

Salt & Light

Fall 2003

The Newsletter of the Social Concerns Ministry Team

You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world...

Educating and informing the church body in light of biblical principles

Mt. 5:13-14

Editorial Note:

This issue takes up one of the most controversial topics in society today: homosexuality. We caution the reader that the opening article is somewhat graphic in its sexual language (it could easily have been more graphic!). However, it is important to tell the truth. And telling the truth about homosexuality requires not only examining the health risks involved (p. 1) and the unfounded claims that homosexuality is genetically caused and thus unavoidable (p. 2), it also involves considering the Bible's view of homosexuality (p. 3). But if we are to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), we must also tell the rest of the story. Don't miss the final article (p. 3) on how Christians should respond. For more information, call the four organizations identified in boxes throughout this issue.

Kerusso Ministries
(757)872-8878
Ministry to homosexuals

Is Homosexuality Desirable?

From: Jeffrey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Baker Books)

The *typical* homosexual lifestyle—especially among males—differs dramatically from American averages. This difference means little by itself, but the fact that *these same differences are all critical risk factors for multiple medical illnesses* is highly significant. And because, as the authors of *Sex in America* note, people tend to have sex predominantly with people who share their lifestyles and preferences, the risks associated with homosexuality tend to be shared with other homosexuals. This is an obvious point, but it has important consequences when we consider disease.

Two major risk factors contribute to the disproportionately greater incidence of non-AIDS illnesses among (male) homosexuals: anal intercourse and the number of different partners. In other words, the sexual profile of the typical gay male is precisely the most dangerous one. The typical homosexual (needless to say there are exceptions) is a man who has frequent episodes of anal intercourse with other men, often with many different men. These episodes are 13 times more frequent

than heterosexuals' acts of anal intercourse, with 12 times as many different partners as heterosexuals.

Shockingly and frighteningly, yet consistent with the concentration of AIDS cases among high-risk populations, epidemiologists estimate that 30 percent of all twenty-year-old homosexual males will be HIV-positive or dead of AIDS by the time they are thirty. This means that the incidence of AIDS among twenty- to thirty-year-old homosexual men is roughly 430 times greater than among the heterosexual population at large.

In the current political atmosphere the whole notion that homosexuality is dangerous must appear inflammatory. But consider for a moment: If these findings are true (and while the life span research has only limited value, the more rigorous medical findings are incontrovertible), how could anyone with a heart for the sufferings of others stand by in silence? Given the risks, the only ethical approach to assisting people who consider themselves homosexual—and especially youngsters still wrestling with their emerging sexual feelings—must at the least include a willingness to help them change not only the "high-risk behaviors" but the homosexual "orientation" itself. †

Is Homosexuality Inescapable for Some?

From: Various Focus on the Family materials

Of course, everyone knows it's true, right? It was reported on National Public Radio, in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, after all. "Research Points Toward a Gay Gene," the *Journal* said. "Report Suggests Homosexuality Is Linked to Genes," read the *Times*.

A study by Dean Hamer and his colleagues in *Science* magazine in July 1993 purported to find a genetic cause for homosexuality. Though the necessary caveats were added to the news stories, most people would already have turned off the radio or turned the page, thinking that homosexuality is caused by a gene. But can you believe everything you read in the

paper: Is there such a thing as a gay gene?

Demonstrating that any behavioral state is not only biological but genetic is well beyond our present research capacity. This is especially true for something so complex and nuanced as homosexuality. No study of homosexuality has come remotely close to these requirements.

Science revisited the topic in 1999, publishing two articles questioning supposed links to a gay gene. Both articles reference an independent genetic study conducted in Canada in 1989 with research continuing today by four researchers from the University of Western Ontario and Stanford Medical School. This

study used 52 pairs of gay siblings from 48 families. Hamer's research used 40 homosexual brother pairs. The study concluded, "It is unclear why our results are so discrepant from Hamer's original study. Because our study was larger than that of Hamer *et al.*, we certainly had adequate power to detect a genetic effect as large as was reported in that study. Nonetheless, our data do not support the presence of a gene of large effect influencing sexual orientation. Any claims to have found a "gay gene" were overblown, if not outright wrong. It is premature, and will almost certainly prove to be incorrect, to state that homosexuality is genetic. †

Is Homosexuality Wrong?

From: Ben Irwin, "The Bible & Homosexuality" (Family Research Council)

Our traditional understanding of sexual morality is rooted in biblical teaching, as illustrated by Genesis 2:24 and similar New Testament passages. The homosexual Christian movement wants the church to reject this ethic as the guiding absolute standard of sexual behavior. Doing so would open the door to the normalization of any kind of sexual behavior prohibited by the biblical principle of human sexuality. When researcher J.D. Unwin examined nearly 100 civilizations in his study *Sexual Regulations and Cultural Behavior*, he found that cultural vitality is directly related to a society's adherence to the biblical principle of heterosexual monogamy.

One of the most common arguments used by homosexual Christian activists is that Jesus

never addressed homosexual behavior, so it cannot be condemned. However, an explicit condemnation or affirmation of homosexual behavior from Jesus is not necessary for a proper understanding, because He addressed the broader issue

of all human sexuality. "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'" —Mark 10:6-9

Including the passage quoted above, these words were reaffirmed as the standard for human sexual behavior *four times* in the New Testament (Mt. 19:4-6, Mk. 10:6-9,

1 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 5:31).

Other biblical passages address homosexuality in particular. For example: *Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.* —Lev. 18:22

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations

for unnatural ones...Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. —Rom. 1:24-32

In schools today, homosexuality is

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Exodus International
(888)264-0877
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ministry, 37-states.

How Should Christians Respond?

From: Joe Dallas, *How Should We Respond?* (Focus on the Family)

Before we can effectively go into our culture and address its sins, God calls us to look at our *own* sins, repent of whatever immorality exists within our *own* walls and recommit to biblical standards of holiness. When we have a divorce rate in the body of Christ that is nearly equal to that of the culture, when the use of pornography among Christian men is virtually epidemic and when we have scandals in our own leadership that rival whatever we have seen in Washington, we have surely abdicated our moral authority to speak to the issues of our time.

Is the answer, then, to simply withdraw and be silent? Oh, no. It's to reform. It's to do exactly what Jesus did. Jesus didn't say, "Don't go out and try to remove that speck from your brother's eye." He did say that before you do it, have a look at the log in your own. And Paul echoed the same sentiments when, in Romans, he said, "You who say you should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who say you should not steal, do you steal?" It is because of this type of deceit that Paul said, "For this reason the name of God is blasphemed among the unbelievers." Today, God is calling the Church to repent of her own immorality in order to speak with fresh authority to the moral issues of our time and return to biblical standards of holiness.

Second, the Church must repent of hostility toward homosexual people. I believe God is calling us

to recommit to bold love. You remember Jonah who had an extraordinary calling to deal with a group of people he didn't want to deal with at all? He preached what must go on record as being the world's worst evangelistic sermon. "You're going to burn. I've done my part." In fact, we read in Jonah's book that he went and got himself a front row seat to watch the barbecue. Then, lo and behold—from the king on down—Nineveh repented! Jonah went ballistic. He said, "I don't believe this, God! You called me to come out here and tell these people that they're going to burn. And I did my part, and You did not do Yours. You called them to repentance." You see, Jonah cared more to see the destruction of people than he cared to see them redeemed. How many Christians today are afflicted with the Jonah syndrome? To hear some of us talk, you'd think it's more important to politically defeat homosexuals than it is to see them won into the kingdom of God. And that ought not to be!

In taking a stand publicly against homosexuality, a person does not have to become homophobic, bigoted or cruel. We are *mandated* to stand against it. Yet, *how* we oppose it is as important as opposing it. So Christians must

repent of whatever hostility exists towards homosexual people and recommit ourselves to bold love.

Bold love seeks to serve without compromising. The remarkable thing we read about Jesus is that the common people gladly listened to Him. *God* incarnate could be approached by prostitutes, tax collectors and the lowest of the low. The dregs of His society felt comfortable coming to Him. But, you never

hear Him legitimizing sin. He never failed to call a spade a spade. Whether He was telling an adulterous woman, "Don't do it anymore. I don't condemn you, but I want you to stop," or whether He was rebuking the self-righteous Pharisees. And yet, He was able to serve people and relate to them.

If you have a homosexual loved one, relative, friend or co-worker, you can do them a powerful service by asking them, "What is life like for you? I want to know you. I want to hear about your experience. I want you to know I'm interested in you, not as an object of conversion, but as someone I care about."

We must be ambassadors as Jesus was to the Samaritan woman. Some Christians appear to be obsessed with seeing people convert from homosexuality to heterosexuality. Don't they realize that heterosexuals can go to hell just as easily as homosexuals? The issue is where do they stand. Are they dead

***National Association for
Research and Treatment of
Homosexuality (NARTH)***
(818)789-4440
**An organization of nearly 400
professionals across the country.**

Spatula Ministries
(310)691-7369
**A ministry/support group for
parents of homosexuals.**

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How to Respond?

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in sin or alive in Christ? If they're dead in sin, it hardly matters *what* the sin is, they are dead in sin.

Repentant homosexuals who abandon homosexuality are not just abandoning the sexual sin, they are abandoning a whole network of support and identity. Having made the right decision, they come to the Church with virtually nothing. Yet, many in the Church find it so hard to relate to the particular sin of homosexuality that they fail to relate to the individual.

We've learned on the abortion issue that it's not enough just to tell pregnant women what not to do. We've learned that we have to walk alongside women and say, "Not only will we tell you not to murder the child, we will help you to do what is right." So now we have

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Christian-sponsored halfway houses where women can carry a child to full-term. We have crisis counseling centers for women who are pregnant to tell them about their options. We have support groups for women who have had an abortion and are grieving that decision. We must also recognize that it will not be enough just to tell the homosexuals that they are wrong. We must be willing to say, "Come into our churches, and we will help you do what is right." †

Is It Wrong?

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being presented as a moral option. We must be forthright in insisting that it is not.

We must also remember Scripture's further word on the subject. People *can* change, by God's grace.

And that is what some of you were [fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexual offenders, sodomites] But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. —1 Cor. 6:11 †

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