HOMOPHOBIA: THE SCARLET “H” (Part II)

by Eric Holmberg

In Part I we considered the ways many (most?) LGBTQ supporters are using homophobe and homophobic as pejoratives in order to shame and intimidate people who hold to the Creator’s design for human sexuality. Now I want us to consider this issue from the Biblical perspective.

Let’s begin by asking ourselves “What if?”

What if what the Bible says is true: that God really is, as the first verse of the scriptures emphatically states, the Creator of everything? This would necessarily set Him in the position of absolute power and authority over every aspect of His creation. Conversely, it would place mankind in complete subordination to that authority. To put it another way: choosing to live contra deus - in rebellion to that God and His dictums - would consequently be a profoundly illogical, unwise, and ultimately suicidal way to conduct one’s life.

What if as the capstone of His creation this God fashioned an imago dei, an image of Himself: forming the first man by combining the dust/matter of this new creation with His own eternal/uncreated breath/nature? And then through another, final and highly significant creation act: extracted and then formed from Adam a kenegdo: a complementary “other half” that was like the man and yet opposite or different from him? (Gen. 2:18b)

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1 I use here the masculine pronoun to refer to God because the Bible often does. But there is no question scripturally that ontologically YHWH transcends our gender categories. Remember: “In His image He made them, male and female He made them.” (Gen. 1:27) It takes both the male and the female to best approximate, humanly speaking, the mirror image of God.

2 Among other things, completing or perfecting the imago dei by creating the other half of the binary man was radically significant (Gen. 1:27b), an act that addressed one of the several reasons why “it was not good for Adam to be alone.” (Gen. 2:18) And by the way: contrary to the popular homophile apologetic (e.g. Matthew Vine’s popular video), simply lacking a soul-mate was NOT one of the reasons. Adam had Jesus to walk with him in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8) - the ultimate soul-mate and through Whom every man or woman is made perfectly complete.
What if God then solemnly ordained the coming together of these two halves (of the *imago dei*) to become one to be the preeminent institution of human existence; that which creates and sustains society at its most foundational, even molecular level? That this covenantal union (marriage as it came to be known) was to be the means by which new image-bearers of God were formed; that it further mirror something of the “one and many” mystery of God’s triune nature as well as foreshadow the consummation of all things as Christ is married to His bride? (Eph. 5:32)

What if there was then a “fall” wherein man rejected God’s authority and instead chose to do what was right in his own eyes? What if the infinite Light that the “angled mirror” of mankind was supposed to live, walk in and reflect was lost to our first father and mother, leaving them with nothing but the darkness of their own fallen, finite and fallible imaginations to lean upon?

What if as part of the early stages in redeeming His image-bearers God granted to mankind a set of rules or guides that pointed them in the direction there were to go in order to flourish - as as well as warned them of the pitfalls into which the entropy of their fallen natures, left unchecked, would inevitably lead? That among these guides were rather arcane (to us now) statutes designed to keep men moving towards the masculine side of the binary divide, and conversely women towards the feminine, rather that succumbing to the fallen impulse towards conflation, confusion and chaos. And going to the heart of the issue before us, what if He also

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3 There isn’t time here to develop this fascinating line of thought. Suffice it to say that a number of the Old Testament laws that skeptics love to point out and most Christians either ignore or gloss over (e.g. rules concerning eunuchs) suddenly make perfect and illuminating sense when looked at in this context.
gave mankind a few\textsuperscript{4} stringent warnings concerning untethering sex not only from marriage but even more fundamentally from the gender binaries He created? Put simply, \textit{what if} God denounced homosexual activity as sin; as a gross departure from the design parameters He mandated for the human race?\textsuperscript{5} And because such behavior cuts across the grain of human ontology, of what it means to be an image-bearer of God, \textit{what if} it is further characterized as being among the worst types of sin (Lev. 18:22); that any society that normalizes it is in real danger of falling into the abyss of rank apostasy and a “reaping what they have sown” judgment (Rom. 1:18-32); and that individuals who practice these things are at great risk of not entering the consummate Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9,10)?\textsuperscript{6}

\textit{What if?}

If all this is true - and I, along with millions of others, believe it is - a number of simple, logical implications result\textsuperscript{7}:

\textsuperscript{4} Pro-gay apologists love to point out the relative paucity of verses condemning homosex, concluding from this that it really isn't that big a deal to God. But this apologetic doesn't work on a number of counts. First, it's God talking to us and therefore even once is more than enough. Second, the condemnations are couched in very severe language, emphasizing the warning against homosexual activity all the more. Third, there are even fewer condemnations concerning bestiality (where one goes beyond the barrier of gender into conflating the distinction between human and animal) in the Bible. Does anyone really want to use that to argue that God has less of a problem with bestiality than other sexual sins (like adultery) that the Bible mentions more frequently?

\textsuperscript{5} There isn't time here to address the growing contention by homophile apologists that the Bible has been misinterpreted and actually has nothing negative to say about - and even endorses - sexual relations between two members of the same sex as long as they are in a loving, committed (defined differently), non-exploitive relationship. Suffice it to say that such positions are novel; are clearly by-products of the sexual revolution and the growth of higher criticism and other liberal trends in relation to the Bible; and fly in the face of thousands of years of the Church's (Old and New Testament) understanding of scriptures in relation to homosexuality. Several honest scholars from within the homophile camp have admitted as much. Among them Walter Wink (“Simply put, the Bible is negative toward same-sex behavior, and there is no getting around it.”) and Louis Crompton (“Nowhere does Paul or any other Jewish writer of this period imply the least acceptance of same-sex relations under any circumstance.”). See Dr. Robert Gagnon's article \textit{How Bad Is Homosexual Practice According to Scripture and Does Scripture’s Indictment Apply to Committed Homosexual Unions?} for citations, more quotes and, in general, a withering critique of any and all pro-gay interpretations of the Bible.

\textsuperscript{6} Homosexual activity is just one of nine sins 1 Cor. 6:9,10 lists that can disqualify a person from entering the Kingdom. Interestingly, a third of them directly involve sex.

\textsuperscript{7} Of course, I realize there are many people who believe that all or some of the postulates I've just listed are not true. But I trust that even the skeptic with the greatest animus towards Christian beliefs (think Richard Dawkins) will accept the following implications as necessarily true if the “what ifs” are as well.
1. It makes no more sense to label Christians *homophobes* than it does to call people *kleptophobes* because they consider stealing (one of the other eight vices listed in 1 Cor. 6: 9,10) to be a sin.

2. The most loving and ethically consistent thing a Christian can do in relation to this issue - along with praying and striving to model God’s design for gender identity, sexuality and marriage - is to warn homosexuals of the great danger associated with their lifestyle and do all they can to help them repent, turn to Christ and reform their lives. To do anything less would be to demonstrate a callous indifference to homosexuals’ well-being; an apathy bordering on hatred.\(^8\)

3. Relatedly, Christians should do all they can to keep homosexuality from being normalized and celebrated within the broader culture. To not do so is to disobey God in relation to the Prime Directive He has given us\(^9\) and well as to fail our nation and its citizens. Culture, like meat, tend towards rot - to growing degrees of putrification and its related maladies - unless it is somehow preserved. And according to Scripture - both specific verses as well as the Bible’s overall internal logic - being that “salt and light” is among the Christian’s primary callings.

4. Because this issue is so transcendentally important - dramatically affecting society at its most fundamental, molecular level (gender, sex and family) - there is no way to avoid a major clash of worldviews between the true believers on either side of this cultural, philosophical and moral divide. Certainly we should strive to maintain an attitude of charity and humility in defending and advancing our position. But in the end, make no mistake: we find ourselves locked in a zero-sum game\(^10\), a David and Goliath-type

\(^8\) While I am no fan of certain aspects of the magician Penn Jillette’s worldview, two-fisted atheist that he is, *to his credit he understands this point well. (1:08 minutes and following)*

\(^9\) Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 5:13,14

\(^10\) A zero-sum game is one where only one side can win and does so if the other side loses. Poker is a classic example.
stand-off. Only one side can ultimately prevail in the marketplace of ideas and culture. And the other is going to necessarily become subservient to the one that is victorious.

Echoing this, one of the key activists for the homophile movement, Chai Feldblum (lawyer, commissioner of the EEOC and herself a lesbian) has described the tension between religious beliefs/freedoms and gay rights as a zero-sum game on more than one occasion. And when asked what should happen if push comes to shove between the two sides, she has stated, "I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win."11

Exactly.

And on the other side of the equation: As much as I want to get along and “live and let live;” as much as I strive to love all people, including homosexuals, and desire to see them happy; as much as I lean towards libertarianism in regard to the size and scope of government and its regulations, as a Christian committed to the “what ifs” enumerated above, I’m having a hard time coming up with any way in which society should recognize and normalize homosexual relations.

In the third and final installment of this series, I will examine the “smooth stone” that homophiles are using to advance their cause and disqualify ours: the so-called separation of church and state.

11 1 Sam. 17:9. This is not meant to denigrate the homophile camp by associating them with Goliath. Anyway, they can just as easily - and no doubt would - see themselves as the David in the story and the heterophiles as the giant they need to defeat.

12 Weekly Standard, May 15, 2006, Vol. 11, No. 33; “BANNED IN BOSTON: The coming conflict between same-sex marriage and religious liberty." This article closes with this gloomy prediction from Marc Stern, general counsel for the left-of-center American Jewish Congress: "It's going to be a train wreck. A very dangerous train wreck. I don't see anyone trying to stem the train wreck, or slow down the trains. Both sides are really looking for Armageddon, and they frankly both want to win. I prefer to avoid Armageddon, if possible."