



# Christian Citizenship

**“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.**

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## **Gender Reversal: Not So Fast!**

Zahara Cooper is 21. Born a girl, she changed her name to “Zane” at age 18. Her parents were divorced and, as a child, she was shy and found it difficult to make friends. Always more of a “tomboy,” she hated the changes to her body that came at puberty and determined she was a lesbian. She was bullied and labeled “weird.” Looking for help on the internet, Zahara watched videos about transgender people and became convinced she was “trapped in the wrong body.”

When her family doctor refused to help her “transition,” saying, “...you were born female, I pulled you out of your mother,” Zahara labeled him “transphobic.” She sought the help of a counselor, a general practitioner, and an endocrinologist before a psychiatrist diagnosed her with gender dysphoria. In December of 2015 Zahara began taking testosterone which, according to YouTube videos, would make her feel “elated.” Instead, she became angry and depressed. When her voice deepened and facial hair appeared, she felt anxious. “I didn’t feel like myself,” Zahara said. Twice, she attempted suicide.

Zahara had been living with her grandfather who told her he couldn’t treat her as a male, but would love and support her. After the suicide attempts, he pushed her to see a mental health specialist who decided that Zahara has borderline Asperger’s syndrome.” Something “clicked” for Zahara. With some research of her own, Zahara discovered that “Asperger’s people commonly struggle with gender dysphoria as an answer to why they don’t fit in.” In knowing that she is also mildly autistic, Zahara says she would have “understood myself more.”

At the risk of “letting the transgender side down,” Zahara wanted to “go back.” She is happier now, but realizes she “might always confuse some people.” She tried going “girly,” but decided she is not “that kind of girl.” She dresses female, but her voice lets her down. It shocked the store assistant when she went to purchase a bra. At another store, they called her “sir” even though she dresses as a girl.

We should be aware, writes Carolyn Moynihan, “of the mounting evidence of a link between autism spectrum disorder (AS) and gender dysphoria or variance (GV) and refer a young person for testing. A diagnosis of GV on the basis of one interview, which provides a blank [check] for sex change therapy, seems grossly inadequate.”

**What can we do?** We should ask: 1) What is the effect of parental separation and a broken family on a young child? 2) Because many changes caused by testosterone are irreversible, shouldn’t we demand a high standard of consent for girls wanting to transition to male? 3) Are we alert to the increasing evidence that most adolescents who experience discomfort with their birth gender are likely to accept their birth sex as they get older? “I hate seeing young lives wrecked,” says Victor Rakich, Zahara’s grandfather. We’ve “got to give them more attention, not just medicine.” (Source: “Transgender reversal: It’s not so easy to become a girl again,” *Mercatornet.net*, 5-2-17)

***Please pray that we resist sexual experiments and trust God’s design for male and female even in a fallen world... in Jesus’ name.***

## **Advice from a Millennial to Parents**

Trevin Wax is an author and blogger with Gospel Coalition. He was born in 1981 and, as a “millennial,” he seeks to encourage Christians of his generation. Wax was 21 when he married his wife, but he sees that many of his generation are waiting to marry because “maybe they’ve grown up in homes that were unhappy or had divorce.

They have seen the fallout of that and want to make sure they're making the right decision." But, Wax believes that "marriage matures you. It's one of the ways that God reveals to us our own selfishness and begins to grow us up in the faith. Romantic comedies a lot of times end with the wedding as if that's the ending, the summit—but the mountaintop is a marriage of 50 years, a couple who look more and more alike, who have the fruit of their union present in their kids and grandkids, and have the joy that ripples out over time from a healthy marriage and family."

Here's what else Wax has to say about the culture, sexual ethics, and LGBT pressures: "Many people in my generation are unaware of their unexamined assumptions. They think about things a certain way ... but don't really have reasons why." One crucial assumption made by "80 percent of Americans," even in our churches, is that "enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life." Therefore, "...we need to uphold the value of civil discourse and debate ... [remembering that] the Lord calls us to witness, not always to win." We "need to showcase the beauty of Christianity's sexual ethics in such a way that we can silence the slander of critics who would say you're just hateful or bigoted." We are challenged to "show our love for our neighbor while also opposing ideologies that we believe are destructive to the human person."

Some of us "might look back over history yearning for a different time the Lord might have placed us in, or we might begrudge certain aspects of the challenges we now face," says Wax. "It's time to fix our eyes on Jesus and move forward in faith, not bemoaning the problems of our culture but seizing the day for the mission of God. Now is the time to be faithful." (Source: *WORLD*, 5/13/17)

**Resources for you:** *This Is our Time, Everyday Myths in Light of the Gospel* (Trevin Wax), *The Failure of Sex Education in the Church: Mistaken Identity, Compromised Purity* (Linda Bartlett), *Sexual Morality in a Christless World* (Rev. Matthew Rueger); *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom* (Ryan T. Anderson).

**Please pray** for faithfulness to God's Word as we reach out to a younger generation... in Jesus' name.

## **Rebuilding in the Midst of Decay**

For now, the Christian lives on this earth, but we are marked as heirs of God's Kingdom. The hymn puts it this way: "All newborn soldiers of the Crucified bears on his brow the seal of Him who died." (LSB 837) Parents do well, writes Anthony Esolen, to remind themselves and their children that "we have been marked with the character of Christ. Not by our nature and not by our efforts, but by the grace of God we sinners have been marked as new creations. We must not walk in darkness anymore."

Marked with "the character of Christ," says Esolen, "we will not play the futile games of the world. We will not fornicate, we will not divorce, we will not snuff out the lives of our children ... If we fail, we will confess our sins and repent," trusting that the Lord's mercies are new every morning. "We do not have other gods before God. We refuse to place our hope ... in scientists, who are men as we are: frail, vain, ambitious, stubborn in error, prone to going along with the herd ... apt to believe themselves to be wiser than they are. ...We do not place our hope in magic "democracy," or magic "government," or magic "equality," or magic "gender inclusivity," or any other wave of the wand and rabbit pulled out of a top hat. We will honor legitimate authority, and we will obey just laws, but we will not bend the knee before knaves, ruffians, shrews, whores, butchers, and fools."

Let's "be clear," writes Esolen. "The world around us is not Christian. It is not even sanely pagan. It is quite mad and quite unhappy. We cannot minister to them by appearing to be pagan or by making ourselves half mad and half miserable. We can minister to them only by being sharply distinct. Those in the world who are weary of its broken promises will not listen to us if we speak the language of the world. They are longing for a different language entirely—the real language, which will restore to them the world's lost beauty and goodness and point them towards what is beyond the world." The great divide "is between those who place all their hope in the present life and those who know that we are pilgrims." (Excerpts from *Out of the Ashes* by Anthony Esolen.)

**Please pray** that Christians be of good courage, resist ways of the world, and raise children... in Jesus' name.

