

A RESPONSE TO THE PRO-GAY THEOLOGY OF TODAY
BY ROBIN SCHUMACHER

Not Welcome?

In 2005, a certain protestant denomination began airing a series of commercials that started by focusing on a beautiful and ornate church with a series of steps that led up to the building's front door. As a mass of people began making their way up to the church's stairs, they were met by a group of men that served as "bouncers" for the church. The men selectively admitted some people by unchaining a set of linked ropes – much like those used at nightclubs and concert halls to keep people out – while others who wished to enter the church were stopped cold and turned away. The denomination's message was that while some churches deny entry to certain individuals for various reasons hinted at during the commercial, their church was open to any and all who wish to come.

When the commercials were first introduced, there is little doubt that those involved in the pro-gay theology movement nodded their heads in agreement over the implied fact that gays are not welcome in many churches. The Church of Jesus Christ is mostly viewed in a negative light from the gay community, with some of the criticism being rightly deserved. Such an attitude has spawned a number of gay church movements such as Evangelicals Concerned, who describe themselves as a "safe" place for homosexuals and lesbians to come just as they are and experience a worshipful encounter with Jesus Christ. These groups have statements of faith that drip with pure biblical doctrine on the deity of Jesus, the inerrancy of the Bible, and other foundational beliefs. However, they hold to the conviction that God does not condemn homosexuality in the way they practice it, and that new truth from the scriptures has been discovered that underscore this assertion.

Traditional Christianity is now squeezed from two sides. On one front is the post-modern secular culture that discounts biblical authority, questions the existence of any one true God, and believes that immersion in moral relativism (which includes the acceptance of homosexuality as a perfectly normal lifestyle) is the only worldview. On the other side are gay “fundamentalists” who wholeheartedly endorse Christianity and believe the Bible, but feel that homosexuality is perfectly acceptable to God in the way they practice it. Is conventional Christianity in error in terms of its current stance against homosexual practices and should it embrace the new wisdom that today’s pro-gay theology and secular society espouse? To thoroughly answer this question, the presuppositions from both the secular and pro-gay theology movements need to be examined in light of what historic Christianity has embraced, with the end goal being to determine if there indeed exists a God who has clearly expressed His will on the matter of whether it is acceptable to be both a practicing homosexual and a true follower and believer in Jesus Christ.

Examining the General Presuppositions

In general, the secular culture and pro-gay theology agree on one set of presuppositions that stand in contrast to a second set of beliefs held by traditional Christianity. Before someone on one side can intelligently engage a person on the other side in debate, they need to educate themselves on these presuppositions, which are outlined in Table 1¹.

Secular / Pro-gay Theology Stance	Traditional Christianity Stance
Born homosexual	May or may not be born homosexual
It is an identity	It is a choice
It is “who I am”	It is “what I do”

¹ Chip Ingram, *What do you say to a Gay Friend*, audiotapes of sermon series *Let My People Think* by Chip Ingram (Atlanta: Living on the Edge Ministries, 2003).

It is normal and natural	It is abnormal and unnatural
It is an alternative lifestyle	It is a destructive lifestyle
It is a civil rights issue	It is a moral issue

Table 1 - Pro-gay theology and traditional Christian presuppositions

By exploring each set of presuppositions, one can reasonably reach a conclusion on whether it is possible for a person to be a practicing homosexual or lesbian and call themselves a born-again believer in Christ.

Is it in the Blood?

When the modern homosexuality movement began a number of decades ago, the consensus among gay persons was that it was their own personal choice to live an alternative lifestyle and that no one should question their decision. More recently, however, the stance from the pro-gay theology movement has changed to one that says homosexuality is an ingrained physical characteristic that a person is born with and given from God and as such, is something that does not require resistance on the part of a person, but rather it is an identity that should be completely embraced. Those holding to this position often point to a number of various questionable scientific studies that appear to validate their stance by showcasing analysis such as different sizes of gay vs. non-gay hypothalamuses, research on twins who both turned out to be gay later in life, or certain genes that appear in homosexuals but not in heterosexual individuals. Looking back through history, there is a definite but gradual progression of the claim that homosexuality is inborn. When sexologist Alfred Kensey in the 1940's asked homosexuals why they practiced homosexuality, only nine percent claimed they were born that way. A decade or

so later found that 35 percent claimed to be born that way, and today, virtually all make this declaration.²

Some Christians contend that there is no conclusive scientific evidence that proves that people are born homosexual. Indeed, both a thorough John Hopkins and a Masters and Johnson's study³ on the subject arrived at the same conclusion, which was that there was no evidence to support the claim that a person is born a homosexual or lesbian.

However, careful analysis of the question of whether one is born a homosexual or not may result in the question itself being unnecessary. Just because someone is born with a particular trait, it does not mean that it is "normal" or moral. There have been a number of studies suggesting that alcoholics are the end result of inborn chemical events that occur in the brain, yet no one would encourage a person to plunge headlong into alcoholism.⁴ Second, there is a very real difference between physical human characteristics and leanings that are of a spiritual nature. Norman Geisler has pointed out:

"First, there is a difference between *inherited physical characteristics* (like brown eyes), over which I have no control, and *inherited spiritual tendencies* (like lust), over which I ought to have control. We cannot avoid the basic size, color, talents, or ethnic group from which we have come. But we do have a choice as to whether to follow spiritual impulses we may have inherited, like impatience, anger, pride, or sexual impurity Morally speaking, "irresistible urges" are urges that have not been resisted. People have died for lack of water and food, but no one has ever been known to die for lack of sex, alcohol, or other drugs to fulfill his cravings! We have a free choice in all these areas."⁵

This distinction nullifies any argument that being born gay validates the practice of homosexual behavior. It now becomes a question of whether the choice to practice any particular

² Joe Dallas, *A Strong Delusion* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 120.

³ Ibid, 110.

⁴ Ibid, 116.

⁵ Norman Geisler, *Chosen but Free* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 26-27. Emphasis in the original.

spiritual or moral leaning is acceptable in the sight of God, which leads to the second set of presuppositions.

Is Homosexuality Really a Choice?

Because the homosexual begins with the presupposition that they are born that way, the second point naturally follows, which is it is their identity. Those of the pro-gay theology movement then proceed to the conclusion that if they were born that way, then it stands to reason that God made them that way, and therefore it must be acceptable in His sight to live out a gay lifestyle – one that they define as loving and mutually beneficial. For example, Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Church that caters to homosexuals, claims, “Yes, God created homosexuals and homosexuality.”⁶ The Christian view is that homosexuality is instead a conscious choice that one makes to follow and adhere to. It is at this point that dialogs between homosexuals and Christians break down with each side claiming that the other simply does not understand reality.

It should be acknowledged by those in the gay community that recruitment into the lifestyle does indeed occur, with some homosexuals choosing to adopt a different sexual orientation from their previous heterosexual walk. However, the Christian community must also understand that the pull many feel toward homosexual tendencies goes far beyond the seemingly easy choices that people make every day. Joe Dallas, who previously lived for many years in the homosexual lifestyle and has since come out of it to run a ministry dedicated to helping others who feel the tug of homosexuality on their heart, makes it clear that a lot of those struggling with gay feelings agonize over what they experience. He says, “Homosexuality doesn’t just vanish when a person decides he no longer wants it. None of my counselees have been unclear on that point. As Bible-believing Christians, they no more wanted to be gay than they wanted a third

⁶ Troy Perry, *The Lord Is My Shepherd and He Knows I’m Gay* (Los Angeles, CA: Nash Publishing, 1996), 3, quoted by Dallas, *Delusion*, 17, footnote 4.

eyeball.”⁷ It is apparent that many Christians are simply too flippant when it comes to truly acknowledging the deep-seated feelings that many homosexuals have. To them, it is not something that they can just easily take or leave, but instead it is a desire so strong that they reach the conclusion that it must be part of their identity. And if this is truly the case, then it is not hard to understand how those in the pro-gay theology movement take the next step of believing that it must be something that God approves of or it simply would not exist.

However, this is where those in the pro-gay theology camp fail to thoroughly comprehend one of the core doctrines of the Christian faith, which is the depravity of man. As Joe Dallas simply puts it, “All Christians, of course, don’t wrestle with homosexuality, but they wrestle with *something*. That’s part of our common human experience.”⁸ When it comes to the depravity of mankind, the Bible stresses two key principles. First, Scripture makes it plain that each person is born with a sin nature that has been inherited down through the ages from the original two human beings that fell into sin. Romans 5:12-13 states, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” On this point, many Christians will find themselves standing beside those in the pro-gay theology movement in agreement. For example, Evangelicals Concerned lists the depravity of man as one of their core doctrines.

This being the case, it is rather odd that those in the pro-gay theology movement fail to come to terms with the second aspect of a built-in sin nature, which is that each man and woman will find within themselves various sinful tendencies, feelings, and leanings that they will struggle with their entire human lives. The apostle Paul freely admitted such a thing when he penned Romans 7:18-23:

⁷ Joe Dallas, *Desires in Conflict* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2003), 16.

⁸ *Ibid*, 18, emphasis in the original.

“For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.” Further in the same chapter, Paul expounds upon this concept further when he says, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.”

Seeing this concept displayed in each and every human being is not difficult. For example, what parents ever had to teach their toddlers to lie, be selfish and self-centered, or have outbursts of anger?

Recognizing this conflict is important because it means that even though each person will find “natural” tendencies that are present within their being, they have a choice as to whether they will be obedient to God and resist such desires or give in and practice behaviors that are clearly out of God’s will for their lives. For example, most men are simply not born monogamous when it comes to desiring sexual activity with women. Given an amoral choice, the vast majority of men would have sex often with as many different women as possible and would admit that this is a natural desire that each of them has. But God’s sex plan for men is that intercourse is only to be performed within the bonds of marriage and with one woman over the course of a lifetime. Does this conflict with the natural desire that most heterosexual men feel? Again, most would admit that it certainly does. However, men giving their lives to Christ make the choice to live in a monogamous relationship with one woman and only have sex with the wife of their youth.

Even so, men who follow Christ and have chosen to live within the confines of God’s plan for sex will honestly admit that the desire to have sex with other women does not vanish when they give their lives to Christ. In fact, many Christian men admit that the struggle for sexual purity within both their bodies and minds is the number one issue with which they wrestle. This issue has been readily acknowledged within the body of Christ with many Christian

organizations such as New Life Ministries finding their “Every Man’s Battle” series of books, courses, and workshops being in heavy demand by Christian men struggling mightily with the “natural” desire to have sex outside of marriage.

Is this struggle really any different because it is heterosexual vs. homosexual? Both seem natural to those wrestling with desires that are in apparent opposition to the will of God. Both simply do not go away when a person professes faith in Christ and is born again. And both may buffet each believer for the rest of their human life. But just because an internal struggle is present, it does not mean that a choice is not available as to whether to yield to the natural leanings of the fallen nature or instead be obedient to God and follow what is written in His Word. How many in the pro-gay theology would agree that it is in keeping with God’s standards to regularly participate in lying, have outbursts of rage, or drink heavily just because each activity seems to come naturally? Although it is admittedly hard to do, a Christian battling homosexual tendencies must abandon the argument that says a person recognizing same-sex desires has no choice but to give in to those particular temptations because it is clear that God commands all to live within the confines of His Word and resist the tug of the fallen nature.

Normal and Therefore Acceptable in God’s Sight?

It is not surprising that secular society completely embraces the idea of same-sex partnerships and all that goes with it. If God does not exist, then who is to say what is right and what is wrong? Post-modern and pluralistic worldviews put to death the idea of absolute truth along with the God who gives such truth. Indeed, William Lane Craig has said that the easiest way to legitimize homosexual behavior is to be an atheist.⁹ Simply put, no God means that anything goes.

⁹ William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton, IL, 2003), 132.

The trouble with this is that most secular homosexuals and all of those in the pro-gay theology movement do not want to hold an atheistic position, and instead want to maintain a belief in a set of morals and in a God that completely endorses the practicing of homosexual behavior. All of those in the various homosexual movements want moral atrocities such as the murder of gays by the Nazis or other hate groups to be recognized, and the only way to accomplish this is to acknowledge a God who prescribes a set of unchangeable and absolute moral laws. Without God, such a thing becomes impossible as one cannot recognize a crooked line without knowing what a straight line looks like.¹⁰

But the question becomes – is the practice of homosexuality a natural and acceptable behavior or is it unnatural and an unrighteous practice in God’s sight? As has already been discussed, the issue of equating a “natural” feeling with moral and righteous behavior simply cannot be done as the depravity of man doctrine makes clear that the two are not the same. But the Bible goes even further on the question of if homosexuality is natural in the sense of how God created mankind to function.

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul makes it plain that the practice of homosexuality goes against God’s original design of male and female sexuality. Paul discusses the fact that mankind is always in rebellion against God and will replace Him with anything including false gods, idols, and even man himself. Then Paul describes the consequences of such actions and various immoral practices that arise from this rejection of God, with one being homosexuality: “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error”

¹⁰ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: Macmillian Publishing, 1943), 45.

(Romans 1:26-27). Paul plainly states that homosexual practices are not normal and stand in contrast to what God intended in terms of sexual practice and desires.

In addition, there are several other points of interest in this short series of verses. First, Paul begins with the concept of lesbianism. This is significant because, as John MacArthur points out in his commentary on the book of Romans, women are usually the last ones to fall into sexually immoral practice and when it does happen, it signals that complete moral decay has set in.¹¹ Second, Paul specifically states that they “exchanged” and “abandoned” the natural function God gives everyone and instead began practicing something that was different than what God originally intended.¹² This is important because it speaks against the claim of the pro-gay theology movement that says homosexuals simply do not possess the capability for opposite sex attraction. Clearly a person cannot give away something that they do not possess, yet Paul says they both replaced the practice of heterosexuality with homosexuality and discarded the original design of God for something else.

The pro-gay theology movement counters this argument by saying that Paul is either referring only to homosexual prostitution that was performed in conjunction with idol worship, that it speaks only to homosexual acts between men and boys, or that he is referring to heterosexuals who are acting in homosexual ways and is not at all condemning “natural homosexuality”. It is difficult to justify any of the above positions for several reasons. First, it is doubtful that anyone involved with pro-gay theology would argue that the other sinful behaviors mentioned by Paul in the same chapter of Romans would be acceptable outside of idol worship. For after Paul discusses his position on homosexuality, he goes on to say, “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of

¹¹ John MacArthur Jr., *MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Romans 1-8* (Hiawatha, IA: Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1991, Electronic Edition, Parsons Technology, 1997).

¹² Norman Geisler, *Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: MI, Baker Books, 1989), 264.

envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” (Romans 1:28-32). To cherry-pick homosexuality out and deem it acceptable to God while condemning all the other immoral actions described in the previous set of verses simply does not make for good exegesis. Further, one would have to conclude that the above mentioned activities would be valid outside of idol worship, and who in the pro-gay theology movement would assume that stance?

Second, there is no indication that Paul is talking about sex with minors in the passage. In fact, Paul specifically says that the issue is “men with men committing indecent acts” with no mention being made of children whatsoever.

Third, there is simply no indication, differentiation, or definition given to “natural homosexuality” vs. heterosexuals who are now practicing homosexual behavior. The only way to justify this position is by creating one from extra-biblical thinking. Thus, it is rational to conclude that God’s Word is stating that homosexual behavior is abnormal and not in keeping with God’s normal design for sexuality.

One final line of reasoning that can be put forth in determining whether homosexuality is normal and therefore moral and acceptable in God’s sight is the examination of Immanuel Kant’s “categorical imperative” argument. Kant, who was an agnostic but held to a belief in God along with a stance in ethical unqualified absolutism, stated that if one wanted to determine whether a particular activity or behavior was normal and moral, they should take the behavior and apply it on a universal scale and observe the end result. For example, in determining whether murder is a moral, normal, and acceptable behavior for people, what would be the end result if everyone committed murder? In this vein, what would be the final result if everyone on the planet only practiced “loving and monogamous” homosexuality as the pro-gay

theology movement advocates? The final analysis is that mankind would likely cease to exist within a generation. In effect, this is more than just a consequential outcome view as the universal practice of homosexuality truly does defeat itself. Anyone suggesting that homosexuals and lesbians could practice In Vitro fertilization to preserve the species would have to admit that this is simply not the natural way God intended conception to occur. Further, any sex outside of the “loving and monogamous” partnerships espoused by the pro-gay theology movement would constitute adultery or fornication by their definition. Therefore, using Kant’s philosophical argument, one can conclude that homosexuality is not normal/moral and therefore not desired by God.

Just an Alternative Lifestyle?

Both secular society and the pro-gay theology movement make an appeal to tolerance when it comes to accepting the homosexual lifestyle as nothing more than an alternative means of human sexuality. Is homosexual practice on equal footing with heterosexuality or is it instead a departure from God’s plan for mankind and something that is destructive in nature?

It is interesting to first note the definition from Webster’s on the meaning of tolerance, which is simply “deviation from a standard”. Those who have gone through scientific or engineering courses will also recognize the term as it most often refers to how far a system (a bridge, engine, etc.) can be stressed from what is right and true until it breaks. One has to ask if the act of straying from what is true, good, and perfect is a smart thing to do. Although Jesus does not, in fact, have any words recorded in the gospels on the subject of homosexual behavior, He does indeed say plenty that leads a competent reader of Scripture to conclude that heterosexuality is the standard. For example, speaking in Mark 10:6-9, Jesus says, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” The rest of the Old and New

Testaments echo Christ's words with absolutely no reference being found as to same-sex partnerships being on par with heterosexual marriage.

God's standard with respect to sexual activity is clearly spelled out in Scripture, with sex only being allowed between one man and one woman and within the bonds of marriage. To call anything else an "alternative" is nothing more than a euphemism for behavior that is contrary to the will of God, which happens to be unpopularly known as sin.

Moreover, it can be shown that homosexual behavior goes beyond something that is just an alternative lifestyle, and instead is a practice that clearly places many in jeopardy. Studies on the health of homosexuals have found that 78% of gay men have or have had a sexually transmitted disease (with the city of San Francisco having twenty-two times the national average of sexually transmitted diseases), that 50% have gonorrhea, and that two-thirds of all AIDS cases result from homosexual conduct.¹³

Worse news is found on the life expectancy front for homosexuals. One study found that the life expectancy for a 20-year-old gay man is 8 to 20 years less than all men, and that nearly half of all gay and bisexual men will not see their 65th birthday.¹⁴ Another study by Paul Cameron, which has been loudly denounced by the homosexual community, was performed by examining over 6,500 obituaries from 16 U.S. homosexual newspapers for 12 years. Dr. Cameron compared those obituary statistics with ones from regular newspapers and found that less than 2% of the homosexual men made it to old age, with the average age of death being only 42.¹⁵ Finally, researchers funded by the National Institute of Health estimated in the mid-nineties that, as of the then rate of current infection, a majority of 20-year-old gay or bisexual men in

¹³ Ingram, *Gay Friend*.

¹⁴ Hogg, RS., Strathdee, SA., Craib, KJP., O'Shaughnessy, MV., Montaner, JSG., Schechter, MT., " Modeling the impact of HIV Disease on Mortality in Gay and Bisexual Men," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1997, pp. 657-61.

¹⁵ Cameron, Paul; Playfair, William L.; Wellum, Stephen. "The lifespan of homosexuals." Paper presented at Eastern Psychological Association Convention (April 17, 1993).

America would one day have the AIDS virus.¹⁶ One must keep in mind that these studies occurred far after the time safe-sex education campaigns began their work in America's schools and in the mainstream media.

Such statistics seem to bear out the warning of Paul in Romans 1:27 where he states that the practice of homosexuality results in the homosexual "receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." One has to ask if it really is an act of love not to educate homosexuals of these facts along with the truth and warnings of God's Word.

Civil Rights or Moral Issue?

Homosexuals claim that their fight is one for civil rights, while traditional Christianity argues that the issue is one of morality instead. The fact that homosexuals have been targeted by a number of hate groups as well as discriminated against in various professional and social situations must be acknowledged. However, special rights for homosexuals are not necessary as the basic rights afforded all under the U.S Constitution are quite adequate for civil protection. Moreover, passing specialized laws that, for example, mandated capital punishment for anyone killing a homosexual would in all practicality elevate the worth of homosexuals over heterosexuals and would violate the standard in America of all men being created equal.

Instead, the issue is really one of a moral nature – what mankind "ought" to do versus what they are doing. It is here that the relativistic/post-modern world and pro-gay theology collide with traditional Christianity. How should the traditional Christian respond to the post-modernist and those in pro-gay theology?

¹⁶ *Newsweek*, 19 September 1994, pp. 50-51; cited in *Narth Bulletin*, December 1994, vol. 2, no. 3, quoted by Dallas, *Delusion*, 50, footnote 38.

Answering the Post-Modernist View of Morals and Homosexuality

The standard practice of the post-modernist is to point their finger at the Christian and ask, “Who are you to say that homosexuality is wrong?” Far too many Christians fail to turn the charge back around and ask, “Who are you to say homosexuality is right?” The question can be elevated up to an even higher level to become “Is there anything wrong with anything?” If there is, then one has to ask what standard of measure is appealed to in order to determine what is blessed as right and what is condemned as wrong.

The post-modernist or relativist position of no absolute standard of truth and morality is easily defeated by simply demonstrating how their claim of everything being relative is actually an absolute statement in and of itself. On this single fact, the relativist’s house of cards collapses. As William Lane Craig has said, “Truth and morals aren’t a matter of taste, but of fact”¹⁷. Absolute truth and morality does indeed exist and both come from the One who created everything out of nothing. The truth of morality is actually one of the main arguments for the existence of God and can be stated as follows:

1. Moral laws imply a Moral Law Giver.
2. There is an objective moral law.
3. Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver.¹⁸

Using this line of reasoning, it can be argued that the very recognition of wrong necessitates the existence of God. Mankind simply cannot identify evil unless they have some standard to measure good and evil. Without such a plumb line, it is just a matter of opinion. The ultimate reference point for distinguishing good from evil can only be found in the person of God. If He does not exist, then there are no moral absolutes and no ultimate basis exists for one to judge between Hitler and Mother Theresa. This necessitates that the post-modernist look to God alone for His opinion of homosexuality (as well as every other moral issue) and only when

¹⁷ Craig, *Hard Questions*, 131.

¹⁸ Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1999), 278-279.

that opinion is rendered can the answer of whether homosexual practice is morally right or wrong be determined.

General Responses to the Pro-gay Theology Moral Stance

It is correct to say that all of those involved in the pro-gay theology movement need no convincing that God exists and some will not argue with the fact that He has set forth absolute moral standards in His Word – the Bible – for all to live by and obey. This confuses many Christians who engage the pro-gay theology member in debate over homosexuality as born-again believers know what the Bible teaches on the subject. What many Christians do not understand is that pro-gay theology can also be referred to as "revisionist theology" because it in essence reinterprets both the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which have traditionally been viewed as containing condemnations of homosexuality, and revises them with different, pro-homosexual interpretations. Some of those in pro-gay theology are well versed in their apologetic arguments and can easily leave unknowledgeable Christians twisting in the wind with respect to coming up with any well-defined rebuttals. It is critical that today's Christian understand the revisionist thinking that pro-gay theology groups like Evangelicals Concerned possess so they can be ready to make an accurate defense of what Scripture really teaches.

The main theme of the pro-gay theology argument is that God does not in any way condemn homosexual behavior as being morally wrong, especially the type of homosexual partnerships espoused today. The traditional verses found in the Old and New Testaments on the subject of homosexual behavior have simply been misinterpreted by Christians and have led to the false conclusion that homosexuality is unacceptable in God's sight. Many times this is suffixed with the phrase "especially because of the way gays love one another today". Reading between the lines of this statement, one can see that the assertion being made is that the Bible does not speak to modern homosexual practices and is neutered when it comes to addressing the pro-gay theology way of life.

In reality, this is first an attack on the omnipotence of God. It is in essence saying that God did not know how today's "modern homosexual" would choose to live. Joseph Gudel addresses this point well when he writes, "It is ludicrous to believe that the Creator of the universe, in guiding the biblical authors, was ignorant concerning the things we now know about homosexuality through modern biology, psychology, sociology, and so forth. To deny scriptural statements about homosexuality on these grounds is to completely deny God's superintendence in the authorship of Scripture."¹⁹

Next, it is important to remember that Paul wrote in a day when homosexuality was practiced very openly in society. As educated as Paul was, he would have been quite familiar with the homoerotic love that was celebrated during this time and would certainly be familiar with the "marriage" of the emperor Nero and Sporus, who was a man that was altered via first century surgery to become Nero's "wife". Paul's message against homosexuality was as counter-culture then as it is today.

Moreover, there is clear evidence that the pro-gay theology movement ignores plainly-stated and cross-culture moral guidelines from God's Word regarding sexual behavior. For example, the Evangelicals Concerned website contains "success stories" of homosexuals who have come to terms in supposedly reconciling Christianity and homosexual practice. One testimony on the website is that of a former preacher who writes about his own "Brokeback Mountain" (a pro-homosexual movie) experience. While married, he concluded that he was not going to live the heterosexual lifestyle any longer and states, "So many men, so little time I was like a kid in a candy store for the first time. All of this was great fun but without a committed love relationship it became rather hollow."²⁰ Not only is there never a line of

¹⁹ Joseph Gudel, "That Which Is Unnatural", *Christian Research Journal*, Winter 1993, vol. 15, no. 3, p. 12, quoted by Dallas, *Delusion*, 174, footnote 7.

²⁰ Gary M "A Parallel Story to Brokeback Mountain", [\[http://www.ecwr.org/resources/stories/ParalleltoBrokebackMountain.html\]](http://www.ecwr.org/resources/stories/ParalleltoBrokebackMountain.html).

repentance for his promiscuous behavior, but the writer admits to even bringing home his boyfriends to meet his wife.²¹ One has to ask, where in the Bible is fornication or adultery allowed for a Christian who determines they are going to live out a homosexual lifestyle? Further, how can a group like Evangelicals Concerned who lists the Nicene Creed on their website as accepted doctrine endorse such behavior?

Troy Perry, the founder of the Metropolitan Community Church (which has become one of the largest – if not the largest – “denomination” of pro-gay theology) describes one of his first sexual encounters with another man as taking place with his unknowing wife being in the next room. Perry, who was a Church of God pastor at the time, says of the occurrence, “Eventually, I came to realize that what we were doing seemed right for me. It stopped short of being love, but was a marvelous education.”²² Again, it is difficult to understand how anyone who claims to hold to the absolute authority of the Bible can rationalize such behavior as being acceptable in the sight of God. However, much pro-gay theology literature is written in a way that encourages the suppression of the built-in warning system provided by God to every human being, so that the conscience is seared in a way that immoral behavior becomes guilt-free (1 Timothy 4:1-3). However, just because someone reaches the point where no guilt is felt does not mean one will not be found guilty before God for immoral conduct.²³

The slow downhill slide toward additional and deeper questionable moral practices is not an uncommon progression for those living contrary to God’s Word, and is somewhat like a story that comes from the Civil War era. Traveling soldiers asked a farmer if they could use part of his fence for a fire at night to keep warm. The farmer agreed, but asked that they only remove planks from the fence’s top rung. At dawn the next day, the entire fence was gone, with each

²¹ Ibid.

²² Troy Perry, *Don’t Be Afraid Anymore*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 20, quoted by Dallas, *Delusion.*, 31, footnote 7.

²³ Craig, *Hard Questions*, 130.

subsequent watch of the soldiers removing what was, at that moment, the top row of the fence. Looking back through the history of the pro-gay theology movement, one can see how each new wave of adherents has broken down another level of God's commands so that there is little, if anything, truly separating them from living as secular homosexuals.

Responding to the Pro-Gay Hermeneutic

To support their pro-gay theology stance, organizations like Evangelicals Concerned apply a revisionist hermeneutic to the plain words found in Scripture. Although others exist, in general, there are five main sets of verses in the Old and New Testament that refer to same-sex sexual activity in a condemning fashion:

1. Genesis 19:4-9
2. Leviticus 18:22, 20:13
3. Romans 1:26-27
4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
5. 1 Timothy 1:9-10

The debate on Romans 1 has previously been covered with Paul's verses on the subject being shown to not support the pro-gay theology stance on the passage, and the verses in Timothy are not really challenged from the pro-homosexual camp. But what about the other three sets of verses? Have they been misrepresented as the pro-gay proponents contend?

The verses in Genesis refer to the destruction of Sodom and tell the story of Lot and the angels that came to visit him. The men of Sodom surrounded Lot's house and demanded that Lot turn the angels over to them for homosexual intercourse, with the end of the story being familiar to all. Those in the pro-gay theology argue that homosexual practice was not the issue, but instead it was one of either inhospitality, the intention of a violent gang rape of the angels, or pride and idleness as suggested in Ezekiel 16:49. The suggestion of inhospitality does not stand up under scrutiny as Lot's response to the men of Sodom makes it clear that they were acting in a wicked manner, with Lot trying to appease them by offering his own daughters up to the crowd.

Further, one must ask exactly who was being inhospitable – Lot or the men of Sodom?²⁴ The argument of gang rape has merit, but is overcome as both Josephus and Philo note in their historical records that city-wide same-sex relations was common in Sodom. It is a stretch to conclude that God would destroy an entire city – full of innocent people not participating in the attempted rape – over the intended act of one group of wicked men. Finally, while Ezekiel does not specifically connect homosexuality and Sodom in chapter 16 of his book, he does state that those of Sodom committed “abominations” in the eyes of God, with both Peter (2 Peter 2:6-7) and Jude (verse 7) specifically calling out homosexuality as the real sin of Sodom.²⁵

Regarding the verses in Leviticus, several stances are assumed by those in pro-gay theology with the most common being that it only refers to homosexual prostitution/idolatry or that the Levitical code has been done away with as the Church is not under law but grace. The argument that the verses only condemn homosexual practice in connection with idolatry do not hold water because one would have to assume the stance that all sins listed in this chapter with homosexuality (including adultery, bestiality, incest, child sacrifice) are acceptable apart from idol worship – a position few, if any, would be prone to adopt. The same argument can also be used to defeat the stance that the Levitical prohibitions do not apply to modern life today. New Testament Christianity did away with dietary restrictions in Leviticus, but not the moral code.²⁶

Those in pro-gay theology challenge the set of verses in 1 Corinthians on the basis of that the word used for homosexual – *arsenokoite* – never appears in any Greek literature before Paul used it, and if Paul had truly been referring to homosexuality, he would have used any of the words already in existence for it. However, such practice was not unusual for a learned man like Paul with the evidence being that he coined some 179 terms in the New Testament. Paul

²⁴ Dallas, *Delusion*, 189-190.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 192-193.

²⁶ *Ibid*.

derived his word for homosexual straight from the book of Leviticus with *arsenos* being found in both Leviticus passages in the Septuagint that condemn homosexual behavior. Further, *arsane* appears in the New Testament with the meaning always being “male” and *koite* is used in the Bible to refer to a bed or couch within a sexual context. The passage in the Corinthians clearly refers to homosexuality and not anything else as those in the pro-gay theology movement contend.²⁷

How Should the Church Respond?

With the presuppositions of both the pro-gay theology and traditional Christianity being thoroughly examined, a reasonable conclusion can be reached. The question of whether one is born a homosexual or not has been shown to not matter as the doctrine of depravity states that all humanity is born with a sin nature that morally pulls in the opposite direction of God. This fact defeats the position of homosexuality being an identity (i.e. “who I am”) and instead shows that homosexuals are given the choice by God to resist the tendency for homosexual practice as all other saints of God are commanded to do in other moral areas (lust, etc.). The question of whether homosexuality is a natural and therefore acceptable practice has been answered negatively by carefully examining Paul’s words in Romans 1 and applying Kant’s categorical imperative, which shows that universally appropriating homosexual behavior (as those in pro-gay theology define it) to all persons results in the extinction of mankind. The issue of whether homosexual behavior is simply one of many alternative lifestyles and not destructive has proven to be false as too many statistics contradict such a claim. Finally, although those in the pro-gay theology movement attempt heroic acrobatics in their interpretation of Scripture to make homosexual practice appear acceptable in the sight of God (and therefore nothing more

²⁷ Ibid, 198-199.

than a civil rights issue), careful exegesis of verses throughout the Old and New Testaments prove that homosexual practice is in no way endorsed by the Creator.

Given these facts, what should the response of the Church be to homosexual practice and homosexuals in general? It is readily apparent that a balanced position must be held by the Church of Jesus Christ. On one hand, the Church should welcome those struggling with homosexual behavior just as it welcomes those wrestling with other desires produced by the fallen nature that stand in opposition to God. Those tempted to judge homosexuals more harshly than others should remember Christ's words about it being more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for cities that had come face-to-face with the truth of Christ and turned away (Matthew 10:15). It must also be remembered that homosexual orientation is not the issue, but the practice of homosexual behavior, and even then, understanding must be given to those who fall into sin but turn back in repentance to Christ. Jesus acted only with compassion and understanding with the adulterous woman whose story is told in John 8. Do Christians really believe the outcome would have been different if a homosexual caught in the act was thrown before Christ instead of a woman charged with having immoral heterosexual relations?

But those in the pro-gay theology movement must be careful not to pull out their eraser and remove Christ's final words in the John 8 passage, which are: "now go your way and leave your life of sin." The Bible clearly does not condone homosexual behavior and provides guidelines for removing unrepentant believers from the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 5). The Church should make every effort to spiritually educate struggling homosexuals on God's truth and provide counseling and support groups that supply help to those struggling with the temptation. Most importantly, the Church should relay the fact that homosexuality can be overcome just as every other temptation that is common to man. After Paul speaks about those who continue to practice sin (including homosexuality) being denied entry into the kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians 6, he provides much needed hope for those who believe that escape from homosexual behavior is not possible: "Such *were* some of you; but you were washed, but you

were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11, emphasis added). Paul clearly speaks about those temptations being a thing of the past, proving that rescue through regeneration in Christ is possible. Many who have come out of the homosexual lifestyle will attest that hope does indeed exist, and that it is both accessible and available to those who seek it.

Conclusion

The same protestant denomination that aired commercials decrying the “bouncer-driven” church in 2005 began delivering a new series of commercials in 2006 that showed a church full of various types of people, with some being launched out of the sanctuary via ejector seats that were controlled by members of the church who scanned the congregation for those who “didn’t belong” and took action. Such a depiction sends a spiritually immature message and is wrong in at least two ways. Churches should certainly not remove those who wish an encounter with Jesus Christ and legitimately want to be obedient to His Word. Instead, the Church should welcome all weary travelers who struggle with sin and provide accurate doctrine and truth that lead all down the correct path of moral behavior. Failure to do so will result in those wrestling with homosexuality turning to accepting congregations that do not accurately preach the truth of the scriptures. As Mel White, a leader in the pro-gay theology movement, has said, “We grow because hundreds of thousands of gay and lesbian Christians who are despised and rejected by the Catholic and Protestant churches of their childhood have no where else to go.”²⁸

The other error in the commercial depiction is one that says sinful behavior as outlined in God’s Word should not be challenged. Scripture firmly denounces homosexual behavior and calls all of God’s people to a life of moral purity – one that can be attained through

²⁸ Mel White, *Stranger at the Gate*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 317, quoted by Dallas, *Delusion.*, 227, footnote 2.

accepting Christ and trusting Him to complete the good work that He starts in all born-again believers. The recognition that tempting struggles will always occur on this side of eternity is acknowledged, but one should not simply indulge them because they feel natural and desirable. Instead, a Christian must carefully examine God's Word and adhere to what it says regarding sexual behavior. Not doing so can result in much grief being experienced in this life, not to mention the jeopardy it places one in with respect to spending eternity apart from God.

Modern day society insists that no one has the right to call into question the moral practices of another, and any who dare to do so are offensive and should be denounced. However, the Bible assumes a different stance and sets truth spoken in love above the request to not hurt one's feelings, with Paul asking those he was correcting in Galatians 4:16, "So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" While those in the pro-gay theology movement may be initially hurt and offended over having the truth of God's Word communicated to them, the fact is that Christ said only truth can set one free, with the opposite conclusion being that error possesses the ability to imprison one in a lifestyle that brings heartache and danger. The balanced position the Church of Jesus Christ must assume is one that loves all regardless of their sexual orientation, communicates the truth and hope in love, and never compromises on God's design for human sexuality.

WORKS CITED

- Cameron, Paul; Playfair, William L.; Wellum, Stephen. "The lifespan of homosexuals." Paper presented at Eastern Psychological Association Convention (April 17, 1993).
- Craig, William Lane. *Hard Questions, Real Answers*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003.
- Dallas, Joe. *A Strong Delusion*. Eugene: Harvest House, 2003.
- Dallas, Joe. *Desires in Conflict*. Eugene: Harvest House, 1996.
- Ingram, Chip. *What do you say to a Gay Friend*, audiotapes of sermon series *Let My People Think* by Chip Ingram. Atlanta: Living on the Edge Ministries, 2003.
- Geisler, Norman. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Geisler, Norman. *Chosen but Free*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1999.
- Geisler, Norman. *Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989.
- Hogg, RS., Strathdee, SA., Craib, KJP., O'Shaughnessy, MV., Montainer, JSG., Schechter, MT., " Modeling the impact of HIV Disease on Mortality in Gay and Bisexual Men," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1997.
- Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillian Publishing, 1943.
- MacArthur, John Jr. *MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Romans 1-8*. Hiawatha: Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1991, Electronic Edition, Parsons Technology, 1997.