

Systematic Theology for the Local Church
#72-74—Anthropology—IX-XI¹
Homosexuality and Scripture
Paul Karleen
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Helpful for the studies in biblical anthropology are House, section 46, and Reymond, 415-430.

Few theological topics could be more relevant to practical life and the times in which we live as the one that we will engage in today. Here is part of an article that appeared this week:²

A new national poll suggests a majority of Americans oppose legalizing same-sex marriages, but the survey indicates a vast generational divide on the issue.

The recent poll shows that those who have a gay friend or relative are more likely to support gay marriage.

Fifty-four percent of people questioned in a CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll released Monday say marriages between gay or lesbian couples should not be recognized as valid, with 44 percent suggesting they should be considered legal.

But among those 18 to 34 years old, 58 percent said same-sex marriages should be legal. That number drops to 42 percent among respondents aged 35 to 49, and to 41 percent for those aged 50 to 64. Only 24 percent of Americans 65 and older support recognizing same-sex marriages, according to the poll.

Here is an article from just two weeks ago:³

Lately, a new kind of sisterly love seems to be in the air. In the past few years, Sex and the City's Cynthia Nixon left a boyfriend after a decade and a half and started dating a woman (and talked openly about it).

Actress Lindsay Lohan and DJ Samantha Ronson flaunted their relationship from New York to Dubai. Katy Perry's song "I Kissed a Girl" topped the charts. "The L Word," "Work Out," and "Top Chef" are featuring gay women on TV, and there's even talk of a lesbian reality show in the works.

Certainly nothing is new about women having sex with women, but we've arrived at a moment in the popular culture when it all suddenly seems almost fashionable—or at least, acceptable.

Statistics on how many women have traded boyfriends and husbands for girlfriends are hard to come by. Although the U.S. Census Bureau keeps track of married, divorced, single, and even same-sex partners living together, it doesn't look for the stories behind those numbers.

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² Paul Steinhauser, "CNN poll: Generations disagree on same-sex marriage," at <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/05/04/samesex.marriage.poll/index.html>

³ Mary A. Fischer, "Why Women are Leaving Men for Other Women," at <http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/personal/04/23/o.women.leave.menfor.women/index.html>

But experts like Binnie Klein, a Connecticut-based psychotherapist and lecturer in Yale's department of psychiatry, agree that alternative relationships are on the rise.

"It's clear that a change in sexual orientation is imaginable to more people than ever before, and there's more opportunity—and acceptance—to cross over the line," says Klein, noting that a half-dozen of her married female patients in the past few years have fallen in love with women. "Most are afraid that if they don't go for it, they'll end up with regrets."

Feminist philosopher Susan Bordo, Ph.D, a professor of English and gender and women's studies at the University of Kentucky and author of "Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body," also agrees that in the current environment, more women may be stepping out of the conventional gender box.

"When a taboo is lifted or diminished, it's going to leave people freer to pursue things," she says.

"So it makes sense that we would see women, for all sorts of reasons, walking through that door now that the culture has cracked it open. Of course, we shouldn't imagine that we're living in a world where all sexual choices are possible. Just look at the cast of 'The L Word' and it's clear that only a certain kind of lesbian—slim and elegant or butch in just the right androgynous way—is acceptable to mainstream culture."

After attempting to show that the Bible's view of marriage is inconsistent and irrelevant to our times, Lisa Miller, Religion Editor for Newsweek, asserts that Jesus' message of love and inclusiveness must lead us to accept and even embrace homosexual behavior:⁴

In the Christian story, the message of acceptance for all is codified. Jesus reaches out to everyone, especially those on the margins, and brings the whole Christian community into his embrace. The Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and author, cites the story of Jesus revealing himself to the woman at the well—no matter that she had five former husbands and a current boyfriend—as evidence of Christ's all-encompassing love. The great Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann, emeritus professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, quotes the apostle Paul when he looks for biblical support of gay marriage: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ." The religious argument for gay marriage, he adds, "is not generally made with reference to particular texts, but with the general conviction that the Bible is bent toward inclusiveness."

The practice of inclusion, even in defiance of social convention, the reaching out to outcasts, the emphasis on togetherness and community over and against chaos, depravity, indifference—all these biblical values argue for gay marriage. If one is for racial equality and the common nature of humanity, then the values of stability, monogamy and family necessarily follow. Terry Davis is the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Hartford, Conn., and has been presiding over "holy unions" since 1992. "I'm against promiscuity—love ought to be expressed in committed relationships, not through casual sex, and I think the church should recognize the validity of committed same-sex relationships," he says.

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⁴ Newsweek, Dec. 14, 2008; for an excellent critique of this article, see http://www.albertmohler.com/blog_read.php?id=2881

More basic than theology, though, is human need. We want, as Abraham did, to grow old surrounded by friends and family and to be buried at last peacefully among them. We want, as Jesus taught, to love one another for our own good—and, not to be too grandiose about it, for the good of the world. We want our children to grow up in stable homes. What happens in the bedroom, really, has nothing to do with any of this. My friend the priest James Martin says his favorite Scripture relating to the question of homosexuality is Psalm 139, a song that praises the beauty and imperfection in all of us and that glorifies God’s knowledge of our most secret selves: “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” And then he adds that in his heart he believes that if Jesus were alive today, he would reach out especially to the gays and lesbians among us, for “Jesus does not want people to be lonely and sad.” Let the priest’s prayer be our own.

This last article is representative of the kind of material that people are reading and believing. But please ask yourself: Is this really what the Bible teaches?

1. A definition of homosexuality

What do we mean by ‘homosexuality’? We need to be on the same page as we study the Bible’s teaching about this. I provide here Edward Welch’s definition:⁵

Homosexuality can be defined as thoughts or actions, in adult life, motivated by a definite erotic (sexual-genital-orgiastic) attraction to members of the same sex, usually but not necessarily leading to sexual relations with them.

2. The basic biblical teaching on homosexuality

Before we examine arguments put forth by advocates of homosexuality, it is important that we state the basic teaching of Scripture on the subject:

Both the Old Testament and New Testament are consistent in their condemnation and prohibition of all forms of homosexuality.

We will see this in the biblical texts that we study. Here are the key passages of inspired Scripture on homosexuality (although these are not the only passages that are relevant to the issue):

a. Lev. 18:1-30

Notice that this passage bases its prohibitions on the need to avoid sins that the Canaanites committed and on the uniqueness of Yahweh. Then the text prohibits incest (6-17), adultery (18), sexual relations during menstruation (19), adultery (20), child sacrifice (21), same-sex intercourse (22) and bestiality (23). Notice also that while all of the listed sins are said to be detestable and defiling (24-20, except in v. 17), only same-sex intercourse and bestiality are given their own condemnations as being “detestable” and a “perversion.” Underling is mine.

18 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the LORD your God. ³You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. ⁴You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. ⁵Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.

⁵“Homosexuality: Current Thinking and Biblical Guidelines,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Spring, 1995, 19.

⁶ “No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD.

⁷ “Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.

⁸ “Do not have sexual relations with your father’s wife; that would dishonor your father.

⁹ “Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

¹⁰ “Do not have sexual relations with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter; that would dishonor you.

¹¹ “Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father’s wife, born to your father; she is your sister.

¹² “Do not have sexual relations with your father’s sister; she is your father’s close relative.

¹³ “Do not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister, because she is your mother’s close relative.

¹⁴ “Do not dishonor your father’s brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt.

¹⁵ “Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife; do not have relations with her.

¹⁶ “Do not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife; that would dishonor your brother.

¹⁷ “Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness.

¹⁸ “Do not take your wife’s sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

¹⁹ “Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period.

²⁰ “Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor’s wife and defile yourself with her.

²¹ “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

²² “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

²³ “Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

²⁴ “Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. ²⁵ Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. ²⁶ But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, ²⁷ for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. ²⁸ And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

²⁹ “Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people. ³⁰ Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God.’

b. Lev. 20:13

“If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”

c. Jdg. 19:22-23

Notice in this passage about a Levite and his concubine that rape of a woman is lower on the scale of offenses than homosexual intercourse:

²² While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, “Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.”

²³ The owner of the house went outside and said to them, “No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this disgraceful thing. ²⁴ Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don’t do such a disgraceful thing.”

d. Rom. 1:26-27

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

e. 1 Cor. 6:9-10

⁹ Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

f. 1 Tim. 1:9-10

⁹ We also know that law^a is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

g. Jude 7

^a Or *that the law*

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

3. The sinfulness of homosexuality

Perhaps in an attempt to minimize the impact on Christian fellowship, there are many who say that homosexuality is simply one sin among others and receives no special condemnation in Scripture. I think that there is significant evidence to the contrary. Robert Gagnon has a well reasoned presentation that I will draw from.⁶ He asserts first, “It is my contention that *homosexual practice is a more serious violation of Scripture’s sexual norms than even incest, adultery, plural marriage, and divorce.*”

a. The principle of degrees of sin

Some argue in general, apart from the issue of homosexuality, that all sins are equally offensive to God. Gagnon points out that most people do not actually operate with this belief. Do we really believe that the use of the tongue in anger is as offensive to God as murder? While any single sin is sufficient to exclude a person from the presence of God, some sins are more heinous in his sight.

Scripture supports this view. We have already seen that Lev. 18 attaches special condemnation to homosexuality and bestiality. In addition, when Lev. 20 re-orders the sins of Lev. 18, we find that sleeping with one’s aunt results in the curse of childlessness, but sleeping with a friend’s wife incurs stoning. The text attaches the severest penalty of death to homosexuality, bestiality and some cases of incest and adultery.

Is the New Testament consistent with this? The answer is yes. Here is Gagnon on the Apostle Paul:⁷

Paul’s attitude toward the case of incest in 1 Corinthians 5 also makes clear that he differentiated between various sexual offenses, with some being more extreme than others. This is clear both from the horror in his tone at the case of incest but, even more, from the fact that he has to arbitrate between competing values when he condemns the incest. If there were no ranking of priorities, how could Paul reject out of hand a case of incest that was monogamous and committed? If the values of monogamy and commitment to longevity were of equal weight with a requirement of a certain degree of familial otherness, Paul could not have decided what to do. Would commitment to a monogamous, lifelong union cancel out the prohibition of incest? Obviously, this was not a difficult matter for Paul to decide. He knew that the incest prohibition was more foundational.

b. Biblical evidence for the heinousness of homosexuality

We have already seen that Lev. 18 gives special condemnation to homosexuality and bestiality. Gagnon argues that homosexuality is a great sin and that the only sexual sin that is more offensive to God is bestiality. He gives three reasons for the offensiveness of homosexuality.

1) “It is the violation that most clearly and radically offends against God’s intentional creation of humans as ‘male and female’ (Gen 1:27) and definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman (Gen 2:24).”⁸

⁶ Robert A. J. Gagnon, “How Bad Is Homosexual Practice According to Scripture and Does Scripture’s Indictment Apply to Committed Homosexual Unions?” by Robert A. J. Gagnon, Ph.D. Associate Professor of New Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary www.robgagnon.net, gagnon@pts.edu January 2007 (slightly modified December 2007).

⁷ Ibid. 2-5.

Recall that Gen. 2:22-24 says that the key consequence of the woman's derivation from the man is God's intention that they reunite physically in sexual relations.

²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." ²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

2) "Every text that treats the issue of homosexual practice in Scripture treats it as an offense of great abhorrence to God."⁹

We have seen this (above) in the Genesis and Leviticus texts, and it is supported by texts by ancient Jewish and Christian writers.¹⁰

3) "The male-female prerequisite is the foundational prerequisite for defining most other sexual norms."¹¹

Jesus makes the creation of male and female the basis for his teaching on divorce in Mk. 10:6-9 and Matt. 19:4-6. He argues that an acceptable sexual bond consists of male and female and excludes a third party (except in cases where the bond has been broken already). In other words, divorce that leads to remarriage brings a third party into what should have remained a twosome. In addition to the "unity of two" aspect, marriage as based on the Genesis creation account also involves the unifying of two beings that have a significant degree of separation from each other. Here is Gagnon's description of this:¹²

The principle by which same-sex intercourse is rejected is also the principle by which incest, even of an adult and consensual sort, is rejected. Incest is wrong because, as Lev 18:6 states, it involves sexual intercourse with "the flesh of one's own flesh." In other words, it involves the attempted merger with someone who is already too much of a formal or structural same on a familial level. The degree of formal or structural sameness is felt even more keenly in the case of homosexual practice, only now on the level of sex or gender, because sex or gender is a more integral component of sexual relations, and more foundationally defines it, than is and does the degree of blood relatedness. So the prohibition of incest can be, and probably was, analogically derived from the more foundational prohibition of same-sex intercourse.

The question of the severity of homosexuality in God's sight has significant practical ramifications. The fact that Scripture describes it as so abhorrent should prevent anyone who practices it or condones it from thinking that it is not all that bad. It also points to the outlook a local church should have toward those involved in homosexuality. Gagnon points out¹³ that it is not likely that a local church will condone adultery, much less incest. If homosexuality is portrayed in Scripture as worse in God's sight than either of these, then the reaction of the Christian community should be commensurate with that.

In a sobering study Peter R. Jones shows that homosexuality is one of many sexual perversions that are on the increase because they are influenced by the rise of paganism, which, among other things, seeks to erase all distinctions between men and women, creating a new kind of human being that embodies the masculine and feminine.¹⁴

⁸ Ibid, 3.

⁹ Ibid, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹¹ Ibid, 4.

¹² Ibid, 4.

¹³ Ibid, 5.

¹⁴ Peter R. Jones, "Sexual Perversion: The Necessary Fruit of Neo-Pagan Spirituality in the Culture at Large" in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL:Crossway, 2002), 267.

This new spiritual human being is of indeterminate sexuality or, in many cases, specifically homosexual. It should come as no surprise that the *revival of pagan religion* in our day should be accompanied by a stark *reappearance of pagan homosexuality*. In other words, homosexuality is not merely biological destiny (though many believe it is). Its extension and acceptance are not merely the good and just applications of democratic and human civil rights (though most would see it in that light). If the connection with pagan spirituality is correct, homosexuality has a deeply religious component, whether or not any particular homosexual is aware of it and whatever the causes of such a lifestyle.

If Jones is correct, and I believe that he is, the issue of homosexuality itself is only the tip of the iceberg.

4. Arguments used by proponents of homosexuality

There are several prevalent lines of thinking that are seen in proponents of homosexuality who want to remain within the Christian community. Here are some of the main arguments:

- a. When the Bible speaks about homosexuality it is referring to situations where force or exploitation are involved (such as an adult and an adolescent, forced sex with a slave or homosexual prostitution). Homosexuality that involves committed relationships is acceptable for Christians today.

Here is Ed Welch's description of this position:¹⁵

The reasoning goes like this: The Bible does not speak about "natural" homosexuality. It addresses only "unnatural" cultic male prostitution or "unnatural" homosexuality that was practiced by heterosexually-oriented people. The Bible does not speak specifically to people who are oriented toward homosexuality. Therefore, in order to develop a biblical theology of homosexuality, other, more relevant Scripture must be examined. These relevant texts can be found in teaching about heterosexual relationships. The biblical principle is that sexual behavior is the privilege of committed, loving relationships. For heterosexuals, sexual relationships occur only in the context of marriage. For homosexuals, lacking the legal sanction of marriage, sexual relationships should occur only when there is some kind of love for or loyalty to the same-sex partner. Casual homosexual or heterosexual relationships are wrong, but sex within marriage or a marriage-like relationship is good.

This position constitutes an attempt to give some credence to Scripture. However, while people who use this kind of argumentation want to be identified as Christians, they are forced to this kind of interpretation by their initial assumption that what they are doing or want to do is acceptable.

There is no biblical category of exploitative homosexuality. The consistent witness of Scripture is that homosexuality is wrong, and the Bible makes no distinctions that could lead someone to conclude that there are possible exceptions. There are many biblical points that show this. Here are several that are connected with Paul's writings:

- 1) Gagnon points out that there are "eight points of correspondence, in a similar relative order, between Romans 1:23, 26-27 and Genesis 1:26-27: *human, image, likeness; birds, cattle, reptiles; male, female.*"¹⁶ This argues for Paul's seeing the creation account as basic in his condemnation of mankind's slide into idolatry, as particularly exemplified by homosexuality. Not only does Paul not mention exploitation at all, he

¹⁵ Welch, 21.

¹⁶ Gagnon, 5.

shows that his first concern is the violation of the created order, not some kind of exploitation. Speaking positively, we see that Paul sees the creation order as determinative for the basis of sexual activity, with God's purpose being male-female sexual activity.

2) In Rom 1 Paul emphasizes the mutual interest of those he is condemning.¹⁷ Notice how Paul describes homosexual activity:

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

The sinners he describes here degrade their bodies “with one another,” are “inflamed with lust for one another,” “exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones” and “abandoned natural relations.” These describe mutual, intentional activities. Exploitation cannot be found in Rom. 1.

3) Paul's condemnation of lesbian sexual relations comes in a cultural setting that did not generally see lesbianism as involving exploitation.¹⁸ Therefore, it is very unlikely that Paul was thinking of lesbianism as involving uncommitted relationships. It is most likely that he was thinking of it in general terms, i.e. any lesbianism is wrong.

4) Paul argues that homosexual activity is against nature—twice he uses the phrase “natural relations.” This would not be a particularly useful argument if he were only condemning exploitative homosexual activity. He is instead arguing against violation of the more basic and general male-female sexual union.

5) Two key terms used in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 (*malakoi*, men who act feminine to attract male sex partners, and *arsenokoitai*, men who engage in homosexual activities) involve willing homosexual acts and do not suggest exploitive sex.¹⁹ Here is the passage again:

⁹ Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Once again, all homosexual activity is wrong.

6) While the concept of committed homosexual relationships existed in the time of Paul, some Greco-Roman writers rejected it. This, along with the fact that Paul was writing against the background of Old Testament texts that categorically condemned homosexual activity and against the background of the teaching of Jesus that so strongly emphasized the man-woman sexual bond, argues that Paul would not have made exception for committed relationships vis-à-vis exploitative ones.

There is obviously strong evidence against the assumption that the Bible was condemning only non-committed homosexuality. As Gagnon puts it, “the evidence is overwhelming that Paul, like all other Jews and Christians of the period, opposed homosexual practice categorically and absolutely.”²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid, 6.

¹⁸ Ibid, 7.

¹⁹ Ibid, 7-8.

Gagnon demonstrates that even leading scholars writing in support of homosexuality are forced to admit that the biblical text does not allow committed homosexuality.²¹ He cites several writers (I encourage you to look at these for yourself for the breadth and strength of the admission), among whom is Louis Crompton:²²

According to [one] interpretation, Paul's words were not directed at "bona fide" homosexuals in committed relationships. But such a reading, however well-intentioned, seems strained and unhistorical. Nowhere does Paul or any other Jewish writer of this period imply the least acceptance of same-sex relations under any circumstance. The idea that homosexuals might be redeemed by mutual devotion would have been wholly foreign to Paul or any other Jew or early Christian.

b. An argument similar to the committed-exploitative position is that the Bible describes unnatural homosexuality and present homosexuality is natural. Here is Welch's description of this:²³

The current arguments tend to rely heavily on the idea that modern homosexuality is "natural." It is an orientation that is God-given, not unlike left-handedness. Homosexuality is not something that moderns *do*, it is who they *are*. The "shameful lusts" mentioned in Romans 1:26 refer to reckless homosexuality or homosexual behavior by someone who is oriented heterosexually. This argument is essential to the homosexual position: homosexuality is an identity. Nobody chose it. It just is. Homosexuality is as natural to homosexuals as heterosexuality is to heterosexuals. And how can we as Christians expect people to change their identity? How can *God* expect those *He* has oriented toward homosexuality to go against their nature?

Welch points out that many Christians accept this argument and think that there is some kind of homosexual orientation. But there is a great danger in this:²⁴

But we must be very careful at this point because the consequences are profound. For example, permit a sinless homosexual orientation, and you will encourage the church to constantly look for loopholes in the biblical data. After all, how can God hold people responsible who never choose to be homosexuals? Isn't homosexuality God's decision? . . .

The church must educate itself on this critical issue, and it is here where the church must be able to engage the homosexual community in biblical discussion. The problem, however, is that the idea of homosexual orientation does not rest on any foundation that can be discussed. It neither relies on biblical data nor medical research. Instead, it is a political position intended to gain homosexual rights, and it is rooted in personal experience. Therefore, neither biblical data nor refutation of the medical literature will be persuasive. Ultimately, most homosexuals simply appeal to both their own feelings and the experience of their homosexual brothers and sisters.

Welch identifies the real source of homosexual tendencies:²⁵

But a very significant question remains: Why does it feel natural? The biblical answer is relatively straightforward. Like many other sins, homosexuality does not have to be learned. Like the child

²⁰ Ibid, 9.

²¹ Ibid, 9-11.

²² *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 114.

²³ Welch, 21.

²⁴ Ibid, 22.

²⁵ Ibid, 23.

who never witnessed a temper tantrum but can be proficient at throwing them, it can be an instinctive ability of the human heart. Homosexuality is natural in the same way that anger or selfishness is natural. They are embedded in our humanness. Indeed, homosexuality is “natural,” but only in the sense that it is a natural expression of the sinful nature rather than some sort or morally neutral, God-given constitution.

The fact that many homosexuals cannot remember consciously choosing homosexuality is also readily explained by Scripture. Most sin works on a level where we do not feel that we self-consciously choose it. Our sin can be “unintentional,” but that does not make us less responsible for our violation of God’s will (Leviticus 5:14-19, Numbers 15:22-30).

In short, it is possible that the church has accepted the unbiblical category of homosexual orientation because it has misunderstood the nature of sin. Sin has been reduced to rational, conscious decisions. Perhaps the church has lost sight of the fact that sin is part of our human fabric, and it works on a deep and quiet level.

c. A third argument used by people claiming to be Christians who at the same time advocate homosexuality is that Jesus himself did not attempt to restrict sexual activity to male-female relations.²⁶

But what is the actual evidence? In Mt. 19 (as well as Mk. 10) Jesus relies on Gen. 1 and 2 in his teaching on divorce. God’s purpose of male-female bonding stems from the creation of the woman.

³ Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” ⁴ “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female,” ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Gagnon comments:

The twoness of the sexes is the foundation for the twoness of the sexual bond. In short, according to Jesus, if you think that limiting the number of partners in a sexual union to two persons at any one time is an important requirement for sexual unions, you should regard a male-female requirement as even more important.

There are many other arguments that one can cite as evidence of Jesus’ rejection of homosexual practice, including the fact that the Old Testament that Jesus accepted as Scripture was strongly opposed; that the man who baptized Jesus (John the Baptist) was beheaded for criticizing Herod Antipas for violating Levitical sex laws (the incest prohibitions, even in adult-consensual relationships); that the entirety of early Judaism out of which Jesus emerged believed homosexual practice to be a gross violation of foundational sexual ethics (there are no extant texts within centuries of the law of Jesus indicating any openness to homosexual relationships of any sort, in contrast to the existence of such texts among “pagans”); and that the early church that knew Jesus best was united in its belief that a male-female prerequisite for sexual unions was essential. The supposition of a Jesus supportive of, or even neutral toward, committed homosexual unions is without historical analogue in Jesus’ immediate cultural environment; revisionist history at its worst.

²⁶ Robert A. J. Gagnon, “What the Evidence *Really* Says about Scripture and Homosexual Practice: Five Issues,” March 14, 2009.

d. A fourth argument is that the Bible treats “eunuchs” positively, and eunuchs must have been men who willingly altered their masculinity in order to indulge in homosexual acts.²⁷

The Bible does not support this view. For example, Isaiah 56:3-5 and Acts 8:37-39 actually refer to men who were castrated against their will. Nor is there any indication that they were engaging in homosexual acts.

e. A fifth argument for Christian acceptance of homosexuality is the claim that the Bible supports slavery and the oppression of woman. Since we do not accept these things now, we need not accept the Bible’s view on homosexuality.

Actually, the Bible does not entirely stand against slavery, since the OT provided for mandatory release dates for slaves and the opportunity for someone to buy a relative out of slavery and taught Israelites not to treat their fellow Israelites as slaves. The analogy is also bad because homosexuality is everywhere condemned in the strongest terms: it is not a view that can be easily jettisoned. Also, race is inherited and inherently benign; homosexuality is chosen and not benign.

With regard to womanhood, the analogy is also poor. Being a woman is a purely genetic condition, while homosexuality is not. Also, the Bible gives many examples of positive treatment of women, and the ministry of Jesus exalts women. It is unbiblical to hold the position that the Bible espouses oppression of women. There is no oppression to reject as a parallel to rejecting the Bible’s teaching on homosexuality.

5. The place of biology

If homosexuals could find evidence that their desires are completely the result of forces beyond their control, they could assert that they bear no moral responsibility for what they are and what they do. Also, their condition would be completely natural and should be accepted by others. (Note that the desire to escape responsibility and to be accepted or “affirmed” is not exclusively a goal of those who call themselves Christians; the secular homosexual agenda centers on these two assertions.)²⁸ The main thrust of the attempt to establish this position has been to utilize research in biology. Here is Welch’s description of this:²⁹

The biological research has been used to bolster the assumption that there is a predestined homosexual orientation. That is, it is used to support the contention that homosexuality is part of our biological constitution rather than our sin nature. Since Scripture consistently indicates that homosexuality is an expression of a sinful heart, we should expect certain results in the scientific literature. Negatively, scientific observation will not be able to establish a biological cause to homosexuality. Positively, science should be friendly with the biblical position. And this, indeed, is the case: the findings of science support rather than challenge the biblical view.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ It is significant that only recently have Americans come to believe that homosexuality is biologically determined: “Until 2007, CNN polls had found that a majority of Americans believed gay people could change their sexual orientation if they chose to; it was only last year that a majority for the first time said homosexuality was an inborn trait.” See the article “US researchers find evidence that homosexuality linked to genetics” dated Dec. 1, 2008 and found at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/01/homosexuality-genetics-usa>

²⁹ Welch, 24.

Perhaps the most well-known study on the biology of homosexuality appeared in the periodical *Science*.³⁰ The lead researcher, Simon LeVay, conducted post-mortem examinations on the brains of nineteen homosexual men who died from AIDS and sixteen presumed heterosexual men, six of whom died of AIDS. His results suggested that the brains of the heterosexual men consistently had more brain cells in a specific area of the brain (INAH 3) that is allegedly implicated in sexual behavior. When viewed with a homosexuality-as-biologically-determined bias, the conclusion is that homosexuality is located in the brain.

Christians and non-Christians have frequently noted that the results of this study do not in any way establish a causative link between brain activity and homosexual behavior. Even LeVay recognized the limitations of his study, suggesting that it is little more than an invitation to further research. He knows that his observations are very tentative until corroborated by other researchers, and this corroboration has not as yet been forthcoming. He recognizes that AIDS may have confounded the results, that sample size was too small to draw any clear conclusions, and that his measurements could be prone to error. Furthermore, the brains of three homosexual men in the study were indistinguishable from the analogous brain areas in heterosexual men. Even his assumption that there is a relationship between INAH 3 and sexual behavior has never been clearly established.

Is it possible that there is some physiological contributor to homosexuality? Here is Welch:³¹

It is even possible that a certain brain type is necessary to express homosexual intent. This brain or genetic hardware is not *sufficient* to cause homosexuality, but it may be necessary. Or, to put it another way, a certain genetic predisposition may be necessary for homosexual intent, but it is not determinative.

It is important to be precise in making this point. It sounds as if I am suggesting that it is biblically possible that the body could cause homosexuality; and, indeed, I am. But the word “cause” in this context means “biologically shape or influence,” not “irresistibly compel.” Used this way there is nothing shocking about the statement. It is simply saying that the way our sinful hearts are actually expressed in behavior is the result of hundreds of factors, biology being one. A person whose sinful heart is manifested in murder may have been influenced by unjust treatment, parents who allowed him to vent his rage on siblings, and Satan’s incessant encouragement to kill. None of these influences remove personal responsibility, however. The ultimate cause of sin is always the sinful heart.

Welch is saying that biology may be a necessary prerequisite for homosexuality, but not a sufficient, i.e. absolutely determinative, cause. I have included at the end of this study a recent report that supports this from the standpoint of an experiment (“Homosexual behavior due to genetics and environmental factors”). I do not, however, vouch for its accuracy. Welch allowed for this kind of discovery as he wrote in 1995:³²

Since behavior is mediated (not caused) by our biology, it would not be surprising to hear of future studies that would offer better evidence for a biology and behavior link. But the Scripture is clear: our bodies can never make us sin. The body is weak but not the cause of sin. This is an inviolable principle that, when used accurately, can bring increased clarity to brain research. The

³⁰ Simon LeVay, “A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men,” *Science*, 253, (1991), 1034-1037.

³¹ Welch, 26.

³² *Ibid*, 27.

brain sciences can offer exciting observations, but these observations can only be rightly interpreted when Scripture provides the contours.

6. The possibility of change

The Bible clearly condemns all forms of homosexual activity. By thus placing it in the category of sinful things, it is asserting that for a person who claims to be a Christian homosexual desires and acts can be changed, because the Bible everywhere tells us that sinful habits can be broken. How can this happen? The process is no different from the sanctification process that all Christians are to submit to with regard to sin. First, there must be sound teaching. The homosexual must know and internalize the biblical fact that what he or she is doing is sin and offends a holy God. This involves admitting and confessing guilt and turning from all excusing and rationalization. It also means that there must be a willingness to submit completely to Scripture, rejecting human arguments that twist Scripture to justify sinful practice. Welch describes this process:³³

The process of exposing the heart comes through the Holy Spirit's application of Scripture. The goal is to understand what God says. The goal is to learn to "think God's thoughts." One way into the Scripture is to understand that there actually *is* something deeper than homosexuality. As summarized in Romans 1, homosexuality is an expression of an idolatrous heart. *This* is our deepest problem. We have an instinct that switches our allegiance from God to our idols. What are our idols? Comfort, pleasure, power, personal meaning, self-esteem, and so on. The possibilities are endless, but they all have one thing in common: an allegiance to self. We rebel against God, and we choose to live for our glory rather than God's. We choose to obey our own desires rather than God's Word. Homosexual desire or activity is an expression of the idolatrous instincts of our hearts.

A second key to change is the support of Christians who understand biblical teaching and are willing to reach out and support the homosexual with patience and love. Remember that the world more and more views homosexuality as normal, seeing it as simply an orientation. The support Christian can never take this approach. Welch cautions against not emphasizing the sinfulness of homosexuality.³⁴

The biblical position is that there is a creation order for human sexuality. God's ordained design for sexual relationships is male-female. Homosexual acts *and* homosexual *desire*, by either male or female, are a violation of this creation ordinance and are thus sinful. As such, the church must warn and rebuke those who call themselves Christians but persist in homosexual practice, *and* the church must actively teach that homosexual affection is sinful. It can never suggest that there is a morally neutral, constitutional, homosexual orientation. To plead with those struggling with homosexual desire to simply refrain from acting on their desire would be to sin against these brothers and sisters.

7. The homosexual agenda: a warning and a wake-up call

I have concluded that the public agenda of the homosexual community has as its goal nothing short of achieving full acceptance or "affirmation" of all homosexual activities. The steps toward this goal appear to be:

- 1) Soften resistance to homosexual issues and lifestyle and gain social acceptance

³³ Ibid, 28.

³⁴ Ibid, 24.

- 2) Influence government legislation in order to remove restrictions against homosexual activity and marriage and in order to silence all criticism of homosexual activity and lifestyle. This would include gaining legislative approval of homosexual marriage and legislative restriction on speech critical of homosexuality. The ultimate goal is apparently to make it a criminal offense to criticize homosexuality through making criticism a hate crime.

In his article entitled “The Threat of the Homosexual Agenda to Your Freedoms,” which I have reproduced below, Gagnon lists several results under this scenario. He points out that even today such things as the following are happening. You can:

- Go to jail for “hate speech”
- Lose your job for not supporting “coming out” celebrations at work or for “discriminatory” speech outside of the workplace
- Be fined and pay heavy legal fees for daring to criticize, or not supporting with your business, homosexual practice
- Have your children taken away from you if you teach them “homophobic” ideas
- Have the school systems teach your children that you are a hateful bigot.

Gagnon gives convincing examples of how these things are happening. Here are some other frightening things that are happening or could happen soon that Gagnon provides:

- Adoption agencies will not be able to give *any* priority to heterosexual married couples over homosexual couples because that would be discrimination. It makes no difference that the child is exposed to a homosexual environment and would be more inclined from this to experiment in homosexual behavior. It makes no difference that the vast majority of homosexual relationships will be not be long-term and monogamous.
- Christian groups on college campuses that do not allow practicing, self-affirming homosexuals as leaders will be charged with discrimination and kicked off campus.
- Professionals who have affiliation with such “discriminatory” groups as the Boy Scouts or the Salvation Army will be subjected to censure. Already, for example, the American Bar Association is considering prohibiting judges from involvement with any organizations that “discriminate” on the basis of “sexual orientation.”
- Christian colleges and seminaries that are suspected of “sexual orientation” discrimination—whether in hiring professors, allowing any faculty to say in class that homosexual practice is sin, or failing to provide “domestic partner benefits” to homosexual employees or “married student housing” to homosexual students—will be denied access to federal student loans. Eventually accreditation will be affected since the Association of Theological Schools cannot permit institutions to perpetuate the “moral equivalent” of racism.
- In order to protect themselves from federal lawsuits or civil suits, corporations will need to prove that they do not discriminate on the basis of “sexual orientation” by adopting affirmative-hire programs for self-professed GLBTs (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered persons). It will not be good enough to have an “orientation-blind” policy.

Here is a paragraph from the Web site of the Traditional Values Coalition that addresses the recently passed House of Representatives Bill 1913 (I have reproduced this page below):³⁵

LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) activists have worked aggressively to promote the idea that Bible Speech (opposition to the gay agenda) will lead inevitably to violent “hate” crimes.

³⁵ See <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/modules.php?sid=3617>

Thus, they say restrictions of such speech is justified as a way of protecting homosexuals from violence. What they're really targeting is speech against LGBT behaviors that is based upon an understanding of what the Bible says about this behavior. In short, they're targeting Bible Speech—not actual “hate speech.”

God is not caught by surprise by what is happening in our day—the perversions of Scripture and the mass movement toward acceptance of homosexuality in the West. Christians should recognize that homosexuality and the attempts to justify it are sin and that they will be factors in the spiritual battle that faces all believers. To be successful we need to utilize the full armor of God (Eph. 5) and be sure that we are resting on Scripture in all things.



April 17, 2009 – LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) activists have worked aggressively to promote the idea that Bible Speech (opposition to the gay agenda) will lead inevitably to violent “hate” crimes. Thus, they say restrictions of such speech is justified as a way of protecting homosexuals from violence. What they’re really targeting is speech against LGBT behaviors that is based upon an understanding of what the Bible says about this behavior. In short, they’re targeting Bible Speech — not actual “hate speech.”

For example, the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) defines “hate crime” this way: “Hate crimes are criminal acts (such as violent crime, hate speech or vandalism) that are motivated by feelings of hostility against any identifiable group of people within a society, if systematic, rather than spontaneous, instigators of such crimes are sometimes organized into **hate groups**. The ILGA clearly defines hate crime to include so-called hate speech!

On the website “hatecrime.org,” LGBT activists claim that pro-family organizations are engaging in hate speech when they criticize homosexual conduct and this “hate speech” allegedly leads to hate crimes and must be suppressed.

This site compares opposition to homosexuality as equal to Adolf Hitler’s slaughter of six million Jews in Europe before and during World War II.

Hatecrime.org also blames pro-family groups for the murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard. This effort to link criticism of homosexual conduct to the murder of Matthew Shepard is typical of the kind of thinking by the gay advocates.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution blaming religious groups for so-called “hate crimes” such as the murder of Mathew Shepard. In addition, the Board approved a resolution urging the local media not to carry advertisements by pro-family organizations that addressed hope for homosexuals to change.

Traditional Values Coalition’s Executive Director Andrea Lafferty was verbally attacked by the President of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). HRC accused Mrs. Lafferty of being personally responsible for the killing of Matthew Shepard. This occurred at the local Washington, D.C. Fox station.

In New York, a billboard with a Bible verse on it was taken down under pressure from city officials, who cited it as “hate speech.”

In Massachusetts in 2005, parent David Parker was arrested for protesting his elementary school child having to listen to pro-LGBT propaganda! He eventually removed his child from the school. He was in court for two years and lost all of his appeals.

Pacific Justice Institute President Cites Cases Of Anti-Christian Bigotry: In his testimony before the House Committee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security on April 17, 2007, PJI President Brad Dacus cited several examples showing how hate crime laws are inevitably used to silence freedom of speech and religion.

He noted, for example, that the 9th Federal Circuit Court in California sided with homosexuals against a student in a high school in Poway who wore a T-shirt saying that homosexuality was shameful! The 9th

cited California's "hate violence" statute as an excuse to silence this Christian student's religious viewpoint about gay behavior.

In addition, Slavic students in Sacramento wore anti-gay agenda T-shirts to protest the gay-inspired Day of Silence on campus. They were punished for their views.

The claim that hate crime laws against violence do not affect free speech or freedom of religion is bogus.

Dacus also notes that the Hindu American Foundation is attempting to compare opposition to Hinduism as "hate speech." The foundation claims that such hate speech could provoke a crazed gunman to attack Hindus in their temples!

Pennsylvania Hate Crime Law Puts Christians In Jail

One of the most serious attacks on free speech and religious freedom came in Philadelphia in 2004.

[Eleven Christians were arrested](#) on felony charges for preaching the Word of God at a gay pride rally. Eight charges were filed against them: three felony charges and five misdemeanors. Charges were eventually dropped against six of the Christians, but the five left faced potential prison sentences of 47 years in jail and fines up to \$90,000!

They were charged under Pennsylvania's [hate crime law](#), which had recently added "sexual orientation" to their statute. The Christians were charged with: criminal conspiracy, possession of instruments of crime, reckless endangerment of another person, ethnic intimidation, riot, failure to disperse, disorderly conduct and obstructing highways.

The "instruments of crime" were bull horns for witnessing!

The "ethnic intimidation" section of the hate crime statute was used against the Christians for having preached to the homosexuals in the parade and rally. Their "speech" was considered ethnic intimidation.

The charges were eventually dropped against the Christians for having no basis in fact – but their free speech and religious freedom were violated and they had to spend thousands of dollars on legal fees.

The bottom line is that hate crime laws supposedly designed only to combat violence, can easily be construed to suppress free speech as "intimidation" and an incitement to violence. The Christians arrested in Philadelphia are prime examples of this slippery slope.

9th Federal Circuit Court Says Gay Agenda Trumps Free Speech In Oakland, California

The far-left 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco has attacked freedom of speech and religion for the Christian employees of the city of Oakland, California.

The [court issued a memo](#) declaring that it sided with the city of Oakland in censoring the emails and posters of the Good News Employee Association that used words like "Natural Family," "Marriage" and "Family Values" in their materials. The 9th Circuit said the city had the right to censor those words because it made LGBT employees uncomfortable and violated the city's sexual orientation ordinance! These words were considered "statements of a homophobic nature" and "sexual-orientation-based harassment"!

These are only a few examples that show how sexual orientation and hate crime laws can be used to suppress religious freedom and free speech!

This Hate Crime Bill Will Lead To Increased Pro-LGBT Propaganda In Our Public Schools

This legislation provides hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund so-called anti-hate programs. This includes a series of \$100,000 grants to organizations allegedly fighting “hate” in their communities.

If signed into law, this so-called hate crimes bill will be used to fund pro-LGBT teaching materials for our nation’s public schools. It will be a replay of what occurred during the Clinton Administration.

During the Clinton years, TVC exposed the federal government’s use of tax dollars to fund an “anti-hate” (actually anti-Christian) school curriculum. **“Healing the Hate: A National Bias Crime Prevention Curriculum for Middle Schools,”** actually did the following:

- Compared Baptists and Pentecostals to White Supremacist groups.
- Defined “prejudice” to include the “bigoted thoughts” of religious organizations. If a church teaches homosexual sex is wrong, you see, the curriculum calls it bigotry!
- Defined a “hate incident” as “harmful words or actions motivated by prejudice,” which specifically includes “religious beliefs.” In other words, if you have moral principles based on your religious faith, the curriculum says you’re prejudiced!
- Defined institutionalized prejudice as widely accepted in religious groups.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno actually had a Department of Justice website for children K-5 teaching them to turn in their parents if they were “bigoted.”

The Washington State Safe Schools Coalition produced, for their Anti-Violence Documentation Project, curricula for kindergarten children -- **KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN -- to think bisexuality and sex change operations were normal!** These curricula -- blatant propaganda for radical homosexual practice -- were called “age appropriate.”

Under the guise of hate crime prevention, \$100,000 a pop will be given to LGBT groups to create more anti-Christian pro-gay agenda materials for public schools and communities, teaching children to accept homosexuality, bisexuality and transgenderism, etc as normal behaviors.

Under Section 4, the Office of Justice Programs is empowered to ensure compliance with “the local infrastructure developed under the grants.” Affected parties can include “community groups and schools, colleges, and universities.”

Another flaw in the bill is that affected parties are not defined. Also, will traditional values once again be denigrated with taxpayer dollars?

Homosexual behavior due to genetics and environmental factors

<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2008/06/28/homosexual.behavior.due.genetics.and.environmental.factors>

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Homosexual behaviour is largely shaped by genetics and random environmental factors, according to findings from the world's largest study of twins. Writing in the scientific journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, researchers from Queen Mary's School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, and Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm report that genetics and environmental factors (which are specific to an individual, and may include biological processes such as different hormone exposure in the womb), are important determinants of homosexual behaviour.

Dr Qazi Rahman, study co-author and a leading scientist on human sexual orientation, explains: "This study puts cold water on any concerns that we are looking for a single 'gay gene' or a single environmental variable which could be used to 'select out' homosexuality - the factors which influence sexual orientation are complex. And we are not simply talking about homosexuality here - heterosexual behaviour is also influenced by a mixture of genetic and environmental factors.

The team led by Dr Niklas Långström at Karolinska Institutet conducted the first truly population-based survey of all adult (20-47 years old) twins in Sweden. Studies of identical twins and non-identical, or fraternal, twins are often used to untangle the genetic and environmental factors responsible for a trait. While identical twins share all of their genes and their entire environment, fraternal twins share only half of their genes and their entire environment. Therefore, greater similarity in a trait between identical twins compared to fraternal twins shows that genetic factors are partly responsible for the trait.

This study looked at 3,826 same-gender twin pairs (7,652 individuals), who were asked about the total numbers of opposite sex and same sex partners they had ever had. The findings showed that 35 per cent of the differences between men in same-sex behaviour (that is, that some men have no same sex partners, and some have one or more) is accounted for by genetics. Rahman explains:

"Overall, genetics accounted for around 35 per cent of the differences between men in homosexual behaviour and other individual-specific environmental factors (that is, not societal attitudes, family or parenting which are shared by twins) accounted for around 64 per cent. In other words, men become gay or straight because of different developmental pathways, not just one pathway."

For women, genetics explained roughly 18 per cent of the variation in same-sex behaviour, non-shared environment roughly 64 per cent and shared factors, or the family environment, explained 16 per cent.

The study shows that genetic influences are important but modest, and that non-shared environmental factors, which may include factors operating during foetal development, dominate. Importantly, heredity had roughly the same influence as shared environmental factors in women, whereas the latter had no impact on sexual behaviour in men.

Dr Rahman adds: "The study is not without its limitations - we used a behavioural measure of sexual orientation which might be ok to use for men (men's psychological orientation, sexual behaviour, and sexual responses are highly related) but less so for women (who show a clearer separation between these elements of sexuality). Despite this, our study provides the most unbiased estimates presented so far of

genetic and non-genetic contributions to sexual orientation.”

The Threat of the Homosexual Agenda to Your Freedoms

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Most people have not been closely following the implications of the promotion of the homosexual agenda in other Western countries, especially Canada and Sweden, or even in selected areas of the United States. Here are some results that would follow from granting homosexual marriage or its legal equivalent and making “sexual orientation” a specially protected civil rights category for “hate speech” and “non-discrimination” laws.

(1) *Go to jail for “hate speech.”* If a “Human Rights Commission” finds that you have made public statements that “incites hatred” against homosexual persons, you may go to prison. Ultimately, even ministers of the gospel will not be exempt.

This past June in Sweden a Pentecostal minister, Ake Green, was sentenced to a month in prison for referring to homosexual practice in a sermon as a “horrible cancerous tumor in the body of society.” The public prosecutor commented: “Collecting Bible [verses] on this topic as he does makes this hate speech.” The Swedish parliament has already given initial approval to a constitutional amendment that would prohibit any speech that “implies unfavorable treatment” to homosexual persons, with a prison sentence of up to two years.

Even highly placed church officials face the specter of prosecution. In the Catholic Church, Belgian Cardinal Gustaaf Joos faces an anti-discrimination lawsuit for remarks that he made in 2003 about homosexuality and the Church’s teaching in a Belgium magazine. Madrid Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco Varela is facing a suit in Spain for preaching against homosexuality in a sermon he gave in 2003. In 2000 Dutch authorities even contemplated bringing charges against Pope John Paul II after he declared a homosexual rally in Rome to be “an offense to Christian values.” They backed off only when they were forced to concede that the Pope had “global immunity.” In Oct. 2003 Anglican Bishop of Chester, England, Peter Forster, was investigated by police by making the following “hate” comment in an interview with a local newspaper: “Some people who are primarily homosexual can re-orientate themselves. . . . We want to help them, but I don’t offer it as a panacea.” The police chief declared that the comments were “totally unacceptable” and compared the remarks to offenses against ethnic minorities “generated by hate and prejudice.”

Just three weeks ago in Philadelphia eleven people belonging to a Christian evangelistic group called “Repent America” were arrested for singing hymns and carrying signs (“Homosexuality Is Sin; Christ Can Set You Free”) at a homosexual celebration called “Outfest.” They were charged with “ethnic intimidation” under Pennsylvania’s “hate crime” law (“sexual orientation” and “gender identity” were added to the law this past summer). This, along with a charge of “criminal conspiracy,” and other trumped-up charges, could result in a prison sentence of up to 47 years.

(2) *Lose your job for not supporting “coming out” celebrations at work or for “discriminatory” speech outside of the workplace.* That’s right, you can even be fired from your job for statements made outside your place of employment. Chris Kempling, a public school teacher and guidance counselor in British Columbia, Canada, was suspended for one month, without pay, for writing allegedly “discriminatory and derogatory statements against homosexuals” to a local newspaper. What kind of terrible statements did

Kempling write? Things such as: “Gay people are seriously at risk [of sexually transmitted disease], not because of heterosexual attitudes but because of their sexual behavior”; and “Homosexual relationships are unstable, ‘gay’ sex poses health risks and many religions consider homosexuality immoral.” In a decision against Kempling handed down this past February by the British Columbia Supreme Court, Justice Ronald Holmes stated that “discriminatory speech” made outside the workplace can be punished by one’s employer if one belongs to the “teaching profession” or “any [other] profession” (i.e., a white-collar job).

In 1998 Annie Coffey-Montes, a New York Bell Atlantic employee for 20 years, was fired for attempting to remove herself from the e-mail list of GLOBE (Gay and Lesbians of Bell Atlantic), which advertised “gay pride” parades, “coming out” parties, and homosexual dances. After a year of petitioning her supervisor to have her name removed, she responded to one GLOBE e-mail with: “Please take me off this email. I find it morally offensive. God bless you.” She ended by citing Romans 1:27. Coffey-Montes was fired for “creating a hostile work environment.” In 2001 Albert Buonanno was fired from AT&T Broadband of Denver for not signing a “certificate of understanding” stating that he would “fully value sexual orientation differences.” In Oct. 2002 Rolf Szabo, a 23-year employee of The Eastman Kodak Company was fired when he responded to an e-mail requiring supervisors to promote a “Coming Out Day” for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees with the following: “Please do not send this type of information to me anymore, as I find it disgusting and offensive. Thank you.” In 2003 Richard Peterson at Hewlett-Packard’s office in Boise, Idaho, posted at his cubicle two Bible verses critical of homosexual practice in response to a poster of two homosexual man placed near his cubicle. He was fired for not “accepting [the company’s] values.”

(3) *Be fined and pay heavy legal fees for daring to criticize, or not supporting with your business, homosexual practice.* Two incidents in Canada give a good indication of where things are headed. Canadian print shop owner Scott Brockie was ordered to pay a fine of \$5000 because he refused to print homosexual advocacy materials for the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives. In attempting to defend himself in the courts, Brockie not only incurred over \$100,000 in legal expenses beyond his legal defense fund, but was also ordered by the Ontario Court of Appeal this past year to pay the \$40,000 incurred by the Ontario Human Rights Commission for prosecuting him. Hugh Owens, a Canadian correctional-center guard, was fined \$4500 by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in 2002 for taking out an ad in a local newspaper that responded to a “Gay Pride” celebration. The ad reproduced a bumper sticker that Owens had created, showing two male stick figures holding hands, with a line through the picture, and the mere citation of four references from the Bible against homosexual practice (no quotations). Owens, who had to represent himself because he could not afford legal representation, may yet have to pay the prosecuting expenses of the Human Rights Commission.

In California businesses that don’t offer benefits to homosexual couples are denied state contracts, irrespective of the business owner’s religious beliefs. Moreover, perceived workplace discrimination against “transgendered” persons (both transsexuals and transvestites) makes businesses liable to a \$150,000 fine.

(4) *Have your children taken away from you if you teach them “homophobic” ideas.* In 2003 Dr. Cheryl Clark was ordered by a Denver Circuit Court judge and later in 2004 by the Colorado Court of Appeals not to say anything to her adopted daughter that her ex-lesbian partner might construe as “homophobic.” In California potential foster parents who express disapproval of homosexual practice are disqualified from foster care. Adoption qualifications will one day screen potential parents on the basis of their stance toward “sexual orientation differences.” Where is this ultimately headed? It is not hard to imagine. Suppose your child wonders whether he or she is bisexual, homosexual, or transgendered—not a far-fetched possibility given the coercive promotion of bisexuality, homosexuality, and transgenderism in the school systems and the higher percentage of orientation confusion among adolescents. If your child then

tells the school guidance counselor that you regard homosexual behavior as sin, the counselor will report the matter to your state Child Protective Services and your child will be removed from your home. The state will reason: Would we tolerate black children raised in the homes of Klu Klux Klan members?

(5) *Have the school systems teach your children that you are a hateful bigot.* In California all public schools, as well as private and religious schools that receive state money, must have curricula that “foster appreciation” for sexual orientation differences. An example of the kind of material that children can be subjected to includes a presentation sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network (GLSEN) called “Cootie Shots.” In one of the skits a young boy declares how wonderful it is to dress “in Mommy’s high heels.” “What’s wrong with being like a girl? ! / . . . They are swine, I am the pearl! / And let them laugh and let them scream! / They’ll be beheaded when I’m queen!” In a GLSEN video, “It’s Elementary,” a resource promoted to elementary school teachers, an 8-year old girl reads her essay to her class stating that those who accept the Bible’s teaching on homosexual practice are stupid. The teacher gives her essay an award.

In 2002 the Canadian Supreme Court ruled that neither parents nor school boards could prevent public school children, even in kindergarten and first-grade, from being instructed in the classroom about the acceptability of homosexual relationships. This is what is coming to America. If you are fortunate enough to have your children embrace your values in sexual ethics they will be marginalized as the moral equivalent of racists and humiliated in the classroom.

(6) *Other Consequences.* The ramifications of making “sexual orientation” a nationally protected civil rights category are endless. Here we can only mention briefly a few other consequences.

- Adoption agencies will not be able to give *any* priority to heterosexual married couples over homosexual couples because that would be discrimination. It makes no difference that the child is exposed to a homosexual environment and would be more inclined from this to experiment in homosexual behavior. It makes no difference that the vast majority of homosexual relationships will be not be long-term and monogamous.
- Christian groups on college campuses that do not allow practicing, self-affirming homosexuals as leaders will be charged with discrimination and kicked off campus.
- Professionals who have affiliation with such “discriminatory” groups as the Boy Scouts or the Salvation Army will be subjected to censure. Already, for example, the American Bar Association is considering prohibiting judges from involvement with any organizations that “discriminate” on the basis of “sexual orientation.”
- Christian colleges and seminaries that are suspected of “sexual orientation” discrimination—whether in hiring professors, allowing any faculty to say in class that homosexual practice is sin, or failing to provide “domestic partner benefits” to homosexual employees or “married student housing” to homosexual students—will be denied access to federal student loans. Eventually accreditation will be affected since the Association of Theological Schools cannot permit institutions to perpetuate the “moral equivalent” of racism.
- In order to protect themselves from federal lawsuits or civil suits, corporations will need to prove that they do not discriminate on the basis of “sexual orientation” by adopting affirmative-hire programs for self-professed GLBTs (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered persons). It will not be good enough to have an “orientation-blind” policy.

The Bottom Line

The one political concern where the greatest sea change in the federal government’s policies is likely to come is not in social programs for the disadvantaged, the environment, taxes, or even the Iraq War. No, the greatest change is likely to come on the issue of homosexual advocacy and the oppressive hand of

the federal government against those who resist the false conclusion that homosexual practice is a normal, natural, and acceptable form of behavior that society should promote. It is on this issue that there is a serious prospect of radical abridgement of your religious and civil freedoms, to the point of being fired or imprisoned. What could be more alarming? Every Christian has a civic responsibility to engage the political process with a view to preventing such tragic results.

Questions for Further Study

1. What are the major lines of argument used to justify Christians as homosexuals?
2. What appear to be the reasons for such kinds of argumentation?
3. What is the essence of Jesus' teaching relative to homosexuality?
4. What does Paul teach about homosexuality?
5. According to the Bible what is the source of homosexuality? Why is it important to stress this?
6. Why is change possible for the homosexual?
7. What should Believers' Fellowship do to help stem the tide of the approval of homosexuals?

Running compilation of key definitions

1. Systematic theology: The organized presentation of all that the Bible teaches about God and His works.
2. Exegesis: The actual practice of studying or interpreting a document or other message to determine its meaning.
3. Context: Context in a document or utterance is the surroundings of a portion of a word, a word, or a group of words.
4. Bibliology: The doctrinal study of the nature of the Bible.
5. Biblical authority: The quality inherent in Scripture by virtue of which human beings are completely answerable to its content.
6. Revelation: The information about Himself given by God to human beings.
7. General revelation: God's disclosure of Himself, available directly to everyone, given through means other than dreams, visions, direct words and Christ Himself.
8. Special revelation: The disclosure of information from God that is not available directly to all human beings.
9. Inspiration: A term applied to the Bible denoting that it is the product of God's creative activity, figuratively breathed out from Him (2 Tim. 3:16); applies to the process of recording Scripture, not specifically to the people involved; actually, *expiracion* would be a better term to reflect the concept of 2 Tim. 3:16; the result is *inerrancy*.
10. Textual criticism: The science and art of attempting to discover the original text of a literary work for which the original document does not exist. It is especially important for biblical studies, and the foundational endeavor to all subsequent investigation of the Scriptures.
11. Canon: Transliterated from a Greek Word meaning 'standard'; as used of the Bible, it refers to books authenticated as possessing divine origin and therefore authoritative; the Jewish canon consists of thirty-nine books, the Protestant of sixty-six and the Catholic of eighty (including apocryphal books).
12. Inerrancy is a term applied to the Bible, although not specifically found in it; it denotes that the Bible, as originally written, possessed no humanly induced deviations from the message God intended to be recorded and that it is true in every respect; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:19.
13. Infallibility: Although some assert that this term has a different meaning from inerrancy, the two terms are, for purposes of biblical study, synonymous; the Bible is infallible because inerrant, and inerrant because infallible.
14. Illumination is the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God that imparts understanding of the message of Scripture to the believer; not to be confused with inspiration, which in the Bible is used of the work of God in giving Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16); 1 Jn. 2:20; Jn. 16:13.
15. Spirituality: God is not physical, but immaterial, incorporeal, invisible and alive.
16. Self-existence/Aseity: God exists independently of anything else. He is self-existent.
17. Immensity: God is infinite in relation to space.
18. Eternality: God is infinite with regard to time.
19. Simplicity: God is not a plurality and cannot be looked at as divisible into parts.
20. Pure actuality: There is nothing about God that is potential. He is not unfinished in any way.
21. Necessity: God is uncaused and exists because he must exist.
22. Immutability: God is unchanging and unchangeable.
23. Impassibility: God is incapable of being changed or disturbed by what he experiences and is incapable of suffering.
24. Transcendence: God and the world are distinct; he is not part of the world, and the world is not part of him.
25. Immanence: God is present in the world.
26. Infinity: There are no limits to God's person and his perfections.
27. Omnipotence: God can do whatever he wills.
28. Omniscience: God knows everything there is to know.
29. Omnipresence: God is present everywhere in his creation
30. Holiness: God is morally pure and separated from all moral evil and sin.
31. Goodness: A quality that describes or includes his love, benevolence, mercy and grace
32. Truth: God's person, actions, knowledge and revelations correspond to reality
33. Love: God's continual communication of himself to his creatures.
34. Benevolence: God's goodness toward his creatures.
35. Mercy: God's goodness toward those who are helpless.
36. Grace: God's goodness toward sinners.
37. Glory: The greatness of God's perfections.

38. Trinity: There is only one true God, existing as a single Being comprised of three Persons who are equal in every way, yet distinct in their tasks and relations to humanity.
39. God's decree: The decree of God is his plan for the universe that includes all things and is certain to come to pass.
40. Providence: God's care for and upholding of his creation.
41. Sovereignty: God's control over his universe.
42. Christology: The study of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
43. Incarnation: The joining of deity and humanity in one person forever. The word is based on the Latin word for flesh: the Lord Jesus Christ is God joined with human flesh.
44. Pre-existence: Used of the Son, it means that he existed before Bethlehem.
45. Theophany: An appearance of God.
46. Christophany: An appearance of Christ.
47. Priesthood: The system that God established to remedy the problem of alienation between a holy God and sinful human beings.
48. Son of God: A name for Jesus that describes his deity and his approval by the Father at the resurrection.
49. Son of Man: A messianic name for Jesus that emphasizes his humanity backed by deity and his role of taking humans to God through suffering and humiliation.
50. Messiah: A transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning 'anointed one'; used of the expected national deliverer of Israel; the linguistic equivalent of Greek *christos*, 'Christ'.
51. Efficacious grace: Efficacious grace is the working of God in an individual that cannot be thwarted and that leads that person to faith in Christ. It is also described as effective calling and irresistible grace.
52. Regeneration: Regeneration is the unseen and unfelt work of the Holy Spirit that overcomes depravity and brings spiritual life and the capacity to please God and exercise faith.
53. Spirit baptism is the nonphysical act of the Spirit of God that places a believer in the Body of Christ and makes him a partaker, along with all other believers, of the work and merits of Christ; should be distinguished from filling, sealing, and indwelling; cannot be felt or noticed, and hence must be appropriated by faith; there is no warrant in Scripture for assuming a second act of God for power, a 'baptism,' after salvation.
54. Sealing is a guarantee that the believer will persevere in Christ all the way to entrance into heaven, when God completes his work of purchasing the individual. It begins at the moment of salvation when the Father places the Holy Spirit in the believer for permanent indwelling. It is unseen and unfelt and should result in praise and obedience to the Spirit.
55. Indwelling is the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit in every individual who has placed personal trust in Christ as Savior. Described in Jn. 14:17, this is the basis of His other ministries to the believer, such as sealing, anointing and filling and establishes the believer as a part of the spiritual temple that God is building today.
56. The filling of the Spirit is 1) A constant characteristic of a believer's life that consists of regular control by the Spirit that produces Christlikeness through Scripture; 2) A special enablement at particular times for service during the first century.
57. A spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service.
58. A cessationist (with regard to spiritual gifts) is a person who holds that the miraculous gifts are not present in the Church today as part of God's plan.
59. A continualist (with regard to spiritual gifts) is a person who holds that the miraculous gifts are present in the Church today as part of God's plan.
60. An angel is an individual, personal spirit being originally created by God to assist him in his plan for saving the elect.
61. The cosmos is Satan's organized spiritual system, in rebellion against God.
62. A demon is a fallen angel that is free to assist in carrying out Satan's plan of opposition to God.
63. Biblical anthropology is the study of what the Bible teaches about the nature and purpose of human beings.
64. Homosexuality is thoughts or actions, in adult life, motivated by a definite erotic (sexual-genital-orgiastic) attraction to members of the same sex, usually but not necessarily leading to sexual relations with them. (Edward Welch)