

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK: Another cultural icon goes 'woke'

By William Perkins
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The venerable Sports Illustrated magazine took a deep dive into the country's culture battle when the publication breathlessly announced last week that the cover of the 2021 swimsuit edition will feature a transgender model for the first time ever. In this case, the cover "girl" is a male who has transitioned to female and apparently undergone the necessary surgery and hormone treatments to make the switch a reality (of a sort).

Leyna Bloom, age 27, is a resident of New York City. Bloom is fairly famous in the city's ballroom dancing community and makes a living as a model and actress in minor movies.

Regarding the Sports Illustrated gig, Bloom recently posted on an Instagram account, "This moment heals a lot of pain in the world. We deserve this moment... Many girls like us don't have the chance to live our dreams, or to live long at all. I hope my cover empowers those, who are struggling to be seen, feel valued."

Bloom is the second publicly-announced transgender person to appear in the 85-year-old magazine. Brazilian model Valentina Sampaio, then age 23 and also a male-to-female transition

case, was the first when chosen for an inside page of the 2020 swimsuit issue.

Sampaio has also been celebrated as trend-setter Vogue magazine's first transgender cover in 2017, and made Victoria's Secret history when chosen to model the company's overpriced underwear in 2019.

Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue editor-in-chief M J Day was positively giddy over the magazine's decision to put Bloom on the cover. "Leyna is legendary in the world of activism, strikingly gorgeous, and has an undeniable sense of self that shines through the minute she walks on set," Day said in making the announcement.

"Her story represents one grounded in resilience, and we couldn't be more thrilled to help her tell it. Her presence as the first trans woman of color to be in our issue is a result of her lifetime dedication to forging her own path," Day gushed.

To start, Christians should not be patronizing the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, even if it is an American cultural icon. First published in 1964 to boost readership at the time of year when few major sports stories were available, the swimsuit issue has devolved into soft core pornography with barely-there outfits that leave little to the imagination.

Self-appointed arbiters of fashion and culture would argue that's the problem of the male viewing audience, but it's also a problem *for* men. God made men and women irresistible to each other for a number of reasons, but the sin of lust is not one of them.

Men and women alike generally don't need much titillation to be drawn into a perversion of God's perfect plan for His highest creations. American culture is awash in all forms of sexual temptation, and the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue is a prime example. It's not harmless fun. Stay away from it.

Keep your children – boys and girls – away from it to protect their hearts and minds.

Now to the subject of mainstreaming transgenderism in this country. At present, anyone can declare themselves transgendered. They don't necessarily have to avail themselves of the necessary hormone treatments and surgeries.

That has allowed a man who still has his original biological body parts, for example, to declare himself female and parade around totally naked in the women's locker room at places like Evergreen State University in Washington State, even when six-year-old girls are in there changing for swim class.

Transgenderism is also forcing aspiring girls and young women out of competitive sports. U.S. President Joe Biden, a Democrat, has decreed by executive order that transgenders can compete in sports using their preferred gender. Given the physical makeup of men versus women, it's difficult to compete with a male who declares himself a female for the purpose of participating in women's sports.

Young women competing against male-to-female conversions are losing out on such opportunities as high school championships, college sports scholarships, and Olympic medals, to name only three problems. (Yes, transgendered athletes are allowed to participate in the Olympic Games.)

Finally, there's just no getting around the way God intended for each of us to be. If one is born male, he is a male throughout his life. If one is born female, she is a female throughout her life. It doesn't matter what we "think" or "feel" we are. We can't change some very important aspects of our being, simply by declaring we don't like who we are.

That point is driven home by the recent introduction of a new prescription drug called Descovy for PReP®. Among the disclaimers on the drug's website is this: "It is not for use in people assigned female at birth..." When it comes to base, we

are who we are as God created us, and just pronouncing ourselves something else really doesn't change fundamental biology.

Our responsibility as Christians is to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. If we do that job as Jesus explained it to us (Matthew 28:18-20), we will bring sinners to Jesus and let Him change their hearts and lives – and lifestyles.

All sinners. We don't get to pick and choose. Let's get busy.