

Bearing False Witness: Balch's Effort at Demonization and His Truncated Gospel

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In my review essay (part 2) of David Balch's edited book, Homosexuality, Science, and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture, I respond to a highly tendentious review of my book, The Bible and Homosexual Practice, given by Balch for the Southwestern Regional Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in March 2003.¹ The two sections of my response entitled "Bearing False Witness: Balch's Effort at Demonization" and "Balch's Truncated Gospel"² were too long to fit into the print edition of the article. Consequently I provided a condensed version in the print edition. Here I offer the full-length version of these two sections of my response to Balch (see <http://www.robagnon.net/articles/homoBalchHBTReview2.pdf> for the rest of my response to Balch). Balch has reprised some of his vitriolic comments in a presentation to a Lutheran renewal group, WordAlone, at the WordAlone Annual Convention on Apr. 25-27, 2004. It is posted on the web at <http://www.wordalone.org/conferences/annual2004/balch.htm>. A response to his WordAlone piece will be added to this article in the near future.

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Balch's association of my book with lynching blacks. At the end of his critique,³ Balch finally throws off any remaining vestige of scholarly civility and Christian charity by charging me with inciting violence against homosexual persons. Balch associates my work with the deaths of three homosexual men that occurred in 1998-99 (*The Bible and Homosexual Practice* was published in 2001). I suppose that I should not be too surprised. Lacking any viable or substantive critique of my book, Balch ultimately has to rely on demagoguery. Balch even goes so far as to associate me with

the horror of whites lynching 4,752 blacks between 1882 and 1968, blacks who were dehumanized by ordinary Christians as "beasts, dogs, snakes, animals, and brutes."

Gagnon comes dangerously close to such prejudice by associating homosexuality with incest, polygamy, pedophilia, prostitution, and bestiality. Gagnon writes that same-sex intercourse is an "abominable and detested practice," which should call forth "social repugnance." In his book he uses similar terminology: depraved sexuality, disgusted, intense revulsion, visceral response. He compares gay/lesbian relations to incest, prostitution, bestiality, and pedophilia. In the context of American history and use of the Bible, this is scary language that tends to dehumanize others and to incite violence, the kind of violence perpetrated against Matthew Shepard, Billy Jack Gaither, and Barry Winchell.

¹Robert A. J. Gagnon, "A Comprehensive and Critical Review Essay of *Homosexuality, Science, and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture*, Part 2," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 25:2 (2003): 179-275 (available also at <http://www.robagnon.net/articles/homoBalchHBTReview2.pdf>). The critique of Balch appears on pp. 239-74.

²Ibid., 265-72 and 272-74, respectively.

³Pp. 13-14.

My response to Balch's base accusation is fourfold.

1. *Balch's calculated omission of my appeals to compassion.* Balch apparently decided that it would not fit the dehumanizing strategy of his review to note the many exhortations in my book to treat those with homoerotic desire with sympathy and compassion. **Here are four examples among many that he could have cited from my book:**

I deplore attempts to demean the humanity of homosexuals. . . . The person beset with homosexual temptation should evoke our concern, sympathy, help, and understanding, not our scorn or enmity. Even more, such a person should kindle a feeling of solidarity in the hearts of all Christians, since we all struggle to properly manage our erotic passions. . . . Thus a reasoned denunciation of homosexual behavior . . . is *not*, and should not be construed as, a denunciation of those victimized by homosexual urges, since the aim is to rescue the true self created in God's image for a full life.⁴

[In the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:28-35] Jesus was not telling the lawyer to affirm the Samaritan's belief system. . . . Nor was Jesus stating that whatever lifestyle the Samaritan adopted was to be treated as acceptable. He was asserting that the lawyer should respond to the Samaritan in love, not hate, acting with as much vigor in the Samaritan's best interest as he would be inclined to act in his own self-interest. In the contemporary case of the homosexual that means doing what is best for the homosexual, not necessarily what the homosexual lobby thinks is best. In other words, Christians should treat the homosexual as a friend to be converted over to the path of life, not as an enemy to be consigned to the path of death. . . . The church can and should recapture Jesus' zeal for all the "lost" and "sick" of society, including those engaged in homosexual practice. Concretely, this means visiting their homes, eating with them, speaking and acting out of love rather than hate, communicating the good news about God's rule, throwing a party when they repent and return home, and then reintegrating them fully into communities of faith.⁵

Far from being an unloving act, a sensitive refusal to condone homosexual conduct is the responsible and loving thing to do. . . . To simply assert that God loves us and forgives us as we are, without holding out the necessity and hope of a life conformed to the will of God, is to deny "God's power to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. . . ."

The church must not shirk its duty to effect the costly work of reconciliation that liberates persons from bondage to a sinful self. . . . The church should reject the notion that the only alternatives are to affirm homosexual behavior or to hate and harass homosexuals. Rather, the church must affirm a third option: to love the homosexual by humbly providing the needed support, comfort, and guidance to encourage the homosexual not to surrender to homosexual passions.⁶

With regard to church, practicing, self-affirming homosexuals should be treated as any other persons engaged in persistent, unrepentant acts of immoral sexual behavior. They should be loved and ministered to; the church of God must struggle along with them and share in the groanings of the Spirit. They should also be called to a higher standard of behavior. . . . The final word on the subject of homosexuality is and should always be:

⁴Ibid., 31-32.

⁵Ibid., 227-228.

⁶Ibid., 484-85. The quote about "God's power" is from an unpublished text of Marion Soards.

love God and love the homosexual “neighbor.” The homosexual and lesbian are not the church’s enemy but people in need of the church’s support for restoring to wholeness their broken sexuality through compassion, prayer, humility, and groaning together for the redemption of our bodies. . . . To denounce same-sex intercourse and then stop short of actively and sacrificially reaching out in love and concern to homosexuals is to have as truncated a gospel as those who mistake God’s love for “accepting people as they are” and who avoid talk of the gospel’s transformative power. It is to forget the costly and self-sacrifician work of God in our own lives, past and ongoing.

The policy stances that the church must take toward same-sex intercourse do not diminish the believer’s call to love the individual homosexual. Indeed, a keener understanding of the theological, social, and physical consequences of same-sex intercourse can *potentially* perform the salutary task of helping our “love abound still more and more in knowledge. . . (Phil 1:9-11). An ill-informed love can be just as destructive as hatred. It is not enough to want to love. . . . At the same time, it is not enough to know what is right. Knowledge can “puff up” or “inflate” the ego. It can become a weapon for exalting oneself over others in a smug attitude of moral superiority. It can turn into a tool for “depersonalizing” others. Love must be wedded with knowledge, faith must express itself in love. . . .

This book has been aimed at showing that affirming same-sex intercourse is not an act of love, however well meaning the intent. That road leads to death: physically, morally, and spiritually. Promoting the homosexual “rights” agenda is an awful and harmful waste of the church’s energies and resources. What does constitute an act of love is befriending the homosexual while withholding approval of homosexual behavior, working in the true interests of the homosexual despite one’s personal repugnance for same-sex intercourse, pursuing in love the homosexual while bearing the abuse that will inevitably come with opposing homosexual practice. It is the harder road to travel. It is too hard for many people to live within that holy tension. Yet it is the road that leads to life and true reconciliation; it is the calling of the church in the world.⁷

Balch never bothers to tell readers about such remarks throughout my book—and those cited above can be found in very obvious places: the introduction, the end of two chapters, and the last five pages of my book. **Only someone who is determined to lift particular remarks in my book grossly out of context could possibly misunderstand the point** that the church should reach out in love to those violating the very standards for sexual holiness that the church is obligated to uphold. Why doesn’t Balch point out such themes to readers? The answer is clear. Apparently he *wants* readers to draw an erroneous conclusion about my book. It does not serve his purposes to represent my work accurately and fairly, for his intent is to set up a “straw man” and to incite others to hatred of me and of my work. In behaving this way, Balch intentionally bears false witness against me and deceives his hearers.

2. Balch’s calculated effort at obscuring what the authors of Scripture thought. The statements that Balch pulls out of context from my work refer to what *the biblical writers* thought. Below I give the context for the expressions cited by Balch and put the expressions in italics:

[Compared with the issue of slavery] the homosexuality issue is put on an entirely different footing by Scripture, where there is not the slightest indication anywhere in the

⁷Ibid., 489-93.

canon that same-sex intercourse is anything other than *an abominable and detested practice*, a practice to be utterly eschewed by the people of God, Jew and gentile believer alike, at all times and in all circumstances.⁸

In short, homosexual practice . . . was *not* a matter of indifference for Paul. . . . To the contrary, for Paul, same-sex intercourse comes under the heading of “*depraved sexuality*” that is to be “laid aside” along with the other vices of [Rom] 13:13.⁹

[According to Rom 1:24-27] God deliberately decides not to intervene to thwart the control of sinful passions in order that the punishment might fit the crime. . . . the dishonoring of God leads to a dishonoring of self. The place of Rom 1:24-27 within the larger context . . . suggests that the hopeful intent of the punishment is reformatory. Humans *disgusted* by their self-debasing conduct become good candidates for receiving the gracious transforming power of the gospel and Spirit of Christ.¹⁰

The depth of Paul’s *visceral* feelings toward same-sex intercourse finds parallels not only in the level of disgust toward same-sex intercourse exhibited by other Jewish writers of the period but also in the responses to homosexual behavior in Paul’s scripture: the narratives of homosexual rape (Ham, the men of Sodom, and the Benjamites at Gibeah) as examples of the zenith of detestable behavior; the *intense revulsion* against homosexual cult prostitutes manifested in Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic texts; the special attachment of the label “abomination” to all male homosexual intercourse in the Levitical prohibitions; and possibly the unmentionable character of same-sex intercourse in Ezekiel, who refers to such behavior only by the metonym “abomination.”¹¹

What does Balch want to argue? That the biblical writers, as also ancient Israel, early Judaism, and early Christianity generally, were *not* repulsed by homosexual practice? That they would have responded favorably, or at least neutrally, to a committed homosexual union? Such notions are historically preposterous. And it is precisely this fact that poses such a problem for Balch. Scripture itself clearly expresses revulsion for the act of same-sex intercourse.

That is why homosexual practice plays a significant role in “kitchen sink” stories of great sin in the Old Testament (Ham, Sodom, the Levite at Gibeah). A sense of strong revulsion also explains why homoerotic behavior is tagged specially with the label “abomination” or “detestable act” in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 (*and* Ezek 16:50 and 18:12, *and* Deut 23:18; 1 Kgs 14:24) and “disgrace” or “disgraceful act” in Judg 19:23-24. Paul, too, in Rom 1:24-27 declared same-sex intercourse to be a supreme instance of “sexual uncleanness,” a self-“dishonoring” or self-“degrading” activity, an act “contrary to nature” and a shameful “indecent,” comparable on the horizontal dimension to vertical offense of idolatry and, according to 1 Cor 6:9, an activity that could bring about exclusion from God’s kingdom.

Balch rails against me for talking about same-sex intercourse in the same breath as incest, polygamy, pedophilia, prostitution, and bestiality. Yet this is precisely what the authors of Scripture do. Leviticus 20 puts male-male intercourse alongside the first tier of sexual offenses involving adultery, sex with one’s stepmother and daughter-in-law (and, by inference, sex with one’s mother or daughter), and sex with an animal. Paul in 1 Cor 6:9 speaks of *pornoï* (which, in

⁸“Review Essay, Part 1,” 197.

⁹*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 244.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 263.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 269.

context, includes men who commit incest [1 Cor 5] and men who have sex with prostitutes [1 Cor 6:15-18]) and of adulterers. When he highlights “sexual uncleanness” in Rom 1:24-27 as an instance of human suppression of the truth about God evident in creation and nature, Paul chooses same-sex intercourse as the prime example. Jewish writers of the period treat same-sex intercourse as a form of sexual immorality exceeded only by bestiality and as more or less comparable to the worst form of incest, sex with one’s mother.¹² Paul and, undoubtedly, Jesus viewed same-sex intercourse as a frontal assault on the two key creation texts regarding human sexuality, Gen 1:27 and 2:21-24; namely, on the concept there that two sexes are needed to reconstitute a one-flesh sexual whole, a “male and female,” a “man” and “his woman.” Balch does not point out the scriptural basis for associating same-sex intercourse with other sexual offenses because, of course, it is most inconvenient for him to do so.

Naturally, making comparisons between same-sex intercourse and other instances of sexual immorality does not infer an equation in all respects. It may merely reveal a particular fallacy in the reasoning of those who argue for same-sex intercourse. For example:

a. *Bestiality.* When someone argues that there is no such thing as a truly unnatural act, or that love is all that matters (trumping any alleged structural prerequisites), or that infrequency of mention in Scripture correlates with insignificance, or that there are no moral absolutes, one need only cite *bestiality* as a convincing proof for the opposite conclusion. To be sure, bestiality is not the best analogue to same-sex intercourse, both because bestiality is a worse offense than same-sex intercourse and because bestiality poses the opposite problem (sex between extreme “unlikes” rather than between extreme “likes”). But it nonetheless has value for making specific analogical points.

b. *Pedophilia.* While pedophilia and ephebophilia (adult-adolescent sex) have some of the same drawbacks as bestiality, they are not without merit as analogies to homosexual practice—and not just because of the existence of NAMBLA (the North American Man-Boy Love Association), occasional debate in the homosexual community regarding the merits and demerits of “intergenerational sex,”¹³ or the disproportionately high rate of adult-child and adult-adolescent sex among men who experience homoerotic impulses.¹⁴

First, attraction to children and/or adolescents is a “sexual orientation,” defined correctly as the directedness of one’s sexual desire at a given segment of one’s life. Recognition of this fact undermines typical attempts by prohomosex Christian groups to “thank God for the multiplicity of sexual orientations that exist in the church.”¹⁵ **The following comments by Dr. Fred Berlin,**

¹²Cf. “Notes to Gagnon’s Essay,” n. 17 (online at www.robgagnon.net). Views in early Judaism varied as to whether same-sex intercourse was worse, equivalent to, or less offensive than sex with one’s mother.

¹³E.g., *Journal of Homosexuality* 20:1-2 (1990). The entire issue was devoted to “male intergenerational intimacy.” For other connections between pedophilia and the homosexual community, see: Mary Eberstadt, “Pedophilia Chic’ Reconsidered,” *Weekly Standard* 6:16 (Jan. 1, 2001), online: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/content/public/articles/000/000/001/329pdstm.asp> (for part 2, replace “329pdstm.asp” with “330nanxg.asp”). Cf. Alan Sears and Craig Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principle Threat to Religious Freedom Today* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 83-87.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 83; *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 479-80. Of course, most homosexual persons are not pedophiles. Moreover, in terms of absolute numbers, more heterosexuals molest girls—precisely what one would expect given that 96-97% of the population self-identifies as heterosexual. The phrase “disproportionately high rate” is key.

¹⁵This is a quote from a liturgy devised by members of “Lutherans Concerned” for an ELCA synod forum that I participated in for the ELCA Southeastern Synod. Although it was presented as a statement that all could agree on, it was obviously intended to propagandize those present.

founder of the Sexual Disorders Clinic at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and professor of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, take the mystique off of the expression “sexual orientation” and the argument “God made me this way”:

People are attracted not only by gender—male, female—but also by other factors such as age. The average man refrains from sex with a child not only because he’s a moral person but also because a child does not tempt him sexually. The term used to describe an orientation toward pre-pubescent children is “pedophilia,” of which there are two types. One is the exclusive type: the person is attracted only to children. The other is the non-exclusive type: there is some attraction to adults. . . . Ephebophilia is a condition in which a person is attracted not to prepubescent children but to children or adolescents around the time of puberty, basically teenagers. . . .

We don’t know if [people have this condition] because they were born that way or because they were damaged during their early psychological maturation. Regardless of the cause, it’s not that they chose to be that way. . . . It may have to do with various hormones, with chromosomes, and so on. . . . There may also be some biological factors that determine the kinds of behaviors or kinds of partners that cause sexual arousal. There’s a lot of research going on in that area, so it may be that we will find that there are more biological factors that contribute to the intensity and nature of sexual desire than we previously suspected. We also now have biological treatments—not that we can change an orientation but if a person is hungering sexually for the wrong kinds of partners, to make it easier for them to resist acting on unacceptable sexual impulses. . . . People who are attracted to children often become aware of it at quite a young age, about the time most of us become aware of certain attractions. . . .

The common misperception about people who become sexually involved with children is that they are just pretending to care in order to get at them sexually. In most cases, it’s really quite different. The priest or whoever tends to have a genuine affection for the child and is interested in them in ways that would otherwise be quite positive. Then, sadly, because they feel sexually tempted and act on those temptations, what otherwise might have been a healthy and positive relationship becomes a damaging one. . . .

Pedophilia isn’t caused by celibacy. . . . There’s no cure for pedophilia. There is, however, effective and successful treatment. As with alcoholism, where there are many similarities, we talk about successful treatment but not cures. There’s something about your makeup that makes you vulnerable and you need to pay attention every day to make sure that you don’t, so to speak, fall off the wagon. If you think you’re cured, meaning that this vulnerability is somehow removed, that’s dangerous because you can let down your guard, stop maintaining vigilance, and gradually slip back into old habits. . . .

The Church . . . needs to be true to its belief in the possibility of salvaging the human life that’s gone astray. Forgiveness and atonement—those shouldn’t just be words. . . . The Church cannot be true to itself, if it treats the pedophile priest as though he is less than human.¹⁶

¹⁶Interview with the Office of Communications, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Sept. 8, 1997; available online at: <http://www.usccb.org/comm/kit6.htm>.

Pedophiles—or perhaps better, “pedosexuals”—are a group of persons with an identifiable sexual orientation. They do not ask to experience pedosexual desires; they simply do. Who would be a pedophile if it were a matter of choice? However, this does not absolve persons with innate pedosexual desires of moral responsibility. As Berlin aptly states elsewhere: “The biggest misconception about pedophilia is that someone chooses to have it. . . . It’s not anyone’s fault that they have it, but it’s their responsibility to do something about it.”¹⁷

This leads to a second point of comparison with homosexuality: The inability to cure completely a given set of innate impulses, sexual or otherwise, does not render therapeutic treatment a farce. Prohomosex activists have often ridiculed attempts to “change” homosexuals as futile. But change is a multifaceted phenomenon and refers in the first instance to ability to *manage* unwanted impulses. Alcoholics Anonymous has never proclaimed an ability to “cure” persons with an alcoholic disposition. Why then should we expect complete eradication of homoerotic impulses from sexual transformation ministries?

A third point of comparison has to do with the issue of harm. It is often argued that no consensual sexual relationship should be prohibited absolutely unless it can be demonstrated that the sexual activity produces scientifically measurable harm to all participants in all circumstances. Yet not even child victims of pedophilia invariably grow up experiencing discernable serious harm. Two APA studies have noted this: one arguing for this conclusion, the other more or less conceding the point.¹⁸ So obviously the standard of demonstrable harm put forward by prohomosex supporters is unrealistic. Even in the absence of universal, measurable harm, Western society maintains an absolute structural prerequisite in terms of age.

c. *Sex with prostitutes.* Paul himself employs the analogy of sex with prostitutes to show that sexual intercourse is not a matter of indifference; that even in the case of a commercial sexual transaction an individual’s whole body is adversely affected (1 Cor 6:15-20). In some respects prostitution is worse than same-sex intercourse: it removes sexual activity from the context of commitment and often disrupts a preexisting committed relationship. At the same time, sex with prostitutes does not normally involve a long-term commitment to an unnatural form of sexual activity. It does not entail an erotic desire for what one already is as a sexual being.

d. *The best analogies: polygamy and incest.* The best analogies to same-sex intercourse—and certainly analogies far superior to Gentile inclusion, slavery, or women’s roles—are *polygamy* and *incest*. Both can be conducted as adult, consensual, and committed unions; and incest also has a monogamous potential. Polygamy may correlate with sexual orientation; that is, those who engage in it sometimes experience profound dissatisfaction with a single long-term sex partner. Such persons could be designated “polysexuals.” While not normally an exclusive “orientation,” incest of an adult, consensual variety occurs between persons who lack a common or instinctive aversion to sex with near kin, often through no fault of their own.

Balch is offended by the *polygamy* analogy but does not tell us why. Promoting same-sex intercourse while pretending to be shocked by polygamy strikes me as a bit disingenuous given

¹⁷*People Magazine*, 4/15/02.

¹⁸B. Rind, P. Tromovitch, and R. A. Bauserman, “A meta-analytic examination of assumed properties of child sexual abuse using college samples,” *Psychological Bulletin* 124 (1998): 22-53; S. J. Dallam, D. H. Gleaves, et al., “The effects of child sexual abuse: comment on Rind, Tromovitch, and Bauserman (1998),” *Psychological Bulletin* 127 (2001): 715-733. The latter study, though critical of the former study’s minimization of the negative effects of CSA (child sexual abuse), starts off with this admission: “The purpose of our article is not to argue that all types of sexual abuse do in fact cause pervasive and intense harm in all victims. Indeed, it is well recognized in the empirical literature that the aftereffects of CSA are extremely varied and that *a significant percentage of abused children remain asymptomatic*” (p. 716; my emphasis).

the facts that: (1) Scripture regards the other-sex dimension as more significant than a monogamy requirement;¹⁹ (2) fidelity and commitment can be manifested in “threesomes” or other polygamous unions;²⁰ (3) male homosexual relationships show themselves to be, on the whole, deeply resistant to monogamy;²¹ and (4) the limitation of sex partners to two persons at any one time is itself predicated on the idea, rejected by Balch, that two sexes are necessary and sufficient for establishing a sexual whole. Heterosexual polyamory is a lesser wrong than homoeroticism. The reason is obvious. Heterosexual polygamists have greater likelihood of maintaining long-term unions and having less lifetime sex partners on average than homosexuals do. They have a better track record. Moreover, they achieve these results without violating the requirement for complementary sexual others.

I also fail to see why Balch regards *incest* of an adult and committed sort to be so horrible, given his embrace of homoerotic unions. Concern for “intergenerational” spillover and for birth abnormalities (the latter a non-issue in this age of contraceptives) do not address what is really wrong about incest. What is so wrong about a man having sex with his mother in a consensual, committed relationship—assuming the father’s death or divorce? Unless Balch subscribes to the idea that too much structural sameness is a bad thing, he has no grounds for rejecting incest per se. Leviticus 18:6 proscribes sexual intercourse with “the flesh of one’s flesh”; that is, intercourse with another who is too much of a *familial* “like” or “same.” The concept is similar for same-sex intercourse, only the infraction manifests itself more deeply: intercourse with another who is a *sexual* “like” or “same” (hence the modern term “*homosexual*”: “homo-” for

¹⁹For those who want to argue the reverse, namely that the Bible does not seem so concerned about polygamy, the response should be obvious. I confess to agreeing with Jesus: The logic of Gen 1:27 and 2:21-24 implies that sexual unions are to be lifelong and monogamous, to say nothing of male-female (Mark 10:2-12). In general, this logic worked itself out in ancient Israel for women (there was no polyandry, only polygyny). Human—chiefly male—hardness of heart led to a time-limited concession in the Mosaic law as regards divorce and polygamy. Jesus implicitly revoked this concession (*Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 203). Paul’s description of marriage in 1 Cor 7 indicates that he followed suit.

²⁰Marvin Ellison, professor of Christian Ethics at Bangor Theological Seminary and also a homosexual man and ordained minister of the PCUSA, questions the limitation of marriage to two persons at any one time: “How exactly does the number of partners affect the moral quality of a relationship?” (*Same-Sex Marriage: A Christian Ethical Analysis* [Boston: Pilgrim, 2004]). Not surprisingly, based on the U. S. Supreme Court “sodomy” case (*Lawrence v. Texas*), a civil rights attorney, Brian Barnard, filed a federal lawsuit on Jan. 12, 2004 challenging Utah’s ban on polygamy. The suit was filed on behalf of a married couple and a woman who were denied a marriage license for their “plural” union by Salt Lake County clerks. Dani Eyer, executive director of the ACLU of Utah, commented on the case, saying that Utah will “have to step up to prove that a polygamous relationship is detrimental to society. The model of the nuclear family as we know it in the immediate past is unique, and may not necessarily be the best model. Maybe it’s time to have this discussion.” Cf. Katharine Beale, “On polygamy, a crackdown and a bid for legitimacy,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Jan. 30, 2004; online); Alexandria Sage, “Utah polygamy ban challenged,” CBSNews.com (Jan. 27, 2004).

²¹*Ibid.*, 452-60. Even J. Michael Bailey, chair of the department of psychology at Northwestern University and a prominent researcher of homosexuality, has candidly acknowledged: “Because of fundamental differences between men and women. . . . [and] regardless of marital laws and policies. . . . gay men will always have many more sex partners than straight people do. . . . Both heterosexual and homosexual people will need to be open minded about social practices common to people of other orientations” (*The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism* [Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 2003], 101-102). In other words, heterosexuals will need to be more tolerant of the typically nonmonogamous behavior of male homosexuals, while male homosexuals will need to be more tolerant of heterosexuals who value monogamy!

homoios, “like” or “same”). Despite the existence of the “intersexed” (hermaphrodites),²² boundaries based on sex (gender) are far more secure than boundaries that divide incestuous from nonincestuous relationships and therefore require less elaboration for ambiguous cases. This is why Lev 18 devotes thirteen verses to discussing the boundaries of incest (vv. 6-18) but only one verse to defining male-male intercourse (v. 22). Moreover, an other-sex prerequisite is more obviously ensconced in creation (Gen 2:21-24) than is a prohibition of incest. The only differentiation established by the splitting of the binary human is the differentiation into two sexes. Reconstitution of the sexual whole requires the reemerging of the constituent parts split apart.

Thus, a good case can be made that consensual incest between adults is, on the whole, not as bad as same-sex intercourse, insofar as the structural incompatibility or discomplementarity of an attempted merger of two persons of the same sex is more apparent.²³ Of course, Balch will continue to insist that it is horrendous to use adult, consensual incest as an analogue to same-sex intercourse. But he cannot say why it is so. He just knows that incest is heavily stigmatized and thus wants to rid homoerotic behavior of the same.

What Balch arrogantly wants to do is to deny anyone the right to make reasonable connections between homosexual practice and other forms of immoral sexual behavior while he and others maintain the right to make specious connections between a reasoned and loving critique of homosexual practice and lynching black persons.

3. Balch’s rhetoric of intolerance and hate. Persons such as Balch are not going to be satisfied until they coerce from others, legally and ecclesiastically, full acceptance and even appreciation of homosexual behavior. In effect, Balch is arguing that, contrary to what the biblical authors believed, there should be no taboo or stigma to homoerotic practice. Of course, if this happened, then there would be no basis for disapproving of homosexual behavior, at any level. Opposition to homosexual practice would be sheer prejudice, needing to be stamped out with the same rigor that society exercises in stamping out racism. **Balch’s reasoning is entirely circular:**

- a. No one can say anything critical of homosexual practice per se because, to do that, would incite others to violence against homosexually inclined persons.
- b. But if there is no criticism of homosexual practice per se, then such behavior cannot be morally wrong.
- c. Since homosexual practice per se cannot be morally wrong, there is no basis for being opposed to the behavior per se.
- d. Therefore anyone who remains critical of homosexual practice per se must be the moral equivalent of a racist and justly subject to all the negative sanctions that church and society can muster.

It does not take long to see, once laid out in this way, that such an argument is both logically and morally vacuous. **Balch is not opposed to intolerance and hate. He simply projects his**

²²Usually an allegedly “intersexed” person has a genital abnormality that does not significantly straddle the sexes; for example, females with a large clitoris or small vagina, or males with a small penis or one that does not allow a direct urinary stream. Extreme instances of sex ambiguity are very rare.

²³For further discussion of the value of the incest analogy, see my “Review Essay, Part 1,” pp. 191-92; and esp. *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 48-50.

own onto others by demonizing those who do not share his own self-perceived enlightened viewpoint. He wants those who speak up against ecclesiastical and societal endorsement of homosexual behavior to be treated as the moral equivalent of racists. I suppose that we can thank people like Balch for giving us a clear warning of what we face in days to come if, out of tiredness or a desire to get along, we give up efforts to resist a coerced acceptance of homosexual practice. Marginalization and even persecution of those who speak out against homosexual practice are on the rise and will continue to get worse as greater concessions are made to an intolerant prohomosex agenda.

We now face the forced indoctrination of our children in some public school systems as early as kindergarten by “GLBT counselors.” In California all public schools, as well as private and religious schools that receive state money, must have curricula that “foster appreciation” for sexual orientation differences. An example of the kind of material that children can be subjected to includes a presentation sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network (GLSEN) called “Cootie Shots.” In one of the skits a young boy declares how wonderful it is to dress “in Mommy’s high heels.” “What’s wrong with being like a girl? ! / . . . They are swine, I am the pearl! / And let them laugh and let them scream! / They’ll be beheaded when I’m queen!” In a GLSEN video, “It’s Elementary,” a resource promoted to elementary school teachers, an 8-year old girl reads her essay to her class stating that those who accept the Bible’s teaching on homosexual practice are stupid. The teacher gives her essay an award.²⁴

Persons have already begun to lose their job, be threatened with criminal prosecution, or otherwise have their civil rights trampled on if they do not embrace and even promote the homosex agenda. Here are some examples:²⁵

- **In late June 2004 “a Swedish court sentenced a pastor belonging to the Pentecostal movement in Sweden, Ake Green, to a month in prison,** under a law against incitement, after he was found guilty of **having offended homosexuals in a sermon.** Soren Andersson, the president of the Swedish federation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights (RFSL), said on hearing the sentence that religious freedom could never be used as a reason to offend people. ‘Therefore,’ he told journalists, ‘I cannot regard the sentence as an act of interference with freedom of religion.’ During a sermon in [summer] 2003 [in Kalmar, Sweden], Green described homosexuality as ‘abnormal, a horrible cancerous tumour in the body of society.’” According to the church newspaper *Kyrkans Tidning*, the prosecutor, Kjell Yngvesson, justified the arrest this way: “One may have whatever religion one wishes, but this is an attack on all fronts against homosexuals. Collecting Bible cites on this topic as he (Pastor Green) does makes this hate speech.”²⁶
- **On Apr. 28, 2003 Dr. Cheryl Clark was ordered by a judge not to say anything “homophobic” to her own adopted 8-year-old daughter.** Clark had once been in a lesbian relationship, during which time Clark adopted a girl from China. Her lesbian partner, Elsey McLeod, had traveled with her to China but only Dr. Clark had applied for the adoption and paid for it. Her partner had not expressed an interest in acting as a parent. Later in 2000 Dr. Clark returned to her Christian roots, realized that her homosexual lifestyle was incompatible with

²⁴For other examples see Sears and Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda*, 45-71.

²⁵I make no pretense to being anything close to exhaustive here. See further Sears and Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda*, 150-204, 212-14.

²⁶“Swedish pastor sentenced to one month’s jail for offending homosexuals,” *Ecumenical News International*, June 30-July 1, 2004; Robert Knight, “When you hear of ‘civil unions,’ recall Czechoslovakia, Sweden,” *WorldNetDaily.com*, March 3, 2004.

being a Christian, and broke off the relationship. McLeod sued for joint custody. Denver County Circuit Judge John Coughlin not only granted joint custody, requiring Dr. Clark to make joint decisions with her ex-girlfriend, but also ordered Dr. Clark to “make sure that there is nothing in the religious upbringing or teaching that the minor child is exposed to that can be considered homophobic.” McLeod was not required to abstain from remarks critical of Dr. Clark’s beliefs, even though she was critical of Clark’s church and religion. On July 1, 2004, the Colorado Court of Appeals upheld the joint custody order but sent the case back to the lower court to determine whether barring anti-homosexual religious instruction violates the woman’s First Amendment rights. Dr. Clark is appealing the joint custody aspect of the decision.²⁷

- **On Feb. 4, 2004 the British Columbia Supreme Court upheld the actions of the British Columbia College of Teachers²⁸ (May 2002) in giving Chris Kempling, a teacher and guidance counselor in a public school in Quesnel, B.C., a one-month suspension, without pay, for writing allegedly “discriminatory and derogatory statements against homosexuals” to a local newspaper.**

Cited against Kempling was a letter that he had written, stating: “Gay people are seriously at risk, not because of heterosexual attitudes but because of their sexual behaviour, and I challenge the gay community to show some real evidence that they are trying to protect their own community members by making attempts to promote monogamous, long-lasting relationships to combat sexual addictions.” The first part of Kempling’s statement is essentially accurate (I would add only the adverb “primarily” before the first “because”), while the second part of the statement is a justifiable challenge.

Also cited against Kempling was this statement of his: “Homosexual relationships are unstable, ‘gay’ sex poses health risks and many religions consider homosexuality immoral”—incidentally, another factually true statement. Understandably, Kempling had concluded that “homosexuality is not something to be applauded.” Notice that he didn’t say that homosexual persons should be persecuted or despised but merely that the condition of homosexuality should not be extolled as a societal good. Kempling had added, “I refuse to be a false teacher saying that promiscuity is acceptable, perversion is normal, and immorality is simply ‘cultural diversity’ of which we should be proud” (note: a “perversion” is an act that deviates from “what is right or proper; any aberrant sexual act” [Webster’s]).

Not only was Kempling punished for making essentially accurate statements, he was also punished for views expressed *outside* the classroom as a private citizen. In the decision handed down by the British Columbia Supreme Court against Kempling, Justice Ronald Holmes stated: “Discriminatory speech is incompatible with the search for the truth.” (Is a “discriminatory” statement against polygamists and consenting participants in incest “incompatible with the search for the truth”?) Moreover, said Holmes, “It is entirely appropriate that the teaching profession, *like any profession*, be held to more stringent standards of conduct than the lay public” (emphasis added). The ultimate implication of this ruling is that any scholar or teacher, or indeed any person in any profession, who is critical of societal approval of homosexual behavior, whether in or even *out* of the place of employment, can be fired for such criticism. Kempling has expressed an intention to appeal the ruling of the British Columbia Supreme Court.²⁹

²⁷“Judge to Christian mom: No ‘homophobic’ teaching,” WorldNetDaily.com, Oct. 31, 2003; Valerie Richardson, “Mother Appeals Ruling on Gays,” *Washington Times*, Nov. 5, 2003; eadem, “Ex-lesbian couple use court in custody, homophobia spat,” *Washington Times*, Nov. 18, 2003; “Court to reconsider ex-lesbian’s parental rights,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, July 2, 2003 (AP).

²⁸The British Columbia College of Teachers also denied graduates of the teaching program at Trinity Western University accreditation to teach in public schools in June 1996. However, in May 2001 the Canadian Supreme Court ruled 8-1 in favor of the school (*The Homosexual Agenda*, 183).

²⁹Claude Adams, “Teacher battles union over published views: Faces Suspension,” *National Post*, Nov. 25, 2002; Susan Martinuk, “Teachers’ college—not Christian educator—guilty of intolerance,” *The [Vancouver] Province*,

- In May 2004 a federal judge ruled a **former Temple University student** can proceed to trial in his suit against **two school officials who he claims tried to commit him to a psychiatric ward because of his views on homosexual practice**. “Michael Marcavage alleges William Bergman, Temple University vice president of operations, and Carl Bittenbender, managing director of Campus Safety Services, forcibly detained him and attempted to have him involuntarily committed in the school hospitals’ psych ward in the fall of 2000. The lawsuit seeks unspecified money damages from the administrators. Marcavage had been working to offer a Christian alternative on campus to the play ‘Corpus Christi,’ which portrayed Christ and His disciples as homosexuals. Bittenbender, in seeking to commit Marcavage, claimed he had ‘inflicted or attempted to inflict serious bodily harm on another ...’ and that Marcavage had ‘attempted suicide’ In denying the Temple officials’ motion to dismiss the claims, Judge Petrese Tucker wrote, ‘Bittenbender ... (in his deposition) conceded that he had no knowledge of (Marcavage) threatening or causing harm to others,’ and he ‘also conceded that he had no knowledge of (Marcavage) attempting suicide.’”³⁰
- **In 2001, AT&T Broadband fired Albert A. Buonanno of Denver when the latter refused to sign a new company “certificate of understanding.”** The certificate stated **that employees must “fully recognize, respect, and value the differences among all of us,” including “sexual orientation” differences.** (We will leave to one side the stupidity of such a statement in failing to recognize that sexual desires for multiple partners or for children constitute a “sexual orientation.”) Buonanno had assured his employer that, though his Christian beliefs did not permit him to validate homosexual practice, he would not discriminate against or harass homosexual persons. But it was not good enough for AT&T that Buonanno would tolerate homosexual practice. They wanted him to affirm an orientation for such behavior as a societal good. Fortunately, in April 2004, a judge for the U.S. District Court for Colorado awarded Buonanno \$146,200 for lost salary, benefits, and compensation for emotional distress.³¹ However, given the increasing encroaching of the homosexual agenda on free-speech rights, it may be only a matter of time before other federal judges will rule differently on similar cases.
- **On Jan. 6, 2004 the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Hewlett-Packard’s Boise, Idaho, office was justified in firing Richard Peterson for silently protesting homosexual activism in the workplace.** Peterson’s great “crime” was responding to a “diversity posters” celebrating homosexuality by posting two or three Bible passages implicitly critical of homosexual behavior on the overhead bin in his cubicle. No co-worker had complained about Peterson’s postings and Peterson had not accosted any co-worker.³²
- **In October 2002, Rolf Szabo, a 23-year employee of The Eastman Kodak Co., was fired** when he responded to an e-mail requiring supervisors to promote a “Coming Out Day” for gay,

April 23, 2003 (http://www.ccr1.ca/article_THPROV_042303.html); “Teacher must do better on tolerating gays: court,” Reuters, Feb. 7, 2004; Allan Dobras, “Oh Canada, We Hardly Knew Ye...: Debating Sexual Freedom in the Public Square,” *Breakpoint*, May 24, 2004; “‘Bible as hate speech’ bill nearing vote,” WorldNetDaily.com, Sept. 17, 2003. The text of the ruling of the British Columbia Supreme Court can be found at <http://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/Jdb-txt/SC/04/01/2004BCSC0133.htm>. Kempling’s response to the verdict, along with other materials, appears at <http://www.bcptl.org/rights.htm#Wagner>. Cf. also <http://www.canadianalliance.org/47.pdf>, pp. 4-8.

³⁰“Brave New Schools: Christian’s suit against university goes forward,” WorldNetDaily.com, May 26, 2004.

³¹Kris Hudson, “Diversity suit loss for cable titan,” *Denver Post*, Apr. 6, 2003; Amy Fagan, “Worker opposed to gays wins suit,” *Washington Times*, Apr. 7, 2004; Timothy Dailey, “Christian Wins Federal Court Case Against AT&T,” *Culture Facts*, April 9, 2004; John W. Whitehead, “Gays and Straights in the Work Force: Tolerance for Other Viewpoints,” The Rutherford Institute, Dec. 8, 2003; John W. Kennedy, “Corporate Thought Police: Growing pro-gay business agenda jeopardizes religious employees,” *Christianity Today* (online), Dec. 29, 2003.

³²Jason Hoppin, “Cubicle Anti-Gay Postings Merited Firing,” *The Recorder*, Jan. 7, 2004.

lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees with the following: “Please do not send this type of information to me anymore, as I find it disgusting and offensive. Thank you.”³³

- **In 2000, Kenneth P. Gee Sr., a Bureau of Reclamation job training teacher in Nampa, Idaho, and a Mormon, was ordered by his employer to “observe gay and lesbian pride.”** Gee e-mailed his supervisor, saying that he believed homosexual behavior was sinful and did not want to celebrate it. Three supervisors told him that his e-mail violated federal policies. He was warned not to express disagreements in the workplace again or face termination. The case is currently under litigation.³⁴
- **In 1998 Annie Coffey-Montes, a New York Bell Atlantic employee for 20 years, was fired for attempting to remove herself from the e-mail list of GLOBE (Gay and Lesbians of Bell Atlantic),** which advertised “gay pride” parades, “coming out” parties, and homosexual dances. After a year of petitioning her supervisor to have her name removed, she responded to one GLOBE e-mail with: “Please take me off this email. I find it morally offensive. God bless you.” She ended by citing Romans 1:27. Coffey-Montes was then fired for “creating a hostile work environment.” She appealed to the New York State Department of Health. The Department of Health dropped the case against New York Bell even though New York Bell failed to show for all three hearings. The decision to drop the case was not all that surprising, considering that Coffey-Montes’ caseworker had pro-homosex posters on her office wall. Coffey-Montes subsequently sued New York Bell and received an out-of-court settlement. New York Bell has not changed its policy.³⁵
- On Dec. 11, 2002, the Court of Queen’s Bench in Saskatchewan (Canada) validated a 2001 ruling of **the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission** that had **ordered both the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* newspaper and Hugh Owens each to pay \$1500 to each of the three homosexual men who had filed a complaint with the commission.** The reason for the fine? Owens had paid **for an ad**, which the *Star Phoenix* published, that showed two male stick figures holding hands, over which a circle with a line through it was superimposed. There was no additional commentary on Owens’ part; he had simply reproduced in print a bumper sticker that he had created. Alongside the image were simple references, not quotations, to Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1, and 1 Cor 6:9-10. The Commission had concluded that “the slashed figures alone were not enough to communicate the hatred . . . but *the addition of Biblical references are more dangerous*” (my emphasis), thereby subjecting the complainants to “hatred or ridicule.”³⁶ Because he lacked financial resources as a guard at the Regina Correctional Centre, Owens had represented himself in Commission and Court proceedings. He may, like Brockie (below), get stuck with tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees incurred by the prosecuting Human Rights Commission.
- **On Feb. 19, 2000 the Ontario Human Rights Commission** ruled that Scott Brockie, owner of an Ontario print shop, had violated the ban on discrimination against “sexual orientation” in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Commission (incidentally headed by a homosexual man, Keith

³³Joe Kovacs, “Kodak fires man over ‘gay’ stance,” WorldNetDaily.com, Oct. 24, 2002; Christopher Lisotta, “Kodak fires worker for anti-gay message,” Gay.com, Oct. 30, 2002.

³⁴Kennedy, “Corporate Thought Police”; “Idaho teacher files suit over gay pride month,” desertnews.com, Oct. 12, 2003.

³⁵Timothy J. Dailey, “Employees Fired after Objecting to Company-Sponsored Gay Activism, Part Two,” *Culture Facts*, Dec. 9, 2002.

³⁶“Anti-gay ad ruling sparks concern over freedom of religion,” ChristianWeekOnline, July 24, 2001, at <http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol15/no08/story3.html>; Art Moore, “Bible regarded as hate literature,” WorldNetDaily.com, Feb. 18, 2003; Cecelia Forsyth, “Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission a Legal Fiasco” at http://www.realwomensca.com/newsletter/1999_Sept_Oct/article_7.html; Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, “A Canadian civil rights ruling dealing with anti-gay verses in the Bible,” May 20, 2003 (updated July 4, 2004), at http://www.religioustolerance.org/bibl_hate3.htm. The decision by the Court of Queen’s Bench for Saskatchewan, *Owens v. Saskatchewan (Human Rights Commission)*, 2002 SKQB 506, can be read at <http://www.canlii.org/sk/cas/skqb/2002/2002skqb506.html>.

Norton) **ordered Brockie to pay Ray Brillinger, president of the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives, \$5000 for refusing to print business cards and other materials given to him by the Archives in 1996.** It also required Brockie to print any materials given to him in the future by homosexual advocacy groups. Brockie appealed the decision to the Ontario Divisional Court. On June 17, 2002, the court upheld the fine and restricted somewhat the order to print any materials. The court distinguished between printing materials that “might reasonably be held to be in direct conflict with core elements of Mr. Brockie’s religious beliefs,” such as “material that conveyed a message proselytizing and promoting the gay and lesbian lifestyle,” and printing letterhead, business cards, or “a directory of goods and services that might be of interest to the gay and lesbian community,” even if the latter “causes or activities clearly repugnant” to Brockie’s religious beliefs.³⁷ The Divisional Court had awarded Brockie \$25,000 in costs. Brockie decided to appeal no further. However, the matter was far from over. The Ontario Human Rights Commission and Brillinger appealed to the Ontario Court of Appeal to have Brockie pay their legal fees on top of the \$100,000 in legal fees that Brockie had incurred, over and above his legal defense fund, in defending himself. On Mar. 30, 2004 the Court of Appeal ruled in favor of the Commission and Brillinger, thus adding to Brockie’s legal bill an additional \$40,000.³⁸ Brockie has commented:

We do work for clients who are gay. We've had staff who said they were gay. I don't have a problem with people who are gay. I can't force them to change. However, I don't think I have to support that cause. If Mr. Brillinger had asked me to print personal business cards, I would have. We must promote the family, but we must not hate those who are gay.³⁹

- **On May 10, 2002, Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert MacKinnon ordered Monsignor John Pereyema High School, a private Catholic school, to allow 17-year-old Marc Hall to attend the senior prom with his 21-year-old boyfriend.** Hall’s attorney had argued that the Catholic high school’s action violated the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and the provincial Code of Conduct. The lawyer representing the Durham Catholic District School Board had argued that the Canadian Constitution “provides absolute protection for religious decisions by denominational schools” and that Hall “sets a bad example to others.” Moreover, Hall “chose to attend a Catholic school, which carries with it an expectation of moral conformity. Instead, he wants to force the Catholic community to adapt to him” rather than to choose a public school.⁴⁰
- In April 1997 homosexual teacher James Chamberlain and other members of the Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE) attempted to **introduce three books promoting homosexual parenting to kindergarten and first-grade students in a school in Surrey,** a suburb of Vancouver. The titles of the books were: *Asha’s Mums*; *Belinda’s Bouquet*; and *One*

³⁷Art Moore, “Freedom of conscience debated in Ontario,” WorldNetDaily.com, Dec. 17, 2001; “Refusal to print stationary containing the words ‘Gay and Lesbian’ ruled discriminatory,” Ontario Human Rights Commission Press Release, Mar. 2, 2000; “Ontario Court forces the OHRC to respect religious and conscience rights, but fails to recognize Toronto printer’s conscientious objection,” Catholic Civil Rights League press release, June 18, 2002, at <http://www.ccr1.ca/press61802.html>; “Brockie case a legal victory but still a human tragedy,” LifeSite.net, June 27, 2002, at <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2002/jun/02062701.html>; Terence P. Jeffrey, “Benchmarks that loom in Canada,” *Washington Times*, July 15, 2003.

³⁸Rory Leishman, “Judicial activists destroying rule of law,” *Canoe News*, May 4, 2004; “Scott Brockie Loses Decision at Court of Appeals, On the Hook for \$40,000,” LifeSite.net, Apr. 16, 2004, at <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2004/apr/04041604.html>.

³⁹Comments reported on the Canadian Association for Free Expression website at http://www.canadianfreespeech.com/updates/brockie/scott_brockie_under_attack.html.

⁴⁰Allyson Smith, “Canadian Judge Forces Catholic School to Allow Homosexual Prom Date,” Concerned Women for America, May 16, 2002, at <http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=600&department=cfi&categoryid=cfreport>.

Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads. The Surrey School Board, in response to complaints from Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh parents, passed a motion to disallow use the teacher's use of the books in the classroom, while allowing the books to remain in the library. Some Surrey teachers and parents filed suit. In December 1998 the British Columbia Supreme Court ruled against the Surrey School Board on the grounds that the School Board had wrongly allowed the "overt religious influence" of parents to affect their decision. The School Board appealed the ruling to the British Columbia Court of Appeal (September 2000), which ruled in the School Board's favor. Chamberlain then appealed to the Canadian Supreme Court (*Chamberlain v. Surrey School Board*), which in a 7-2 decision ruled against the School Board (December 2002). Chief Justice Beverley McLaughlin flatly declared, "Tolerance is always age-appropriate." She added: "Parental views . . . cannot override the imperative placed upon the . . . public schools to . . . teach tolerance." In saying these things, McLaughlin did not bother to reflect on whether "tolerance" has any limits or whether the decision itself was intolerant toward parents who did not want their kindergarten and first-grade children exposed to homosexual propaganda.⁴¹

- **In 1996 the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) refused to certify the public school teacher training program at Trinity Western University (TWU) because TWU, a private Christian institution, prohibited its students from engaging in "premarital sex, adultery, and homosexual behavior."** According to the BCCT, teachers with a TWU education might discriminate against homosexual students or students with homosexual parents. Fortunately, the BCCT lost the case when it came before the British Columbia Supreme Court (September 1997), again when it came before the British Columbia Court of Appeals (December 1998 in a close 2-1 decision), and finally when it came before the Supreme Court of Canada (May 24, 2001 in an 8-1 decision). The latter ruled: "For better or worse, tolerance of divergent beliefs is a hallmark of a democratic society."

However, even this ruling sends some alarm bells. First, the decision did not allow any teachers to question the acceptability of homosexual practice in the school systems. It merely stated that the BCCT had not proven that TWU graduates would discriminate against homosexual students. The Court stated that, while TWU graduates were entitled to hold "sexist, racist or homophobic beliefs" (!), "acting on those beliefs . . . is a very different matter. If a teacher in the public school system engages in discriminatory conduct, that teacher can be subject to disciplinary proceedings. . . . Disciplinary measures can still be taken when discriminatory *off-duty* conduct poisons the school environment" (emphasis added; cf. the British Columbia Supreme Court's ruling against Chris Kempling, cited above). Second, one judge, Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, did vote against TWU, saying that "the public interest in the public school system requires something more than tolerance" (i.e., affirmation), a person's sexual orientation and sexual behavior cannot be distinguished in practice, and TWU graduates would not be prepared to "help lesbian, bisexual, and gay youth before a crisis develops." Continued rapid erosion of traditional values in Canada could eventually lead to an overturning of this decision, or a different outcome if a similar case should ever reach the United States Supreme Court. Third, the case makes clear that gay activist groups intend to use "sexual orientation" protection laws as a weapon to threaten private Christian institutions with loss of accreditation.⁴²

⁴¹Debra Fieguth, "Surrey school board taken to court over gay-parent books," *ChristianWeek* 11:23 (Mar. 17, 1998), at <http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol11/no23/>; and the articles at [http://www.canadianchristianity.com/cgi-bin/na.cgi?nationalupdates/021224supreme](http://www.canadianchristianity.com/cgi-bin/na.cgi?nationalupdates/021224supreme;); <http://www.egale.ca/index.asp?lang=E&menu=70>; http://www.religioustolerance.org/rt_surr.htm; http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1040356828066_95/?hub=TopStories; <http://www.ctlibrary.com/8947>; and <http://www.christianlegalfellowship.org/Articles/chamberlain.html>.

⁴²See <http://www.canadianchristianity.com/cgi-bin/bc.cgi?bc/bccn/0601/twu>; <http://www.egale.ca/index.asp?lang=E&menu=71&item=255>; <http://www.ctlibrary.com/1294>; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/009/11.18.html>;

- In 1997 the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council ruled that the airing of a James Dobson “Focus on the Family” program, entitled “Homosexuality: Fact and Fiction,” violated the requirement that opinion be presented in a way that is “full, fair, and proper.” **Focus on the Family Canada is no longer allowed to broadcast programs that criticize homosexuality.** Radio stations that broadcast such programs risk fines and loss of their license.
- **In October 2003, the Anglican Bishop of Chester, England, Peter Forster, was investigated by the Cheshire police for making the following true and compassionate statement in an interview with a local newspaper, *The Chester Chronicle*:**

Some people who are primarily homosexual can re-orientate themselves. I would encourage them to consider that as an option, but I would not set myself up as a medical specialist on the subject—that’s in the area of psychiatric health. We want to help them, but I don’t offer it as a panacea. I am about giving honor to marriage.

A complaint was filed against the bishop for allegedly violating the Public Order Act of 1986. A month later police decided not to prosecute. However, the police chief Peter Fahy declared: “I think in a civilized society [Bishop Forster’s comments are] totally unacceptable” and compared the remarks to “offenses against members of minority communities which are generated by hate and prejudice.” Needless to say, the mere threat of an investigation, coupled with the police chief’s comments, would have a chilling effect on freedom of speech—even for high church officials. The only reason why Forster was not prosecuted was because there was, as yet, no ban on “inciting hatred” against the GLBT community equivalent to the ban against racist speech.⁴³ In Canada there is now such a ban (see below).

- **Other European church officials have faced criminal charges for speaking out against homosexual practice. Belgian Cardinal Gustaaf Joos** faces a lawsuit under that country’s discrimination laws for his remarks about the nature of homosexuality and the Church’s teaching published in a Belgium magazine (CWNews.com, Jan. 26, 2004). **Madrid Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco Varela** is facing a suit in Spain for preaching against homosexuality in a homily he gave in Madrid Cathedral on the feast of the Holy Family (*Washington Post*, Jan. 3, 2004). **In Ireland**, clergy and bishops were warned that the distribution of the Vatican’s publication on public recognition of same-sex relationships could face persecution under Irish incitement to hatred legislation (*The Irish Times*, July 2, 2003). **In 2000 Dutch officials contemplated whether to bring charges against Pope John Paul II** after he declared a homosex-rights march

<http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol11/no12/story1.htm>;
<http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol12/no19/story0.htm>;
<http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol15/no05/story1.html>; http://www.twu.ca/Challenge/news_sc_fdecision.asp.
 For the text of the decision by the Canadian Supreme Court go to: http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/csc-scc/en/pub/2001/vol1/html/2001scr1_0772.html.

⁴³David Holmes, “Gays can have their sexuality changed,” *Chester Chronicle*, Nov. 7, 2003 (Richard Alleyne, “Bishop’s anti-gay comments spark legal investigation,” www.telegraph.co.uk, Oct. 11, 2003; “No charges for bishop in gay row,” BBC News, Nov. 9, 2003 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3255461.stm>); “Police chief criticizes bishop,” BBC News, Nov. 10, 2003 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/merseyside/3257623.stm); Ted Olsen, “Weblog: Police Investigating Bishop for Saying Some Gays Can Change,” ChristianityToday.com, Nov. 10, 2003 (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/145/11.0.html>); Rob Moll, “Weblog: Bishop Committed No Hate Crime Saying Gays Can Change,” ChristianityToday.com, Nov. 11, 2003 (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/145/22.0.html>); “Bishop’s ‘gay cure’ remarks not hate crime,” WorldNetDaily.com, Nov. 13, 2003 (http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=35594). In a June 2003 speech Bishop Forster had stated: “I favor a reasonably tolerant, pastoral approach in the life of the Church to those who find themselves with homosexual feelings, and drawn into homosexual relationships. But there has to be limits.”

in Rome to be “an offense to Christian values.” Ultimately they conceded that the Pope had “global immunity”—which the rest of us do not have.⁴⁴

- **In 2002 Harry Hammond, a 69-year-old street preacher, carried a sign** in a public square in Bournemouth, England, **that read “Stop Immorality, Stop Homosexuality, Stop Lesbianism.” He was surrounded by an angry mob of 30-40 persons** that threw dirt at him, doused him with water, and knocked him to the ground. **A British court convicted *the beaten man*** of disturbing the peace, fined him 300 pounds and ordered him to pay 395 pounds in court costs (roughly \$1275 total in American currency). In January 2004 Britain’s High Court posthumously ruled—Hammond had died in the interim—that the conviction and the reaction of the crowd was justified.⁴⁵
- At some institutions of higher learning, there have been **attempts to bar from campus facilities and defund Christian groups such as Intervarsity Christian Fellowship** because of the unwillingness of such groups to accept into their leadership self-avowed practicing homosexuals. Who knew that this is what sexual orientation non-discrimination policies at colleges and universities would lead to?⁴⁶
- **The Boy Scouts and the Salvation Army**, two private organizations that do an extraordinary amount of public good, **have suffered greatly for their stance on homosexual behavior**—the Boy Scouts because they do not accept homosexual scoutmasters and the Salvation Army because they do not provide domestic partnership benefits. The U. S. Supreme Court ultimately, in a close 5-4 decision, barely upheld the right of the Scouts as a private organization to bar individuals from leadership whose behavior was at odds with the Scout’s values. However, this decision, which probably will be revisited by the Supreme Court at some future date, has not prevented subsequent persecution. The Boy Scouts have lost millions of dollars in corporate funding, been dropped from United Way chapters, and have had their access to public facilities in some areas of the country withdrawn. As regards the Salvation Army, in June 2004 the New York City Council voted to exclude any contractor from doing more than \$100,000 worth of business with the City, if the contractor refuses to extend health benefits to same-sex domestic partners.
- Currently **the American Bar Association is considering prohibiting judges from association with organizations that “discriminate” on the basis of “sexual orientation,”** such as the Boy Scouts. Since 2003 California has had in place a law that requires judges to disclose affiliation with such organizations—the aim of which is to stigmatize association with any groups that regard homosexual practice as wrong.⁴⁷

Particularly insidious is the passage of “hate speech” laws. In 2004 the Canadian parliament passed a bill that adds “sexual orientation” to a list of “identifiable groups” (color, race, religion, or ethnic origin) that are protected from “hate speech.” According to the law, “Every one who, by communicating statements in a public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace” or who “willfully promotes hatred against and identifiable group” is “guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.” “Statements’ includes words

⁴⁴Sears and Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda*, 185; citing “Dutch Will Not Prosecute Pope for Antigay Remarks,” Reuters, July 18, 2000.

⁴⁵“Christian ‘properly convicted’ for ‘anti-gay’ sign,” WorldNetDaily, Jan. 15, 2004 (http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=36602).

⁴⁶Sears and Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda*, 78-79.

⁴⁷Gina Holland, “ABA May Bar Judges From Anti-Gay Groups,” Associated Press, Aug. 6, 2004.

spoken or written or recorded electronically or electromagnetically or otherwise, and gestures, signs or other visible representations.”⁴⁸

In May 2004 the Swedish parliament gave initial approval to a constitutional amendment that adds “sexual orientation” to the Swedish constitution’s prohibition of speech that “implies the unfavorable treatment of a citizen because he belongs to a minority group by reason of race, color, or ethnic origin” (chap. 2, art. 13 and 15). “In a formal explanatory note to the parliament, Goran Lambertz, the Swedish chancellor of justice, declared that references in a sermon to homosexuality being sinful ‘might’ constitute a criminal offense under the amendment. Those convicted face up to two years in prison. Homosexual organizations have stated that they intend to report ministers who ‘speak disparagingly’ about homosexuals in sermons. The Swedish Federation for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights has demanded that the law be applied to churches, and says it will report ‘hate speech irrespective of where it occurs.’ Swedish Christians and pastors understand the amendment to mean that they are allowed to quote biblical passages that refer to homosexuality, but are not permitted to state that those teachings are applicable today.” The amendment, which must be approved by one more vote later this year.⁴⁹

When people like Balch compare strong but compassionate opposition to homosexual practice with the lynching of African Americans in this country’s past, the writing is clearly on the wall. The situation for the church will be dire if it allows itself to be bullied and intimidated by such hate rhetoric. **Religious exemptions to coercive prohomosex laws cannot long endure because the church is not protected in cases where “civil rights” or “child abuse” is involved.** Ministers who proclaim the obvious biblical witness for an other-sex prerequisite and against homoeroticism will be liable to significant fines and even incarceration. In addition, Christian colleges and seminaries that do not show evidence of affirming homosexual behavior will lose accreditation, any tax-exempt status, and access to federal student loans.

As regards ecclesiastical developments, most mainline denominations will insist that prospective candidates for ministry affirm the blessedness of committed homoerotic unions or be denied enrollment. Thereafter, the only pastors being ordained will be those who are willing to deny publicly a core value of biblical sexual ethics. Those already ordained will face church discipline if they promote the “traditional” (read: scriptural) view in their local church. Denominations that are today unwilling to implement church discipline on those who violate with impunity the church’s stance against self-affirmed homosexual practice will go full circle in their insanity and implement church discipline on ministers who are critical of homosexual practice. Mainline seminaries, which are already largely in the grip of a homosexual agenda, will officially refuse to fill faculty appointments with anyone critical toward homosexual practice. Untenured faculty who espouse the scriptural view on homosexual practice will be denied tenure. Even tenured faculty members may face termination if they express their views in class or in publication. Tenure is no safeguard against violating institutional policy or against “discriminatory” statements. The “gay rights” agenda will dominate the national denominational conventions and relegate to the margins any who question their position. In short, denominations that adopt the prohomosex agenda espoused by the persons like Balch will soon be radicalized to a hard left theological stance on various issues, not just sexual ethics. **Ironically, under the**

⁴⁸Allan Dobras, “Oh, Canada, We Hardly Knew Ye...: Debating Sexual Freedom in the Public Square,” *Breakpoint*, Prison Fellowship Ministries, May 24, 2004.

⁴⁹“Swedish ‘Hate Crimes’ Law Could Target Christians,” *Family Research Council*, July 2, 2004.

banner of tolerance, diversity, and pluralism, the church will become increasingly intolerant of different views, uniformly left of center, and rigidly ideological.

4. Balch's convoluted effort at connecting loving disapproval with violence. Finally, if Balch is going to be consistent in maintaining that even well-reasoned and compassionate arguments against homosexual practice incite persons to violence against homosexuals, **then Balch will have to campaign against any negative views about incest, polyamory, bestiality, prostitution, and pedophilia**, or at least work toward substantially toning down societal opposition. **If it were otherwise**—that is, if Balch wants society to continue to take a dim view of these behaviors—then it follows, by Balch's own reasoning, that **Balch is inciting others to violence against polygamists, participants in adult incest, and those who engage in sex with prostitutes, among others.** There seems to be no two ways about it in Balch's thinking. For, according to Balch, holding a vigorous societal revulsion for such behaviors incites violence. The consequence of violence *necessarily* follows from the attitude of revulsion. It is apparently not good enough to talk vigorously about loving those who violate sexual norms in the context of vigorously rejecting their behavior.

A great irony here (or, better, one more great irony) is that Balch demonizes and dehumanizes me and, by inference, those who share my views; that is, the overwhelming majority of world Christendom, to say nothing of the Apostle Paul, Jesus, and the entire Judeo-Christian witness against homosexual practice. So, apparently, in comparing me with those who lynched blacks or murdered homosexuals, Balch is quite happy to incite others to violence against me and those who think like me. But perhaps Balch would be content if we were all incarcerated or at least fired from our jobs. It is hard to tell.

It is interesting, too, that **Balch chose to ignore the incitement to hatred posed by his rhetoric.** Critics of homosexual behavior, especially those who have participated in political efforts to roll back a coercive homosexual agenda or who have testified to transformation out of a homosexual lifestyle, have become the targets of death threats, drive-by shooting into their homes, arson, and other forms of harassment. The situation is only going to get worse.

On Nov. 19, 2002, Mary Stachowicz, a 51-year-old wife, mother of four, and devout Catholic, **was murdered by a 19-year-old homosexual man when she asked him, "Why do you [have sex with] boys instead of girls?"** In a fit of rage, Nicholas Gutierrez punched, kicked, stabbed, and strangled Mrs. Stachowicz; then stuffed her body into a crawl space under the floor of his apartment, where it remained for two days until he confessed to police. Not surprisingly, the news outlets gave this story very little attention. If Balch thinks that I share guilt for the murders of homosexual persons when, in fact, my book stresses over and over again the importance of reaching out in love to homosexual persons, then Balch himself shares guilt for contributing to the rising violence and intimidation of those who maintain a public, compassionate opposition to homosexual practice—indeed, the more so since there is nothing compassionate about his response to me.

Taboos and labels of "impurity" in early Judaism and early Christianity served a valuable purpose in deterring people from engaging in sexual acts that dishonor the image of God into which humans are created. They communicated a sense of divine wrath, communal outrage, and individual shame that, in turn, served the purpose of offsetting the virulent dangers of illicit sexual passion. Practical sanctions had only limited effectiveness in a context where the pleasure of self-gratification was so intense, the setting for transgression was so private (behind closed doors), and the self-justification for transgressing was so artful. The

conceptual world of purity and pollution provided additional psychological support to civil penalties, creating a sense of communal revulsion that functioned as a first line of defense. This, in turn, preempted the power of illicit desire by banishing from most people even the very thought of transgression.⁵⁰ Paul's almost exclusive application of the term *akatharsia*, "uncleanness, impurity," to sexually immoral acts underscores this natural application of impurity to sexual immorality.⁵¹ **Even today a number of sexual offenses continue to carry a strong social stigma**—including incest, polyamory, pedophilia, bestiality, adultery, and prostitution). Few bemoan this state of affairs.⁵² Few believe that maintaining such stigmas incites people to violence.

The mission and message of Jesus speak precisely against the correlation of revulsion and violence promulgated by Balch. Jesus both intensified God's ethical demands in the areas of sexual and economic ethics and reached out aggressively in love to those most violating these demands. Jesus spoke at length about the evils of the misuse of material possessions and at the same time reached out in love to the very tax collectors who were most guilty of exploiting others economically. I discuss this point at length in ch. 3 ("The Witness of Jesus") of *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* but Balch once more appears to be unaware of what I have written. It will not do for Balch to argue that we cannot be expected to speak and act in ways that Jesus spoke and act. Jesus obviously intended his approach to be followed by his disciples or "learners"; moreover, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the energizing force of the church.

Balch is desperate, as is the homosexual lobby generally, to whip up mass hysteria over the tragic but isolated deaths of an extremely small fraction of the total number of homosexual persons. His, and their, ultimate aim is to use such rare incidents to affirm homosexual practice. **Andrew Sullivan, homosexual columnist and senior editor of *The New Republic*, has had the courage to note the shameful political exploitation of Matthew Shepard's death:**

The evidence shows that Shepard is representative of very few gay Americans. According to the FBI, in 1997, the year before Shepard was killed, a total of three hate-crime murders of homosexuals were recorded in the entire United States. This number is not a fiction. Murders are the least underreported of crimes, because bodies have to be accounted for, and the FBI's number is the total reported by some 10,000 reporting agencies across the country. But let's assume that the FBI understates gay hate-crime murders by a factor of five. That makes 15 anti-gay murders a year. Further assume that around five percent of the population is gay. That means that the chance of a gay American meeting the same fate as Matthew Shepard is about one in a million. Or about the same as being hit by a railroad train.

No, the resilience of the Shepard case is about political and cultural symbolism. It is about the need for a victim so blameless and a crime so heinous that a story about the relationship between gay Americans and straight Americans can be told in which there are no complexities and no doubts. . . . After a while, . . . the facts cease to matter. What matters is the message. And the message is that homosexuals are innocent victims and

⁵⁰Cf. the quotes from Mary Douglas and Stephen Bigger, as well as the citation of Plato's *Laws* 838, in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 126-28.

⁵¹1 Thess 4:7; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Rom 1:24; 6:19; cf. Col 3:5; Eph 4:19; 5:3.

⁵²Among biblical scholars L. William Countryman and self-professed gay man, is an exception. He actually argues that the taboo status associated with incest does more harm than good (*Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 257-58).

heterosexuals are either saviors or menaces. You are either enlightened or a bigot; on the side of the victims or on the side of the murderers.⁵³

What Balch conveniently ignores is that the amount of injury done to homosexual persons pales in comparison to the amount of damage that homosexual persons do to themselves, through “pickup murders” associated with public or anonymous sex,⁵⁴ domestic violence rates that exceed the number of hate crimes committed annually,⁵⁵ high rates of drug abuse, risks of injury arising from thrill-seeking sadomasochistic practices,⁵⁵ the spread of HIV and AIDS through risky sexual behavior,⁵⁶ suicidality rates that have remained constant over time despite increasing tolerance of homosexuality and even in strongly homosex-affirming areas,⁵⁷ and continued high rates of nonmonogamy and short-term sexual relations (the latter especially among male homosexuals, the former especially among female homosexuals). If we are to trust Scripture, endorsing homosexual behavior also has serious ramifications for life beyond this perishable existence. **The more loving response is to resist cultural incentives for homosexual practice while coming alongside those who are struggling with same-sex attraction.**

Balch’s Truncated Gospel

The root problem with Balch’s work is that he truncates the gospel to mean freedom from moral demands.⁵⁸ When Paul asks in Rom 6:15 the rhetorical question, “Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?” he answers by insisting that genuine adherence to the lordship of Jesus Christ leads us *out of* a life under the control of the sinful impulse (6:15-23; 7:5-6; 8:1-17; cf. 6:1-14). Thus Paul can assert:

Just as you [formerly, as unbelievers] presented your bodily members as slaves to *sexual uncleanness (akatharsia)* and to [other acts of] lawlessness with a view to lawlessness, so

⁵³Andrew Sullivan, “Afterlife,” *The New Republic* (Nov. 22, 1999).

⁵⁴Cf. the following observation in the homosexual publication, the *Washington Blade*: “The killings of more than a dozen gay men in D.C. over the past decade remain unsolved in cases that police and gay activists refer to as ‘pickup’ murders. In each of these cases, police have said they found the victims dead in their houses or apartments, with no evidence of a forced entry. This suggests that the gay male victim most likely met his killer at a gay bar or other meeting place and invited the assailant to his house or apartment, police have said” (Lou Chibbaro, “Body of gay man found inside duffel bag,” *Washington Blade*, Dec. 26, 2003). Note that the reference to “a dozen gay men” applies only to the D.C. area and only to unsolved cases.

⁵⁵*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 474-75.

⁵⁶According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), about half of all AIDS cases where an exposure category has been identified or three-quarters of all AIDS cases connected with sexual activity are attributable to men having sex with males. HIV rates have gone up in recent years. For example, in 2003 the CDC reported that from 1999 to 2002, new cases of HIV climbed 17% for homosexual men (compare only 7.3% for all men). Cf. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 473-74; “Review Essay, Part 1,” 211 n. 68, 219 n. 88. Infected males often fail to disclose HIV/AIDS status before having sex. In 2003 there were about 15,000 deaths in the United States owing to HIV/AIDS, about half of which were attributable to male-male intercourse. While heterosexuals can contract HIV/AIDS at high rates (as the African experience has shown), HIV/AIDS infection rates among male homosexuals are high everywhere, for the obvious reason that male-male relationships are far more characterized by high-risk behavior than are heterosexual relationships on average.

⁵⁷*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 476-78. Cf. Theo Sandfort, et al., “Same-sex sexual behavior and psychiatric disorders: Findings from the Netherlands mental health survey and incidence study (NEMESIS),” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 58:1 (Jan. 2001): 85-91.

⁵⁸Cf. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 277-84; *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 53-56.

now [as believers] present your bodily members as slaves to righteousness with a view to holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to [not doing] righteousness. What fruit, therefore, were you having at that time? Things of which you are now ashamed, for the end (outcome) of those things is death. (Romans 6:19-21)

Same-sex intercourse in Rom 1:24-27 is cited as the prime example of “sexual uncleanness” (*akatharsia*)—the very word used in Rom 6:19 to denote the behavior that Christians must now leave behind (note that the term appears nowhere else in Romans). The mention of shameful practices that lead to death in Rom 6:19-21 also clearly echoes the themes of Rom 1:24-27, 32. Obviously, then, the point of the Christian life is to discontinue the shameful practices of 1:19-31, including females having intercourse with females and males having intercourse with males. If *the wrath of God* manifested in this age involves, in part, God permitting people to engage in such self-dishonoring, shameful behavior, with death resulting, then *the saving righteousness of God* must mean not merely forgiveness of sins but empowerment, through the Spirit, to be delivered from the primary control of such shameful impulses.

Paul does indeed set up a sting operation in Romans 2 against moral persons—in context, primarily unbelieving Jews—who condemn those who engage in the sinful activities of Rom 1:18-32 while committing sins of their own. But Paul does so not to trivialize the moral life but rather to underscore the universal human need for putting one’s trust in Jesus’ atoning death and empowering presence. God’s wrath is *still* coming on those who live under sin’s primary rule, which for Paul meant all unbelievers and some self-professed believers in Christ. Jesus’ amends-making death makes possible the indwelling of Christ’s Spirit for those who believe, which in turn makes possible a Spirit-led life, with an outcome of eternal life. A return to the sin-led life of old puts at risk one’s inheritance in the kingdom of God, whether one claims to be a believer or not. This includes a return to the practice of same-sex intercourse.

Accordingly, “sin shall not be lord over you, for you are not under the law but under grace” (6:14). To be “under the law” is to be dominated by sinful passions that “bear fruit for death” (7:5). To be “under grace” is to be Spirit-controlled and thus bearing fruit for life (7:6). It is life *lived* in “the law of the Spirit of life”—that is, life lived under the primary regulating power of indwelling Spirit—that effects liberation from “the law of sin and death.” Paul means by “the law of sin and death” the internal regulating power of sin operating in human flesh, which brings death to those who obey it (8:1-2). Life lived in conformity to the Spirit “fulfills the righteous requirement of the law” (8:4) rather than violates or ignores the law.

For Paul, the transformed life, while not meriting salvation, is the indispensable middle term between Christ’s justifying death and the gift of eternal life. Self-professed Christians who continue to live life under sin’s primary sway will perish. Thus the conclusion to the question, “Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?”—that is, should we sin because there are, allegedly, no apocalyptic repercussions for sinning—is as follows:

So, then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, that is, to live in conformity with the flesh. For if you live in conformity to the flesh, you are going to die. But if, by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live. For as many as are being *led* by the Spirit of God—these are the children of God. (Romans 8:12-14)

In other words, a profession of faith void of a transformed life is worthless and will not save a person from divine wrath.

The same point is made in 1 Cor 6:9-20, where Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers not to return to the sexual immorality of their former life, which could include adult consensual incest, male-male intercourse, adultery, fornication, and sex with prostitutes. “These things some of you *were*; but you washed yourselves off, you were made holy, you were made righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (6:11). The basis for his appeal is that sex, unlike dietary concerns, is not a matter of soteriological indifference (6:12-20; contra Balch who appeals to the inclusion of Gentile believers in Acts 15 as a parallel). What one does sexually can get one thrown into hell (compare Jesus’ saying about cutting off body parts in Matt 5:29-30). Precisely because Christ has purchased us out of slavery to sin, we belong to God, not ourselves, and so should “glorify God in [our] bodies” (6:19-20). In the immediate context it is obvious that Paul was not against the church passing judgment on believers who engage in sinful sexual behavior, even behavior of an adult, consensual, and committed sort. In the case of the incestuous believer in 1 Cor 5, a somewhat exasperated Paul asked the Corinthians: “Is it not those inside [the church] that you are to judge?” (5:12). By Balch’s reckoning, the Corinthian believers should have responded: “No. You are turning grace into law!” But that is the wrong answer to this obviously rhetorical question.

In short, the fact that all persons have sinned is no license to continue in sin. The point of our “baptism into Christ’s death” is that we should now, “as if alive from the dead,” put our bodily members at God’s, not sin’s, disposal (Rom 6:3-14). The difference between our lives before faith and our lives in faith is *not* that we now get to live sinful lives without fear of apocalyptic repercussions, but rather that we are now empowered by the indwelling Spirit of Christ to live lives that do not lead to death.