serial "romantic" and "monogamous" relationships with men practicing sodomy as an outward expression of what I believed at the time was love for them.

By the grace of Jesus Christ, because of a close friend choosing to share deep truths about God from his own journey with Jesus and the grace of God given to him, I was lead to begin a healing journey with Jesus. Jesus took me back to my childhood and started removing the barbs that were tied around my identity and causing me pain.

As Jesus worked on my heart and mind over several years, I asked God to be made righteous according to God's standards through faith in Jesus Christ. By the mercy and grace of God, Jesus Christ delivered me. God gave me grace through faith in Jesus Christ resulting in persistent change of identity, desires, and behavior. I experienced change from exclusive homosexual desires to exclusive heterosexual desires. Jesus did this through at least a dozen sovereign interventions such giving me grace to forgive those who bullied and shamed me, lead me to being disciplined by reading the Bible and other testimony/discipleship books (some now banned by Amazon), speaking to Christian licensed therapists, prayer with others, and receiving pastoral care. All of which today according to HF2156 would be labeled 'conversion therapy' and be prohibited.

When I accepted the homosexual identity, I had to give up my boyhood dream of being married to a woman and having children. But by the miracle of God, Jesus Christ restored that dream and now I've been married to my wife Rhoda, a female woman, since Dec 11, 2005, and we have a male son, Sebastian, born in 2013, and a female daughter, Esther, who was born in 2015.

I have experienced my romantic and sexual desires restored to heterosexual orientation, and in doing so I believe they are rightly ordered in righteousness and holiness before God. I have been given a family of my own and affirmed as a man and image bearer of God. I believe all this was the

redeeming and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ. I can attribute these miracles and the sustaining power to no other.

The irony of my testimony of Jesus Christ that I just shared, in context of HF2156, is that it would be labeled as ex-gay ministry, aka 'conversion therapy', and therefore categorized as disproven, discredited, harmful, and discriminatory against the LGBTQ community, and consumer fraud. The government has no authority to declare the work of Jesus Christ in my life as disproven and discredited, or seeking Jesus, who said He is the way, the truth, and the life, to be harmful and discriminatory, nor a fraud. HF2156 would do a great harm to my freedom to live my faith.

I believe I will be harmed by HF2156 as it will likely empower the medical associations, specifically the LGBTQ religious belief affirming ones, the ones who see Christianity as a religious stigma to be avoided, put into their practices the "science" to diagnose my beliefs as an illness and recommend treatments to deprogram me from religious dogma. As many statements already made by LGBTQ leaders and these medical associations suggesting that ex-gays are just suffering from 'internalized homophobia' or are victims of stigma created by religion and therefore denying our 'true selves'.

I am a licensed minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. HF2156 would have an effect to chill my free speech and the free exercise of my Christian religious belief to 'go and make disciples of men'. I would not be able to provide pastoral care for those who as seeking to align their behaviors and identity to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

HF2156 would carve out a community of people, those who identify as LGBTQ, and prevent me from discipling them in the Christian faith. Scripture says to go and make disciples of ALL people, I believe that to mean all people, even those who have isolated themselves in the LGBTQ community and identity. According to HF2156, offering to disciple someone leaving the LGBTQ community and identity would be treated as 'conversion therapy' and be prohibited and considered discriminatory and fraud. God desires all to be reconciled to Him. Who am I not to live out in my calling and offer salvation to those who seek it? No law can stop God's power to bring the Gospel to all people, and I will not stop.

Why does the government decide that LGBTQ identified people are not allowed to hear The Gospel or choose to become Christian disciples? In effect, that's what HF2156 does. It chills, if not prevents, conversion from LGBTQ religious beliefs to Christian beliefs, especially in recognizing we are all created heterosexual by nature and all have the potential to be healed by Jesus out of the 'sexual orientation' of homosexuality.

If sexual orientation and gender identity defines LGBTQ in HF2156, my faith in Jesus Christ defines me in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. My faith should be treated equal under the law. Yet HF2156 turns my faith into discrimination? May it not be so! Sharing the Gospel message is the commandment from my Lord Jesus Christ to share with everyone, and it is GOOD NEWS, not discrimination. Why does HF2156 in spirit work against my faith and make it unlawful to disciple LGBTQ identified people? What interest does the government have in preventing LGBTQ people from converting to Christianity? Why does the government choose the LGBTQ beliefs to be the state's approved religious standard and prohibit my beliefs? Why can't I live out my faith as guaranteed by the First Amendment?

What is the test for religious discrimination if not the discrimination based on the message of the sincerely held belief? I sincerely believe I am heterosexual male created by God and that Jesus was the one who delivered me from sin, from homosexuality, from the LGBTQ community and made me a member of His kingdom and a son in His royal family, and He gave me new desires that are not an abomination, but to serve Him for His glory. My work as a licensed minister will become prohibited and HF2156 would prevent me from using my Constitutional rights to speech and practice of my religion as a defense, but would call such speech and religious practice as fraud. It is tacitly admitting the goal of the bill is to impact religious practice and free speech. [This of course has been

the LGBTQ lobby's agenda from the beginning. <https://bit.ly/SBProxy01>] And so it is targeting my religious belief by denying my Civil Rights and my First Amendment Rights to free speech and free practice of my Christian faith. "You Hypocrites!" What a double standard HF2156 would be.

It is also my belief that HF2156 would harm my rights as a father to my children. If my children become confused about their sex, of which I believe God ordained from the beginning of time, and that it is harmful to affirm a child as the opposite sex, both mentally and spiritually, I would be prevented from seeking assistance to help the child align to reality of them being male or female. HF2156 would come between my rights to direct the lives of my children according to the convictions of our religious beliefs in Jesus Christ.

My Christian faith will be discriminated against even more with the passing of HF2156. There is nothing equal about it. Our civil rights will be decimated to the point of no return. We aren't just being sent to the back of the bus in our country, we'll be told to get off the bus. And then we'll be denied being able to purchase parts to build our own bus. If by some miracle we can build a bus, we won't be allowed to drive where we want to go. All the roads will lead to LGBTQ religion.

HF2156 will harm me and our community of ex-LGBTQ Christians (Christians formerly identified as LGBTQ) if it is passed into law. Where is our equality? Are some more equal than others?

In Service and Obedience to Jesus Christ,
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