

A Hermeneutic of Paul's Theology of  
Homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27

by  
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In my profession as a marriage and family therapist there exists a half-century of revisionism in relation to the issue of homosexuality. As I was finishing my last year of graduate school in 1994 the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) was published without including any reference to homosexuality as an aberrant behavior.<sup>1</sup> Since that time a push has been made to mainstream this behavior and to even discredit professionals who might suggest otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

It is primarily because such an upheaval is taking place in the therapeutic community that the subject of homosexuality is being pushed to the forefront in conservative theological circles.<sup>3</sup> The influence of our contemporary culture begs us to reexamine long held beliefs

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<sup>1</sup>American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV*, 4 ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The first edition of this manual, published in 1952 listed homosexuality along with transvestism, pedophilia, fetishism, and sexual sadism under the heading "Sociopathic Personality Disturbance".

<sup>2</sup>The American Psychological Association, American Medical Association, American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and American Counseling Association each recognize sexual orientation as a normal variant of human sexuality.

<sup>3</sup>In the Stone-Campbell movement, John Rumble, a former Professor of New Testament at Johnson Bible College in Knoxville, Tennessee hosts a website, [www.outofcontext.us](http://www.outofcontext.us), with the stated mission to work for "full inclusion of gay people in the Body of Christ".

on this subject. Moreover, it is in the conflicting views concerning the theological usefulness of the present culture that one can observe the developing lines of division concerning homosexuality in the church.

Following a very similar timeline a comparable revision has begun to take place in Scripture among some<sup>4</sup> and one particular battleground is found in Romans 1:26-27. This paper will examine the traditionally held view of this passage as well as the more recent understandings of those who seek to slant this pericope for their agenda as they interact with modern scientific hypotheses on homosexuality.

The conflict over the meaning of this passage includes but is not limited to: an understanding of the cultural context in which the apostle Paul was writing, how one's theological tradition might relate to scientific findings,

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<sup>4</sup>Derrick Sherwin Bailey's Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition, published in 1955, was a pioneering work. His book paved the way for decriminalization of homosexuality in the United Kingdom. Bailey's work was the first sponsored by an ecclesiastical body in the twentieth century that provided extensive coverage of the issue of homosexuality. Bailey's attention is drawn primarily to the issue of "Sodomy". He queries whether the traditional interpretation of homosexuality is in view or whether the Hebrew word - *yādhā'* - literally translated "to know" could suggest that hospitality traditions were violated. "The association of homosexual practices in the story of Sodom is a late and extrinsic feature which for some reason has been read into the account" (p.8). This is untenable if one does not dismiss Jude 7 as does Bailey.

and linguistic arguments. This paper will address these concerns and how this relates to the ethical behavior to which we are called today.

In the debate between those who present a biblical view of human sexuality and those who would replace that with the humanistic worldview of the last several decades, Romans 1 takes center stage. Among the several passages that seemingly prohibit engaging in homosexual activity this may be the most obvious condemnation of them all.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their **women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones**. In the same way the **men also abandoned natural relations with women** and were inflamed with lust for one another. **Men committed indecent acts with other men**, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion (Rom. 1:26-27).<sup>5</sup>

Unique to this paragraph is Paul's discussion of women. Female homoerotic practice is not addressed elsewhere in Scripture. The plain sense of this passage, "women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones," seems to be the one exception. Rendered "natural relations" in the above translation, a literal reading would be "natural use".

Some scholars would consider it anachronistic for the modern reader to impose a lesbian reading on this sentence

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<sup>5</sup>All Scripture citations are from the New International Version.

or a prohibition on homosexuality in the pericope under examination. The revisionist would remark that homosexual or heterosexual orientation is a non-issue to the first century culture.<sup>6</sup> In fact the word homosexual,

did not enter the English vocabulary until the early twentieth century. The word, and with it the concept of lifelong primary sexual orientation toward members of one's own gender, was unacknowledged and probably unknown in the biblical world.<sup>7</sup>

The concern is the passion of the ones having sex not the gender. Fredrickson justifies this argument as he scrutinizes the word  $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\nu$  translated "use" or "relations".<sup>8</sup> Instead of the traditional exegete's position alluding to lesbianism in verse 26 when translated in English as "relations", Fredrickson finds the literal translation of "use" more suitable as he reports historical

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<sup>6</sup>Robin Scroggs, The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 18.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas E. Schmidt, "Homosexuality," in Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 351.

<sup>8</sup>David E. Fredrickson, "Natural and Unnatural Use in Romans 1:24-27: Paul and the Philosophic Critique of Eros" in Homosexuality, Science, and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture, ed. David L. Balch (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 199.

evidence for sexual desire to be analogous to physical hunger.<sup>9</sup>

This line of argumentation notes that the word *χρήσι ν* or “use” is not about the gender involved but instead emphasizes the manner in which the object of sexual desire is used. This reflects an understanding that Paul is interacting with contemporary Stoic thought that emphasized self-control. *χρήσι ν* is used in Stoic thought in reference to food and sexual desire with the admonition to live in moderation.<sup>10</sup>

Following the same line of argumentation is the application of the identical term “natural use” - *Φυσι κήν χρήσι ς* - which is defined by Seneca as an “avoidance of luxury and the control of passion”.<sup>11</sup> “Natural” is that which is consensual according to this train of thought. According to Scroggs comprehensive work on this issue homoeroticism flourished in this era because of the male-oriented subcultures in the educational and political

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 200.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 204. Fredrickson makes reference to several Stoic documents emphasizing the need to self-regulate one’s passion.

<sup>11</sup>Seneca On the Happy Life 17.2.

circles.<sup>12</sup> In this culture consensual homoerotic activity was deemed natural as long as it was consensual.

As revisionists continue to see Paul interacting with his contemporary culture, they observe him to be condemning behavior that is "unnatural" as that which is non-consensual or driven by passionate desire beyond the "natural use" of sexual activity - to procreate. The sort of sexuality that was not mutual but hierarchical in this understanding would be the common practice of pederasty - literally a lover of boys.

In a world where little contact was made with females in social and political settings the chosen partner to a male was often a young boy.<sup>13</sup> Sexual activity between men and boys was an act of dominance by the man over the passive boy and not considered homosexual as the men

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<sup>12</sup>The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate, 141.

<sup>13</sup>Abraham Smith, "The New Testament and Homosexuality," Quarterly Review 11 (Winter 1991): 19.

maintained heterosexual relationships and raised children.<sup>14</sup>

Revisionism argues that the unnatural acts condemned by Paul are those that represent sexual dominance or violence over another individual. The pederast gives in to his passions and "uses" another passive individual to meet his own sexual desires.

Perhaps this is not a discussion of sexuality at all. Conservative scholars might agree that Paul is speaking to a much larger issue. Revisionists would run with this and add that Paul isn't condemning consensual sexual activity at all but is instead focused on the larger problem of idolatry. These idolatrous people in the larger context of Romans 1 have taken specific steps to deny the existence of God. So, Paul is concerned about the influence of paganism and specifically its sexual practices. One is not idolatrous because of homosexuality but engages in

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<sup>14</sup>As an interesting side note an examination of English translations of the Quaran reveals two possible references to pederasty in Surah 52:24 and Surah 76:19. This is seemingly considered as something other than homosexual activity. An image of a Molla - a Muslim cleric - kissing a young boy on the mouth suggestive of such a relationship is available at <http://bp1.blogger.com/59Lg2x61JQ/R09VYYtz6jI/AAAAAAAAAJI/6p-ZXQCTMEg/s1600-h/mollah.jpg> (accessed 27 July 2008).

homosexual practice with temple prostitutes because he is idolatrous.

Christians who are in covenant homosexual relationships do not take these steps so this passage is not applicable to them. Scanzoni and Mollenkott seem to have this in mind when they write the following.

The key thoughts seem to be lust, "unnaturalness," and, in verse 28, a desire to avoid acknowledgement of God. But although the censure fits the idolatrous people with whom Paul was concerned here, it does not fit the case of a sincere homosexual Christian.<sup>15</sup>

A summary of this argument is that Paul is condemning behavior that is excessive and self-centered with which no Christian scholar would disagree. The females are self-seeking in their abandonment of the "natural use" of the sexual relationship as are the males. The revisionist approach to this text, building on Bailey's original arguments, is that only the self-gratifying sexual experience is under condemnation.

The Hebrew culture and the Stoic philosophers sought moderation in all things: sleep, sexual activity, eating, and emotion. Excess in any of these areas of life would be considered a moral failing. So the "natural use" in any

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<sup>15</sup>Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994), 67.

area would not be speaking to wrongly oriented desire but inordinate desire - going to excess and losing control.

If there is any condemnation at all of homosexual activity, some revisionists would note it is for those of heterosexual orientation who abandon their "natural use" of the sexual experience for an unnatural homosexual experience.<sup>16</sup> While this sounds similar to the traditional interpretation of the passage there is more than a semantic issue at its heart. An extension of the argument bears this out. A person who is homosexual in orientation and engages in heterosexual activity would be considered to be engaging in "unnatural use" - acting out simply for the sake of self-gratification. Thus the unambiguous passage of all Scripture is twisted to suggest that a homosexual who engages in heterosexual activity is "unnatural".

There is more to consider. A final argument for the revisionists is painted with a broad brush stroke sweeping through any passage prohibiting homosexual activity. Revisionists cite a history of using the Bible to justify oppression.

Significant social issues to which the church has responded are those of slavery, segregation, and the role

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<sup>16</sup>Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition,  
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of women. On each of these issues in the Western Christian tradition there has been near unanimity of opinion in the past followed by a painful, self-searching inventory and a subsequent reversal of opinion.

Explaining that it is not what the majority of Christendom might believe today regarding the above social issues but what the church taught 200 years ago that should shape ones theology of sexuality, Rogers calls on the church to ask why many have changed their minds on these issues.<sup>17</sup> Correctly citing abusive treatment of scriptures like Genesis 9:20-26 - the curse of Ham - and Genesis 3:1-16 - the curse on Eve - Rogers details theologians from Augustine forward who justified unfair treatment for women and for slaves.<sup>18</sup> Rogers explains that the historical position of church leadership claimed that:

(1) the Bible records God's judgment against the sin of people of African descent and women from their first mention in scripture; (2) People of African descent and women were somehow inferior in moral character and incapable of rising to the level of full white male, "Christian civilization"; and (3) people of African descent and women were willfully sinful, often sexually promiscuous and threatening, and deserved punishment for their own acts.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Jack Rogers, Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press), 18.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 18-32.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 33.

Similarly homosexuals have been deemed as judged of God, inferior, and willfully sinful. As the church was called to carefully reexamine the social issues of slavery and women so new "scientific discoveries" justify a similar reconsideration of the morality of covenant homosexual relations.

Homosexual orientation according to revisionists is natural, occurring in 2.5 percent of the U.S. population, and is "like handedness: most people are one way, some are the other".<sup>20</sup> With the light of science yielding new conclusions about the etiology of homosexual activity revisionists claim we should use a new paradigm for the understanding of this activity.

A relevant analogy regarding the acceptance of people who are homosexual is grounded in the central message of Scripture as interpreted through the lens of Jesus' life and ministry. Additionally, a specific biblical passage is instructive on the matter, the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 argued for the inclusion of Gentiles in the promise of

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<sup>20</sup>David Myers, Psychology 8<sup>th</sup> ed., [excerpt on-line]; available from <http://www.davidmyers.org/Brix?pageID=62>; Internet; accessed 6 August 2008. Myers review of the subject of the etiology of sexual orientation concludes that it is a naturally occurring event observed not only in human nature but animal nature as well. He also notes that the "emerging neuroanatomical picture is suggestive of brain anatomy influencing sexual orientation".

salvation without adhering to the Jewish rite of circumcision. Peter challenges the church, "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10) to which Johnson opines, "The words of Jesus and the Scripture are normative for the believers, but in a way that allows new and deeper understanding of them."<sup>21</sup>

The revisionist position would have one believe that Paul's clear admonition against homosexuality in his Roman letter is anything but this. The verbal pyrotechnics employed are clever but nonetheless deserve careful consideration and a sensitive response.

As one approaches this text it is significant to note that Paul is seeking to draw the attention of the reader to the background story of creation. According to Malick, Paul's selection of the term **Φυσι κήν** demonstrates that he is speaking of one's "natural endowment or condition inherited from one's creator".<sup>22</sup> He goes on to demonstrate

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<sup>21</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 107.

<sup>22</sup>David E. Malick, "The Condemnation of Homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27," Bibliotheca Sacra 150 (July-September 1993): 331.

that Paul uses the term elsewhere in Romans clearly referring to the created order.

In Romans 11 Paul wrote of the branches of the olive tree that are "natural" (κατά φύσιν, v. 21) and of the tree itself which is "by nature" (κατά φύσιν) a wild olive tree" (v. 24) and has branches grafted into it contrary to nature (παρά φύσιν).<sup>23</sup>

Accordingly Cranfield observes that in Romans 1:26 φυσικός means "in accordance with the intention of the Creator" and παρά φύσιν means "contrary to the intention of the creator".<sup>24</sup> He goes on to add that:

The decisive factor in Paul's use of (φύσιν) is his biblical doctrine of creation. It denotes that order which is manifest in God's creation and which men have no excuse for failing to recognize and respect (cf. vv. 19 and 20).<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, Paul chooses the terms θήλειαι (females) and ἀρσενες (males) which the LXX uses to highlight the created order of male and female in Genesis 1:27 rather than the typical selection of γυνή (woman) and ἀνὴρ (man). Likewise Jesus used the terms θήλειαι and ἀρσενες in his discussion of divorce in the texts of Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6. "These words do not refer to the cultural heritage of

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 332.

<sup>24</sup>C.E.B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ed. J.A. Emerton, C.E.B. Cranfield, and E.M. Stanton, vol. 32, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 125.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 126.

marriage but to the 'natural' expression of mankind as seen in God's creation."<sup>26</sup>

Other words in the context selected by Paul that seem to draw the attention of the reader back to the creation are: image (v. 23 compare with Gen. 1:26) and "birds and animals and reptiles (v. 23 compare with Gen. 1:26).<sup>27</sup>

The significance of this is that Paul is not reminding the readers of Jewish customs and purity practices. He wants them to recognize the created order from the beginning. Verses 26 and 27 in Romans 1 are in the context of Paul's discussion of man's departure from the created order and the logical progression of rejecting God and following after our own desires. As such Paul is not looking at homosexual activity from the perspective of Jewish purity laws that no longer have application.

While Paul may well be interacting with contemporary thought on moderation in Greco-Roman philosophy, he is defiantly going much further back in history. It does not take anything away from his argument to suggest he was aware of and interacting with contemporaries. Instead it affirms that he is in agreement with the negative

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<sup>26</sup>David E. Malik, "The Condemnation of Homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27," Bibliotheca Sacra 150 (July-September 1993): 332.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

evaluation that many have of homosexual activity. But, Paul is addressing homosexuality from the transcultural perspective of God's created order. The question then becomes one of what is natural to the Creator and not what is natural to the created.

What then of the conclusions of modern science? Studies cited above suggest that there are those who are "natural" homosexuals in their orientation. It is not that they have consciously chosen their sexual orientation but that they were born with the propensity to engage in sexual acts with those of the same gender. If God "made" them this way then the conclusion is that it would be "unnatural use" to engage in heterosexual activity.

Haas reminds us that one must first examine the context of Paul's remarks regarding the corruption of a culture that rejects its creator.<sup>28</sup> Beginning with verse 18, Paul notes that the fundamental sin of rejecting God results in idolatry (vv. 21-25), homosexual activity (vv. 26-27), and the general breakdown of human relationships. Haas expounds on the logical progression of this order that homosexual activity, "manifests the internal moral

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<sup>28</sup>Guenther Haas, "Exegetical Issues in the Use of the Bible to Justify the Acceptance of Homosexual Practice," Christian Scholar's Review 26 (Summer 1997): 405-406.

confusion and disorder which results from the refusal to acknowledge the Creator".<sup>29</sup> Ignoring the context revisionists seek to impose their own world view on the text and have misunderstood the clear call back to the created order found in Genesis.

Likewise, those who would suggest the context for the passage under discussion is speaking to the issue of idolatry and that sexual orientation is only incidental to the passage are performing eisegesis - reading their own agenda into the text. Scanzoni and Mollenkott, noted earlier insert the idea of "Christian homosexual". White and Niell respond.

This entire argument begs the question. It assumes a particular biblical conclusion with insertion of the idea of 'Christian homosexuals' right from the start and having done so, uses its conclusion to reinterpret the Scriptures.<sup>30</sup>

Revisionists are staking their claim on the point that homosexuality is condemned in the Levitical holiness codes which are no longer in force ignoring that Paul is beginning his argument with the created order in Genesis. Haas reorients us as he reminds that there are several other prohibitions in the Levitical code that have lasting

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 406

<sup>30</sup>James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, The Same Sex Controversy (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publisher, 2002) 137.

significance such as: incest (Lev. 18:7), adultery (Lev. 18:20), and bestiality (Lev. 20:15-16).<sup>31</sup> Paul's argument is from creation. "He singles out homosexual relations because they are a vivid image of humanity's rejection of the sovereignty of the Creator".<sup>32</sup>

As noted earlier certain scholars find no evidence for Paul's condemnation of same sex relations in a modern context. They would suggest that Paul is only speaking to the practice of pederasty. However, claims of the anachronistic use of the term homosexuality are less than credible.

In an important article it is shown that this argument is an utter failure. Particularly focusing on the earlier referenced work by Scroggs, Mark Smith demonstrates that the texts and art work from the fourth century B.C. to the first century A.D. provide abundant evidence for the existence of non-pederastic homosexual relationships in the Greco-Roman world, both male and female.<sup>33</sup> Of special

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<sup>31</sup>Guenther Haas, "Exegetical Issues in the Use of the Bible to Justify the Acceptance of Homosexual Practice," Christian Scholar's Review 26 (Summer 1997): 396.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 398.

<sup>33</sup>Mark D. Smith, "Ancient Bisexuality and the Interpretation of Romans 1:26-27," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 64 (Summer 1996): 233-243.

interest are Smith's remarks about what was actually taking place in the first century as pederastic practices were in significant decline while there was a significant increase in homosexual activity between consenting adults, both male and female.<sup>34</sup> Smith concludes,

When it comes to sexual behavior...the evidence demonstrates that the Greeks and Romans were busily engaging in almost every form of expression known to us, with perhaps some variation in emphasis.<sup>35</sup>

What of the broad brush strokes that are painted by those who see a connection between social justice for slaves or women? If the revisionist were to concede that this passage like others in Scripture is a prohibition against homosexual activity does he still have an argument for social justice? Was the Bible only speaking to perverse homosexual activity as was taking place among the Ancient Near Eastern peoples without making a statement regarding covenant monogamous homosexual relationships?

Webb makes a convincing argument for a resounding "No" to these questions as he explains his "redemptive-movement hermeneutic".<sup>36</sup> He utilizes a hermeneutical model that he

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>36</sup>William J. Webb, Slaves, Women & Homosexuals, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 30-66

describes as redemptive as opposed to static or isolated.<sup>37</sup> A static hermeneutic disallows "the spirit-movement component of meaning which significantly transforms the application of texts for subsequent generations".<sup>38</sup> In contrast a redemptive hermeneutic recognizes biblical texts are pointing the original culture in the direction of an ultimate ethic.

Since the scope of this paper is limited a brief example must be sufficient. Webb posits that it would be anachronistic to talk about biblical slavery or polygamy as a "hideous evil".<sup>39</sup> Instead, one should consider a passage such as Exodus 23:12 which commands a day of rest for slaves or legislation regarding polygamy in Exodus 21:10 as redemptive.<sup>40</sup> Each of these passages provides an ethic that improves upon the treatment of these individuals above that which the surrounding cultures enjoy. Subsequently, one sees movement within Scripture that points to treatment that is even better such as theoretical equality between

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 44-46.

men and women in the letters of Paul (Gal. 3:28) or his injunction against harsh treatment of servants (Col. 4:1).<sup>41</sup>

However, when addressing homosexuality texts within this model no such "forward" movement exists. Instead,

Scripture evidences a redemptive spirit when it moves the people of God to a complete ban on same-sex activity. Homosexuality was widely accepted within the broader culture, so the movement within the Bible is clearly in one direction and complete - at least in terms of its broad-sweeping, negative assessment of the behavior.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, if the Christian wants to reflect the spirit and direction of the biblical text, a negative assessment of homosexuality needs to be retained.

Does this mean that as Christians we should maintain a negative and condemning stance towards those who practice homosexuality? I believe the answer to this is also a resounding "No". Should we condemn the activity? Yes! But, waving placards in protest or using pejoratives to assail the homosexual - "No". It is interesting that while Paul most certainly condemns homosexual activity that he seems to do so in a most clinically detached way. He spends much more time speaking to a lack of love and understanding among brethren than he does scribbling out lists of sins.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 39.

In the narrative of the man who was born blind in John chapter 9, the disciples were not told "why" - in terms of cause - the man was born blind. They were simply given the final cause, "...this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (Jn. 9:3).

As a marriage and family therapist in full-time ministry work I must look at the practical side. I am aware of the earlier referenced studies that suggest a biological component but also recognize that there is a large body of work by reputable researchers that does not make a giant leap to conclude that this abrogates personal responsibility.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, the challenge is how we translate our theological understanding into an appropriate and helpful response.

Foremost, Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5 that the created order of sexuality is first a picture of the intimate relationship between Jesus and his bride, the church. Again, there are distinct male and female roles in this description. More importantly Jesus who did not have any problem with marriage or sexual expression within marriage - he attended weddings and quoted Genesis and

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<sup>43</sup>Mark A. Yarhouse and Stanton L. Jones, "A Critique of Materialist Assumptions in Interpretations of Research on Homosexuality," Christian Scholar's Review 26 (Summer 1997): 478-495.

celebrated all that should be celebrated - did not see marriage and therefore sex as the ultimate state. Jesus tells us that "some have renounced marriage [and therefore sexual expression] because of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:12). Jesus also tells us that in heaven we "will neither marry nor be given in marriage" (Lk. 20:35). Paul says to his Corinthian readers, "I wish that all men were as I am. [unmarried and celibate]" (1 Cor. 7:7).

The point seems to be that sexual expression between a married man and woman is something to celebrate but that it is not the ultimate expression. God created within us a desire to be known and to be in relationship with others. "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:18).

It may not be necessary to call a homosexual into heterosexual relationships only to call them to the ultimate relationship. The cost of discipleship for the homosexual individual may seem high but in the grace of Jesus it really is not. The person with a potential predisposition to participate in homosexual acts needs to be led to view this as symptomatic of their participation in a world disfigured by the fall of all creation. The last thing that Jesus or Paul seem to imply is that if you are not in a married heterosexual covenant relationship that

you are missing out. Ultimately what Paul is saying is that rejection of God leads to cheap self-expression in pseudo-intimate relationships. But, in Christ we have the grace to be who we are in God's presence as he shapes us and molds us into who we will be for eternity.

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