



EDITORIAL

RA's credentials on display in Adelaide

THE opening address by Dr. Max Champion at the 2005 AR Conference, and the papers that followed, established the Alliance's credentials as a reforming movement and a sign of hope for a church in decline. Citing Jeremiah 5:30, Dr. Champion said Resolution 84 was 'appalling and horrible' because it "now permits and encourages ... mutually exclusive faiths as if they are equally valid expressions of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith." He said the church faced reformation or schism, and noted that "the cause of authentic evangelical/orthodox faith" had triumphed against slavery, nazism and apartheid. He outlined the necessary steps towards a confessing movement in the Uniting Church.

His address will appear in next issue of *ReForming* along with other conference papers. They already appear on the Alliance website: www.reformingalliance.org.au

In Adelaide the weight of science was added to the sound biblical and theological exposition that is a hallmark of Alliance conferences. Neil Whitehead's paper on 'why activists act' shows that questionable science and slanted propaganda support the homosexual agenda, to the detriment of fair debate and the church's integrity. Other papers continue the RA tradition of reasonable and coherent opposition to the emotionalism and flawed exegesis of the same-sex 'marriage' and normative homo-eroticism school that now drives official UCA policy.

Important responses to R84 from ethnic and indigenous communities appear in their official statements, and will be summarised in our next issue. They show the insensitivity and partiality of Assembly and synod decision-makers when faced with the question: to whom to show compassion? Not that compassion is the core question in debate over R84, but it is the word most often used in defending homosexual practice as normal and unchallengeable. So to whom to be compassionate?

Is the anguish and modesty of migrant and indigenous communities less real than the slights and offences suffered by homosexual people? One would think so, judging by our church's official devotion to the latter's cause, and the instinct to cry 'homophobia' rather than question our society's rampaging homosexual agenda.

PREPARING FOR ASSEMBLY 06

Alliance seeks legal advice on R84, church property

The Reforming Alliance will seek advice on the legal status of the 2003 Assembly Resolution 84 and the issue of churches and other properties used and maintained by congregations. This was decided at the annual general meeting of RA in July, attended by 107 members.

Preparing for the 2006 Assembly, the meeting unanimously approved an RA motion on sexuality to be submitted to the next Assembly, and agreed that letters from parishes supporting the motion be sent to presbyteries and congregations and the Assembly general secretary.

The RA will express appreciation to ethnic congregations and the Aboriginal and Islander Congress for their responses and will translate for ethnic congregations material concerning the resolution.

The Alliance will also inform the Assembly general secretary of the large numbers of congregations that have left or are disbanding because of R84, reminding him of the scientific competence and integrity of Dr. Howard Bradbury's statistical research through all synods. Networks will be set up to encourage congregations to hold times of prayer and fasting before the 2005 synods and the next Assembly.

Details of legal advice

The executive will seek legal opinion on the impact of R84 on the church's doctrines, teaching and practices, including the propriety of processes and procedures used in considering and passing it. The legal inquiry will also consider how the UCA's doctrines, teachings and practices with regard to marriage and sexuality affect ministers of the Word, deacons, youth workers, candidates and those in positions of leadership.

In light of disquiet, disbandment and withdrawal of some congregations, the RA will support the principle that property vested in synod property trusts should be held in trust for the benefit of local congregations. This will test the relationship of the church's Constitution (S50), which vests ownership of all property in the synods, to the Basis of Union's affirmation (para. 15a) that the congregation is 'the embodiment in one place of the Church'.

(continued on p. 2)

The executive will seek a formal response from all synod property boards about their understanding of moral ownership of properties. Should synods dispute the RA position, the executive will seek an amendment of the Constitution at the 2006 Assembly, so that definition of matters of vital importance for the church is entrusted to synods and presbyteries in such a way that is binding on the Assembly.

Another amendment (to S40 of the Constitution) will be sought to ensure that future assemblies are more representative of the church membership.

A working group of RA members will be set up to propose action by the Alliance should the Eleventh Assembly “not return to the Gospel of Christ as testified to in the unique witness of Scripture reflected in the Basis of Union”.

The meeting resolved that in the light of the liberating power of Christ from sexual brokenness, the executive hold workshops in each state within the next year to help people understand the causes and healing of sexual brokenness and to provide pastoral support.

The Alliance will hold a national meeting the day after Eleventh Assembly closes, to decide what options should be recommended to its members.

At the Conference public rally, Max Champion declared that the Alliance was engaged in more than a single issue.

A fierce encounter between opposing world views

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth' (Jn 1:14).

'We, too, groan inwardly while we await the redemption of our bodies' (Rom 8:23c).

'We are destined to grow up into the full humanity of Christ' (Eph 4:13).

Flesh-Body-Humanity are the stuff of distinctive Christian faith.

'Anyone who thinks the controversy in the Church about homosexual practice is only about homosexuality is greatly mistaken.' (Faris) We are in the midst of a fierce battle between competing world views which have previously shaped Western culture – Christian humanism and pagan naturalism. We are now living in a 'post-Christian' age in which private values and public policies disavow any connection with Christianity.

Our culture is now largely immune to the Christian faith. As familiarity breeds contempt, many broken people are led to despair. More and more folk are

turning to forms of spirituality which are 'natural' (not supernatural) and self-fulfilling (not self-giving). The search for 'happiness,' which used to be found in contributing to the 'common good,' has largely become a quest for self-gratification.

Deep concern for human 'rights,' which flows from our unique God-given dignity in creation, often degenerates into 'my right' to do what comes naturally. Humility in the face of God's holiness and mercy is often superseded by confidence in our own innate goodness.

Faith in a loving, divine purpose for humanity is often abandoned while we focus on our short term goals. Passion for the truth is being displaced by a bland, intolerant tolerance. Desire for social harmony based on common morality has been replaced by a consensus based on moral relativism and the virtue of 'diversity.'

This simplified sketch may help us to see that R84 (2003), which sanctions 'mutually exclusive views' on the ordination of folk in committed same-sex relationships, is one result of a seismic shift in Western thinking. Once it was assumed that 'God' was real, and we/I needed to be explained by God. Now, it is assumed that we or I are or is real, and God needs to be explained by us.

Since Descartes uttered the immortal words 'I think therefore I am' we have all been used to thinking about human existence from our own (self) perspective. Two things follow: First, the thinking individual displaced God as the most reliable source of self-knowledge. Second, a fateful split between mind and body has taken place in our understanding of what it means to be a human being. We have come to think that a person's 'essence' is to be found in his or her self-conscious mind and not, as for biblical faith, in the unity of the body-and-soul. Therefore, what has been happening around us and within us is a habit of thought which believes that:

The individual has replaced God.

Our 'true humanity' is to be found in our minds.

Our bodies (which aren't thought to be part of our essential humanity) can now be used as each individual decides according to his/her own reason, feeling and needs.

The single issue we face with R84 is not homosexuality per se, but our true nature and destiny as human beings. What does it mean to be a person? If my humanness is defined by my mind, feelings or will, then the way(s) in which I choose to use my body in sexual relations will have little to do with the physical structure of the body (as male or female) or with the divinely appointed covenant of marriage (between a man and a woman).

In a post Christian world, where God has been replaced by the thinking self, and where the real person isn't thought of as the physical, biological reality, but the 'consciousness' which resides in a

suit of flesh, I am free, in principle, to choose my sexuality. What I choose to do in the body (as a chaste, hetero, homo or bi- sexual person) isn't thought to affect my essential humanness. The 'rightness' of sexual relationships now depends solely on mutual consent.

Against this stands the unified biblical view that a human being is not only mind or body, but the God-given unity of body-and-mind which includes our specific identity as male or female. The failure to see that our creation as 'male' and 'female' constitutes our basic humanity/flesh/body – and isn't additional to our creation as 'individuals' – is at the heart of the current crisis which has devastating effects for so many people.

The sexuality debate thus highlights a clash between incompatible views of our flesh/body/humanity. On one hand, it is thought that a 'person' is made in the 'image of God,' quite apart from and prior to considerations of gender (Greeks). On the other, a person's gender (male or female) is an integral part of being created in the 'image of God' (Jews-Christians). With unmistakable clarity, Scripture affirms that our likeness to God is not found in our rationality, creativity, personality, race or culture but in our co-humanity as male and female (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2; Col 1:15f, Eph 5:31-32).

This clash cannot be resolved by appeals to tolerance (of difference) or by decisions which just 'note' that there are 'mutually exclusive views' (and practices) (R84). A clear decision must be made, not fudged, by the 2006 National Assembly on this issue. Scripture honours the (actual) body in a way that is denied by those who begin with the needs and choices of consenting 'individuals.' It calls us to treat our bodies with respect for their God-given structure (as male and female) and with delight that God has redeemed our fallen humanity by taking our flesh in Christ.

It isn't by chance that people like Bishop Spong, who insist that we abandon faith in the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ, support the gay agenda. They think the particular shape of the human body and the particular community of the Body of Christ are barriers to the individual's search for his/her own spirituality, values and sexuality.

Their protest makes it clear that this is 'more than a single issue.' The structure and purpose of our bodies cannot be separated from the body of doctrine concerning Christ and the Church. Indeed, there is an integral connection between our bodily creation as male and female and the embodiment of God's love in Jesus and his presence in the 'Body of Christ' (the Church).

This connection has been splendidly expressed by the late Pope John Paul II in his 'theology of the body.' God 'impressed his own form on the flesh ... in such a way that even what was visible might bear the divine form' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n 704). In the one flesh union of man and woman in

marriage we see, not only the beauty and holiness and joy of living in communion with the 'other,' but also the 'great mystery' that takes us into the heart of God's plan for the cosmos (Eph 5:31-32). The complementary unity of marriage is a sacrament of God's love for the world in a way that the union of two (similar) individuals cannot be. As a particular man is a mystery to a particular woman and a particular woman is a mystery to a particular man in a particular (exclusive) marriage, so God's union with the human race is, to us, a wonderful, particular and exclusive mystery of love. ...

We Protestants, who tend to spiritualise or moralise faith, need to be reminded that the heart of the Gospel is 'God's free and gracious union with humanity in the flesh of Christ.' The 'Otherness' of God (who is unlike us) is made known to us in Christ's incarnate, crucified and resurrected body. And the Church is united with him in the 'holy communion of his body.'

*Opponents are treated
with contempt; their
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compassion questioned*

As we look back through the events of Jesus and Israel, we can see that 'God created us male and female' right from the beginning to live in a "holy communion" that foreshadows the Holy Communion of Christ and the Church' (Christopher West, *Theology of the Body*, p9). That is why the analogy of marriage (between man and woman) plays such a prominent part in the witness of Scripture to God's steadfast love. In a special way it highlights God's union with humanity 'in Christ' and our union with God through faith in Christ!

Like all analogies, it must be used carefully. We aren't to make God in our image and infer that God is a sexual being (Greeks). We are made in God's image, not vice versa. God has inscribed an image of his own mystery in our humanity by creating us male and female (West, p11). The marriage analogy is the least inadequate. Unlike the analogy between individuals, it points to the 'Otherness' of God who has 'united' himself with our humanity in the 'flesh of Christ' and calls us into 'true community' as the 'Body of Christ.'

It is necessary to think through the issues raised by R84, not by starting with my/our individual reason, feeling or will (as post-Christians), but from God's revelation, as attested in Scripture. By rejecting the idea that our 'consciousness' is the 'essence' of us as persons, and insisting on the unity of body-and-mind in the twofold creation as male and female, we see the unique splendour of marriage in God's purpose – both as the means by which human community is nourished and maintained and as a splendid parable of God's self-giving love in uniting himself with our flesh in Christ. ... R84 isn't just about sex! It is more than a single issue!

Therefore, this is not a matter about which members of the 'Body of Christ' can agree to disagree by holding mutually exclusive views. That is why RA is committed to doing what it can to get the 11th Assembly (2006) to 're-affirm' the fundamental sexual teaching-and-ethic of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church – in conformity to our creation and redemption in Christ.

To this end, and to offer genuine hope for broken men and women, we are encouraging congregations and Presbyteries and Assembly to support a motion which will re-affirm the splendid teaching of the Ecumenical Church. Our goal is to re-call the UCA (including ourselves) to her true mission – to preach the word of God's mercy and righteousness (to and with our fellow sinners) and to offer friendship and support to all (including brothers and sisters who are attracted to homoerotic relationships) in their struggles with temptation, loneliness, ostracism, sickness and death.

In the present climate within the UCA, this is an extremely difficult task. Regrettably, many people, including those who have 'come out' of the gay lifestyle, have experienced great hostility from Church leaders at every level. The various Councils of our Church are reluctant to hear dissenting voices. The results of surveys, showing that 6500 individuals and 43 congregations have left the UCA because of R84, are dismissed; as were earlier surveys and independent research which showed overwhelming opposition to the Assembly. Opponents of R84 are often treated with contempt, their motives, compassion and integrity being seriously questioned. Voices of dissent from the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and migrant-ethnic churches are deliberately and cleverly muffled by Anglo-Saxon leaders who publicly wear their pro-aboriginal and pro-multicultural credentials with pride!

Friends, we seek your prayers, your theological insight, your political commitment and your financial support to fight the battle until at least the next Assembly. At the moment, we are considering various ways in which RA may be able to establish itself more firmly as a Confessing Movement. We believe that the crisis in the UCA, sparked by R84, is not a 'single issue' about sex, but a particularly important issue about sex which exposes a way of thinking about 'humanity' that is totally at odds with the created and redeemed humanity which are found in the flesh of Jesus Christ. We all need to be reminded that our chief purpose is to glorify Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, and to marvel at the splendour of our creation and redemption as male and female, as attested in Scripture. That, ultimately, is why RA is needed in the UCA at this point in its short history.

In all things, then, let us praise God that in Christ Jesus the Word became flesh and dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth!

HOMOSEXUALS ARE NOT BORN THAT WAY

Complex factors, not genes, make us what we are

First of two papers by N. E. Whitehead

I would like to show that in terms of Same-Sex Attraction (SSA), we are not born that way. I will deal mostly with the science and the numerous studies which seem to indicate we are born that way. The case we are not born that way is spelt out in much more detail in our book *My Genes Made Me Do It!* (sarcastic title – see www.mygenes.co.nz). The case is more general than just for SSA. Most traits are produced by a complex mixture of genes, environment and chance, and are therefore ultimately changeable. It also seems that individual chance reactions are often to genetic factors or social factors.

The theological case therefore is that Jesus can indeed rescue us, even if only the science is considered. This paper therefore is a kind of cutting away the undergrowth only. It might seem to be wildly wrong-headed, and part of the lunatic fringe, in view of various official pronouncements and the general impression given by the media.

But in academic circles the nature-nurture debate was settled 30 years ago with the conclusion that all traits, including homosexuality, are the result of a complex mixture of factors, and except in rare cases like physical features (blue eyes, hereditary diseases, hair colour etc) we are not inevitably born that way. It is only the result of politics wanting to push the debate either towards genes (usually but not exclusively conservatives) or towards environment (usually liberals, but not in the present case), that anyone makes a strong case for an overwhelming influence of nature or nurture. So if ultimately pressed scientifically no-one will say there is an exclusive nature or nurture case, but try to argue it is so overwhelming it might as well be. We shall see that is not so for SSA.

Since 1973 the politics has grown extraordinarily intense. It is so bad that one of the original movers of the motion to declare SSA not a psychiatric disorder (Cummings), has written a book about the extremely bad effects of the political correctness. He found it difficult to get contributors for chapters in his book because they were very scared they would lose tenure or be discriminated against in other ways, and this had happened to colleagues.

"The American Psychological Association has chosen ideology over sciencecensorship exists..... Even in the McCarthy era there was not the insidious sense of intellectual intimidation that currently exists under political correctness" - *Wright & Cummings (2005)*

This is an extraordinary statement and an enormous indictment of a professional scientific body. Worse than the McCarthy era?!! So an announcement from the American Psychological Association has now only the weight of the word of a political figure.

However there are numerous studies which link or correlate SSA with something physiological, mental or anatomical. A short list is: Finger length studies, Pheromones, Startle reflex, Elder brother hypothesis, Prenatal hormones, Fluctuating asymmetry, Left-handedness. Surely with so many, the cumulative effect must be overwhelming? And surely there are more to discover, making it even more overwhelming? No.

I want to take two typical examples. The two types occur over and over again. They are the Blink Reflex and SSA links with genes.

Blink Reflex

This research in the University of East London has as its first author Qazi Rahman. It relies on the blink reflex. When there is a loud noise, you blink. Everyone does this and it happens from birth. If there is a softer sound before the loud noise, the subsequent blink is inhibited, and this is called "pre-pulse inhibition". Men and women show very different reactions. Women continue to blink, but men blink much less, apparently figuring the risk is less, or "learning".

Lesbian women also apparently learn, and blink much less than heterosexual women and much more like heterosexual men. The authors conclude that since the blink reflex is not a learned one, being present at birth, therefore the lesbian difference is also innate.

But to establish that no learning after birth was involved, one would need to test new-born girls who eventually become lesbian, and no such study exists. In fact the very fact that pre-pulse inhibition exists shows that some type of learning after birth is possible.

Then we need to ask the question, even if there is a difference between lesbians and heterosexual women as a group, are there differences such that the two groups are completely separate, or is there an overlap?

I reconstructed the original data from the numbers in the paper and made a graph which shows there is much overlap between lesbians and heterosexual women. That is, quite a number of heterosexual women can be shown to have more pre-pulse inhibition than most lesbians. This shows that you could not predict the sexual orientation of a woman merely from a test of this type, and therefore the effect for all practical purposes is weak. An individual is not inevitably diagnosable as lesbian from birth.

I have done numerous such analyses using data

from many papers on many subjects and in all cases the effect is variable and weak. No measurement one can make on someone with SSA gives other than an ambiguous indication of their sexual orientation.

The lesson from this study is that it has not proved that the effect it measures is innate, and even if it were, it would not differentiate well. The effect is weak. If you see a new study in the media it will also be a weak effect. This is shown by identical twin studies which we consider in a minute.

Gay Genes?

In a series of papers published in 1993 and later, Hamer, a gay scientist, claimed to have found an association between SSA and a region on the X-chromosome of males. However Rice and others in another research group could not reproduce this finding. Hamer and others in 2005 did a much more extensive search over all the human genome and could not find associations, which rather negated the first findings. They concluded they had been unlucky, and fooled by a chance occurrence.

This means that at present there is no evidence for a gay gene or gay genes in males. Some weak associations are likely to be found in the end, but the connections will likely be indirect. This means your genes do not force you into SSA.

Twin Studies

These show once and for all that genetic and upbringing effects are rather small.

Identical twins have identical genes, and (mostly) identical upbringing. They are therefore a wonderful test bed for testing for genetic effects. To get the most value, a conventional twin study also looks at non-identical twins, who have the same upbringing but only about half their genes in common. In this paper I shall restrict our attention to identical twins, because they show us all we need to know.

One has to search hard among identical twin pairs to find pairs with at least one with SSA. For the last few years Australians have led the world in these studies with large twin registers, particularly in Queensland, and it is possible to find enough twins where one member has SSA. Now, what would you predict about the co-twin? He/she has identical genes, and identical upbringing. Does the co-twin have SSA? And how often?

The most prominent researcher is John Bailey from Northwestern University, who is a pro-gay researcher but has received much flak from the gay community.

Understanding the results has been complicated by the fact that in their published papers it has been necessary for good technical reasons to give rather inflated figures, necessary during the subsequent calculations. But from our point of view, the relevant statistic is – if one identical twin has SSA the other has SSA only 11% of the time.

The twins are mostly different. This shows that genes, similarities in womb environment, and upbringing which act on all the pairs, don't have much effect. Genes aren't to blame, but neither, mostly, are parents. Overwhelmingly important are chance effects. John Bailey interviewed discordant twin pairs and found that they had often perceived family situations very differently. It seems then, that erratically a young twin may react in different ways from his co-twin to the same situation. A particular situation will mostly not produce SSA, but erratically may become vital to one twin and lead to SSA. This could be a reaction to family, or perceived features of his/her own body.

Note that these twin studies include all factors already known, but also all factors yet to be discovered. This is very unusual and remarkable, that a prediction about future research is possible. We have to say the combined effects are weak. It also follows that the effects being discovered at the rate of a few each year are also weak. The predominant factor is actually the erratic way twins react to them.

Here is a typical genetic effect:

Boy is born with poor coordination (a genetic effect). He is bullied at school and hates masculinity. He longs for male acceptance. He has a sexual experience with an older boy, and experiences acceptance. He confuses sex and acceptance.

He seeks male sex for the acceptance. He develops more general SSA.

But most boys with poor coordination do not develop SSA. Most boys who are bullied do not develop SSA. The effect is weak and indirect. Other effects are similar. If a media report says "SSA is due to XYZ (a biological effect)" think "So is writing media reports."

If a media report says homosexuality is determined by prenatal brain structure, that really means they have found a weak link, and the major cause is something else.

Innateness

Is anyone actually born with a sexual orientation? Well, I don't see toddlers rushing off to gay bars or nightclubs. Sexual orientations develop slowly over years and are not stable until adulthood. Many environmental factors come into play in the meantime.

Conclusion

Genes create a tendency, not a tyranny. You can give your tendencies a feast or a famine. Even if we did not choose consciously in the past, we can choose now, but might need to choose hundreds of times to reverse longstanding trends. People are not Born that Way, because identical twins differ. This applies to almost every trait you can think of. Change is possible.

What does Jesus want to change in you?

A moving story of mercy and healing

In two addresses Pastor Ron Brookman, director of the Living Waters ministry, shared his long and difficult journey out of homosexuality and his work in helping churches minister to people confused about their sexual identity. His testimony was a moving account of the destructive effects of his former way of life and his movement towards wholeness, through growing awareness that the grace of God in Christ comes with mercy and healing.

Healing also was the theme of Mrs. Briar Whitehead's address, in which she declared that "if the Uniting Church embraces homosexuality you will become part of a nominal church, an irrelevancy in the Kingdom of God, increasingly indistinguishable from a party or club of do-gooders. If you say : Homosexuality is something that our God of great love and power can redeem, and hold out the word of Life, and you become a healing community, then you will find yourselves within the Body of Christ and the Holy Spirit will be with you."

Pastor Brookman's input was significant because the UCA offers help to people drawn to homosexuality, but avoids any reference to alternatives.

Disappointingly, the Assembly-authorized study, *Sexuality and Leadership in the Uniting Church* (2004), failed to mention Pastor Brookman's ministry.

Addresses by Pastor Brookman and Mrs. Whitehead will appear next issue.

WHY GAY ACTIVISTS ACT: PART ONE

Bias by therapists and censorship by scientists

N.E.Whitehead

In his introduction Dr. Whitehead described Jesus as the centre of Christian faith and experience. He claimed that Jesus rescues us from same sex attraction. His paper is edited for publication.

Part of the opposition to that claim will be the crippling negation by activists : "No, he can't and doesn't. " I'm surprised how important this negation is in activism, and this is a critical point for our understanding of it. We universally hear, even from experts, that change is not possible. How can that be?

The notorious Dr Kinsey believed in changing one's sexual orientation to fit circumstances and devised a form of therapy in the late 1940's to help people

change. He said it worked quite well, but failed in some cases. Why has this been ignored?

Up until 1973 it was common knowledge and a rule of thumb in the therapeutic professions that given a few years of therapy about a third of people with SSA (same sex attraction) made large changes in their orientation, a third made small changes, and a third did not change. Even those who had changed to a small extent were rather satisfied with their progress. There was also a rule of thumb that the earlier the same-sex experience, and the more intense it was, the longer it took to change the orientation. Among therapies regarded as legitimate were some which were brutal, and rightly condemned.

*Conservatives were
afraid of engaging in
a hundred year war*

A friend of ours, an ex-gay activist now married to a woman for about 15 years, in his gay days had aversion therapy in a New Zealand hospital (which did him no good). He was homosexually raped by two of the staff in the process. Today no therapist would condone the basic therapy idea let alone the abuse. Don't let anybody tell you this kind of brutal therapy happens any longer in the west or that modern therapy is harmful. Rather, it follows normal therapeutic guidelines whose guiding principle is First, do no harm.

In the US in 1973 activists took over the APA (American Psychiatric Association and later its fellow body the American Psychological Association) with intimidatory tactics, including forging of credentials, physical threats and meeting disruption, and removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders. Those who supported this merely wanted to not be too tough on gays/lesbians, but later activists tried to pass measures saying actual therapeutic help was unethical. This was only stopped by threats by some members to sue the APA for "restraint of trade". Very American this! The publishing of anything academic against gay/lesbian/bisexual is now almost impossible (at least in American Psychological Association journals which are the most influential). This is remarkable. In thirty years as a scientist I have never seen such scientific censorship in the western world before. It is typical of a communist regime only.

I have reluctantly to conclude that some scientific accounts written by gay activist scientists are partly biased. They are involved in what is called "advocacy science".

Had new scientific discoveries shown that therapy didn't work, or that it was indefensible? No. There were no new discoveries or significant papers. It was just a power grab. The objective facts are that the therapy worked as well as any other used at the time. But you will now hear the myth that it didn't work at all, and is completely discredited (a favourite gay

activism word, and usually a sign there is something to it, in spite of what they say).

The rest of the world took about 20 years to follow the American lead and remove GLB from their international diagnostic manual. It is now very hard to find therapists prepared to work with those who want to change. Those who are may be found mostly in the United States and particularly among the Mormons. Most, regardless of religious belief, belong to a non-religious organisation called NARTH (National Association for Research and Therapy on Homosexuals) which has 1500 members mostly in the USA. Many like myself are not trained counsellors, but contribute in related scientific fields.

Parallel with these professionals, amateur groups emerged. These followed the clues supplied by Dr Elizabeth Moberly of Oxford. At that time it was the usual opinion that homosexuality among men was the result of smothering mothers. Dr Moberly said that more usually the problem either in men or women was a deficit in relationships with members of the same sex. This had a considerable impact on therapists, and was taken up by at least four major amateur groups, Evergreen among the Mormons, Exodus among (mostly) Protestants, Homosexuals Anonymous (parallel to Alcoholics Anonymous), Living Waters (Protestant, which dealt more generally with sexual problems) and to some extent Courage amongst Catholics.

In Australia and New Zealand, therapists are rare. There may not be one in even a major city. There are usually amateur groups, but sometimes not even then. Exodus, Living Waters and Courage exist.

Therapists still working in the field have volunteered rates of significant change (to a greater or lesser extent) from their work, of 50-80%, generally improved from earlier therapy.

Scientific research parallel with this proliferation of small groups, but mainly a few decades later, seemed to show that no one cause predominated. There were many routes to SSA. So virtually all who study the subject academically say that it has multiple causes. Today they would include relationships with peers as very important.

Are we 'born that way'?

What is this we hear then, about constant discoveries that we are "born that way"? Every year there are a few such reports in the media. Virtually all this research is by gays, or very strong gay sympathisers. It has been published, so it has passed the high barrier of peer review and so the basic research is usually at least worth looking at.

First I must tell you that no-one in the academic world believes that everything is fixed unalterably at birth. They believe that what we are is a complex interaction of nature and nurture. It is not pure nature. In spite of this, some researchers and activists try to give the impression that homosexuals are born this way and cannot change. Media people are much

worse. This has remained a constant in the debate for about 15 years. I shall show later that we already have the answer to the degree of how much we are “born that way” (not much) and the answer is not going to change regardless of future discoveries.

However the impression was and still is given by activists that very strong early influences made SSA unchangeable. Alongside this is the parallel invoked to the civil rights movement in the United States. It is claimed (though statistics do not bear it out) that gays/lesbians are a hugely disadvantaged class who need special protection of their status in law. That appears also to apply to their status in the church. They should be allowed to “marry”, to lead the church.

But there is an element in gay activism which goes way beyond civil rights activism. During the New Zealand debate in 1993 about rights for homosexual people, MP Michael Cullen (now Minister of Finance) triumphantly said (I paraphrase) “Now your ability to voice a negative opinion about gay people stops at the end of your nose!” That is, you can think about it, but you must not say a word. There is a kind of vengefulness in that attitude, often fuelled by hatred and anger. Anger at heterosexual gender roles. Envy of heterosexuals. And interestingly, an appeal for special protections, because they do not feel strong enough to stand up to negative opinions about them. “We can’t stand the nasty things people say against us. Please protect us”. So there is hate speech legislation which other groups don’t usually need or seek.

Churches

In churches and society a number of trends were operating. First the liberal – conservative split from the mid 1800’s continued and deepened. The most radical non-traditional views on all subjects were advanced by liberals or radicals, and this centred on differing views of Scripture, but often about different views of Jesus Christ. If he really was God, then much followed which liberals did not accept. As a scientist, I have to confess that much of this was the fault of my fellow scientists who gave the impression that their work and results were much more sure and far reaching than they were. Christians were fooled into thinking that scientists’ methodology was all powerful, whereas all it really did was clarify the situation in an archipelago of islands in the middle of irreducible chaos. All of technology is that cluster of small islands in a Pacific Ocean of Chaos, which can be nudged, but not directly manipulated.

The conservatives, and here I must repent with you, were afraid to get into the 100 years war which would result if they insisted on outlawing liberal thought. So extreme views were tolerated, including the idea that homosexual relationships might not always be sin, and now the idea that they are normal, and that they do not constitute sin. If you want to fight liberal views you are committing yourself to the 100 years war. It is a strong current in the west.

This current is so strong that even non-Christian reli-

gions are divided that way. Islam has fundamentalist, moderate and liberal streams. In Judaism they are known as orthodox, conservative and reform. An ideological battle is in progress which transcends even the major religions. What could cause this? I think the liberal movement tends to the secular, the scientific and the comfortable.

Science is so value-neutral that in many cases any religion can use its results – an improved strain of wheat for example. So the technology of science has huge and deceptive prestige. Although science will be able to deal with only the 1 per cent of non-chaotic reality, it is believed to be nearly all-powerful, and hence should be listened to very seriously.

Since Science by its nature does not talk about God, an “enlightened” or “informed” person will not either. Science does not talk about miracles; neither will a liberal ideology. Science does not have much in the way of moral values about sex; neither will a liberal person. It takes the attitude ‘Let us allow any behaviour in society, provided society can support it and continue to expand economically and we can be comfortable’.

So homosexual behaviour became tolerated in liberal settings, and opinion in the church was divided between those who wanted to lynch them and those who wanted to ordain them. That is probably an irreconcilable difference. Are these grounds for divorce?

The result of this is the current mess in the church in the west worldwide. In many denominations open same-sex behaviour is tolerated, or even sanctified by ordination, and the successes mean the activism will continue and intensify.

NEXT ISSUE: How experience trumps Scripture.

Orthodox Church’s No to homosexual ordination

Responding to a question about homosexual ordination, Archbishop Stylianos of the Orthodox Church in Australia has advised RA of his “doctrinal and pastoral commitment to the non-negotiable Word of God, not only in the Bible but in the decisions of the ecumenical councils of the undivided Church”.

The Roman Catholic statement on homosexual unions by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith opposed the legal recognition of unions between homosexual persons. The statement said :

“The Church’s teaching on marriage and the complementarity of the sexes reiterates a truth that is evident to right reason and recognised as such by all the major cultures of the world. Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was established by the Creator with its own nature, essential properties and purpose. No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists

solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons. In this way, they mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives.

“The natural truth about marriage was confirmed by the Revelation contained in the biblical accounts of creation, an expression also of the original human wisdom, in which the voice of nature itself is heard.

“There are three fundamental elements of the Creator’s plan for marriage, as narrated in the Book of Genesis. In the first place, man, the image of God, was created “male and female” (Gen 1:27). Men and women are equal as persons and complementary as male and female. Sexuality is something that pertains to the physical-biological realm and has also been raised to a new level – the personal level – where nature and spirit are united.

“Marriage is instituted by the Creator as a form of life in which a communion of persons is realised involving the use of the sexual faculty. That is why ‘a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh’ (Gen 2:24). The union of man and woman has a special participation in his work of creation. He blessed the man and the woman with the words ‘Be fruitful and multiply’ (Gen 1:28). Therefore, in the Creator’s plan, sexual complementarity and fruitfulness belong to the very nature of marriage.

“Furthermore, the marital union of man and woman has been elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. .. Christian marriage is an efficacious sign of the covenant between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32). This Christian meaning of marriage, far from diminishing the profoundly human value of the marital union between man and woman, confirms and strengthens it (cf. Mt 19:3-12; Mk 10:6-9).

“There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

“Sacred Scripture condemns homosexual acts as a serious depravity... (cf. Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:10; 1 Tim 1:10). This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.

“Nonetheless ... men and women with homosexual tendencies must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. They are called, like other Christians, to live the virtue of chastity. The homosexual inclination is however objectively disordered and homosexual practices are sins gravely contrary to chastity. ■

State RA committee in NSW

A State committee of the Reforming Alliance will be set up in NSW to represent the views of RA members to the New South Wales Synod and the RA National Executive. The committee will have eight or ten members chosen by a general meeting of RA members who reside in the New South Wales Synod.

A constitution will come into effect after approval by a general meeting of New South Wales members of the Reforming Alliance and the RA national executive.

The NSW body will provide advocacy on behalf of NSW members but will not be authorised to collect, own or distribute funds or property. The inaugural meeting will be convened by the national executive.

Brian Hill’s study at the July 13 conference worship session drew parallels between Israel’s desire for a king and the church’s desire to embrace the homosexual agenda.

Across the years, a devout man speaks to us

Our reading comes from 1 Samuel 12: 13-25. Let me fill in some of the background. Earlier, in chapter 8, we read that when Samuel was old, the elders demanded a meeting with him in Ramah, a town of refuge in the south. They made it clear they wanted him to take a back seat.

“We want a king!” they shout. What they don’t say is: “We want to be like our neighbours.” Samuel rebukes them. “What’s wrong with living God’s way?”

“Maybe,” they reply, “but look at the pleasures they enjoy.”

“Yes”, says Samuel, “but look at the fall-out. Their ways lead to enslavement and oppression.”

“We want a king!”

Samuel doesn’t give an immediate answer, though it goes totally against what he believes to be God’s will for Israel. Instead of reacting from the gut and saying or doing something he may later regret, he seeks guidance from God (8: 6). To his dismay God tells him to give them their wish. Sometimes the only way we learn is when we’re allowed to have our way. We won’t listen to God; so God grants our desire.

“All right”, says Samuel. “Go home and I’ll ask the Lord what he thinks of your demands.” Then God arranges the secret meeting with Saul, and Samuel anoints him as the future king. Now Samuel calls the people together at Mizpah, the site of a decisive victory in Samuel’s early days. It’s an intentional

reminder to them of the way God gave them that victory over the Philistines on a plateau – a thunderstorm, and the enemy fled. But they don't get the message. Instead, the tribal leaders clamour to get a move on, and lots are cast to find who the Lord has chosen.

But surprise, surprise! The lot in this case falls on Saul, from the lowly tribe of Benjamin. Saul: tall and handsome; Saul, moody and self-indulgent. "Yes, anoint him, old man. This is our king."

But the northern tribesmen sniff. "Hardly a distinguished family", they say. "Samuel has screwed up." They refuse to recognise Saul as king. But Saul wins a notable battle against the Ammonites, and at last the people are willing to present a united front. They respond to Samuel's summons to meet again, this time at Gilgal.

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Another shrewd choice – Gilgal had been a sacred site since the time when Joshua first crossed the Jordan and set foot on the soil of the Promised Land in this area.

What a man this Samuel is. By this time he could have been forgiven for telling them to go to hell, but he's still hanging in. He presents Saul to the people. Which brings us to our reading.

See, here is the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; see, the Lord has set a king over you. If you will fear the LORD and serve him and heed his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well; but if you will not heed the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king. (vs. 13-15)

Samuel, I don't think they're taking it on board. I can hear them thinking: "Same old stuff. It's the sort of thing an old prophet would be expected to say — Boring." But Samuel continues.

Now therefore take your stand and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain; and you shall know and see that the wickedness that you have done in the sight of the LORD is great in demanding a king for yourselves." So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. (v. 16-18)

Now they're listening. The coincidence is uncanny. What's more, their crops are in jeopardy. They're afraid, but it's not a godly fear. Give the old man what he wants, so long as we save our crops and he doesn't cancel the coronation.

All the people said to Samuel, "Pray to the LORD

your God for your servants, so that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of demanding a king for ourselves." (v.19)

Crocodile tears! It's too late. Pour scorn on them, Samuel, and then turn your back on them and leave them to it. — But what does he say?

Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; and do not turn aside after useless things that cannot profit or save, for they are useless. For the LORD will not cast away his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. (v. 20-22)

What a man! Note Samuel's attitude at what for him is a very humiliating moment. The people are saying: "Move on, old man." His response puts him in a very select line-up of Old Testament leaders, along with people like Moses, Nehemiah, and Esther. Do you see why I say this? See how Samuel is still prepared to say, on God's behalf, that they are chosen people and God will stay with them if they will only turn to him with all their heart. But that's not all Samuel has to say. He rises to a height of selflessness rarely seen in the Old Testament.

Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve him faithfully with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king. (v. 23-25)

Look again at those extraordinary words: "Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way." Ponder that. Here's a leader heedless of his own reputation or even his own safety, so strong is his compassion for his foolish and disobedient people.

Does that bring echoes to your mind? Hear Moses saying: "Lord, if you won't forgive their sin, blot me out of your book" (Ex. 32: 31-32). "You wouldn't be the God I think you are." Bold, caring man! Hear Nehemiah saying: "I grieve for my people, we've been so foolish. Lord, help me approach the king." (Neh.1: 1-11)

Hear Esther saying: "I'll go in to the king, despite the law that prohibits it; and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4: 16).

What a select company: great leaders who in their willingness to risk all for the sake of their people faintly foreshadowed the willingness of our Lord Jesus himself to die for his people – us! Time and cultural change have not dimmed the qualities of leadership which Samuel exhibited.

So much for exegesis. But exegesis without application is like an oasis without water. And I feel we have much to learn in our current situation from this example which the Lord sets before us. Consider

four aspects of Samuel's godly leadership.

1. He was a true servant-leader. He'd spent a lifetime leading the people and hearing their complaints. Now, an old man, he's confronted by the fact that he must remit control to a personable but untried young man. Does he try to retain power, claim special privileges, patronise his successor?

Not at all. In the words of John the Baptist in a later age, he recognises that "I must decrease and he must increase." Samuel does what he can to prepare his successor for his new role. And then he steps back. Not quitting; just stepping back. Servant-leadership has its own cross, which we bear for Christ's sake.

We have to be careful that the Alliance doesn't become a refuge of ageing complainers. My perception is that we're not getting our message across to a younger generation. We're not making enough effort to recruit and train younger evangelicals. In our youth work, we're tempted to pass on a gospel of entertainment rather than edification.

2. He continued to care about what happened to them, even when they rejected his message and scorned his passion. He didn't take them to court for compensation, nor did he walk out on them. He hung in.

We live in an age of Christian pub-crawling. If I don't like the way they do things here, I'll go somewhere else, or strike out on my own. Sometimes the Spirit of God does lead us to step away from a situation that has become a deadlock. But always the questions to ask are: "What will happen to the believers we leave behind? Is it all their fault? Is there really nothing more I can do?"

Such considerations have kept me in the Uniting Church over the years despite increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of leadership at the top. There has always been something to do at the local church level. And paradoxically, it's becoming easier to do it. A couple of Assemblies ago, much was made of the new discovery that the life of the church is in the congregation. Surprise, surprise!

Meanwhile, things are weakening at the centre, and even Resolution 84 has facilitated the greater freedom of action of the local church, much as we deplore it on other grounds. I foresee wider doors of opportunity to interpret the mission of the local body of Christ in evangelical terms.

Samuel was one of those who persevere. By contrast, many of us have a natural tendency, when people we've known for years criticise us as hardliners, homophobes, and the like, to withdraw in hurt pride and distance ourselves from them. To continue cheerfully to serve them as well as we are able is the way of the Cross. And Samuel took it.

3. He continued to speak God's word to them. As if he hadn't already told them a thousand times. It was too important to be silenced, even though he knew that many people would give it a cold reception.

There are ways of doing this, of course. Some pronounce the word of God as judgment, laying guilt on the people they're cross with. That often conceals a vengeful ego trip. Samuel comes across as maybe a bit inclined this way. A better model is Paul, when he tempers his rather sharp criticisms of the Corinthians by saying: "We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections (2 Cor. 6: 11).

In some recent instances, members of the Reforming Alliance have been vilified by those who resent the stand we are taking. Some of our publications in response have been angry and thunderous.

*At all costs
we must guard
against demonising
our opposition*

We must at all costs guard against demonising our opposition. They are human, and by and large most are sincere in what they believe. We'll win nobody over by questioning their integrity. When we do, the truly wicked rejoice, and the merely bewildered are repelled.

It's a bit like that regrettable tendency in much Australian sport these days to "play the man." Cricketers sledge the batsmen when the umpires are out of earshot. Footballers target the good players on the other team, and try to nobble them when the referee's not looking. In philosophy, it's called argumentum ad hominem –attacking the person rather than assessing the propositions he or she is putting forward. It's not just bad logic; it's unworthy Christian conduct. We must patiently set forth the Word and contend for the truth with grace.

4. He continued to pray for them. When I said earlier that Samuel stepped back, that didn't mean he washed his hands of their affairs. He didn't say: "Well, I've done my bit. Now it's time to enjoy retirement and go on a world cruise." No. "I won't cease to pray for you", he said.

On a purely pragmatic level, if we do what Jesus told us to do, and pray for our enemies, it restores our sense of balance and seasons our words with respect for the other person. Which, incidentally, is likely to make more headway with the opposition anyway. On a spiritual level, it can sometimes have unexpected effects. Abraham Lincoln was once chided by one of his generals for not inflicting heavy reparations on the losers. He was actually preparing to provide subsidies for their rehabilitation. "Your job is to destroy our enemies, not rescue them", said the general. Lincoln replied: "Don't I destroy my enemies when I make them into my friends?"

Actually, I don't believe we have as many enemies as we think we have. Many bewildered people would like to come on board with us, but are offended by the stridency and even self-righteousness of some of our utterances. In the words of our Lord, "Love your

enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:43-44).

So Samuel speaks to us across the years, a devout man caught up in national politics. His concern for truth is matched only by his love for the straying people of God. When he sees his people wanting to be like their sinning neighbours, he keeps reminding them of their inheritance – the salvation story – telling of their historic dealings with a God who intervenes, and the lifestyle he expects of them. We’re challenged to do the same, with integrity matched by grace, for that is the way of the Cross. ■

RA at three Synods

The Reforming Alliance will be represented this month at the Synods of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. RA chairman Dr. Max Champion will speak at lunch-hour meetings in NSW and Queensland, and national administrator Peter Bentley will address a lunch-hour gathering in Victoria. Mr. Bentley is the author of the Bentley Report on the church-wide response to the report of the task group on sexuality, and is a former secretary of the Sydney presbytery.

Foundation to aid Wesley Institute scholarship program

The Gordon Moyes Scholarship Foundation is being established to honour Dr. Moyes, who retires soon after 27 years as mission superintendent. The Foundation will provide scholarships to Wesley Institute’s Theology School, which, with the support of RA (NSW) and EMU (NSW), is seeking acceptance by the NSW Synod as a centre for ministerial training. The Synod Education Board has responded positively, given the small undergraduate numbers electing to enrol at UTC and the

huge financial outlay needed to maintain it.

The RA executive states “We are happy to advertise the Foundation in view of the fact that a number of RA congregations are identified with Wesley Mission, training will be evangelical in ethos, and courses at Wesley Institute are already accredited by the NSW accrediting agency. The Foundation addresses a concern that RA has already expressed about the liberal bias in much of our present theological training.”

Chairman commends appeal

After twenty seven wonderful years Dr Gordon Moyes retires as Superintendent of Wesley Mission at the end of 2005. Under his leadership, building on the work of his predecessor, Sir Alan Walker, and his predecessors, and helped by six thousand paid and voluntary staff, the mission has experienced extraordinary and successful growth in Word and Deed. It has been decided to honour his contribution by establishing the Gordon Moyes Scholarship Foundation (GMSF). The Foundation will provide scholarships to enable meritorious students to attend the Wesley Institute. Wesley Mission has been engaged in theological education since 1884. Its educational activities now reside within Wesley Institute, a fully accredited, degree granting tertiary institution, specialising in training for ministry and the creative arts.

Scholarships will pay fees for up to three years, subject to satisfactory progress. Estimates indicate that, on average, \$100,000 will support a scholarship indefinitely.

A wide appeal is being conducted to raise funds to establish the GMSF. If you wish to contribute to a farewell gift for Dr Moyes, please be aware that it is his wish that contribution go to the Foundation. The other officers of the Mission, the treasurer Dr Jim Pendlebury and I, encourage you to follow his wish. Bequests will be most welcome.

*David Greatorex AO,
Chairman of the Foundation Appeal*

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