

Eye on Our Generation

He Said – Use of “Faggot” or “Dyke” – She Said

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The question is simple: should homosexuals have a different expectation of freedom than heterosexuals regarding the use of the words “faggot” and “dyke?” Put plainly, do they have a *right* to use this language? To answer this question requires only a yes or a no, but to understand and explain an answer is a more difficult issue.

Before I attempt to unravel the complexities, some personal admissions are appropriate. Because accusations of bias are unavoidable, I think it is fair to at least address them up front. First of all, I am a heterosexual; I have never had a gay experience, so I am not speaking as a member of the “in-group.” Secondly, I do not have any *openly* gay friends. I have not consciously avoided entering into such a friendship, but forcing one that did not occur naturally—even in the name of diversity—feels like a falsehood. I *do*, however, have family members whom I love very much, that have been and/or are participants in same-sex relationships (I know, I know, whoopy do!). Lastly—and here comes the controversy—I am a politically right-leaning Christian who has yet to make up his mind on the (ignorantly self-titled) “origins of gayness” debate—in my biblical interpretation the evidence does not point favorably in the direction of homosexuality and I believe that the scientific research is incomplete, so the jury is still out.

If you are offended by my unwillingness to either blast homosexuals or staunchly defend their (your?) lifestyle, I ask you to suffer through my ignorance and continue reading.

The issues relevant to this debate are similar to those issues raised in a debate concerning the use of the words “nigger” and “nigga” by blacks (as discussed in a past issue of the Lion's Eye). There is one sizable difference which lies in that comparison, though: the practically unanimous consensus of the American population is that being black is not *wrong*. The gay population does not have the benefit of such amoral classification. Therefore, for some, using “nigger” is worse than

using “faggot” because it (in *their eyes*) applies to an unalterable aspect of black identity, whereas being gay (in those same eyes) is a poor moral decision, such as being a liar or a thief. For that reason, claiming, “Blacks say ‘nigger’ so homosexuals should be able to say ‘faggot’” does not quite work. We accept blacks’ use of “the n-word” largely because we identify that their persecution was immoral and that they required a defense mechanism of some kind. I do not see such widespread, unanimous agreement regarding the defense of homosexuality.

But so what, why does that even matter? It matters because it becomes necessary to determine whether homosexuals deserve the right to what I am calling “societal defensive mechanisms,” as it was—perhaps unconsciously—decided that blacks’ deserve that same right. Ultimately, it seemingly comes down to the moral question: *does homosexuality, and thus homosexuals, deserve to be defended (even if only by those within the group)?* Anticlimactically, I will not make a clearly cut decision on that matter—I am no man’s judge. For those I persuaded to stick around two paragraphs ago, I still will not commit to your side, whatever it may be.

What I will do is rule that homosexuals absolutely, positively have the right to use whatever words they please to describe themselves or other members of their “in-group,” and I will make this ruling with the part of my personality that others may have expected me to use as a means of opposing homosexuality from the get-go. Jesus Christ, my Savior, makes it perfectly clear that I am to love others, and even if a lesbian wants to scream, “I’m a dyke” from the rooftops, she is a human being with a soul who is unconditionally loved by God. And I reckon that anyone foolish enough to condemn something as arbitrary as the *vocabulary* of a man (or woman) whom God sees fit to love has earned a title with worse connotations than those of “faggot.”

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As society becomes more liberal, far more things are deemed acceptable than ever before. Years ago situations such as teenage pregnancy or interracial marriage became scandalous, branding those involved as tainted, or somehow less of a person. In the present day and age, people are much more tolerant. Girls aren’t sent away to give birth to their babies in secret, and young women aren’t disowned for falling in love with a black man. However, as we become more tolerant, does this mean we erode our moral values further and further?

Take the use of the word “faggot” for example. I hear people use it quite frequently. Jocks shout it at each other in jest, men hurl it at buddies jokingly, and even kids use it. Does this make it acceptable? Of course not. Is it one more thing we should let slide? Absolutely not. Becoming a liberalized society does not mean we must necessarily also become immoral. What do morals have to do with it? For starters, people with morals do not devalue others. Don’t you think being called a faggot would be dehumanizing? We learn in kindergarden that name calling is wrong. Why then do grown people belittle others by using this name? I was always taught that one does not build himself up by tearing others down. Perhaps those with self confidence

issues use that word to cover up the fact that they are unsure of themselves. Maybe some men as boys were called that by their fathers, when they did things that were considered less than manly. Now these same men, all grown up, have fallen into the trap of perpetuating the cycle of verbal abuse. Whatever the reason, it is wrong and should not be tolerated.

As a practicing Catholic, I cannot condone homosexuality. As a Christian though, I can’t in good conscience say that I reject people for their sexual preferences. I also cannot overlook the use of the word faggot. I have a son, and I would be extremely upset if someone called him that. If he someday came home and told me he were gay, would I love him less? No... I would be very disappointed but I wouldn’t stop loving him. I have taught my three children that name calling and cursing are not acceptable forms of behavior. In my family, we view the word faggot as both a bad name to call someone and a cuss. As with the “N” word, I can’t ever remember sitting them down and explaining why we don’t use that word. They just know it’s wrong, so why don’t adults?

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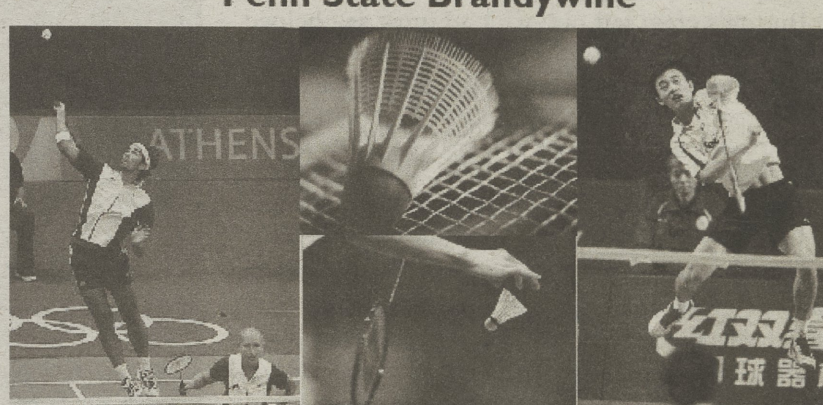
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