

Five Years Continued

Now, I can confidently say--yikes--that the gay population here is much more willing to fess up to their sexuality today. They're willing to do it proudly I might add. Five years ago I wouldn't be writing this article. Five years ago there wouldn't be a GSA [Gay, Straight Alliance] on campus. Five years ago I wouldn't have seen forty students in "Vote No" shirts pose for a picture supporting equal rights.

Let my people marry! Okay, rant finished.

Anyway, Concordia has evolved into something more than a place for secret gays (LESBIANS TOO!) to sit quietly in their own secret filth. That homophobic waft that once drifted out of Wollager just smells like man sauce now. I can leave Concordia knowing now that it has been a progressive five years. And that is sooo ga--HETERO!

Opinion: Reflection on the recent convocation on Sexuality in the context of the Christian Gospel

By Nathan Rinne, Concordia Librarian

I realize that in the aftermath of this event - and the recent election as well - the hopes of those advocating for increased acceptance of "gay-friendly" viewpoints at Concordia is probably quite high. If this is you I hope that you might take a moment to hear the view of one who found the event to be disappointing and discouraging. To me, most of what was said seemed overly emotional and was deficient in the kind of rational discussion that befits a university - especially a university that was founded, and remains rooted, in the Word of God.

Please understand, I want as many students with homosexual inclinations to be at Concordia as possible! I also want Concordia to be a place where the bullying of such students is utterly condemned. As the father of five young boys, I will teach them to show genuine kindness towards all people - whoever they are. As Christians, we not only must do this - we are to delight in doing this.

That said, I also want Concordia to remain what it is - that is, a university that follows in the historic train of the orthodox Christian faith - which means upholding the Scriptures that were delivered to us by the Apostles who were taught and called by Jesus Christ.

One of the frustrating things about a discussion like this is that, as regards the Christian faith, the issue of homosexuality is simply not a focus - even though today many seem to think it is. I have probably heard my pastors talk about homosexual activity from the pulpit less than five times in my entire life (inevitably when the text specifically mentions it). Yet, whenever a conversation like this happens, many persons get the impression that the Church is "obsessing over sexual issues".

The Church does have rather clear teachings and boundaries as regards issues of sexuality, but if we are to be "obsessed" about anything, it is upholding the authority of the Scriptures - of the faith once delivered to the saints. We long to be faithful to the teachings of our Lord, for He bled and died not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. Our concern should be that all find their ultimate personal identity in the crucified God-man, Jesus Christ - not in human sexuality. Really, I would much rather be talking about Jesus' rescue of the whole world from death, the devil, and, of course, our sin. I would rather talk ad nauseum about how when we call "sin" what God calls "sin", we are to immediately call "grace" what God calls "grace". And not only to freely receive it for ourselves, but also that we might eagerly give it to our neighbors.... This is what Christianity means to me, and has meant for countless generations of Christians.

In any case, homosexual activity is one of those things the Scriptures call "sin." So is all sexual activity outside of marriage by the way - "committed" cohabitation (oxymoron) included. The same goes for divorces enacted for reasons other than adultery. In each of these cases, we obviously can't sensibly talk about persons gladly embracing forgiveness where there is no corresponding repentance. After all, why is forgiveness needed if there is no wrongdoing?

The mission of organizations like the Gay-Straight Alliance, who some would like to see on campus, is to "educate the school community

about homophobia [and] transphobia". I for one, do not see how the University can possibly endorse such a group on campus. Those who believe the Scriptures not only contain but are the Word of God realize that they can't, in good conscience, encourage views that are contrary to its teachings. Written passages from the New Testament like Romans 1, even understood in their original context, are simply too clear to be denied (for those disagreeing here, please stick with me for the rest of what I want to say...)

All this said, there should be plenty of opportunities for robust conversations about topics such as these at Concordia. For example, students should be able to write papers and give speeches on this topic, arguing either for or against it - without recrimination (I must admit, I was very puzzled when one professor told me he did not let his students write their persuasive paper on the issue of abortion. If I recall, he said this was because the topic gets discussed too much, or something to this effect).

At the same time, those professors at Concordia who are Christians ought to be concerned to make clear not only what the Scriptures say about this issue, but also not be afraid to encourage persons to look at the variety of social and scientific studies that have been done. Many times, the popular accounts echoed in the media do not accurately reflect the complex realities the studies speak to.

If there are some faculty who wish to be identified as Christian who are nevertheless convinced that the Church's historic interpretations of Scriptural passages that deal with this issue are incorrect - and desire to share this in their classes as this seems appropriate - they should also be willing to find the best defenses of the traditional views to share with their class as well. As I recently wrote in a paper for pre-seminary students: "We have nothing to fear from a robust conversation with the world." But this presumes that we are actually talking about a conversation!

Overall though, I think the fact that the Christian church has historically seen this as a "closed question" needs to be acknowledged as well. If homosexual activity is indeed a sin, this makes sense of course. We don't approach the issue of adultery as if it is an "open question."

But if this position really disturbs you, just keep this in mind: just because your conversation partner seems rather intransigent, it does not mean either that they can't be civil (and even your friend!) or that either side should think that they have nothing to learn from the disagreement. This truth, sadly, is often missed.

Let me say for the record that I am pleased to have friends and acquaintances who defend and do things I believe are contrary to God's will. These people know that even though I cannot condone their views or behavior, I continue to genuinely care about them (seems I do something similar with my kids all the time).

Can you say the same thing? Whether you say "yes" or "no", let's have a coffee together. I'll buy.