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Sojourners, Don't blame Catholics

Heidi Schlumpf | May. 15, 2011 NCR Today

I have a lot of respect for *Sojourners* magazine, the evangelical/progressive publication and Washington, D.C.-based community focused on social justice issues. I know some of the editors and have written for it. That's why I was especially saddened to hear about the controversy over the magazine's decision to reject an ad [1]calling for inclusion of LGBT families in churches.

A lot has been written about this decision, which Sojourners defended by saying they didn't want to take sides on the LGBT issue, including an excellent column by NCR's own Jamie L. Manson [2].

I had nothing to add to the discussion until I read one of the most recent defenses [3] by former Sojourners board chair Brian McLaren, who claims *Sojourners* had to reject the ad because of its coalition-building among evangelical Christians, Catholic Christians and progressive Christians. The cost of that coalition, he argues, is: "You can?t lead a coalition that includes mainstream evangelical and conservative Catholic Christians if you are an outspoken leader on LGBTQ issues."

First, although I applaud *Sojourners* for any coalition-building it has done with "conservative Catholic Christians," I highly doubt that the majority of Sojo's Catholic supporters are from the traditional arm of our church.

McLaren's piece mentions Catholics five times, even speculating that perhaps *Sojourners* will change its policy when "more evangelical and Catholic Christians will stop refusing to be part of coalitions with gay-affirming folks, making it possible for Sojourners to stretch the coalition faster and farther."

He admits that the "messy contemporary reality" means they're damned if they do, and damned if they don't. So why not do the right thing? And if you're not going to, don't blame us Catholics.

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[1] http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/4583/lgbt_%E2%80%9Cwelcome%E2%80%9D_ad_rejected_by_soj
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