

GOING SOFT ON HOMOSEXUALITY:

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE MINDS OF CHRISTIANS TODAY?

A short commentary on the problem and some helpful papers and articles.
Version 2.3

“History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.”
-- General Douglas MacArthur

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Introductory Comments

I was initially going to write an extensive article on this subject. I now feel that this is not necessary because there is such an upsurge in materials proving the abominable nature of homosexuality.

The reason was not because of the recent, aggressiveness of the homosexual lobby and their allies in the universities and media etc, but because of the incredible soft stance by some within the Churches that obey the Torah.

Today some are aghast at the possibility of speaking out on homosexuality and lobby extensively members not to. They admit that they are of the 1968 generation which rose up against Western civilisation and Christian basis for Anglo-Saxon-Keltic values. I am sorry but that is our calling and our duty (amongst many others) for the Churches to speak out on such sins. Watering-down this duty may lead some to accept such perversion in some form or one way or another.

Don't think it won't happen!

Already the unthinkable has happened in a number of moral issues such as:

- Abortion – nothing is being done to enforce Biblical principles on this issue
- Euthanasia – no articles or preaching against this practice
- Feminism – no article or teaching showing how wrong this is
- Interracial marriages – the media, rock videos, movies etc are being permitted to promote this to members without the spiritual mother having anything to say to counter this sin.

Remember: it wasn't so many years ago that some were crying out that if we rid ourselves of 'strange' and unique doctrines such as church eras, place(s) of safety, Assyrian identity of Germany etc we would then have greater growth and be more acceptable to the world. They said we should 're-word' our statements so that we don't appear strange to the world. Then we would grow with new members pouring in – yet it hasn't happened and it won't.

Others are now openly saying here that we should adopt political correctness to be accepted by the world and to avoid persecution. To them, the Bible has taught political correctness all along.

Huh?

Consider the facts:

- When the Church was doctrinally conservative, then we had great growth. But when we watered-down truths, then we went backward in membership, unity and truth;
- The Churches of this world have undergone similar experiences. Every time they accept Left-Liberal beliefs, they shrank further. The people that took over these churches inherited the assets, but lost the members and any moral authority whatsoever. Instead, their members fled to home groups, small community churches or conservative churches. It is no different among the Churches and will get worse if we soften our stance on homosexuality, interracial marriages and such like.

If such attitudes persist, the political correctness creeping into the Churches will only get worse and engulf it. What will God do to the Church then?

Some conservative and authentic Christians are being goaded into accepting a soft stance by the following liberal well-thought out and tried methodology:

1. push their point-of-view in a 'loving' and 'caring' manner
2. portray those that do not have this view as extremists and callous
3. attempt to convince the conservative that any disagreement with them is hopeless and that their liberal cause will 'inevitably' win. They do this to forge a psychology of defeat upon the conservative – pressing a defeatist attitude into them and one of feeling they have an uphill battle which cannot be one. It is too exhausting – just give in!
4. they then convince the conservative that they must not try to stand up to the problem. Indeed, they will exert such psychology of fear on them that the conservative eventually flees from their long-held and precious point-of-view, feeling that they are helpless and begin to think that they may have been wrong all along. Yet the old view still holds sway within him. So, what he does is compromise and water-down.

He presto! The minority liberal has won and many of these conservatives just cannot see it. As the saying goes: 'never so blind as those that will not see'. They have 'seared their conscience' and feel that the compromise is a win – stalling for time or whatever other self-delusion enters their heart. But the scripture states:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9 – RSV)

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having **their conscience seared** with a hot iron" (1Tim 4:2 - KJV)

This is no more apparent than with the homosexual debate and the insidious slide toward acceptance or soft attitude toward it. If this is not a form of apostasy, then no apostasy can possibly exist! Merely holding a soft attitude toward homosexuality or other new age apostasies such as abortion, euthanasia, radical feminism and such like will lead to the total acceptance of these evils. These attitudes are not that of an authentic Christian.

Conservative, you have nothing to loose but your shackles of fear! You fear for no reason at all over a number of issues. What is your problem?

Don't you know that if you fear you sin! Stop thinking in your heart that such decisions at compromise are acts of wisdom when they are instead acts of sin:

“For **God hath not given us the spirit of fear**; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (II Tim 1:7)

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, **and I will not fear** what man shall do unto me.” (Heb 13:6)

“There **is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment**. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (I John 4:18)

Yet I am struck by the number of conservative Protestant sites attacking homosexuality – the strength of their essays, websites and seminars put us to shame. For instance, I recommend that one visits <http://www.narth.com/> which has some good resources in our fight against political correctness and the homosexual lobby.

While many political conservatives and Protestants speak out in accordance with scripture, some cringe and seem to run for cover. Why is this so? What is the cause? If we can understand the root cause for such behaviour, then we can apply the remedy to getting back on the track on this subject.

The Bible gives plenty of examples of bravery, even unto death. For instance we are told in the book of Acts:

“And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” (Acts 5:40-42)

Teaching Jesus Christ is not just about His name or His life in the first century. A name is a Hebraism meaning all that He is and what he stands for: his doctrines, beliefs, principals, standards, values and so on.

“And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, {had taught many: Gr. had made many disciples}

Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:19-22)

Note: nothing stopped them from preaching the truth!

Now turn to the famous ‘armour of God’ chapter in Ephesians 6 (specifically verses 7-13) and notice that no backplate is mention. Why?

It would seem that what God is inspiring Paul to convey to us is that we must face the enemy, not run from him it.

He further informs us in 1Tim 6:12:

“**Fight the good fight** of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

He didn’t tell us to be cowards, but warriors! And as we are told in Luke 24:46-47:

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

The True Gospel has always been accompanied by a warning about the sins of one’s contemporary generation. So today it would be radical feminism, homosexuality, stem cell research, euthanasia, abortion and such like.

Therefore, to say that we should not warn the world of its sins is most inaccurate. And to say that we should only preach about the Gospel is doctrinal change that has not been authorised for we have never taught that. The problem is that many are not hearing messages or seeing articles countering this world's views on this and other social issues. As such, they absorb the world's Leftist positions. Particularly the youth.

But in the letter to the Romans Paul says:

“Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through him that loved us.
For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”. (v 37-39)

So what is there to fear? (Rev 21:8).

Surrendering to Political Correctness

Now let us consider why some are not speaking out. Here are the likely reasons:

- Fear of what the world may do or accuse them of (eg discrimination)

- Lack of understanding of legislation. Out of the 200 or so nations in the world, there MAY be just one or two that do not permit public and democratic views on the subject. This trend may grow, but there is no need to fast forward what may happen in the future into the Church now.

Remember what the scriptures state in 2Peter 2:1-11, 22:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies [such as political correctness], even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves.

Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;

if he condemned the cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah** by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—

if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings;

yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.

...

Of them the proverbs are true: "**A dog returns to its vomit,**" and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

What does ‘dog’ mean in this context?

In *Strange Facts about the Bible*, Webb Garrison writes that the term ‘dog’ used in the Bible, often refers to homosexuals and male prostitutes:

“This enigmatic prohibition stems from the fact that in Elizabethan English “dog” was used as a euphemism for a male sex deviate. So, in translating it was natural to employ the term for what in the original Hebrew meant “male prostitute.”” (page 97)

Refer to Deut. 23:18 regarding this. Turn also to Phil. 3:2 where the term “dog” is used:

“almost always certainly refers to sexual deviates, common in Greek cities of his [Paul’s] day.” (ibid)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is famous for his speech *A World Split Apart*, given at Harvard Class Day Afternoon Exercises, Thursday, June 8, 1978. The speech provides valuable insights into the mind of the liberal product of the 1968 revolution:

“If humanism were right in declaring that man is born to be happy, he would not be born to die. Since his body is doomed to die, his task on earth evidently must be of a more spiritual nature. It cannot be unrestrained enjoyment of everyday life. It cannot be the search for the best ways to obtain material goods and then cheerfully get the most out of them. It has to be the fulfillment of a permanent, earnest duty so that one's life journey may become an experience of moral growth, so that one may leave life a better human being than one started it. It is imperative to review the table of widespread human values. Its present incorrectness is astounding. It is not possible that assessment of the President's performance be reduced to the question of how much money one makes or of unlimited availability of gasoline. **Only voluntary, inspired self-restraint can raise man above the world stream of materialism.**”

He later states that

“A Decline in Courage [ie unnecessary fear] may be the most striking feature which an outside observer notices in the West in our days. The Western world [and so the Church] has lost its civil courage, both as a whole and separately, in each country, each government, each political party and of course in the United Nations. Such a decline in courage is particularly noticeable among the ruling groups and the intellectual elite [again, so with the Church. But certainly HWA could not be accused of such], causing an impression of loss of courage by the entire society. Of course there are many courageous individuals but they have no determining influence on public life. Political and intellectual bureaucrats show depression, passivity and perplexity in their actions and in their statements and even more so in theoretical reflections to explain how realistic, reasonable as well as intellectually and even morally warranted it is to base state policies on weakness and cowardice. And decline in courage is ironically emphasized by occasional explosions of anger and inflexibility on the part of the same bureaucrats when dealing with weak governments and weak countries, not supported by anyone, or with currents which cannot offer any resistance. But they get tongue-tied and paralyzed when they deal with powerful governments and threatening forces, with aggressors and international terrorists.

“Should one point out that from ancient times decline in courage has been considered the beginning of the end?” [be forewarned, Churches of God]

He then poses a warning which we, of all people, need to take heed of:

“Western society [read Church] has given itself the organization best suited to its purposes, based, I would say, on the letter of the law. The limits of human rights and righteousness are determined by a system of laws; such limits are very broad. People in the West [read Church] have acquired considerable skill in using, interpreting and manipulating law, even though laws tend to be too complicated for an average person to understand without the help of an expert. Any conflict is solved according to the letter of the law and this is considered to be the supreme solution. If one is right from a legal point of view, nothing more is required, nobody may mention that one could still not be entirely right, and urge self-restraint, a willingness to renounce such legal rights, sacrifice and selfless risk: it would sound simply absurd. One almost never sees voluntary self-

restraint. Everybody operates at the extreme limit of those legal frames. An oil company is legally blameless when it purchases an invention of a new type of energy in order to prevent its use. A food product manufacturer is legally blameless when he poisons his produce to make it last longer: after all, people are free not to buy it.

“I have spent all my life under a communist regime and I will tell you that a society without any objective legal scale is a terrible one indeed. But a society with no other scale but the legal one is not quite worthy of man either. **A society which is based on the letter of the law and never reaches any higher is taking very scarce advantage of the high level of human possibilities.** The letter of the law is too cold and formal to have a beneficial influence on society. Whenever the tissue of life is woven of legalistic relations, there is an atmosphere of moral mediocrity, paralyzing man's noblest impulses.

“And it will be simply impossible to stand through the trials of this threatening century with only the support of a legalistic structure.”

In other words, following merely the bare essentials of the law and not reaching to its higher plain, the spiritual intent, leaves wide open the means to water-down even the basic letter!

And so it is with the argument for ‘Christian homosexuality’.

Christian Homosexuality?

Now some argue that there are legitimate ‘Christian homosexuals’ – members that are Christian, yet have a ‘problem’. According to this theory they are struggling with this problem and we should not do anything to affect their membership (tell that to the innocent members forced out of various congregations because they hold to the true doctrines.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Some are now arguing that homosexuals can attend Church services so long as they contain their inclinations. Where they get this from we have no idea. Certainly HWA would not approve this at all and there is no evidence that he ever did.

One other argument goes something like this: ‘people sin anyway, so if we excluded homosexuality we have to exclude everyone’. What they forget is this:

- Certain categories of people are to be removed from the congregation or prevented from entering the congregation;
- Homosexuality is so horrendous to God, that it is treated very harshly in scripture, much more so than most other sins;
- It is a disgusting and awful perversion, much worse than most other sexual sins.

As such, it cannot be compared to the ‘normal’, ‘run of the mill’ sins. So why are they using such terminology? To answer this question, refer above to the fear factor, for the answers.

The term 'Christian homosexual' is an oxymoron and used with intent to confuse and then to water-down resistance. All sorts of soppy language such as 'God loves them' is used to gain acceptance to this new teaching.

"But even more abuse of language follows this disconnection of language from reality. We now hear of a condition called "homophobia" which etymologically means a (pathological) fear of the same, but is used to refer to a fear of homosexuality. Thus we have "homosexuality" equated with "sexuality" (as a legitimate form thereof) reduced to "homo" (whose original meaning contradicts "sexual") and then made the object of a supposedly pathological fear instead of (what is closer to reality) a natural revulsion for the pathological.

A whole new universe of discourse is thus built upon this linguistic invention of a reality where it is a matter of indifference what your "sexual" preferences are or your "sexual" life style is. All very convenient for those who wish to indulge sexual pleasure without any natural restraint - but a horrible delusion which only too soon will have its natural nemesis. For it is a flight from reality; more than a moral breakdown, socially speaking, as G.K. Chesterton noted very early in the piece, it is a mental breakdown.

What is particularly disturbing at the present time, however, is the way in which the "leaders" of our society are so easily deceived by this change of language and are drawn into the world of unreality which it fosters. At this stage one would think that it is time we woke up to what is happening in our use or rather abuse of language. There are good reasons, however, for fearing that we will not until it is too late." (*Language & Life*, DG Boland 1997).

[See section 7 of this paper *Language and Society*]

As in the world, so in the Church - language and 'persuade' society (or, in our case, the Church) to water-down their stances and accept the universities' and media's anti-Bible social change agenda.

From various postings on forums advocating the title of 'Christian homosexual', it is alarming to see how far into the psyche political correctness has marched in the Churches of God. This is just one of dozens of postings on various issues by members who want to cozy up as much as they can to political correctness - yet feel safe by keeping the sabbath and holy days - as if that is all there is to God's Way. This is only going to get worse and worse as some work their way up in the Church (in the main they seldom openly espouse their beliefs or they keep them well hidden - and they deny it when confronted. They prefer to be 'subtle', seeding their ideas all over the place).

See what I mean?

What is this doctrinal change that has taken place without any approval - that one can be a 'Christian homosexual'? What a massive compromise with the world and that WILL lead to further softening of standards. It seems to us that:

1. One can be a repentant homosexual who becomes a Christian;
2. one can be a homosexual who wants to be a Christian;

3. one can be a homosexual who does not wish to be a Christian (or is not called);
4. one can be a homosexual who was a Christian. BUT, one cannot be a 'Christian homosexual' that several are espousing.

Who made this doctrinal change - there are just toooooo many of these strange and unthinking politically correct ideas floating around? Similarly, one cannot be a 'Christian Sunday-observer', 'Christian adulterer', 'Christian murderer' etc. One can only be a Christian. But one can be a Christian who was a FORMER homosexual or former this or that who suffers temptations. But one cannot be a 'Christian homosexual' which implies staying homosexual mentally while entering the CoGs.

Man, I have heard so many arguments from people over this. Some clever and others silly. But the bottom line is that people want to feel comfortable with the world; they don't wish to offend the homosexual lobby (but they are quite prepared to offend loyal members); certain ones no doubt want to use this as a stepping stone to the next level - that has always been the case. Step-by-step.

Here is what one concerned Church member wrote in late 2006:

"The homosexual issue has actually been around since just after most of us left WCG. I remember when they changed the verbiage about it. They changed sin to state that it was the "practice of homosexuality" ... ie acting upon it. Looking at it 12 years down the line now, I want to marvel. Having the Holy Spirit means that our minds are "transformed" not just "conformed" ... there is a renewing of the mind to God's way of thinking not simple conformance to a standard (at least not forever) ... In a sense there is no surprise in any changes they make. Once a person continues in sin, without repentance, they are cut off from the Holy Spirit. They can't help it. They are going to keep coming up with more and more that is against God because the carnal mind is enmity against God ... to quote a concept. I know how you feel though.

To hear of the next thing they come up with is still a mind boggler."

This not so subtle change in language is leading us into the next step on this issue.

All political observers know that the use of language is the biggest tool that the Left have used over the past 50 years - and now it is entering the Church.

A few ask the question "How should a former homosexual be treated?" (note: there is no such thing as a 'Christian homosexual').

Answer: like we always did in the WCG - with respect like everyone else! Why not?

If one were an ex-homosexual who now hates that sin, members would treat him as all others. But, in this politically correct charged world, it would be best for the ministry to check out such a one first prior to them attending Church.

However, no homosexual has the right to come along appealing to the liberal bleeding heart types and get them onside against the majority of members. It is a

well taught tactic by the homosexual lobby groups - get as much sympathy as possible and get the liberal to take a soft line while attacking conservatives.

This clever tactic, taught at their gatherings and universities, is used to soften up individuals and organisations prior to the final assault on them.

So what does this all tell us?

Concluding Remarks

1. This tells us that some Churches are in immediate danger and about 50% on the way to accepting the Left's ideology! Yet those advocating compromise with the world cannot fathom why the Church is not being blessed. So they seek further compromise with the world, thinking that this would arrest the Church's decline. Yet they are utterly blind to the fact that it is compromise with the world that is causing the withdrawal of God's blessings from the Church.
2. We cannot make exceptions for homosexuals 'trying to overcome' and not for adulterers. Strange days indeed.
3. We must not have a different, more supposed 'caring' attitude toward it than the Bible.
4. It is no use placing homosexuality on the same plain as other sins – because it is treated differently and condemned differently in God's Word.
5. I am stunned by the extensive amount of public proclamations against homosexuality by conservative Protestant ministers, websites and books. Yet they are not in legal trouble! What does Christ think of all of this? This senseless and baseless fear is not based on Biblical foundations.

So what on earth is the problem? Could someone explain that to us please?

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are **bold** as a lion”
(Proverbs 28:1)

“And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more **bold** to speak the word **without fear**” (Phil 1:14)

“But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were **bold** in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

For **our exhortation was not of deceit** [no watering-down of God's Truth], nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness” (1Thess 2:2-5)

Final thoughts:

The following comment is not aimed at anyone in particular, but it may be time to take it to heart:

The way things are now developing, the Church has lost much of its community of authority to teach, believe and discuss the Bible.

Instead, it has become a voluntary social gathering where many are not interested in being reminded of the problems of the world (such as homosexuality) or that political correctness is poisoning us to death. We are being constrained by fear and a false sense of 'love' and toleration for left-wing and extremist ideas.

The decline in numbers and influence of the Church will continue until such time as we are all zealous and acknowledge that authentic Christianity is what was taught and preached by HWA, not by watering-down the truth and compromising with the world.

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- <http://www.narth.com> (National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality website)
- <http://www.pts.edu/gagnonr.html> (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary)
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Relevant New Testament Scriptures

(2 Pet. 2:4-9 and Jude 7 are both references to Genesis 19:4-11)

2 Peter 2:4 - 9(NASB)

4 “ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;
5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;
6 and if He condemned the cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction** by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter;
7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men
8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds),
9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment . . .”

Jude 7 (NASB)

7 “ Just as **Sodom and Gomorrah** and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after **strange flesh**, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”

Romans 1:24-27(NASB)

24 “Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them.
25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
27 and in the same way also **the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts** and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11(NASB)

9 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **effeminate**, nor **homosexuals**,
10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”

1 Timothy 1:9 - 11(NASB)

9 “ realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers
10 and immoral men and **homosexuals** and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,
11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”

Romans 13:13(NASB)

“Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in **sexual** promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.”

1 Corinthians 5:11 (NASB)

"But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an **immoral person**, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one."

Galatians 5:19-21(NASB)

19 "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: **immorality**, impurity, **sensuality**,
20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions,
factions,
21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I
have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of
God."

Ephesians 5:5 (NASB)

"For this you know with certainty, that no **immoral** or impure person or covetous man, who is
an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Philippians 3:2 (KJV)

"Beware of **dogs**, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."

Revelation 21:8 (NASB)

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers **and immoral persons**
and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and
brimstone, which is the second death."

Revelation 22:15

"Outside are the **dogs** and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and
the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."

The Old Testament Attitude to Homosexuality
***Expository Times* 102 (1991): 259-363**
By Gordon J Wenham *

*** The College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham**

That the Old Testament condemns homosexual acts is well known. Why it does so is a mystery. Various suggestions have been put forward. Driver and Miles¹ for example held that it was a development parallel to that in Mesopotamian law. The older Laws of Hammurapi do not mention the offence, whereas the Middle Assyrian laws condemn it. They suggested that a similar development occurred in Hebrew law. The earlier laws do not discuss homosexuality, while the latest (P) texts demand the death sentence for it (Lev 18:22, 20:13). Similarly Coleman² tries to derive the biblical attitude from the attitude of other nations, specifically the Egyptians. Indeed he suggests there was a common Semitic consensus opposing homosexual practice.

Now it cannot be ruled out *a priori* that the Old Testament shared its neighbours' attitudes to homosexuality. There does seem to have been a large measure of agreement in the ancient world as far as heterosexuality was concerned. Marriage law and

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customs, for example, the repudiation of pre-marital intercourse and adultery, the acceptance of polygamy and divorce, seem to be much the same throughout all those Near Eastern cultures for which evidence is available.³ The most obvious difference between Israel and its neighbours as far as heterosexual morality is concerned lies in the area of incest. Here the Old Testament rules,⁴ forbidding union with consanguines and affines of the first and second-degree, go much farther than their neighbours, who sometimes even countenanced unions of consanguines of the first degree, e.g. brother and sister. So it could be that in repudiating homosexual practice the Old Testament is simply adopting the attitudes of surrounding nations.

However the evidence at present available suggests that this is not the case. The Old Testament rejection of all kinds of homosexual practice is apparently unique in the ancient world. Most of the ancient Near East adopted an attitude to homosexuality very similar to that of classical Greece⁵ and Rome which simply accepted it as long as it was done among consenting adults. Indeed Greeks and Romans often approved homosexual acts between adult men and youths where it was part of an ongoing educational relationship. This practice of pederasty does not seem to have been approved in the ancient orient, but in other respects the classical and oriental outlooks seem similar.

Since the Near Eastern background to the biblical pronouncements is little known, it is my first purpose to sketch it briefly. I then propose to address the question that this new reading of the Old Testament material inevitably raises: what prompted the revolution in the attitudes towards homosexuality expressed in the Bible.

We therefore begin with a view of the cultures adjacent to ancient Israel. Mesopotamian law and attitudes are carefully and thoroughly expounded in the article 'Homosexualität' in *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* (4. 559-68). From iconographic evidence dating from 3000 BC to the Christian era it is clear that homosexual practice was an accepted part of the

Mesopotamian scene. This conclusion is confirmed by many literary and legal texts in which homosexual activity is mentioned.

Most interesting are the two laws in the Middle Assyrian collection devoted to it. MAL 19 involves a false accusation of passive homosexuality. Someone who accuses his neighbour of being involved frequently in such relationships and does not substantiate it is beaten, fined and has some mark of shame⁶ inflicted on him. This law is very similar to the preceding one where a man is falsely accused of allowing his wife to be used as a prostitute. In both cases the accused man's reputation is at stake. He is being effeminate or unmanly in allowing his wife or himself to be exploited in this way. There are many texts indicating that passive homosexuals, though not guilty of breaking the law, were despised, so to accuse someone of effeminacy, especially in the masculine militaristic society of Assyria, was a grave slur on their reputation.

Apparently closer to the biblical prohibition is MAL 20 'If a man has intercourse with another and they indict him and prove him guilty, they will have intercourse with him and turn him into a eunuch'.⁷ Certain things are clear about this law. It is the active male partner who is punished. The passive partner escapes all censure. This is unlike the punishment in the Bible (Lev 20:13) where both parties are punished. It is also unlike the oriental punishment of adulterers where both male and female parties receive the same penalty, unless circumstances suggest that the woman was raped. So here it seems likely that it is not because homosexual acts were forbidden that only one party is punished, but because one man imposed himself on the other that he is condemned. In other words MAL 20 is dealing with homosexual rape rather than an act between consenting adults.⁸

The *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* therefore concludes: 'Homosexuality in itself is thus nowhere condemned as licentiousness, as immorality, as social disorder, or as transgressing any human or divine law. Anyone could practise it freely, just as anyone could visit a prostitute, provided it was done without violence and without compulsion, and preferably as far as taking the passive role was concerned, with specialists.⁹ That there was nothing religiously amiss with homosexual love between men is seen by the fact that they prayed for divine blessing on it.¹⁰ It seems clear that the Mesopotamians saw nothing wrong in homosexual acts between consenting adults.

Nor were homosexuals shut away in Mesopotamia. There were homosexual cult prostitutes, who took part in public processions, singing, dancing, wearing costumes, sometimes wearing women's clothes and carrying female symbols, even at times pretending to give birth. These professional homosexuals were forced to take the passive role in intercourse and for this reason were despised as unmanly. Sometimes they are called 'dogs'. 'It therefore appears that these types of person, as in other places and periods including our own, formed a shady sub-culture where all sorts of ambiguities, mixtures and transformations were possible.'¹¹

Unfortunately there are no studies of comparable thoroughness and sophistication to elucidate the

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attitudes of other ancient Near Eastern peoples. Hittite Law 189 states that 'If a man violates his daughter it is a capital crime. If a man violates his son, it is a capital crime'. This juxtaposition of intercourse with one's mother, daughter, and son, show that the last union is not banned because it is homosexual, but because it is incestuous. The eminent Hittitologist H. A. Hoffner observes: 'A man who sodomizes his son is guilty of *hurkel* (illegal intercourse) because his partner is his son, not because they are of the same sex'.¹² Later he notes, 'it

would appear that homosexuality was not outlawed among the Hittites'.¹³ It therefore appears that the Hittites shared the same attitude to homosexuality that the Assyrians did.

The evidence from Egypt seems more ambiguous and has been interpreted in different ways. Goedicke¹⁴, followed cautiously by Westerndorf¹⁵, argues that homosexual acts were not regarded as immoral where there was mutual consent. This interpretation may be supported by the grave of two friends which may imply that a homosexual relationship could be continued in the after-life. In a myth it is told how the god Seth attempted to rape his younger brother Horus. He later boasts of his manly achievements to the other gods. In iconography of the Amarna period 'The difference between the sexes appears to be almost obliterated... the ideal image of the body was virtually the same for men and women. It is the male image adapting to the female.'¹⁶

On the other hand in the Book of the Dead chapter 125 the soul twice protests his innocence in the words 'I have not had sexual relations with a boy'.¹⁷ A story of king Neferkare spending the night with one of his generals may be told to illustrate the corruption of the king. However, both these examples involve relations between unequals where coercion may be inferred. In which case it may well be that Egyptians saw nothing immoral in homosexual acts where there was mutual consent. If this is correct, there would appear to be very little difference between their attitude and those of the Assyrians and Hittites.

Ugaritic texts give no clue to Canaanite attitudes.¹⁸ However, passages such as Lev 18:3, 24-30 with their blanket condemnation of the sexual practices of the Canaanites and Egyptians may well imply that among other things the Canaanites tolerated homosexual practice. And if the story of Sodom (Gen 19) is supposed to illustrate Canaanite practice, the insinuation is even clearer.

To sum up: The ancient Near East was a world in which the practice of homosexuality was well known. It was an integral part of temple life at least in parts of Mesopotamia, and no blame appears to have attached to its practice outside of worship. Those who regularly played the passive role in intercourse were despised for being effeminate, and certain relationships such as father-son or pederasty were regarded as wrong, but otherwise it was regarded as quite respectable.

The Old Testament Picture

The stories of Sodom and Gibeah may be better understood against this background. As commentators have realized the demand to 'know' the visitors to Sodom must be a demand that they submit to homosexual intercourse.¹⁹ That Lot offers his daughters instead and the Levite his concubine shows that the demand was for sexual intercourse (Gen 19:5-8; Jdg 19:22-26). Given ancient oriental attitudes it is by no means strange that the men of Sodom asked to have intercourse with men in Lot's household. What is surprising and deeply shocking is their total disregard for the accepted principles of eastern hospitality. Visitors, whether anticipated or not, must be treated with the utmost courtesy and kindness. Here the men of Sodom show utter disregard for the rules of hospitality, and suggest Lot's visitors submit to the most demeaning treatment they can devise, a treatment elsewhere used on prisoners of war.²⁰ So the sin of Sodom is not primarily homosexuality as such, but an assault on weak and helpless visitors who according to justice and tradition they ought rather to have protected (Ezk 16:49).

Yet having said this, undoubtedly the homosexual intentions of the inhabitants of Sodom adds a special piquancy to their crime. In the eyes of the writer of Genesis and his readers it showed that they fully deserve to be described as 'wicked, great sinners before the LORD' (13:13) and that the consequent total overthrow of their city was quite to be expected. It is

often noted by commentators that the destruction of Sodom parallels the destruction of the world by Noah's flood. In both cases we have a complete population being obliterated and only one family escaping thanks to divine intervention. There are many verbal parallels between the stories too. It may also be noted that the motive for divine judgment is similar in both cases. The flood was sent because of the great wickedness of man demonstrated by the illicit union of women with supernatural beings, 'the sons of God'. In the case of Sodom another type of illicit sexual intercourse is at least contributory in showing it deserves its destruction.

This leads us on to consider the laws against homosexuality in the Old Testament. Though Middle Assyrian law punished homosexual assault and

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accusations of passive homosexuality (Middle Assyrian Laws A18-20), the biblical law is quite different. The key texts are Lev 18:22 and 20:13.

The exact terminology of these laws deserves note. Lev 18:22 states: 'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination'. This obviously prohibits the active type of homosexuality that was quite respectable in the ancient world. It should also be noted that the passive partner is just described as 'male', rather than 'man' or 'youth'. Clearly this very general term prohibits every kind of male-male intercourse not just pederasty which for example the Egyptians seem to have condemned. Finally, the practice is condemned as an 'abomination',²¹ one of the strongest condemnatory words in the Old Testament, for offences deemed specially heinous in God's sight.

Lev 20:13 states: 'If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them'. Lev 18 prohibits various acts but prescribes no penalties. Lev 20 does mention how offenders should be treated. Sometimes human punishment is decreed, sometimes it is left to God. Homosexuality here attracts the death penalty, which puts it on a par with adultery (Lev 20:10) or the worst cases of incest (Lev 20:11, 12). These were offences that nations outside Israel did view with extreme seriousness: but they never put homosexuality on the same level. Secondly it should be noticed that both parties in homosexual intercourse are punished equally: the passive partner and the active are both put to death. The use of the term 'lie' (here and in Lev 18:22) without any qualifying verb, e.g. 'seize and (lie)', and the equal punishment shows that consent to intercourse is assumed between the partners. Comparison with the laws on adultery shows that if it were a question of homosexual rape only the rapist would have been executed (cf. Deut 22:22, 23, 25). In other words the Old Testament bans every type of homosexual intercourse, not just forcible as the Assyrians did, or with youths (so the Egyptians). Homosexual intercourse where both parties consent is also condemned.

The two motive clauses also underline the culpability of both parties. 'Both of them have committed an abomination ... their blood is upon them.' The second clause occurs only in this chapter (vv.9, 11, 13, 16, 27) and in Ezk 18:13, 33:5 and apparently justifies the demand for the death penalty. It seems to be equivalent to the commoner phrase, 'his blood shall be on his head'. It appears to mean that if a man breaks such a law, he does so knowing the consequences, and therefore cannot object to the penalty imposed.

The laws just discussed cover both private (secular) homosexual acts and religious homosexuality. But in that homosexual male prostitution was well established in the ancient orient, it is not surprising that there are a number of laws aimed at this particular phenomenon and its associated practices. Dt 23:17 prohibits male and female cult prostitution in Israel. The following verse describes a male homosexual prostitute as a 'dog',

a description also found in Mesopotamian texts²² and in the book of Revelation (22:15). The books of Kings state that when Canaanite religious practices were introduced into Israel, so was cult prostitution and three reforming kings attempted to abolish the male prostitutes (1 Kgs 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs 23:7).

Since male prostitutes were sometimes castrated and often took part in ceremonies flaunting their effeminacy, it may well be that aversion to homosexuality partially explains the ban on castrated men participating in the public assembly, or on wearing women's clothes. The latter is described as 'an abomination to the LORD' (Dt 23:1; 22:5). It could well be that the law is banning anything suggestive of homosexual practice (cf. our summary of Mesopotamian attitudes).

Seen in their Near Eastern context the originality of the Old Testament laws on homosexuality is very striking. Whereas the rest of the ancient orient saw homosexual acts as quite acceptable provided they were not incestuous or forcible, the Old Testament bans them all even where both parties freely consented. How can we explain this innovation? To ascribe this to Israelite reaction against the customs of their neighbours is too simple, for such an explanation in fact explains nothing. Israel did not reject all the religious and moral practices of Canaan. They accepted some and rejected others. They offered similar sacrifices, but they refused to eat pigs. The Canaanites believed their gods heard prayer, so did Israel, but they maintained there was but one God. Similarly in the realm of sexual ethics, Israel accepted, like their contemporaries, that adultery was the great sin, that premarital sex was wrong, but Israel went much further in banning incest and homosexual intercourse. Aversion to Canaanite custom no more explains Israel's attitude to homosexuality than it does its preference for monotheism. That Canaanites practised homosexuality no doubt enhanced Israel's aversion to it (cf. British dislike of certain foreign habits), but it is not the fundamental motive for it.

It is now generally recognized that many of the most fundamental principles of Old Testament law are expressed in the opening chapters of Genesis. This applies to the laws on food, sacrifice, the sabbath as well as on sex. Gen 1 repeatedly insists

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that God created plants, fish, birds, and other animals to breed 'according to their kind'. God created the different plants and animals to reproduce according to their own particular type. Hence the law forbids any mixed breeding or acts that might encourage it (Lev 19:19; Dt 22:9-11). The worst case of mixed breeding is described in Gen 6:1-4) and that prompted the flood.

When Genesis comes to man's creation, it states that God deliberately created mankind in two sexes in order that he should 'be fruitful and multiply'. This is the first command given to man and is repeated after the flood; contrast the gods of Babylon who introduced various devices to curtail man's reproduction.²³ In that homosexual acts are not even potentially procreative, they have no place in the thinking of Gen 1. Nor do they fit in with Gen 2. There the lonely Adam is provided not with a second Adam, but with Eve. She is the helper who corresponds to him. She is the one with whom he can relate in total intimacy and become one flesh.

It therefore seems most likely that Israel's repudiation of homosexual intercourse arises out of its doctrine of creation. God created humanity in two sexes, so that they could be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Woman was man's perfect companion, like man created in the divine image. To allow the legitimacy of homosexual acts would frustrate the divine purpose and deny the perfection of God's provision of two sexes to support and complement one

another. St Paul's comment that homosexual acts are 'contrary to nature' (Rom 1:26) is thus probably very close to the thinking of the Old Testament writers.²⁴

References

- ¹ G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles, *The Assyrian Laws* (Oxford, Clarendon Press [1935]), 71.
- ² P. E. Coleman, *Christian Attitudes to Homosexuality* (SPCK [1980]), 52-57.
- ³ For a convenient summary cf. S. Greengus, 'Law in the OT' (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume), esp. 533-34.
- ⁴ For a discussion of Lev 18 and 20 cf. G. J. Wenham *The Book of Leviticus* (Eerdmans [1979]), 253-58, 279-80.
- ⁵ Cf. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Duckworth [1978]).
- ⁶ So G. Cardascia, *Les lois assyriennes* (du Cerf [1969]), 130.
- ⁷ The translation of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* Volume N, 198.
- ⁸ This is what Cardascia, *Les lois assyriennes*, 134-35 suggests. Bottero and Petschow in *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* 4, 462 are more dogmatic. 'The verb *niāku/nāku* ... implies a certain constraint on the part of the protagonist. Its literal translation would be "to do violence to" and almost "violate". It is precisely because the victim submits to violence that obliges its author to submit in his turn to violence himself.'
- ⁹ *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* 4, 467.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*, 468.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*, 465.
- ¹² H. A. Hoffner, 'Incest, Sodomy, and Bestiality in the Ancient Near East' in (*Orient and Occident: Essays in Honor of C. H. Gordon*, Neukirchen, Neukirchener Verlag [1973]), 83.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 85.
- ¹⁴ H. Goedicke, 'Unrecognized Sportings' (*Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt* 6 [1967], 97-102).
- ¹⁵ W. Westendorf, *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* 2, 1273.
- ¹⁶ L. Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (Routledge [1987]), 25-26.
- ¹⁷ A20; B27, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 34-35.
- ¹⁸ M. H. Pope, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, 416.
- ¹⁹ Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary* (SPCK [1986]), 301.
- ²⁰ M. H. Pope, *art. cit*, 416.
- ²¹ Cf. E. Gerstenberger in *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 2, 1051-55.
- ²² *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* 4, 465.
- ²³ Epic of Atrahasis 3:7:1-8.
- ²⁴ By 'contrary to nature' Paul clearly means 'contrary to the intention of the Creator', C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans I* (T. & T. Clark [1975]), 125. For an extended discussion of the New Testament teaching on homosexuality see the articles of D. F. Wright: 'Homosexuals or Prostitutes: The Meaning of *arsenokoitai*' (*Vigiliae Christianae* 38 [1984], 125-53), and 'Homosexuality in the Early Church' (in A. Higon, ed., *Sexuality and the Church*, Kingsway [1988], 39-50).

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Language and Society By Ian Heath

Sub-headings

Process

Diagram 4 Sequence of social change

Two language phenomena

Effect of Change on Language

Social changes produce changes in language. This affects values in ways that have not been accurately understood. Language incorporates social values. However, social values are only the same as linguistic values when the society is a stable and unchanging one. Once society starts changing, then language change produces special effects.

In the article **Problems of Language**, I presented the view that language was created so that the person could fulfil long-term desires.

The use of language forms a closed loop, since it is modelled on the loop of projection and introjection. The difference between the two loops is simply that the psychological one is based on individual meanings and the linguistic one on social values. This link between language and social values is one of identity, but ***only as long as society is static or is evolving slowly***. In a static society, the language is the society. Society is its language. The two are one.

Language and society are two different systems since the structure within language centres on the static signifier whilst the structure within consciousness orientates on the dynamic signified. In times of stability the dynamic structure of consciousness is put on hold, so linguistic values and social values are one. However, as society changes so the dynamic structure gradually comes into the foreground. Perhaps it is more accurate to put this effect the other way around: as the dynamic structure of consciousness becomes accentuated, so society begins to change.

As society changes, social values and linguistic values begin to diverge.

Language contains traditional values – this is what is implied in the ideas of social conditioning and social learning. In a static society, traditional values are unquestioned. Hence social learning takes the form of social conditioning. Social conditioning is the unquestioned or confused adherence to social norms, and occurs when society is taken to be self-referential. Society is the judge of its own needs.

The only circumstance that normally breaks social conditioning in some degree is change. Therefore in a period of fast social change, chaos occurs as social norms are questioned, altered and perhaps even rejected. New norms are slowly generated. This chaos ensures that society can no longer be regarded as being self-referential.

In this situation of chaos, language is grasped as being self-referential. Then language is no longer necessarily tied to social reality. In such times, values change as the values within language change and we may witness radical innovation in artistic genres.

For example, the nineteenth century saw the focus on art for art's sake, along with science for science's sake (neither art nor science were to be dependent of values external to themselves, such as social usefulness). Then the problem of grappling with the new possibilities of language produced the dense symbolism of Mallarmé. In twentieth-century literary theory the text has become autonomous and self-contained, and/or the reader has acquired total freedom in his interpretation of the text.

Process

To explain how this process happens I bring in politics. Consider a static, unchanging society. This has conservative, even right-wing, social values and a rigid hierarchy of authority or power. Society and politics have coalesced into a uniform model of conformism.

Initially this model suited contemporary needs. But as evolution progresses and new needs appear, which cannot be met under this model, so the existing social norms become a handicap. This restrictiveness on human development eventually becomes challenged. Activists and non-conformists begin to initiate social change by confronting the system of authority. Thinkers give direction to new ideas on freedom and justice. Left-wing politics are born.

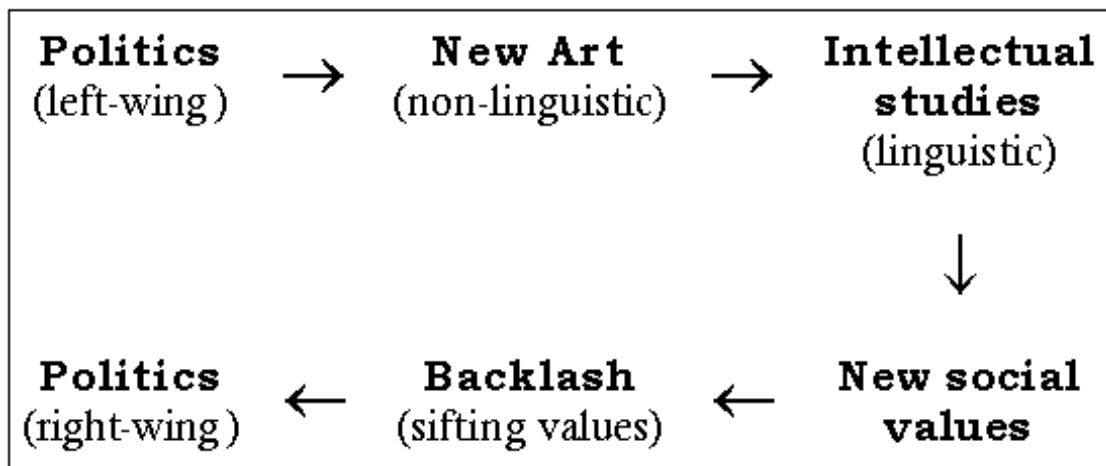
Social change intensifies emotional responses. These new intensities bring forth creative abilities in art. Change is always handled intuitively before it can be expressed in intellectual ideas. Art is the herald of linguistic change. New art is usually born in the catharsis stage of social abreaction.

Once new genres of art have become established, the intellectual attempts to verbalise their meanings and the reasons for their birth start to separate language values from social values. The clarification of such intellectual ideas is a slow process. Language is no longer necessarily tied to social reality: language becomes self-referential.

As social change moves into the stage of abreactional backlash the new linguistic values are sifted and only those needed to solve current problems are retained. Society again centres on right-wing politics ; such politics attempt to return society back into a stable, static state. If this attempt is successful, then the new model of stability is more in tune with contemporary needs than the previous model was. This stability occurs when social values have 'caught up' with the new linguistic values. Then once again society and language become one.

The overall sequence is given in diagram 4. The arrows can be read as 'leads to'. So left-wing politics leads to new art, which in turn leads to intellectual studies, etc.

Diagram 4 :
Sequence of Social Change



Note. The French Revolution misled nineteenth-century political theorists. Due to unusual circumstances, the peasantry became left-wing in their politics. This led some theorists to presume that being left-wing is the normal state of the bottom levels of society. Whereas, in my view, the normal state for all levels of society is to be right-wing, since the majority of people dislike social change and prefer traditional values rather than experimenting with new ones.

Different genres of art may move through this sequence at different speeds and at different times from each other. So there may be mini-sequences of social change overlapping each other.

The sequence of social change that I have outlined shows that any society is really a language community. The individual transforms his meanings into social values via language. Values have to become incorporated into language before they can become incorporated into the stock of social values. Language brings forth the social reality.

Language creates society

This relation is not apparent in static societies ; it is easy to assume that society antedates language. Even 'primitive' societies are no exception. A 'primitive' society is one where language use is primitive, and indicates hunter-gatherer tribes - yet a tribe cannot be established until the necessary linguistic signs for authority are created.

Society cannot be created until a group of people has some values in common. And values require a language to embed them and articulate them. It is language that brings people together and keeps them together. Language always precedes society. Even in small groups this relation holds: for example, in a political discussion group the people come together because they already have, or want to learn, a common political language.

Two Language Phenomena

1). Ethnic Destruction

Language is modelled on the loop of projection and introjection. This makes possible a destructive cultural phenomenon. When a foreign language is imposed on a group (or ethnic minority) that group is eventually destroyed. When a person changes his primary language, or even his culture, he automatically changes his pattern of projection and introjection. Hence his needs change. His old way of life disappears.

There are two qualifications to this view.

The rate of change depends on how related the languages are: the more related they are, the more gradual is the change. Secondly, immigrants may only speak their adopted language in their adopted society ; they may retain their ethnic language in their family settings. This retention of the ethnic language slows down the cultural destruction of the group.

Abandoning native languages leads to a 'melting pot' pattern of immigrant assimilation. This pattern cannot work in the long-term, since the immigrants' sense of identity is destroyed. A new sense of identity cannot be created without community support, and this is often lacking for the immigrant.

A cosmopolitan culture is much better than a melting pot culture, and is better suited to the widening possibilities in choice of values that is opening to the modern world. Therefore, in today's age of cosmopolitanism, it is bad politics and bad psychology to try to persuade immigrants to abandon their native language.

2). Pursuit of Truth

Times of change produce a special phenomenon: the pursuit of truth. In times of change, social values (representing tradition) and language values begin gradually to diverge because they begin to reflect different needs, those of tradition and those of modernity.

Within this 'gap' arises the possibility of pursuing the search for truth. This gap allows the spectator to view both social values and language as separate realities that are running on parallel courses. Truth is always the result of comparing the old with the new.

In a static society, social values and language are one ; there is no means of attempting a re-valuation of existing values. Tradition is the only mode of knowledge.

Hence, in a static society, the pursuit of truth can never arise.

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What the Bible *Really* Says About Homosexuality **By the Bethel Church of God**

The *Encyclopedia Of 7700 Illustrations*, (Garland Texas: Bible Communications) refers to a comment taken from the *Pastor's Manual* (Tan, P.L. 1996, c 1979). It states that a congregation is being established in Atlanta, Georgia, to serve the "largest homosexual population in the South." It is the 20th local church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches described as a "gay denomination." The National Institute of Mental Health estimates there are some 4 million men and women in the United States who are considered homosexuals, but some homosexual organizations estimate the number to be as high as 10 million (The Libronix Digital Library System, series X, logos research systems).

It is one thing to advocate the gay lifestyle based on secular arguments of one kind or another (gene proclivities, biological divergence, etc.), but quite another to use the Bible for support. Today, there are a number of "Christian gays" who insist the Bible does not condemn a loving relationship between two people of the same sex. This is the issue that will be examined in this article.

Material written by Christian gays informs us that many translations of the Bible reveal the personal biases of the translators, and that it is difficult to find English words to match the Hebrew and Greek original. Translators of the Bible, they tell us, assumed that everyone was heterosexual. Homosexual advocates insist that the "Holiness Code" of the Jews (Lev. 17–23) is no longer binding, and that it is not clear what the Apostle Paul meant when he addressed the issue in the New Testament. They tell us that Paul may have been referring to temple prostitution or people who are not innately gay or bisexual, engaging in homosexual acts. Also, that the Bible says almost nothing about homosexual feelings.

Their arguments include the view of many Christians today who do not feel Paul's writings are a useful guide for the ethics and morals of the twentieth century. They believe that Paul's writings should apply only to his day and to the people of the Mediterranean basin. Also, in ancient times there was a shortage of males due to the constant wars, and procreation was limited, but in our day there is a population explosion that threatens civilization. Therefore, they say Paul's criticisms about homosexuality are no longer valid.

Homosexual advocates insist that the New Covenant of grace is being ignored, and the Old Testament is emphasized for the purpose of condemnation. Furthermore, that the New Covenant is not concerned about gender roles. The New Covenant "did away" with all distinctions between clean and unclean, and that God affirms the love of heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Both Ruth and Naomi, and David and Jonathan are regarded as having same-sex relationships. Furthermore, Jesus had absolutely nothing to say about homosexuality. After all, we are told, God *is* love.

It is not in the scope of this paper to address in detail the arguments regarding the validity of the "Holiness Code," or what is required under the New Covenant. These issues have been largely addressed in various articles posted on our Web site. The interested reader may want to examine some of these articles. We will take a look, instead, at the various Scriptures that have been cited by gay advocates to substantiate that lifestyle.

A brief look at the Holiness Code illustrates various health and moral laws that were given for the well-being of society as a whole. These include laws regarding crossbreeding of animals and crops for the purpose of maintaining healthier species. Among these laws are those regarding homosexuality. Were these laws beneficial? Of course. Would they be

beneficial if applied today? Definitely. But, we do not live under the kind of theocratic government established during the Old Testament period. Does that mean these laws would be bad for us? Of course not. If observed today, we would be healthier and better off. There is, however, an important factor that is overlooked regarding what is written in the Old Testament. Jesus said: ". . . It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Note: All Scriptures in this article are from the *New King James Version* unless otherwise noted. The Old Testament is an important part of the Word of God. As such, consideration must be given to it. A few more points that should be called to the reader's attention are that when one becomes a Christian, he or she does not cease being male or female. And, indeed, as was stated, God is a God of love. But how does God define love? Read 1 John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (AV). But God is also a God of justice. Justice and the ensuing penalty for sin will not be overlooked in the final Judgment (Rev. 22:11–12).

Gay advocates insist that there is no clear biblical condemnation of people with a homosexual orientation. Those verses that seem to condemn it, they say, are homosexual acts under some set of circumstances of which we are not aware. Genesis, chapters 18 and 19 are a case in point.

When the angels appeared at Sodom and were domiciled in Lot's home, the men of Sodom assembled outside. We read: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them" (Gen. 19:4–5 AV). In the *New King James Version* the word "carnally" is added, but is not found in the original text.

The original Hebrew word, *yada*, means "to know." Homosexual advocates tell us that the word "know" is ambiguous and that it is not clear whether the men of Sodom wanted to simply "meet" the guests, or sexually force them, or attack them physically. How can we know? The Hebrew word used for "know" means, "to know, to ascertain by seeing," and is used in a great variety of senses. But, it also means to know one carnally, that is to have sexual relations. How do we know this? By examining the Old Testament usage. An important key to understanding the Bible is the context in which a word is found. Notice verse eight of this chapter (NKJV). Lot says, "See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man" The word "known" is the same word that is used in verse five. It would be a gigantic assumption to believe they had never met or talked with any man. Surely these daughters were acquainted with men. So, the meaning in both verses refers to sexual relations. Other examples of where the word for "know" is used in the same sense are in Genesis 4:1, 17, 25. A wife could not conceive by merely "being acquainted" with her husband. In each of these cases it could only refer to sexual relations. Consider the incident in Genesis 38 where the word "know" is used. Judah's daughter-in-law, Tamar, disguised herself as a harlot and Judah had relations with her. She conceived (v. 18). After she bore twins, we read: ". . . And he never knew her again" (v. 26). Surely Judah was "acquainted" with Tamar after that. After all, she had borne him two sons. So, the meaning is that he never again had sexual relations with her.

We read this about Sodom and Gomorrah: "And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their *sin* is very grave" (Gen. 18:20). "But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD" (Gen. 13:13). They were guilty of sin. What is sin? The Bible states: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: *for sin is the transgression of the law*" (1 John 3:4 AV). Yet, homosexual advocates say that it is unclear whether the men of Sodom were uncharitable to

strangers, or wanted to rape people, or wished to engage in homosexual acts. They refer to Matthew 10:14–15 and Luke 10:7–14 for proof that the sin of Sodom was inhospitality. Matthew 10:14–15 reads "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!" Luke's account adds: "But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you" (Luke 10:10–11).

These cities were condemned because they rejected Christ's message—the gospel of the Kingdom of God (v. 9). We should not assume the people of these cities would treat *every stranger* in the same manner they did God's representatives. The issue was not inhospitality. The men of Sodom did not know the angels were God's messengers, so could not have been condemned for rejecting God's representatives. But the cities in Jesus' day did reject Christ. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for sodomy, not inhospitality.

Several Scriptures indicate this. Notice, for example, the warning in Deuteronomy 29:21–23 for breaking the Covenant:

And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law, so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it: The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in *His anger and His wrath*.

Is it logical to assume that God would destroy four cities because the people there were inhospitable? Not likely.

Notice Ezekiel 16:48–50:

As I live, says the Lord GOD, neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed *abomination* before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

Homosexual advocates maintain that verse 49 proves that the sin of Sodom was inhospitality. Yet, they fail to notice the significance of the word "abomination" in verse 50. Compare the word "abomination" in this text with Leviticus 18:22; 20:13. The same Hebrew word is used in reference to sodomy in all three texts. Homosexual advocates say that the word "abomination" is a religious term that refers to idolatry, not to homosexuality. So, they think the sin of Sodom was idolatry as well as inhospitality. What are the facts? The word "abomination" refers to many things in the Bible. It is not limited to idolatry. Bible dictionaries inform us that "abomination" applies to anything that offends the religious or moral sense of a person and causes extreme disgust, hate, or loathing. In the Bible this includes idolatry, the worship of carved images, the sacrifice of inferior animals, wearing the clothing of the opposite sex, witchcraft, and spiritism. It even includes evil-minded persons, a false balance, the thoughts of the wicked, the justification of the wicked and the condemnation of the just, a proud look, a lying tongue, feet that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift to run to mischief, a false witness, and one that sews discord. All these abominations use the same Hebrew word found in Ezekiel 16:50, and Leviticus 18:22; 20:13.

Consider 2 Peter 2:5–8. It tells us that God:

. . . did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).

Lot's plea to the citizens of the town was not to violate his guests. Homosexual advocates argue that the sin was not homosexual rape, but the victimizing of a nonconsenting partner. The sin, we are told, was treating a man like a woman. The fact is: There is not the slightest indication in the Scriptures that homosexual activity would have been permissible had Lot's guests consented. What is even more important than this interpretation is the fact that the condemnation of homosexuality in other passages is not limited to homosexual rape. Homosexual conduct, whether by consent or not, is clearly censured in the Bible.

Leviticus 18:22, is very clear. It states: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination." Homosexual advocates insist that while this text is found within the context of incest, bestiality, adultery, engaging in sex during a woman's period, etc., the only one that is a religious term—the word "abomination" (v. 22)—is directed against temple prostitution, not against a loving relationship between two persons of the same sex. Why cannot this view be substantiated Scripturally? As we have already seen, the word "abomination" means many more things than temple prostitution. Why, then, should verse 22 be selected out of the many found in this section—all of which refer to things God forbids—to refer specifically to temple prostitution? The answer: To support a view that makes some forms of homosexuality acceptable. When it comes to textual proximity, Byrne Fone says, ". . . textual proximity is not a definitive argument . . ." (*Homophobia*, page 83). The fact is: The meaning of "abomination" cannot be limited to temple prostitution. Many of the practices God forbids in this chapter were not prohibited because they were idolatrous. Homosexuality, in this passage, is not associated with idolatry. Exactly the same thing can be said about the argument used to reject what is stated in Leviticus 20:13. This Scripture reads: "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them."

Take a look at Deuteronomy 23:17, in the Authorized Version. It reads: "There shall be no whore (Heb. *kadesha*) of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite (Heb. *kadesh*) of the sons of Israel." Homosexual advocates contend that the word "sodomite" is a blatant mistranslation. According to them, it should be translated "holy one," or "one set aside for a holy purpose"—and refers to one who practices prostitution in order to honor his/her deity. The primary function of these prostitutes, according to homosexual advocates, was to engage in sexual activity with women. So, they say here the condemnation in Deuteronomy 23:17 is for temple prostitution, not for a loving relationship between two members of the same sex. It is true that in the overall sense the word *kadesh* refers to holiness, but the argument that the word *kadesh* limits the biblical proscription to temple prostitution (homosexuality) fails to take into consideration the fact that God's Word elsewhere condemns homosexual activity. Compare Leviticus 18:22; 20:13. So, if the meaning of *kadesh* in Deuteronomy 23:17 refers only to temple prostitution, then *both* temple prostitution and homosexuality, in general, are condemned in the Bible.

Aside from all that, there is little evidence that male temple prostitutes engaged in homosexual acts with women only. From a book entitled, *A History of Prostitution*, by George Riley Scott, we read: "These men, *Kadeshim*, were attached to the temples and

consecrated to the goddess, in a precisely similar manner to the consecrated women. They were male prostitutes for the service of the *priests* [emphasis ours] and worshippers" (p. 182, fn). Also, Colin Spencer states: "Sacred prostitution was the central part of the ritual in the Temple. The priestesses performed a sacred marriage to ensure the fertility of the country and the great fortune of the new king, for the king copulated with the holy priestess at the beginning of his reign. There were lesser priestesses who were also musicians, singers and dancers, *certainly some of these were men who also copulated with both men and women*" [emphasis ours]. The goddess Ishtar had turned these men into women as a demonstration of her awesome power (*Homosexuality in History*, p. 29).

Homosexual advocates also refer to Judges, chapter 19. In the account, a traveling Levite and his concubine were forced to spend the night in the city of Gibeah. They were invited into the home of an old man. The section dealing with homosexuality reads:

So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink. Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him (Judges 19:21–22, AV).

Homosexual advocates give the same explanation here as in Genesis 19:5, that is, the word "know" is too vague to understand. They reason that since the mob threatened to kill the Levite, the act of the men of Gibeah was an act of ultimate inhospitality. They say if it refers to homosexual activity, it refers to homosexual rape, not to a consensual homosexual relationship.

The problem with this argument is that it overlooks two important verses. The first is Judges 19:25. There it states: "But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they *knew* her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go" (AV). It is obvious these men were doing more than "getting acquainted with her." They were sexually assaulting her. The word "know" is the same word used in verse 22. The second verse that is overlooked is Judges 20:5. It reads: "And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they *forced*, that she is dead" (AV). The notion that the Levite killed her is false. She died from the sexual assault, which is not an uncommon thing under such circumstances. The word "forced" is used in Lamentations 5:11 where we read: "They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah" (Lam. 5:11 AV). *The New King James Version* gives the following rendering for Judges 20:5: "And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died."

So the argument that the word "know" is too vague to understand cannot be supported Scripturally. This was clearly a case of rape, and these Gibeonites had fully intended to rape the Levite. The end result was that almost the entire tribe of Benjamin was killed in the ensuing war that followed. It is unlikely the whole nation of Israel became enraged over an "act of inhospitality." Rather it was because of the intended homosexual rape and the murder of the concubine—a thing unheard of in Israel. ". . . No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day . . ." (Judges 19:30). This crime against the Levite and his concubine could not go unpunished.

Two texts in I Kings, which address "sodomy," can be dispensed with rather quickly. In the Authorized Version they read: "And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children

of Israel" (1 Kings 14:24). "And he [King Asa] took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made" (1 Kings 15:12). In both cases, homosexual advocates say the texts refer to temple prostitution and that they say nothing about consensual homosexual activity. As we have already seen, both temple prostitution and homosexuality, in general, are forbidden in God's Word, so the whole argument here is moot.

Paul's epistles were mentioned on page one of this article. Because of man's rejection of God's Way, Paul wrote the following:

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due (Rom. 1:24–27).

Homosexual advocates contend that Paul "might have been criticizing" people who engaged in homosexual activity which was against their nature; that is, they were really heterosexual but were engaging in homosexual acts, or they were homosexual but were engaging in heterosexual acts. In brief, they tell us it is not clear what Paul meant. Also, they insist that verses 23–24 indicate those criticized were guilty of idolatry, so that the sexual acts described in verses 24–27 "might have been" associated with idol worship. They insist that the verses are too vague to be interpreted as a blanket prohibition against same-sex activities. They add that while Paul is not favorable toward homosexual acts, he classifies them as unclean (v. 24), which is not a moral precept. The sin, they say, is not homosexuality, but rather a mind that is centered on unrighteousness.

Consider this: Paul said these people changed the natural use into that which was *against* nature. What was the natural use? We read in Genesis 2:24–25: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become *one flesh*. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." The natural use is a heterosexual relationship. The *natural use* was what these sinners abandoned. They turned to that which is *against nature*. What is against nature? The answer: men and women burning in lust toward those of the same sex (Rom. 1:26–27). These Scriptures are very clear, and there need be no doubt. To say that Paul's statements are too vague to understand, illustrates an unwillingness to accept the Scriptures for what they really say.

What about the assertion that while such behavior constitutes uncleanness (v. 24), this is not a moral precept? What does the Apostle Paul say about uncleanness? "For this you know, that no fornicator, *unclean person*, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. 5:5). This is not considered a moral precept? The fact is: Paul made it clear what will happen to those who practice such things.

Also, according to homosexual advocates, Paul does not condemn homosexuality, but a mind that is centered on unrighteousness. What is unrighteousness? "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (1 John 5:17). What is sin? "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for *sin is the transgression of the law*" (1 John 3:4 AV). Can a mind be centered on unrighteousness and not be guilty of sin? Hardly. The Bible tells us: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he . . ." (Prov. 23:7). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made it plain that wrong thoughts are just as sinful as wrong actions. He said that if one is guilty of lusting in his heart, he is just as guilty as if he had committed the act (Matt. 5:27–28).

Another Scripture homosexual advocates try to explain can be found in 1 Corinthians 6:9. This text reads: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *effeminate*, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*" (AV). "Abusers of themselves with mankind" is from the Greek word *arsenokoitai*. This word will be addressed shortly. The word "effeminate" is from the Greek word *malakoi*, and means "soft." Homosexual advocates inform us that the original meaning of *malakos* is unknown, that in Greek literature *malakos* was never applied to homosexual acts in general, and that while a number of Greek words were used to describe homosexual acts, this word was not among them. The authoritative work, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Arndt and Gingrich, points out that *malakos* refers to men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually. This work also lists a number of places where this word is used in Greek literature, ranging from the first century BC to the third century AD. The fact is: It makes little difference whether or not it refers to homosexual acts "in general." Arndt and Gingrich say it refers to specific acts, and it is clear the Apostle Paul condemns them.

To look at *arsenokoitai*, notice 1 Timothy 1:9–10. It reads:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, *for them that defile themselves with mankind*, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

The phrase "for them that defile themselves with mankind" is from the Greek word *arsenokoites*. This same word, *arsenokoitai*, was used in 1 Corinthians 6:9, as "abusers of themselves with mankind." (The reader should keep in mind the different spellings of a root word ending reflect its grammatical usage.) Homosexual advocates inform us that the meaning of this word is too vague to understand since "the meaning has been lost." They ask that since the word means "male bed," does it refer to a "male copulator," "a man who copulates with women," or a "man who is copulated"? This, of course, is simply obfuscation. If anything, they say, it refers to a male copulator associated with temple prostitution.

The reader is already aware that the "temple prostitution" argument is moot, since all forms of homosexuality are condemned in the Bible. Arndt and Gingrich define the word *arsenokoites*, and its cognates, as "a male who practices homosexuality." Polycarp referred to it in the second century, and it is found in papyri and other nonliterary sources. Polycarp's employment of the word in the second century shows that it was in use at that time. This indicates the meaning is not as vague as homosexual advocates would have us believe. While Paul used it in the New Testament, evidence suggests the term did not exist prior to the Christian era. However, the question that needs to be asked is this: Was the New Testament inspired by God or not? Indeed it was. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use the word *arsenokoitai*. The context in which it is found (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10), links it with other sexual sins. Homosexual advocates would be quick to point out that idolatry is also mentioned in connection with *arsenokoites* in 1 Corinthians 6:9, but since temple prostitution is also condemned, the argument is hollow.

Referring to these sexual practices, Paul told the Corinthians, "and such *were* some of you." Some of these Christians *had been* practicing homosexuality. But Paul says, ". . . but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). These Corinthians had turned to God, repented, and were baptized. They were no longer homosexuals. With the help of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they had been able to overcome the pulls that had led them down this wrong path. Anyone who is willing, can be given the same opportunity today. But gay people should not delude themselves into believing that homosexual conduct is acceptable

to God. Homosexual advocates often speak of a "loving relationship between two persons of the same sex." The extent that this is practiced within the gay community may be a matter of debate. The high incidence of AIDS among gays does not indicate too many "monogamous loving relationships" between persons of the same sex. If anything, it indicates the high degree of promiscuity among gay people.

The last Scripture to be addressed in this article is Jude 7. This text reads: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (AV). Again, homosexual advocates say the meaning of this verse is not clear. They insist that the text does not refer to the account in Genesis 18 and 19 since it says the people went after "strange flesh." They reason, angels would be strange flesh indeed. What it illustrates, they say, is people attempting to dishonor angels. Also, Jude's comment about "going after strange flesh" is taken to refer to some apocryphal or extra-biblical story. Homosexual advocates may not be aware that many apocryphal or extra-biblical accounts are often outlandish embellishments.

The word "fornication" in this verse is translated from the Greek word *ekporneusasai*. It means "gross immorality," "ultra-fornication." In Greek literature, it includes male prostitutes (*The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich). The term applies to all forms of sexual sin, and as far as Sodom and Gomorrah were concerned, referred to sexual conduct that was out of control. This would certainly include homosexual rape. In regard to "strange flesh," not all the truth about a matter is generally found in a single passage. A key to Bible understanding is found in Isaiah 28:10. "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little." Putting the accounts together, we see that the Sodomites were guilty of gross immorality in all forms, including bestiality. The idea that men had sexual relations with angels contradicts Jesus' statement in Luke 20:35–36. Angels do not engage in sexual relations.

The Bible does not delineate between homosexual acts in general and "loving relationships between two persons of the same sex." God's Word forbids homosexuality in *all* forms. The last book in the Bible—Revelation—includes the following statement: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are *dogs*, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:14–15 AV). What is the meaning of the word "dog"? During the Old Testament period the pay received by a sodomite (temple prostitute) was not to be put into the Temple treasury (Deut. 23:17–18). Notice the word "dog" in verse 18. The *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* tells us that "the wages of a dog" is a figurative expression used to denote the gains of a *qadesh* (sodomite) because of the dog-like manner in which he debased himself.

Homosexual advocates would immediately argue that the text in Revelation 22 is speaking about temple prostitution only. But the Bible makes it plain that God's Word forbids all forms of homosexuality. To limit Bible proscriptions against homosexuality to temple prostitution only is an attempt to justify an aspect of sin that clearly is forbidden. Gays may wish to continue in a lifestyle that will eventually bring consequences they may not desire (Rom. 1:27), but they cannot use the Bible for justification.

Homosexuality and the Bible by Isaiah 58 Broadcasts & Tracts

Whether or not a person accepts what the Bible says concerning this subject, he will have to admit that from the first mention of homosexual behavior to the last which is found in the Bible, there is no equivocation on the issue. The condemnation of this deviant sexual behavior is constant and complete. From Genesis to Revelation, there is no excuse made for homosexuality. One of the explanations for their ungodly behavior which homosexuals offer is that they were born homosexual; in other words, it is a natural way of life. But if homosexuality is according to nature, one may ask, how is it then that there is no such thing to be found in the animal kingdom? In reality, as the Scriptures clearly state, all such conduct is completely "against nature".

Jesus said that sin proceeds from the heart of man. And inasmuch as homosexuality is clearly revealed to be sin by the Scriptures, all who truly seek to know and to do the will of God must confess that homosexual desires spring from man's heart. And since homosexuality is condemned as sin in the Scriptures, we must also assume that the homosexual is not being forced to be what he is or to do what he does, for deeds which a person has no choice but to perform are not usually reckoned to him as sin. If the serpent had forced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, she would not have been cast out of the garden.

So totally does the Bible reject homosexuality as an unacceptable, ungodly lifestyle that not many verses are needed to communicate God's position on the matter. The following Scriptures are a fairly complete list of those which deal with the ugly subject of homosexuality.

The Old Testament

Leviticus 18:22: And with a male [this word refers to any male: boys, men, or even male animals] you shall not lie [that is, lie with in an intimate manner] as one lies with a woman. It is detestable.

Leviticus 20:13: And a man who lies with a male, as one lies with a woman, they both have committed an abomination. They shall surely be executed. Their blood shall be upon them.

Deuteronomy 23:17: Ceremonial sexual intercourse in "honor" of the gods of fertility was fairly common in the ancient world. This verse forbids that practice. The Hebrew word for "sacred" or "holy" is "kodash". Playing on this word for holiness, these temple prostitutes called themselves "kadash" (male), or "kadashah" (female), meaning "dedicated one" or "sanctified one". In Job 36:13-14, wise Elihu states that the hypocrites are among these unclean worshippers of God. Their devotion, however, was to their own lust, despite all their seeming devotion to their gods. Their efforts to make their obsession with lust of the flesh appear to be the result of their love for God were especially disgusting to the Lord. He was neither impressed nor honored. There shall be no [sacred] prostitute among the daughters of Israel, nor shall there be a [sacred] sodomite among the sons of Israel. Other places where reference is made to these temple prostitutes are 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46. In 2 Kings 23:7, we learn that God's people wandered so far from righteousness that houses for temple prostitutes were constructed right beside the temple of God in Jerusalem. Perversion of the faith is not peculiar to our generation.

IF HOMOSEXUALITY IS A NATURAL STATE, HOW IS IT THAT THERE ARE NO HOMOSEXUAL CHICKENS?

Deuteronomy 23:18: The term, "dog" is used once, here, in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament (Rev.22:15) in derogatory reference to male homosexuals, probably as reference to the manner of dogs (i.e., sniffing another dog's rectum). You shall not bring the hire of a harlot [Hebrew word for an ordinary whore] or the price of a dog into the house of Jehovah your God for any vow. For these both are an abomination unto Jehovah your God.

Genesis 18 - 19: The sin of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar, was sodomy, not merely that they were inhospitable, as homosexual groups sometimes claim. God would never have rained fire and brimstone on entire cities simply because they were lacking in the social graces. Peter said that Lot was vexed every day with the Sodomites' "filthy conduct" (2Pet.2:6-8), not just on the day the two angels visited Lot. The Sodomites were, according to Peter, "ungodly" people who were performing "unlawful deeds". This sin, according to the angel of the Lord who spoke with Abraham was "very grievous" (Gen.18:20). Abraham referred to the inhabitants of those cities as "the wicked" (Gen.18:23, 25). The perverseness had permeated the social structure of the city of Sodom so completely that both young and old surrounded Lot's house, demanding that they be allowed to sodomize the two angels of the Lord (Gen.19:5).

Judges 19:16-22: Moses described the nature of his people as being like that of Sodom (Dt.32:32). Future events proved him right. The intent of the Israelites of Gibeah in this story was to sodomize the Levite traveler, even though they did settle for his wife instead. The righteous old man under whose roof the young visitor had found shelter for the night pleaded with the inhabitants of the city not to do this "wickedness", calling it "folly" and "a vile thing". The opinion of the Israelites was that the men who committed this lewdness were "sons of Belial" (20:13). Much later in Israel's history, Isaiah lamented that, except for a remnant which God graciously left in the nation, Israel would be as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa.1:9), and even addressed the leaders of his nation as "rulers of Sodom" (Isa.1:10). But that would not have irritated the rulers of Israel at all. They were proud of what they would have considered progressive and sophisticated attitudes toward unlawful sexual behavior (Isa. 3:9). Over a century later, God declared through Jeremiah that all the holy city of Jerusalem was to Him "as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah" (Jer.23: 14). Ezekiel, prophesying in Babylonian captivity about the same time, said that God's people had actually outdone Sodom and her filthiness (Ezek.16:44-56).

New Testament

Romans 1:18-28: Perhaps the most surprising element of Paul's treatment of the issue of homosexuality is that he teaches that it is not primarily a sin for which one will be punished, but is itself punishment for sins already committed! According to Paul, the homosexual lifestyle is the evidence of God's wrath - it is God's punishment -against unthankful men and women who are made aware of the will of God but stubbornly refuse to obey Him. Thinking that they are becoming wiser, "they become fools", full of vain imaginations, refusing to worship God as He commanded men to worship Him. In a vain attempt to justify their perverseness, such people may actually suppress the truth concerning their perverted behavior. They serve what God created (the flesh), rather than the Creator, and "change the truth of God into a lie." Paul condemns both homosexuality and all who endorse it (Rom.1:32). This would include corrupt clergymen who attempt to make such sin appear to be acceptable with God (cp.Isa.5:20). These ministers are victims of the adulterous spirit of this age, and are to be pitied.

Homosexual behavior, as with abortion, is one of the ultimate forms of self-hatred, wherein the natural instincts and desires are satisfied, but to the destruction of the race. But if homosexuality is God's punishment for self-willed men and women, as Paul states, it may be more appropriate to say that homosexuality is one of God's ultimate expressions of disgust with men.

In this section of Paul's letter to the church at Rome, homosexuals are said to be "dishonoring their own bodies" by their conduct and that they are "without excuse" for doing so. Their behavior is said to be the result of a darkened, foolish heart. Homosexual impulses are called "vile affections". Homosexual conduct is called "unnatural", "unseemly", and "improper" (KJV: "not convenient"), and it makes one "worthy of death". Homosexual behavior is indulged in, says Paul, by those who have been cursed with a "reprobate mind". It is God's fitting punishment for those who will not believe and obey the truth.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Paul here equates homosexuality with unrighteousness, saying that such people "abuse themselves with mankind". All such, he says, will be refused an inheritance in the kingdom of God. The word translated "effeminate" in the KJV is literally "soft ones", which is a reference to catamites, young boys used in pederasty. The single word which is translated "abusers of themselves with mankind" in the KJV is a Greek word which refers to a male homosexual. This word is used again by Paul in the verse from 1 Timothy, cited below. Secondly, Paul reveals that there is mercy to be found for those who have participated in this wretched lifestyle. Some of the Corinthian believers themselves had once practiced homosexuality. This is not surprising, inasmuch as temple prostitution was one thing for which Corinth was noted. In the territory around Corinth, "Corinthian girl" was a euphemism for a prostitute.

1 Timothy 1:10-11: Here, Paul says homosexuals "defile themselves with mankind", and that to do so is "contrary to sound doctrine." We know then that any minister who attempts to persuade men to believe that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle before the Lord is a liar, teaching what is "contrary to sound doctrine" in Christ, either for money and prestige or to try to justify a secret, ungodly lust of his own.

Jude 7: Jude calls homosexual behavior "going after strange flesh", meaning, of course, that it is ungodly and forbidden by God for a man to have sexual desires toward another man and for a woman to lust for another woman. The word "strange" is used frequently in the Scriptures in reference to things contrary to the will of God. The actual Greek word is "other" flesh, translated "foreign" in some places. It is certainly "other" than the will of God and "foreign" to it for men to lust after men and women for women. Jude also notes that such people have "given themselves over to" moral impurity, and they shall suffer the vengeance of God in the form of "eternal fire".

Is Homosexuality condemned by the Bible?

Religion Today

By Richard N Ostling, AP Religion Writer

The question is at the heart of a debate in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which is struggling over whether to lift its ban on gay clergy. Now a conservative scholar has mounted a vigorous defense of existing church policy, based on a close reading of Scripture.

Robert A.J. Gagnon, of the Presbyterians' Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, started to write an article on the subject and ended up producing "The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics."

The new 520-page tome may be the most comprehensive assessment of the Bible texts related to homosexuality since the issue began roiling several of America's major Protestant denominations three decades ago.

In June, delegates to the Presbyterians' national assembly voted to abolish the church's ban on actively homosexual clergy and lay officers.

In the coming months, 173 presbyteries, or regional legislatures, will vote on whether to follow the delegates' action and repeal the ban. Church policy will be set by whatever the majority of presbyteries decide.

They could lift the ban with solid scholarly support. An open letter urging the delegates to lift the ban was signed by a majority among Bible professors at Presbyterian seminaries - 33 out of 58.

One of those professors, the Rev. Brian Blount of Princeton Theological Seminary, told a meeting of Presbyterians fighting the ban that the New Testament obviously condemns gay behavior.

But, he said, "they are words out of a particular context. Our context is so significantly different that I don't think the words are any longer living, but dead words if we try to read them without contextually understanding them."

Gagnon's book is appearing in ample time for people attending the regional meetings to ponder whether his rebuttal to the 33 professors has merit.

The liberal professors neatly summed up the typical arguments for lifting the gay ban in their letter:

-Bible passages about homosexuality should be understood for "their meaning in their own time." On careful reading, they "seem to be advocating values such as hospitality to strangers, ritual purity or the sinfulness of all human beings before God."

-"The concept of homosexuality as now understood" is probably not something the ancient biblical writers could have known.

-The church should honor "the rule of love" rather than "pronouncing judgment upon a specific behavior of a whole category of persons," since the Bible's overarching principles are inclusivity and justice.

Gagnon, however, thinks the strictly heterosexual view of gender and sexuality in the creation (Genesis 1 and 2) is fundamental. Assessing ancient Jewish thought apart from the Bible, he says heterosexuality was seen as God's design built into human anatomy.

Of about 20 biblical texts with some bearing, Gagnon focuses on the Old Testament's Leviticus 18:22 and Romans 1:26-27 in the New Testament.

Gagnon translates the Leviticus command as: "With a male you shall not lie as though lying with a woman; it is an abomination." (Leviticus 20:13 is similar, with the death penalty added).

Liberals note that this verse is embedded in a code of Jewish ritual purity laws, most of which Christians disregard. But Gagnon argues that Christians have always upheld sexual prohibitions in the same chapter against adultery (verse 20), incest (6-18) and bestiality (23).

Jesus Christ never condemned same-sex behavior, liberals further contend. Gagnon responds that there's no reason to suppose Jesus disagreed with Jewish sexual morals, since he "was not shy about expressing his disapproval of the conventions of his day."

And in Mark 10:6-9 and Matthew 19:3-6, Gagnon says, Jesus endorsed the exclusive heterosexuality of Genesis 1 and 2. In those passages, while answering a question about divorce, Jesus says that "from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female." He also says "the two shall become one."

Paul's statement in Romans addresses homosexuality more directly.

Gagnon's translation is: "God gave them over to dishonorable passions, for even their females exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature; and likewise also the males, having left behind the natural use of the female, were inflamed with their yearning for one another, males with males committing indecency and in return receiving in themselves the payback which was necessitated by their straying."

Liberal thinkers contend that here Paul was condemning only homosexual acts by those whose natural orientation was heterosexual, or else the Greeks' sexual exploitation of youths and social inferiors, and would not have understood the modern idea that people are born homosexual and should form loving relationships.

Gagnon disputes such arguments in detail, examining both ancient culture and modern scientific evidence.

Even if Paul thought exploitative relationships and pederasty were especially despicable, Gagnon says, that doesn't negate his "wider reference to all men who sleep with other males." In the Bible, he writes, "it simply does not matter how well homosexual conduct is done; what matters is that it is done at all."

Gagnon also examines two disputed Greek words in so-called "vice lists" of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. In his interpretation, "malakoi" means any males who play the sexual role of females, and "arsenokoitai" means any men who sleep with males. Some scholars say the terms referred to prostitutes.

As for the liberals' emphasis on love and justice, Gagnon agrees those are vital principles but says they don't negate specific biblical commandments.

This book was no project to undertake lightly, Gagnon said in an interview. ``The political climate in academia is very much in favor of affirming homosexual relationships, so the fear factor is considerable among those who disagree," he said.

But he wrote the book because he's convinced that wider acceptance of same-sex activity will harm society - including homosexuals themselves.

He also thinks endorsement of gay and lesbian activity ``will shake to the core the church's fidelity toward Scripture." If such a ``pervasive, severe and absolute" biblical prohibition can be overturned, he believes, no teaching of Scripture is safe.

The *Zenit* News Agency Interview: The Bible and Homosexual Practice: An Overview of Some Issues

[revised slightly from an interview with Zenit News Agency, Mar. 21 and Mar. 28, 2002]

By Robert A. J. Gagnon, Ph.D.

Assoc. Prof. of New Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Author of *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Abingdon, 2001)

It is not possible in so short a compass to do justice to 500 pages of research.

However, I will attempt to hit some key points. I will begin by talking about the two most important sets of texts: the Levitical prohibitions and the texts in Paul. Included here will be a brief discussion of whether “new knowledge” about **homosexuality** as an innate condition changes matters for us. I will then proceed to a broader array of texts in the **Bible**, both implicit and explicit, that make clear a pervasive and strong condemnation of homosexual practice. In this context I will also address the alleged silence of Jesus on the issue of same-sex intercourse. Finally, I will say a few words about why the **Bible’s** teaching should remain normative and how Christians should respond to the current crisis.

Q: Could you outline the principal passages in the Bible that you believe are the basis for prohibiting homosexuality?

There are two particularly important sets of explicit texts. First are the prohibitions in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, which declare that for a man to “lie with a male as though lying with a woman” is “an abomination” or “detestable act”—in Hebrew, *to’evah*—something utterly repugnant to God. The second set is the Apostle Paul’s references to same-sex intercourse, for which the key text is Romans 1:24-27. Here he treats same-sex intercourse as “exhibit B”—with idolatry as “exhibit A”—proving gross and deliberate human sin on the part of Gentiles against the truth about God accessible in creation or nature.

Also important in Paul is his reference to “males who lie with males” (*arsenokoitai*) and “effeminate males who play the sexual role of females” (*malakoi*) in the vice list in 1 Corinthians 6:9. The context here is the comparable issue of a case of incest at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5). Paul argues that the community of believers at Corinth should not deceive themselves: believers who participate in serial and unrepentant fashion in immoral sexual activity—be they participants in incest or in the solicitation of prostitutes (*pornoi*), adulterers, or participants in same-sex intercourse—along with believers who engage in serial and unrepentant fashion in idolatry or egregious cases of economic exploitation and the like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The term *arsenokoitai* reappears in the vice list in 1 Tim 1:10. In the discussion that follows we will not spend much time on these texts. It will suffice here to point out that what Paul means by *arsenokoitai* has to be unpacked in light of what Paul finds offensive about same-sex intercourse in Romans

1:24-27. Those who tend to dismiss the term *arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10 as utterly beyond knowing often act as if Romans 1:24-27 did not exist. There are also a reasonably large number of other texts that explicitly or implicitly indicate opposition to same-sex intercourse, leaving little doubt that such opposition was the consensus position of both Testaments, as well as of the historical communities out of which these texts arose.

Q: Sometimes modern-day skeptics reject Leviticus.

The texts in Leviticus are often dismissed on one or more grounds. For example, it is claimed that these prohibitions have no more significance for the church today than other defunct purity laws; or that they have in view only same-sex intercourse conducted in the context of idolatrous cults, prostitution or adult-adolescent unions. Yet such arguments overlook at least seven points. First, the prohibitions against same-sex intercourse occur in the context of other types of sexual activity that the church today still largely regards as illegitimate: incest, adultery and bestiality.

The strong prohibitions against these forms of sexual activity represent the closest analogues to the prohibition of same-sex intercourse. This is particularly true of the incest prohibition which, like the prohibition of same-sex intercourse, rejects intercourse between two beings that are too much alike. Leviticus refers pejoratively to sex with a family member as sex with the “flesh of one’s own flesh” (Lev 18:6). Bestiality is wrong for the opposite reason: it is sex between two beings that are too much unlike.

Second, the attachment of purity language in ancient Israelite culture to such acts as incest, adultery, male-male intercourse, idolatry, economic exploitation, and the like—far from suggesting an amoral or non-moral basis for the rejection of such acts—actually buttresses the moral focus on the inherently degrading character of the acts themselves. It underscores that any talk about the positive moral intent of the participants is irrelevant. For the same reason, the Apostle Paul many centuries later connected the language of impurity with acts—usually sexual acts—that are rejected on moral grounds: not only same-sex intercourse but also adultery, incest, sex with prostitutes, and promiscuous sexual activity (Romans 1:24 and 6:19; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; cf. Ephesians 4:19; 5:3, 5; and Colossians 3:5).

Third, unlike a number of the now-defunct elements of the Holiness Code to which reference is often made, the indictment of same-sex intercourse is particularly severe, as suggested by the specific attachment of the label *to’evah* and by making it a capital offense.

Same-sex intercourse was regarded by ancient Israel as a particularly severe infraction of God’s will. Indeed, we know of no ancient Near Eastern culture that adopted a more rigorous opposition to all forms of same-sex intercourse. True, the New Testament and the contemporary church does not apply the penalty attached to this act in the Levitical code. But, then again, it does not retain the Old Testament valuation of adultery, incest and bestiality as capital offenses either, even as it still rejects such forms of intercourse as immoral.

Fourth, the prohibitions of same-sex intercourse are not limited to particularly exploitative forms but are rather unqualified and absolute.

The general term “male” is used, not “cult prostitute,” “boy, youth,” or even “neighbor.” The prohibition applies not only to the Israelite but also to the non-Israelite who lives among them (Leviticus 18:26). The fact that both parties to the act are penalized in Leviticus 20:13 indicates that consensual acts are being addressed.

Idolatry is hardly the main concern since the prohibition in 20:13 is set in between prohibitions of adultery, incest and bestiality; it does not follow immediately upon the prohibition of child sacrifice as in 18:22. Moreover, male cult prostitution was not the only context in which homosexual intercourse manifested itself in the ancient Near East generally. It was merely the most acceptable context for homosexual intercourse to be practiced in Mesopotamia, certainly for those who played the role of the receptive partner.

Fifth, the reason for the prohibition is evident from the phrase “lying with a male as though lying with a woman.” What is wrong with same-sex intercourse is that it puts another male, at least insofar as the act of sexual intercourse is concerned, in the category of female rather than male.

It was regarded as incompatible with the creation of males and females as distinct and complementary sexual beings, that is, as a violation of God’s design for the created order.

Here it is clear that the creation stories in Genesis 1-2, or something like them, are in the background, which in turn indicates that something broader than two isolated prohibitions is at stake: nothing less than the divinely mandated norm for sexual pairing given in creation.

Sixth, the non-procreative character of same-sex intercourse was no more the primary consideration in the rejection than it was for the proscription of bestiality. Incest and adultery, two other sexual acts rejected in Leviticus 18 and 20 are certainly not wrong because they are non-procreative; but neither is the primary reason for their rejection that fact that children might arise. All three are wrong because they constitute sex with another who is either too much of an “other” (sex with an animal) or too much of a “like” (sex with a near kin and sex with a member of the same sex). These are transcultural creation categories, not superstitious dregs from a bygone era.

Q: How are these prohibitions reflected in the New Testament?

The Levitical prohibitions of same-sex intercourse are clearly picked up in the New Testament—our seventh point. The Apostle Paul, who emphasized that the Mosaic law had been abrogated, nevertheless saw significant continuity with the moral code of the Spirit.

The basic categories of sexual immorality—such as same-sex intercourse, incest, solicitation of prostitutes, adultery, etc.—remained in place for believers in Christ (so 1 Corinthians 5-7). Indeed, Paul formulated his reference to “men who lie with males” (*arsenokoitai*), one of the groups of people whom he insists will not inherit the kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, directly from the Levitical proscriptions of male-male intercourse. Clearly, then, Paul himself did not believe that the abrogation of the Mosaic law rendered obsolete the rejection of all same-sex intercourse for believers.

Q: What does Romans 1:24-27 say?

The text in Romans 1:24-27 is worth quoting at length: “because of the desires of their hearts God gave them over”—that is, those who chose not to worship God as God—“to an uncleanness”—that is, filthy conduct—“consisting of their bodies being dishonored among themselves. . . . God gave them over to dishonorable passions, for even their females exchanged the natural use”—that is, of the male as regards sexual intercourse—“for that which is contrary to nature”—that is, sexual intercourse with other females—“and likewise also the males, having left behind the natural use of the female, were inflamed with their yearning for one another, males with males committing indecency and in return receiving in themselves the payback which was necessitated by their straying”—that is, from the truth about God evident in nature.

Here the intertextual echoes to Genesis 1-2 are even more pronounced than in the Levitical proscriptions.

Q: You have examples of this, of course.

In the context of Romans 1:18-32 there are obvious allusions to Genesis 1 in the words “ever since the creation of the world” (1:20) and “the Creator” (1:25). Also unmistakable is the link

between Romans 1:23—referring to idols “in the likeness of the image of a mortal human and of birds and of four-footed animals and of reptiles” —and Genesis 1:26—“Let us make a human according to our image and . . . likeness; and let them rule over the . . . birds . . . and the cattle . . . and the reptiles.”

Paul’s denotation of the sexes in Romans 1:26-27 as “females” and “males” rather than “women” and “men” follows the style of Genesis 1:27: “male and female he made them.”

Q: What are the implications of such an echo to Genesis 1:26-27?

For Paul, both idolatry and same-sex intercourse reject God’s verdict that what was made and arranged was “very good,” as Genesis 1:31 says. Instead of recognizing their indebtedness to one God in whose likeness they were made and exercising dominion over the animal kingdom, humans worshipped statues made in their own likeness and even in the likeness of animals.

Similarly, instead of acknowledging that God had made them “male and female” and had confined legitimate sexual intercourse to opposite-sex pairing, humans denied the transparent complementarity of their sexuality by engaging in sex with the same sex, females with females, and males with males.

Q: Would this harking back to Genesis be natural for Paul?

That Paul should have the creation stories in the background of his critique of same-sex intercourse is not surprising.

In an earlier letter to Corinth, when Paul discussed the case of incest, he drew on a hypothetical analogy of sexual immorality—solicitation of prostitutes—and in the process appealed to the creation texts: “a man ... shall be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, cited in 1 Corinthians 6:16). It was in this context that Paul listed serial, unrepentant same-sex intercourse as one of the behaviors that could lead to exclusion from God’s kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9). So, clearly, just as Paul had Genesis 1:27 in the background when critiquing same-sex intercourse in Romans 1:24-27, so too he had Genesis 2:24 in the background when critiquing same-sex intercourse in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

Like any other Jew in his day, it was not possible for him to think about sexual immorality apart from such an appeal. In the same way, when Jesus criticized divorce and remarriage he too cited from Genesis 1:27—“God made them male and female”—and Genesis 2:24—“for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.”

Consequently, any assessment of sexual immorality by Jews and Christians of the first century ultimately had in view the creation stories. It is for this reason that attempts to limit Paul’s—or any other early Jewish or Christian—critique of same-sex intercourse to particularly exploitative forms is doomed to failure. Moreover, for all the occasional critique of homosexual behavior that could be found among some Greco-Roman moralists, it did not approach the degree of revulsion experienced by Israel and the church. Jews and Christians stood apart from all other cultures of their time in their absolute opposition to all forms of homosexual practice.

Paul’s own wording in Romans 1:24-27 makes clear that the contrast in his mind is not between exploitative and non-exploitative forms of homosexual behavior but between same-sex intercourse per se and opposite-sex intercourse: females exchanging sex with males for sex with females; males leaving behind sex with women and yearning for sex with other males. In Paul’s view—and indeed in the view of every Jew or Christian from whom we have

firsthand written records within a millennium or more of Paul's day—what was wrong, first and foremost, with two females or two males having sex is the same-sexness of the erotic act, an act that was intended by God to be a reunion of complementary sexual others according to Genesis 1-2.

Q: You have argued that Paul had the creation stories in Genesis 1-2 in view when he rejected all homosexual practice. How does his argument that homosexual practice is “against nature” fit into this?

Jews and Christians recognized that the scriptural understanding of human sexuality was not accessible only to those who had exposure to the Scriptures of the Jews.

Since the Creator had designed human sexual pairing for complementary “sexual others,” it is not surprising that such a design was imbedded in compatible opposite-sex differences and still observable in the natural world set in motion by the Creator's decree. Hence, Paul could argue in Romans 1:24-27 that even Gentiles without access to Scripture had enough knowledge in creation/nature to know that same-sex unions represented a non-complementary sexual pairing, an “unnatural” union, a violation of Creator's will for creation.

The naturalness of opposite-sex unions is readily visible in the areas of anatomy, physiology—that is, the procreative capacity—and in a host of interpersonal aspects that contribute in our own day to the popular slogan, “men are from Mars and women are from Venus.” To tamper with that naturalness and to act as if male-female sexual differences are not vital components of sexual pairings is, in short, to reap the whirlwind. There is no disharmony between Scripture and nature on this score.

Q: What about those who argue that “we now know” today that people are born with homoerotic attraction and thus it is a “natural” phenomenon?

Four points can be made here.

First, Paul was not saying that every human impulse is “natural” and therefore God-approved. He went on to list in Romans 1:29-31 a series of impulses and behaviors that have some innate proclivity—including covetousness or envy—but which were not, for that reason, “natural” or morally acceptable. Paul distinguished between innate passions perverted by the fall of Adam and exacerbated by idol worship on the one hand, and material creation that was left relatively intact despite human sin on the other hand. Second, some current theories of homosexual development are essentially compatible with Paul's own view of sin. In Romans 5 and 7 Paul speaks of sin as an innate impulse operating in the human body, transmitted by an ancestor human, and never entirely within the control of human will. This is precisely how most homosexual-affirming advocates describe homosexual orientation today.

Third, theories about a congenital basis for homoerotic attraction were widespread in Paul's day, as was the existence of men whose sexual desire was oriented exclusively toward other males. We may have refined the view of exclusive innate attraction to members of the same sex, but the basic elements of this theory were already in place in antiquity and still made little difference to critical assessments of homosexual behavior. Why? Because it is obvious—especially in a worldview that incorporates the notion of a human fall from an original sinless state—that innate impulses are not necessarily moral simply because they are innate.

Fourth and finally, it is not quite true that science has now discovered that homosexual impulses are given at birth, whether through genes or hormones or special homosexual brains. In fact, studies to date indicate that homoerotic impulses are not congenital. Rather,

whatever contribution is made through genes, hormones or brain-wiring is largely indirect and subordinate to macro- and micro-cultural factors [see pp. 384-432 of my book].

For example, cross-cultural studies have been done showing a wide variance in the incidence of homosexual behavior and homosexual self-identification in different population groups, ancient and modern. And the most important identical twin study to date, recently conducted by J. Michael Bailey, “did not provide statistically significant support for the importance of genetic factors” in the development of **homosexuality**.

Q: Anything else that you want to say that might indicate that Paul was opposed to all forms of same-sex intercourse?

Yes, in addition to, first, the allusion to the creation stories in Genesis 1-2 and to, second, the broad argument from nature, three other points can be made that show that Paul’s critique of homosexual practice was not limited in scope only to certain exploitative types.

Third, Paul critiques not only male homosexual practice but also female homosexual practice. The latter did not conform to the male pederastic model, nor did it usually entail cultic associations. Apparently, then, Paul’s main problem with homosexual behavior did not have to do with pederastic or idolatrous dimensions.

Fourth, the fact that Paul indicts both partners in same-sex unions and speaks of mutual gratification indicates that he does not have in view forms where coercion is involved. Fifth, glowing tributes to homosexual love in Paul’s time and the wide variety of manifestations of same-sex love in Greco-Roman society give the lie to contemporary claims that Paul could not have conceived of caring homoerotic unions when he opposed same-sex intercourse.

Q: Many people are willing to concede your point that both Paul and the authors of the Levitical prohibitions were unequivocally against all homosexual practice. But they would counter-argue that same-sex intercourse is not much of a concern to Scripture because it receives so little attention. What is your response?

There are two problems with this claim. The first is that there are a fair amount of texts that speak strongly against same-sex intercourse.

Despite allegations by some scholars that the stories of Sodom (Genesis 19:4-11) and of the Levite at Gibeah (Judges 19:22-25) only express opposition to homosexual intercourse in the context of rape, these stories do include male-male intercourse per se as an important factor in the evil behavior of the inhabitants. To them can be added the story of Ham’s sexual act on his father Noah (Genesis 9:20-27).

That these stories are relevant to an indictment of same-sex intercourse generally is apparent from: (a) the wider narratives of both the Yahwist and the Deuteronomistic historian which elsewhere indicate a restriction of appropriate sexual activity to heterosexual relations; (b) ancient Near Eastern texts that censure male-male intercourse for reasons other than coercion; (c) the assessment of Sodom’s sin by a number of later texts, including Ezekiel 16:50, Jude 7, and 2 Peter 2:7; and (d) the motifs common to the Ham and Sodom stories on the one hand and the denunciation of Canaanite sexual sins in Leviticus 18 and 20, including Canaanite participation in non-coercive male-male intercourse as a basis for expulsion from the land.

Also to be included among anti-homosex texts are a series of texts in the Deuteronomistic history (Joshua through 2 Kings) that speak disparagingly of cultic participants in homosexual activity: 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7. These texts are grounded in the law of Deuteronomy (23:17-18) and continued in the Book of Revelation (21:8; 22:15).

They show a special revulsion for males functioning as receptive partners in intercourse with other males, referring to them as “**dogs**.” Parallel Mesopotamian texts indicate that the main issue is not cult association or fees but rather behaving sexually as though female rather than male.

Q: And what is the second problem with claiming that Scripture shows little concern for homosexual practice?

Texts that implicitly reject homosexual unions run the gamut of the entire **Bible**, including not only the creation stories in Genesis 1-3 and the apostolic decree in Acts 15:20, 29, and 21:25, along with other occurrences of the word *porneia* (“sexual immorality”) in the New Testament, but also the whole range of narratives, laws, proverbs, exhortations, metaphors and poetry that in addressing sexual relationships presume the sole legitimacy of heterosexual unions.

For example, when the relationship between God and Israel or between Jesus and the church is depicted as an intimate covenant relationship between adults, it is always imaged as a heterosexual relationship, never as a homoerotic relationship. And this is so despite the apparent incongruity of male-dominated communities imaging themselves as females. Why? Because the idea of a homosexual union was utterly repugnant to biblical authors.

Another example: why is it that there exists not a single law in any of the legal codes in the Pentateuch that distinguishes appropriate and inappropriate types of same-sex erotic relationships? After all, such laws abound for heterosexual relationships. The reason is self-evident: all same-sex erotic relationships were regarded as inappropriate. Nowhere is there the slightest indication of openness anywhere in the **Bible** to homoerotic attachments, including the narrative about David and Jonathan.

The reason why not every author of Scripture explicitly comments on same-sex intercourse is that some views are treated as so obvious that very little needs to be said. The only form of consensual sexual behavior that was regarded by ancient Israel, early Judaism, and early Christianity as more egregious than same-sex intercourse was bestiality. It is no accident that bestiality receives even less attention in the **Bible** than same-sex intercourse—it is mentioned only in Exod 22:19; Lev 18:23 and 20:15-16; and Deut 27:21. Incest receives only comparable attention. Yet unequivocal opposition to bestiality and incest by every biblical author and by Jesus can hardly be doubted. The “big picture” of the **Bible** on the issue of homosexual practice is not some vague concept of love and tolerance of every form of consensual sex but rather the complementarity of male-female sexual bonds and the universal restriction of acceptable sexual activity to heterosexual marriage.

Q: Speaking of Jesus, some argue that because Jesus said nothing about the matter that it was not an important issue for him. What do you think?

There is no historical basis for arguing that Jesus might have been neutral or even favorable toward same-sex intercourse.

All the evidence we have points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that Jesus would have strongly opposed same-sex intercourse had such behavior been a serious problem among first-century Jews. It simply was not a problem in Israel.

First, Jesus’ alleged silence has to be set against the backdrop of unequivocal and strong opposition to same-sex intercourse in the Hebrew **Bible** and throughout early Judaism. It is not historically likely that Jesus overturned any prohibition of the Mosaic law, let alone on a strongly held moral matter such as this. And Jesus was not shy about disagreeing with

prevailing viewpoints. Had he wanted his disciples to take a different viewpoint he would have had to say so.

Second, the notion of Jesus' "silence" has to be qualified. According to Mark, Jesus spoke out against *porneia*, "sexual immorality" (Mark 7:21-23) and accepted the Decalogue commandment against adultery (Mark 10:19). In Jesus' day, and for many centuries before and thereafter, *porneia* was universally understood in Judaism to include same-sex intercourse. Moreover, the Decalogue commandment against adultery was treated as a broad rubric prohibiting all forms of sexual practice that deviated from the creation model in Genesis 1-2, including homoerotic intercourse.

Third, that Jesus lifted up the male-female model for sexual relationships in Genesis 1-2 as the basis for defining God's will for sexuality is apparent from his back-to-back citation in Mark 10:6-7 of Genesis 1:27 ("God made them male and female") and Genesis 2:24 ("For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh").

These are the same two texts that Paul cites or alludes to in his denunciation of same-sex intercourse in Romans 1:24-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9. For Jesus, marriage was ordained by the Creator to be an indissoluble (re-)union of a man and woman—two complementary sexual others—into one flesh. Authorization of homoerotic unions requires a different creation account.

Fourth, it is time to deconstruct the myth of a sexually tolerant Jesus. Three sets of Jesus sayings make clear that, far from loosening the law's stance on sex, Jesus intensified the ethical demand in this area: (a) Jesus' stance on divorce and remarriage (Mark 10:1-12; also Matthew 5:32 and the parallel in Luke 16:18; and Paul's citation of Jesus' position in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11); (b) Jesus' remark about adultery of the heart (Matthew 5:27-28); and (c) Jesus' statement about removing body parts as preferable to being thrown into hell (Matthew 5:29-30 and Mark 9:43-48) which, based on the context in Matthew as well as rabbinic parallels, primarily has to do with sexual immorality.

Simply put, sex mattered to Jesus. Jesus did not broaden the range of acceptable sexual expression; he narrowed it. And he thought that unrepentant, repetitive deviation from this norm could get a person thrown into hell.

Where then do we get the impression that Jesus was soft on sex? People think of his encounters with the adulterous woman in John 7:53-8:11, the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-50, and the Samaritan woman who had many husbands in John 4.

What the first story suggests is that Jesus did modify the law at one point: Sexual immorality should not incur a death penalty from the state. Why? Not because sex for him did not matter but rather because stoning was a terminal act that did not give opportunity for repentance and reform. Moreover, all three stories confirm what we know about Jesus elsewhere: that he aggressively sought the lost, ate with them, fraternized with them. But the same Jesus who could protect an adulterous woman from stoning also took a very strong stance against divorce-and-remarriage.

We see a parallel in Jesus' stance toward tax collectors, who had a justly deserved reputation for exploiting their own people for personal gain. We do not conclude from Jesus' well-known outreach to tax collectors that Jesus was soft on economic exploitation. To the contrary: All scholars agree that Jesus intensified God's ethical demand with respect to treatment of the poor and generosity with material possessions. Why then do we conclude from Jesus' outreach to sexual sinners that sexual sin was not so important to Jesus?

Q: Some would still argue that the teaching against homosexuality is related to cultural and social conditioning. Now that society is more accepting of homosexuality, why shouldn't Christianity change its position? In other words, why is this teaching inalterable?

Ancient Israel, early Judaism and early Christianity never adopted the position that they should alter their ethical standards simply because the broader cultural milieu took a more accepting view of some practices.

They all lived in environments where male-male intercourse was often more of an accepted practice than it is in our own contemporary culture. Yet, far from capitulating on their position regarding acceptable sexual expression, they maintained clear distinctions between their own practices and the practices of those outside the community of God. This is what holiness refers to: being set apart for the exclusive use of God rather than conforming to the ways of the world. Jesus himself called on his followers to be "the light of the world" and "a city built on a hill," and not to act "like the Gentiles." The view of Scripture against same-sex intercourse is pervasive, absolute and strong, and was all those things in relation to the broader cultural contexts from which Scripture emerged. It was then, and remains today, a core countercultural vision for human sexuality.

As crosscultural studies indicate, cultural affirmation of homosexual practice will lead to higher numbers of self-identifying and practicing homosexuals and bisexuals in the population, which in turn will lead to an increase in the ancillary problems that affect the homosexual and bisexual population at a disproportionately high rate. This includes health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, mental illness, substance abuse, and a 10-year or more decrease in life expectancy; problems in relational dynamics, including a high incidence of non-monogamy (especially among male homosexuals) and short-term relationships (especially among lesbians) due to the distinctive natures of males as males and females as females; and higher incidence of adult-adolescent and adult-child sexual activity.

For the macro-culture generally, approval of homosexual behavior will all but annihilate societal gender norms of any sort, promoting the normalization of the most bizarre elements of the homosexual movement—transsexualism, transvestism—thereby increasing gender identity confusion among the young. Indeed, we can expect a lessening of aversion to various sexual relationships hitherto regarded as sexual perversions—for example, "threesomes," "open" committed relationships, adult-adolescent sexual relations, and consensual adult sex between close blood relations—owing to a complete abandonment of single divinely-sanctioned, nature-imbedded model for acceptable sexual expression.

On top of all this, we can expect—given the track record to date of the leadership in the homosexual lobby—the public marginalization and eventually persecution of any who make known their opposition to homosexual behavior. If anyone needs any proof of this, they need only look at what is happening to the Boy Scouts and the Salvation Army, and to Christian student groups at colleges and universities who are derecognized for their stance on homosexual behavior. Or examine the mandatory "sensitivity training" programs and "zero tolerance" policies implemented in some school systems and major corporations, alongside the official endorsement of homosexual organizations that tar those who question the acceptance of homosexual practice with the label of "homophobic bigots," akin to racists. Is this something we want our children to face?

God has deemed that sexual intercourse be an experience between complementary sexual "others" that creates a "one-flesh" union, a celebration of sexual diversity and pluralism in the best sense of the terms. There is clearly something developmentally deficient or "unnatural" about a person being erotically attracted to the body parts shared in common with another of

the same sex, about someone seeking a complementary sexual relationship from a person who in terms of sex is non-complementary, a sexual “same.” It is no more wise, or loving, to promote such unions than it is to promote adult, committed incestuous unions.

Q: We live in an age of “tolerance.” What does the Bible say about how we should treat homosexuals? And how can Christians oppose homosexuality in the public square without falling into extremism?

We should love all people, regardless of whether they engage in immoral activity or not. Love is a much better, and far more scriptural, concept than tolerance.

Jesus lifted up the command to “love one’s neighbor” in Leviticus 19:18—a command in the Holiness Code—as the second great command. We often miss the intertextual echo to Leviticus 19:17, which not only says that we should not hate, take revenge, or hold a grudge against our neighbor but also says that we should “reprove” our neighbor “and so not incur guilt because of him.”

If we really love somebody, we will not provide approval, let alone cultural incentives, for forms of behavior that are self-destructive and other-destructive. Jesus combined an intensification of God’s ethical demand in the areas of sex and money with an active and loving outreach to sexual sinners and economic exploiters. We should do the same: love the sinner, hate the sin.

Concretely, this means abhorring demeaning descriptions of homosexuals as “fags,” “queers,” and the like. It means supporting fair and equal prosecution of violence done to homosexuals. It might even mean—consistent with Jesus’ actions toward the adulterous woman—decriminalization of homosexual behavior. It certainly means making friends with homosexuals and helping AIDS sufferers. It means making a distinction between people who experience homoerotic impulses and people who act on them.

It does not mean, however, embracing “sexual orientation” along with race and gender as a specially protected legal classification. The unfortunate effect of such legislation is: (a) to provide cultural and legal incentives for the behavior in question; (b) to send the wrong message that homosexual behavior is as morally neutral as race and gender; (c) to marginalize and intimidate legally those who adopt a critical view of homosexual practice; and (d) to establish the legal basis for indoctrinating our children and for mandating state-sponsored homosexual marriage.

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Reply to Shmuley Boteach on Gay Marriage **By Rabbi David Eidensohn**

Shmuel Boteach's article on Gay Marriage is really an assault on family people. Boteach masquerades as an Orthodox Jew. In this article he stands revealed as a pagan who battles with the Jewish bible. He may practice Orthodoxy, but his politically correct beliefs are far from true Orthodox and Talmud thinking. I developed this in an attack on Shmuel who maintained, in his article on September 11, that G-d does not punish us for our sins. Suffering, said Shmuel, is something we should not repent for, but complain about to G-d! This contradicts the bible and the Talmud in many places.

The first paragraph in Shmuel's article on Gay marriage puts the spin on the debate. No facts, but descriptions, actually, lies, about "the hysteria surrounding the debate on gay marriage." Shmuel opposes "the shrill homophobia...of many religiously minded colleagues." In other words, when I sit down and write an article about the bible and the Talmud that proscribes Gay Marriage, I am really being hysterical and I rant because I am a homophobe. These are lies. They are lies from the lips of a very articulate and clever prevaricator.

Shmuel then lists ten considerations to guide us in discussing Gay Marriage.

One, is the "boldface lie" that gay marriage is "the single most serious threat to the heterosexual institution of marriage." Shmuel tells us, with a straight face, that this is a "boldface lie," not just a plain lie, because the real problem with marriage is from the heterosexuals! That's right. People like me, who have ten children and thirty grandchildren, have destroyed marriage. And imagine the audacity of me to consider Gay Marriage not a real marriage!

Sure, there are problems with marriage today. Yes, heterosexuals, even people like me with all of our progeny can improve our act. But if Gay Marriage becomes marriage, we make a mockery of marriage. Next will come marriage between brothers and sisters (why not?), and then, if people really find true satisfaction with their dog, and there are such people, why can they not sanction this with the civil title of marriage?

Even if you don't go so far, you can at least let people marry their mothers. Freud would understand. So, it is surely not a "bold faced lie" to consider Gay Marriage a mortal blow to the status of marriage and family. I am very upset that anyone can call me a "bold faced liar" especially when the person doing so is dishing out whoppers by the dozen.

Shmuel points out that gays are a small part of the population, but heterosexual divorce is fifty percent. So what? Does this mean that gays are not a problem? The secular culture with its fun and games, its consumption, its denigration of a real father and a real mother that children can survive with, is responsible for the fifty percent divorce rate. So, do we make things worse by making society more secular, more remote from natural and normal family life?

Next, Shmuel says that homosexuality is just as natural and normal as oral sex. If you practice oral sex, you must believe in gay marriage!

Those homosexuals spraying their infected and battered anal cavities in desperate effort to alleviate pain and infection know better than the rest of us just how unnatural their compulsions are. Nature hates homosexuality. HIV and AIDS didn't develop from oral sex. Studies have shown that homosexuality is a compulsion that is not related to human love but

to chemical releases. Some gays have a dozen partners in one night. This is “natural”? This produces the worst diseases. I am not saying that oral sex is right or wrong. But it is surely not as unnatural as homosexual sex.

Why does the cool and chic Shmuely oppose Gay Marriage? Don't think because he is Jewish and believes in the Talmud and bible that are so much against homosexuality and certainly gay marriage. No, Shmuely invokes Hinduism, to show that life is about opposites joining. Men and women are opposite, so they should join, but homosexuals are not different, so they should not join. But Shmuely later says we should give gays civil unions. Why give them unions and not call it marriage?

If Shmuely reserves the sanctity of marriage only for real opposites, why not join dogs and people? Why not join mothers and sons, or fathers and daughters? They are opposites.

Shmuely invokes Zoroaster paganism that the world is comprised of antagonistic forces in continuous competition, such as light and dark, good and evil. Therefore, in keeping with this system of dueling dualities, we should, says Shmuely, allow marriage only between opposites.

Shmuely, I prefer to think of my marriage as something not in continuous contention, and I don't think that my wife or I enjoy being compared to darkness or evil. Two good people, blessed by G-d, not the paganism of Shmuely, join because G-d sanctions their union. He does not sanction homosexual union, and certainly not homosexual marriage.

Shmuely then tells us that gay men who are also attracted to women make better fathers and husbands than those who are not gay. Shmuely, why don't you improve your marriage with a little homosexuality? Zoroaster would understand.

Shmuely tells us that religious people who tell homosexuals to live alone violate the bible! The bible says, “It is not good for a man to be alone.” Therefore, says Shmuely, if a man lives with another man, they are “good.” Phew. Shmuely, this is the deal. A man without a wife is “alone” and lacks real “goodness.” However a man with another man is not just lacking in “goodness,” he is evil, an abomination. G-d said that to Moses at Sinai. That is in the bible. When we demand that people recognize the evil and abominative essence of homosexuality, we do what G-d wants. Physics accepts the cosmos as being of Anthropic Design, meaning that its creation was for people. The Creator who made the cosmos had to tell us why. He did this, to Israel at Sinai. Anyone who opposes homosexual marriage has nature, the cosmos, G-d, and the bible to back up his arguments.

We will leave the name calling to Shmuely.

2003, the Year of the Homosexual

By Flip Benham
November 25, 2003

There can be no doubt about it now. The year 2003 has been a nuclear explosion for the expansion of the radical homosexual agenda. Almost every television sit-com has a homosexual character, always portrayed as funny, bright, and sweet. Even commercials are playing the sexual diversity card. Almost every major corporation has instituted "same sex" medical benefits. Our schools have become primary agents to press the homosexual lifestyle into the hearts and minds of our kids. Our local, state, and federal governments have all bowed and kissed the face of this deadly idol. And one had better never say a contrary word about homosexuality on our college campuses. You do at the risk of your own life. Yes, 2003 is a year that will go down in infamy. It will forever be remembered as "the year of the homosexual."

Five years ago one could never have imagined the inroads that homosexuality would make into the culture of America . When I was in college in the 70's we studied about homosexuality in Sociology 101 under the title of "abnormal psychology." Yes, homosexuality was placed right alongside those who liked to have sex with dogs, tail pipes of cars, cadavers, ad nauseam. Today the American Pyschiatric Association treats homosexuality like it is the noblest sexual practice on the face of the earth. What has happened?

The Bible tells us that because we exchanged the truth about God for a lie, that God's wrath would be revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness (Romans 1:18 -32). We, in America , have arrogantly cast God behind our backs and attempted to remove Him from our history, our law, our government, and our culture. Because we have, God Himself has turned us over to shameful lusts and to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done. Women have exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. Men have also abandoned natural relations with women and are inflamed with lust for one another. Men are committing indecent acts with other men, and are receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. Aids anyone?

When the Supreme Court of the United States of America found (in one of the constitutional penumbras?) that *homosexual sodomy* was, from this day forward, a new constitutional right, all hell broke loose! In one fell swoop, this court threw out God, His Law, 4,000 years of history, and its own past precedent, to declare sodomy, in all of its perverse forms, a constitutional right! In it's June 26 th rendering of *Lawrence v. Texas* ; the Supreme Court unleashed the very fury of hell upon our nation.

What came next was a cascading sequence of events from which our culture will not recover.

1. 3.2 million dollars was allotted by the state of New York to establish an *all homosexual high school* in New York City . It is named after dead homosexual activist, Harvey Milk. Its purpose is to educate a group of about 130 mixed up kids who believe they were born to be homosexual in a non-threatening environment. Of course this is a lie – no one was ever born to be a homosexual!

Yet, the state of New York has bought into the lie hook, line, and sinker. It has created a "MOST FAVORED STUDENT" status for the homosexual. By devoting a school to practicing homosexuals, it is cementing into the minds of our kids that homosexuality is a good thing, to be protected above all else. How do our kids over come this?

2. Next came the ordination of Rev. Eugene Robinson as a bishop in the Episcopal Church. Rev. Robinson is a practicing homosexual who left the wife of his youth and his children for a homosexual lover. That's right! The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire now has an adulterous practicing homosexual as its Bishop. Men in the pulpits are being turned over to a depraved mind. The United Methodist Church is close behind this rush to legitimize and normalize homosexual sodomy. If the Church is fumbling with this issue what should we expect from our government? When there is a fog in the pulpit there will always be a mist in the pew.

3. Evidence of that mist has been reflected in the decisions made by our "born-again," evangelical President. George W. Bush has done more for the promotion and legitimization of the homosexual lifestyle than any President before him. Several openly homosexual men serve on the White House staff - more than ever served on Mr. Clinton's staff. President Bush appointed Michael Guest, an outspoken homosexual, to be the United States Ambassador to Romania . Guest is presently living with his partner of six years, Alex Navarez, in the official U.S. residence in Bucharest .

4. On October 14, 2003, President Bush sent a letter to the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Los Angeles congratulating homosexual activist Rev. Troy D. Perry on the occasion of MCC's 35 th anniversary. MCC is the largest homosexual denomination in the nation with churches in virtually every state. Its basic tenet is that one can be a practicing homosexual and a Christian at the same time. This lie, spawned in hell, is leading to the early death and eternal damnation of thousands of young men and women. The Metropolitan Community Church would be better named "The Synagogue of Satan."

In the letter to Perry, President Bush stated, " By encouraging the celebration of faith and sharing God's love and boundless mercy, churches like yours put hope in people's hearts and a sense of purpose in their lives...rejoice in God's faithfulness to your congregation." Even the President of the United States of America is legitimizing homosexuality. It isn't love to send people to an early grave and to their eternal damnation. But it is good politics according to Karl Rove.

5. What came next was "the kiss." Mickey Mousketeers, Brittany Spears and Christina Aguilera exchanged an open mouth kiss with a washed-up, elderly, Madonna (who looks like about 150 miles of bad road) at the MTV Music Awards. The whole world was watching as the Word of God was being blasphemed on national television. Our kids are getting the hint – sodomy is cool!

6. Just last week the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that homosexual couples are legally entitled to wed under the state constitution. Chief Justice Margaret Marshall wrote, "Barring an individual from the protection, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage solely because that person would marry a person of the same sex violates the Massachusetts Constitution." This ruling is so patently absurd it defies all logic. The Constitution of the state of Massachusetts has been in existence for 387 years and no one has ever found homosexual sodomy to be a protected right by the state.

Make no mistake about it. Homosexuality is an all out frontal assault on the God of the Bible. The first human institution set up by God in the Bible was the institution of marriage. God blessed it. He even gave away the very first bride. Before church government and civil government there was the institution of Marriage. It is the absolute bedrock of the family. It is a union between a man and a woman where God makes out of two, one. There is no other human institution, given by God, which precedes this one.

It is out of this union between a man and a woman that Godly offspring are brought forth. This is God's desire. This was and is His purpose in creation. Any attack on the institution of marriage is an attack upon God Himself. Homosexuality is an outrageous attack upon God, His plan, and His purposes in creation. It is inspired by the devil and will lead to death those who practice it and the nation that approves of this behavior.

In the midst of these advances of the radical homosexual agenda in 2003, God pulled back the covers and exposed the lie of homosexuality for what it truly is and what it truly does. The tragic figure of Michael Jackson paints for us a portrait almost too sickening to view.

Essay: How Normal Is Deviance?

By Charles Whitaker
CCG Weekly

Readers with a background in statistics or logic will immediately recognize the oxymoron in the question, "How Normal is Deviance?" The question states a contradiction in terms, for defiance is, by definition, a *departure* from the normal. To be deviant is to be *abnormal*.

That raw fact is not deterring the homosexual community from its logic-defying campaign to convince Middle America that deviant sexual behavior is normal. Mary Eberstadt ("The Family: Discovering the Obvious," *First Things*, February 2004, p. 10) summarizes evidence that proves the contrary to be true.

- **Drug Abuse:** The "propensity to addiction . . . is ubiquitously documented to be worse among lesbians and gays. Virtually every study one can find on the subject confirms it." A recent issue of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy* dedicated an entire issue to the topic.
- **Alcoholism:** The *Gay Community News* points out, "The statistics do point to the gay community, particularly gay men, as being most at risk of becoming alcoholics." A website which focuses on gay and lesbian health issues claims that "alcohol, drug, and tobacco use all occur at significantly higher rates in the GLBT community than in the general population" (*glbthealth.org*). Eberstadt points out that gay Alcoholics Anonymous chapters flourish in "many localities—an interesting detail, given the numerically small proportion represented by the gay population."
- **Depression:** Depressions and phobias of a variety of types appear disproportionately in the homosexual world. Eberstadt quotes the *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, which she points out is "no socially conservative rag": "The levels of depression and anxiety in our homosexual subjects, whether HIV positive or HIV negative, are substantially higher than those found in representative general population samples."
- **Attempted Suicide:** The findings of a highly-respected 1978 study by Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg contradict the authors' song of tolerance for homosexuals. They note that the incidence of attempted suicide by white homosexual males is no less than *six times* higher than that of their heterosexual counterparts. Newer evidence suggests that the attempted suicide rate of gay and lesbian teenagers is three times higher than that of their heterosexual peers.
- **Educational Dropouts:** Eberstadt points to evidence that "[n]early one-third of gay teens drop out of school annually, three times the national average."

Bottom line: Members of the homosexual community are not statistically normal. On a number of measures, they manifest behavioral problems in far greater numbers than the general (heterosexual) population.

Homosexuality is not normal, any more than it is free. Rather, it is costly to the individual, who, even in these days of "tolerance" and legal protections, is racked by the guilt, fear, and disease his sin exacts from him. In addition, it is costly to society at large, which must fund disease-control centers, psychotherapy facilities, detoxification programs—all these and more to fill the gap left by an individual who is psychologically, educationally, and socially "wasted," not performing to his potential.

Do not fall for the media's preachments. The homosexual "preference" is everything *but* normal. It is a highly self-destructive sin.

In Katrina's Wake By Senator Hank Erwin

WORLDNET DAILY

http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/printer-friendly.asp?ARTICLE_ID=46568

Senator: God judging U.S. with disastrous hurricanes
Alabama Republican cites culture of 'gambling, sin and wickedness'

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An Alabama state senator says the reason why the Gulf Coast is suffering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is because God is judging Americans in that region for sinful behavior.

"New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast have always been known for gambling, sin and wickedness," wrote Sen. Hank Erwin, R-Montevallo, in a column, according to the Birmingham News. "It is the kind of behavior that ultimately brings the judgment of God."

Erwin said he was awed, but not surprised after surveying the damage to hard-hit regions including Gulfport and Biloxi, Miss., and the fishing town of Bayou La Batre on the Alabama coast.

"Warnings year after year by godly evangelists and preachers went unheeded. So why were we surprised when finally the hand of judgment fell?" he wrote. "Sadly, innocents suffered along with the guilty. Sin always brings suffering to good people as well as the bad."

"America has been moving away from God," continued the former talk-radio host and now a media consultant and senator. "We all need to embrace godliness and churchgoing and good, godly living, and we can get divine protection for that point."

"The Lord is sending appeals to us," he said. "As harsh as it may sound, those hurricanes do say that God is real, and we have to realize sin has consequences."

Erwin said the catastrophic storms are part of a pattern evident in the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, claiming God has removed an umbrella of protection from America due to an increase in abortion, pornography and prostitution.

"If you are believer and read the Bible, you know sin has judgment," Erwin said. "New Orleans has always been known for sin. ... The wages of sin is death."

"I have no idea what sort of senator or politician Mr. Erwin is, but he's sure no theologian," William Willimon, bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, told the News. "I'm certainly against gambling and its hold on state government in Mississippi, but I expect there is as much sin, of possibly a different order, in Montevallo as on the Gulf Coast. If God punished all of us for our sin, who could stand?"

Fisher Humphreys, a professor of divinity at Samford University, didn't respond directly to Erwin, but he did say Christians believe God cares about sin.

"There is a standard about right and wrong conduct, and God is fully aware of whether our conduct measured up to the standard or not," Humphreys said.

As to God's control of events, he told the News different believers answer the question differently.

"A God that is irrational and vindictive, and filled with anger – that understanding of God is not the understanding we find in Christ. We don't believe in a God that is vindictive or cruel."

However, the Book of Revelation describes the return of Jesus Christ to Earth, using terms indicating God is filled with wrath, and will Himself slay many people:

[I]n righteousness he doth judge and make war. ... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ... And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Rev.19:11-21)

As WorldNetDaily previously reported, some believe Katrina is divine judgment for U.S. support of the ouster of Jewish residents of Gaza.

There have also been claims from some political leftists such as Robert F. Kennedy and Barbra Streisand that the hurricane activity is being heightened by so-called global warming, rather than any action by God.

That idea has been refuted by Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center, who says hurricanes historically have appeared in an up-and-down cycle.

"The 1940s through the 1960s experienced an above-average number of major hurricanes, while the 1970s into the mid-1990s averaged fewer hurricanes," Mayfield told the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee's Subcommittee on Disaster Prevention and Prediction.

God's Punishment upon Homosexuals

Hurricane Katrina Hit New Orleans During the Week Scheduled for a Homosexual Event called "Southern Decadence Day"-Truth!

Summary of the eRumor

The eRumor says that during the week that Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the United States, a homosexual event called "Southern Decadence Day" was due to take place in New Orleans.

The eRumor also says that gambling casinos were in the eye of the storm.

The email also says that the storm was brewing in the Atlantic at the same time that Israeli's were being forced out of their homes in Gaza.

The Bible is then quoted where "sea and waves roaring" is predicted as well as "men's hearts failing them for fear."

The Truth

First, the name of the event is "Southern Decadence."

It was scheduled to take place from August 31 to September 5 and had become a Labor Day tradition in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

According to promotional materials about Southern Decadence, it was to involve more than 100,000 mostly gay and lesbian participants and generate more than \$100 million in tourist dollars.

One of the common questions after natural disasters is whether these "acts of God" mean anything about the locations where they took place.

Only God can answer that but there is no end of people who will answer it for him.

Last updated 9/2/05

A real example of the eRumor as it has appeared on the Internet:

Hurricane Katrina is America's tsunami though you might not know that unless you are watching Fox News.

What you won't hear anywhere is that this week New Orleans was to observe "Southern Decadence Day" with 100,000 homosexuals gathering there to commit unspeakable acts in public.

Previous events were photographed and sent to the mayor and police officials but they did not care. They had their own lust: The \$100,000,000 the event brings in. Gambling casinos took a hit on the coast as this is where the eye of the storm hit.

In his book God's Final Warning to America, John McTernan noted that there are many coincidences linking homosexual events to major natural disasters.

Here are some examples:

- The Gay Pride Day of 1992, staged in California, felt the effects of an earthquake
- Another Gay Pride Day held in 1993 held in Mississippi and Missouri was ruined by a huge flood on that very day!
- The terrible fires in the Orlando area 'coincided' with the Gays Days events held at Disney World in Orlando in 1998
- The massive stock market crash of 1987 occurred just days after the huge homosexual rally in Washington DC

Now we see yet another striking "co-incidence" with events that were about to occur around the same time as Katrina struck New Orleans.

A reviewer at Amazon.com writes:

"The first chapter of *Warning Judgments* records in detail, with dates, the severe weather-related incidents and natural disasters that have happened in this country since the mid-1980's.

Other chapters catalog natural disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, 500-year floods, and economic chaos caused by these events and stock market crashes. All these disasters are linked statistically by dates to actual activities by our government, on a local, state and national level. Among the activities included are passage of laws favoring abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia. On a national level, disasters linked to the President's veto of the Partial-Birth Abortion Act are listed, as are disasters linked to presidential support for peace initiatives which force Israel to give back land to the Palestinians.

Years ago people felt that natural disasters were a warning from God. These days, people seem to have lost that understanding. *God's Final Warning to America* brings that idea back into sharp focus with details and statistics given in a highly readable form.

God's Final Warning to America is a book that should provide a wake-up call to Americans who are concerned that this country is going down the wrong path! Reading the book will be an eye-opener and hopefully will be an encouragement for people to get active on a grass-roots level in their government. It is also a call to prayer for those people who have a religious outlook.

The book gives concise and well-documented information in chapters that are well-organized and easy to read. Mr. McTernan has really done his homework!"

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