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Theocracy Alert

Beware the fruit fly . . .

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June 25, 2005—A [study](#) by Drs. Barry J. Dickson and Ebru Demir of the Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, published in the June 3 issue of the scientific journal *Cell*, showed definitively that sexual behavior in fruit flies is genetically governed.

The first logical question is: “Does that finding have relevance to sexual orientation in humans?” The next logical question is: “How long before the Christian Right attacks the first question?”

While I can’t (definitively) answer the first question, I can offer an answer to the second. Eighteen days later James Dobson’s media machine posted its [response](#): “Gay Activists Twist Fruit Fly Study: Despite what you may have heard in the media, a report on the sexual genetics of fruit flies has no bearing on human experience.”

Finding definitive evidence that sexual orientation is genetically linked is the Christian Right’s worst nightmare. Why? It’s simple.

If sexual orientation is genetic, then the Christian Right’s fundamental argument that homosexuality is just a “perverted lifestyle choice” goes out the window, along with their credibility.

If sexual orientation is genetic, then “God made homosexuals that way” and, unless “God” screwed up, homosexuality is part of His plan and all the self-righteous demagogues like Jerry Falwell, Lou Sheldon and James Dobson will be exposed as the hate-mongering bigots they are.

They will also no doubt lose a lot of the money pouring into their “ministries” to fight homosexuality. The same holds true for those running “ex-gay” ministries and “reparative therapy” programs.

With every new independent scientific study, the Christian Right’s worst nightmare comes a little closer, as demonstrated by the latest [work](#) of Dr. Qazi Rahman, a psychobiologist at the University of East London, and Dr. Glenn Wilson, a personality specialist from the University of London. Among their findings, there is *no evidence* that people could “learn” to be gay and that homosexuality appears to have a genetic basis.

Although the leaders of the Christian Right were unusually silent on the fruit fly study and its possible implications, those involved in the for-profit ex-gay programs and reparative therapies weren’t.

Among the more vocal was a professor at Grove City College in Grove City, Pa. Warren Throckmorton is a staunch supporter of ex-gay therapies and has produced his own [propaganda film](#) on the subject. He uses the Internet well to popularize himself and his cause, and he’s [well represented](#) on the website of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality. However, it has been suggested that Dr. Throckmorton may be [more interested in his own notoriety than anything else](#).

Wherever there’s a program that might benefit gays or promote respect for all people, Throckmorton is sure to be there voicing opposition. For example, January 24–28, 2005, was designated [No Name-Calling](#)

[Week](#). The event was organized by the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educational Network. GLSEN worked with *Misfits* author James Howe to develop a program that won the endorsement of the Girl Scouts, the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, and the National Education Association. More than 5,000 educators in 36 states participated in the 2005 program. No Name-Calling Week was by no means specific to gays. It encouraged civil speech and respect for all students. Nevertheless, the Christian Right condemned the program and labeled it another attempt to push “the homosexual agenda.” But as the director of the National Education Association’s Health Information Network, Jerald Newberry, noted, “People who would criticize this [program], regardless of who came out with it, are people with bad hearts.”

One of those “bad hearts” belonged to none other than Warren Throckmorton: “It appears that No Name Calling Week may be another effort on the part of GLSEN and other event organizers to tell those who object to homosexuality on religious or philosophical grounds to ‘drop dead’” (CNSNews, January 24, 2005). Apparently Prof. Throckmorton believes that if people object to homosexuality “on religious or philosophical grounds” that gives them the right to use derogatory insults and indulge in hateful name-calling. Religion and philosophy were also used to justify slavery and segregation, and racism is full of name-calling. Dr. Throckmorton’s “drop dead” suggestion may, however, have metaphoric merit.

[Love in Action, Inc.](#) is an “ex-gay ministry.” They run the “Refuge Program” camp in Tennessee. A 16-year-old involuntary inmate named Zach recently [blogged](#) what goes on there.

Wayne Besen, who tracks the “ex-gay” movement and is the author of *Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth*, said that Zach is likely to experience psychological damage. In fact, Besen said, “This is significant child abuse.”

The following line in Dyana Bagby’s [article](#) about the Refuge Program documented one type of psychological damage necessitated by ex-gay therapies: “Rev. John Smid, Love In Action’s executive director, *who is married to a woman and claims to have left behind ‘the homosexual lifestyle,’ if not same-sex attractions*” (italics mine).

“If not same-sex attractions?” That’s called “repression,” Rev. Smid, and *repression* is definitely *not* a “healthy lifestyle” . . . or an honest one.

Does the DNA programming of fruit flies tell us anything about our own? Probably. Almost as if to acknowledge that, the Focus on the Family Citizenlink [story](#) ended with a question: “But what if a [gay] gene is found—legitimately—someday?”

Kermit Rainman, “gender issues analyst” for Focus on the Family, gave the response: “As moral agents with free will who reflect the image of God, humans are responsible for their behavior and the stewardship of the various impulses experienced. In short, we are called to a higher standard than mere animal instinct.”

In such a case, however, those theocratic “morals” and “higher standards” would contradict being faithful and true to the nature and “image of God” He gave each person. And if I’m not mistaken (and I’m not), being faithful to one’s God-given nature is the message of St. Paul in his epistles.