

Article: DG238

## ANSWERING THE “GAY CHRISTIAN” POSITION

This article first appeared in the Effective Evangelism column of the *Christian Research Journal*, volume 23, number 1 (2000). For further information or to subscribe to the *Christian Research Journal* go to: <http://www.equip.org>

Twenty-two years ago I craved justification for my homosexuality. I had decided I was gay, and I felt utterly incapable of changing my sexual desires. Instead of conforming my actions to biblical standards, I chose to adjust biblical standards to accommodate my actions. My subsequent six-year involvement as a staff member of the pro-homosexual Metropolitan Community Church became the fruit of that compromise and remains a source of deep regret to this day.

During my tenure as a self-professed “gay Christian,” I was often confronted by believers who argued the standard passages on homosexuality. Like anyone steeped in propaganda, however, I knew which Scripture passages would be thrown at me (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; all of which clearly condemn homosexuality) and could recite the pro-gay interpretation of each, leaving my Christian opponent and me at a stalemate.<sup>1</sup> The problem, of course, was that we were debating my revised view of the Bible without addressing the state of heart and mind that had led me to that revision in the first place.

Clearly there’s a place for arguing doctrine. When biblical integrity is discarded (as it surely is when pro-gay theology is adopted), then a stand for truth is mandated. Crucial to that stand, however — and often missing in our discussions with those in the pro-homosexual religious movement — is a willingness to include, then go beyond, a point/counterpoint approach to the biblical references to homosexuality. “Going beyond,” in this case, means asking questions of a broader, more penetrating nature.

When our friends who call themselves gay Christians insist that God approves of their orientation and behavior, we do well to challenge the interpretation of Scripture they claim supports their position. When that debate concludes, however, they will often fall back on two general arguments by which they accept, and even celebrate, their homosexuality. The first is based on the seeming immutability of their sexual orientation; the second is their sense of God’s presence in their lives while they are openly and actively homosexual. Two questions come to mind as we consider these arguments.

**Is there a divine intent for sexual expression, and, if there is, how do we determine *what it is*?** When Troy Perry, homosexual activist and founder of the Metropolitan Community Church, writes about his sexual awakenings, he describes an encounter he had with another man. Although married (his wife, in fact, was in the adjoining room during Perry’s tryst), he explains his rationale for committing homosexual adultery: “Eventually, I came to realize that what we were doing seemed right *for me*” (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup> While admitting it did not constitute love, he nonetheless refers to the episode as “a marvelous education.”<sup>3</sup> Consistent with this subjective approach to ethics, Perry’s first sermon to his newly formed church was titled, “Be True to You.”<sup>4</sup>

Should the *authenticity* of our sexual desires be the criteria by which we judge their *rightness*? If so, one wonders whether pedophilia, incest, or sadomasochism might not also be legitimized so long as they “seem right” to an individual.

The pro-gay apologist might indignantly argue that same-sex contact between consenting adults is a far cry from the horror of pedophilia or incest; yet that response evades the broader issue: Are we to conform our sexuality to a revealed intent or to our own deeply ingrained preferences? If we claim to be Bible-believing Christians (which most in the gay religious movement identify themselves as), yet draw our

moral conclusions not from Scripture but from our own passions, then a glaring contradiction exists and cries out for correction.

“But,” the gay apologist counters, “how could God condemn something I’ve tried so hard to overcome and even asked Him to remove?” Mel White, gay author and former ghostwriter to a stellar list of Christian leaders, argues this point in his autobiography *Stranger at the Gate* (Simon and Schuster). Movingly, he recounts years of prayer, psychotherapy, and shock treatment geared toward obliterating his homosexual desires. When all efforts to remove the temptation toward sex with other men failed, he determined by concession that, since his prayers to be relieved of homosexual feelings went unanswered, those feelings were therefore God ordained.

His testimony echoes that of hundreds of religious homosexuals who assume that unwanted temptations that are not *completely* removed through prayer must therefore be feelings that cannot be removed *at all*; subsequently, what cannot be removed *at all* must be, by its very immutability, *legitimate*. (E.g., “I prayed for God to remove my temptations, but some of them remained. Therefore, God must expect me to yield to them.”)

In contrast, Francis Schaeffer provides a better approach to the frustration of deeply ingrained temptations: “So I must ask, very gently: How much thought does (our identification with Christ) provoke? Is it not true that our prayers for ourselves are almost entirely aimed at getting rid of the negative at any cost rather than praying that the negatives be faced in the proper attitude?”<sup>5</sup>

Regarding sexual temptation, Schaeffer is more specific: “Here in the midst of life there is to be a strong choice, by the grace of God. It is not a matter of waiting until we no longer have strong sexual desires, but rather — we are to understand what Jesus means when He talks about denying ourselves that which is not rightfully ours.”<sup>6</sup>

Placing the concept of being true to myself above self-denial, I (and I fear many like me in the gay church) decided homosexuality was natural because it came naturally to me. Having predetermined the rightness of it, I read that determination into the Bible rather than submitting that determination to the Bible’s authority.

That is the crux of the problem. If there is a divine intent for our sexuality — and, indeed, there is — then we do well to face what it is, not what we wish it to be. To do less is to set ourselves up for a lethal combination of heresy and tragedy.

**Does God’s presence in our lives indicate His approval of our lifestyle?** “I feel God’s presence in my life,” you’re likely to hear from someone aligned with the gay religious movement. “And at my church, people are born again, and God’s Spirit is manifest. How could that be if He disapproves of homosexuality?”

I can testify firsthand to the power of this line of reasoning. If, upon my first visit to a pro-gay congregation, I had encountered a Roman orgy in progress, it would have been easy to dismiss the very notion of “gay Christianity.” At the Metropolitan Community Church, however, I witnessed traditional hymns, sermons that were theologically conservative, and even an occasional altar call. *Isn’t this evidence, I thought, that God sanctions homosexuality?*

A cursory look at Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian church refutes this erroneous thinking. The Corinthians were carnal and full of divisions (1 Cor. 3:3-4), an incestuous relationship existed openly among them (1 Cor. 5:1-5), and drunkenness occurred during their communion celebrations (1 Cor. 11:21); yet God was present in their lives. At the very least, as born-again believers, they had the Spirit of God within them, however grieved the Holy Spirit may have been with their behavior.

Could God’s presence be construed to indicate His approval of their behavior? Hardly. Likewise, though our friends in pro-gay churches claim ongoing fellowship with Christ, their foundation is experiential, in contrast to the surer foundation Christ commended when warning against claiming a *knowledge of Him* apart from *obedience to Him* (Matt. 7:24-27).

All of this makes our encounters with those claiming to be gay and Christian reminiscent of an encounter between Jesus and a rich young ruler (Mark 10:17–23). Christ loved the young man and was acutely aware of the spiritual hunger posed in his question, “Good Master, what should I do to inherit eternal life?” Like our friends or loved ones in pro-gay churches, this young ruler obeyed many of the commandments, but something in his life — his riches, which he deemed invaluable — was holding him back. When Jesus put His finger on this one area, the ruler walked away, unwilling to relinquish and obey.

There, Mark’s account of the conversation ends; but who knows? Someday, perhaps years later, this same man may have reexamined the contrast between earthly and eternal wealth. Maybe Christ’s way of speaking truth — gently but firmly — never left his memory. Perhaps — just perhaps — he finally yielded what seemed so important, only to find a hundredfold more when his life was conformed to Christ’s word, then transformed by it.

I know it’s possible. The sound Bible teaching I received as a young Christian haunted me, pursuing me even in the midst of indescribable rebellion. It would not be ignored; truth finally conquered convenience when I realized I’d been kidding myself into believing what I *wanted* to believe, rather than what I *truly* believed.

As we address the issue of obedience and truth with our friends caught in the deception of pro-gay theology (and other self-serving theologies), we prayerfully hope they, too, may find the truer blessing of a yielded life.

– Joe Dallas

## NOTES

1. For a fuller treatment of the pro-gay interpretation of Scripture, see Joe Dallas, *A Strong Delusion* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996).
2. Troy Perry, *Don’t Be Afraid Anymore* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 20.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 38.
5. Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1971), 26-27.
6. Ibid., 27.