

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class

Book: "The Church & Homosexuality: Searching for a Middle Ground" (Kirk House Publishers, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2002)

Author: Dr. Merton Strommen is ELCA pastor and research psychologist. His book has nine chapters. One of them is entitled "What Does the Bible Say?" Which chapter do you think this would be? (It is the seventh.) This is an example of the ELCA doing theology. First, they sample society and then look for biblical support to back up what society is doing. Each chapter contains evidence from social science that reflects negatively upon homosexual practice but then the author ends the chapter trying to soften that view in an attempt to look for balance.

Introduction: (page 11) "I believe that the one extreme—the condemnation and rejection of homosexuals—can be dispensed with quickly by any Christian who believes the gospel of God is unmerited grace and forgiveness. We need to proclaim clearly that God loves homosexuals as much as He loves the rest of us—all of us sinful and broken, all of us redeemed and in the process of transformation."

Chapter One- Who Are Homosexuals?

(page 14) "In order to see clearly we need to free ourselves of sweeping generalizations. This requires that we start not with our biases and prejudice—one way or another—but with the best psychological, sociological, and historical research currently available."

(pages 17 and 18) "Today the idea that ten percent of our population are (is) homosexual or lesbian is widely accepted. As the following information will indicate, this is not true...The evidence is strong that the number who identify themselves as homosexuals is three percent or less."

Where do the people live who are trying to push homosexuality upon our nation?

(page 22 and 23) "Today the goal of the gay activist movement is to identify homosexuality as an acceptable, normal, and safe way of life. Its advocates demand that society view homosexuality as a sexual preference on equal footing with heterosexuality....Today the agenda of militant gay activists is to establish homosexuality as being: 1. An innate, genetically determined aspect of the human body; 2. Irreversible, something that cannot be changed; and 3. Normal, as left-handedness is normal."

Conclusion- (page 24) "I cringe at some of the horrible things which have been said and done to homosexuals—many of them by people who claim they are representing the Christian faith....At the same time there are sound theological, psychological, and sociological reasons for questioning the position of gay activists."

Chapter Two- What Causes Homosexuality?

(page 25) "Do people simply choose to be homosexual? The answer for nearly all homosexuals is 'no.'"

(page 27) "Behavioral geneticists find no evidence for this widely held belief that homosexuality is genetically determined. No research is able to do more than identify what seems to be a genetic predisposition toward homosexuality."

(page 28) "Today's most respected researchers say only that genetics may contribute a predisposition to a homosexual orientation. They generally agree that homosexuality—like most other psychological conditions—is due to a combination of social, biological, and psychological factors. Homosexuality is developmentally determined."

Why might some want homosexuality to be genetically determined (“born that way”)?

(pages 28-29) “A correlation has been observed between homosexuality and non-masculine behaviors in boyhood...Those labeled ‘sissy,’ the loners, and those who preferred the company of girls, tend to shy away from rough boy activities and competitive games. This is a loss, because the early years of a boy help shape his concept of himself as a male. These studies indicate that boys in groups actualize the masculine potential in each other. Males in groups teach each other a resilience and trust that the ‘pre-homosexual’ boy misses.”

(page 29) (from the studies of New Zealand scientists Neil and Briar Whitehead) “Ten percent of the influence to become homosexual is genetic. Society can emphasize or de-emphasize the genetic contribution by acting upon it or suppressing it. If a society encourages homosexuality, then the comparative influence of environment increases, and the genetic influence of ten percent drops even lower.”

(page 30) “With the onset of puberty, most boys between ages 8 and 14 experience a homosexual period...the vast majority of youngsters who engage in homosexual practices outgrow them. This is an important point that I will pursue later. It relates to the high vulnerability of adolescent males who, when they admit to having homosexual inclinations, may be counseled to join a gay club at school. They may be told wrongly that they are homosexuals and that they should learn to live with this fact. This simply strengthens the homosexual orientation.”

(pages 30-31) “The idea that parents contribute to the formation of homosexuality is sharply opposed by gays and those favorable to their point of view...But to discount the theory of parental impact ignores the results of careful studies involving significant samples.”

(page 32) “Those who counsel homosexuals find that their clients consistently single out their relationship to mother or father as a contributor to their homosexuality...80 percent of the mothers in the homosexual sample were overly close to their son, spent a great deal of time with him, and preferred him to his siblings. Contrastingly, when father-son relationships show an absence of loving, warm, constructive attitudes and behavior, homosexuality often occurs.”

(pages 34-35) “Another developmental factor is the sexual stimulation provided by older persons, friends, literature, or films...The discovery of gay pornography by a young adolescent can have a very habituating influence on the sexually confused and impressionable boy.”

Why is the presence of homosexual characters on TV important for pushing the gay activist agenda?

(pages 37-38) The work of psychotherapist Richard Cohen in the recovery process of homosexuals:
Stage One- cut ties with the homosexual community and build a support network of healthy love and a sense of self-worth through a personal relationship with God.

Stage Two- develop skills for creating happiness in his present life.

Stage Three- identify the homo-emotional wounds, heal them, and fulfill them in healthy, non-erotic same-sex relationships.

Stage Four- identify hetero-emotional wounds, heal them, and fulfill them in healthy, opposite-sex relationships

This relearning process is not a quick fix, taking up to three years.

Conclusion (page 38) “It is an oversimplification to say that people are born homosexual. There may indeed be a genetic predisposition, but other developmental and environmental factors play a more decisive role.”