

# BEWARE OF THE GOD

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## Australian Christian Lobby and bad science

The Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) is a small but influential pressure group drawing most of its support from socially conservative Pentecostals and Baptists. Together with two similar organisations, it was largely responsible for the Howard Government's ban on same-sex marriage in 2004. Led by former Brigadier Jim Wallace, ACL describes itself as 'a political advocacy group unaligned with any political party. It is a moderate group ...' [ACL, May 26, 2006]

**IF** the Australian Christian Lobby is so moderate, why is it quoting notorious US-based extremist Paul Cameron in its recent anti-gay and lesbian submission to the *NSW Adoption Act* review?

ACL is using his 'research' in an attempt to add scientific respectability to their religious prejudices; a simple literature search fatally damages any such claim to credibility.

Dr Paul Cameron is "by far the most rabid of the [US Christian Right] anti-gay propagandists... director of the mis-named Institute for the Scientific Investigation of Sexuality [later known as the Family Research Institute] ... author of a brochure entitled *'Murder, Violence, Homosexuality'* in which he links gays to mass murder and child molestation. Cameron is a leading proponent of the view that gays should be quarantined to stop the spread of AIDS", according to political researcher Sara Diamond,

Cameron is quoted as saying: "Think of Thomas Jefferson ... He said in a considered statement that homosexuals ought to be castrated. He said that homosexual females ought to have a one-inch hole drilled through the cartilage of their nose."

Diamond also notes that Cameron might easily be dismissed as a vicious crackpot 'were it not for the acceptance he receives from more subtle homophobes.' This seems to be what is now happening in Australia.

Many other writers have been highly critical of Cameron's ability to manufacture statistics to suit his case: "It was [Cameron] who 'proved' that gays were ten to twenty times more likely to be child molesters than their peers, and five to twenty times more likely to commit bestiality. It was Cameron who claimed that a person was fifteen times more likely to be murdered by a homosexual than a heterosexual. It was Cameron who said that lesbians were twenty-nine times more likely to infect a sexual partner with a venereal disease on purpose." This last statistic was based on a sample of seven!

The big problem is that Cameron has been around for so long that his ridiculous claims and figures have acquired a totally undeserved patina of respectability among groups like the Australian Christian Lobby.

These religious-political lobbyists clearly don't want to check the information against its methodology, or mention salient facts such as Cameron's expulsion from the American Psychological Association on ethical charges in 1983.

So widespread is Cameron's influence that all touted 'research' in this area should be carefully examined for a 'Cameron taint'. He's cited by many groups seeking to limit or reduce civil rights for non-heterosexuals, and is often remarkably easy to identify. If you notice a list of 'facts about homosexuals' ('10 times more likely', '20 times more apt' etc.), check the footnotes immediately.

Another researcher, Didi Herman, warns that 'mainstream' Christian Right organisations often prefer to keep Cameron's history in the background 'while continuing to rely on his research in their own publications.' She points out that unlike many other homosexual-bashers, Cameron spends plenty of time attacking lesbians as well as gay men. According to his 'data': "In comparison to heterosexual females, lesbians are 19 times more apt to have had syphilis, 2 times more apt to have had genital warts, 4 times more apt to have had scabies, 7 times more apt to have had an infection from vaginal contact, and 12 times more apt to have ever had an oral infection from penile contact."

Cameron also argues that 'rape and battering are more frequent among lesbian couples than among married heterosexual couples.'

It's understandable, therefore, why 'Cameronisms' like this sneak into articles and, more importantly, inquiry and legislative review submissions put together by groups like the ACL. Jim Wallace and his colleagues are very anxious to prevent same-sex couples from adopting children, and their May 30,



The Australian Christian Lobby successfully campaigned against same-sex marriage in Australia. Now they're working to ensure that adoption remains restricted to heterosexuals. Paul Cameron, their 'scientific authority', is fighting for the recriminalisation of homosexuality in the US - is that next on the ACL agenda for Australia?



2006 submission to the *NSW Adoption Act* review, contains this paragraph:

While there is an understandable lack of empirical studies into the effect of homosexual parenting, a major American study arrived at these conclusions:

'[C]hildren of homosexuals will,

- be more frequently subjected to parental instability (of residence and sexual partners);
- have poor peer and adult relationships;
- be more apt to become homosexual;
- be unstable (have emotional problems and difficulty forming lasting bonds) with reduced interest in natality, and
- be sexually precocious and promiscuous.' [p.8]

ACL attributes this information to: Paul Cameron 'Homosexual parents: testing "common sense" - A literature review emphasising the Golombok and Tasker longitudinal study of lesbians' children', *Psychological Reports*, 85, 1999, p.282.

Looks pretty good, doesn't it— 'literature review', respectable-sounding journal and all? Except that *Psychological Reports*, which publishes a great deal of Cameron's material, is a 'pay-to-publish' periodical with a low article-rejection rate. You cough up the cash —\$27.50 a page— and they'll normally give you a run.

Read all about Cameron and his publishing methods in [http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts\\_cameron.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_cameron.html) and <http://www.boxturtlebulletin.com/Articles/000,012.htm>.

In conclusion, shouldn't ACL tell us whether they agree with Cameron's ideas about what should happen to the homosexual community? At a 1985 Conservative Political Action Conference, Cameron was quoted as saying: "Unless we get medically lucky, in three or four years, one of the options discussed will be the extermination of homosexuals."



When asked in 1996 whether he advocated the extermination of homosexuals, Cameron responded:

"That's not true. All I said was a plausible idea would be extermination. Other cultures have done it. That's hardly an endorsement per se." ■

## SOURCES

Australian Christian Lobby (2006) *Submission to the NSW Department of Community Services Review of the Adoption Act 2000*, May 30

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Burroway, Jim (2006) 'Paul Cameron Conquers Cambridge', *Box Turtle Bulletin* - <http://www.boxturtlebulletin.com/Articles/000,012.htm>, April 15

Diamond, Sara (1989) *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (South End Press, Boston MA)

Gallagher, John and Chris Bull (2001) *Perfect Enemies: The Battle Between the Religious Right and the Gay Movement* (updated edition) (Madison Books, Lanham, New York, Oxford)

Herman, Didi (1997) *The Antigay Agenda: Orthodox Vision and the Christian Right* (University of Chicago Press)

[http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts\\_cameron.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_cameron.html)

## SO WHO'S USING HIS RESEARCH?

■ The Australian Christian Lobby's 30 May 2006 submission to the *NSW Adoption Act* Review quotes Cameron's findings to support its contention that homosexuals should not be allowed to adopt children.

■ Paul Cameron was the chief witness in favor of the failed *Virginia Anti-Gay Adoption Bill* in 2005. In 2003, his research was cited by dissenting justices on the Massachusetts Supreme Court in the case that led to legalizing same-sex marriage in that state. In 2004, a Florida Supreme Court decision upholding a law banning adoption by same-sex couples cited Cameron's research as being "consonant with the notion that children raised by homosexuals disproportionately experience emotional disturbance and sexual victimization."

■ IN THE WORLD OF anti-gay activism, researcher Paul Cameron is something of a darling. When columnist Pat Buchanan wrote about AIDS and gay death in March 1993, he cited a study by Cameron. When columnist Don Feder wrote about gay servicemen and child molestation in July 1993, he also cited Cameron. (...) Cameron served as the scientific consultant for both the Oregon Citizens Alliance and Colorado for Family Values, the main groups pushing antigay referenda on those states' election ballots. Statistics from Cameron's studies were included in "The Gay Agenda" a videotape produced by the religious right and widely circulated during the US debate on gays in the military.

From: *Queer Science*, by Mark E. Pietrzyk, first appeared October 3, 1994, in *The New Republic*.

Professional organisations disassociated from

## PAUL CAMERON

■ In 1984, members of the American Psychological Association received official notice that "Paul Cameron was dropped from membership for a violation of the Preamble to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists".

■ In 1984, the Nebraska Psychological Association formally disassociated itself from the representations and interpretations of scientific literature offered by Dr. Paul Cameron in his writings and public statements on sexuality.

■ In 1985, the American Sociological Association (ASA) adopted a resolution which asserted that "Dr. Paul Cameron has consistently misinterpreted and misrepresented sociological research on sexuality, homosexuality, and lesbianism" and noted that "Dr. Paul Cameron has repeatedly campaigned for the abrogation of the civil rights of lesbians and gay men, substantiating his call on the basis of his distorted interpretation of this research."

■ In his written opinion in *Baker v. Wade* (1985), Judge Buchmeyer of the U.S. District Court of Dallas referred to "Cameron's sworn statement that 'homosexuals abuse children at a proportionately greater incident than do heterosexuals,'" and concluded that "Dr. Paul Cameron...has himself made misrepresentations to this Court" and that "There has been no fraud or misrepresentations except by Dr. Cameron" (p.536)

Excerpted from comprehensive resources on:  
[http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts\\_cameron.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_cameron.html)

## CURRENT CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

Paul Cameron's Family Research Institute is currently calling for this legislation:

- A sodomy law making penile-anal sex illegal.
- Under threat of loss of funding, the *Defense of Marriage Act* would be extended to deny benefits to persons in any form of 'civil union' or 'domestic partnership.'
- Protection of children by requiring governments (...) to ban funding of entities that permit fostering or adoption by homosexuals.
- A re-alignment of public education and daycare by requiring school districts to treat homosexual sex as a public health hazard, under threat of funding withdrawal. (...) administrators and school boards would be fined for hiring homosexuals or known child molesters.

From: <http://www.familyresearchinst.org/Default.aspx?tabid=145>, 20 June, 2006