

Media rarely objective about homosexuality

The "discovery" of "new evidence" of a "gay gene" was trumpeted on the front page of *The Washington*

Post as a scientific breakthrough equivalent to a cure for cancer. But the story is another exercise in the uncritical "reporting" by most of the major media when it comes to homosexuality and an example of the loss of credibility the press suffers when it climbs into bed with an advocacy group.)

The story quotes another "study" by Dean Hamer, a molecular biologist at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). One might ask why federal funds targeted for cancer research are being diverted for another purpose.

The *Post* fails to mention that Hamer's widely trumpeted 1993 "gay gene" study is under investigation for alleged fraud by the federal Office of Research

Integrity and that a colleague of Hamer has charged that Hamer selectively reported data in ways that enhanced the study's thesis.

Press stories don't mention that Hamer was reassigned to other areas of research, such as smoking and cancer, after ethical questions arose.

The *Post* story tells of researchers "confirming and (extending) ... the discovery that hereditary factors apparently predispose some men to homosexuality." But is it good science for scientists to confirm and extend their own original findings? Such findings must be confirmed by other scientists. Hamer, who published his original conclusions in *Science* magazine, chose another publication, *Nature Genetics*, for his latest conclusions.

The *Post* notes that the second study, unlike the first, reports on a control group of heterosexual brothers, but downplays the fact that 22 percent of the non-gay brothers had the same genetic markers. Not only is scientific integrity compromised in such studies, journalistic credibility is,

too. Hamer once told a meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, "if you tell the press what to write about a scientific study, they'll write it."

Why has most of the press become a skill for the gay rights movement? Fear is one answer. Most liberals don't want to be labeled "intolerant" and shy away from any moral code that doesn't support their political comfort level/ But perhaps the main reason is that the establishment media have developed a relationship with the political objectives of gay rights activism that has shamefully compromised their ability to report objectively and fairly on the issue.

Evidence of this compromise is everywhere, from the open recruitment of "gay journalists" to a convention of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association meeting in Washington last month.

The Washington Post contributed \$2,500 to the convention and underwrote a National Press Club awards reception. *The New York Times* kicked in \$5,000 and co-sponsored (along with NBC News, an \$8,000

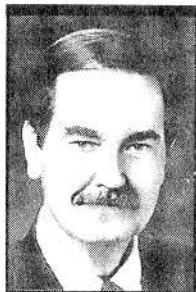
contributor) a luncheon with the Minority Journalism Association presidents.

Other mainstream media underwriters included Knight-Ridder (\$15,000), The Gannett Foundation (\$10,000), CBS News (\$7,500), the *Los Angeles Times* (\$5,000), ABC News Washington Bureau (\$3,000), Hearst Newspapers and *The Miami Herald* (\$2,500 each).

Would anyone imagine such press giants making contributions to, or cavorting with, the Christian Coalition? Whatever happened to press ethics? Whatever happened to the arm's-length separation journalists were supposed to observe between themselves and the subjects they cover?

Never has it been more necessary for the public to analyze the information it receives from the media in order to determine whether it is truth or propaganda. Increasingly, when it comes to homosexuality, the press cannot be trusted.

Cal Thomas' column is distributed by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.



By CAL THOMAS