

"THE GAY THING" in light of this summer's denominational votes on it

Dear Ken,

Forgive the *open* letter: nothing private here, & it's time for an update (though, as you say, on this subject I've done many Thinksheets [I'll not here refer back to]).

1 In the summer '00 public mind, when it's not fixated on sports & gambling, two issues are signal (in several senses: notable; conspicuous; triggering a mindset; instantly divisive, like the old green/red traffic lights before the yellow was invented). They are **abortion** (which in my view overrates, even sacralizes, unborn human flesh) & **homosexuality** (which in my view overrates, even sacralizes, human equality).

In that both are sacralizations, both are religious--religion being the domain & discipline of, & devotion to, the sacred. Trying to bracket religion off from either issue is as philosophically feeble as trying to do so vis-a-vis the origins thing (though both the Darwinians & the Creationists try to).

2 The dual genius of the North American political experiment (viz., representative republicanism & the freedom of religion from government support or interference) is at the cost of two illusions, viz. (1) that religion is optional & subject to the ballot, & (2) that government, including public debate on cultural issues, can proceed without consideration either of *organized* religion (which is largely true) or of religion (which is demonstrably false on the basis of any intellectually respectable definition of religion).

3 Religion always loses (as Kierkegaard often observed) when it moves from its own ground to fight on foreign soil, either ethicopolitical or esthetic. Liberal religion, by making both those moves, has surrendered--& here, for this Thinksheet, I leave off commenting on abortion--to both banners, "GAY RIGHTS" & "GAY IS BEAUTIFUL." Indeed, in the very act of abandoning its own playing-&-fighting field, it has ceased to be religion & is only liberal (more in the Rousseauian than the Lockean sense).

4 Once liberal clergy move off the turf (the religious sphere) on which they were ordained, they are in the land of the god Isotes (Gk. "Equality": Gk. has more than two doz. ways to say it!). STORY: PBS:TV, for a panel of three, needed somebody to speak against "gay marriage" & pd. a Cape Cod cabbie \$215 to roundtrip me to/from Boston, a city brimming with intellectuals. Except for my part, the program dripped with egalitarian sentiment, including a docuclip of two old longtime faithful lesbians (I'd not been told the program would include anything other than the panel).

5 The God of the Bible ain't no egalitarian & so is, in egal. eyes, the devil. You were so right when you said today (on my answering machine), "The authority of the Bible is at stake" in the gay thing. And you mentioned a book (one, unfortunately, of many) asserting that the Bible has nothing to say about homosexuality.

That assertion is at the end of a forty-year hermeneutical trajectory. (1) The Bible was defended on the ground that the Levitical condemnation of homosex (Lev. 18. 22; 20. 13) was OT (a book of law), not NT (the book of love). This doubly ignorant position was quickly abandoned: both the condemnation & both love & law are in both Testaments. (2) In the NT, homosex is condemned only by Paul, & everybody knows Paul was "off" on sex matters. A laughable reversal of Marcion (fl. ca. AD 140 CE), who threw out everything in the Epistle Corpus (the NT's 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$) *except* Paul. Paul, since the early days of feminism's downing him, has of late been getting a better press on fe/male relationships. (3) What the NT condemns (Ro. 1. 26-27; 1 Cor. 6. 9; 1 Ti. 1. 10) is not homosexuality between "consenting adults" but pederasty, i.e. adult preference for & sex with children. That was not exegesis but eisegesis; the NT doesn't mention pederasty & does speak, in Ro. 1, of adults (on which see Plato, below). (4) What the NT condemns is not "homosexuality" in the modern companionate sense but only sacred prostitution.* Again, an (eisegetic) argument out of whole cloth; but this is the basis for the current pro-homo claim that "The NT has nothing to say about homosexuality." Getting rid of the Bible was a project required by liberal religion's abandonment & betrayal of its own turf/ground/field. *And promiscuity.

6 The woman thing, the gay thing, & the man-boy thing all use the same **biopolitical-egalitarian** pitch: we are made this way, so get out of our way & let us have equal rights with those who are otherwise made. The basic rhetoric or spin of all three movements was earlier developed in the politically successful black-white thing: not only can we not help being black but we're proud of it, & claim the full rights accorded U.S. citizens in our nation's founding documents.

Members of the National Association of Man-Boy Love are proud of their sexual preference for boys, & the laws condemn their sexual practice (not preference) as much as until recently the laws condemned the sexual practice (not preference) of homosexuals. (The notion that government should not make laws limiting sexual practice is libertine-anarchic absurdity.)

7 Let's look at the "we are made that way" (the biological) argument. No question here about blacks & women; whether pederasts can change is debatable, with the present weight being on the "no" side; whether gays & lesbians can change is debated (the gay community shouting a resounding "no"), but statistically not debatable (e.g., as many as 70% of lesbians were straight, & some cases of gays going straight are solidly documented). Using only our present knowledge, & in the narrow light of the biopolitical-egalitarian pitch, we should be slightly more permissive of pederasts than of homosexuals. (Yes, the rhetoric has again landed us in absurdity.)

8 As radical feminists preach the myth of the past Golden Age of the Goddess, homosexual activists preach (alongside the myth that "we're all born this way") the myth of ancient Sexual Equality of straights, gays, & pederasts, especially in Greece. The weight of epigraphic material does not support this myth. Here, e.g., Plato (in THE LAWS I.636): "That pleasure is to be deemed natural which arises out of the intercourse between men and women; but the intercourse of men with men, and of women with women, is *contrary to nature* [πὰρὰ φύσιν *para phusin*, the same expression Paul uses in the same connection in Ro.1.26]; the bold attempt was originally due to unbridled lust."

And the same Plato has some sardonic remarks about the democratic/egalitarian politic. E.g., in THE REPUBLIC (VIII.557-558c) he has Socrates say "Democracy, which is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, dispenses a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike." Between then & our present North American infatuation with Equality (as supreme political value & goal) lay the French Revolution with its atheist-romantic belief in human equality & perfectibility: "The rights of man in society are liberty, equality, security, and property" ("Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and Citizen," 1795). Kierkegaard's wry comment: "It's hard to make an advance on Socrates." Well, it's hard to make an advance on the Bible's realism vs. the humanistic egalitarian idealism which now reigns in the boardrooms of the media & the halls of academe. Of course "the gay thing" is antibiblical, for the Bible's worldview is radically other than the mindset officially produced in our public K-12 & higher education.

In "the gay thing" vis-a-vis marriage/union, much more is at stake than whether or not the laws are to give to homosexual unions equality with (heterosexual) marriage, which has sacral-cosmic rootage in covenant & community (a viewpoint well developed by Max Stackhouse [of Princeton Seminary], who opposes, as I do, the legal as well as sacral [performed by reps of "organized religion"] marriages/unions of homosexuals). In the last century, Western civilization's conviction of a (Hebrew-Greek-Roman) cosmic **Order** came under severe challenges from philosophers & politicians who believed not in social *contract* vis-a-vis that Order but in social *construct*, i. e., that humanity is free to construct the very basis of its social life, an *ordo humani* independent of any *ordo naturae* or *divini*. Result? Not freedom but self-imprisonment, with tens of millions of the corpses of those who didn't fit into the New Order (fascism, nazism, communism). This "Write Your Own Ten Commandments" spirit did not die with World War II but continues in numerous forms, one of which is the gay egalitarianism that has seduced enough liberal clerics to produce a crisis threatening to divide a number of U.S. Protestant denominations. (I regret that my own UCC is a captive of gay egalitarianism.)

Some GOOD NEWS: The crisis has produced a counter-movement for covenant (God-centered) marriage, in contrast to contractual marriage (centered in the interests of both parties). Interested? covenantmarriage@lifeway.com.