

One

Gay Revolution: From Stonewall to Soulforce

The summer of 1969 saw several history-making events. My generation—Baby Boomers—commemorated the fortieth anniversaries of each with varying degrees of fanfare in 2009. Those old enough to remember can recall the Apollo 11 lunar mission and Neil Armstrong’s televised “giant leap for mankind” onto the moon’s surface in July of 1969. That year’s August Woodstock music festival was a pop-culture phenomenon that elicits unique memories for many. Much less known outside the gay community is another event that occurred that June at an otherwise obscure gay bar in New York’s Greenwich Village—the Stonewall Inn. It might be considered a “giant leap” for the gay movement, whose early activists, no doubt, saw gaining legitimate minority status in the hearts and minds of average citizens as akin to flying to the moon. Sadly, many Boomers who lived through that era are gone now, lost to the tragic holocaust of AIDS. In the early morning hours of June 28, eight police officers raided the Stonewall Inn, ostensibly because it had no liquor license. Such raids at gay

bars had been commonplace for years. What made this one different is that, for the first time, militant gays fought back—in a big way.

Accounts differ as to how the Stonewall riots began. Urban legend has it that the bar's 200 or so patrons were in an unusually volatile mood following Judy Garland's death a week earlier. A good many of the 20,000-plus mourners attending her funeral—she was an icon of sorts to the gay community—were said to be gay men. Perhaps angry homosexuals, some of whom were already experienced anti-Vietnam war or anti-establishment protesters, just snapped from years of harsh treatment and decided to make a stand. For whatever reason, a full riot broke out and spilled over into the next several days. Initially, the overwhelmed police force barricaded itself inside the empty bar, which the protesters almost set ablaze at one point. The beleaguered cops had to be reinforced by the Tactical Patrol Force (TPF), an elite riot-control squad specially trained to disperse the war protestors of that day.

So began, more or less, the postmodern gay revolution. A gay magazine in New York published a special riot edition, featuring a story entitled, "The Hairpin Drop Heard Round The World." A short time after Stonewall, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF)—a precursor to later militant gay organizations—formed. The following summer, on the anniversary of the riots, the first gay pride march with 10,000 participants took place in the Big Apple. The last week or so in June continues to be recognized as Gay Pride Week, while June is Gay Pride Month, by a year-2000 declaration of former President Bill Clinton. Gays get another month of special observation, however. October 11 is National Coming Out Day, and the entire month of October is GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) Awareness Month, focusing on various gay icons and their historic contributions. One wonders what may be next on the gay-rights horizon, since the calendar still has ten more months to be claimed.

In April 1972, I visited the city that never sleeps for the first time on my high school senior trip. Our group stayed in the historic Taft Hotel in midtown Manhattan. From an upper story window, my roomies and I witnessed one of New York's still-nascent gay pride parades taking place on the street below. The next evening, we went to see Lauren Bacall in "Applause" on Broadway. We sat bug-eyed during the scene where a chorus line of presumably gay actor-waiters, clad in nothing but checkered aprons and tap shoes from the waist down, table-danced to raucous applause during the title number. That fall, I enrolled as a freshman at an elite Virginia women's college. When I tried out for the basketball team, I got yet another reminder that I was "no longer in Kansas." The coach was as butch as they come, and too many of the other players, peppering their speech with a non-stop chorus of F-words and sporting mannish mannerisms, left me feeling as if I didn't get the memo. I decided they didn't need my basketball skills. I was more than a little wary of whatever game they were playing. Colleges back then did not have to deal with athletes openly touting a "gender identity" that was different from their sex, as they do today.

The growing gay culture also had invaded the classroom. My sociology professor took the better part of class one day to describe for us in joyful detail the lesbian "wedding" of two friends he had attended in Washington, D.C. the previous weekend. I worked with his wife in my part-time library job and actually got to meet said couple when they visited her there. I remember one of them having a rainbow "Gay power for gay lovers" patch—a fad of that era—sewn onto her back jeans pocket. Not long after that, I was sorting the library's mail when out of its plain, brown wrapper fell the latest issue of *Playboy*, its cover graced by two amorous, doe-eyed coeds. A cover line unabashedly asked, "Should I sleep with my roommate"? Fortunately, I didn't have one since I lived at home and commuted to classes. I wondered just how many of my

classmates were conducting that social experiment. It was hard to get the *Playboy* image out of my mind.

Home was not exactly the picture of bliss for me. My parents had divorced a few years earlier. My dad was an alcoholic, laboring at recovery but with a long journey still ahead of him. Mom worked hard to hold everything together. My younger brother routinely embarrassed me by carousing around the campus with the son of one of my professors, dabbling in drugs and generally living la vida macho, seventies-style, with willing students. Otherwise, he was at home, playing his psychedelic music as loud as possible, sending me to the campus library until closing time late at night. Still, I am probably quite fortunate to have lived at home during my college years. Otherwise, I fear I too would have fallen to the many temptations that were all around me. It was a different world on campus. As it was, I was having trouble staying chaste in a long-distance relationship with the boyfriend whom I naïvely believed I would marry after we graduated.

I babysat for a family that lived just up the street from me. The liberated mother of two—a Northern transplant to our sleepy, little college town who had married a local boy—left the infamous feminist tome, *Women Unite: Our Bodies, Ourselves*, out in plain sight for me to secretly read after the children were in bed. My head was spinning with confused images. Raised in a conservative, church-going community—with a Southern Baptist upbringing since birth—I was caught between two worlds. There was no escaping the ubiquitous sexual revolution, with its strong feminist and homosexual undertow. I knew, although no one else did, that I was in danger of being carried out to sea by it. Twenty years would pass, half of which I spent cycling in and out of major depression, the other half fighting the homosexual temptations that depression had dulled, before I dared to taste the forbidden fruit. The agony that came with capitulating to that sin was like

a knife repeatedly piercing my heart—far worse than the pain of unrequited desire.

Those wounds healed ever so slowly through solid counseling and other support, which included much prayerful time I spent prostrate before God, seeking his face and his will for my life. Eventually, mercifully, I came to see myself in the whole image of God. That healing formed a hope and compassion in me that I am compelled today to extend to others like me—especially those brought up as Christians—who are similarly struggling with same-sex attraction. Many of them remain hidden in their secret closets or cloistered in small, accepting communities. Others have come out and live as openly gay men and women while some choose celibacy. A growing number of them are now Christian activists seeking “freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression”—in other words, full acceptance by the Church for homosexuality as a “gift” from God. The one thing we all know, regardless of how we interpret Scripture, is that we never actually chose the terribly conflicted feelings we have known. They are so complex as to be somewhat beyond our comprehension, despite the oversimplified and scientifically or biblically unsupported explanations we have been spoon-fed by the media and gay activists and even those Christian extremist groups bent on exposing the “lies from the pits of hell” of gay affirmation. For me, it is sufficient to accept this brokenness as a symptom of a fallen, sinful world. That means only one legitimate solution exists for reconciling its confusion and pain: Jesus Christ.

The Gates of Hell Are Pushing

Flash forward about 25 years from my college days to this same part of Central Virginia—Jerry Falwell country—and a sunny Sunday morning in October 1999. On the sidewalks outside Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg—my church, as of earlier

that year—stands a gathering of Christian gay protestors and their supporters. They are part of Soulforce, the nonviolent but subtly militant gay activist organization led by Rev. Mel White, former evangelical ghostwriter for Falwell and other prominent Christians. The group has managed to get Falwell to agree to a meeting between representatives of the Christian gay and local church communities in an attempt to tone down the “anti-gay rhetoric” they say has issued forth from the pulpit at Thomas Road and other conservative churches for too long. Most churchgoers that morning enter through side doors or politely walk by, smiling and largely ignoring the equally polite protestors. A few stop and speak with them, some of those conversations leading shortly afterward to a web-based project called Bridges Across the Divide. Some national, regional, and local news media folk mill about. The much-ballyhooed meeting goes off with only a few hitches (the Church leadership does not allow the two groups to “break bread” together, for instance, citing scriptural injunctions). Falwell preaches a somewhat conciliatory sermon that morning, but elects not to broadcast it later to the nation over “The Old Time Gospel Hour” television program. In the end, nothing changes. Falwell is not “converted” to pro-gay theology (although I know he continued to have great compassion for his old friend, White), hell does not freeze over, and Soulforce just paints a bigger target on the “religions right.”

We’ve come a long way, baby—from a ghetto subculture of closeted gays and lesbians taking root predominantly in cities like San Francisco, New York City, and New Orleans, to out-and-about, progressive Christian gays, fomenting a movement that is splintering mainline church denominations and is coming ever closer to bridging the ideological gap in the minds of many Americans. We’re in a full political, cultural, and spiritual war waged by influence-peddling activists, lobbyists, and the media. A main objective—the coveted spoils of this war—is the right

to constitutionally define the ancient institution of marriage, either as it has been traditionally or broadened by judicial fiat or legislative sleight-of-hand to include same-sex couples and more, altering the socio-political landscape forever. Many gays just want mainstream legitimacy. Problematically for them, many others still want to keep the sassy, edgy, party-loving image. The gay-rights movement can appear to be a tug-of-war between the two elements. Conservative sociologists and many biblically literate Christians fervently believe legally sanctioned gay marriage will do the already-embattled family no favors, and could well be its fatal blow. The result, goes the reasoning, would be unprecedented upheaval for all civilization, for which a married mom and dad rearing children is the essential building block. Liberal sociologists and activists argue that traditional marriage has long been in a precarious freefall (the divorce rate was already at 33 percent in the fifties) and that allowing homosexuals to marry and even raise children will not further erode traditional families, well-reasoned counter-arguments notwithstanding. What ought to be obvious no longer is for many because we have moved ever farther away in this postmodern era from moral clarity and truth.

There is even a socialist/anarchist sub-voice within homosexual activism that questions why gays should ever want to emulate the patriarchal bastion of oppression they perceive marriage as representing. Perhaps that's why the lesbian couple whose lawsuit brought us gay marriage in Massachusetts in 2003 eventually filed for divorce. The other states that are slowly affirming and codifying same-sex marriage—five so far, not counting the several more recognizing gay civil unions or the two states whose voters fought back and won—may as well stand by for a new wave of divorces and the heart-rending child custody battles they will breed as the courts are asked to rule with a set of laws intended to cover heterosexual marriages. California

remains locked in a back-and-forth pattern, with its fate likely to be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Transgender issues aside, traditional custody disputes don't deal with ex-men or ex-women as warring parents. However, some prominent legal cases have arisen when one same-sex spouse or partner has opted to renounce homosexuality and claim a God-ordained right as the legitimate parent of a child brought into that union, via artificial insemination, a surrogate arrangement, or a previous heterosexual marriage. It is most common in lesbian unions that go sour. The most prominent so far has been the seven-year ongoing battle over custody and visitation involving a now-8-year-old child in the Lisa Miller-Janet Jenkins (*Miller v. Jenkins*) case. This case involves two states—Vermont, a gay marriage state and Virginia, a state with a particularly strong one-man, one-woman constitutional marriage amendment and a Marriage Affirmation Act. Miller is the child's biological mother who chose a relationship with Jesus Christ over homosexuality after being in a brief civil union with Jenkins, an avowed lesbian. Just how abundant are longtime-monogamous same-sex unions, such as those the media enthusiastically parade in front of us? No one knows.

The Great Cover-up?

Another rallying cry for both sides of this cultural debate is on the HIV/AIDS front. AIDS was a hot topic again in 2006, the 25th anniversary of its emergence as a serious public health problem. Men having sex with men (MSM) remain at the highest end of the risk scale for the HIV virus and were responsible for 50-70 percent of known infections in the U.S., as of 2006 when the latest data was analyzed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC (MMWR) report, "HIV Prevalence Estimates—United States, 2006," details data "suggesting that HIV prevalence in the United States increased by approximately 112,000 (11.3

percent) from 2003 to 2006.” HIV in the black MSM population is nearly twice as prevalent as it is in the white MSM population, and it is proliferating in the black heterosexual population, as well. Except for pockets, the worldwide pandemic is not receding and is affecting increasing numbers of women, children, and various ethnic groups. Cultural differences and moral sentiment/stigma vary from country to country, making the virus’ spread more difficult to contain. Money remains an issue, even though the cost of newer antiretroviral drugs has decreased. Some complain of the lack of funds to finance research and development of more vaccines, needed because of the adaptability of the various HIV viral strains. Yet AIDS research gets considerably more funding per victim than any other deadly disease. Others maintain too much money is being siphoned off by profiteering drug companies, is wasted on ineffective public education programs, or is tied up in the ideological wars between funding factions. Those advocating stronger abstinence-based programs are dismissed as proselytizers and science bashers. The evidence shows the ABC—Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condoms—approach to HIV prevention works dramatically better than the “safe-sex” condom approach alone. Uganda saw a substantial reduction in HIV/AIDS rates during the first eight to ten years of this approach, from 15 percent of the population infected to only 5 percent. Kenya’s rate of reduction also has been impressive.¹

But Uganda has been in a heated battle over gay rights and HIV/AIDS policies. Faith and science are at war there, with lots of U.S. aid on the line. Uganda’s HIV rates, which went from the highest in all of Africa to the lowest, proving that a population can be motivated to change risky behaviors, have been climbing again. In this largely Christian nation, some ultra-conservative elements have sought draconian legislative measures aimed at wiping out their “gay problem” by targeting not only “serial offenders”—those

who have even consensual gay sex with one or more partners—or predatory “defilers,” but also those who sympathize too much with homosexuals for the national comfort level. Homosexuality is a serious “crime against nature” to many Ugandans. Some government officials in Uganda, as well as some fiery, indignant church leaders, have even pushed for the death penalty for those found guilty of certain “aggravated” sexual offenses—having sex with a minor or a disabled person or exposing a sexual partner, consensual or not, to HIV. International pressure, including outcries from some prominent American evangelicals and the U.S. Department of State, has kept this battle on the international radar. Life imprisonment already exists in Uganda for certain heterosexual and homosexual offenses, including “defilement” or adults having sex with persons under the age of 18. Singling out gays for harsher punishment than heterosexuals committing the same offenses is not likely to fly in a country where archaic tribal rituals and serial infidelity still greatly multiply human suffering.

South Africa, a country that has pushed condoms as AIDS prevention more than any other in Africa, had the highest rate of HIV infections in the world as of 2005, according to the 2006 UNAIDS Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic. A 2005 study by the Human Sciences Research Council showed that 10.8 percent of the South African population was then infected with HIV/AIDS.² Those numbers have continued to increase, especially in older women, who, it is reasoned, are more victimized by cultural ignorance and ingrained sexual practices than younger women, among whom HIV infection rates have dropped some. Craig Timberg, writing for *The Washington Post*, reported in March 2007, “Researchers increasingly attribute the resilience of HIV in Botswana—and in southern Africa generally—to the high incidence of multiple sexual relationships.” He further concluded, “Soaring rates of condom use have not brought down high HIV rates. Instead, they rose together,

until both were among the highest in Africa.”³ The 2008 UNAIDS report offers the sobering assessment that “... prevention programs, especially in countries with concentrated epidemics, fail to reach many people at high risk of exposure to HIV, including a majority of men who have sex with men and injecting drug users.”⁴ In the U.S., the gay community attempts to downplay its role in the spread of HIV infections, and younger populations of gay men, as well as some minority populations, are not as well-informed on preventive measures as they should be.

The South African government chose to provide unlimited condoms free of charge. Well-manufactured condoms are about 80-90 percent effective in preventing the HIV virus, if used properly and consistently. That’s the big “if” that argues against their exclusive use, other moral questions aside. If people can’t control their sexual impulses, how do we expect them (especially teens) to be disciplined in condom use? The latex prophylactic is also less effective than touted against other sexually transmitted diseases. Abstinence until marriage and faithfulness to one’s spouse are—how often must it be repeated?—100 percent effective in preventing all STDs. The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), first proposed by President Bush in his 2003 State of the Union address, originally contained a proviso that roughly one-third of its allotted funds would be spent on fidelity and abstinence-based prevention education. Congress has all but removed that requirement from the program, while dramatically increasing the funding for drugs and condoms.

Gay rights advocates even fight among themselves over how best to prevent and treat HIV infections. Divided in principle and practice, each side points fingers at those they consider to be political sell-outs. In gaydom, they have been called “Uncle Toms.” The latest five-year strategy released by PEPFAR in December 2009 proposed reducing the HIV infection rate by 12 million cases.

An article in *The Lancet*, the esteemed British medical journal, in March 2010, however, pointed out in no uncertain terms the “deep gulf” within the prevention community, which makes this goal untenable:

One camp sees that multiple sexual partnerships drive infection in generalised epidemics in eastern and southern Africa, dispersed through the broad population. The other emphasises the large number of already infected individuals, particularly the many existing discordant couples, and stresses widespread HIV testing. But careful examination of these complex generalised epidemics reveals a crucial role for both components, and provides a basis for a unifying approach.⁵

In a *Lancet* commentary, in which Shelton replied to a letter concerning HIV myths, he said, “We are failing to focus properly on the key driver of these generalised (as opposed to concentrated) HIV epidemics: concurrent sexual partnerships.” He further pointed out that “the latest UNAIDS annual report does not even mention concurrent partners or partner reduction, and the 2007 report of the Global Health Prevention Working Group barely notes it.” And he concludes “the major prevention strategy emerging in the 1980s—the most-at-risk strategy—has been highly successful in helping contain concentrated epidemics with more modest funding.”⁶

The Kinsey Connection

It is interesting to go back and review the run-up to the Stonewall era in the gay movement, known then as the “homophile” movement. One influential figure was Frank Kameny, a homosexual scientist who had been fired from a

government job in the 1950s McCarthy era. Deciding that the government had “declared war” on him, he became a full-fledged gay rights activist, to the extent possible in those days. Less-radical homosexual activists had been trying to get someone within the medical/mental health establishment to acquiesce and push for reversing the long-held view of homosexuality as a disordered condition. “The prejudiced mind is not penetrated by information, and is not educable,” said Kameny.⁷ True, and applicable to both sides in the debate we continue to engage in today. Kameny dismissed the “experts” who disagreed with him and undertook his own PR campaign. Taking his lead from the black civil rights movement, as Mel White later would do in establishing Soulforce, he said, “I do not see the NAACP and CORE worrying about which chromosome and gene produced a black skin, or about the possibility of bleaching the Negro.” Playing off the “Black is beautiful” slogan, Kameny—he would go on to run for Congress as an openly gay candidate in 1971—coined another: “Gay is good.”⁸ It is Kameny who takes credit for convincing us that 10 percent of the general population is homosexual. “I personally created the ‘10-percent figure’ in late 1960 for use in my position to the U.S. Supreme Court, in my own case,” he said in a letter to the *Washington Blade* on September 6, 2002. “The figure was based upon a reasonable and plausible, intentionally conservative and understated interpretation of the Kinsey data, which were the only statistics then available.”

Ah, Kinsey. Social scientists have many a bone to pick with his research. Some sources maintain his data was more conservative than generally depicted—that he supposedly claimed only 4 percent of the adult male population and about 2 percent of females were exclusively homosexual. Kameny’s arbitrary 10 percent figure, then, is overblown even by Kinseyan standards. It is Kinsey who gave the sexual continuum theory and the bisexuality movement

their initial impetus. He claimed that as many as 37 percent of the male population have had at least one homosexual encounter. Of course, most of his sexual research subjects were prison inmates. The ones that weren't infants or children, that is.

Dr. Judith Reisman and Edward Eichel's 1990 book, *Kinsey, Sex, and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People*, deconstructed Alfred Kinsey's research. A 1989 book entitled *AIDS: Sexual Behavior and Intravenous Drug Use*, from the National Academy of Science, originally supporting Kinsey's work, recanted:

It has long been recognized that one of the greatest faults of the Kinsey research was the way in which the cases were selected; the sample is not representative of the entire U.S. population or of any definable group in the population. This fault limits the comparability and appropriateness of the Kinsey data as a basis for calculating the prevalence of any form of sexual conduct.⁹

More Kinsey bad news appeared in James H. Jones' 1997 book, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life*:

The man I came to know bore no resemblance to the canonical Kinsey. Anything but disinterested, he approached his work with missionary fervor. Kinsey loathed Victorian morality. ... He was determined to use science to strip human sexuality of its guilt and repression. He wanted to undermine traditional morality, to soften the rules of restraint. ... Kinsey was a crypto-reformer who spent his every waking hour attempting to change the sexual mores and sex offender laws of the United States.¹⁰

Hijacking the Mental Health System

As the 1960s and seventies progressed, the gay movement took on the militant, socialist character of the anti-war, anti-establishment, and feminist movements. In 1973, gay activists found their (somewhat reluctant) man inside the medical establishment. Dr. Robert Spitzer, pressured by the literal taking over of the American Psychiatric Association's convention that year by militant gays, spearheaded the move to eliminate homosexuality from the list of diagnosable mental disorders. This was another benchmark for gay rights—a revolution within the revolution—that set the stage for the gay cultural gains made in the three ensuing decades. Of course, 1973 was a banner year for anarchists as that was also the year of *Roe v. Wade*, the historic Supreme Court decision that found the right to privacy in the Constitution and formed another defining cultural and moral battle. Once the APA did an about-face—only roughly one-third of its members tacitly voiced approval through a later vote—other organizations within the medical establishment began to capitulate like dominoes and trumpet homosexuality as normal, acceptable behavior. Gay was good. Science had declared it so.

In their 2005 book, *Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well-Intentioned Path to Harm*, psychologists Nicholas Cummings (past president of the American Psychological Association) and Rogers Wright lament “the ascent of social activism over open-minded scientific inquiry and quality care in the current mental health establishment.”¹¹ Cummings and Wright describe themselves as “lifelong liberal activists,” so they are hardly conspiratorial conservative mouthpieces. Cummings was part of the first task force that championed the mental health needs of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. However, the authors come out strong against the current direction of the mental health establishment when dealing with homosexuality:

In the current climate, it is inevitable that conflict arises among the various subgroups in the marketplace. For example, gay groups within the APA have repeatedly tried to persuade the association to adopt ethical standards that prohibit therapists from offering psychotherapeutic services designed to ameliorate “gayness” on the basis that such efforts are unsuccessful and harmful to the consumer. Psychologists who do not agree are termed homophobic. Such efforts are especially troubling because they abrogate the patient’s right to choose the therapist and determine therapeutic goals. They also deny the reality of data demonstrating that psychotherapy can be effective in changing sexual preferences in patients who have a desire to do so.¹²

To its credit, the American Psychological Association did recently acknowledge through its Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation that religiously mediated efforts toward sexual orientation change could be helpful for those whose same-sex attractions are incongruent with their faith or religious worldview. Still basically anti-change in philosophy, the APA nonetheless conceded that statistically significant numbers of people seeking help through faith-based counseling or support groups for unwanted same-sex attraction do move in a positive direction along the scale of change, or more readily accept celibacy as an option.

It is not just psychology and psychiatry that have been politically hijacked out of the medical establishment by gay activists. Medicaid has even paid for controversial sex-change (“reassignment”) surgeries in some states, costing taxpayers as

much as \$85,000 per surgery. The state of Washington decided in 2006 to halt Medicaid funding of such surgeries at about the same time its state Supreme Court voted to uphold its voters' ban on gay marriage.¹³

I find it most intriguing that depression has become more and more medicalized as a clinical impairment over the past 30 years while homosexuality has become more normalized. Today, growing numbers in the medical community are realizing the mistake in taking sorrow, a necessary and even useful human condition, and trying to treat it medically and psychologically or mask it altogether. While some depression is clinical and related to other physical ailments, much of it is not. Taking the possible developmental and clear health-risk factors out of the homosexual medical literature for political expediency is as wrong as throwing open the pharmaceutical flood gates and enslaving untold numbers of depressed "patients" to drugs. To call homosexuality per se a "mental illness" when many on the GLBT spectrum appear otherwise normal, functional, and ostensibly happy, would clearly be a stretch in postmodern culture. But can we be sure there is no inherent pathology in homosexuality? Can we really declare normal a condition whose sexual behaviors run counter to every natural law mankind has long known and that is accompanied by some serious health risks? The medical establishment has an obligation, for the sake of public health if for no other reason, to closely examine its current positions on homosexuality. That jury remains out, weighing the evidence, popular sentiment and politics notwithstanding. Gay rights activists, of course, tend to turn purple with anger and cast their opponents in the most hateful terms when confronted with the unsavory facts. Extremists on the other side of the fence spit out their accusations with equal contempt.

After the medical establishment came on board with the gay movement, the public education system was the next target for gay

propaganda. In 1987, the GLBT Educators Caucus was established within the liberal National Education Association (NEA). This opened the door for various gay-themed educational programs to enter the classroom, many being initially pushed in California, one of the gayest bellwether states. Staunch California conservatives came out swinging. They threatened to pull their children out of public schools and made their voices heard in boisterous school board meetings as they fought against blatant gay propaganda in the classroom. Christian child psychologist James Dobson began to urge his huge constituency of Focus on the Family radio program listeners to contact state representatives and voice their objections to questionable education policies and legislation that grew more prevalent into the nineties. The battle, often played out in the courts through legal challenges to controversial statutes, kept California's and other states' constitutional attorneys busy.

Creating Homophobia and “Suspect” Status

In 1989 (the year Kinsey was first debunked), a rather radical, if arcane, pro-gay book, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90's* by Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, appeared. It advocated a tri-partite strategy for helping America to conquer its unsavory homophobia and to accept gay as normal: desensitize, jam, and convert the “bigots.” The book has been widely misquoted, although why I cannot say. There is more than enough incriminating material in it without rearranging it. The book could have benefited from some rewriting, since the two authors seemed enamored with stilted phrasing. They suggested a massive, but unrealistic advertising campaign to help secure their objectives. They considered that they would be accused of “exchanging one false stereotype for another equally false.” They maintain, however, that “it makes no difference that the ads are lies; not to us, because we're using them to ethically good effect. ...”

The authors spend a good deal of the book pointing out the ways in which the gay community is a house of cards. They maintain the gay community is ruled by “too many fiefdoms.” Interestingly, Kirk and Madsen claim there is (was) a “permanent identity crisis” in the gay community, that gays “compartmentalize their notion of self into two halves, like a split personality—part gay and part non-gay—and hold that the latter part is really more representative.” The authors discuss the factors that “discourage the we-feeling among gays,” such as the social chasm between gay males and females and the discomfort their forced political intimacy engenders. They also point out the division within the male gay camp, and call it the “R-types” (those manly gays who can pass themselves off as straight) vs. the “Q-types” or “homosexuals on display.” Despite all these problems, Kirk and Madsen propose a propagandistic image makeover for gays, though they seem to question from the outset that it will work. “Our effect is achieved without reference to facts, logic, or proof,” they state.

Whether this was an organized strategy for social change or the historical convergence of pro-gay trends and attitudes, today we see that the methods for bringing about critical changes in public attitudes and policies related to gay rights have played out better than Kirk, Madsen, and other activists could have imagined. The assertions Kirk and Madsen made that: (1) “Gays don’t feel an urgent need to liberate themselves and transform their society by eliminating homohatred,” and (2) “Gays don’t see themselves as members of a valuable and cohesive cultural group worth fighting for,” today are laughable.¹⁴ The gay ethos now pervades institution after institution. It has taken biblical truth captive and is redefining our cultural mores, while many in the Church fret and fume or are stymied by paralysis of analysis. Not wanting to either appear intolerant of their gay brothers or sisters or incur the wrath of their fellow truth-dividing, Bible-reading

Christians, many just pretend not to notice anything is amiss. Others have leapt over the transom and have come to equate love and compassion with full acceptance of homosexuality, taking sin right out of the equation.

Since 1972, when gay rights activists first marched on Washington, D.C., demanding to be recognized as a bona-fide minority group—and even more so after they marched again in 1993—their social change tent, Church or no Church, has grown enormously. Here is a basic run-down of both federal- and state-level gains for gay rights:

Affirmative Action/Minority Status for Gays:

More and more cities with gay rights legislation in force (San Francisco and Denver were two of the first) have instituted affirmative action goals for gay city employees.

Federal Grants for Gay-as-Normal Sex Education Curriculum:

From 1993-1995, nearly \$38 million in federal grant money was given to promote gay-related “health studies” in America’s public schools. In 2006 and 2007, California made sweeping pro-gay changes in curriculum and public education policies, and other states have followed.

Federal Discrimination Aid for Gay Advocacy Organizations:

By 1982, an exhaustive study had revealed that the federal government was providing 58 percent of funding for all American homosexual advocacy organizations. It is commonly known that per-case federal spending on AIDS research (which here in the United States has a skewed benefit to gay males) far exceeds spending on research for other diseases producing comparable or much larger mortality rates.

Non-Discrimination Against Gays in Insurance Coverage:

Gay rights lobbyists were largely responsible for AIDS being declared a “disability” under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991). Thus, AIDS has become the world’s first 100-percent fatal disease to be protected by “minority rights,” thus making non-discrimination against AIDS sufferers mandatory for employers and insurers.

Child Custody, Adoption, Visitation, Foster-Parenting Rights for Gays:

In November 1995, the New York Supreme Court, noting “fundamental changes” in the American family, ruled (4-3) that neither heterosexual nor homosexual couples have to be married to adopt a child together. In July 1996, the Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals ruled that homosexual unmarried couples in “committed relationships” are permitted to adopt children under District law. Other states have followed suit. A Vermont court declared in 2003 that an unrelated, non-adoptive, lesbian civil union partner was a “parent” to the child born to the other partner. These are the tip of the iceberg.

Legalization of Same-Sex Marriages:

Hawaii was the first state whose Supreme Court heard a gay marriage case in 1993. The court reinstated an earlier lawsuit by three gay couples that had been thrown out by a circuit court judge. As public policy analyst Whitney Galbraith observed, “The key to the [Hawaii Supreme Court’s] decision [regarding same-sex “marriage”] was the court’s declaring same-sex couples to be part of a ‘suspect class.’” If gays are indeed part of a suspect class, they should not be denied such privileges as marriage either, the argument goes.¹⁵ Though Hawaii subsequently passed a state constitutional amendment authorizing its legislature to ban gay

marriage (which it did), the prior court rulings there opened the door for other states to pursue similar pro-gay-marriage options. Hawaii's legislature authorized civil unions in 2010, but the governor refused to sign the bill into law, viewing it as "marriage by another name."

In November 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court became the first in the nation to rule in favor of gay marriage. In May 2008, California's Supreme Court joined suit, but its decision was overturned by voters six months later and then reinstated by a federal judge. Four additional states (Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Iowa) and the District of Columbia have since codified same-sex marriage, in one way or another. Maine's legislature passed a gay-marriage bill in 2009, but voters turned it back, as California had done the previous year. New Jersey recognizes same-sex civil unions (Illinois is headed there) while Oregon, Washington, California, Colorado, Nevada, Hawaii, Wisconsin, and Maryland currently have domestic partnership laws similar to civil unions.

Syndicated columnist Mike Royko, not exactly a conservative, wrote more than a decade ago that gays were hardly the oppressed minority they claim to be. They are arguably less so today:

[Homosexuals'] difficulties look pretty meager compared to those of the poor, the uneducated, and the unemployed. It may be a politically incorrect risk to disagree with those hundreds of thousands of homosexual demonstrators who gathered in Washington, but, no, this decade will not be 'The Gay '90s.' That's because there are so many people in this country who have far worse problems than do homosexual men and lesbians.¹⁶

The Little Rainbow Schoolhouse

Edging ever closer to its “gaytopia,” California led up to its landmark 2008 gay marriage ruling with several earlier banner legislative years for gay rights. “The 2005-2006 legislative session in California broke the record for the most lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights bills ever passed by a state legislature in our nation’s history,” touted Geoff Kors, executive director of Equality California, which brought the lawsuit that state justices heard before ruling in favor of gay marriage.¹⁷ In 2006, the California legislature was compelled to vote on a bill, introduced by openly gay Democratic State Senator Sheila Kuehl of Santa Monica, that would mandate school children be given “age-appropriate” and positive instruction about the contributions of “people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, to the economic, political, and social development of California. ...” Gov. Schwarzenegger made good on his vow to veto even a revised version of the bill (political posturing in an election year, perhaps?). At the height of the controversy, almost 90,000 faxes opposing the bill were sent from pro-family Californians to the offices of state assemblymen in one 24-hour period, according to Focus on the Family, which led the pro-family charge.¹⁸

That bill had another stealth companion that managed to work its way through the California legislature along party lines and was signed into law by Schwarzenegger in the summer of 2006. It gives the state superintendent of public instruction the power to withhold state funds for any school district deemed to be discriminating against gays, and scrutinizes classroom instruction, Big Brother-style. Dan Walters, State Capitol columnist for *The Sacramento Bee*, wrote of this move, “Treating all people, regardless of sexual orientation, with absolute equality is one thing. In seeking such equality in marriages and other fields, gay rights advocates, it could be said, are occupying the moral high ground.

There's nothing moral about legally mandating propaganda of any kind in the classroom."¹⁹ While Walters' statement about gay activists owning the "moral high ground" is improperly accepted as axiomatic among most members of the press, his aptly expressed sentiment about propaganda in the classroom is not gaining traction in liberal-leaning California.

In the fall of 2007, Schwarzenegger was fighting two firestorms—the literal blazing inferno that burned a half-million acres of the state and the backlash from a bill long desired by gay rights activists that he finally signed into law: SB 777. The bill prohibits anything "discriminatory" from being said in California classrooms about homosexuality. The implication is that it will be mainstreamed as normal behavior into curriculum. As California goes, so goes the nation, historically.

Many California families, predictably, have begun a new wave of defections from public schools, and even from the near-bankrupt state, itself. Gov. Schwarzenegger chose not to fight the state Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage, despite its overturning of the people's 61-percent-majority mandate in 2000's Proposition 22 vote. The people had the final say again, however.

Political Expediency and Our Children

There is little doubt that the exponential growth of school Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs has impacted the rush for teens to identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or "questioning," regardless of how well-intentioned these clubs may be or how much actual anti-gay bullying goes on in schools. School bullying hit the national agenda as a problem sorely needing to be confronted in the fall of 2010 after a series of heart-wrenching student suicides, some from gay or perceived-gay youth. Confused students are encouraged to find their label from among those on the GLBTQ spectrum. Popular youth fiction (such as the book

Misfits) and other media influences through MTV and network programming aimed at teens are contributing to the problem. In 2007, we saw the first-ever transgender high school students running for prom queen/king in California (one—a “drag queen” looking lovelier than some of the real girls—even won). This wave has not yet begun to crest. Are kids just thinking this is amusing and harmless counter-culture stuff? At least one lawsuit against a school district was filed by a female student who says she was humiliated when, among other things, only a handful of students showed up at her high school’s alternative prom. It was organized for the gay-identified students who were barred from attending the official one as same-sex couples.

A large youth problem yet to be dealt with is just coming to light. Recent studies are finding that gay-identified teens, and especially girls who say they are bisexual, are at much higher risk for depression and suicide than previously known. One such study came from the University of British Columbia’s McCreary Research Centre, which found that bisexual teen girls are nearly four times as likely to attempt suicide as straight girls and three times as likely as gay teen boys.²⁰ Bisexuality, or experimentation with it, is clearly on the rise among teens, especially girls. It is common knowledge among students, and my own daughters, while still in high school—a Christian school—confirmed it existed among their peers.

Another noteworthy study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in October 2005 found that risky behavior in the form of sex, alcohol, and drugs causes the most teen depression.²¹ Conventional wisdom had thought just the opposite—that sex and drugs were forms of self-medication for already-depressed teens. Commenting on the study in a November 30, 2005 article for *The Christian Post* and other publications, Dr. Warren Throckmorton, professor of psychology at Grove City College in Pennsylvania,

said that depression may be “the new sexually transmitted disease” among teens. The two-year study, authored by Dr. Denise Hallfors of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, showed that girls experimenting with sex of any kind were three times more likely to be depressed than those who abstain from all sexual activity (12 percent versus 4 percent). For sexually promiscuous teen girls, the results were shocking: 44 percent of girls with multiple sexual partners during the study period experienced depression.²² Hallfors concluded, “Parents, educators, and health practitioners now have even more reason to be concerned about teen risk behaviors and to take action about alcohol, drugs, and sex.”²³

“Morally Straight”?

Gay rights activists have taken aim at any institution they believe is vulnerable to their threats and “bullying” tactics, and that now even includes churches or anything remotely parachurch. They have set their sights on the Boy Scouts of America with a vengeance, attempting repeatedly to force the century-old organization to allow gay scouts and gay scoutmasters to join—a violation of its moral code. The Scouts win some and lose some. In an ironic turn of events following a lawsuit filed on behalf of a Christian Good News Club in a California school district, claiming the club should be allowed free use of school district facilities because the Boy Scouts were afforded that courtesy, the court ruled against both organizations and began charging the Scouts a rent fee. “Now there will be no discriminatory treatment between evangelists and Boy Scouts,” Jose Gonzales, an attorney for the San Diego Unified School District, was reported as saying in *The Union-Tribune*.²⁴

The Boy Scouts won two prior legal battles in San Diego, being allowed to continue leasing land for a camp in historic Balboa

Park, and an aquatic center on Fiesta Island, while Philadelphia, the “City of Brotherly Love,” handed them what initially had appeared to be a staggering defeat. There, where the Scouts’ third-largest council, the Cradle of Liberty Council, has had its headquarters for 80 of the venerable organization’s 100 years, the openly gay city solicitor and other activists tried to force the Scouts out of the building they built with their own hands in 1923 but had given back to the city in an agreement to lease the offices for \$1 a year “in perpetuity.” The city found a way to get around the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2000 ruling in support of the Scouts’ right to exclude openly gay scouts and scoutmasters from membership and to make the Scouts pay for it, since they own the property the historic building sits on. They sought to make the Philly council pay the fair market value in rent for their building of \$200,000 per year or vacate. The Scouts filed a lawsuit and, after more than two years, the case was finally decided in their favor.

“With violence on the rise, you’d think a program teaching integrity to 40,000 boys would be the last thing to go. But this city insists on putting political correctness first,” lamented a Family Research Council radio commentary, when the news of the Scouts’ Philly battle first broke.²⁵ An editorial appearing in the online edition of *Investor’s Business Daily* (“Scouts Honor,” Oct. 19, 2007) asked, “Isn’t it hypocritical, though, to be intolerant in the name of tolerance, to say that it’s wrong to disapprove of the lifestyles of others but OK to condemn the religious and moral beliefs of others?” The editorial further stated, “If America is about anything, it’s about the right to hold beliefs and views with which others disagree, the right to express and act on those views, and the right to freely associate with others holding similar views. That’s not bigotry; it’s true diversity.” Alas, many gay activists and their media champions don’t get that.

Ironically, one of the amicus briefs supporting the Boy Scouts

was filed by members of Gays and Lesbians for Individual Liberty. They pointed out that “infringement of the freedom of association would harm all Americans, but it would particularly threaten the welfare of gay and lesbian Americans.” Were they worried they might be forced to allow heterosexuals into their group or merely upholding the same standard for all?

While disgruntled gays have many legitimate complaints of mistreatment or discrimination, creating homo-hysteria or using hyperbole to inflate their woes will only earn them derision. Not every institution they dislike is fomenting homophobia or “spiritual violence.” Some are, to be sure. Others are just repeating old, worn talking points. It is incumbent on the Church and Christian organizations to take the lead in seeking to diffuse this crisis. What many see as an era of gay proliferation that has gone too far others see as an opportunity to bind old wounds and find a place of peaceful co-existence in which both sides seek to understand each other in the light of Scripture. God will judge what is in our hearts. He expects more from us than mere good intentions.