

“I’m a gay man, happily married to a woman. And I’m not the only one”, *LifeSiteNews*, March 27, 2017; “The Case for Dating Non-Christians” by David and Constantino Khalaf, *Progressive Channel, Patheos*, December 7, 2016; *For Those Tears I Died* by Marsha Stevens-Pino (Canyon Walker Press, 2016), 249 pp.; *To Drink from the Silver Cup* by Anna Redsand (Terra Nova Books, 2016), 313 pp.

Nobody would fall for this headline: “I’m a heterosexual man, happily married to another *man*. And I’m not the only one.” Yet, *LifeSite’s* headline is just as flaky, concocting a superficial “complementarity” of *genitalia*, as if the presence of a *penis* plus a *vagina* makes a *good* marriage, regardless of the *sexual orientations* of the two *persons* present.

A *good* marriage goes far deeper than *genitalia* or anatomy. Psychosexually *involuntary*, *mutual fascination* with the other *person*, along with the *sharing of their most basic values* and their *willingness and skill as team players*, forms the basic triad of marital success.

But when antigay busybodies push others into *mixed-orientation* marriages, *the fix is in that fixes nothing*. The tragic results are *dysfunctional* families and, usually, divorce.

The Khalafs, a “progressive” Christian gay couple, gets right what *LifeSite* gets wrong. But, arguing for *Christians* to date *non-Christians* diminishes the matter of *shared values* that the Khalafs observe in their own marriage, i.e., *both value progressive Christianity*. Screening for a committed partner, the *big* deals for each must align. If each is merely *nominally* Christian, the couple *shares* that value. If one is *evangelically committed* to *Christ* and the other *isn’t* or is *committed* to a *rival* worldview, *conflict* and a sense of *disconnection* is coming when neither “gets” what’s so meaningful or so offensive to the other. They contend: “Dating is difficult enough.” And a *seriously mismatched marriage* isn’t? Why, in searching for a life partner, would one ignore very *predictable* sources of conflict and isolation? They contend: “The more filters we select, the fewer people meet our criteria.” Well, *too picky* is one thing, but ignoring what’s *significant* is something else. Besides, when a person is *wisely* screened out, that’s a very *successful* screening.

“For Those Tears I Died” is a well-loved praise song that Marsha Stevens wrote when she was just 17, back in the ‘60s Jesus Movement. *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music* calls her “the mother of Contemporary Christian Music”. Her famous song’s title is now the title of Stevens-Pino’s autobiography.

For nearly half a century, millions have *identified* with her words that were, to her, very *personal*. Her angry, drunken, preacher father was abusive and he sexually molested her. Her childhood was a constant effort to escape his attacks. Yet, with faith in Jesus, she wrote, prayerfully: “You said You’d come and share all my sorrows, You said You’d be there for all my tomorrows; I came so close to sending You away, But just like you promised, You came here to stay; I just had to pray. And Jesus said, ‘Come to the water, stand by My side, I know you are thirsty, you won’t be denied; I felt ev’ry teardrop when in darkness you cried, And I’m here to remind you that for those tears I died.’”

In the mid-’80s, she “came out” as lesbian. Friends shunned her, buying into the lies of Fundamentalist preachers. Her music ministry was cut short. She got involved with both Evangelicals Concerned and Metropolitan Community Church, though, as she says, “I found it was difficult at times to have scripturally based conversations in the MCC. There was a lot of woundedness in the lives of so many. [But] I longed for honest conversation that was spiritually challenging without being viewed as judgmental. I

backed off those types of discussions in MCC. My connections with Evangelicals Concerned expanded.” She has performed in concert at EC summer connECTIONS across America. Unlike so many other wounded souls, she still identifies as “a conservative evangelical, strongly committed to the authority of Scripture, passionate about having a personal relationship with Jesus.”

For all same-sex oriented Christians, reared under antigay preaching that pushed them into “ex-gay” *frauds* and the *failures* of mixed-orientation marriages or who, under the onslaught of antigay preaching, lost their faith, her book points to *integration*. Jesus *does* feel our tears of hurt, fear, confusion, guilt, disillusionment and despair. He died for us and was raised for us. He called disciples to make disciples of others and assured them he’d be with them always. Her song, written as a teenager, is still her testimony today.

In the Foreword, Peggy Campolo recalls the first time she saw her minister to those who “knew too well the rejection of much of the church. As Marsha sang and talked to them, that audience came alive. It was as though she had watered flowers just as they were about to die of thirst. Truly, she had brought to those people the living water.”

Redsand’s is a different story. Reared by Christian Reformed parents, missionaries to the Navajo, she came out as lesbian and, sadly, her Reformed family rejected her. But, in trying to cope with the pain of rejection, she has rejected what’s *central* to Stevens-Pino’s faith in the face of similar rejection. Redsand’s “Jesus” is not the one on whom Stevens-Pino relies. To Redsand, “no human being is perfect. I include Jesus in that, by the way, believing he was just as human as we and no more a son of God than we are children of God. ... I don’t see [the redeeming of] the broken world ... as unique to Jesus, but he may have, in his life, fulfilled that purpose more fully than most. He is one of the exemplars we can follow.” To come to these conclusions, she’s bought into discredited attacks on the authenticity of Jesus. She mistakenly thinks that biblical accounts were “picked and chosen” in the interest of “certain powerful men”. Though she claims, “God is beyond my comprehension”, she dogmatically adds: “I do not think God is a person”.

Rejecting the Great Commission as “proselytizing” and denouncing it as even “cultural genocide”, she dogmatically asserts, “I don’t think any one faith is best for everyone.”

Sadly, tragically, in her painful search for acceptance, she seems unaware of major CRC scholars (e.g., Woudstra, Boer, Ellens, Hart, Wolterstorff, Smedes, et al.) who, for over four decades, have supported the ministry of Evangelicals Concerned. She’s looked for spiritual support in 12-step programs, yoga, Native American spirituality, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, MCC, UCC, Unity, Unitarianism, etc. Now, after creating *her own version* of an “Apostles’ Creed”, she’s joined a progressive Presbyterian church.

In *To Drink from the Silver Cup*, a title borrowed from a secular song, “Lonely People”, Redsand confirms the bias of others with unresolved hurt and anger over a conservative church past. But sadly, that past is a stumbling block to returning to the Christ who *died* for their tears.

