

Ben:

As per your question on 2/28...

*When (I think it is when and not if) science is able to show that there are many degrees of sexuality within the human genome as there are eye colors, how will the church handle this information? If a gay or transgender person is truly born that way, then God made them that way. How can it be an abomination to Him? How can it be a sin? How can The Word be inerrant?*

PROLEGOMENA

I have put off writing my response for a while; I have, however, been thinking seriously and deeply about it for several days. Your question has several important elements which need to be clarified first. Among them are:

1. "Degrees of sexuality" is a problematic construct for me. Human sexuality is especially complex because we know from prima facie evidence that human sexuality is *more* than biology. Powerful cultural factors affect and effect human sexuality. While hormones (e.g., testosterone) create multiple levels of "masculine" effects in *both* genders, and multiple levels (e.g., estrogen) create multiple levels of "feminine" effects in *both* genders, *socially* powerful factors often diminish the apparent effects of said hormones. For example, skirts in some cultures are the ultimate feminine garb, whereas Turk's swirling skirts are an icon of masculinity. Social factors contribute as much to genderization<sup>1</sup> as biological factors. But it's even more complex...



Feminism and masculinity are not opposite poles on one continuum; they are two distinctive, albeit correlated, continua which all people possess. Coming to grips with the power cultural and biological factors affecting and effecting genderization is key to understanding our responses to atypical gender identification.

2. Using the phrase "...a gay or transgender person..." may suggest the two types of genderization are equivalent. To be clear, over-whelming evidence supports the biological antecedents for transgender identification. Specifically, 1-2.5 births per thousand involve the child being born with both sexual organ sets or external organs of one sex and internal organs of the other. Transgender people have some serious biological challenges to

---

<sup>1</sup>"Genderization" is a word I thought I made up for this article. Someone has already coined it, apparently (by the Unilever marketers for *Axe* and *Degree*). Regardless, I am using genderization here to reflect how we become identified as "male"—"female" **and** "man"—"woman." Genderization is more than a static biological and/or social assignment. The gender of a person is a dynamic, complex, systemic, and cauffective process. That is, the process factors comprising genderization are continually moving, multi-variate, highly interactive and cauffective. "Cauffective" is a construct I developed in the early nineties to describe phenomena where what is "cause" and what is "effect" is either indeterminate, or irrelevant. In this scenario consider, does the presence of upper body strength cause one to feel masculine, or does feeling masculine reinforce building upper body strength?

See more about "cauffective" in *A Cauffective Model of Interpersonal Sequencing: An Ontologically Based Conception of Communication*, Interpersonal Communication Division, International Communication Association, Dublin, Ireland, 1990; with K.N. Cissna.

overcome. Equating their condition to what the Bible says about homosexuality is not only incorrect, but unethical.

Transgender people are a challenge—they evoke deep fears of our identity's legitimacy. They violate all kinds of social norms, and we too often equate their gender identity issues with sexual problems like pornography or pedophilia. Differences scare us. Fear betrays us. And, it does not speak well for the cause of Christ Jesus when we are bone-headedly cruel to transgender people.

3. "God made them that way" is a dangerous allegation and stance. There are lots of biological anomalies which are derived from human abuse of the ecology, use of toxins, to say nothing of aberrant weapons of war. Attributing cause and/or blame to the Lord God is problematic, if not wrong, empirically and ethically.

We also know some people are "born that way" when it comes to addiction; some genetic groups have propensities to become more easily addicted to alcohol and other drugs. God did indeed "make them that way." But, it is not a sin to be an alcoholic. The Lord God does not want His creation to get drunk, to become dependent on alcohol and other drugs. Correspondingly, we are not sinning if born a homosexual. The Bible only speaks against homosexual acts.

4. "How can The Word be inerrant?" is a troubling question, given the antecedents to the question. The "inerrancy" of Scripture is a bedrock of systematic theology for the Christian. Unfortunately, we Christians think we have a lock on "inerrancy;" to wit, what **we** think Scripture says is really what we mean by "inerrant." Here are my thoughts on the issue (from another article) so you'll understand, hopefully more clearly, my epistemological foundations as I answer your questions—

The Bible was compiled to meet the human need for some degree of certainty, especially in times of chaos, dire doubt and the mere need for simplicity. We humans, however, take almost any attempt at theory development and make it more complicated than it is, or pretend we have perfect data. Conversely, our need for simplicity is too often satisfied by deifying the simplistic.

The reality of the Bible is that it is a complex, systemic and dynamic compendium of the thoughts and aspirations of many women and men. These people have encountered Deity in their lives and were inspired, presumably by Deity, to "put it down in words."

Like many endeavors to develop viable theories, those who trust Bible text for truth assume (aka have "faith") that Deity is, Deity will reveal him/herself, and being Deity, will do so perfectly. No sentient believer believes our understanding of Truth (aka Deity) is any more than truth. Our perceptions of Truth are just that, perceptions of truth. We only assume Deity has revealed perfectly, not our understanding of same.

All bodies of knowledge begin with assumptions. In fact, much of science and theology's assumptions are non-falsifiable. Thus, the human quest to understand continues to struggle. That struggle is good, but not necessarily pleasant. Assumptions help heuristically and formatively nonetheless.

So? At the least, the Bible is an heuristic tool useful for understanding Deity. At the best, the Bible is Deity revealed by Deity through human eyes and ears. The Bible is not Deity, nor should it be worshipped as such. It is, however, like nature, science, archaeology, and history: a great source of revealing knowledge about Deity.

## NOW TO THE QUESTIONS AT HAND...

The nature of “sin” is too often confused with breaking laws or violating norms or being immoral. Sin is much more serious. When sin is equated with violating a law, we excuse such law breaking all too easily. Few feel guilty when speeding, unless the police pull us over. Few seriously worry about fudging numbers for our tax return. Unfortunately, when we treat sin as law breaking, we treat violation of the Lord God’s commandments as if they were a traffic ordinance or an IRS code prescription.

When we equate sin with immorality, we excuse immorality—as long as it “does not hurt someone else.” Immoral acts become mere violations of social convention, mere anomalies to polite behavior. Sin is much more serious.

Sin is anything that separates us from the Lord our God. God wants His creation close; any parent understands the need for closeness. But, the Lord God knows imperfection will create chasms of relational angst. We have trouble loving the child who abhors us, who ignores us, who denies our existence. Trinity made us in Their image if for no other reason than we would understand Deity’s angst when we worship “another.”<sup>2</sup> Or, when we murder someone.<sup>3</sup> Or, when we commit adultery.<sup>4</sup>

Does homosexuality behavior separate us from the Lord our God? Of course it can, just as heterosexuality can. When our need to be stimulated and loved supersedes our need to be close to the Creator, it separates us with the false impression we’re close, loved, affirmed. This was the

---

<sup>2</sup>If Deity is truly deity, there is but one. Asserting the existence of multiple deities is too useful to be True. Having lots of deities gives a believer alternatives in case one deity fails—she/he can turn to another for satisfaction. And, we humans will make up deities to satisfy our needs.

Deity in the Decalogue warns human to avoid that problem at the very start. Of course, most humans don't like having only one deity. Our actual worship behavior, especially by monotheists, however, shows we naturally gravitate to worshipping not Deity but wealth, status, ourselves, affirmation from others, etc. At least atheists are honest: they don't pretend to worship Deity.

Back to believers, then, it makes sense, pragmatically and spiritually, to place the 1st commandment first in the Decalogue. If we can focus our *raison d'être* on Deity and Deity alone, our predisposition to create deities will be more easily suppressed.

<sup>3</sup>If we were to judge human by its predilection to murder other humans, to say nothing of other species, we could easily conclude human has an obsession with suicide. Deity challenges that predisposition.

Yet, we murder, excusing it as killing in self-defense, or killing for justice, or killing to punish, or killing to eat. At least non-human species normally eat what they kill. And humans? We justify murdering other humans by calling them “animals” or “kikes” or “gooks” or “niggers” or simply “godless.”

Assuming Deity created human and/or allowed human to evolve, why was such predilection permitted? Welcome to just one of the great anomalies of human; we are indeed a curious species. Perhaps Deity wishes us to rise above our biological heritage and/or rise toward a more socially beneficent existence. Either way, murder is stupid. Deity is smart for challenging its practice.

<sup>4</sup>Counter-intuitively, our biological heritage seems to seek genetic and social diversity; i.e., adultery. Our ability to be faithful to spouse, family, country, and/or ideals fails often, too often. Children suffer, hearts break, and countries dissolve.

Deity, thus, has challenged human to be true to the vows we take. Nothing shakes foundations more than failing to defend vows to protect a constitution, a legal contract, an ethical ideal, or a child who we’ve brought into the world.

man's fault in the garden; he chose his relational affirmation with the woman over the Lord God. Instead of helping her fight the temptation by protecting her, he separated himself from the Lord God—he worshipped the relationship.

The real problem with homosexuals is many are good people: people we like to be around, people we find admirable—solid citizens as it were. And, when those homosexuals become good friends, it gets worse for the Christian believer. After all, the Scripture is clear—homosexual acts separate us from the Creator. But the really horrific test of our Christianity comes when that homosexual is a believer—they trust the Christ, they are faithful to their partner, they revere the Lord God and pray for His will to be accomplished, and they look forward to living eternally with Him. It challenges our confidence.

Confidence is the real challenge of homosexuality. If we remember that all are born and socialized on **two** continua—male and female, then all people, when they're honest with themselves, will find people of their same gender attractive. It gets tough. Denial of one's masculinity or femininity creates angst of the highest order. We overcompensate. We denigrate. We hate. We imprison. And... we make homosexuality a "serious" sin, more serious than obesity, drunkenness, divorce, gossip, adultery, etc. Oh the human need to feel superior to those "others" in our life. Holy Spirit-led self confidence is the real solution to our angst regarding homosexuality.

Jesus the Christ was superior to us all. Yet, He ate with the sinners. He socialized with the woman with demons. He touched the leper. He forgave the adulterer. He forgave—and us? We point fingers as if we were the judge of all that's pure and holy. Nothing interferes with the cause of Christ more than such judging. James (4:11-12) said it well...

*Do not speak against one another, brothers and sisters. He who speaks against a fellow believer or judges a fellow believer speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but its judge.*

*But there is only one who is lawgiver and judge – the one who is able to save and destroy. On the other hand, who are you to judge your neighbor?*

---

I can think of no greater insult to the King of kings than acting as if we were He. May the Lord God forgive us for our hubris.

---

The Scripture makes it clear that women are not to be appointed elders/pastors/deacons. I don't like that, especially with three daughters—two of whom have expressed aspirations in that direction. But what I don't like doesn't matter. Yet, the Scriptures praise women for the likes of teaching an elder (Timothy), praise women for preaching/teaching (as long as their head is covered), and for supporting the Christ when He was on earth ministering to us all. Nonetheless, they're barred from these church offices, yet encouraged to fulfill much of what elders/pastors/deacons actually do—minister, preach, support, etc.

And apparently so it is with homosexuality—the Lord God has revealed in Scripture that homosexual acts separate us from Him. I don't like that, especially with believing gay friends, but what I don't like doesn't matter. I'll ask Him when I leave this plane of existence.

I apologize for not answering your question—*“How can it be an abomination to Him? How can it be a sin?”* I simply do not know, now. I do know now, however, it is an abomination for us to:

1. Treat homosexuals for whom the Christ died as if they were lepers.
2. Avoid gays as if they had a communicable disease.
3. Discriminate against them as if they were evil.
4. Place homosexuality on some higher, extra-evil point on the sin continuum as if we were the Lord God.

Why such a harsh list? A personal story. When I was serving in the Dean's office at USF, I became quite good friends with another woman in the office. Fortunately, she was gay; she was no threat to Mary Ellen. It was a great friendship because we shared a lot of common beliefs about education, people, the Lord—we had a great affinity for each other. One day, she indicated she was looking for a church home. I wanted to recommend Carrollwood. I could not. My heart sunk. It still hurts.

