
HOMOSEXUALITY *A Straight BYU Student's Perspective*

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CARMACK

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Credits

Inasmuch as this book is of good report or praiseworthy, I credit:

Kenneth Miller, whose book *Just a Theory* provided a structural prototype for chapter 2.

My parents, David and Becci Carmack, for teaching me moral courage.

BYU and my BYU professors, who have educated and helped me develop the skill of critical thinking.

Many of my friends, from whose examples I have learned compassion.

My LDS upbringing, for teaching me to seek for and cleave to truth.

My Heavenly Father, who has encouraged and inspired me along the way.

Inasmuch as the book is erroneous (and I would be deeply surprised if it does not have many faults), I take full blame.

Disclaimer

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Introduction

The average person on this earth has a twelve-fold better chance of having strong homosexual tendencies than of having membership in the LDS church. At 14 million members, the LDS church constitutes about .21% of the world's 6.8 billion people. At even the most conservative consensus figures estimating the prevalence of homosexual orientation (3% of men and 2% of women¹), that means about 170 million homosexually oriented people worldwide—which is 12 times the number of church members. Even within the church, at that same prevalence, a very conservative estimate is that there are roughly 350,000 homosexually oriented members of the LDS church. Given the number of church units (wards and branches), the likelihood that at least a handful of homosexually oriented church members or ex-members live in your boundaries is extremely high. Bottom line? **Homosexuality is neither rare nor insignificant.**

Who is my audience? Like the LDS author of the well-known *No More Goodbyes*, I would answer:

“I write primarily of the Mormon experience, but I don't write only to Mormons. I write to all who find themselves walking that challenging territory where religion and sexuality collide. We are an interesting bunch, we Latter-day Saints. Politically we hold a significant place on the national scene, and I think we offer a fine microcosm of all conservative religions as they address this unavoidable subject. Everyone can learn a lot from our pain, our confusion, our failures, our learning, and our successes.²” (in writing this book I have noticed parallels between Muslim, Catholic, and Mormon responses to homosexuality³)

Though I intend this book to be a mildly apologetic, faith-based response from a seventh-generation Latter-day Saint, in it I will reach some tentative conclusions that the reader may as of right now disagree with. I invite all readers to suspend present views long enough to openly consider the support I will give for the conclusions herein. This reading will be worth little unless you do, because if one's conclusions are already set, presented evidence is likely to result only in polarizing further the stance already taken⁴. If, when you finish the last page, you have found none of my arguments persuasive—no harm done, just return to the views you held before picking up the book. In exchange for your commitment to openness, I commit to a robust, well-researched inquiry. I hope to emulate the ideal of the editors of *Understanding Same-sex Attraction: LDS Edition*: “We need all of the understanding we can get from the three pillars of wisdom: religion, science, and human experience. To this end we should spare no effort.⁵”

Penultimate request: please consider the chapters of this book independently. If, for example, you are moved by chapter 1's call for compassion, please do not reject that emotion because you find a later claim about the causes of homosexuality wanting.

Last introductory request: hold this book in suspicion. I am no less susceptible to bias than the reader, and though I have sought to be fair in my approach, please be on guard against my prejudices.

Chapter 1: A Case For Compassion

I've thought a lot on this topic over the past few years ever since one of my cousins came home from his mission, came "out of the closet," and subsequently left the church. I've always thought of homosexuality to be one of the toughest challenges anyone could be faced with when simultaneously believing in the gospel of Christ where a heterosexual marriage and resulting family are so resoundingly central.

- Sara Johnson*

Though the statements below bear on related issues (such as causation, mutability, and same-sex marriage), my purpose in this chapter is *only* to argue that LDS members should have compassion on homosexually oriented people in and out of the church; I intend to discuss related issues in other chapters. If your heart is touched by the plight of many homosexually oriented people, my purpose for this chapter is accomplished.

My argument is two-fold: LDS members should have compassion on homosexually oriented people in and out of the church because 1) church doctrine compels it and 2) homosexually oriented people often have it rough.

1) Church Doctrine Compels Compassion:

“Religion’s power lies not so much in the sermon as it does in the believers capacity to bring to fruition through ethical and moral action the spoken or written word of God.”⁶

From the Church’s pamphlet, *God Loveth His Children*, written for homosexually oriented members: “God does indeed love all His children. Many questions, however, including some related to same-gender attractions, must await a future answer, even in the next life. But... He loves all His children, and because He loves you, you can trust Him.”⁷

Irrespective of one’s conclusions as to the sinfulness of homosexual orientation and/or behavior, it is clear that the LDS church should be a hospital for sinners rather than a mansion for perfected saints. In addition to the above reminder of God’s love, I could provide several more authoritative quotes. However, though abundant, they don't depart significantly from this clearly articulated one by member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Oaks:

“All should understand that persons (and their family members) struggling with the burden of same-sex attraction are in special need of the love and encouragement that is a clear

responsibility of church members, who have signified by covenant their willingness to bear one another's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ.⁸"

I add to these two excerpts a third quote from a previous mission president, former BYU biology professor, and current active Latter-day Saint, Bill Bradshaw-

"Greater sensitivity and a reduction in hurtful disapproval might also be achieved as we review and evaluate pertinent LDS doctrines. I would like to suggest that it is appropriate for members of the Church to withhold judgment about the implications of some religious principles in humble recognition of the uncertainty that accompanies our relative ignorance. . . . The ideals we espouse provide wonderful general guidelines for the heterosexual majority in their quest for exaltation, without ruling out the possibility that there will be equivalent eternal possibilities for the homosexual minority. . . it would seem most appropriate to love and support our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in their efforts in this mortal sphere to acquire as much as they can of godliness.

It is also my belief that our Heavenly Father has in store special blessings for his homosexual children in recognition of the successes they have made of their mortal lives in the face of undeserved hostility.⁹"

In response to a petition from the Human Rights Campaign, the church responded:

"This past week we have all witnessed tragic deaths across the country as a result of bullying or intimidation of gay young men. We join our voice with others in unreserved condemnation of acts of cruelty or attempts to belittle or mock any group or individual that is different - whether those differences arise from race, religion, mental challenges, social status, sexual orientation or for any other reason. Such actions simply have no place in our society.

This Church has felt the bitter sting of persecution and marginalization early in our history, when we were too few in numbers to adequately protect ourselves and when society's leaders often seemed disinclined to help. Our parents, young adults, teens and children should therefore, of all people, be especially sensitive to the vulnerable in society and be willing to speak out against bullying or intimidation whenever it occurs, including unkindness toward those who are attracted to others of the same sex. This is particularly so in our own Latter-day Saint congregations. Each Latter-day Saint family and individual should carefully consider whether their attitudes and actions toward others properly reflect Jesus Christ's second great commandment - to love one another.¹⁰"

Last, I quote LDS poet, author, and playwright Carol Lynn Pearson, whose words apply especially to this chapter:

"What if we are in that archery class, all of us, practicing for perfection, rehearsing for heaven? And what is the bull's eye, that desired point for which we aim? No secret there. Love. That is made clear in every sacred text that has graced this planet. Jesus said that the center point, the greatest commandment, is to love God and your neighbor (as well as yourself). "Love one

another, as I have loved you..." Perhaps many of us respond to our fellow students' learning with a righteous zeal that causes us to miss love and land on judgment, fear, hate... Perhaps some of us see the mote that is in our brother's eye and are not aware of the beam that is in our own. Perhaps our Teacher would like us to be one another's cheerleaders rather than one another's judges...

"[E]verything that comes from love is a miracle" and brings about oneness. Whatever does not come from love comes from fear and contributes to the illusion of "separation," separation from God and from one another.

Can we be "kind" to others when we see them as a different "kind"? We can be polite to our homosexual brothers and sisters, but we are not being "kind" unless we acknowledge them as "kin," not as "the other," but as our very own kind.

In this book I introduce you to your kin [homosexuals], your own kind. There's an old Jewish Saying: *An enemy is someone whose story you do not know*. Storytelling is part of my calling, and as you read the following stories, I have full confidence that your understanding and compassion will increase, that you will respond from the place of love, of kindness, and that together we will create miracles.¹¹

2) They Have It Rough:

To paint this "they have it rough" picture, I will quote a few studies and share several stories illustrating facets of the story of what it's like to be homosexually oriented and LDS. It is my hope that the reader will thoughtfully consider whether and how any of his/her past or future attitudes or actions contribute to the experience of homosexually oriented people. In this as in other chapters, the stories shared will present a diversity of views, including occasionally views critical of some teachings of church leaders. I include these excerpts not necessarily because I agree with any particular view, but because I feel that a candid presentation of many diverse perspectives adds value to our pursuit of understanding.

Negative attitudes toward homosexuality harm:

Attitudes about homosexuality are not without heavy consequences. Many homosexually oriented people have experienced depression and/or committed suicide because of misunderstanding and maltreatment from others because of their homosexual orientation:

"According to a national survey conducted in 2000, 74 percent of [gay persons] and bisexuals reported having been subjected to verbal abuse because of their sexual orientation and 32 percent

reported being the target of physical violence.¹² ; see also D. Satcher, supra ("[a]veraged over two dozen studies, 80 percent of gay [persons] had experienced verbal or physical harassment on the basis of their orientation, 45 percent had been threatened with violence, and 17 percent had experienced a physical attack")¹³.

I'd imagine many homosexually oriented people also appropriately crave being open, being authentic, being loved as they are¹⁴:

Look at me
You may think you see
Who I really am
But you'll never know me
Every day
It's as if I play a part
Now I see
If I wear a mask
I can fool the world
But I cannot fool my heart

Who is that girl I see
Staring straight back at me?
When will my reflection show
Who I am inside?

I am now
In a world where I
Have to hide my heart
And what I believe in
But somehow
I will show the world
What's inside my heart
And be loved for who I am

Who is that girl I see
Staring straight back at me?
Why is my reflection
Someone I don't know?
Must I pretend that I'm
Someone else for all time?
When will my reflection show
Who I am inside?

There's a heart that must be
Free to fly
That burns with a need to know
The reason why

Why must we all conceal
What we think, how we feel?
Must there be a secret me
I'm forced to hide?
I won't pretend that I'm
Someone else for all time
When will my reflection show
Who I am inside?
When will my reflection show
Who I am inside?

Though I don't know how representative the following experience is, this 1999 letter of one father illustrates the depths of difficulty many LDS individuals and families have faced in dealing with homosexual orientation¹⁵:

(when I first read this letter, I was deeply moved by the experience of this man and his family. Though some of his comments can seem accusatory, please try to understand his writing primarily for what it is: one person's authentic feelings and experiences.)

“I need to inform you of the personal heartache and damage you have to some degree been responsible for visiting upon my immediate family as the author of *To the One* [a talk given by Elder Boyd K. Packer in 1978 that was subsequently distributed by the church as a frequently used pamphlet]... my wife and I have been referred to it numerous times as we have come to grips with this issue over the past few years. As one who has always been mindful of my Temple covenants, an unwavering believer, and a follower of my Priesthood leaders, this is not an easy letter to write. For me it represents an anguished "Crossing of the Rubicon." I hope you will take the time to read it, for in it I have invested my very soul.

Early on a Saturday morning six weeks ago, I watched as our car pulled away with my wife driving our eldest son to a new city, a new community, and a new school to complete his senior year of high school. Ever since that morning, I have grown progressively angrier that to protect our son's life and sense of self worth, we are compelled to send him away from our home and family. You see, this community of "Saints" we live in is so steeped in ignorance, fear, loathing, judgment and qualified "love" towards our son and those who like him face the challenge of homosexuality, he twice arrived at the point where he was devoid of hope and felt he had no alternative but to take his own life. Fortunately, he did not succeed. My son is not manic-depressive, nor was he ever before suicidal. He simply understands too well the Gospel and believed what his Seminary teachers and Priesthood leaders taught him about homosexuality, based upon the doctrine set forth in *To The One*.

My wife and I are the parents of six children - two daughters and four sons - ranging in age from twenty-three to eight. Our oldest son at age thirteen had the courage to come to us with his growing fear that he had no attraction whatsoever to girls - the thought in fact disgusted him - but that he was very attracted to those of his same sex. That he would come to us without fear or shame, confide in us, and seek our counsel attests to the strong relationship my wife and I have both always had with our son...

This son was always spiritually mature for his age. He is the finest young man I have ever known - giving, loving, supportive, honest, reliable. Most definitely unselfish. A leader among his peers in his school and primary classes and in his Priesthood quorums. Since he was old enough to talk and walk, we were very much aware of certain differences that concerned us. He carried himself differently, walking and running. When we could get him to pick up a ball, he threw it differently. He spoke differently. He was not in the least interested in sports (in spite of countless practices and Saturdays we spent supporting him in sporting events that utterly disinterested him). He loved dolls and playing house. He loved music, literature, drama and poetry. He made friends easily with girls, but very rarely with boys. Carlie and I listened with hope to LDS counselors and leaders who dismissed or downplayed all of this as merely a "phase." We believed in and relied on them.

The years passed, but the "phase" didn't - this in spite of our doing everything recommended to us by LDS counselors, Priesthood leaders and, of course, the teachings of the General Authorities... While we were assured by LDS counselors that this was little more than a correctable Pavlovian response and that "nothing could be easier to cure," and took hope in your confident statement in *To The One*: "When we understand fundamental moral law better than we do, we will be able to correct this condition routinely. . . ," matters went from bad to worse. One

evening in 1997, while I was out of town and my wife was being assured by our well-meaning Stake President at his office that "if we just keep it quiet - the same as if someone in your family had committed adultery [our son had done nothing]- it will all be just fine, trust me . . .," our son slit his wrists in his room at home. Earlier in the day, it had been the "Sodom and Gomorrah" lesson in Seminary.

As bishop of a student Ward at the University of Utah working with homosexual returned missionaries, I came to the painful realization that the "reparative therapy" practiced by LDS Social Services and organizations such as Evergreen (whose board of directors I then served on) was not merely ineffective, it was terribly damaging. In every instance I found that this "therapy" accomplished little more than driving these earnest brothers and sisters, desperate to believe that they would "change," deeper into self-loathing and despondency.

Their failure to "change" as promised them by you and other Priesthood leaders - a failure ultimately arrived at by each and every one of these young men and women who were honest with his or her situation - left only three realistic alternatives: (1) practice deceit as long as possible to remain in good standing with Church and family, (2) give up completely, abandon Church and family, and turn to the only community that will accept you - the gay community, or (3) commit suicide...

In *To The One* you preach that homosexuality is not innate, but is a curable condition. Your fundamental proof: God wouldn't make a mistake like this. By preaching this, you set the impossible goal of "cure" as the standard to which my son must hold himself responsible, as must his family and all other Church members. Until he chooses to do what he must to be "cured," he hasn't done enough. He will never have done enough. He will always come up failing in the most fundamental aspect of his entire existence as a child of his Heavenly Father. He is a pervert, an aberration, and an abomination... How would you deal with this if you were him?...

Last week a dear friend (formerly a bishop) reassured us that he still loved our son "even if he has made a choice to be this way." My son did not choose to be this way. This type of "love" born of duty and pity for his abominable choice acts like a slow but virulent cancer on our son's self-esteem. It is for this reason we have found it necessary to send our son away from the community of the "Saints."

As the Church "progresses" on this issue, what we are hearing more and more from Priesthood leaders today is the idea that our son is acceptable so long as he practices life-long chastity. That is, of course, actually called celibacy, and while it's a convenient idea to advance, in practice it is virtually impossible to live... You may recall that in his somewhat recent newspaper interview in California, President Hinckley compared the plight of homosexuals to that of the single sisters in the Church. To paraphrase, he said that the Church doesn't ask homosexuals to do anything it doesn't also ask of its other single adult members - to live chaste lives. But this simply isn't true. As a former bishop I have firsthand experience. We openly love and support our single brothers and sisters. We give them important callings - especially with our youth and children. We urge them to date, to flirt, to get crushes, to fall in love, to marry. We sponsor Ward and Stake activities and dances to get them together to accomplish this. We ask them to be

chaste - until they find someone to share their life and intimacy with. We go out of our way to give them something of immeasurable value in the struggle to keep the law of chastity - hope - hope that no matter how difficult this emotional and physical loneliness is, it is temporary. For those with the least control over their situation, our single sisters, we give special encouragement and hope that they will find love, emotional intimacy and fulfillment in this life - and if not, certainly in the next.

We do not knowingly give homosexuals important callings - especially not with our youth or children who would be at risk of being infected and recruited. We forbid them ever to flirt, to date, to get crushes, to fall in love, to have a legally-recognized monogamous relationship. The image of a Tri-Stake Gay and Lesbian Gold-and-Green Ball is amusing. We ask them to be chaste - forever. No hope at all. The question of sexual intimacy aside - can you imagine having being denied the ability to become attracted to, flirt with, get a crush on, hold hands with, steal a kiss from, or fall in love with your wife? With all trace of romantic love and emotional intimacy denied you, with what would you fill the void to hold at bay a life of loneliness, emptiness, and despair?

We do have at least one historic example to look to. The Catholic Church has attempted to enforce celibacy on its clergy throughout the ages with success at some level (although we will never know what level). With what did they replace the emotional void? They had the love and adulation of the church membership, and authority and power. They were, in fact, the Bishops, Stake Presidents, and General Authorities. They were held next to deity - and their record is less than stellar. Imagine the celibacy success rate of a group defined by a loathsome and abominable "condition."

Imagine also, for a moment, if you were to stand up in front of the freshman class at BYU and announce that everyone present was being given a special calling to live a celibate life from then on. How many do you think would really be able to do it? How many empty and guilty lives and suicides would result? The Church has never taught the principle of celibacy. As a parent, I don't have the slightest idea how to begin teaching it. There are no manuals, no courses, no "For the Strength of Celibate Youth" cards to carry. There are no Priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, or Primary lessons on celibacy. On the other hand, following the teachings of the Church, we have raised our children in a home filled with open love, intimacy, loyalty and commitment between a couple. Our children know Carlie and I adore each other, and they want and need the same thing in their lives.

I never thought I would say this, but as a father given the choice between (a) my son's suicide, (b) his complete abandonment of the Church and embracing of the extreme gay culture with its emotionally debilitating and physically dangerous practice of anonymous casual sex, or (c) living in a committed, monogamous relationship for the rest of his life practicing the Gospel virtues of love, commitment, and fidelity we have taught in our home, I would have to pick the latter. The Church, however, is now doing all in its power to prevent that...

Then again, perhaps my son is simply a casualty of war - acceptable "collateral damage" in an eternal plan and struggle in which by the luck of the draw he has no relevance or place. The Gospel has always been easy to have faith in and follow because it made real sense and worked

in our lives. This would make no sense. And the current doctrine, as set forth in *To The One* is not working for our family. I can't tell you how strange and difficult this is. It's like we woke up one morning on a different planet. In our greatest time of need as a family, the Church has failed us and abandoned us - and through the convenient but hurtful doctrine of parental causation, complicity and guilt it directly promotes (evidence the article in September's Ensign), it kicks us while we are down... We live in this issue twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and must raise our children through it by our best lights. And there are many more like us in the Church. Parents like us are ultimately forced to make a hopeless decision: abandon our homosexual children, or turn from the Church. "Not so," you say. You would never know unless you walked in our shoes..."

David Eccles Hardy

From a homosexually oriented LDS member in 2010:

"Before I even knew what sex was or conceptualized the word gay or knew of the hostility the world—especially my world—had towards such a concept, I was attracted to my same gender. I was gay. I remember vividly my first crush in third grade. I didn't choose to have that crush, it just happened.

There was no struggle with that attraction and I certainly wasn't suffering from it. There was no value judgment of superiority or inferiority. It just was.

Unnatural. Unclean. Abomination. Next to murder. Ungodly. Unworthy. Immoral.

It wasn't until these words were preached to my young heart from persons I was raised to hold in the highest esteem and the highest authority that the suffering and struggling started. Church leaders spoke of those who struggle and suffer with these attractions, and because I knew I was the target of their words, I too started to suffer.

I remember intentionally souring personal relationships with people in my life because they expressed romantic interest and I dared not simply decline out of immense fear that this would somehow give me away as one with "unclean desires". And so I was mean. I was hurtful. I pushed people away—away from me, and away from my secret. Indeed there was pain and suffering! Oh the regret.

I remember the nights where I would lock my bedroom door, crawl into my closet, and behind the safety of the closet doors plead aloud "Lord why me? Why hast thou forsaken me? I feel so alone. If thou will provide a way, any way, to overcome this I will do all that you ask."

I remember waking at 4:30 am every Tuesday morning to show God my commitment and faithfully going to the Temple to do baptisms for the dead. I remember through the grogginess of my tired eyes being able to see the love gleaming from the eyes of the senior couples who

braved the early hours to give service to their faith and realizing that my church had condemned me to never feel the joy of such a partnership.

I remember the spiritual wrestling match going thousands of rounds over hundreds of nights.

I remember so vividly each hot tear as it burned streaks down my face in the darkest hours of too many nights.

I remember once looking at my pillow one Saturday afternoon as I exchanged the used pillow case for a new freshly laundered one. The cradle of my head was so soiled and stained, not from nocturnal drooling, but from thousands of tears consciously and unconsciously shed. Its yellowed stained appearance as physically appalling as the spiritual angst that created it.

Just as my church leaders had prophesied, my sexual attractions did bring much suffering...

I still struggle when I see an institution that has preached so much emphasis on the family woefully and inadequately prepare its members with the resources necessary to cope with such a difficult conflict between their familial love and their religious teachings.

I still struggle when I hear the news of those who were tired of the fight and choose to bow out far before their time.

I still struggle when in the darkest hours of the night the tears come again as my phone rings with a sobbing friend on the other end of the line who can barely express through their own tears their weariness, despair, and “struggle and suffering” with their attractions.

I still struggle when I see friends and loved ones who are not gay but are reviled as apostates because their consciences, life experiences, and relationships with their fellow man tell them that their church leaders are wrong on this issue...

So yes, my greatest blessing continues to be my greatest struggle. However, that suffering has evolved from one of internalized self conflict to a struggle of my heart reaching out in compassion to those I love and to those who lack understanding.¹⁶

A 21-year old Gay Mormon:

“I have adhered to and lived by the Church's counsel and guidelines most of my life, while at the same time being tormented by something inside me that countered some of the Church's most steadfast rules. Something that defied change and quietly but stubbornly rebelled against everything that it was claimed to be by President Kimball in his seemingly endless and merciless damnation of it. Something that has caused me endless nights of lost sleep and endless days of struggle, denial, guilt and tears. Something defined as homosexuality.

I suppose I am, and have been for a number of years (if not always), a homosexual.

The events which led up to my going on a mission for the Mormon Church are another chapter entirely. Perhaps, as much as anything, it was hope and faith which harboured the rationale of 2 years devoted service to the Lord in exchange for the withdrawal of that something which President Kimball never failed to blacklist.

If I have accepted my sexuality, it has not been out of defiance, pride (or shame), adventure, or understanding. Merely surrender. After years of hope, prayer, faith, work, and unending anguish, I cannot go on playing Don Quixote fighting a windmill for which there is no conquering...¹⁷,”

Andrew Sullivan, a religious gay man¹⁸:

“In my adolescence and young adulthood, the teaching of the Church was merely a silence, an increasingly hollow denial even of the existence of homosexuals, let alone a credible ethical guide to how they should lead their lives. It is still true that in over thirty years of weekly churchgoing, I have never heard a homily that attempted to explain how a gay man should live, or how his sexuality should be expressed. I have heard nothing but a vast and endless and embarrassed silence, an awkward, unexpressed desire for the simple nonexistence of such people, for their absence from the moral and physical universe, for a word or phrase, like ‘objective disorder,’ that could simply abolish the problem they represented and the diverse humanity they symbolized. The teaching I inherited was a teaching that, in the best of all possible worlds, I simply would not exist. And it was hard to disobey this; since it was not an order, it was merely a wish.

If articulated, I suppose, the order was abstinence. Abstinence forever; abstinence always; abstinence not for the sake of something else, but for its own sake; abstinence not just from sex, but from love and love’s hope and the touch of a lover’s embrace. Abstinence even from recognition, acknowledgment, family. Some were honest enough to describe this fate as emblematic of Jesus’ suffering on the cross, and they invited you to participate in it and told you to embrace it. And they did so with a sympathy that was no less cruel for being genuine. But Jesus’ suffering on the cross was at least *for* something, for forgiveness, for universal redemption, remaining in his desperate isolation on the cross a symbol of human brokenness who opened his pinioned arms to everyone. It was an act of eternal solidarity with the suffering, not an arbitrary invitation to the ordeal, let alone a glorification of it... [N]o other group of people was told that although they did not choose their condition, it precluded them from the most sacred and sustaining relationships know to man. The infertile was prayed for, and married, and embraced; the sick and wounded were celebrated and invoked as models; the pariahs were welcomed into the fold; the prodigal sons were counted more joyously than the regular parishioners. But the homosexuals were unmentioned and unmentionable.”

Cloy Jenkins, a BYU student, wrote:

“Let me tell you briefly of a young man who recently successfully completed this treatment at BYU under the direction of Dr. Ford McBride, whose work you are familiar with. He is, according to Dr. McBride, one of his "star cases." As a young boy, he came to realize his strong attraction to the other boys. As a teenager, he began to experience the sexuality of his attraction but also learned that it was regarded as wrong and resolved to change. He was popular and a good student but troubled by this problem that wouldn't go away. He was devoted to the Church, but his talks with the Church authorities only served to confuse him as he was already following the particular steps which they said would cure him. Nevertheless, he was faithful to the commandments, and not once did he have any kind of sexual experience with another person. He entered the mission field confident that his missionary work would produce the answer to his faithful prayers. After completing a successful mission, he returned to BYU as homosexual as before. He dated, socialized and studied hard, but his desires were becoming increasingly insistent in spite of his vigorous efforts to put them behind. Try as he might, the advice given him by the Church was totally without any effect. He knew under the circumstances that he could not marry. With trepidation, he finally went to the counseling service. He was given a battery of tests and interviews, then was set up on a conditioning therapy program coupled with hypnosis and supportive counseling. He was sent to Salt Lake to magazine stores to find pictures of naked men that excited him. These were made into slides and flashed on a screen while he sat in a chair with electrodes strapped to his arms. As the pictures were shown, he was given a shock; the purpose being to couple the pain of the shock with the stimulating picture in order to condition him so that he not only disliked the shock but also the picture. This was the first time he had ever looked at pictures of naked men. He was given a dial to determine the strength of the shock, and was soon keeping it on full strength, as he was determined to be cured as quickly as possible. He came out of these sessions nauseated, shaking, and with mild burns on his arms. He was hypnotized and told he would no longer think homosexual thoughts but would instead have heterosexual ones. The therapy sessions progressed well, and he was sent again to Salt Lake to find pictures of nude girls which were shown to him without the shock. He was counseled to let his imagination have free play on these pictures and was to let them be the basis of his sexual fantasies. He understood what they meant.

For nearly two years this therapy lasted, during which time he felt confident that he was changing and that homosexuality was behind him. His therapist was extremely pleased and had him write a letter, stating that he was now cured through these reconditioning techniques.

Shortly after this, a girl friend introduced him to a friend whom I shall call Bob. Bob was talented, intelligent, and handsome. He was about to leave for a mission. Immediately upon his introduction to Bob, he knew that nothing really had changed. He felt so intensely attracted that he could no longer deny the fact to himself...

To you, his feelings for Bob may seem strange or repulsive, but for him it was a deeply satisfying, warm, loving expression of how he really felt towards another person and the first such experience in his life. It was not easy for him to accept, however, as he had to examine it against all that the Church has to say on the subject and against all of his own built-up prohibitions. But he could no longer deny the truth of who he was and what his experience had been. As he told me, "No one wanted to change more than I did. I did everything within my power to change, and it didn't alter my homosexuality one whit. All I had learned to do was

suppress much of my personality largely through preoccupying my mind and energy with other distractions. I suddenly realized how much of my life I was shutting down, turning off, and how absolutely lonely I was becoming. I was avoiding even innocent non-sexual rapport with other men for fear it might turn sexual. I was making my life miserable by a pervasive denial of who I am. It isn't easy now, especially because of the Church which means so much to me...

This young man's experience, like many others, including my own, discredits the proposition of reconditioning the homosexual... This young man, like many others, had never had a homosexual experience prior to therapy. Nothing could be misconstrued as conditioning him for homosexuality. Everything points to the contrary. He chose *not* to be homosexual, he systematically refused to attend to homosexual fantasies, he chose and had those experiences that would reward heterosexual interests and extinguish homosexual ones. His two years of therapy were the epitome of rewards and punishments scientifically calculated to destroy homosexuality and evoke heterosexuality. His subconscious was massaged through hypnotic techniques, his conscious efforts were strongly supported and his spiritual efforts were absolute. According to conditioning and "appetitional" theories, he should have become heterosexual. His therapist and the counseling department believe him to be; they have his letter to prove it. He knows differently. His story can be and is duplicated over and over. Right now, young men are going into the Smith Family Living Center to be strapped with electrodes and shocked out of homosexuality [please remember this is an older quote that does not reflect current LDS church practice].

A young convert recently told me of how, as a teenager, he had tried drinking hot mustard water to destroy his homosexual urges. He can laugh at himself now, but at the time it was distressing. Many kinds of self-punishment have been attempted from drinking raw eggs to burning oneself. In some cases, death has resulted. For many, the self-torture is more subtle, a sort of mental self-mutilation and is carried on for a lifetime with not so observable but equally disastrous results. Typical of this is a professor who finally decided to go ahead and get married. Now, when he walks down the hall, he keeps his eyes straight ahead, not looking at anyone. He has several children, but the life has gone out of him.¹⁹

Hans explains why he has found success being gay and a LDS²⁰:

“I feel that I have reached a sustainable level of success on my journey through same gender attraction...

I questioned God. I questioned his Prophets. I questioned the principles of the gospel and the commandments. I allowed myself to doubt the reality of it all. I did everything in my power to get rid of those feelings, but failed at every turn. Gratefully, I never stopped praying or studying the scriptures, even when I felt that there was no benefit in doing so. After a particularly difficult period of introspection and despair, I finally felt humble enough to seek help.

I confided in my parents and a few very close friends. I asked my bishop for help. I obtained professional counseling to help me talk through my thoughts and feelings in productive, healthy ways. As I have come to terms with my feelings, my understanding of God's plan for me has increased dramatically. My heart has become full of gratitude for a trial that lowered me enough to feel the full weight of my need for the Savior...

I have been through the hell of abandonment, loneliness, misunderstanding, confusion, frustration, and despair that accompanies same gender attraction. My soul has shattered from the sheer torture of it. I believe that each and every one of God's children must experience those feelings in this life, maybe even more than once. As unpleasant as they may be, they teach us compassion and love, patience and charity.

As one who experiences SGA, I don't see myself as any different from those who don't experience it. As difficult as it was to accept, in my heart of hearts I view SGA as trial that came about because of the fallen world we live in. Just as Jesus Christ offers love, healing, and the marvelous gift of change to those afflicted with all kinds of difficulties, so He offers those precious gifts to me.

I have decided to join my voice to those who believe success is possible and offer hope to any and all afflicted with this struggle.”

Wrote Ty Mansfield (an author of well-known *In Quiet Desperation*):

“I believe that even with an experience of same-gender attraction – which in a mortal, fallen world a minority of people may come to feel, for a myriad of reasons- individuals can find real peace with what we have been taught through the Lord’s prophets concerning the importance of marriage and family. Despite the challenge of same-gender attraction, they can reconcile their challenge with a life completely faithful to Christ and to His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints... Even though the challenge of this experience has often felt unbearable, I do now feel hope- the kind of hope that comes with eternal perspective and faith in God. And I now feel peace, a kind of peace I have felt only through the Spirit of the Lord when I have diligently strived to follow His word given through ancient and modern prophets.²¹”

Other LDS homosexuals also report living happy and/or successful lives in the church²². Some of these homosexuals are friends of mine, both single and heterosexually married. In light of Otterson²³ and Uchtdorf’s²⁴ October 2010 comments, many think the church is becoming more and more a healthy place for a greater number of gay members. On 28 November 2010 in Provo, Utah’s Oak Hills 8th Ward, *Jennifer Matthews spoke about treatment of same-gender attracted people. Many listening came up to the speaker afterward to thank her for what she said, affirming the need for such an address. One very touched gay man in the congregation told me about the talk (and I confirmed subsequently²⁵ with the speaker):

“Michael Otterson who works for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints Public Affairs Department was the one who delivered the church's media response to the controversy over President Packer's remarks. Here is that statement:

‘This Church has felt the bitter sting of persecution and marginalization early in our history, when we were too few in numbers to adequately protect ourselves and when society's leaders often seemed disinclined to help. Our parents, young adults, teens and children should therefore, of all people, be especially sensitive to the vulnerable in society.... This is particularly so in our own Latter -day Saint congregations. Each Latter-day Saint family and individual should carefully consider whether their attitudes and actions toward others properly reflects Jesus Christ's second great commandment- to love one another.’

Elder Marvin Jensen about two months ago, met with a group of gay and straight LDS members in the Oakland, CA stake. Those present spoke of the pain they had experienced during the Prop 8 campaign. People cried, and Elder Jensen cried with them. One person who had experienced something extremely difficult, said he felt the church owed him an apology. Elder Jensen rose and said ‘to the full extent of my capacity, I say that I'm sorry... I know that many very good people have been deeply hurt, and I know that the Lord expects better from us.’

About a year ago a gay member of the Oakland, CA stake, gave a talk and it was given and read for him by someone else.

In it, he makes the following plea, which I personally think sums up what a lot of members of the LDS church who are dealing with Same Gender Attraction are silently asking for from their straight LDS counterparts. In his talk he states the following:

‘You know who I am. You have been seated next to me in meetings. You have greeted me with enthusiasm when you have seen me in church. You have heard my voice in prayer. Yet, I wonder how many of you would treat me less kindly if you knew the truth. I wonder if you would judge me- however mildly, however inadvertently, however silently. I don't want pity. To pity me is to make me a victim. I want understanding. To understand me, is to love me as an equal. I don't want tolerance. If I'm tolerated, I am disliked or feared in some way. I want respect as a fellow striving child of God - an equal in his eyes. I don't want acceptance. To accept me is to graciously grant me the favor of your company. To accept me is to marginalize me with the assumption that I am less than you. I am your peer. I am neither above nor below you. I don't want judgment. My path may be different than yours, but it is a plan built for me by a power greater than anyone of us in this room. To judge me, is to judge the designer of that path. I do not want to be viewed as a mistake. My path on this Earth was prescribed uniquely for me, just as yours was. It was designed to give me the experiences I need to grow as a child of my Heavenly Father. To view me as a mistake is to view Him as a maker of mistakes. On a cosmetic level, we are very different, you and I. You have spouses, or the opportunity for spouses. I do not. You have children, or the opportunity for children, I do not. You are attracted to those of the opposite gender, I am attracted to those of my same gender. What I want most of all is for you to look past the cosmetic. I want you to look at what makes us the same: the simple fact that we are all children of our Heavenly Father, and we are struggling day to day to understand how to best do

his will, and how to return to Him. It is that similarity, brothers and sisters, that weighs more than all the cosmetic differences in the world.’

Other examples to me are my aunt and uncle. After their son *Brant came out gay a few years ago, they met him at a restaurant for his birthday. He introduced them to his boyfriend. My uncle just went up to the man and embraced him. The boyfriend broke down in tears, saying " I never thought that a man from Utah County would ever hug me."

Another example, a son came out to his mother and told her that he was gay. They were worried about how his father would take the news. so he decided to write his father a letter. After receiving the letter, the father became very depressed, crying and moping around the house for several days. Finally his wife became worried and spoke to her husband, saying, ‘Our son is still our son, and we need to love and support him for who he is and not for who we wish he was’ He looked at her and said, ‘I’m not upset about what you think I’m upset about. I’m not sad or angry that our son is gay - I will always love him the same. What I’m sad about is that I just found out that my son has been suffering all these years alone, and he didn’t feel comfortable enough to come to me so I could be there to support him through this...’

We do know gay people, we just may not know that we know gay people...

Now, I could imagine what it must like to be gay. I could imagine what it must like to be a gay member of the church. But the truth is, I really have NO idea what it’s like. We just do not know what those around us are dealing with.

Do we make jokes and off-hand comments when we think we’re just with our friends? Do we pass along stereotypes about gay people and how we think they are or what we think they’re like? Do we make comments in church and write things on the internet that we would never say to someone’s face? If we had a friend who was gay and we didn’t know it, would they feel safe enough to tell us and come to us for support? Some gay people have been rejected by their families, and their ward family IS their only support.

When we were baptized as members of this church, we made a covenant to “bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light, to mourn with those that mourn, and to comfort those in need of comfort.” (Mosiah 18) If we are to be like our Savior and show unconditional love, it means just that—love without any conditions placed on it.”

Carol Lynn Pearson, describing the experience of her husband coming out to her²⁶:

“Gerald thought a moment, then went on. ‘I was not being dishonest with you when we married. I loved you. You were wonderful and I really did love you. I thought that the problem would be taken care of. They told me it would be. I did everything they said to do. And I thought for a few months that everything was changed.’

‘But, Gerald,’ I interrupted, ‘we were- I was- happy!’

‘And I was too, in many, many ways. Blossom, this is not your fault. Maybe you think it is, but it has nothing to do with you, only with me. Yes, we were happy. I liked being with you. I even liked being with you physically. But to me it was like... like we were such good friends that we shared everything with each other, even sex. It was never quite like... like lovers. There is this other thing in me, Blossom, and it has never gone away and I know now that it never will. There is this thing in me that needs, that insists that my strongest feelings be for a man. It is a need that seems to be as deep in me as my need for food and breath. I tried to beat it to death, to strangle it, to smother it. And it has not died. Blossom, I know the anguish you’ve been through this last week. Can you understand that I have been in anguish too? And for more than a week.

‘Gerald,’ I said, ‘it’s wrong!’

‘Wrong!’ Gerald put his face into his hands and then looked up. ‘I have taken that word and used it like a whip on myself. I have flagellated myself with that word until I’m bloody. But it does not change things. I have fasted, I have prayed. How many thousands of prayers I have prayed! And it does not change things. If my homosexuality is wrong, then I am wrong, the fact of my being is wrong. Because that’s what I am!’”

Said Clay Essig:

“As long as there is suffering, as long as there is loss of testimonies and hope, as long as families are being divided and destroyed over this issue, as long as there is emotional, spiritual and physical death and suicide because of the lack of truth regarding homosexuality, we must diligently seek divine guidance, revelation and blessings to end these destructions.²⁷”

Many homosexuals feel they are going to hell:

“They may attend church with their wives on Sunday, but they have secret homosexual liaisons on other days of the week. They have long since given up hope of changing, and seem to be convinced that they are destined to inhabit... hell.

Most men in this category say that while they desperately wish they could change their sexual orientation, develop the willpower to live celibate, or be faithful to their wives, they are resigned to the fact that they cannot... One, typical of many, confided to me that ‘at first I used to say to myself, “Stop that now. You can’t go into [gay bars and pick-up points] anymore.” Then after a while I stopped kidding myself. I stopped mocking God with false repentance and I just decided to not worry about it anymore. If I’m going to be judged by God anyway, I may as well do as I please. I’m going to the same place anyway.’

Gay Mormon (or former Mormon) men who believe they are destined for hell are easy to find... While some eventually manage to break free of the church and assuage the guilt associated with their homosexuality, some—years after their last church meeting—still feel that they are only biding their time, waiting for God to condemn them.²⁸”

Another account of a mixed orientation LDS marriage, by Gordon Miller²⁹:

“Finally at a late age, I married, hoping that might be the step which would “cure” me of my homosexuality. From what I have observed, I was eminently successful in hiding my sexual feelings from everyone, including my wife.

During the course of twelve years of marriage, my wife and I parented four beautiful children. Our marriage went well except in our sexual relations. This was the only matter concerning which we ever argued and had hard feelings... I was never moved to initiate sexual relations with my wife. She was always dominant in that area, and if she didn't make an issue of it, there were no relations. As time went on sexual relations became much more infrequent... I found from the outset of marriage that I had difficulty spending time alone with my wife. The children provided a great escape in this area of our relations. I could be out of town and not miss my wife but always missed the children immensely.

I found myself in the situation of constantly having to feign the small but necessary verbal and physical demonstrations of affection which really are vital to a loving relationship. I would more often than not be remiss in that department, and only at the behest of my wife would I revive my feigning hypocrisy. I always wished that I could really demonstrate spontaneously all of the things my wife needed and often asked for, but I couldn't, and it was very painful. Every time we were with another couple or I saw another couple who were spontaneous in their verbal and physical public demonstrations of affection, I felt a great deal of pain. It constantly reminded me of those things I did not feel for a woman and that I was denying my wife- things she wanted, needed, and deserved.”

Commentary on mixed orientation LDS marriage, by a man who's in one³⁰:

“There is a common undercurrent though, that runs through almost everything I have read. Without any exception that I can think of, [Mormon homosexuals] who have gotten married, and who are still married, find a part of them that wishes it had never happened.

At its core, we are gay men living in a situation that defies our nature. Yes we may have a loving and understanding spouse, but we are the other half of the equation that cannot make the whole no matter how hard we try. We can sacrifice, compromise, work hard, and even have joy and happiness for ourselves and our spouse, but we cannot give all. That part of us that is gay, that core identity we possess, does not change, and is not satisfied in a heterosexual relationship...

This knowledge presents me with a dilemma. I do want to live with more integrity, or more authentically as I have heard it put more succinctly. If I am authentic then as a gay man I should not be married, and reason would have it that I should also seek a relationship that will make me whole. If I am authentic then as a father I cannot abandon my family to whom I am morally and emotionally committed. This sucks...

I couldn't face my family ... and turn my back on a pioneer heritage that included so much personal sacrifice for the Church. If they could scratch out a living in desolate Utah, then [I figured] it must be a worthy cause and surely I could make my own sacrifice. I felt that if I openly came out as gay, then I would negate all my ancestors' efforts...

My wife did know about my same sex attraction before we married, but it wasn't until last year that I really understood that it was a part of me that was not going to go away, and that pushing it away was killing me.”

From the same source, a second man in the same family situation said:

“I am so fed up, it's unbelievable. There is no simple solution. No single right answer. I have to answer to so many. A family who needs me, but I am dying emotionally, mentally, spiritually. Though I can pretend! If there is one thing I have learned over the years, it is how to pretend, to be what everyone else needs, to sublimate my own needs/desires/self so that others can have what they need.

I don't care about the Church any more. They offer me nothing, but expect me to deny everything about myself. Yet, when I read the scriptures, they say something entirely different. When I attend the temple, I get answers I need...

I am not happy in the life they said would bring me happiness. Yet to leave my children, to cause pain to both them and wife - that is something that is not me, not something I would deliberately do, let alone choose to do. I would rather die. And so I am dying.

I am depressed most of the time. It sucks. I want to be happy. I want to be happy with my kids. I want to be a real person. But it doesn't look like it ever will be in my cards.”

Counselors and Psychologists

I've also had the opportunity recently to speak with the director of BYU's Counseling Center. He noted how extraordinarily difficult life often is for homosexually oriented people in the church. I illustrate some of this heart-wrenching hardship by quoting Beverly Shaw, who holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and since 1982 has practiced psychotherapy. She's also a life-long active Latter-day Saint and has been President of the Association for Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists. Her quote matches what the director expressed to me:

“During the years I have been in practice I have had men and women in my office with just about every variation of homosexual issue – from those who are open about their orientation to those for whom I was the only one who knew. I've seen individuals who are repressing their attractions in order to remain acceptable in church environs, and those who left the church feeling they have been unjustly labeled as evil, dirty, and/or perverse. I have seen those who are in committed same-sex relationship working on the same types of issues as heterosexual couples and those who have tried or are trying to make a heterosexual marriage work in order to ‘change those aberrant feelings.’ I have seen women and men who desperately wanted a family and were absolutely heart-broken that they would never have it, those who accepted or had no interest in having children, and those who have actively pursued alternative approaches such as single parent adoption. I have seen everything from the stereotypical leather-wearing gay biker to the (apparently) ‘straight’ recommend-holding Priesthood leader. . . .I can say with some amount of surety that probably the most challenging and heart rending therapy experiences that I have shared is the pain of those individuals who are/were devoted members of the LDS church and

who are also homosexual. The anguish they feel at having a part of themselves completely at odds with what they hold sacred is indescribable and unfortunately is usually compounded by feelings of abandonment by God – that He has rejected their pleadings for help. An interesting paradox that I have noticed is that the majority of the individuals I have seen have not been the rebellious, rule-breaking, defiant, anti-gospel individuals one might expect. Almost without exception they have been spiritually devoted to the gospel, and possessed very strong testimonies. . . . most of them have ended up sorrowfully leaving the Church because they feel spiritually and emotionally battered and bruised when there. . . . I can say without reservation that none of them chose this orientation, none of them accepted it with a blase attitude, and none escaped the heart-rending ‘Why me?’ Not one has ever given any indication it was something chosen or desired. . . .³¹”

In August of 2010, the following article was published in the Deseret News:

SALT LAKE CITY — As the number of suicides among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations continues to increase across the nation, concern among the Utah LGBT community has begun to push the issue into the spotlight.

In July, Utah's LGBT community lost at least three members to suicide, including a 28-year-old man whose death was mourned by more than 300 people during a candlelight vigil on the steps of the state Capitol.

Two other suicides of well-known members of the LGBT community, also gay men, have occurred in the past month... "This is a serious problem in general," said Valerie Larabee, executive director of the Utah Pride Center, "and it's a serious problem in Utah... Over my 10 years here, every year we've had people (in the local LGBT community) who have killed themselves," she said.

Jacob Jacquez was among those at the state Capitol recently who paid his respects to his deceased friend.

"Unfortunately, this tragedy that has happened to my family impacts so many others the same way," said Jacquez, who had been in a relationship with the man. "Suicide, especially in the LGBT community, just happens too much."³²

For some historical evidence of elevated homosexuality-related suicide rates, see August 13, 1975 *The Advocate* article, “Outside the Temple Gates- the Gay Mormon.”³³”

Religiosity Correlated to Rejection, and Rejection Correlated to Suicide and Drug Use:

Here’s an irony: the more religious a family is, the more likely they are to reject their gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth:

“Childhood religious affiliation was linked to family acceptance; participants who reported a childhood religious affiliation reported lower family acceptance compared with those with no religious affiliation in childhood. Childhood family religiosity was also linked to family acceptance; highly accepting families reported low religiosity compared with the high religiosity among low accepting families... There are clear links between family acceptance in adolescence and health status in young adulthood. Young adults who reported high levels of family acceptance scored higher on all three measures of positive adjustment and health: self-esteem, social support, and general health. For the measures of negative health outcomes, young adults who reported low levels of family acceptance had scores that were significantly worse for depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation and attempts. Half as many participants from highly accepting families reported suicidal thoughts in the past 6 months compared with those who reported low acceptance (18.5% versus 38.3%). Similarly, the prevalence of suicide attempts among participants who reported high levels of family acceptance was nearly half (30.9% versus 56.8%) the rate of those who reported family acceptance.³⁴”

Another study corroborated:

“Higher rates of family rejection were significantly associated with poorer health outcomes. On the basis of odds ratios, lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression, 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs, and 3.4 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.³⁵”

Studies Evidencing the Appalling Rates of Suicide Amongst Youth

*“What is it about young gay Mormons?
We must find a solution because too many lights are going out³⁶.”*

- **“Every fourth gay or bisexual woman and every tenth man has attempted suicide... Our survey shows a **doubled and in some cases a trebled risk** for impaired psychological well-being, stress, severe anxiety and suicidal thoughts among young sexual minorities.³⁷”**
- **“The odds for GLB high school students having attempted suicide in the past year were **3.9-times greater** than for heterosexual students.³⁸”**
- **LGBT “young adults whose families were highly rejective [sic] of their identity during adolescence were **more than eight times as likely to have attempted suicide** at least once, compared with those who received no or low levels of family rejection during adolescence.³⁹”**
- **“Mental health professionals have long-known that gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) teens face **significantly elevated risks** of mental health problems, including suicidal thoughts and suicidal attempts. However, a group of McGill University researchers in Montreal has now come to the conclusion that self-identity is the crucial risk-factor, rather than actual sexual behaviours.⁴⁰”**
- **“A 1999 German study of 217 homosexual individuals (age = 15-27) reported that **18% had attempted suicide.**⁴¹”**

- “Utah leads the entire nation in suicides among men aged 15 to 24... up to 30% of completed youth suicides are committed by gay and lesbian youth... it is clear that many suicides among young Mormon homosexuals, as well as gay people in other religions, can be traced directly to a hostile social and religious environment.⁴²”
- I could go on and on, but the consensus is the same: “Studies suggest that gay and bisexual teens may be at **2 to 4 times the risk of committing suicide.**⁴³”

I hope that these studies strike the reader as more than merely numbers. One faithful, celibate Latter-day Saint (Stuart Matis) wrote shortly before his suicide: “Straight members have absolutely no idea what it is like to grow up gay in this church. It is a life of constant torment, self-hatred and internalized homophobia.⁴⁴” His and the abundant suicides and attempted suicides referenced above represent *people*. Stuart also said: “In the end, remember, Clay, that we gay people are your family. We are your brothers and sisters. We are your sons and daughters.⁴⁵” Imagine *your* best friend, *your* spouse, *your* sister or brother, *your* child- in a place where they would consider taking their own life. I once had someone very, very close to me attempt suicide by slicing her arteries longways for the length of both forearms. I’m not a big crier, but when I saw those wounds- I bawled for hours with wracking sobs in a way I’ve never done before or since. Even now in writing the account I can’t stop weeping at the memory. Some people, upon becoming aware that an individual is in a place where she would consider taking her own life, would cast aside their tasks, abandon their pursuits, and run to help that person. If this response does not describe you, please- at least feel compassion for them. For my part, it is for them that this book is written- and to them that it is dedicated.

Chapter 2: Causation

I now turn the tone from an emotional appeal in chapter 1 to a logical appeal as I here address the question of the causation of homosexual orientation. I will use a number of acronyms in this chapter- the first one is HO (homosexual orientation). You may choose to don your thinking cap for this chapter.

The structure will be as follows:

- 1) A primer on sexual determination
- 2) A scientific inquiry into two competing theories for the causation of HO
- 3) A religious inquiry into the LDS view of the causation of HO

Sexual Determination

*I have found it useful during this research to look up brief summaries of unfamiliar topics or terms in Wikipedia- the reader might consider a similar practice.

I have recently been helping a professor write an ethics case on hydraulic fracturing (HF). The crux of the case is this: an efficient method of extracting natural gas, HF, promises America another decade or two of cheap energy. However, some of the chemicals used in this process may be entering the food chain and accumulating in our tissues. By itself this possibility is not terribly surprising or alarming- however, as Theo Colborn persuasively argues in her book, *Our Stolen Future*, some industrial chemicals may be messing up the fertility and sexual development of human populations. How? Endocrine disruption. Keep this story in mind- more on it in a page or two.

What makes a man a man and a woman a woman? What is the causation of physical sex? What is physical sex? The answers to these questions are neither simple nor straightforward- but parts of those answers are well understood, so we'll start there. There are two common ways of causing/determining sex in the biological world: 1) nongenetic factors (such as environmental temperature) and 2) genetic factors. Humans fall into the latter category, based on the genotype of chromosome 23: XY individuals are male and XX are female. This genetic difference causes a number of measurably different phenotypes (physical traits)- different shaped faces, different

genitalia, different brains, different hands, different hematocrit (red blood cell count), different muscle mass, and different hormone profiles to name just a few. All right, nothing new here so far. How does the genotype difference translate into these phenotypes?

Here the answer begins to get more complex. The default phenotype in humans is female. For a short period after an egg is fertilized, the zygote is bipotential, meaning it can become either a male or a female, and has both Mullerian ducts (precursors to the uterus and fallopian tubes) *and* Wolffian ducts (precursors to the prostate and seminal vesicles). A simplified, two-step explanation of how the default female embryo is converted into a male:

Step 1: the SRY (Sex-determining Region Y) gene from the Y chromosome is translated into a protein known as TDF (Testis Determining Factor).

Step 2: TDF causes a consequence cascade, which in concert with hormones causes the phenotypic differences observed between males and females.

Now, as you might imagine, things can go wrong at a number of points during this process. In Step 1, the SRY gene could be broken or missing- this results in XY, or X_ persons that are phenotypically female (Turner syndrome). The SRY gene could be translocated to an X, resulting in an XX person that's phenotypically male (XX male syndrome). The SRY gene could be faulty, resulting in an XY phenotypic female (Swyer syndrome). This is just the beginning, though, as these abnormalities result only from Step 1 problems.

Step 2 problems are even messier. Step 2 problems also demonstrate why genes are not the whole story when it comes to sex determination. Before I illustrate some Step 2 problems, let me describe **epigenetics** by comparing the endocrine system to a football team. (note to geneticists- I recognize that epigenetics usually refers to genetic imprinting and methylation. Here I follow Robin Holliday's precedent⁴⁶ in using the term more broadly- in this case to refer to regulation of gene expression and other downstream effects caused by hormones).

Epigenetics

"The construction of a building is as important as the blueprint." -Our Stolen Future, page 204

Hormones (such as the androgen testosterone) are like footballs; hormone-producing glands such as the adrenal gland are like the quarterbacks that throw the footballs; and wide receivers are the hormone receptors- proteins embedded in cell membranes or cytoplasm which “catch” the football and pass its signal down into the cell. After being caught, the hormone football then degrades. The football’s signal exerts influence *upon* (epi) the *genetic* (genetic= hence, epigenetics) expression of the cell. The most typical cellular responses to catching the football are to up- or down- regulate gene expression: meaning that the number of proteins the cell translates from a particular gene goes either up or down. If there are too many or too few received footballs, disaster can occur (e.g. testes won’t develop). Okay, so we’ve got the basics of the endocrine system- what next?

Without the activity of the endocrine system, especially of androgens, an embryo cannot become phenotypically male. For instance, for a short time embryos have a pair of partially developed organs that if left to themselves will turn into ovaries. If acted on by “downstream” elements from TDF, however, the gonads will become testes. Similarly, many typically male phenotypes are dependent, not only on genes, *but upon precise dosages and timing of specific hormones*. Though the causes of fetal hormone variance are not substantially understood, their role in sex determination is. For emphasis, I’ll repeat the bottom line: sex determination is not merely genetic; it relies necessarily on the endocrine system. Now for why this matters.

I noted above that Colborn’s book argued that some industrial chemicals are affecting human fertility and sex determination. The reason? The industrial chemicals do what some plants have been doing for millennia: they manipulate the human endocrine system to decrease human fertility (the evolutionist might argue that so doing results in less predation of the plant over time). The most common ways chemicals disrupt the endocrine system:

- They block the ball (for instance, by binding to or disfiguring the hormones)
- They hold the receiver (by binding to the receivers’ hands so there’s no room for hormones)
- They throw their own football-like balls into the air (known as hormone mimics)
- They tackle the quarterback (block the glands from producing or releasing hormones)

These endocrine disrupting effects often take place entirely independent of genes or gene expression. Because some wide receivers will catch about anything that’s lofted to them, the

mimics oftentimes don't even need to bear a resemblance to an actual football- even a lampshade sometimes does the trick. To complicate matters, hormone mimics and defensive linemen tend to stick around, rather than degrading like good little footballs do after they're caught- thus, they can go through the cycle again and again.

The same effects caused by endocrine disrupters can occur if genes coding for hormone receptors are flawed, or if glands don't produce hormones in the right conformations (shapes) and amounts and at the right times. What kinds of effects do we see in the animal kingdom (including *Homo sapiens*) when these internally and externally induced Step 2 problems occur?

- Over a single decade, Florida eagles showed a sharply atypical lack of interest in nesting or courtship during the mating season for several consecutive years⁴⁷
- Minks in the Great Lakes area, despite being bred as they had always been by mink breeders, dropped from birthing on average 4 pups to 2 pups, then to even less, and many of the pups died shortly afterward⁴⁸
- In the early 70's, for the first recorded time male-female nesting pairs of western gulls were replaced by same-sex female pairs with extraordinarily large numbers of eggs. The eggshells were thinner than usual, and the next two decades witnessed the spread of this phenomenon from Southern California to the Great Lakes, Puget Sound, and the coast of Massachusetts⁴⁹
- CAIS (Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome) – human beings that are phenotypically female but genetically male. These individuals have gonads inside, but they're testes instead of ovaries. The genetic maleness of these people usually isn't noticed until puberty when menstruation fails to start.
- PAIS (Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome)- the phallic structure varies in every degree between a penis and a clitoris. The genotype is male (XY). Some have a single orifice connected to both the urethra and the vagina. These people span the entire range from predominantly phenotypically female to predominantly phenotypically male.
- During the 80's, alligators in the Florida lakes decreased hatching percent from 90% to 18%, and half of the baby gators died within 10 days. Though there was a pesticide spill in their lake in 1980, the effects weren't witnessed until years later. This is an example of the transgenerational effects of some endocrine disruptors- meaning that you don't see problems until the fetuses that got the wrong dose at the right time or the right dose at the wrong time reach sexual maturity and have trouble reproducing a generation later⁵⁰
- A review of 61 studies revealed that from 1938 to 1980, human sperm abnormalities are up, sperm counts are down, testicular cancer is up, the incidence of undescended testicles is up, and the incidence of shortened testicles is up⁵¹
- The sons of female rats given a small dose of dioxin (a hormone mimic) on the fifteenth day of pregnancy, a crucial window in sex determination, had sperm reductions as high as 56% less than their peers whose mom's hadn't been given the dioxin (interestingly, rats have ridiculously more

sperm than they need, so even a hit of 56% won't likely affect their fertility. Humans, on the other hand, have just *barely* enough). Additionally, the sons whose moms were poisoned were much less likely to sexually act like males and much more likely to arch their backs in the typically female response known as lordosis, and allow another male to mount them⁵²

I could go on, but the other effects follow similar lines, i.e. they confirm that sexual differentiation and reproductive problems result from endocrine disruption. The timing and doses of hormones floating around in the womb during the critical sex determining phases of fetal development are like the small rudders which turn huge ships. Bottom line of this primer on sex determination? *Both 1) genes and 2) the intra-organismal environment (i.e. the womb) play a huge role in sex determination.*

Causation

Now why in the world did I spend all that space giving a primer on sexual determination? Because it provides vital context to the second of two theories that we will test in this section. To the LDS reader hesitant to proceed, I note that Elder Oaks in a 2007 press conference found on the official Church Newsroom said: “The Church does not have a position on the causes of any of these susceptibilities or inclinations, including those related to same-gender attraction. Those are scientific questions — whether nature or nurture — those are things the Church doesn't have a position on.”⁵³ I hope you will take him at his word, as I have done, and seriously consider that very scientific question here. You are free to safely choose whichever causation theory you wish.

The Parking Lots Test

If John claims that the car is parked in lot C, and his wife Sarah claims that the car is parked in lot D, how do you test who's right? The answer: you walk to the two parking lots and see which lot the car is parked in! This kind of organized common sense is at the root of scientific inquiry, and it is the method we will use to test two competing theories that claim to explain what causes homosexual orientation (HO). I point out that we will not be testing the causation of homosexual behavior, nor of some mix of homosexual behavior and HO- we will only be testing the narrow question of what causes HO. The lineup:

Theory 1: MIC

This is the non-biological factors theory. Though there could be any number of non-biological factors, I have named the theory after some of the popular ones I hear most often: molestation, infection, and choice. Molestation is the idea is that people become HO as a result of childhood and/or adulthood molestation. Infection is the idea that people become HO as a result of some kind of contact with someone who's already HO, such as the way you might get recruited into the NRA, the way you catch a cold, or the way you "inherit" from your upbringing the practice of waiting until prayers are said before you start eating. This "infection" idea is similar to memetic inheritance, if you're familiar with the concept. (A meme, analogous to a gene, is an idea, belief, or pattern of behavior which is "hosted" in one or more individual minds, and which can reproduce itself from mind to mind- it's how cultural information is spread)⁵⁴. Under this umbrella you could also place "the way you were raised," or parenting styles, which have also been proposed as causative factors. Choice is the idea that a person chooses to be HO. I'm going to aggregate this constellation of factors such that any one of them, or any combination of them, whichever results in the strongest presumption in its favor, will be tested below (in the parking lots below, we'll assume whichever combination will help MIC make the best predictions). I will refer to this set of factors as MIC, which stands for Molestation/Infection/Choice theory.

Theory 2: GPRE

This is the biological factors theory. Though there could be any number of biological factors, I have named the theory after some of the popular ones I hear most often: Genes and PRE-natal hormones (GPRE). Now is where I drive home the relevance of the primer on sex determination. *This theory considers sexual orientation to be a subset of sexual development.* The most likely placement of sexual orientation is under the umbrella of prenatal sexual differentiation of the brain.

Okay, so now we have the lineup. Four problems and two terms before we get started:

Mixed Causation

What if HO is caused by a mix of MIC and GPRE? This would mess up our test, which requires that these theories exclude each other.

For the moment I resolve this tension by imposing a 90% threshold. The relevant question here is a common statistical one: what % of the variability in trait A is caused by factor X? The question is usually answered with a confidence interval. Examples: 90% (or .9) of the variability in autism, +/- 10 percent, is due to heritable factors. Anorexia is 70% +/- 10% heritable. 40% of the variability in alcoholism, +/- 10%, is due to heritable factors. Using these three examples as a precedent, I will set both MIC and GPRE to 90% +2%/-2% (meaning 90% of the variability in HO, plus 2% or minus 2%, is due to MIC/GPRE). This basically means that we will test two hypotheses: (a) 90% of the variability in HO is due to MIC and (b) 90% of the variability in HO is due to GPRE. Because this standard excludes the opposite theory from having even the possibility of accounting for more than 12% of the variability, our test may proceed- *duo non possunt in solido unam rem possidere* (two cannot possess one thing each in entirety).

Bisexuality

What about those who consider themselves intermediate between homo- and hetero- sexual orientation? One could define bisexual as being between complete revulsion toward members of the same sex coupled with complete attraction toward members of the opposite sex on one end, and complete revulsion toward the opposite sex coupled with complete attraction toward the same sex on the other. Alternatively, perhaps only those between an 80% homosexual and 20% heterosexual orientation might be considered bisexual. Depending on where one draws the lines, this bisexual group could account for most of the population. This is a difficulty which is further compounded by the fact that males and females demonstrate different sexual orientation distributions on the Kinsey scale (e.g. the male bell curve is bimodal and the female has only one mode as measured by the Kinsey scale, a frequently employed metric of sexual orientation). In the studies where there are only two categories, we assume that individuals reported their predominant orientation. In studies that do report bisexuals as a discrete group, we will consider the implications of bisexual orientation. As I will explain immediately below, the possible errors resulting from assuming that individuals report their predominant orientation cut in favor of MIC.

The Difficulty of Self-Reporting

Many of the parking lots we will visit will have a set of data for heterosexual people and a separate set of data for homosexual people. In most cases the subjects were separated by self-report. The criticism here is that the reporters could be mistaken or lying. This is a difficulty, and is not unique to our test- for instance, it is a difficulty in happiness research as well (i.e. if Sally says she's happy, we can't just take her at her word- she could be honestly mistaken or lying!) However, the difficulty is also not fatal to our test. There are two and only two types of error that could come from self-reporting: false positives and false negatives. A false positive would be a heterosexually oriented person who reported as HO. A false negative would be a HO person who reports as heterosexually oriented. Interestingly, **both false positives and false negatives favor MIC and disfavor GPRE**, since most of the lots we will visit measure biological phenomena. Stated another way: let's say a claim is made that homosexuals on average have bigger toes than heterosexuals. The false negatives would make the heterosexual toe size mean (average) closer to the homosexual mean, and the false positives would make the homosexual toe size mean closer to the heterosexual mean. Thus, self-reporting problems favor MIC- meaning that a conclusion that MIC is a better theory than GPRE would be suspect, but a conclusion that GPRE is a better theory than MIC could only be strengthened by reporting errors.

The number and magnitude of pathways to HO will also cut in favor of MIC during the bulk of our parking lot tour. Imagine for a moment that some people are raped into HO, while others are merely born that way. In this hypothetical there are two separate pathways to HO- which again will mean that both the number and size of non-GPRE pathways to HO, if they exist, will further vitiate confidence in a MIC > GPRE conclusion, but serve to strengthen a GPRE > MIC conclusion.

Reliability of Studies

How can the reader know that what we see in the parking lot is legitimate? The short answer is: she ultimately can't. The longer answer is that she can take reasonable steps to become more confident in the legitimacy of the studies. I am reminded of a TV show I used to watch called "Reading Rainbow." Star Trek Commander La Forge actor LeVar Burton was the host. After a

child would give a tantalizing book review, the child would always immediately afterward encourage the watchers to read the book for themselves, parroting Levar's signature catch phrase: "But you don't have to take *my* word for it!"⁵⁵ I will modify his phrase and insist: "Do not, do not, *do not* take my word for it." You will note that with some exceptions, I don't heavily reference the studies/parking lots we are about to visit (though I note here that I use some of Bradshaw and LeVay's language in this section). This is a strategic decision. I feel that the 80+ additional pages I could, by virtue of my academic training in the biological sciences, compose on the nitty gritty of the science would 1) merely replicate what more capable authors have already accomplished and 2) distract somewhat from my intended objectives for the book as a whole. Most of the studies are readily accessible by anyone with internet access, and each and every study is cited and available in at least one of the two resources I'm about to describe. To the discriminating reader who wants to satisfy herself as to the reliability of the studies and my applications of them, I emphatically recommend all of these three steps: 1) read Bill Bradshaw's analysis and treatment of the studies by downloading his 57-page .pdf entitled *The Evidence for a Biological Origin of Homosexuality*, which I have made available for the reader (with permission) at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B4d4HeuA_ceTYzgyODNkMGQtNjY1Mi00OWU5LWI2MmYtMjhjMzk0MTgyNTIx&hl=en; 2) read Simon LeVay's 295-page *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: the Science of Sexual Orientation*, published in 2010; and 3) using the bibliographies in both of these resources, "**peer review**" **the studies yourself**.

Two terms to know

Prevalence: the total number of cases in a given population at a specific time. *Incidence*: frequency of occurrence, usually in a defined time period.

Okay, now we're almost ready to embark! Together we shall make a multi-stop journey through a countryside filled with parking lots. As we journey, please keep a tally of points. Example: if we were contrasting "flat earth" vs. "spherical earth" theory, one parking lot might be to get on a spaceship, fly out into space, then turn around and look at the earth. Flat earth would predict they'd see something like a piece of paper; spherical earth would predict they'd see something like a sphere. You would likely award -1 (a demerit) to flat earth since its prediction was

contradicted, and +1 (a point) to spherical earth for being vindicated. Similarly, MIC and GPRE will, like John or Sarah above, make a prediction of where the car will be. As we visit each lot, award a point to either or both theories whose predictions are matched by our observations, and award a demerit to the predictions which are contradicted. At the end, I will ask you what score you came up with. Also, please be aware that a portion of readers have found the next fifteen or so pages exhaustive. Though the scientist in me considers the material germane and important (hence the choice to include it in the text), some readers may nonetheless fast-forward through some segments.

Ready?

Parking Lot 1: Gay hands?

The hands of men and women are, on average, distinctly different. Specifically, the 2D to 4D (second to fourth digit, or ring to forefinger) ratio is closer to one in women than it is in men. MIC would predict that either 1) the male HO population will have the same mean ratio as the male heterosexually oriented population; 2) somehow the choice or infection of HO changes finger length; or 3) a molestation or choice event retroactively changes finger length. 2 and 3 are possible but not particularly likely, which leaves MIC with prediction 1. GPRE would predict the opposite, namely that the mean ratio for HO men will be closer to that of heterosexually oriented women, and that the mean ratio for HO women will be closer to that of heterosexually oriented men. What do we observe? HO men's ratios are shifted in the direction of straight women, and HO women's ratios are shifted in the direction of straight men⁵⁶.

Some scientists would put the matter to bed right here in parking lot 1, claiming that it's ludicrous to think that MIC causes HO- after all, 1) the differences are significant; 2) these populations were selected on a single variable, HO; 3) self-reporting and multiple-pathway errors cut in favor of MIC; 4) the study has been independently replicated many times; 5) with a little training on taking precise measurements + a large sample, almost anyone can replicate this experiment; and 6) there is no reason why molestation, choice, or infection would alter the length of a person's fingers (in any case, fingers can be measured in the womb and in early childhood well before either parenting, infection, choice, or molestation have an opportunity to alter the

2D:4D ratio). So some scientists would say. I, on the other hand, have promised a parking lot *tour*, not a one-stop trip- thus, we shall proceed.

Parking Lot 2: Twins

Will same-gender identical twins or fraternal twins be more likely to share the same sexual orientation? MIC would predict that, at a large sample size, either type of twin will be about equally exposed to cultural influences, molestation, and choice. In any case, an *individual's* molestation, choice, and infection experiences will be a much better predictor of whether that person is HO than biological factors, since biological factors are not primary etiological factors of HO. Thus, two brothers or two sisters are neither more nor less likely to share the same orientation as fraternal or identical twin siblings. GPRE, on the other hand, would make two very specific predictions: One, that identical twins will share the same orientation more often than non-twin siblings because they share a greater portion of their genes (and genes are partly the cause of HO). Two, the identical twins will not always share the same orientation, because that would mean HO is only genetic, rather than being a product of both genes and pre-natal hormones (because the fetal twins develop at different paces and are positioned differently in the womb, we'd expect at least slightly different results if pre-natal hormones are causative agents). What do we observe? Same-gender identical twins on average share the same sexual orientation much more than fraternal twins⁵⁷. The author of the seminal study writes: "The evidence we have at present strongly supports the proposition that there are hereditary factors in male homosexuality – the observation that an identical twin of a male homosexual has approximately a 20% likelihood of also being gay point to this conclusion, since that is 10 times the population incidence."⁵⁸ The broadest twin study just came out in 2010:

"We used data from a truly population-based 2005–2006 survey of all adult twins (20–47 years) in Sweden to conduct the largest twin study of same-sex sexual behavior attempted so far. We performed biometric modeling with data on any and total number of lifetime same-sex sexual partners, respectively. The analyses were conducted separately by sex. Twin resemblance was moderate for the 3,826 studied monozygotic and dizygotic same-sex twin pairs. Biometric modeling revealed that, in men, genetic effects explained .34–.39 of the variance, the shared environment .00, and the individual-specific environment .61–.66 of the variance. Corresponding estimates among women were .18–.19 for genetic factors, .16–.17 for shared environmental, and .64–.66 for unique environmental factors. Although wide confidence intervals suggest cautious interpretation, the results are consistent with moderate, primarily genetic, familial effects, and

moderate to large effects of the nonshared environment (social and biological) on same-sex sexual behavior...

It has been suggested that individual differences in heterosexual and homosexual behavior result from unique environmental factors such as prenatal exposure to sex hormones, progressive maternal immunization to sex-specific proteins, or neurodevelopmental instability (Rahman, 2005). Although the unique environmental variance component also includes measurement error, the present results support the notion that the individual-specific environment does indeed influence sexual preference.⁵⁹”

Parking Lot 3: Childhood gender-nonconformity

You don't have to be an expert to know that little boys and little girls behave differently. As LouAnn Brizendine elegantly illustrates in her books *The Female Brain* and *The Male Brain* (both highly recommended reads- you can see my summary of *The Male Brain* on my blog⁶⁰), little boys and little girls differ significantly on their risk taking, looking at their mothers' faces, and turn-taking behaviors. They also differ in how much they engage in rough-and-tumble play, how often they convert domestic objects into weapons, and whether they prefer boy or girl clothing. Are girly-behaving boys or boyish-behaving girls more likely on average than their gender-conforming counterparts to report HO as an adult? MIC would predict that knowing a subject's childhood behavior would on average tell you nothing or very little about whether the person is HO, since the MIC factors of choice, molestation, and infection usually exert the majority of their influence in later childhood or afterward. GPRE, on the other hand, which considers sexual orientation to be largely if not completely a brain-located reality whose development is almost wholly complete by six months post-partum, would predict on average a high correlation between childhood gender non-conformity and adult HO. What do we observe? Over 40 studies confirm a high correlation between childhood non-conformity and adult HO⁶¹. Remember to tally the points for MIC and GPRE as we go along- I'll be asking you for the scores you awarded later on.

Parking Lot 4: The older-brother effect

Psychiatrists at London's Maudsley Hospital predicted in the 60's and 70's that later-born boys would be more likely on average to be HO. Later this prediction was modified slightly: men that have older brothers are more likely than all other men to be homosexually oriented. What would MIC think of this prediction? *Ceteris paribus* (all else being equal), either 1) MIC would

conclude that the prediction would fail- after all, what could having older brothers have, on average, to do with infection or choice or molestation?, or 2) MIC would ratify the prediction because older brothers are more likely to molest their younger brothers, but for that same reason would limit the prediction to a weak correlation, as the increased likelihood would be moderate. GPRE would look again to the endocrine system and genetics for answers, and would find a potential answer in each. From epigenetics is the hypothesis that a mother's immune system may conclude that this Y-chromosome-antigen-exposing XY creature inside her XX self is foreign, and will mount a moderate defense in the course of the pregnancy, the residual effects of which may disrupt end-user endocrine action in a subsequent male pregnancy. From genes the answer may be that maternal line of gay men tend on average to be more fecund (have more kids) than other mothers, or that heritable factors make a fetus more susceptible to a homosexualizing maternal anti-male antibodies response. Thus, GPRE would not be surprised if the prediction is verified. What do we observe? Compared with having no older brother, **each older brother increases the likelihood of a subject being HO by 33%**⁶².

Parking Lot 5: Handedness

MIC: handedness will not help you predict whether a subject you've never met is HO- only a knowledge of the subject's environment (molestation and infection) and personal choices will. GPRE: if handedness is related to the same genes that affect sexual orientation, or if handedness is related to hormone activity, then such a correlation is possible, though not necessarily an intuitive prediction. What do we observe? Gay men are on average left-shifted in handedness compared with straight men, and lesbians very shifted toward non-right handedness compared with heterosexual women⁶³:

“The authors conducted a meta-analysis of 20 studies that compared the rates of non-right-handedness in 6,987 homosexual (6,182 men and 805 women) and 16,423 heterosexual (14,808 men and 1,615 women) participants. **Homosexual participants had 39% greater odds of being non-right-handed.** The corresponding values for homosexual men (20 contrasts) and women (9 contrasts) were 34% and 91%, respectively⁶⁴” (emphasis added).

Parking Lot 6: Older-brother effect and handedness

How about another twist on the older brother effect? Say the London Psychiatrists now claim that the older-brother effect applies only to right-, but not left-, handed men. MIC's response:

“Bizarro! Perhaps you’re not getting the message- HO is not caused by biology, it is caused by infection, molestation, and/or choice. Handedness in concert with the number of older brothers is not going to tell you anything about whether a person will turn out HO.” GPRE’s response: “If right- but not left- handedness is correlated to the same genes that cause either increased maternal fecundity or male HO, as is suggested by the left-shift in handedness, then such a prediction may be verified.” What do we observe? The older-brother effect only applies to right-handed men⁶⁵.

Parking Lot 7: Limb length to trunk length ratio

This lot is very similar to lot 1 above. MIC: the ratio of limb:trunk length will not help you predict a person’s sexual orientation because that ratio is biological, and biology does not cause HO. GPRE prediction: HO men will have a ratio shifted toward that of heterosexual women, and HO women will have a ratio shifted toward that of heterosexual men. What do we observe? HO men have a ratio shifted toward that of heterosexual women, and HO women have a ratio shifted toward that of heterosexual men⁶⁶.

Parking Lot 8: Gait and voice-quality

This lot is similar to lots 1 and 7. MIC prediction: these “gaydar” signals won’t work because, again, they’re biological (though perhaps gaydar signals cause persecution of such individuals, and the persecution makes them gay). GPRE prediction: gender-atypical intermediate gait and voice quality for HO men and women. What do we observe? Gender-shifted gait and voice quality, as well as other aspects of body function, in both lesbian women and gay men⁶⁷.

Parking Lot 9: Cross-cultural rates of HO

Because culture and choices vary so widely, MIC would predict that the prevalence of HO will accordingly vary from culture to culture. GPRE would predict that, absent some regional endocrine influence or lineage-conserved genotypic trend, prevalence of HO will be fairly uniform across cultures. What do we observe? Consistent cross-culture prevalence of HO⁶⁸.

Parking Lot 10: Female to Male HO ratio

Would MIC predict that men or women would more often be HO? Are men or women molested more on average than the other gender? If so, the M of MIC would predict the more-often-molested sex. Are men or women more susceptible to HO infection? Under the I of MIC, the more susceptible gender would have a higher prevalence. Are men or women more likely to choose HO? Under the C of MIC, the “more likely to choose” gender is predicted to manifest a higher prevalence. Because the answers to this question are unclear, one might reasonably conclude that this parking lot cannot cut for or against MIC. GPRE, on the other hand, would definitively predict that the default sexual orientation, female-type (towards men), would have a higher prevalence simply because there are more steps that must go “just right” in order to result in male-type orientation (towards women). What do we observe? Consistent 1.5 to 2.0 times the rate of gay to lesbian HO⁶⁹.

Parking Lot 11: Personality and gender-associated occupational preference

MIC: there will be no difference between HO and heterosexual populations for either gender as to gender-associated occupational preferences, physical aggressiveness, empathy, expressiveness, and aesthetic/technological interests unless they on average either 1) result from MIC factors or 2) lead to MIC factors. GPRE: HO men will consider themselves less masculine, and HO women more masculine, than their heterosexual counterparts, including in the listed categories. What do we observe? Gay men consider themselves less masculine, and lesbian women more masculine, than their heterosexual counterparts. Significant gender shifts in physical aggressiveness, empathy, expressiveness, aesthetic/technological interests, and gender-associated occupational preferences are also observed.

Parking Lot 12: Cognitive traits

Will HO men and heterosexual men score differently on tests where each gender is known to perform differently, such as male-favored mental rotation of objects, targeting, navigation and female-favored tasks such as verbal fluency, letter fluency, synonym fluency, judgment of line orientation, and remembering the location of objects on a page? How about HO and heterosexual women? MIC prediction: no. GPRE prediction: yes, the HO population will perform more like the heterosexual norm of the opposite gender. With the exception of lesbians

who don't do worse than straight women on object location, the HO subset of both genders does indeed perform atypically on these metrics for their gender in the direction of the opposite gender.

Parking Lot 13: Molestation rates

In what way does molestation cause HO? One hypothesis is that whichever gender a child first has sexual contact with will determine the orientation of that person for life (e.g. if molested by a man or experiments with a male peer, a boy will grow up HO. If molested by a woman or experiments with a female peer, he will grow up heterosexually oriented, and vice versa for girls). The less popular theory is that the person will grow up attracted to the *opposite* gender of their first sexual experience partner/molester. MIC would certainly endorse at least one of these hypotheses, and absent genes dependent on subsequent external stimulus, GPRE would predict an absence of effect.

One study indicates that both gay men and lesbians are more likely to have had sexual contact with an older person of their own sex when compared to heterosexual people. This study requires the assumption that the adolescents and children were sexually passive targets. Especially for the adolescents, the molester may have either picked up on clues about the target's sexual orientation from childhood indicators and selected on that basis, and/or the target may have invited or resisted less the molestation than their heterosexual counterparts. In the study, 68% of the men and 62% of the women subjects identified themselves as homosexual *before* the molestation took place. The authors also said: “[Molestation] may not, however, be a causal factor in either gender. Perhaps children or adolescents with a higher potential for homosexual behavior are more likely to enter a situation that leads to same-sex molestation.” In similar molestation studies, over 95% of the subjects report being aware of their own HO *before* the incest or sexual relations with adults.

Another study reported that molested males, though not molested females, were more likely than non-abused males to form homosexual partnerships in adulthood. The latter study's finding could be limited to homosexual behavior rather than HO, and thus might be beyond the scope of this tour.

The fact that most young people in at least America develop an awareness of their sexual orientation while they are still virgins and/or before they've have sexual experiences with members of the preferred sex belies the molestation hypothesis. The reality that one out of three US women is sexually abused before age 18, yet the prevalence of HO in women is far less than 33%, is another factor vitiating the first hypothesis (similarly, the difference between the % of molested men and the prevalence of HO even without subtracting the unmolested HO population argues against molestation as an etiological factor). Last, the undisputedly high incidence of HO persons who were never molested indicates at the least that there's more to the HO story than molestation (though the "molestation produces HO" idea has led to fruitless "molester witch hunts" in some LDS wards and other communities when one of their members comes out).

Some in the MIC camp predict that sexual abuse of girls by men would cause an increased incidence of HO in women. GPRE would predict that the abuse would be irrelevant. What do we observe? No greater percentage of lesbians than straight women report having been abused.

In conclusion, I'm not sure how to score this lot- it seems dicey. You choose for yourself- I'm going to give both MIC and GPRE neither a point nor a demerit.

Parking Lot 14: Boarding school

Homosexual behavior is common among British children and adolescents who attend single-sex boarding schools. MIC would predict a higher incidence of HO in this population than the general population. GPRE would predict no difference. What do we observe? Adult Britons who attended these schools are no more likely to engage in homosexual behavior than those who did not. Once again, this behavior-based outcome may be beyond our "HO causation only" tour.

Parking Lot 15: Systemic cultural molestation

There are a number of cultures with require male youth to engage in homosexual acts, some of them believing that semen improves vitality. An example of this norm is found in the Sambia tribe of New Guinea. If indeed molestation causes HO, then MIC would predict elevated levels of HO in the men of this tribe. GPRE would predict no difference in orientation. What do we observe? As adults, these men marry and behave heterosexually. Again this behavior outcome may be outside our "orientation only" scope.

Parking Lot 16: HO as a subset of gender socialization

If the psychology of gender is socialized (meaning that the mental and behavioral traits that differ between males and females are learned from parents and society more generally), why couldn't HO be simply a subset of gender learning gone awry? For instance, across cultures boys engage in rough-and-tumble play more than girls. Perhaps all the cultures of the world reward boys' rough play and punish girls' rough play. Or perhaps a child just imitates other role models, such as older boys that play rough. MIC would predict that if you raise a child as a girl the child will adopt a female gender identity, including an attraction to men. Biology-bound GPRE would predict that sexual orientation is mostly independent of socializing factors. What do we observe in this parking lot? Studies of genetic males who were reassigned as females while babies (due to severe congenital malformations of the pelvic area) report being attracted to females when they reach adulthood. Additionally:

“In 1995 Diamond reviewed the arguments that homosexuality is an acquired/learned condition. His summary of the earlier work of investigators in both the United States and Great Britain who examined the family and social backgrounds of heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual adults was “Their basic finding was that no common parameter of family or upbringing could be linked causally to sexual orientation, nor could any link be found between any aspect of an individual's childhood or adolescent experiences and homosexual or bisexual activities.” Nothing published in the subsequent 14 years appears to contradict this conclusion.⁷⁰”

Parking Lot 17: HO as a product of parent orientation

HO could result from a child role-modeling her parents. MIC would predict that HO parents that raise their own or others' offspring would have a higher incidence of HO among those raised children. MIC would further predict that, on average, straight parents will raise fewer HO children. GPRE would predict that either correlation would be due to genetics and prenatal hormones (*biological* parentage) rather than *how* the parent raises the child. What do we observe? The vast majority of HO people have straight parents, and according to numerous studies children raised by HO parents don't differ in sexual orientation from children raised by straight parents (with the exception of the female biological children of lesbians).

Parking Lot 18: Choice

MIC would predict that many if not all HO people chose to be HO. The MIC camp is split on whether heterosexually oriented people chose their orientation- some say heterosexual orientation is just as chosen as homosexual orientation, while others say heterosexual orientation is endemic to all people, but HO people choose to deviate from the orientation they were born with. GPRE would predict that neither HO nor heterosexual people choose which sex to be sexually attracted to. What do we observe? Only 4% of gay men and 15% of lesbians say that choice has anything to do with why they are HO. One may speculate that heterosexually oriented people would on average respond similarly- namely that choice has little to do with why they are heterosexually oriented. (For some reason, there doesn't seem to be a survey reporting heterosexuals' response to the inquiry).

One also questions here why on earth large numbers of people, especially in the church, would choose to be HO:

“Join us and very possibly break your parents' hearts, throw the family into chaos, run the risk of intense self-loathing, especially if you are religious, invite the disgust of much of society, give up the warmth and benefits of marriage and probably of parenthood.”⁷¹

If the heavily predominant preference is for heterosexual orientation and that is an available alternative, why are so many otherwise good, reasonably normal people choosing what many consider an exceptionally difficult life as an HO person?

Parking Lot 19: Animal HO

Some people claim that a number of animals are homosexually oriented. MIC would predict that animals would not manifest HO because, with a few exceptions (species which can learn from their peers, such as ravens and higher mammals and primates), animals are merely products of their environment and are incapable of sexually abusing, being molested, being “infected” with cultural information, or choosing. Also, even from an evolutionary perspective, homosexuality will be selected against since it doesn't produce offspring- right?

Looking to the substantial prenatal and genetic similarities between ours and other species, GPRE would predict widespread homosexual conduct (which serves as the indicator of HO

animals since they cannot self-report) in the animal kingdom. What do we observe? More important than the strength of the evolutionary arguments⁷² for either side (which are abundant and available) is the reality suggested by our observations. We observe homosexual, bisexual, and/or transgender courtships, sex, affection, pair bonding, and/or parenting in about 1,500 species, with substantial documentation for 500 of those 1,500. Examples: 8% of male rams behave only homosexually (turns out the sexually dimorphic nucleus of the medial preoptic area is half the size in the gay than in the straight sheep); one report is that 9 of 10 giraffe pairings occur between males; in some penguin species same-sex individuals mate for life and refuse to mate with females even when given the chance; and many others (gulls, mallards, dolphins, elephants, lions, bison, bonobos, and hyenas to name a few). Speaking of same-sex penguin pairings, Carol Lynn Pearson wrote:

“I have followed the charming story of Roy and Silo, two male penguins who met in a zoo holding tank in 1998 in New York’s Central Park. They became inseparable, built a nest, defended it from others, and “engaged in what zookeeper euphemistically call ‘ecstatic display.’” They showed signs of wanting to be parents, so the zookeepers gave them a dummy egg, which they successfully incubated, then gave them an actual egg. When the baby chick was born, Roy and Silo cared for it, fed it, kept it warm, and successfully launched it into maturity. Years later, the couple is still going strong and is regarded as just another couple by their heterosexual penguin peers.⁷³”

Also, “Sexual behavior is clearly under genetic control in animals. A single gene... controls male and female sexual behavior in fruit flies. When the female route of expression of the gene is experimentally induced in genetic males, they do not exhibit male courtship movements and sounds. When the male route of expression of the gene is experimentally induced in genetic females, they behave sexually like males. It is not valid to dismiss evidence obtained from non-humans with the rejoinder that, “But, of course, people are not fruit flies.” Evidence continues to mount that the biochemical mechanisms that operate during embryonic life are remarkably similar, in general outline, among animals, and a large number of the genes that control development in fruit flies and people (and worms, and frogs, and mice) are the same.⁷⁴”

Another observation- remember the rat sons referenced in the sex determination primer? The landmark study on the rat genome noted: “the rat genome contains about the same number of genes as the human and mouse genomes. Furthermore, almost all human genes known to be associated with diseases have counterparts in the rat genome and appear highly conserved through mammalian evolution, confirming that the rat is an excellent model for many areas of medical research.⁷⁵” Our reliance on mouse and rats for the experimenting with new drugs evidences our trust in the biological similarities between rats and humans. In the experiment

referenced above, a single dose of a known endocrine disruptor was given to mothers. MIC would perhaps concede that HO in animals is biological, but inasmuch as HO in animals is similar to that in humans, a biological factor such as an endocrine disruptor won't affect HO. GPRE would predict hyper-masculinizing or feminizing of the sons, depending on the effective direction of the endocrine disruption. What do we observe? The small dose of endocrine disruptor was enough to turn the rat sons to homosexual behavior. Other studies, such as one where moms were exposed to plant estrogens, resulted in sons who show less mounting behavior and fewer ejaculations. The latter study shows that the first ten days after a rat's birth (rat's aren't as developed as humans at parturition) are the critical period for those areas of the brain linked to sexual behavior.

Parking Lot 20: Congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH)

CAH “refers to any of several autosomal recessive diseases resulting from mutations of genes for enzymes mediating the biochemical steps of production of cortisol from cholesterol by the adrenal glands.” Individuals (usually women) with CAH frequently had too little or too much of sex steroids such as testosterone, progesterone, and estrogens during development. MIC would predict that there will be no difference between HO and heterosexual populations as a result of the biological factor of CAH presence. GPRE would predict masculinized or feminized orientation, based on which steroids were present at altered levels, and the magnitude of alteration. Because very elevated testosterone is the most frequent occurrence, GPRE would predict increased incidence of HO. What do we observe? No less than 19 studies evidence that CAH women are on average very significantly shifted in the direction of HO.

Parking Lot 21: Auditory pathways

Did you know the cochlea *makes* sounds in addition to sensing them? It's true- and the sounds are called oto-acoustic emissions (OAEs). A sensitive microphone placed inside the ear can detect the OAEs frequencies. Any particular person will have between zero and about a dozen different OAEs. It turns out that the number and volume of these OAE varies predictably by gender (women have on average more and louder OAEs). This sex difference also exists in

monkeys and sheep. MIC's prediction: HO and heterosexually oriented individuals from either gender will not differ in their OAE's because anyone can choose/become infected/be molested into HO, and none are significantly biologically predisposed. GPRE: HO males will be shifted toward the heterosexual female norm, and HO females toward the heterosexual male norm. What do we observe? HO men show no difference from heterosexual men, and HO women are shifted towards the heterosexual male norm.

Additionally, men and women differ in their prepulse inhibition (PPI), which is the degree to which they are startled by a loud sound stimulus if they are exposed earlier to a weaker sound. This non-learned behavior is measured via eye blink, and is lower in women than it is in men. MIC would predict no PPI differences; GPRE would predict gender shifts for this sexually dimorphic trait. What do we observe? Homosexual women manifest a significantly masculinized PPI.

Parking Lot 22: DES exposure

What is DES? "Diethylstilbestrol (DES) is a synthetic nonsteroidal estrogen that was first synthesized in 1938. Human exposure to DES occurred through diverse sources, such as dietary ingestion from supplemented cattle feed and medical treatment for certain conditions, including breast and prostate cancers. From about 1940 to 1970, DES was given to pregnant women under the mistaken belief it would reduce the risk of pregnancy complications and losses.⁷⁶" DES is also a known estrogen mimic. MIC would predict that DES exposure would not affect the likelihood of either gender's HO, since the pre-natal hormones aren't causes of HO. GPRE would predict a discernible difference between DES-exposed and non-exposed people. What do we observe? There was no indication that DES influences the sexual orientation of sons. Out of 30 women whose mothers were *not* exposed, none indicated either a bisexual or a HO. Out of 30 women whose mothers *were* exposed, 24% reported a lifelong bisexual or HO. When studying sister pairs where one sister had been exposed in the womb to DES and the other hadn't, 8% of the unexposed sisters reported lifelong bisexual orientation, while 42% of the exposed sisters reported a lifelong bisexual orientation⁷⁷.

Parking Lot 23: HO running in the family

Additionally, what would MIC and GPRE predict about homosexuality running in families? MIC might or not predict HO running in families based on how conserved the family culture is through generations, which culture could affect HO incidence in the family. GPRE would predict a moderate correlation based on the genetic component of HO. What do we observe?

“Data from random samples show that gay men are about three times more likely to have gay brothers than are heterosexual men (9% compared to about 3% in the general population). Lesbians tend to have a higher incidence of lesbian sisters (6-25% compared to about 2% in the general population).⁷⁸”

Parking Lot 24: Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS)

“In another human intersexual condition called androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS), the gene that encodes the protein receptor that mediates signaling by testosterone is mutant. Males with this condition cannot respond prenatally to the male steroid hormones and are convincingly female in anatomy. These persons are nearly always raised as women, are no different in psychological well-being compared to control women...⁷⁹”

MIC would predict that AIS would not affect homosexual orientation- after all, the HO is overwhelmingly caused by molestation, choice, or cultural infection rather than biology. GPRE would predict that fetal androgen sensitivity is vital to converting the default orientation towards men into an orientation towards women, as a lack of prenatal exposure to androgens leads to a sexual orientation toward males- *sublata causa, tollitur effectus* (the cause being removed, the effect ceases). What do we observe? AIS men uniformly exhibit sexual attraction to men.

Parking Lots 25-32: The brain

This could be the most important lot visited on the tour- as your guide I have “saved the best for last.” Though brains are plastic in some limited ways until about age 25, most structural aspects are static and measurably different for men and women by a few months after birth, which is before the time that MIC factors could exert influence. If girl and boy brains are different from each other- how about the brains of HO men and women? MIC would predict no difference. GPRE would predict, as it has in the many parking lots before this one, that the brains of HO men and women will be atypical for their gender in the direction of the opposite gender.

Additionally, GPRE would predict marked differences in parts of the brain that are likely candidates as sexual orientation centers. What do we observe? (award points for each bullet)

- HO men are gender-shifted in terms of the relative sizes of the left and right cerebral hemispheres in the direction of the heterosexual female norm.
- Both gay men and lesbian women are gender shifted toward the opposite gender in their brain responses to compounds thought to be sex pheromones.
- Gay males, like females, have better verbal abilities than straight males.
- Both gay men and lesbian women are gender shifted toward the opposite gender in the functional connectivity of their amygdalas, the emotional center of the brain, as measured by cerebral blood flow.
- The isthmus of the corpus callosum, whose size heritability is a whopping 94%, is different between heterosexual and homosexual men.
- Viewing a female face produced a strong reaction in the thalamus and medial prefrontal cortex of straight men but not of gay men. Gay male brains reacted more strongly to the face of a man.
- The anterior commissure (superfast cables connecting the brain hemispheres) are larger in gay than in straight males.
- Significantly, gay men are gender shifted in the size and density of the third interstitial nucleus of the hypothalamus, which is a sexually dimorphic cell group concerned with male-typical sexual behavior.

The 32-stop parking lot tour is now complete! Thanks for coming along for the ride- next let's check the scoreboard. Now, there could be some error (which could go either way) in assuming each parking lot merits the same amount of points- nevertheless for the sake of convenience, presume each lot can give out no more than two demerits or two points [five possibilities: 1- both MIC and GPRE's predictions failed (one demerit each), 2- they both succeeded (one point each), 3- one succeeded and the other failed (one point, one demerit), 4- one either succeeded or failed and the other neither succeeded nor failed (one point or demerit), 5- neither succeeded or failed (none)]. What did you get? My tentative tally is MIC, -22 GPRE, 27. We must remember that the size and magnitude of multiple pathways, if they exist, will frustrate GPRE's claims but serve to substantiate MIC's claims. Also, if any persons in the sample groups mistakenly reported their orientation or lied, such errors will similarly reduce or eliminate the differences between heterosexual and homosexual norms in the parking lots which measured physical

attributes. To account for these MIC-favoring self-reporting and multiple-pathway errors, I will award a modest one demerit to MIC, leaving MIC -23 and GPRE 27 for a point spread of 50.

Causation of HO: the LDS view

Okay, now the parking lot test is done. Was the parking lot test a valid approach to gaining knowledge for a Latter-day Saint? Abrogating a longer epistemological discussion, I will here merely assert that there are two valid sources of truth approximations for a Latter-day Saint: revelation (explored below) and observation/science (analyzed above). Joseph Smith taught: “one of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”⁸⁰ Also:

“Diversity of opinion does not necessitate intolerance of spirit, nor should it embitter or set rational beings against each other. ... Our religion is not hostile to real science. That which is demonstrated, we accept with joy; but vain philosophy, human theory and mere speculations of men, we do not accept nor do we adopt anything contrary to divine revelation or to good common sense.”⁸¹

Thus, I conclude that the scientific approach taken above is a legitimate one that merits consideration for a Latter-day Saint. Having heard some from observation/science, we will now give voice to what revelation has to say: *audi alteram partem* (hear the other side).

To construct the revelation-based LDS view on the causation of HO, I will cite approximately 60 statements by church leaders (I count 48 from those sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators) over the years that could reasonably be interpreted to bear on the question of the causation of homosexual orientation. To avoid the potential of casting an unfavorable light on any particular church authority I have evidenced authorship in the endnotes rather than in-text. This construction will be difficult since it seems that sometimes terms such as homosexuality and perversion refer to either {homosexual behavior + homosexual orientation}, homosexual orientation, or just homosexual behavior. I will leave it to the reader to discriminate how the terms are used, since I struggle. I remind the reader that statements which bear on only homosexual behavior are outside the narrow scope of this chapter.

- “Some suppose that they were pre-set and cannot overcome what they feel are inborn tendencies toward the impure and unnatural. Not so! Why would our Heavenly Father do that to anyone? Remember, He is our Father.⁸²” (2010)
- “There is a reason why we in the Church do not talk more openly about this subject. Some matters are best handled very privately. With many things, it is easy - very easy - to cause the very things we are trying to avoid. On one occasion, with a friend of mine, I went to the medical center of a large university to see another friend who was a doctor there. In the waiting room before us was a low table covered with pamphlets describing various diseases. My friend observed: ‘Well, there they are. Read enough about it and you’ll think you’ve got it...’ and I have already said that we can very foolishly cause things we are trying to prevent by talking too much about them.⁸³” (1978)
- “First, far less is known about the causes of same-gender attraction than is claimed to be known. Preliminary findings are touted as proven facts while retractions or contradicting evidence about the same issue receive little, if any, attention. The result is an abundance of untruth and distortions worthy of Isaiah’s warning: ‘Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil...⁸⁴’ (2010)
- “homosexuals can be assured that in spite of all they may have heard from other sources, they can overcome and return to normal, happy living.⁸⁵” (1970)
- “There appears to be a consensus in the world that it is natural, to one degree or another, for a percentage of the population. Therefore, we must accept it as all right. However, when you put a moral instrument on it, the needle immediately flips to the side labeled “wrong.” It may even register “dangerous...” The answer: It is not all right. It is wrong! It is not desirable; it is unnatural; it is abnormal; it is an affliction. When practiced, it is immoral.⁸⁶” (1978)
- “If someone seeking your help says to you, ‘I am a homosexual,’ or, ‘I am lesbian,’ or, ‘I am gay,’ correct this miscasting... it is simply not true. To speak this way seeds a doubt and deceit about who we really are.⁸⁷” (2010)
- “Please notice that I use [homosexual] as an adjective, not as a noun: I reject it as a noun. I repeat, I accept that word as an adjective to describe a temporary condition. I reject it as a noun naming a permanent one.⁸⁸” (1978)
- “First, it is important to understand that homosexuality is not innate and unchangeable. Research has not proved that homosexuality is genetic. Even more important, many researchers whose studies have been used to support a biological model for homosexuality have determined that their work has been misinterpreted. What is clear is that homosexuality results from an interaction of social, biological, and psychological factors. These factors may include temperament, personality traits, sexual abuse, familial factors, and treatment by one’s peers.⁸⁹” (1999)
- “To the ‘misinformed’ who believe ‘God make them that way... This is as untrue as any other of the diabolical lies Satan has concocted. It is blasphemy. Man is made in the image of God. Does the pervert think God to be ‘that way?’⁹⁰” (1975)
- “‘God made me that way,’ some say, as they rationalize and excuse themselves for their [homosexual] perversions. ‘I can’t help it,’ they add. This is blasphemy. Is man not made in the image of God, and does he think God to be ‘that way?’⁹¹” (1980)
- “Today we are aware of great problems in our society. The most obvious are sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, drug abuse, alcoholism, vandalism, pornography, and violence. These grave problems are symptoms of failure in the home—the disregarding of principles and practices established by God in the very beginning.⁹²” (1982)

- “For centuries men have sought to find the cause of this condition... but it is not a physical disorder. A most extensive physical examination will not reveal one shred of evidence that it is. Physicians have never located any tangible control center in the body that can be adjusted by medical or surgical means to change this condition. The next obvious place to look is the emotional or psychological part of our nature. Here we come closer.⁹³” (1978)
- “Some people who seek help for homosexual problems may have concluded that experiences from their youth, such as perceived problems with a parent or some other older person, contributed to their inappropriate feelings. Some may believe that they have not consciously chosen to have such feelings in the first place. No general agreement exists about the causes of such problems.⁹⁴” (1992)
- “There is some widely accepted theory extant that homosexuality is inherited. How can this be? No scientific evidence demonstrates absolutely that this is so. Besides, if it were so, it would frustrate the whole plan of mortal happiness. Our designation as men or women began before this world was. In contrast to the socially accepted doctrine that homosexuality is inborn, a number of respectable authorities contend that homosexuality is not acquired by birth. The false belief of inborn sexual orientation denies to repentant souls the opportunity to change and will ultimately lead to discouragement, disappointment, and despair.⁹⁵” (1995)
- “Is this tendency impossible to change? Is it preset at the time of birth and locked in? Do you just have to live with it? For example, the shutter of an expensive camera is calibrated at the factory and cannot be adjusted in the field. If such a camera, by chance, is thrown out of calibration or damaged, it cannot be fixed locally. It must eventually go back to the factory, for only there can it be put in order. Is perversion like that? The answer is a conclusive no! It is not like that. Some so-called experts, and many of those who have yielded to the practice, teach that it is congenital and incurable and that one just has to learn to live with it. They can point to a history of very little success in trying to put whatever mechanism that causes this back into proper adjustment. They have, to support them, some very convincing evidence. Much of the so-called scientific literature concludes that there really is not much that can be done about it. I reject that conclusion out of hand.⁹⁶” (1978)
- “The chief psychiatrist at one of Washington’s largest hospitals says, ‘A normal 12- or 13-year-old boy or girl exposed to pornographic literature could develop into a homosexual.’⁹⁷” (1970)
- “Having same-gender attraction is NOT in your DNA...”⁹⁸ (2009)
- “First is the misconception that same-gender attraction is an inborn and unalterable orientation. This untrue assumption tries to persuade you to label yourselves and build your entire identity around a fixed sexual orientation or condition.⁹⁹” (2009)
- “Some who become tangled up in this disorder become predators. They proselyte the young or the inexperienced. It becomes very important for them to believe that everyone, to one degree or another, is “that way”... Do not be deceived. If you are one of the few who are subject to this temptation, do not be misled into believing that you are a captive to it. That is false doctrine!¹⁰⁰” (1978)
- “There are said to be millions of perverts who have relinquished their natural affection and bypassed courtship and normal marriage relationships. This practice is spreading like a prairie fire and changing our world. They are without ‘natural affection’ for God, for spouses, and even for children.¹⁰¹” (1971)
- “In the two most common responses, 42% of this public sample said gay or lesbian people are born that way, and 36% said they choose to be that way. Both of those responses are factually wrong...

As two Columbia University researchers put it, 'the assertion that homosexuality is genetic . . . must be dismissed out of hand as a general principle of psychology'... even though no universal explanation exists, some patterns do fit many same-gender attraction cases. For example, we know from the research that among women up to 80% who have same-gender attraction were abused in some way as children. Among men, especially during the years just before and during puberty, as President Boyd K. Packer has said, 'What would have only been a more or less normal passing phase in establishing [your] gender identity can become implanted and leave you confused, even disturbed.' In other words, before puberty, boys are typically more interested in other boys than in girls. Then their interest gradually shifts to girls, but a few boys don't make this transition. Often these boys are emotionally sensitive, introspective, and, especially among Church members, perfectionistic. When puberty hits this group, they can be sexually aroused by many factors. When those factors include other boys, they can become fixated on the fear that they are "gay," especially if they have male sexual experiences, including male pornography. Then their fixation can block their normal emotional-sexual development.¹⁰²" (2009)

- "Every form of homosexuality is sin. Pornography is one of the approaches to that transgression.¹⁰³" (1974)
- "[A]nimals do not pair up with their own gender to satisfy their mating instincts.¹⁰⁴" (1992)
- "Now it is not all that unusual for a boy or a girl, in a moment of childish play with someone of the same gender, to enter into some mischief... two young men or two young women, motivated by some attraction or responding to a desire for affection - any kind of affection - sometimes are drawn almost innocently into unnatural behavior. They can be drawn into some circumstances that makes them, for the moment, doubt their identity. Do not be deluded into thinking that such thoughts and feelings are normal for you. Just because you experience some period of confusion, do not make of that thing something that it is not. Do not order your life to conform to a transient thought or experience¹⁰⁵." (1978)
- "Find a therapist who can help you identify the unmet emotional needs that you are tempted to satisfy in false sexual ways¹⁰⁶." (2009)
- "There is a distinction between immoral thoughts and feelings and participating in either immoral heterosexual or any homosexual behavior. However, such thoughts and feelings, regardless of their causes, can and should be overcome and sinful behavior should be eliminated. This can be achieved through faith in God, sincere repentance, and persistent effort.¹⁰⁷" (1991)
- "The Church distinguishes between feelings or inclinations on the one hand and behavior on the other. It's not a sin to have feelings, only in yielding to temptation.¹⁰⁸"
- "Children learn how to love in a stable, healthy family. Parents need to know that lack of proper affection in the home can result in unnatural behavior in their children such as homosexuality or inability to be an effective parent when the time comes.¹⁰⁹" (1975)
- ""We are told that as far back as Henry the VIII, this vice was referred to as 'THE ABOMINABLE AND DETESTABLE CRIME AGAINST NATURE... We know such a disease is curable... and promise him if he will stay away from the haunts and the temptations, and the former associates, he may heal himself, cleanse his mind and return to his normal pursuits and a happy state of mind. The cure for this malady lies in self mastery...¹¹⁰" (1964)

- "Homosexuality is an ugly sin, but because of its prevalence, the need to warn the uninitiated, and the desire to help those who may already be involved with it, it must be brought into the open. It is the sin of the ages....¹¹¹" (1977)
- "We talked of the influences that had put [a young gay man] where he is, of the home from which he came, of associations with other young men, of books and magazines read, of shows seen.¹¹²" (1975)
- "It is easy to hypothesize that inheritance plays a role in sexual orientation. However it is important to remember, as conceded by two advocates of this approach, that 'the concept of substantial heritability should not be confused with the concept of inevitable heritability. ... Most mechanisms probably involve interactions between constitutional predispositions and environmental events... Satan "seeks to undermine the principle of individual accountability, to persuade us to misuse our sacred powers of procreation, to discourage marriage and childbearing by worthy men and women, and to confuse what it means to be male or female."¹¹³" (1995)
- "Thus prophets anciently and today condemn masturbation....While we should not regard this weakness as the heinous sin which some other sexual practices are, it is of itself bad enough to require sincere repentance. What is more, it too often leads to grievous sin, even to that sin against nature, homosexuality. For, done in private, it evolves often into mutual masturbation – practiced with another person of the same sex – and then into total homosexuality.... Sin in sex practices tends to have a 'snowballing' effect. As the restraints fall away, Satan incites the carnal man to ever-deepening degeneracy in his search for excitement until in many instances he is lost to any former consideration of decency. Thus it is that through the ages, perhaps as an extension of homosexual practices, men and women have sunk even to seeking sexual gratification with animals¹¹⁴." (1971)
- "If an individual tries to receive comfort, satisfaction, affection, or fulfillment from deviate physical interaction with someone of his own gender, it can become an addiction! At first it may fill a need and give comfort of some kind, but, when that has faded, feelings of guilt and depression follow. A greater need soon emerges.¹¹⁵" (1978)
- "It should go without saying that many of these problems would be alleviated if parents would spend more time teaching and rearing their children. Related to the story that I gave at the beginning of my talk is evidence of a clinical researcher who, after studying 850 individual cases, stated: "Homosexuality would not occur where there is a normal, loving father-and-son relationship." Any of our people living in righteousness would normally avoid being involved in these problems.¹¹⁶" (1977)
- ""So-called gays and lesbians...may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control."¹¹⁷" (1998)
- "The Lord defined some very basic differences between men and women. He gave the male what we call masculine traits and the female feminine traits. He did not intend either of the sexes to adopt the other's traits but, rather, that men should look and act like men and that women should look and act like women. When these differences are ignored, an unwholesome relationship develops, which, if not checked, can lead to the reprehensible, tragic sin of homosexuality. In other words, we have a responsibility as priesthood bearers to be examples of true manhood."¹¹⁸" (1971)
- "There are some circumstances in which young men may be tempted to handle one another... When a young man is finding his way into manhood, such experiences can misdirect his normal desires and pervert him not only physically but emotionally and spiritually as well."¹¹⁹" (1976)
- "Normal desires and attractions emerge in the teenage years; there is the temptation to experiment, to tamper with the sacred power of procreation. These desires can be intensified, even perverted, by pornography, improper music, or the encouragement from unworthy associations.

What would have only been a more or less normal passing phase in establishing gender identity can become implanted and leave you confused, even disturbed. If you consent, the adversary can take control of your thoughts and lead you carefully toward a habit and to an addiction, convincing you that immoral, unnatural behavior is a fixed part of your nature. With some few, there is the temptation which seems nearly overpowering for man to be attracted to man or woman to woman. The scriptures plainly condemn those who “dishonour their own bodies between themselves ... ; men with men working that which is unseemly” or “women [who] change the natural use into that which is against nature...” The gates of freedom, and the good or bad beyond, swing open or closed to the password choice. You are free to choose a path that may lead to despair, to disease, even to death.¹²⁰ (2000)

- There is a falsehood that some are born with an attraction to their own kind, with nothing they can do about it. They are just "that way" and can only yield to those desires. That is a malicious and destructive lie. While it is a convincing idea to some, it is of the devil.¹²¹ (1976)
- “Important as it is, building stronger homes is not enough in the fight against rising permissiveness. We therefore urge Church members as citizens to lift their voices, to join others in unceasingly combatting, in their communities and beyond, the inroads of pornography and the general flaunting of permissiveness. Let us vigorously oppose the shocking developments which encourage the old sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and which defile the human body as the temple of God.¹²² (1977)
- “Freedom from this kind of enslavement is up to a trail that an individual must walk alone. If you stumble, get up and move on. Soon your bruises will heal. You will grow stronger. Your battle is two-thirds won, or three-fourths or four-fifths won, when you take charge of your identity. Accept yourself as belonging in the tabernacle that God has provided for you. Your body was provided as an instrument of your mind. It has the purpose to bless others. Don't be mixed up in this twisted kind of self-love.¹²³ (1978)
- “A 1977 Sacramento Bee article “gave expert evidence that homosexuals certainly are not born – they are made – further defusing claims that they ‘can’t help it.’¹²⁴” (1978)
- “The Church refutes the idea that homosexual orientation is genetically determined....Furthermore, a genetic/biological cause of homosexual attraction has not found support in the scientific literature. “Science has never proved a genetic link to sexual orientation. Moreover, the Church repeatedly, in nearly every statement about homosexual relations, teaches that homosexual attraction is not inherent to a person's particular genetic make-up and that they are quite able to change.¹²⁵ (2001)
- “BYU does not intend ‘to admit to our campus any homosexuals. If any of you have this tendency and have not completely abandoned it, may I suggest that you leave the university immediately after this assembly; and if you will be honest enough to let us know the reason, we will voluntarily refund your tuition. We do not want others on this campus to be contaminated by your presence.’¹²⁶ (1965)
- “[BYU] will never knowingly enroll an unrepentant person who follows these practices nor tolerate on its campus anyone with these tendencies who fails to repent and put his or her life in order.¹²⁷ (1965)
- “A problem they caused, or they were born with? Answer: I don't know. I'm not an expert on these things. I don't pretend to be an expert on these things.¹²⁸ (2004)
- “Once the carnal in man is no longer checked by the restraints of family life and by real religion, there comes an avalanche of appetites which gathers momentum that is truly frightening. As one jar loose and begins to roll down hill, still another breaks loose, whether it is an increase in homosexuality, corruption, drugs, or abortion. Each began as an appetite that needed to be checked but which went unchecked.¹²⁹ (1978)

- "‘Homosexuality can be cured if the battle is well organized and pursued vigorously and continuously.’ [This obviously refers to the condition of sexual attraction to persons of the same sex.]¹³⁰" (1984)
- "There appears to be a consensus in the world that [sexual perversion] is natural, to one degree or another, for a percentage of the population. Therefore, we must accept it as all right. However, when you put a moral instrument on it, the needle immediately flips to the side labeled "wrong." It may even register "dangerous"... The answer: It is not all right. It is wrong! It is not desirable; it is unnatural; it is abnormal; it is an affliction.¹³¹" (1978)
- "The words homosexual, lesbian, and gay are adjectives to describe particular thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. We should refrain from using these words as nouns [or pronouns] to identify particular conditions or specific persons. . . . It is wrong to use these words to denote a condition, because this implies that a person is consigned by birth to a circumstance in which he or she has no choice in respect to the critically important matter of sexual behavior.¹³²" (1995)
- "Usually, there will be some resistance, particularly with the abandonment of the people for many perverts will claim to have great "love" for some with whom they have been involved, especially where there has been a sustained relationship, but since the problem is in the mind more than in the body, it is necessary to find a new climate and to make possible the elimination of the evil thoughts which drive him back to his trouble.¹³³" (1970)
- "Since homosexuals have become a nationwide entity, and have come out of hiding to demand their place in the sun, many of them claim that they are what they are because they were born that way and cannot help it. How ridiculous is such a claim. It was not God who mad them that way, any more than He made bank robbers the way they are¹³⁴. (1978)
- "Do not be misled by those who whisper that it is part of your nature and therefore right for you. That is false doctrine!¹³⁵" (1978)
- "It was not God who made them [homosexuals] that way....He gave all mankind free agency.¹³⁶" (1978)
- "Sexual immorality creates a barrier to the influence of the Holy Spirit with all its uplifting, enlightening, and empowering capabilities. It causes powerful physical and emotional stimulation. In time that creates an unquenchable appetite that drives the offender to ever more serious sin. It engenders selfishness and can produce aggressive acts such as brutality, abortion, sexual abuse, and violent crime. Such stimulation can lead to acts of homosexuality, and they are evil and absolutely wrong.¹³⁷" (1994)
- "When one projects himself in some confused role-playing way with those of the same gender in an effort to become more masculine or more feminine, something flips over and precisely the opposite results. In a strange way, this amounts to trying to love yourself. A male, in his feelings and emotions, can become less masculine and more feminine and confused. A female can become, in her emotions, less feminine and more masculine and confused. Because the body cannot change, the emotional part may struggle to transform itself into the opposite gender. Then an individual is on a hopeless, futile quest for identity where it can never be achieved.¹³⁸" (1978)
- "Only be the destruction of those who practice them. Why, if a little nest of them were left that were guilty of these things, they would soon corrupt others, as some are being corrupted among us... how can this [sodomy] be stopped? Not while those who have knowledge of these filthy crimes exist. The only way, according to all that I can understand as the word of God, is for the Lord to wipe them out, that there will be none left to perpetuate the knowledge of these dreadful practices among the children of men. And God will do it, as sure as He has spoken by the mouths of His prophets.¹³⁹" (1897)

- “When we understand fundamental moral law better than we do, we will be able to correct this condition routinely.¹⁴⁰” (1978)
- “Be choosy about the professionals you enlist. Many are proponents of the “you were born that way” philosophy. Ensure that the counseling is consistent with gospel principles.¹⁴¹” (1999)
- “Now it is not all that unusual for a boy or a girl, in a moment of childish play with someone of the same gender, to enter into some mischief that should remain essentially innocent and meaningless and should be forgotten. And two young men or two young women, motivated by some attraction or responding to a desire for affection - any kind of affection - sometimes are drawn almost innocently into unnatural behavior. They can be drawn into some circumstances that makes them, for the moment, doubt their identity. Do not be deluded into thinking that such thoughts and feelings are normal for you. Just because you experience some period of confusion, do not make of that thing something that it is not. Do not order your life to conform to a transient thought or experience. And just because someone has stubbed his toe a bit, or just because someone did not watch carefully where he was going and got off the track into some unnatural behavior, or just because he may have fallen victim to some clever predator, that is no reason to jump off the cliff into spiritual oblivion¹⁴².” (1978)
- “begin the ruinous practice of perversion through curiosity and then become entangled in its tentacles.¹⁴³” (1971)
- “First, it is important to understand that homosexuality is not innate and unchangeable. Research has not proved that homosexuality is genetic.¹⁴⁴” (1999)
- “Many questions, however, including some related to same-gender attractions, must await a future answer, even in the next life.¹⁴⁵” (2007)
- “The cause of this disorder has remained hidden for so long because we have been looking for it in the wrong place. When the cause is discovered, it may be nothing so mysterious after all. It may be hidden because it is so obvious. Have you explored the possibility that the cause when found, will turn out to be a very typical form of selfishness - selfishness in a very subtle form? Now - and understand this - I do not think for a minute that the form of selfishness at the root of perversion is a conscious one, at least not to begin with. I am sure it is quite the opposite. Selfishness can attach itself to an individual without his being aware that he is afflicted with it. It can become imbedded so deeply and disguised so artfully as to be almost indistinguishable. It is hard to believe that any individual would, by a clear, conscious decision or by a pattern of them, choose a course of deviation. It is much more subtle than that. If one could even experiment with the possibility that selfishness of a very subtle nature may be the cause of this disorder, that quickly clarifies many things. It opens the possibility of putting some very sick things in order... When one has the humility to admit that a spiritual disorder is tied to perversion and that selfishness rests at the root of it, already the way is open to the treatment of the condition. It is a painful admission indeed that selfishness may be at the root of it, but we do not have much evidence that one can cure perversion by trying to cure perversion. If unselfishness can effect a cure, we ought to be desperate enough by now at least to experiment with the possibility. I repeat, we have had very little success in trying to remedy perversion by treating perversion. It is very possible to cure it by treating selfishness... you can understand unselfishness and selfishness. You can learn to cure perversion.¹⁴⁶” (1978)

The next collection of excerpts comes from two pamphlets published in 1970 and 1971 by the LDS church. The first is for church leaders, entitled *Hope For Transgressors* (1970):

“In the event that you have members who have homosexual tendencies or activities, it will be your privilege and responsibility to assist them to effect a cure and bring their lives back into total normalcy. This dread practice is becoming widespread in the country and there is some of it even among our members which we deeply regret.” [In the years following this statement some HO people underwent aversion therapy at BYU to “effect a cure.”¹⁴⁷ They were shown heterosexual and homosexual pornography¹⁴⁸. Physiological responses (based on a penis-attached device) from homosexual porn were punished by electric shocks and/or induced vomiting, and soothing music was played during the heterosexual porn¹⁴⁹. At least two of the subjects committed suicide after the therapy, with most of the rest leaving as broken people¹⁵⁰.]

“Reason might also be employed to convince the individual that there is no future for a homosexual... the day will come in his life when there is nothing left but chaff and dust and barrenness and desolation.”

“The entrenched homosexual has generally and gradually moved all of his interests and affections to those of his own sex rather than to the opposite sex and herein is another step. When you feel he is ready, he should be encouraged to date and gradually move his life toward the normal.”

“If they will close the door to the intimate associations with their own sex and open it wide to that of the other sex, of course in total propriety, and then be patient and determined, gradually they can move their romantic interests where they belong.”

“Homosexuality CAN be cured.”

From *Horizons for Homosexuals*, published by the church in 1971:

“Next to the crime of murder comes the sin of sexual impurity as expressed in its many manifestations: adultery, fornication, homosexuality and related transgressions. Man is created in the image of God and prostitutes his God-given powers and image in such practices. No amount of rationalization can really neutralize the pollution. The death penalty was exacted in the days of Israel for such wrong-doing.”

“Satan tells his victims that it is a natural way of life; that it is normal; that perverts are a different kind of people born ‘that way’ and that they cannot change. This is a base lie. All normal people have sex urges and if they control such urges, they grow strong and masterful. If they yield to their carnal desires and urges, they get weaker until their sins get beyond control. ‘The knowledge that homosexuality can be effectively treated must be made more generally known, to offset the effect of organized groups of homosexuals who would have society accept homosexuality and relieve them of the pressure to undergo the changes that can be effected through appropriate treatment... It can be overcome and the ease of difficulty of overcoming depends largely upon the strength or weakness of the individual, the depth of his entrenchment, the quality and quantity of his desire and determination.’ *Psychiatric Spectator*, Vol II No. 4- January 1965.”

“Some continue until, when the changing gets difficult, they admit their inability to cope with it and yield. They rationalize that they are of another class of people; that the Lord made them that way; that they cannot change. The powerful Lucifer has had his day.”

“You might be able for a time to deceive your associates and leaders. But, you cannot lie to yourself nor to your lord, for in spite of all the rationalization, you know deep in your heart what you are. You may be able to convince your mind that it is not so wrong but deep in your heart, you will always be uneasy and unhappy and know that your sin is vicious and base. Remember there are no rooms with such tight windows or with blinds so heavy but that the Lord and his angles know what is going on.”

“When I say this is sin, I am quoting the Creator of the world. Truth is truth and needs no eloquent tongue nor brilliant brain to portray it.”

“God made no man a pervert. To blame a weakness and transgression upon God is cowardly.”

“Whether or not you believe those scriptures or the things written above, they are still true and they are still true and will ever be a testimony against you... Having read this letter, you will never in time nor eternity forget it, nor its message totally.”

“God did not make men evil. He did not make people ‘that way.’”

Another way to represent the church’s stances on HO causation is through a table of authoritative statements (from only those sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators) on the subject¹⁵¹:

	pre-1969	1969	1970	1971	72-73	1974	1975	76-77	1978	1979	80-81	82-84	1985	1986	1987	1988	89-91	1992	1993	1994	1995	96-98	1999	2000	01-06
Abnormal, transgressive affliction																									
Aggressive acts																									
Avoiding domesticity																									
Biology																									
Combination of several factors																									
Constitutional predisposition																									
Curiosity																									
Disease/Contagion																									
Environment																									
Free agency																									
Ignoring sex roles																									
Learned																									
Masturbation																									
Molestation																									
Monogamy																									
Not biological																									
Not known																									
Parental failure																									
Peer rejection																									
Physical perversion																									
Pornography																									
Powerful inclination																									
Proselyting																									
Satanic influence																									
Search for psychosexual role																									
Seductive fathers																									
Selfishness																									
Social permissiveness																									
Speaking about it																									
Unchecked appetites																									

Unconscious biological compulsions																									
TOTALS PER YEAR	4	4	2	6	1	3	4	3	8	0	7	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	2	6	1	5	4	3

Numbers inside black boxes indicate number of multiple references to this topic in same year

This table and the above collection of excerpts, mostly from the past 50ish years, paints a reasonable picture of the historical/present LDS view on the cause(s) of HO. Many of my homosexually oriented LDS friends have read many of these quotes before, having snapped up all church statements they can find on the subject in their search for hope and truth. Some of these same friends have expressed to me the extreme pain they found in revisiting these quotes. Said one (I will keep him anonymous):

“You've done your homework. You know the references that all of us (we being those who live with same-sex attraction) have read and memorized, and the pamphlets we've kept on our bookshelves... The sleepless nights in reading page after page of study and press conference and archived talks and letters.

And yet, ultimately, from my perspective as a Mormon who has lived with this all my life, being totally and completely truthful... the most depressing composition I've read since I was 16 and almost killed myself because of SSA [same-sex attraction].”

It is my hope that most readers have a more positive experience. To use another's words which articulate my own hope¹⁵²:

“I believe my approach can be faith-promoting for believers seeking to understand their religious community as led by fallible humans who struggle to achieve God's will. For religious believers who do not view the LDS church and its leadership through the lens of faith, I hope they will read this study with the charity they expect others to give to the humanness of leaders in their own religion's history. I would also expect secular readers not to hold LDS leaders to a standard of infallibility which secularists deny to everyone else.

Charity is a virtue I have often found among secular humanists as well as among believers in various religious traditions. It has been my guide in appreciating an extraordinary people and in restraining personal judgments about many matters I have examined. ‘Of course, there are aberrations in our history,’ current LDS President Gordon B. Hinckley has publicly stated¹⁵³. ‘There are blemishes to be found, if searched for, in the lives of all men, including our leaders past and present. But these are only incidental to the magnitude of their service and to the greatness of their contributions.’”

Conclusion

Given the wholly inconsistent, contradictory, and bizarre picture of HO causation painted by these 60ish statements, the apologist in me seeks for some way to reconcile or ignore such confusion. I will do so by selecting a recent statement that I prefer, then arbitrarily giving that statement incredible weight. Inasmuch as the above LDS statements endorse the MIC theory, per Elder Oaks’s 2006 statement they may be summarily rejected in favor of a better-performing etiology (causation) theory: “The Church does not have a position on the causes of any of these susceptibilities or inclinations, including those related to same-gender attraction. Those are scientific questions — whether nature or nurture — those are things the Church doesn’t have a position on.”¹⁵⁴

Thus, I conclude that HO is very likely caused predominantly by genes and pre-natal hormones, and not by factors such as parenting, infection, molestation, or choice.

Chapter 3: Mutability

Now to the question of the mutability (or changeableness) of HO. Remember again that our inquiry is limited to HO, not homosexual behavior or {HO + homosexual behavior}.

At the outset I will note that the mutability question is moot for LDS people. Because homosexually oriented people are considered worthy unless they sexually transgress, it is not necessary for them to succeed or even attempt to change their orientation in this life. Given the involuntariness of HO, this rule is intuitive. In recent years, some church statements even go far enough as to reinforce this principle by promising that homosexual orientation will not exist in the afterlife¹⁵⁵.

Our inquiry begins with an initial conclusion: HO is not completely immutable, since at least some people report full reversal from HO to heterosexual orientation¹⁵⁶. Robert James, for instance, claims: “Many people have some degree of attraction to the same sex and a much larger degree of attraction to the opposite sex. These experiences moved me along that continuum. My attraction for men greatly decreased, and for the first time in my life, I found my interests in women increasing.¹⁵⁷” Many researchers in this field of mutability research would criticize this conclusion, claiming that the best results from reversal attempts are merely to 1) convince bisexuals to restrict their sexual activities to members of the opposite sex and 2) convince homosexuals to remain celibate. These critics would also point to the incredible pressures that HO people experience, which systematically incentivize them to lie or engage in self-deception as to their orientation reversal. Additionally, much as there is a distinct difference between the psychology of gender and the biology of physical sex, sexual identity is *not* equivalent to sexual orientation. We, however, accepted self-reported HO in chapter two- so to be consistent we shall accept self-reported HO reversal here in chapter three. Thus, we have established a lower bound, i.e. at the least HO is not absolutely immutable.

Even if the self-reporting contention is discarded, that the orientation of fruit flies, with whom we share 60% of our genome, can be reversed and then reversed again¹⁵⁸ suggests that a comparable biological intervention may hypothetically make human orientation reversible- which would also frustrate a conclusion of absolute immutability. Last, it seems clear that an

omnipotent God can reverse HO- which is the third argument against the absolute immutability of HO.

Now for an upper bound. Elder Holland says “others, however, may never be free of same-gender attraction in this life.¹⁵⁹” The *God Loveth His Children* pamphlet also says, “others may not be free of this challenge in this life.¹⁶⁰” Elder Oaks, speaking of the “core characteristic” of HO, said that at least some “have this kind of challenge that they cannot control.¹⁶¹” Thus, a conclusion of absolute mutability also appears unmerited.

So where does that leave us, now that we’re between a floor (lower bound) and a ceiling (upper bound)? I assert that the relevant question now is no longer, “is HO mutable or immutable.” Instead, I propose we next explore “**how mutable is HO, and what factors are most likely to affect HO reversal?**” I will attempt to answer that question as of today in 2010 (since there’s no way to predict with certainty whether a successful change therapy of some kind may enter the scene in the future, even if we conclude that HO is highly change-resistant). The structure from here on will roughly be 1) a discussion of relevant church doctrines, followed by 2) a commentary on what the empirical data and logical arguments have to offer our inquiry.

Relevant Church Doctrines

I will first discuss the agency argument. Second I will examine the Atonement argument.

Agency argument

First I address an assertion which commonly arises when attempting to answer this question: “Homosexual orientation must be changeable. To conclude otherwise is a violation of free agency.” In response to a similar claim I once replied (excerpt edited):

*"I thank you and *Josh for relying on a fallacy in your comments. By addressing it I hope to resolve one of the most common misunderstandings I observe in discussions among LDS folk about homosexuality.*

The fallacy? That a reduction in available alternatives violates the principle of free agency. Permit an explanation.

*First task: *Mark, using nothing but your natural capacities, please jump straight up in the air 200 feet. Can you choose to do it? No. In this scenario you may not choose to jump 200 feet straight up in the air using nothing but your natural capacities. Is agency violated here?*

Next task: Compose a 200 page supreme court caliber legal opinion from scratch in 13 seconds. What, you can't choose to do it? I thought "there is always choice"!

Last example: take an infertile couple- say, the man's sperm don't develop because of an inherited double recessive meiosis inhibitor.

Okay, infertile man: sire a child by natural means. What, you can't? What happened to God-given free agency?

Now let's consider a different scenario which will let me resolve this apparent tension by creating a construct I will call "freedom".

Say little Johnny has 2 candy bars in front of him. He has 4 alternatives: grab neither bar, both bars, bar A, or bar B. I will term "agency" that power by which Johnny selects from among the alternatives available to him. I will term "freedom" the number of alternatives available to him. To quantify in this situation, Johnny has "full" agency, and a freedom of 4: i.e., 4 alternatives.

*Now take away candy bar B. Johnny now has 2 alternatives instead of 4. He may now only choose between grabbing or not grabbing the bar. However, his agency, or power to choose from among the available alternatives, is still "full." His freedom, however, was reduced from 4 to 2. I would further argue that even if no candy bar were in front of Johnny, such that he has 0 alternatives, his agency is still "full-" though that agency would not be discernible until alternatives are available to him. Bottom line: **in all four scenarios above, biological/physical limitations of the actor necessarily define his freedom without lessening his agency.** Elder Oaks: "Essential to our doctrinal position on these matters is the difference between our freedom and our agency. Our freedom can be limited by various conditions of mortality, but God's gift of agency cannot be limited by outside forces, because it is the basis for our accountability to him."*

My application of this conclusion? None of us can exercise our agency to choose an alternative that is not available to us. Thus, the question of what alternatives are available is not made irrelevant by acknowledging free agency. Respecting homosexual orientation mutability, one candidate question would be whether the alternative of reversing one's sexual orientation is available to individual A. This question cannot be disregarded by an appeal to agency, since the abundance or scarcity of alternatives (freedom) necessarily relies upon the biological/physical capacities and limitations of the actor. Thus, if homosexual orientation is merely chosen, then the alternative of reversing orientation is likely available to individual A. If, on the other hand, reversing one's exclusive romantic/emotional/sexual orientation toward members of a sex is biologically impossible for A, then that alternative is not available to A. The resolution of the scope of A's freedom requires a determination at least of whether sexual orientation reversal is physically possible or impossible- hence the relevance of evaluating the "evidence" you decry as irrelevant.

We will return to evaluating the evidence presently. Before we proceed, I address the second most common contention I hear when addressing the mutability question with Latter-day Saints: the Atonement argument.

Atonement argument

The argument goes something like this: “Of course homosexual orientation is changeable. The Atonement can reverse even death- so why not sexual orientation?” Responding to this very interrogatory, I once wrote:

*Presuming I've established the relevance of the question of the cause(s) of homosexual orientation, I now respond to another of *Mark's claims- the oft-used "Atonement argument". Seth notes that the atonement can reverse death, and thus it can reverse sexual orientation, since orientation reversal is certainly less impressive than death reversal. Granted- the Atonement can do so. So what? What matters to a decision maker is what God Will do, not merely what he CAN do. If you're the only person around for miles except for a child that is drowning in a steep canal, and you CAN throw the kid a rope to save her but DO not, the kid will still drown. The question for a homosexually oriented person, then, turns to the likelihood of God's intervention to reverse his/her orientation. I draw on Mark's comparison to death. I hope it's not an exaggeration to claim that death reversal rates have historically been less than .01%. In most cases we know of, the death reversal was also not readily predictable by the subject. Thus if God's sexual orientation reversal intervention rate is at this same level, a reasonable homosexually oriented person is justified in placing little confidence, not in God's CAPacity to reverse his/her orientation, but in God's LIkelihood of doing so for him or her. God's likelihood of reversing homosexually oriented person A's orientation is the relevant question for decision-making A. "A" may also reasonably consider:*

"The pernicious consequence of promoting the idea that homosexuality is a chosen and changeable condition is that tens of thousands of Latter-day Saint homosexuals, believing that the atonement will change their homosexual inclinations, become disillusioned with God and Christ (and the Church) when they make every sacrifice of which they are capable in the belief that they will be free of homosexual feelings—only to discover that their efforts are ineffective. More often than not, they may blame themselves for having insufficient faith and either lose all faith, suspend their belief, or take their lives. Ecclesiastical leaders who have experience counseling with Latter-day Saint homosexuals know the heartbreak associated with such cases."

*I assert that the Atonement's purpose is generally not to reverse physical conditions such as old age, diabetes, homosexual orientation, and disability. That is a mistake many people in Christ's day made, who viewed him merely as someone who could heal their physical bodies (e.g. giving sight to the blind man) and assuage their physical appetites (e.g. loaves and fishes). They missed the point these miracles were supposed to lead them to: **that Christ/the Atonement's primary purpose is to heal us spiritually.** Though a mortally disabled or homosexually oriented or old person can be exalted, an individual tainted or damaged by sin cannot achieve exaltation*

without reversing her sinful condition. Guess how often God Will (not merely CAn) reverse spiritual death of sinners who repent? 100% of the time. 100%! This is a much better ratio than .0001. Even though God CAn merely speak the word and your child's Down's Syndrome will disappear, that you go ahead and make preparations to raise him as he is does not evidence your lack of faith. The primary purpose of the Atonement is to engender salvation and exaltation via the spiritual healing/cleansing of and grace extended to those damaged by sin. Hence, my claim that the Atonement argument is weak/irrelevant- which in turn refreshes the legitimacy of investigating questions of mutability and causation."

Others have written along similar lines:

“The magnificent doctrine of the Atonement helps us to find ways to cope, to deal with our challenges, but is not an assurance that a condition will change. This goes far beyond being a theoretical doctrinal issue. We need to be aware of how frequently, when finally realizing that heroic efforts will not change their homosexuality, many of our brothers and sisters, finding themselves excluded and marginalized and without acceptable options, despair of life and faith and spirituality and hope – believing tragically that the Atonement may not apply to them. I don't want that to happen... Given the experience of a great number of gay and lesbian members of the Church that sexual orientation is not alterable even after the most devoted appeals to God and adherence to a strict program of righteous living, it may be reasonable to conclude that homosexuality should not be viewed as a sickness, disease, or disorder that might otherwise be amenable to divine healing.¹⁶²”

“Healing blessings come in many ways, each suited to our individual needs, as known to Him who loves us best. Sometimes a "healing" cures our illness or lifts our burden. But sometimes we are "healed" by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us... The healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ—whether it removes our burdens or strengthens us to endure and live with them like the Apostle Paul—is available for every affliction in mortality... Brothers and sisters, if your faith and prayers and the power of the priesthood do not heal you from an affliction, the power of the Atonement will surely give you the strength to bear the burden.¹⁶³”

“The atonement of Christ was undertaken to pay the price for our sins and to lift our burdens, not to change our physiology. There are any number of human conditions that are not affected by the atonement. While it may be true that the atonement may lighten emotional burdens and ameliorate “struggles,” including struggles with homosexual attraction, it does not, as Byrd, Cox and Robinson seem to suggest and as Dean Byrd has argued in other publications, “diminish homosexual attraction” or change one's sexual orientation. To argue such is also to argue that the atonement can change color blindness, left-handedness, schizophrenia, Down's syndrome, or other conditions that fall outside what might be considered the norm. When they argue that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of change, and we (including those who struggle with homosexual attraction) cannot sink lower than the arms of the atonement can reach,” the authors are really arguing for something that goes significantly beyond what the scriptures describe as the scope and power, let alone the purpose, of the atonement.¹⁶⁴”

“Changing bodies or protecting temples are miracles, but an even greater miracle is a mighty change of heart by a son or daughter of God (see Mosiah 5:2). A change of heart, including new attitudes, priorities, and desires, is greater and more important than any miracle involving the body. I repeat, the body will be resurrected in any event, but a change affecting what the scripture calls the “heart” of a spirit son or daughter of God is a change whose effect is eternal. If of the right kind, this change opens the door to the process of repentance that cleanses us to dwell in the presence of God. It introduces the perspective and priorities that lead us to make the choices that qualify us for eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).¹⁶⁵ When I heard these words I realized I had been praying for the wrong miracle. The miracles that Jesus performed were merely types of the greater miracles he desired to perform in the hearts of the children of God- and more importantly, in my heart- giving the spiritually blind eyes to see, the spiritually deaf ears to hear, the spiritually crippled legs to walk upon in faith, and the spiritually dead rebirth and spiritual life in Christ. Although at the time I had never acted on my feelings of same-gender attraction and tried diligently to follow the teachings of the Church, I was still blind to some aspects of the gospel. . . . If we think we have to be fully rid of every attraction or inclination to do wrong in order to move on to the next life, we are setting a standard that we simply cannot reach.¹⁶⁶” –Ty Mansfield

One homosexually oriented member, Jonathan Adamson, responded to these atonement perspectives thus:

‘The best part is that it felt like truth! It resounded with my own experiences and struggles and my own journey with faith and testimony. I had been trying to use the Atonement in a way that it wasn't meant for. I was begging to be cured. I was doing everything I could to show God that I was worthy of such a miracle. When I found that there was no miracle in store for me, despite doing all that I knew how to do to please God, I felt abandoned, unworthy, and unimportant. But now that I have accepted who I am and what that will mean for me, the atonement HAS healed me and continues to shape my life. I went from the spiritually, emotionally dead person trying to change something core to himself, spending all my energy and time trying to "fix" myself, to a person who has come to love who he is and has been spiritually awakened with a new and greater understanding of God and excitement for life! And just like Lehi's initial reaction after having eaten the fruit of the tree of life, my immediate reaction was to reach out and share what I had found with others in my situation.¹⁶⁷’

Much earlier than Jonathan, a faithful church member wrote¹⁶⁸:

“I feel that I have achieved some measure of resolution about my homosexuality. I could not have been more motivated to change. I could not have tried harder to change. I say this with no sense of boasting or self-justification but simply because it is true. My sense of peace has come about not because I am “cured” of my homosexuality but because I have finally been able to accept that there is no cure. I accept that my homosexuality was not something I chose or created because I was evil. All my life I had been treating the symptoms of homosexuality and

consequently struggling with depression, guilt, and anxiety. Facing the real cause of these feelings directly and understanding myself finally brought more clarity and peace to my life.¹⁶⁹”

The statements above have hinted at the experience that many homosexually oriented Latter-day Saints have in trying to reverse their orientation. We should remember that their experience is not universal, since at least some LDS people report full, permanent reversal from a HO to a heterosexual orientation. In light of what we have discussed so far, how is a HO Latter-day Saint to decide whether or not to attempt to reverse his or her orientation?

What matters to a reasonable decision maker contemplating a reversal of homosexual orientation is 1) the magnitude of benefit, 2) the likelihood of benefit, 3) the magnitude of harm, and 4) the likelihood of harm of the reversal attempt. Thus, the benefit/harm likelihoods, the amount of harm, and the amount of benefit matter. Certainly heterosexual marriage becomes more accessible with a change to heterosexual orientation- so the magnitude of benefit is outstanding. (“Persons who have this kind of challenge that they cannot control could not enter marriage in good faith.”) The harm of self-loathing, depression, loss of faith, suicidal ideation, reduced self-esteem, failure, leaving the church, etc. is certainly high- thus most likely approaching the magnitude of the potential benefit. Emotional improvement, lifestyle changes, or I-feel-better-about-myself therapy outcomes are valuable but won’t score them the payoff of access to satisfying heterosexual marriage. Also, for those who consider HO to be a perversion, only HO reversal will provide the payoff sought. Thus, presuming one and three mostly cancel each other out, the most critical factors become two and three, which are essentially the same factor: the actual success rates of orientation reversal.

To ascertain this success rate the reasonable decision maker looks to the outcomes of those around her that are similarly situated. Over the past 30 years, she will look to her homosexually oriented predecessors and peers that were/are similar if not equal to her- similar in age, similar in standing before God (i.e. His child), similar in willpower, similar in therapeutic approach, similar in access to the Atonement, similar in how they became HO, and similar in their sincere desire to change their orientation. What does this reasonable HO decision maker observe when viewing

these similar others, which observations will help her decide whether a change attempt is worth it? After his term finished, one bishop reported:

“My experience with the fifty or so homosexuals with whom I have had a close relationship over the past twenty years can be summarized as follows: I have not met a single homosexual Latter-day Saint who chose or was able to change or alter his or her sexual orientation. I also have not met a single homosexual Latter-day Saint who had not tried valiantly, generally over a long period of time, to change his or her orientation. Some of the most painful experiences I had as a bishop related to homosexual members recounting their desperate, even heroic efforts to change their sexual orientation. For many, these efforts took place over a number of years and involved incredible sacrifice and self-denial. Because they had been led by priesthood leaders to believe that they could change if they were just righteous or self-sacrificing enough, when change didn't come, they tended to blame themselves. Such self-blame often led to alienation from God and his church and at times to self-destructive behavior, including suicide.¹⁷⁰”

The bishop's account matches my personal experiences of talking with HO members of the church, who again and again report something like this:

“For twenty years I listened to the message of self-loathing preached from LDS authorities. For twenty years I believed in their false hope that I could pray and fast and serve away my sexual orientation and God would then reward me with “righteous” heterosexual desires.

When the change never came, the blame became even more internalized, and I lost hope. But after a thankfully failed attempt to end the misery of this life, I finally found the true peace of my divine identity. I finally realized that all of those years I didn't change because I didn't need to. I was the way God intended me to be.¹⁷¹”

Going to BYU as a factor in changing homosexual orientation¹⁷²:

"Mike said, 'Most gays I know went to BYU initially with an undying desire to change.;"

““Everyone counseled me to come to BYU,’ said Byron. "My stake president knew I was gay, and he told me 'Go to BYU—everything will be OK.' It turned out not to be OK."

Getting married as a factor in changing homosexual orientation¹⁷³:

“Many people are convinced that the homosexual is simply afraid of having sex with a girl and that he only needs to try it and discover how much he likes it to get over his fears. Some Church authorities have encouraged the young man along this line, urging him to just go ahead and get married and that he will get to like having sex with his wife... I have talked with the women who

have been on the receiving end of this emotional duplicity. For many, their lives have been irreparably damaged... I wish you could visit for a few hours with just such a young woman whose husband married her at President Kimball's urging. She is now struggling to piece together her shattered life and raise their young daughter on her own while her ex-husband is drawing other women into the vortex... in an effort to convince himself he is a man. Even in these recent attempts, he has had the encouragement and blessings of his Church leaders.”

”I never should have married, but I thought at the time I could pull it off. Now I have two beautiful children whom I love very much, but I never should have had them. In spite of the joy they bring me, if I had it to do again, I would never marry. It is very difficult for me to hold my marriage together, but I feel I must now for the sake of my children.”

I would also note here that some heterosexually married homosexuals, including a good friend of mine, report happiness in heterosexual marriage.

Another friend of mine wrote:

“It has been hurtful at times when some people have assumed that someone's orientation was a matter of choice, or the result of bad parenting or bad influences, etc. As the son of wonderful parents, and having grown up in a fairly sheltered LDS environment (and I've always been active in the Church and still am), none of those explanations have made any sense in my life.

I knew essentially nothing about "gay" and didn't feel that anything was unusual when I excitedly recorded in my journal at age 12 about how much I admired a certain boy I had recently met, how spiritual I thought he was, how excited I was to make eye contact with him, how I thought we must have known each other in the pre-existence! I felt that way about a number of guys as a teenager and in my years at BYU, feelings of caring so much about them, wanting to be close to them emotionally and physically. So many times it broke my heart when it would become clear that they didn't feel the same way and I couldn't understand why. Unlike what some might assume, it wasn't sexual attraction; I'm actually asexual and don't experience sexual attractions to people of either gender.

It took a long time for me to understand these things in my own life; I knew that I didn't experience attractions to girls (on any level: romantically, physically, or sexually), but I was always thinking I was just a "late bloomer" and that the right hormones would kick in someday. When I was at BYU, I even went and got my hormones checked because I wondered if something was wrong. I kept praying that things would change. For several years at BYU, I went on lots of dates with girls, hoping that would spark something; there was never the slightest spark, but I didn't give up. For years I wasn't ready to directly confront the issue. Even though every week I could look around the room in sacrament meeting and see all the cute guys, knowing I didn't ever see cute girls, I still just reasoned to myself that it was just brotherly love and that I was still a late bloomer (age 26!), and that things would change when I met "the right girl". It wasn't until last December that I was ready to understand, and Heavenly Father metaphorically whacked me over the head and then gently let me know that what I was wanting and struggling to make true wasn't what He wanted.

Since then, I've become very happy about how God has created me; I think there may be reasons for it I don't completely understand, but I want to do my best in life. I don't feel it is an evil thing to feel love for another person, to care deeply about him. It is so hurtful when some people have conflated love and lust and insinuated that gay people only feel lust. I've opened my heart here because I hope it may help someone understand what it's like to be a gay member of the Church; I hope it will help someone love their brother, their sister, their son or daughter, a little bit more, and not judge them too harshly. I have two gay LDS friends who I know have tried to kill themselves, and others who I worry about, because they have felt so hurt and so conflicted **after having failed to change their orientation**. I know several who joined the Church and were baptized as young adults, hoping and expecting that this would change them and make them straight. I know many others who served missions for the Church, hoping the same thing, who were so disappointed when they found that it doesn't work like this. I have other friends whose orientation falls somewhere in the middle (having some attractions to both genders), some of whom have married heterosexually, with varying degrees of success in their marriage.¹⁷⁴

From Cloy Jenkins:

“Brother Packer calls the assertion that homosexuality cannot be cured "a malicious and destructive lie." Is it a lie that I have faithfully and meticulously followed every particular point of advice which Brother Packer says will make me heterosexual and yet I remain homosexual? My experience with his advice is the rule, not the exception. Why is it that we never hear one of Brother Packer's "cured" homosexuals make this statement for him? Why is it that the only ones we ever hear make such a categorical claim are people who have never been homosexual? Where are all these men the Brethren have cured? What a tremendous opportunity the Church has to show the entire world that it has discovered the method by which homosexuality can be cured. This method is so accessible that all that is necessary is for the homosexual to really want to change and sincerely follow a few simple steps. Why is it that the Brethren cannot grasp the fact that many of us have already done all they say and much more? Do they not realize that most young men will have already gone to extreme lengths to understand and change their situation before they would go through the terrifying and perhaps humiliating experience of actually telling their bishop that they are homosexual? It is a desperate, last resort effort. They come away bewildered and disillusioned. They begin immediately to figure out how to convince the bishop that they have changed. That's what the bishop wants to believe after all, and he would be the last one to challenge the young man on this point. He is only too relieved to be rid of the problem.

Over and over again in the literature appears the documented failure. Nowhere, not even once, have I found a substantially documented and extensively followed-up case history of the cured homosexual.¹⁷⁵

Over and over and over again in my personal discussions with homosexually oriented members of the church, I observe the same trend- including as recently as this week. They go to extremes trying to please God (usually through extreme dedication as a missionary, attending BYU, repenting intensely, reading scriptures excessively, extreme frequency in serving in the temple, etc.), trusting that if they follow the prophets' counsel, God will reverse their orientation. Over

and over and over again, despite their nigh-superhuman faith and efforts, God does not reverse their orientation. They blame and punish themselves, try harder, and/or attempt suicide. Utah leads the nation in young male suicides¹⁷⁶. They feel rejected, unloved, and unclean. Robert Rees¹⁷⁷ (speaking of the parents of Stuart Matis):

“The story they tell about their son is also a familiar account of the arc that is, unfortunately, characteristic of too many Latter-day Saint homosexuals: denial, repression, acknowledgment, sustained and desperate attempts to change one’s orientation, vacillation between the impulse to express homosexual feelings and the desire to conform to Church standards, feeling unaccepted by the Church or loved of God, and finally abandoning all hope of finding a peaceful resolution in morality.”

Another Latter-day Saint familiar with LDS orientation reversal attempts:

G. Allen Gundry worked for decades for LDS Family Services with the assignment of counseling gay and lesbian members. Half of the 400 males he had extended professional interaction with were single. He describes the single gays: “For all, the beginning awareness of same-gender attraction was unwanted, and they did everything they knew how to stop or change it.” He further summarized that although other positive outcomes are possible, “only 10% of the single men with whom I worked experienced enough reduction of their same-gender attraction to marry.” He classified this 10% as bisexual¹⁷⁸.

Another Latter-day Saint has written:

“Honesty compels us to consider the direct experience of a very large number of LDS gay people, who in spite of exhaustive, lengthy, and totally sincere efforts, have not been able to change the fact of who they are sexually. A testimony of the truthfulness of the restoration of the gospel, faithful church activity, fasting, prayer, missionary service, temple service - all of these are important, gratifying, motivating and allow us to increase in power and goodness, but none, in any combination, has been able to alter sexual orientation for the vast majority, and possibly for the totality¹⁷⁹ ... Whatever other religious or social or personal standards we choose to use in attempting to understand homosexuality and respond appropriately to it, we cannot ignore this fact from the life experience of those most closely affected.¹⁸⁰”

This concludes our consideration of relevant church doctrines and a purview of Latter-day Saints’ experiences. Now we turn to see what science has to add.

What the empirical data and logical arguments have to offer our inquiry

I will discuss logic-based arguments, then some empirical data. I note at the outset that the current conventional wisdom outside conservative religious traditions is that “The vast majority of human sexuality researchers, therapists, religious liberals, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals generally agree that a person's sexual orientation is determined before reaching school age. Once established, sexual feelings are always or almost always unchangeable.¹⁸¹”

Logic-based arguments

A useful, common-sense consideration in answering the question of mutability is to ask oneself (whether straight or HO) how easy it would be to fully and permanently reverse your own orientation (again, not your conduct- but your romantic, sexual, and emotional feelings towards members of a certain sex):

“Is it possible, if hypothetically required or commanded, that you repent of your heterosexuality? If you were to awake tomorrow to a world where heterosexuality was outlawed and you were required to repent of it, just how would you go about it? What would you do about the tremendous backlog of heterosexual desires, experiences, loving relationships, even your earliest childhood memories, attachments, and self-concept? What would you do if you were further required to develop homosexual desires? How easy would this be for you and how would you go about it? Could you even attempt it? Minor considerations and differences aside, this is precisely how the homosexual experiences the demand to change. Do you think that if you really buckled down and wanted to change, three or four right good counseling sessions would do it for you? There are young men whose counselors believed they had changed after three or four sessions. You may realize the absurdity of this, but do you think that thirty shock treatments, while you looked at naked men, would extinguish your heterosexuality?¹⁸²”

One might also ask oneself, "Can I remember deciding that I was going to be someone who would fall in love with a person of the opposite sex?," or "Can I envision any argument or program of persuasion that would cause me to change the object of my romantic feelings?" Could you permanently change your orientation in the next five seconds? How about by tomorrow afternoon? Next month? Next year? Next decade? When you're 90? How many electric shocks would it take for you – 500? 5,000? 50,000? By how much would your

orientation be changed? How permanent would that change be? Your answers serve as one data point indicating how susceptible sexual orientation is to change.

Next logical argument: In chapter two we established that GPRE has a much better track record as a predictor than MIC. Would it then be reasonable to make some inferences based on juxtaposing MIC and GPRE as we did during the Parking Lots Test? Let's give it a try.

What if we were to treat mutability as a parking lot like one of those in our test of causation above, what would MIC and GPRE predict? MIC would likely say: choice and socialization in, choice and socialization out. If a person was socialized or chose to be HO, she can likely socialize or choose her way out as well- making HO fairly plastic. GPRE would say that because the period of human development in which sex determination (of which sexual orientation is a subset) takes place has almost fully closed by a few months post-partum, it will be very difficult to bring the water back under the bridge:

“I am aware that these days some young people find gay being sort of “hip” and try on the identity. But sleeping in the garage does not make you a car. Nor does sleeping with a heterosexual spouse make a gay person straight. The large number of gay people I know who have slept for years with their straight spouses without it making the slightest impact on their sexual orientation leads me to believe it would be an impossible assignment to take a truly heterosexual person and turn him or her into a gay person.¹⁸³”

If orientation is to be reversed, the operation will likely be quite invasive and look something like surgery/hormone therapy/gene therapy.

Let's illustrate GPRE's conclusion with an analogy to severe autism. Some HO people will likely disapprove of this analogy, being fatigued with how frequently HO is compared to and characterized as equivalent to negative conditions such as addictions, diseases, adultery, and mental disorders. I hope the disapprovers will forgive me. I choose this example for three reasons that I think make it fit for comparison: 1) the heritability of severe autism is about the same as our 90% biological factor GPRE threshold¹⁸⁴; 2) unlike handedness or heterosexual orientation, severe autism can restrict an individual's marriage prospects (we generally frown on marrying those with the mental capacity and function of third graders), and 3) much like HO,

there is a significant autism camp which insists that autism should be considered as a difference rather than a disorder to be cured. I acknowledge the significant difference that, for at least the overwhelming majority, HO people are quite different from autistic persons in that they are completely capable of social interaction, communication, learning, and making informed decisions. Now to the application.

How susceptible to reversal is severe autism? Should we encourage autistic people to seek to change their autism? The common sense answer to these questions is that it would be senseless to encourage a severely autistic person to change because either 1) there's nothing at all wrong with being autistic and/or 2) autism is a persistent condition highly resistant to reversal attempts (the same conclusion might adhere to homosexual orientation). I note here that it is contrary to common sense to think that therapy, prayer, or righteous living will or even should reverse conditions such as handedness or autism. Let's return now to the reversibility of autism.

Though difficult to tell how often recovery happens, "Children recover occasionally, so that they lose their diagnosis of ASD."¹⁸⁵ Significantly however, "No cure is known."¹⁸⁶ The best reported recoveries so far are limited to "developmental functioning and decreasing maladaptive behaviors and symptom severity at the level of group analysis."¹⁸⁷ The present mutability of autism, then, seems about the same as for homosexual orientation: namely, a high tide of modest "symptom" control.

Empirical data

There's a plethora of literature on the subject of orientation reversal. Much of the available research on orientation is highly charged, with claims of high rates of orientation reversal resulting from certain therapies juxtaposed against claims that there has never been a single reliable report of permanent orientation reversal. Wading through these arguments, data, and sharply competing claims has proven difficult for me, and vitiates confidence in my analysis. Though our empirical inquiry will be limited, nonetheless we shall try.

Those that claim relatively high reversal rates

First, let's take a look at some evidence strongly supporting the conclusion that HO is relatively malleable. P. Scott Richards was the Coordinator of the counseling Psychology program at BYU and editor of the AMCAP (Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists) journal. He suggested in *Understanding Homosexuality: Perspectives of LDS Psychologists and Psychotherapists* by AMCAP that "therapy outcome research... provide[s] considerable support for the notion that many people can control, reduce, and even overcome their homosexual thoughts, attractions, and behaviors."¹⁸⁸

I will now quote from "Ex-Gays?: An Extended Longitudinal Study of Attempted Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation."¹⁸⁹ I chose this study because the sample population is religious and thus germane to our partly religious inquiry. I also selected this study because it is recent and purports to be "the most rigorous longitudinal methodology ever applied to this question of sexual orientation change and possible resulting harm."

"The present study was designed to address those weaknesses of previous studies by studying attempted change longitudinally and prospectively via standardized self-report measures. In some important ways, our study resembles the respected decade-long study by Lisa Diamond (2007; 2008) of a group of 89 non-heterosexual women. Where our study differs from hers most distinctly was that her sample was not seeking deliberate change in their experience of sexual attraction (though some did report significant change), while our sample all sought such change."

"We studied a group of men and women seeking sexual orientation change through a religious ministry organization called Exodus. Exodus International (2007) is a worldwide, interdenominational, 'Christian organization dedicated to equipping and uniting agencies and individuals to effectively communicate the message of freedom from homosexuality.' It is the largest umbrella organization for Christian ministries to people experiencing unwanted sexual attraction or sexual identity concerns. Exodus seeks to articulate a Christian perspective that neither rejects homosexual persons nor embraces "gay" identity as an acceptable norm. Exodus affiliated ministries seek to help individuals troubled by their sexual orientation to achieve 'freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ' (Exodus, 2007)... The motives behind the various ministries are grounded in the traditional Christian moral teaching disapproving of homosexual conduct."

"We conducted a prospective, longitudinal study of individuals seeking sexual orientation change using respected self-report measures of sexual orientation and of psychological distress. This is the most rigorous longitudinal methodology ever applied to this question of sexual orientation change and possible resulting harm."

“the study, it does not allow, however, for rigorous examination of more sophisticated hypotheses such as predictors or probabilities of change, or differential effectiveness of change strategies.”

“total elapsed time between T1 and T6 [time one and time six] varied from 6 to 7 years.”

“First, we used the seven point self-report Kinsey scale (1948), originally scaled from 0, exclusively heterosexual, through 3, equally heterosexual and homosexual, to 6, exclusively homosexual (we shifted the scaling to a seven point scale from 1, exclusively heterosexual, to 7, exclusively homosexual). We report two variations of the Kinsey: 1) the Kinsey 1-item was the original version asking subjects to describe the population of individuals with which one had had sexual relations (behavior), and 2) a Kinsey Expanded scale that is the average of four Kinsey ratings of behavior, sexual attraction, emotional/romantic attraction, and fantasy. Second, we used the Shively and DeCecco (1977) scale, which is based on conceiving heterosexual and homosexual attraction to be separate and orthogonal (rather than on a single continuum as for the Kinsey scale). Thus, the Shively and DeCecco scale is composed of four questions that ask for a five-point rating of physical sexual attraction to men and separately to women, and of emotional attraction to men and separately to women. The result is separate ratings (from 1, none, to 5, exclusively) for homosexual and heterosexual orientation.”

“We began with 98 subjects at T1. Our sample eroded to 73 at T3, a retention rate of 74.5%. This retention rate compares favorably to that of respected longitudinal studies. 63 subjects were interviewed or categorized at T6, for a T1 to T6 6 to 7 year retention of 64%.”

“For the whole population, the T1 to T6 change away from homosexual attraction attained significance and moderate effect size, while the change toward heterosexual attraction did not attain significance. Neither of the T1 to T6 changes attained significance for the Phase 1 subpopulation. For the Truly Gay subpopulation, the T1 to T6 change away from homosexual attraction attained significance and a large to moderate effect size, while the change toward heterosexual attraction attained significance and a moderate effect size. Note that changes away from or the diminishing of homosexual orientation appear of larger absolute magnitude than changes toward heterosexual orientation. It would appear, then, that while change away from homosexual orientation is related to change toward heterosexual orientation, the two are not identical processes. The general picture that emerges from these data is that on a number of standardized measures of sexual orientation, this population experienced statistically significant change away from homosexual orientation.”

“Following prevailing professional wisdom, our hypothesis was that involvement in the orientation change process should result in worsening psychological distress outcomes on average on the SCL-90-R. Our analysis yielded no support for this hypothesis. The global severity index or GSI did not show any indication on average of increasing psychological distress. The results in Table 3 do manifest significant changes for the whole and Truly Gay subpopulations, both in the moderate effect size range, and both indicating improved psychological status.”

“If the attempt at the change process was going to be harmful, this harm should show up among those continuing to pursue change over a period of six years or more years. Contrary to these expectations, we found no evidence of movement toward increased distress on average as a result of Exodus involvement.”

14 of 61 (23%) T6 participants reported “change to be successful by experiencing substantial reductions in homosexual attraction and substantial conversion to heterosexual attraction and functioning.” The remaining 77% reported either 1) homosexual attraction to be present only incidentally or in a way that does not seem to bring about distress, allowing them to live contentedly without overt sexual activity; 2) may have experienced modest decreases in homosexual attraction, but were not satisfied with their degree of change and remained committed to the change process; 3) no significant sexual orientation change; 4) had experienced no significant sexual orientation change, and had given up on the change process but without yet embracing gay identity; or 5) had given up on the change process and embraced gay identity.

“from 57 initial Phase 1 subjects, only 5 attained Success: Conversion status (9%)”

The current data suggest such change can be sustained through T6 for those who report successful change. These findings go against the common argument that change of orientation is gradual and occurs over an extended period of time. Some may see these results as reflecting not a change in sexual orientation for most participants who reported such change, but rather a change in sexual identity. Such a change might result from how one thinks of oneself and labels one’s sexual preferences (that is, attributions and meaning-making).”

“We found no evidence that the attempt to change sexual orientation was harmful on average for these individuals... Despite these findings, we cannot conclude that particular individuals in this study were not harmed by their attempt to change. Specific individuals may claim to have experienced harm from the attempt to change, and those claims may be legitimate, but while it may be that the change attempt caused harm by its very nature as an attempt to change orientation, it may also be that the harm was caused by particular intervention methods that were inept, harsh, punitive or otherwise ill-conceived, and not from the attempt to change itself. Our findings mitigate against any absolute claim that attempted change is very likely to be harmful in and of itself. The logic of scientific inquiry drives us, based on our results, to reject both hypotheses and to conclude that sexual orientation may be changeable for some, and that the attempt to change sexual orientation is not harmful on average.”

“The pattern of outcomes documented here is suggestive of the possibility of change but not adequate to make firm predictions of likelihood of change. While this study reports on arguably the best, most representative sample of subjects ever studied seeking change via religious means, we cannot affirm that it is scientifically representative. We do not know what such a representative sample would look like, as this is a rarely studied or even acknowledged population.”

“In addition to clarifying what we found, it is equally important to clarify what we did not find. First, we did not find that everyone can change. Saying that change is not impossible in general is not the same thing as saying that everyone can change, that anyone can change, or that change

is possible for any given individual. Second, while we found that part of our research population experienced success to the degree that it might be called (as we have here) “conversion,” our evidence does not indicate that these changes are categorical, resulting in uncomplicated, dichotomous and unequivocal reversal of sexual orientation from utterly homosexual to utterly heterosexual. Most of the individuals who reported that they were heterosexual at T6 did not report themselves to be without experience of homosexual arousal, and they did not report their heterosexual orientation to be unequivocal and uncomplicated.”

In conclusion, the findings of this study would appear to contradict the commonly expressed view of the mental health establishment that sexual orientation is not changeable and that the attempt to change is highly likely to produce harm for those who make such an attempt.”

Now that we have examined a significant study suggesting relatively high orientation reversal, let’s hear from the other side.

Those that claim very low reversal rates

I will quote from four sources which extirpate confidence in some of the claims made about orientation reversal.

Source 1: Bill Bradshaw

“There are counseling programs offering sexual reorientation therapy (“conversion” or “reparative” therapy) that hold out the promise of changing homosexual orientation. There are at least two important issues that should be taken into consideration when evaluating these efforts. The first is that while claiming success at effecting change, these programs often fail to quantitatively report their results or to substantiate that the alleged change is long-term. The second consideration is that a certain number of gay people are bisexual, capable, in varying degrees, of romantic feelings for persons of either gender. There is a very strong possibility that those who report success in changing their homosexuality are bisexuals who have achieved an accommodation to focus on one only (the heterosexual interest) of the two attractions they are capable of.”

“Shidlo and Schroeder reported on the results of 202 individuals with whom they conducted anonymous 90-minute telephone interviews in the period between 1995 and 2000. These people contacted the researchers in response to mailings to gay and ex-gay organizations and to a national association of conversion therapists. All met the criteria of : 1) having self-rated themselves 5-7 (more homosexual than heterosexual to exclusively homosexual) on a modified 7-point Kinsey scale, and 2) having engaged in at least 6 sessions of any form of conversion intervention. The participants reported receiving psychotherapy from both licensed mental health

professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, marriage and family counselors) and non-licensed practitioners (peer and religious counselors). The mean age of the participants was 40 years. Ninety percent were men, and 86% were Caucasian. Sixty-six percent considered themselves religious; 11 (5.4%) were LDS. Twenty-six (13%) of the participants perceived their therapeutic experience as successful. These could be further subdivided into three groups: successful and struggling (repeated slips into homosexual behavior) - 12 persons (6%); successful, not struggling (able to manage same-sex desire) 22- 6 persons (3%), 3 of whom were celibate; successful heterosexual shift - 8 persons (4%). Seven of the 8 provided ex-gay counseling, 4 of whom had paid positions. Of the 176 (87%) who were disillusioned by their conversion therapy experience, and viewed it as a failure, 21 (10.4%) identified themselves as resilient, having recovered a gay identity without negative psychological after-effects. The remaining 155 individuals (77%) identified as having recovered a gay identity, but had experienced significant long-term damage from the therapy. The authors recommend among other things that potential clients for conversion therapy be informed of the possibility of harmful side-effects and “not be told that high motivation and hard work in the treatment assures a change in sexual orientation.”

“The respondents in the Spitzer study... Sixty-eight percent of the woman and 78% of the men engaged in masturbation, and of these 18% of women and 45% of men reported same sex fantasies on 20% or more of those occasions. Overall, only 11% of the males and 37% of the females self-reported a complete or near complete change in all measures of sexual orientation that were employed.”

“[Spitzer] also conceded that finding persons who could report these kinds of results was difficult, and that ‘this suggests that the marked change in sexual orientation reported by almost all of the study subjects may be a rare or uncommon outcome of reparative therapy.’”

“Twenty-six commentaries written by 42 mental health professionals that occupy 44 pages of text and 6 pages of references to published journal articles appear with the Spitzer article. They constitute a very important contribution to the discussion about the validity of reorientation therapy, representing a wide range from sympathy to condemnation. A small number of these commentaries concur with Spitzer’s interpretations or at least find his study to be professionally legitimate. Most, however, are highly critical. There is extensive disapproval of the methodology employed and the conclusions drawn from the data. Many ethical concerns are also raised...

Two of the studies cited above [106,110] (and many others) have also documented deleterious and destructive outcomes from participation in reorientation therapy programs. Among the harms and negative consequences that have been reported are depression, loss of self-esteem and increased self-loathing, increased loneliness (alienation and social isolation), an increased impulse to suicide, and a loss of religious faith.¹⁹⁰”

Source 2: Lee Beckstead

Lee Beckstead is a returned LDS missionary who also has a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Utah and is currently working as a psychologist in private practice in Salt Lake City, Utah.

“Fifty individuals with same-sex attraction were included in this study (5 women, 45 men). All underwent counseling to change their sexual orientation. The individuals fell into two groups: those who believed in reparative therapy and those who did not. Those who supported the ideas and purpose of reparative therapy believed that:

- Heterosexual marriage is the ideal
- Homosexual desires are emotional attractions for the same-sex which become sexualized during developmental years.
- Erotic attractions to the same sex can be unlearned.
- Using the identity label "same-sex attracted (SSA)" is healthier, more fulfilling, and productive than using the identity labels lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB).

In other words, those who believe in this therapy chose to label themselves as having SSA rather than to accept the identity of being homosexual or bisexual. They then attempt to "unlearn" their attractions for the same sex and follow the ideal of heterosexual marriage... Positive outcomes reported by participants in these therapy programs included:

- They found ways to reconcile their previously distressful identity.
- They were able to control their homosexual behaviors better.
- They felt their attractions to the same-sex became less intense.

What was not reported as a result from the therapy programs was a substantial or generalized heterosexual arousal, or being able to eliminate their erotic or romantic attractions to their same sex. Since no increased attractions to the opposite sex ensued, those who reported that their attraction to the same sex diminished due to reparative therapy reported feeling more asexual - (i.e., an absence of attractions for either sex) rather than a move toward heterosexuality.

Distressful identity problems had developed in participants from feelings of not fitting in while growing up in homo-negative or heterosexist environments. Resolving the identity problem made many involved in the therapy feel that the therapy was successful in spite of not having any increase in attractions for the opposite sex. Instead of identifying as gay, they learned to accept the fact that they had attractions to the same sex. They learned that these attractions were not something they chose and having these attractions does not make them a bad person, only what they choose to do with those emotions has a moral implication. The new label, Same Sex Attracted (SSA) provides a way of accepting one's homosexual attractions without an acceptance of the distressful identity of being gay.

Although elements of reparative therapy can be beneficial, its underpinnings and current practice also have potential for harm. Some elements have the potential for both benefits and harm. For example, change therapies encourage a closer affectionate relationship with a father figure which can be good, but can also place blame on parents for the person's condition and can hurt relationships and the healing process.

Effective and beneficial results from therapy programs that participants experienced include:

- They are not the only ones with such feelings.

- They found love and support through the program.
- They were able to get a broader perspective of their situation and find a variety of options.
- They can find ways to feel and have more control of their lives.

Ineffective and harmful results from therapy programs that participants experienced include:

- Misrepresentation of treatment outcomes.
- Internalization of treatment failure.
- Presentation of misinformed biases. (For example, the idea that Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual self-identifying persons are all fundamentally unhappy.)

The false hopes can lead to hopelessness and major depression. For some, this sense of hopelessness and inability to reconcile sexual, social, and religious conflicts led to suicide attempts.”

“You can help persons with same-sex attractions by emphasizing that there are a number of others who have these feelings, even among active members of the church. Some with attractions to the same sex have found they can reduce the behaviors motivated by their attractions but in general persons are unable to eliminate the tendency to be attracted to the same sex and are unable to increase opposite-sex attractions. There are more than two choices. They can accept their feelings as being normal and not evil and with support they may be able to make behavioral choices regarding their same-sex attractions (e.g. celibacy, etc.). This is a way of being affirming of the individual while living within church standards. On the other hand, they may find ways to be spiritual and maintain much of their religious belief system and ethical code of conduct even if they decide to become more affirming of a lesbian, gay or bisexual identity.

Marriage may be an option, especially if they experience bisexual attractions. However, open and informed dialogue between the individual and fiancée needs to occur regarding options, limitations, needs, commitment, honesty, and authenticity. Unless an informed awareness and discussion had occurred, the marriages of individuals in my studies were troubled and spouses also tended to internalize the failure of reparative treatments and blame themselves for their spouses' inability to be heterosexually aroused.”

Source 3: Douglas C. Haldeman, Ph.D.

The Pseudo-science of Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy

“To show why conversion therapy should not influence the development of public policy, this analysis will address several issues:

- Conversion therapy is based on faulty assumptions.
- Homophobia leads some individuals to seek sexual orientation change.
- The mental health professions generally oppose conversion therapy.
- No reliable evidence supports the effectiveness of conversion treatments.
- Conversion therapy can be harmful.
- Conversion therapy adversely affects the public’s views of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.”

“Psychology and psychiatry have no precedents for treating conditions that are not considered to be illnesses. Since 1973 homosexuality has been considered a normal variation of human sexuality. Proponents of conversion therapy disregard this view because of their mistaken belief that homosexuality was declassified as a mental illness only after lobbying from gay activists. The truth, however, rests in the science, or lack thereof, of the “mental illness” assumption of homosexuality.

Homosexuality itself became a mental health diagnosis only as a reflection of prevailing social prejudice. This assumption was first questioned by Evelyn Hooker, who compared matched groups of homosexually and heterosexually-identified men. She found that scores from psychological tests of the two groups were indistinguishable from one another. Since then, a substantial scientific literature has found no significant differences between homosexual and heterosexual subjects on measures of overall psychological functioning and mental and emotional well-being. The most comprehensive review of such studies was conducted by Gonsiorek...”

“Conversion therapists have different views on what constitutes effective treatment. Religious groups often encourage celibacy for their “ex-gay” followers, so lack of sexual contact is construed as successful treatment. Most studies published in the mental health literature use heterosexual behavior as a treatment goal. Much of the effectiveness of conversion therapies is asserted in clients’ testimonials or in articles in publications that do not meet accepted research standards. A careful analysis of other evidence of conversion therapy effectiveness fails to justify these recent claims. The studies that have appeared in legitimate journals are generally quite old and share common methodological problems. Studies of conversion therapy are not based upon a random sample of homosexuals who are randomly assigned to different treatments and are then compared, but on a group of homosexuals who have sought treatment because they are unhappy with their sexual orientation. Furthermore, the studies all rely on clients’ self-reported outcomes or on therapists’ post-treatment evaluations. As a result, all conversion therapy studies are biased in favor of “cures” because clients of conversion therapy are likely to believe that homosexuality is an undesirable trait to admit and may feel pressure to tell their therapist that the treatment has been successful. Similarly, conversion therapists have an interest in finding that their treatments are successful.

The potential for what is known as “social desirability bias” in self-reported outcomes is most obvious in studies of group approaches to conversion therapy. In one group approach, Hadden finds that 37% of 32 research subjects reported that they had shifted to heterosexuality. But these results must be viewed with skepticism, since therapy groups implicitly encourage individuals to report that they meet the group’s standards, even when this is not true.

Misclassification is another widespread flaw in these studies that will inflate reported success rates. Researchers are likely to misclassify bisexual people as homosexual, which makes it more likely that clients will pursue heterosexual behavior even without treatment. A finding that bisexual men can be taught to strengthen their heterosexual behavior is not equivalent to changing sexual orientation. The earliest study attempting to show reversal of homosexual orientation through long-term psychoanalytic intervention reported a 27% success rate in “heterosexual shift.” But only 18% of those research subjects were exclusively homosexual to begin with. Fifty percent of the successfully treated men were more appropriately labeled bisexual.”

“Finally, follow-up of those subjects who meet the subjective criteria for “successful change” in sexual orientation is either poor or nonexistent in conversion therapy studies. Adequate follow-up is likely to uncover cases of reversion to homosexual behavior, which would further reduce the therapy’s success rate. Birk described a combination approach group format for treating homosexuality and claimed that 38% of his subjects achieved “solid heterosexual shifts.” Nonetheless, he acknowledged that these shifts represented “an adaptation to life, not a metamorphosis,” and that homosexual fantasies and activity are ongoing, even for the “happily married” individual. Similarly, a religiously-oriented conversion therapy program described by Pattison and Pattison reveals that more than 90% continued to have homosexual fantasies and behavior after treatment. More comprehensive examinations of conversion therapy studies have been published elsewhere. Those reviews show that no study claiming success for conversion therapy meets the research standards that would support such a claim.”

“Such individuals often experience continued depression over their homosexuality, compounded with a sense of shame over having failed at conversion therapy. Further, they may have a psychologically debilitating sense of having lost those important life elements—family of origin, religious affiliation, social support—for which there was still some hope as long as the individual was trying to change.”

“From a practical perspective, even the staunchest advocates of conversion therapy will admit that sexual orientation is extremely difficult to change. For every satisfied client who comes forward claiming that conversion therapy changed her or his sexual orientation, there are many more who disavow its efficacy. Sexual orientation is a deeply rooted, psychologically complex aspect of the human experience. Though one’s feelings about his or her sexual orientation may be changeable and susceptible to social influence, no evidence suggests that sexual orientation itself is so malleable.”

“Conversion therapy is not just an individual mental health issue but has implications for society. This discredited and ineffective psychological treatment harms people and reinforces the notion that homosexuality is bad. In this regard, it is not a compassionate effort to help homosexuals in pain, but a means of exploiting unhappy people and of reinforcing social hostility to homosexuality.”

Source 4: American Psychological Association

“The most recent position statement by a professional organization on the subject of therapeutic efforts to change sexual orientation was issued by the American Psychological Association (membership 150,000) in August 2009. It came after a conference of the organization heard the report of a task force whose six members had conducted a comprehensive analysis of 83 peer-reviewed studies on the subject published between 1960 and 2007 [118]. The reviewers distinguished among the research work based on the methodological designs employed by the investigators (whether experimental, quasi-experimental, or qualitative - based on retrospective self-reporting), and examined variables such as sample size, attrition among study subjects, measures of orientation (attraction, identity or behavior), the nature of treatments (aversive - as by using electric shock or induced vomiting, psychotherapeutic counseling, etc.), and the validity

and generalizability of the conclusions drawn from the resulting data. They determined that the earlier studies, prior to 1981, were the more scientifically rigorous, in part because physiological measures of arousal, such as penile volume, were employed, and comparisons were made with control groups of subjects.

After conducting this review, members of the task force concluded that the assertions that sexual orientation could be changed were not validated by the evidence, whether the measure was decreased attraction for or sexual activity with same-sex persons, increased attraction for or sexual activity with other-sex persons, increased healthy relationship and marriages with other-sex partners, or improved quality of life and mental health. Judith M. Glassgold, chair of the task force, summarized their investigation as follows. “Contrary to claims of sexual orientation change advocates and practitioners, there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation. Scientifically rigorous older studies in this area found that sexual orientation was unlikely to change due to efforts designed for this purpose. Contrary to the claims of Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) practitioners and advocates, recent research studies do not provide evidence of sexual orientation change as the research methods are inadequate to determine the effectiveness of these interventions. At most certain studies suggested that some individuals learned how to ignore or not act on their homosexual attraction. Yet, these studies did not indicate for whom this was possible, how long it lasted, or its long-term mental health effects. Also, this result was much less likely to be true for people who started out only attracted to people of the same sex.” By a vote of 124-4 the 26 governing Council of Representatives of the APA accepted the recommendations of the task force and adopted a resolution reaffirming its position that homosexuality is not a mental disorder, and stating that mental health professionals should avoid telling clients that they can change their sexual orientation through therapy or other treatments.¹⁹¹”

This concludes our cursory review of both sides of the empirical studies mutability debate.

My take on how much is known, in which direction the evidence leans, and by how much

The reader is of course free to interpret the research presented here and elsewhere as they see fit. After my research, I conclude that some HO people permanently change their sexual orientation. I also find, on balance, that the “very low reversal rate” arguments are more persuasive than the “relatively high reversal rate” arguments. The scholarship here, though mixed, leans substantially toward the conclusion that HO is highly resistant to attempts at change using historical and current approaches. My research has revealed no credible report of large-scale success in permanent sexual orientation reversal from a large sample of non-self-selected HO

people- but in LeVar Burton's famous words, "you don't have to take my word for it." Go dig up the research yourself and see what you find.

Closing discussion

There are individuals who report that their attempts to change were fully successful. However, given the cost/benefit calculus, the enduring orientation reversal rate must be fairly high to rationally justify the attempt.

Now there are, as acknowledged above, many worthwhile benefits to be gained from therapy and counseling. As to the narrow result of homosexual reorientation, however, in light of the high risks and low probability of meaningful success, there is but one most reasonable course both to take and to advise LDS HO people who are under no gospel obligation to reorient or seek reorientation. That course is: *at the very least*, wait for new and promising therapies/interventions, and at the most refrain from making risky sacrifices for any extant method.

Conclusion

HO is a persistent, core physical characteristic highly resistant to present day change therapies.

Chapter 4: Why Homosexuals Can Reproduce

This chapter builds an apropos bridge between preceding scientific chapters and succeeding same-sex marriage chapters. Because it is an edited dialogue excerpt that rebuts a common anti-SSM argument, this chapter could have been placed inside chapter 6 (which contains almost exclusively edited dialogues rebutting common anti-SSM arguments). I chose to make it a separate chapter for two reasons: 1) the idea is novel and eyebrow-raising to most, and 2) the concept is especially significant.

Interlocutor 1: *“As to your refuting the claim that homosexual couples can't have children: I would say that you refuted the claim that a homosexual individual can't have children, because you said he or she can reproduce through a third party. This does not refute the claim, however, that two homosexual individuals cannot reproduce together. Homosexual couples can raise children (one of my dearest friends was adopted and raised by two women), but they cannot bear children without a third party. And necessarily - in every case - bringing in a third party for homosexual couples differentiates these couples from heterosexual unions that don't inherently necessitate a third party. ("Inherently" is the operative word.) There is a difference between reproducing with your partner and reproducing via a third party.”*

Interlocutor 2: *“The take home message is, any given heterosexual couple (in the aggregate) can *potentially* procreate independently. There is NO potential for ANY homosexual couple to procreate independently/naturally (that 3rd party and all the tech would be needed). Therefore, I think we can argue that a procreation-based definition of marriage can still be supported, since natural procreation can only occur in a heterosexual couple.”*

My response: I think you're misunderstanding four of my scenarios- which is understandable, they're not exactly Biology 100. Four of the scenarios I've noted require NO third party. Also, I did not argue that heterosexuals as a rule cannot reproduce without a third party. Rather, I argued that a subset of them are just as inherently infertile as homosexual couples and thus merit exclusion as much as the class of couples that are same-sex on a *potential* to reproduce basis. Also: You make a claim about "natural procreation"- moral claims from nature are usually flawed¹⁹².

I "reproduce" my edited arguments here- I realize they're a bit complex, but I think they'll make sense if carefully analyzed, and it's the best way I can think of to address your specific questions:

Interlocutor: *“I don't see the logic in your contention about homosexuals not being able to reproduce together.”*

What is your definition of “reproducing together”? Since you can't respond here I will posit what seems a reasonable dictionary definition: “the process of generating new individuals of the same kind from the parents.” The mechanism of inheritance in sexually reproducing species

(and indeed all cellular life) like ours is DNA. Take a gay couple- the men mix their sperm, fertilize a donated egg, and have a charitable female friend act as surrogate. Or we could look to a lesbian couple. Is not a DNA contribution by both partners (throw in gestation by one of the parents too if you want) sufficient to make them biological parents? Picture partner A of a lesbian couple replacing the nucleus of partner B's oocyte with her own fertilized nucleus, then either partner gestates the child. The resulting offspring will be genetically related to both lesbian parents. The biology here is inescapable¹⁹³.

You've also lost me on the third party discussion. If your standard is that bringing in a third party "differentiates these couples from heterosexual unions" and that "there is a difference between reproducing via a third party," I will make two embryologic counters, each in the alternative, followed by a normative argument. Though these ideas are original, I have little doubt others have articulated them before me.

First counter: Will the usefulness of inherent reliance on a third party as a discriminator fail when the technology advances sufficiently to enable homosexual couples to be the two and only two biological parents of a child?

Scenario 1: For instance, all the instructions necessary to create a human egg are contained in each somatic cell of an adult male (because males are the heterogametic sex, and because the second X of chromosome 23 in females is lyonized into an unused Barr body, it follows that all the genes needed for oogenesis are necessarily in adult male diploid cells). Given the proper hormone/nutrient/transcription factor cocktail, totipotent cells (which as the name implies can become any of the several hundred distinct types of human cells) harvested from gay partner A could be stimulated to become eggs. The sperm of partner B could fertilize the eggs from partner A. (Interesting sidenote- children reproduced in this way would be on average about 66% male and 33% female, while the counter situation [Scenario 2] in lesbians would likely require added proteins [chromosome Y gene products], and could only produce girls). The embryo could then be implanted in a surrogate or, if you think gestation contributes to biological parentage, avoid the third parent by placing the embryo in an artificial womb to gestate. [Though the device is not yet fully operational, much as the Death Star, many of its constituents are already employed. Three examples: 1) extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a functioning technique and a component of an artificial womb currently used within neonatal intensive care units for very premature infants; 2) dialysis techniques, which could remove waste products generated during gestation; and 3) lactated Ringer's solution, which can be used to replace amniotic fluid]. The feat of producing a mouse with two and only two same-sex parents was accomplished in December 2010 (about three months after I first began advancing this argument - see "My Mouse has Two Daddies"¹⁹⁴).

Scenario 3: Fuse two sperm (one from each partner), then place the resulting diploid nucleus into an enucleated totipotent stem cell from one of the men- voilà.

Scenario 4: the nucleus of lesbian partner A's gamete could be fused to that of partner B's, the resulting oocyte persuaded that fertilization had occurred, and the zygote implanted in either partner. Bottom line in all three scenarios? **A child with two and only two biological parents of the same sex.**

In the face of these biological possibilities, is not the natural possession of all the inheritable material necessary for procreation sufficient to conclude that homosexual couples are inherently capable of reproducing together? Given that the gap between the current situation and the scenario I've described is purely technical, is there some articulable reason to wait for that technology to actualize before concluding that homosexual couples possess just as fully as heterosexual couples the essential inherent elements (i.e. the DNA) needed to reproduce together?

Second counter: If my argument that homosexual couples are inherently capable of two and only two parent biological reproduction fails for some reason, I argue in the alternative that to be fair, the standard of inherent reliance on third parties to reproduce must also be applied to infertile heterosexual couples who inherently rely on third parties. You noted that the operative word is "inherently." I would ask for your definition of inherent, which would engender testability. Since you can't respond right now I will again quote a dictionary: "Existing as an essential constituent or characteristic; intrinsic." The most essential biological intrinsic constituent existing that we know of is DNA. For at least some subset of infertile couples the cause of infertility is an inherited genetic condition (such as two recessive alleles which when combined inhibit meiosis). Because these couples/individuals' third-party reliance was DNA inherited, that reliance is inherent. For at the very least that subset of infertile couples whose infertility is inherent they fail to survive your standard. Assuming that my interpretation of "inherent" is reasonable, you must either 1) abandon the reproductive reliance on a third party as a discriminator or 2) abandon the claim of being fair in applying the standard unless you would also exclude this class of heterosexual couples.

Normative argument: Irrespective of the success of counter 1 or 2, I question the purpose of endeavoring to find reproductive differences on which to pin exclusion of access to marriage. Marriage traditionally is not strictly tied to reproduction. Parties that have undergone a hysterectomy or vasectomy, elderly people incapable of reproduction (I'd point out this infertility is also inherent, as we inherit senescence genetically), emasculated individuals, etc. are all permitted to marry. Thus, excluding homosexual people from the institution must be done on some other basis than reproductive capacity to avoid a conclusion of caprice. Said the moderator of a January 2011 debate on SSM on the website of *The Economist*:

Ms. Gallagher narrows eligibility for marriage to couples whose sexual acts are "freighted with the possibility" of producing a child. Gay couples (and sterile men and women, apparently) do not qualify. Her justification is her concern that gay marriage will lead to the further fragmentation of sex, reproduction and marriage. This is an interesting argument, though it burdens gay marriage with a trend that is well under way. After all, out-of-wedlock births have been on the rise in the West for three decades, with no correlation to the legalisation of gay marriage. If you share Ms. Gallagher's concerns, it would seem much more radical solutions are in order.¹⁹⁵”

Interlocutor: “Again, the take home message is this: If I select a heterosexual couple at random, there is a statistical possibility that they can procreate naturally (without the 3rd party, or test-

tubes, etc). If natural procreation is part of the definition of marriage, then all heterosexual couples (regardless of fertility - and leaving out all incest and things of the like) should be allowed to be married because of that statistical possibility. In other words, that group is all in without prejudice.

(---You may argue, "but what about the old people?" Sure, if you select randomly from a set of 100+ year old heterosexual couples, they may too have zero statistical potential for procreation. But that group is so small, that it is ridiculous to consider them as their own entire category due to sample size. Thus, they'd be included in the set of all hetero couples.---)

My response: First, are you sure of your numbers? Is the set of couples characterized by {too-old-to-reproduce + sterile} larger than the set of homosexual couples? Second, if you zoom out and cover your eyes, sure you can say that there's a statistical possibility that a random heterosexual couple can reproduce. If you'll zoom out, though, given that the vast majority of people are heterosexual, you could just as easily zoom out one more blip, lump in the homosexual couples, and by the same standard a random couple (including homosexual couples) would have the possibility of reproducing naturally. What is your zoom level standard, and what is the justification for its placement where you put it rather than closer in or farther out?

If you open your eyes, on the other hand, you can look and see whether an inherently infertile couple, an inherently fertile couple, or a homosexual couple stands before you. If you'll look closely enough to distinguish classes, then you'll see the homosexual class of couples and the inherently infertile class of couples- in which instance it's unfair to exclude class 1 but not class 2 on an inherently infertile basis.

As to the old people argument, would you then permit homosexuals to marry as long as only a few of them requested it? It sounds like the new device created to exclude homosexuals, since the capacity to reproduce discriminator has failed, operates because there are too many of them that want the exception. If more and more people undergo vasectomies and hysterectomies or wait until they're postmenopausal to marry, or there's a boom in gerontology ward weddings, will you then begin to exclude them from marriage as well? What's your threshold percentage? Or is it an absolute number? What is the justification for placing it where you do rather than higher or lower? The size of the exception is a candidate discriminator, but a weird one- perhaps I should applaud the creativity:

“There are at least as many sterile heterosexual couples in America as homosexual ones, and every one of them is allowed to marry. If the possibility of procreation is what gives meaning to marriage, then a postmenopausal woman who applies for a marriage license should be turned away at the courthouse door. What’s more, she should be hooted at and condemned for breaking the crucial link between marriage and procreation, for stretching the meaning of marriage beyond all recognition, and for reducing the institution to frivolity.¹⁹⁶”

Interlocutor: “One may argue that lesbians are capable of procreating via artificial insemination, so the state does have an interest in recognizing lesbian marriages, but a lesbian’s sexual relationship, committed or not, has no bearing on her ability to reproduce¹⁹⁷.”

My response: Yes, but marriage is much more than a recognition of a sexual relationship, as this author vigorously argued earlier when honing in on whether the couple propagates. Also, when used by sterile heterosexual couples, such technologies are also independent of the couple's sexual relationship. Again, this argument would exclude infertile heterosexual couples from marriage as well, since their sexual relationship has no bearing on their ability to reproduce. If you're serious about reproduction as the justification for marriage, then apply it fairly.

Interlocutor: "*Elderly couples can marry, but such cases are so rare that it is simply not worth the effort to restrict them.*"¹⁹⁸

Are elderly marriages really that rare? Consider:

"There seems to be a trend of remarriage among the elderly. In fact, marriage among the elderly is already a popular Internet topic, as well as a popular media subject. This trend promises to increase with the growth of the elderly population. As a whole, between 1990 and 1994, the elderly population has increased by a factor of eleven, while the total population has only tripled in that same amount of time. Under population predictions by the United States Census Bureau, the number of elderly will increase to eighty million in the next century."¹⁹⁹ (see footnotes 1-7)

Additionally, I ask: how hard is it to restrict elderly marriages? Cap the age at a certain number and withhold the license! They already have to calculate age on the form to prove they're over 18. Also, would you then allow homosexual couples to marry, as long as it's only a few of them? Will you start restricting elderly couples if enough of them start asking for marriage?

Interlocutor: "*The marriage laws, therefore, ensure, albeit imperfectly, that the vast majority of couples who do get the benefits of marriage are those who bear children.*"²⁰⁰ Elder Oaks: "*the interests at stake in the proposed legalization of so-called homosexual marriages are sufficient to justify a formal Church position and significant efforts in opposition... one generation of homosexual "marriages" would depopulate a nation, and, if sufficiently widespread, would extinguish its people. Our marriage laws should not abet national suicide... vigorously oppose the legalization of homosexual marriages.*"

First off, legalizing same-sex marriage does not prohibit opposite-sex marriage, nor even if it did would the world necessarily be depopulated in a generation, since reproduction has a robust extramarital track record. Second, the authors have made an unsupported syllogistic leap that fertile couples reproduce. As one author previously noted, those who get the benefits of marriage are usually those *capable* of bearing children- not necessarily those that reproduce. Otherwise, it's feasible to restrict marriage to those that bear children more narrowly- for instance, by revoking the marriages of those who don't actually reproduce by a certain age or by, say, ten or twenty years into the marriage.

I would also ask, if you are serious about restricting marriage to reproducers, what you would advise in these two situations:

First: a man and a woman marry, and two years after the wedding the man loses his fertility, e.g. through cancer of the *vas deferens*. Should his wife fulfill the purpose of marriage by leaving him for a fertile man, or would it be better to stay with him but merely cancel their marriage?

Two: a man and a woman marry, and two weeks after the wedding the man discovers that his wife is infertile, but that she purposely waited until they were married to disclose the fact. Should the law fine her for failure to reveal the most important fact about her marriage worthiness, or instead give her jail time for breaching such a fundamental social contract? Should the husband divorce and then cohabit with her, or instead divorce her and marry someone else who's fertile²⁰¹?

Interlocutor: *"First problem: one of them isn't a parent in the technical sense. By definition, two people of the same sex cannot both be "a genetic progenitor" of a child. When traditional marriage is upheld, we assign parenthood by the obvious, natural principle: biology. Every child has a mother and a father. This is a biological reality. No matter how you answer the question, you are not only saying that you know better than natural law."*²⁰²

My response: Will this problem disappear with the obstacle? That is to say, when it becomes feasible for a homosexual couple to reproduce together (say, via somatic cell nuclear transfer, or by inducing opposite gender germline development of one partner's stem cell), will you cease to use this genetic progenitor argument against same-sex marriage? Also, a naturalist argument (what is natural is right and what is unnatural is wrong) is weak absent additional support. What is natural law? What about examples in nature of non-opposite-gender reproduction? Is there some moral standing to what is natural? It is natural for humans to commit genocide, but also immoral. It is natural for those who are strong to exploit the weak, but enforcing a man-made criminal code against such offenders is a better law. It is unnatural to administer lab-produced antibiotics, but also moral - see my post about the naturalistic fallacy²⁰³.

Interlocutor: *"What would you think about an exception crafted in this way: Any two individuals who have a presumed natural ability to procreate may marry. Where 'presumed natural ability' is defined as 'compatible reproductive organs--one male; one female.'"*

My response: Compatible reproductive organs (I presume that means X genital fits into Y genital) are insufficient and unnecessary to procreate- as evidenced by those inherently infertile couples who successfully copulate without conceiving on the one hand, and procreate without sex via in vitro fertilization on the other. It is not the union of penis and vagina, but egg and sperm, which is typically necessary to reproduction. Plus, you have chosen a male-leaning denominator for your exclusion, as the ratio of male:female orgasms resulting from penis-vagina unions is much greater than one (the female biological analog to the male penis is the clitoris, not the vagina). Indeed, the percentage of penis/vagina unions that produce children is quite small, suggesting other purposes and effects:

“We are taught that the reason for the differences, and the use to which the sex organs are put, has to do with making babies. This is a lie. In our society only occasionally are these organs used to make babies. Much more often they are used to produce sexual pleasure for men...²⁰⁴”

Additionally, it is quite a departure from your children-based argument to seek to reduce marriage access to whether one has a penis or a vagina. What about persons who undergo a sex change? Individuals who have lost their genitals, such as a man whose penis and testicles were severed in a work accident or a woman whose uterus and vagina failed to develop properly or at all? Your marriage standard would clearly exclude them. Additionally, the modern view of mate selection turns primarily on the complementarity of individuals rather than their body parts, and as the divorce rate evidences, “many male-female couples turn out not to be very complementary at all²⁰⁵” despite possessing the “right” equipment.

As to the use of a "presumed natural ability," a baseless presumption does function as a discriminator but is also accurately described as arbitrary and capricious. Similar to the baseless presumption that black people are inferior to white people, what matters is whether class A is inferior to class B, not whether class A is presumed to be inferior to class B. As I've shown, there is no significant difference between inherently infertile homosexual and heterosexual couples as to their capacity to reproduce. In any case, what is the basis for concluding reproduction method G is superior to method H? Who is authorized to say that modern medicine and third parties cheapen the reproductive process? To close:

“Their real position is that the possibility of procreation defines marriage when homosexuals are involved, but not when heterosexuals are involved. To put the point more starkly, sterility disqualifies all homosexuals from marriage, but it disqualifies no heterosexuals. So the distinction is not pro-procreation (much less pro-children) at all. It is merely antihomosexual.²⁰⁶”

I finish with the view of a prominent LDS feminist, Valerie Hudson, who argues against using reproduction and fertility as a basis for opposing SSM:

“What we understand from our doctrine is that the telos of marriage is to ground every human family in real, lived, embodied gender equality. And then, as a consequence, all reproduction would occur only within that context of gender equality. If the ideal were lived, then every son and daughter of God would be born into a family that lived gender equality, and thus each would learn how to form such a relationship when they themselves came of age. Reproduction is the fruit, not the root, of what God intended in establishing marriage.

That is why it doesn't matter who's fertile, and whether a marriage of infertile people is a marriage is beside the point.²⁰⁷”

Conclusion

Same-gender couples can reproduce. To the extent their reproductive capacity is limited, it is no less limited than for inherently infertile opposite-gender couples.

Chapter 5: A Moral Case for LDS Same-Sex Marriage

I love and support the LDS church and it's leaders- and encourage you to do so as well, whether a member of the church or not. I have a firm testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the LDS church. This testimony is strengthened by my regular temple attendance (for a year I was also a temple worker), consistent service in the church, faithful church attendance, fasting, and daily prayers and scripture study. I have always had a special appreciation for the Book of Mormon, whose inspired passages guide my life and decisions. Deep down, I'm little more than an EFY counselor who loves to have fun and teach the gospel. Though I will make a strong moral case for LDS SSM, please remember:

- 1) Neither this book nor this chapter is to be interpreted as promoting homosexual relations or seeking to influence others to engage in homosexual behavior. I do not oppose any doctrines or policies of the church. I do not believe in advising the Lord's representatives or forcing them into my way of thinking. However, I do believe in badgering the Lord for revelation- because it is the only reliable mechanism for getting answers that I know.
- 2) Though I am still seeking the Lord's will regarding SSM and evaluating the arguments for and against it, I have been publicly active in opposing same-sex marriage. In the fall of 2009 I volunteered with Protect Marriage Maine to help call voters in Maine to oppose same-sex marriage legislation there (which opposition prevailed). Earlier this year I sacrificed considerable time to help organize BYU's Stand For the Family Student Symposium. To use another SSM-analyzing author's words, "I come to this as a true believer in the special importance and unique qualities of the institution of marriage. For all its failings in particular cases, and for all the stress it has borne lately, marriage is *the* great civilizing institution."²⁰⁸
- 3) That a strong moral case *for* LDS SSM exists does not necessarily imply that the moral case *against* SSM is weaker. A key outcome of a successful education is the ability to make a persuasive argument advancing a proposition with which one personally disagrees. If successful, my rigorous presentation of the pro-SSM position will help traditional marriage defenders sharpen their advocacy as a consequence of understanding their opposition better.

Now back to the task at hand. To make this moral case, I ask you to embark on a thought experiment with me into a world independent of the one you know- specifically, a world exactly like this one, with two exceptions: 1) that homosexual conduct is sinful is not a necessary moral conclusion; and 2) that SSM is wrong is not a necessary moral conclusion. The purpose for these exceptions is to engender a forward, (i.e. take a look at evidence, then conclude) rather than a retrospective, (make the conclusion first, then interpret evidence through that lens) evaluation. I believe what I've asked of you is a truly awkward mental task- but please take a minute to really complete it. (You've already practiced awkward mental tasks, right? Remember suspending your views per my request in the introduction?) Once you're inside the world, read on. Remember, this is a *thought experiment*, a safe zone which cannot be construed as the author's view on the morality of SSM in the actual world. Again, because of how often this chapter has been misinterpreted as my real-world views toward SSM, I underline- a thought experiment is a departure from the real world into the realm of imagination.

26 good reasons why, inside this thought experiment, LDS members and the LDS church should support SSM for homosexually oriented people

Are you inside with me? Okay, here we go-

1. Homosexual orientation is not all about lust

In the past five decades there has been a careful and successful “lustification” of homosexual orientation in a large portion of the population. Many of the most potent of these “lustifications” have been declared by past and present church leaders, who have systematically characterized heterosexual orientation as exalting and desirable (though it can be perverted into lust), while scorning homosexual orientation as *only* base, abominable, and solely about lustful sex. More recently, in contrast, the church has said: “The Church recognizes that those of its members who are attracted to others of the same sex experience deep emotional, social and physical feelings.²⁰⁹”

“It is hard to escape the conclusion that the aversion many heterosexuals mount against homosexuality is based on a feeling of repugnance for the physical nature of love-making

between persons of the same gender. Unable to imagine themselves engaging in such activity, they (heterosexuals) may perceive it to be unnatural, a perversion. It must be admitted, however, that the intimacies of sex are somewhat mysterious, sometimes overwhelming even for recently married men and women. It is the contemporary LDS view that physical affection in marriage is not only proper, but an essential component in a healthy, fulfilling relationship, sustained by mutual concern and respect for one's partner. Importantly, since this is deemed a private matter, the mechanics of love-making are neither prescribed nor proscribed, thoughtfulness and sensitivity to the feelings of one's mate being the most important consideration. The private and personal character of sex also obtains in a homosexual context in which there is also an emphasis on appropriate balance, that sex should not assume a dominant role at the expense of the other necessary psychological and spiritual elements in the monogamous association of two people in love with each other. While properly arguing that a long-lasting and satisfying relationship between a man and a woman cannot be based on sex alone, it is also incumbent on critics not to believe that homosexual love is primarily based on erotic desire. The expression of homosexual love is no more governed by lasciviousness than is heterosexual love²¹⁰.

Sexual orientation, be it toward men or women, is about more than erotic desire. For example—my mother loves and supports my father. Within her is a sexual orientation toward men, a constellation of romantic/sexual/emotional susceptibilities/inclinations/orientation/attractions /feelings toward members of the opposite sex. She has chosen to direct that constellation toward loving him and strengthening their relationship, which has resulted in unmeasured benefits to me and my siblings. What if her sexual orientation were instead housed inside a man's body? Would my mother's ability to choose to direct that orientation be lessened? Would she (he) be any less capable of being my father's "help meet?" Of staying by my father's bedside when he's sick? Would his hands be any less capable of making countless meals for my father and our family? Of standing by my father through thick and thin? Of making him a big lunch when he goes away for the day with a love note inside? Of keeping marital vows? Of pleasing him in bed (if he is also sexually oriented toward men)? Of listening to him after a hard day at work? Of going on long trips to the wilderness with his wanted-to-be-a-park-ranger spouse, despite preferring his familiar suburban home? Of supporting him when he's frequently away on church assignments? Of tending to the kids during the night out of love for him? I for one do not think so.

Just as there exists a distribution along the spectrum from asexual to hypersexual for heterosexually oriented people, there exists a distribution along that same spectrum for homosexually oriented people. My gay friend *Matthew, for instance, claims to be asexual, and describes his orientation in terms of romantic and emotional attraction and connection:

“I’ve always been faithful in the Church (and still am), but have never been able to be attracted to a girl, in spite of years of praying and working for it. Instead, I’ve found that I love guys, and in many cases care deeply about them and yearn to be close to them emotionally and physically; that is how it has been at least since I was 12 years old. But I don’t want to have sex with them, contrary to what some people seem to be assuming: I am asexual, meaning I don’t experience sexual attractions to anyone. I’m happy now to understand that God loves me, and I believe he may have made me this way for a reason.²¹¹”

Another has written: “The need for us to be open on the issue of homosexual choice is especially strong since, in contrast to fear, or anger, or greed, or any one of a number of negative characteristics to be resisted and overcome, love for another human being is a fundamentally positive and noble attribute.²¹²” One doesn’t have to recite the Hercules story to prove that one of the greatest errors in history has been to underestimate the motivating power of human romantic love. (For those interested in the differences between the three separate, brain-mediated drives for sexual love, romantic love, and companionate love, I recommend Helen Fisher’s book *Why We Love: the Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love*). If homosexual orientation is all about lust, why are so many of them seeking marriage- when they could engage in essentially unlimited homosexual conduct with one or multiple partners outside marriage? Though homosexual orientation has often been compared or grouped with negatives such as pornography, temper, alcoholism, addiction, gambling, a covetous manner, and drug use- would we compare heterosexual orientation to any of these negatives? In addition to the reality that homosexual orientation is not as transitory as these analogs, it is morally repugnant to demonize what can accomplish such incredible human good. One author wrote:

“Homosexuality is no less of a complex interplay of emotions, affections, identity, needs, aspirations and sexuality than is heterosexuality. For most of the homosexuals I know, the feelings for one another are the most deep, warm, genuine expressions of love and compassion that two human beings are capable of sharing. Like heterosexuals, most of their affections are not explicitly sexual, nor is their relationship, when sexual, any more oral, anal, sado-masochistic or prone towards fetishes than is the heterosexual experience.²¹³”

Wayne Schow:

“sexual morality is not just a matter of “thou shalt not.” “Thou shalt not” is a blunt instrument, a negative, easy, and sometimes heavy-handed marker. If we believe that our sexuality is something more than inherent evil, if we see our sexual nature as a vital part of our humanness and as having the potential to raise us to a higher level of being, and if we would pursue the

opportunity for growth inherent in this nature, we must surpass the Pharisaical letter of the law to find the more fulfilling and sublime positive aspects of sexual relationship with another.²¹⁴

Wrote Carol Lynn Pearson:

“A strong belief of mine is that sexuality is an awesome gift and should be treasured. I am impressed with the words of American publisher Margaret Anderson, who said, “In real love you want the other person's good. In romantic love you want the other person.” I wholeheartedly believe that intimate access to the body of another person is the most supreme of privileges, that being in love—real love—wanting both the other person and the other person's highest good—is a breathtaking experience that brings us about the closest we mortals ever get to heaven.²¹⁵”

Said another:

“It is common to hear the advice, “Even if you’re homosexual, you don’t have to act on your homosexual feeling.” The unspoken assumption in this sentiment is that what a homosexual experiences is lust. But what are the essential, healthy feelings of a gay person? As with heterosexuals, they are love, respect, admiration, or infatuation, for another human being. They are the natural feelings that accompany the dreams of becoming a spouse or partner. They are a love for children and a hope for the security, solidarity, and sanctity of a family. They are the feelings that accompany the hope of being a good parent. They are the feelings we all, heterosexual and homosexual alike, share in common as human beings. What is the origin of these feelings? They are the inheritance of spiritual offspring of divine parents, the results of lessons taught in the homes of active LDS families, all confirmed as good through life’s adult experiences. They are the feelings that have been cultivated by associating with the Saints. Not to act on those feelings? Not to be honest with oneself? Not to know who you are and be true to what you’ve been taught? How would those of us who are heterosexuals react to the suggestion that we should not act on those same feelings, feelings born in part from our innate sexuality and leading us to aspire to goodness and godliness?

Those not closely acquainted with gay people may not have considered that they are capable of the same type of romantic feelings that characterize heterosexual love, something in addition to urges of a sexual nature. Nevertheless that is true. Falling in love can have the same positive emotional, spiritual, and moral qualities for a homosexual couple as for a heterosexual couple. Homosexual love is not counterfeit. What do Latter-day Saints (and others) who are in a committed gay relationship do? They get up in the middle of the night to care for a sick partner. They fix dinner, out of turn, when the person they love has had a bad day. They sacrifice in order to provide opportunities for the growth and development of their children. They resist the temptation to be unfaithful. They send flowers. They coach little league baseball teams. They say, “I’m sorry.” They help in buying the groceries. They plant flowers and mow the lawn. They delight in the success and achievement of the one to whom they are devoted. They do their best to express the deepest feelings of their heart when they say, ‘I love you.’²¹⁶”

Wrote one faithful member²¹⁷:

“I too have needs to be fulfilled. Homosexuality is not about sexual fulfillment but rather about emotional fulfillment. Homosexuality is an internal drive for intimate companionship and bonding with one of one’s own sex. Many homosexuals, confused by a lack of self-esteem and by social labeling as “perverts,” “queers,” and “degenerates,” have fallen into the trap of sexual promiscuity, trying desperately to meet an inner need by changing partners continuously. Such promiscuity is as much a symptom of personal inadequacy and immaturity as promiscuity among heterosexuals.”

Carol Lynn Pearson argues similarly:

“Sexuality, I am convinced, is the life force itself- and not just the reproductive life force. When a power so great is not allowed a respectable stage upon which to dance, it will nearly always come out in twisted and tortuous ways. We have sadly learned from our Catholic friends, through the news of case after case of sexual molestation by priests, that celibacy is a calling for some but clearly not for all. I am beginning to understand why some gay people have expressed their sexuality in ways that have shocked us. I recently heard a very articulate gay man on *Oprah* say he is convinced that the promiscuity of many gay men is due to the shame they have absorbed. With absolutely no societal, family, or spiritual support, with few role models, and under layers of learned self-loathing, I believe that many have been left one by one to reinvent the wheel of relationship, even to some extent the wheel of life. I firmly believe that what they will do with societal, family, and spiritual support, excellent role models, and layers of self-respect is surely something that will bless us all.²¹⁸”

Wrote another of the hypothetical of a straight person being told that all heterosexual conduct is a sin, whereas homosexual marriage is God’s plan for all His children²¹⁹:

“Let’s suppose that you take this hypothetical demand seriously. After several years of determined effort, you realize that your heterosexual desires are, if anything, experienced more intensely, and you are as adverse to homosexuality as ever. You then decide to abstain. Your resolve requires a supreme effort. Your dreams and fantasies refuse to be suppressed. Your daily routine brings you constantly into contact with attractive women. The longer you abstain, the more persistent your desires become. Since you cannot have a woman and you don’t want a man as your intimate companion, you maintain a limited rapport with both. Your social life, though it consumes much of your time and energy, is kept at a safe distance emotionally. No amount of church meetings, social functions or vocational preoccupations fills the void you experience for that warm, loving intimacy with a woman. Loneliness becomes the hallmark of your experience. Ten, twenty years of this isolation take their toll on your personality. You remain steadfast to your conviction, but you face old age with an ever-increasing sense of loneliness and unfulfillment. The question now needs to be asked, ‘Is such a life really morally neutral?’”

Cloy Jenkins continues:

“Recommending to the homosexual that he abstain from the sexual expression of who he is has far-reaching consequences. It cuts him off from the only real possibility open to him to experience love. The more frightening fact is that it unquestionably condemns him to a life of loneliness which cannot and is not ministered to by any facet of the Church or society. No

amount of temple going, priesthood meetings, home teaching, or special interest activity will ease the loneliness. This can only be realized through a mature loving intimacy. The men whom I know who have followed the course of abstention have a conspicuous diminution of humanness in their lives. They are, for the most part, a mixture of flat, uninteresting, impoverished personalities with a conspicuous tenseness and anxiety that is never focused or constructively expended. Those around them sense their desperate need for warmth and affection but also an overriding coldness, prohibiting any closeness. Years ago, I met a young man here at BYU. I knew in an instant that he was homosexual and, moreover, that he was fighting it. I could tell it from a certain fierceness in his manner. I never saw him again for several years but was kept abreast of his activities, including his counsel from the Brethren, his marriage, and his subsequent divorce. I visited with him about five years ago, and he vigorously denied that he was homosexual though his behavior indicated otherwise. The most convincing indication to me was his fractured personality; a downright dull returned missionary type, so inappropriate for his age, and a hypertensity bordering on hysteria. I have visited with him several times since, and it appears he is slowly coming to accept the fact that he is homosexual but he has also attempted several cures. Now, as he approaches middle age, he is finally able to face his homosexuality and open up to who he really is. All of his years of abstaining and denial have taken their toll on him, but the most dramatic change for the better has taken place recently as he has straightforwardly fallen in love with another man. He is at last allowing himself to love and be loved, and his personality is warming, expanding, and maturing, and a soul, starved for all these years, is at last being nourished with affection and love.”

Homosexual love is not counterfeit.

2. Family: the substance

What is family? Let’s begin briefly with form, then discuss substance.

The family form has two prongs: the number of genders and the number of partners. The traditional family has two genders and two partners.

What about the substance of family? The core of the institution of the family is the marriage. Even if no kids are ever brought in (say the couple is infertile), the Doug and Jenny Larsen family is no less a family:

“Marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation. Rather, its very nature as an unbreakable compact between two persons... demand that the mutual love of the spouses, too, be embodied in a rightly ordered manner, that it grow and ripen. Therefore, marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life, and maintains its value and indissolubility, even when offspring are lacking- despite, rather often, the very intense desire of the couple.²²⁰”

Also, from an LDS scholar-feminist:

“LDS prophets have emphasized that the marriage relationship is not a mere means to a good end, but a good end in itself which then makes possible other good ends. Men and women are that they might have joy: the scripture does not say men and women are that they might have children...

But another very large part of the joy I feel is in the relationship I have with my spouse, which existed before we had children and will exist after the children have left our home to create their own.²²¹”

Thus, our question turns to: what is the substance of marriage? One given answer by a well-known family science LDS author is: "united spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically, taking full responsibility for nurturing each other, they are truly married."²²² One of the most important functions of marriage is to help someone become like God by abandoning a “me” identity and instead merging into a “we.” Could this principle not apply to a homosexual couple as well as a heterosexual one?

Let’s assume for a moment that a homosexual union is for some reason “less” than a heterosexual one. Just because it is unlikely or impossible for a seriously Down's Syndrome child to graduate from high school, let alone college, this fact does not imply that one should prohibit her from going to elementary school. Similarly, even presuming a homosexual union does not qualify as a first-place ideal, why prohibit the homosexually oriented from *approximating* the ideal of marriage and family? Take a look at a class of individuals- namely poor, uneducated Americans who grow up in divorced homes. (I choose this class because their category is chosen about as much as is homosexual orientation). Despite their elevated likelihood of themselves divorcing and thereby disadvantaging their own children (i.e. failing to reach the first-place ideal), one would nevertheless refrain from prohibiting their marrying, and would perhaps even try to assist them in building a stable marriage and family. Since according to the presumption homosexually oriented people can hardly if ever make the ideal family, one should help them get as close to that ideal as they can rather than hedging up their way. Said the *Safe Space Declaration* in 2004:

“We stand for the principle that love is not a sin. We believe that the focus on sexual orientation obscures the real underlying issues of sexual sin, which are founded on lust, greed, and sexual exploitation, found among both heterosexuals and homosexuals everywhere.

We stand for the institution of the family as the embodiment of love and commitment. The presence of a father, mother, and children living together is no guarantee of family success. The presence of true love and commitment within a family is a much better indicator. We believe that all families, regardless of the gender of those involved, should receive wholehearted sanction from our Church....^{223,}

There's no physical reason why homosexually oriented people can't get married and parent, as there is in the case of mentally handicapped persons. Absent the barrier to entry that is the prohibition against SSM, homosexually oriented people become similarly situated to single church members, who as a general rule may marry who they want as long as they can persuade their available target to consent. Neither celibacy nor promiscuity deliver a family experience. Hetero and homosexual marriage do. Thus we should encourage both- and as it would be repulsive and impractical for most fully homosexual members to enter heterosexual marriage, to say nothing of the risk to the spouse, SSM is the most intuitive vehicle through which to deliver a family experience.

Let us continue to consider this question by exploring a homosexually oriented member's perspective. A faithful LDS homosexually-oriented member has primarily four lifestyle choices: 1) heterosexual marriage, 2) fidelity to a single homosexual partner, 3) lifelong celibacy, and 4) homosexual promiscuity. Since homosexual promiscuity is a demonstrably unhealthy lifestyle, we should definitely seek to create and encourage superior alternatives. How about heterosexual marriage?

“It is clear that our culture, in which everyone is expected to marry, puts enormous and excessive pressure on homosexuals to marry. I am aware of the pressure on homosexuals because in the last fifteen years I've been studying this issue of same-sex attraction (SSA) and meeting with homosexuals in our culture. Universally, they report feeling the pressure to marry. Many homosexuals also report on their marriages which have ended in failure. For example, in 1994 I surveyed an LDS homosexual group of 136 where 71 percent were returned missionaries (indicating their commitment to the church) and 36 had tried marriage. They had been married an average of nine years and had an average of 2.5 children. Only two of the 36 were still married...

Evergreen, a resource group committed to promoting change therapy for homosexual Latter-day Saints, helps create this problem by promoting the idea that persons can “transition out of homosexuality.” This idea is also promoted by many ecclesiastical leaders, most of whom are not well informed about the nature of homosexuality. The extent of the problem is seen in the fact that Evergreen receives over 150 requests for help each month from those with homosexual attractions; 40 percent of these requests come from men who are married. Only 10 percent of the

calls come from women. The remaining 50 percent are from single men. This pattern indicates a great deal of social pressure on LDS men with homosexual attractions to marry heterosexually, with unfortunate outcomes for many of them and their spouses and children.

It is possible that Ben [a homosexual male] can achieve a successful marriage, but, unfortunately, the odds are against him and Jessie [a heterosexual female]. An increasing body of data, some mentioned above and some that will summarize below, reinforces this pessimistic forecast. Much pain- directly and indirectly- results when these marriages fail.^{224,}

Said Marybeth Raynes, who was quoted in chapter 1:

“I can count on both hands the couples I have worked with who have chosen to stay married with the goal of managing the difficulties and enriching their experience with each other and their children...

I have talked to many women- and several men- who felt left out of discussions of future ramifications, even if they knew about the same-sex attraction prior to the marriage. Amity Burton, author of *The Other Side of the Closet*, discusses the trauma, silence, and loss of integrity that occur as one spouse comes out of the closet. Effectively, when the gay partner comes out of the closet, the straight one often goes in. The feeling of invisibility and of not being loved or cherished increases for most spouses...

Indeed, this concern about “not being loved” in a gay/straight marriage has led me to more pondering than any other in the area of homosexual married people. I am deeply concerned about what happens to both partners when there is very little or no sexual interest toward the other by at least one spouse. When this is the case, there often may not be a sustained emotional and mental wish to really discover who one’s partner is on many levels. Much like the quip, “Money doesn’t buy happiness, but it sure makes a good down payment,” sexual interest alone does not create a loving marriage, but it certainly is an important feature. In their book, *The Good Marriage*, a study of three types of healthy marriages, Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee conclude that at least warm, if not deeply passionate, sex is a necessary feature in all types of good marriages.^{225,}

Last, a quote from Wayne Schow:

“This problem is more widespread among Mormons than we care to acknowledge. These “mixed” marriages seem much more likely to end in divorce or, if they remain intact, are much less likely to provide marital satisfactions to both partners. Indeed, their negative outcomes typically cause pain and suffering for all involved, not least to the children of such unions. Nor is it in society’s best interest to perpetuate such suffering. Would it not be fairer and more humane to legitimize a form of marriage that is more realistically attuned to the uniqueness of the individuals involved?^{226,}

In past decades (and indeed to an extent in the current one), some church leaders prescribed heterosexual marriage as a remedy for homosexual inclinations. The Craigslist culture in Utah

and Salt Lake counties of sealed LDS men seeking out homosexual men to come over for “when the cat’s away the mice play” during the absence of the wife and kids hints at the duplicity in many of these heterosexual marriages:

“You would be amazed how many married gay men there are in the Church, in Utah especially, who lead double lives. They have secret same-sex partners or anonymous sexual encounters on their business trips. Their spouses are unaware, or suspect and live in denial. These spouses are at risk for many reasons... the Church’s anti-gay attitude creates a destructive subculture of lies and deceit.”

Then again, who can blame the man or the wife in these situations, who make incredible sacrifices for the Mormon bottom-line: a sealed heterosexual family with children?

More recently, "Persons who have this kind of challenge that they cannot control could not enter marriage in good faith" seems to be more of the Church’s stance. Thus, if options 2 and 4 are out, and 1 is also advised against, the homosexually oriented person is left with lifelong celibacy as the only acceptable means for moving forward. The church position on homosexuality as evidenced by the Wickman/Oaks press conference is treading a fine line between some weighty doctrine-induced duties. (I asked Elder Wickman in person in September 2010 about the press conference- he said the transcript was pretty raw/unedited but for grammar and such. I asked what he would change in retrospect. He said, "not a thing, it was spot on." I appreciated his approachability). The first is to forbid homosexual behavior. The second is to refrain from forbidding to marry: "And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man." –*Doctrine and Covenants* 49:15. One might wonder if homosexual men, to use an example, are not also men in the usage of that verse- in which case advising against heterosexual marriage for those homosexually inclined appears to be inappropriate on its surface. If homosexual orientation does not exist, is not significant, is chosen, and/or is changeable, then there seems to be little unjustified risk in a homosexually oriented person obediently entering heterosexual marriage. What relative risk increase exists if, per the assertions in the Oaks/Wickman address, behavior is all that matters, and each person has total control over his or her behavior?

Also, this counsel, which uses the language of "challenge... that they cannot control" seems almost to contradict the theme of the press conference about "we do not accept the fact that

conditions that prevent people from attaining their eternal destiny were born into them without any ability to control" and "One of the great sophistries of our age, I think, is that merely because one has an inclination to do something, that therefore acting in accordance with that inclination is inevitable" and "we know we can control how we behave, and it is behavior which is important."²²⁷ No less an authority than a Supreme Court Justice rejected the significance of a distinction between behavior and orientation: "Following the Supreme Court's decision in *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez* on June 28, 2010, the plaintiffs in *Perry* cited the decision by Justice Ginsburg's as Supreme Court precedent that sexual orientation is "an identifiable class" in opposition the defense's argument that sexual orientation is "behavioral". Christian Legal Society had asserted that it did not restrict membership based on sexual orientation but based on "conduct and belief that the conduct is not wrong". Ginsburg rejected that distinction, noting that with respect to sexual orientation the court has "declined to distinguish between status and conduct" and offering the parallel from an earlier case: "**A tax on wearing yarmulkes is a tax on Jews.**"²²⁸ (emphasis added).

I'm also not fully convinced about the significance of this inclination/behavior distinction. Take two 10 year olds- John, who's normal, and Mark, a very low-functioning autistic person with an inclination toward flailing about and throwing tantrums. John and Mark can both control their behavior, and despite his inclinations in any particular instance Mark can, and sometimes does, refrain from throwing a tantrum. If John flailed about in class and threw a tantrum, you might discipline him somewhat severely. If you punished Mark the same amount for the same behavior, he'd spend his life in the corner. Despite Mark's agentic control (i.e. the reality that any particular instance of misbehavior is not inevitable), it's absurd to hold him as responsible as John for an outburst or trend of outbursts- and it would be foolish to expect Mark to regulate his behavior to the same level of mellowness as John. (Please pardon the comparisons to negative behaviors- culpability highlights the distinction between inclination and behavior). Said Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project²²⁹:

"The best case I can make for that is the following: about half the people on the planet have a particular predisposition to criminal behavior that makes them about 20 times more likely than the other half to end up in trouble with the law and end up being incarcerated and in prison. Who are those people? Those are the males. That is probably the strongest of all the influences we will ever discover in terms of a predisposition for violent behavior."

Perhaps one can hold these individuals strictly responsible for the consequences of their actions- but are they truly as worthy of blame and stigma as those with no predisposition who behave similarly? It is established that alcoholism is 40-60% heritable²³⁰. Are alcoholics equally culpable for their consuming behaviors as those who have no genetic predisposition? To analogize to theory of criminal law, let's take two individuals, Mark and Sarah, who both participate in the crimes of assault and battery of John. Let's presume that they both were equally violent; also presume that Sarah has no predisposition toward violence and that Mark is significantly predisposed because of his genes, high testosterone levels, and an inhibition of cortisol (a stress hormone) uptake that together account for 50% of the variability in his violent behavior. In criminal law, punishments are not just based on the tort theory of strict liability (which roughly means that you're responsible for any and all foreseeable consequences of your acts) but upon finding the element of *mens rea*, or the guilty mind: *actus non facit reum nisi mens sit rea*- "the act does not make a person guilty unless the mind be also guilty." The punishment of criminals found to be mentally incompetent is usually mitigated. Might it similarly be appropriate that 90% of the punishment to Mark and Sarah should be in the strict liability sense, but that the *mens rea* calculus would differ between them, since their minds are *not* equally guilty? Say, give them both nine months in jail, but then give Mark an additional fifteen days, but Sarah thirty, to account for the difference in their moral breach? Though potentially impractical, wouldn't this approach otherwise be appropriate?

Another example would be thoughts about sex. Though we consider ourselves in control of our thoughts, that control is limited to handle thoughts once they enter one's head- we have much less control over how often those thoughts come. If one were to plot out the number of thoughts about sex per day by your average male between the ages of 10 and 30, it becomes fairly clear that the testosterone-saturated adolescent male brain is imposing a lot of thoughts about sex irrespective of the boy's agency. Is he as guilty as an 18-year old girl of the same age who consciously spends 30 minutes each day, brow furrowed, drumming up lustful thoughts just to keep pace with her reasonably self-controlled male peers? Might not a similar principle be at work with the trends of our behaviors, most of which reflect conditioned compliance with cultural norms and habits rather than highly volitional, intentional conduct? How chosen are most of a newborn's behaviors? How about the possibility of genetic predispositions to

personality traits and spirituality? What about the influences of other biological factors besides genes? How about non-biological environmental influences such as social and cultural/memetic factors? Anyway, let's move on.

It's interesting that in the Wickman/Oaks address, homosexual orientation was affirmatively identified as unique to mortality (i.e. was not an aspect of pre-mortal existence and won't be an aspect of post-mortal existence). This principle is conducive to suicide. Here is the message some hear: "The theosis (becoming like God) utility of family life is the primary purpose of mortality. The sum of all other activities pales compared to the value of being a parent and spouse. Due to conditions outside your control, you are homosexually oriented. If you cannot control your attractions (which is largely true of almost every homosexually oriented person, if controlling attractions means eliminating homosexual thoughts/feelings and/or replacing them with heterosexual ones), you could not enter opposite-gender marriage in good faith. Same-sex marriage is out of the question. However, you can start progressing substantively on the path of Godhood as soon as you die and are resurrected as a person you can't currently relate to, namely, a version of you that is heterosexually oriented. Though as you are you're not good enough to take big strides toward becoming like God now, if you were lucky enough to get hit by a bus (thus side-stepping the moral consequences of suicide) and radically changed into a more God-conducive (heterosexual) version of yourself, you could then start progressing on that path. Otherwise, patiently endure decades of the relative misery which results from loneliness, lack of intimacy, and self-repression in the hope that one day sweet death will release you from the shackle of your fallen tabernacle whose homosexual orientation daily afflicts you with guilt, doubt, and temptation. Only then will you at last be equal to your peers in capacity to advance toward Godhood; until that day, you must endure witnessing as your heterosexual peers select spouses and raise children." In this light, I no longer scratch my head much when reflecting on some of my celibate homosexually oriented LDS friends who have longed for death, waded through deep depression, and in a great many instances, sought to take their own lives.

It seems that this fact (homosexual orientation is for mortality only) also brings up a more cheerful, hopeful idea: *it suggests the permissibility of at least a mortality-only remedy for the homosexually oriented.* If we are willing to "throw up our hands" and say "the Lord will work it out in the afterlife" in difficult situations (e.g. a child with serious Down's syndrome, or a woman

who goes through life without receiving a marriage proposal), why not carve out a similar short-of-eternal-heterosexual marriage, mortality-only remedy for the homosexually oriented? Perhaps a remedy that would encourage greater obedience to the law of chastity, which is also about 1) {cleaving to a single spouse} and 2) {behaving with fidelity} in addition to restricting sexual behavior to one's opposite gender? It seems that promiscuous homosexual behavior is more immoral than fidelity to a homosexual partner- but if the repercussions of each behavior class are equal, there seems to be little incentive for treading the more moral of two paths both deemed to be immoral:

“Their abstract demand that homosexuals be saved, their loving invitation to ‘leave’ a ‘deception,’ could only serve to obliterate the integrity and self-respect of any gay child who heard them. The ministers who used such language certainly could not provide an ethic for homosexual living. They offered a way out, not a way forward. But what if the way out was unavailable? What options remained? What incentives were offered for you to choose one way of life over another, when all possible expressions of your identity, from love and fidelity to promiscuity and prostitution, were regarded as morally indistinguishable one from the other? How can a human being navigate an ethical life in the midst of such moral nihilism?²³¹”

Along these lines, one author who argues for LDS SSM wrote:

“Gay marriage need not be seen as incompatible with LDS doctrine. The Church opposes sexual activity outside marriage; but by recognizing gay married relationships, it would allow the ennobling expression of natural sexuality in a morally responsible way, within the context of commitment. Gays could then be expected to observe the same standards of fidelity to their spouse that the Church requires of heterosexual persons. Channeling gay sexual expression in this way would discourage the promiscuity that gays as outsiders are, not surprisingly, vulnerable to. Surely that would be a good thing.²³²”

Though the church's teachings are very appropriate for the heterosexual majority, on what basis does a homosexually oriented member have faith in the ability of the church to help him or her be happy and prosperous during mortality? Certainly there is the promise of full opportunity and felicity after death- but "it has always been a cardinal teaching with the Latter-day Saints that a religion which has not the power to save people temporally and make them prosperous and happy here, cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually, to exalt them in the life to come.²³³" - Joseph F. Smith. Neal Maxwell similarly taught:

“Whatever it is in the gospel that Jesus tells us to do is productive of happiness here as well as salvation in the world to come. The sum of human misery is less because some Mormons live their religion; the sum of human happiness is greater for the same reason.

We are rightly concerned with reforming and improving our institutions in society.²³⁴”

Said one LDS member:

“I believe that homosexual Latter-day Saints realize that marriage is not an end in itself. It is not sought as a badge of honor, to spite society, or out of any other questionable motive. Rather marriage, regardless of sexual orientation, is viewed as a relationship between people who love each other that permits both to begin to acquire those godly traits that we all hope to develop during our mortal existence: unselfishness, kindness, forgiveness, sacrifice, service to others, and fidelity, to name a few. And, as a people we argue forcefully that no other institution is able to foster these characteristics as effectively, and, as we are taught, mortality is the most effective period for that to be achieved.²³⁵”

Said one author:

“The more internal structure or “real” stuff of the marriage relationship is its connection to individual human dignity via the opportunity it provides its participants to achieve levels of human self-fulfillment that are wholly unique and otherwise unattainable.²³⁶”

If a prayerful homosexually oriented member of the church took a teleological rather than a deontological ethical approach (arguably as Adam did in consciously and intentionally violating a commandment of God to bring about a worthwhile end, namely "that man may be") and concluded that s/he could obtain more of godliness through getting as close to marriage as s/he could with a partner of the same (or, for that matter, opposite) gender than through a long life of lonely dinners and little family purpose, one might be hard pressed to find that judgment grossly erroneous. Both religion and culture generally extol marriage. The LDS church preaches marriage and family *ad nauseum*. It's hard to beat marriage as far as its value as a stepping stone to theosis (the core Mormon doctrine of man becoming like God), and the opposite genderness aspect of marriage is not the only cause of those valuable effects. As one friend of mine said, "no matter how many puppies you save and battered women you help, you're still alone at the end of the day.²³⁷" Also from a gay friend: “We’re being short-shrifted from the ‘we’ universe, and we know it²³⁸” (meaning the identity shift from “me” to the “we” unity that can come from being married is unavailable to celibacy- sentenced HO people). Though the *God Loveth His Children* pamphlet points out "Partaking of the sacrament, singing the hymns of Zion, and listening to uplifting talks all contribute to your spiritual growth²³⁹," general authorities consistently couch happiness in terms of spouse and children and preach the central role of the family in God's plan in mortality. Comparing service and endeavors outside the home to

motherhood, President Hinckley taught: "There is no other thing that will compare with that regardless of what she does."²⁴⁰ David O. McKay taught, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home."²⁴¹ Might this principle include, for those that are capable (*including* homosexuals), "No other success can compensate for failure to *have* a home," meaning spouse and/or children? Though counseled to serve and focus on non-family aspects of life, it is clear that the sum of these "other" activities will never approach the eternal utility of even a modest dose of parenting a child and/or becoming one with a spouse. Said one LDS homosexual male:

"The church would have me live a celibate life without a partner. It would have me refrain from even dating. They would have me live alone. For the rest of my life. Now, if this life is all about learning and progression, to what extent would I be able to learn and progress living a life like that? On the other hand, say I got married to a man. We adopted children. We raised them and taught them the best we could. We experienced trials together as a family, etc. Now wouldn't that experience be far more beneficial to learning and progression? To learn compromise and loyalty within a valid, loving relationship? To experience the challenge and joys of raising children? I believe I would be much more likely to learn more of what it must be like to be God in that kind of life than it would a celibate, lonely one."²⁴²

Because family is so central, individuals understandably exhibit a certain fierceness in marriage's pursuit. A marriage or marriage-like relationship can, like almost no other relationship, context, or experience in life, help one to develop attributes of godliness such as patience, love, mercy, and the host of relational virtues unavailable to non-family experience²⁴³. Even if a prayerful homosexually-oriented member of the church mistakenly fails to account for the primacy of earth's purpose to "to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" in choosing to develop attributes of godliness through a marriage-like homosexual relationship, that mistake seems somewhat small ethically. Family is central to the Creator's plan for His children *during mortality*.

3. Family: the form

The above section about the substance of family should not be interpreted to say that form is immaterial- rather, the claim is that substance can be preserved through at least some changes of form. God has manifestly been open to expanding the form of marriage, as He has repeatedly done so through history by expanding the "one man one woman" definition to "one man one woman OR one man several women." The rebuttal here is: "But we know of no case where this precedent extends to same-gender marriage!" To my knowledge, this is true. However, the first

marriage we know of was one man/one woman (Adam and Eve); thus, sometime between then and now, God must have introduced for the first time and without earthly precedent the marriage form expansion of polygyny. (No doubt some of the traditional marriage advocates present at the unveiling ceremony cleaned out their ears, thinking they must have heard Him wrong). If God was willing to change the “number of partners” prong of marriage form, He may be willing to change the “number of genders” prong as well. No one argues that God *can't* expand the expansion of marriage form- He *can* do anything. Notably, the Restoration scriptures (Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the Book of Mormon) are silent on anything to do with homosexuality, and many liturgies from monasteries between the fourth and eleven centuries suggest that the early Christian church performed same-sex marriages.²⁴⁴ Though not direct evidences of God's will, same-sex marriages have been practiced traditionally in a number of cultures, such as in parts of the Inuit culture, the Vanuatu in the South Pacific, the Ming Dynasty in China, the Azande in sub-Saharan Africa, and in cultures in Eastern Siberia and 27 Native American tribes where Mormon missionaries have proselyted²⁴⁵.

That being said, there are many good reasons, such as the Manifesto,²⁴⁶ to limit marriage in the church to two partners. I will forbear further arguments for and against seeking to bring back LDS polygamy except to say that fear of SSM leading to polygamy is not as troubling inside the church as it is outside it.

Also, legalized same-sex marriage arguably makes same-sex couples' sexual conduct within the church's law of chastity already, since the church's law of chastity is tied to “legal and lawful” marriage. Compare to an apologist's explanation of Brigham Young's anti-interracial marriage teachings:

“First, Brigham Young is not even talking about intermarriage between whites and blacks. In 1863, there were few, if any, places where whites were free to marry blacks in the United States. Therefore, President Young is talking about sexual relations outside of marriage.

The strong opposition that Latter-day Saints have to sexual relations outside of marriage is well-known...

Since Latter-day Saint men could not legally marry black women, then any sexual relationships between them were strictly condemned.²⁴⁷”

Homosexual behavior between legally married persons, such as Buckley Jeppson and husband Michael Kessler²⁴⁸, already comports with the law of chastity since as stated in the temple that standard requires that sexual relations be limited to one's legally and lawfully wedded husband *or* wife – and thus, Buckley's sexual relations with Michael, his legal husband, are chaste. As far as I know, no other church moral standard besides the general Article of Faith 12 duty to obey the law is explicitly tied to an external legal concept. Perhaps this is part of the reason for the Church's opposition to legalizing SSM in Hawaii, California, and everywhere else²⁴⁹. If homosexual relations are sinful only because they are extra-marital, then they will remain so – except in marriage²⁵⁰. Thus, LDS SSM might not necessarily require a departure from historic condemnation of homosexual conduct, since the morality of such was, arguably, always conditioned on the absence of marriage.

Penultimately, the Family Proclamation already contains the mechanism for LDS SSM (though the Family Proclamation hasn't been sustained by the body of the church and therefore is not new doctrine: “The only one authorized to bring forth any new doctrine is the President of the Church, who, when he does, will declare it as revelation from God, and it will be so accepted by the Council of the Twelve and sustained by the body of the Church.²⁵¹”). President Packer's talk was amended to downgrade the description of the document from “revelation” to “guidance.” Even were the Proclamation authoritative, in the very paragraph declaring marriage between a man and a woman to be “essential to His eternal plan,” it states: “Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.” Homosexual orientation is an “other circumstance necessitating individual adaptation” if ever there was one. “This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted- by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed²⁵²”- Joseph Smith. Might not an adaptation be made available for gays and lesbians who seek the moral good of a family-pursuing, life-long commitment to each other?

Last, God has frequently turned the doctrinal tables on what consensus church apostles of the day thought was truth. Preach the gospel to the *gentiles*? “Emphatically not!” (until Peter's vision of the sheet descending with unclean animals). Give the priesthood to *black* men? “Emphatically not!” (until President Kimball's declaration). Give marriage to *homosexuals*? “Emphatically not!” (until _____). Conclusion? Because of these reasons, including the

precedent of polygyny, the likelihood that God will again expand the form of marriage is more than nominal.

4. Children

Though children are not necessary to constitute an LDS family, children are commonly contemplated when one thinks of the word. Same-gender couples can bear and/or raise children by adopting and/or reproducing as described in chapter four.

“Jesse Levey is a Republican activist who says he believes in family values, small government and his lesbian mothers' right to marry. Levey is part of the "gayby boom" generation. The 29-year-old management consultant is the son of a lesbian couple who chose to have a child through artificial insemination. He's their only child. Critics of same-sex marriage say people such as Levey will grow up shunned and sexually confused. Yet he says he's a "well-adjusted heterosexual" whose upbringing proves that love, not gender, makes a family.²⁵³” There is a significant pronatalist camp among homosexual couples. The Williams Institute estimated that in a recent year, about 60,000 gay, lesbian, or transgender couples are raising at least one child under 18²⁵⁴.

The Family Proclamation states: "Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony."²⁵⁵ Though we usually think that this clause means that parents who intend to bear children should be married, there's a second part: “children are entitled to birth.” Children are entitled to birth! Entitlements, like rights, are meaningless if the other side of the coin is not a duty that is binding on someone. This duty is reinforced by the command to “multiply and replenish.” If this duty exists, and reproduction is the only available means for children to be born, then adults are obligated not only to refrain from bearing out-of-wedlock children- *they are also obligated to bear children*. Thus, it would seem that at least those fertile adults who choose not to bear any children are in breach of an important duty. Now to the relevance:

If a particular child will not be conceived but for a homosexual marriage, it is very difficult to argue against that homosexual marriage on a children's-interest basis, even if one were to

concede that the child's life would be less ideal than in a different family. How do you compare even a blighted life to no life at all? Picture an empty bench- on it sits Greg, the child that was never born because the ban on gay marriage resulted in his Family Proclamation-following mother's choice of a celibate life over the lesbian union Greg would have been born into (e.g. via a sperm donor). As much as life can suck sometimes, most non-suicidal people nonetheless overwhelmingly prefer to exist. A same-sex household may be a promising family environment for an IVF child: the commitment of parents is often a key predictor of child outcomes. Since IVF techniques and adoption are usually expensive and serious undertakings, "a same-sex married couple might well view their marriage as both a symbolic and legal commitment, and this acknowledged commitment might be the deciding factor when the couple was considering whether to adopt a child or whether to produce a child through the use of advanced reproductive techniques."²⁵⁶ Regardless of parenting caliber, if one contends that Greg's spirit will simply be sent to another family, by that same token it becomes difficult to criticize normal, fertile couples who choose to have no children. If the buck doesn't stop at adults capable of reproduction, where does it stop? Why block an attempt by God's children to exercise their free agency by choosing to fulfill one of the most important duties incumbent on them, namely the bearing of children within the bonds of matrimony? Is theirs not the same dilemma that Adam faced? Adam could not both multiply/replenish the earth *and* refrain from partaking of the fruit, though he *could* do either. Most homosexual couples cannot both multiply/replenish the earth *and* avoid the sin of leaving the church as a consequence of their same-sex monogamy, though s/he *could* do either. Are they not following the moral example of Father Adam, who chose the better option of multiplying/replenishing the earth "that man may be"? Why seek to place stumbling blocks in the path of these moral agents? Why not instead affirm the difficult decision made by partially obedient, pronatalist homosexuals, or if not affirm at least refrain from condemning it?

"You do not defend families by making life more difficult for people trying to create a family."²⁵⁷

5. Parenting

Though the issue is hotly contested, the predominance of research to date indicates that "there is a consensus among credible scientific researchers which confirms the abilities of gay and lesbian

persons as parents, and finds positive outcomes for their children. Statements by the leading associations of experts in this area reflect professional consensus that children raised by lesbian or gay parents do not differ in any important respects from those raised by heterosexual parents. No credible empirical research suggests otherwise²⁵⁸. If gay, lesbian, or bisexual parents were inherently less capable than otherwise comparable heterosexual parents, their children would evidence problems regardless of the type of sample. This pattern clearly has not been observed.²⁵⁹” The inherent parenting capability exception here would be breastfeeding with gay men- though men can lactate²⁶⁰, I know of no gay couples who have undergone the intervention needed to enable breastfeeding. Excerpts from studies and three statements:

Study 1: "According to their mothers' reports, the 17-year-old daughters and sons of lesbian mothers were rated significantly higher in social, school/academic, and total competence and significantly lower in social problems, rule-breaking, aggressive, and externalizing problem behavior than their age-matched counterparts in Achenbach's normative sample of American youth.²⁶¹" -17-year national longitudinal lesbian family study

Study 2: Also in 2010, "children raised by lesbian parents (mostly comothers) have been found across a large number of tests to be generally similar to children raised by heterosexual parents on dimensions of psychological well-being, peer relations, and social and behavioral adjustment.²⁶²"

I presume the inconsistent findings (same vs. superior outcomes) are attributable to the separate metrics.

Statement 1: The Canadian Psychological Association has stated in 2006: “The literature (including the literature on which opponents to marriage of same-sex couples appear to rely) indicates that parents’ financial, psychological and physical well-being is enhanced by marriage and that children benefit from being raised by two parents within a legally-recognized union. As the CPA stated in 2003, the stressors encountered by gay and lesbian parents and their children are more likely the result of the way in which society treats them than because of any deficiencies in fitness to parent.²⁶³”

Statement 2: “In July 2006 the American Academy of Pediatrics issued the following statement: ‘There is ample evidence to show that children raised by same-gender parents fare as well as those raised by heterosexual parents. More than twenty-five years of research have documented that there is no relationship between parents’ sexual orientation and any measure of a child’s emotional, psychosocial, and behavioral adjustment. These data have demonstrated no risk to children as a result of growing up in a family with one or more gay parents. Conscientious and nurturing adults, whether they are men or women, heterosexual or homosexual, can be excellent parents.²⁶⁴”

Statement 3: We also know that the kids of heterosexuals do better when their parents are married rather than just living together. The parents' relationship is more stable and grounded and that gives kids a more secure feeling. We know that when the parents are married rather than just roommates, that the relationship lasts longer. Far more unmarried couples split up than marriages. Marriage provides more stability to the kids. Denying gays marriage objectively harms their kids and makes them feel more insecure and increases their risk of living in a single parent home and the accompanying harm that it causes... Why are we LDS promoting this anti-child and anti-family agenda? ... Many straight couples aren't ideal parents. They may have poor morals, do drugs, subject kids to second hand smoke, drink, belittle education, put the kids in day care every day, live in a poor/dangerous neighborhood, don't provide a well-balanced diet, etc... Why are such sub-ideal couples allowed to marry, but a lesbian couple, both with graduate degrees in Marriage, Family and Human Development from BYU, who are active in a church, who are actively involved in the child's local school, who live in a nice neighborhood, who have one parent stay home and make nutritious well balanced meals and raises the child with no day care, where neither parent smokes, drinks, does drugs, etc...are NOT allowed to marry? Which couple is more fit to raise a child and deserve the protections marriage provides spouses and kids?²⁶⁵

It is not difficult to imagine at least some committed homosexual couples lovingly raising children. It seems common sense to me that married homosexual couples would on average do at least as good a parenting job, if not better, than the more prevalent single parent homes, which many conclude is a very risky environment for children. Said one gay LDS man:

“I also feel like if gays were granted the right to marry their marriages would probably have a higher rate of success because they have had to fight so long for that right. I'm sure after the initial marriages, the numbers would be equal to heterosexual marriages, but there would be a lot of successful ones. Same goes for kids. These couples have to go through so many obstacles to be able to have kids. They really have to work hard for it. There aren't any "accidents" or unplanned children. So in all likelihood, these homes would be very well prepared for children and the parents would be very committed, simply due to the hardships they must go through to enjoy parenthood.^{266,}”

Is it not socially sensible to at the least promote healthy, committed homosexual couple families over single parenting? Many would go farther and argue that same-gender families merit the same treatment and consideration as parent candidates as opposite-gender families. Based on the observed outcomes to date, this parenting-capacity argument is not far-fetched:

“[C]hildren can and do thrive in both contexts [same and opposite sex two parent households], and some of the differences noted in the literature do not establish that children are better off when raised by parents of different sexes.^{267,}”

Children in opposite-sex households stand to benefit from SSM as well:

“What children, all children, need is protection from the bleak allure of a culture without commitment and a future without marriage. They need to grow up taking for granted that love, sex, and marriage go together—for everybody. They need to live among friends and neighbors, including gay friends and neighbors, who are married, not shackled up. No matter how you look at things, it is hard to see how a marriageless homosexual culture sends a good message for children or improves their social environment.²⁶⁸”

In addition to child-benefit-based parent arguments, one should consider the parent’s benefit as well. “The title father is sacred and eternal. It is significant that of all the titles of respect and honor and admiration that are given to Deity, He has asked us to address Him as Father.²⁶⁹” Like uniting with a spouse, parenting children is a crucial step in theosis that should take place in mortality where possible. Lonely celibacy cannot afford a parenting experience to nearly the degree that homosexual marriage can.

6. Providing reliable caregivers

“From society’s point of view, an unattached person is an accident waiting to happen. The burdens of contingency are likely to fall, immediately and sometimes crushingly, on people—relatives, friends, neighbors— who have enough problems of their own, and then on charities and welfare agencies. We all suffer periods of illness, sadness, distress, fury. What happens to us, and what happens to the people around us, when we desperately need a hand but find none to hold?

If marriage has any meaning at all, it is that when you collapse from a stroke, there will be another person whose “job” is to drop everything and come to your aid. Or that when you come home after being fired, there will be someone to talk you out of committing a massacre or killing yourself. To be married is to know there is someone out there for whom you are always first in line.²⁷⁰”

Providing reliable caregivers is one of the most significant societal and personal benefits *and* one of the most significant responsibilities that attach to marriage. Marriage is more stable on average than cohabitation (and for the same reasons, I would presume domestic partnership and civil union):

“A husband or wife is the social worker of first resort, the psychiatrist of first resort, the cop and counselor and insurer and nurse and 911 operator of first resort.²⁷¹”

Also:

“It is true that the single most important reason society cares about marriage is for the sake of children. But society's stake in stable, long-term partnerships hardly ends there. Marriage

remains an economic bulwark. Single people (especially women) are economically vulnerable, and much more likely to fall into the arms of the welfare state. Furthermore, they call sooner upon public support when they need care—and, indeed, are likelier to fall ill (married people, the numbers show, are not only happier but considerably healthier).²⁷²”

Many of the benefits of marriage (which I detail later in this chapter) may come because married people have someone to look after them, and someone to look after- and they know it.

Homosexuals largely lack this assurance:

“One of the first things many people worry about when coming to terms with their homosexuality is: Who will take care of me when I’m old? When I’m sick?”

If it is true that marriage creates kin, then surely society’s interest in kin creation is strongest of all for people who are less likely to have children of their own to rely on in old age and who may be rejected or even evicted—it is still not all that uncommon—by their own parents in youth. If the AIDS crisis showed anything, it was that homosexuals can and will take care of each other, sometimes with breathtaking devotion—and that no institution or government program can begin to match the love of a devoted partner.²⁷³”

One sees more evidence of this “commitment to caretaking” as a primary aspect of marriage in three ways: legal, normative, and ceremonial.

Legal (generally):

- Spouses can make life or death decisions when the other is incapacitated
- Don’t have to testify against each other in court
- Hospital visiting rights
- Doctor’s cannot refuse to tell the spouse’s condition
- Inheritance rights
- File taxes as a unit
- Etc.

Many legal benefits recognize the unique responsibility spouses have to care for each other. As one author concluded:

“The vast majority of ways in which the law recognizes marriage—practically all of them, if you stop to think about it—aim at facilitating and bolstering the caregiving commitment.²⁷⁴”

Normative/Social:

In addition to these legal evidences, normative social expectations also support the proposition that providing reliable caretakers is a primary purpose/aspect of marriage. The first evidence comes from the reader- do you consider caring for each other as a primary purpose/aspect of marriage? My guess is that most would answer yes. Has this purpose/aspect been substantively attached to marriage in the past few centuries and beyond, in the reader's perspective? I would again predict an affirmative response. The third evidence comes from a hypothetical. Let's say Mary and John, a middle-aged couple, are married. John is terribly injured at work: paralyzed from the waist down. Mary immediately abandons him, moving several states away. Mary calls every so often to chat for a bit, but leaves John's care completely to a hired helper. Could Mary still claim to be married? Would John be likely to get a divorce, perhaps even more likely than if Mary had committed adultery? I imagine their friends would also be shocked. "[W]hatever else marriage may be, it is a commitment to be there... the sine qua non of marriage."²⁷⁵

Ceremonial:

Last, one sees evidence from the text of frequently used marriage vows. The Book of Common Prayer from as early as 1662:

"To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part... Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?"

Regarding this prayer, Jonathan Rauch said:

"The text speaks twice of care and comfort 'in sickness and in health,' twice of love, twice of a lifetime bond. Those three, it implies, are interwoven: the commitment to care for another for life is the love which exceeds all others, the love of another even above oneself. There is no promise of children here, either to have them or to raise them, no mention of sex, no mention of inheritance, not a word about personal fulfillment... they placed at the center of marriage what most married people today also place there: 'in sickness and in health, to love and cherish, till death us do part.'²⁷⁶

Conclusion:

Providing reliable caregivers is well within the capacities of both homosexuals and heterosexuals. The benefits from this aspect of marriage accrue to homosexuals and society more generally, including heterosexuals. The opportunity cost in the church and in the country is enormous: potentially thousands and millions (respectively) of reliable caretaking relationships. Celibacy (and, to a lesser degree, civil union, cohabitation, and domestic partnership) does not do nearly as good a job of providing reliable caretakers as does marriage, including SSM.

7. Settling young men

A few years ago, I lived south of BYU campus in the Moon Apartments of Provo, Utah. While there I remember having a one-on-one talk with my bishop about marriage. Encouraging me to marry, he taught me that young men are sexually driven, strong, and aggressive. His teaching, I think, is an expression of common wisdom: marriage channels young men's sexual and other energy to settle and stabilize them. Said a prominent political scientist in 1993:

“Much of the history of civilization can be thought of as an effort to adapt these male dispositions to contemporary needs by restricting aggression or channeling it into appropriate channels. That adaptation has often required extraordinary measures... of all the institutions through which men may pass- schools, factories, the military- marriage has the largest effect.²⁷⁷”

Wilson went on to note some evidence for the unmatched stabilizing and settling effect of marriage, such as the statistic that unmarried men between 24 and 35 are three times as likely to murder another male, and are more likely to rape and rob, among other risks, than their married counterparts. I will cut short a more exhaustive review of the civilizing effects of marriage by stating that I think such effects are intuitive because:

“Marriage confers status: to be married, in the eyes of society, is to be grown up. Marriage creates stakes: someone depends on you. Marriage creates a safe harbor for sex. Marriage puts two heads together, pooling experience and braking impulsiveness. Of all the things a young person can do to move beyond the vulnerabilities of early adulthood, marriage is far and away the most fruitful. We are different people when we have a home: more stable, more productive, more mature, less self-obsessed, less impatient, less anxious. And marriage is the great domesticator.²⁷⁸”

An article from *The Economist* arguing for gay marriage emphasized the societal value of marriage in parenting and caregiving. It then said:

“Not least important, marriage is a great social stabiliser of men. Homosexuals need emotional and economic stability no less than heterosexuals—and society surely benefits when they have it. . . For society, the real choice is between homosexual marriage and homosexual alienation. No social interest is served by choosing the latter.”²⁷⁹”

However, it’s not only marrying, but the *prospect* of marrying, than can contribute to the social benefit of settling marinating-in-testosterone-brained men. I have observed this in my own and my peers’ lives. Said one corroborating author:

“If you hope to get married, and if your friends and peers hope to get married, you will socialize and date more carefully. If you’re a young woman, you will avoid getting pregnant unintentionally or gaining what used to be called a reputation. If you’re a young man, you will reach for respectability. You will devote yourself to your work, try to build status, and earn money to make yourself marriageable (often true of women, too). People who expect to get married observe and emulate husbands and wives.”²⁸⁰”

These civilizing effects apply to both men and women, though predominantly to young men.

“So what?” a critic might say. “Young homosexual men can still get married- to a woman.”

This rebuttal reminds me of a discussion I had about SSM a couple months ago with my brother, *Matthew, and some others. One person advocated for SSM, to which Matthew pushed back, noting that some homosexual people are happily married to someone of the opposite sex. My brother wryly retorted (out of Matthew’s earshot) that a lot of black people managed to attain some level of happiness under the yoke of slavery as well, but that fact doesn’t argue for maintaining the institution. I can also see the parallel drawn by my friend who quoted from Griffin’s *Black Like Me*:

“Whites told their black employees, and really believed it, that the NAACP and Martin Luther King were the black man’s greatest enemies. They were offended by any suggestion of injustice. They claimed that they always treated black people wonderfully well and always would so long as black people “stayed in their place.” If you asked them what that “place” was, they could not really say, but every black man knew that place was right in the middle of the stereotype.”²⁸¹ Many in the anti-SSM make the same claim: ‘we treat homosexuals wonderfully and always will, as long as they “stay in their place”- *outside* marriage.’²⁸²”

I trust that the comparable prejudice holds true for but a small subset of SSM opponents. To return to the critic, I note a few details from a 2010 study reviewing 20 years of mixed-orientation marriage studies:

“While gay-heterosexual marriages benefitted from communication and discussion of individual needs, few such marriages enjoyed a mutually satisfying sexual relationship together... Hays and Samuels (1989) administered a 28-page questionnaire adapted from Klein, Sepekoff, and Wolf (1985) to 21 heterosexual women who were or had been married to, and had children with, bisexual or gay men. Descriptive analysis revealed that all women had anticipated a lifelong, monogamous marriage, even those who had some knowledge of their husband’s premarital homoerotic feelings. Grief, social isolation, and feeling deceived were common responses of women after they discovered the sexual or emotional relationships of their husbands with other men. Forty-eight percent of the participants had divorced, separated, or were in the process of leaving their husbands. Women did not feel at liberty to seek support from friends and family due to fear of stigma. Of the 52% of participants who remained married, three felt secure in their relationships. Most married couples were not sure if their marriages would endure.

[From another study] A wavelike model of changing emotional foci was identified from common themes found in participants’ written narratives of their experiences. After their husbands came out to them, the women reported the following issues that emerged as they examined their relationship both in the present and as they reviewed their relationship history: (a) awareness of sexual or emotional dissonance with their spouse, (b) bewilderment and feelings of failure that their naïveté or actions caused the dissonance, (c) simultaneous relief and preoccupation about the implications of their husband’s coming out, (d) despair as they were unable to find mutually acceptable solutions except separation or divorce, (e) concern for their children’s well-being after learning that their father was gay, (f) disorientation as the women tried to assess the impact of the experience on themselves, (g) spiritual turmoil as they examined their religious beliefs and ties to their faith community, and (h) redefining themselves and renegotiating life plans after integrating their experiences and resolving loss issues...

[From a study surveying gay and bisexual men in MOM’s] The majority of men (65.4%) married because it seemed an expected life choice... Half of the sample realized they were gay or bisexual before marrying... Men were significantly more homophobic, with negative attitudes toward gay and lesbians...

[Another study] All participants reported depression longer than a month before coming out to their wives and reported self-loathing after witnessing their wives’ anger and pain. Men were fearful of losing friends and family ties after coming out...

[From the discussion] Pressure from within is described in these data as arising from tension between societal expectations, love for spouse, and same-sex attraction; fear of losing one’s family; developing a cogent sense of self while compartmentalizing feelings and behaviors; dealing with ambiguity about one’s sexual identity across contexts; and being able to live intentionally and with integrity...

Coming out to one’s straight partner was reported to be an extremely stressful event for both spouses...

Rating on scales of homosexuality was positively correlated with incidence of divorce and separation. Findings from investigations in Australia and the Philippines indicate that lack of community acceptance, few positive gay role models, and little gay-affirming societal discourse exert pressure on bisexual and gay men to marry women...

Straight women in MOM experienced an array of responses after their husband's coming out, ranging from outrage to relief. Such women's experiences were often conceptualized in terms of loss, shock, and sadness. Responses included isolating themselves, feeling humiliated, seeking counseling, and attempting to renegotiate or dissolve their marriage.,²⁸³

I would also reply that the church now counsels (at least to a significant degree) against mixed orientation marriages²⁸⁴. I point out that many gay men in mixed orientation marriages fantasize about men to enable their sexual performance, and after having sex with their wives some of them go into the bathroom and vomit. From an 1897 treatise on "sexual inversion:"

"I have little sympathy with those who are prepared to "cure" the invert at any price... the remedy [hypnosis, prostitute services] seems to me worse than the disease... it is not uncommon for even a pronounced invert to be able sometimes to effect coitus. It often becomes easy if at the time he fixes his thoughts on images connected with his own sex. But the perversion remains unaffected; the subject is merely practising masturbation *per vaginam*...

The assistance of an honest woman would be much better therapeutically, but it can very seldom be right and feasible to obtain the help of one who is likely to be successful... it is often not difficult to prematurely persuade an invert that his condition is changed; his health is perhaps improving, and if he experiences some slight attraction to a person of the opposite sex he hastily assumes that a deep and permanent change has occurred. This may be disastrous, especially if it leads to marriage... The apparent change does not turn out to be deep, and the invert's position is more unfortunate than his original position, both for himself and for his wife. Nor is it possible to view with satisfaction the prospects of inverts begetting or bearing children. Often, no doubt, the children turn out fairly well, but for the most part they bear witness that they belong to a neurotic... [footnote: "I have recently been told.. of a congenital invert.. who lately married in the hope of escaping his perversion, and was not even able to consummate the marriage. It is needless to insist on the misery which is created in such cases. "] It is better that a man should be enabled to make the best of his own strong natural instincts, with all their disadvantages, than that he should be unsexed and perverted, crushed into a position which he has no natural aptitude to occupy. As both Raffalovich and Fere have lately insisted, it is the ideal of chastity, rather than of normal sexuality, which the congenital invert should hold before his eyes.²⁸⁵

I note that the trust-vitiating risk of adultery is elevated in these marriages and point out the irony that some of the same critics which excoriate gay male promiscuity's risk to marital fidelity would also suggest they marry an individual they're not sexually interested in. If the critic is straight and male, I would shortcut a fuller defense along these lines and ask him a bottom-line question: "Imagine that the world now has *only* SSM: OSM (opposite sex marriage) is not an option, and opposite-sex couples have no special legal or cultural status and are considered to be cohabiting. If you want a lifelong, committed relationship, your options are to either marry a man or shack up with a woman. How willing would you be to marry another man (same question but to another woman if the critic were female)?" I don't know what the critic would

say, but this heterosexual author is exceptionally interested in marrying a woman and intensely disinterested in marrying a man- and I expect those interests wouldn't be much different if the tables turned on me tomorrow. “[M]ost regard the hope of a love marriage as the sine qua non of the pursuit of happiness—ahead of career, money, fame, even children.²⁸⁶” If LDS SSM were available, I would make two predictions: but few heterosexuals would avail themselves of SSM, and but few homosexuals would opt for OSM. The author of *When Gay People Get Married: What Happens When Societies Legalize Same-Sex Marriage*, who studied the effects of SSM in the Netherlands (which has legalized SSM since 2001), wrote:

“I compare the actual rates of same-sex marriage or registered partnership across countries... [W]hat I find is that the vast majority of gay and heterosexual couples alike choose marriage when they have options for legal recognition.²⁸⁷”

By prohibiting SSM, all homosexuals except those who enter mixed orientation marriages are effectively barred from marriage- and thus, for the male subset of that population, from marriage's (and the *prospect* of marriage's) settling and stabilizing effects.

8. God did not create all people physically male and female

Up to this point, the arguments in support of SSM have largely been some of the same reasons that Latter-day Saints typically support OSM (opposite-sex marriage). We will now turn to some reasons that are more uniquely specific to SSM.

Many church leaders have argued against a biological origin for homosexual orientation based on the claim that God makes no mistakes- “While it is a convincing idea to some, it is of the devil. No one is locked into that kind of life. From our premortal life we were directed into a physical body. There is no mismatching of bodies and spirits. Boys are to become men -- masculine, manly men --ultimately to become husbands and fathers²⁸⁸” (1978). This position was reiterated as recently as the October 2010 general conference: “Some suppose that they were pre-set and cannot overcome what they feel are inborn tendencies toward the impure and unnatural. Not so! Why would our Heavenly Father do that to anyone? Remember, He is our Father.²⁸⁹” [one might question the implicated theodicy (resolutions to the problem of evil) here-

if He is our benevolent Father, why did He create and send so many of us physically and mentally disabled into a world saturated with evil, suffering, and abuse?]

God created man male and female- Genesis says so, right? *Not if you're talking about physical sex.* Application of the idea that God made us all physically male or physically female fails not far beyond its limited application to Adam and Eve. The proof:

Because the claim requires gender to be binary (either male or female and nothing in between), in order to be reliable a gender test must also place every individual it is applied to correctly into one of the two categories. This implies two requirements:

- 1) the test must place every person (i.e. none can be ambiguous), and
- 2) there must be no false positives or false negatives (classifying a male as a female, or vice-versa, such as might happen if applying multiple tests or a single test with multiple non-exclusive criteria).

What criteria would you use to ascertain physical gender?

(for support of the examples cited below see e.g. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klinefelter's_syndrome, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_hermaphroditism, <http://www.isna.org/>, and the references section of <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersex>)

I present several commonly proposed phenotypic and genotypic criteria:

- a. The “pull your pants down” test (genitalia)- take a look and see if they have a vagina or a penis. This test fails because there are some people that have both or neither. There are some that have a partial penis/partial clitoris. Some have both ovaries and testicles. Some have testicles where their ovaries should be. This test violates both requirements 1 and 2 above.
- b. The genetics test (XY is male, XX is female)- this will help by separating those with ambiguous genitalia, and is testable through genotyping. However, this test also fails because some people are XXY or XXYY. Also, some have XY but the SRY gene either isn't expressed or is damaged (so the XY individual is phenotypically female, the default gender in the sexual differentiation of humans- see chapter 2). This test doesn't tell a judge how to come down in these cases (violating 1 above).
- c. The gametes test- whichever gametes (eggs or sperm) a person makes defines the person's gender. A number of people fail to make any gametes (e.g. via upstream aborted oogenesis or spermatogenesis)- thus frustrating requirement 1.

c. The brain test- though largely alike, as Brizendine (author of *The Male Brain* and *The Female Brain*) summarizes, there are distinct structural differences between the average male and the average female brain. The exceptions here are 1) those who exhibit intermediate brain phenotypes, 2) those who have a male brain but female genotype and female genitalia, and 3) those with a phenotypically female brain and phenotypically female genitalia but male genes. Thus, requirements 1 and 2 are both violated.

d. The sexual orientation test- assign the gender opposite the sexual orientation of the subject (e.g. if the person's attracted to men, conclude the person is a female). This test fails both because it is counterintuitive and because sexual orientation is spectral rather than binary (e.g. what about bisexual people?), thus at the least violating requirement 1.

Take Mr./Ms. Chase as an example. Born in New Jersey with ambiguous genitalia that baffled doctors, her/his parents originally named her/him Brian Sullivan, noting that "Chase is XX, and the reason for her intersex condition has never been fully understood." Mr./Ms. Chase was born with "mixed male/female sex organs" and after the discovery of ovaries and a uterus, a clitoridectomy was performed when she/he was aged 18 months. Her/his parents, as advised by doctors, moved to a new town and raised him/her as a girl, Bonnie Sullivan. Although she/he had begun speaking before the operation, she/he fell silent for six months after the operation. She/he developed ovotestis at age 8 (later clarified as "the testicular part of her ovo-testes"). She/he found out about the clitoridectomy aged 10, and at age 21 succeeded in gaining access to her/his medical records. She/he now goes by two names, Bo Laurent *and* Cheryl Chase, and advocates that surgery should only be done on patients who are able to make an informed choice.

What is a bishop to do when one of these ambiguous-gender persons comes before him requesting marriage? Does he send the person away with a prescription for lifelong celibacy? Does he randomly assign the person a gender and restrict their marriage prospects to its opposite? Oftentimes judges decide the gender of these ambiguous individuals when the intersex person is young, ordering invasive surgery and hormone treatment to force the individual to become one gender (one of the judges I've worked for told me he has had to make the call a few times). Not infrequently the person grows up and angrily claims the judge got it wrong, in some cases seeking a sex change operation. In other cases the individual grows up and criticizes the judge for not letting them remain as they were born – phenotypically a third gender. Now back to the argument, where I conclude:

Unless and until a reliable and unambiguous test of physical gender is identified, the existence of these intersex persons frustrates the two-gender claim.

As one can see, the claim that God made all people either physically male or physically female is demonstrably false (to say nothing of those who feel their spiritual gender doesn't match their physical, such as a subset of transgendered²⁹⁰ persons). If this building block is destroyed, the cross-beam that relied upon it, namely that God placed the proper sexual orientation into every body, is also suspect- *sublato fundamento, cadit opus* (the foundation being removed, the structure falls). Additionally, if a person appears before an LDS Bishop and requests marriage, and this is key- *the bishop doesn't know with certainty the spiritual gender of the requestor*. This is not surprising because the bishop (or you or I) doesn't know with certainty whether a body is even ensouled or not. Picture a room with ten bodies. One has had no vital signs for an hour (heart, lungs, brain, etc.). Another has brain stem function but no higher brain function. One has no brain function but the lungs and heart are working. One has had no vital signs for two seconds. One is a united egg and sperm right before union, one the sperm and egg are united but the chromosomes aren't. One is partway through syngamy (similar to the concepts of fertilization or conception), one three seconds after syngamy (though thirty nonessential base pairs didn't bond), one ten days after syngamy, and the last one two hundred and thirty days after syngamy.

“It is a fact that a child has life before birth. However, there is no direct revelation on when the spirit enters the body.” – 2010 Church Handbook of Instructions, 17.2.10

Without being told, can you or the bishop tell how many ensouled bodies are in the room with your eyes closed? If so, what is the number? Could you count if your eyes were open? How about open with access to all the details just listed? Would reliance on physical characteristics advance, obstruct, or have no effect on discerning a spiritual reality?

If the Bishop cannot discern even the *presence* of absence of a human spirit (which makes issues such as organ donation and abortion very sticky), how can the Bishop be relied upon to correctly identify an attribute of that spirit? Here we return to the arguably more exacting task of discerning spiritual gender. If the Bishop is blind and a person is brought before him, does he know whether that person is a male or a female spirit? Would he not wait to conclude until he

heard the person speak? Wouldn't sight-privileged people conclude based on apparent physical appearance? Would some of them factor in the testimony of the person, who may be transgender? What if a person got a sex change and changed their appearance- could they not trick the Bishop into marrying a female-turned-male to another female? What if that person were born intersex? Is there any basis for affirming conclusively the spiritual gender of *any* person, irrespective of their physical appearance? The practice of marrying only physical males and physical females risks both false negatives (prohibiting a male and a female spirit from marrying because their bodies are of the same or ambiguous sex) and false positives (uniting two same-sex spirits because their bodies are of different or ambiguous sex). In the absence of certainty about spiritual gender, it is irrational to exclude marriage on the basis of apparent physical sex: instead, a bishop charged with marrying male to female spirits must either not marry at all (thus avoiding same-sex pairings) or marry any two people that come before him (thus avoiding the absence of any marriage). Stated another way: being uncertain as to sex itself, it makes little sense to exclude marriage on that basis, and more sense to instead stake marriage access on a more sure and discernible foundation, *especially* if the relevant determination is of spiritual sex. That foundation is the platform constructed of the planks of 1) two partner, 2) consent, and 3) minimum age requisites, and *not* 4) indiscernible spiritual sex. SSM fits the bill: man/woman-only marriage does not.

9. We can't be 100% certain we know God's thoughts on SSM

The claim has been made that SSM will never be performed in the church because God has sexual intercourse with His wife and God has offspring²⁹¹, implying that same-sex couples cannot mimic a heterosexually married God in this way (though opposite-sex couples can). To my knowledge, precious little if anything has been revealed about either the mechanism of spiritual reproduction or God's sex life. Certainly, the idea of reproducing as we typically do on earth (by having a number of sexual episodes with a partner followed by a painful, risky nine-month pregnancy) becomes difficult to conceptualize as God's method, considering He and His wife(ves)'s numberless progeny, omnipotence, and invulnerability. In the end, that would be an obscene amount of sex and pregnancy (numberless offspring multiplied by numerous orgasms per conception) for the embodied parents of unembodied spirits. Plus, we are close to giving the ability to reproduce together to same-sex couples here on earth- is there doubt that omnipotent

persons in heaven would struggle with a comparable task? For instance, we are told God created our bodies from the dust of the earth, which seems very unlike sexual intercourse- in which case increasingly following His example through the use of reproductive technologies might seem difficult to condemn. In any case, there is insufficient revelatory basis to support the contention that homosexual couples cannot mimic God's method of spiritual reproduction: the literal spiritual parentage of God cannot even potentially argue against SSM absent knowing the mechanism of spiritual reproduction.

Also, even if God is heterosexually married, He is either exclusively monogamous *or* polygamous, in which case to become like Him each of us must mimic Him- meaning that in eternity all will be either polygamous *or* monogamous. Given that over time faithful church members have fit some into one and some into the other camp during mortality, one or the other class will have some significant changes to make in heaven. If God instead permits a diversity of marriage forms (e.g. you can be exalted in either polygamous *or* monogamous opposite-gender marriage) as long as the individual is sealed to at least one other spouse, then there is no necessary preclusion of same-sex pairings. Indeed, knowing that God is not the only person of His stature and indeed trod a path similar to ours, including likely having an exalted spiritual father, we reasonably conclude that a community of Gods exists. Not knowing the homogeneity of that community's constitution, the possibility of exalted same-sex couples extant in the universe at this moment exists.

Below is an interesting study. Though it lacks rigor, the results are intuitive and belie certainty that God's will regarding SSM is fully and broadly known:

"We published a notice on our web site encouraging visitors to take part in our study to assess the will of God. We E-mailed a form to each visitor to our web site who had asked to be included in the study. Subjects were thus self-selected. The form asked the recipient:

- Whether they were currently in favor of or opposed to same-sex marriages (SSM).
- Some personal data -- their sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and which "wing" of that religion that they followed.
- To seek God's will for same-sex marriages through prayer.
- To continue praying until they received a response from God or felt that they could not assess the will of God.
- If they were successful in assessing God's position on SSM, then we asked:

- what God's will is, and
- how certain are they that they correctly assessed God's will."

Results from the preliminary study

Although the sample size was small, one result was striking: Of the 68% of the participants who believed that they assessed the will of God, *every person* found that God agreed with their stance on SSM:

- All of those who are personally opposed to SSM reported that God agreed with them.
- All of those favoring SSM also reported that God agreed with them.
- None found that God took a compromise position, saying that God supported or opposed SSM depending upon the specifics of each individual case.

Summary of the study

The most significant result, in the author's opinion, is that:

- Those who personally favored SSM found that God also favored it.
- Those who personally opposed SSM found that God also opposes it.
- God did not disagree with any of the participants' beliefs, even though they are in conflict.

With few exceptions:

- Religious liberals favor SSM.
- Religious conservatives oppose SSM.

With no exceptions:

- Heterosexual conservative Christians oppose SSM²⁹².

When asking God to reveal truth, one must be open to whatever answer He would give, even one that contradicts what you thought you knew for sure- else there is little point in posing the question.

Joseph Smith: "Why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain?"²⁹³

10. Very few open members stay active

I failed to find a credible percentage of those LDS members who stay active after coming out of the closet about their orientation. My unscientific inquiries to three I thought well equipped to provide the answer said:

"Of the 100s of gay men I know with Mormon roots, I'm one of maybe 3 or 4 that are out and active. I would submit that the ones who stay are deep in the closet... hard to poll a hidden population.²⁹⁴"

"Ooooh, thats a hard number to estimate. Mostly because I don't see it as a binary thing. Some of my friends have left 100% have withdrawn their memberships like they have their testimony, some are completely indifferent, some fight the church, some stay active, and I know many people who still have membership but aren't active, don't wear garments and will unlikely go back to church without the church policy changing and then bringing them back. As for people who stay 100% active years after they come out- 5% of people I know. I know plenty of people who have SAID and PROMISED they'd stay active, but they don't ever. It's not that they go apostate either. It's more like the church isn't a healthy place to live for them and they part ways for a few years or decades until things get better between them.²⁹⁵"

"Honestly I Have no idea on that statistic, sorry. I would say that of people who acknowledge their homosexuality, meaning that are out at all, it is infinitesimally small. Almost no out gay people, some that are kinda halfway out and a fair number that aren't out at all, many who are married. But for percentages...no way anything I'd say would be anything other than pure speculation.²⁹⁶"

Gary Watts, the former president of Family Fellowship (Family Fellowship is a predominantly Latter-day Saint support group for families who have Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and/or Transgender members²⁹⁷), says less than 10% stay in the church. This statistic matches my personal experience and I for one find it devastating, if indeed God uniformly condemns leaving His restored church. Mosiah 27:3: "for they could not bear than any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble."

There are doubtlessly many reasons why individuals choose to withdraw their church activity. However, if these perceptions are even roughly accurate, they are one piece of evidence to suggest that the LDS environment is inhospitable to those who are open about their homosexual orientation. If there is nothing sinful about being homosexually oriented, there seems to be little reason to criticize the act of coming out. (Even if homosexual orientation *were* sinful, there might still be little reason to criticize the act of coming out- see my post²⁹⁸). To

tolerate or advocate SSM as a church is likely to make the LDS environment more hospitable to those who do come out (and likely those who don't as well). It should go without saying that proselytizing efforts to HO people and their loyal loved ones would likely be more successful with than without LDS SSM²⁹⁹.

In addition to losing fewer homosexually oriented people to apostasy or suicide, the church stands to gain from losing fewer people who sympathize with homosexually oriented people.

What follows is some dialogue I had with a new convert troubled by this issue.

Linda: My name is *Linda. I am friend of *Brenda who is a friend of Brad Carmack. Actually, Brenda was my missionary back in 2007 and has turned into a very dear friend. I am writing because I would like some opinions on the subject of same sex involvement including marriage. I was raised by lesbians and that was the main reason I did not want to be part of the church after knowing their feelings of gay people and marriage. (I grew up in a non-denominational church led by gays) After some serious talks with Brenda, I was convinced that maybe I did not need to understand or even believe every single thing the same as the church teaches. I eventually got baptized. I had been going to church for a couple of months and about a week after I got baptized Brenda got transferred. I quickly went into panic mode. I no longer had 'my missionary" there by my side to talk to very day. I still went to church but about a month after that all happened Proposition 8 in California was going on in regards to same sex marriage. My bishop started talking about it one Sunday and I got up and left. The next day I saw the news reports of how much money the LDS church was giving to campaign against same sex marriage. I was done with church. (I know it wasn't just the LDS church giving money...but that was the church I was tithing to so in essence...I was helping to pay for something that was way against my beliefs).

Me: *I can see why that experience would be hard.*

Linda: About a year later I started missing the feelings I got while I attended the church so I went back but only once. I again started getting angry about the church's stance on the subject as it was brought up AGAIN in church that day. I have never been back since.

I have since started getting into universal happiness and karma to put it simply. However, when I try to think that maybe there isn't a God, I get a strange feeling. When I try to believe in giving good to the universe gets me good back....something happens and I end up "praying to God" even though I have sort of denounced him in a way. Obviously something isn't right. So when I think about....Is there a God?....I can only come to the conclusion that the LDS church seems to be the lessor of all "the religious evils" if that makes any sense. I think it does. Still I can not come to terms with the gay issue.

Me: *Okay, I follow you.*

I am married to a man....not gay. However, my mom wanted nothing else but to be happy with her lifetime partner. When she was on her death bed, she was not able to get the rights with her lover that heterosexual couples got. This hurt me so bad.

Me: I would imagine! I'd probably feel about the same way in your shoes.

I also know people this has happened to as well. A long-time friend of my mom's was with her lover for 38 years and after she died, her lover got no rights, lost their house, and was not even allowed at the funeral.

Me: That is a very rough outcome.

Linda: There have just been so many terrible things that go along with this....it makes me cry to think of them. As you can see, it is not easy for me to go to a church that ex-communicates (from what I've heard) gay people that act on it....but re-enacts ex-communicated members that are child molesters (my husband's 2 uncles).

Me: I don't know for sure but I'd imagine that an individual that is excommunicated for homosexual conduct could also regain his or her membership and fellowship in the church after repentance, much like child molesters.

Linda: How do I get over this? How does a gay man or woman stay in a church that doesn't 'want' them?

Me: I for one want them. I think the Lord wants them. Though duty-bound to take a hard line against what God has declared as sin, there are some strong statements from church leaders that the church wants them. (See "Helping Those Who Struggle With Same-Gender Attraction:" "What's more, I love you. My Brethren among the General Authorities love you. I'm reminded of a comment President Boyd K. Packer made in speaking to those with same-gender attraction. 'We do not reject you,' he said. '... We cannot reject you, for you are the sons and daughters of God. We will not reject you, because we love you.'")

Linda: How do I follow the right path (if it is indeed the right path) alongside people that would not have allowed my mom to be a member or even say she was wrong to be happy in an "unconventional" way?

Me: By following that path. The people in the church are no more perfect than you, me, or your mother. If people in the church commit uncharitable errors, it seems more appropriate to love, forgive, and associate with them than to part ways.

Linda: Brad mentioned one of you lead a same sex marriage talk group on campus... I would really appreciate your guys take on all of this. I so bad want to be where I belong....I just don't know where that is.

Me: *I pray you'll find it. Though I don't know how or when, because you're seeking, I think you will find where you belong if you have real intent (see Moroni 10:3-5 or D & C 14:5) and ask God.*

Linda: I hate to think it is in the LDS church and I will miss out on the Celestial kingdom (if, again, I believe that) because of this when it doesn't even affect me directly. However, I would never change how I grew up.

Me: *The way you grow up is a dangerous foundation for deciding how to believe and live. There are many scriptural examples of individuals who were raised with at least some false traditions (e.g. the Lamanites). If these people always followed the way they were raised, then none would forsake their lives and take up their cross to heed the Savior's invitation to "Come, Follow Me." It is better to seek and conform to truth even at the expense of abandoning beliefs or practices you were raised with if necessary (or, conversely, embracing correct beliefs you were raised with even if they're unpleasant). How this principle applies in your case I don't know.*

Linda: And I will fight right alongside of the gays and lesbians for equal rights for my mom's sake, as well as human rights sake, as long as I live.

Me: *Again, the fight may be a just one, but it is not made so merely because of your mother's choices- for though of course you love and respect her immensely, she is no less human/imperfect than you or me. I don't conclude as to the correctness of her choices: but I do claim that if they are correct, they are so not merely because the choices were made by her- but instead because they are in harmony with independent principles such as justice and equality.*

Linda: I need answers and I don't like the ones I am getting. HAHA. I am not naive enough to think that any "religion" would say it is okay to be gay. But I do believe that many people are pushed away from "God" because they are gay. If memory serves me right, I was taught that God loves everyone and no one should judge. So if that's true....why do people that follow Gods' word judge?

Me: *For some, the answer is because God has charged them with that responsibility. For instance, Bishops are common judges in Israel, and are tasked with, among other responsibilities, judging and punishing certain sins. God does love everyone, but He does not endorse sin, and it would be wrong for His servants to refrain from fulfilling a duty God has laid upon them. Fortunately in my view, most members don't have this burden/responsibility of judging. Plus, it is valuable to remember as God reminds us so often in the scriptures that He will judge us at the last day and hold us accountable for our choices- and that even though He loves us, He will not shield us from the consequences of our choices, positive and negative, without our exercise of agency. Thus, church members should judge themselves, identify errors, and repent of them. Thus, I've identified two categories where people should judge.*

Linda: Isn't the point of our lives to live happily and do good to people? To help people? To show generativity (people nurturing the younger generations)? To [be] unselfish to our own needs and wants? To raise a family with good values and morals?

Me: Yes, there's lots of scriptures supporting these points you make.

Linda: And that is a whole other subject. There are so many children out there that don't have homes. They are living in group homes or on the streets. Why is it not okay to have these children placed in good homes if those homes consist of gays and lesbians? The church would rather those children grow up without a loving foundation? I just don't get it. Please help me understand.

In the end, despite my efforts, she didn't understand- and fell away from the church.

11. LDS divine command theory relies on living oracles

*note- the next two reasons are a bit of an exception because they support the proposition that one should be *ready* to accept SSM, not necessarily that she *should* support SSM (as do the other reasons).

“Mormonism... calls for thoughtful disciples who will not be content with merely repeating some of its truths, but will develop its truths.... The disciples of ‘Mormonism’ ... will yet take profounder and broader views of the great doctrines committed to the church; and... will cast them in new formulas; co-operating in the works of the Spirit, until ‘they help to give to the truth received a more forceful expression, and carry it beyond the earlier and cruder stages of its development.’³⁰⁰” -Elder B.H. Roberts

The de facto moral reasoning theory most Mormons use is divine command theory, meaning that our most important duty is to comply with God's commands. We learn His commands through prophets. Mormons believe that the words of living prophets trump the words of dead ones- I leave the proof for this claim out since I think but very few would contest it (examples of prophets trumping their predecessors include relaxed strictures on birth control, relaxed standards on the length of garments, and significant alterations in temple ordinances). Wrote an advocate of LDS SSM:

“Does it trouble me that my view of this matter directly challenges the present stance of the LDS Church, which opposes gay marriage and forbids as sinful any sexual activity outside of traditional marriage? Yes, it does sadden me to be at variance with the Church, but that does not absolve me of the moral responsibility to analyze such matters as thoughtfully as I can and to share with others what my relevant experience has been. I do not see my questioning of the present Church position as inappropriate, disloyal, or without ample precedent. After all, in the Judeo-Christian tradition and in recent LDS Church history, there are numerous examples of significant doctrinal reinterpretations and course corrections. Major examples include the revised

view that God is the God of all human beings, not of Israel alone; the reinterpretation of the gathering of Israel, the institution and subsequently the cessation of the practice of polygamy; and the extension of priesthood ordination to black men. It is even evident that the Church's view of homosexuality has undergone some significant adjustment in recent decades; therefore, it, too, may be susceptible to further revision.³⁰¹

This living>dead principle can be a fortunate thing. For example, President Kimball's 1968-1971 teachings about homosexuality created a psychological living hell^{302,303} for many homosexually oriented members in the 1970's. In chapter 2 we concluded that homosexual orientation is, in at least most cases, predominantly caused by biological factors. Thus, homosexual orientation is at least roughly morally equivalent to being born left-handed, i.e. that there is nothing morally wrong with either since neither is agentic (chosen). Certainly moral agents are responsible only for their acts and omissions and not for phenomena they did not causally contribute to. We observed in chapter 2 as well that many earlier church statements did not discriminate between orientation and behavior; thus, many experienced the equivalent of falsely condemning themselves for the choosing to be left-handed in a world where such handedness is offensive to God. However, because of more recent authoritative statements, such as President Hinckley's 1997 recognition of the moral difference between orientation and conduct, we need no longer apply President Kimball's repeated characterizations of our homosexually oriented brothers and sisters as self-selected perversions. President Hinckley: "Now we have gays in the church. Good people. We take no action against such people – provided they don't become involved in transgression, sexual transgression."³⁰⁴ This is not the first time that the church has changed significantly regarding homosexual issues.

LDS church leaders did not speak out very much against homosexuality except in belated concert with the homophobic trends in the surrounding culture (mostly in the past 60 years- though as in the initiation they once again lag slightly behind the culture, which is currently reversing the trend). Wrote one author: "Reaching adulthood in the twentieth century seemed to be the crucial factor in the decline of tolerance among LDS leaders for homoerotic behaviors and the rise of homophobia within the Mormon hierarchy since the early 1950s."³⁰⁵ Also, "Despite newspaper reports of sexual activities among Mormon students since the early 1900s, for decades some LDS administrators and Mormon teenagers showed no homophobia."³⁰⁶ This is contrasted with the harsh penalties Mormons of an overlapping time period imposed on perpetrators of acts of

bestiality, incest, or adultery, including decapitation and castration³⁰⁷. Sodomy wasn't even illegal in Pioneer Utah, as evidenced by Mormon municipal judge Jeter Clinton's release of soldier Frederick Jones for sexual assault on a nine-year old boy. The judge noted in the 1864 case that anal sex was not illegal in Utah³⁰⁸ (a month before, the Salt Lake County Court sentenced a man to 20 years of hard labor in the Penitentiary for sexually assaulting a similarly aged girl³⁰⁹). "In fact homoerotic conduct was not among the sex-related charges for which any Mormon was excommunicated between 1845 and Brigham Young's death in 1877³¹⁰ (though notably three teenagers were excommunicated nearly a decade later for homoerotic acts³¹¹).” A number of prominent Mormons in the early nineteenth century were not sanctioned for their homosexuality, including Evan Stephans, Louie P. Felt, and May Anderson, all of whom in 1919 “came out” in public at the zenith of their church careers³¹². “In almost every instance Mormon leaders who served in the nineteenth century were more tolerant of homoerotic behaviors than they were of every other nonmarital sexual activity.³¹³” The activities of Salt Lake City's Bohemian Club evidenced that Utah was no exception to the existence of “an early American subculture of people who interacted socially because they shared an erotic interest in persons of their same gender.³¹⁴” Also, for decades same-sex church leaders slept in the same bed together when traveling: “same-sex sleeping arrangements were nearly a requirement for Mormon men in church leadership positions that involved extensive travel³¹⁵.” In 1843, Joseph Smith preached that “two who were vary friends indeed should lie down upon the same bed at night locked in each other[‘s] embrace talking of their love and should awake in the morning together. They could immediately renew their conversation of love even while rising from their bed.³¹⁶” This is in sharp contrast to the strict mission rule that companions are not to sleep in the same bed³¹⁷. Mormon men and women in the nineteenth century often kissed others of their same gender out of religious devotion and personal affection, most likely full on the lips³¹⁸. Even as late as the 1940's, the Apostle Richard Lyman's extramarital heterosexual affair was punished much more harshly than the revelation of Church Patriarch Joseph F. Smith's homosexual affairs with college students³¹⁹. Others, such as a Mormon professor at Ricks College, were dropped from held positions rather than excommunicated or disfellowshipped³²⁰. Homosexual acts as grounds for excommunication was not added to the Handbook of Instructions until 1968³²¹.

This brief historical treatment suggests that the church's treatment of homosexual issues is flexible³²². We should be careful to presume that we have enough, that we've received the last word from the Lord on homosexual issues:

“Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!... For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.” 2 Nephi 28: 27 & 30

Also,

“Is God inconstant, changing his mind suddenly as he goes along? Or do we change in our perception of his will as we experience evolutionary growth? I subscribe to the second position. Since the Church proclaims the importance of ongoing revelation and since our leaders, however wise, do not claim to be infallible, the Latter-day Saints above all religious groups should accept that internal, as well as external, dialogue can contribute to advancing our understanding of the divine will. Latter-day Saints should not merely concede that God's revelation regarding moral development is unfinished but should optimistically expect it to be continually refined. All of us have a responsibility to help prepare the seedbed of understanding for moral progress.”³²³

A story from Joseph Smith:

“Upon Pelatiah Brown being brought to trial before a high council, the Prophet Joseph is quoted as saying, “I did not like the man being called up for erring or questioning doctrine... I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled.”³²⁴

Last, from apostle Hugh B. Brown:

“Revelation may come in the laboratory, out of the test tube, out of the thinking mind and the inquiring soul, out of search and research and prayer and inspiration.

We should be dauntless in our pursuit of truth and resist all demands for unthinking conformity. No one would have us become mere tape recorders of other people's thoughts. We should be modest and teachable and seek to know the truth by study and faith. There have been times when progress was halted by thought control. Tolerance and truth demand that all be heard and that competing ideas be tested against each other so that the best, which might not always be our own, can prevail.

Knowledge is the most complete and dependable when all points of view are heard... One of the most important things in the world is freedom of the mind; from this all other freedoms spring. Such freedom is necessarily dangerous, for one cannot think right without running the risk of thinking wrong, but generally more thinking is the antidote for the evils that spring from wrong thinking. More thinking is required, and we should all exercise our God-given right to think and

be unafraid to express our opinions, with proper respect for those to whom we talk and proper acknowledgment of our own shortcomings.

We must preserve freedom of the mind in the church and resist all efforts to suppress it. The church is not so much concerned with whether the thoughts of its members are orthodox or heterodox as it is that they shall have thoughts... And while all members should respect, support, and heed the teachings of the authorities of the church, no one should accept a statement and base his or her testimony upon it, no matter who makes it, until he or she has, under mature examination, found it to be true and worthwhile; then one's logical deductions may be confirmed by the spirit of revelation to his or her spirit, because real conversion must come from within...³²⁵”

Because we are a church of living oracles, we have no loyalty to what past prophets have said which contradict the living one. Also, we hold that the canon is still open: “We believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.³²⁶” There is little use in praying for God to reveal truth to us if we place bounds on the answers we will accept. Thus, we must be prepared to follow whatever direction comes- even a reversal of the current church practice of fighting SSM. This scenario not entirely unlikely- if indeed the circuit and/or Supreme Court upholds the *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* holding, which God necessarily knew would happen because He’s omniscient, it is counterintuitive that God would have instructed the church to promote Proposition 8 in the first place if indeed His ostensible purpose was to make same-sex marriage as broadly illegal as possible. Why? Because God is not stupid. The church’s involvement in the passage was a direct contributing cause to the exact opposite effect, namely that more states than just California may no longer prohibit same-sex marriage. Circuit or Supreme Court affirmations of *Perry* will expand this effect even further. Perhaps Proposition 8 was like Zion’s Camp or the command to Abraham to slay his innocent son- God had other purposes besides the ostensible redemption of Zion by arms or the death of Isaac by his father’s hand. Even if this speculation fails, one may in any case argue that a reversal of the church’s religious and legal opposition to SSM is vanishingly likely- but if President Monson pronounced tomorrow that the church will now practice and promote SSM, will you be ready, or like some members after the blacks/priesthood reversal will you fall away? **The stereotypical LDS divine command theory approach demands that level of readiness, sacrifice, and obedience.**

Additionally, I note that many of the harsher anti-homosexual statements of church leaders can be excused by virtue of rapid change in the landscape of reproductive technologies. A few decades ago, the ability of homosexuals to reproduce was not as apparent. Also, the accessibility of reproductive technologies for same-gender couples was less than that of today (the most likely increased accessibility in coming decades). Thus, that portion of older statements contingent on the inability of same-gender couples to reproduce may be somewhat excusable. Additionally, it is arguable that none of the past statements (as listed in chapter 2) qualify as the church's position: "formal statements by the First Presidency are the definitive source of official church positions."³²⁷

12. SSM advocates may turn out to be pro-family

Was George Washington a traitorous rebel or a freedom fighter? Is Al-Qaeda a bright hope for justice or a deeply traitorous rebel? The answer usually turns not on the nature of their activities, but on the whether the judge is a Tory or a Patriot; an American or a radical global jihadist Sunni Muslim. Similarly, some view SSM advocates as a threat to the family. Others see them as family freedom fighters. Either view can cause regrettable problems.

Over the last year I have worked with two prominent LDS scholars who are very outspoken against SSM. I have heard both of them pejoratively use terms such as "agenda-driven gay activists," spitting forth the "gay activists" phrase as though they were some reprobate societal plague. I have witnessed similar vitriol from some of these activists when describing people like me, defenders of traditional family. I am impressed with neither. At the end of the day you have only *people* on both sides- spiritual brothers and sisters who wake up, eat breakfast, face challenges, and then go back to bed again just like you or me. Certainly members of the church do not want to risk harboring hateful feelings toward any person or group. It is never appropriate to demonize the opposition when that opposition is constituted only of mortal people.

It would also be wise to avoid vilifying SSM, as one cannot be certain whether or when their case will ultimately prevail:

“Second, with marriage in America declining in appeal and statistical success, it can use help from whatever quarter. Homosexuals constitute a minority that wishes to affirm this institution and its ideals. Contrary to the hue and cry raised by the extreme right, gays are not trying to dismantle marriage but rather to extend its stabilizing influence on society. By entering into it, they are attempting as individuals and as couples to be socially responsible.³²⁸”

Marriage connects a couple with their community. For decades the heterosexual majority has snubbed and excluded homosexuals and same-sex couples. The efforts of some homosexually oriented people to seek marriage could thus be viewed as an act of forgiveness- that after so many years of offensive persecution and discrimination, they are still willing to attempt reconciliation. Many homosexually oriented people are not as forgiving, and instead choose to remain in the separate status to which society has relegated them. Also,

“At a time when marriage needs all the support and participation it can get, homosexuals are pleading to move beyond cohabitation. They want the licenses, the vows, the rings, the honeymoons, the anniversaries, the in-laws, the benefits, and, yes, the responsibilities and the routines. Same-sex marriage offers the opportunity for a dramatic public affirmation that marriage is for everybody and that nothing else is as good. And who is telling gays to just shack up instead? The self-styled friends of matrimony.³²⁹”

It is not clear to everyone whether SSM strengthens or weakens the family. In the meantime, civil and respectful opposition to SSM advocacy is appropriate for those whose consciences so dictate.

13. The deadness of the law

“Religion should not be a scaffold to maintain the privilege of being right so much as it should be a ladder that prompts us in doing and becoming good.”³³⁰

Many faithful members of the LDS church feel duty bound to “follow the brethren” in insisting that 1) HO is chosen and abominable; and 2) HO members should try very hard to change, since HO is contrary to the Plan and can be routinely reversed. Either or both of these ideas unquestionably impose excruciating and unnecessary hardship on HO Latter-day Saints, as abundantly evidenced by their personal accounts and disturbingly elevated suicide rates. Though I and many others conclude that members are not duty bound in this way, I do not condemn those who judge otherwise. I also do not condemn the 50% of participants in the Milgram experiments³³¹ who hurt innocent people merely because an authority figure so instructed them. (In the experiment ordinary people repeatedly sent, according to their understanding, lethal

amounts of electricity into the bodies of people who were screaming at the top of their lungs and urgently protesting for their lives). I may even exculpate those 200 or so faithful members who, under the explicit direction of their Mormon church leaders, massacred in cold blood over 100 unarmed men in the Mountain Meadows Massacre³³². (Those very leaders, under the pretense of a white flag and promise of safe passage, beguiled the band of traveling emigrants to yield up their weapons before commanding their slaughter). The situation of today's duty-bound members is not so different from that of pre-Christ Jews, who were required to impose excruciating hardship on homosexually behaving people by stoning them to death (Leviticus 20:13). The difference today is that the imposed excruciating hardship is persistent rather than temporary. To these members who feel duty-bound to harm homosexually oriented people, I recommend by analogy the account of a homosexual-stoning, pre-Christ society of Jews (2 Nephi 25):

24 And, notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled. 25 For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments... 27 Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law... that they need not harden their hearts against him when the law ought to be done away.

As concluded in chapter 2, homosexual orientation is overwhelmingly biologically caused (genetic + prenatal intraorganismal hormone environment). Though some few report successfully reversing from a fully homosexual orientation to a fully heterosexual orientation, the predominance of attempts to reverse orientation result in heart-wrenching anguish, intense suffering, excruciating disappointment, and abject failure. An embrace of SSM would be one way to send the vital message that the unchosen characteristic of homosexual orientation is not evil, and instead can be channeled to further God's purposes for His children during mortality.

14. Eschatology (the afterlife) doesn't necessarily argue against SSM

Interlocutor: "There are no homosexual unions or marriages in Heaven. As a primary goal of life on Earth is to create eternal family units, giving validity to a same-sex union that will have no validity after this life would be counter-productive for those engaged in it. Also, if same-sex attraction is a mortal "test" equivalent to blindness, cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome, or mental illness (in the eyes of God), and if those individuals who suffer from same-sex attraction here

will no longer suffer from it after death or after the resurrection, we do them harm by encouraging or "blessing" what will ultimately be self-destructive behavior (destructive to them)."

In response, I would ask two questions. First: how is lifelong celibacy's track record doing for creating eternal family units? Second: how about a woman whose husband dies in a car crash two weeks after the wedding? A woman can only be sealed to one man, and it would be unfair to her first spouse, who committed no fault, to lose his wife to another man. What LDS man would marry such a woman, to whom he could not be sealed? Would their children be the posterity of the first husband? Will he spend his whole life raising and building relationships with his spouse and another man's progeny, only to lose his wife and/or children in the afterlife? What rational man in the church would entertain even for a minute the idea of dating this woman when he could instead marry someone he would be with for eternity? If she was unlucky enough to have her sealed spouse die early on, perhaps her failure in not doing a better job of protecting him justifies her subsequent lifelong invalidity in the church as a legitimate marriage partner. Perhaps also those single women who are born infertile, whom in the women-heavy dating market men would reasonably pass up in favor of a woman who can meet the church's naturally reproducing ideal, are also rightly disadvantaged as God's comeuppance for some transgression on their part.

I hope these examples sound as repugnant to the reader as they do to me. The important point here is that, as established in chapter 2, at least for the majority of HO people, they chose to be "that way" as much as the woman above chose to have her husband die early, or as much as naturally infertile women or men chose their infertility. Our Christian hearts go out to these people, and for some of us our Christian hands as well, in designing something that will enable them to have a family experience in this life- even a less-than-celestial-law something. [It is obvious that we don't yet live a celestial law in the church. We live the law of tithing- in the celestial kingdom is the law of consecration. In the celestial kingdom, looking on a woman to lust after her is adultery- for that offense we don't even remove a man from his calling, let alone disfellowship or excommunicate him. In heaven there is no divorce- here temple divorces (sealing cancellations) are frequent and regular.] What are some examples of the products of these Christian hands?

A bishop might counsel a man to give the young widow serious consideration as a marriage partner. An understanding young woman might consider dating and marrying an infertile man, even knowing they will never have their own biological children. A young husband who learns shortly after the wedding that his wife can't have children decides that, despite his belief in the importance of rearing his own biological children, he will stay with her anyway. An infertile couple is encouraged to draw on reproductive technologies, in spite of the church's disfavoring of unnatural types of reproduction³³³ (though I hear the 2010 Church Handbook of Instructions has changed to disfavor unnatural reproduction less). Many couples seek adoption. Two old people, whose spouses have passed away, marry each other in the temple for time only. What do all of these examples have in common? They are attempts in the here and now, *in mortality*, to provide as much of a family experience as possible to people in a difficult situation they did nothing to choose. Why are we not more interested in similarly helping homosexually oriented people, whose family prospects are limited for the same non-agentic reasons?

“If God wants to change the orientation of their sexual feelings in an afterlife, that matter is in his hands, but we can make their lives better here and now.”³³⁴

In the young widow example, most of us would, rather than prescribe lifelong celibacy, encourage her to marry and rear children. Most of us would hope that men would not write her off as a marriage candidate. If we would encourage this couple to marry, *knowing* they will be separated in the afterlife, *why would we do so?* Is it not because the value of companionship, even if it is *only* during mortality, is better than being single? Some people would scream this out: BEING WITH A SPOUSE IS BETTER THAN BEING ALONE YOUR WHOLE LIFE! (Moses 3:18- “it was not good that the man should be alone”). Wrote one:

“But what about the assertions in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” those that concern “the eternal role of gender” and declare an “ideal” familial structure for parent/child relationship? Neither need those beliefs be an impediment to supporting gay marriage. The Church need not accept gay marriages as “eternal”; it would not need to offer temple gay marriages. They could be regarded like civil marriages—for this life only. As the Church views the matter, adjustments are going to have to be made in an afterlife anyway for many people, because many situations involving marriage, singleness, or parent/child/nurturer relationships are not ideally finalized. For those who do their best to live uprightly given their varying mortal circumstances, the afterlife will doubtless satisfactorily resolve itself.”³³⁵

From the 2010 Church Handbook of Instructions, we see how a comparable uncertainty results in a broad grant of discretion to a family:

“Temple ordinances are not performed for stillborn children. However, this does not deny the possibility that a stillborn child will be a part of the family in the eternities.” -17.2.10

If we expect that God will “work it out somehow in the afterlife” in the remarried widow example, must we not also expect that God could and would “work it out somehow in the afterlife” for homosexual couples?

15. A revealed religion need not be conservative

"The Church... is imperfect. [However,] it is the best instrument the Lord has, given our agency, to effect His purposes. If it is at times inefficient, backward, repressive, it is also at times instructive, progressive and liberating. The Church is like *us* I'll go one step further: the Church *is* us; it is no better or no worse than we are (and that includes *you* and me), for the Church is what we make it.³³⁶"

My brother once noted that religions are often “behind the times” of social progress. To him I responded:

(edited) “It seems strange that religions should be years behind societal changes- you'd think instead that at least a revelation-based religion would be light years ahead on important issues of social justice and truth because of their access to a source of omniscience. Though I can see the wisdom of non-revelation based (unsupported by direction from heaven) religions using a conservative (old ways are better than new) approach similar to that of the judicial branch, it seems that a revealed religion would be fresh, bold, fearless, and progressive. A conservative church seems slow to change and risk averse, like an old man, more than strong and fearless and benefit-seeking and truth-filled, like the strapping prophet Joseph. But, perhaps there's a sensible explanation for the apparent disjoint.

An example of being years ahead of society that comes to mind would be the Word of Wisdom (other examples include progressive recognition of racial and gender equality, in doctrine at least if not in practice- ""all are alike unto God, black and white, male and female"- 2 Nephi). A riposte would be blacks and the priesthood, which in 1978 was not only over a decade behind the civil rights movement but over a century behind the Emancipation Proclamation.

Perhaps church members and leaders are too quick to presume that we already have all the truth we need (a sin we typically charge the Jews with for stopping at the Old Testament instead of accepting Christ and the New; or that we find modern people culpable of for stopping at the Old and not accepting the Another [Book of Mormon: Another Testament]). Just last Sunday, a bishopric member advocated that I cease my line of questioning. He made the "it's not important

to your salvation" bromide in response to my discussion of some church policies. Article of Faith nine: "We believe... that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven." Also, Joseph Smith: "... it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave."³³⁷ Given the doctrinal support for the idea that God doesn't work among men save according to their faith and doesn't reveal until His children ask (e.g. the Doctrine and Covenants sections are almost wholly answers to interrogatories), it would seem to make sense for church members and leaders to be knocking down the doors of heaven to obtain answers to tough questions such as homosexual privileges, surrogate motherhood, and social justice, rather than shutting their praying mouths on a "we've received all we need" basis like the Jews did to Jesus and many today do to President Monson. (Proverbs 2: 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.)

President Kimball's worrying, praying, and raising of the issue likely resulted in the lifting of the priesthood ban against blacks ("God rarely—if ever—uses his prophets as "teletype machines" who mindlessly transmit God's will word for word—he requires his prophets to inquire with some thought as to potential answers"³³⁸). Kimball's predecessor, Harold B. Lee, speaking on the subject the day he became President, said he "intended to stand by and wait until the Lord speaks."³³⁹ This passive strategy did not lift the ban. We must be proactive: "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs."³⁴⁰ Perhaps if prophets a century earlier had cared to pray about and resolve the issue the ban would have been lifted then (see especially "Circumstances which preceded the 1978 revelation"³⁴¹). Indeed, nine years earlier the ban almost *was* lifted. In November 1969, the Quorum of the Twelve passed a proposal that would allow full priesthood for Blacks. Since President McKay was incapacitated, the two counselors in the First Presidency could have signed the rarely-but-sometimes-used joint declaration of the First Presidency and the Quorum to grant priesthood to those of black African ancestry. Apostle Lee, absent during the decision, returned and persuaded the Quorum to rescind their vote, holding to "the traditional belief as revealed in the Old Testament that the races ought to be kept together."³⁴² Apostle LeGrand Richards wrote in 1967: "I always say I am not half as much concerned about pleasing the Lord as I am about pleasing all of the Brethren."³⁴³ Lee then pressured First Counselor Hugh B. Brown into signing a statement reaffirming the ban. Of this experience Brown's grandson wrote:

"Grandfather managed to add language to Elder Lee's statement endorsing full civil rights for all citizens, but he still resisted signing the statement. However, he suffered from advanced age and the late stages of Parkinson's disease and was ill with the Asian flu. With Grandfather in this condition, Elder Lee brought tremendous pressure to bear upon him, arguing that with President McKay incapacitated Grandfather was obligated to join the consensus with the Quorum of the Twelve."³⁴⁴

Of the priesthood ban, and bearing striking parallels to homosexuality, Brown wrote that same year:

"Personally I doubt if we can maintain or sustain ourselves in the position which we seem to have adopted but which has no justification as far as the scriptures are concerned so far

as I know. I think we are going to have to change our decision on that. The President says that it can come only by revelation. If that be true then it will come in due course. I think it is one of the most serious problems confronting us because of course it affects the millions of colored people.³⁴⁵”

On the other hand, the Lord didn't lift the ban until about 10 years after President McKay and Hugh Brown's attempts to move in that direction, thus implicating a possibility of some wise purpose(s) in the Lord's forbearance. It is likely that much truth is withheld because people are so steeped in their traditions (which are acutely manifest by symptoms of conservatism):

“There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger [a piece of corn bread] for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle [a wooden mallet]. Even the Saints are slow to understand.³⁴⁶” – Joseph Smith

“I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen... Why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain?... Some people say I am a fallen Prophet, because I do not bring forth more of the word of the Lord. Why do I not do it? Are we able to receive it? No! not one in this room.³⁴⁷” - Joseph Smith

On the other hand, perhaps the revelation in this area is cohesive, comprehensive, and correct. Anyway, to conclude, I haven't yet resolved this tension between a revealed religion and its apparent conservativeness as compared to secular society.

My brother: “*Society changes but religion often lags far behind. An example is the infamous case of blacks not being able to receive the priesthood. This was a blatantly racist practice that had no base in the written works. There was even an apostle who said that blacks would never get the priesthood, as god himself was inherently racist (Good 'ol Bruce R. if you were wondering).*”

My response: Yes, in retrospect that statement seemed unwise. My friend wrote:

“So why does the Lord not reveal the answers to a prophet so that we can clear up this mess once and for all? Continuous coddling of God's people has never been conducive to the development of their faith. Instead, sustained periods of revelatory abundance and prolonged prophetic spoon-feeding have also penned a tragic scriptural history of deteriorating righteousness ending in eventual destruction. Don't believe me? Read *The Holy Bible*. Read *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. A prophet at the help does not automate or ensure salvation-collective or individual.³⁴⁸”

I've heard “SSM-will-never-be-approved” language similar to that about blacks/priesthood which makes me cringe. Some claim that homosexual behavior will never be approved in the Church because to do so would be counter to the Plan of Salvation. That conclusion is based on the presumption that homosexual behavior is *malum in se* (inherently wrong) rather than *malum*

prohibitum (wrong because it's prohibited)- which is a conclusion frustrated by the simple difficulty of reconciling the Plan with the reality of homosexual orientation. Other Plan misfits: severe mental retardation, early death, or living one's whole life as a single sister. Yet all four categories seem involuntary - so what is to be done for these misfits? *Contra non valentem agere nulla currit praescriptio* - "no prescription runs against a person not able to act." They are all children of God as well, and it seems certain that God has made provision for them somehow. *Justitia nemini neganda est* - "justice is to be denied to no one." Permit a comparison.

One: Sexual behavior itself isn't wrong- in fact to a faithful LDS member though it's a sin at one point, it is then condoned and encouraged fifteen minutes later, provided a marriage ceremony intervened (thus heterosexual behavior in a certain category is *malum prohibitum*, but not *malum in se*- the same might be the case for homosexual behavior). If the declaration that homosexual conduct is sinful is rescinded, the conduct is no longer *malum* (or wrong). *Sublata causa, tollitur effectus*- "the cause being removed, the effect ceases."

Two: McConkie's afterstatement: "There are statements in our literature by the early Brethren that we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, "You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?" All I can say is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or George Q. Cannon or whoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June 1978. It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on this subject. As to any slivers of light or any particles of darkness of the past, we forget about them. We now do what meridian Israel did when the Lord said the gospel should go to the Gentiles. We forget all the statements that limited the gospel to the house of Israel, and we start going to the Gentiles.³⁴⁹" Again, it's only the most recent revelation that counts.

Three: Similarly, the priesthood used to only be extended to males in one of Israel's twelve tribes- now, by dictate, it's extended to all worthy males. It might later be extended to women or sheep: who's to say? The euthyphro dilemma ("Is what is morally good commanded by God because it is morally good, or is it morally good because it is commanded by God?³⁵⁰") can thus exhibit a temporal aspect in that what is morally right is merely what has been most recently commanded by God- thus the seeming folly in making future predictions such as "women will never be bishops" or "homosexual marriage will never be approved by God." Many church members and leaders mistook the prohibition against blacks holding the priesthood as doctrine. It seems more likely in retrospect that it was a practice whose doctrinal foundation ultimately failed. Similarly, were church leaders to alter their stance about the sinfulness of monogamous, committed homosexual relationships in addition to their current altering of the language they use in discussing such matters (e.g. you don't observe the demeaning "so-called" and derogatory "chosen homosexual lifestyle" language as much in the last decade), it would seem that the church's policy once again reflected practice more than doctrine.

My brother: “*When the world changed and civil rights happened the church realized, years later, that they had to change or become marginalized in American society.*”

My response: Perhaps- though arguably the Church relied on revelation rather than the realization of marginalization risk regarding polygamy and blacks/the priesthood. Otherwise they would likely have changed much earlier than they did. What seems strange is why the revelation didn't precede the persecution and marginalizing effects, given God's foreknowledge. "This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted- by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed³⁵¹"- Joseph Smith. A test of faith? Because His servants didn't ask (“I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh.³⁵²”? You’ve got me.”

Bottom line? The members of the church are (or at least should be) prepared to follow wherever God leads them. If social progress is justifiably moving toward an embrace of SSM socially, religiously, and legally- why shouldn't Christ's revealed church be ahead of the curve?

16. Because we supported polygamy

“There is an irony inherent in the church's taking a public position opposing homosexual marriages...

The leading United States Supreme Court authority for the proposition that marriage means a relationship between a man and a woman is Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145 (1878). In that case, in which the United States Supreme Court sustained the validity of the anti-polygamy laws, the Court defined marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman. The court's stress in that case was on one. The modern relevance of the Reynolds opinion is its reference to marriage as being between a man and a woman. The irony would arise if the Church used as an argument for the illegality of homosexual marriages the precedent formerly used against the Church to establish the illegality of polygamous marriages.³⁵³” –Elder Dallin H. Oaks

It's generally appropriate for an institution, such as a church, to take a stand on a consequential issue such as the definition of marriage, *provided they're consistent*. For instance, it'd be appropriate for the First Baptist Church to declare, "The only definition of marriage should be/is one man and one woman." What's not internally consistent is to say "the only definition of marriage always has been and always should be one man and one woman," (for instance, because that's God's unchanging, unqualified position on the matter) then later expand or contract the definition. The LDS church, for instance, has a vitiated, or at least qualified, foundation from which to declare that marriage is only between one man and one woman. Why? Because in the recent past they officially maintained a broader definition (one man and one woman OR one man

and several women)! Polygynous marriages had only two genders, but more than two partners; now, the official definition the LDS church supports is only two genders and two partners. At first blush these two positions manifest a glaring hypocrisy:

“God is not the author of incoherence or injustice, but we humans often are. We in the LDS Church must be more honest about our history, including the past and future practice of polygamy in our official doctrine. This will be difficult, for it will reveal that we have been less than truthful in our public relations, and it will show our inconsistency with current statements opposing gay marriage.³⁵⁴”

Are we not mimicking the type of treatment our polygynist ancestors received in our legal and organized opposition to SSM? Having so recently received such bitter government persecution (*by defenders of traditional marriage!*) for practicing an unpopular minority definition of marriage, one might reasonably predict that the LDS church would instead support (or at least refrain from opposing) those who, due to deeply-held beliefs, also desire government recognition and societal tolerance of their practice of an unpopular minority definition of marriage. Indeed, “many same-sex couples desire to marry for religious reasons.³⁵⁵” Certainly an anti-SSM conservative Christian perspective should not be accorded more weight than a pro-SSM progressive Christian perspective: to use partisan language, the Christian right doesn’t have a corner on the religious market. Though we depart from their religious views, should we not protect as fiercely as we do our own their right to constitutionally-privileged religious exercise?

Supporting SSM would of course manifest tolerance for the unpopular minority practice, as tolerance is subsumed within support.

17. Presuming the principle behind the practice is a hazardous idea

“[M] most of our Church governance is performed and the majority of our teaching is conducted as if we had not only a common moral ground but a uniform understanding of the doctrines of the Church. Because of this, we tend to expect more of the Church than it can possibly give and also expect a higher level of Christian behavior from some Saints than they can possibly live.³⁵⁶”

One way to learn about God is to deduce His characteristics based on His behavior. This is one of the primary reasons for studying the scriptures. Since Christ founded and guides the LDS church, it is reasonable to seek to infer some of His attributes from the extant practices in His church. For instance, in the LDS church bishops lovingly counsel sinning members and help them to repent. The principle behind this practice would be that God is a counseling, forgiving, and loving Person. However, this “principle behind the practice” learning approach is fraught with peril. Why?

Example 1: political vs. moral issues. The church’s political neutrality statement, in part, says³⁵⁷:

“The Church’s mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, not to elect politicians. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is neutral in matters of party politics. This applies in all of the many nations in which it is established.

The Church does not:

- * Endorse, promote or oppose political parties, candidates or platforms.
- * Allow its church buildings, membership lists or other resources to be used for partisan political purposes.
- * Attempt to direct or dictate to a government leader.

The Church does:

- * Expect its members to engage in the political process in an informed and civil manner, respecting the fact that members of the Church come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and may have differences of opinion in partisan political matters.
- * Reserve the right as an institution to address, in a nonpartisan way, issues that it believes have significant community or moral consequences or that directly affect the interests of the Church.”

Though the Family Proclamation calls “upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society,” the Church claims to not attempt to direct a government leader. The Family Proclamation is not the only example of the Church’s attempts to influence civic and government matters. Let’s analyze the practice of the church regarding addressing such issues to determine the principle behind the practice. The Church used its church buildings and other resources to oppose³⁵⁸ the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a rather brief proposed constitutional amendment:

“Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.”

(sidenote: “In 1978, a First Presidency statement contained the following quote; ‘We believe the ERA is a moral issue with many disturbing ramifications for women and for the family....and could result in an increase in the practice of homosexual and lesbian activities.’³⁵⁹”)

Through the church’s anti-ERA and pro-Prop 8 activism, one observes what a potent force for political activism LDS women prove when the cause is cast in terms of loyalty to the church and defending the family. The Church also advocated against SSM in Proposition 8-like state amendments around 1998 in California³⁶⁰, Hawaii³⁶¹ and Alaska³⁶². The Church’s overt and covert advocacy against the ERA, which- like their support of Proposition 8- arguably tipped the scales of a close race, would seem to indicate the principle that God opposed this gender equality measure. On the other hand, in the midst of campaigning against the ERA, God/the church felt “significant community or moral consequences or that directly affect the interests of the Church” sufficient to speak out against deregulating airlines: “the First Presidency asked all western Congressmen to vote against the deregulation of airlines, hardly a matter of faith or morals.”³⁶³ Perhaps the interests of the church truly were threatened, since it was a significant stockholder in the threatened Western Airlines. In any case, this advocacy stands in stark contrast to the “aloofness of most LDS leaders toward the civil rights movement of the 1960s because they defined that as a ‘political issue.’³⁶⁴” In “The Case Against Gay Marriage,” Randolph G. Muhlestein in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* wrote:

“Probably most Americans would view the social and legislative accomplishments of the various civil rights movements as among the most important achievements of American society during the last fifty years.”³⁶⁵

A “principle behind the practice” presumption deduces that God does not agree with most Americans about the “significant community or moral consequences” of the civil rights movement- else why wouldn’t the Church have promoted aspects of the movement in a way similar to its opposition to ERA and advocacy for Proposition 8? Said one jaded member in his letter to the church requesting the removal of his membership record:

“The Mormon god seems not to care for basic social justice. The Mormon god did not have his “inspired prophets” march with Martin Luther King during the Civil Rights movement, and none of the leaders of the Mormon Church actively pushed for basic rights for gays, lesbians, and transgender people until the church received negative press from the Church’s support of Proposition 8.³⁶⁶”

Ezra Taft Benson spoke of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1969:

“The man who is generally recognized as the leader of the so-called civil rights movement today in America is a man who has lectured at a Communists training school, who has solicited funds through Communist sources, who hired a Communist as a top-level aide, who has affiliated with Communist fronts, who is often praised in the Communist press and who unquestionably parallels the Communist line. This same man advocates the breaking of the law and has been described by J. Edgar Hoover as ‘the most notorious liar in the country.’ ...³⁶⁷”

Benson also delivered a 1967 general conference address entitled “Civil Rights: Tool of Communist Deception,” which stated³⁶⁸:

“Now there is nothing wrong with civil rights--it is what's being done in the name of civil rights that is alarming. *There is no doubt that the so-called Civil Rights movement as it exists today is used as a communist program for revolution in America,* just as agrarian reform was used by the communists to take over China and Cuba...

Not one in a thousand Americans--black or white--really understands the full implications of today's civil rights agitation. The planning, direction, and leadership come from the communists, and most of those are white men who fully intend to destroy America...”

LDS apostle Delbert Stapley wrote a letter to civil rights activist, Latter-day Saint, and Michigan governor George Romney (the namesake of my MPA program at BYU), in 1964:

“After listening to your talk on Civil Rights, I am very much concerned... I thought to drop you a note not in my official Church position, but as a personal friend...

When I reflect upon [Joseph Smith’s] statements and remember what happened to three of our nation’s presidents who were very active in the Negro cause, I am sobered by their demise. They went contrary to the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith... ‘those who are determined to pursue a course, which shows an opposition, and a feverish restlessness against the decrees of the Lord, will learn, when perhaps it is too late for their own good, that God can do His own work, without the aid of those who are not dictated by His counsel,’ has and will continue to be fulfilled.

In this respect, let me give you a personal experience... a great champion of the colored race—came to me after my call into the Twelve, and acknowledged President McKay to be a Prophet of God. He wanted me to ask President McKay to inquire of the Lord to see if the Lord would not lift the curse from the colored race and give them the privileges of the Priesthood. I explained to him that the Lord had placed the curse upon the Negro, which denied him the Priesthood;

therefore, it was the Lord's responsibility—not man's—to change His decision. This friend of mine met a very tragic end by drowning. He was a most enthusiastic advocate of the colored cause and went about promoting for them all the privileges, social opportunities, and participation enjoyed by the Whites...

It is not right to force any class or race of people upon those of a different social order or race classification. People are happier when placed in the environment and association of like interests, racial instincts, habits, and natural groupings...

I fully agree the Negro is entitled to considerations, also stated above, but not full social benefits nor inter-marriage privileges with the Whites, nor should the Whites be forced to accept them into restricted White areas. In my judgment, the proposed Bill of Rights is vicious legislation... Principle—religious or otherwise—cannot be abrogated for political expediency.

Now, don't think I am against the Negro people, because I have several in my employ. We must understand and recognize their status and then, accordingly, provide for them. I just don't think we can get around the Lord's position in relation to the Negro without punishment for our acts; going contrary to that which He has revealed. The Lord will not permit His purposes to be frustrated by man.³⁶⁹

I note here that we could delve into several other relevant examples which verify that “principle behind the practice” peril:

- The unequal status of women in Christ's church in both former and modern times, including their severe underrepresentation in scripture
- The replete scriptural references to God's wrath and anger, a set of characteristics we are ironically counseled to eschew
- Changing stances on evolution
- Blood atonement practiced in 19th and 20th century Utah
- The regular use of alcohol by church leaders in the 19th century, including Joseph Smith's lifelong consumption of alcohol
- Systematic lying, such as Joseph Smith's denial of his practicing of polygamy
- Dramatic changes in the temple ceremony over the last two-ish centuries
- Changes in church teachings about the moral permissibility of oral sex and birth control
- Church support of racial segregation (e.g. “I think the Lord segregated the Negro and who is man to change that segregation?³⁷⁰” and “caste systems have their root and origin in the gospel itself, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant restrictions and segregation are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord³⁷¹”)
- Church support of discouraging interracial marriage (e.g. “To intermarry with a Negro is to forfeit a ‘Nation of Priesthood holders³⁷²’ and “the whole Negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a caste apart, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam should not intermarry,³⁷³” and “We are unanimous, all of the Brethren, in feeling and recommending that Indians marry Indians, and Mexicans marry Mexicans; the Chinese marry Chinese and the Japanese marry Japanese; that the Caucasians marry the Caucasians, and the Arabs marry Arabs.³⁷⁴”)
- Church support of a race-based priesthood discrimination

For the moment, let's take a closer look at the last bullet.

Example 2: the prohibition against black people holding the priesthood. The common-sense principle behind this practice is that black people are viewed differently by God than non-black people (or at least that non-black men are viewed differently from black men). Some conclude from this previously official LDS practice that God is racist, as shown by the abundant paper trail evidencing racist teachings and practices by Christ's Latter-day apostles³⁷⁵. (See Mac Madsen's paper³⁷⁶ for why this issue is similar to the SSM). These teachings are contrary to today's anti-racist sentiments and 2 Nephi 26: 33: "And he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness, and he denieth none that come unto him, black or white, bond or free, male or female, and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God." (2 Nephi 26:33) We also know that God is impartial³⁷⁷ and no respecter of persons³⁷⁸. I will briefly quote just three passages (including two from my current university's namesake), then move on with why this matters:

- 1) "Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so."³⁷⁹ –Brigham Young
- 2) "Cain, Ham, and the whole Negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, they can be identified as a caste apart, a people with whom the other descendents of Adam should not inter-marry."³⁸⁰ – Bruce R. McConkie
- 3) "You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind... the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race -- that they should be the "servant of servants;" and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree... That curse will remain upon them, and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the last ones of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be the last from whom the curse will be removed. When the residue of the family of Adam come up and receive their blessings, then the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will receive blessings in like proportion."³⁸¹ – Brigham Young

Though the possibility exists that black skinned, flat-nosed people were indeed cursed by God to be the servant of servants until some point between the time of President Young's teachings and

the present day (perhaps because in some way all of Adam's other descendants have since then received Priesthood keys, blessings, and promises), most of us find this conclusion unsavory—and would instead elect to reject these teachings as the type of scripture-mingled ideas of men we're warned against. Were the prohibition viewed as merely a practice rather than a revealed principle, it would presumably need no revelation to reverse. Were the principle instead revelation, one is left to wonder why an impartial God of truth would share with his prophets the secret³⁸² that some black-skinned people are uncouth, deprived, unintelligent, and undeserving of the priesthood. President Wilford Woodruff wrote: “The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as president of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so he will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty.”³⁸³ Wrote Brett Alan Sanders:

“Jesus's rejection of formalized religion... forces a confrontation—disorienting for many faithful—with our own Church's corporate structure at over a century-and-a-half's remove from the Prophet Joseph's ragged frontier church... Wilford Woodruff promises that neither he nor any prophet-president of the Church will be permitted by God to lead His people astray—a puzzling promise in the light of so many well-established prophetic misstatements. One solution to that dilemma is to differentiate between when the prophet in question was speaking ‘as a man’ versus as the prophet, but how does that idea help to clarify anything? What exactly constitutes being led astray? Does God tolerate His prophets' errors on science or politics, just so long as they don't fail to teach faith, repentance, and the importance of sacred ordinances? And if so, is that idea of any comfort to the gay Mormon who has committed suicide because he can't bear his enforced separation from those ordinances?”³⁸⁴

President Benson taught, “We encourage earthly knowledge in many areas, but remember, if there is ever a conflict between earthly knowledge and the words of the prophet, you stand with the prophet, and you'll be blessed and time will vindicate you.”³⁸⁵ Another explanation might be therefore that today's church is in apostasy, since it is apparent both that President Young was not removed out of his place and that the current church's position contradicts President Young's future-predicting³⁸⁶ position. In addition to finding this explanation unsavory, I think it fails because today's President is also not removed out of his place.

The perverse result of concluding that God is racist shows the difficulty of inferring principles from a church practice. Much as LDS members oppose civil SSM today because they believe God has declared it to be immoral, it is not difficult to see why so many LDS members were

apathetic or opposed to aspects of the civil rights movement such as ending segregation, promoting legal equality, and ending racism. If God is racist in practice and prophetic precept, certainly one is on dangerous ground promoting the “worldly” view of social justice and racial equality. I for one am grateful here that the worldly view won out, and tend to agree with:

“In the present LDS context of anguished wrestlings over the problematic existence of same-sex attraction among the marginalized faithful, Wills’s treatment of Jesus’s challenge to the very “holiness codes” that his religion and ours still uphold is itself of great importance. ‘No outcasts were cast out far enough in Jesus’s world to make him shut them out,’ Wills writes, but not so for the Christianity that arose in his name to cast out the Jews: ‘If this sin of ‘racial purity’—which Wills calls one of Christianity’s greatest sins—’did not cause the Holocaust, in certainly facilitated it.’³⁸⁷”

At the risk of over-emphasizing the virtue of charity, I condemn “otherizing” those who are “impure” as among the worst of vices.³⁸⁸ Yet, just such objectifying seems to have been employed by God’s people to systematically stigmatize, respectively, gentiles, Jews, and black people. This practice and precept seems violative of:

“In reality, we can’t accept the Atonement until we are able to love those who, like ourselves, are undeserving of Christ’s love. It is through loving others that we participate with God in the redemption of his children, and it is in being loved by others that we receive the power to seek redemption.³⁸⁹” - Robert Rees

“One of the things the gospel of Jesus Christ tells us is that our brotherhood with men on this planet is not a mere biological brotherhood but a kind of brotherhood that lets me know that I have an accountability, for my relationships will be perpetuated far beyond today, far beyond here, and far beyond now... I would submit to you that we cannot really forgive each other if our brotherhood is simply a biological brotherhood in which we share the same planet at the same time; the only kind of forgiveness that can operate effectively in the human family grows out of a sense of brotherhood that the gospel of Jesus Christ makes pervasive and persistent.³⁹⁰” (Neal A. Maxwell)

Also: “Violence is not only what we do to the Other. It is prior to that. Violence is the very construction of the Other.... Outside by definition but always threatening to get in, the Other is poised in a delicate balance that is always off balance because fear and aggression continually weight the scales. Identity forged against the Other inspires perpetual policing of its fragile borders.³⁹¹”

Additionally: “Civilization is the process in which one gradually increases the number of people included in the term 'we' or 'us' and at the same time decreases those labeled 'you' or 'them' until that category has no one left in it.” - Howard Winters

These Jew/gentile/race-otherizing religions have, as foreshadowed immediately above, “policed the fragile borders” by fiercely resisting the common humanity of man. In His mortal ministry, Jesus passionately decried that very resistance.

Some would inquire whether these racism-evidencing statements were made “over the pulpit.” That this inquiry never arises until a seemingly contrary statement crops up evidences the confirmation bias endemic to such a justification. *Verba debent intelligi cum effectu*: words ought to be understood with effect. A conclusion that these statements were made by these men while not in their role as prophets results in either 1) castigating confidence in current pronouncements by church leaders, or 2) reducing prophetic teachings to an impotent “I’ll pick and choose which teachings to buy into by calling the ones I like prophetic and the ones I dislike their personal views.” Fairly applying this “not in their role” contention exposes past and present statements by church leaders on homosexuality to dismissal (and as one might imagine, there is a hot debate about the desirability of that dismissal- especially regarding the homophobic and “there’s no such thing as inborn homosexual orientation” subsets). In any case, the church practice of forbidding homosexuals to marry each other does not necessarily imply that homosexual people are inferior to heterosexual people, nor that He will never open up to them the privilege of approved matrimony. D&C 56:4 "I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good."

18. SSM doesn't necessarily weaken marriage

Some say that gay marriage weakens the institution of marriage. This is clever wording, as adding same-genderness to a two-partner-only construction of marriage is merely a change which requires an additional value judgment to be deemed a weakening. What is the justification that the change is negative? As shown from the blacks and the priesthood analysis, practice-based deductions are suspect. Two quotes:

“The political and religious rhetoric around the “Protection of Marriage” concept provided the last layer of despair that drove Stuart Matis and others to take their lives. We must not allow this to happen again. Whatever our convictions about which unions are appropriate to legalize and

which are inappropriate, we must recognize once and for all that in our universe of people there are many dear loved ones who happen to be homosexual and that we are responsible to them, responsible to see them as our own kind, to give them respect, Christlike love, to circle the wagons around them so that they too can be safe and warm.³⁹²”

Jeffrey Nielsen, an instructor BYU’s Department of Philosophy refused to rehire because of his public views: “Further, to say that gay marriage will destroy traditional marriage and the family without giving any reasons why is the fallacy of appealing to fear. Indeed, once you get past the emotion, it is quite an unfounded claim. How could the union of two committed and loving people negatively affect my marriage? I believe that quite the contrary is true; namely, legalizing gay marriage reinforces the importance of committed relationships and would strengthen the institution of marriage.³⁹³”

Indeed, “A look across a broader range of countries provides some evidence that gay couples might even be bucking the heterosexual trend of increasing skepticism about marriage.³⁹⁴”

As will be seen in chapter 7, some leading proponents of Proposition 8 and other anti-SSM or anti-gay laws and practices seek to condemn homosexual people for various social ills, such as fatherless homes, single parenting, and filial instability. These attempts bear a strong resemblance to historic anti-Semitic treatment, as persuasively illustrated by Cindy LeFevre in her article, “The Hidden Nazi Mentality in the Proclamation on the Family.³⁹⁵” Also, it seems that legalizing SSM has little or no effect on the marrying and divorcing behaviors of heterosexuals (2009):

“Chapter 4 plunges more deeply into the demographic changes in these countries to ask whether same-sex couples have somehow changed heterosexual marriage choices. Measures of heterosexual marriage and divorce behavior turn out to suggest that nothing much changed as a result of the recognition of same-sex couples... Opening up marriage to same-sex couples is just the latest step toward renewing marriage’s continuing relevance in the twenty-first century.³⁹⁶”

I have included more thorough discussion on the “weakens marriage” argument in civil SSM-based chapter 6, much of which draws from “the age-old wisdom that love and sex and marriage go together and are severed at society’s peril.³⁹⁷” In another’s words:

“I believe that the norm of sex-love-marriage is the one to go with, because the norm of opposite-sex-only is less important and less fair and is crumbling anyway as the culture adjusts to the reality of same-sex unions. The fundamental conflict today, if you care about marriage, is not between same-sex marriage and traditional marriage; it is between marriage and nonmarriage.³⁹⁸”

In conclusion,

“If marriage is to fulfill its aspirations, it must be defined by the commitment of one to another for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health—not by the people it excludes.”³⁹⁹”

19. Increase freedom

“Aside from the specific benefits offered by marriage, access to marriage exemplifies for gays and lesbians the more general goals to which they aspire: respect, legitimacy, and recognition that this very important aspect of their being—the condition that for whatever reason is deeply imprinted in their sense of themselves—does not diminish them or make them second class. As a naturally occurring minority, they claim to be entitled equally to whatever rights and opportunities society can extend. In short, they are looking for their justified place at the table. And since they have no intent to disrupt the feast for the rest of us, nor do we have reasonable and realistic grounds to say that they would compromise our gustatory satisfaction, how can we then deny their request without compromising our own ideals of equity and fairness?”⁴⁰⁰”

The meaningfulness of agency (the power to select an alternative) is inversely correlated to freedom (the number of available alternatives). Opening up LDS marriage to same-sex couples gives those couples one very significant alternative they didn’t have previously. Many SSM advocates exemplify: “And now the design of the Nephites was... that they might preserve their rights and their privileges, yea, and also their liberty..., they were fighting for their homes, and their liberties, their [spouses] and their children, ...for their rites of worship.... their families...their freedom...” -Alma 43:9, 45, 47, 48. Wrote Clay Essig:

“In LDS Seminary and Institute, I was taught marriage, our choice of who we marry and how, is one of the most important and personal choices or exercises of our God given agency we can make in mortality. If marriage is an exercise of personal choice and agency for us, isn’t it the same for our Gay and Lesbian neighbors?

Our Father in Heaven declared: “...because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him... by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down” (Moses 4:3). Do we Latter-day Saints believe and live by these words of God? Can our Father in Heaven teach us any more clearly that when we seek to destroy the agency of any of His children we are doing Satan’s work, not God’s; and in so doing we put our souls in serious jeopardy of being cast down? Or do we believe God has suddenly changed and is now pleased when we legislatively seek to destroy the agency of the millions of His Gay and Lesbian children to marry and raise families according to their conscience and religious beliefs? If we Latter-day Saints vote to destroy the ability of millions of God’s Gay and Lesbian children to choose to enter the sacred and loving bonds of marriage, what will we say to God in our final judgment if He asks, “Did you seek to destroy the agency of any of my children?”⁴⁰¹”

Also, we have a strong belief in allowing others to freely exercise their religious beliefs. Thus, for at least that subset of SSM advocates that possess a religious belief that same-gender couples should be allowed to marry, we should at least refrain from opposing them. “We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience... human law...should never suppress the freedom of the soul...holding sacred the freedom of conscience... ”We believe that ... governments have a right, and **are bound to enact laws for the protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief**; but we do not believe that they have a right in justice to deprive citizens of this privilege, or proscribe them in their opinions...” (Doctrine and Covenants 134:2, 4, 5, 7- emphasis added). Even if we personally disagree with their dictates of conscience, it might be wise to get out of the way or join homosexuals fighting for honorable marriage over the anti-family alternatives of lifelong celibacy, promiscuity, or cohabitation to which society has consigned them. Is not marriage a better family alternative for these people than promiscuity, celibacy, or cohabitation?

- “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 3:4)
- “And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man.” -D & C 49:15
- “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” – Matthew 25:40

To close:

“Do we care enough about the well-being of our homosexual brothers and sisters to allow them a socially approved, supportive structure of love, acceptance, and security like that enjoyed by married heterosexuals, and the opportunity to grow together with a loved one in sustained, committed intimacy? Jesus did say that we should judge human behaviors by their fruits, that is, by their practical outcomes, not by some ideology (Matt. 7:16). Scripture teaches us by implication that it is not good for a man (or a woman) to be alone (Gen. 2:18). If two people of whatever gender commit to each other that they will love, cherish, and support each other without reservation through life’s vicissitudes, will not such commitment likely bear good fruit—and should we not support that? I say yes!⁴⁰²”

20. Integrity, Security, Community, and Happiness

A virtue ethics perspective evaluates moral choices based on what character attributes result from conduct, and what way of living results in eudemonia (also known as human flourishing, or “the good life”). To juxtapose the alternatives of either including or excluding same-sex couples from marriage, a virtue ethicist might ask which produces the superior virtue profile. I argue here that SSM, more than its absence, contributes to the character attributes/moral goods of happiness, community, security, and integrity. Because the support for these claims is found in stories and quotes elsewhere in the book, I will avoid repetition by merely outlining this argument without many references.

Integrity is often viewed as encompassing two or three of these concepts: 1) wholeness, 2) commitment keeping, and 3) honesty/authenticity. Compared with mixed orientation marriages (MOM) and celibacy, SSM on average accords more of all three to homosexually oriented people. Many (though not all) homosexuals in MOM’s feel or act duplicitously⁴⁰³ (abrogating honesty and authenticity), and many feel a great hole in their lives roughly characterized by the lack of an intimate and/or romantic relationship with someone he or she is erotically, emotionally, *and* romantically attracted to. I assume that divorce is more common in MOM’s compared with SSM (a whopping 85% in the first three years after coming out for MOM’s where the husband comes out to his wife after they’re married⁴⁰⁴). The norm of encouraging gays and lesbians to “stay in the closet” or pretend to be and/or act “straight” is also inconsistent with integrity for many homosexuals:

“[The norm] tells gay people that [it] is acceptable to be gay as a matter of fact, but that it is unacceptable for gay people to act out that identity—to show same-sex affection, to discuss their sexuality in any significant way, to engage in behaviors that are perceived as ‘gay’... this denial of integrity, this severing of the self, can exact significant physic damage on gay people and their relationships, and is ultimately stifling and harmful to society as a whole, particularly in a society in which we all, gay or straight, have some attribute that society pressures us to downplay in order to fit into the mainstream.⁴⁰⁵”

Also:

“An individual who acts *consistently* with his or her sexual orientation acts in a *morally good* manner. A person who acts in that fashion will be able to feel happiness (including sexual pleasure) more authentically and will be more likely to live a life of honesty and integrity. By contrast, a person who acts inconsistently with his or her sexual orientation is more likely to experience unhappiness (including sexual deprivation and dissatisfaction) and is more likely not to have integrity in his or her life. A corollary of such choices is that the person who becomes

the spouse of a person who is acting inconsistently with his/her sexual orientation is also more likely to experience unhappiness in his/her life.⁴⁰⁶”

Last:

“I credit the atonement for the change that occurred in me. I obtained a new view of God and self. I could finally see myself with God. And THAT is how I know that my decision to live as a gay person was the right one. Because all those years of trying to change, trying to suppress it, trying to pluck it out of me drove a wedge further and further between myself and God. He became so distant that I could no longer see how He could possibly exist. But the minute that I accepted my sexuality and decided that I would move forward doing the best I could as a gay man, living honestly with myself and others, God was in my life. He was all around me, and I was suddenly enabled to be a tool in His hands.⁴⁰⁷”

I now add security to the list of virtues/moral goods begun by integrity. The security (meaning both security in the relationship, the marriage, and in perceived physical, emotional, and psychological security which often results from an intimate, committed, society-supported relationship) of homosexual couples is a moral good that society should value. That security is increased by SSM compared to SSM’s absence. Also as supported elsewhere in the book, homosexuals on average are happier when SSM is available compared to when it is not. Last, because marriage connects a couple to their community more than does celibacy and cohabitation, the virtue of community connection/commitment is enhanced.

In conclusion, SSM enables many homosexual people to live with 1) greater integrity, 2) greater security, 3) greater happiness, and 4) greater commitment/connection to their community (note that the framework *engenders*, rather than *guarantees*, that enhanced capacity)⁴⁰⁸.

21. Homosexually oriented people are children of God

“Jesus’s pronouncements and his behavior... challenge us to reach out to others generously, flexibly, and inclusively rather than seeking to justify exclusion. Why and how these Christian principles relate to the question of committed homosexual marriages should be obvious.⁴⁰⁹”

Is the gospel for everyone or isn’t it? That SSM should be made available to HO people is essentially an argument from equality:

“And why the presumption of equality? That we may truly love our neighbor, for if we cannot love him as our equal, as ourselves, we do not really love him. And if we cannot truly love our neighbor, we cannot be “one,” and if we are not one, we are not “His” (D&C 38:27).⁴¹⁰”

As children of God, homosexually oriented people deserve the privileges and opportunities equally available to all of God's children. "God is no respecter of persons."⁴¹¹ There is no "separate but equal" to Him (the clause comes from a famous US Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which recognized segregation and was overturned by *Brown v. Board*'s declaration that separate is inherently *unequal*). We buy into the Nephite tradition: "...it was strictly contrary to the commands of God that there should be a law which should bring men on to unequal grounds." - Alma 30:7. Also, king Mosiah wrote to his people::

"And now I desire that this inequality should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land, yea, even as long as any of our posterity remains upon the face of the land." - Mosiah 29:32

Homosexual members are in every way equal before God and are candidates for exaltation. Even their tithing monies support chapels and temples in which they themselves are forbidden to marry a chosen spouse. Because homosexually oriented people don't have equal access to heterosexual marriage (they are for the most part counseled against it) and are by nature generally ill-positioned for it, a logical deduction from equality is that an equal institution should be made available to them: LDS SSM.

"*Ubi eadem ratio ibi idem jus, et de similibus idem est iudicium*" (when there is the same reason, then the law is the same, and the same judgment should be rendered as to similar things).

22. There are many benefits from marriage to both individuals and society

The literature abundantly evidences the many benefits of marriage that do not necessarily also attach to cohabitation (though these benefits are correlated to marriage, I am not yet aware of substantial evidence supporting causation). Might not at least most of these benefits be realized by married homosexual couples in addition to married heterosexual ones? The opportunity cost for LDS homosexuals is lifelong celibacy, which is much less likely to bring about these effects (see this footnote⁴¹² for bullets below that don't have their own citation- most of the following is an excerpt):

Benefits for both genders:

- Married people have longer life expectancies than unmarried peers⁴¹³.

- Married people are more productive, have higher incomes, and enjoy more family time than the unmarried. This is due in part to the division and specialization of labor, where spouses each take responsibility for specific tasks⁴¹⁴.
- Married people are more likely to volunteer. Married adults were 30% more likely than unmarried adults to have volunteered [for social service], and married adults averaged 40% more volunteer hours than unmarried individuals. In addition, parents were also twice as likely as childless adults to volunteer for social service.
- Married people experience less depression. Married people had considerably less depression and fewer problems with alcohol than did unmarried people. Men who married and stayed married were less depressed than those who remained single. Among women, marriage was associated with fewer alcohol problems.
- Getting married increases the probability of moving out of a poor neighborhood. Marrying nearly doubled the probability that a person would move from a poor to a non-poor neighborhood. Likewise, the dissolution of a marriage more than doubled the probability that a person would move from a non-poor to poor neighborhood. Among blacks, marital dissolution increased the likelihood of moving from a non poor to a poor neighborhood almost six-fold.

Benefits for Men:

- Marriage encourages better relationships between parents and children, especially father-child interactions⁴¹⁵. -Brad Wilcox
- Married men gain substantial physical health benefits; they are physically fitter and less prone to illness or disability⁴¹⁶.
- Mortality rates are two-thirds as high among married men as among single men. Married men (and women) are less than half as likely as their divorced counterparts to attempt suicide.
- Married men have lower levels of testosterone which is associated with a reduction in aggressive and risky behavior, as well as promiscuity⁴¹⁷.
- Married men are less likely to have alcohol and drug addictions, to commit crime, and to be abusive⁴¹⁸.
- Single men have almost six times the probability of being incarcerated as married men.
- Men's financial gains are substantial. Married men make 25 percent more money than single men, and two-parent families are five times less likely to be in poverty than single-parent families.

Benefits for Women:

- Compared to unmarried women, married women without children have higher incomes and married mothers are less likely to live in poverty⁴¹⁹.
- For women, marriage combats depression, provides particularly high psychological benefits, and significantly lowers the risk of suicide⁴²⁰.
- Studies show that wives are 30 percent more likely to rate their health excellent or good than single women of the same age. In addition, married women (and men) are less likely to suffer long-term chronic illness or disabilities than single women. And mortality rates are less than one-third as high among married women as among non-married women.

- Women gain financially as well--marriage increases income by 50 percent for women (25 percent for men)--and domestic violence rates decrease substantially. Married women are far less likely to be victims of intimate-partner violence than divorced, separated, or never-married women. The rate per thousand for divorced or separated women is 31.9; never married women, 11.3; married women, just 2.6.

Wayne Schow, in a *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* article, similarly argued:

“First, marriage, as experts agree, does promote stability in people’s lives: better health, fewer risky behaviors, more satisfying sex lives, larger incomes, greater longevity, and in general greater happiness than single or divorced people. Stable lives mean fewer problems that society must deal with. Why, then, is it not in society’s interest to make the stabilizing influence of marriage available to a significant minority that, not surprisingly, has suffered for want of it? If gays are statistically more subject to health risks and have higher rates of depression, addiction, and suicide, surely the lack of social acceptance and of equal opportunity for socially approved unions is partly responsible. Leveling the playing field would undoubtedly improve these conditions. Consider, for example, how the introduction of gay marriage has the potential of reducing sexual promiscuity among gays (as marriage reduces promiscuity among heterosexuals) and thereby reducing the spread of AIDS.⁴²¹”

The Economist made a corroborating claim:

“We have, for example, lived through a period in which around 300,000 young Americans died of a terrible disease that was undoubtedly compounded by the total lack of any social incentives for stable relationships. Imagine what would happen to STD rates or legitimacy rates if heterosexual marriage were somehow not in existence. Do you think that straight men would be more or less socially responsible without the institution of civil marriage?⁴²²”

Along similar lines, Jonathan Rauch argued:

“But what may not be obvious is the stake straight society has in helping homosexuals establish settled lives. One way to see that stake is to reflect on the AIDS crisis and its enormous social cost (to say nothing of the horrific cost in gay lives). A culture of marriage might not have stopped the virus altogether, but it certainly would have slowed the virus down, and saved who knows how many lives and who knows how much money and agony. A sexual underworld is inevitable in every society, but in a marriageless society its extent is greater and its allure stronger. And, of course, its cost is higher. Syphilis, gonorrhea, and all the rest have haunted sexual underworlds since long before AIDS appeared. Beyond disease, there is a moral cost. In the context of heterosexual life, conservatives take for granted that a culture in which marriage is the norm is a healthier culture for children. It has always struck me as peculiar that so many conservatives have denounced the “homosexual lifestyle”—meaning, to a large extent, the gay sexual underworld—while fighting tooth and nail against letting gays participate in the institution which would do the most to change that lifestyle.⁴²³”

23. Benefits from marital homosexual conduct

In addition to the benefits mentioned in the section above, the likely sexual conduct between committed same-sex partners may be morally beneficial in the same ways as marital heterosexual conduct. I will address both sides of why this may be so: 1) avoiding harm and 2) promoting human love.

Avoiding Harm:

There is potential for harm to individuals that comes from restricting their opportunities for sex and romance. To the homosexual who cannot control his or her homosexual feelings, Elder Oaks counseled not to enter into heterosexual marriage⁴²⁴. This amounts to a prohibition against sex if not also necking, kissing, flirting, and other romantic and sexual gestures between two persons of the same sex attracted to each other⁴²⁵. Presuming persistent orientation, the statement also removes reasonable hope of sexual expression during this life, if not also a reasonable hope of other romantic expressions with a partner one is attracted to in sexual and/or romantic ways. Wrote Wayne Schow:

“To understand why we are morally obliged to grant homosexuals the right to marry, we must look at the larger, central, complex role of sexuality in human lives. Whether or not we like to admit it, we are sexual beings. For most of us, sex is one of the most fascinating, mysterious, and challenging aspects of life. Like the Grand Canyon, it’s awesome, dazzlingly beautiful at times, powerfully inviting, and also potentially dangerous to negotiate. On the one hand, we are like lesser animals in the inescapability of our sexuality; on the other, we sense in it a godlike power. Mythology and folklore from earliest times and disparate cultures perceived this power and framed the creative acts of the gods in sexual metaphors. On some primordial level we know that sexuality is an energy that underlies and drives creation. It is a basic human need, a basic human privilege. And so a life without sexual fulfillment is not a complete life, however good it otherwise may be.”⁴²⁶

Though my experience will not match that of all others, I personally find it difficult to advise another to embrace celibacy, which is something I would probably be unwilling to do myself.

The most intense and persistent psychological stress I have experienced during the last 10 years has resulted from repressing my sexual impulses. I am committed to abstinence from premarital sex and other sexual indulgences. The clash between this commitment and my uninvited, often nigh-consuming libido has caused me intense pain, discomfort, and suffering. Much like

choosing to eat, sleep, breathe, or defecate, one can elect to refrain- but she cannot choose the consequences of such consistent omissions, which are often quite negative and severe. Because long-term repression of romantic and sex drives runs so counter to fundamental human biology⁴²⁷, it unsurprisingly leads to depression, anxiety, frustration, and a pall of apathy or deadness, to name but a few outcomes. Similar outcomes result from the lack of human touch, which is more likely to be the experience of many gay men in an anti-homotactile, keep-gays-away-from-children, homophobic culture (though the cultural norms for female touching are mercifully more liberal). I have the freedom to mitigate these deleterious results by kissing, dating, cuddling, and seeking a legitimized sexual relationship with a female partner I am attracted to. Ending a lengthy kissing abeyance with a blossoming new relationship helps me feel alive again. It would be unreasonable for me to presume that at least some subset of my homosexually oriented brothers and sisters do not have a similar experience. Thus, in applying the golden rule to me personally, to condemn this subset to a lifetime without sex and/or romance is at the least unfair, and at the most immoral (this conclusion may hold at the society level as well). Indeed, if an authoritarian regime told me to stop dating, kissing, and pursuing a legitimate sexual relationship for the remainder of my life, I can easily imagine myself rebelling against that regime (likely with some carefully chosen, colorful language on my way out the door). I can also see myself rebelling similarly were I instructed by an authority figure to deny, ignore, or refute such a core component of my identity.

In addition to this narrow conclusion as to effect on repressed persons, it is also reasonable to consider the indirect consequences that occur to others as a result of the repression-linked negative conduct of individuals who choose to follow the Church's counsel to unnecessarily repress their sexual and romantic feelings.

Promoting Human Love:

Is sexual conduct morally praiseworthy or worthy of condemnation? The short answer is: it depends, running the spectrum from reprehensible to exalting. The relevant factors are 1) context and 2) the motive of the individual.

Context:

Are the couples in a recognized, committed relationship, or not? Premarital/extramartial, uncommitted sex is presumed to be less moral than marital sex:

“The Lord’s law of moral conduct is abstinence from sexual relations outside of lawful marriage and fidelity within marriage. Sexual relations are proper only between husband and wife, expressed within the bonds of marriage.^{428,”}

Sex within SSM can fulfill the same purpose. Summarizing a federal court’s analysis, Michael Sandel wrote:

“The marital relationship is significant, wrote the court of appeals, not only because of its procreative purpose but also ‘because of the unsurpassed opportunity for mutual support and self-expression that it provides.’ It recalled the Supreme Court’s observation in *Griswold* [*v. Connecticut*] that ‘marriage is a coming together for better or for worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred.’ And it went on to suggest that the qualities the Court so prized in *Griswold* could be present in homosexual unions as well: ‘For some, the sexual activity in question here serves the same purpose as the intimacy of marriage.’^{429,”}

Motive of the Individual:

This factor, like context, merits great weight when calculating the morality of sexual conduct. Both the Catholic and LDS churches have historically alternated between focusing solely on procreation on the one hand, and the mutual love and fulfillment of the marriage partners on the other, as acceptable purposes for marital sexual conduct⁴³⁰. The modern view of both is that marital sexual relations are appropriate outside of the strict procreative purpose; though a virgin myself, I would predict that most married couples would find this result intuitive, since the majority of sexual conduct between marital partners is not only or in many cases even partly the motive. An expressed Catholic view on this subject will likely ring true for many Latter-day Saints:

“The mutual inward moulding of husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense, as the Roman Catechism teaches, be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony, provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of children, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof.^{431,”}

Also,

“Pure conjugal love ‘involves the good of the whole person.’ In such statements the lie is given to the notion that sex in marriage is evil, or only a concession to concupiscence, or valid only for procreation.⁴³²”

It is common to consider same gender sexual conduct as an obvious perversion of the biological function of the sexual organs. However:

“We do not find it ‘contrary to nature’ that man has taken the hands which biological evolution provided him as grasping instruments and employed them in the ideal creative pursuits of wielding a brush or pen. Nor do we find it contrary to nature that man has used his mouth with its teeth, tongue and lips, obviously intended by nature for eating, in order to communicate through speech and song his most intimate aspirations. Nor should we find it any less according to nature for procreation, in order to give the most intimate expression to his drive for union in love with his fellow man.⁴³³”

Additionally, a naturalistic argument for sexual conduct negates any possibility of understanding human sexual conduct as having a component of the human dimension of interpersonal love:⁴³⁴

“It is this personal uniqueness of every individual which forms the necessary basis for the possibility of human love. A loving action, even if it takes the form of a sexual gesture, must be directed to the other as unique, as end in himself or herself. To treat another person merely as a means to an end that lies outside the person himself represents a failure to love that person as unique.

From this personalist viewpoint an overemphasis on procreation can be seen as leading potentially to a seriously immoral and dehumanizing form of sexuality. Modern consciousness has been sensitized by the movement for women’s rights to the fact that to understand the female exclusively in a functional manner as ‘bearer of children’ is a depersonalizing and, therefore, immoral attitude. Such an emphasis can be seen as in conflict with the Gospel emphasis on the respect and love due to one’s fellow human as a person. As we have seen, a general consideration of scriptural data concerning sexual behavior leads to only one certain conclusion: those sexual relations can be justified morally which are a true expression of human love. The call of the Gospel to man is not one of conforming passively to biological givens; rather, that call is to transform and humanize the natural order through the power to love...

The wife who withholds sex with a view to negotiating a fur coat is acting immorally; she is behaving like a prostitute, even if a legal prostitute. And the husband who uses his wife as a convenient instrument of masturbation, seeking exclusively his own egotistical pleasure, is immoral and remains so even if the act is open to the possibility of procreation. From these examples it should be obvious that there is something more to the moral quality of sexual behavior than the purely objective legal question of marriage, or even the objective rational question of openness to procreation. Something else ought to be present; and that something else is love. Are you using your sexual powers as a means of expressing your love? Are you

centering your existence in the one you love and seeking his or her fulfillment in what you are doing? The human conforms to the divine image... not by acting in an impersonal, rational way, but by acting from a motive of love.⁴³⁵”

Thus, the increase of human love as can be expressed through sexual conduct in a committed homosexual partnership, stands as another benefit of SSM.

24. Many LDS homosexuals will opt for a monogamous homosexual union anyway

Cloy Jenkins wrote:

“Most of the young homosexual men here will sooner or later meet and come to love another man. Most of them would prefer their friend to be of the same background and share the same values and faith. Ironically, the Church discourages this, drives the homosexual underground and out of the Church to seek his friends elsewhere. Sadly enough, many do as they are told on this point, and instead of associating openly and maturely among their own kind here, they take to more questionable social settings where their sexuality is accepted but their values seldom respected. Originally, these men were looking for love. They soon find themselves forced into places and lives, where sex, not love, is the name of the game. It is one of those strange contradictions of life that finds the Church directly instrumental in encouraging a loveless, lonely life of dubious morality.⁴³⁶”

Said another:

“Many of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, knowing that heterosexuality is not possible for them, and seeing celibacy as an unsatisfying and unacceptable alternative, will opt for a loving, spiritually fulfilling monogamous relationship, seeing it as the more moral choice, the one most in keeping with their sense of what God wants for them, even if it means being unable to function in the Church. This decision is made reluctantly, no doubt with agonizing reluctance. These people find themselves in a position they never would have supposed or chosen under normal circumstances – being able to do more to exercise a Christian life of service, sacrifice, and personal growth outside the Church than they would be able to achieve by remaining celibate and staying in the Church. I believe that given that terrible “Sophie’s Choice,” most gay LDS have opted or will opt for a committed same-sex relationship - their understanding of the gospel and their pleadings with God will impel the majority in that direction. This decision will not be made out of a spirit of defiance or rebellion or disagreement with spiritual truths, but just the opposite, because of devotion to those very ideals. The above commentary is not intended as a prescription of what gay LDS people ought to do, but a prediction about what is most likely to happen based on my past observations⁴³⁷.”

Gary Watts argued:

“I believe [some form of sanctioning or affirming committed, monogamous same-sex relationships] has the potential to provide some reward and incentive for gay members to sustain a committed, monogamous relationship that would have value for the church. If gay members in committed relationships were able to feel that their relationship had value and that it would enable them to remain members of the church, I believe that most of the animosity currently extant would evaporate overnight. Other benefits to the church would flow naturally. Gay members would continue to be active in the church and would be able to make contributions which are sorely missed presently... Gay and lesbian members would, for perhaps the first time, feel welcome that they finally have a place in the church. The church could even become a place where gay members with an interest in things of the spirit could socialize rather than congregate in gay bars. The exodus of so many gay members and their families and friends from the church would cease, and acrimonious feelings and expressions would certainly diminish. Many individuals, unable to give unqualified support to the church because of this issue, would return to the fold and once again become its advocates.⁴³⁸”

M.V. Lee Badgett, featured on the SSM debate on *The Economist*, wrote:

“In America, almost 600,000 same-sex couples live together. The experience of the states that allow those couples to marry suggests that most of them will jump at the chance. In Massachusetts, two-thirds (and counting) of same-sex couples have married since 2004.⁴³⁹”

There is also reason to conclude that marriage stability is increased when 1) couples marry within a church, 2) couples have a good relationship with their families, and 3) the couples are embedded within an approving network of friends and community⁴⁴⁰. Willingness to invest in the relationship and children is key difference between married and cohabiting heterosexual couples⁴⁴¹, and the existence of a similar correlation among homosexual couples is not unreasonable. One story:

“Bill and Robert considered themselves “soulmates.” When Robert fell fatally ill, the admitting Maryland hospital knew through his accompanying medical records- and Bill’s statements to hospital staff- that Bill was Robert’s family and legal agent for health care decisions. But the hospital blocked any communication between them, saying that only “family” were allowed access to patients. Bill was forced to watch with mounting anguish and humiliation as families of other patients arrived and quickly were escorted in to see their loved ones. Robert slipped into unconsciousness, alone and without comfort, support, and solace during his final hours. He never saw or spoke with Bill before his death.

Not infrequently, the lack of marriage’s kin-creating tools can cripple commitment when the need is greatest.⁴⁴²”

LDS SSM would help in the cultural and legal movement for civil SSM. Both are likely to bring the beneficial kin-creating, commitment-to-each-other strengthening, investing-in-children aspects of marriage to society and homosexuals.

Conclusion:

If many church members will opt to seek a monogamous same-gender union, necessarily sacrificing their membership in God's church, why not let them have the union and keep their membership too? In light of the intense desires of and sacrifices by many of them to keep God's commandments and live a family life as He would have them, should we not support their attempts rather than prescribe the anti-family institution of celibacy?

25. Biblical condemnation of homosexuality is not clear

My judgment is susceptible to confirmation bias. In the area of biblical interpretation, as in many areas, my judgment is also (and unfortunately) based on thin research. Now there are, as one would imagine, rebuttals⁴⁴³ to the arguments I present below. Though I have found many of these rebuttals to be unpersuasive insofar as I have researched, I encourage those interested in a balanced inquiry to review them- in this section I will primarily represent only that side which supports the title.

“The Church pamphlet "Hope for Transgressors" states that there are many scriptures that condemn homosexuality and lists 74. Of that list, only 4 actually refer to homosexuality. Two of those are from the old Jewish law contained in Leviticus. Application of the ancient Jewish law is, in our time, forbidden by federal and state law and ecclesiastically obsoleted through the Gospel of Christ. Many of the statutes of the old law carrying heavy penalties are not followed at all by the Saints today. Standing on their own, the references from ancient Jewish law are mainly of historical value. The other two references in this list are from Paul's writings. Not one of the other 70 references can be construed to refer to homosexuality directly. Instead, these references deal with faith, repentance and the evils of sin generally. They are obliquely applicable to the view of homosexuality as presented in the pamphlet but by no means do they accomplish what the list was supposed to prove—that the Bible condemns homosexuality.⁴⁴⁴”

“It is possible, of course, to read the Bible from an absolute or inerrant perspective. In such a view the words of the Biblical writers are self-evident, to be interpreted literally (never metaphorically nor symbolically), reflect precisely the mind and will of God, and are timeless, in that they apply without alteration regardless of peoples, culture, or circumstance. Alternatively, one can believe that careful study is required to distinguish the literal from the figurative, and accept that a revelatory message might be imperfectly understood, even by an inspired human

recipient, or imperfectly transmitted through or between the sometimes inadequate instrument of languages. Latter-day Saints accept the latter proposition, believing it to be consistent with broad implications of the Mormon declaration that the “Bible is the word of God as far as it is translated correctly.” One of these implications of this qualification is that a thoughtful investigation is required in the search for understanding. What follows, then is an attempt to scrutinize those Biblical passages that have been traditionally used to condemn homosexuality.

Conventional wisdom has it that the destruction by God of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as recorded in Genesis 19 can be attributed to homosexuality practiced by their citizens. This view is inappropriately perpetuated through the conventional use of the words sodomy and sodomite. A thoughtful analysis of the Biblical texts, however, demonstrates that this conclusion is not valid. In the account, Lot violates the cultural mores of Sodom by inviting strangers (in this case two heavenly agents) into his home. Sodom’s people were not hospitable. A crowd of some citizens gathers and demands that the two be turned over to them, in order “that we may know them.” That the word “know” has a sexual connotation in this context (not the much more frequent use of the Hebrew “yada,” meaning recognize, acknowledge, make known, or punish has been assumed because in refusing to invite the strangers into their homes Lot alternatively offers his virgin daughters in appeasement. (We note that the Inspired Version renders the text as “. . . let me, I pray you, plead with my brethren that I may not bring them out unto you.”) The story is also remarkably similar to another account in Judges 19-21 in which the outcome is more clearly a gang rape of the house guests. The critical insight in interpreting this account is that the inhabitants of Sodom are condemned, for reasons not specified, before the incident at Lot’s home. Divine judgment has been passed previously (the Lord had earlier informed Abraham of what would happen), and is not a consequence of the events at the doorstep. In fact the angels have been sent to execute the destruction. A review of the subsequent Biblical references to Sodom (in seven books of the Old Testament and six books of the New Testament) does not justify the conclusion that the problem of the city’s people was sexual. (The one possible exception is Jude 7 which cites fornication and the vague statement “going after strange flesh,” where the Greek word “sarx” is variously interpreted to mean food, the body, human beings, or human nature - frailties or passions [133].) Most frequently Sodom and Gomorrah are cited together as a metaphor for wickedness: “. . . as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,” Isaiah 13:19. An unequivocal statement of the real source of the wickedness, however, is made by Ezekiel. “Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” (Ezekiel 16:49). The Sodomites were selfish and uncaring. As a reflection of their arrogance and unwillingness to care for those in need, they turned away strangers. Jesus had this same view. He says that people in those cities who fail to host and be receptive to the missionary apostles will be under greater condemnation than those of Sodom and Gomorrah (because they also were inhospitable) - repeated in Matthew 10:15, Mark 6:11, and Luke 10:12. Sodomites were not homosexuals; they were people bereft of charity.

If, in fact, those who gathered at Lot’s door were intent in gang raping his visitors, this can be universally condemned as despicable, a sadistic act of violence. Such behavior was apparently not uncommon in the ancient world as part of the violence inflicted by victorious armies upon the vanquished. It must be clearly distinguished, however, from a same-sex romantic encounter. This propensity for cruelty and the exploitation of other people may, in fact, be the reason why

the word sodomite was used pejoratively, as, for example, Deuteronomy 23:17-18, where it is probably a reference to male prostitutes associated with Canaanite and Babylonian fertility rituals. The interpretation that **the sin of Sodom was inhospitality, mistreatment of aliens, and a lack of generosity** is strongly supported by ancient Jewish religious texts (the Babylonian Talmud). The (unreliable) connection of Sodom with same-gender sex was first made thousands of years after the fact by Philo of Alexandria, whose life spanned that of Jesus and the early church fathers. It then became the dogma of the fledgling Catholic Church, espoused, for example by Augustine. Latter-day Saints should not accept an erroneous notion that became part of Christian religious canon during that apostate period of history when legitimate revelation was in such short supply⁴⁴⁵ (emphasis added).

A scriptural appeal supporting the proposition that homosexuality is an abomination is deeply flawed. Jay Michaelson, the founder of *Nehirim: GLBT Jewish Culture & Spirituality* and columnist for the Forward, Huffington Post, and Tikkun, is completing his Ph.D. in Jewish Thought at Hebrew University. He wrote:

“The word “abomination” is found, of course, in the King James translation of Leviticus 18:22, a translation which reads, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it [is] abomination.” Yet this is a thoroughly misleading rendition of the word *toevah*, which, while we may not know exactly what it means, definitely does not mean “abomination.”... a close reading of the term *toevah* suggests an entirely different meaning: something permitted to one group, and forbidden to another. Though there is (probably) no etymological relationship, *toevah* means taboo.

The term *toevah* (and its plural, *toevot*) occurs 103 times in the Hebrew Bible, and almost always has the connotation of a non-Israelite cultic practice. In the Torah, the primary *toevah* is *avodah zara*, foreign forms of worship, and most other *toevot* flow from it. The Israelites are instructed not to commit *toevah* because other nations do so. Deuteronomy 18:9-12 makes this quite clear:

When you come into the land that YHVH your God gives you, do not learn to do the *toevot* of those nations. Do not find among you one who passes his son or daughter through the fire; or a magician; or a fortune teller, charmer, or witch... because all who do these things are *toevah* to YHVH and because of these *toevot* YHVH your God is driving them out before you.

Elsewhere, Deuteronomy 7:25-26 commands:

[Y]ou shall burn the statues of their gods in fire. Do not desire the silver and gold on them and take it onto yourself, else you be snared by it, for it is a *toevah* to YHVH your God. And you shall not bring *toevah* to your home

Deut. 12:31, 13:14, 17:4, 27:15, and 32:16 further identify idolatry, child sacrifice, witchcraft, and other “foreign” practices as *toevah*, and Deut. 20:18 says that avoiding *toevah* justifies the genocide of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. So, *toevah* is serious, but it is serious as a particular class of cultic offense: a transgression of national boundary. It is certainly not “abomination.”

Toevah is used four times in Leviticus 18—once to refer to male homosexual acts, and then three times as an umbrella term. As in Deuteronomy, the signal feature of toevot is that the other nations of the Land of Israel do them: “You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit these toevot... because the people who were in the land before you did these toevot and made the land impure (tameh)” (Lev. 18:26-27; see also Lev. 18:29). The term is repeated with reference to homosexual activity in Lev. 20:13.

Similarly, the Books of Kings and Chronicles use toevah nine times to refer to acts that other nations did in the Land of Israel:

1 Kings 14:24 (general); 2 Kings 16:3 (child sacrifice); 2 Kings 21:2 and 2 Kings 21:11 (idolatry); 2 Chron. 28:3 (child sacrifice); 2 Chron. 33:2 (idolatry); 2 Chron. 34:33, 36:8, and 36:14 (general). (Ezra 9:1, 9:11, and 9:14 use the word in exactly the same way.)

In all these cases, toevah refers to a foreign cultic behavior wrongly practiced by Israelites and Israelite kings.

And likewise, the prophet Ezekiel uses the term toevah a record-setting 39 times to refer to idolatry (Ez. 5:11, 6:9, 6:11, 7:20, 14:6, 20:7-8, 22:2, 44:6-7, 44:13), usury (Ez. 18:13), haughtiness and pride (Ez. 16:47-50; the “Sin of Sodom”—more on that in a future article), heterosexual adultery (Ez. 22:11, 33:26), and violence (Ez. 33:26), as well as a general term for foreign acts (Ez. 16:51) or transgression, often in a cultic context (Ez. 5:9, 7:3-4, 7:8-9, 9:4, 11:18, 11:21, 12:16, 16:2, 16:43, 18:24, 20:4, 33:29, 36:31).

In one extended passage (Ez. 8:1-18), Ezekiel is taken on a visionary tour of toevot, all of which have to do with idolatry and each, Ezekiel says, is worse than the previous one, beginning with an image on the door of the gate of Jerusalem, to idols and imagery in a house of worship, to women weeping for the god Tammuz,* to men worshipping the sun within the Temple itself. This extended passage, with six mentions of toevah, links the term in every instance with avodah zara, or idolatry.

In five instances, Ezekiel mentions toevah together with both idolatry and zimah or znut, “whoredom” (Ez. 16:22, 16:36, 16:58, 23:26, 43:8), strongly suggesting that the nature of sexual toevah is not mere lewdness, and certainly not loving intimate expression, but sexuality in a cultic context.

Detestable Because it is Foreign, or Foreign Because it is Detestable?

Now, so far, it is unclear whether a toevah is detestable because it is foreign, or foreign because it is detestable. This question is resolved elsewhere in the Bible, because Israelites are not the only ones with toevot. There are several examples of things which are toevah for Egyptians but perfectly acceptable for Israelites.

Genesis 43:32 states that eating with Israelites is toevah for Egyptians. Gen. 43:34 states that shepherds are toevah to Egyptians—the sons of Israel are themselves shepherds. In Exodus 8:22, Moses describes Israelite sacrifices as being toevah mitzrayim (toevah of Egypt), although

obviously Israelite ritual is not an objective “abomination.” If toevah means abomination, then eating with shepherds, eating with Israelites, and Israelite sacrifices themselves must be abominable! Since this clearly is not the case, toevah cannot mean “abomination” in any ontological sense—it must be a relative quality.

Toevah can also mean other things. It can refer to ritual imperfection: Deut. 17:1 uses it to refer to the sacrifice of a blemished animal, and Deut. 19:19 bans as toevah sacrifices bought through prostitution or “the price of a dog.” Deut. 22:5 calls crossdressing a toevah (incidentally, in Orthodox Jewish law, this includes women wearing pants). Remarriage (i.e. of the same two parties) is toevah according to Deut. 24:4. The sole ethical use of the term in the Torah is in Deut. 25:16, in which the use of unequal weights and measures is called toevah.

In the Book of Proverbs (which comes late in the Bible but which scholars believe to have been composed prior to the Deuteronomic and Levitical material), toevah is used twenty-one times to refer to various ethical failings, including the ways, thoughts, prayers and sacrifices of the wicked (Prov. 3:32, 15:8-9, 15:26, 16:12, 21:27, 28:9), pride (Prov. 6:16, 16:5), evil speech (Prov. 8:7), false weights (Prov. 11:1, 20:10, 20:23), devious heartedness (Prov. 11:20), lying (Prov. 12:22, 26:25), scoffing (Prov. 24:9), justifying the wicked and defaming the righteous (Prov. 17:15). Interestingly, Proverbs 13:19 says that “to turn from evil is toevah to fools,” again suggesting that toevah is something relative in nature. Similarly, Prov. 29:27 says poetically: “An unjust man is toevah to the righteous, and the straightforward man is toevah to the wicked.”

Finally, other books of the Bible adapt the meaning of toevah in accord with their overall literary agendas. Isaiah uses it to refer to the sacrifices of hypocrites (1:13, 44:19), as a taunt against earthly power (41:14), and idolatry (66:3). Jeremiah associates toevah with idolatry (Jer. 2:7, 7:10, 32:35) and unspecified transgression (Jer. 6:15, 8:12, 44:22). Malachi (2:11) uses it to refer to the Israelites’ having “married the daughter of a foreign god.” And Psalm 88:9 poetically uses the term to refer to being alienated from one’s friend: “You have taken me far from my acquaintance; made me a toevah to him, put away, and I cannot come out.”

Even these variant uses, in most cases, point to the nature of toevah as something foreign or, more generally, something which is or ought to be far away from oneself. Proverbs’ use of toevah is the exception, rather than the rule; in the overwhelming majority of cases, toevah has nothing to do with ethics, and everything to do with cultic behavior, idolatry, and foreign ritual. However we may understand this type of transgression, it is certainly not “abomination” in the modern sense.^{446,}

Justin W. Starr, author of a FAIR (Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research), wrote in 2004⁴⁴⁷:

“The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is short and ultimately unsatisfying in the search for certainty concerning the Biblical treatment of homosexual conduct. In the ancient literature Sodom is destroyed for reasons as varying as arrogance to pederasty... [quoting another] ‘the city was consequently destroyed not for sexual immorality but for the sin of inhospitality to strangers.’”

Lack of hospitality is in fact a common explanation for the destruction of Sodom, both in modern and ancient literature. Kugel, in his commentary, notes that being ‘stingy and inhospitable, especially to strangers, was no small matter. From ancient times, this had been considered a particularly grave fault.’

The Hebrew word for *yadah*, the proponents of the inhospitality theory argue, means literally “to know” or “become acquainted with,” and has no sexual connotation as used by the men of Sodom. ‘When the Hebrew bible does refer to homosexual intercourse or bestiality, it uses the verb *shakabh*, not found in this story.’ *Shakabh* is translated ‘to lie with,’ such as the Levitical prohibition that a man not ‘lie with’ another man.

It is also noteworthy that the *Septuagint* (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible used by the Jews of Christ’s day) version of this passage implies nothing more than ‘become familiar with’ or ‘become acquainted with’ (*suggenometha autois*). This is in sharp contrast to the verbs the *Septuagint* employs in reference to Lot’s daughters (*egnosan, khresasthe*), which clearly denote sexual activity... Jesus himself declared the sin of Sodom to be inhospitality when he tells his disciples that ‘if anyone does not receive you... it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town’ (Matthew 10:14-15).”

Back to our former author:

“The main Old Testament scripture they refer to is the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The very scholarly research of Derrick Bailey in *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* reveals that it was centuries after its destruction before a homosexual interpretation was ever attributed to the sins of Sodom. Once applied, the interpretation has stuck, and Sodom to this day remains erroneously synonymous with homosexuality. The bulk of the few remaining Biblical references to homosexuality come from the writings of Paul in his epistles to the Romans, Corinthians and Timothy. Though some experts doubt that Paul is directly referring to homosexuality, it appears to me that there is little doubt that he is, and that he condemns the practice. But several other crucial facts must be squarely faced by all parties who give scriptural authority to the problem of homosexuality. The belief was current in the Mediterranean culture of Paul's time that overindulgence in heterosexual activities would make a man effeminate and turn him into a homosexual. The notion held that the heterosexual profligate would simply wear out and become bored with "normal" sex and by dint of its unusualness, would turn to the taboos, one of which would be homosexuality. This explains Paul's condemnation of men who "turn from" the "natural use" of the woman to lust after each other. The homosexual who reads this scripture is bewildered, realizing that he has never "turned from" the woman. His "natural" desire has always been for a man and sex with a woman is for him "unnatural." He connects with Paul's condemnation of the homosexual activity of these men but is at a loss to see how their activities and his situation coincide. The young men to whom this scripture has been read by their bishops come away only more confused about their sexuality, especially if they have not yet had any kind of sexual experience but are keenly aware of the desire they have always had. The responsible application of Paul's statement to the Romans requires that one subscribe to the theory that too much heterosexual sex will turn a person into a homosexual. This general notion is still held as valid by the Jehovah's Witnesses. (*Awake*, March

15, 1977) In the most strict interpretation, Paul was condemning wanton heterosexuals who were turning for sheer novel pleasure to sexual activities outside of their "natural" desires.⁴⁴⁸

The prohibitions of Leviticus:

“It is helpful to put the Old Testament verses of scripture that comment on same-gender sexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13) in the historical setting of Israel attempting to survive physically and maintain its religious and social integrity in the face of foreign influences the people encountered in a new location. The regulations in this book constitute a “Holiness Code,” intended, in large part, for the priests as rules of behavior that would distinguish the emigrants from Egypt from the Canaanites whose land they have entered. “Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out. And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore, I abhorred them. But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people [Leviticus 20:22-24].” The practical implementation of this “separation” took the form of instructions pertaining to security, preserving a cultural identity, and procreation so as to enlarge the population. The Israelites were not to worship Canaanite gods nor adopt their customs. The need of this community has been described as “nation building,” an attempt to maintain ethnic purity, appropriate to a particular frontier circumstance at a particular time. As examples of the effort to promote a state of strict purity, the people were forbidden to interbreed cattle, plant a field with two different kinds of seeds, or wear clothing made from two different kinds of fabrics (Leviticus 19:19). There is a long list of additional prohibitions including round haircuts, marital sexual relations during menstruation - all deemed impure. Many of these violations were punishable by death. Sex between men is described as an “abomination” (Lev. 18:22). The Hebrew word is “tow’ebah” or “to’ebah,” which has a range of meanings, but whose intent as it appears in a number of verses in Leviticus and Deuteronomy seems to be “abhorrent because of being idolatrous or ceremonially unclean [133].” Thus, other “abominations” included eating organisms that creep on the earth (Lev. 11:4), taking idols (or removing the gold or silver from them) obtained from defeated enemies (Deut. 7:25), sacrificing a blemished bull or sheep (Deut. 17:1), wearing the clothing of a person of the opposite gender (Deut. 22:5), being a practitioner of magic or the mystical (Deut. 18:12), taking back a divorced wife whose subsequent husband had died (Deut. 24:4), or doing business with dishonest scales or rulers (Deut. 25:16). Many of these concerns are clearly anachronisms in today’s society, or at best viewed as trivial, and not intrinsically evil. This is especially true since the required punishment for same-gender sex was death, also prescribed for adultery, sex with one’s parents, sex with one’s children, sex with animals (Lev. 20: 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16), but also for cursing one’s parents (v. 9), dabbling in the occult (v. 27), blaspheming God’s name (Lev. 24:16), murder (Lev. 24:21), or advocating the worship of false gods (Deut. 13:5). Few today would consider the death penalty appropriate for all of these kinds of behaviors, even those deemed highly contemptible.

So those who argue in favor of a letter of the law Old Testament condemnation of homosexuality appear to be guilty of a serious inconsistency, by advocating one set of prohibitions while disregarding most of the others. But the more important point is that the same-sex acts referred to

were undoubtedly perceived to be between heterosexuals, there being no concept at the time in this culture that there existed in humanity any other state than to be opposite-sex attracted.”

The New Testament statements of Paul

“Writing from Greece, Paul begins his letter to the Romans with greetings (Romans 1:1-15), and then launches a sermon on the degraded state of human kind, probably highly influenced by the pagan practices he had observed in his recent missionary journeys. He decries the fact that though the ways of godliness are obvious, the people have abandoned righteousness. They have substituted love of self for love of god. Beginning with worship of idols, there follows a long list of inappropriate attitudes and behaviors which derive from this self deception. Among these, verses 26-27, are same-gender sexual acts, deemed unnatural for either women or men. The emphasis here is on the capacity of people to be contrary, to know what is right, but to do the opposite. In this context, being one thing but doing another, it is reasonable to believe that Paul was condemning those of a heterosexual orientation who performed homosexual acts, and that it was unlikely that he imagined that some women or men were homosexual by nature. “The idea was not available in his world. Other statements in the writings of Paul about those who “abuse” (I Cor. 6:9) or “defile” (I Tim. 1:10) “themselves with mankind” are most likely references to male prostitutes, an interpretation consistent with his companion examples of promiscuity (fornicators, adulterers, whoremongers). I propose, then, as have others before me, **that when the two or three Biblical writers denounced homosexual behavior they were addressing the issue of heterosexual persons engaging in homosexual sex.** It was inconceivable to them that there were persons whose natural state was to be romantically oriented to those of their same gender. Such a possibility just did not occur to these people at that time. I note the absence of a reference to homosexuality in the Book of Mormon, or Pearl of Great Price, or, especially, in The Doctrine and Covenants. Disease-causing microorganisms were unknown until the rise of late 18th century scientific technology permitted their detection and a conceptualization of their role in human affairs. In an analogous way, it has taken even more time for us to conceive of a segment of humanity with a non-heterosexual orientation, and for gay and lesbian people to emerge from the realm of the invisible. I submit that our current perspective should take into account recent knowledge and experience. Human understanding of what is true changes over time. Truth may be eternal, but our comprehension of it is neither automatic nor complete. It takes time, usually a long time, for us to learn[.] What seems apparent is that God doesn’t jump in unilaterally and correct our deficiencies in knowledge and understanding; He appears to wait patiently while we figure things out for ourselves. The evidence is strong, as presented in Parts I and II of this document, that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters are homosexual by nature, and that their type of sexual orientation is not alterable. This information places us under obligation to reconsider misconceptions we may have harbored, even those based on scripture, when we recognize our understanding to be faulty.⁴⁴⁹”

Wrote Clay Essig of invoking Paul’s teachings about homosexuality:

“A few of Paul’s teachings are another traditional roadblock to accepting and blessing God’s Gay children. We Latter-day Saints readily dismiss Paul’s teachings regarding women keeping silent in church (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-12), the wearing or not wearing of hats (1 Cor. 11:4-7), hair length (1 Cor. 11:14-15), his injunction to “drink no longer water, but use a little

wine” (1 Tim. 5:23), shunning and shaming sinners (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:14), the marital status of deacons and bishops (1 Timothy 3:2, 8, 12), the verses used to justify slavery (Eph. 6:5 etc.), not to mention the verses which suggest celibacy is more noble than marriage (1 Cor. 7:7-9, 38); but many promote vehemently Paul’s writings that are traditionally used to condemn all homosexuals and homosexuality.⁴⁵⁰”

Also, there is a lack of teachings about homosexuality in modern canon:

“One of the more singularly striking facts is that in the entire Book of Mormon and the other modern scriptures there is not one single reference to homosexuality. These scriptures contain the "fullness of the Gospel" and all the essential commandments for the Saints, and yet the subject of homosexuality is conspicuously absent. To my knowledge, Joseph Smith never mentioned the subject.⁴⁵¹”

No doubt some of the more enthusiastic view the silence of modern scriptural canon on homosexuality as “writing on the wall.” Said one:

“As [most Mormons] see it, the Lord by means of his prophets has repeatedly condemned homosexuality. But has He? Where are these prophetic denunciations so often cited by opponents of same-sexuality? They are not found in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, or the Pearl of Great Price- an astonishing omission given the alleged gravity of the sin. ... Mormon prophets have not condemned homosexuality on the strength of prophetic authority. ... Not even statements from the First Presidency which have appeared in various editions of the bishop’s handbook can make the claim of [being revelation] since they represent an arbitration of policy, not doctrine.⁴⁵²”

It is debatable whether scripturally-based modern teachings about homosexual behavior survive independent of scriptural canon: *debile fundamentum fallit opus* (where there is a weak foundation, the work fails). In any case, appeals to the New and Old Testament homosexuality condemnations are not a sufficiently certain basis for concluding one way or the other about God’s views on the morality of homosexuality:

“It follows that to condemn homosexuality as sinful simply on the basis of appeal to biblical authority is insufficient. We must undertake a more painstaking moral assessment based on its effects. The highest criteria against which Latter-day Saint Christians should measure behavior (including homosexual behavior) were given us by Jesus Christ. He taught us to evaluate attitudes and actions not by their conformity to the letter of a generalized law but rather according to their compatibility with the spirit of love and the degree to which they promote self-development. In this light, sin is behavior that weakens our capacity for love, impedes our growth toward divine characteristics, and undermines our worth and dignity as offspring of God...

I believe he would recognize that they too have been given God's gift of sexuality for their potential benefit. To that end he would judge the expression of homosexuality by standards similar to those we apply to heterosexuals: is it committed and loving in a larger context rather than promiscuous, selfish, and merely sensual? 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' he taught, and the fruits of the homosexual life vary considerably, even as do the fruits of heterosexuality. Perhaps the appropriate question is not whether but how one is homosexual.

Would Jesus find homosexual expression sinful because it is biologically infertile? I think not. Conceiving, bearing, and rearing children in this life may be a blessing, but it is not *sine qua non* for salvation and continuing growth. Many married people do not produce offspring, and we do not regard this as evidence of moral failure. If homosexuals are biochemically unsuited for the psychological demands of heterosexual cohabitation, that is sufficient reason not to marry.

Would Jesus find homosexual expression sinful on grounds that sexual intimacy outside marriage is forbidden? I doubt he would look at the matter that simplistically... He would recognize that for most of us, whatever our sexual orientation, a fulfilled life is more likely if an individual is sustained by the love of another person within the bonds of caring, committed intimacy... He would recognize that marriage, through sharing and commitment, provides stability and mutual support conducive to maximum growth of the partners. For what sanctifies marriage is not its legal formality but rather the holy enterprise of bonding and complementing which is intrinsic to it.

I believe that Jesus would recognize that homosexuals, deprived of socially approved cohabitation, have nevertheless the same righteous need for loving commitment. Would he deny them opportunities for growth that are compatible with their nature and with righteous love? That means, of course, that gays should enter monogamous, faithful relationships analogous to our ideal of heterosexual marriage. Ultimately Jesus would, I believe, judge each human relationship on its own merits.^{453,}

26. The utility of suffering argues for SSM

When discussing SSM with my LDS friends, it is not uncommon for me to hear comments like the following:

"I have been through the hell of abandonment, loneliness, misunderstanding, confusion, frustration, and despair that accompanies same gender attraction. My soul has shattered from the sheer torture of it. I believe that each and every one of God's children must experience those feelings in this life, maybe even more than once. As unpleasant as they may be, they teach us compassion and love, patience and charity."

or,

“All of us must bear crosses in this life - there is no getting around that. Life is not supposed to be easy or smooth. It's a test. It's a refiner's fire. It's a probationary period for people to prepare to meet God, a time to prepare for our eternal future...”

or,

“I believe that every problem presents an opportunity, and with this particular challenge comes a corresponding spiritual opportunity. It is an opportunity to build spiritual muscles that few people are given... spiritual growth does not come when one shrinks from divinely-appointed challenges.”

These and similar statements argue for maintaining the hellish experience of dealing with same gender attraction because of the eternal utility of suffering. After all, we cannot become like God without passing through severe trials, right? I will now show why this view is grossly immoral.

This attitude is evil because it justifies harming innocent people. The necessity of severe trials for salvation is an insufficient basis to rationalize imposing intense suffering on another person. Racist behavior with its corresponding effect on people (causing a child of God to think that Heavenly Father views him as less than another person) could certainly “build spiritual muscles that few people are given.” Torturing someone for years in a dank prison would no doubt make life less “easy or smooth” and convert life into “a test” and a “refiner’s fire.” Arbitrarily gouging out a person’s eyes would unquestionably impose a severe, lifelong trial on that person that could help teach them “compassion and love, patience and charity.” Yet I hope it is obvious that none of these consequentialist arguments justify such clearly immoral acts. It would similarly be unethical to obstruct development of AIDS treatments, or oppose reasonable efforts to reduce child abuse, or, God forbid, sexually molest a young child knowing how likely that act is to impose intense, lifelong suffering on that person, because of the eternal utility of suffering! The suffering and happiness reductions that most homosexually oriented members experience are not because of some condition inherent to mortality, such as malaria or severe burns resulting from an unforeseeable accident or getting cancer. Their suffering does not even directly result from being homosexually oriented. Most of their difficulties are instead caused primarily by the insistence of Latter-day Saints that 1) non-biological causes such as the devil or choice are responsible for their homosexuality, 2) homosexually oriented members can and should alter

their ultimately damning orientation in mortality and their failure to do so reflects their lack of effort and faith, and 3) they should remain celibate their entire lives. These three factors are not accidents; they are not unfortunate and unavoidable aspects of mortality. They are *choices* made by the LDS community, *my* LDS community- choices within that community's power to change.

Conclusion

How much room in this world's LDS theology is there for LDS same-sex marriage? Enough for two elephants, long-ways, with a walkway in between.

Chapter 6: Rebuttals to Common Anti Same-Sex Marriage Arguments

Though I have advocated against SSM, I am not opposed to understanding the opposition. Powerfully arguing for the other side elicits the strongest responses for the pro-traditional marriage camp. Traditional marriage defenders can then use these strong responses in their advocacy efforts. Below, I respond to common anti-SSM arguments. Most responses are edited excerpts from various facebook, in-person, blog, and email conversations I've had in recent months that bear on the issue of same-sex marriage (SSM) or Proposition 8.

I have grouped the anti-SSM arguments into four interrelated categories. I will give each category its own section, then address specific anti-SSM arguments within each category. The outline:

Parenting/children Consequences

- Opposite-gender parenting is best
- Studies of gay parenting are fatally flawed
- SSM harms children
- Don't change the rules for children
- We should subsidize marriage to propagate society
- SSM is about private indulgence; marriage is a public institution
- Relationship with both biological parents

Religious Consequences

- SSM threatens my family's religious values
- Churches will have to perform SSM
- Religious liberty

Legal Consequences

- SSM would lead to marrying animals, etc.
- The state has no interest in gay marriage
- State recognition of marriage is not a universal right
- Individual states should be allowed to define marriage
- The federal judiciary violated the sovereignty of the people by overturning Proposition 8
- We can't trust the courts
- SSM violates gender equality
- Opposing SSM is about gender, not sexual orientation

Societal Consequences

- History shows that monogamy is best
- SSM distorts the traditional definition of marriage
- Gay promiscuity will taint marriage by reducing marital fidelity
- SSM "weakens marriage:" promote domestic partnership or civil unions instead
- SSM contributes to family breakdown
- SSM will make civilization come crashing down

Parenting/Children Consequences

Opposite-gender parenting is best

Interlocutor: *"Studies show irrefutably that children do best when raised by a mother and a father. Those who do best of all are raised by their own biological parents. 'Millenia of human experience tell us that marriage is society's way of ensuring that the adults responsible for*

creating children take responsibility for raising them. When we recognize marriage between a man and a woman in our laws, we are endorsing that idea.⁴⁵⁴ If we really want what is best for children, we would want them to have a mom and a dad.”

My response: Ah, please permit an endeavor to refute the irrefutable! The studies you reference are incapable of concluding that children do best in arrangement X unless those studies also examined how children fare in arrangements Y, Z, and all other candidate arrangements. The logical flaw in your claim is that most if not all of the studies you implicitly reference did not juxtapose same sex parent households against opposite gender and biological parent opposite gender households. [instead, they likely compared biological parent to 1) non-biological parent opposite gender, 2) single parent, and/or 3) one-biological parent opposite gender families]. Thus, until the studies include same sex families, they are incapable of concluding as to the superiority of A over B, and in any case will never be capable of claiming a "best" conclusion since many conceivable family arrangements (such as same-sex 2 and only 2 biological parent households) are still untested (and indeed, as yet, untestable). At least some studies suggest that same-sex couple households parent as well or better on average than opposite-gender households⁴⁵⁵.

The claim was made that recognizing marriage between a man and a woman endorses the idea that adults responsible for creating children take responsibility for raising them. This ideal is not threatened by SSM since 1) man/woman marriages are still recognized and 2) same-sex couples will be equally responsible for raising the children they create.

Also, an advocate of homosexual marriage could acknowledge the relevance of gender differences and the value of opposite gender parenting, yet still advocate on other grounds such as fulfilling the duty to bring children into the world in two parent households or on the basis of providing for a right to marry. Or in the alternative they could argue, as Biblarz and Savci did in 2010: "Contrary to popular belief, studies have not shown that 'compared to all other family forms, families headed by married, biological parents are best for children' ... Research has not identified any gender-exclusive parenting abilities (with the partial exception of lactation)... 'very little about the gender of the parent seems to be distinctly important.'⁴⁵⁶” There are those who say: “now that I am married, I see what my wife does that I cannot possibly do.⁴⁵⁷” They argue that the divine roles of men and women are both essential to marriage and family. On the related subjects of Mormon feminism and gender equality, I wrote:

“Now, I'm going to hone in on the gender discrimination and examine it using the comparison to the issue of racial discrimination as evidenced in "separate but equal" (see *Plessy*⁴⁵⁸) and "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (see *Brown v. Board of Education*⁴⁵⁹) language. No doubt brighter authors than I have done this very exegesis before. I feel more uneducated on this subject cluster than on other recent posts. Notwithstanding, here goes:

Plessy: Family Proclamation :: *Brown*: Adam and Eve story. Allow me to explain.

Much has been made of the "separate but equal" roles of men and women in the church. The divine role of women and the doctrine of motherhood is abundantly taught. (See for more detail, “LDS Family Ideals versus the Equality of Women: Navigating the Changes Since 1957,⁴⁶⁰” 2008). The Family Proclamation teaches:

"By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners." (Separate responsibilities but equal partners- separate but equal, *Plessy's* language)

This paragraph expounds separate responsibilities for fathers and mothers, though it doesn't go as far as to say in what ways the two genders' natures differ (that they differ is implied by "Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose."). I term this illustration of the archetypal family the **Modern Family**. Because I want to get to other points, I will not exhaustively research authoritative statements which support a conclusion that, for instance, the church teaches that men are built better for providing or that women are built better for nurturing children than the opposite gender. Although I would point out that although women and men might complement each other well generally, the general man and the general women never marry- instead, there is always a specific man and a specific woman, each with a unique attribute profile. If the father is more nurturing than the mother, or the woman more capable and inclined to protect or provide than the man, then the couple has a tougher job complying with the articulated roles than a more stereotypical couple. If one's profile of characteristics is largely unchosen, this result seems difficult, unfair, and unnecessary- with the seeming response of "tough luck."

Anyway, back to my intended points. The Adam and Eve story is one of the ideal marriage and family, and provides an archetype to follow (I term their arrangement the **First Family**). It seems that Adam and Eve's approach wouldn't fit in very well under the modern church's depiction of gender roles. That could be okay - the modern church is for the modern world, and Adam and Eve were in a different world, a new world, where they had the opportunity of establishing the culture rather than responding to it. However, the juxtaposition might shed some light on the doctrine of gender roles. I think it paints more of a picture of equality than the "separate but equal" conception extant today. (Though I don't here, I might also juxtapose an interesting third option chronologically nestled between the **First Family** and the **Modern Family**, namely the **Polygynous Family**, which like the other two, seems to have garnered at least occasional endorsement by God).

Back to the **First Family**. Adam and Eve did everything together. In Moses 5, it seems there wasn't a division of labor resulting from different innate, gender-specific tendencies.

Did just Adam do the providing? No, they worked together: "Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him."

Did Adam take the lead as voice in their prayers, receive commandments, and pass them along to his wife? No- they prayed and worshiped and received revelation together. Notice the "they's": "And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them... And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of

their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord."

Did Eve do the predominant share of nurturing? Here the answer is less clear, though again the partnership is referenced as the teaching entity: " And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters." I think there is no doubt that women have a nurturing nature- but I'm not convinced that men lack this ability.

LouAnn Brizendine, *The Male Brain*, 2010: "The stereotype of the stoic, unemotional male is again contradicted by research showing that the daddy brain and mature male brain are profoundly devoted and nurturing" (pg. 132).

I also don't think it is clear that men lack the level of nurturing that women exhibit, though men may nurture differently than women. I think men often nurture in similar ways as well, though- e.g. see the male-only priesthood qualities from D & C 121 that sound very feminine and nurturing, such as "persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned 42 By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile- 43 Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy." Thus, I think men are equally qualified to teach and nurture children. At the least I think they could unlock the ability if socialized to do so.

I also see little reason on a "nature" argument why women are not cut out to be providers. Women are strong and smart and can do about anything with some training (as can men generally as well). Eve didn't seem to balk at earth tilling. Indeed, history shows that women have brought home the bacon as much or more as men for the bulk of human history⁴⁶¹.

One ill of promoting a Modern Family over a First Family model is that some of those "misfits" (e.g. 1: *Jessica Stott, a young and high-accomplishing Ph.D. professor in a graduate school program at BYU's Marriott School of Management. Her husband is content to be a stay-at-home dad and his wife the breadwinner. Or 2: *Sarah Stewart, a high-accomplishing, full time MPA student and mother of four) receive condemnation, both direct and indirect, within the church. Who can blame them, when the Family Proclamation states: "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children." Both couple examples I illustrated are misfits. In the First Family model, however, such a couple is not out of line, as long as the *between them* the couple provides and *between them* the couple nurtures. The First Family model treats the couple as a unit, rather than an association of a father and a mother to whom different duties independently attach. The First Family approach seems to treat the couple⁴⁶² as "one flesh"⁴⁶³ better than the Modern Family framework.

Personal preference, I like the First Family approach more than the Modern Family approach. It seems to be a better policy in an ideal and in a practical world because men and women really are equal⁴⁶⁴, and avoiding role differentiation allows the couple greater flexibility in fulfilling the parenting and other responsibilities incumbent on them as a couple. I think in a First Family, if there is any failure in the performance of parenting duties, then each is held individually responsible for the breach, as each individual is accountable for the entire parental

performance. In addition to apportioning responsibility, I see great benefit in a tighter peer/equality relationship. As the *Brown* decision says, **separate is inherently unequal**. This justification is bounded, though- for there are some physical differences at least between the average man and average woman (see e.g. Brizendine's *The Female Brain* and *The Male Brain*). As mentioned above, though - because unique individuals marry rather than averages, less discriminating of roles seems a propos (instead, assign roles to the couple rather than to individuals, which further incentivizes unity). Men and women "are alike" - at least to God...

As to the nurturing argument, I would argue that men nurture differently than women on average, but not necessarily worse or less⁴⁶⁵. Also, is nurturing more important than the male-associated roles of providing, protecting, and presiding, all identified in the Family Proclamation? One must necessarily conclude as much to exalt women in relation to men on a nurture basis.⁴⁶⁶,

The bottom line is this: *emphasizing gender distinctions strengthens some couples at the expense of others*. The alternative of attaching responsibilities to spouses, parents, and couples does a better job of promoting gender equality without losing the important functions of emphasizing providing, nurturing, and protecting. Gender equality also more accurately describes the real world of marital partners. Spouses are *always* equal; a model emphasizing stereotypical gender differences only *sometimes* holds for a particular couple (e.g. a man is not always more firm with the kids or more cut out for the marketplace than his spouse- and trying to force an individual into that majoritarian mold can be counterproductive for a particular family). As one replied to the commenter above who spoke of his wife's unique abilities:

"How do you know she's able to do those things as a result of being female, not just as a result of being another human being with different experience, talents and abilities than yours?"⁴⁶⁷,

Now we return to empirical evidence shedding light on the parenting ability of same-sex couples. One study came out in 2010 in *Applied Development Science*: "Our findings revealed, for the first time, that young children adopted early in life by lesbian and gay parents were as well-adjusted as those adopted by heterosexual parents. Our results suggest that lesbian and gay adults can and do make capable adoptive parents. We found no significant differences among families headed by lesbian, gay, or heterosexual parents in terms of child adjustment, parenting behaviors, or couples' adjustment."⁴⁶⁸ (see also studies referenced in chapter 5's "Parenting" section)

That an opposite sex couple parents better than a single parent does not imply that an opposite gender couple parents better than a same-sex couple. In any case, most of the children of same-sex couples are adopted- which means that the choice is not as frequently between an opposite and a same sex couple as parents, but instead between having no parent and having two parents. At the least, for the vast majority of adopted children, the ideal of being raised by the child's two biological parents is simply not feasible. Indeed, SSM may well encourage more adoption- and there is little doubt that a loving SSM home is better for a child on average than no adopted home⁴⁶⁹.

Additionally, we must remember some of the salutary effects on children. According to the 2000 Census Bureau, between 166,000 and 300,000 children (and perhaps up to 2 million⁴⁷⁰) live in a SS couple household. These numbers are likely larger now and are likely to persist. Thus, it

would make good policy sense from a benefit-to-children perspective to encourage the marriage of the same-sex couple:

“[S]uppose that Ann makes use of artificial insemination to conceive a child, Bernard. Suppose further than Ann is raising Bernard with her partner, Nancy... Permitting [Nancy] to adopt can have a number of benefits for the child, e.g., he will be eligible to be covered under Nancy’s employer-provided insurance policy. However, in some jurisdictions, a non-marital partner is not allowed to adopt unless the parent is willing to surrender her own parental rights. Thus, in some jurisdictions, unless Nancy and Ann were married or Ann was willing to surrender her own parental rights, Nancy would not be permitted to establish a legal relationship with Bernard, and Bernard would be unable to avail himself of various financial benefits to which he would have been entitled had he been recognized as Nancy’s child... Nancy might be more willing to invest in her relationship with Bernard if that relationship were accorded legal protection.⁴⁷¹”

If Ann were to die in a car crash, Bernard might be sent to a home with people he doesn’t know if Nancy is a legal stranger to him- despite their relationship. (interestingly, even in those jurisdictions that allow second parent adoptions to compensate for the unavailability of marriage to same-sex couples, the second parent option reduces the incentive to marry and increases the number of children raised out of wedlock, partly because unmarried heterosexual couples have begun to avail themselves of second parent adoption⁴⁷²). Similarly, if Anna and Nancy break up, Anna could forbid Nancy from seeing Bernard, even if it would have been better for Bernard to maintain relationships with both of the adults who raised him since infancy. At the conclusion of a week-long online debate about SSM on *The Economist*, the proponent of SSM said of the opposition lead:

“Maggie Gallagher's latest non-sequiturs illustrate yet again that there is no good reason for the government's exclusion of gay couples from marriage. Denying marriage to committed couples does nothing to address any of the things she ostensibly worries about: divorce, men and women's "freighted" relationships, "unintended" children, etc. If Ms Gallagher's concern is that the children of different-sex couples be raised in wedlock, why then does the NOM [National Organisation for Marriage] not advocate abolishing divorce or compelling different-sex couples that conceive "unintentionally" to marry? Wouldn't that make more sense than withholding the critical safety net and meaning marriage brings from same-sex couples, thereby punishing them and the children they are raising? Why is the entire programme of the so-called National Organisation for Marriage—the flood of money its funnels into attack laws and constitutional amendments—obsessively about barring gay people from marrying, rather than anything that would actually help anyone's life, including real children who have the parents they have?⁴⁷³”

We should also consider benefits that accrue to the aged. More and more adults are acting as caregivers for their own parents- and without marital benefits such as being covered by a spouse’s insurance policy or the increased security that derives from a formal commitment, the adult child may be simply unable to stop work to care for an aging parent⁴⁷⁴ (or, for that matter, a sick or disabled child or a sick spouse). These consequences may result in a greater burden on the state to pick up the slack and inferior care for the spouse, child, and/or aged parent.

Last, imposing optimal parenting requirements for marriage strikes most of us as ridiculous. We wouldn't stop a poor couple from getting married, or a minority, or someone raised in a divorced household, or someone that uses drugs, or doesn't intend to procreate, irrespective of how those factors might contribute to their parenting fitness:

“[A]s a general matter, we do not impose an optimal-parent requirement on those seeking to marry. Indeed, we do not even impose an optimal parent requirement on those seeking to adopt. Nor would anyone think of proposing such a standard were this not a discussion of same-sex marriage or LGBT parenting. That this criterion is suggested only in the context of LGBT parenting or marriage suggests that this criterion is not really embraced as the appropriate consideration to determine who may marry or adopt but, instead, is being used as a makeweight to justify the imposition of a burden on members of the LGBT community.⁴⁷⁵”

Studies of gay parenting are fatally flawed

Interlocutor: *"Unfortunately, small sample sizes and other methodological problems make it impossible to draw conclusions from studies that directly examine the effects of gay parenting."*⁴⁷⁶

That conclusion is not merited. Every study is less than ideal, but that reality vitiates confidence in conclusions, rather than making such conclusions impossible. This is a well-known foul trick of argument known as the “call for perfection.” The author seems to find empirical studies on gender complementarity in parenting sufficient to draw sweeping conclusions- if the author does not maintain a double standard, he at the least is not transparent about his threshold acceptability criteria. He joins other SSM opponents who, ironically, criticize the validity of SS parenting research, yet simultaneously claim that children fare less well in such families⁴⁷⁷. Also, the author's conclusion relies on the authors' review of all studies to this point that directly examine gay parenting, which comprehensive research isn't likely. If the author has reviewed all such studies and found them wanting for the reasons he states, it is not justified to characterize all such studies as having small sample sizes because future studies might very well prove methodologically sound and have large sample sizes.

SSM harms children

Interlocutor: *"So if I admit that there exists stable, committed, and functional same-sex households I have to concede that same sex marriage wouldn't harm children? If the purpose of this nation is to promote the general welfare, why not start with those people who have no voice in court or the law—who literally only have the ability to cry if the people charged with their care decide that there are other, more important, more "enlightened" things than their welfare."*⁴⁷⁸

A persuasive point, though it advocates against premarital reproduction, divorce, drug use, step-parenting, single-parenting, co-habiting before marriage, and other family arrangements short of two biological parent households as much as (or more than) homosexual marriage. Also, there

still is little data about child outcomes in homosexual marriage since only a few countries (such as Spain) have recognized homosexual marriage for a significant amount of time, and even then the results may resist generalized application. Also, one should remember that class of people who will likely be brought into the world that, but for homosexual marriage, would not. If a particular child will not be conceived but for the homosexual relationship, it is very difficult to argue that the child is harmed. How do you compare a blighted life to no life at all? This is the classic “non-person” problem- how do you harm someone who doesn’t yet exist? Picture an empty bench- on it sits Greg, the child that was never born because the ban on gay marriage resulted in his mother choosing a single life over the homosexual union Greg would have been born into (e.g. via a sperm donor). As much as life sucks for some people, most nonetheless overwhelmingly prefer to exist. If you contend that Greg will simply be sent to another family, by that same token it becomes difficult to criticize normal, fertile couples who choose to have no children. Additionally, you must consider the babies who “only have the ability to cry” and will benefit by having the couple raising them be married.

Last, the higher the “optimal parent” requirement for marriage access, the fewer the parents that qualify- meaning both fewer children overall and fewer children in stable households. Until you apply an “optimal parent” requirement for marital access to heterosexuals (for instance against the less fecund, the poor and uneducated, those who grew up in divorced homes, or any other category shown to result in decreased child outcomes), it is unfair to apply it only to homosexuals.

Don't change the rules for children

Interlocutor: *"But let's take a few steps back and try to see the longer view—one in which children haven't come into the picture yet, but face a world which has changed the rules about the where, when and why of their existence."*⁴⁷⁹

The rules have already significantly changed, and will likely continue to do so. For instance, sex and reproduction used to be tightly correlated. With birth control two people can have sex thousands of times with no offspring. Similarly, couples can reproduce prolifically without ever having sex (e.g. via IVF). Also, the civil rights movement of the 60's and the passage of the 19th Amendment both occasioned sweeping, yet welcome, change. Your argument would be better if based on the consequence bundle of a particular change rather than “changing the rules for children” generally.

We should subsidize marriage to propagate society

Interlocutor: *"Collecting a deceased spouse's social security, claiming an extra tax exemption for a spouse, and having the right to be covered under a spouse's health insurance policy are just a few examples of the costly benefits associated with marriage. In a sense, a married couple receives a subsidy. Why? Because a marriage between two unrelated heterosexuals is likely to result in a family with children, and propagation of society is a compelling state interest."*⁴⁸⁰

This argument is deeply flawed in that it fails to recognize the tens of thousands of children in America that are being raised in one- or two- homosexual parent households. Where do these children come from? The majority come from previous marriages. There are many ways for lesbian and gay couples to have a family with children absent previous heterosexual

relationships, though. Adoption, artificial insemination for lesbians, mixing sperm to fertilize a donated egg subsequently gestated by a surrogate for gays, etc. have and do result in homosexual parent households. Thus, denying marriage to these parents harms/fails to benefit their children. Similarly:

“To the extent California has an interest in encouraging sexual activity to occur within marriage... the evidence shows Proposition 8 to be detrimental to that interest. Because of Proposition 8, same-sex couples are not permitted to engage in sexual activity within marriage... To the extent proponents seek to encourage a norm that sexual activity occur within marriage to ensure that reproduction occur within stable households, Proposition 8 discourages that norm because it requires some sexual activity and child-bearing and child-rearing to occur outside marriage.”

The argument also assumes, without merit (as evidenced by the failure of governments to take reasonable steps to restrict marriage to reproducers) that reproduction is the primary or only state interest in marriage:

“[S]tates have never required spouses to have an ability or willingness to procreate in order to marry.⁴⁸¹”

SSM is about private indulgence; traditional marriage is a public institution

Interlocutor: *"not only are you saying that it is more important to support private indulgences than public institutions"*⁴⁸²,

Not necessarily. As argued above, there are legitimate grounds for advocating same-sex marriage as a public institution (e.g. homosexual couples are more likely than homosexual singles to bring children into the world, and many of the public benefits of marriage and family are not limited to the opposite genderness of marriage). It is inappropriate to characterize same-sex marriage as a private indulgence- this appellation reflects a sex-centered conception of the proposed institution that fails to acknowledge the richness that same-sex marriage can provide two people that are committed to and sacrifice for each other. Generally we don't consider heterosexual marriage to be a private indulgence or all about sex- is there a basis for an opposite conclusion about homosexual marriage? Especially since homosexual people can privately indulge without marriage?

Interlocutor: *"The biggest danger homosexual civil marriage presents is the enshrining into law the notion that sexual love, regardless of its fecundity, is the sole criterion for marriage."*⁴⁸³

My response: This conclusion also is not merited. Is sexual love the sole criterion for heterosexual marriage? Are there not many other significant reasons why individuals choose to marry?

“Never has the state inquired into procreative capacity or intent before issuing a marriage license; indeed, a marriage license is more than a license to have procreative sexual intercourse... ‘[I]t would demean a married couple were it to be said marriage is simply about the right to have sexual intercourse.’ *Lawrence*, 539 US at 567. The Supreme Court recognizes that, wholly apart from procreation, choice and privacy play a pivotal role in the marital relationship.⁴⁸⁴”

The incidence of premarital sex, at least, belies the conclusion that marriage for heterosexual people is just for sex- and there is no reason to presume contrarily for homosexual persons.

Relationship with both biological parents

Interlocutor: “*Now, I don't know about you, but I am grateful to have a relationship with both of my biological parents.*⁴⁸⁵” Also, “*Taken together, these benefits illustrate the many dimensions of the child's bonding rights which heterosexual marriage is able to protect with relative ease. Same-sex marriage, mostly as a result of structural considerations, does not and in most cases cannot provide any of these benefits to the child.*⁴⁸⁶”

The relationship of children in homosexual families with one of that child's biological parents is likely to be absent or abrogated as compared to a two-biological parent household- so you imply a strong point⁴⁸⁷. However, many children never know their fathers either because they skip town or they were conceived IVF by an anonymous donor, but your complaint doesn't also target them, which it should on a basis of opposing action that induces identity issues. Would you also legally prohibit out-of-wedlock births, divorce, and IVF, and putting kids up for adoption from that are in abusive, two-biological parent homes? Also, it is not clear that SSM would increase the number of children not raised by their biological parents (many children in SS homes are adopted and would not be raised by their biological parents regardless of the marital status of the SS couple).

Religious Consequences

SSM threatens my family's religious values

Interlocutor: “*The argument I always hear is, "Well, they just want to be happy, and it doesn't invalidate my marriage if they have theirs." To that, I say, "yes and no." It does not directly affect my marriage (meaning if homosexual couple X gets married, my marriage doesn't blow-up or something). However, it perpetuates a moral value that I see as negative and subjects my family and children even more to that negative value. Values and principles, in my opinion, are crucial in our country, but appear increasingly lacking due to the power of empiricists. A similar argument might be, "It doesn't hurt me directly if they legalize prostitution in my town, because I'm not going to a hooker anyway. Let those people have the fun they desire." Does that make the situation morally right? Does that create a culture that is hostile and non-supportive of the*

religious values I espouse? It certainly does... and, in that way, it certainly affects me and my family. Anyway, the moral to my ramblings is, sometimes we follow our gut and our values rather than the data.”

My response: So you say there’s a negative effect of subjecting your family and children to a perpetuated moral value you view (and others who view similarly—let’s call this group the Westovers) as negative. Let’s say I concede that the effect exists. The same argument about using the negative consequence as a basis for prohibiting conduct or privileges can be used equally against the offended. Example: some citizens of the country, let’s call them the Eastovers, could view your occupational choice or your religious practice or your white skin or your heterosexual marriage or some other characteristic or conduct as subjecting their family and children to a perpetuated moral value they find to be negative. Which class’s conduct and privileges should be then constrained: the Eastovers, or the Westovers? Is there a reason outside personal moral view to esteem either –over over the other –over? (the literary device is no extra charge). If not, how is the superior moral view to be selected, and who makes the selection? Absent solid answers to these questions, it follows that even a concession of the consequence doesn’t advance a proposal to limit the conduct/privileges of either negative moral value perpetrator.

Plus, it is essential to consider the welfare of homosexuals, who by and large are by banned from marriage since nature has predisposed them away from romantic and erotic interest in the opposite sex (which, though not the only reasons to marry, are important and useful ones) and made SSM very attractive and potentially very beneficial to them:

“If there are 12 million gay Americans, that would be more than the population of any but the seven largest states, not a trivial number. Even if the number were much smaller, each gay person is an individual seeking the good life. Not one of those lives in inconsequential... no one can make decent social policy without considering both sides of the equation. To assume that “we” (the heterosexual majority) should deny millions of Americans any chance to marry if allowing them to marry would cause “us” any harm or inconvenience at all is to account gay welfare as essentially worthless... A one-eyed utilitarian is a blind utilitarian.⁴⁸⁸”

Following your gut or values is appropriate, but doesn’t get one very far in the public square. Arguing public policy in a pluralistic society under a constitutional democratic republic like unto the one we’re in requires persuading people- and unless either 1) everyone happens to agree with you or 2) you have an effective way to convince lots of someones to make consequential decisions based not on their guts or the “dangers of logic,” but instead on your guts, you might find the uphill battle discouraging.

“A commitment to the First Amendment prescription of the separation of church and state necessarily precludes government from establishing and enforcing a religious theocracy. But it does not require a banishing of religious beliefs as a legitimate source of shared moral values in the public arena. Conversely, *the fact that a moral value is derived from a religious belief should not shield that moral value from contestation in the public domain*⁴⁸⁹ (emphasis added).”

Lex plus laudatur quando ratione probatur - the law is the more praised when it is supported by reason.

Churches will have to perform SSM

Interlocutor: “How do you think allowing gay marriage would affect the church's right to refuse marriage to whom they want? with so much hate swirling against the church in connection to prop 8, do you think its infeasible to expect there to be suits against the church for refusing gay members to marry in the temple or even be married by a bishop on the grounds of preventing their constitutional right to marry how they want? unlike other churches, where different pastors may have different views and some may refuse where others won't, the Mormon church is absolute in their position against gay marriage, which prevents a gay couple from getting married in the church forever.”

My response: It seems unlikely that suits against the church for refusing same-sex temple marriage would succeed. The freedom of prejudice for religions is robust in the United States and other countries. On what law or grounds would such a suit proceed? Why is the church experiencing none of this type of trouble in Canada, a country that has legalized SSM? Why isn't the church running into these problems in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Vermont, where same-sex marriage is legal? Private religious practice is given high deference in the federal US courts (and indeed in many if not most nations), and religions are not government actors- and thus not subject to the high constitutional standards that might be binding on, say, a civil official performing a marriage. It seems that the most proximal hazard would be loss of property tax exemptions (in some states) for church-owned public accommodations if the church blocked access based on sexual orientation⁴⁹⁰ (see endnote for further discussion of the bounds of burdening acts of discrimination by religions).

Noncompliance with the restriction against supporting political campaigns that “have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates⁴⁹¹” is also a tax exemption risk. The unlikely loss of 501(c)3 tax exempt status based on refusal to perform SSM would merely amount to a reduction of a gov't subsidy rather than the more egregious offense of depriving a religion of their right to exclude applicants from a religious ordinance. However, that risk is extremely low:

“Almost certainly not... the major case under federal tax law is *Bob Jones v. United States*... a charitable organization... they have to serve a public purpose and not be contrary to established public policy they must be in harmony with public interest and the institution's purpose must not be so at odds with community conscience as to undermine public benefit... unlikely for a court to do that... unlikely for the IRS to even bring that action to begin with. The IRS is a relatively conservative federal agency... extremely unlikely that the IRS would try to bring sort kind of action to take away the church's tax exempt status based on their views on same-sex marriage.⁴⁹²”

Speaking of the loss of tax-exempt status resulting from a religion not performing SSM, one commentator wrote: “This argument truly stretches the bounds of existing legal doctrine... No religious organization, other than Bob Jones University, has ever had its tax-exempt status revoked because of discriminatory rules that it applied on the basis of race or any other category.⁴⁹³”

Plus, the church is not a university, as Bob Jones was; religions are typically accorded greater deference than universities. Last, the church's gender inequality is more threatening than orientation discrimination. The church's questionable and non-transparent political lobbying jeopardizes their status more than their views or practices regarding same-sex marriage⁴⁹⁴. Said the Connecticut Supreme Court:

“Finally, religious autonomy is not threatened by recognizing the right of same sex couples to marry civilly. Religious freedom will not be jeopardized by the marriage of same sex couples because religious organizations that oppose same sex marriage as irreconcilable with their beliefs will not be required to perform same sex marriages or otherwise to condone same sex marriage or relations.⁴⁹⁵”

As in other countries, a practical work-around if the battle heats up would be for the church to mandate that all church members wanting to be temple or LDS clergy married get married civilly by a justice of the peace or equivalent first. (The church already requires its members to do this before a temple sealing in some countries with adverse legal landscapes). In that case there would be even less basis for an attack, because who cares if you exclude or discriminate folks from a legally meaningless religious ordinance (as whether they are married in the eyes of the state would be resolved independent of the excluding practices of the subsequent sealing or bishop-performed hitching)?

Writing on a similar subject in a *Square Two* article, Ben Hertzberg wrote⁴⁹⁶:

“The prospect of legal gay marriages should disturb Mormons less than it disturbs conservative Christians. This is the case because of the difference between the relationship of LDS marriage to the State and the relationship of traditional Christian marriage to the State. This difference gives Mormons resources to deal with a state that marries gays that I believe conservative Christians lack. Marriage as it is traditionally defined is one of the last legal institutions in which Church and State share roles. If a couple is married in a Baptist Church (or a Mormon temple) the minister or sealer acts on authority delegated to him from the State. This is the purpose of issuing marriage licenses. Church and State cooperate in marrying couples. In a sense, then, marriage is one of the last remnants of the Western, medieval, theocratic partnership of Church and State. This partnership is reflected in the liturgy of Christian marriage ceremonies: they are large events done in Churches (or sometimes out of doors) and the couple invites their community—they invite the public to witness the occasion. Now, gay marriage is seen (at least by conservative Christians) as ending that partnership—the State and the Church will no longer work together to marry and support heterosexual couples only. Mormons, in contrast, have never really worked in tandem with the State on questions of marriage—at least, not to the extent that other Christians have. This is because the LDS definition of marriage is fundamentally different from the State's definition and from the traditional Christian definition. Mormons, of course, marry “for time and all eternity,” not “till death do you part.” (And, of course, Mormons once practiced plural marriages, another important difference between both the State and other Christian definitions.) The State has never been so bold as to even attempt to marry couples in some way that would be binding after death; indeed, the suggestion that it ever could is laughable. And this difference in definitions of marriage is reflected in the LDS marriage ceremony, just as the definition shared between other Christian Churches and the State is reflected in their liturgies. Mormons do not seal couples in public. They instead perform their most important marriages in private, behind the closed doors of the temple. The explicitly

private nature of the Mormon marriage ceremony reflects the distance between the LDS understanding of marriage and the State's (the public's) definition of marriage. Mormons, then, already have more than one hundred years of experience in conducting a form of marriage that is not and cannot truly be ratified by the State. This is not to say, of course, that the State's performing gay marriages will not be a radical change for Mormons. It will be. But it will be a change that Mormons are more prepared to deal with than many other Christian groups—by virtue of our own private practice of eternal marriage. We therefore should fear gay marriage less.”

Religious liberty

Interlocutor: *“SSM is a threat to religious liberty. Just look at Catholic Charities in Massachusetts- they stopped their adoption work because of legalized SSM. Or, take a look at education- if SSM is legalized, teachers that have a religious belief that SSM is wrong won't be able to speak out at their schools.”*

My response: I don't follow the logic here. It's well established that the government is interested in refraining from preferring religious practice A to religious practice B (Establishment Clause⁴⁹⁷). Example 1- let's say an organization called Christchurch Charities, informed by its religious conscience, places adoptees only in married same-sex and opposite-sex families. If the state prohibits or fails to legalize SSM, that religion's religious practice is inhibited because they can no longer place children with same-sex couples, since their religious belief is to only place adoptees in homes where the parents are married. Example 2: Cathy Johnson is a 7th grade science teacher. Her religious belief is that homosexual and heterosexual people are equal and therefore should both be allowed to marry. To the extent that a teacher opposed to SSM would be inhibited by a SSM legalization, Cathy would be inhibited by a SSM prohibition. The long-standing tradition in America is to permit religious practice within certain defined bounds, imposing those limitations impartially on all religious practices. “We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it... We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed [prohibited] in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied.” -Doctrine and Covenants 134:4, 9. Thus, the religious liberty argument doesn't advance an anti-SSM argument because it necessarily cuts both ways. Said the Connecticut Supreme Court:

“Many people hold deep-seated religious, moral, and ethical convictions that marriage should be limited to the union of one man and one woman, and that homosexual conduct is immoral. Many hold equally strong religious, moral, and ethical convictions that same-sex couples are entitled to be married, and that homosexual persons should be treated no differently than their heterosexual neighbors. Neither view answers the question before [the court]. Our concern is with [our state] [c]onstitution as a charter of governance for every person properly within its reach.⁴⁹⁸”

Additionally, Catholic Charities was accepting public funds, and was therefore bound to obey the laws of the state because the people deserve a say in the expenditures of public funds. LDS Family Services, because it is privately funded, still adopts babies out only to straight married

LDS couples. Their sexual orientation and religious discrimination is allowed because they don't accept money from the state.

On a similar subject, Clay Essig wrote:

“We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, *unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others*” (D&C 134:4; emphasis added). Isn't it strongly held “religious opinions” regarding marriage and family that are fueling these “pro-family” campaigns which severely “infringe upon [marital and familial] rights and liberties of others”, specifically our Gay and Lesbian neighbors?

Growing numbers of churches see the good in their Gay and Lesbian members and want to offer them the blessing of marriage. If we Latter-day Saints support the majority to legislatively deprive the religious freedom of those churches to marry according to their beliefs, aren't we opening the door further for the majority to vote away our right to practice our LDS religious beliefs, severely undermining essential religious freedom? “... but we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion” (D&C 134:4).

Do we practice what we preach?

Consider some forms of public or private devotion. Do they include prayer, scripture study, baptism and marriage? Since we believe the proper form of prayer is to conclude “in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen”, should we pass a Constitutional amendment forbidding any other forms of prayer? Should we Latter-day Saints constitutionally define baptism as “only by immersion by one having authority from God” and legislatively forbid other forms of baptism? How can we maintain integrity when we continue to support political movements, laws, State and National Constitutional amendments that are contrary to our own declarations in our own LDS scriptures?⁴⁹⁹”

Such constitutional amendments often have more than merely legal consequences. A 2010 article from the American Journal of Public Health found that SSM bans might decrease the mental health of the LGB population:

“Psychiatric disorders... increased significantly between waves 1 and 2 among LGB respondents living in states that banned gay marriage for the following outcomes: any mood disorder (36.6% increase), generalized anxiety disorder (248.2% increase), any alcohol use disorder (41.9% increase), and psychiatric comorbidity (36.3% increase)... These psychiatric disorders did not increase significantly among LGB respondents living in states without constitutional amendments. Additionally, we found no evidence for increases of the same magnitude among heterosexuals living in states with constitutional amendments.⁵⁰⁰”

The author of *When Gay People Get Married: What Happens When Societies Legalize Same-Sex Marriage* studied the effects of SSM in the Netherlands, which has legalized SSM since 2001. She argued similarly in her section, “Reducing Minority Stress: The Value of Inclusion:”

“Social science suggests that experiences of discrimination or unequal treatment can have harmful effects on physical and mental health. This ‘minority stress’ has been linked to higher blood pressure... and to other negative health outcomes for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people⁵⁰¹. The psychologist Glenda Russell’s research shows that life in an atmosphere of antigay politics has similar negative effects on the mental health of LGB people. Recent studies show that stigma and homophobia reduce the quality of same-sex relationships... it seems reasonable to predict that removing formal discrimination through policies such as opening up marriage to same-sex couples will have positive mental health effects on individual LGB people (including those who are single)... my own experience makes me wonder how the ability to marry could not change LGB people in some profound and positive way, especially for those LGB people who decide to marry... Moving from a position of exclusion to one of inclusion is a change that is likely to have a positive psychological effect on some people.^{502,}”

In another forum, she said:

“Research also shows that getting married has been good for same-sex couples. They are more committed to their relationships, feel more secure, perceive that their children are better off and receive more support from their families than when they were unmarried. Having the right to marry makes gay people feel more included in society overall, a profound change that extends to unmarried gay people and, one hopes, to young people who are struggling to accept being gay, lesbian, or bisexual.^{503,}”

These arguments match my experiences of talking with many gay and lesbian people who very much view issues such as SSM as matters of equal rights, and feel in important ways like second-class citizens.

Last in this subsection, a quote from Ben Hertzberg:

“If it is the case that the issue Mormons should be most concerned about is the protection of our religious liberty, then I worry that the Proposition 8 campaign was a mistake. As the homosexual community’s reaction to our apparent “victory” indicated (deplorable though it was) campaigning against gay marriage alienates the very parties with which we will eventually have to forge some sort of compromise and feeds the flames of the culture warriors who relish continued battle. It also works to undermine the possibility of such a compromise—a compromise on which I believe our continued flourishing as a religious group importantly and essentially different from traditional, conservative Christianity depends.⁵⁰⁴”

Legal Consequences

SSM would lead to marrying animals, etc.

Interlocutor: “*Allowing gay marriage would just be the ball at the top of the hill. Next: Polygamy (FLDS are already challenging that law in Texas), marriage with children, marriage with other animals, marriage with rocks, etc. If we change marriage to include everything, it will eventually mean nothing.*”

My response: You lack a substantial basis to confidently predict the continued expansion of the marriage definition. Is it possible that polygamy, then marrying children, then marrying animals, then marrying rocks would sequentially follow expanding from [man-woman] to [man-woman or man-man or woman-woman]? Yes. Will it likely happen? Difficult to discern. Would any continued definitional expansion be causally linked to the initial expansion? Also difficult to show. Will it happen? Impossible to conclusively say. I could argue the likelihood of continued definitional expansions, but am content to point out how difficult it is to predict the future as you have done (gay marriage would just be the ball at the top of the hill).

Now I will speak more directly to the polygamy contention. First, I point out that hundreds of human cultures have condoned polygamy, and at least the vast majority of them were neither preceded by, contemporaneous with, nor succeeded by SSM.

Also, though there is exhaustive literature on the number of partners issue, I will mention but one reason cluster that argues for two-partner-only marriage:

“If I were to marry three or four people, the pool of potential caregivers would be larger, but the situation would, perversely, make all of them less reliable: each could expect one of the others to take care of me (and each may be reluctant to do more than any of the others are willing to do- a common source of conflict among siblings who need to look after an aging parent). The pair bond, one to one, is the only kind which is inescapably reciprocal, perfectly mutual. Because neither of us has anyone else, we are there for each other.⁵⁰⁵”

Independent of this and other justifications that could be advanced to defend two-partner-only marriage, it suffices to say that the same limits which apply to OSM can and should apply to SSM, and for the same reasons. These limits include relatedness, number of partners, and age. SSM does not include “everything;” rather, it merely expands narrowly to include (or discontinue excluding) SS couples. If polygamy is to win recognition, it will have to do triumph its own merits, as it is not a necessary result of legalizing SSM.

Interlocutor: “*SSM would allow a father to marry his 24-year-old son, or Sally to marry Christina, a sick friend she’s caring for.*”

My response: Yes, Sally could marry Christina. Seth could marry Christina, the sick friend, equally well- in both cases the same restrictions apply as to age, consent, etc. As to the father marrying his son, what is to stop him from marrying his 26-year-old daughter? The answer: a statute to that effect. Whatever relatedness restriction good for the goose is good for the gander, and could be applied equally to same and opposite gender couples. However, there is some reason to think that incest laws may be unconstitutional, especially if the elevated birth defect risk argument fails⁵⁰⁶. *Lawrence v. Texas* may be used to argue that the right to privacy is unconstitutionally violated by legal restrictions on consensual incest, especially when unrelated persons with genetic disorders are allowed to marry despite their elevated risk of passing on a

birth defect. In any case, it is important to remember that 1) homosexual relationships are less reproductive on average than heterosexual ones and thus have less risk of contributing to birth defects and 2) incest laws will stay or be overturned on their own merits independent of the success or failure of SSM.

There is no necessary logical tie between SSM and polygamy, incest, or marrying children which doesn't also apply to OSM:

“Gay people are not asking for the legal right to marry anybody they love or everybody they love... Instead, homosexuals are asking for what all heterosexuals possess already: the legal right to marry *somebody* they love.⁵⁰⁷”

The state has no interest in gay marriage

Interlocutor: *"Some argue that homosexual marriages serve a state interest because they enable gays to live in committed relationships. However, there is nothing stopping homosexuals from living in such relationships today."*⁵⁰⁸

How can one be certain of that? Lack of recognition of marriage disincentivizes the commitment of homosexual unions economically and socially at least in ways similar to cohabiting heterosexual couples, which empirically have inferior parenting and individual outcomes as compared to married heterosexual couples. For example, relatives are often more willing to give financial help to families where the parents are married compared to cohabiting- and this correlation may at least partly hold for same-sex couples as well⁵⁰⁹. Also, both the state and the partners may be interested in marriage because of the comparatively superior equitable asset allocation that results upon relationship dissolution:

“The plaintiffs in marriage-equality cases do not say that they want to marry so that if they split up the property division and support rules that accompany divorce will apply to them. Like all couples who plan to marry, they do not expect to divorce. But the different rules for settling money issues at the end of a marriage versus an unmarried relationship can cause indefensible hardship.”⁵¹⁰

The state might also be interested because:

“All societies must accept that there is an underworld of deviants and criminals that want to hide their activities from public view. But to effectively force a group that wants the sunlight into a shadow society surely is self-deluding and, yes, harmful.”⁵¹¹

Last, ‘the value of marriage as a signal to one’s partner and third parties of the committed nature of the relationship is lessened if the marriage is not legally binding.’⁵¹²”

State recognition of marriage is not a universal right

Interlocutor: *“The debate over whether the state ought to recognize gay marriages has thus far focused on the issue as one of civil rights. Such a treatment is erroneous because state recognition of marriage is not a universal right.”*⁵¹³

My response: That point is debated. For instance, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, article 16 states:

“(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.”⁵¹⁴

A right to marry has been recognized as a constitutional right in numerous Supreme Court cases (see e.g. the line of cases quoted in page 110 of *Perry*). Thus, the prohibitions on cousin marriages and bigamy may later be found unconstitutional. Even if cousin and bigamy prohibitions are found constitutional, a right to marry someone of the same sex may nonetheless be found constitutional under either due process and/or equal protection, and indeed has been so found under one or both clauses by both federal and state courts (e.g. *Kerrigan*, *Perry*, and *Varnum*).

Individual states should be allowed to define marriage

Interlocutor: *“On Constitutional grounds, my observations are that there are several SCOTUS decisions, both before and after Loving v. Virginia, that support the idea that states have the right to define the nature of the marital relationship within them (as state's have a vital interest in the organization of their societies) while individuals have the right to decide whether they want to enter into that relationship and with whom. Or, in other words, the individual's right to marriage is subject to the state's definition.”*⁵¹⁵

My response: What then would prevent a state from regulating marriage out of existence or prohibiting marriage altogether? Let's for the moment concede that states can indeed define and regulate marriage and marital relationships, and that regulation can vary from state to state. There is one significant limit- the states may not define or regulate in such a way as to deny any state citizen equal protection under the laws of the United States. The states may grant MORE rights than the federal constitution, but they absolutely may not grant LESS- otherwise states could use their statutes or constitutions to deprive US citizens of their federal constitutional rights. The US Constitution is supreme and trumps state laws and constitutions. Thus, state discretion is only in one direction (broader than or irrelevant to, but never violative of, those rights guaranteed by the US Constitution). Because the right to marry has been identified as a US constitutional right, it must have at least a minimum definition (or “floor”) afforded to all US

citizens irrespective of the state they reside in. Though they may expand the right to marry, states may not narrow it such that it deprives their citizens of that federal constitutional right by either statute, conduct, or constitution. Above this floor, it makes good federalist sense to allow states to experiment with age, relatedness, and other standards. Also, I can see some wisdom in state-by-state SSM legalization⁵¹⁶, as incremental change is less likely to trigger the kind of deleterious “culture war” pushback and the perception of an overly active federal judiciary that sometimes result from sweeping national family law changes such as *Roe v. Wade*’s ruling on abortion. On the other hand, like black people following *Brown v. Board*:

“[D]espite the harmful backlash experienced by the gay rights movement following marriage cases such as *Goodridge*, lesbians and gay men are nonetheless better off as a result of those cases...

Although it is understandable that so many gay rights supporters feel despair and anguish in the face of the severe backlash against gay rights...*Brown* and its aftermath teach us that backlash is a part and parcel of the history of civil rights struggles in this country. Those struggles are, at their core, about getting the majority to give up privileges, both tangible and intangible, that reinforce their perceived superiority. The fact that, prior to *Brown*, laws and regulations kept blacks out of the white (and much better) schools created and reinforced the view in the minds of many whites that they were superior to blacks. And for years after *Brown*, many of those whites, especially in the South, did everything they could to retain the long standing regime of privileges that benefitted them at the expense of blacks.

Similarly today, the maintaining of the institution of marriage as exclusively heterosexual reinforces the views of many straight individuals that they are morally superior to lesbians and gay men because their relationships are more meaningful, valuable, and important. And despite cases such as *Goodridge* — indeed, because of cases such as *Goodridge* — many heterosexuals will do everything they can to maintain the long standing regime of privileges that benefit them at the expense of lesbians and gay men.⁵¹⁷”

For more readings on the intersection of topics such as discrimination, equality, the courts, the constitution, popular sovereignty, and same-sex marriage, I have compiled the following list. You may also email me for a document giving a one-paragraph summary of each at homosexualityperspective@yahoo.com.

- Neal Devins, *How State Supreme Courts Take Consequences Into Account: Toward a State-Centered Understanding of State Constitutionalism*, 62 STAN. L. REV. 1629 (2010).
- Sue Davis, *Discrimination Through Direct Democracy: The Role of the Judiciary in the Pursuit of Equality*, in THE JUDICIAL BRANCH, 375-400 (Oxford University Press 2005).
- David A. Yalof, *Courts and the Definition of Defendants’ Rights*, in THE JUDICIAL BRANCH, 432-458 (Oxford University Press 2005).
- William N Eskridge, Jr., *Pluralism and Distrust: How Courts Can Support Democracy by Lowering the Stakes of Politics*, 114 YALE L.J. 1279, 1283 (2005).
- Kevin J. Worthen, *Who Decides and What Difference Does it Make? Defining Marriage in Our “Democratic, Federal Republic”*, 18 BYU J. PUB. L. 273, 274 (2004).
- Aileen Kavanagh, *Deference or Defiance? The Limits of the Judicial Role in Constitutional Adjudication*, in EXPANDING THE CONSTITUTION: ESSAYS IN CONSTITUTIONAL THEORY (Grant

Huscroft, ed. 2008) *available at*
<http://ebooks.cambridge.org/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO9780511511042&cid=CBO9780511511042A017>.

- Naomi Cahn & June Carbone, *Deep Purple: Religious Shades of Family Law*, 110 W. VA. L. REV. 459, 497 (2007).
- Glen Staszewski, *Reason-Giving and Accountability*, 93 MINN. L. REV. 1253 (2009).
- Martha Nussbaum, *A Right to Marry? Same-Sex Marriage and Constitutional Law*. DISSENT 56(3): 43 (2009).
- Monte Neil Stewart, *Marriage Facts*, 31 HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y 313 (2008).
- Julia Halloran McLaughlin, *DOMA and the Constitutional Coming Out of Same-sex Marriage*, 24 WIS. J.L. GENDER & SOC'Y 145 (2009).
- Martha T. McCluskey, *Thinking With Wolves: Left Legal Theory After the Right's Rise*, 54 BUFF. L. REV. 1191, 1270 (2007).
- Amy Wax, *The Conservative's Dilemma: Traditional Institutions, Social Change, and Same-sex Marriage*, 42 SAN DIEGO L. REV. 1059 (2005).
- Andrew Koppelman, *The Decline and Fall of the Case Against Same-sex Marriage*, 2 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 5, (2004). Also, *Same Sex, Different States: When Same-Sex Marriages Cross State Lines* (Yale University Press 2006).
- Louis Michael Seidman, *Gay Sex and Marriage, the Reciprocal Disadvantage Problem, and the Crisis in Liberal Constitutional Theory*, 31 HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y 135 (2008).
- Carlos A. Ball, *The Backlash Thesis and Same-sex Marriage: Learning from Brown v. Board of Education and its Aftermath*, 14 WM. & MARY BILL RTS. J. 1493 (2006).
- Robert A. Schapiro, *Toward a Theory of Interactive Federalism*, 91 IOWA L. REV. 243, (2005).
- Judith E. Koons, *Engaging the Odd Couple: Same-Sex Marriage and Evangelicalism in the Public Square*, 30 WOMEN'S RTS. L. REP. 255 (2009).
- Naomi R. Cahn and June Carbone, *Red Families v. Blue Families: Working Paper*, 18 UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA JOURNAL OF LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY, forthcoming; GWU LAW SCHOOL PUBLIC LAW RESEARCH PAPER NO. 343, in possession of Brad Carmack and *available at* SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1008544> (SSRN membership is free).
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The federal judiciary violated the sovereignty of the people by overturning proposition 8

Interlocutor: *“Then what is marriage? who defines marriage? is the government given that power, or is it the people? does the constitution define marriage? if not, as Brad [Carmack] said, how do you decide whether or not a right is being violated? The question here isn't the right of people to be married, it's the very definition of marriage. Some say that a homosexual union means marriage, and others say that it does not. It is perfectly within their rights to disagree. So, the question that I think Brad is getting at, is who gets to define marriage? the people, or the government (sounds like Brad sides with government, or the judiciary). But what is the government when it denies the will of the people? Sounds like tyranny.”*

My response: Two rebuttals.

1) First some philosophy of law/social contract and constitution theory. In 1787 “we the people” gave up a portion of our power by social contract to the Constitution, which means that there’s a certain portion of our will that is no longer ours- namely any will which would in effect contravene that Supreme rule of law- and thus that will portion is not available to be either denied or affirmed. Stated another way- picture ten people who have 100 "sovereignty" dollars each. They come together and sign a contract saying they'll immediately exchange five sovereignty dollars each for securing the blessings of liberty to their posterity, ensuring domestic tranquility, and providing for the common defense. The five dollars means they agree (or consent, which is the term a positivist would likely use) to be subject to the judgments of the limited government created by the contract. At the end of the process, they only have 95 bucks

left! They are no longer as fully sovereign as people in a state of nature. To then claim that the rule of law empowered by those sovereignty dollars violates your sovereignty can only be true for the remaining 95 units, i.e that portion of your sovereignty not already contracted away (the non-Constitutional areas of life). [Sidenote- state law takes another BIG chunk of the remaining 95- "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people" (Tenth Amendment)]. Based on responses I've heard, this widespread illusion that the people of a United State still possess their full popular sovereignty is a cause of much misplaced angst. It would be like a computer engineer who's contracted to work from nine to five for pay to rebel against his boss during the workday by saying, "I'd rather build a swing set in my backyard than a motherboard; I'm a free man, now shove off." The workman's free to spend his time as he pleases off the clock; on the clock he's bound to uphold his contract. Similarly, it's assumed US citizens have contracted to subject ourselves to the Constitution- it is meaningless to speak of the Constitution as the supreme law of the land otherwise. Californians are part of the "we the people of the United States" and by virtue of the contract just discussed are subject to the US Constitution- thus the difficulty in concluding that a properly interpreted Constitution overcomes the will of the people. Again, it's still fine to argue that the Constitution was not properly interpreted [i.e. Judge Walker got it wrong]. However, "If we oppose persons who hold particular offices or the policies they pursue, we are free to vote against them or work against their policies. But we should not carry our opposition to the point of opposing their offices, or we weaken the institution of constitutional government" - Elder Oaks. If one argues that Judge Walker/the federal judiciary shouldn't be interpreting the Constitution, the next question would be- who should interpret the Constitution instead? The Constitution is truly impotent absent some level of uniform and predictable application, which necessarily requires judgment. Who makes the calls if not the federal judiciary?

Additionally, by failing to fight against the effect of *Marbury v. Madison*, we have arguably permitted the federal judiciary to grab the power of constitutional interpretation which "we the people" might otherwise have allocated.

2) The right to marry is a federal constitutional right binding on the whole country. Why should the will of California voters determine the definition of a right that applies nationwide? California doesn't command a sufficiently significant portion of the country's population to qualify their vote as the will of the people of the United States. Even if we assume for the moment that "we the people" haven't lost/ceded to the federal judiciary that portion of power which defines the US Constitutional right to marry, shouldn't national consensus be required to evidence the will of the people?

We can't trust the courts

Interlocutor: *"And I really don't care for centuries-old jurisprudence. Go ahead and take a stab at Roe v. Wade with me and that will tell you how much I care about case law setting precedent. If it's not deliberately in the Constitution, I remand the right to law-making with the people. I err on the side of democracy every time, even when they make historical mistakes. I'm also not in favor of judicial activism. I prefer the patient process of rational argument to change the heart and minds."*

My response: I find your “if it’s not deliberately in the Constitution” scheme unworkable, because Constitutional provisions have no practical meaning outside their interpretation. Example: say you have a right to free speech. Does that mean you can publish your opinion about Obama or state your stance on abortion to your sister? Perhaps. Does it mean you can punch a poster of Ralph Nader? Maybe. Does it mean you can start a business? It’s possible. To find out which of these examples qualifies as an expression of free speech *requires a judgment*, an application of law to facts. The constitution is absolutely impotent absent an interpretation. Thus, quibbling about whether rights are written or not or deliberately in the Constitution or not doesn’t resolve the question of who interprets, as even explicit enumerated rights necessarily require a judgment call in order to mean anything. Someone has got to do it—what I don’t see in your statements is who that person or entity is. Is it you? Oscar the Grouch? A magic 8 ball? Who?

Additionally, wouldn’t your position exclude fundamental rights not specifically enumerated in the Constitution? Are you prepared to cast aside federal protection of the right to privacy, the right to marry, the right to interstate travel, and the right to procreate? Any deliberate-ist/originalist of the ilk you’ve described must scratch those just for starters.

Also, how is the judicial activism accusation relevant? Is not a judicial decision itself the result of a patient process of rational argument? How is judicial activism discerned generally? How was it evidenced in the *Perry* decision?

Last, would you prefer the “side of democracy” when, as *Brandon suggested, the Alabama (sorry for picking on you Alabama) majority stripped LDS temple attenders of their driver’s licenses? If not, how do you determine when to check the voice of the people quickly vs. the patient process of rational arguments, and who makes that decision?

“That the majority of California voters supported Proposition 8 is irrelevant, as “fundamental rights may not be submitted to [a] vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections.” *West Virginia State Board of Education v Barnette*, 319 US 624, 638 (1943).

SSM violates gender equality

Interlocutor: “*There is simply no other arrangement that can ground every human family in gender equality—companionate heterosexual monogamous marriage (as the essay entitled “Some Things Which Should Not Have Been Forgotten Were Lost”⁵¹⁸ in this issue terms it) is simply “it.” No gender unequal relationship (even if it is called “marriage”) and no gender apartheid arrangement (with a person of the same sex or with no other person at all) can ground the households of the human family in gender equality.⁵¹⁹ Also, “If men and women live separate lives within their society, a hierarchy of men over women—with its attendant slide towards malignant patriarchy—is the inevitable result... It is only through the widespread existence of companionate heterosexual monogamous marriages that democracy, freedom, prosperity, and other goods such as state peacefulness can continue to have strong root and be sustainable.⁵²⁰”*

My response: Does allowing an African American to marry another African American frustrate racial equality? Should we instead require that an African American marry a Caucasian, or a Japanese person marry a non-Japanese, to promote racial equality? How about religion- should we mandate Catholic-Jew weddings, and bar the pairing of two Southern Baptists, to promote

religious equality? “One must wonder why it is necessary to prohibit same-sex marriage to promote gender equality when it suffices to permit interracial marriage to promote racial equality.⁵²¹” Allowing different-race marriage doesn’t evidence the state’s preference for or against endogamous same-race marriage. Apartheid is an inappropriate comparison because apartheid mandates segregation whereas SSM is merely an option (an option which is likely to be overwhelmingly chosen by homosexuals- few straight people will likely marry someone of the same sex). The offensiveness of miscegenation laws is not merely because of its privileging one race above another, but that race is simply not an appropriate basis for limiting or granting the privilege of marriage. Gender is inappropriate by the same token. Last, what is the basis for concluding that patriarchy is the inevitable result of SSM? Both men and women have equal rights in such a jurisdiction- what then would found the supremacy of the males? Indeed, traditional marriage has historically promoted gender hierarchy with women receiving the short end of the stick. Might not defense of that traditional hierarchy itself perversely result in fewer women entering the institution? Much of the tradition-based anti-SSM rhetoric is vulnerable to that risk:

““[T]he gender equality argument offered by same-sex marriage opponents may mask something that they do not seem to appreciate, namely, that it may well be that one of the reasons that marriage may seem to be in trouble is that proponent of traditional marriage seem to extol traditional gender roles and stereotypes.... those who seek to promote marriage are doing themselves and society as a whole a disservice by suggesting a return to the ‘good old days.’ For those women for whom the good old days do not look particularly good, such descriptions may well make marriage seem less rather than more desirable...”

By extolling a period in our history during which women were not viewed as equals, and by refusing to permit the needs of same-sex couples and their families to be met, same-sex marriage opponents may be doing more harm to the institution that they allegedly venerate than the recognition of same-sex marriage ever could.⁵²²”

Opposing SSM is about gender, not sexual orientation

Interlocutor: “*Most of the arguments for Prop 8 that I have heard are based on gender, not sexual orientation. Those are two different things... That is about gender, not sexual orientation.*⁵²³”

My response: I concede that gender and sexual orientation are different. However, the sexual orientation discussion is related because the gender discrimination has a disparate impact on gay and lesbian people. To illustrate, I draw from the related field of employment law. Let’s say the Tucson police department refused to hire those who know Spanish and have lived more than a year in Mexico. Though this is not on its face race or national origin discrimination, the policy has a “disparate impact” on Mexican immigrants compared to other applicants and would thus violate federal discrimination law. Similarly, because gay and lesbian people are overwhelmingly represented in the population of those seeking same-sex marriage, gender discrimination “disparately impacts” a group of people based on their sexual orientation. After writing this I came across a similar passage:

“Sexual orientation discrimination can take the form of sex discrimination. Here, for example, Perry is prohibited from marrying Stier, a woman, because Perry is a woman. If Perry were a man, Proposition 8 would not prohibit the marriage. Thus, Proposition 8 operates to restrict Perry’s choice of marital partner because of her sex. But Proposition 8 also operates to restrict Perry’s choice of marital partner because of her sexual orientation; her desire to marry another woman arises only because she is a lesbian.⁵²⁴”

Alternately, I could rebut gender discrimination on its own merits, as Judge Walker did in the Proposition 8 case (*Perry v. Schwarzenegger*). Essentially, the argument is this: if American citizens are granted the right to marry a woman, it violates equal protection to give that right only to men. Legal privileges may not be denied on the basis of sex. This is, again, the same issue as voting- is the substance of voting the participation of a citizen in democracy, or is it the male-only definitional aspect? Similarly, is the substance of marriage the consensual, recognized union of two adults (amongst other elements), or is it the opposite-gender definitional aspect? I respect the position that the substance of marriage is that opposite-gender definitional aspect- but I hope both sides would agree that there is at the least much more to marriage than its opposite-genderness. Said *Perry*:

“Marriage has retained certain characteristics throughout the history of the United States. Marriage requires two parties to give their free consent to form a relationship, which then forms the foundation of a household. The spouses must consent to support each other and any dependents. The state regulates marriage because marriage creates stable households, which in turn form the basis of a stable, governable populace. The state respects an individual’s choice to build a family with another and protects the relationship because it is so central a part of an individual’s life.⁵²⁵”

Said an Alaska court, emphasizing a right to choose one’s life partner, rather than a right to marry another of the same sex, as fundamental:

“Government intrusion into the choice of a life partner encroaches on the intimate personal decisions of the individual... The relevant question is not whether same-sex marriage is so rooted in our traditions that it is a fundamental right but whether the freedom to choose one’s own life partner is so rooted in our traditions.⁵²⁶”

A right to dignity might be appealed to as well when inquiring about the necessity of legal same-sex marriage:

“Given that the state already recognizes a right to marry for opposite-sex couples, if this is not a sufficient basis to extend that right to same-sex-couples, I do not know what would be. It is then almost a self-evident truth that same-sex couples ought to be afforded the same legal right to marry in the name of human dignity that is afforded to opposite-sex couples.⁵²⁷”

Regarding sexual orientation and discrimination resulting from a state SSM ban, the Connecticut Supreme Court found:

“[W]e agree with the plaintiffs’ claim that sexual orientation meets all of the requirements of a quasi-suspect classification. Gay persons have been subjected to and stigmatized by a long history of purposeful and invidious discrimination that continues to manifest itself in society. The characteristic that defines the members of this group—attraction to persons of the same

sex—bears no logical relationship to their ability to perform in society, either in familial relations or otherwise as productive citizens. Because sexual orientation is such an essential component of personhood, even if there is some possibility that a person’s sexual preference can be altered, it would be wholly unacceptable for the state to require anyone to do so. Gay persons also represent a distinct minority of the population. It is true, of course, that gay persons recently have made significant advances in obtaining equal treatment under the law. Nonetheless, we conclude that, as a minority group that continues to suffer the enduring effects of centuries of legally sanctioned discrimination, laws singling them out for disparate treatment are subject to heightened judicial scrutiny to ensure that those laws are not the product of such historical prejudice and stereotyping...

‘[b]ecause a person’s sexual orientation is so integral an aspect of one’s identity, it is not appropriate to require a person to repudiate or change his or her sexual orientation in order to avoid discriminatory treatment.’ *In re Marriage Cases*, supra, 43 Cal. 4th 842...⁵²⁸”

Societal Consequences

History shows that monogamy is best

Interlocutor: “*Good old fashioned monogamy just happened to be the most successful societal structure from an evolutionary point of view (or monogamous marriage happened to be practiced in Western Europe which through Jared Diamondesque factors came to dominate the world).*”

My response: Yes, monogamy is highly conserved historically and cross-culturally, indicating its evolutionary fitness as an institution. Counterexamples (such as the matrilineal Musuo in China) are few. On the other hand, polygyny seems to have been fairly common: “According to the Ethnographic Atlas Codebook, of 1231 societies noted, 186 were monogamous. 453 had occasional polygyny, 588 had more frequent polygyny, and 4 had polyandry”, and interestingly the males in those relationships (polygyny) tend to live on average 12% longer. However, homosexual relationships, especially reproductive ones, either couldn’t or haven’t been given much chance to prove themselves yet- so it’s inappropriate to discard them so quickly on an ‘evolutionarily unfit’ basis. They should at least be given their day in court first.

However, even if they are less “fit,” what justification is there for using evolution as a filter of family types, especially when the very strains of the colander are not natural, but rather agentic, meaning that we choose them as a society? That’d be sort of like saying “we’ll see if evolution will favor the corn stalk I planted,” then either tending or poisoning it and concluding that nature has spoken.

SSM distorts the traditional definition of marriage

Interlocutor: “*Gay marriage and traditional marriage cannot coexist any more than we can logically conclude that there is no difference between a man and a woman. A heterosexual relationship and a homosexual relationship are not the same, and to call them both “marriage”*”

is a distortion of an obvious and self-evident reality; whether one is better or worse than the other does NOT need to nor should it enter the public discourse and legal debate; it only masks the real truth. We simply need to be honest and pursue a course of equality, while at the same time recognizing the differences. The equality is achieved through equal recognition and benefits, and the difference is recognized through calling one by one name and the other by another. Marriage has always been defined as opposite gender, so what logic is there to change this name? Do we need to get rid of the names "men" and "women" and replace them with "it" or "unisex" or call "women" "men" in order to achieve gender equality?... The voice of the California people did NOT discriminate, and it did NOT promote inequality: it only said that a name should be preserved from distortion."

My response: I appreciate your points. I concede that marriage has predominantly been an opposite gender institution over time. Bryce Christensen criticized similarly in his article, "Same-sex 'marriage' as verbicide: reaffirming the linguistic and cultural heritage that once made 'marriage' a vibrant word of substance and hope":

"[P]opular ownership of the language is anathema to those pressing for what they persist in calling homosexual *marriage*. These activists are claiming a politically and culturally perilous right to define a word by judicial or political fiat, even if doing so destroys the traditional meaning of the word. Indeed their lexical behavior is precisely that which the British literary scholar and Christian apologist C.S. Lewis called 'verbicide, the murder of a word.'^{529,530}

The traditional definition argument fails, though, for two reasons: first, it is a well-known fallacy; two, it is not clear what traditional marriage really looks like, and that same-sex marriage is less in keeping with traditional marriage than its absence.

First, an appeal to tradition is a popular is-ought fallacy⁵³¹. There might be a successful, independent "ought" argument, but it won't derive from "is." An easy example illustrating why this is a fallacy: "Slavery is what we've always done in Georgia; thus, emancipation is a bad idea." A similar example would be the very traditional ideas of gender inequality and racism. There must be some argument besides mere tradition to advance the anti-SSM ball.

Second, there is significant historical evidence of same-sex marriage in many cultures⁵³²; thus, same-sex marriage is not bereft of precedent and thus not clearly non-traditional. I also note that marriage has also historically and predominantly been a union between two persons whose sexual orientation is or is assumed to be toward the gender of the partner- in which case, the subset of same-sex marriages between homosexually oriented people *is* traditional. Last, the traditional definition argument has failed in two important, comparable contexts before: voting and interracial marriage.

Voting:

At the time of the suffrage movement, the traditional definition of voting was by men only⁵³³. Imagine if the traditionalists won, but conceded some "ballot-casting" benefits to women—say, they could cast ballots for state issues and candidates but were prohibited from "voting" for the President and U.S. Senators and Representatives. (This is similar to granting domestic partnership benefits and adoption privileges to same-sex couples but denying them marriage.) Voting would then come to have a narrow meaning based on its exclusion of women. As

decades passed and competent, visibly equal women citizens were continually barred from the privilege of “voting,” “ballot-casting” would come to be viewed as more legitimate than “voting” and would likely replace voting as the preferred democratic participation (much as I fear civil unions compete with marriage- though perhaps with time and consensus, one would prefer civil unions- especially if marriage is saved as an instrument of inequality). The definition of voting had to be expanded to include women or voting would remain discriminatory by definition and would become increasingly unaccepted in an increasingly equality-recognizing society. Allowing women to vote does not distort nor is it a threat to the word "vote," even though the definition changed. And yes, to respond to the “replacing ‘men’ and ‘women’ inquiry”: calling men and women "person" or "citizen" does indeed have a great track record of promoting gender equality.

Interracial marriage:

Some of those who opposed interracial marriage made a definitional argument as well, contending that miscegenation is not marriage, and “to call it ‘marriage’ is a distortion of an obvious and self-evident reality.” Similar “destroying the sanctity of marriage” rhetoric was also wielded vociferously to oppose the legalization of interracial marriage. The interlocutor says it is futile to ignore the “obvious and self-evident reality” that men and women are different. Indeed, it would also be inappropriate to deny that black and white people are different: their skin color is visibly dissimilar! **The question is not whether differences exist; it is whether differences matter.** As popular awareness increased of lifelong-committed black/white couples who raised families and love each other and are equal and similar in every other way, miscegenation laws looked increasingly ludicrous in a Constitutional republic “dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Here, as in voting, it became expedient to look at the substance of the institution, not its past definition, in order to preserve it. Were miscegenation excluded today because it “distorts” the definition of marriage, marriage would suffer loss of legitimacy and popularity because of the taint of discrimination enshrined in its definition. Similarly, some straight, opposite-gender couples may begin to request civil unions so as to eschew the same-sex-excluding institution of marriage. One straight man/woman couple in Britain made just such a request (though perhaps for different reasons) in November 2010⁵³⁴.

More and more same-sex couples are conspicuously parenting, reproducing, and keeping life-long commitments of love and caretaking to each other:

“Constitutional amendments or not, gay and lesbian families are not going back into the closet. One-third of female same-sex households and more than one-fifth of male same-sex households include biological children under eighteen. Eight U.S. states and the District of Columbia currently allow a child to have two legal mothers or two legal fathers. And 40 percent of the nation’s adoption agencies report that they have placed children with gay or lesbian parents. This is a reality that won’t go away.⁵³⁵”

In a legal and societal environment that denies them marriage, the heightened awareness occasioned by their very presence contributes to marriage’s decline as marriage is defined more by who it excludes⁵³⁶ than the purposes it fulfills and the obligations it imposes. Unfortunately in my view, committed same-sex couples often become walking advertisements for the legitimacy of cohabitation and the irrelevance of marriage.

In the country where SSM has been legal the longest (the Netherlands- since 2001), “The Dutch are quick to say, ‘There is no gay marriage here—it’s just the same marriage for everybody.’ And it’s obvious when you think about it. The legal status is the same for same-sex couples and different-sex couples, so there is no need for a separate term like ‘gay marriage’ or ‘same-sex marriage.’ A better term for the subject... would be something like ‘equal access to marriage for same-sex couples.’⁵³⁷” Similarly, we no longer speak of miscegenation, but only of marriage- because the legal status is the same for mixed-race and same-sex couples.

Said one LDS member:

“How can our own families possibly truly love, accept and support us when they are told to use their money, time and means seeking to destroy our agency to live in loving, stable relationships? What message and harm result when we are repeatedly taught about the temporal and eternal blessings of marriage and family but are then told in word and action that we, God’s Gay and Lesbian children, are inherently so bad that we do not deserve any of those blessings, or anything that resembles those blessings in this life. We are taught love, marriage and family are good and of God... except for us... that we are so vile that somehow merely participating in marriage and family would cheapen and undermine all marriages and families; as if Gays have some kind of marital cooties that will degrade the sanctity of all marriages and destroy civilization as we know it. Did granting slaves freedom cheapen and undermine freedom for all or did it actually strengthen freedom and increase the numbers of those willing to fight to maintain it? Did allowing women the right to vote weaken and undermine democracy and society or did it strengthen and broaden it? Did allowing God’s Black children the priesthood destroy the sanctity of priesthood or defile the temple? Or did it actually strengthen the priesthood and purify the temple through diminished prejudice and increased love and unity?⁵³⁸”

As noted above, defenders of tradition because “it’s always been that way” or because “it has passed the test of time” must distinguish their support from also endorsing slavery, gender hierarchy, and racism- all which “passed the test of time” and functioned for centuries. Though fiercely traditional, all these institutions were flawed, and overturning them proved a superior alternative to maintaining the status quo from both a deontological (all people should be treated equally without regard to gender or race being the germane duty) and a utilitarian perspective (the greatest net benefit accrues by overturning compared to the status quo). Legalizing SSM is superior to the alternative of maintaining the opposite gender-exclusive status quo for the same types of deontological and utilitarian reasons. I close with the words of the Connecticut Supreme Court:

“Like these once prevalent views, our conventional understanding of marriage must yield to a more contemporary appreciation of the rights entitled to constitutional protection. Interpreting our state constitutional provisions in accordance with firmly established equal protection principles leads inevitably to the conclusion that gay persons are entitled to marry the otherwise qualified same sex partner of their choice. To decide otherwise would require us to apply one set of constitutional principles to gay persons and another to all others.⁵³⁹”

Gay promiscuity will taint marriage by reducing marital fidelity

Interlocutor: *“Studies show that gay men have on average more than 250 partners. It is women that tame male promiscuity- and women would be absent from male-male marriage. ‘The chaos of sexual irresponsibility (especially infidelity and promiscuity within marriage) will grow, and the moral expectations of the basic institution of society will fade as the sexual ethic of gay and lesbian lifestyles is embraced as marriage.’⁵⁴⁰ Also, ‘Legalizing same-sex marriage would be another notch in what Professor Helen Alvare calls “The turn toward the self in the law of marriage and family.”⁵⁴¹ It would encourage gay fluidity, promiscuity, infidelity, and instability in marriage. However, if we want to foster fidelity, monogamy, responsibility, and emotional bonding in marriages, the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples would be counter-productive... The morality of marriage would be the most devastating casualty of the legalization of same-sex marriage.’⁵⁴²”*

My response: I will make five responses.

Response 1:

It would be unsurprising that gay men on average are more promiscuous than straight men. They lack (generally) the civilizing institution of marriage, approved sexual outlets, and societal acceptance compared to straight men. Also, the area of the male brain that processes thoughts about sex is 50% larger on average than the female brain, and men’s brains are practically saturated with testosterone⁵⁴³. Males are more visually oriented when it comes to sex, and the number of thoughts about sex that sexually mature males have per day is on average several times that of their female counterparts of the same age. Though there may not be a strong link between sexual desire and promiscuity, it would be unsurprising that gay men, like straight men, are more sexually active, more sexually creative, and interested in a greater number of sexual variety and sexual partners than women. It is not altogether unlikely that there would be more straight sex, including more sexual partners, were women as interested in sex as men are- and thus it would be unsurprising to learn that gay men are on average more promiscuous than straight men. However, the figure you cite greatly exaggerates gay male promiscuity. The 250 average you cite came from a San Francisco Bay Area sample recruited from bars, sex clubs, and sex-cruising spots⁵⁴⁴. The consensus numbers are more likely similar to these descriptions:

“Now it does appear that a significant minority of American gay males do have lots of sexual partners. Moreover, the median American gay male does have somewhat more sexual partners than the median straight male (likely ten to twenty lifetime partners for gays as opposed to five to ten for straights...).⁵⁴⁵”

The General Social Survey found that straight women reported having had on average three sex partners since age 18, straight men six, and gay men ten⁵⁴⁶. Thus, gay men are not on average as hyper-promiscuous as you claim. Plus, it may be that a minority of gay men are responsible for the predominance of the promiscuity- and it could be argued that group is less likely to enter SSM than the less promiscuous subset.

Response 2:

Homosexuals may be asexual, on average, more often than heterosexuals (though the following finding is limited since it was not based on a random sample):

“An online poll suggests that there is an overrepresentation of gays and bisexuals among asexuals, with 11% of the asexuals polled self-identifying as gay, 24% as bi, and only 43% as straight⁵⁴⁷. One hypothetical explanation is that among sexuals, large percentages are homo/bi-romantic or homo/bi-physical but they identify as straight because their sexual attractions are exclusively hetero, whereas among asexuals the diversity of romantic and physical attractions comes to the forefront. Alternatively, asexuality may be an effect of some of the same prenatal biological factors that cause homosexuality/bisexuality, in which case the correlation may be a result of a common origin. Another way of looking at the poll data is that a gay person is about 8 times more likely to be asexual than a straight person, and a bisexual person is about 18 times more likely to be asexual than a straight person (assuming a 3% prevalence rate in the general population for self-identified gays and also 3% for bi).⁵⁴⁸”

Response 3:

It is well-established that men are more promiscuous than women⁵⁴⁹ - and that includes both heterosexual and homosexual men. However, lesbian couples do not contain men- yet few if any who raise the promiscuity contention would permit SSM for lesbians, even if lesbians exhibited on average even greater fidelity than straight couples or straight women. If marital fidelity were truly the aim, then there would be no reason to bar lesbians- in fact, they may be preferred to opposite-sex couples who, due to the fact that they each include a man, may be on average more promiscuous.

Response 4:

Why is SSM counter-productive to fostering emotional bonding between spouses? It is not at all clear that same-sex couples do not bond emotionally with their partners in an inferior way to same-sex couples. The rush of oxytocin (a bonding/trust neurochemical) associated with orgasm in both men and women still occurs when same-sex couples kiss, hug, touch, and have sex. Authentic communication engendered by commitment and a shared life with a partner bear the potential to foster emotional bonding in same-sex as in opposite-sex pairings. Male and female brains are, on average, different. Arguably, due to the decreased median difference between the brains of same-sex spouses, an elevated level of similarity and understanding may grant an emotional bonding advantage.

Response 5:

“Remember that two-day, four-part Marital Aptitude Test you were required to pass before you were allowed to get your license? Remember when the social worker visited your home and interviewed your neighbors to make sure you were faithful enough to your partner to qualify for marriage? Remember how, before they issued your license, the authorities looked up your age group and ethnic group and religious group to check that the odds of your staying married were up to par? No?...

[T]he fidelity double standard—the insistence that gay people become model marital citizens before they can have the right to marry—is the bitterest of all the ironies in the gay-marriage debate, and also the most twisted... [Critics] treat gay people not as individuals but as averages... it is certainly possible for [a gay couple] to stay faithful to each other, and many do, just as many straight couples do not. Even if all gay-male couples were adulterous, their number

would not approach that of adulterous heterosexual husbands. But all such considerations are deemed inconsequential, because the gay average is below par. One wonders: Exactly what proportion of gay men would need to be faithful in order to earn homosexuals the legal right to marry? Seventy-five to 80 percent- the male heterosexual average, if you trust surveys? Ninety percent? And how many heterosexuals would agree that their own legal right to marry should depend on the average fidelity of other heterosexuals?⁵⁵⁰”

Barring SSM because of the promiscuity of gay men penalizes both homosexually oriented men and women for not living up to the rules of a club they're excluded from, predicts without merit the future behavior of a group of people, assumes that any increase in heterosexual couples' divorce or adultery would be unacceptable regardless of costs to homosexuals, and applies a fidelity prerequisite to homosexuals that is not applied to heterosexuals. As with fertility (see chapter 4), it seems that by exposing inconsistencies we have unearthed yet another façade- one that is no more pro-fidelity than the fertility-based SSM opposition was pro-fertility. Instead, it is merely anti-SSM.

SSM “weakens marriage”: promote domestic partnership or civil unions instead

Interlocutor: *“If SS couples want health benefits and hospital rights for their partner, then sure, give them civil unions or domestic partnerships that include those benefits- but do not, under any circumstances, give them marriage. SSM weakens the institution of marriage.”*

My response: I will now show one reason cluster why SSM strengthens, rather than weakens, marriage. Prohibiting SSM has led SS couples to creatively promote alternate institutions such as second-parent adoption, civil unions, domestic partnerships, cohabitation, etc. To the extent that heterosexuals avail themselves of these marriage competitors, marriage is disincentivized⁵⁵¹ as a result of banning SSM. Said Jonathan Rauch, author of *Gay Marriage: Why it is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America*:

“The main and great benefit of SSM, however, would be its normalization of marriage. Marriage depends for its success on its uniqueness and its universality. Those, in turn, depend on two principles. One is ‘If you want the benefits of marriage, you have to get married.’ The other is ‘Marriage is for everyone- no exclusions, no exceptions.’ Gay marriage reinforces both principles. It makes marriage not just a norm (the one for heterosexuals) but the norm (for everybody). In doing so, it offers the best hope of stopping the proliferation- aided, perversely, by the anti-gay-marriage movement- of marriage-like and ‘marriage-lite’ alternatives.⁵⁵²”

Many same-sex couples perceive that these second-class “alternative” institutions evidence that their relationships are not as valuable or worthy as opposite-sex couples' relationships. Indeed, a significant portion of the harm alleged by black-white couples who were forbidden to marry under miscegenation laws was their dignitary interest. Ordering that the couples be allowed access to the gold standard that is marriage appropriately recognized the equality of same and mixed race couples. Similarly, the dignitary interest of same-sex couples is not satisfied by a “back of the bus” type concession typified by civil unions and domestic partnerships. It is unsurprising that many same-sex couples refrain from availing themselves of these separate-but-

equal, *Plessy*-like alternatives⁵⁵³, but when marriage is available they frequently jump on board⁵⁵⁴.

Civil unions and domestic partnerships threaten marriage for two reasons.

1) They compete with marriage, i.e. many homosexuals and some heterosexuals have⁵⁵⁵ and will likely in coming years avail themselves of some or all of the benefits and responsibilities associated with each:

“The importance of marriage for society's general health and stability also explains why the commonly mooted alternative to gay marriage—a so-called civil union—is not enough... Some gays think it would be better to limit their ambitions to that, rather than seeking full social equality, for fear of provoking a backlash...”

Yet that would be both wrong in principle and damaging for society. Marriage, as it is commonly viewed in society, is more than just a legal contract. Moreover, to establish something short of real marriage for some adults would tend to undermine the notion for all. Why shouldn't everyone, in time, downgrade to civil unions? Now that really would threaten a fundamental institution of civilisation.^{556,}

2) They devalue the understanding of marriage in comparatively suggesting that marriage is either A) merely a contract between two people, B) a bundle of benefits, or C) both:

“To understand how to preserve the health of marriage as a social institution, and also to understand why there is no substitute for same-sex marriage, it is necessary to understand where marriage gets its special power: how it works. And this depends crucially on understanding that marriage is not merely a contract between two people. It is a contract between two people *and their community*.⁵⁵⁷”

I remember this “two parties + community” idea of marriage sticking out to me when I read Bruce Hafen’s *Covenant Hearts*. This construct of marriage is buttressed by noting that private contracts can take place between only two partners, whereas marriage must take place before a magistrate or clergyman; essentially, a third party is always present to symbolize the public’s interest in the union (usually, there are many guests as well). The author of *When Gay People Get Married: What Happens When Societies Legalize Same-Sex Marriage* studied the effects of SSM in the Netherlands, which has legalized SSM since 2001. She wrote:

“As a deeply rooted social and cultural institution, marriage is powerful in ways we might not always appreciate... [the strong reaction of a father to his daughter’s marriage] illustrates the profound meaning and value that the act of marrying has for many people other than the two getting married. [M]arriage is an experience that connects the couple to other people in their social circles—whether the couple wants it or not. Ironically, at a time when many demographers take for granted the ‘deinstitutionalization of marriage’ for heterosexual couples, that is, the fading away of the social and legal meanings of marriage that structure how married people live their lives, the experiences of gay and lesbian couples suggest that marriage has a continuing relevance and meaning.^{558,}”

Third-party presence is not as highly conserved in civil unions and domestic partnerships, and is almost wholly absent from cohabitations. These three marriage competitors, by virtue of their

diverse expectations and understandings, don't possess what marriage does- a clear, bright-line understanding of the difference between married and non-married. Very few understand what a civil union in a particular state means, or what expectations do and do not attach to a particular jurisdiction's domestic partnership, nor even when someone is domestically partnered or civilly united. The definitions of domestic-partner programs, for instance, vary by sponsor⁵⁵⁹. There is much less confusion about what marriage means and who is and isn't married- and it this "standard package" clarity itself which contributes to marriage's power. (I would also make the ancillary note here that in a pluralist, church-and-state-separate society like America, this reason also argues for keeping civil marriage rather than "getting government out of the marriage business."⁵⁶⁰ Taking government out means a more case-by-case, intrusive evaluation of whether or not two people are married. The loss of a common marital currency impoverishes the institution. Plus, "Secular rather than religious authorization of marriage has been a consistent tradition in the United States... The author of the preeminent nineteenth-century legal treatise on marriage and divorce showed his commitment to state authorization by calling marriage a 'civil status'; he dismissed as 'too absurd to require a word of refutation... the idea that any government could, consistently with the general well-being, permit this institution to become merely a thing of bargain between men and women, and not regulate it."⁵⁶¹ For these and other reasons, I would argue against the vociferous position of at least one friend of mine that government should stop regulating and distributing marriage).

Thus, the "common currency" aspect partially explains the magic of marriage (for a rebuttal of this position which argues that "*Marriage is not the right dividing line*,"⁵⁶² see Nancy Polikoff's 2009 *Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage: Valuing All Families Under the Law*, chapter 7, "Valuing All Families Under the Law." Another reason marriage is the gold standard is that it ties benefits to burdens in many informal and formal ways. Legal benefits, societal expectations of caretaking and commitment, etc. require marital parties to assume the burdens as well as the benefits. Cohabitation is the most egregious offender in decoupling burdens and benefits, and most traditional advocates eschew it as a marriage alternative:

"What [conservatives] miss is that a growing number of homosexuals are acting married and being regarded by their heterosexual peers as married in all but law. The risk is that the culture and the law will part ways as gay people set up what amount to common-law marriages, becoming spouses unofficially but cohabitants in the eyes of the law. The very distinction between marriage and cohabitation blurs as couples' behavior, rather than their legal status, comes to be accepted as the dividing line... the growing visibility of unmarried gay couples may legitimize cohabitation instead. The marriage ban turns gays into walking billboards for the irrelevance of marriage."⁵⁶³

Civil unions and domestic partnerships, in at least some of their varieties, join cohabitation in decoupling benefits and burdens (at least much more than marriage). For instance, the mere addition of a domestic partner to an employee's health benefit plan doesn't pull much weight as far as society's elevated expectation of that partner's commitment or caretaking. Marriage does:

"SSM, then, clarifies and reinforces the key message to people who are embarking on coupledom: marriage is for everybody, marriage is unique—no exceptions, exclusions, or excuses. In doing so, gay matrimony bolsters marriage's status as the gold standard for committed relationships, at a time when marriage's competitors are gaining ground. And in so

doing it also preserves and strengthens marriage's legitimacy and sustainability as a social and legal institution. It stabilizes marriage for the long haul...

When it became obvious that blacks were not children and that women could think for themselves, the country had to make a choice: expand the franchise or see it lose its legitimacy. Marriage's position today is similar... straights-only marriage could soon have the dubious distinction of being 'the *discriminatory* lifestyle choice.' Cohabitation and partnership may emerge as ethically modern, while marriage becomes your father's Oldsmobile.⁵⁶⁴

Also, "[T]he experience in Europe and in states like Vermont and California suggests that alternatives to marriage are useful only if they are transitional statuses on the way to full equality for same-sex couples."⁵⁶⁵

Though more justifications could be provided, a preference for SSM over competitors such as cohabitation, civil unions, and domestic partnerships is well-supported based on the reasons above.

SSM contributes to family breakdown

Interlocutor: *"The breakdown of the family is one of the greatest tragedies in history. Children are growing up in single parent families, growing up without a father, and the education and poverty and drug problems that result are drastic. SSM weakens the institution of marriage."*

My response: You've pinned the crime on the wrong man. SSM is not the cause of society's ills. More likely criminals for the lack of education, poverty, mental health, drug, and crime problems we observe include⁵⁶⁶:

- Divorce
- Negative influences from the media
- Materialism
- Absentee fathers
- Families that lack a stay-at-home parent
- Co-habitation before marriage
- Pornography
- Unemployment, and/or a poor economy
- Parental drug use/abuse
- Parental alcohol use/abuse
- Drug use/abuse among teens or children
- Teen sexual involvement/activity
- Alcohol use/abuse among teens or children
- Adultery
- Poor schools or quality of education

The existence of social problems does not argue against SSM absent a causative link between SSM and those problems. *Causa proxima, non remota spectatur* - the immediate, and not the remote cause is to be considered. Said one in a law review article:

“Opponents of same-sex marriage like to talk about morality, but their eagerness to scapegoat innocent people for social problems that those people have nothing to do with has moral implications of its own.⁵⁶⁷”

Rather, same-sex couples may instead build up the family:

“[A]lthough controversy surrounds same-sex marriage and lesbian and gay families with children, these families appear to be remarkably similar structurally to other post-modern families formed through adoption, ART, and remarriage. Many appear to hew both toward heteronormativity in terms of adult-affective binary and mutual relationships and toward post-modernity in their expansive kin networks and embrace of social and biological kin.⁵⁶⁸”

Additionally, why wouldn't pro-family organizations spend their limited resources attacking these more culpable criminals, rather than lynching the questionable-at-best criminal of SSM? Has the church come out as publicly or in as big a way on any (allegedly) pro-family issue besides opposing SSM since the Family Proclamation came out in 1995? For instance, the church could instead focus its political capital on divorce, drug use, poverty, keeping one parent at home, media, or materialism. They could even fight the emphasis on erotic/romantic love in a bid to strengthen marriage. Over the last 50 years, erotic/romantic love has come to be viewed as an increasingly necessary reason to get and to stay married:

“In the eighteenth century, people began to adopt the radical new idea that love should be free to choose their marriage partners on the basis of love. The sentimentalization of the love-based marriage in the nineteenth century and its sexualization in the twentieth each represented a logical step in the evolution of this new approach to marriage.⁵⁶⁹”

This shift is untraditional and has arguably hobbled marriage's stability. Very high expectations of self-fulfillment and romance have weakened the institution because such ends are not typically found quickly, easily, or in consistently abundant quantities in marriage. Romantic love, for instance, is a decidedly brief biological reality (usually around six months⁵⁷⁰). Even de-emphasizing (though not eliminating) erotic/romantic love as the or the primary reason to get and to stay married will arguably reduce divorce, increase healthy marital expectations, and thus strengthen marriage more than keeping the institution from homosexuals. One of my favorite, and I think effective marriage-promoting quotes from President Hinckley:

“There seems to be a superstition among many thousands of our young who hold hands and smooch in the drive-ins that marriage is a cottage surrounded by perpetual hollyhocks to which a perpetually young and handsome husband comes home to a perpetually young and ravishing wife. When the hollyhocks wither and boredom and bills appear, the divorce courts are jammed.... Anyone who imagines that bliss is normal is going to waste a lot of time running around and shouting that he has been robbed.... Life is like an old-time rail journey—delays, sidetracks, smoke, dust, cinders, and jolts, interspersed only occasionally by beautiful vistas and thrilling bursts of speed. The trick is to thank the Lord for letting you have the ride.⁵⁷¹”

Even if this angle is rejected as tenuous, certainly campaigns against adultery, divorce, and cohabitation are more effectively targeted than opposing SSM. Advocating for maternity leave and health insurance benefits are two other candidates more amenable to the public square, if that’s where the advocacy is desired. As argued in the “SSM ‘Weakens Marriage’” section, prohibiting SSM may weaken marriage more than promoting SSM. As noted by other authors⁵⁷², in concert with the church’s anti-homosexual approach in opposing the ERA, the church’s pro-family public/cooperative/political capital has been disproportionately allocated in anti-homosexual endeavors.

SSM will make civilization come crashing down

Interlocutor: “*We must... defend [traditional marriage] if we are to preserve society as we know it.*⁵⁷³ ‘[I]n our time, the inevitable, ultimate social consequences of letting everyone do their own thing^l in regard to marriage—and specifically in regard to legalizing same-sex marriage—will be... devastating. A weakening of the institution of marriage is certain. As that institution is the foundation of social order, a weakening of social order is inevitable.’⁵⁷⁴” *God rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah for not doing everything they could to stomp out homosexuality. Rome fell for the same reason. SSM is a radical blow to the family. The Proclamation on the Family explicitly warns that ‘the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.’*”

My response: That is certainly a very serious concern. However, there are three possible reasons why perhaps we should be cautious about an impulsive response to SSM based on the fear of God’s punishment. Before expounding these three, however, I must inquire: What exactly is the traditional family the interlocutor wants to preserve?

“When anti-gay advocates use the term ‘traditional,’ I always wonder what tradition and what time. Do we support early 19th-century traditional marriages when married women had no legal standing, could not own property, sign contracts, or legally control any earned wages?⁵⁷⁵” Said Valerie Hudson:

“If the telos of marriage is gender equality—a teaching of how the two halves of humanity are to relate to one another so that when new members of humanity are brought forth they will be

taught this correct principle from birth—then the student’s question was right on the money. “Traditional” marriage is simply not what LDS members believe marriage is, for “traditional” marriage is based on a hierarchy of men over women, and oppression of women in all facets of society based on the template found in “marriage.” Given the greater light and knowledge revealed to the LDS, it would be abominable to stand together with those who advocate “traditional” marriage, for it is the opposite of what marriage means, we believe, to God.⁵⁷⁶”

Wrote another:

“It is hard to think of a bigger affront to tradition than allowing married women to own property independently of their husbands. In *What is Marriage For?*, E.J. Graff quotes a nineteenth-century New York legislator as saying that allowing wives to own property would affront both God and nature, “degrading the holy bonds of matrimony [and] striking at the root of those divinely ordained principles upon which is built the superstructure of our society.” In 1844 a New York legislative committee said that permitting married women to control their own property would lead to ‘infidelity in the marriage bed, a high rate of divorce, and increased female criminality,’ and would turn marriage ‘from its high and holy purpose’ into something arranged for ‘convenience and sensuality.’ A British parliamentarian denounced the proposal as ‘contrary not only to the law of England but to the law of God.’⁵⁷⁷”

The rhetoric sounds familiar.

In her book, *Marriage, A History*, Stephanie Coontz shares her belief that “marriage adds something extra... the highest expression of commitment in our culture and comes packaged with exacting expectations about responsibility, fidelity, and intimacy... These commonly held expectations and codes of conduct foster the predictability and security that make daily living easier.⁵⁷⁸” Many LDS people doubtlessly concur with her belief. In the book Coontz details the radical evolution of marriage, which has experienced intense transition in the last two centuries. She noted that nearly every generation presumes that marriage was better in the preceding generation:

“[F]or thousands of years people have been proclaiming a crisis in marriage and pointing backward to better days. The ancient Greeks complained bitterly about the declining morals of wives. The Romans bemoaned their high divorce rates, which they contrasted with an earlier era of family stability. The European settlers in America began lamenting the decline of the family and the disobedience of women and children almost as soon as they stepped off the boats...

‘The invention of a past filled with good marriages⁵⁷⁹,’ Kaler concluded, is one way people express discontent about other aspects of contemporary life.⁵⁸⁰”

She continues, pointing out that most of the “new” family trends are actually old, and many of the old aspects are actually new:

“Furthermore, many of the things people think are unprecedented in family life today are not actually new. Almost every marital and sexual arrangement we have seen in recent years, however startling it may appear, has been tried somewhere before. There have been societies and times when nonmarital sex and out-of-wedlock births were more common and widely accepted than they are today. Stepfamilies were much more numerous in the past... Even divorce

rates have been higher in some regions and periods than they are in Europe and North America today...

On the other hand, some things that people believe to be traditional were actually relatively recent innovations. That is the case for the ‘tradition’ that marriage has to be licensed by the state or sanctified by the church... Even the Catholic Church long held that if a man and woman said they had privately agreed to marry, whether they said those words in the kitchen or out by the haystack, they were in fact married. For more than a thousand years the church just took their word for it.⁵⁸¹”

Having a single breadwinner, high marriage rates, and marrying young are also relatively recent:

“Until [the 1950’s], relying on a single breadwinner had been rare. For thousands of years, most women and children had shared the tasks of breadwinning with men... for the first time, a majority of marriages in Western Europe and North America consisted of a full-time homemaker supported by a male earner. Also new in the 1950s was the cultural consensus that everyone should marry and that people should wed at a young age. For hundreds of years, European rates of marriage had been much lower, and the age of marriage much higher... the baby boom of the 1950s was likewise a departure from the past, because birthrates in Western Europe and North America had fallen steadily during the previous hundred years.”

The idea that a husband owned the body of his wife and could not therefore rape her (the marital rape exception) used to be common (up until the 1980’s)⁵⁸². The home used to be a sanctuary that state authorities would not invade in order to protect women from violent wife-battering husbands. Now, “legislation and police directives allow public authorities to breach the ‘sacred precincts’ in order to arrest violent men.⁵⁸³”

Birth control used to be available only to married couples, until the historic *Eisenstadt* case “denied the state’s right to distinguish between citizens of differing marital status.⁵⁸⁴”

During the latter 19th century, “Many states put stricter controls on marrying, ‘guarding the altar,’ as one historian has called it, using the public power of the state to raise the age of consent and to instigate hygiene-based or ‘eugenic’ requirements, supposed to safeguard the next generation by refusing to license people with venereal disease or mental incapacities to have children.⁵⁸⁵” Other states made divorce very difficult to obtain by taking away their omnibus (catchall) clauses as grounds for divorce, limiting the acceptable grounds to factors such as adultery, abandonment, and habitual drunkenness. “[C]onservative and religious voices held that ‘a man and a woman, who have sinned against the law of marriage, [should] be kept by law from marrying one another.’⁵⁸⁶”

Love (romantic, erotic, and companionate) as a fundamental reason for marriage is a radical new idea:

“[M]arriage was not primarily about the needs and desires of a man and woman and the children they produced. Marriage had as much to do with getting good in-laws and increasing one’s family labor force as it did with finding a lifetime companion and raising a beloved child.⁵⁸⁷”

I would also point out that a traditional construction of marriage, if looking at the balance of history, supports a much more significant “property” or “ownership” element (namely, of the

husband owning the wife as property) than modern day defenders of traditional marriage would prefer to acknowledge:

“Through much of its history, marriage was primarily about family alliances, the consolidation and preservation of wealth and power, and/or the practical division of labor for family survival. If love entered into it that was a bonus.⁵⁸⁸”

Monogamy-only rather than polygyny or both is arguably a new state of affairs. Robust enforcement of consent of both parties is also a recent addition to the institution, one that I presume most traditionalists would not oppose. Coontz:

“[Marriage] was too vital an economic and political institution to be entered into solely on the basis of something as irrational as love... Because marriage was too important a contract to be left up to the two individuals involved, kin, neighbors, and other outsiders, such as judges, priests, or government officials, were usually involved in negotiating a match... not until the late eighteenth century, and then only in Western Europe and North America, did the notion of free choice and marriage for love triumph as a cultural ideal.⁵⁸⁹”

Would traditional marriage defenders advocate a return to a time when women generally needed to marry in order to gain economic security and legal status? How about when coverture was still binding? From *Public Vows: a History of Marriage and the Nation*:

“Under the common law, a woman was absorbed into her husband’s legal and economic persona upon marrying, and her husband gained the civic presence she lost... the wife’s marital dependency so compromised her ability to act for herself in public that single women, too, being potential wives, were often treated as lacking civic independence.⁵⁹⁰”

How about when it was much harder to live the single life? From *Marriage, A History*:

“Women’s legal and economic dependence on men and men’s domestic dependence on women was the fourth factor that had long driven people to get and stay married. But during the 1970s and 1980s women won legal autonomy and made huge strides toward economic self-sufficiency. At the same time, the proliferation of laborsaving consumer goods such as permanent-press fabrics, ready-made foods, and automatic dishwashers undercut men’s dependence on women’s housekeeping⁵⁹¹.”

In a recent discussion on this subject I heard one wry concluding remark: “Marriage has more to fear from dishwasher salesmen than same-sex couples.”

No-fault divorce represents another significant change. Reliable birth control and contraception have impacted marriage as well. “Only in the last hundred years have women had the independence to make their marital choices without having to bow to economic need and social pressure.⁵⁹²” The fall of the acceptability of wife beating is another significant change, as is the fall of the marital rape exception (though both have yet to fall fully). The prevalence of the legitimate/illegitimate status of children has declined. Due to the rise of feminism and other movements, cultural norms about male protection of female purity have changed drastically, as has adherence to Victorian morals. Cohabitation, solitary living, female workforce participation, and later age of first marriage all either cause or indicate changes. Employment laws, health

laws, and business practices extending benefits to unmarried partners all alter the landscape. Last,

“The reproductive revolution has shaken up all the relationships once taken for granted between sex, marriage, conception, childbirth, and parenting. People who could not become parents before can now do so in such bewildering combinations that a child can potentially have five different parents: a sperm donor, an egg donor, a birth mother, and the social father and mother who raise the child.⁵⁹³”

To those who claim:

“[T]he principle ‘harm’ done by marriage-like ‘registered partnerships’ was to amplify the dissolution of the once vital bond between marriage and procreation. Sterile by definition, the concept of same-sex marriage strips the heart out of the traditional institution, to the confusion and disorientation of society as a whole, and of the young in particular,” Allan Carlson replies:

“In truth, though, the bond of procreation and marriage was already seriously weakened by the prior legal embrace of contraception within marriage, by the intentionally childless marriage, by elimination of ‘illegitimacy’ as a legal category, and by recognition in law of heterosexual cohabitation⁵⁹⁴. Indeed, Eskridge, Spedale, and Ytterberg make a powerful rejoinder that ‘[i]f the chief concern of family law should be the creation of a stable family structure for the rearing of children, then most of the hetero-liberalization of the last generation—no-fault divorce, cohabitation, rights for non-marital children—has been a mistake. Marriage in America has been compromised in ways that should be reclaimed.’ They add that any traditionalist defense of marriage that ‘leaves no-fault divorce and cohabitation untouched’ has already embraced a radical redefinition of marriage, one that has done much more measurable harm to children and society than same-sex marriage⁵⁹⁵. On empirical grounds, it appears, here they are correct.⁵⁹⁶”

This cursory review shows that marriage in the past is far from homogenous. A parallel review would likely make a similar conclusion as to marriage in Biblical cultures. In past societies, including Biblical ones, many of the elements common to marriage would be considered heinous today. To those who decry the breakdown of the family and seek to brake or reverse its deterioration, I would inquire again: exactly which traditional family do you want to preserve?

Now, I return to the three possible reasons why we should be cautious about an impulsive response to SSM based on the fear of God’s punishment or disastrous social consequence.

1) Homosexual orientation is largely if not wholly biological in origin. It is likely that God is aware of this fact. Though there is biblical evidence of the obligation to stone homosexuals, hopefully most of us can agree that at least today it is morally wrong to kill homosexuals even if it seems to some that the Bible mandates it.

2) It is not clear that homosexual orientation, homosexual conduct, or same-sex couples were the reasons for God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (see “Biblical condemnation...” discussion in chapter 5) As to Rome, what justification is there for attributing its downfall but not its rise to homosexuality, as such was present during its growth as well as decline? Certainly the proximate, substantive cause of its fall was not homosexual conduct. Civilizations rise and fall normally (haven’t the vast majority of them fallen or been assimilated?)- so what evidence is there that God destroyed Rome because it tolerated homosexuality?

3) If the concern is homosexual conduct, such may actually be lessened in that promiscuous behavior among gay men may on average decrease as more gay men choose SSM. If the concern is that homosexual unions are less reproductive, it suffices to point out that SSM does not outlaw OSM, and no doubt heterosexual unions (which are much more common) will continue to reproduce independent of the presence or absence of SSM. If the concern is natural disasters, such have struck many countries that have not legalized SSM and have not struck at least most countries that have. If the concern is that opposite-gender families will not form as frequently because potential members of those unions are instead in same-sex relationships, I would point to the incredible difficulties and high divorce rates endemic to mixed-orientation marriages and ask whether MOM's contribute more, on average, to broken families, shattered women, and disappointed men (to say nothing of the incredible suffering of children in such conflicted families), than they do to strong families and men and women and their children living lives of integrity and happiness. Also, allowing women to own property was viewed by many religious and civil leaders as a blow to the divine institution of the family- yet in retrospect most of us support that move whether we perceive that it brought calamities or not. In addition, same-sex couples exist mostly outside of legal marital recognition and will continue to do so. If their presence/cohabitation is likely to incur God's wrath, then we must break them up or punish/eliminate the participants, rather than merely legally bar SSM- actions few are willing to take under a modern morality. Though we eschew tolerance of sin and believe that the Book of Mormon promises of prosperity and freedom from bondage are contingent on whether the inhabitants serve God and keep His commandments, this ethic does not always translate clearly into legislative recommendations. Though baptism and confirmation in Christ's true church fulfills God's commandments, we would not approve a tax subsidy on that activity. Though we oppose baptizing infants and drinking coffee, we would not criminalize those activities⁵⁹⁷. Indeed, it would be contrary to God's commandments to overly burden freedom. Thus, even if God would have His people oppose homosexual behavior, He might nonetheless will that His people promote civil same-sex marriage based on the principles of agency and/or equality.

Same-sex does not appear to threaten opposite-sex marriage: "none of the data convincingly link the recognition of same-sex partners to either fewer marriages or a declining belief in the current relevance of marriage."⁵⁹⁸ Plus:

"[E]ven if it is true that gay marriage constitutes a more radical definitional change than earlier innovations, in an important respect it stands out as one of the narrowest of reforms: all the earlier changes directly affected many or all married couples, whereas same-sex marriage would directly pertain to only a small minority. It isn't certain that allowing same-sex couples to marry would have any noticeable effect on heterosexual marriage at all.

True, you never know what might happen when you tinker with tradition. A catastrophe cannot be ruled out. It is worth bearing in mind, though, that predictions of disaster if open homosexuals are integrated into traditionally straight institutions have a perfect track record: they are always wrong. When openly gay couples began making homes together in suburban neighborhoods, the result was not Sodom on every street corner; when they began turning up in corporate jobs, stud collars did not replace neckties. I vividly remember, when I lived in London in 1995, the forecasts of morale and unit cohesion crumbling if open homosexuals were allowed to serve in the British armed forces; but when integration came (under court order), the whole thing turned out to be a nonevent. Again and again, the homosexual threat turns out to be

imaginary; straights have far less to fear from gay inclusion than gays do from exclusion. Granted, for many people marriage is defined in terms of sexual orientation, which (for example) employment never was. Still, there is reason to doubt that the latest predictions of the end of civilization will prove more accurate than their predecessors.⁵⁹⁹”

I end with a quote from LDS scholar Valerie Hudson:

“This uniquely LDS view calls for a wholesale reevaluation of the logic and the arguments of the anti-same-sex marriage movement, to the intent of improving its chances at this time of twilight. If the movement is not put on firmer footing, with a truly adequate answer provided..., it will be but a memory in less than a decade.⁶⁰⁰”

Conclusion

Most of the common anti-SSM arguments I’ve heard to date are either flawed or deeply flawed.

Chapter 7: In Re Proposition 8: Perry v. Schwarzenegger

My day job is as a humble Teacher's Assistant in the BYU Biology Department. Between shifts I'm a full-time grad student at the Marriott School of Management (BYU's Business School), and in my spare time I moonlight as a J. Reuben Clark Law School student. [Don't ask me how I found time to write this book, which first 120-page draft I did in a three week period during September/October]. On September 9th, after a meeting on the hydraulic fracturing research mentioned in chapter 2, I literally ran across campus from the Marriott School to the Law School to get a good seat for hearing a distinguished speaker- Mr. Charles Cooper.

The lead counsel defending Proposition 8 in *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, Chuck Cooper spoke to students and faculty for an hour. I was privileged to sit in the front row, from which position I could observe not only Mr. Cooper but other VIP's such as DC Circuit Court Judge Tom Griffith; First Quorum of the Seventy emeritus member Lance Wickman; former clerk for US Supreme Court Justices Warren Burger and Antonin Scalia, Von Keetch; J. Reuben Clark Law School Dean James Rasband; and professors Cole Durham and Lynn Wardle, among others.

Mr. Cooper spoke for a half hour to the standing-room only crowd, focusing on faults in Walker's decision. After discussing the history and purposes of marriage, he opened to questions. There were many hands and little time- but amazingly after a few questions such as how homosexual marriage harms heterosexual marriage and whether the plaintiffs have standing to appeal, I was chosen. I even got to ask *two* questions! Hogging the Q and A time- selfish I know.

My first question addressed his claim that homosexuals can't reproduce. I refuted his claim, showing that some of them do reproduce by citing two examples (e.g. lesbian couple- partner A gets her egg artificially inseminated, then implants the embryo in partner B who bears the child. Or, a gay couple who mix their sperm, fertilize a donated egg, then have a close friend act as surrogate). I further noted that stimulating the germline development of totipotent cells from partner A into sperm, then using that sperm to fertilize an egg of partner B, would yield a two biological parent homosexual household. I concluded by asking whether advancing reproductive

technologies such as these would weaken his tradition-based argument. He said no, but admitted that eventually it would if the technologies get to that point (a notable concession). He pointed out that a third party intercessor is required. I didn't push him on the contention that no one balks at infertile heterosexual couples doing the same or similar third-party-required procedures. For that matter, I also refrained from the more obvious rebuttals that reproduction or likely reproduction or even potential reproduction has never been required to get a marriage license. Even if reproduction is vital to the institution of marriage, if you'll let old people who can't reproduce (and others who aren't likely to reproduce) marry, why deny marriage to homosexual people on the basis of their reduced reproductive capacity? Anyway, back to the story.

He continued to answer my question by citing a lengthy list of social ills, such as children growing up in single parent families, children growing up without a father, and the education and poverty and drug problems that result in those situations. This is where he lost me. I spent a chunk of my 2010 summer as a research assistant for a law professor researching issues such as the economic and social consequences of family breakdown. [Let me know if you'd like my paper on this, or my thorough research on the role of courts in defining SSM, by emailing me at homosexualityperspective@yahoo.com]. Thus, I was aware of how well documented the ills are that he cited. However, *they don't advance his position!* He's arguing for a particular definition of marriage (only a man and a woman) over an alternate (man and a woman + man/man + woman/woman). Yet the evidence he cites is not causally linked to his advocacy of definition A over definition B. Sure, we all agree that those social outcomes are undesirable - but they've mostly taken place during the last 40 years, during which time as Mr. Cooper noted the applied marriage definition has been the traditional one. Thus, the most likely deduction is either that 1) other factors besides the definition of marriage caused those ills, or that 2) the *traditional* definition contributed to those ills. The speculative, prospective *non sequitur* (it does not follow) that instead the alternate definition would exacerbate those negative social consequences is the least supported deduction of the three. This rhetoric bears the signs of a classic witch hunt: though most everyone is upset about the breakdown of the family, you've pinned the tail on the wrong donkey. Homosexuals are not the perpetrators of society's broken homes and single parenting. (Indeed, as *The Economist* argues, "the weakening of marriage has been

heterosexuals' doing, not gays', for it is their infidelity, divorce rates and single-parent families that have wrought social damage.⁶⁰¹)

Thus, my follow up question appropriately demanded that he identify the nexus or link between the ills he cites and the alternate marriage definition he opposes. I found his response, which centered on the ills resulting from general family breakdown being likely to increase because of the weakening the institution by the alternative definition, unsatisfying. The alternate definition is not clearly a weakening of the institution- it is only clearly different. Whether the change weakens, strengthens, or doesn't affect marriage is neither agreed upon nor well evidenced, and thus in the absence of empirical data amounts to little more than a value judgment which lacks the ability to confidently predict future consequences. The evidence he emphasized is nothing more than a red herring effectively wielded on those unaware of the glaring gap between that evidence and his proposition. Again, *frustra probatur quod probatum non relevant*- that is proved in vain which when proved is not relevant.

However, his overall position seems to be in line with the LDS church on the matter: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regrets today's decision. California voters have twice been given the opportunity to vote on the definition of marriage in their state and both times have determined that marriage should be recognized as only between a man and a woman.⁶⁰²" When I first read this, my response was: "Uh, what happened to the Constitution-loving church I thought I knew?"

I hope it is not necessary to prove that the LDS church is Constitution-affirming. Besides the potent endorsements of the Constitution in the Doctrine and Covenants (98:5-6, 101:77-80, 109:54), President Ezra Taft Benson ("I reverence the Constitution of the United States as a sacred document. To me its words are akin to the revelations of God, for God has placed His stamp of approval on the Constitution of this land⁶⁰³") and President Hinckley, ("The Constitution under which we live, and which has not only blessed us but has become a model for other constitutions, is our God-inspired national safeguard ensuring freedom and liberty, justice and equality before the law⁶⁰⁴") *while president*, both unequivocally endorsed the document. Elder Oaks recently taught, "If we oppose persons who hold particular offices or the policies they pursue, we are free to vote against them or work against their policies. But we

should not carry our opposition to the point of opposing their offices, or we weaken the institution of constitutional government⁶⁰⁵" (2010).

"It is emphatically the province and duty of the Judicial Department [the judicial branch] to say what the law is⁶⁰⁶." - *Marbury v. Madison*. The judicial branch determines the constitutionality of state laws and state constitutional provisions under the *federal* constitution. A state law, or even a state constitution, may not deprive a US citizen of a right under the US Constitution. If indeed there is a constitutional right to marry (as has been recognized in numerous US Supreme Court cases- see e.g. page 110 of the *Perry* opinion⁶⁰⁷), then it is emphatically the judicial branch's job to define that right. Opined the United States Supreme Court:

"The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men. Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival... Under our constitution, the freedom to marry or not marry... resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State.⁶⁰⁸"

An absence of a marriage definition would make the right meaningless, for one could not then discern when or whether the right is violated. One may certainly argue that the court got it wrong, but I fail to see the defensibility of the position of a US Constitution-affirming church that the people of California should be the ones to define a federal constitutional right. "[T]he United States Supreme Court... has the ultimate responsibility of interpreting the meaning of the lofty and general provisions of the Constitution⁶⁰⁹" -Elder Oaks. Coincidentally, Elder Wickman expressed basically the same position as the church that the legislature/people of California should be defining marriage rather than the courts during my conversation with him right afterward (which conversation also included a notable Q and A about the Oaks/Wickman Public Affairs interview on homosexuality). I guess I don't see his/the church's logic. It may seem odd that one man (Judge Walker) can overturn the expressed will of 13.4 million (7 million in favor, 6.4 opposed). You may even agree with Thomas Jefferson, who in response to *Marbury v. Madison* said "that if this view of judicial power became accepted, it would be 'placing us under the despotism of an oligarchy.'⁶¹⁰" To Thomas Jefferson and those who contend similarly I say: you lost! Welcome to contemporary America. Federal judicial review of state law or conduct alleged to be violative of federal constitutional rights is how our system's been working for over two centuries now.

Closing

In closing I 1) discuss my motivations for writing, 2) make a request of the reader, and 3) offer my closing thoughts.

Motivations for writing:

I am often asked why I care about the issues addressed in this book. Indeed, distributing it resulted in the loss of my chosen career (BYU's MPA program denied my appeal to reverse their refusal to nominate me for the Presidential Management Fellow program on October 31, 2010. Despite my exceptional performance in the selection criteria categories and the glowing reviews of my supervisors at the Maricopa County Superior Court, Idaho Supreme Court, and Government Accountability Office, the MPA program decided to reject me on account of my choice to share an early version of this book). In addition, writing and sharing this book has brought the disapproval of my parents, contributed to a girlfriend's decision to break up with me, and led to stressful conversations with several church leaders, BYU deans, and dear personal friends. This book was not written for a class, and no mortal person suggested the project to me. I am not a part of any advocacy group. To be frank, the experience has required a lot of me-physically, mentally, spiritually, relationally, and emotionally- as I have wept and researched and reasoned its pages into existence.

The short and unsatisfying answer to the "why I care" question is that I don't exactly remember other than that I felt called to write this. The highest goal of my life has been to fulfill the missions my Father has for me in this mortality. My sentiments and situation mimic Ty Mansfield's, who at the conclusion of *In Quiet Desperation* wrote of his decision to attach his real name as author:

"I believe in Christ and in the fullness of the gospel, and when it comes to proclaiming both the redeeming and enabling power of His name, with this specific book and in this particular situation, I could not stand behind "Name Withheld." Because I'm not married, I had to take into consideration how it could affect my potential future family but, nevertheless, as I continued to ponder and pray, I knew what I needed to do, and I felt the Lord's peace with that decision. That is the only thing that matters to me. So, regardless of what happens in the future concerning

a family or the societal response to the convictions recorded on these pages, I know the Lord is with me and will provide a way for me to do whatever it is that He would have me do.”

I am not as confident as Ty that the ideas in my book are correct and divinely approved/inspired. However, I feel 1) to affirm that I felt called to this task, 2) that the general endeavor was largely appropriate, and 3) that some of the content *was* inspired. I don't think I could have written this book on my own. During the three week period that most of it was drafted, I would sometimes go to bed, then unable to sleep because of the flood of ideas of what to write and how to write it, I would arise and resume composing. I can't fully explain what moved me. However, I will give three post-hoc justifications for my composing and distributing this book: timeliness, my future children, and my human side.

Timeliness:

One reason for writing, especially the second part (SSM), is that same-sex marriage is a defining issue of my generation. The acknowledgement that biologically-caused homosexual orientation exists is relatively new, significantly substantiated only recently, and spreading. More and more people are choosing to come out, and more and more gay and lesbian people are openly living in lifelong committed relationships. Due to current and improving reproductive technologies, homosexuals are gaining access to reproduction, including with each other. Increased gender and racial equality, economic prosperity, no-fault divorce, and other changes have altered marriage from what it looked like in the 1950's- and I doubt the institution will ever go back. Now is the time to take a hard look at marriage from both a religious and civic standpoint and forge ahead with a marriage worthy of securing for ourselves and succeeding generations- which leads me to my next justification.

My future children:

It is my hope this reason appeals to my Millennial generation peers who are similarly situated.

The reason is this:

I plan to marry a woman and raise my own biological children soon. One or more of those children may be homosexually oriented. I want the world to be a place where the American dream and the LDS dream, which I believe both include the opportunity for marriage, is as bright for my homosexual children as it is for their heterosexual siblings. Indeed, at the risk of being

overly dramatic, I have a dream that someday soon my children will be judged by the content of their character and not by ~~the color of their skin~~ their mostly-if-not-wholly-biologically determined sexual orientation.

Human side:

I would also say that the more human side of my motivation is one cup curiosity, one cup commitment to truth, and two cups compassion.

Curiosity: Initially, my interest resulted from my natural curiosity (I'm a binge learner), triggered three or four years ago after I heard from a BYU professor the evidence for a biological origin of homosexual orientation. Without a doubt, his presentation challenged my presumptions. I was not aware of a single homosexually oriented friend at that time.

Truth: From my LDS upbringing I have been taught, above all else, to seek for and cleave to truth- and it is to that high standard I seek, though I don't know that I have ever attained it. In the Epilogue of *Understanding Same-sex Attraction: LDS Edition*, Dennis Dahle wrote: "The greatest display of compassion, and the greatest blessing that can be given, is to find and share the whole truth of the matter."⁶¹¹

*Compassion*⁶¹²: As I have since looked into the science and moral arguments, I have learned of the intense, widespread, and predictable difficulties my homosexually oriented brothers and sisters experience. In a drama the reader is likely familiar with, the character Frodo said: "I will take the Ring to Mordor. Though — I do not know the way." Gandalf, placing his hands reassuringly on Frodo's shoulders, responded: "I will help you bear this burden, Frodo Baggins, as long as it is yours to bear."⁶¹³ That is the message I hope to convey to those of my homosexually oriented brothers and sisters who consider their orientation a burden. 1 Corinthians 12: "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."⁶¹⁴ Per my baptismal covenant and per the human compassion God has privileged me to possess, I will help you bear your burden- as long as it is yours to bear.

Request to the reader:

What would I hope the reader will do, feel, or think, as a result of reading this book? Wrote Bob Rees of Carol Lynn Pearson's *No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons Around Our Gay Loved Ones*:

“The Mormon pioneers who set out on the treacherous journey to their promised land did so because they were misunderstood, persecuted, and at times even murdered for their beliefs, including their very unorthodox beliefs about marriage. They went to escape social ostracism and political tyranny that sought to deprive them of their right to live according to their beliefs. What sustained them was their faith and their fellowship with one another and their belief that they would find a place, “far away in the West, / Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid,” where they would not only be free of persecution but free as well to build a better kingdom for themselves and for those who would come after.

I dream of such a place for our homosexual brothers and sisters. But rather than traveling to it over plains and mountains, rather than carving it out of a desert wilderness, I believe we have to make it where we are, here and now, in our homes, in our communities, and in our congregations. It is the courage of people like Carol Lynn Pearson that gives me hope that we can—heterosexual and homosexual together—build the Zion we are called to build.⁶¹⁵”

How can we build this Zion? To answer this question, I will quote another, who wrote two decades ago⁶¹⁶:

“As someone who loved the church but has literally chosen between life and death, I beg you to consider these points:

- 1) Most homosexuality is biologically determined. It cannot be “unchosen” once it occurs.
- 2) Please allow homosexuals the choice to remain in the church on the same basis as heterosexual members, through sexual restraint rather than denial and change. I do not ask you to approve of gay sexual relations, but it is clear that those who understand their homosexual orientation early on in an accepting environment have fewer difficulties adjusting, are less promiscuous, and have a better chance of achieving a healthy self-image and a positive lifestyle.
- 3) If and until a proven method of change becomes available, the burden of guilt could be lifted from those whose thoughts and feelings are homosexual. If the church recognized that homosexuals did not cause their condition and are not responsible for its continued existence, their self-esteem could be built and they could focus their energies on sexual self-restraint and acceptance of themselves as gay individuals.
- 4) If members of the church were educated about what we currently know and do not know about homosexuality, this would alleviate much of the suffering experienced by parents, wives, children, friends, and the homosexual individual him- or herself. Such education may help to reduce the frequency of suicide among despairing gays...

Truth is one of the cornerstones of the church. The church should not avoid truth or make it difficult to find. I pray that you will be part of the effort to promote honesty and truth about homosexuality. I pray that you will help bring about a greater understanding of this difficult

subject so that families can come back together, individuals may begin healing, and we may all share a brighter future of love and understanding.”

Closing Thought:

I anticipate that my views as expressed in this book will change over time as I learn more. Thus, all that I have written is tentative- merely a snapshot of my current thinking. In composing it I hope that I have learned and come closer to truth- in reading it I hope you have as well. In addition to insights about SSM and homosexuality, I hope that you walk away from this book with one additional take-home: faithful members of the LDS church need not close their hearts nor remove their critical thinking caps to practice their religion.

Endnotes

- ¹ See notes 5-15 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexual_orientation
- ² Carol Lynn Pearson, *No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons Around Our Gay Loved Ones* pg. 5.
- ³ See e.g. Carol Lynn Pearson, *No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons Around Our Gay Loved Ones* pg. 77; John McNeil, *The Church and the Homosexual*, 1976.
- ⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias
- ⁵ Dennis V. Dahle, "Return to Reason: Drawing Upon the Three Pillars of Wisdom to Address Same-sex Attraction," in *Understanding Same-sex Attraction: LDS Edition*, 2009, pg. 478.
- ⁶ George Handley, "The environmental ethics of mormon belief," *BYU Studies* 40: 2 (2001) pg. 206.
- ⁷ http://lds.org/topics/pdf/GodLovethHisChildren_04824_000.pdf
- ⁸ Dallin H. Oaks, "Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 1995, 7.
- ⁹ Bill Bradshaw, "The evidenced for a biological origin of homosexuality" pg. 43. Available at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B4d4HeuA_ceTYzgyODNkMGQtNjY1Mi00OWU5LWI2MmYtMjhjMzk0MTgyNTIx&hl=en
- ¹⁰ Church Responds to HRC Petition: Statement on Same-Sex Attraction: <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/article/church-mormon-responds-to-human-rights-campaign-petition-same-sex-attraction>
- ¹¹ Carol Lynn Pearson, *No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons Around Our Gay Loved Ones* pg. 21-22.
- ¹² [See also] ... "Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Inside-Out: A Report on the Experiences of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals in America and the Public's View on Issues and Policies Related to Sexual Orientation (2001) pp. 3-4...."
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- ¹⁴ Christina Aguilera, "Reflection" 1999.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.lds-mormon.com/hardy.shtml>
- ¹⁶ Personal friend of the author, pasted from a Facebook note circa October 2010.
- ¹⁷ Anonymous letter to the editor, *The Open Door*, September 1978, vol 2. no. 9, p. 5.
- ¹⁸ Andrew Sullivan, *Love Undetected: Notes on Friendship, Sex, and Survival* 1998.
- ¹⁹ Cloy Jenkins, "Prologue: An examination of the Mormon attitude towards homosexuality." 1978. Available at <http://www.affirmation.org/history/prologue.shtml>
- ²⁰ <http://gaymormonguy.blogspot.com/p/success-stories.html>, see also <http://sgamormon.blogspot.com/>
- ²¹ Ty Mansfield, *In Quiet Desperation* 68-69.
- ²² See e.g. <http://gaymormonguy.blogspot.com/p/success-stories.html>
- ²³ <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/article/church-mormon-responds-to-human-rights-campaign-petition-same-sex-attraction>
- ²⁴ <http://www.sltrib.com/news/50537493-78/uchtdorf-church-lds-sex.html.csp>
- ²⁵ Sam Westfahl, friend of the author, used with permission. Talk received from the speaker (also with permission) and in possession of the author, 3 December 2010. Author's references- Michael Otterson statement: <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/article/church-mormon-responds-to-human-rights-campaign-petition-same-sex-attraction> Elder Marvin K. Jensen: http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/sexandgender/3437/mormon_leader%3A_%E2%80%98i%E2%80%99m_sorry%E2%80%99_for_hurtful_legacy_of_prop._8/ Oakland, CA Stake talk by anonymous gay church member (he has since revealed himself—scroll down to the talk by Mitch Mayne):<http://www.clpearson.com/oaklandstake.htm> Also: <http://mormonsformarriage.com/?p=116> Son who wrote letter to father: http://scienceblogs.com/dispatches/2007/10/national_coming_out_day.php
- ²⁶ *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-sex Attraction*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, 1991, pg. 70-71.
- ²⁷ Clay Essig, "A Plea to Seek Revelation and Blessings Regarding God's Gay & Lesbian Children and to Let Our Light Shine," http://www.gaysandthegospel.org/articles/Seek_Revelation_and_Blessings_Regarding_Gods_Gay_Lesbian_Children.pdf

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- ²⁸ Rick Phillips, *Conservative Christian Identity and Same-sex Orientation: The Case of Gay Mormons*, 2005, pg. 91.
- ²⁹ *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-sex Attraction*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, 1991, pg. 90-91.
- ³⁰ "A Situation That Defies Our Nature," *Invictus Pilgrim: Married, Mormon and Gay: One Man's Journey*, <http://invictuspilgrim.blogspot.com/2010/12/situation-that-defies-our-nature.html>
- ³¹ Bill Bradshaw, "The Evidence for a Biological Origin of Homosexuality," available at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B4d4HeuA_ceTYzgyODNkMGQtNjY1Mi00OWU5LWI2MmYtMjhjMzk0MTgyNTIx&hl=en pg. 29.
- ³² Available at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700054446/Advocates-see-rise-in-gay-suicide.html>
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- ³⁴ Caitlin Ryan, Stephen T. Russell, David Huebner, Rafael Diaz, and Jorge Sanchez, "Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults," Volume 23, Number 4, November 2010, *Journal of Child and Psychiatric Nursing*, pg. 208. http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_Family%20Acceptance_JCAPN.pdf
- ³⁵ Caitlin Ryan, David Huebner, Rafael M. Diaz and Jorge Sanchez, "Family Rejection as a Predictor of Negative Health Outcomes in White and Latino Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Young Adults," published online December 29, 2008, *PEDIATRICS: Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*, Vol. 123 No. 1 January 2009, pg. 346. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/123/1/346>
- ³⁶ Laura, <http://mormonsformarriage.com/?p=274>, July 21, 2010.
- ³⁷ Swedish National Institute of Public Health, based on review of people aged 16-29 between 2005 and 2008.
- ³⁸ <http://www.youth-suicide.com/gay-bisexual/#updates-suicide-studies>
- ³⁹ <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>
- ⁴⁰ February 2010, *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*.
- ⁴¹ <http://www.youth-suicide.com/gay-bisexual/#Papers-Suicidality>
- ⁴² Carol Lynn Pearson, *No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons Around Our Gay Loved Ones* pg. 37. See also "Deadly taboo: Youth suicide an epidemic that many in Utah prefer to ignore." Published: Monday, April 24, 2006 12:37 p.m. MDT By Lucinda Dillon Kinkead and Dennis Romboy, Deseret Morning News. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/635201873/Deadly-taboo-Youth-suicide-an-epidemic-that-many-in-Utah-prefer-to-ignore.html>
- ⁴³ Suicide in Gay/Bisexual Youth, list of resources available at <http://www.datehookup.com/content-suicide-in-gay-bisexual-youth.htm>
- ⁴⁴ Stuart Matis, Letter to a Cousin, February 2000, available at http://www.affirmation.org/suicide_info/letter_to_a_cousin.shtml
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- ¹⁴⁹ *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-sex Attraction*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, pg. xxv.
- ¹⁵⁰ "The Abominable and Detestable Crime Against Nature: A Revised History of Homosexuality and Mormonism, 1840-1980" by Connell O'Donovan. Available at <http://www.connellodonovan.com/abom.html>. "I also personally recall an Affirmation meeting in 1988 when a man showed up calling himself only David. He sat alone in a corner during our meeting and became extremely jittery when anyone approached him. I spoke with him but he requested that I remain at least six feet in distance away from him. He then rolled up his shirt sleeves and showed me his arms. The deeply-scarred skin on the inside of his arms looked like raw hamburger and I almost vomited from the sight. He informed me that he had participated in electric shock therapy at BYU in 1977 and had been allowed to turn up the voltage as high as he wanted to."
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- ¹⁵³ Sheri Dew, *Go Forward With Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley*, pg. 391, qtd in D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. ix.
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- ¹⁵⁵ Lance Wickman: "Gratefully, the answer is that same-gender attraction did not exist in the pre-earth life and neither will it exist in the next life. It is a circumstance that for whatever reason or reasons seems to apply right

now in mortality, in this nano-second of our eternal existence.” Description: “The following interview was conducted in 2006 with Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church, and Elder Lance B. Wickman, a member of the Seventy. These senior Church leaders responded to questions from two members of the Church’s Public Affairs staff.” Available at <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/official-statement/same-gender-attraction>.

¹⁵⁶ *Sexual Fluidity* by Lisa Diamond is also one source suggesting the flexibility of sexual orientation for some. Also, Stanton L. Jones (Wheaton College) and Mark A. Yarhouse (Regent University)- available at <http://www.ivpress.com/media/pdfs/ex-gay-apa.pdf> indicates that at least some in a six-to-seven year study report substantial movement away from homosexual orientation and toward heterosexual orientation. More directly, David reported homosexual attractions and never being attracted to girls (pg. 161), followed by being “free of the struggles of trying to resist homosexual temptation” (pg. 164) in Erin Eldridge, *Born That Way: A True Story of Overcoming Same-sex Attraction*, Deseret Book 1994. In the same book, the author reports being lesbian, then later marrying a man and experiencing freedom from same-sex attraction (pg. 29). Eldridge also includes an account of Jeff, who was physically attracted to other boys as a young boy and through college and later “was no longer sexually attracted to other men” and “grew into my true heterosexual identity with its subsequent attractions and desires for the opposite sex” (pg. 169). See also the second testimonial in David Matheson, “The transition from homosexuality: the role of Evergreen International,” in *Understanding Homosexuality: Perspectives of LDS Psychologists and Psychotherapists* by AMCAP (Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists), 1993, pg. 109. Also, Raymond reports changing from a homosexual to a heterosexual in Rick Phillips’s *Conservative Christian Identity and Same-sex Orientation: The Case of Gay Mormons*, 2005, pg. 89.

¹⁵⁷ Robert James, “The Fruits of Faith,” in *Understanding Same-Sex Attraction: LDS Edition*, Editors Dahle, Dant, Byrd, Duncan, Cox, Livingstone, and Wells, Foundation for Attraction Research, 2009, pg. 428.

¹⁵⁸ Robert Roy Britt, “Scientists Make Fruit Flies Gay, Then Straight Again,” FoxNews.com, Tuesday, December 11, 2007. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,316316,00.html>

¹⁵⁹ Jeffrey R. Holland, “Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction,” *Ensign*, Oct 2007, 42–45

¹⁶⁰ God Loveth His Children, 2007, available at http://lds.org/topics/pdf/GodLovethHisChildren_04824_000.pdf

¹⁶¹ Description: “The following interview was conducted in 2006 with Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church, and Elder Lance B. Wickman, a member of the Seventy. These senior Church leaders responded to questions from two members of the Church’s Public Affairs staff.” Available at <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/official-statement/same-gender-attraction>.

¹⁶² Bill Bradshaw, “The Evidence for a Biological Origin of Homosexuality,” available at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B4d4HeuA_ceTYzgyODNkMGQtNjY1Mi00OWU5LWI2MmYtMjhjMzk0MTgyNTIx&hl=en pg. 27.

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¹⁶⁴ Robert Rees in Bill Bradshaw, “The Evidence for a Biological Origin of Homosexuality,” available at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B4d4HeuA_ceTYzgyODNkMGQtNjY1Mi00OWU5LWI2MmYtMjhjMzk0MTgyNTIx&hl=en EN pg. 27.

¹⁶⁵ Dallin H. Oaks, “Miracles,” *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 6

¹⁶⁶ Ty Mansfield, *In Quiet Desperation*, page 77-78.

¹⁶⁷ Personal email October 2010, used with permission.

¹⁶⁸ *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-sex Attraction*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, pg. 111.

¹⁶⁹ *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-sex Attraction*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, pg. I don’t remember- somewhere in the 324 pages.

¹⁷⁰ Bill Bradshaw, “The Evidence for a Biological Origin of Homosexuality,” available at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B4d4HeuA_ceTYzgyODNkMGQtNjY1Mi00OWU5LWI2MmYtMjhjMzk0MTgyNTIx&hl=en pg. 30.

¹⁷¹ Isaac Higman, available at http://myoutspirit.com/index.php?pag=advertise_inspiration&id=34. Description: “Isaac Higham resides in Utah and wrote this post in response to a talk at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) General Conference on Sunday, October 3rd 2010.”

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- ³³⁰ George Handley, "The environmental ethics of mormon belief," *BYU Studies* 40: 2 (2001) pg. 206.
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- ³³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_meadow_massacre
- ³³³ Church Handbook of Instructions (CHI), 2006, 186-188. "Artificial insemination with semen from anyone but the husband is strongly discouraged." "Artificial Insemination of single sisters is not approved." "In vitro fertilization using semen from anyone but the husband or an egg from anyone but the wife is strongly discouraged." "Surrogate motherhood is strongly discouraged." "The donation of sperm is strongly discouraged." "The Church strongly discourages surgical sterilization as an elective form of birth control." I quote from this resource because 1) the 2006 CHI is broadly available online, 2) excerpts are abundant on blogs, and 3) the release of the controlling 2010 CHI has made the 2006 CHI instructive and valuable historically, but no longer binding.

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- ³³⁵ Wayne Schow, "A Case for Same Sex Marriage: Reply to Randolph Muhlstein," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 40:3 (Fall 2007): 61.
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- ³³⁷ *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 268.
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- ³³⁹ Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 465, also 404 for Lee's administrative supremacy as first counselor, quoted in D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. 15.
- ³⁴⁰ President Spencer W. Kimball, "Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec 1974, 2
- ³⁴¹ http://en.fairmormon.org/Blacks_and_the_priesthood/Lifting_the_ban
- ³⁴² Ernest L. Wilkinson Diary, 3 Mar. 1965, qtd in. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. 14.
- ³⁴³ LeGrand Richards to Ernest L. Wilkinson, 27 Dec. 1967, Wilkinson papers, Lee Library, qtd in Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. 13. See also Richards's 1974 tape-recorded oral history in LDS archives.
- ³⁴⁴ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. 14.
- ³⁴⁵ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. 14.
- ³⁴⁶ Brigham Henry Roberts, By the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* Part 1, Volume 6, page 184. 1844, reported by Wilford Woodruff.
- ³⁴⁷ *History of the Church*, 4:478; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Dec. 19, 1841, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff.
- ³⁴⁸ Andy Fernuik, *Dear Mr. Stephens: Letters of Love and of Hope*. Pg. 47-48. <http://www.andyfernuik.com/>
- ³⁴⁹ Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike unto God," Bruce R. McConkie was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this address was given at the CES Religious Educators Symposium on 18 August 1978.
- ³⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthyphro_dilemma
- ³⁵¹ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 256-7.
- ³⁵² 2 Nephi 4:35
- ³⁵³ Dallin H. Oaks, "Principles to Govern Possible Public Statement on Legislation Affecting Rights of Homosexuals," Memo proposing "general principles to guide those who prepare the text of a public statement if one is needed", 7 August 1984, http://affirmation.org/pdf/oaks_paper_02.pdf.
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- ³⁵⁵ Gordon A. Babst, Emily R. Gill, & Jason Pierceson, editors, *Moral Argument, Religion, and Same-sex Marriage*, 2009, xviii.
- ³⁵⁶ Robert Rees, "Forgiving the Church and Loving the Saints: Spiritual Evolution and the Kingdom of God," *Sunstone*, February 1992, pg. 21.
- ³⁵⁷ <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/official-statement/political-neutrality>
- ³⁵⁸ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 384-398. "the use of meetinghouses was encouraged in Hinckley's private instructions to regional representatives, stake presidents, and 'state[wide] ERA coordinators" (397); "LDS church 'involvement in the ERA controversy may well have exceeded legal boundaries for tax-exempt institutions" (398); 5 October 1979 instruction: "Church building[s] may be used for ERA education, Any and all Church meetings are appropriate forums for discussing ERA" (384); "Mormon congregations received leaflets describing how to vote for referendums and sometimes for state legislators" (385); "On crucial ERA referendums Mormon congregations tried to distribute anti-ERA leaflets to the doorsteps or car windshields of all

eligible voters. Wards in Tempe, Arizona, made this pamphlet distribution an assignment for priesthood boys ages fourteen to sixteen" (386); "In each state anti-ERA "civic" organizations of Mormons, sometimes of women only, were organized under the direction of Regional Representatives of the Twelve. The regional leaders acted under the direction of Gordon B. Hinckley, chair of the Special Affairs Committee at LDS headquarters" (386).

³⁵⁹ Mac Madsen, "Homosexuality and the Church: Perspectives of an LDS Father," from a paper delivered at the 2000 Sunstone Symposium, available at http://www.affirmation.org/resources/homosexuality_and_the_church.shtml

³⁶⁰ See Proposition 22, "The Knight Initiative," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proposition_22

³⁶¹ Some details at <http://www.lds-mormon.com/article9.shtml>;
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii_Constitutional_Amendment_2_\(1998\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii_Constitutional_Amendment_2_(1998))

³⁶² Some details at <http://www.lds-mormon.com/gaylds.shtml>, <http://www.examiner.com/lds-church-in-national/same-sex-marriage-banned-hawaii-the-lds-church-s-role>

³⁶³ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 399-400. See additional references in footnote 191.

³⁶⁴ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, pg. 400. See additional references in footnote 192.

³⁶⁵ Randolph G. Muhlestein, "The Case Against Gay Marriage," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 40:3 (Fall c2007): 2.

³⁶⁶ Letter in possession of the author, January 2010.

³⁶⁷ Ezra Taft Benson, "It Can Happen Here," in *An Enemy Hath Done This*, Jerreld L. Newquist, comp. [Salt Lake City, Utah: Parliament Publishers, 1969], pp. 103, 310.

³⁶⁸ An address delivered on September 29, 1967, at the General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, and printed in pamphlet form by Deseret Book Company.

³⁶⁹ http://www.boston.com/news/daily/24/delbert_stapley.pdf

³⁷⁰ Mark E. Peterson, "Race Problems as They Affect the Church," delivered at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, August 27, 1954, <http://www.lds-mormon.com/racism.shtml>.

³⁷¹ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 114.

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³⁷³ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 114.

³⁷⁴ Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 303.

³⁷⁵ Several may be found at <http://www.lds-mormon.com/racism.shtml>

³⁷⁶ Mac Madsen, "Homosexuality and the Church: Perspectives of an LDS Father," from a paper delivered at the 2000 Sunstone Symposium, available at http://www.affirmation.org/resources/homosexuality_and_the_church.shtml.

³⁷⁷ Moroni 8:18 For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.

³⁷⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 38:16 And for your salvation I give unto you a commandment, for I have heard your prayers, and the poor have complained before me, and the rich have I made, and all flesh is mine, and I am no respecter of persons.

³⁷⁹ *Journal of Discourses* 10: 109.

³⁸⁰ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, pp. 107-108.

³⁸¹ *Journal of Discourses* 7:290-291 (October 9, 1859).

³⁸² Amos 3:7- "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, abut he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

³⁸³ "Excerpts from three addresses by President Wilford Woodruff regarding the manifesto,"

Sixty-first Semiannual General Conference of the Church, Monday, October 6, 1890, Salt Lake City, Utah. Reported in *Deseret Evening News*, October 11, 1890, p. 2.

³⁸⁴ Brett Alan Sanders, Review Essay, "He Was Solitary, Rebellious, and Hard to be Governed," reviewing Garry Wills's *What Jesus Meant*, in Sunstone March 2007, pg. 68.

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- ³⁹⁷ Jonathan Rauch, *Gay Marriage: Why it is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America*, 2004, pg. 81.
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- ⁴⁰¹ Clay Essig, *Believing the Words of Jesus Christ – a Gay LDS Perspective* pg. 10, www.GaysAndTheGospel.org.
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⁴²⁴ Dallin Oaks: "Persons who have this kind of challenge that they cannot control could not enter marriage in good faith." Description: "The following interview was conducted in 2006 with Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church, and Elder Lance B. Wickman, a member of the Seventy. These senior Church leaders responded to questions from two members of the Church's Public Affairs staff." Available at <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/official-statement/same-gender-attraction>.

⁴²⁵ There is some debate as to whether same-sex couples may kiss and hold hands. Because such gestures are not typically considered sinful for heterosexuals, some consider them moral for homosexuals as well. A friend wrote me an email in December 2010: "On the one hand, President Hinckley stated, 'Now, we have gays in the church. Good people. We take no action against such people -- provided they don't become involved in transgression, sexual transgression. If they do, we do with them exactly what we'd do with heterosexuals who transgress. We have a very strong moral teaching concerning abstinence before marriage and total fidelity following marriage. And, regardless of whether they're heterosexuals or otherwise, if they step over that line there are certain sanctions, certain penalties that are imposed.'" (<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/1997/04/13/SC36289.DTL&ao=3#ixzz19WGr5vgL>) This states quite clearly that Church discipline should not be taken against gays unless they commit sexual transgression, and that the standard of definition is exactly the same as for heterosexuals. Therefore, since flirting and kissing are not considered sexual transgressions for heterosexuals, they shouldn't be for homosexuals either. For additional relevant quotes on this point, there is Elder Marlin K. Jensen's statement, "there is a single standard actually of morality for all members of the church" (<http://www.pbs.org/mormons/interviews/jensen.html>), also Elder Holland's, "You see, same-gender attraction is not a sin, but acting on those feelings is-just as it would be with heterosexual feelings." (http://lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=2354fccf2b7db010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD&locale=0&sourceid=e5cbbba12dc825110VgnVCM100000176f620a___&hideNav=1). On the other hand, BYU's honor code maintains a double-standard: "Homosexual behavior includes not only sexual relations between members of the same sex, but all forms of physical intimacy that give expression to homosexual feelings." Ironically, this permits heterosexuals to engage in more physically intimate relations with the same sex than homosexuals. Also, some local leaders discipline same-sex flirting or kissing more than the same behaviors by opposite-sex couples.

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- ⁴²⁸ First Presidency Letter, November 14, 1991. Also quoted in *Church Handbook of Instructions 2006*, pg. 187.
- ⁴²⁹ Michael J. Sandel, *Moral Argument and Liberal Toleration: Abortion and Homosexuality*, 77 Cal. L. Rev. 521 (1989) at 535 (quoting *Hardwick v. Bowers*, 760 F.2d 1202, 1212 (11th circ. 1985), rev'd 478 U.S. 186 (1986) (footnotes omitted).
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- ⁴³¹ Cf. Seven Great Encyclicals (Paramus, J.J.: Paulist Press, 1963), pg. 93-94. Quoted from John J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual*, pg. 100 (1976).
- ⁴³² "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World- a Response," Documents of the Vatican II, ed. W. Abbott, pg. 314-315, also "The Pastoral Constitution" no. 50. Quoted from McNeil, *The Church and the Homosexual*, pg. 205-206 (1976).
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- ⁴⁴³ See e.g. Justin W. Starr, "Biblical Condemnations of Homosexual Conduct," FAIR (Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research) 2004. available at <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/BiblicalHomosexuality.pdf> and Ashby L. Camp, "The Bible and Homosexual Conduct" available at <http://members.cox.net/theoutlet/The%20Bible%20and%20Homosexual%20Conduct.pdf>
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- ⁴⁶² See Moses 6: 9 In the image of his own body, male and female, created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created and became living souls in the land upon the footstool of God.
- ⁴⁶³ See Mark 10: 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.
- ⁴⁶⁴ See 2 Nephi 26: 33 For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.
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