

Hear No Evil, See No Evil, ...

Legalistic Biblicist or Loving Progressive? Which are you? An ELCA questionnaire on homosexuality offers only these two options. Neither way of using the Bible helps in sorting out moral dilemmas in this broken world. Here are some of the problems with them and also a better way, Luther's way:

The Slippery Slope of Inerrancy. The problem with using the Bible as a social blueprint for all times and places is that one has to be so selective. What about issues like slavery (1 Cor 7:20-24; Eph 6:5), divorce (Matt 5:31-32; 19:9; Mk 10:11-12; Lk 16:18; I Cor 7:10-11), drunkenness as a mortal sin (1 Cor 6:9-10), saving women through childbirth (I Tim 1:15), etc.? We don't use the Bible woodenly on these questions. We have to be careful not to use the Bible as a club merely where it suits us.

And what about ethical dilemmas not addressed in Scripture, like smoking, cloning, gambling? Just because we can't quote Bible verses on these issues doesn't mean God is indifferent to them, or that they are not serious ethical issues of concern to Lutherans.

The "Loving Progressive" Option Also Fails. Progressives pit the Bible against their Gospel, saying we should not be legalists, but loving, by which they mean relationships should be judged by their "quality" not what "kind" they are. Under the pious cloak of affirming such qualities as "care" and "commitment," progressives close their eyes to the damage and destructiveness of sexual behaviors which are often accepted and even celebrated by the culture at large.

1. It's not loving to encourage people to engage in self-destructive behavior; gay sex is physically destructive, leading to many diseases and early death.

2. Just because a relationship is "loving" doesn't mean it's healthy or ought to be blessed by the church. Polygamy, adultery, incest, bestiality are all "kinds" of relationships which could be "loving," yet damage those who practice them and undermine the safety and stability of society.

How To Use the Bible? Fundamentalism doesn't work but neither does pitting a sentimental "gospel" against the Bible. Is there a more excellent way?

Paul says in Romans 13:10: "Love does **no harm** to the neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law."

In Rom 1:26-27 and 1 Cor 1:6:9 Paul applies doing "no harm" to the question of homosexual behavior in his situation. We listen and learn from these early Christians even as we are called to examine the evidence about homosexual behavior in our own day. We use reason. We think and debate. As Lutherans we want to know:

What are the Damages? The trauma and subsequent disease associated with gay sex is well documented:

Even in the absence of major trauma, minor or microscopic tears in the rectal lining allow for immediate contamination and the entry of germs into the bloodstream As a result, gay men are disproportionately vulnerable to a host of serious and sometimes fatal infections caused by the entry of feces into the bloodstream (J. Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, p.67)

As a result, the average life span of gay men, even apart from AIDS and *with* a long-term partner, is 43 years, 30 years fewer than for other males. AIDS further shortens the life span of gay men by more than 7% (Cameron, Playfair, and Wellum, "The Homosexual Life Span," Presentation to the Eastern Psychological Association, 4/93). Should Lutherans recommend gay men seek a life-time partner, knowing how harmful gay sex is even for partnered gays?

What's Good for Kids? Is a gay pastor with a partner a good model? Do we want to encourage those who are wavering or ambivalent about their sexuality to think that gay unions are like heterosexual marriage? A gay activist speaks a painful but saving truth:

Who wants to encourage their kids to engage in a life that exposes them to a 50% chance of HIV infection? Who even wants to be neutral about such a possibility? If the rationale behind social tolerance of homosexuality is that it allows gay kids an equal shot at the pursuit of happiness, that rationale is hopelessly undermined by an endless epidemic that negates happiness (Gabrielle Rotello, *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men* cited in Wolfe and Kristol eds., *Homosexuality and American Public Life*, [1999] 86).

The "Hear No Evil" Problem in the ELCA. Like the three monkeys, ELCA leaders commonly shut their ears, eyes, and mouths to the growing body of evidence about the dark side of gay sex:

... Speak No Evil



1. The victim-turned-perpetrator phenomenon.

Homosexuals, as a group, are more likely to have been sexually abused as children than are heterosexuals. ("Abused adolescents, particularly those victimized by males, were up to 7 times more likely to self-identify as gay or bisexual than peers who have not been abused." The Journal of the American Medical Association, cited in Mary Eberstadt, "The Elephant in the Sacristy," *The Weekly Standard*, 6/17/02, p.31). Clinical estimates for the rate of childhood victimization among abusers range as high as 80%. In other words, although not all victims of sexual abuse go on to become perpetrators, many perpetrators do seem to have started as victims.

2. Higher rates of sexual abuse of minors by homosexuals compared to heterosexuals. Misconduct with minors is **three times more common** among gays than straights according to a peer-reviewed study by Freund and Watson (*Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 18:1 [1992] pp. 34-43).

3. The evidence that gay unions are seldom, if ever, exclusive. Two gay therapists studied 165 gay couples who intended to live in long-term relationships and none of the couples maintained fidelity for 5 years. They concluded, "The expectation for outside sexual activity was the rule for male couples" (McWhirter and Mattison, *The Male Couple* [1984] p.3).

4. The myth that homosexuals are "born that way."

The victim-turned-perpetrator causal chain and the prominence of man-boy seduction in gay literature and culture indicate the influence of environment on sexual "orientation" ("Pedophilia Chic" 6/17/96 *The Weekly Standard* [weeklystandard.com/content/public/articles/000/000/001/329pdstm.asp]).

5. Sexual "orientation" can be changed. In "Initial Empirical and Clinical Findings Concerning the Change Process for Ex-Gays," a peer-reviewed article, Dr. Warren Throckmorton summarizes the experiences of thousands who have changed their sexual orientation as a result of therapy for some, ministry for others, and spontaneously for still others (*Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33:3 [June 2002] 242-48).

Lutheran Ethics: What are the Damages? For more than 30 years the Catholic Church has allowed a gay subculture to grow within its ranks. As a result a great many boys have been seduced or forced into homosexual acts by certain priests. Only recently have the enormous damages to the victims and to the church come to light.

The ELCA is charging down the same road - deaf, blind, and dumb both to the damages and to the evidence that people can and do change their sexual "orientation."