

A debate on homosexuality continues

MERTON STROMMEN and AL QUIE

David Valen makes three points in his critique of a letter from Al Quie and me. (See "What if...:" *Metro Lutheran*, February, 2010, page 7.) 1) "A preponderance of scientific evidence" establishes that a person is born homosexual.

2) Homosexuals don't differ from others in church.
3) We are judgmental and not following the gospel of love.

First point: The big issue in psychological literature has been to find the cause of homosexuality.

Bailey and Hillard thought they had identified a genetic causation which was highly publicized. But, improved studies showed no genetic causation. In 1992 Dean Hamer thought he discovered a genetic marker, but that fizzled. William Byne and Bruce Parsons (1999) reviewed 135 studies and concluded there is no preponderance of scientific evidence for a biological explanation.

As I point out in my book, *The Church and Homosexuality*, homosexuality is caused by a variety of factors, mostly unknown to the individual. That is why most homosexuals think they were born that way. Choice becomes an issue when the person decides whether or not to engage in homosexual behavior or, at a later time, when the person is faced with an opportunity to return to heterosexuality — which thousands have done.

Second point: I roughly classify homosexuals into six groups. The first resemble the persons Valen describes, deeply devout Christians who

believe in Jesus Christ. The second group are non-church gays who live quietly with a partner, serving in various occupations, contributing to the social good.

The ones in the other four groups make up the vast majority of homosexuals. People in church know little about their culture, behavior, and be-

liefs. An article in the *Star Tribune* (December 1, 2000), reported on six one-hour presentations on cable TV entitled "Queer as Folk." As the TV drama started, the narrator warned the audience saying, "What you need to know is, it's all about sex." The first hour

presented participants engaging in "sex orgies," stripteasing for business clients, male prostitution, shower-room sex, etc. The premiere was welcomed by parties where gays gathered to see this breakthrough, historic event. It presented a lifestyle few members of a congregation associate with the gays they know.

Last year, a National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality team reviewed all research reported in professional journals in the last 10 decades. One focus was the question, "Is there a greater pathology among homosexual people?" The conclusion drawn from the 621 articles was, "A greater pathology exists among homosexually-oriented people than among heterosexuals. In fact it is difficult to find another group in society with such high risk

for experiencing such a wide range of medical, psychological, and relational dysfunctions."

Their review focused on homosexually-involved youth. They experience suicide, prostitution, substance abuse, runaway behaviors, school problems, and AIDS, far more than typifies heterosexual youth ("What Research Shows," *Journal of Human Sexuality*, 2009, p.55). Underscoring this is the news from the Minnesota Department of Health that HIV/AIDS rose an by alarming 13 percent in 2009.

Third point: It is not judgmental to identify smoking tobacco as harmful. We agree it is not judgmental but loving to encourage people to stop smoking.

Likewise, it should not be judgmental to identify homosexual behaviors as potentially harmful when the evidence is so strong. Is it not the love of Christ to encourage homosexuals to refrain from homosexual behaviors and accept opportunities to return to a heterosexual life? Over a hundred studies show that a return to heterosexuality is possible, not harmful, and as successful as other therapies.

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