

Homosexuality: Truths and Myths

The current ‘hot’ topic of homosexuality and government policy has stirred high emotions. To promote rational debate, we need to move away from rhetoric and political correctness as clear thinking calls for the debunking of various myths related to homosexuality and lesbianism.

1. **Myth #1: *That homosexual behaviour or desire is inborn rather than learned behaviour (the “gay gene” argument)***

Protagonists of homosexuality argue that homosexual behaviour stems from a “homosexual gene” and therefore homosexuals are “born that way.” This assertion is strongly contested, not scientifically proven or supported by medical evidence. Therefore, such arguments are inconclusive.

Even homosexual activists in the United States are abandoning this ‘genetic’ argument because extensive research does not conclusively support a theory of biological causation. Researchers consider that homosexuality cannot be explained apart from environmental factors. The pro-homosexual group, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), admits that genetic causation remains unproven in their booklet, *Why ask Why?*

Studies have found that large numbers of identical twins bear different sexual orientations. This scientific data credibly undermines “any absolute claim that homosexuality is genetically determined.”

Furthermore, “even if a biological cause for homosexuality had been found, that would not have proven that it was a healthy or normal variant, nor would it prove that treatment is not necessary. Many biological deviations resulted in disabilities and are treated as pathological.”¹ A biological predisposition towards alcoholism is not *carte blanche* for encouraging alcoholism.

¹ Benjamin Kaufman, ‘Why Narth? The American Psychiatric Association’s Destructive and Blind Pursuit of Political Correctness’ (2002) 14 Regent University Law Review 423 at 430. The full text of this article is available free at the website of the law review at <http://www.regent.edu/acad/schlaw/lawreview/issues/v14n2.html>. This same volume contains a range of interesting articles in a symposium entitled “Homosexuality: Truth be Told.”

Many studies also present evidence that homosexuals who are willing to, can and do, overcome their homosexual identity and lifestyle. Many homosexuals come from dysfunctional families, broken homes, bearing traits of rejection and were victims of sexual abuse.² An article reviewing the literature on change states:

The available evidence supports the observation of many counsellors that many individuals with same gender sexual orientation have been able to change through a variety of counselling approaches.³

In Singapore, the *Choices* ministry of Church of our Saviour, a ministry that reaches out to homosexuals, has successfully assisted several homosexuals to be freed of this disorder. There is thus hope of healing and restoration for homosexuals who wish to change. In compassion, society must be willing to provide the necessary care for this and support those who undertake to walk on the road to wholeness.

Accepting the myth that homosexual orientation is inborn, predetermined, will foster the homosexual political agenda and discourage those seeking to leave the homosexual lifestyle from seeking help. The goal of the homosexual agenda is to ban therapy for same-sex attraction by arguing same-sex attraction is ‘natural’ or even healthy, thereby infringing upon the freedom of choice of those who voluntarily want such help by making it unavailable.

Truth: Homosexuality is learned behaviour and it is therefore possible to overcome homosexual identity and leave the homosexual lifestyle. Change is possible and desirable.

² For example, Edmund Bergler, *One Thousand Homosexuals* (1959); Daniel Cappon, *Towards an Understanding of Homosexuality* (1965); Joseph Nicolosi, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality* (1991). A full list is cited in footnote 35 of Kaufman, *supra*, note 1.

³ Warren Throckmorton, Efforts to Modify Sexual Orientation: A Review of Outcome Literature and Ethical Issues, (1998) 20 *Journal of Mental Health and Counseling* 283 at 287.

2. ***Myth #2 That homosexuality and lesbianism is simply a lifestyle choice and not a mental disorder***

Propagators of this view rely on the 1973 decision of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) which eliminated the classification of homosexuality as a disorder in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual ("DSM"). However, this finding was wrought by the bullying pressure tactics⁴ of homosexual activists, rather than supported by scientific data.

Ronald Bayer, who supported this decision, stated:

A furious egalitarianism that challenged every instance of authority had compelled psychiatric experts to negotiate the pathological status of homosexuality with homosexuals themselves.

Thus, this conclusion rested not on “the approximation of the scientific truth as dictated by reason” but was “an action demanded by the ideological temper of the times”.⁵

The APA used the DSM as an instrument of social change in America and its politicised viewpoint carries no probative value as scientific truth.

1999 studies show a positive correlation between homosexuality and high neuroticism, revealing a higher rate of suicide and psychiatric disorders among homosexuals, than heterosexuals. This viewpoint deserves serious study, in formulating public policy.

The secular view that homosexuality is unnatural, unbalanced and unhealthy, particularly since the advent of AIDs, is explained thus:

In Nature, there is no biological niche for homosexuality. It runs counter to all principles of biology and physiology. Sex originally came into existence for... procreation, and the pleasurable component of sex exists merely to ensure that animals [will] procreate....Hence...sex with someone of one's own sex [is] unnatural. While two men may care for each other, it would be unnatural for either

⁴ This includes disrupting meetings at the 1971 and 1972 APA meetings.

⁵ Ronald Bayer, Introduction to *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (1981) at pages 3-4.

of them to feel a sexual attraction for the other: homosexuals [may claim an attraction for a person of the same sex]...but this does not change the fact that they are biologically not capable of having natural intercourse with that individual...the mind is always out of balance with the body [where a homosexual lifestyle is chosen]. Intuitively speaking, homosexual intercourse is clearly forced...

Unlike the vagina, the anus is not self-lubricating, so an artificial lubricant must be used. The vagina is self-cleansing, while the anus is a filthy wasteland of bacteria...any reasonable thinker [should know] that the anus ought not to be used as a receptacle for a penis...Furthermore... the rate of sexually-transmitted diseases among those who engage in homosexual sex is many times greater than among those who engage in natural sex.⁶

Truth: Homosexuality is a Mental Disorder and a Pathology which can be treated. It was declassified as a disorder not based on scientific data but to further a political agenda.

3. ***Myth#3: That homosexuals constitute a class akin to race or gender-based minority groups and hence deserve legal protection and “equality”.***

The law protects vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities or women. Article 152 of the Constitution recognises the duty of the government to protect ‘racial and religious’ minorities. The Singapore government progressively signed the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) in 1995 to show its solidarity for the worthy principle of equality between the sexes. This goes some way to fulfil the promise in the 1959 PAP Manifesto which sought to raise women’s status in society and provide equal opportunities for all on the basis of meritocracy.⁷ These groups are based on

⁶Hardline Perspective: A Case Against Homosexuality: www.resanigo.most.org.pl/hardline/homosex.htm.

⁷ PAP female MP Chan Choy Siong said during a 1960s debate on the Women’s Charter: “ Women in our society are like pieces of meat put on the table for men to slice. The PAP government has made a promise. We cannot allow this inequality in the family to exist in this country. We will liberate women from the hands of the

the immutable or fixed traits of race or gender. A Chinese woman cannot change the race or gender she was born with.

In contrast, homosexual groups define themselves by their sexual choices or preferences. That sexual orientation is not fixed is confirmed by many documented cases in which homosexuals have changed and become heterosexually re-oriented, regaining their natural sexual identity. Dr. Cameron of the US-based Family Research Institute reports that the “‘*born that way*’ claim...is tenuous... has been uncritically accepted and hyped by the media and some-less than careful researchers.”⁸

Interestingly, Dr. Robert Spitzer who actively supported the 1973 APA decision stating that homosexuality was not a disorder, subsequently investigated the claims of ex-homosexuals and reportedly found credible evidence of change. He stated those who denied change was possible “have not been honest and [have not] taken the time to do the research.”⁹ This is not surprising given how politically contentious and polarising this matter is, with truth becoming the first casualty in the attempt to advance a political agenda. Thus, drawing an analogy that homosexuality is a fixed trait like gender and race, therefore creating a new ‘minority’ group which deserves legal protection, is flawed.

Truth: Homosexuals enjoy the same rights as heterosexuals and are seeking additional or special rights / privileges for a class defined by sexual preferences, rather than fixed and immutable traits like gender or race.

4. Myth #4 *That all who disagree with the homosexual lifestyle are intolerant "bigots" and "homophobes"*

oppressor.”

‘Women, where art thou?’ Zuraidah Ibrahim, *Straits Times* (Singapore) 17 July 1999 at 53

⁸ Dr. Paul Cameron, ‘Born WHAT way?’, available at the Family Research Institute website at http://www.familyresearchinst.org/FRI_EduPamphlet5.html.

⁹ Interview with Dr. Laura Schlessinger with Robert Spitzer, American Psychiatric Association (Jan 21 2000), reprinted in 8 NARTH Bulletin 26 at 27 (2000).

There is a chilling tendency to erode liberty of conscience by castigating as a bigot someone who considers the homosexual lifestyle as repugnant, perverse, immoral, and undesirable. This name-calling has unfortunately started (*Streets*, ‘Get this straight: Bigotry is not a family value’ 10 July 2003) and tends to intimidate the expression of opposing views. The truth is that morality is not relative, that there are absolute values independent of our personal preferences. The homosexual agenda’s assertion that the majority’s intolerant values are being “imposed” on them is in itself an absolutist stance, intolerant of any other views. One is not a ‘homophobe’ (literally, an irrational fear of homosexuals) because one believes that homosexuality is wrong and will erode the moral fabric of society. We can disagree and debate a public interest matter rationally and with civility, as violence and rudeness towards homosexuals is not advocated.

Furthermore, history shows that the homosexual movement abroad has been accompanied by violence and intimidation which cannot be allowed to infiltrate and disrupt the harmony of Singapore’s multi-racial and multi-religious society. An aggressive homosexual movement, progressively demanding more rights, will upset and provoke religious and non-religious groups and individuals and undermine societal stability. Homosexuals, like all other individuals, are valued citizens, but it does not follow that greater rights should be accorded to them as a group. The danger is that if one gives an inch, they will press for greater “rights” which will erode other civil liberties like the freedom to believe that homosexuality is a disorder which can and should be treated, and to speak out for this viewpoint. In some countries, there are attempts to broaden hate crimes law to include protection for homosexuals – therefore, anyone who speaks out from religious or secular convictions that homosexuality is a disorder could be branded a ‘hate criminal’ for promoting or inciting hatred towards homosexuals. Pointing out that someone has a problem like alcoholism is not ‘hate’ but ‘concern’ and concern for homosexuals and a desire to help them leave their lifestyles if they are willing cannot be considered hate! In the Canadian Parliament, for example, there is a fierce debate currently over whether the Bible and Koran can be considered hate literature (opening the door to censorship?) because it considers homosexuality a sin.¹⁰ If similar laws were to be enacted down the road in Singapore, this could precipitate disquiet among religious groups and strong opposition, which would harm our social harmony.

¹⁰ Randall Palmer, ‘Religious Hatred? Canadian Hate-Crimes Bill Sparks Debate over Bible, Koran’ *Reuters* 16 May 2003, from abcnews.com (accessed 20 July 2003).

Many religions, while advocating that homosexuals be treated compassionately, consider homosexual activity immoral and inimical to a sound moral and social order. These views must not be dismissed contemptuously.

The Christian Bible clearly states that homosexuality is unnatural and a sin. God hates the sin, which is hurtful and harmful, not the sinner. However, like any other sin, homosexuality can be forgiven and even healed through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Islam views sodomy as an offence. Buddhists consider that homosexuality is wrong but that homosexuals should be compassionately treated. These religious beliefs, which are firmly committed towards family values, are protected under article 15 of the Constitution¹¹ and those holding such views should not be vilified as bigots.

Christians are often accused of being intolerant and ‘absolutist’ because they speak up for the moral absolutes they believe in. Because they do so, they are criticized as imposing their views on others. However, any moral standard necessitates intolerance of anything which violates that standard. If the Bible says adultery is a sin, it must necessarily oppose a view celebrating adultery as a permissible form of sexual expression. To say that Christian values are intolerant is itself an expression of intolerance against Christian values.¹² There is nothing bigoted in being faithful to one’s convictions. The simple point is that worldviews and values clash, and we need to evaluate competing value systems on their merits rather than fudging the debate with name-calling.

The Singapore government has consistently advocated the importance of having a firm moral grounding as the basis of our community. In terms of family values, the Ministry of Community Development has declared:

The family is an important institution. It brings fulfilment to our lives and is our anchor in this fast-paced, ever-changing environment.

Families serve as an important pillar of support for the nation. At the

¹¹ Article 15 Freedom of Religion: “(1) Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and to propagate it.” Full text available on <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/>.

¹² If tolerance means that all views are equal, Truth becomes nothing more than a personal preference or fashion. The ultimate sin, according to this brand of political correctness, is to assume that it is impossible to judge between values since all values are legitimate (including values like slavery, racism or chauvinism). The only acceptable view would be to tolerate all views; there could never be an objective ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. This violates freedom to think according to one’s conscience.

individual level, families are the primary source of emotional, social and financial support. At the national level, they contribute to social stability and national cohesiveness as they help develop socially responsible individuals and deepen the bond Singaporeans have with our country.¹³

We have been reminded by DPM Lee that:

We must be careful not to change our norms to make marriage and family mere lifestyle preferences, or to forget that one important responsibility of couple is to produce and nurture the next generation¹⁴

Children can never come from a homosexual union, unless help is provide from the heterosexual world through *e.g.* artificial insemination. Indeed, no person who claims to be homosexual came into this world as the result of a same-sex union. A culture of heterosexual marriage is therefore necessary not only because it buttresses social stability, but also because it ensures our physical survival.¹⁵

We should also not forget the shared values articulated in the 1990 White Paper were designed to be a bulwark against the corrosive influence of excessive “western” individualism, devoid of personal responsibility or sense of community. Of course, the *individual* is always of value but this is distinct from *individualism* which connotes selfishness and ultimately, egoistic hedonism. One of the shared values is the “family” as the basis of society, which figures prominently in many government policies. Indeed, Prime Minister Goh in his 1994 National Day Rally speech stated:

America, Britain and several West European governments have taken over the economic and social functions of the family and so make the family unnecessary and superfluous. Marriage to raise the family is now an extra, like optional extras when buying a car.

America and Britain’s social problems – a growing underclass which is violence-prone, uneducated, drug taking, sexually promiscuous – is a

¹³ Statement on Family by the Ministry for Community Development and Sport at <http://www.mcds.gov.sg>

¹⁴ ‘Govt to work harder to get more women into Parliament’, *Straits Times*, 8 March 2003 at H9

¹⁵ To the argument that not all heterosexual couples can or do procreate, it may be pointed out that sterility is not an essential characteristic of heterosexual couplings but an unfortunate breakdown and exception, rather than the rule. On the other hand, sterility is an inherent part of homosexuality.

direct result of the family unit becoming redundant or non-functional¹⁶

Truth: It is intolerant to call someone else intolerant. The view that all values are equal and immune from criticism is intolerant of the view that moral judgements can be made. In the culture war, there is necessarily a clash between values and to speak from one's conscience and convictions, which flows from free speech and religious freedom, is not in itself bigotry.

Conclusion: Tolerance or Endorsement?

Notably, the homosexual agenda's call for equality and tolerance (which includes tolerant disapproval) really seeks the *approval or endorsement* of homosexual practices as an alternative lifestyle choice as valid as heterosexual relationships which ground marriage, the cornerstone of a stable and morally wholesome society. This would violate the freedom of conscience of many thinking people.

The homosexual agenda demands special, not equal rights. For example, every Singapore citizen has the right to marry – a person of the opposite sex. What the homosexual agenda seeks to accomplish is the radical redefinition of “marriage”, “spouse” even “family” to gain legal recognition of same-sex unions, through influencing public opinion, educational curricula and eventually, the law. Homosexuals already enjoy the rights all Singaporeans enjoy but seek *more* rights for themselves, couching their call for *special* treatment as *equal* rights. Rights are not absolute and may be restricted by society's interest in public morality; liberty is not licence for libertines.

It is apparent from homosexual movements in other countries that the homosexual agenda seeks various goals through a gradualist strategy, culminating in radical change in social mores. That is, homosexual activists have an ambitious blueprint to ensure the mainstreaming of homosexuality in

¹⁶ PM's National Day Rally Speech: Three lessons for Singapore, Straits Times, 22 August 1994 at page 24. *The Straits Times (Singapore) August 22, 1994*

society.¹⁷

First, they seek to decriminalise sodomy as an offence. Notably, in Singapore, there have already been calls expressed in the newspapers to abolish the offence of sodomy in section 377 of the Penal Code in an attempt to remove the stigma associated with homosexual behaviour, in the aftermath of PM Goh's statement about a more liberal approach to employing gays in civil service. Section 377 and 377A of the Penal Code provides:

“377. Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animals, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to fine.

377A. Any male person who, in public or private commits, or abets the commission of, or procure or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 2 years.”

When the homosexual movement gains a foothold, it seeks to turn it into a stronghold in incremental measures such as this. When the first stage is completed, they move on to the second step of their strategy.

This second step of the homosexual agenda is to equalise the age of consent for both consensual heterosexual and homosexual sex. Third, it seeks to push for anti-discriminatory provisions that protect gays in public or private employment, to enable them to adopt children and enjoy the same legal rights as married heterosexual couples. This will change family law, criminal law, constitutional law, employment law – it is a far-reaching agenda which seeks to restructure society in a detrimental fashion.

In other countries, this has led to sex education curricula that teach children about the normalcy of homosexual lifestyles and how to engage in homosexual

¹⁷ This strategy is openly referenced in a document put up by a Singapore homosexual group entitled ‘Gay Law: Emancipation and Emasculation’ (1 October 2002). This is available at <http://www.oursafehaven.com/activities/gaylaw.htm> (accessed 12 July 2003)

practices like buggery. This tramples on parental rights to ensure their children receive sound values in schools. Why should a child be taught that it is normal for Mei Ling to have 2 mummies? There is also a push to grant homosexuals the right to “marry” or to have legally recognised same sex unions.¹⁸

As citizens concerned for the social, moral and economic welfare of Singapore, we should be informed about the nature of the homosexual agenda and the challenge this poses to our core shared values which includes safeguarding the integrity of the family unit and racial- religious harmony. When PM Goh mentioned that the government had adopted a pragmatic stance in employing openly homosexual individuals, this was a pragmatic recognition of realities and this tolerance should not be read as a blanket moral approval of the homosexual lifestyle. Many of us reserve the right to disapprove with vigour.

There is also an argument that what one does in private is not the state’s business, therefore the state has no role where two same-sex adults have consensual sex. There are two limbs in the response to this.

First, for reasons of prudence, the State should not intrude into the privacy of the bedroom, but this does not immunise homosexual conduct from moral scrutiny. The argument from privacy does not mean that all acts done in private are good or estimable or should be promoted. What about incest or bestiality? Would these be acceptable as long as the party ensures that such unnatural acts are carried out in the privacy of his home? The fear is that enhanced state powers will threaten civil liberties as a whole and thus keeping the State out of regulating what goes on in a bedroom, however immoral, is the lesser of 2 evils.

A related argument is that what is done in private, such as private consensual sex between two men or two women, does not cause public harm. In the same vein, it has been argued that homosexual ‘marriage’ does not threaten heterosexual marriage and family since this is done in the private sphere. However, same-sex relationships do constitute an assault on our children’s understanding of three fundamental things which affect the social welfare of society: that of marriage, parenthood and gender.¹⁹

¹⁸ ‘New Zealand considering same-sex unions’ globeandmail.com, 17 July 2003. ‘Gay activists press marriage in US: Mother of all cultural battles shapes up as courts poised to rule on right to wed’ globeandmail.com, 15 July 2003, (both accessed 20th July 2003).

¹⁹ For an elaboration, see Glenn T. Stanton, ‘Frequently asked Questions about Same Sex Marriage’ at the Focus on the Family website: Focus on Social Issues: <http://family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage/FAQs/a0026916.cfm>.

Second, if the argument of private consensual sex between same sex adults prevails, it is very easy to go down the slippery slope to (perhaps unintentionally) sanctioning paedophilia, as in countries where the age of consent for sex (homosexual and heterosexual) is equalized and lowered to 12-14 years olds. This vulnerable group, which comprises primary six to secondary two schoolchildren, need protection from sexual predators.

Furthermore, offensive public displays of homosexual activity should not be allowed, since this will outrage the public's sense of decency. Society has a right to resist moral corruption. In compassion, we should help homosexuals who voluntarily want to leave their lifestyle, to do so. Ultimately, this is a matter of free will and not compulsion. But this choice must be preserved.

Prime Minister Goh is to be lauded for taking a firm stance by not allowing gay parades (which is an attempt to get the authorities to 'affirm' or endorse the gay lifestyle) and for stating that homosexual acts will remain an offence – law has an important educative function and the criminalisation of homosexual acts as wrongful acts reflects the views of most Singaporeans, whom both PM Goh and SM Lee regard as *conservative* (which is not a dirty word). As SM Lee rightly said in a 1998 CNN interview, "It is a question of what a society considers acceptable... I don't think an aggressive gay rights movement would help"²⁰

The homosexual agenda relies on certain myths to promote its radical agenda which undermines social morality. It threatens 'fences' like marriage and is contemptuous of millennia of moral and religious teaching. We should never have to pretend or be subdued into accepting the view that homosexuality is as normal and healthy as the love between a man and a woman. It is not. While laws are not static and may be changed within a democratic process, we should heed the wisdom in GK Chesterton's quip: "don't ever take a fence down, until you know the reason why it was put up."²¹

THIO SU MIEN, Ph.D. (Law)

²⁰ 'S'poreans too reliant on govt? SM disagrees', *Straits Times (Singapore)* 13 December 1998 at H28.

²¹ John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 918 (14th ed., 1968).