

A Primer for Discerning and Addressing Common Fallacies of Logic

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Preface

God has revealed to us in his Word that he created mankind in his image. (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9) To a large extent, the image of God consists of his building into us aspects of his communicable characteristics, or attributes. These attributes, which he has in an unlimited and infinite capability, we have in limited and finite but genuine capabilities.¹

One of those parts of God's image that he has formed in us is our capacity to reason. (Isaiah 1:18; 55:8-11; Romans 12:2; Hebrews 11:19) In Hebrews 11:19, we read that Abraham "reasoned." The Greek verb is λογίζομαι (*logizomai* < λόγος [*logos*], word, deed, reason), meaning reckon, calculate, consider, but it is not solely intellectual; it involves emotion and feeling. It is the basis from which our English word, logic, is derived.

We live in a day where in the United States the public school is failing to provide the classic education students received in the past. Special interest groups with highly funded and strong activist agendas are influencing the changing of values throughout our society, including in education at all levels, the news and entertainment media, government, business, service organizations, and in church denominations that have failed to maintain faithful adherence to the Word of God and historic principles of hermeneutics (interpretation, especially of the Bible).

Even the concept of objective and verifiable truth is being denied, primarily by contemporary postmodern philosophy.² Of course, such philosophical views and the activism that proceeds from them are contrary to the Bible. In the Bible, and in historic Christian theology, we read that God has revealed himself and his truth in two main ways: through special revelation (the Bible and in Jesus Christ, on whom the whole Bible focuses) and general revelation (observable phenomena God has built into his creation, all of which point to him but are not sufficient for salvation yet render humans without excuse for not pursuing the truth to find it in Jesus Christ.³

Many of the values these activists are trying to implement are contrary to God's Word (special revelation) and contrary to common sense (part of God's general revelation). A major aspect of the lack of common sense is observed in the frequent occurrence of flawed logic in their advocacy and in their argumentation.

When such flaws occur, how can we help people to correct their errant thinking? This is an especially important challenge for Christians, for our Lord has called us to speak the truth and do so in love (Ephesians 4:15), and many of those whose logic is flawed do not accept the Bible as

¹ For more information on the Biblical teaching pertaining to the image of God in humans, see "[Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions \(PowerPoint\)](#)." Using the "Find" feature under "Edit" in your toolbar, type in "image of God."

² For a brief explanation of postmodernism, and its contrast with the prior philosophy of modernism, see the "[Essential Christianity](#)" PowerPoint.

³ See Romans 1:18ff. and the "[Essential Christianity](#)" PowerPoint.

God's Word. Therefore, our initial response should start with a commonly held value, for example as the Apostle Paul did with the men of the Areopagus in Athens. (Acts 17:22ff.) After we have built a basis for understanding, we can more effectively include an explanation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I suggest that one good way to immediately counter flawed reasoning with a commonly held value is to point out a logical flaw when it occurs. For reasons that human learning research has explained, doing so by raising a question is especially influential.⁴ For example, on such occasions we can say, "Do you know that what you just said contains a logical fallacy?" Or, we could say, "Are you aware that what you just said violates one of the laws of logic, a subfield in the field of philosophy?"

Then, whether the person agrees or disagrees, identify the logical fallacy and explain it to him or her. What are the common logical fallacies that appear in conversations, lectures, news reports, and other venues, and how can we explain them? The following is a primer on logical flaws.⁵

Logical Fallacies Commonly Used Today

The thinking put forth in logical propositions is referred to as an argument, to be differentiated from an argument in the sense usually meant when two or more people are having a spat over some matter. Arguments in logic are typically viewed as consisting of two types: inductive and deductive.

Each argument claims that its premises provide evidence for the truth of its conclusion, but due to their nature, only deductive arguments claim to provide conclusive evidence. An example of deduction includes syllogistic reasoning. Inductive arguments do not claim conclusive evidence for the truth of their conclusion; they settle for providing some evidence for and the probability of it, for example reasoning from analogy. Truth and falsehood are evaluations of the propositional statements in an argument; the terms valid and invalid refer primarily to deductive arguments whose premises provide conclusive evidence for their connection with their conclusion. The concept of soundness is referred to arguments all of whose premises are true.⁶

The philosophical nuances and intricacies of logic are considerably complicated. Consequently, and since logic is a secular field, Copi avers that the

logician is not so much interested in the truth or falsehood of propositions as much as in the logical relations between them, where by the "logical" relations between propositions we mean those which determine the correctness or

⁴ Notice how often Jesus used questions in his teaching. (See especially, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.)

⁵ The following is an abridged and expanded excerpt from the second half of chapter four of my e-book, *What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love*, which is free and downloadable on either my [general Website](#) or my [academic Website](#), both of which are free and secure. Thus, most of the illustrations of these logical fallacies relate to their use by LGBTQ+ advocates. Nevertheless, the explanations are readily transferrable to other subjects, such as abortion advocacy, where they regularly occur in daily discussions. For more information see the unabridged section in the e-book.

⁶ Irving M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic* (New York, The MacMillan Company, 1959), pp. 9, 11, 311.

incorrectness of arguments in which they may occur. Determining the correctness or incorrectness of arguments falls squarely within the province of logic. The logician is interested in the correctness even of arguments whose premisses might be false.⁷

Here is where Christians can be of special help to enable people to think logically to the fullest extent. While the logician prefers to focus on the process, which is also important to the Christian, the Christian is also especially equipped with the information from God's revelation (special and general) to speak to the truth and falsehood of the premises of an argument's propositions. Thus soundness and validity are very important to us. Two law professors put it this way.

For us what counts about an argument is whether it is *sound*, i.e., whether its premises are true and its logic valid. If a line of thought about the morality of sex is reasonable today, it was reasonable in the time of Jesus or Plato or Abraham or as far back as we find men and women and their children. Whether arguments "work" persuasively in one era but not another is philosophically irrelevant, as any philosopher should take for granted.⁸

Logical fallacies are typically divided into two general types: formal and informal. Formal fallacies are usually discussed in connection with validity factors in deduction. Informal fallacies are grouped into errors of relevance, errors of ambiguity, and errors of presumption. The following errors are the most common and deceptive that are frequently used, sometimes intentionally and sometimes unwittingly. When one ignores these errors and engages in this fallacious reasoning, he or she neither speaks the truth nor does so in love.

Pay close attention to these flaws, for they regularly appear in many walks of life and thought, including in the media, in politics and political discussions, in classrooms, and in literature just for starters. If you learn, or review, them here, you'll be able to help people think more logically in other pursuits as well. So you may have a primer as to the most frequent errors in reasoning, I identify most of them with their technical Latin designation, but also provide their common name in English, define them, and give examples of their daily use.

Using Words without Proper Definition

Using words without proper definition results in fallacious argumentation. Logical reasoning and argumentation (in the philosophical sense of a cogent explanation of one's viewpoint) demands definition of the words being used. Accurate understanding requires that the words the sender transmits mean the same to him or her as to the one who receives them. A definition explains the meaning of a word and also eliminates ambiguity. As Logician Irving Copi points out, fallacious arguments result from the unwitting use of ambiguous terms.⁹ Such arguments also result from the intentional use of ambiguous terms. Whenever someone uses a word or term

⁷ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, pp. 11.

⁸ John Finnis and Robert P. George, "Natural Law and the Unity and Truth of Sexual Ethics: A Reply to Gary Gutting, Public Discourse, March 17, 2015, <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/03/14635/> (Accessed 4/17/15)

⁹ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, p. 85.

differently from common parlance, simply ask, “What do you mean by...?” Or, please clarify what you mean by....”

Redefinitions

This axiom in the field of logic regarding the essential need for proper definition in reasoning raises a concern pertaining to the contemporary proclivity of people to employ words and terms as they see fit without feeling a need to let others know what they mean by these words and terms. They make up their own meanings, called stipulative definitions in logic, contrasted with dictionary definitions. When others hear those words and understand by them the standard meaning as recorded in the dictionary, but the one speaking the words means something else, communication breaks down with a counterproductive effect on relationships and the accomplishment of fruitful purposes. If such proclivity proceeds unabated, the end result will be the failure to communicate and the arrival at thoughtless absurdity.

The deliberate redefining of terms, which is rampant today, also frequently commits fallacious reasoning and logical error, as is done in the attempt to redefine marriage. We see such fallacies in terms such as “gay,” “same-sex marriage,” which is a self-contradiction, and “gay marriage,” which contains contradiction and other logical flaws regarding definitions, such as vagueness, and being intentionally misleading.

Further, the rationale for redefining terms that involve aspects of culture rooted in history must be questioned and carefully considered before ever doing so. The Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant framers of the March 2015 declaration rightly state that such historic definitions as the transcultural and eternal realities instituted by God are not to be redefined. “As Christians...we must insist that our sexual desires, orientations, and proclivities do not provide a basis for redefining marriage.”¹⁰ These desires, orientations, and proclivities are also a flimsy and inadequate basis for redefining anything else.

The time is coming, and now already is, when it will be imperative to temporarily halt a conversation and ask the person to define a word or term he or she is using before continuing. When the word or term is substantially different from its dictionary definition, it will be necessary to point that out for meaningful conversation to continue. One comment to introduce this clarification might be, “Are you aware that you are using this term in a fundamentally different way from how it has been historically used and is still so on the street? So I can understand what you are saying I need to know what you mean by this term.” You are thus distinguishing the person’s stipulative definition from the standard dictionary definition.

New Definitions

Ryan Anderson shows how the proclivity for redefinitions is mounting. The end result, if no resistance is offered, is meaninglessness and absurdity. Anderson writes

¹⁰ “The Two Shall Become One Flesh: Reclaiming Marriage,” <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/03/the-two-shall-become-one-flesh-reclaiming-marriage-2> (Accessed 3/12/15)

There is no limiting principle for what will be classified as a sexual orientation or gender identity in the future. Indeed, Wesleyan College has extended the LGBT acronym and created a “safe space” for [LGBTTOQFAGPBDSM](#): Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Flexual, Asexual, Genderf..k, Polyamorous, Bondage/Disciple, Dominance/Submission, Sadism/Masochism.¹¹

Be prepared to hear some or all of the following terms. Anderson, alerts us to four of the more recent ones.¹²

The first he lists in his insightful essay is “monogamish,” a term introduced to Americans by homosexual activist Dan Savage in 2011. The word refers to a sort of monogamous relationship but with a homosexual spin on it meaning that the partners would agree that sexual infidelity is permissible in their partnership as long as they’re honest about it.

A closer look at this term in the light of the homosexual lifestyle disclosed in my book, [What Is God’s Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love](#), reveals why homosexuals would want such a relationship; it fits their typically promiscuous proclivity; but the newly coined term is inaccurate and misleading, even deceptive. The prefix “mon,” from the Greek *monos*, means singly existent, alone, sole, only. The adjective suffix, “ish,” means almost or approximately.

Imagine the attempt to live out this concept in real life: no assumption is made that one’s partner will be committed and faithful, and no assurance is available that the sexual encounters of the partner will be with people who are disease-free. Further, the “relationship” goes downhill from there according to the problems identified elsewhere in my book. Worst of all the “relationship” is primarily rebellion against God’s will!

Sadly, Savage extends his anti-Biblical rebellion against God to, and advocates this idea for, heterosexuals in their marriages. Disclosing his unwarranted, indeed errant, assumptions that humans don’t want to, can’t, and even shouldn’t, commit to life-long fidelity to their spouse, he says heterosexuals also should give up striving for such a commitment. Does he think we are animals that can’t control our impulses, urges, and temptations? Many, including this author, testify “No!”

One of the criticisms of “homosexual marriage” that has been advanced from early in the conversation is that such a redefinition of true marriage as instituted by God would lead to all kinds of redefinitions that would so change the understanding of marriage as to obliterate the concept and render the relationship insignificant and meaningless, which as I document in the book, is part of the pro-homosexual agenda. As seen elsewhere on those pages, polygamy has been suggested as the next step.

¹¹ Ryan T. Anderson, “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Are Not Like Race: Why ENDA is Bad Policy,” Public Discourse, March 15, 2015, <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/03/14649/> (Accessed 4/17/15)

¹² Ryan T. Anderson, “The Social Costs of Abandoning the Meaning of Marriage,” September 9, 2013, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/09/the-social-costs-of-abandoning-the-meaning-of-marriage> (Accessed 3/8/15)

Well, leading in that direction is the concept of “Polyamory,” literally “many ‘loves.’” Far from the true love revealed in God’s Word, and discussed elsewhere in the book, polyamory is crafted to deceptively connote and deceptively denote a euphemism for sex with many people in an amorphous relationship that is supposedly very open. This framework also leads to an unfulfilling and dissatisfying experience in the most intimate of human relationships to say the very least.

Similarly and expectedly, the silly term, “Throuple,” was presented in 2012 to refer to a relationship somewhat like a couple but as a threesome. It is a polygamous or polyandrous arrangement depending on the genders involved. Of course in addition to all else the “throuple” may do, sex is a major part of it.

The fourth term Anderson informs us of is “wedlease.” The term was introduced in 2013 in advocacy of putting marriage in the form of a contract so one could get out of it without the messiness of (read: owning up to the responsibilities involved in) a divorce. Thus, like other contracts a marriage license would be temporary, more like a lease, time-limited with an opportunity to “re-up” or “move on.” Supposedly, due to lack of careful thinking, “[t]he messiness of divorce is avoided and the end can be as simple as vacating a rental unit.”¹³

A much greater complicating factor enters when not only the dictionary standard is ignored but when the much higher and more authoritative standard of God’s Word is ignored, disregarded, and even set aside with redefinitions in opposition to God’s will as revealed in his Word. That disregard for the Biblical standard has characterized the secular culture and society as long as the church has existed, and it is our call to engage that culture and our society and not conform to it (Romans 12:2) but to facilitate transforming it. What is an enormous concern for us now is the disregard for the Biblical standard that is emerging in many church congregations. ***That there is confusion in the culture on the matter of homosexuality is understandable; there should be no confusion in the church.***

These are only a few examples of the new and deceptive definitions. And they are perilous.

When such cultural confusion enters the church, what encouragement does the world have, the world God so loved that he gave, at huge cost including pain to himself, his only-begotten Son to redeem his creation from such and all other evil? We are called to bring hope and help to the world, not to hinder it and to hasten it toward ill health, physically and, worst of all, spiritually. As documented, especially in Chapter Three, and elsewhere on the pages of my book on homosexuality, all over the world and throughout history, homosexuality has been seen to be unnatural and abnormal. What are non-Christians to think, when they see the church, to whom they look for moral uprightness and from whom they expect the truth, when they see such

¹³ Anderson here quotes Paul Rampell, “A High Divorce Rate Means It’s Time to Try ‘Wedleases,’” *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-high-divorce-rate-means-its-time-to-try-wedleases/2013/08/04/f2221c1c-f89e-11e2-b018-5b8251f0c56e_story.html

confusion and caving in to the worst parts of culture? What did the Apostle Peter say? (Review his comments about the pagans in 1 Peter 2:12.)¹⁴

Unwarranted Use of Analogy (Or The Fallacy of False Analogy)

Another common flaw in reasoning involves a misuse of similitude, comparisons and examples, i.e., analogies. The error typically occurs when superficially observing similarities in two or more phenomena and concluding that because each entity shares a common aspect, or even more than one, therefore they are in the same class or are at least equal.

This fallacy of logic is often colloquially called comparing apples to oranges. Paul Elsher further explains that “The fallacy of false analogy arises when one attempts to prove or disprove a claim using an analogy that is not suitable for the situation...It’s a common type of fallacious claim; people frequently use misleading and inaccurate analogies to support their ideas and views.”¹⁵

An example is where an advocacy group in a city in Colorado tried to persuade the city council to establish a proposed “identity and equity commission,” also referred to as a “diversity commission,” to support people of minority races and those with disabilities along with LGBTQ+ groups, which would be ignoring the essential aspects of these groups and illogically treating biological and ideological, specifically moral, issues equally with no distinction, making unwarranted generalizations, when key variables render them categorically distinct. The error often occurs in subjects pertaining to homosexuality and to so-called “same-sex marriage” also in the transgender movement in particular.¹⁶

Pittsburg Theological Seminary Professor Robert A. J. Gagnon told a reporter at *The Christian Post* that the strong declaration of the alliance of Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant scholars, “The Two Shall Become One Flesh: Reclaiming Marriage,” offers help the church can use to correct this logical flaw in addressing the issue of homosexual “marriage.” Gagnon explained to the *Post*

that this document does not serve just a political purpose but also is designed to debunk analogies used by gay supporters who reason that since divorce and cohabitation is increasingly accepted in many churches, churches can accept homosexual marriages, as well.

"This is a faulty use of analogical reasoning," Gagnon asserted. "One can't logically and reasonably move from limited accommodation in lesser offenses to full accommodation in greater offenses."

¹⁴ For much more information on this subject, see [What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love](#), Chapter Four.

¹⁵ Paul Elsher, “False Analogy (Logical Fallacy): Definition and Examples,” *Fallacy in Logic*, <https://fallacyinlogic.com/false-analogy-definition-and-examples/> (Accessed 1/6/2021; 4/26/2023)

¹⁶ See also Mary Margaret Olohan, “[Transgender Activists Strategize to Overcome GOP Wins With ‘Race Class Gender Narrative,’](#)” *The Daily Signal*, January 4, 2022. (Accessed 1/5/22)

[The *Post* also reports that] Gagnon agrees that affirming same-sex marriages is not a faithful Christian view.¹⁷

Other examples of the unwarranted use of a Biblical analogy should be considered. One frequently heard by pro-homosexual activists attempts to equate Jesus' eating with "tax collectors and 'sinners'" with an acceptance of practicing homosexuals today. They argue on the basis of the superficial observation that because Jesus ate with sinners, he'd "surely" hangout with, be comfortable with, and accept homosexuals. The argument fails when the incongruence of the two phenomena is easily observed. The key element or factor at issue pertaining to the two sets of sinners is the behavior change to righteous living that Jesus requires. (Cf. John 8:11. The Greek verbs for "go" and no more "sin" are in the imperative [command] mood; the present tense [now]; and the active voice [keep on doing it].) It occurred in the ones Jesus accepted, but such a behavior change is rejected by practicing homosexuals.¹⁸ Thus, the logical flaw.

A common fallacious use of analogy involves the rejection by some of the Copernican heliocentric theory of the earth revolving around the sun. The analogy fails to take into account key elements in both phenomena that differ significantly enough they prohibit the intended comparison. Specifically, the Biblical texts those (but not all in) the church in the 16th century hermeneutically misinterpreted to oppose Copernicus were *narrative and descriptive* texts. The Biblical texts pertaining to homosexuality that some are trying to use by analogy are *commands* of God. No passage in the Bible requires a Ptolemaic or a Copernican cosmology. On the contrary the passages examined in Chapter One of [*What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality?*](#) are commands and do require the rejection of homosexuality. Therefore, this analogy cannot be used to justify either the practice of homosexuality or the admission to membership¹⁹ of unrepentant and practicing homosexuals in the church—which historically requires members to be "in good standing," i.e., with belief and behavior in accord with the Bible—hence, no "Copernican Revolution on the settled issue of human sexuality" as one writer "*feels*" (emphasis his), after talking to "a number of people."²⁰

Another example of false analogy is the reference to the intersex phenomenon where a minuscule number of people born with a genetic defect causes them to have some aspects of male and female sex characteristics. Just because a tiny number of people are born with a biological physical disorder, does not provide a logical basis to verify and legitimize a nonbiological ideological disorder. For more on the phenomenon of intersex, which formerly was called hermaphroditism, and is now referred to as disorders of sexual development (DSDs), see the section below on the naturalistic fallacy.

¹⁷ Samuel Smith, "Gay Marriage 'Graver Threat' Than Divorce, Cohabitation, Rick Warren, Other Evangelicals, Catholics Declare," *The Christian Post*, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/gay-marriage-graver-threat-than-divorce-cohabitation-rick-warren-other-evangelicals-catholics-declare-133359/> (Accessed 2/14/15; 4/26/23)

¹⁸ For more see Chapter Five in [*What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love*](#), pertaining to the question of whether homosexuals should become members of, and even leaders in, the church.

¹⁹ The issue here is membership, and thus leadership, in the church should not be possible for unrepentant and practicing homosexuals, and also unrepentant heterosexuals, who are practicing behavior the Bible condemns (such as, e.g., those listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9ff.). Attendance is another matter. The church welcomes all sinners to gather together to hear the Word of God faithfully proclaimed with the command from God to repent and obey.

²⁰ Chuck DeGroat, Unpublished White Paper, "Can We Disagree On Homosexuality Yet Remain Together?" p. 5.

Burden of Proof

This very common fallacy in thinking is seen where a person makes an assertion, often an accusation, and places the on responsibility to dispute the claim on the other person(s). The assertion requires anyone who doubts or denies the claim to prove it is wrong.

On the contrary, in the field of logic, the “burden of proof is on the person who makes the claim, not on the person who denies (or questions) the claim. The fallacy of the Burden of Proof occurs when someone who is making a claim, puts the burden of proof on another party to disprove what they are claiming.”²¹

Logical Fallacies offers this illustration of a burden of proof fallacy. Notice the useful response by Marty that is also applicable to other manifestations of this fallacy.

Ellis: “I believe that fairies exist.”

Marty: “How can you prove it?”

Ellis: “I don't have to, if you can't prove that fairies don't exist.”

On the contrary: why should Marty, especially if he or she has no particular reason to spend valuable time on this subject, need to do Ellis' work on this matter? It's Ellis who is trying to advance this claim, which requires significant and substantial support. Also, that support must be from a credible source, such as sound science, logic, and, most importantly, since it involves a theological subject, from the Bible. Furthermore, it is illogical to conclude that Marty's not seeking to prove Ellis' assertion proves Ellis' belief in fairies.

Another frequent occurrence of the burden of proof fallacy is in the accusations being made concerning sexual harassment. This charge is very serious...for all parties involved. No one, of either sex, should ever receive any kind of unwanted sexual verbal or physical contact. Such an experience is an especially egregious injustice.

Nevertheless, since the issue is so serious, with potentially life-long negative effects on the one(s) accused, as well as the accuser, solid proof must be presented, and (sadly in many cases) it must be produced by the accuser, even if he or she is truly the victim, primarily because sometimes the person presenting him- or herself as the victim is actually the perpetrator of an unjust accusation. It is typically hard to provide such proof, but it must be done, since so many lives can be damaged for the rest of their time here on earth.

There is no logical basis, especially with the realistic Biblical anthropology (revealing the reality that all humans are sinful [e.g., Romans 3:23]), to assume that the accuser is telling the truth...or that the one(s) accused is/are telling the truth. Proof is required, and the burden must be on the accuser. Otherwise, it is possible that all people, who are disliked by one or more people, would have to spend the rest of their lives defending themselves from unjust accusations.

Speaking of the Bible. There is a Biblical basis for those of us who are believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, to “Always be prepared to give an answer [Greek: ἀπολογία

²¹ <https://www.logicalfallacies.org/burden-of-proof.html> (Accessed 05/02/2023)

(*apologia*), defense] to everyone who asks you to give the reason [Greek: λόγος (*logos*) > logic] for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:15-16) This text, of course, is one of the bases of our calling by our risen and reigning Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be his witnesses. So we welcome, and even invite, such opportunities to present in love the logical rationale of our belief that the Bible is true and that Christ Jesus lived, suffered, died, and rose again in accord with God’s plan of redeeming and restoring his creation that was corrupted by human sin.

Unsound Premise

Another common logical flaw is the *unsound premise*. A premise that is wrong usually determines a conclusion that is wrong. Secular people arguing from a non-Biblical point of view, and thus without being able to appeal to the highest authority, God, have much more difficulty establishing the soundness of their premises. We who consider a given subject in the light of God’s Word as our standard, thereby have the rational basis for calling wrong that which conflicts with the Bible.

When homosexuals hear heterosexuals talk the truth about homosexuality, mentioning some of what you’ve read in the preceding pages, some assume heterosexuals hate them; they confuse disagreement with hatred. When accusations are made that straights engage in homohatred, or other epithets such as “homophobia,” and where no evidence is presented to support the accusation, the logical fallacy of the unsupported premise is committed. When the next mental step is taken and a statement follows such as, “Therefore all straights hate homosexuals,” then another fallacy of logic occurs, the hasty generalization, which we’ll examine below.

Pro-LGBTQ+ activists accuse Bible authors of ignorance about homosexuality. Where is their evidence? It is neither offered nor proven. They wrongly assume that the Bible is a human document and not the fully inspired Word of God. None of us contemporary heterosexuals wrote the Bible or any part of it. Contrary to the historical understanding and teaching of the church given to it by God, they do not hold that the Bible is indeed the infallible and inerrant Word of God that was written by at least 40 diverse authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit as to what to write (2 Timothy 3:16) and kept from error while they wrote. While humans were employed by God to write the books of the Bible, they wrote what he guided them to write through the special revelation they received from him.

Irrelevant Conclusion

This fallacy of logic is also frequently seen. People cite an outcome that homosexuals do and attribute it to a cause without documenting and establishing the connection between that cause and the outcome, thus committing the logical fallacy of *irrelevant conclusion*. For example, a person disappointed in her denomination’s decision to not accept a pro-homosexual policy proposal led her to engage in a protest because of the synod’s decision, and ““for Andrew, who died of depression and suicide. Exclusion can have a big impact on mental health.””²² In this expression of her rationale, she is drawing an unsupported and unwarranted conclusion that the

²² www.thebanner.org/news/2016/07/ontario-churches-lament-same-sex-marriage-decision (Accessed 7/4/16)

denomination's decision to maintain the Biblical basis for its policy to not include practicing homosexuals as members in good standing in its churches is a detriment to mental health that can lead to depression and even suicide.

Notice also the failure to include any responsibility for the sad outcome to the homosexual himself. As documented in my book, depression and suicides are linked with the seriousness of the effects of the homosexual lifestyle, which is not at all "gay."

Moreover, such depression and suicide cannot be used as a rationale for overturning the church's traditional practice in obedience to God's Word, which is the standard by which we are to live. In fact, the sad effects of the homosexual lifestyle occur as a result of disobedience to God's Word, which can be said for the negative effects of all human disobedience and rebellion against God. What all people should do, but frequently do not to our own detriment, is to ask God to help us put our lives ever more in sync with his Word and will. In so doing, we do and will avoid a host of spiritual, physical, psychological, relational, and other problems.

Further, as cited elsewhere in both editions of my book, some male and female homosexuals want the church to speak the truth in love, thus giving them the hope and the help they need to become free of this lifestyle's grip on them and its counterproductive effects on their lives. As documented in these pages, the church's teaching the truth in love is helping thousands of homosexuals to break free.

Another example of this logical fallacy of the irrelevant conclusion, we've already seen in use when we considered the case in China of Yang Teng, a homosexual who sued the clinic that administered shock treatments in order to turn him into a heterosexual. When the court ruled in his favor both he and his attorney committed the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion when they said the court's decision was a judgment that homosexuality is normal and doesn't need treatment. But that's not what the court is reported to have said; the court stated that the judgment was against the clinic for the type of treatment it administered, not that treatment was given. People commit the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion when they present an argument or a rationale that is intended to establish a particular conclusion but then redirect it to prove a different conclusion.²³

Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc

In the field of logic, the literature refers to many of the fallacies with Latin terminology. This very common fallacy, *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, literally means "after this, therefore because of this." Chronology is not causative. Just because Event B follows Event A, one cannot reasonably conclude that A caused B. That rationale is a *non sequitur* (< Latin: "it does not follow," < Latin: *sequi*, sequel; cf. sequence, sequential).

A person may have a ham sandwich for lunch. He starts feeling ill later in the afternoon and concludes it was the ham sandwich that has made him ill. That reasoning is illogical. He could have become ill for many other reasons, for example exposure to germs and a weakened immune system due to lack of proper sleep for days prior to eating the ham sandwich, without yet experiencing any symptoms of the illness that was now in progress. It is possible there was

²³ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, p. 51.

something in the sandwich that made him ill, but without evidence, he cannot logically conclude that it was the sandwich that made him ill simply because he became ill after eating it.

Another example occurs with marriage counseling and divorce. After counseling, a large number of people divorce, so many illogically conclude that such counseling causes divorce, and, therefore, they will avoid it. Many other reasons not only could be, but actually are more likely the reason(s) for the divorce. As a pastor who has done a considerable amount of counseling and discussed this matter with other counselors, we know that many people come to us with their minds already made up that they intend to divorce and just want a professional counselor to agree with them. Others come to counseling with the intention to divorce and simply meet with a counselor to be able to say that they “tried counseling and it didn’t work.” So many other factors are involved that it is not logical to say that the counseling caused the marriage to fail. Even taking into consideration the reality that there is a high percentage of incompetent counselors, even if a poor choice of professional help were made, it is still the responsibility of the couple to make the right decision pertaining to saving their marriage, and the proper advice or lack thereof cannot cause the dissolution of a marriage. Furthermore, many marriages have been saved due to a couple seeking counseling, a reality that disproves the myth that counseling causes divorce.

Tu Quoque

One of the most common logical fallacies used in human communication today is called *tu quoque* (pronounced two-kwo-kwee, from the Latin: you also). It refers to a retort charging an adversary with being or doing what he criticizes in others.²⁴ An example regularly seen in politics is where one partisan, whose party is accused of a specific wrongdoing, quickly replies that the accuser’s party does the same thing. That reply is an irrelevant and illogical argument that fails to address the original accusation. Even if the accuser’s party does the same thing, which is not established by the rejoinder, such activity fails to justify the wrongdoing in the original assertion.

Tu quoque is an appeal to hypocrisy that is intended to relieve the user of this fallacy from having to defend his or his cohort’s position or actions and in so doing put the other person on the defensive. As we see in 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, homosexuals frequently point out how heterosexuals also sin and are included in the sin catalogues of Paul as well. When faced with this accusation, Christ’s people can agree, as above and as in the discussion of the Corinthian passage in my book to which I’ve been referring, that heterosexuals also sin, but at the same time we should point out that the phenomenon of heterosexuals sinning does not justify homosexual sin; indeed, as the old secular saying puts it, and with a clever wordplay, “Two wrongs don’t make one right.”

We should also clarify that not all heterosexuals commit sexual sins. Further, by identifying as a heterosexual, one is not ipso facto identifying with a practice that is rebellion against God’s will.

We must state here that *it is not wrong to point out hypocrisy, if in doing so we speak the truth in love, when the motivation is for information and amelioration. The issue here is when the appeal*

²⁴ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tu%20quoque> (Accessed 4/6/15)

to hypocrisy is done in the illogical attempt to justify and validate one's own position. We believers in and followers of Jesus Christ who always desire the truth, should warmly invite people to share with us any corrective feedback we need to hear in order to serve the Lord more effectively. If someone throws a *tu quoque* at you, respond in words to the effect, "Tell me more. What have I done that looks to you like I don't do what I say? I need to know." We should keep in mind, however, that we don't have to believe everything someone tells us about ourselves, especially an adversary; but if something is said that may be plausible, before believing it and making any changes, ask two or three people, who have the courage to tell you like it is including your pastor and especially your spouse, if the feedback is accurate. Also, keep in mind that anything said about you does not validate the other person's logic or its soundness. That reality is important to tell him or her...in love...and not in retaliation to any, especially deserved, corrective feedback.

Here is what makes *tu quoque* a dangerously powerful though flawed argument: the fallacy sometimes contains an element of truth. When something is wrong, it is wrong for anyone who does it. "What's true for the goose is true for the gander." When someone is accused of doing something wrong and then accuses his accuser of doing the same thing, he is making a point that, if it is true, must be acknowledged and corrected, *but that point still does not address the original premise*. If someone holds to a basic principle or truth, but fails to act accordingly, his or her failure to act according to the principle does not invalidate the principle.

The next question being raised is, "Is the principle unrealistic; i.e., is the bar set too high?" The correct answer is obtained by asking who set the standard? If it is a human standard, maybe it should be reconsidered. **BUT** if the standard is from God it must remain in place. He owns this world; the owner of anything has the right to decide how it is used. In this case, it is God's will, and we do not have the authority to change it. Instead, we need to accommodate to it and help others do so as well. We live in his world; he owns it, knows all and what's best, loves us, and has the inherent right to say how his world will be run.

Heterosexual believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ should also add that the homosexual's *tu quoque* accusation, when true, only shows how heterosexuals cannot throw stones; the homosexual's Judge is not the heterosexual. The Judge who set the standard that homosexuals are rejecting is the one to whom they'll have to answer truthfully. At the same time, he has called his people to speak the truth in love, so that all who bear the image of God and whom he loves will have an opportunity to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, repent, and come into the kingdom of God.

Argumentum ad Misericordiam

Another logical fallacy is called *argumentum ad misericordiam* (plea for pity), i.e., arguing by an appeal to emotion, and other unsound and unwarranted assumptions. We see an example in this article by Associated Press reporter, Denise Lavoie.

Supporters and activists routinely ask gay couples to meet with reluctant lawmakers to put a human face on same-sex marriage. They file lawsuits. They use unexpected allies—in some cases, churches—to spread their message.

It's a strategy that has shown results,...

We've really used a spirit of relentlessness," says Marc Solomon, the national campaign director for Freedom to Marry. "That's the way we've approached this entire movement from the get-go in Massachusetts and around the country."

[An opposition was defeated by] intense lobbying by same-sex marriage supporters who asked gay couples to meet with their lawmakers and talk about what their marriages meant to them.

Solomon, a leader of the campaign in Massachusetts, and several other veterans of that drive have been working in other states since then.

They've worked to build support among lawmakers, oust others, and recruit business leaders and other prominent people to their side. In Indiana, executives of pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and engine maker Cummins have argued against a proposed ban, saying it could hinder worker recruitment.²⁵

The "human face on same-sex marriage" and the opportunity for "gay couples to meet with their lawmakers and talk about what their marriages meant to them" is expressed in emotive terms that evoke pity and compassion for their difficult circumstances. Of course the message is that lawmakers can change those circumstances by supporting the LGBTQ+ agenda, but the argument is not presented as an appeal to the intellect by a superior logic and cogent rationale, but as an appeal to the heart, and human responsibility is ignored. For another example of *argumentum ad misericordiam*, see the section in *What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality?* on the homosexual agenda where Kirk and Madsen urge the portrayal of homosexuals as victims: "the public should be persuaded that gays are victims of circumstance."²⁶

It is not wrong to "put a face on" the results of injustice. Legislators pushing for passage of a bill to correct, or at least ameliorate, wrongdoing frequently bring in a person who has been victimized by the status quo. This procedure can make some important contributions to the decision-making process. Decision-makers more clearly understand the seriousness of the situation. This is especially helpful to men who typically reason from the left-hemisphere of the cerebrum and contemplate principles and factual data apart from the more relational and emotive dimension located in the right hemisphere. The presence of women in the discussion, and the

²⁵ Denise Lavoie, "Tactics endure after ten years of same-sex marriage," p. 9A. Irrefutable evidence of such hindering of worker recruitment is lacking and of course was not included in this article. How extensive has been their search? Executives who make such assertions do so not based on unbiased and careful social science studies but on political correctness and the corporate fear of bad publicity and litigation. Not only flawed logic but flawed science characterizes the argument of the LGBTQ+ agenda. Lavoie's article also reveals in its title a subtle and misleading connotation that same-sex marriages endure as do heterosexual marriages. As noted above, homosexuals are notoriously promiscuous. By pointing to one or a few who have stayed together, they are unscientifically trying to generalize from a tiny and non-randomly selected sample.

²⁶ The quotes are from Kirk and Madsen, p. 184.

inclusion of people who have been affected by the issue being addressed helps to “connect the dots,” to bring the two hemispheres together.

Nevertheless, it is vital for everyone to be aware that a danger exists in this procedure that leads to fallacious reasoning and a false outcome. The danger is that the wrong message is sent, and that wrong message is rarely if ever pointed out in the decision-making process. The correct message is, “Folks, here you see the seriousness of the matter before us.” The incorrect message that is sent is, “You must vote for the bill before you, because it offends us.”

It’s necessary that we keep in mind that injustice toward anybody is wrong, and God’s people are called to speak the truth in love. (Deuteronomy 16:20; Micah 6:8; Luke 11:42; Ephesians 4:15) For example, Christians and other heterosexuals are against the bullying of anyone. Bullying and the accompanying physical, emotional, and other harm come to LGBTQ+ people; that bullying is wrong, and we should oppose and help stop such behavior. These are people who bear God’s image, whom he loves and wants to believe in Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior, repent, obey, and become members in the kingdom of God. At the same time, we cannot allow the misery bullying causes to be used illogically as an argument to defend, affirm, validate, and encourage LGBTQ+ practice; that is illogical. Further, heterosexuals are also bullied, and that is equally wrong for the above reasons, not because it offends us; we should oppose and help stop such behavior.

Another danger is that too many people allow their heart to rule their head. God’s Word is clear that we must exercise a cerebral self-control, which is actually a fruit of the functioning of the Holy Spirit within his people. (Galatians 5:23)

This distinction must be made to avoid committing the logical fallacy of *argumentum ad misericordiam*. It is one thing to say that something is important; it is quite another to say that a given proposal is the best way to improve a situation and/or to correct or eliminate it. So when people are presented to us, who have sad stories to tell about how a particular situation has had a disastrous effect on them, we need to pay careful attention to the seriousness of their life condition while at the same time keeping in mind that the proposal the proponents are presenting to us *may well not* be the most effective, just, or morally right way, i.e., in accord with God’s will, to resolve the issue. It is incumbent upon us who are called to speak the truth in love that we point out this vital distinction and act, as well as urging others to act, accordingly.

Another, very common, occurrence of *argumentum ad misericordiam* is the accusation, “That offends me!” Or from a third party, “Do you know what you just said offended her?” These are two contemporary manifestations of this illogical argument, which shifts the focus from facts to feelings. It is illogical, because it doesn’t address the other person’s point. It is an avoidance mechanism often employed when the person doesn’t have a cogent response. Any response that fails to address the argument is off point and thus illogical, especially when the argument is presented by “speaking the truth in love” in accord with God’s Word. (Ephesians 4:15)

Furthermore, the truth, even when presented in the most loving, compassionate, and caring manner, will displease and alienate many people. That is no reason to water down, apologize for, and certainly never to avoid speaking the truth, which is our calling and mission from God.

Always remember that the Holy Spirit, speaking through the prophets and apostles, has told us that the truth will offend many.

And, do not fail to maintain this overriding perspective, which I will present in the form of a question: Who are we most concerned about offending, God or humans? As I've written in [*Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions*](#),

A key part of his [God's] holiness is his wrath toward sin. Sin and evil offend God who is holy, holy, holy. People today are worried about offending someone or being offended; we should be most concerned about offending God! Another reason he hates sin and evil is because of his great love for his people who are hurt by sin and evil.

To be sure God's essence is love (1 John 4:8), but *precisely because he is loving from the core of his being, he is also just and will judge the sin which offends him due to his holiness and the hurt sin does to the people he loves. His justice is an aspect of and flows from his love.*

Fearing God helps us obey; as Moses told the Israelites, “the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” (Exodus 20:20)

Could such sinning include failing (a sin of omission) to speak the truth in love out of fear of offending another human being? Yes, indeed. We not only fail and offend God, but we fail to provide vital information to another human being, one to whom the Lord has sent us to speak his truth in love. Again, we are not responsible for how others use or misuse the truth. But we are responsible to present it to them, surely in love, but many people who have no valid counterpoint, and often no counterpoint of any kind, will reply with a variety of illogical responses that have nothing to do with addressing the issue you and I are presenting. Therefore, we need to recognize these logical errors in order to help us avoid anger and to calmly and caringly help the other person learn that he or she is using flawed reasoning and to explain why it is illogical.

In 1 Corinthians 10:32-33, the Apostle Paul writes, “Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; ³³just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.” (NASB) In his commentary on this passage, leading Bible scholar, R.C.H. Lenski, insightfully explains, “Some may, indeed, *take* offense, namely wrongfully; we are not to *give* offense. The former no Christian can avoid; the latter all Christians are to avoid.” Again, we cannot control how people will receive the message we send. When it is the truth of God's Word spoken in love, we are simply obeying God.

As Peter and Paul both explain, the very Gospel of Christ itself is offensive to many people, e.g., Peter says, “Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,’ ⁸and, ‘A stone that causes men to stumble [original Greek: πρόσκομμα (*proskomma*) stumbling, offense] and a rock that makes them fall.’” (1 Peter 2:7-8) Paul says, “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for

wisdom,²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block [original Greek: σκάνδαλον (*skandalon*), offense, stumbling block] to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,²⁴but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24)

Clearly, the Holy Spirit did not silence Peter, Paul, and the other apostles for fear that someone would be “offended.” We are to speak the truth in love, but we cannot control how others feel about it. However, they will be held to account as to what they do with the truth that has been spoken to them in love.

One more example will suffice. In his argument that church members should change the traditional practice of not allowing homosexuals to be members of the church with all the privileges of membership, DeGroat commits the logical fallacy of *argumentum ad misericordiam*, and in the process can’t resist an *ad hominem* (accusing those holding to a traditional interpretation as being “naïve”) to top it off, when he writes the following in his essay.

Judgments of those who are becoming progressive that include claims of "abandoning the truth" and "leaving orthodoxy" are naive, and miss the real life stories of men and women wrestling with this. Will we privilege one person's story over the next?²⁷

Wrong question, especially in this case. As I explain in my book on *What Is God’s Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love*, the standard for decision-making in the church is God’s Word, not human experience (stories). As important as stories are for determining pastoral care and how to love and help people, they do not provide a standard for moral judgment and moral action. We haven’t “missed the stories;” we just treat them in the right manner: as means for ministry, not as criteria for determining right and wrong.²⁸

Argumentum ad Hominem (Abusive)

One of the most frequent fallacies in logic that is used to advance the cause of normalizing homosexuality, “same-sex marriage,” and other LGBTQ+ agenda items by attempting to bring down the opposition, is called *argumentum ad hominem* (literally, argument [directed] to the man). The argument appears in two ways.

The most common use of this false reasoning is in its abusive form. Comments are made to discredit and even remove an opponent rather than address the content and process of his or her thinking. This form of argument attacks the person, especially with insinuations as to his or her character, instead of attempting to show how his or her reasoning is inadequate. Rather than demonstrate how a particular argument is superior to an opponent’s rationale, an effort is made to disparage the person; such disparagement is often done by name-calling. The classic use of

²⁷ Chuck DeGroat, “Can We Disagree On Homosexuality Yet Remain Together?” p. 8.

²⁸ For more on both of these subjects, moral judgment and moral action, see Chapter Five of [What Is God’s Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love](#).

this logical fallacy in the issue of homosexuality and “same-sex marriage” is calling opponents homophobic or faggots. For several other common examples of this logical fallacy in the homosexual literature see the quote by Kirk and Madsen in my book in the section on the agenda principle of jamming.

What makes *argumentum ad hominem* a logical fallacy is that it does nothing to address an opponent’s reasoning; it is an attack on his or her character. As I’ve often explained it, “You can say anything you want about my character, but you leave my argument untouched; thus, what you’ve said is not logical.”

An illustration of how serious and out of control this logical fallacy has become, is explained in an interview of Bret Weinstein a liberal college professor who became a victim of *argumentum ad hominem*. He talked about the Social Justice Warriors movement (SJW) that populates most college campuses today and the strategy they use to get their way or at least to appear to win arguments, even causing professors they perceive as not being liberal enough to lose their jobs, such as occurred with Weinstein, who was forced to leave Evergreen State College, a capitulation to the SJW, described in the interview as a small but growing and vocal minority, that cost the college half a million dollars. Political “correctness” is expensive! Weinstein observes that though the ideas of the SJW are “crazy to the point of absurdity,” their strategic plan is effective, because it essentially involves an unrelenting and high-pitched invective of *argumentum ad hominem*. He explains how the SJW gets away with their flagrantly flawed and illogical assertions.

In other words – no matter how silly and patently false their underlying arguments are, these students have learned to argue them in such a way that it is nearly impossible to refute them. All logical, counter-balancing points are dismissed with: “That’s victim blaming!” “That’s your white privilege speaking!” “You’re using the language of the patriarchy!” “It’s not the role of the oppressed to inform the oppressor!” Ad nauseum. This doesn’t necessarily help them convert anyone to their cause, but it does give them the appearance of “winning” whenever they are in a showdown with the rational-minded. And that appearance alone may be enough to explain why more and more students – many of them who have felt victimized their entire lives for one (real or imagined) reason or another – are drawn to join the movement.²⁹

Along with logic keep psychology in mind. When Christians are accused of being homophobic, Islamophobic, xenophobic or phobic in any other way that involves a value judgment, consider that the person hurling that accusation may well be engaging in what is called projection in the psychological literature and in common parlance. As is generally known, projection is the practice where one attributes to someone or something else an orientation, concepts, values, and/or attitudes that the projector has or actions that he or she does, typically as a coping mechanism to overcome guilt and anxiety. Thus, without committing the same error, it would be instructive to ask (not accuse) such people if the opposite isn’t actually the case, by raising

²⁹ “Professor Explains Why Social Justice Warriors are Taking Over Academia,” *Total Conservative*, November 26, 2017.

questions such as, “Which of the facts I’ve presented do you think is untrue?” Also ask, “Can we focus on the facts without name-calling? Such character invectives do not disprove an argument.”

Thoughtful and intelligent people perceive the inadequacy of *argumentum ad hominem* (both forms), which reminds them of a childish playground tactic. It tends to backfire on the user, whose argument is seen to be insufficient for persuasion, so he or she has to resort to personal attacks. In my observation the most intelligent people on both sides of the issue avoid such verbal abuse.

Christians who are maturing in the sanctification process, growing in Christ-likeness, have little if any fear. We are told throughout all of God’s Word, both the Old and New Testaments, that we should not fear and why we don’t have to ever fear: Because God is sovereign, almighty, everywhere present, and he loves his people; he takes care of us.

¹God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

⁶Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

⁸Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

¹¹The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. (Psalm 46:1-3; 6-11)

God is both transcendent and imminent. Because of the latter reality, he knows everything that is occurring in the lives of his people whom he loves; because of the former reality, he is fully capable of taking care of his people whom he loves. Why fear? Consider carefully the rationale for not fearing that the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to experience and write:

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

Because we need not fear anything, and don’t fear, we are freed to love. See also Matthew 10:26-28; Luke 12:4-12; Revelation 1:17.

The Apostle Paul fearlessly and forthrightly proclaimed in love the truth God revealed to him. As a result he experienced many harsh and vindictive lashes from the forces arrayed against him, some which he lists in 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, but none of those deterred him, for he was protected, and helped to overcome them, by God. For example,

⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.

¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."

¹¹So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18:9-11)

Remember also what we read in the letter to the Hebrews:

⁵...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

⁶So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5-6

Christians not only read God's Word every day and allow God to shape our minds and hearts thereby through the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but we also sing his word. One of our time-honored favorites is the famous hymn to which Martin Luther put Psalm 46. Contemplate these words as you read them, and even sing along, to recall why you, as one maturing in Christ-likeness, don't fear and why you never have to be afraid.

1. A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.
2. Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.
3. And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.
4. That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.³⁰

³⁰ Martin Luther (ca. 1529), trans. Frederick H. Hedge (1853), "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," public domain. http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/A_Mighty_Fortress_Is_Our_God/ (Accessed 3/26/16)

It is thus illogical to hurl the ad hominem accusation of homophobia at anyone, much less at a Christian. It only discredits the one making the attack, and it does nothing to prove his or her argument.

Argumentum ad Hominem (Circumstantial)

The other main way this argument is employed is when an opponent ignores the question of whether his or her assertion is true or false and says that it should be accepted on the basis that the circumstances demand it. See my book for examples of this appeal in the school's response to the girls who were harassed by a transgender boy in their restroom and in the homosexual agenda section on discerning their flawed appeal to science.

In addition to a denial to the girls that the harassment is occurring, the school told the girls [without proof] that they were in opposition to a sweeping 2008 Colorado antidiscrimination law and could face being removed from athletic teams and even be charged with hate crimes. Here the attempt was to dispute the girls' stand, not by addressing its merits, but by saying they must accept the special circumstances of the situation in order to not be out of compliance with the school's interpretation of a state law that is being disputed.

Another circumstantial aspect of this case is the transgender boy's need to use the restroom he wants to use to fit in with his choice of gender. The *argumentum ad hominem* here is that the girls just have to accept the situation due to his special circumstance. Then the school issued an in-your-face threat, whereby the *ad hominem* (circumstantial) became abusive to the girls. The school tried to end the issue by throwing the circumstantial argument at them instead of addressing the logical merits of their reasoning.

Kirk and Madsen come right out and state their logical flaw, but with the veil covering their hearts and minds, (2 Corinthians 4:4) it's understandable they may well not see the flaw. By the common grace God gives to all human beings, (e.g., Matthew 5:45) they may see the flaw, but sin motivates them to ignore it and hope we don't notice along with the rest of their misinformed, misguided, and misleading thinking. Recall the following comments they make, part of which was addressed above:

...the public should be persuaded that gays are *victims of circumstance*, that they no more chose their sexual orientation than they did, say, their height, skin color, talents, or limitations. (We argue that, for all practical purposes, gays should be considered to have been *born gay*—even though sexual orientation, for most humans, seems to be the product of a complex interaction between innate predispositions and environmental factors during childhood and early adolescence.) To suggest in public that homosexuality might be *chosen* is to open the can of worms labeled 'moral choice and sin' and give the religious Intransigents a stick to beat us with. Straights must be taught that it is as natural for some persons to be homosexual as it is for others to be heterosexual; wickedness and seduction have nothing to do with it. *And since no choice is involved, gayness can be no more blameworthy than straightness.* In fact, it is simply a matter of the odds—one in ten—as to who turns out gay, and who

straight. Each heterosexual must be led to realize that he might easily have been born homosexual himself.³¹

They attempt to validate their logically flawed appeal to circumstance by linking with an equally flawed appeal to science. But it doesn't work for those who've been informed about the flaws in logical reasoning. Even if it were true that their present situation were part of a circumstance they had little or nothing with which to do, that would not logically establish the truth of their argument. Again, it also commits the naturalistic fallacy (*op cit.*). Further, they know no scientific proof exists for being born a homosexual. Their big fear is to be left with no other recourse than to admit their homosexuality is a matter of choice, for which they then have to assume responsibility. But that is what remains: sound science does not work for them, and neither does logic.

As the perceptive reader can readily tell, the pro-LGBTQ+ agenda consists of one logical fallacy after another. As he or she learns these fallacies, they will leap out in the reading of the agenda, for example the naturalistic fallacy, which will be discussed below.

The authors also play another victim, read *argumentum ad hominem* (circumstantial), card.

...gays should be portrayed as *victims of prejudice*. Straights don't fully realize the suffering they bring upon gays, and must be shown: graphic pictures of brutalized gays, dramatizations of job and housing insecurity, loss of child custody, public humiliation, etc....

Bear in mind that these arguments are no more than an appeal to rationality and as such would scarcely make a dent in an emotional condition like homohatred. What arguments can do, however, is suspend the straight viewer's rush to judgment just long enough to slip in front of her visual images that either arouse shame over her homohatred or else build favorable emotions toward gays.³²

Their second assertion that "gays" should be portrayed as victims of prejudice also commits the logical fallacy of *argumentum ad hominem* (circumstantial). Claiming that homosexuals are mistreated does not validate their rebellion against God; or their lifestyle that is characterized by extremely unhealthy practices and violence that are neither normal nor typical of the other 97-98% of the population; or their agenda with its deceit. Speaking of the 97-98% figure, Kirk and Madsen throw careful science out the window and perpetuate the Kinsey 10% myth, preferring flawed and discredited "science" that suits their purposes, especially since many are unaware of the more accurate science that shows how relatively few homosexuals there are in the country.

An anecdotal account which follows discloses a discussion between a psychologist and a delegate to an ecclesiastical trial of a minister who officiated at the wedding of his lesbian daughter and another woman contrary to the constitution of the denomination that holds his ministerial credentials. In response to a question the delegate raised, the psychologist asked the delegate if the minister's daughter couldn't find a suitable male spouse did the delegate think she

³¹ Kirk and Madsen, p. 184.

³² Kirk and Madsen, pp. 184-185.

should live alone. Here is another example of the circumstantial form of *argumentum ad hominem*. The clear, but logically flawed, argument is that the delegate should accept the minister's action due to the special circumstances of his daughter. The appeal is to circumstance; not to the rightness or wrongness of the decision, and especially without regard to God's will as revealed in his Word.

As Copi explains

Arguments such as these are not *correct*; they do not present good evidence for the *truth* of their conclusions but are only intended to win assent to the conclusion from one's opponent because of his special circumstances. This they frequently do; they are often very persuasive.

The connection between these two varieties of *argumentum ad hominem* is not difficult to see. The second may even be regarded as a special case of the first. For the second, the "circumstantial" kind, in effect charges the man who disputes your conclusion with inconsistency, either among his beliefs or between his preaching and his practice. And this *may* be regarded as a kind of reproach or abuse.³³ [Emphases his]

We also see in print and hear in audio and video media a related use of this fallacious thinking. It is sometimes referred to as "the blame game." It goes like this: "It's not my fault that [you fill in the blank] has occurred; it's the fault of my predecessor." Or "I don't have my homework; I did it but my computer crashed, and I lost it all [the contemporary equivalent of the previous 'but my dog ate it' excuse]." Or, "I'd really have my department humming, but I can't with this ridiculous budget limitation I've been given."

And there are countless other examples of the blame game going all the way back to the beginning, to the first human being, Adam. Audacious Adam, trying to bluff his way past the all-knowing God, not only blamed his wife but God too! In answer to the LORD God's question, "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Adam quickly double-blamed Eve and God himself saying, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." (Genesis 3:11-12) What Adam was trying to do was to shift guilt from himself to his wife, and even to God, by playing the "victim of circumstances" card. Of course it didn't work. God, who thinks with perfect logic and whose thoughts far transcend human thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9) knew even ahead of the fact what took place.

God also asked Eve, "What is this that you have done?" (a teaching method, for God already knew what she had done). In fact, God knew what Eve and Adam were going to do well before they did it, which is why he issued the warning to them of what would take place if they disobeyed him. (Genesis 2:17) Eve also played the blame game and tried to make the serpent (Satan) responsible saying, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13) We see here two major Biblical motifs, or themes, that we need to recognize in this discussion.

³³ Copi, pp. 55-56.

The first motif is that Satan and the forces of evil are influencing and affecting the circumstances in which we live. We see that reality in the verses which immediately follow, where God curses the serpent/Satan. We see this motif recurring throughout the rest of the Bible.

The second motif we also see in this text and throughout the Bible is that though there are demonic, human, and other forces negatively affecting our circumstances, we are ultimately responsible for recognizing them, overcoming them by relying on God's all-sufficient help, and for acting rightly, because God is going to hold us accountable for what we do. He will hold us accountable directly (Romans 3:19) and indirectly through others to whom we must give account (e.g., government authorities [Romans 13:1-7], other leaders [Hebrews 13:17], and family leaders [1Timothy 3:4,5; Ephesians 5:21-33]).

So the blame game doesn't work. Circumstantial and abusive *argumentum ad hominem* are illogical fallacies. Let's look at another common and deceptive flaw in reasoning.

Argumentum ad Verecundiam

Argumentum ad verecundiam (the appeal to authority) is another logical fallacy used frequently. Obviously, it is important to be able to cite authoritative sources to substantiate one's argument. In fact, teachers and professors require their students to footnote with careful documentation legitimate and sound sources to support the points they are trying to make. The graduate school in the United States, where I taught for the longest time, had a policy that students could not cite Wikipedia as a source, due to its practice of allowing anyone to contribute to the subjects on that social media platform. We said that students could start with Wikipedia to obtain a wide perspective on many aspects of a subject they wanted to pursue, but they were not to use Wikipedia for support in their footnotes. The students' support had to come from well-accomplished and established sources who are highly regarded in their field due to a long-standing track record of careful scholarship.

When such people's research and writing are cited in articles, essays, and publications, their findings and opinions have value for others to the limited extent they apply to the current matter being addressed. On important issues where significant disagreement is occurring, other qualified authoritative sources should also be included.

The key here is "qualified." Many scholars and "authorities" are cited who don't "measure up;" they lack sound data, wisdom, experience, professional standing, and other qualifications. Some scholars and other authorities who do have a respected track record, have much accomplishment and good qualifications in their area of work, but when they speak their opinions pertaining to an issue in another field, they are simply functioning as laypeople in that matter; they lack standing in that field. Their expertise in their field is not transferrable to other fields and issues.

Thoughtful observers of current issues today rightly say: "Anytime you hear a sentence beginning with the words, "Studies show," "Experts say," or "Research reveals," a red flag should go up that raises key questions to indicate whether the logical fallacy of Argumentum ad verecundiam is occurring. Questions that will disclose that indication include, "Which

‘experts?’” “What studies?” “What is the point trying to be made by citing these persons and documents?”

Herein is how the appeal to authority becomes illogical. Essentially, substandard sources are cited, and both inadequate and adequate sources are cited with information that does not relate to, much less prove, the argument being advanced.

For example, let’s return to the anecdote mentioned in the discussion above, pertaining to the circumstantial form of *argumentum ad hominem*, in which an ecclesiastical trial was conducted. This denomination, which officially holds that homosexuality is a sin and that the practice is opposed to the teaching of the Bible, brought to trial one of its ordained ministers, who at the time was also president of one of its seminaries. This minister admitted to officiating at the wedding of his daughter and another woman, which is also contrary to the church’s constitution. In the course of the trial, the defense called a psychologist to testify. In so doing, and in the psychologist’s report of an anecdotal encounter with one of the delegates, at least six common flaws in logic occurred, one we’ll consider in this section and the other five in the next.

The first was in having the psychologist testify in a theological court, which resulted in the fallacy of *argumentum ad verecundiam* (the appeal to authority), which takes place when an authority in one field is appealed to for testimony in another field outside his or her area of expertise.³⁴ In this case the psychologist was set up for this fallacious argumentation. He brought information pertaining to secular research on the psychology and biology of homosexuals, in particular their sexual orientation (which research is strongly and effectively disputed³⁵). Assuming the information from these secular disciplines is accurate, which is an assumption frequently unwarranted, it can be useful, including in some church education programs, but the primary, and what should have been the sole, issue in the trial was what God’s Word says about the issue and whether the minister on trial complied, as he is required to do, with the Scripture and the denomination’s constitution or did not.

God’s Word is to be our ultimate standard as to what we do; sexual orientation and popular practice are not the standard by which God will judge us. No matter what our orientation is, the Scriptural requirement involves what we do: is our behavior consistent or inconsistent with God’s Word? Do we obey God or submit to our urges?

Early in United States history, the standard of the Bible was even the standard of secular law, at least in several of the colonies. These colonies stipulated their laws in their constitutions, and then they concluded with the statement that if any of the above laws conflicted with the Bible, the citizens must follow the Bible which superseded the state law.

³⁴ This logical fallacy is also seen when a movie star or some other figure from the pop culture urges you to buy a product he or she is endorsing. The popular figure is held up as an authority but one who has no established credentials in the industry producing that product. Thus, how does he or she know that product is better than one produced by another company, which might be better for you? What, precisely, makes his or her opinion valid?

³⁵ See especially Chapter Two of my book, [What Is God’s Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love](#), and my paper, [“Homosexuality: An Abbreviated Fact Sheet for Speaking the Truth in Love.”](#)

Throughout the Bible God urges his people to follow justice and only justice. (Deuteronomy 16:20) Also throughout the Bible we see many texts warning us to not be a respecter of persons (KJV) translation of such passages as Exodus 23:3; Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17; 10:17; 16:19; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Psalm 82:2; Proverbs 18:5; 24:23; Malachi 2:9; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; 1 Timothy 5:21; James 2:1, 9; 3:17) In order to follow justice and justice alone we must use God's Word as our standard to determine what is right in a particular matter and not the opinions of persons, even those of high reputation. (Galatians 2:6) This does not mean we should avoid consulting with people who have specific knowledge that is required on a particular matter, but those people should be chosen carefully and even then their opinion should be compared and contrasted with God's Word and followed as long as it is consistent with Scripture, which is the main philosophical basis the Founders used in their formulation of the United States government.³⁶

The Complex Question

At least five other logical flaws occurred at that trial at a break time. The anecdotal account discloses a discussion between the psychologist and a delegate, where the former asked the delegate if the minister's daughter couldn't find a suitable male spouse did the delegate think she should live alone? This is an example of what in logic is called the *complex question*. It is often called a trick question. On the surface it appears to be a simple yes or no question, but it is not; it hides one or more a priori unasked questions and has the effect of confirming the implied answer to an unasked question.

Such a complex question also poses a false dichotomy. Another example is the often-raised and illogical question pertaining to transgenders (more scientifically accurately, transexuals): "Would you rather have a live son or a dead daughter?"³⁷ The implication is that if you don't let your confused daughter "transition," she will likely commit suicide, a canard that not only lacks sound science but where such suicides do occur, it is typically a result of the child having gone through a transition and then realizing the irreversible and lifelong consequences of what she has done and being distraught over the decision. Dr. Michelle Cretella writes, "Adults who undergo sex

³⁶ What were the sources the Founders consulted to construct their philosophy and form of government? A massive study of 15,000 writings for over 10 years by political science professors, revealed that individuals the Founders' most frequently quoted were political philosopher, Charles Montesquieu (8.3%); legal scholar, William Blackstone (7.9%); and political philosopher and theologian, John Locke (2.9%). However, the Founders' most quoted source by far was the Bible (34%). Further study of these three scholars reveals that the Bible was a primary and strong influence on their writings. Consider also John Adams who, writing to the Massachusetts Militia, said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." At the end of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin said, "I agree to this Constitution...and I believe, further, that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other." Documentation of these statements in is my paper, "[Homosexuality: An Abbreviated Fact Sheet for Speaking the Truth in Love.](#)" (See pages 5-7.)

³⁷ Or, if the situation is reversed, "a dead son or a live daughter?" This argument also commits the logical fallacy of ad hominem (circumstantial). In other words, it says, "You have this circumstance, you therefore have to make this choice...."

reassignment—even in Sweden, which is among the most LGBT-affirming countries—have a suicide rate [nearly 20 times greater](#) than that of the general population.”³⁸

One of the classic examples of this type of question is “have you abandoned your evil ways?” The implied but unasked question is, “Have you in the past followed a course of evildoing in your life?” This logical fallacy occurs when asking a prima facie simple, yes or no, question that masks a plurality of hidden a priori questions, and/or unwarranted assumptions, where a single answer is required.

Of course the most effective way to answer such a question is to refuse to answer it as a simple yes or no question and identify its several components. Often by answering one of the a priori questions, the rest of the question self-destructs, which is what the delegate should have done. He could have explained that the minister’s daughter had at least several other options than the one presented (living alone).

The perceptive reader who has a good handle on logical reasoning may also see the subtle inclusion of the fallacy of *argumentum ad misericordiam* [appeal to pity] mixed in with the complex question, another flaw in logic that obscures rather than clarifies and thus leads the conversation farther away from the main issue and the truth of the matter.) For example, the fallacious reasoning emerges in statements like, “Don’t you see how miserable she is? She believes she was ‘born in the wrong body,’ and if you don’t let her transition she won’t find happiness in her life.” Wrong...on many counts.³⁹

Nevertheless, none of that addresses the overriding issue of how a behavior that God has commanded his people to not do can be right in his sight. A time is coming when we will have to give account to him for our behavior here on earth in this phase of life. (Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:12; Hebrews 4:13; 1 Peter 4:5)

A third logical flaw committed by the psychologist was in his use of a Scripture quote he attached at the end of the anecdote. Immediately after he recounts how the delegate fell for the complex question, he throws at him, and by extension any sympathetic reader, a quote from Matthew 23:4 (TEV) “As Jesus said of the Pharisees, who preached what they didn’t practice, ‘They tie onto people’s backs loads that are heavy and hard to carry.’” Here we have another use of the circumstantial form of *argumentum ad hominem* whereby the professor is charging the delegate with an inconsistency between his belief and his practice. The flaw is the diversionary tactic that tries to discredit the delegate’s behavior rather than the delegate’s argument.

The fourth flaw is his use of an undocumented and unsound premise in his suggestion that the delegate is guilty of the Pharisaical hypocrisy in Jesus’ quote. How does he know what the delegate’s practices are? Further, when he misapplies the Scripture, he does not show how the

³⁸ Michelle Cretella, MD, “I’m a Pediatrician. How Transgender Ideology Has Infiltrated My Field and Produced Large-Scale Child Abuse.” *The Daily Signal*. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2017/07/03/im-pediatrician-transgender-ideology-infiltrated-field-produced-large-scale-child-abuse/> (Accessed 09/13/22; 04/09/2023)

³⁹ See [What Is God’s Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love](#), and [“Homosexuality: An Abbreviated Fact Sheet for Speaking the Truth in Love.”](#)

delegate's faithful adherence to God's command not to engage in homosexuality is subject to Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees' hypocrisy in not putting into practice the Rabbinical laws to which he was referring in Matthew 23:4.

The logical fallacies mount when trying to go against God's Word. Twisting one text raises problems with other texts.

A fifth flaw in logic occurs in regard to the use of Matthew 23:4 to try to discredit the delegate's stand. When the professor uses 23:4, which concerns hypocrisy, as an attempt to discredit the delegate, he raises an irrelevant issue. The delegate is addressing the Biblical command to not practice homosexual relations, and the professor raises the otherwise important, but here irrelevant, matter of hypocrisy, thus committing the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion (*op cit.*).

Hasty Generalization

A *hasty generalization* occurs when someone makes a general rule from a single case⁴⁰ or only a few. In common parlance it's referred to as "painting with too broad a brush." It occurs when someone is observed doing something and the observer makes a general rule out of that one instance, stating or implying that everyone in the same class of people does the same thing, without considering that what he or she observed may be atypical or one of such a few unrepresentative instances that it is impossible to accurately generalize to all people in that class.

One example of this fallacy, which commonly occurs in the subject before us, runs like this: "Sam and Bill are having affairs with women other than their wives, and each of them think homosexuality is sinful, even though their own Bible teaches that both are wrong in the same verse! That just goes to prove what I believe, 'All Christians hold to a double standard.'" Just because one or a few in a class do something, it is illogical to conclude that everyone in that class does it.

Another example comes from Critical Race Theory. The statement is frequently made that "all white people are inherently racist." Such assertions are illogical stereotypes. Just because some can be shown to be racist, it does not logically follow that all are racist.

Sweeping Generalization

A *sweeping generalization* applies a generalization too broadly. It is the opposite of the hasty generalization, where a generalization is inferred on the basis of a single case or even of only two or three. The sweeping generalization involves taking a general rule, that may or may not be sound, and applying it to a specific individual or case in which, due to the specific elements present in the individual or case, the rule does not truly apply; the conclusion is not logical.

An example is given using the principle that children should be seen and not heard. Little Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is a child. Therefore, Wolfgang should not be heard. No matter

⁴⁰ <http://www.logicalfallacies.info/presumption/hasty-generalisation/> (Accessed 4/11/15)

what one thinks of the soundness of the major premise (children should be seen and not heard), the generalization is not true in this case.⁴¹

This argumentation employs widespread use of stereotypes. An example in the matter before us is when the assertion is made that straights are bigots. Sam is a straight; therefore, Sam is a bigot. Furthermore, logic, especially flawed logic, cannot prove what is in Sam's heart and mind simply on the basis of his belonging to a certain class of people.

Argumentum ad Populum

The homosexual agenda necessarily employs other flaws in logic and assertions in its misuse of social science research. Another example of illogical reasoning used very often is called *argumentum ad populum* (arguing by appealing to the people and arousing their passions). It's the bandwagon argument that tries to win approval of an idea, concept, product, service, or whatever the proponent is trying to sell based on the thesis that everyone is doing it so you'd better "get with it" in order to not wind up left out, looked down upon, or cause dissension. The rationale is that this concept, etc., is so good and must be true, because "50,000,000 Frenchmen can't be wrong."

This approach is often accompanied by a passion-building sense of urgency: "do it now so this bad result [insert specific disaster here] doesn't occur." The argument is illogical, because it assumes that since so many people are doing something, that means it must be good for you too (thus also committing the naturalistic fallacy), which may not at all be true; further, no sound rationale is offered to verify the claim or justify its use. An example and application of this logical flaw is seen in the argument that if the church doesn't change its policy toward homosexuals in membership and leadership, people will (and the argument avers they already do) not perceive the church as welcoming and will turn away, harming the church and its outreach and growth.

The argument also attempts to portray the church as in danger of being viewed as backward, stuck in the past, and failing to "keep up with the times which are changing" and therefore the church should "get on the stick" and change too. The flaw in *argumentum ad populum* is the failure to put forth valid and sound premises as to why the opinion of those fabled 50 million Frenchmen are correct on this matter.

It is important to not misunderstand this point. No one is saying the church should never make certain changes, when such changes are Biblically permissible and productive. The point is that a logical argument for a proposed change must be put forth with valid and sound premises, not because "everybody's doing it." In the field of logic an argument based on the passion of a large number of people is neither valid nor sound.

This fallacious argumentation is frequently used also on a smaller basis. I have been in many meetings where especially a popular, or a highly positioned, committee (today called a team) member has said, "I feel [or sometimes with some others, "we feel"] strongly that we should do [such and so]." That's OK for him (it's always been a male; in the many meetings I've been in

⁴¹ <http://www.logicalfallacies.info/presumption/sweeping-generalisation/> (Accessed 4/11/15)

with women I haven't heard any woman make such an assertion) to say, but his feeling strongly doesn't supply a valid and sound rationale to support his argument. Just because someone feels strongly about something does not prove it is logical or right to do, neither when he is joined by a few or even by many others.

One of many examples of the results of caving into the *argumentum ad populum* is the decision by the Women's National Basketball Association to conduct a marketing campaign to the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) segment of the population.

Amid a surge of public opinion on favor of gay rights in the U.S., the WNBA is launching a campaign to market the league to the LGBT community, becoming the first pro sports league to specifically recruit gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender fans to its games.

With the marketing campaign, the WNBA is capitalizing on what it has known for years: The community makes up a significant portion of its fan base....

The launch of the effort coincides with a surge of political and legal advances for the gay-rights movement in the U.S., and shifting public opinion behind many of those advances....

"For us it's a celebration of diversity and inclusion and recognition of an audience that has been with us very passionately," WNBA President Laurel Richie said.⁴²

Did you notice the link between logical fallacy and the agenda-driven misuse of social science research, or actually omission thereof, in the report of this rationale? In the attempt to link with populism, which can be and often is wrong, no sound research is documented to support the WNBA's statement of "shifting public opinion." Also, what does the WNBA mean when it says that it has known for years that homosexuals make up a "significant" portion of its fan base?" "Significance" in social science research is a technical term, and it typically is not used to refer to a number that is less than three percent.

This flawed rationale leads to the inclusion of some popular—but Biblically and theologically errant—songs into God's worship services. The stimulating music that engenders euphoria eclipses the cognitive evaluation of the lyrics' Scriptural compliance, compatibility, and consistency. When someone points out that crucial disqualification, one too-often hears the tongue-in-cheek dismissive appeal to *argumentum ad populum*: "Oh, but it's so popular; everybody loves it!" Everybody? Have you considered what God thinks? Consult his Word and prayerfully contrast the related passages with the theological incompatibility in the song. You'll have his answer. Then, redouble your effort to carefully monitor the musical selections in worship going forward, and sing the more Biblically accurate songs, hymns, and psalms.

What is for sure is that the public is not the authority to determine rightness or wrongness of an assertion. Neither does its passion supply a logically sound basis for a decision rationale, especially one that is in opposition to God's will.

⁴² "WNBA to market to LGBT community," Associated Press, *Reporter-Herald*, May 22, 2014, p. 1B.

The Naturalistic Fallacy

Another very common error in logic, that is regularly made, is called *the naturalistic fallacy*. In its most basic and fundamental form, this logical flaw is the effort to argue from “is” to “ought.” Such reasoning proceeds from the assumption that what is, is what should be. Yet, a closer look at this erroneous rationale shows that just because something “is,” does not necessarily or logically mean that it “ought to be.” We observe that this rationale commits two flaws in one; it also contains the logical flaw of the unsound premise (*op cit.*), which emerges here in the assumed and unexamined suppositions (unless we expose them) that what is being advocated is superior to what was and should be replaced by the new vision. The naturalistic fallacy is especially seen in the attempt to justify and advance personal and corporate agendas.

One of the most common examples of the naturalistic fallacy is the often-heard expression, “Welcome to the ‘new normal.’” Similarly, we also hear, “We live in a new world now; this is the ‘new age,’ the ‘new normal.’”⁴³ Other versions of this same logical fallacy pertain to culture, e.g., the old and errant adage, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”

The message containing both logical fallacies in the same sentence is, “This is the way it is now; we not only can’t, but shouldn’t, change it, so just get used to it.” Here is another time where asking questions is especially effective, more so than propositional statements that opponents quickly dismiss without considering them; questions disequilibrate and linger.

Therefore, when we hear people say, “We can’t change it,” we should ask, “Why do you say ‘We can’t change it?’” We’ll receive one or both of these replies, “We can’t go back [‘to the way it used to be’],” thereby committing the logical fallacy of the unsound premise, including the theological fallacy of ignoring God’s Word, such as “obey my commands” (e.g., Nehemiah 1:9; John 15:10) and “all things are possible with God.” (Matthew 19:26)

Or we’ll hear, “We shouldn’t go back.” This second reply reveals more of the unsound and undisclosed premise involving an opinion, often a value, frequently a moral value. To which in reply, a good question to facilitate clarification, discussion, and correction would be, “Why shouldn’t we go back to what was good in the past?” They will also say, “We shouldn’t go back, because we have to keep up with the times.” This rationale reveals not only these two flaws but the failure to discern right from wrong in their thinking, primarily because the determination of

⁴³ It is important to discern and remember the rationale, conscious for some and unconscious for others, that undergirds this principle. Those advocating “the new normal” concept, are seeking to replace a standard of reference for decision-making. The historic standard for evaluation of most people, and especially believers in and followers of the Lord, is a criterion: God’s Word and his will that he commands us to obey, e.g., Nehemiah 1:9; John 15:10, and his revelation that he will hold all people to account (cf., e.g., Deuteronomy 18:19; Psalm 10:13; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:12) regarding that obedience. “The new normal” is an attempt to replace God’s criterion standard with a norm standard: the prevailing opinion of the people in a given population. The philosophical basis of this thinking is a commitment to postmodernism’s tenet that there is no objective truth, thus trying to remove any reference to the vertical dimension of reality (including ignoring and disavowing God) and focusing only on the horizontal dimension of life: other people’s opinions. The unseen force driving that change and its rationale is the spiritual warfare, the Satan-led demonic deception, revealed in God’s Word (e.g., Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12-20). Also, never forget Jesus’ revealing Satan as a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

what is right and what is wrong requires a criterion reference. A norm reference cannot provide a satisfying answer, for it cannot adequately identify and support whose opinion is the standard for determining what is right and what is wrong. Somebody not liking one person's opinion, or one group's opinion, can simply go to another person or group until he or she finds one or more who will support what he or she wants to hear. But, how can he or she be certain that that group is right?

Another question that can help people examine their thinking pertaining to the naturalistic fallacy is, "What do you do with the harmful components of the 'new normal?'" Here it helps, when talking to people who do not hold to a criterion standard of reference, to have some evidence from sound science to show the harmful aspects of "the new normal."⁴⁴

Similarly, we often hear proponents of the naturalistic fallacy tell us to "Follow the science." When this assertion is made, at least three questions are helpful for our reply. First, "When you say, "the" science, what science are you referring to?" Second, "Do you know that many studies have not carefully followed the establish steps of the scientific method and are therefore flawed?" Here we're asking not only for empirical evidence, but evidence from sound science; i.e., research that has carefully followed the scientific method, which has not been done by most of the literature that purports to be "science."⁴⁵ Third, it also helps to raise the related question, "Do you know [how to distinguish between sound and flawed science?](#)"

Typically ignoring God and the criterion of his Word and his will, they prioritize "being 'with it' to 'keep up with the times'" over pleasing God and thereby, they think, improving the current times. For us who are believers in and followers of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, we have this standard to guide our answer to the naturalistic fallacy: The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2)

The usually unexamined and unsound premise driving the naturalistic fallacy is the idea that what exists by nature is just fine and therefore should remain as is. In addition to ignoring God and his will, such an unwarranted assumption (that what "is" is "what ought to be") exists due to the failure to consider the enormous impact upon nature that occurred when Adam and Eve deliberately chose to disobey God. This understanding has to come through God's special revelation. God has to inform us of this spiritual situation; it's not something humans can figure out themselves. All humans can see the effects of sin and evil, but without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they don't see the cause (sin, evil, and the Satanic and demonic instigation). Furthermore, without drawing on God, the criterion of his Word and will, and his help, they

⁴⁴ You can find sound science pertaining to the harmful effects of such issues as abortion, cohabitation, divorce, and LGBTQ+ on both of my Websites: my [general Website](#) and my [academic Website](#).

⁴⁵ See my essay, "[Science: Distinguishing Between Sound and Flawed Science](#)," in which I explain the steps of the scientific method. I emphasize how, when each of the steps is carefully and honestly followed, the results tend to be trustworthy, reliable, and useful. But I also show how easy it is to manipulate each step to obtain the desired "findings," and motivations scientists have for doing so, that result in flawed science which, in the words of careful scientists, "renders the flawed research not worth the paper it's printed on." We must help people know about, and learn how to discern the difference between, sound science that has carefully followed each step of the scientific method and flawed "science" that is errant, misleading, and counterproductive. This brief essay will help.

frequently don't even see what "is" as being wrong and harmful; and when some do sense (as a result of God's common grace to all people) that "something is 'not right' about this matter," they don't know why. Indeed, God reveals these realities through the Scriptures. That disobedience, sin, against God not only corrupted human nature but profoundly affected all creation such that it "groans and suffers." (Romans 8:22 NASB)

Herein we see how much more realistic is God's Word and the Biblical worldview. This perspective enables us to reason more realistically and logically...and to keep out of trouble and avoid serious harm.

The sin that has corrupted human nature, and that cannot please God, is explained in the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Rome.

¹Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,
²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

³For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.

¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,

¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "*Abba, Father.*"

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with

Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

¹⁸I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

¹⁹The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Romans 8:1-22)

Here God’s Word explains why nature, while still outwardly retaining much of its beauty, has been corrupted and cannot be a standard for us to use in determining what ought to be. Therefore, that one is a homosexual does not mean he or she ought to be so. As we see in our study of God’s Word pertaining to Creation, God made everything good and we do not see any homosexuality in the creation—just the opposite; we only see homosexuality arising out of the sinful and corrupt human nature after Adam and Eve’s disobedience and sin which resulted in such disharmony and displeasure to God.⁴⁶

We thus observe that homosexuality was not included in creation. It cannot, therefore, be made acceptable, much less normative, for others simply on the basis that it exists. This mental mistake is the illogical attempt to leap from what is to what ought to be, stemming from an a priori thesis of the desire to normalize homosexuality.

Be alert for many uses of this fallacious argumentation in the homosexuals’ articulation of their agenda and in their other statements. For example, when Kirk and Madsen claim that “Straights must be taught that it is as natural for some persons to be homosexual as it is for others to be heterosexual; wickedness and seduction have nothing to do with it,”⁴⁷ they commit the naturalistic fallacy and a serious Biblical and theological error.

Concerning the naturalistic fallacy, we’ve just seen that one cannot logically leap from “is” to “ought.” Further, as we observe throughout my book, the LGBTQ+ lifestyle is not at all natural, not even in the fallen nature since Adam’s and Eve’s disobedience, revealed also in the reality that they constitute three percent of the population (keep in mind many are leaving that lifestyle), and even if they were more prevalent, that would not make it right, especially when God says it is not only wrong but תֹּעֲבָה (*tô ‘ēbâ* detestable, abomination, to be abhorred; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 22:5). The powerfully negative effects of sin and evil unleashed by Adam’s and Eve’s rebellion have seriously tarnished and corrupted the beautiful nature God created, but they have not totally destroyed it. Much of it still retains its beauty, but, according to God’s Word, the *tô ‘ēbâ* of LGBTQ+ is not part of that beauty.

⁴⁶ See Chapter One in [*What Is God’s Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love*](#).

⁴⁷ Kirk and Madsen, p. 184.

Speaking of God leads to the awareness of their theological error when they say “wickedness and seduction have nothing to do with it.” Review Chapter One of my book where we examined the most directly related sections of God’s Word; wickedness has everything to do with the main reason why homosexuality is neither normal nor acceptable to God to whom we are accountable, and seduction is just one of many expressions of that wickedness.

Another application of the naturalistic fallacy is seen in the “I” of the LGBTQIA+ acronym. The I stands for Intersex, i.e., the minuscule percentage of the population who are born with abnormal sexual development. Formerly called hermaphrodite, intersex is also being referred to as disorders of sexual development (DSD). Disorders of sexual development are defined as follows:

disorders of sexual development (DSDs): also referred to as *intersex*, and formerly referred to as *hermaphrodite*, DSDs are congenital (biologically based) conditions in which the development of a person’s chromosomal, gonadal, internal, and/or external anatomical sex is atypical. Some DSDs are visible at birth. Others appear at later stages because of the malfunctioning of (estrogen or testosterone) hormones.⁴⁸

The massive report (175 pages) delves deeply into the theology and the biology of LGBTQIA+ matters. The following table indicates the rarity of intersex disorders.⁴⁹

Table 1. Selected Chromosomal and Hormonal Disorders of Sexual Development and Estimated Incidence

Chromosomal DSDs		Hormonal DSDs	
Name	Estimated Incidence	Name	Estimated Incidence
De la Chapelle Syndrome	1 in 20,000	Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome	1 in 20,000
Jacob’s Syndrome	1 in 500	Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia	1 in 15,000
Klinefelter Syndrome	1 in 500	5-Alpha Reductase Deficiency	“very rare” ²⁹¹
Metafemale Syndrome	1 in 1,100		
Swyer Syndrome	1 in 80,000		
Turner Syndrome	1 in 2,000		

⁴⁸ “Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality: Agenda for (CRC) Synod 2021,” p. 61.

https://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/human_sexuality_report_2021.pdf (Accessed 3/11/2022; 4/10/2023). This report is the result of a five-year study of a carefully selected committee chosen to research this subject and report to the highest judicatory in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to aid the denomination in its decision-making on the LGBTQ+ issue. The composition of the committee included eleven members, all of whom “adhere to the CRC’s biblical view on marriage and same-sex relationships....persons from the following groups: an African American pastor, a Hispanic pastor, a Korean pastor, three faculty members from Calvin Theological Seminary, a same-sex attracted person, a chaplain, a philosopher, and a social scientist.” (p. 3)

⁴⁵ “Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality: Agenda for (CRC) Synod 2021,” p. 169.

Three aspects of the intersex phenomenon are especially germane to this matter before us: scientifically, (1) they are very rare; (2) they are recognized as disorders; and Biblically, (3) they are not part of God's original creation (Genesis 1:27) but are part of the enormous post-fall aberrations due to the negative impact of Adam's and Eve's sin. (Romans 8:20-23)

With this understanding of reality, we can more easily see how the LGBTQIA+ activists' attempt to make LGBTQ+ behavior acceptable (because intersex conditions have a biological cause) commits the naturalistic fallacy and is an error in logic. As seen in Chapter Two of my book (with its focus on science), there is no genetic basis for the LGBTQ+ behavior, and intersex is a disorder. The attempt to reason from is to ought on the basis of intersex disorders is illogical, committing the naturalistic fallacy, and eminently unreasonable. In addition, intersex conditions are not in God's original design, not normal, contain undesirable dimensions that limit and prohibit normal functioning. Who, then, would desire such conditions? Intersex disorders do not provide a logical basis for normalizing LGBTQ+ ideology or behavior.

Furthermore, such an attempt commits other fallacies of logic, such as the fallacy of false analogy (see above). Just because a tiny number of people are born with a genetic defect, does not logically verify and legitimize nonbiological ideologies.

Fallacies of Ambiguity: Division

The use of, and failure to discern, significant differences of meaning in the use of terms, frequently results in faulty logic. One of the most common and deceptively ambiguous flaws in this type of illogical thinking is called the *fallacy of division*. More than one form of this fallacy exists, but one that often occurs in the subject before us is the presumption that what is true of the whole of a class must also be true for each of its constituent parts.

An example that Copi gives of this fallacy is the thought that since a certain company is very important, and since Mr. Doe is an official in that company, therefore Mr. Doe must be very important. It could be that Mr. Doe is about to be fired. Another example would be to assume that because a particular machine is very heavy, therefore each component of the machine is heavy. It could very well be that when all the parts of the machine are disassembled it is discovered that individually they are all quite light, but together they weigh a lot.⁵⁰

LGBTQ+ apologists try to take advantage of this fallacy of ambiguity, as do most pro-LGBTQ+ advocates, including of course the LGBTQ+s themselves. When they argue according to the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," and since all homosexuals are men,⁵¹ therefore all homosexuals are equal to all other men, they commit the division form of the fallacy of ambiguity. The fallacy in this ambiguous thinking is the failure to distinguish that

⁵⁰ Copi, pp. 75-76.

⁵¹ Since the United States Declaration of Independence is an historical document that was written well before "political correctness" became vogue, and since it is still in effect, I'm here using the original language as do most other people in this illustrative case. In this usage of the English language the male noun was understood in its generic sense, referring to both sexes.

while all people were created equal before God that does not mean they are equal before God in their values or in their behavior.

Neither does it mean all people are equal in the sight of all other people, which is why human life loses value when God is ignored; our value comes from, is based on, and is upheld in him. As explained in Chapter One of my book on homosexuality, in creation God created everything and everyone good. It was only after Adam and Eve's disobedience to God that human nature and the rest of the world became corrupt.

The Law of Non-Contradiction

This axiom of logic has been articulated at least as long as Aristotle. Briefly, the law of non-contradiction reasons that a concept and its exact opposite cannot both be true in the same sense and at the same time.

That is, X and non-X cannot both be true. X can be true and non-X false. Or X can be false and non-X true. It is also possible that X and non-X can both be false, but both X and its contradiction, the assertion that X is wrong, cannot both be true. Such a proposition is not sensible, reasonable, or logical; it is an inherent contradiction and fallacy of rationality, but it is commonly used.

For example, many people say today that "All religions believe in the same God." This is a fallacious statement on other grounds as well (for example the unsound premise and the hasty generalization) but it is a clear example of the law of non-contradiction.

When I've heard someone make this untrue statement (that all religions believe in the same God), I typically say, "Now, please hold your thought; I want to hear everything you want to tell me, but before you proceed and move on to other subjects, we have to discuss what you just said. Do you know that no one who takes his or her religion seriously, from the original founder to contemporary followers, would agree with you, that his or her view of God is the same as everyone else's?"

Consider just two. Do you know that Islam's Qur'an clearly and pointedly rejects the Christian teaching based on the Bible that God is triune, consisting of three divine Persons who share one essence or substance, and that Jesus is divine as well as human?"

Since the other person is making this assertion, the burden of proof (*op cit.*) is on him or her. You could simply ask, "This is a common statement, but I've never heard or seen any proof of it. Can you offer some support for that assertion? Why do you say that?" Likely that question will not receive an answer, much less an adequate one, because it is not true. If the other person does say that he or she has read that, ask for a copy of the document.

So, though you don't need it, it is good in order to offer a strong witness for Jesus Christ, to have readily on hand, or know where to locate (therefore stated right here), an authoritative citation for your rejoinder. Here is some helpful documentation you can provide, especially if you are asked to do so.

Consider this contrast; the uppercase in the quote is in the Qur'an. The Qur'an, Sura 109:1ff. states, "SAY: 'UNBELIEVERS [includes Christians] I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I shall never worship what you worship, nor will you ever worship what I worship. You have your own religion, and I have mine.'" Notice also Sura 4:171ff. which states, "God forbid that He should have a son!" and Sura 5:71, "The Messiah, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle...." Contrast those statements, which by definition are non-Christian assertions, opposed by many Bible texts including John 3:16, which reveal that Jesus' shares God's essence, that Jesus is God's only begotten (μονογενής [*monogenēs*]) Son. Cf. Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 2:9.

Consider also John 14:6, where Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Those are unqualified and universal statements. Notice, Jesus did not say, "I know the way;" "I point to the way;" "I'm a good way;" and he did not even say "I am the best way." He said, "I am the only way" to the Father. That exclusive statement rules out any other way humans, or the demonic behind them (1 Corinthians 10:20-21),⁵² have devised in opposition to the one true, triune God, who reveals himself as such in the holy Bible, all of which points to and explains Jesus Christ and his redemptive work.

Clearly Islam and Christianity do not proclaim and worship the same God; they have mutually contradictory views of God and much else; both cannot be correct. Which is correct?

Consider the sources and their support. Jesus' resurrection, the only resurrection in human history,⁵³ the basis of Christianity, fulfilled 300 prophecies in and through human history, and over 500 eyewitnesses testified to seeing him after his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-8) and before his ascension to heaven, which was also observed by eyewitnesses. (Acts 1:9-11) The Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:7 that most of the eyewitnesses were still living at the time he wrote this letter to the church in Corinth, ca. A. D. 55, so the readers could talk to the eyewitnesses about Jesus and what they saw. That alone is sufficient evidence, in addition to much else that supports Christian theology, contrary to every other religion.

The Undistributed Middle

To the foregoing identification of these common and deceptive mostly informal fallacies should be added an extremely common fallacy in deductive logic. It is called the fallacy of the undistributed middle.

The term, the undistributed middle, refers to what is called the middle term in the classic standard form categorical syllogism. Such a syllogism consists of three propositional statements about three categories, a conclusion and two preceding premises. The first premise is a general

⁵² "No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons." (1 Corinthians 10:20-21)

⁵³ Be careful to distinguish resurrection, the raising of a dead human body which becomes a new body of a similar but substantially and distinctly different composition that will never die, from resuscitation, the restoration of a current body which will eventually die. For more information on this subject, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

statement and is called the major premise; the second is a specific statement and is called the minor premise. One of the classic syllogisms is this one:

Men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
 Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

In a standard syllogism the predicate of the conclusion is called the major term (here, mortal), and the subject is the minor term (here, Socrates). The third, or middle, term (here, man/men), which does not appear in the conclusion, is the category in both premises that is shared to some degree by the major term and the minor term.

Each proposition in the premises makes an assertion about the degree to which one term (category or class of objects) is included in another, i.e., whether the one category is included in the other in whole or in part. In standard deductive syllogistic logic there are four different forms of categorical propositions. They can be symbolized as illustrated in the schematic section of the chart below, where S = Subject and P = Predicate.

It is also customary in logic to designate the four standard forms of categorical propositions with the letters **A**, **E**, **I**, **O**, which are presumed to come from the Latin terms “**A**ffirmo” (meaning “I affirm”) and “n**E**g**O**,” (meaning “I deny”). Thus, **A** and **E** propositions are quantitatively universal (**A** universally affirmative [as far as the quantity is concerned; not referring to morality of the class]), **E** universally negative), and **I** and **O** propositions are quantitatively particular, limited (**I** being particularly affirmative, and **O** being particularly negative).⁵⁴

Standard Categorical Proposition	Standard Schematic
1. All politicians are liars. (A)	1. All S are P.
2. No politicians are liars. (E)	2. No S are P.
3. Some politicians are liars. (I)	3. Some S are P.
4. Some politicians are not liars. (O)	4. Some S are not P.

The above paragraph and accompanying table introduce the technical term in logic called “distribution.” Briefly, distribution refers to the degree to which a proposition designates the quantity of its two categories. A proposition is said to distribute a term if it indicates that all members of a category, or class, are included in or designated by the term. Thus, in the illustration above, the subject term, politicians, is distributed in both examples 1 and 2, since the proposition refers to all in the class of politicians in both cases. In example 2 the proposition states that the whole of the class of politicians is excluded from the class of liars. The proposition is also asserting that the whole class of liars is excluded from the class of politicians; thus, the proposition clearly asserts that of each and every liar, he or she is not a politician. In examples 3 and 4, the subject term is undistributed, since it is clear that the proposition does not refer to everyone in the category or class of politicians.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, pp. 124-126; 158-159.

⁵⁵ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, pp. 128-131.

We should again refer to the concept of soundness in logic. It is possible (technically in logic) to have a valid syllogistic argument that follows the rules of logic, e.g., concerning distribution, where the conclusion is unsound, due to the unsoundness of one or more of the premises. Thus, in the illustration above a valid argument containing any of the four propositions could be made, but any argument with either of the first two propositions above would yield a conclusion that is unsound, since both of these propositions are unsound (i.e., contrary to popular but unsupported opinion, all politicians are not liars; some have been documented to be so, but not all).⁵⁶

Briefly, in the summary in this table which follows, we see that A propositions distribute their subject. In the illustration, the proposition is clearly referring to the whole class of its subject, politicians, thus the term politicians is distributed; but the proposition is not referring to all the members in the class in the predicate, liars, so the predicate term is undistributed. We've already considered above the second proposition, which is characteristic of all E propositions.

Standard Categorical Proposition	Standard Schematic	Distribution of Proposition
1. All politicians are liars. (<u>A</u>)	1. All S are P.	1. S distributed; P undis. ⁵⁷
2. No politicians are liars. (<u>E</u>)	2. No S are P.	2. S dis.; P dis.
3. Some politicians are liars. (<u>I</u>)	3. Some S are P.	3. S undis.; P undis.
4. Some politicians are not liars. (<u>O</u>)	4. Some S are not P.	4. S undis.; P distributed

As also indicated above, the subject in the I and O propositions is undistributed, since the quantifier, "some," clearly restricts the statement to certain but not all members of the class of politicians. However, a difference occurs in the two propositions regarding the class in the predicate. The I proposition also makes no declaration pertaining to the class of all liars. Therefore, the term is undistributed in the I proposition. Notice though that the opposite is true for the predicate term in O proposition. The proposition says nothing about all politicians, but it does say something about some members of this class, specifically that this *part* of the class of all politicians is excluded from the *whole* of the class of all liars in the proposition's predicate. Therefore, the predicate term is distributed. These characteristics of the above I and O propositions are true of all I and O propositions.⁵⁸

The reason, again, why we're considering this subject is that the fallacy of the undistributed middle is very common, and it is quite so in the accusations slung by pro-homosexual activists against conservative Christians and other conservatives. With this understanding readers can watch for these accusations and be prepared to point out the flaw. For example, one argument containing this logical fallacy emerges like this:

All churches are composed of heterosexuals.
Most holders of a double standard are heterosexuals.
 Therefore, all churches are holders of a double standard.

⁵⁶ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, pp. 11, 273.

⁵⁷ The designation, "undis," stands for "undistributed."

⁵⁸ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, pp. 130-131.

This common assertion illustrates the fallacy of the undistributed middle. Let's analyze it for our future reference. Consider first the type of the propositions in the premises.

All churches are composed of heterosexuals. (A)
Most holders of a double standard are heterosexuals. (I)
Therefore, all churches are holders of a double standard.

As we saw in the above explanation (see also the chart), the predicate term in both (A) and (I) propositions is undistributed. That is, it is not able to make a statement about all members of that class or category. The middle term in the predicate of both premises in the syllogism before us is heterosexuals. The first premise is an A proposition, and the second is an I proposition, which means that the term in the predicate of both, the middle term, is undistributed. This reality renders the conclusion invalid; the argument is invalid due to the fallacy of the undistributed middle term. In this case, since the middle term is undistributed one cannot logically conclude that all churches do what some members in that class of heterosexuals is accused of doing. Thus the argument is also unsound.

As Copi explains,

It should be clear that any syllogism which violates this rule [that the middle term must be distributed in at least one premiss⁵⁹] is invalid, by the following considerations. The conclusion of any categorical syllogism asserts a connection between two terms. The premisses justify asserting such a connection only if they assert that each of the two terms is connected with a third term in such a way that the first two are appropriately connected with each other *through* or *by means of* the third. For the two terms of the conclusion really to be connected through the third, at least one of them must be related to the *whole* of the class designated by the third or middle term. Otherwise each may be connected with *different parts* of that class, and not necessarily connected with each other at all...[the middle term must] connect the syllogism's major and minor terms. For it to connect them, *all* of the class designated by it must be referred to in at least one premiss, and this is what is meant by saying that in a valid syllogism the middle term must be *distributed* in at least one premiss.⁶⁰

Thus, the accusation that the church has a double standard, one rule for heterosexuals and another for homosexuals, commits the logical fallacy of the undistributed middle. It is not logical to argue that when one instance or even a few sins occur that the church as a whole is at fault.

When this assertion is made in an informal argument, with its unsound premise that Christians hold to a double standard, it commits another logical fallacy. As we saw earlier it commits the fallacy of the hasty generalization. It typically runs like this: "Sam and Bill are having affairs with women other than their wives, and each of them think homosexuality is sinful, even though their own Bible teaches that both are wrong in the same verse! That just goes to prove what I

⁵⁹ Premiss is Copi's spelling of premise.

⁶⁰ Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, pp. 179.

believe, ‘All Christians hold to a double standard.’” Just because one or a few in a class do something, it is illogical to conclude that everyone in that class does it.

Concluding Observation

We should learn the basic principles and rules of logic in order to reason most lucidly and effectively, and so we can help others to do so as well, which will also help us speak the truth in love. One of the communicable attributes of God that he has given us, albeit in microcosm, when he created us in his image, is the ability to reason. We should use it as best we can in order to honor him and serve him as he has called us to do.

At the same time we should keep in mind God’s revelation in his Word of the present condition of human nature and its limitations. As Billy Graham articulated it so well pertaining to evangelism, it also applies in the rest of our reasoning. “Prayer is crucial in evangelism: Only God can change the heart...No matter how logical our arguments or how fervent our appeals, our words will accomplish nothing unless God’s Spirit prepares the way.”⁶¹ Let us pray for the people we are engaging in conversation for the Lord before, during, and after talking as logically as possible with them.

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Talk now with your pastor, or if you are the pastor give thought now, as to how you will respond to the pro-homosexual agenda to contact every conservative church in the United States “to raise up LGBT-affirming voices in every evangelical church in the country.”
 - a. What will you say to them when they contact you?
 - b. What preparations do you need to make?
2. Select one of the logical fallacies, explain it to someone, and give an illustration as to where you’ve heard it (e.g., in the newspaper, on a talk show, on the Internet).
3. Which of the logical fallacies do you hear most frequently? Where do you hear it? (You don’t have to divulge a person’s name.) How will you respond, speaking the truth in love, when you next hear this fallacious reasoning?
4. Have a conversation first in dyads (groups of two) and then in the whole group.
 - a. Begin in a one-to-one conversation and take turns explaining how you’ll help someone reason more accurately when he or she commits one of the logical fallacies in your presence. Agree with the other person about which fallacy you’d like to work on, and one of you begin by telling the other, “Here’s what I’d say....” Then give the other person time to add whatever comes to his or her mind that could also be said. If time allows, take up one or more of the other logical fallacies in the same manner, only with your partner starting the next discussion.

⁶¹ Billy Graham, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Quote from a promotional piece for the movie *Heaven*.

- b. If you're part of a group, after an agreed upon time, take turns sharing what you said so all can learn from each other and in the process develop the skills needed to articulate the most effective response possible in such situations. Ask a representative of each dyad to report at least one comment he or she made.
5. How should you respond to someone who accuses you of being hateful and homophobic?