

## **CULTURAL AND MEDICAL MYTHS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY**

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*Three questions need to be answered regarding cultural and medical myths about homosexuality: (1) Is there a “gay gene”? In giving a positive answer, some sources cite two categories, nature and nurture. Behavioral genetics have sought and allegedly found a source for homosexuality, but many scientists have strong questions about behavioral genetics. Various studies have failed to prove conclusively that a “gay gene” exists. (2) Is it possible for a person to change sexual orientation from being homosexual to heterosexual? The current consensus in the mental health profession is that attempts to convert a homosexual to a heterosexual are too likely to be harmful. A possibility of change has been demonstrated, but worldwide consensus continues to view such a change as impossible because of biological and psychiatric factors. Studies by Spitzer and Jones/Yarhouse have identified examples of change without harm to individuals involved. (3) How have homosexual activists impacted modern culture throughout the world? Various pieces of legislation, both national and international, have put at risk anyone who dares to oppose homosexuality. Even some ecclesiastical leaders have softened their tone in speaking against this sexual deviation.*

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I must admit that earlier in 2008 I approached my Faculty Lecture as I approached writing this article, with a bit of fear and trepidation. I can identify with the prophet Amos when he affirmed, “I was neither a prophet nor a prophet’s son” (Amos 7:14). I am not a geneticist or the son of a geneticist. I am not a biologist or the son of a biologist. And I am not a cultural anthropologist or the son of one. I am primarily and gladly a student of Scripture. And even more narrow than that, my focus has been principally on the OT. With that in mind, I venture into regions of knowledge that are not areas I have mastered. I offer the following observations based on much hard work and research, but with humility in light of my limitations

as a non-scientist.<sup>1</sup>

Most of those who will read this article are much more interested in biblical studies rather than science, let alone genetics, psychiatry, psychology, and sociology. Regardless, I would encourage readers to give attention to today's issues as a way to understand better and be more able to minister to people who either wholeheartedly support or struggle with homosexuality.

This article deals with three major issues. First of all, is there a "gay gene"? Secondly, is it possible for a person to change sexual orientation from being homosexual to heterosexual? Thirdly, how have homosexual activists impacted modern culture throughout the world?

### Is There a "Gay Gene"?

On July 15, 1993, National Public Radio (i.e., NPR) reported a new study that was due to be released the next day. The tenor of the report suggested that someone had finally discovered a gene that causes homosexuality. NPR added a few quiet caveats at the end of their report, ignored by most listeners.<sup>2</sup> The next day, the *Wall Street Journal* headlined their report: "Research Points toward a Gay Gene."<sup>3</sup> The subtitle said "Normal Variation," affirming the opinion of the article's author that homosexuality was a normal variation of human behavior. At the bottom of the last paragraph on the last page, deep within the paper, a geneticist offered his opinion that this gene might only be associated with homosexuality and not the cause of it.<sup>4</sup> Regardless, for most of the world the discovery had been made and now the political wheels began to turn (leading to the push for protection of civil rights, laws against discrimination, civil unions, gay marriage, etc.).

As part of this issue of a "gay gene," it is essential to offer a basic definition of "sexual orientation." It "typically refers to the directionality of a person's sexual attraction" or "their sexual predispositions."<sup>5</sup> The various theories that seek to

<sup>1</sup>I do teach a biblical ethics course with some regularity and have dabbled in the questions this article addresses, but I realistically understand that I am not an expert in this complicated area.

<sup>2</sup>Jeffrey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) 109.

<sup>3</sup>"Research Points toward a Gay Gene," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 1993.

<sup>4</sup>Even the scientist referred to as the source for this report, a gay man, Dr. Hamer of the United States National Institutes of Health, never claimed to have found a gene determining homosexuality. In another setting he stated: "We have not found the gene—which we don't think exists—for sexual orientation" (R. McKie, "The Myth of the Gay Gene," *The Press* [July 30, 1993]:9). He did claim to have found evidence that some male homosexuality was passed through female members of a family (cf. Neil and Briar Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It!: A Scientific Look at Sexual Orientation* [Lafayette, La.: Huntington House, 1999] 135).

<sup>5</sup>Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?: A Longitudinal Study of Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007) 27.

explain the source for or basis of a person's sexual orientation fall into two broad categories: **nature** or **nurture** (or some combination of the two).

#### Nature

For the last three decades, there has been a resurgence of research in genetic studies as relates to providing cures for diseases as well as finding the genetic basis for certain behaviors. During this time researchers have discovered genes responsible for Huntington's disease, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, and others. Researchers have made great progress on mapping the human genome and by the end of the twentieth century determined the genetic basis for 450 physical conditions.<sup>6</sup>

This success led some scientists to pursue genetic causes for various behavioral patterns. Consequently, a category of study—behavioral genetics—came into being. The various studies mentioned below pursue some kind of genetic explanation for homosexuality as a human behavior. However, in addition to the comments given for each of the methodologies discussed below, it is important to understand that numerous scientists have far-reaching questions about the clarity of behavioral genetics.

One example is this quote by Charles Mann, a regular contributor to *Science*: "Time and time again, scientists have claimed that particular genes or chromosomal regions are associated with behavioral traits, only to withdraw their findings when they were not replicated. 'Unfortunately,' says Yale's Gelernter, 'it's hard to come up with many' findings linking specific genes to complex human behaviors that have been replicated.'" Mann adds: "All were announced with great fanfare; all were greeted unskeptically in the popular press; all are now in disrepute."<sup>8</sup> This does not signify that there are absolutely no genetic factors that could impact or give rise to homosexual behavior. Nevertheless, it affirms that the alleged genetic basis of certain kinds of behavior is very ambiguous and is still open to debate. It is important to keep this in mind since the media in general and homosexual activists in particular ignore the genetic evidence's lack of clarity.

The broad consensus in the general population is that few people actually choose to have a homosexual or heterosexual orientation. Instead, they simply find themselves experiencing a same-sex or opposite-sex attraction as part of who they are. The first category used to describe the source for a person's sexual orientation, *nature*, refers to some kind of biological antecedent. The evidence for the biological or genetic cause of homosexuality includes research on twin studies, differences in

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<sup>6</sup>Neil and Briar Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It!* 135-36.

<sup>7</sup>Charles C. Mann, "Behavioral Genetics in Transition," *Science* 264/5166 (June 17, 1994):1687.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

brain structure, gene scans, and prenatal hormone exposure.<sup>9</sup> Only the first two of these will be discussed in any detail.

### **Concordance rates found in twins' studies**

Twins have been invaluable to medical research for a number of decades. Sadly, during World War II, horrific experiments were performed on twins by the Nazis. More recently, most twin studies are performed as a way of addressing various maladies. Twin "registers" exist in different countries and are the foundation for modern twin studies. Scientists are organizing a gigantic European register (with a projected 600,000 members).<sup>10</sup> However, one of the largest in use at present is in Australia, with more than 25,000 twins listed.<sup>11</sup> Various scholars have worked through different twin registries to find identical twins in which at least one twin has "same sex attraction." They then consider the frequency with which the other twin has those same tendencies ("concordance").

#### Foundational studies (1991, 1993)

Bailey, Pillard, and their colleagues initially published two studies dealing with male and female twins that established the public perception that there is a strong genetic component to the causation of a homosexual orientation.<sup>12</sup>

*Key terms.* Several terms commonly occur in discussions of the genetic issues as they relate to homosexuality. The first one is "identical twins" or "monozygotic" (from "one egg"). These children share the exact same genes and hence are always the same sex and have same eye color. They are identical in every biological characteristic that is caused by the genes. The second term involves

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<sup>9</sup>Various other potential sources of evidences for a natural cause of homosexuality have been and are being suggested. This article cannot be exhaustive in presenting all the possible suggested alternatives. The most commonly cited sources of evidence receive attention here.

<sup>10</sup>Neil and Briar Whitehead, updated chapter from *My Genes Made Me Do It!—A Scientific Look at Sexual Orientation*, <http://www.mygenes.co.nz/download.htm> (ch. 10, p. 1) (accessed 9/2/2008); cf. "Studies of European Volunteer Twins to Identify Genes Underlying Common Diseases," <http://www.genomeutwin.org/index.htm> (accessed 9/2/2008); O. Quintana Trias, "GenomEUtwin: A European Community Framework 5 Functional Genomics Special Initiative," *Twin Research*, 6/5 (October 1, 2003):353, <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/aap/twr/2003/00000006/00000005/art00001;jsessionid=5hkoff3ao8bu8.alice> (accessed 9/2/2008); cf. Dorret I. Boomsma, "Twin Registers in Europe: An Overview," *Twin Research and Human Genetics* 1/1 (February 1998):34-51.

<sup>11</sup>M. M. Braun, N. E. Caporaso, W. F. Page, and R. N. Hoover, "Genetic Component of Lung Cancer: Cohort Study of Twins," *The Lancet* 344 (1994):440-43.

<sup>12</sup>J. M. Bailey and R. C. Pillard, "A Genetic Study of Male Sexual Orientation," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 48/12 (December 1991):1081-96; J. M. Bailey, R. C. Pillard, M. C. Neale, and Y. Agyei, "Heritable Factors Influence Sexual Orientation in Women," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 50/3 (March 1993):217-23.

“fraternal twins” or “dizygotic” (from “two eggs”). In this case, both eggs from the mother are fertilized by different sperms. They can be different gender and have different genetically determined characteristics (e.g., eye color). They would share the same basic degree of genetic similarities as any two siblings born to the same parents. The final term (in this overview) concerns “concordance.” Concordance studies seek to discern the percentage of times a *matching of sexual orientation of twins*, especially identical twins, occurs. The general assumption is that a greater percentage of sexual orientation concordance in cases of increased genetic similarity may indicate a genetic cause for a homosexual orientation.

*Basic methods and conclusions.* People who conducted concordance studies searched for members of the gay community who were twins and investigated the sexual orientation of their siblings. They reported the following “concordance” rates, i.e., cases where both twins shared a homosexual orientation:<sup>13</sup>

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Identical twins	52%	48%
Fraternal twins	22%	16%
Non-twin siblings	9.2%	14%
Adoptive siblings	11%	6%

Here is what they actually found:

- 29 out of 56 identical twins where both brothers were gay (52%)
- 1 triplet trio where all three brothers were gay
- 27 identical twin pairs where one brother was gay and one was not (48%)
- 12 out of 54 fraternal twins where both brothers were gay (22%)
- 6 out of 57 of the adoptive brothers where both brothers were gay (11%).

Thus, Bailey and Pillard concluded that their study on identical and fraternal twins provides evidence of a genetic cause for homosexuality.

Problems with these two studies

Various scholars have critiqued the studies published by Bailey and his colleagues.<sup>14</sup> Here are a few of the problems that have been raised. In the first place,

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<sup>13</sup>Bailey and Pillard, “A Genetic Study of Male Sexual Orientation” 1089-96.

<sup>14</sup>Here are just a few of those critiques: Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000) 72-79; Stanton L. Jones and Alex W. Kwee, “Scientific Research, Homosexuality, and the Church's Moral Debate: An Update,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 24/4 (2005): 304-5; Neil and Briar

the fact that Bailey recruited his samples by advertising in popular homosexual media outlets in the greater Chicago area would make his sample less representative. It was not a random sampling. This preferential recruiting could have been avoided by placing the advertisements in periodicals intended for the general public.<sup>15</sup> Second, the concordance rate does not mean that, for example, 52% of the population of identical twins were gay. It means that out of the twins interviewed (recruited through popular homosexual media outlets), 52% was the concordance rate. Third, if homosexuality is genetically determined, why did only 52% of the *identical* twins share the same sexual orientation? How about the other 48% who differed in their sexual orientation? If a homosexual orientation had a fundamental or primary genetic or biological cause, one would expect a higher level of concordance. Notice some other life characteristics that various studies have identified as having a *heritability rate* of around 50%: extroversion, depression, criminality, alcoholism, religiosity, fundamentalism, and divorce.<sup>16</sup> Those do not derive from genetic factors primarily but have a strong connection to external factors. Fourth, one must keep in mind that “heritable” does not mean “directly inherited”. To some degree, almost every human characteristic has a heritability rate. However, few human behavioral traits are directly inherited as with physical features like height, eye color, and skin pigmentation. “Inherited” refers to something “directly determined by genes,” with little or no way of preventing or modifying the trait through a change in the environment.<sup>17</sup> The numbers offered by researchers concerning the genetic basis for homosexuality refer to a potential heritability rate rather than to an indication of direct inheritance.

#### Bailey's Australian study (2000)

Recognizing the limitation of his own sampling, Bailey and his colleagues accessed the Australian Twin Registry and sent surveys to every twin who had registered in that list.<sup>18</sup> Notice the difference in the results, compared to his previous study:

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Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It!* 135-47; Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 123-29.

<sup>15</sup>As the next section indicates, Bailey and his colleagues used a more representative sampling for their study in 2000.

<sup>16</sup>Neil and Briar Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It!* 158-59. The authors footnote each characteristic to reference a study that suggested that heritability rate.

<sup>17</sup>Jeffrey Satinover, “The Gay Gene?,” *The Journal of Human Sexuality* (1996), <http://www.leaderu.com/jhs/satinover.html> (accessed 9/2/2008).

<sup>18</sup>J. M. Bailey, M. P. Dunne, and N. G. Martin, “Genetic and Environmental Influences on Sexual Orientation and its Correlates in an Australian Twin Sample,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78/3 (2000):524-36.

	U.S. <b><u>Males</u></b>	Australian <b><u>Males</u></b>	U.S. <b><u>Females</u></b>	Australian <b><u>Females</u></b>
<b>Identical twins</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Fraternal twins</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Non-twin siblings	9.2%	N/A	14%	N/A
Adoptive siblings	11%	N/A	6%	N/A

Bailey himself admits that the results suggest that concordance rates from his previous studies reflected an inflated bias in the sample he had gathered.<sup>19</sup>

#### Summary

The newer findings call into question whether or not there is a *significant* genetic influence involved in the causation of homosexuality. This kind of evidence (twin studies) has been overemphasized by those who favor some biological basis for homosexuality. The conclusions of Bailey's first studies were trumpeted in secular and religious media as evidence that favors a biological cause for homosexuality. It is also true that the apparent unanimity on a biological cause for homosexuality is not an accurate portrayal of the scholarly consensus. Various scholars have firmly rejected the notion that biological or genetic factors serve as the primary or fundamental basis for sexual orientation.<sup>20</sup> Though this evidence does not rule out all genetic involvement, it clearly minimizes its impact as a fundamental cause of a person's sexual orientation.

In addition to the study of genetic similarity of twins with regard to homosexuality, scholars have also given attention to differences in brain structure as a potential evidence for "built-in" causation of homosexuality.

#### Differences in brain structure

Various studies have suggested that one specific brain area (the interstitial nucleus of the hypothalamus [area 3], i.e., INAH3) may be different in homosexuals and heterosexuals.<sup>21</sup> LeVay's inaugural study posited a connection between brain structure and sexual orientation, but two later studies seriously questioned the clarity of his findings.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 534.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. W. Byne and B. Parsons, "Human Sexual Orientation: The Biologic Theories Reappraised," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 50/3 (March 1993):228-39; Peter S. Bearman, "Opposite-Sex Twins and Adolescent Same-Sex Attraction," *American Journal of Sociology* 107/5 (March 2002):1183-88.

<sup>21</sup>For a comparison of conclusions of brain structure differences found in 6 studies (1985-2001), see the chart in Jones and Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research* 306.

Simon LeVay (1991)

LeVay claimed to have found conclusive proof that gay and straight men have distinct differences in brain structure. He discovered that a small area of the hypothalamus (INAH3) was smaller in gay men than in straight men (and was similar in size to that of women). Based on this evidence, LeVay concluded that there was only one reasonable conclusion: these brain differences were the *biological causes of sexual orientation*.<sup>22</sup>

In light of his article and the way pro-homosexual activists utilize LeVay's conclusions, one would think that his research provided very concrete support for this conclusion. However, at the end of the article, LeVay himself wrote that "the results do not allow one to decide if the size of INAH3 in an individual is the cause or consequence of that individual's sexual orientation" or whether it is the result of or the cause of a totally unrelated issue!<sup>23</sup>

William Byne (2001)

Byne and his colleagues revisited the issue of brain structure differences.<sup>24</sup> His study offered several corrections to LeVay's conclusions:

- INAH3 in women has a different number of neurons than men (heterosexual and homosexual), not primarily a different size or density. In other words, the INAH3 area in women is smaller, not because their neurons are smaller or more dense, but because they have fewer neurons.
- Heterosexual and homosexual males have comparable numbers of neurons.
- The volume or size of the INAH3 of homosexual males is between that of heterosexual males and heterosexual females—to a statistically nonsignificant degree.
- The slight difference in size of the INAH3 area between homosexual and heterosexual males is not proof of prenatal, biological determination of sexual orientation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Simon LeVay, "A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men," *Science* 253/5023 (August 30, 1991):1034-37.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 1036.

<sup>24</sup>W. Byne, and others, "The Interstitial Nuclei of the Human Anterior Hypothalamus: An Investigation of Variation with Sex, Sexual Orientation, and HIV Status," *Hormones and Behavior* 40/2 (2001):91. Cf. Jones and Kwee, "Scientific Research" 306-7.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

- Though some of the difference in size may have been influenced by prenatal hormones, those differences could also have been the result, rather than the cause of, sexual behavior and preference (as a result of postnatal experience).<sup>26</sup>

Byne's study concludes: "Sexual orientation cannot be reliably predicted on the basis of INAH3 volume alone."<sup>27</sup>

Savic, Berglund, and Lindstrom (2005)

These three Swedish scholars exposed 36 individuals (12 heterosexual males, 12 homosexual males, and 12 heterosexual females) to male and female pheromones (derivatives of testosterone and estrogen). Of the various findings of this study, two deserve mention. First of all, the male homosexuals and female heterosexuals responded most to the male pheromone and the male heterosexuals responded most to the female pheromones. Secondly, the changes measured in the way the hypothalamus processed these signals suggested that "our brain reacts differently to the two putative pheromones . . . and suggests a link between sexual orientation and hypothalamic neuronal process."<sup>28</sup> Here is the central point of this information—*changes in the hypothalamus at times are the result of sexual orientation and behavior rather than the cause of it.*

Many studies of this kind completed so far have generated inconsistent findings, failed to reproduce findings, and have been characterized by poor methodology.<sup>29</sup> Of course, the question about brain structure is whether it is the result or the cause of homosexual orientation and behavior. However, it seems quite clear that any reference to differences in brain structure as a reliable indicator of a genetic basis for homosexuality is not justified by the evidence. Because of space limitations, the other two potential genetic causalities (genetic scans and prenatal hormone exposure) are just referenced for completeness.

### Genetic scans/linkage

Various studies have attempted to examine the entire genetic structure as part of an attempt to find genetic causes for homosexuality. Dean Hamer,<sup>30</sup> his

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Byne, "Interstitial Nuclei" 91.

<sup>28</sup>Ivanka Savic, Hans Berglund, and Per Lindström, "Brain Response to Putative Pheromones in Homosexual Men," *Proceedings of the National Academies of Science* 102/20 (May 17, 2005):7356.

<sup>29</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 28.

<sup>30</sup>Dean H. Hamer, and others, "A Linkage between DNA Markers on the X Chromosome and Male Sexual Orientation," *Science* 261/5119 (July 16, 1993):321-27. Cf. Dean Hamer's book, *The Science of Desire: The Search for the Gay Gene and the Biology of Behavior* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

colleagues,<sup>31</sup> and Brian Mustanski<sup>32</sup> have led these past attempts to examine the entire genetic structure of homosexuals. They studied 40 pairs of homosexual brothers and allegedly identified an X-linked gene at position Xq28 that was associated with homosexuality (inherited from the mother to her homosexual son). Also various ongoing efforts continue this research. Under the direction of Alan Sanders, researchers at the Evanston Northwestern Healthcare Research Institute, Northwestern University, University of Chicago, and University of Illinois at Chicago are also searching for genes that influence male sexual orientation.<sup>33</sup>

Hamer and others performed a common type of behavioral genetics investigation called the "linkage study." In this kind of study, researchers identify a behavioral trait that runs in a family, look for a chromosomal variant in the genetic material of that family, and determine whether that variant is more frequent in family members who share the particular trait. To the average person, the identified "correlation" of a genetic structure with a behavioral trait signifies that this trait is "genetic," that is, something directly inherited. In fact, it means absolutely nothing of the sort, and it should be emphasized that virtually no human trait is without *a number of genetic connections*.<sup>34</sup>

How is one to evaluate the methodology employed in these studies? Various scientists from diverse disciplines have questioned the clarity and accuracy of the suggested findings from these genetic scans.<sup>35</sup> They have generally dismissed the idea that the Xq28 marker provides evidence of genetic causation for homosexuality. Hamer's results have never been reproduced. In fact, two subsequent studies of other homosexual brothers have since concluded that there is *no* evidence that male sexual orientation is influenced by an X-linked gene.<sup>36</sup> Ongoing research in this area is looking for numerous genetic markers that would evidence a genetic cause for homosexuality.

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<sup>31</sup>S. Hu, and others, "Linkage between Sexual Orientation and Chromosomes Xq28 in Males but not in Females," *Nature Genetics* 11:3 (November 1995):248-56.

<sup>32</sup>B. S. Mustanski, and others, "A Genomewide Scan of Male Sexual Orientation," *Human Genetics* 116/4 (2005):272-78.

<sup>33</sup>See Alan R. Sanders, "Molecular Genetic Study of Sexual Orientation," <http://www.gaybros.com> (accessed 9/2/2008).

<sup>34</sup>Jeffrey Satinover, "The Gay Gene?," *The Journal of Human Sexuality* (1996), <http://www.leaderu.com/jhs/satinover.html> (accessed 9/2/2008).

<sup>35</sup>Jones and Kwee, "Scientific Research" 305-6; Jones and Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research* 79-83; Ingrid Wickelgren, "Discovery of Gay Gene Questioned," *Science* 284/5414 (April 23, 1999):571; Bearman, "Opposite-Sex Twins" 1186.

<sup>36</sup>George Rice, and others, "Male Homosexuality: Absence of Linkage to Microsatellite Markers at Xq28," *Science* 284/5414 (April 23, 1999):665-67; J. M. Bailey, and others, "A Family History Study of Male Sexual Orientation Using Three Independent Samples," *Behavior Genetics* 29 (1999):79-86.

**Prenatal hormone exposure**

This approach draws on the studies of animal fetuses that have been injected prenatally with abnormal doses of sex hormones (which is not at all comparable to what homosexual men or women have experienced). It also considers studies of “animal homosexuality” that consider “gay fruit flies,” “gay penguins,” and “gay sheep.” Although some scholars have found these studies significant, they seem to overlook fundamental differences between human and animal sexuality.<sup>37</sup>

**Summary**

All of the above research did not “discover” a gay gene, although many have suggested that. However, these studies that suggested some biological cause for homosexuality significantly influenced public perceptions. As Yarhouse points out, “The more people believed that homosexuality was a biological ‘given,’ the more likely they were to support a variety of issues deemed important to some in the gay community (e.g., ordination of practicing gay, lesbian, or bisexual clergy; gay rights legislation, etc.).”<sup>38</sup>

**Nurture**

The other category of suggested causes for homosexuality, nurture, focuses on environmental or psychological factors. Theories under this heading focus on parent-child relationships and psychodynamic theory, i.e., the activity and interplay of the unconscious and conscious mental and emotional forces that determine personality and motivation.<sup>39</sup>

According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA):

There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian orientation. Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors. Many think that nature and nurture both play complex roles; most people experience little or no sense of

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<sup>37</sup>For a few examples of this approach along with critiques, see Jones and Kwee, “Scientific Research” 306-8; Bearman, “Opposite-Sex Twins” 1188-90; Jones and Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research* 61-65; Neil and Briar Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It!* 113-24.

<sup>38</sup>Mark A. Yarhouse, “Homosexuality, Ethics and Identity Synthesis,” *Christian Bioethics* 10 (2004):241.

<sup>39</sup>This definition is drawn from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “psychodynamics, n.,” <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 9/2/2008).

choice about their sexual orientation.<sup>40</sup>

Jones and Yarhouse affirm that current research concerning the cause of homosexuality is “decidedly inconclusive.”<sup>41</sup> They correctly conclude that one cannot point to genes alone, but that the cause draws on multiple and complex factors.<sup>42</sup>

#### **What if there is a “gay gene”?**

What if, at some point in time, scientists were able to present some concrete evidence that supported the concept of a “gay gene”? Al Mohler has addressed this question more than once on his well-known blog, [www.AlbertMohler.com](http://www.AlbertMohler.com). Here is a summary of some of his observations. In the first place, he would point out that the biblical understanding of the effects of sin would most certainly explain the corruption of the genetic code. Secondly, he would affirm that any genetic link for any sinful behavior indicates nothing about the moral status of that behavior. God’s verdict on homosexuality is determined in the Bible, not in any laboratory.

#### **Summary**

First of all, numerous scientists from various disciplines have and are working hard to demonstrate some fundamental or primary genetic or biological cause for homosexuality. Various homosexual activists speak and write as if a genetic cause for a homosexual orientation has been clearly established. Based on that alleged reality, they press for various kinds of civil rights protections since their lifestyle is not chosen or aberrant, but the result of the way they are “hard-wired” from birth. On the other hand, a number of homosexual activists have expressed concerns about finding a genetic cause for homosexuality. They suggest it could lead to prenatal testing and abortions to eliminate gay people<sup>43</sup> or could lead to attempts to correct genetic patterns. Secondly, based on the above genetic studies, *no clear evidence* confirms that genetic or biological factors provide the primary cause for a homosexual orientation. Finally, the above studies do not rule out any or all genetic or biological factors from the question of a homosexual orientation. The question is whether those features are determinative or could represent some kind of predisposition. As Jeffrey Satinover suggests, “A certain genetic constitution may make

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<sup>40</sup>American Psychological Association, “Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality,” <http://www.apa.org/topics/orientation.html#whatis> (accessed 9/2/2008).

<sup>41</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays* 29.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>For example, see Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation’s note about the recently inaugurated study of 1,000 pairs of brothers; “1,000 Pairs of Illinois Brothers Participate in ‘Gay Gene’ Research,” Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (October 30, 2007), [www.glaad.org/publications/archive\\_detail.php?id=4082&PHPSESSID=f](http://www.glaad.org/publications/archive_detail.php?id=4082&PHPSESSID=f) (accessed 9/2/2008).

homosexuality more readily available as an option, but it is not a cause of homosexuality.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Is It Possible for a Person to Change Sexual Orientation from Being Homosexual to Heterosexual?**

#### **What is a sexual orientation?**

As stated above, a simple definition of “sexual orientation” is “the directionality of a person’s sexual attraction” or “their sexual predispositions.”<sup>45</sup> However, the way one defines this expression varies widely among those who study and write about this issue. Broadly speaking, two metaphysical assumptions stand behind the way a person defines someone’s sexual orientation: “essentialism” and “constructionism.”

#### Essentialism

Proponents of this definition of sexual orientation argue that all types of sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual) represent “natural human kinds” that can be found throughout history and in other cultures. Generally, but not always, proponents of this view point to specific genetic or prenatal hormonal factors that lead to these differences in orientation.<sup>46</sup>

#### Constructionism

On the other hand, there are others who propose that sexual orientations are “social human kinds” and that distinctions made in contemporary culture about heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality reflect linguistic constructs that capture certain meanings about sexual behavior.<sup>47</sup> Most “constructionists” would lean toward external influences rather than genetic or biological features as the

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<sup>44</sup>Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* 114.

<sup>45</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 27. The APA offers this definition: “Sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person’s sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions” (American Psychological Association, “Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality” ([http://www.apa.org /topics/orientation.html#whatis](http://www.apa.org/topics/orientation.html#whatis) [accessed 9/2/2008]).

<sup>46</sup>Yarhouse, “Homosexuality, Ethics and Identity Synthesis” 242-43.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 243. From a constructionist’s perspective, sexual orientation could be compared to being a Republican or Democrat. These categories are not universal “givens” that cross all cultural and historical realms. Instead, they are understandings fashioned by our society as a way of accounting for political preferences, identity, and voting patterns.

primary cause for a person's sexual orientation.<sup>48</sup> An understanding of the definition of sexual orientation will clearly impact the possibility of change or "re-orientation."

### **The general consensus: the impossibility of "change"**

#### Before the 1970s

Prior to the 1970s, the majority position of the leading professionals in the mental health community was that homosexuality was a psychological disturbance of some kind that could be treated successfully, resulting in a change from a homosexual to a heterosexual orientation.<sup>49</sup>

#### Between the 1970s and 1990s

In these two decades, rapid and almost unanimous shift occurred in professional opinion concerning homosexuality. On the one hand, opposition to regarding it as a psychological disturbance grew. On the other hand, more and more mental health professionals became convinced that any attempt to produce a change in sexual orientation was unattainable and necessarily harmful.<sup>50</sup>

#### Current consensus

The current general consensus in the mental health profession is that reparation or reorientation therapy can get some gays to identify themselves as "heterosexual" and therefore "ex-gays," but few, if any, will report changes in sexual attraction, fantasy, and desire consistent with true changes in sexual orientation. They reject the notion of a change from a predominant homosexual orientation to a predominant heterosexual orientation.<sup>51</sup> For example, in 2000 the APA recommended that "ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals' sexual orientation, keeping in mind the medical dictum to first, do no harm."<sup>52</sup> A more recent APA publication affirms that all "major mental health organizations have officially expressed concerns about therapies promoted to modify sexual orientation. To date, no scientifically adequate research exists to show that therapy aimed at

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<sup>48</sup>Yarhouse ("Homosexuality, Ethics and Identity Synthesis" 243-46) is careful to point out that one should not confuse or equate the nature/nurture debate with the essentialist/constructionist debate. While his point is valid, the general correlation of these two debates seems to be appropriate at a basic level.

<sup>49</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 15.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>51</sup>Robert L. Spitzer, "Reply: Study Results Should Not Be Dismissed and Justify Further Research on the Efficacy of Sexual Reorientation Therapy," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32/5 (October 2003):472.

<sup>52</sup>"APA Reiterates Position On Reparative Therapies," *Psychiatric News* 36/13 (July 6, 2001):34.

changing sexual orientation (sometimes called reparative or conversion therapy) is safe or effective.”<sup>53</sup>

The basis for this thinking—the evidence versus the ideology

*The evidence, both secular and religious.* In their volume, *Ex-Gays*, Jones and Yarhouse provide an overview of psychotherapeutic change literature from the 1950s–1990s. Out of thirty studies, the percentage of positive outcomes, i.e., a change from homosexual to a heterosexual orientation varies from a low of 25% to a high of 82%.<sup>54</sup> Their review of “religiously mediated change literature” (including Spitzer’s study summarized below) also demonstrates the potential of a change in a person’s sexual orientation.<sup>55</sup>

What does the above evidence say and not say?<sup>56</sup> First of all, change from a homosexual orientation to a full or substantial heterosexual orientation is attainable by some individuals by a variety of means. Secondly, such a change is not easy and a high percentage of individuals may not make this change. Thirdly, change or modification of sexual orientation is not guaranteed for everyone who attempts such a change.

*The ideology.* Regardless of the evidence that seems to demonstrate clearly the possibility of change, the majority opinion throughout the world is that sexual orientation is immutable, i.e., cannot be changed. This bias without sufficient evidence draws on two primary sources. Advocates of the absolute immutability of a person’s sexual orientation, base their conclusion, first of all, on alleged biological causation. Richard Green argued that if homosexual orientation was solely biological in origin, any claim of orientation change through psychosocial means is ludicrous.<sup>57</sup> Green seems to ignore the fact that biological causation for homosexual orientation remains inconclusive. Scholars who ignore the ambiguity of the evidence and affirm that a person’s sexual orientation is immutable draw on alleged psychiatric evidence. In an influential article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Chandler Burr stated: “Five decades of psychiatric evidence demonstrates that homosexuality is immutable and nonpathological, and a growing body of more recent evidence implicates biology in

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<sup>53</sup>American Psychological Association, “Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality,” <http://www.apa.org/topics/orientation.html#whatis> (accessed 9/2/08). It is interesting to note that when Jones and Yarhouse (*Ex-Gays?* 16, cf. 388 n. 1) retrieved the APA answers brochure (4/2005), they found a much firmer statement: “Can therapy change sexual orientation? No. . . . [H]omosexuality . . . is not changeable.”

<sup>54</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 78-79, cf. 77-85, for an explanation of these charts.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 85-94.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>57</sup>Richard Green, “The Immutability of (homo)sexual Orientation: Behavioral Science Implications for a Constitutional (Legal) Analysis,” *Journal of Psychiatry and Law* 16/4 (1988):537-75.

the development of sexual orientation.”<sup>58</sup> This raises an important question. How does Chandler’s statement favoring immutability match the evidence summarized above, that demonstrated the sexual orientation could sometimes be changed? It is almost as if we must believe it because he said it.

#### Robert Spitzer—An Important Development

##### Spitzer’s study

Robert Spitzer<sup>59</sup> is a research psychiatrist who first gained prominence in 1973 when he lobbied the APA to remove the listing of homosexuality as a clinical disorder. In 2001 he addressed the APA and affirmed that whether through psychotherapeutic efforts or through ex-gay religious ministries (e.g., Exodus International), that homosexual men and women can and have changed to a heterosexual orientation.<sup>60</sup> Spitzer reported on interviews he conducted of 200 persons (143 males and 57 females) who had reported a change from homosexual to heterosexual orientation.<sup>61</sup> He interviewed only persons who experienced at least 5 years of some kind of change to a heterosexual orientation.<sup>62</sup> He asked each of these individuals 114 close-ended questions<sup>63</sup> and 60 more open-ended questions.<sup>64</sup> Almost all the questions focused on two time periods: the year before starting the therapy that led to their orientation change (PRE) and the year before the interview by Spitzer (POST).<sup>65</sup> The participants wanted not only to change their sexual orientation, but to function well heterosexually. 66% of the males and 44% of the females satisfied

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<sup>58</sup>Chandler Burr, “Homosexuality and Biology,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 271/3 (March 1993):65.

<sup>59</sup>According to an interview done by *Christianity Today*, Spitzer describes himself as a Jewish atheist, Douglas Leblanc, “Therapeutically Incorrect: Atheist Psychiatrist Argues That Gays Can Change,” *Christianity Today* 49:4 (April 20, 2005), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/april/20.94.html> (accessed 9/2/2008).

<sup>60</sup>Robert L. Spitzer, “Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation? 200 Participants Reporting a Change from Homosexual to Heterosexual Orientation,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32/5 (October 2003):403-17.

<sup>61</sup>Consequently, this sample of persons is called a “convenience sample” rather than a “representative sample.”

<sup>62</sup>Spitzer (“Change” 405) only included people in his study who had a significant homosexual attraction for many years (at least “60” on a scale of 0-100 [with 100 being exclusively homosexual]) and who had experienced a substantive change in orientation (at least 10 points).

<sup>63</sup>These involved either yes/no answers or a number on a defined numeric scale (e.g., 0–100 or 0–10).

<sup>64</sup>For example, one question asked, “What were the most important things you talked about in your therapy?”

<sup>65</sup>Spitzer, “Change” 406.

the criteria to be described as “good heterosexual functioning.”<sup>66</sup> About 90% of all respondents indicated that they were only slightly or not at all troubled by the intrusion of homosexual thoughts or feelings after they had finished their therapy and lived with this new sexual orientation for at least five years.<sup>67</sup>

#### **What does Spitzer’s study not say?**

He does not affirm that all homosexuals can change to a heterosexual orientation. He does not even suggest that all homosexuals should or need to do this. In an interview after his initial presentation of his data to the APA, he acknowledged that the results of his study “may help 5,000 people, but harm 500,000.”<sup>68</sup> He also is concerned that the Christian right might use his findings to strengthen their campaign to prevent gays and lesbians from gaining civil rights protections.<sup>69</sup>

#### **What does Spitzer’s study say?**

In contradiction to the near-unanimous consensus in the psychiatric community and pro-homosexual proponents, Spitzer carefully argues for the genuine possibility for a person to change from a homosexual to a heterosexual orientation without the danger of emotion or psychological risk. Not only did the pro-homosexual activists condemn Spitzer’s study,<sup>70</sup> but many of his colleagues expressed their horror at his conclusions.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 411.

<sup>67</sup>Another way of looking at these statistics is that about 69% of the respondents were bothered to some degree by homosexual feelings (slightly—58.5%, moderately—9.5%, moderately—1%) and 31.5% were not bothered at all (ibid., 410).

<sup>68</sup>Ken Hausman, “Furor Erupts Over Study On Sexual Orientation,” *Psychiatric News* 36/13 (July 6, 2001):20.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>For example, in a pro-homosexual booklet that condemns Dr. James Dobson on numerous fronts (Jeff Lutes, “A False Focus on My Family,” p. 11, [http://www.soulforce.org/pdf/false\\_focus.pdf](http://www.soulforce.org/pdf/false_focus.pdf) [accessed 9/2/2008]), the author quotes Spitzer, “For the vast majority it is not possible for them to change their sexual orientation.” [Change therapy] “may help 5,000 people, but harm 500,000.” They suggest that this is an indication that Spitzer’s study is flawed.

<sup>71</sup>A number of his colleagues attacked Spitzer’s ethics and professional credibility, even to the point of accusing him of violating the Nuremberg Code of medical ethics for reinforcing the stigmatization and mental suffering of gays and lesbians (see M. L. Wainberg, and others, “Science and the Nuremberg Code: A Question of Ethics and Harm,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32/5 [October 2003]:419-68). At the APA meeting where Spitzer presented his paper, the APA issued a press release emphasizing that the “APA maintains that there is no published scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of reparative therapy as a treatment to change one’s sexual orientation” (Hausman, “Furor” 20).

## Jones and Yarhouse—Another, More Recent, Development

Stanton Jones (Wheaton College) and Mark Yarhouse (Regent University) have written numerous essays, articles, and two books that deal with the issue of homosexuality, focusing on potential causes and whether a person can change sexual orientation. Their most recent book (2007), *Ex-Gays?: A Longitudinal Study of Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation*, revisits the issue addressed by Spitzer's 2001 article.

**What is Jones' and Yarhouse's focus?**

Their book reports on their research “on the possibility of change of homosexuality orientation via religiously mediated means.”<sup>72</sup> They seek to answer two simple questions. In the first place, is it *ever* possible for an individual who has a homosexual orientation to change that orientation via religious means (esp. as a result of a cluster of conservative religious ministries that focus on ministry to homosexuals [e.g., Exodus International])? Secondly, is the attempt to change harmful, as so many today claim?<sup>73</sup>

**How do they hope to accomplish this?**

Their key operating principle is the “Principle of Falsifiability.”<sup>74</sup> For example, while one cannot prove the universal claim that all crows are black, the discovery of even one crow that was not black would disprove the universal claim that all crows are black. For Jones and Yarhouse, here is the primary issue. They are investigating the claim, widely made today, that sexual orientation, homosexual orientation in particular, cannot be changed, that it is immutable.<sup>75</sup> They contend that “Compelling evidence that even one individual demonstrates fundamental change in sexual orientation will constitute an invalidation of the universal claim that sexual orientation change is impossible.”<sup>76</sup>

**What are Jones and Yarhouse not claiming?**

In the first place, they are not seeking to prove that *permanent, enduring change* has occurred in the people who participated in their study. That would require another very long-term study.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, regardless of how many of the

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<sup>72</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 15.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 16

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>77</sup>Jones and Yarhouse (*Ex-Gays?* 118) hope to follow their “sample” of 98 individuals over the coming years and pursue that issue further.

individuals included in this study demonstrate significant change, this study provides no conclusive evidence about what proportion of individuals can change. That is not an objective of their study.<sup>78</sup>

#### **Their methodology<sup>79</sup>**

They interviewed 98 individuals who had some affiliation with Exodus International, indicating some desire to change their sexual orientation. Phase 1 participants included 57 individuals who were involved in the change process for one year or less (at the beginning of the study). Phase 2 participants dealt with 41 individuals who were involved in the change process for between one and three years (at the beginning of the study). The interviews conducted by Jones and Yarhouse took place in three phases, generally separated by 12-18 months.

#### **Basic Conclusions**

Their qualitative analysis of sexual orientation outcomes fell into six categories:<sup>80</sup>

- **Success—conversion (15%):** The subject reports considerable resolution of homosexual orientation issues and substantial conversion to heterosexual attraction.
- **Success—chastity (23%):** The subject reports homosexual attraction is either missing or present only incidently and in a way that does not seem to bring about distress.
- **Continuing (29%):** The person may have experienced diminution of homosexual attraction, but is not satisfied and remains committed to the change process.
- **Nonresponse (15%):** The person has experienced no significant sexual orientation change. The subject has not given up on the change process, but may be confused or conflicted about which direction to turn next.
- **Failure—confused (4%):** The person has experienced no significant sexual orientation change and has given up on the change process but without yet embracing gay identity.
- **Failure—gay identity (8%):** The person has clearly given up on the change process and embraced gay identity.

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<sup>78</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 17-18. For them to answer the question of probability would require the authors to examine a scientifically representative sample of all persons who experience homosexual attraction.

<sup>79</sup>They explain their basic methodology in chapter four (*Ex-Gays?* 106-43).

<sup>80</sup>Jones and Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays?* 368-69.

Summary<sup>81</sup>

What Jones and Yarhouse did find was that change in sexual orientation can happen and that change in sexual orientation does not harm the participant who changes. However, what Jones and Yarhouse did not find was that not just anyone can or did change. The “conversions” were not necessarily from total homosexuality to total heterosexuality. There is no indication of the permanence of these changes (yet).

**How Have Homosexual Activists Impacted Modern Culture  
Throughout the World?**

Various ways are available to demonstrate the impact of homosexuality on today's culture, here in the United States as well as the rest of the world. The following section provides just a small cross-section of the imprint left by homosexual activism in today's world. There are *numerous* other examples of the way homosexual activists have made and are making a powerful impact on public education and the political process in the United States as well as on political realities in the world.

The Issue of Homophobia

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, homophobia signifies the “fear or hatred of homosexuals and homosexuality.”<sup>82</sup> However, different meanings have been assigned to this word. Although there are legitimate cases of homophobia, the modern use of the term has been expanded to take on social and political meanings. Gay advocates use it widely to refer to those who are hostile toward gay people and even those who disagree with the pro-gay perspective. They consider homophobic those who want to resolve their homosexual problems as well as therapists who try to help them. When working with this expanded definition, an important clarification would help. It is important to distinguish between prejudice or some kind of bias and homophobia. Those who disagree with the pro-homosexual agenda may also do it legitimately out of conviction, which is a strong belief. Those who object to homosexuality on religious or moral grounds do so out of conviction, not because of a phobia or prejudice. Unfortunately, this one word, homophobia, is used by different people in different settings with some very different meanings. It is rapidly becoming a “snarl” word like racism and sexism.

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 372-76.

<sup>82</sup>*Oxford English Dictionary*, “homophobia, n.,” <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 9/2/2008).

## Domestic Impact

**Hate crime legislation—H.R. 1592**

On May 3, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to expand the definition of hate-crimes to include violence motivated by perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.<sup>83</sup> This bill has not yet been voted on by the U.S. Senate or signed by the President.<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately, the bill presents a set of serious problems. This bill seems to set up a two-tiered justice system with a first-class and second-class set of victims. The existing hate-crime bill includes only non-behavioral characteristics (race, color, and national origin). According to recent FBI figures, hate crimes made up only 3% of violent crime in 2005. It is also interesting to note that 16% of those victims were attacked because of their religion and only 14% were attacked because of their sexual orientation.<sup>85</sup> Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the First Amendment Center, said that one could rightly interpret the bill as another step toward normalizing homosexuality.<sup>86</sup>

**The “Philly 5”**

On October 10, 2004, a group of 11 Christians was displaying banners with biblical messages and “preaching God’s Word” to a crowd of people attending the Philadelphia “OutFest” event. After a confrontation with a group called the Pink Angels, described by protesters as “a militant mob of homosexuals,” the Christians were arrested and spent a night in jail. Eight charges were filed: criminal conspiracy, possession of instruments of crime, reckless endangerment of another person, ethnic intimidation, riot, failure to disperse, disorderly conduct, and obstructing highways. None of the Pink Angels was cited or arrested.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Susan Wunderink with reporting by Collin Hansen, “House Adds Homosexuality to Hate-Crimes Protections,” *Christianity Today* 51 (May 2007, Web-only), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/mayweb-only/118-52.0.html> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>84</sup>As part of the defense bill that was proposed in November 2007, the House Democrats sought to add the hate crimes measure as part of the package. Eventually, they dropped that extension of hate crimes protection from the defense bill that the president eventually signed in December 2007, Sarah Pulliam, “Hate Crimes Bill Dropped,” *Christianity Today* 51 (December 2007, Web-only), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/decemberweb-only/150-12.0.html> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>85</sup>“Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders by Bias Motivation, 2005—Table 1,” Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Hate Crime Statistics 2005, <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hc2005/table1.htm> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>86</sup>Susan Wunderink with reporting by Collin Hansen, “House Adds Homosexuality to Hate-Crimes Protections,” *Christianity Today* 51 (May 2007, Web-only), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/mayweb-only/118-52.0.html> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>87</sup>Ron Strom, “Testing the Faith: ‘Philly 5’ Win 1 in Court,” *World Net Daily Exclusive* (Jan. 21, 2005), [http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=42492](http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=42492) (accessed 9/3/2008).

In mid-February, all the charges were dropped as well as the bail requirement that they stay at least 100 feet away from any homosexual gathering.

### **Reverse bias**

Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD) calls the state of Indiana's efforts to institute a strict anti-gay marriage law as an "anti-marriage equality movement."<sup>88</sup> Their public statement represents a reverse bias against marriage under the guise of "anti-marriage equality."

### **California's SB 777**

On October 12, 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 777<sup>89</sup> into law.<sup>90</sup> This bill deals primarily with what constitutes discrimination against homosexuals.<sup>91</sup> It changes numerous sections in the Education Code (EC). A key part of this bill mandates that ". . . a charter school shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, . . . and shall not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220."

#### The pre-SB 777 education code

In the Education Code before SB 777, under the section titled "Prohibited instruction or activity" (Section 51500), the code stated the following: "No teacher shall give instruction nor shall a school district sponsor any activity which reflects adversely upon persons because of their race, sex, color, creed, handicap, national origin, or ancestry."

#### The impact of SB 777

SB 777 changed existing Section 51500 of the EC by having it refer to amended EC Section 220. The resulting combination of Sections 51500 and 220 effectively imposes the following requirement on every public school: "No teacher

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<sup>88</sup>"Indiana's Anti-Marriage Equality Movement Halted," Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (January 26, 2008), [http://www.glaad.org/media/stw\\_detail.php?id=4197](http://www.glaad.org/media/stw_detail.php?id=4197) (accessed 9/2/2008).

<sup>89</sup>For an analysis of the bill before it was passed, see Roy Hansen, Jr., "SB 777—Private Schools & Private Home School," Private & Home Educators of California (February 4, 2008), <http://www.pheofca.org/SB777071017.pdf> (accessed 9/3/2008). Also, for a consideration of the bill that became law in January 2008 in California, see Roy Hansen, Jr., "SB 777—An Analysis," Private & Home Educators of California (February 4, 2008), <http://www.pheofca.org/SB777080124.pdf> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>90</sup>For those interested in reading this bill, see "Bill Number: SB 777," California Senate Records, [http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/sen/sb\\_0751-0800/sb\\_777\\_bill\\_20070223\\_introduced.html](http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/sen/sb_0751-0800/sb_777_bill_20070223_introduced.html) (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>91</sup>In this sentence, "homosexuality" serves as an abbreviated way to refer to the three categories of sexual orientation: "homosexuality," "bisexuality," and "transsexuality."

shall give instruction nor shall a school district sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias because of [one of the following characteristics: disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics].” Notice the comparison of these sections of SB 777 below:

Old 220: It is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their *sex, ethnic group identification, race, national origin, religion, mental or physical disability, or regardless of any actual or perceived* characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state. The purpose of this chapter is to prohibit acts which are contrary to that policy and to provide remedies therefor.

New 220: It is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their *disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other* characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state. The purpose of this chapter is to prohibit acts which are contrary to that policy and to provide remedies therefor.

Old 51500: No teacher shall give instruction nor shall a school district sponsor any activity which reflects adversely upon persons because of *their race, sex, color, creed, handicap, national origin, or ancestry*.

New 51500: No teacher shall give instruction nor shall a school district sponsor any activity *that* reflects adversely upon persons because of *a characteristic listed in Section 220*.

What does this new law mean?

Here is what seems to be the punchline: Under SB 777, public school teachers are prohibited from giving any instruction, for example, that would make it look like same-sex marriages or a homosexual lifestyle was wrong. This means that any instruction, which supports marriage between a man and a woman as the only legitimate or best arrangement for a family or for rearing children, could be considered an illegal discriminatory bias against homosexuals or bisexuals.<sup>92</sup> This Section 220 does not apply to any private school that “is controlled by a religious

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<sup>92</sup>Roy Hansen, Jr., “SB 777—An Analysis,” Private & Home Educators of California (February 4, 2008), <http://www.pheofca.org/SB777080124.pdf> (accessed 9/3/2008).

organization if the application would not be consistent with the religious tenets of that organization<sup>93</sup> or to home schools.

#### Church Involvement or Non-Involvement in the Issue

##### **Emerging church**

Notice the statements by Brian McLaren on his blog for *Christianity Today* as relates to the relevance and clarity of the Bible concerning homosexuality:

Frankly, many of us don't know what we should think about homosexuality. We've heard all sides but no position has yet won our confidence so that we can say "it seems good to the Holy Spirit and us." That alienates us from both the liberals and conservatives who seem to know exactly what we should think.

If we think that there may actually be a legitimate context for some homosexual relationships, we know that the biblical arguments are nuanced and multilayered, and the pastoral ramifications are staggeringly complex. We aren't sure if or where lines are to be drawn, nor do we know how to enforce with fairness whatever lines are drawn.

Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements. In the meantime, we'll practice prayerful Christian dialogue, listening respectfully, disagreeing agreeably.

When decisions need to be made, they'll be admittedly provisional. We'll keep our ears attuned to scholars in biblical studies, theology, ethics, psychology, genetics, sociology, and related fields.<sup>94</sup>

##### **Will we risk arrest if needed or not?**

In one of his blog entries in September 2006, Mohler referred to Joel Osteen, pastor of Houston's Lakewood Church, concerning his statements concerning homosexuality. When asked what he thought of gay marriage (during his visit to Massachusetts, the first state to make them legal), Osteen responded: "I don't think it's God's best. . . . I never feel like homosexuality is God's best." When pressed on the issue, Osteen said, "I don't feel like that's my thrust . . . you know, some of the issues that divide us, and I'm here to let people know that God is for them and he's on their side."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Roy Hansen, Jr., "SB 777—Private Schools & Private Home School," Private & Home Educators of California (February 4, 2008), <http://www.pheofca.org/SB777071017.pdf> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>94</sup>Brian McLaren, "Brian McLaren on the Homosexual Question: Finding a Pastoral Response," *Out of Ur: Following God's Call in a New World—Leadership Journal Blog* (January 23, 2006), [http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/01/brian\\_mclaren\\_o.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/01/brian_mclaren_o.html) (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>95</sup>Albert Mohler, "Meanwhile, In No Apparent Danger of Arrest," [http://www.albertmohler.com/blog\\_read.php?id=766](http://www.albertmohler.com/blog_read.php?id=766) (accessed 9/3/2008).

Mohler contrasted Osteen's evasive non-answer to that fact that Stephen Green was recently arrested in Great Britain for passing out pamphlets that included Bible verses clearly declaring homosexuality to be a sin.<sup>96</sup> Christians in many parts of the world now risk arrest for declaring openly what the Bible clearly teaches. Mohler makes the point that Osteen's answer "will put him at very little risk for arrest. But then, pandering prophets are rarely at much of a risk from the public anyway."<sup>97</sup>

### Helpful resource

Daniel Heimbach provides a listing of religious statements on sexual morality from various mainline denominations.<sup>98</sup>

### International Impact

#### Canada's Bill C-250 (May 2004)

In Canada, "homophobia" is already illegal. Homosexual activist Member of Parliament Svend Robinson worked for 10 years to get Bill C-250, a private members bill (which almost never get passed into law) through parliament (equivalent to the US House of Representatives). The bill added "sexual orientation" to the pre-existing hate crimes and genocide bills. Opponents of the bill argued that sexual orientation was not fully defined, and existing legislation already offered legal protection. Their protests fell on deaf ears. Passages of the Bible condemning homosexuality, in Leviticus and Romans, have been declared akin to "hate literature" by a judge in Saskatchewan.<sup>99</sup>

#### The arrest of a Swedish pastor for preaching against homosexuality (2005)

Åke Green is a Pentecostal Christian pastor who was sentenced to one month in prison under Sweden's law against hate speech. On February 11, 2005 an appeals court, overturned the decision and acquitted him. However, on March 9, the Prosecutor-General appealed this decision to the Supreme Court, which on November 29 also acquitted him. In their opinion, while Green had violated Swedish law as it currently stands, a conviction would most likely be overturned by the European Court

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<sup>96</sup>Albert Mohler, "The Criminalizing of Christianity in Great Britain," [http://www.albertmohler.com/blog\\_read.php?id=768](http://www.albertmohler.com/blog_read.php?id=768).

<sup>97</sup>Albert Mohler, "Meanwhile, In No Apparent Danger of Arrest," [http://www.albertmohler.com/blog\\_read.php?id=766](http://www.albertmohler.com/blog_read.php?id=766).

<sup>98</sup>Daniel R. Heimbach, *True Sexual Morality: Recovering Biblical Standards for a Culture in Crisis* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2004) 375-449.

<sup>99</sup>"European Union Seeks To Expand Gay Rights, Penalize Dissenting Viewpoints," *National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality* (February 3, 2006), <http://www.narth.com/docs/criminalize.html> (accessed 9/2/2008).

of Human Rights, based on their previous rulings regarding Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.<sup>100</sup>

In 2002, the Swedish parliament included references to sexual orientation in a list of groups protected against persecution in the form of threats and expressions of disdain. The list appears in a section of Swedish criminal law (*Brottsbalken*) known as The Act on Persecution of Minority Groups (*Lagen om hets mot folkgrupp*).<sup>101</sup>

#### **The expansion of gay rights in the European Union (February 2006)**

Leaders in the European Union (EU) have passed a resolution stating that “homophobia” is a social evil and an irrational fear of homosexuals. The “Homophobia in Europe” resolution compares homophobia to racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and sexism” and calls for its criminalization. The leader of this effort is Franco Frattini, the justice minister of the EU. He stated: “Homophobia is a violation of human rights and we are watching member states on this issue and reporting on cases in which our efforts have been unsuccessful.” The resolution warns that any refusal to grant homosexuals same-sex marriage status will be considered a crime of homophobia.<sup>102</sup>

#### **The decision of the UN Economic and Social Council (December 28, 2006)**

At the end of 2006, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) granted official status to three European homosexual organizations as well as the International Lesbian and Gay Federation (ILGA).<sup>103</sup> After previously voting against this coveted status for such groups, the Bush administration’s representative has now voted for it. As reported by the UN watchdog organization, Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute (C-FAM), the U.S. vote to approve accreditation for the three groups prompted an unnamed UN representative from another nation to comment: “While the Bush administration has been solid on life issues, it seems irrational to me

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<sup>100</sup>“Åke Green cleared over gay sermon,” *The Local: Sweden's News in English*, (November 29, 2005), <http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=2590&print=true> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>101</sup>“Åke Green,” *Answers.com*, <http://www.answers.com/topic/ke-green> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>102</sup>“European Union Seeks To Expand Gay Rights, Penalize Dissenting Viewpoints” (February 3, 2006), *National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality*, <http://www.narth.com/docs/criminalize.html> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>103</sup>ILGA has a history of association with the world’s leading organizational advocate of pedophilia, the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). The relationship between ILGA and NAMBLA had led to UN rejection of the group in the past. Now claiming to have broken its ties to NAMBLA, ILGA nevertheless refuses to condemn man-child sex.

that they insist on favoring gay groups that clearly seek to undermine marriage and the family.”<sup>104</sup>

#### **The decision of various European cities (October 30, 2007)**

The government of Catalonia, Spain, joined ILGA (joining the European cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Venice). The Catalanian organization called “E-Christians” wrote that “the ILGA is a pressure group, an international political lobby, that has as its objective the construction of a homosexual society. . . . Their political agenda has the intention of eliminating the natural differentiation of humanity between men and women for another based on the differentiation of heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgenders, etc.”<sup>105</sup>

The primary agenda of the ILGA is to establish homosexual sex acts as a “human right,” something no binding UN document has ever done. To this end, it is a promoter of the “Yogyakarta Principles,” a gay-rights declaration drafted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia earlier this year by several members and ex-members of United Nations “human rights” bodies and other international organizations.<sup>106</sup>

#### **Potential government control of private and home schools over “homophobia”**

Gay activist groups in Ontario are urging the provincial ministry of education to exert more control over private and home schools to fight against the alleged effects of homophobia.<sup>107</sup>

### **Summary**

In this article I have sought to consider three primary issues which I present as three questions. Here are the general conclusions:

First of all, is there a “gay gene”? Science has in no fashion clearly demonstrated a fundamental or primary genetic cause for homosexuality. That does not mean that genetics has nothing to do with homosexual desires and behavior.

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<sup>104</sup>John F. McManus, “Homosexual Groups Win UN Acceptance With U.S. Approval,” *The John Birch Society: Standing for Family and Freedom* (December 28, 2006), <http://www.jbs.org/index.php/jbs-news-feed/763-homosexual-groups-win-un-acceptance-with-us-approval> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>105</sup>Matthew Cullinan Hoffman, “Government of Catalonia Joins International Homosexual Organization Associated with Pedophilia: Outraged Catalonians Denounce Decision as Immoral and Unjust,” *LifeSiteNews.com* (October 30, 2007), <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2007/oct/07103009.html> (accessed 9/3/2008).

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup>“Canadian Gays Urge More Government Control Of Private and Home Schools Over ‘Homophobia’” (February 8, 2008), *National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality*, <http://www.narth.com/docs/morecontrol.html> (accessed 9/2/2008).

However, any genetic factor does not determine that a person has a homosexual orientation, hence making it acceptable and moral. God's Word is the primary source for what we believe about homosexuality.

Secondly, is it possible for a person to change sexual orientation from being homosexual to heterosexual? Yes, various studies demonstrated that there was a potential for sex-orientation change, especially in religious settings that focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ. The general consensus that a homosexual orientation is immutable is an ideological statement that does not draw on numerous lines of evidence.

Finally, how have homosexual activists impacted modern culture throughout the world? Sadly, homosexual activists have impacted all parts of the world with an influence that greatly surpasses their numbers.

**Appendix: a selection of gay/homosexual activist organizations:**

ACLU Gay & Lesbian Rights Project  
Equality Federation  
GLAD—Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders  
GLAAD—Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation  
GLMA—Gay and Lesbian Medical Association  
GLSEN—Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network  
Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute  
Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund  
Gay Yellow Pages  
HRC—Human Rights Campaign  
IGLHRC—International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission  
GLAAD—Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation  
HRC—Human Rights Campaign  
ILGA—International Lesbian and Gay Association  
LLDEF—Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund  
NCLR—National Center for Lesbian Rights  
NGLTF—National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
NAMBLA—North American Man/Boy Love Association  
NGLTF—National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
Other Sheep—"Multicultural ministries with sexual minorities"; Member of ILGA  
PFLAG—Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
Rainbow Wedding Network  
SIECUS—Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States