

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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Lutheran Group Approves Homosexuality

The August 22, 2009 edition of *The Indianapolis Star* contained an article entitled "*Lutheran group approves noncelibate gays as clergy.*" This group joins the Episcopalians in putting their official stamp of approval upon this sin. The purpose of this article is not to deal with whether homosexuality is sinful or not. Any honest student of God's word knows that such is an abomination to God. What I wish to examine is what this action says about the attitude this group (and others) have toward God and His word.

What gives this group or any group of men the authority to make such decisions? The Psalmist declares "*For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven*" (Psalm 119:89). All the conferences and votes of men can not change that fact. If every person on the face of the earth decides to approve homosexual relationships it would not change the fact that God says "*that they which commit such things are worthy of death*" (Romans 1:32).

One individual is quoted in this article as saying "*he would need some time to review the votes before he could offer a reaction.*" Would it not have been better for him to have said that he needed to study God's word more before offering a reaction? Nowhere in this article is there any indication that this group took into consideration what the Bible says in making their decision. In fact, the article indicates that this decision could influence other groups "*struggling to reconcile conflicts over homosexuality and the Bible.*" Yes, there is a conflict between homosexuality and the Bible. A choice must be made. Will we approve of homosexuality or will we take a stand upon the truth of God's word? Even those putting their stamp of

approval on this sin recognize that there is a conflict.

Of course, this action is simply a reflection of the attitude men have taken toward God's word for years. Their attitude has been to accept what the Bible teaches only if it agrees with what we want to do. Paul said, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*" (2 Timothy 4:3,4). Anytime men think they need to vote on what they will believe, practice or accept they have rejected God and His word.

✍ James Hahn



And Such Like

These three simple words most likely do not make a great impression upon the average reader. I hope after reading this article they will mean more to all of us. They are found in the list of the works of the flesh which the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian brethren. "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" (Galatians 5:19-21). A number of years ago, I heard a gospel preacher very definitely preach that no one should refer to a thing being sinful unless it was specifically stated in the scriptures. He was a respected preacher and was well thought of in the brotherhood. I didn't misunderstand him. He emphatically stated that if an act or practice was not specifically condemned by name in the scriptures, it should not be preached as something sinful. I was young then, but I was old enough to differ with him, and I still differ with him. My ground for differing with him was based upon what Paul spoke by inspiration in Galatians 5:21: "*Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:*" What are we to understand when we read "*and such like*"? The simple and plain answer is that there are practices similar to these which he does not mention but that they are to be recognized as just as sinful as those which are. I am not certain

if Paul is limiting the phrase “and such like” to revellings, or if the phrase is to be applied to the entire list of the works of the flesh which begin with verse 19. Whatever might be the case, the phrase very definitely shows that the scriptures endorse and authorize sinful practices other than those specifically stated in the scriptures. There are practices which are sinful other than those mentioned which can keep us from inheriting the kingdom of God.

There are sinful practices which are not specifically stated in the scriptures. We are to read the scriptures and realize how such things are condemned in principle by the scriptures, though they are not specially mentioned. There are brethren who are fond of gambling, and their big defense for it is that it is not mentioned in the scriptures by name. In fact, I have been told of an elder in a congregation who went to the chalkboard and wrote that gambling was not sinful because it was not even mentioned in the scriptures. The word “gambling” is not found in the scriptures. I know of no version which speaks of gambling, and neither do the words rape, manslaughter, larceny, suicide, embezzling, bootlegging, white slavery, nor racketeering, occur in the scriptures. However, the evils involved in all these, as in gambling, are clearly and repeatedly condemned. The word of God sets forth principles which are in direct conflict with the practice of gambling. Gambling is wrong because it denies the integrity of work, the law of labor. *“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”* (Ephesians 4:28). It is stealing from another by mutual consent. Just as dueling is murder. The dueler takes another’s life with his consent. Gambling takes food, clothes and other blessings from the gambler’s family. The word “abortion” is not found in the scriptures. If we think of “and such like” having reference to the entire list of works of the flesh, wouldn’t murders include abortions? There is nothing also said in the scriptures in a specific way regarding the scourge of heroin and cocaine in our society. Are we prepared to view the use of such as being innocent? Doesn’t the phrase “and such like” come into play when such evils are considered?

The phrase “and such like” helps us appreciate other scriptures. Christians are commanded to present their bodies a

living sacrifice. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* (Romans 12:1). Anything which defiles our bodies should be avoided. We are to keep our bodies pure, and impure habits should have no place in our lives. *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* (I Thessalonians 5:22). There are those things specifically stated in the scriptures which can keep us from presenting our bodies a living sacrifice. There are also things like these which are not mentioned by name which can do the same. Individuals may not actually commit the act of fornication, but they can become lovers of pornography. When we are thinking of the drug horror, we must not forget that nicotine and alcohol are the most common of all drugs. We need to keep ourselves from the like! *“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you. Which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* (I Corinthians 6:19-20). We should be very careful in handling the word of God. Spiritual growth enables the children of God to recognize sinful practices and those things which are similar to them. *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”* (I Peter 2:11) Fleshly lusts may be specifically stated or as “and such like”. Beware!

✍ Bobby K. Thompson

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514

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