

The Gay Agenda In The Light Of Reason, Research And Revelation

INTRODUCTION

Is homosexuality right or should it be condemned? Is there an objective standard outside of ourselves to get fair and just answers to these questions? Should they be protected by the state through congressional legislation? How should society and the church deal with advocates of such a lifestyle? Should same-sex relationships be accepted as the new norm?

Persistent attempts are being made by LGBT (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender) advocates to make it so. The May 10, 2016, Yahoo News reported the historic win for a congressional seat in the House of Representatives of Geraldine Roman, the first and highest ranking transgender politician in a predominantly Roman Catholic country like the Philippines. This 49-year-old, former Spanish News Agency senior editor now legislator, underwent sex reassignment surgery in the 1990s. One of her campaign promises was to lift restrictions of a law passed in 2001 which made it impossible for transgender Filipinos to change their name and sex. She is also pushing for “an anti-discrimination bill that ensures equal treatment in the workplace, schools, commercial establishments and government offices.”⁰¹

Another news-worthy report came in months later related to this issue. According to the September 8 edition of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU) has designated single all-gender-rest-rooms in its main campus as toilets for all genders. Their purpose was to foster dialogue between the University, the LGBT community and others in campus. ADDU President, Fr. Joel Tabora, S.J. said it was intended “to increase understanding and respect for the human needs and sensitivities of all.” It further added that this

... is not only because Davao City has special legislation proscribing discrimination against the LGBT community, but more so because ADDU is itself positively committed to cultural sensitivity, intercultural dialogue and cultural transformation in favor of a society that is more accepting of diversity, including gender diversity, based on a fundamental recognition of the dignity of all.”⁰²

Ever since the Dutch Parliament passed a bill allowing same-sex couples to marry, divorce and adopt children in the Netherlands last December 2000, a number of others followed. But the whole world felt the shock when the United States of America Supreme Court made their controversial ruling to legalize it last June 2015. Those who celebrated the decision claim that theirs was a battle won by a minority in pursuit of equality. For conservatives, it was a blow to the ethical and moral norms of society, emboldening LGBT advocates worldwide. As the saying goes, “when America sneezes, the whole world catches a cold.”

With all these in the public fore, as a pastor of a local New Testament Baptist Church in Manila, we decided to get the pulse of our congregation. While all took the traditional view of marriage, it was only after a series of messages on this subject taken from this paper that many of our people began to understand how many of us, especially our young people, have been deceived and desensitized into believing that homosexuals were not “born this way.”

This paper is an attempt to address the questions posted above while assuming the divine inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency and relevance of the Scriptures. It is our prayer that it will shed light, not heat, to the current controversy. May it appeal to our consciences

than to our emotions. We pray, it will provide various sectors of society an objective, timeless and transcultural basis in formulating one's position on the subject and stir everyone concerned to principled and appropriate action.

CHAPTER I THE BASIS FOR HOMOSEXUALITY

The homosexual revolution is no doubt in full swing on a global scale. Laws of the land from the west have legitimized their lifestyle and some sectors of organized religion have succumbed to their pressure by ordaining gay ministers. In this chapter, we ask: where do LGBT advocates base their claim for the legitimacy of their lifestyle?

The subject of ethics is about the good (the values and virtues we should cultivate) and the right (what our moral duties should be). Because it is about morality, it is usually related to religion and is a normative discipline. However, ethics is not interested much with what people do as it is more interested in what people ought-to-do. It focuses not so much in what values people presently have than in what values people ought-to-have. The Judeo-Christian tradition is one of the main historical sources of the moral heritage of the Western world.

The Judeo-Christian Ethic

Orthodox, historic Christianity has always recognized the Bible as the authoritative basis for belief and behavior. The Old and New Testament Scriptures were written by some 40 human authors of diverse backgrounds covering a period of about 1,600 years in three different continents (namely, Africa, Asia and Europe). The doctrines and ethical norms maintained in these documents have been proclaimed and articulated through the centuries in various settings: churches, pulpits, publications and other gatherings. The Biblical writers claim that their writings were of divine origin, breathed out by God the Holy Spirit who drove them to produce an inerrant and authoritative text.⁰³ While these human authors wrote to their original audiences to address current issues of their day, their writings were apparently preserved for succeeding generations as well.⁰⁴ Jesus Christ Himself recognized the Old Testament as a message from God,⁰⁵ acknowledged its historical authenticity,⁰⁶ believed its prophetic accuracy,⁰⁷ and submitted to its divine authority.⁰⁸ He also pre-authenticated the New Testament as He predicted the Holy Spirit's role in guiding its writers "into all [the] truth" (the definitive article "the" in the Greek text).⁰⁹ These are stubborn facts – facts well substantiated.

American author, critic, scholar, famous professor of English Literature with degrees from Yale University and Harvard University, William Lyon Phelps (2 January 1865 – 21 August 1943) had this to say regarding the Bible's impact on the Western world:

Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a proper substitute. Western civilization is founded upon the Bible: our ideas, our wisdom, our philosophy, our literature, our art, our ideals come from the Bible than from all other books put together. It is a revelation of divinity and of humanity; it contains the loftiest religious aspiration along with a candid representation of all that is earthly, sensual and devilish. I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but, I believe, a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible.¹⁰

However, historical records speak of the theological battles that started from the mid-17th century (when the denial of the supernatural elements of the Bible began in the academe) through 18th century Germany (when belief in the all-sufficiency of human reason was said to have the capacity to promote man's happiness in this life through the Enlightenment Movement).¹¹ Modernism or rationalism posed that anything that would not square with reason could not or should not be accepted as true. This dangerous movement successfully crept into Bible Schools and Seminaries in the 19th century, forcing these theologically conservative learning institutions to combat and purge from among themselves its growing menace at the turn of the 20th century. After going through two World Wars, the promises of rationalism or modernism were found wanting. A paradigm shift of human mindsets took place so that postmodernism was born. Modernism's bankruptcy was exposed so that the needed change had to take place – but it was a change toward the wrong direction. Instead of the look up, it went further within, still independent of God. The parameters of human reason were no longer the basis for knowing what was true and right. Reality has become whatever one imagines it to be. Truth and right were determined subjectively. Every viewpoint is to be viewed with respect and tolerance except those who believed in objective truth. Moral absolutism gave in to cultural relativism. Unfortunately, academic and secular circles continue to adopt this dominant worldview.

Arthur Holmes points out the problem of losing the power of moral imperatives in today's postmodern culture. In his book written in 1984, *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, he says, "This is precisely the problem with modern ethical theory in the West: it has lost its Judeo-Christian roots. It may even advocate virtues and practices that are in many instances compatible with a Christian ethic, but it has lost the binding force of divine commands."¹²

Where does that leave the current generation on matters of theology, value systems, philosophy, ethics, or anything for that matter? Whose standard should be followed, including the matter under discussion?

LGBT's Basis for Ethics

The advocates of LGBT try to make their lifestyle the cultural norm through congressional legislation. They have done this in many Western countries and attempts are being made to do the same in the local scene. By doing so, they have succeeded in making gay marriages become the law of the land.

There are, however, obvious questions and serious ramifications to this. Should the consensual voice of the majority in the House of Representatives be sufficient grounds for determining what should be considered the norm? Questions such as: should we base our ethics on what is popular, what is politically correct, what is personal preference, or what is principled and proper?

Jim Berg labeled "the ethics of the new morality"¹³ in four categories. Something is right if it feels good. This worldview is capsulated in a pop song with its lyrics – "it can't be wrong if it feels so right." He calls this the pleasure ethic. For others, something is right "if we love each other" – the affection ethic. This is the usual argument of LGBT advocates. Still, others say something is right "if we agree" – the consensus ethic. It does not take a scholar to realize that unanimity to a particular decision or course of action may sometimes spell a recipe for disaster. How and when can gang rape ever be good and right? Finally, for others, something is right because God says so – the Biblical ethic. This is not to say that feeling good, showing

affection, seeking a consensus for a particular course of action is always wrong. We are simply pointing out here that these are not the bases for determining what is ethical.

The problem with the affection ethic is that, according to Paul, true, sacrificial love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”¹⁴ John the Beloved apostle writes, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”¹⁵ Robert Gagnon words it well when he says:

Without a moral compass, love is mere mush. Without taking into account God’s will for holy living, love turns into affirmation of self-degrading conduct. This means that true love of one’s neighbor does not embrace every form of consensual behavior. What constitutes an expression of love to one’s neighbor depends significantly on how one assesses the benefit or harm of the neighbor’s behavior. If indeed homosexual behavior is sin and an obstacle to the fullness of life available in Christ, then the church has an obligation both to protect the church from the debilitating effect of sanctioned immorality and to protect the homosexual for whom more is at stake than the satisfaction of sensual impulses.¹⁶

Nature or Nurture

When asked a question about marriage and divorce, the Lord Jesus Christ said:

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”¹⁷

For Him, male and female were created for each other and that the only meaningful, sexual relationship is the husband-and-wife relationship.

Traditionalists maintain that a homosexual lifestyle is a choice to depart from God’s heterosexual design for marriage. Revisionists and LGBT advocates, on the other hand, claim they were “born this way,” thus, implying that God had a hand in genetically making them “women trapped in a male’s body” or “men trapped in a woman’s body.”

Heath Lambert helps us see how the field of Psychology has never proven anything conclusive on this subject. He writes:

When the American Psychological Association (APA) weighed in on homosexuality in 1952 with the first edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) it declared homosexuality to be a mental illness. By 1974, it declared that homosexuality was no longer a mental illness. By 2000, it declared that the people with mental illness were the ones who were troubled by their homosexuality.

This dramatic shift did not happen because of any new information about the nature of sexual orientation. No empirical data contributed to increased understanding about the influence of nature or nurture in determining orientation. The APA changed its position of homosexuality because of increasing cultural acceptance of homosexuality. The APA knows as much about sexual orientation today as it did in the 1950s.¹⁸

Where do such attractions come from? Again, we quote the APA, a secularist source, saying, “although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors.”¹⁹

LGBT advocates have no basis to justify their homosexual behavior. Love and affection without truth and holiness turn out as a mere flimsy excuse for lawlessness, a license to sin. Secular researchers admit that science has not explained or cannot explain where homosexual behavior stems from. None of the studies have ever arrived at a conclusive study on this because the only real source for accurate and true answers on this issue has been given through divine revelation. Let us turn to that in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

BIBLICAL TESTIMONY ON SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Whatever position one takes on this issue, expecting universal consensus is a delusion. It will not happen in a sinful fallen world. Reason and research do not answer the *ought* question on what should compel us to legitimize or reject same-sex relationships. This writer maintains that an objective authority outside of ourselves is needed. That authority is God who has spoken to man through creation, through his conscience, and more specifically through the pages of His inspired, inerrant, infallible Word, the Bible. We shall look at key passages.

God’s Design for Marriage in Creation

The Bible clearly teaches that marriage was not a product of social or anthropological factors. Rather, it was divinely designed. It was God’s idea and creation from the very beginning.

For His Glory

In the eternal counsels of the Tri-une God, both man and woman were created in His likeness, to reflect His image and rule the earth. He designed husband and wife to call attention to the glory of God. The Scriptures tell us plainly that all things were created “by Him [Jesus Christ] and for Him,” Col 1:16, or “for His pleasure,” Rev 4:11. Thus, marriage was divinely designed for His credit and contentment.

Yet, how many couples enter marriage with this perspective in mind – to glorify God? Many proceed merely to have their needs met or their sexual appetites satisfied. While this is certainly part of marriage, it is not its ultimate goal set by its divine Author. It is not surprising, therefore, why our society is witnessing the strangling of the family. This man-centered perspective is apparently the underlying motivation behind the moral chaos happening around us. Same-sex marriages, abortion, adultery and other sexual aberrations are all reflective of our culture’s relativistic and selfish mindset. Basing on the above passage, God intended marriage to be God-centered.

For Procreation

The Book of Beginnings, the Book of Genesis, gives us an inspired record of how and when everything began. The first chapter gives us a chronological account of the six days of creation where everything was declared “good” at the end of each day. After man and woman were placed in the garden prepared for them, God says of all that He has made at the end of the sixth day, “It was very good.” Here, procreation is presented as part of God’s design for marriage.²⁰ Sex was God’s gift designed for man to enjoy exclusively within the bounds of the husband and wife relationship. Marital sex was never to be undervalued as an act of

impurity, especially when the married couple engages in it with the purpose of ministering to their spouse's needs.

Of course, this also involves the responsibility of providing adequate care and training for the children to be raised as godly seeds.

For Companionship

As the narrative unfolds, the second chapter of Genesis gives us the story behind the anthropological account of creation. It provides details on the location of the Garden of Eden, the stage where the prime of God's creation would be situated to enjoy Him and His blessings. It included the formation of man from the dust of the earth and how woman comes into the scene. The first thing that was called "not good" in creation was the fact that man was alone. Thus, God created woman to exclusively meet a need which nothing else in creation could provide for man – the need for companionship.²¹

For Completeness

The same passage reveals the first man's handicapped condition in the absence of woman. Thus, she was created to assist or support man for his completeness – as an helpmeet. Her role was not merely to be his servant. She was designed for significance, someone to suitably meet his needs which nothing else in creation can.

Two things can be clearly inferred from these passages. One, God designed a *monogamous* relationship for He took only one rib to address the problem. Two, God designed a *heterosexual* relationship for He made the rib into a woman and brought her unto the man.

For a Covenant Partnership

Finally, God designed a covenant partnership²² which involves a separation: "*For this cause a man shall leave father & mother....*" This means leaving the deepest ties of youth and establishing a new one so that past ties are not allowed to hinder the growth of the newly established relationship.

Furthermore, this partnership involves unity and permanence: "... *and shall cleave to his wife....*" "Cleave" carries the idea of "clinging to, sticking (glue) to, holding fast to someone in a permanent bond, in affection and loyalty." Once sealed, the bond cannot be parted without incurring severe damage. No wonder, there are devastating effects when attempts are made to "put asunder" what God has joined together.

Lastly, this involves intimacy: "... *they shall be one flesh.*" This implies the physical unity, and more. It also means becoming a spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical unity between man and woman. This is marriage according to its Author, the way God intended it to be.

God's Design Marred by Sin

How can a very promising relationship, like marriage, become a problem? The answer is found in the third chapter of Genesis. As a result of man's disobedience, God placed His curse on His pristine creation that resulted in various aberrations and perversions which were clear departures from God's original design.

God's Punishment

The serpent, who represented Satan, was singled out to be "cursed above all cattle." While all of creation would lie under God's curse, the reptile would be cursed above all. When God

pronounced on it that “upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life,”²³ it seems this was the first time the serpent began to crawl. The Devil’s ultimate destruction is predicted. The continuous enmity between him and “the seed of the woman” will cause his final demise.²⁴ This verse has been called the protoevangelium, the first time the gospel is hinted. Even childbearing would carry the effects of the curse. Giving birth would be accompanied by severe pains.²⁵ The womb that was originally designed to bring forth godly seeds would eventually deliver inherent sinners who deserve death.²⁶

So, everything else was never the same for Adam as well. Sin so affected man that it marred God’s image in him and alienated him from His Creator, making him deserve divine retribution for all eternity. God’s judgment affected a number of areas. First, the ground was cursed and is no longer going to bear fruit for him as before.²⁷ Second, it affected his work. The mention of “thorns also and thistles” is a reminder that nature was no longer subject to man’s dominion. They make man’s work more difficult and complex because the ground from then on would hesitatingly give its yield. While work was part of man’s activity prior to the fall, this time he will have to sweat in his labors in order to provide for himself and his family.²⁸ Sickness, suffering and physical death became part of his earthly experience as a result of his disobedience. Since then, he has to work until his death when his body returns to where it belongs – dust.

God’s Provision

Amid the passing of divine judgment, God gave hope for the first time by shedding initial light on the good news that salvation from sin and victory over Satan are available through the Messiah, referred to here as “*the seed of the woman.*” Man’s separation from God can be restored by man’s acceptance of God’s propitiatory and atoning work for his sin.

In contrast to the fig leaves man made as a covering for their guilt at the Garden of Eden, “the LORD God ma[d]e coats of skins, and clothed them.”²⁹ Apparently, their former covering was inadequate, to say the least. These animal “coats of skins” were made by God Himself. The implication is that an animal must have been slain. Very likely, its blood was shed as atonement for man’s sin. The rest of Biblical revelation teaches that “salvation is of the LORD.”³⁰ It is grounded on the death of an innocent substitute.³¹ It is carried out by the shedding of blood.³² What happened then became a picture and precedent for all men of how redemption from sin was going to be executed in Christ.

God’s Desertion of Human Depravity

God’s Righteousness Revealed in the Gospel

The apostle Paul’s epistle to the Romans contains an inspired explanation of what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about and how it should ethically impact believers’ everyday lives. From the opening verses of this epistle, Paul makes plain that the gospel is not a mere code of ethic or a set of rules and regulations to live by. Rather, it is a divine revelation concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (who was predicted by the Old Testament Prophets) and His work on Calvary (when His resurrection from the dead was a manifest declaration of His deity, His innocence, and the fulfillment of all that the prophets have spoken).³³ The first three chapters present all men as sinners, Jew and Gentile alike. The good news is that God’s righteousness has been provided for unrighteous men. Forgiveness of sin, reconciliation and restoration is possible for anyone. However, these are not gained through human merit for man is morally and spiritually bankrupt, totally unable to pay his debt to God on his own. Neither can it be earned through law-keeping, for the law, good as it is, has no capacity to save. It merely exposes man’s guilt and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Instead, the one, true,

just Judge offers pardon and justifies the guilty in His sight, without ruining His perfect justice, on the grounds of Christ's perfect and propitiatory sacrifice on Calvary. This can only be appropriated by the means of faith in Him.³⁴

God's Revelation Rejected

But before Paul bears out the good news, he explains in the first chapter why no one has any excuse before the invisible God for not knowing Him. He reveals Himself to all, without exception, through general revelation: creation (God's omnipotent power, majesty and glory revealed). Yet man rejects and suppresses (holds back the truth) this limited but universal light,³⁵ even engaging in idolatry by exchanging and worshiping the creature more than the Creator Who is blessed forever. This has resulted in God abandoning them or ceasing to restrain them in their obstinacy by turning them over³⁶ to their reprobate minds. As a further degrading consequence, this has darkened man's view of God,³⁷ defiled his own affections or desires,³⁸ and distorted his ethics.³⁹ These inordinate affections have found expression in various sexually aberrant sins.

It is clear from these passages that Paul sees homosexual behavior as disgraceful – a result of divine judgment. Mere passions and desires toward same sex partners are equally vile according to this passage. By exchanging their natural attractions to the opposite sex for the same sex, they are sinning against God and are doing so contrary to nature. James De Young adds this comment on this passage:

For Paul, what is “natural” (vv. 26-27) reflects the being or nature of the Creator (vv. 18-23) and His revealed law (the Old Testament). It is the normative creation order of what, as designed by God, ought to be, not what exists. Such terms as *unnatural* reflect the rebellion of fallen female and male against the order.⁴⁰

God's Rebels Reason

Paul's condemnation of same-sex unions is so clear that professing Christian and selfconfessed gay author Matthew Vines observed, “For countless lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, Romans is the book that has driven them away from their faith and torn them from their homes and families. It's the book that's sent so many down a path of despair.”⁴¹ Apparently, these “countless lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people” understood Paul's point. But instead of godly sorrow that should have lead them to repentance to salvation, their repulsion of the truth directed them to a kind of grief that brought them the wrong direction – the “*sorrow of the world [that] worketh death.*”⁴² Paul's plainness leads Vines to accommodate but twist the Biblical evidence as he recaps his book against the Church's traditional, non-affirming position by saying:

The bottom line is this: the Bible does not directly address the issue of same-sex orientation – or the expression of that orientation. While its six references to same-sex behavior are negative, the concept of same-sex behavior in the Bible is sexual excess, not sexual orientation. What's more, the main reason that non-affirming Christians believe the Bible's statements should apply to all same-sex relationships – men and women's anatomical complementarity – is not mentioned in any of the texts.⁴³

Vines rightly recognizes that all six references in Scripture to same-sex behavior do not approve of such behavior. He, however, contradicts Paul by qualifying and limiting the apostle's use of “same-sex behavior” to be merely a reference to excessive lust which (he claims) excludes enduring and loving sexual orientation, passion or attraction of committed same-sex partners. Furthermore, to say that men and women's anatomical complementarity is

not mentioned in any of the texts is to simply ignore the evidence. Burk's refutation of Vines puts things in perspective:

For Paul, nature is not defined by secular sources (as Vines suggests) but by the Old Testament. In fact, there are numerous linguistic links between Romans 1: 26-27 and the creation narratives of Genesis 1-2. For example, Paul's use of the relatively unusual words *thelys* for females and *arsen* for males strongly suggests he is relying on the creation account of Genesis 1 where the same two words are used. These two terms accent the sexual differences between males and females and suggest that homosexual relationships violate God's creational intent. Thus for Paul, "against nature" means that homosexuality goes against God's original design.⁴⁴

Vines professes belief in the authority of Scripture yet, in reality, he denies the relevance and sufficiency of it. He goes the extra mile of twisting its message to fit his beliefs and lifestyle.

Unlike him, liberal Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, Luke Timothy Johnson, plainly admits his total disregard for Scriptural authority. His statement implies an acknowledgement of the clarity of the Biblical text on this subject but realizes that rejecting the Bible's message is the only way to justify same-sex unions. He writes:

I think it important to state clearly that we do, in fact, reject the straightforward commands of Scripture, and appeal instead to another authority when we declare that same-sex unions can be holy and good. And what exactly is that authority? We appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience thousands of others have witnessed to, which tells us that to claim our own sexual orientation is in fact to accept the way in which God has created us. By so doing, we explicitly reject as well the premises of the scriptural statements condemning homosexuality—namely, that it is a vice freely chosen, a symptom of human corruption, and disobedience to God's created order.⁴⁵

Apologist John Frame brings this interesting insight to help us understand how and why people can be so off target and arrive at such unscriptural conclusions:

When sinners try to gain knowledge without the fear of the Lord, that knowledge is distorted (Rom 1:21-25; 1Cor 1:18-2:5). This is not to say that every sentence they utter is false. It is to say that their basic worldview is twisted and unreliable. Their most epistemological mistake is, typically, to assert their own autonomy: to make themselves, or something other than the Biblical God, the final standard for truth and right.⁴⁶

God's Deliverance Provided

The apostle Paul expresses his own personal inward struggle against sin in the same book of Romans in a manner every believer can relate. After dealing with the doctrine of justification (how man is delivered from the penalty of sin) in the first five chapters, he talks about how the process of sanctification takes place (how the believer is delivered from the power of sin). He talks about how the believers' freedom from sin makes him a slave to righteousness through Christ in the sixth chapter. The next chapter deals with the Christian's freedom from the law.

As a regenerate Christian, his desire to do what is lawful and good is ever present. But he recognizes a propensity to sin from within, a pattern that goes contrary to that desire – “another law in my members, (constantly) warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”⁴⁷ At the end, he expresses his frustration, lamentation and admission of his inability to please God due to his natural sinful tendencies. He cries, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”⁴⁸ That which the Mosaic law cannot do, or his conscience (the law of God written in man’s heart) cannot do, only Christ can do for him and for all who have come to trust in Christ – deliverance from sin’s penalty and power! The opening verse of chapter 8 is Paul’s conclusion of the matter: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus....”⁴⁹ The apostle, in this great chapter, assures those “in Christ” of the guarantee of their complete salvation on the day of glorification!

How does this apply to our subject at hand? Burk and Lambert traces Paul’s progression of his presentation of the gospel in Romans and beautifully puts it in context:

Paul’s teaching in Romans 8 is particularly relevant in light of his teaching in Romans 1. In that vitally important chapter, Paul makes clear that God’s wrath is revealed in his giving up of people to homosexual sin. It is a truly devastating picture of the carnage of sin in a sinful world. We need to remember, however, that Paul is merely beginning an argument in the introductory chapter of Romans. We should not stop reading at Romans 1, and neither should we forget that chapter when we get to the hope-filled content of Romans 8. Paul intends the powerful teaching of Romans 8 to dispel the discouragement of Romans 1. The same Spirit that overwhelmed Jesus’ corpse with life is able powerfully to change those with sexual desires like those described in Romans 1.⁵⁰

The visible transformation to a new life may take some time. It will require radical steps to avoid common pitfalls and to manage persistent temptations. But the divine provision to receive pardon from sin in Christ, and the enabling power to overcome (not just sinful patterns, but the carnal propensities of the flesh) are already available for the believer through the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is called the Spirit of life for He restored Christ to life from the grave. He also is the same Spirit that quickens and restores our mortal bodies with all its corrupt propensities into usability for God.⁵¹ Wow! The Christian believer is currently in possession of the hope, forgiveness, deliverance from sin (whatever it is, including the sin of homosexuality) and divine enabling for victorious living through Jesus Christ – all that is needed for godly life and service! What glorious truths! But it is available to all those and only to those who have repented of their sin and have come to Christ in faith. Why should anyone turn elsewhere?

CHAPTER III THE LEGALIZATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

LGBT advocates are at it again. In November 2016, World Magazine reported thousands of demonstrators coming out to protest three bills to legalize same-sex marriage in Taipei, Taiwan. These bills were intended to “offer couples welfare benefits, joint property rights, and shared custody of children.” As a result of the demonstration, the report stated that “the legislature decided to allow two public hearings before voting on the law.” Those bills could “make Taiwan the first Asian government to recognize same-sex marriage.”⁵²

The gay agenda tries to convince many that they have a cause worth fighting for – that one’s sexual orientation is inborn – whether heterosexual (attraction towards the opposite sex), homosexual (attraction toward the same sex) or bisexual (attraction to both). They have deluded themselves into believing that this is not a moral issue but a human or civil rights issue. They misguidedly equate the slavery and race issues of past generations to their cause.

In his chapter on Human Rights, Arthur Holmes points out that:

In assessing any human right, the underlying claim is that all persons have an equal right to be treated as persons – regardless of differences in race, religion, sex, politics, or social and economic status. Such differences are ethically irrelevant and do not all affect the essential nature and worth of a person. Discrimination, however, makes such differences count; it treats people unequally, by virtue of race or sex or some other irrelevant factor.⁵³

In other words, every person has a right to be treated as a person. But where does this inherent right come from? Who gives man his fundamental dignity and value? Thomas Jefferson’s famous lines on “*The Declaration of Independence acknowledges that “... that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”* Such a statement concurs with the Biblical teaching that “*God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*”⁵⁴ This God-given dignity in man (that he is a derivative replica of His Creator) is the reason why the State has been divinely granted the delegated authority to implement the severe penalty of capital punishment on those found guilty of the heinous crime of murder.⁵⁵ It is also the ground for the New Testament’s prohibition of cursing our fellowmen.⁵⁶

This being the case, homosexuals, lesbians and bisexuals should be treated as persons with dignity and worth, just like everybody else. The reason is plain and simple. The God, Who created them persons endowed with certain unalienable rights, is the same God who created them “*male and female*” – not as homosexuals, lesbians and bisexuals. Treating homosexuals as persons is one thing. Condoning immorality is another.

David Noebel poignantly clarifies and distinguishes this when he wrote:

It (homosexuality) certainly is not a human rights or a civil rights issue, unless one is willing to make other forms of aberrant behavior civil rights issues. The homosexual revolution is definitely a moral issue, an issue on which we all must take a firm stand, remembering that “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”⁵⁷

Noebel has a point. If homosexuality is to be treated as a civil rights issue, then people indulging in sexual immorality, adultery, theft, extortion or even murder should be granted the same. Imagine a parade of inmates fighting for their rights to murder just as slaves fought for their “unalienable rights” that are “endowed by their Creator.” How absurd is that!

The Role of Government

Under the Theocracy of Israel, where God’s Law is the law of the land, sexual deviancy was treated as a criminal offense, just like murder. Along with adultery and bestiality, sodomy’s penalty was death.⁵⁸

On the other hand, the New Testament writers taught and recognized God's authority delegated in human government, even in their pluralistic settings.⁵⁹ Paul writes:

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.⁶⁰

Christian believers are instructed to pray for all men, including "... kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."⁶¹ These passages apply to the government's role of maintaining public order and implementing just and equitable treatment of all its citizens for a just and peaceable society.

It would be difficult to be precise on how far can and should the State intervene on private matters in a way that would not infringe on one's individual liberty (such as matters of morals and conscience). Suffice it to say, we have Biblical grounds to state that while State and Church powers should be kept separate, the Bible clearly teaches that the State cannot be, indeed is not, separate from God.

The truth is, our liberties are not absolute. Our freedom to swing our arms as wide as we can while walking ends as soon as we disturb the person next to us. There are some personal practices that can be harmful to society's stability or even to ones' self. For example, the law's requirement to buckle up our seat belts while driving serves that end. In considering the matter of legalizing same-sex unions, apart from the gains of broadening some of our politician's electoral base, we ask: what good will this bring to society or to individuals? Again, we quote Holmes for this helpful insight to shed light to this question:

Hence a moral practice like homosexuality, even in private between consenting adults, if it were to become sufficiently widespread and sufficiently accepted, would erode the family structure which is a major strength of the nation. The practice might then even be regarded as treasonous.⁶²

Biological and Psychological Considerations

We need not belabor this point. We will refer this subject to the exhaustive study and research of Lawrence S. Mayer, M.B., M.S., Ph.D. (scholar-in-residence in the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University and a professor of statistics and biostatistics at Arizona State University) and Paul R. McHugh, M.D. (professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine who for twenty-five years was the psychiatrist-in-chief at the Johns Hopkins Hospital) published in the Fall 2016 edition of *The New Atlantis: a Journal of Technology and Society*. We will only mention here the key findings of their study enumerated in their Executive Summary⁶³ that dispel the claims of the gay agenda and makes the legislation of same-sex unions an unreasonable, even harmful, option.

One of their significant findings was "the understanding of sexual orientation as an innate, biologically fixed property of human beings — the idea that people are 'born that way' — is not supported by scientific evidence."

On Sexuality, Mental Health Outcomes, and Social Stress, these researchers conclude the following:

- Compared to the general population, non-heterosexual subpopulations are at an elevated risk for a variety of adverse health and mental health outcomes.
- Members of the non-heterosexual population are estimated to have about 1.5 times higher risk of experiencing anxiety disorders than members of the heterosexual population, as well as roughly double the risk of depression, 1.5 times the risk of substance abuse, and nearly 2.5 times the risk of suicide.
- Members of the transgender population are also at higher risk of a variety of mental health problems compared to members of the non-transgender population. Especially alarmingly, the rate of lifetime suicide attempts across all ages of transgender individuals is estimated at 41%, compared to under 5% in the overall U.S. population.

On Gender Identity

- The hypothesis that gender identity is an innate, fixed property of human beings that is independent of biological sex — that a person might be “a man trapped in a woman’s body” or “a woman trapped in a man’s body” — is not supported by scientific evidence.
- According to a recent estimate, about 0.6% of U.S. adults identify as a gender that does not correspond to their biological sex.
- Compared to the general population, adults who have undergone sex-reassignment surgery continue to have a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes. One study found that, compared to controls, sex-reassigned individuals were about 5 times more likely to attempt suicide and about 19 times more likely to die by suicide.
- Children are a special case when addressing transgender issues. Only a minority of children who experience cross-gender identification will continue to do so into adolescence or adulthood.

To declare homosexuality as politically and culturally right, when it is morally and scientifically wrong and harmful, is a sure road to divine judgment and self-destruction.

CHAPTER IV HELP FOR GAYS AND SAME-SEX COUPLES

Earlier, we argued that love without truth becomes an excuse for lawlessness. God’s love never rejoices in iniquity for it rejoices in the truth. On the other hand, truth without love is heartless and cold. God’s truth and holiness reaches out to those who err. For the Church to reflect God’s glory, Christians who sincerely desire to be Christ-like will treat all men as persons created in God’s own image and likeness while display concern and compassion for those who have fallen into sin through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

The Need for Proper Diagnosis

In the medical field, an accurate diagnosis of an illness is necessary for any doctor to properly provide helpful prescription to the patient. Right thinking is the first step to right living. The subject under consideration is no exception.

If homosexuality or lesbianism is merely an alternative lifestyle, an available and amoral option similar to choosing between which soda to purchase (a Coke or a Sprite), then by all

means legitimize and legalize it. If same-sex relationships are helpful and healthy, perhaps, it should even be commended. On the other hand, if these are aberrant and sinful, then we should tell it like it is. Anything falling short of this would be a self-deception, a disservice to all and will only mean cuddling gays in their harmful lifestyle. It will also mean an offense to God who alone, in His divine perfections and intrinsic qualities, has the absolute prerogative to define or determine what is righteous and what is evil, what is holy and profane, what is wholesome and what is not. He has also made gracious provision for repentant sinners to be reconciled to Himself on the grounds of Christ's vicarious atonement for our sins.

We have already seen Scriptural evidence of God labeling same-sex orientation and behavior as sinful – just as He condemns gambling, cheating, murder, adultery and the like. Jesus said,

That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.⁶⁴

The lexicons' definition of *fornication* (Greek, *porneia*) is "illicit sexual intercourse" which includes "adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, incest."⁶⁵ It is listed among Jesus' catalogue of sins which, He says, comes "*from within, out of the heart of men.*"

The truth is, no one else understands the heart of man better than God. The prophet Jeremiah declares, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*"⁶⁶ No words are more appropriate to describe the inscrutable nature of the human heart. Even its owner cannot understand it. In his fallen state, man is unable to see it as it really is. It is incurably sick, as modern translations put it. Only God's omniscient eye can fathom it and judge it accurately and fairly. Thus, it makes all sense in the world that His assessments, His answers and His solutions are heeded. Once again, man's need for God is being underscored as the bankruptcy of postmodern thought is exposed. "Modern" psychology or sociology, by their own admission, have all been found impotent to properly diagnose and address this moral issue. We need to humbly accept this reality despite milestones of human achievements and advancements in science and technology.

The Need for Proper Rapport

Bible-believing Christians need to remember two words in dealing with LGBT advocates: be welcoming but non-affirming. Christians, instructed in the Word, need to be leading by example in welcoming all men, homosexuals included, as they truly are – members of the Adamic race yet fallen sinners. Who isn't? As such, all should be treated with respect, equity and dignity as men who are created after the similitude of God, James 3:9. But we cannot consent nor affirm a lifestyle that God Himself disapproves and condemns.

Paul reminds us of the importance of presenting the truth of the gospel in a loving way.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.⁶⁷

The gospel in itself is offensive for it uncomfortably confronts sinners of their guilty standing before God. But Christians need not add to the offense of the gospel by their careless or tactless delivery of truth. Rather, they need to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to accurately and compassionately proclaim the good news of salvation with the prayer that God grant sinners repentance to the acknowledging of His truth.

The Need for the Proper Cure

The American Psychological Association admits:

All major national mental health organizations have officially expressed concerns about therapies promoted to modify sexual orientation. To date, there has been no scientifically adequate research to show that therapy aimed at changing sexual orientation (sometimes called reparative or conversion therapy) is safe or effective.⁶⁸

Even if we assume reparative therapy for homosexuals may help, it will only address some symptoms of the problem but it will never address the root of the problem. Reparative therapy might accomplish a reformation (enabling people to turn a new leaf) of its patients but only the gospel of Christ can bring about a regeneration (the Holy Spirit imparting to repentant sinners a new life).

All men are sinners by nature and by choice. The historical fall of man at the Garden of Eden has brought God's curse upon all creation, plunging man into his currently desperately depraved state. Without divine help, he is without hope. Yet, despite this, the Scriptures tell us the good news that God has taken the initiative to provide restoration, forgiveness and reconciliation on the grounds of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice accomplished at Calvary. It was His love that moved Him to voluntarily lay down His life for our sins. His vicarious death adequately satisfied God's outraged justice. His burial and resurrection was clearest proof, not only of His deity and impeccable character, but also of the Father's acceptance of His Son's perfect atonement for the believer's justification. There is no other acceptable sacrifice.

Furthermore, the same power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power available for repentant sinners to enable them (whether homosexuals, gamblers, adulterers, idolaters, extortioners, etc.) to overcome a sinful lifestyle, no matter how deep or dysfunctional one's past.

The apostle spoke of some converts to Christ in the Corinthian church whose past should have barred them from inheriting God's kingdom. Yet he reminded them that their sins do not define them any longer. It is Christ and what He has done that does.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [catamites or pederasts], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [or homosexuals], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: 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.⁶⁹

This is Paul attesting to the power of the Spirit of God Who delivered and transformed the lives of those Corinthians "who call[ed] upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."⁷⁰ And we know his testimony is true for it is backed up by the miracle of inspiration.

Today, that same Jesus promises to deliver those who repent of their sin and turn to Christ in faith. This does not mean there will no longer be temptations nor struggles, but there is unlimited supply and sufficient grace to enable sinners to progressively and practically live victoriously over sin's power today.

CONCLUSION

The gay agenda appears to be gaining ground in today's postmodern world. They see the world as they imagine it to be without any objective standard or basis. But God's Word is crystal clear – God designed the gift of sex to be enjoyed within the bounds of a husband-and-wife relationship. Thus, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, bestiality and all other deviations from His divine design are aberrations – sinful in the eyes of the living God. To reason apart from divine revelation is to assert one's autonomy from God. To depart from the divine design of a loving and holy God would only mean self-inflicted harm and an invitation to provoke His judgment. Objective, scientific research only affirm the declarations of Scripture – that *“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”*⁷¹

So, in an age of pluralism and postmodernism, the call is urgent in Scripture for Christians to live and proclaim the gospel of Christ for it remains to be *“the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”*⁷²

In an age of confusion, where contradictory solutions from so-called “experts” are being offered, there is the urgent need for Bible-believing churches to be *“the pillar and ground of the truth”*⁷³ by equipping Christian families with the unchangeable and life-transforming message of God's Word by preaching the whole counsel of God! This need is urgent so that God's people *“be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”*⁷⁴

In this age of ethical relativism and egoism, we pray for our government leaders, including our legislators, to be *“not a terror to good works, but to the evil”*⁷⁵ by refusing to legalize same-sex marriages that would embolden its advocates to advance their immoral agenda. It will also result in harming themselves and weaken the basic unit of society – the family.

We challenge all LGBT advocates to think through the serious and dangerous ramifications of making decisions merely on the basis of “the ethics of the new morality” where pleasure, affection and mere consensus becomes the determining factor of how society “ought to” or is allowed to conduct everyday affairs with no regard to the voice of conscience and the Creator. We ask all to be wary of compelling the State and the general citizenry, with the use of tax payers' resources, to protect any form of dishonorable and disgraceful conduct that jeopardizes public decency.

Finally, we call all sinners (and we all are) to come to the only One who can mend lives that have been ruined by sin. No matter how dirty, dysfunctional and damaged one's past, Christ offers cleansing, restoration and forgiveness to those who, in faith, will turn to Him from sin. He alone provides divine enabling through the power of the indwelling Spirit to bring order and harmony in believers' lives and growth unto Christ-likeness. The choice is yours.

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