

**From:** Jennifer R O'Rourke <\_\_\_\_\_@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Significant life change  
**Date:** February 19, 2019 at 12:40 PM  
**To:** sarah@churchclarity.com



Did you get this set?  
Blessings,

Jennifer O'Rourke  
404-386-7779  
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jennifer R O'Rourke <\_\_\_\_\_@gmail.com>  
**Date:** February 19, 2019 at 12:18:15 PM EST  
**To:** Gavin Adams <\_\_\_\_\_@northpointministries.net>  
**Subject:** Re: Significant life change

Second/ last set of emails

Blessings,

Jennifer O'Rourke  
404-386-7779  
Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 16, 2018, at 8:15 AM, Gavin Adams <\_\_\_\_\_@northpointministries.net> wrote:

Rory & Jennifer, thanks for the follow up message. I completely understand how you feel as parents of a daughter you love and admire. I'm grateful she has a support system in you both. That is uncommon for most children.

I've spent lots of time thinking about your last message along with our conversation. Here is where I've landed: Our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Everything we do is centered on that mission. And anything that works against our ability to do it must be taken into serious consideration.

I'll save you the entire passage, but Paul in writes this:

**1 Corinthians 10:27-33 (NIV)**

27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. 29 I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? 31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. **For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.**

Broadly this means that influencing people toward Jesus is our most protected goal, even if it works against our own good. If there is anything we are doing that hampers our ability to reach people and lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus, we refuse to do it. Paul didn't mind eating meat, but if it hampered his ability to lead people to Jesus or caused others to stumble along the way, they he "will never eat meat again." (1 Corinthians 8:13)

Applying this to your situation feels pretty clear. Your daughter's public pronouncement can be celebrated by family and friends. But if we ignore it or pretend it didn't happen publicly, we potentially will cause others to stumble: other volunteers who are still exploring faith, other parents who don't agree or understand, and other kids who aren't ready for this conversation.

If I could say it this way: This is so much bigger than your daughter. Paul believed it was way bigger than him, too. This is as big as our mission and the Kingdom, and anything that could cause our mission to suffer is always considered. Sometimes that feels deeply personal. But I would ask you to consider if it's worth taking this stand and continuing to volunteer in the exact same position if someone else's faith would struggle or never begin. Paul seems to suggest that is working against the gospel. We don't want to make points — we want to make differences. We are working towards salvation, not stands. Your daughter is saved, which positions her and us all alike in that others now are our priority.

In the broader sense of what we are trying to accomplish, I firmly believe asking you daughter to step back from her small group and stage leadership for a season was the smartest leadership decision to make. Especially considering we desired to keep her involved in UpStreet in different roles during this season. In no way were we turning our back on her or your family. We were trying to do what was best for the mission and our entire community. Sometimes that feels bad personally, but when we realize it's not about us anyway, it can be easier to embrace. If this were one of my children, I would say the exact same thing.

We would love to have all of you remain a part of Woodstock City. I believe you know that to be true. I also understand if you feel it necessary to engage elsewhere. Life is full of opportunities to lean in the direction of others. We are leaning in your direction as far as we can in this moment.

Thanks for the ongoing conversation.



**Gavin Adams**

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On Aug 5, 2018, at 4:18 PM, Jennifer R O'Rourke <[\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_@gmail.com](mailto:_____@gmail.com)> wrote:

Gavin,  
We apparently look at my daughters coming out as gay in two very different ways. To me discovering who God made her to be was an awesome life event to be celebrated. This was a significant life change but it was a positive change because it finally showed her who she was meant to be and that helped reduce her anxiety, strengthen her friendships and let her know how much she was loved by her entire family regardless of who she loves. As far as I know the church doesn't have you take a break when you get engaged, married, find out your expecting or buying your first home. Why would they? These are also positive life changes. It seems to me that the only negative significant life change that has happened to Kaitlyn is being removed from all of her leadership positions at Woodstock City and therefore no longer feeling

comfortable at our church. So I think for her health we as a family should step away from Woodstock City.

As far as meeting Christy for coffee she is welcome to reach out to Kaitlyn. The only time she has contacted her since their 8:15 talk on June 17 was at 9:20 on June 17. So there has not been the repeated attempts that you may feel have happened. It's been 6 weeks with no other attempts. I do appreciate that you love her but she needs more than that from her church. She needs to be accepted because accepting someone that is LGBTQ means fully embracing and supporting them not seeing them as less than. If you truly believe that this is not a choice then my daughter's announcement that she likes girls shouldn't be any different than any other teenager finally figuring out that the opposite sex isn't yucky anymore.

As I said in our meeting I would be happy

to meet with anyone to help further the discussion on changing this policy. I just feel that your policy should match your teaching so that this doesn't happen to anybody else.

It has been a pleasure being a part of Northpoint ministries for the last two plus decades and we are all heartbroken to be saying goodbye.

Blessings,

Jennifer O'Rourke  
404-386-7779  
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 30, 2018, at 1:02 PM, Gavin Adams <[gavin.adams@northpointministries.net](mailto:gavin.adams@northpointministries.net)> wrote:

Jennifer, thanks again for sending me this email and for the time we spent together.

As I have read through your original, unsent email, there is one thing I'd love to address specifically: "Christy did not say these words but that is what was taken from the conversation."

That sentence stood out to me. I hope that after our meeting, you, Rory, and Kaitlyn understand more fully that what was felt wasn't necessary what was actually communicated. The hardest part of feelings is that they are relevant and valid even when they are not perfectly accurate. As I said when we were together, I certainly understand why these feelings surfaced, as they may have with me if I were in her position. But I hope Kaitlyn and your family understand more fully that Christy, UpStreet, and our church love Kaitlyn the same today and we did a year prior. That has not changed and it will not change, even if your family decides to engage in another church in time.

I know that Christy has reached out at least once to Kaitlyn (maybe multiple times). She is definitely not being "disowned" (that word was in your message, as well). Do you think Kaitlyn would be willing to spend some time with Christy again? I know Christy would love to grab coffee or just hang out a bit.

I am still working through some options, but I wanted to respond directly to your message. So you know, in most of our leadership volunteer positions (small group leaders, stage, etc.), when a person goes through a significant life change moment (as Kaitlyn is doing), we often ask them to step away for a season for their own health. This is especially true with our younger leaders.

Thanks, Jennifer. I'll be back in touch.



Gavin Adams

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On Jul 18, 2018, at 6:47 PM, Jennifer R O'Rourke <[jenniferrourke@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferrourke@gmail.com)> wrote:

Gavin,  
Thank you so much for taking the time

to meet with my family today. I know meetings like this one are probably not at the top of your happy list but for what it's worth you are very good at diffusing tense situations. I'm still not sure where I stand with the church but your use of the word "yet" did give me a glimmer of hope for the future. I guess I'm still struggling with the idea of being part of a welcoming church as opposed to an affirming church. I wrote a letter a couple of days after this all went down and when I showed it to my husband he said this sounds like a goodbye letter and asked me if that's what I wanted it to be. Honestly at the time that was the only option I saw. Now I'm wrestling with the idea of being apart of a church where my daughter is not fully accepted in hopes of someday possibly being more accepted. It's really hard to know what to do. My daughter is a fighter. She has been fighting her medical issues for her entire

life and I'm not sure that I want to add this to the load that she is already carrying but I also know that if she thinks that there's a chance that she can make someone's else's world a better place she is willing to endure what's thrown at her for the greater good. Below is the "goodbye " letter that I originally wanted to send. I'm hoping that over time we can work together to make Woodstock City feel like our home again and that I will have a much different letter to write.

Gavin,

A few years ago while attending a service at Woodstock City I heard the words " the church should be the safest place for a gay teen". These words were music to my ears. I had always wondered if my views lined up with my church on this topic and I finally had confirmation that we were on the same page. A few

months ago when our 16 year old daughter came out to us I was worried about her encountering hateful people. She slowly and privately came out to her friends, extended family, small group leaders and her small group and I must say that I was so touched by how everyone embraced my girl. Their words of love, acceptance and encouragement brought happy grateful tears to my eyes. These encounters reinforced my love for my church. On June 10 my daughter posted a beautiful “love letter” to the gay community and for the first time publicly declared that she is gay. It was part of a campaign for PRIDE month and I couldn’t be prouder of the words she wrote. The comments and text she received were so positive and uplifting. Then on Sunday June 17 when my daughter a life long North Point attender and 5 year volunteer arrived to do sound check before she was to lead worship at



the 9am service and then planned on staying to lead her 2nd grade small group (of 3 years) at the 11am service was taken aside by Christy Jones before the 9 am and told that because she was gay that she was no longer allowed to be in a leadership position at the church. Christy is someone my daughter has looked up to, loved and respected for years. She is the person my daughter wanted to baptize her and she is the person that crushed my girls love for all things Woodstock City by telling her that her church no longer thinks she's a good role model for children. Christy did not use these words but that is what was taken from the conversation. My daughter left with her her head held high and somehow managed to maintain her composure until she got to her car. Kaitlyn has always felt like Woodstock City was her home and the volunteers, children in her small group and her



InsideOut small group were her extended family. My girl volunteered the first two services, attended the 1:00 adult service and then went back at 4:30 for InsideOut. Kaitlyn “hosts” a bible study in her car before school and writes and inspirational Christian blog. This is a girl that is on fire for the Lord and is always bringing friends to InsideOut because she knows how important it is for everyone to have a personal relationship with their Heavenly Father. Kaitlyn is in every way someone that is a great role model. I often hear from adults at Woodstock City and elsewhere that they either want to be like Kaitlyn when they “grow up “ or they want their children to be like her. I don’t know why “the safest place for a gay teen” has a policy that will not allow gay people to be in leadership but I do know that your policy has cost you one of your best volunteers and most loyal members. She now feels

like her UpStreet family has disowned her and that she is only conditionally allow back in her home. Thankfully her faith is strong enough that this act of discrimination did not put out her fire for God and her desire to teach others. We as a family are searching for a church that will accept my daughter for who she is and will allow her to do what she feels called to do and that is to use her many talents to teach children about the love of God. I hope that in reading this letter you reconsider your policy on letting gay people volunteer in every position in your church. LGBT people should be treated the same as everyone else that wants to be a part of your church and being a part of your church is getting involved through volunteering and joining a small group because we all know that circles are better than rows. 22 years ago when I started attending North Point it changed my life and I could not

be more grateful for the influence it has had on my marriage and my children. It breaks my heart to be searching for a new church home but our family can no longer be part of an organization that does not see the value in our gay daughter simply because she loves differently. I believe that Kaitlyn was made on purpose and for a purpose and that my daughter being gay was no accident. She is an amazing and unique human being. I was recently reminded of those words on your UpStreet Instagram post. I am attaching a copy of the Instagram post that set all of this in motion so that you know what was said. Thank you for your time. I hope this letter is the start to making all North Point environments safe for the LGBT community.

Blessings,  
Jennifer O'Rourke

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Sent from my iPhone

