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The moral landscape of the culture usually shifts slowly, with barely perceptible changes that accumulate over a long period of years. This is not the case in our own times, for the pace of moral change now defies the imagination.

This is especially true when it comes to the issues related to sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular. The pace of moral change is now accelerated to the point that it is clearly visible and undeniable.

Evidence for this is found in a recent article published in *The Boston Globe Magazine*. Entitled, “Easy Out,” the article makes the case that today’s gay teenagers in Massachusetts find leaving the “closet” very easy — because they never thought themselves to be closeted as homosexual in the first place.

Reporter Alison Lobron introduces her article with the account of Russell Peck, who declared his homosexuality as a high school freshman at camp:

One day Peck heard several female friends giggling over an attractive older boy, and the next thing he knew, he had joined the conversation. “The girls were talking about how cute he was. I said something like “Yeah, he is so cute,”” Peck remembers. “It just kind of came out, and I was really startled by it.” But his friends were neither startled nor uncomfortable. “They didn’t miss a beat,” says Peck, now 19 and a freshman at New York University. “They totally accepted me.”

Emboldened by his friends’ casual reaction, Peck, a slim young man with curly brown hair, told his parents that he was gay. He was only 15. Their response was equally positive and accepting. His mother, Nancy Peck, who lives in Concord, says her only concern was making sure that Russell was “safe, happy, and healthy.” Her son shared his news with friends at Concord-Carlisle that fall, joined Spectrum - a school-based discussion club about gay and lesbian issues - and continued, he says, to feel “very comfortable” during his remaining three years of high school.

Lobron explains that a massive shift in the culture’s understanding of homosexuality has produced what gay advocates have been promoting for years — the virtual normalization of homosexuality. Friends, teachers, and even parents respond to declarations of homosexual interest, romance, and more with simple acceptance. Russell Peck’s mom just wants him “safe, happy, and healthy.” This assumes, of course, that homosexuality is perfectly consistent with “safe, happy, and healthy.”

And that is precisely the point, of course. The elites have decided that this is what all the rest of us are missing — that homosexuality is normal (even among teenagers) and our concern should thus be to make sure that gay teenagers are safe, happy, and healthy.

Lobron extends the argument:

In the relative ease of his coming out, Russell Peck represents what one educator calls the “next wave” of gay and lesbian teenagers: adolescents who have grown up with openly gay teachers, television characters, neighbors, politicians, and even parents and who take for granted the acceptance that earlier generations struggled to achieve. After

all, this year's high school freshmen were in elementary school when gays began to marry in Massachusetts; for them, gay marriage is more status quo than radical. Most of today's high school students weren't even born in 1989, the year the US Department of Health and Human Services reported that gay and lesbian teens were two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than straight teens, sparking a wave of activism that has made many schools more tolerant places - and taught parents how to support gay children.

As a result of these cultural shifts, gay and lesbian teens are acknowledging same-sex attraction at ever-younger ages and questioning the concept of both "coming out" and "the closet." Increasingly, their challenges look less like the public health crisis of the 1980s and more like the ones their straight peers have always faced: How do you know when a boy likes you (versus just liking you)? How do you ask a girl out? And what do you do when your mom hears about your new boyfriend from one of her friends at the supermarket?

Everyone must be concerned about the problem of teenage suicides, whatever the cause of the teenager's crisis. The reduction in suicides among Massachusetts young people is truly good news. But the logic that the right way to reduce teenage suicides among those struggling with sexual identity is simply to normalize that identity is a moral revolution in itself — and a revolution with obvious limits. Are any and all sexual orientations and identities to be normalized? Do we even have a concept of normal that means anything?

Lobron makes the significant observation that the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts has meant that this generation of Massachusetts teenagers simply assumes that homosexual unions are normal. This should come as no surprise, for some leading homosexual activists have long argued that this is indeed the main point behind the push for same-sex marriage.

One of the most troubling aspects of Lobron's article is the fact that children as young as 13 are welcomed to groups like the Boston Alliance for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth, where they are assured that their same-sex interests are just normal. Just imagine for a moment what that means as a cultural upheaval in itself.

USA Today also produces evidence of this moral shift in an [article](#) by Gary Gates on how these changes might play out as a factor in the 2008 presidential race:

Since 1990, the Census Bureau has tracked the presence of same-sex "unmarried partners," commonly understood to be lesbian and gay couples. From an initial count of about 145,000 same-sex couples in 1990, the 2006 data show that this population has increased fivefold to nearly 780,000 couples. The number of same-sex couples grew more than 21 times faster than the U.S. population did. So either gay recruitment efforts have succeeded, or lots more lesbian and gay couples are "coming out" on government surveys.

As a demographer, I say it's the latter. In a 1992 survey by the University of Chicago, 2.8% of men and 1.4% women identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Ten years later, a National Center for Health Statistics study pegged that figure at 4.1% — almost one-and-a-half times more men and three times more women.

More:

Meanwhile, support for gay people grows. In the late 1980s, Gallup polls found about 30% of Americans thought "homosexual relations between consenting adults" should be legal. A May 2007 poll finds this figure has risen to 59%.

If it's no surprise that Americans are becoming more comfortable living among openly gay men and lesbians, the Census data do pack a wallop that politicians ignore at their peril. Since 1990, the number of self-identified same-sex couples in Mountain, Midwest and Southern states has averaged a sixfold increase. Compare that with the more liberal East and West Coasts, where increases have been less than fourfold.

All this calls for a new awareness among evangelical Christians of how much has changed around us. Our challenge as a people committed to biblical truth has never been greater or clearer. The normalization of homosexuality is just taken as a fact by so many in our society today — especially among those in younger ages.

Evangelical Christians must meet this challenge with both biblical truth and a keen eye on the cultural shifts around us. Our current challenge is not only to tell the truth about homosexuality, but to recover any notion of a moral norm when it

comes to sexuality. That will take more intellectual energy than the evangelical movement has yet devoted to this task.

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