



The New Mumpsimus of Divinity
By: John McWilliams

The English word mumpsimus is an old word. Like mine, your spell check probably never heard of it. However, when you Google it, there's plenty of information on it. Its history is tied to a priest who during the mass, kept mispronouncing the Latin phrase "quod in ore sumpsimus" which means "which we have taken into the mouth." Instead of saying "sumpsimus" at the end of the phrase, the priest would always say "mumpsimus."

Mumpsimus was not a Latin word. Yet for whatever reason, the priest felt it was and he used it instead of the correct Latin word sumpsimus. It is reported that upon being shown his error, the priest said he'd been using mumpsimis for many years and wasn't about to change his mumpsimus for someone else's sumpsimus.

In other words, he was going to ignore the facts and cling to his mistaken point of view. Mumpsimus later became an English word and based on its history with the stubborn priest, it is used to describe someone who maintains a certain practice or claim even after having been shown that the practice or claim is unreasonable or incorrect. A modern day example of a person being mumpsimus would be someone who insists on continuing to pronounce the word "nuclear" as "nucular" even though they've been told "nucular" isn't a word. An extreme example would be the more than 400 people today who make up the membership of "The Flat Earth Society," and who continue to claim that the earth is flat.

The first time the word mumpsimus shows up in print is during the 16th. Century in the midst of The Protestant Reformation. It was used by Protestant reformers to describe their theological opponents. Its first use in print is traced to William Tyndale in his book *The Practice of Prelates* written in 1530. A year before in 1529 Cardinal Thomas Wolsey had publically pronounced Tyndale a heretic for translating The Bible into English. Tyndale objected to the efforts of Cardinal Wolsey and others who were trying to convince Pope Clement VII to annul King Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon in favor of marrying Anne Boleyn. Tyndale felt the annulment was unscriptural and therefore in his book he labeled Wolsey and his group "mumpsimuses of divinity." Mumpsimus was also used in two sermons written by Protestant reformer Hugh Latimer. It was later used by King Henry VIII himself.

Church officials had one of their most infamous mumpsimus moments 102 years later in 1632. That was the year Galileo publically made his case which proved that the earth revolved around the sun instead of the other way around. Yet in spite of the facts, the "mumpsimuses of divinity" stubbornly clung to their mistaken position. They forced

Galileo to stand trial and convicted him of heresy. He was sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life. So much for the facts.

Perhaps it's time we bring this old word back because it accurately describes many Christians who support same-sex marriage today. They are "The New Mumpsimus of Divinity." Why? Because they continue to cling to and advance the claim that same-sex marriage is equal to that of heterosexual marriage in virtually every respect, in spite of ample scientific research, documented evidence and irrefutable facts to the contrary. Of course there are many things that same-sex couples can do which are exactly like that of heterosexual couples.

However, there are important areas of same-sex relationships, especially among men, where the parallels break down significantly. Normal sexual relations is one of those areas. Although marriage is about much more than sex, most people would agree that normal, healthy sexual relationships play an important part in a marriage and should be some of the most intimate, safe and joyful times a couple can share together.

In an opposite-sex marriage where both partners are committed, monogamous and healthy, normal sexual relationships pose no dangers at all to either partner. In fact, the only reason to use protection would be to avoid a pregnancy. That is not the case for same-sex marriages.

For instance, it has been scientifically documented and proven beyond any doubt, that normal sexual relations between two healthy gay men, *including those in committed, monogamous relationships*, always come with numerous inherent physical dangers which simply never exist in normal sexual relations between healthy, committed and monogamous heterosexuals. In fact, non-Christian pro same-sex individuals and organizations openly recognize, write, and warn people about these dangers all the time. They feel it's their ethical responsibility to do so.

So given the facts, one might assume that pro same-sex Christians and organizations would do the same thing and in a pastoral and discrete way, proactively educate and warn Christians about these dangers, especially those involved in same-sex relationships. However, that assumption would be wrong. In fact when it comes to these dangers, my experience has shown time and again that pro same-sex Christians and organizations react to these dangers with intolerance, anger and an unwillingness to even discuss them. You have to wonder why so many pro same-sex Christians keep these dangers quiet, while non-Christians freely acknowledge them and warn people about them all the time.

I have personally researched and compiled these dangers in a study paper called "Homosexuality: Blessing or Sin? The Part Of The Discussion We Never Really Seem To Discuss." If you'd like to see what these dangers are, how they have been scientifically documented and which national pro same-sex Christian ministries have chosen to avoid even talking about them, just go to my ministry website at

WWW.Jbmcw.com and on the homepage click on the “Articles” tab and you’ll see the paper posted there in a PDF format.

In the paper I make the case that the inherent nature and constant presence of these dangers clearly indicates a serious flaw in the picture of same-sex marriage being painted by pro same-sex Christians. The fact that even committed, monogamous relationships between completely healthy partners are always subject to these dangers, indicates to me they are not of God’s design. Does it make sense that God would design sexual relations for people which by their very nature present serious inherent health dangers to those involved in them?

I realize of course that people may disagree with my theological conclusions, but disagreeing with my theology doesn’t make these dangers go away. Therefore those who advocate for same-sex marriage and who are aware of these dangers, but deny or ignore them, are in fact displaying mumpsimus behavior which literally puts gay Christians at risk. One has to wonder why any Christian would purposefully do that. I have shared these dangers with numerous top leaders in the Christian same-sex community and respectfully asked for their comments. One executive director of a large national Christian pro same-sex ministry responded by telling me that it’s likely my sources were homophobic. I then pointed out to him that among others, my sources include The Centers For Disease Control in The U. S., National Health Services in England and Dr. Stephen Goldstone, a nationally respected and honored non-Christian gay surgeon in New York City who has written about these dangers in detail to specifically warn the gay community about them.

After that he changed his tune and rather than continuing to label my sources as homophobic, he chose to switch tactics and make me out to be an unloving and intolerant person for bringing such things up in the first place, as if attacking me would somehow make the dangers go away. Yet in the end, and in spite of all the facts presented to him, he continued his display of mumpsimus behavior and maintained the false claim that there are virtually no differences between normal homosexual and heterosexual sexual relations.

When I suggested to the board of his organization that they might include some appropriate information on their website about these dangers to pastorally and proactively warn the gay Christian community about them, the same way non-Christian pro same-sex organizations do, the board did give me an official response. In their words they said that my concerns “lie outside the scope of our mission.” It’s shocking to me that providing information which could protect gay Christians from serious physical dangers which they face daily in their relationships, is seen as being outside the scope of the mission of a pro same-sex Christian ministry. They warn about lots of other dangers like bullying and homophobia, as well they should, but interestingly enough, somehow these sexual dangers are outside the scope of their mission.

An executive director of yet another large national pro same-sex Christian ministry politely refused to discuss these dangers. However, one of his staff did take the time to scold me for lecturing gay people on their health issues because gay people, she said,

are more aware of their health issues than any straight person could ever be. If that's so, why do gay Christians continue to end up in the emergency room as a result of these dangers which I'm aware of but which they claim they were clueless about before arriving at the emergency room?

Of course some have accused me of being homophobic and of desiring to harm the gay community by pointing these dangers out, as if keeping quiet about them will somehow make them go away. What's ironic is that if my goal was to harm the Christian gay community, one of the best ways to do that would be to do exactly what many pro same-sex Christians are currently doing; namely keeping quiet about these dangers and refusing to acknowledge and talk about them and thereby allowing gay Christians to find out about them the hard way.

Another person who is a nationally recognized Ph. D, college professor of psychology and author, responded to these dangers by saying he had no particular expertise in the differences between gay and straight sex. Yet he is promoting same-sex marriage on a regular basis at a Christian college. One might assume that a person of that stature would have done their homework. Nonetheless, after being presented with the facts, you'd assume from a purely ethical point of view, he would at least adjust his message to appropriately include the dangers of what he's advocating and supporting. Yet in classic mumpsimus fashion he would have none of it. The facts were obviously inconvenient facts which ran counter to his already well entrenched, but errant position. So like a spiritual ostrich he simply stuck his face back in the spiritual sand and politely ended our conversation.

So the questions remain. Why do so many pro same-sex Christians and ministries seem so reluctant to discuss or even acknowledge these dangers, when non-Christian pro same-sex organizations freely acknowledge and warn people about them all the time? What possible reasons or benefits are there for pro same-sex Christians who are aware of these dangers to keep them quiet?

Here's my take on it. It doesn't bode well for your theological position if you claim for instance, that a same-sex relationship between two healthy, monogamous and committed men is as God-designed and God-blessed as a relationship between a healthy, committed and monogamous man and woman , and then have to add a caveat admitting that the same-sex relationship always comes with serious inherent physical dangers.

After all, if God has designed and blessed same-sex and opposite-sex relationships equally, why does one always come with inherent dangers while the other does not?

On the other hand, it does make sense that non-Christian pro same-sex organizations would openly acknowledge and warn about these dangers. Since they aren't trying to present same-sex relationships as something which God designed and pronounced good, they have no theological position which these dangers contradict. They simply recognize the dangers for what they are and deal with them as best they can, free from having to justify or explain them Biblically or theologically.

So in spite of the facts and in classic mumpsimus fashion, pro same-sex Christians continue to paint a picture of same-sex marriage that is disingenuous and which puts gay Christians at serious risk.

Here's one way that happens. Let's say that you are a gay Christian man who is considering marriage and you go to the website of one of these large national pro same-sex Christian organizations looking for things to read about same-sex marriage. You trust them to give you a good and accurate picture of what you can expect. On these websites you'll find numerous articles on same-sex marriage in which people share their experiences and let you see what you can expect from the positive side of things. Yet, you'll find nothing mentioned about the inherent health risks I document in my paper. Nowhere will you be advised or warned. You will just be encouraged to continue your walk toward same-sex marriage and the physical dangers which could potentially ruin your life will never even be mentioned.

It seems to me that it's time to call for some accountability from pro same-sex Christians who continue to downplay, deny and basically ignore these proven inherent dangers. It's time to call for them to appropriately and pastorally post the facts on their websites, to warn people and to stop the mumpsimus behavior. It's time that pro same-sex organizations recognize that denying these dangers, refusing to discuss them, incorrectly implying that they don't apply to committed, monogamous relationships and calling those who bring them up mean-spirited and homophobic, will not make these dangers go away.

It's also time for pro same-sex Christians to address these dangers theologically and give some rationale for why they exist and why they would be part of a God-designed relationship. Why would God design them to be a part of same sex relationships while not a part of opposite-sex relationships?

If that's something they are unwilling or unable to do it seems to me that the least they can do is face the facts and warn the gay Christian community about these dangers in a responsible and pastoral way. Anything less is to choose to purposefully and unnecessarily put gay Christians at risk in ways which are irresponsible, dangerous and avoidable. This is serious stuff and when faced with it you just can't stand there with your fingers in your ears singing La, La, La, La, La!

I certainly realize that when a straight Christian man who isn't in favor of same-sex marriage writes an article like this it will be interpreted in various ways. My motives will be called into question and my sincerity will be challenged. So be it. Yet, for the record, the reason I wrote this article was to expose the many pro same-sex Christians who are turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to certain dangers of same-sex relationships and by doing so are choosing to put gay Christians at risk.

The fact that I disagree theologically with my gay brothers and sisters regarding same-sex marriage, doesn't mean I don't love them and it certainly doesn't mean I wish them harm. In spite of how much I disagree with my gay brothers and sisters on this subject,

my love and respect for them will not allow me to stand idly by and remain silent about the things which threaten to do them harm. However, the fact is that many pro same-sex Christians are currently doing just that. For the life of me, I can't see how Jesus would be pleased with that kind of behavior.

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