

stretched to the end of their rope in their love of their own children and the determination to protect them from such as these homosexuals but certainly faggots must be aware of the danger of driving men to violence when they flaunt their vices.

Going on their way they proceeded to call the employer of the Samaritan who fired him. They investigated his income tax and found him remiss. They had his license to drive suspended. They caused his wife to abandon him. And finally they had him jailed for open and gross lewdness. All testified that indeed he had placed his arm around the faggot and kissed him in the open marketplace.

Next Sunday the priest preached to the school children of the incident pointing out the wages of sin, the necessity of sexual continency and the love of parents for their little ones. On the way home from Mass the school children came upon a transvestite and kicked him to death.

Which of these, in thy opinion proved himself neighbor, - Christian, Catholic, lover of God?

Editor's note:

Ironically enough in that very spot five years before a hippie had caused a similar disturbance. Ten years before a black man had incited a crowd to anger. 15 years before also in the same place a Commie had drawn the ire of good people. 20 years before Catholics had held a Japanese American for the authorities. 25 years before an Indian had disturbed the peace. Jews have made themselves obnoxious by their demands for more police protection for the area.

Alright, enough! Now that you've beaten us to death with the insistence that the major moral question surrounding homosexuality is not what homosexuals do but what we supposed Christians do to them, dare we still ask you what you think about the morality of homosexuality? Yes, It is a legitimate question.

First, however, some distinctions. There is no such thing as a homosexual. You mean really when people relate sexually to members of the same sex.

Secondly, even if there were such a thing as homosexuals, there is no morality concerning that. I know of no priest who would claim it is sinful to be a homosexual any more than to be lefthanded or heterosexual. It is what you do with the condition that the Church is concerned about. Actions not states of being are moral.

Ok, Ok, what about the morality of acts?

We can say some things without question: any sexual act with the same or the opposite sex is sinful if it is rape. Or if it involves the seduction of children. Even the sexual act between married people can be sinful, can it not?

There is no getting away from the fact that the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church has been that sexual acts between persons of the same sex are immoral. Nor can it be avoided that the scriptures, especially St. Paul say the same. However, there is a growing number of moral theologians and scripture scholars who say that there can be a reconciliation of this tradition and the possibility that these acts may not be immoral. Note please that we are talking about objective

morality. Any objectively sinful act may not be sinful in a given case due to lack of sufficient reflection or full consent.

It is at this precise juncture that I must be rather circumspect, which, for me is not easy. I will avoid giving my personal opinion since my Bishop could silence me if it disagreed with his. But I can see no reason why I cannot explain publicly what responsible theologians are saying even if it disagrees with my Bishop. Does it disagree with the teaching of the Church? Obviously those theologians do not think it necessarily does else they would not be saying it. They think they can fit the two together. Fortunately it is not for me to be the arbiter between the bishops and the theologians.

Isn't this precisely what so many Catholic laymen and priests have done about the question of the morality of birth control? They have listened to the Pope and some or most of the Bishops and then they have listened to the many theologians and a majority of priests give an opinion that, let's be honest, is anything but consistent with the Pope's explanation of what the official teaching is and finally they have made a decision that is not what the Pope would approve. Yet priests for the most part agree. There is a conspiracy of silence. Nobody says anything and everyone is happy\* (C/f Page 27)

Fifteen years ago every Priest I knew was teaching and believed that masturbation, homosexual acts, premarital sex, and birth control were grave matter and with sufficient reflection and full consent constituted mortal sin and thus no Catholic could approach Holy Communion without confession, contrition and serious purpose of amendment.

Today no young Priest of my acquaintance and few moral theologians are teaching that masturbation and birth control are serious matter or prevent a person from Holy Communion. In whatever manner the moral theologians have changed (or evolved), by whatever convolutions they have arrived at this different stance on these two topics could it not be possible for them by applying their acumen to the question of homosexuality that a similar change (or non-changed evolution) could come about?

The belief and practice of most of the teachers of youth is not what it was 15 years ago on two moral issues. Can we make it three?

To tell me that the Pope says that homosexuality is serious matter is to beg the question. He says the same about masturbation and birth control. Yet the belief and practice of Catholics belies this position as does that of countless moral theologians, teachers of Christian Doctrine and Confessors.

If the conferences of bishops of several countries resulted in statements regarding birth control virtually the same as that statement for which ninety Washington Priests were suspended, an action subsequently approved by the Holy Father, then it would seem that these many bishops' statements are disapproved by the Holy Father and that he disagrees with them. And that they disagree with his teaching which presumably is the authentic teaching voice.

Could it be then that in a few years we will have a similar position on homosexuality? Is the Pope right? Are the Bishops right? Are the moral theologians right? How is one to tell what is the teaching at any given moment?

And if it changes from no to yes over a period of a decade as it has with birth control, what is to be said of the Catholic who was sure it would in 1958 and acted on his belief. What is to be said of the Catholic who now believes the opinion on homosexuality will change in this decade once it becomes a burning issue as did birth control?

So let me tell you what you may not be aware of: what good Catholic Priests and theologians are doing and saying about homosexuality.

The morality of sexual acts with persons of the same gender:  
The cultural storm between heterosexual or "straight" society and that part of the homosexual milieu known as the "gay world" is a fact. But what is being witnessed at the moment is introductory compared to what can be expected later in the seventies. Very briefly I will go into the reasons why I believe this to be true.

In this context, the term "cultural storm" means that the refusal of society to accept homosexuality as anything other than a vicious legal, moral, and psychological perversion is under challenge. The challenge is basic: it asserts that homosexuality, like sexuality in general, is vital, human and good, and in no way entails any legal, moral, or psychological perversion. This assertion, probably the most important contribution of the well populated gay world, is supported by a rising number of social scientists who have made studies on homosexuals.

Accordingly, it would seem that society can only create a bridge between immorality and illegality when the nature of the activity itself will lead to the corruption of society as a whole, or to the corruption of the individual involved within the scope of the activity. Legislation on murder or heroin serves as an instructive example of the above point. But there is no such evidence concerning homosexuality. The judgments of society on both the morality and legality of homosexuality are often inadequate or naive; for example, the common allegation that homosexuality leads to both personal and societal corruption cannot sustain any systematic correlative analysis. Yet such an attempt is, in fact, often made.

The only point that I wish to make at this moment is that the problem concerning the legality and morality of homosexuality is in an extremely problematical state. Statements which comprise both an ethical and legal judgment such as "gross sin against nature" or "heinous crime against nature" are, above all else, crimes against reason.

It is the essential inadequacy in the thinking of Aquinas and the Church (and on the issue of homosexuality, that equation can be made) that is at fault. Not enough credit however can be given to Thomas' insights into freedom and his placement of freedom at the root of his moral theory. And although the Church has often run scared of the implication of this doctrine, is this any longer the case in any meaningful sense? Thus, blanket rejections of entire

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doctrines and especially the roots of these doctrines is senseless. However, the re-thinking of some questions in the light of our own age - and armed with the mass of new evidence presently in the possession of mankind - is imperative.

Accordingly, it can be asked of the Church - what is the evidence which so strikingly and clearly condemns the practicing homosexual? Why does the Church insist on such a univocal ruling against the practicing homosexual? No answer at present, which purports to defend the Church's position is solidly based. In fact, it is precisely at the juncture of sound reasons that Church theorizing collapses. This is what is most disturbing and upsetting, not only concerning homosexuality but also concerning sexuality in general. Something broke in Church elasticity when it came to fitting a new ethics of sex.

It appears that the Church has fallen into a vicious destructive battle against the orgasm (the felt physical pleasure), placing all important attitudes, motivations, and mutuality of giving at a secondary level of importance, if that. It strikes me that here is a principal mistake made by Thomas Aquinas. In terms of a contemporary and viable sexual ethic for the 70s, it should be seen that there can be none until the physical is faced the way that Christianity says that it should be - by the accentuation and understanding of it at a spiritual and mental level. Plato, after all, had no difficulty doing so.

by Joseph A. McCafferty, Ph.D. Catholic World '71

The Church will become corrupt if She does not break through the artificial world surrounding Her, through a theology of mere words, through an over-emphasized, quantitatively conceived interpretation of the sacraments, and hairsplitting, saccharine devotionism; so that free from all this the Church may be rooted and take shape in a realistic concern for men. No superimposed considerations will be able, I believe, to deter me from this course. Nothing in this world is more important to me than to save the Spirit and the Truth. I recognize, of course, the dichotomy in this conviction:

If I need the Christ of the Church to save the world then I must also accept Christ the way the Church presents Him to me, weighed down with ceremonial, bureaucracy and theology. This is exactly what I will be told: I tell myself that often enough. BUT now I cannot escape the immediate, compelling conviction that the hour has come when the Christian experience (sensitiveness) must "rescue Christ" precisely from the hands of clerical bureaucracy so that the world may be saved...

by Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.

and provided by Fr. Frank Bonnicks to the Diaspora Jan. 1973 issue.

Page 150 - The Lord is my Shepherd and He knows I'm gay. She said, "If I had my way all of you perverted individuals would be locked up, in jail, and the key thrown away!"

I said "Madam, that's a wonderful Christian attitude you have.

She looked me over, backed off a step, and I thought she was going to hit me again. She said, "Young man, do you know what the Book of Leviticus says?"

I told her, "I sure do! It says that it's a sin for a woman to wear a red dress, for a man to wear a cotton shirt and woolen pants at the same time, for anyone to eat shrimp, oysters, or lobster - or your steak too rare."

She said, "That's not what I mean!"

I said, "I know that's not what you mean, Honey, but you forgot all of these other dreadful sins too, that are in the same book of the Bible."

She said, "Do you know what St. Paul said?"

Again, I said "I sure do. He said for women to be silent, not to speak."

She said, "That's not what I mean either."

I said, "I know it's not, Honey, but Paul disliked women: He said that women were not to teach, preach, and that they were not to have any sort of authority over a man. Where would our women's liberation groups be, if they had listened to the Apostle Paul? He didn't like women with short hair, nor men with long hair. He said, "If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him, but if a woman have long hair, it is her glory." Are we going to close the doors of the church just because the Apostle Paul didn't like women with short hair, nor men with long hair?"

She said, "That's not what I mean either." I pressed on; I said, "I know it's not Honey, but you know Paul was a very generous fellow. He met a slave one time, and the word of God says that he converted this slave, made him a happy Christian slave, whatever that is. Well, he didn't try to get him to Canada via the Underground Railroad. He sent him back to his master still a slave! Paul wasn't against slavery. You know he was cited as the principal reason for the Southern Baptists to split away from their church in 1845, and found their organization, just so they could keep their slaves. Yet, today, no one in his right mind would quote the Apostle Paul to justify his right to maintain slaves or slavery."

Then she took out of that heavy purse a small, but hefty, Bible. She said, "Read this, and see what Paul said to the Romans."

Well, some think I never passed my examinations at that Bible college I went to, but I did. I shut her Bible and handed it back to her and I recited from memory exactly what he said in Chapter 1, Verses 26-28. I said, "Here they are, madam: Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 1, verses 26-28:

For this cause God gave them up until vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that

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which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient...

And in First Corinthians, Chapter 6 Verse 9.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind...

And further, in First Timothy, Chapter 1, verses 9 and 10:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for man-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine...

And I'll agree, Madam, Paul did not like homosexuals, but Paul did not take to women's rights, and he would be appalled at short hair on a woman, or excessively long hair on a man. Now, if we're going to close the doors of the churches to the hippies just because they have long hair, and to women who have short hair, or wear a red dress, or eat those forbidden foods, or who teach, or preach, or who exercise any sort of authority over a man, where would we be?

From The Lord is My Shepherd by Rev. Troy Perry

Fr. Stephan Pfurtner, a 49 year old Dominican priest at the Catholic University of Fribourg in Switzerland, is the center of a controversy that threatens Swiss church-state relations and Swiss-Vatican relations.

Over a year ago Pfurtner delivered a sermon on sexual morality that triggered the present tension.

The moral theologian accuses the Church of "rigorous moralism" and "repressive abnegation-morality that imposes unnecessary guilt complexes on millions of persons." According to Pfurtner, the Church's teaching office has no basis for infallible norms of sexual behavior. "In these matters, 'reason and love' alone are the only valid criteria." "All this talk of the 10 Commandments of God is misleading. All regulations concerning sexuality have been invented by a human society."

Pfurtner is criticized strongly for his permissive stands on homosexuality, masturbation, divorce and abortion.

Fr. Pfurtner's '12 theses' on sex:

1. All commandments and institutions exist for the sake of men. They do not exist for their own sake. Man and his happiness may not be subjugated to them.
2. All men have a right to be happy. The right to sexual happiness is a part of this basic human right. Happiness presupposes the fulfillment of life and signifies a

- completely good and successful realization of existence.
3. The decisive factor justifying a particular historical behavior or a specific form of sexual morality is the extent to which they contribute to men's happiness. If sexual behavior interferes with lasting human happiness, it becomes immoral. By the same token, if moral injunctions hinder this, then they become invalid. The supreme moral commandment is: Let love and reason rule.
  4. Sexuality should be primarily regarded as an opportunity toward happiness, for the fulfillment and liberation of human life. Only to the extent that it threatens these can it be regarded as a source of danger.
  5. In tension areas or cases of conflict between generally accepted norms and individual needs and requirements, neither the former nor the latter should be the determining factor. Rather, reason and love, with particular attention to the specific circumstances in each case, should be invoked in the interest of the specific happiness of the life of the person who is involved.
  6. Whenever sexual activity involves the lives of others, one must take their happiness just as much into consideration as one's own. Gratification at others' expense is immoral.
  7. Sexuality by its very nature has social implications. This belongs to its complete development, if it is to be effective. The concerns of society, wherever it is involved, are thereby continually to be taken into account.
  8. But society does not have the right to intervene in the sexual freedom of adults, as long as they do not create social harm through their activity.
  9. Educational measures and social regulations regarding youth are good to the extent that they leave open the way to a responsible exercise of freedom. They must be sustained by the explicit intention for the emancipation of young people and give them legitimate scope for play and experimentation. They become irresponsible if they merely serve to inculcate a false dependence on parents, educators or society. Interdictive measures may only be employed in those instances where sexual behavior norms seriously threaten the lasting happiness of young people.
  10. Human sexuality is replete with psychic and functional implications for individual and society. They are manifest in love partnerships, in the creation of larger communities, in the awakening of We-consciousness, in the formation of families, in the propagation of the human race, in social creativity; in games and festive or ritual events; and in gratification and emotional bliss, especially by complementary partnership as a means of personal liberation and maturation. Whoever therefore discriminates against sexuality blocks the humanization of man as well as his culture and capacity for socialization. He interferes with

deep-seated love or for the mutual giving and receiving of sexual pleasure. The activities engaged in are the same, except, obviously, for one act, that heterosexual couples engage in.

The many studies on homosexuality cannot agree on the source of homosexuality, but whether homosexuality comes from one's genetic makeup or from early conditioning, a homosexual is a homosexual through no fault of his own... It is important to remember that it is a drive which of itself does no harm to anyone else...He (and I will for convenience use the term he or him, although nearly everything said here applies equally to males and females) must exercise restraint at times, just as he does in other physical and psychological appetites (and as heterosexuals must), according to conditions or circumstances which might harm himself or others.

A census of homosexuals would include popes and bishops, military leaders, philosophers, housewives, truck drivers, farmers, scientists, psychiatrists, doctors, secretaries, professional athletes, bookkeepers, salesmen, factory workers - you name it. Sloppy hippies and prim old ladies, John Birchers and leftwing radicals. Democrats and Republicans, football fans and violin cellists, American Indians and immigrant Poles - people of every type of political, cultural and racial persuasion...They are good citizens, have responsible jobs, pay their taxes and live like anyone else. They have virtues and faults like anyone else..."In my twenty years of research in the field of sex" writes Dr. Wardell B. Pomeroy, former research director of the Institute for sex research at Indiana University: "I have seen many homosexuals who were happy, who were participating and conscientious members of their community, and who were stable, productive, warm, relaxed and efficient. Except for the fact that they were homosexual, they would be considered normal by any definition. To insist that they are abnormal or sick or neurotic just because they are homosexual is to engage in circular reasoning which smacks of blind moralism founded in our Judeo-Christian heritage.

Such being the situation, we must ask what the response of the Church has been. Christ himself does not specifically mention homosexuality, but the Church, judging by the moral theology manuals used in seminaries and by catechisms used in Catholic schools, has rather consistently condemned homosexual acts as seriously immoral. Its unbending stand has been based on misinterpretations of stray biblical texts written for another age and culture, and on a vague, unproved "natural law". The fascination of celibate churchmen for legislating in detail sexual morality and their excessive zeal for condemning as mortal sin even slight sexual pleasure outside the procreative act has hardly been healthy for them or the faithful...

The demands made by this moral theology text are not only unnecessary and inhuman but well-nigh impossible...It



is a view of sex which is laughed about by most priests today, who wonder how they could have swallowed it all in seminary days. Fortunately, most of the laity, judging from their confessions and lack thereof, are not buying it either...

Catechisms and religion textbooks have generally followed the strictures listed in the above moral theology text. However, the newest ones have become more circumspect or have tended to skirt the issue rather than give dogmatic answers and blatant condemnation, condemnations which had been based on misinterpreted isolated texts of the Bible and on an ignorance of sexuality. Moral theologians and other people writing in Catholic publications have made efforts to be more understanding and have become more tolerant. But they still use such offensive words as mentally ill, pervert, unnatural vice, sick, abnormal, evil, personality flaw, arrested personality growth...

All in all, the homosexual has found little help from or comfort in the Church. In the past he found condemnation for his condition and way of life. Today he finds that he need not feel guilty about his condition but that he would be guilty of grave sin if he were to live as God made him. He resents the fact that the Church allows two heterosexuals to have repeated sexual activity with each other as long as they make an agreement (marriage) while he is denied the slightest sexual pleasure or sexual expression. He resents being told to see a therapist, for this implies that he is sick; and he resents pious advice to say three Hail Marys every night, for he knows this will not change him...

First let us recall a passage from the Book of Wisdom. The writer, speaking to God, says, "You love all that exists, you hold in abhorrence nothing that you have made, for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it" (11:24). If God does not abhor, but rather loves, the homosexual with the nature he was created with, we can do no less. And this means that we must accept the homosexual as he is. Because of our religious or cultural upbringing we may have some distaste for the idea of homosexuality or for homosexual activities, and we need not change our own preferences any more than we expect the homosexual to change his, but we are not to take a morally superior attitude toward a sexual minority any more than we would to a racial or cultural minority...

When we truly love another person, we must let that person be truly himself, must let him be true to his own nature. If we accept the Divine command to love homosexuals, we will love them as they are... And we will not pressure young people into marriage. Marriage is not a "cure" for homosexuality; it only causes further grief to the homosexual, and it is unfair to his partner if the partner is unaware of the homosexuality. Many homosexuals are married; some unhappily, because it

is a lie they felt they had to enter; others happily because they are bisexual or have working agreements with their knowing partners. Many single people (homosexual or not) have told me that they wished their families and friends would stop trying to push them into marriage...

What about the morality of sexual acts? As Father Andrew Greeley wrote recently in *The Critic*, "It is likely to be a very long time before the Church recaptures any kind of credibility as a teacher of sexual morality." The Church's teaching on sex is now in sad disarray. But maybe that is OK for it will cause us to reexamine our whole teaching on sex. Pope Paul says that every sexual act must be open to conception. Many bishops, a majority of priests and theologians, and certainly a great majority of lay Catholics appear to disagree with him. It is difficult to find a foundation for his limitation. Such a binding obligation cannot be based on some dubious and unsubstantiated "natural law". And certainly not on Scripture... Isolated biblical quotes, as the Dutch catechism points out, must be read on their context; they can hardly have been intended as strict moral laws for all cultures and civilizations of the future.

The fact that homosexual acts are not creative of new physical bodies does not mean that the participants are merely "using" each other. Homosexual love can be as noble, beautiful and holy as heterosexual love or the love of friends or between members of a family. When the Hebrews were a desert tribe trying to build themselves into a nation, it was almost a national obligation to have lots of babies. Today, sexual activity need hardly be limited to the production of children; indeed, the proportion of acts of sexual intercourse by married couples to the number of children produced is like several thousand to one. Also, in considering the nature and purpose of sex we must see it in its evolution. We must take a long-range view, as anthropologist Margaret Mead points out, for there is now the possibility of the conception of children outside the womb and perhaps asexually. It is really weird to read a certain catechism still in use and see the list of things supposedly forbidden by "the sixth commandment." Recent Biblical studies reveal that the "sixth" commandment at the time it was promulgated had more to do with justice than sex. And "Blessed are the pure of heart" was not directive to virginity. Celibacy and/or virginity must be freely chosen; we cannot force it on homosexuals, or make them guilty if they do not choose it...

Nearly every State in the Union has laws forbidding homosexual acts, just as most states have laws forbidding certain heterosexual acts of married people. These are areas in which the State has no rights, competence or jurisdiction... A remark of Thoreau is germane here: "If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it does; and so a man" (Essay on Civil Disobedience). The Church should be in the forefront of a determined effort to rid our country of laws opposed to man's freedom to be himself and to lead his private life without State interference...

In Canon IV of the new English Mass we read of Christ who proclaimed freedom to the imprisoned (Isaiah 61:2). If the Church carries on the mission of Christ, it should work to free homosexuals now imprisoned because of private activity harming no citizen. And through enlightened education the Church ought to calm the irrational fears of ignorant people who think the homosexual a social menace.

From "A Christian Response to Homosexuality" by Father Henry Fehren, U. S. Catholic, September, 1972.

In one of those ironic reversals of roles which occur so often in human history, the homosexual is now persecuted by physicians, and defended by clergymen. In an article published in the influential National Catholic Reporter, Father Henri Nouwen of Utrecht, in the Netherlands, recasts the problem of homosexuality in the light of modern Christian and phenomenological teaching. His essential thesis is that homosexuality is neither a sin nor a disease, but a medical, and especially psychiatric, prejudice. "If a man has chosen the homosexual way of life, prefers homosexual circles and homosexual friends, and does not show any desire or willingness to change", writes Father Nouwen "it does not make any sense to punish him or try to change him.

Quoted by Thomas Szasz in The Homosexual Dialectic.

Let me break in here to remind you, my reader, that I am giving no opinion on these quotes. I am telling you what you may be unaware is being written by competent Catholic scholars. You already know too well what is being said by the bishops. If these scholars are in heresy, then it behooves the bishops to silence them and set the record straight. Since they haven't, it would be safe to conclude that they may safely be listened to without offense to picus ears.

Did you know that the National Federation of Priests Councils at their convention passed a resolution last year asking the Church to re-evaluate its stand on homosexuality?

Did you know that there is an approved Mass for Gays in the Archdiocese of Chicago? That it has been going on with Chancery knowledge and permission since 1971? Did you know that there is a National Catholic Homophile organization called Dignity which has just opened a Chapter here in Boston? Listen to some more quotes.

If Paul...is to be taken seriously, he would appear to be not as one who singles out homosexuals for condemnation, but rather he is one who, having branded all men as condemned, has learned to celebrate the Grace of God for all...

In short, the case has often been made that the root of the classical Christian condemnation of homosexuality has been the teaching of Paul. Jesus, as far as we know, said nothing about it. Living in a Jewish world, the problem apparently never came up, although it would be logical to speculate that if Jesus, as we know, proclaimed His gospel for the outcasts, dramatizing their

inclusion within the Kingdom of God, he probably would have done so with the homosexual as well. Paul, however, seems to be the villain, the source of condemnation. An examination of the two critical passages in Paul which speak to this point may, however, not be as condemnatory as they first appear.

In fact, if Paul were consistent with the depths of his own theology, and not simply lapsing from time to time into traditional formulas of exclusion, Paul's theology with its understanding of sin and grace may be good news, even for the homosexual.

Richard C. Devor, Sr. Minister  
Central Union Methodist Ch., Detroit

As for the rather patronising suggestion that to be homosexual is in itself no sin, of course this is true, but it is less than unhelpful when it leads on to demand of all homosexuals a life of celibacy. I do not see how on this issue the Church can expect to have its cake and eat it. Either celibacy involves a true vocation or it does not. If it does (and I happen to believe it does) then it is surely too much to expect us to believe that all homosexuals automatically have such a vocation, and I suspect that few churchmen would seriously say this was the case, although I have no doubt many would wish the situation were otherwise! Life would be so much easier! There are churchmen however who do not say that all homosexuals are endowed with a vocation to celibacy but who still insist that whether they have a vocation or not they should jolly well restrain themselves and remain celibate. To impose such a penance upon men and women whose primary sexual and emotional orientation does not happen to fit in with the Church's concept of sexuality requires however a degree of theological justification that in the light of our 20th century understanding of the psychology of human personality I doubt if the Church can rustle up...

So long as the causes and true nature of homosexuality remained unexplored there was some excuse for the Church to exhibit natural fear of the unknown, but it is a disgrace that today the Church should be refusing to test its own ill-founded assertions against the yardsticks of scientific and psychological research. It is disgraceful because on the subject of homosexuality the Church is not concerning itself with some abstract theological nicety but with the very fibre of millions of men and women. To be homosexual is to be human. If a homosexual feels compelled, as most human beings do, to create a platform for his or her life through the building up of a unique personal relationship with another human being, he or she requires as much encouragement as anyone else; if not in fact a good deal more. But by a constant harping on the automatically sinful nature of all homosexual relations the Church has denied to homosexuals the Christian gift of hope, and it is small wonder that so many homosexual men and women feel unwanted, unworthy, unclean and unloved. I am constantly amazed