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Debate

FACTS, NOT OPINIONS, DRIVE SCIENCE: A REPLY TO MORRISON

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Accuracy is the most important aspect of empiricism. If investigators are clear about their method and employ it to generate 'facts,' their opinions are irrelevant. So it is of some significance that Morrison, who spends more than one-third of his paper attacking my motives – indeed accusing me of 'hatred of gay men and lesbian women' – does not dispute my findings. Strip away the *ad hominem* attacks and little remains.

First, my investigation, in line with previous reports, demonstrates a strong correlation between children's sexual preferences and those of their parents, evidenced in three studies. (For what it's worth, all three studies are 'pro-gay-rights.') The results of these studies have a bearing on whether a homosexual preference is learned and whether homosexual parents play a role in the sexual preference of their children.

Second, no books on *Amazon.com* were 'omitted'. All that could be *purchased* were used. Certainly, none was ignored because it failed to support my conclusions.

Third, Morrison complains that I did not 'outline when the children … learned about their parents' sexual orientation', learned to become non-heterosexual, or explain why some became heterosexual. He is correct – and I noted these limitations (among others) on page 417 of my study. Those who believe they understand these things with scientific certainty are self-deluded. My analysis was intended to provide some insight into the process by which children make sexual choices – not to answer all outstanding questions in a few pages.

That homosexuality is a predilection somehow inborn rather than learned has become a key doctrine in the ideology of the gay rights movement. Such an assumption is routinely presented as 'fact' in the mass media, judicial system, textbooks, sex-ed courses, and even the scientific press. For instance, Pawelski *et al* (2006) states 'There is no relationship between parents' sexual orientation and any measure of a child's … psychosocial adjustment'. Yet well-executed studies contradicting this assertion can be found throughout the literature. Example: Identical twins share no more homosexual similarity than a twin's other brothers (Bearman & Bruckner, 2002). Example: Boys who spend their mid-teens in large cities, where the density of gays is 3 to 6 times that of rural areas, are 3 to 6 times more apt to engage in homosexuality (Laumann *et al*., 1992, p. 304).

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To dismiss all such research as motivated by hatred is to shut down scientific debate in the interest of establishing a rigid orthodoxy. Studies are intended to help scholars make up their minds, not merely to support already-held prejudices. As a graduate student, I tended to favour the gay rights position. Clinical experience, studies conducted by others, and my own research altered my view. Sometimes it's healthy to consider alternatives and perhaps change your mind.

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