

Appendix

by Edward Batchelor, Jr.

The following are excerpts from church statements on homosexuality.

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

We, as Christians, recognize that radical changes are taking place in sex concepts and practices. We are committed to seeking God's guidance in our efforts to understand faithfully and deal honestly with these changes and related issues. We recognize that there are many traditional problems of family and personal life for which the church's ministries have not been adequate, but we are committed to be used by God to strengthen and broaden these ministries. In this spirit we call upon our churches to engage in worship, study, fellowship and action to provide for meaningful ministries to all persons as members of the 'Family of God' including those who are homosexuals.

THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, Standing Committee for the Office of Research and Analysis, 1977.

The church need not be caught up in the conflicting theories as to how widespread homosexuality is, the factors which cause or foster homosexuality, and whether it is an illness, an arrested state of sexual development, a form of deviant behavior, or a sexual expression of human nature. These are matters for the various scientific disciplines to debate and resolve. The church, however, is concerned that some human beings created in God's image are involved in homosexual behavior, that many people are hurting because of their own homosexuality or that of a loved one, and that the Scriptures speak to the entire issue.

We believe that taken as a whole the message of Scripture clearly is that:

- a. Homosexual behavior is sin, a form of idolatry, a breaking of the natural order that unites members of the human community;
- b. Homosexual behavior is contrary to the new life in Christ, a denial of the responsible freedom and service into which we are called through baptism;
- c. God offers the homosexual person, as every other person, a vision of the wholeness He intends, the assurance of His grace, and His healing and restoration for the hurting and broken.

Nevertheless, we recognize the cries of our homosexual brothers and sisters for justice in the arena of civil affairs. We cannot endorse their call

for legalizing homosexual marriage. Nor can we endorse their conviction that homosexual behavior is simply another form of acceptable expression of natural erotic or libidinous drives. We can, however, endorse their position that their sexual orientation in and of itself should not be a cause for denying them their civil liberties.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST), General Assembly, Study Document, 1977.

. . . The standards of membership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have always rested on confession of faith in Jesus Christ and baptism. Its standards have been "inclusive" rather than "exclusive." In support of these it has appealed to the relationships of Jesus which were inclusive, often, in fact, deliberately directed to those whom society had demeaned and cast aside. It has never acknowledged barriers to fellowship on the basis of dogma or life style. By these principles, rooted in biblical faith, it is difficult to point to any basis upon which homosexual persons might be excluded from membership.

Acknowledging . . . the wide differences of opinion, there does seem to be a minimal consensus to which the church can strive: homosexuals are persons whom God created, loves and redeems and seeks to set within the fellowship of faith communities to be ministered to and to minister. The church can affirm that God's grace does not exclude persons of differing life styles or sexual preferences, nor does the church which is enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Homosexuals may be included in the fellowship and membership of the community of faith where they are to love and be loved and where their gifts of ministry are to be welcomed.

FRIENDS, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1973.

We should be aware that there is a great diversity in the relationships that people develop with one another. Although we neither approve nor disapprove of homosexuality, the same standards under the law which we apply to heterosexual activities should also be applied to homosexual activities. As persons who engage in homosexual activities suffer serious discrimination in employment, housing and the right to worship, we believe that civil rights laws should protect them. In particular we advocate the revision of all legislation imposing disabilities and penalties upon homosexual activities.

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, Biennial Clergy-Laitly Congress, 1976.

The Orthodox Church condemns unreservedly all expressions of personal sexual experience which prove contrary to the definite and unalterable function ascribed to sex by God's ordinance and expressed in man's experience as a law of nature.

Thus the function of the sexual organs of a man and a woman and their biochemical generating forces in glands and glandular secretions are ordained by nature to serve one particular purpose, the procreation of the human kind.

Therefore, any and all uses of the human sex organs for purposes other than those ordained by creation, runs contrary to the nature of things as decreed by God. . . .

The Orthodox Church believes that homosexuality should be treated by society as an immoral and dangerous perversion and by religion as a sinful failure. In both cases, correction is called for. Homosexuals should be accorded the confidential medical and psychiatric facilities by which they can be helped to restore themselves to a self-respecting sexual identity that belongs to them by God's ordinance.

LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, Biennial Convention, 1970.

Human sexuality is a gift of God for the expression of love and the generation of life. As with every good gift, it is subject to abuses which cause suffering and debasement. In the expression of man's sexuality, it is the integrity of his relationships which determines the meaning of his actions. Man does not merely have sexual relations; he demonstrates his true humanity in personal relationships, the most intimate of which are sexual.

Scientific research has not been able to provide conclusive evidence regarding the causes of homosexuality. Nevertheless, homosexuality is viewed biblically as a departure from the heterosexual structure of God's creation. Persons who engage in homosexual behavior are sinners only as are all other persons—alienated from God and neighbor. However, they are often the special and undeserving victims of prejudice and discrimination in law, law enforcement, cultural mores, and congregational life. In relation to this area of concern, the sexual behavior of freely consenting adults in private is not an appropriate subject for legislation or police action. It is essential to see such persons as entitled to understanding justice in church and community.

MORAVIAN CHURCH, Synod, 1974

WHEREAS: the Christian Church has the responsibility of reexamining its own traditional sexual stance in the light of more recent interpretation and scientific evidence for the benefit of both youth and adults, and

WHEREAS: the homosexual has too often felt excluded from and persecuted by society, there be it

RESOLVED: (29) that the Moravian Church reaffirms its open welcome to all people by specifically recognizing that the homosexual is also under God's care, and be it further

RESOLVED: (30) that Moravian congregations will extend an invitation to all persons to join us in a common search for wholeness before God and persons, and be it further

RESOLVED: (31) that as Christians, recognizing our common sinfulness and the miracle of God's grace, accepting God's pardon, and together striving to help free each other from bonds of fear, despair, and meaninglessness, fitting us for lives of commitment, responsibility, witness, service, and celebration in God's Kingdom, we will share in this venture as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ toward wholeness.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, 117th General Assembly, 1977.

That the 117th General Assembly expresses love and pastoral concern for homosexual persons in our society and the need for the Church to stand for just treatment of homosexual persons in our society in regard to their civil liberties, equal rights, and protection under the law from social and economic discrimination which is due all citizens.

Although we confess our need for more light and pray for spiritual guidance for the Church on this matter, we now believe that homosexuality falls short of God's plan for sexual relationships and urge the Church to seek the best way for witnessing to God's moral standards and for ministering to homosexual persons concerning the love of God in Jesus Christ.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE U.S.A., General Convention, 1976.

Resolved, that it is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God, who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church.

Resolved, this General Council expresses its conviction that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the law with all other citizens, and calls upon our society to see such protection is provided in actuality.

ROMAN CATHOLIC, Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1977.

At the present time there are those who, basing themselves on observations in the psychological order, have begun to judge indulgently, and even to excuse completely, homosexual relations between certain people. This they do in opposition to the constant teaching of the magisterium and to the moral sense of the Christian people.

A distinction is drawn, and it seems with some reason, between homosexuals whose tendency comes from a false education, from a lack of normal sexual development, from habit, from bad example or from other causes, and is transitory or at least not incurable; and homosexuals who are definitely such because of some kind of innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable.

In regard to this second category of subjects, some people conclude that their tendency is so natural that it justifies in their case homosexual relations within a sincere communion of life and love analogous to marriage insofar as such homosexuals feel incapable of enduring a solitary life.

In the pastoral field, these homosexuals must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties and their inability to fit into society.

Their culpability will be judged with prudence. But no pastoral method can be employed which would give moral justification to these acts on the grounds that they would be consonant with the condition of such people. For according to the objective moral order homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH—Great Britain, Statement issued by the Archbishop of Westminster, 1957.

The civil law takes cognizance primarily of public acts. Private acts as such are outside its scope.

However, there are certain private acts which have public consequences in so far as they affect the common good. These acts may rightly be subject to civil law.

It may be, however, that the civil law cannot effectively control such acts without doing more harm to the common good than the acts themselves would be. In that case it may be necessary in the interests of the common good to tolerate without approving such acts.

It has, for example, invariably been found that adultery or fornication (which, however private, have clear public consequences) cannot effectively be controlled by civil law without provoking great evils.

Applying these principles to the question of homosexual acts between consenting males:

1. As regards the moral law, Catholic moral teaching is:
 - a. Homosexual acts are grievously sinful.
 - b. That in view of the public consequences of these acts, *e.g.*, the harm which would result to the common good if homosexual conduct became widespread or an accepted mode of conduct in the public mind, the civil law does not exceed its legitimate scope if it attempts to control them by making them crimes.

2. However, two questions of fact arise:
 - a. If the law takes cognizance of private acts of homosexuality and makes them crimes, do worse evils follow for the common good?
 - b. Since homosexual acts between consenting males are now crimes in law, would a change in the law harm the common good by seeming to condone homosexual conduct?

Ecclesiastical authority could rightly give a decision on this question of fact as well as on the question of moral law, if the answers to questions of fact were overwhelmingly clear. As, however, various answers are possible in the opinion of prudent men, Catholics are free to make up their own minds on these two questions of fact.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, Resolution on Homosexuality, 1976.

Whereas, homosexuality has become an open lifestyle for increasing numbers of persons, and

Whereas, attention has focused on the religious and moral dimensions of homosexuality, and

Whereas, it is the task of the Christian community to bring all moral questions and issues into the light of biblical truth;

Now therefore, be it resolved that the members of the Southern Baptist Convention . . . affirm our commitment to the biblical truth regarding the practice of homosexuality and sin.

Be it further resolved, that this Convention, while acknowledging the autonomy of the local church to ordain ministers, urges churches and agencies not to afford the practice of homosexuality any degree of approval through ordination, employment, or other designations of normal lifestyle.

Be it further resolved, that we affirm our Christian concern all persons be saved from the penalty and power of sin through our Lord Jesus Christ, whatever their present individual lifestyle.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA, General Assembly, 1970.

Discrimination Against Homosexuals and Bisexuals: Recognizing that

1. A significant minority in this country are either homosexual or bisexual in their feelings and/or behavior;
2. Homosexuality has been the target of severe discrimination by society and in particular by the police and other arms of government;
3. A growing number of authorities on the subject now see homosexuality as an inevitable sociological phenomenon and not as a mental illness;

4. There are Unitarian Universalists, clergy and laity, who are homosexuals and bisexuals;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the 1970 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association: 1) Urges all people immediately to bring an end to all discrimination against homosexuals, homosexuality, bisexuals, and bisexuality, with specific immediate attention to the following issues:

Private consensual behavior between persons over the age of consent shall be the business only of those persons and not subject to legal regulations. Urges all churches and fellowships, in keeping with our changing social patterns, to initiate meaningful programs of sex education aimed at providing a more open and healthier understanding of sexuality in all parts of the United States and Canada, and with the particular aim to end all discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, The Tenth General Synod, 1975.

Therefore, without considering in this document the rightness or wrongness of same-gender relationships, but recognizing that a person's affectional or sexual preference is not legitimate grounds on which to deny her or his civil liberties, the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ proclaims the Christian conviction that all persons are entitled to full civil liberties and equal protection under the law.

Further, the Tenth General Synod declares its support for the enactment of legislation that would guarantee the liberties of all persons without discrimination related to affectional or sexual preference.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, The Quadrennial Conference, 1976.

Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others and with self. Further we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured, though we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A., 188th General Assembly, 1976.

The 188th General Assembly calls to the attention of our Church that, according to our most recent statement, we "reaffirm our adherence to the moral law of God . . . that . . . the practice of homosexuality is sin . . . Also we affirm that any self-righteous attitude of others who would

condemn persons who have so sinned is also sin." The 188th General Assembly declares again its commitment to this statement. Therefore, on broad Scriptural and confessional grounds, it appears that it would at the present time be injudicious, if not improper, for a Presbytery to ordain to the professional ministry of the Gospel a person who is an avowed practicing homosexual.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD, Convention, 1973.

Whereas, God's Word clearly identifies homophile behavior as immoral, and condemned it (Lev. 18:22; 20:13 and Rom. 1:24-27); and

Whereas, The Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are to be proclaimed and applied to all conditions of mankind; therefore be it Resolved, That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod urge that the Law and Gospel of the Scriptures be applied to homophiles as appropriate with a view toward ministering the forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ to any and all sinners who are penitent.

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS, General Assembly, 1977.

Whereas the UAHC has consistently supported the civil rights and civil liberties of all persons, and

Whereas the Constitution guarantees civil rights to all individuals,

Be it therefore resolved that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection under the law. We oppose discrimination against homosexuals in areas of opportunity, including employment and housing. We call upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality.

Be it further resolved that we affirm our belief that private sexual acts between consenting adults are not the proper province of government and law enforcement agencies.

Statements by Professional Organizations

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, House of Deputies, 1973.

RESOLVED that the legislatures of the several states are urged to repeal all laws which classify as criminal conduct any form of non-commercial *sex conduct between consenting adults in private*, saving only those portions which protect minors or public decorum.

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, Action of the Trustees, 1973.

Passed a resolution urging the endorsement of the Model Penal Code of

the American Law Institute, which recommends to legislators that private sexual behavior between consenting adults should be removed from the list of crimes and thereby legalized.

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, Board of Trustees, 1973.

Unanimously voted for a resolution urging "the repeal of all legislation making criminal offenses of sexual acts performed by consenting adults in private," and another resolution urged sexual practices (including homosexuality) between consenting adults in private should be removed from the list of crimes. In another resolution, the Board of Trustees voted to remove homosexuality, *per se*, from its official list of mental disorders.

The Trustees also approved the following resolution:

Whereas Homosexuality *per se* implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities, therefore, be it resolved that the American Psychiatric Association deplors all public and private discrimination against homosexuals in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodation, and licensing, and declares that no burden of proof of such judgment, capacity, or reliability shall be placed upon homosexuals greater than that imposed on any other persons. Further, the American Psychiatric Association supports and urges the enactment of civil rights legislation at the local, state, and federal level that would offer homosexual persons the same protections now guaranteed to others on the basis of race, creed, color, etc. Further, the American Psychiatric Association supports and urges the repeal of all discriminatory legislation singling out homosexual acts by consenting adults.

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, Board of Directors, 1975.

The American Psychological Association supports the action taken on 15 December 1973 by the American Psychiatric Association removing homosexuality from the Association's official list of mental disorders. The American Psychological Association therefore adopts the following resolution:

Homosexuality *per se* implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational responsibilities;

Further, the American Psychological Association urges all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations.