

Drag Queens in Chesterfield

by Rev. Joe Dirt - Thursday, December 22, 2022

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Looking at the local news online this morning, this story – of course, from the local FOX news outlet – was leading the pack : [‘A Drag Queen Christmas’ show sparks heated protest in Chesterfield.](#)

I thought for a minute that a tornado must have grabbed the whole town I live in, Chesterfield, Missouri, and dumped it in Oklahoma while I slept. But no, we’re still here. I had to remind myself that I live in Missouri and in the particularly onerous 2nd district, the district which has given us such Republican notables as Todd “Legitimate Rape” Akin and Ann “What Climate Change” Wagner.

Since the protesters stated that the drag queens were slapping God in the face, I wondered if there really was a Bible prohibition against cross-dressing. I came across Deuteronomy 22:5 which reads:

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God

There is a lot of room for interpretation in those 32 words. Researching a little more I came across a [scholarly article](#) about this particular verse. Apparently, in parts of Africa with converts to Christianity, there has been a huge controversy about women wearing trousers. We won’t even go into the fact that much male African dress, to a Western eye, appears feminine. From looking at the verse in its historical context and in context with adjacent verses, the article concluded that the verse was really a prohibition against pagan practices, rather than cross-dressing:

In recent times in Nigeria, as in many parts of Africa, there has arisen the controversy on whether or not it is doctrinally acceptable for women to wear trousers; the controversy which is based on the apparent prohibition of cross-dressing in Deut 22:5. Using the historical-critical and textual approaches we have found out that the D source was meant primarily to centralise Yahwism in Jerusalem and to purge it of heathen practices which characterised the religion particularly in the seventh century b.c.e. The D code (Deut 12-26) which was more or less the “constitution” of the nation Israel was at the centre of this religious agenda. The original meaning of Deut 22:5 is best sought within this religious context; that is, as one of those regulations meant to dissuade the Israelites from indulging in heathen practices, and not a prohibition of cross-dressing as it is often misconstrued. This position is supported by the fact that the socio-cultural milieu of the text was one in which the difference between male and female clothing was not emphasised. Since the concern of the text is not about fashion but about heathenism, Deut 22:5 is not

relevant as a basis for the acceptance or rejection of female wearing of trousers in Nigeria or in Africa at large.

But I suppose different scholars could have well drawn different conclusions.

I then also wondered what the protesters would have thought of Elizabethan Shakespearean plays. There was a prohibition against women acting in this period in England so males played all the parts in those plays, and cross-dressed as necessary. Was The Bard slapping God in the face too by writing plays with female characters, well knowing that men would have to cross-dress to play those parts? We could never have had *Romeo & Juliet*. In *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, cross-dressing is central to the play. In two plays, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Cymbeline*, women disguise themselves as men. I am still trying to get my head around the biblical implications of a man playing a woman cross-dressing as a man for a disguise. Oh those Elizabethans, how did the Globe Theater avoid being struck by lightning?

Drag queens are really not my thing, although I have seen a few on stages at various events that I found very entertaining. I will confess, though, to finding the whole concept a little trippy, not off-putting, just trippy. But hey, if it makes you happy, be happy.

I looked and looked and could not find the picture. *Señora* and I were in New Orleans shortly after we started dating when we stumbled across a gentleman who was 40 or 50 pounds heavier than me and had me by four or five inches in height, dressed to the nines in an evening dress and oh so so made up. Of course, those extra inches might have been the spiked heels he had on. He had just won Miss New Orleans Drag Queen for whatever year it was, and was literally floating down Bourbon Street with his exaltation. He was gracious enough to allow me to take a picture of him and Robin. Was this extraordinarily happy man slapping God in the face?

My junior year (1968) in high school in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, the school system finally allowed females to wear pants to school. They were no longer required to wear dresses or skirts. As a protest more than a few male students came to school one day in dresses and skirts. The one male student that stands out for me was the 6' 6" tight end on the school's football team. He was not the most handsome of individuals and hairy as a bear. He wore a dress so short that it barely, barely covered what it needed to be covered. The sight of his hairy, ugly self in the too small dress is forever etched in my memory. He was tall enough to slap God in the face, but I doubt that was his intention.

I won't even get into the long tradition of such acts as Milton Berle, Flip Wilson, Tyler Perry, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis, Dustin Hoffman and so many, many more who have cross-dressed for our entertainment.

If you don't want to see drag queens, don't go to the shows. And if there are biblical injunctions against such things, dang if I can find it, but then again, interpretations of the Bible are only limited by the number of souls reading it.

And so it goes.

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