

A Lutheran Pastor and A Lesbian Sister

By

Rev. Alvin H. Franzmeier, M.Div., M.Th., Dr. Rel.

Foreword

This document completes an assignment for the Circuit 33 Pastoral Conference of the Texas District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It is written in the form of a dialogue between a pastor and a husband/wife leadership team who struggle with the issue of homosexuality in their family. While the dialogue does not raise every facet of the problems faced by the family in connection with this phenomenon, it does lift up enough to challenge readers to re-evaluate their own positions. In the first meeting the pastor listens and ponders the statements of the wife's lesbian sister. The dialogue ends when the pastor asks the couple to set a second appointment. In their second session he responds to the questions the wife and her sister raised.

Note also that the initial dialogue is based, in part, upon my personal experiences in working with individuals and couples in a pastoral setting.

Please note also that the lesbian sister claims to be a believing Christian, that she wants to remain a member of the Lutheran Church and that she is leaning toward joining a church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the church body from which she feels she is receiving satisfactory answers to her questions. A female pastor of that same church body has offered to unite her and her partner in marriage.

The words of sainted Missouri Synod President Alvin Barry apply to every family dealing with this issue:

While clearly affirming the sinfulness of homosexuality, we will also want clearly to affirm God's promise of forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Often families of homosexuals are embarrassed and ashamed. If Christian friends and relatives treat them in ways that increase this shame, it is little wonder that they will attempt to rationalize or otherwise explain away a son's or daughter's sinful lifestyle.

Christians should reach out in compassion to these families, expressing their love and concern, offering the encouragement that is ours in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To the person caught up in the homosexual life, Christian friends and family members should continue lovingly to share their convictions with this person, reaching out with the forgiving love of Christ and the hope that is found only in Him.

(What About Homosexuality, pg. 2)

At the end of this paper I have placed bibliographic sources—many available on the Internet. I will be happy to forward the sources electronically so that readers may automatically link to them. I urge my readers to study these—and any other resources—prayerfully before preparing their own personal responses. At this time, I know of no papers prepared by a Missouri Synod pastor in response to the specific interpretations of Scripture presented by the ELCA pastors and professors, as well as those of other denominations listed in the bibliography. Readers may wish to suggest some. -- AHF.
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Pastor Steve Fisher watched the members of his suburban congregation shuffle from the Sunday afternoon meeting. Several small clusters continued in lively conversation about the proposals they had adopted only a few minutes before. Steve wondered if the enthusiasm they had exhibited would wane when they realized how much time, effort and money it would take to complete the planned expansion of their small facility. He decided to follow the advice he had given to the gathered congregation. It was, after all, in the hands of the Lord.

His meditation was abruptly terminated by a familiar voice. “Pastor, are we still on for that meeting?” Struggling for a moment to answer, he felt his hand touched by a close friend. “Steve. You with me or have you left planet earth?”

“Oh, ah, yes, yes Sam. Excuse me. I was caught up in some thoughts about the meeting. Sure. Come on back to my study as soon as everyone leaves . . . and Connie is coming also, right?”

“To say the least,” replied Sam, winking. “She’s been bugging both of us. Prepare yourself. She’s coming loaded with a hundred questions and some very strange ideas.”

“No problem. I’ll do my best to respond.” Steve smiled, but felt an inner uneasiness as he contemplated the meeting with this leadership couple. Connie had made her concern clear when she dropped off a sheaf of papers at the church office a little over a week before. Her sister, Susan, who lived and worked in Berkeley, California, had announced to the family six months before that she was a lesbian and was living with a beloved partner. She was also planning to come with her partner to their father’s eightieth birthday party next month. The two brothers and two sisters were planning a big weekend with family and friends, culminating with the Sunday worship service. At the service special prayers of thanksgiving for Dad’s long life were requested and the family was to commune together. Susan had grown up in the church. Would Pastor Steve object, Connie had asked, if Susan and her partner participated in the service and, yes, communed? That was the question before him and the cause of his apprehension.

Sam was the congregation’s president and Connie the chairperson of the Ladies’ Guild. Both Sam’s and Connie’s families had been active supporters of the congregation for generations. None of them, as far as Pastor Steve Fisher could tell, had ever had to deal with the question of homosexuality before Susan’s announcement. Before reading

Connie's packet, Steve had been confident of his answer, based upon Holy Scripture. Now, however, he was troubled. Connie's packet included some disturbing ideas, received from Susan a few weeks before. How was he to answer them?

When Connie and Sam arrived in his office, Pastor Steve invited them to settle on the couch facing his desk. He perched himself on a straight back chair facing them. After a prayer and a brief conversation about the afternoon's meeting, Steve shifted to the topic at hand. "I read your sister's papers," he said, looking at Connie. "Where'd she come up with all that?"

"Perhaps I'd better tell you a little more about Sue," said Connie, shifting to the edge of the couch. "She's the brainy one of our clan. After graduating from U.T. she took off for the University of California at Berkeley where she completed a Ph.D. in anthropology. She's now an assistant professor on their faculty. As you can see, she's widely read."

"That's obvious, but before we get into her comments, I'd like to know where she goes to church."

"Well, that's another interesting story. Actually, at present she attends an E.L.C.A. church in Berkeley, but I don't think she's joined."

"She hasn't asked for a transfer from Holy Cross," Steve replied. "For one reason or another, she's still carried on our books. I've often meant to ask you about her."

"She's wandered ever since leaving Texas. When I spent a week with her a while back she told me that for a while she attended some church called The Metropolitan Community Church. Did you ever hear of it?"

"Only by reading their website. They call themselves a worldwide fellowship of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. They also insist that the Bible must be read from a new perspective."

"Right. Susan told me something about them. However, she was unhappy with their approach to the Sacraments and their almost total emphasis upon sexual issues. Brought up in the Lutheran tradition, she wanted to find a church in which she was more comfortable."

"But she couldn't find a Missouri church that would accept her as a lesbian," Sam broke in, a wry smile on his face.

Connie turned toward her husband. “Not exactly. After all, she didn’t go to church with a sign around her neck. And I suspect she might have asked for and received a transfer from Holy Cross without ever mentioning her sexual preference.”

“What did keep her from joining a Missouri congregation out there?” asked Steve, knowing in his heart the possible answer.

“If you knew Sue, you’d realize that as soon as she had decided to ‘come out’ she would research everything her church had to say about homosexuality.”

“And?” queried Steve with raised eyebrows.

“And she decided we were prejudiced against gays and lesbians.”

Steve constrained himself from responding with a lecture about the Bible and faithfulness to Jesus. Instead, he continued, “Perhaps you’d better explain.”

“She concluded that if she lived with her lesbian partner, Missouri would denounce her as an unforgivable sinner heading for hell.”

“Is that so, Pastor?” asked Sam, joining Connie on the edge of the couch.

Steve took a long breath. He sensed a deep anxiety in the hearts of his congregation’s president and an even deeper pain in Connie. “You both know that if I know something is a sin and yet insist on doing it, I’m mocking God’s forgiveness in Christ. If that’s what Susan is doing, then she has rejected God’s mercy and chosen His judgment instead.”

Connie pulled a tissue from her purse and wiped tears from the corners of her eyes. Her voice quivered as she continued. “I tried to tell her that, but she wouldn’t listen. Her voice got real hard and for a time we could hardly talk over the phone. She did tell me her God was not so cruel. When I asked her what she meant she pointed out a passage from the New Testament I never even heard of before.”

“What was that?” asked Steve.

Connie glanced at the notebook she had carried with her to the meeting. “I mentioned it to you, Sam. It’s in Matthew 19, where Jesus faces some Pharisees come to test him about the question of divorce.”

Sam turned toward his wife, frowning. “What has divorce got to do with this issue?”

“It isn’t what Jesus says about divorce; it’s what he says about marriage that’s important here.”

“Come again?” asked Sam.

“Jesus says that not everyone can accept the will of God that a man and woman must not divorce except for marital unfaithfulness. The people of the world, the unbelievers, will insist they have the right to divorce for almost any reason. Then he says something I never in all my life knew. Susan emphasized that Jesus says, ‘Some are eunuchs because they were born that way!’”

“What?” asked Sam. “You never told me about that.” Turning toward Steve, Sam continued, “Is that true, Pastor? I mean, I thought people are gay by choice, not by birth and that they’re pulled into that lifestyle by what happened in their homes while growing up or something. One of the articles I read says there is even organizations, also some Lutheran, who work with gays to lead them out of that lifestyle and choose a God pleasing way.”

Connie’s forehead was creased as she studied her notes. “I too used to think it was only a matter of choice, but Susan pointed out several things. She says the full Greek text in Matthew 19 says there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb and that the word ‘eunuch’ is used only here and in the Acts 8 passage about Philip and the Ethiopian official riding his chariot. She points out that the Greek Old Testament calls Potiphar, who bought Joseph for his slave, the *eunuch* of Pharaoh. Now we know that Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph. Does that imply, Susan asks, that Potiphar was gay, maybe by birth and thus unable to satisfy his wife’s needs?”

“Come on, honey. Aren’t you getting carried away?”

“Am I?” asked Connie, her voice filled with tension. “Susan was simply pointing out that the Bible records or at least implies that there have always been a percentage of men—and women—who are homosexual from birth.”

Steve reached for a document from his desk. “May I break in?” he asked. “I’d like to read from our Synod’s 1999 document on ministry to homosexuals and their families:

‘Some scientific studies have been done in an attempt to discover if the genetic or biological cause can be proven. Many, if not most, of these studies are statistically

and methodologically questionable. To date, no reliable research substantiates a biological or genetic cause for homosexuality (p.7).”

“Susan says that’s simply not true. She points out that the American Psychological Association, in its guidelines, no longer views homosexuality or bisexuality as a form of mental illness, even though before the ‘70s they did. These people, she says, specialize in the science of human relationships. They’re professionals, numbering in the tens of thousands. All the professional counseling organizations, including the marriage and family therapy and social worker organizations hold the same position. They all encourage their members to recognize that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are normal people, and that many particular life issues or challenges experienced by them might be related to multiple and often conflicting cultural norms, values, and beliefs and not to their sexual orientation. The therapeutic work is to help lesbians, gays and bisexuals work through these issues, not condemn them to hell.”

Steve cleared his throat as he prepared to respond. He was not clear about the scientific studies and he felt that perhaps the Synodical documents might have made some dogmatic and possibly not well informed statements on the biological origins of homosexuality. Was it always and forever a result of nurture, a learned behavior? Or was homosexuality sometimes a matter of nature? He was beginning to wonder. Further, he knew of no way to escape Jesus’ statement about some being born eunuchs from their mother’s womb. He knew he’d have to return to that passage, but for the moment he wanted to get at the question from another angle.

“Connie,” he began, “I’m not competent to comment on the views of science or of therapists and counselors. As a pastor, however, Holy Scriptures as God’s Word binds me. Our sainted President Barry listed several relevant Scripture passages in his short statement about our church’s position on homosexuality. These passages make it very clear that homosexual behavior is contrary to the plan and will of God. I want to quote them. I’m sure you already know them.

- “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. ... Do not defile yourselves by any of these things” (Lev.18: 22, 24).
- “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination...” (Lev.20: 13).

- “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error”(Rom.1: 26–27).
- “Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts ...shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor.6:9–10).
- “...The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners ...immoral persons, sodomites... and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim.1: 9–10).”

To those we have to add the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah story in Genesis 19 and the Levite and his run-away concubine in Judges 19.”

“Pastor, I didn’t come here to argue with you about these passages,” said Connie, still struggling with her emotions, “but if you will permit, I must review with you my sister’s position. It’s one of the reasons she is now considering joining the E.L.C.A.”

Steve also fought with his emotions. He had strong convictions about the theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and supported his own church’s decision not to be in fellowship with them. At the same time, he knew in his pastoral heart that Connie and her family were bound by love and family ties to Susan. How could he help them? “Let’s talk about those passages,” he continued. “I read two of the papers you sent along. Let’s start with the Sodom and the Gibeah stories.”

“The crime of sodomy comes from the Sodom story, doesn’t it, Pastor?” asked Sam. “And didn’t the Supreme Court declare sodomy laws unconstitutional about a year ago?”

“You’re right on both counts, Sam. However, it’s not clear that the Sodom story is actually dealing with the sodomy the Court addressed. It depends on your definition.”

“Those Sodom guys wanted to have sex with the angels who came to warn Lot and his family to get out of town. That’s sodomy, is it not?”

“Sure,” said Connie, breaking in, “but Sodom couldn’t have been a whole town full of homosexuals. Like any other town, then or now, the majority were probably heterosexuals. The critical issue was the question of hospitality, not sex. Lot was even ready to offer his daughters to the crowd rather than break his strict code of hospitality.”

“But the men didn’t want the daughters. They wanted the men,” said Sam, a puzzled look on his face as he turned toward his wife.

“Yes, but for what?” Connie replied vehemently. “Not for homosexual acts per se, but to rape them. Rape is an act of domination and perversion. These were primarily heterosexual men who wanted to force themselves on Lot’s guests to disgrace them in acts of twisted sex. It was not an act of consensual sex between two men, which is how most define homosexual acts.”

“Of course not, but sodomy is not consensual either.”

“Oh, but it is according to Texas law,” said Pastor Steve. “For instance, the law says that a person commits an offense if he engages in deviate sexual intercourse with another individual of the same sex. It says nothing about consensus versus rape.”

“So in Texas any kind of homosexual behavior is sodomy and what, a misdemeanor?” asked Sam.

“It is, but the law is hardly ever enforced. In fact, there are only ten out of the fifty states that have any kinds of sodomy laws left on the books. In saying this, however, we’re moving away from the Bible and into a discussion about the laws of states.”

“What about that other story, the one about the Levite and his concubine?” asked Sam.

“That story has been used to condemn homosexual behavior, but it’s really a story about heterosexual rape, so I’d prefer to eliminate it in this discussion and move to the Leviticus passages.”

“That’s better,” said Connie, now regaining her composure as she turned back to her notes, “because Susan pointed to something else I’d never thought about. She refers to that place in the paper I gave you by Dr. Fretheim where he says that God does not have a final will in place from the beginning regarding the development of every aspect of the created order. God makes adjustments in His will for the world as he interacts with a created order like us humans since we are still in the process of becoming and evolving. He adjusts His will in view of His ultimate purposes for all creatures.”

“What do you think that means, Connie?” asked Pastor Steve.

“In the matter of homosexuality, Sue gives examples from his paper to the effect that married couples, for instance, are still fully human even if they don’t have sex or can’t have children. So, if a man changes his sexual orientation in favor, say of another

man, that isn't necessarily unnatural. The idea of what is natural or unnatural needs to be carefully thought through."

Connie paused and returned to her notes. "Here's a quote from Dr. Fretheim that Susan felt was very important.

"The book of Proverbs teaches us that human observation and human experience are very important in discovering the truth about the world. Discoveries of such truths by any discipline cannot be ignored in our biblical, theological, and ethical considerations. To put this point more broadly, the Bible reflects the knowledge of the world that they had at that time. Increasingly smaller numbers of people in our churches insist that, say, the astronomy of the Bible or its considerations about the age of the world, must be accepted by modern Christians in a precise way. This point should be recognized as important regarding any truths recoverable by scientific endeavor."

"Is it Susan's point then," asked Steve, "that the current emphasis upon Gay rights is a kind of human advancement or development and so God's laws for an earlier time need now to be adjusted to meet this new world?"

Connie shook her head. "I don't know, Pastor. Perhaps. All I know is that Sue thinks that the Leviticus laws don't apply in the way we've used them. She says that the laws were put in place because of perversions like those the men wanted to commit in Sodom. So the Leviticus laws condemn heterosexual perversions, not loving, consensual homosexual acts between a man and a man or a woman and another woman. She points to Ezekiel 16:49 ff. where Sodom is condemned for being arrogant, overfed and unconcerned about the poor and needy, not for committing homosexual acts. They were destroyed because of their severe inhospitality, not because of their homosexual acts. Then she points to Matthew 10, where Jesus compares the inhospitable manner in which his disciples will be received to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. The grievous sin of the Sodomites was their breaking of the strict laws of hospitality."

"She goes on to make the same points as Dr. Fretheim does in his paper, namely that all the laws about sexuality in Leviticus 18 and so forth were established so that the people might have a stable sexual community. The real concern about those Levitical

laws for our day is twofold. (1) Does the law continue to have authority for us as law? Or (2) does the law only direct us to the concerns that generated the laws in the first place. Fretheim—and Susan’s—position is that the second is the critical factor. We ignore many other Levitical laws. What church would promote capital punishment for adultery, for instance? Or for cursing one’s parents? Yet if we understand the concern about what was portrayed in the Sodom and Gibeah stories, we might well agree on the death penalty for gang rape.”

“Excuse me, honey,” said Sam, “but are you saying that Susan claims the Leviticus passages do not apply *at all* to homosexual behavior between consenting adults? I mean, this is way off base as far as I’m concerned.”

“I’m not sure my sister would go that far,” replied Connie. “I think she’d come down somewhere on the side of gay marriage, however. Within such a committed relationship she’d want to say its okay, because then the concern of the Old Testament for a stable sexual community is being met.”

Steve was feeling pushed from his long held position about homosexuality. How was he to respond to these arguments? Something he couldn’t put his finger on churned inside him, but he wasn’t sure what it was. He told himself to press on nevertheless. “Connie, I’m really troubled here about what you’re telling me. Let’s set the Old Testament aside for a moment and look at the New Testament passages. It seems to me that the Apostle Paul is very clear . . .”

“Excuse me, Pastor,” Connie cut in, “but before we go there I’ve got one more passage from Susan. I’d like to quote before we go to the New Testament. Okay?”

Steve felt a rising frustration, but once again restrained himself. After all, this was Connie. “Sure, sure. Go ahead,” he muttered.

“Good. Here’s another quote from Fretheim.

‘One particular text that is especially pertinent here is Isaiah 56:1-8 (it has been carefully studied by my colleague Fred Gaiser in *Word & World*, 1994). This text contains the familiar line, "My House shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Leviticus 21 forbids eunuchs from being priests; Deuteronomy 23:1 makes it even more severe, forbidding eunuchs from participating in the

worshipping assembly. Isaiah 56:4-5 explicitly addresses itself to faithful eunuchs and, in effect, welcomes them to "church" and promises these persons who could not produce children an everlasting name within the people of God. Persons who had been singled out as being "against nature" were now proclaimed an integral part of the community of the faithful. This word from God in Isaiah 56 is an outright abrogation of an old law from God. In view of new times and places, God's newer word sets aside God's older word. This text, used by Jesus in overturning the money-changers in the temple (Matthew 21:13), may well have shaped Jesus' vision and that of the New Testament evangelists.”

“So, once again you are saying that evolving circumstances might cause God to change older laws, so long as the basic concern behind the laws is preserved?”

Connie folded her hands on her lap and studied them before she replied. “If I understand my sister, that’s pretty much what she’s saying.”

“Very interesting,” said Steve. “How about we move to the New Testament now. I’m thinking about the Romans 1 passage about men and women giving up natural relations with the opposite sex. Surely that passage is a clear condemnation of homosexual acts.”

“It sure seems so to me too,” said Sam, sliding back again on the couch to turn his gaze upon his wife.

Connie smiled slightly. “Sounds like you two are ganging up on me. All I can say is that Susan and I talked about this passage as well as the one in 1 Corinthians. Once again she drew upon her background as an anthropologist. She says that the perversions and unnatural acts Paul spoke about were either those of heterosexual men having sex with other heterosexual men or pederasty, men using boys. It is unlikely that Paul could have imagined that a same sex relationship could ever be one of love, mutual respect, devotion, and life-long commitment. If today we understand homosexual relationships as loving, monogamous partnerships, then there is a real question whether Paul has anything to say about the topic at all.

“In the case of the women, the meaning of ‘exchange natural relations for unnatural’ is not unambiguous either. It is not even clear that female-to-female

relationships are meant. Susan thinks that Paul has in mind those unconventional forms of intercourse between a man and a woman that Judaism generally rejected because they prevented, or were thought to prevent conception. If that's the case, then Paul may not be referring to lesbian behavior at all. In any event, Romans 1-3 is not primarily a discussion of human behavior, sexual or otherwise, so much as it is a warning to the Roman Christians to humble themselves before God, and not pass judgment on someone else, "for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things" (2:1).

Steve was feeling more and more frustrated as the conversation continued. Who was this sister? He needed time to review what he had read. He wondered why the Synodical papers never addressed the issues Susan had raised about these passages. He began to feel very unequipped to deal with such volatile matters.

One more passage remained, however. Surely *Dr. Susan* (!) would not be able to get rid of that one. "Connie, what about the I Corinthian passage? It says very clearly that "male prostitutes and homosexual offenders" will not inherit the kingdom of God in 6:9-10."

Connie turned a few pages of her notes before replying. "Susan knows some Greek since her doctoral dissertation was on the Greco-Roman world. She says that there are a couple words that need to be interpreted here. The first is *malakoi*. Am I reading this right? I don't know Greek."

Steve nodded. "You're doing fine."

"Sue told me this word is used in Matthew 11:8 and Luke 7:25 in Jesus' reference to "a man dressed in fine clothes," rather than the rough garments of camel-hair that John the Baptist wore. In that context it has no sexual connotations. In using that word in Romans Paul is surely not saying that such 'softies' will be excluded from the kingdom. Actually, it is impossible to know what he meant to connote by the word. Even in English the word soft can refer to someone with a soft heart, one who is very caring, or to a soft head, somebody who doesn't quite get it.

"Of course, as Susan pointed out, words like this can have other meanings too. The NIV and the NRSV both translate this as "male prostitutes." If that is the meaning, then the passage refers to the exploitative use of sex by men who make themselves

available as prostitutes. It doesn't refer to a caring, loving, committed relationship between two homosexual men. Such an idea would probably be inconceivable to the Apostle. However, as we said, the word may not in fact refer to any kind of sexual relationship.

"But Connie," said Pastor Steve, "there are *two* words here." Reaching for his Greek New Testament, Steve turned to the passage and continued. "The second word is *arsenokoitai*, a word that definitely means "men who sleep—with men" and that does have sexual overtones to it."

Connie gazed again at her notes for a moment and said, "Yes, but this is a word created by Paul. It doesn't occur anywhere else in prior Greek literature. It may be Paul's attempt to tie in to the Leviticus 18 and 20 passages. If so, he's referring to male rape, like the men of Sodom wanted to do. On the other hand, Luther translated *arsenokoitai* as "Knabenschänder" (boy abusers). In that case Paul is referring to pederasty. She also says that, based upon later use, the word could refer to men who had sexual relations with both sexes. During that period of Roman history, men were considered healthy and normal if they were attracted equally to males as well as females. Such people today would be called bisexual or ambi-sexual."

"Connie, you have me troubled," said Steve. "I thought I had everything clear when we first talked about this. I want to study what your sister says about these Bible verses some more, maybe even talk with some other pastors, and get back to you."

"For now, let me gather together what we've talked about. Susan believes she and a small percentage of others are born homosexual and can do nothing to change that. So if two homosexuals find one another and fall in love and enter into a loving, caring, committed and permanent marital relationship, its okay?"

"Well," replied Connie, obviously tense, "I think that's where my sister is. Actually, she did mention that she and her partner—her name is Marilyn—have talked about applying for a marriage license and getting married in San Francisco, like a bunch of others have done. She says she knows an E.L.C.A. lady pastor who would officiate at the wedding. And she asked me if I'd stand next to her at the wedding, as her matron of honor."

"Oh my God!" shouted Sam. "You didn't tell me that! What did you tell her?"

Connie began to weep. "I . . . I . . . said I would."

"CONNIE!! How could you? What will the rest of the family think?" Sam sank back into the couch. Confusion and despair were written across his face.

Steve gazed at the stricken couple. How could he help them if he himself was uncertain? Susan's comments about the Bible verses, together with the papers he'd read, raised so many questions. He needed time to think, to pray. "Connie, Sam, please," he said. "Let's all calm down here. No decisions need to be made this very moment. This has been a most difficult session. We all need time to think and pray about this. I suggest we close for today and meet again in two or three days. Would that work for you?"

Both Sam and Connie sat on the couch, neither able to say anything. Finally Sam said, "Yeah, yeah that'll work. What about you Connie?"

Connie nodded her head, but remained unable to reply.

Steve took their hands and began to pray. "Lord Jesus, speak to us in your Word. Give us guidance and a full measure of your Holy Spirit so we may have wisdom to follow your path of love. We need your blessing. Amen."

On Thursday evening of the next week Pastor Steve, Sam and Connie met in Steve's office. After opening the session with a short prayer for guidance, Steve began.

"Connie, I've done a lot of praying about what you said after the voters' meeting. I've also done some research and spoken with a couple close pastor-friends. I assure you that I did not mention your names, because I want to protect the confidentiality of our conversations. Rather I asked them for guidance on the several issues that we talked about. So let me talk to them one at a time."

"Excuse me, Pastor," Connie broke in, "but I'm not sure this is going to help us."

Steve looked at her with a puzzled expression. "Please explain, Connie," he said.

"Well, I got a call from Susan Monday night. She asked me if we'd spoken with you. She wondered what you'd said about the passages and explanations she'd presented. When I told her that you didn't seem convinced, she was furious. I've never seen her like this before. She started to say that she was not coming to the birthday party at all if she and her partner were not to be accepted as normal and full members of the family and of the Lutheran church. When I pleaded with her to reconsider she finally calmed down and

said she'd like to hear what you have to say in response. I gather, however, that no matter what you say, she's not going to change her lifestyle."

Steve glanced at Sam during Connie's report. He saw pain written all over the man's face and wondered what kind of conversations had been going on in that household the past several days. "Connie," he began, "I'm sorry to hear about your sister's attitude. I also realize there may be nothing I can say about these matters that will lead her to change her mind. Nevertheless, may I humbly suggest that we do the best we can in this session to discuss the issues rather than Susan's attitude. I'll do my best to speak objectively. Is that okay with you—with both of you?"

Sam cleared his throat and swallowed. Quietly he said, "Sounds good to me?"

Connie wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. "I'm sorry, Pastor. This has been so very troubling to me. . . Yes, yes, it's fine. I'm ready to listen."

"Good," said Steve. "Let's proceed by starting with the issue about there being a homosexual gene or the idea that sexual orientation is inherited in some manner. The studies that supposedly support this idea were done on the brains of men who died from the HIV virus. Various evaluations of the studies suggest that they were skewed. A rigorous examination of the studies indicates that there is essentially no proof that the sexual orientation of homosexual men and women is determined by genetics. Dr. Jeffrey Satinover writes, ". . . we can guess that we probably *will* find genetic factors that correlate with homosexuality. But we should not even call such factors 'an innate predisposition.' In the proper and precise language of science, they are merely 'risk factors.'" ¹

Sam looked puzzled. "Would you explain what you just said? I'm not sure I understand."

"Well, it's this way. No careful science currently supports the idea that homosexuals have some kind of gene that predisposes them toward their sexual orientation. It could be that in the future somebody might come up with something to indicate some kind of biological connection, but even if they did the human personality is so complex that we'd have to say these factors—whatever they might be—may suggest

¹ Jeffrey Satinover, "The Biology of Homosexuality: Science or Politics," Homosexuality and American Public Life, Christopher Wolfe, editor. Spence Publishing Co. (Dallas, TX), 1997.

such a person could go in that direction, but by no means necessarily so. I would simply have to re-affirm what our Synodical paper said, “To date, no reliable research substantiates a biological or genetic cause for homosexuality.”

“Well, what about the fact that the American Psychological Association and other professional organizations like the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists refuse to view homosexuality as a mental illness?” asked Connie. “They are the professionals, after all.”

“I’m glad you asked that,” said Steve. “In fact this is part of a revolution that did not just happen. It was orchestrated by a small band of very bright men and women—most of whom were gays and lesbians—in a cultural campaign that has been going on since the 1960s. It’s all been a part of a campaign to reinvent human nature and reinvent themselves, to borrow a phrase. The first target was the American Psychiatric Association in 1972-73 (the American Psychological Association followed their lead some years later). Through a series of political maneuvers, lies and outright flimflams the A.P.A. “cured” homosexuality overnight when they got the organization to vote to say that same-sex sex was ‘not a disorder,’ but merely a condition as neutral as left-handedness.”

“Where did you hear that?” asked Connie, a frown on her forehead.

“It’s all documented by Dr. Charles W. Socarides in his book Homosexuality: A Freedom Too Far.² He’s a clinical professor of psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center in New York. He was one of the founders and then president of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality³. He goes on to say in his book that those doctors who did not agree with the vote had their lectures canceled and their academic research papers rejected by the learned journals. TV and movie producers began to do stories promoting homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle. Mainstream publishers turned down books objecting to the gay revolution. Gays and lesbians influenced sex education and seized control of faculty committees in our nation’s colleges. Eventually state legislatures nullified laws against sodomy. And normal

² Margrave Books, Phoenix, Arizona, 1995.

³ NARTH (<http://www.narth.com>)

people are told they are homophobic or homo-hating bigots if they object to what's being said or written.”

“See, see. Didn't I tell you?” said Sam.

Connie stared at him with a look that could kill and he said no more. “It seems to me,” she continued, “that bigotry works both ways.”

“Sadly, it does,” replied Pastor Steve. “We're in the midst of a revolution in the way our culture deals with sexual morality and there are extremes on all sides. In many cases people aren't talking with one another. They are instead shouting and condemning. My only point is that what happened in the A.P.A. is no proof of anything other than the fact that there has been a carefully planned program of desensitization. Dr. Socarides points to a little tract written by Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, a couple of gay men who outlined the process. The tract was called *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 1990's*.⁴ That little book urged the use of the same brainwashing techniques adopted by the communists in China. And it has worked. Please refer to the N.A.R.T.H. website. You can learn much more there about these issues there.”

“Okay, I will,” said Connie, “but that still doesn't respond to the Bible verses Susan mentioned.”

“For starters, I'd like to point to the Bible verse from Sue in Matthew 19 where our Lord said some are eunuchs because they were born that way. As you know, a eunuch is one who has been castrated. That horrible practice was common in those days. It meant that such men were incapable of the sex act. Those born that way are those who are likewise impotent, but not because they were castrated. In turn, there are some men who place the work of Christ's kingdom above marriage. Even some Lutheran pastors have made this kind of commitment. That passage, as well as the other one in Acts 8, is not talking about homosexuals. Consequently it is out of place to quote it in this discussion.”

“We figured that one out on our own,” said Sam. “That was one of the things we talked through together this past week.”

“I thought you might have,” said Steve. “Let's move into some other significant issues brought up by Dr. Fretheim. I want to focus especially on the issue of putting

⁴ Plume Books, 1990.

human experience and observation above the Bible, even suggesting that the Bible is outdated because it reflects the knowledge of the world of long ago. When he suggests that the Biblical considerations about the age of the world are outdated, for instance, he is really saying that the Bible is a mixture of human ignorance and divine revelation. It's a kind of living document that needs updating. So as we Christians grow in our knowledge through experience, observation and reasoning, God is revealing new things like the true age of the earth. So all of the human errors misconceptions in the Bible can and must be corrected.

“Now I don't want to go down a road that leads to a long discussion about the inspiration and validity of the Bible. That will get us far off our topic, but I do want to point out that behind that discussion is the assumption or the unspoken presupposition by the critics of divine Biblical inspiration that human observation and reason (call it science if you will) are *above* the Bible and are therefore capable of correcting the Bible's human limitations, those areas of the Bible where human ignorance, culture and prejudice prevail.

“When you apply the criteria of human reason to the issue of Gay rights, you conclude we now have human science that enables us to correct outdated Biblical views. After all these years we can now say that God's real plan is to maintain what Fretheim calls ‘a sexually stable community,’ made up of all kinds of couples, both heterosexual and homosexual. He does not clarify what that means other than to suggest that same-sex marriage must now be considered as valid and as God-pleasing as heterosexual marriage, provided both types of couples live in some kind of consensual and loving relationship. Nor does he not comment on the possibility of marriage also being defined as the union of multiple persons who agree to live together consensually, the kind of thing practiced by certain Mormon groups and, of course, Muslims.

“That's where we end up, Connie, when we follow Fretheim's path. He does not relate God's Law to God's ultimate revelation in the Gospel. He chooses rather to mock certain parts of the Old Testament law, insisting such outdated views did not come from God, but from the prejudice and ignorance of the writers of Leviticus—and in his view there were many besides Moses.

“While I’m at it, allow me to reconsider the Levitical laws about sex, especially those in Leviticus 18. Those civil laws governed a nation in order to enforce the seriousness of the marriage vows. We know very clearly that the Law in whatever form it takes does not alter or change the human heart. Its major purpose is to reveal the sinful rebellion of our human hearts. Civil laws do, however, act to curb the sinful inclinations of our hearts—at least to some extent. What their civil laws pointed to was what the Lord had done by removing from the bondage of their slavery in Egypt. He had graciously called them again into a loving relationship with Himself. They were, after all, the children of Israel, those people who carried the promise that through the promised seed of Abraham, the One now revealed to us as Jesus of Nazareth, all nations were to be blessed.⁵ Therefore, as God’s covenant people, they were bound by God’s mercy to submit to him and obey him and all his laws.

“When you read Leviticus 18—and I urge you to do that—you find some very strong prohibitions against sexual relations with close relatives, starting with one’s mother and on to one’s sister-in-law. These laws were enforced more severely than any others. Why? Because a nation’s laws will protect what its people consider fundamental to their existence.

“What was most important in the laws from Leviticus? Two things. First, the Lord God values the family and the principle of *one flesh* above all other relationships. Let me read to you from Matthew 19 when our Lord was tempted by the Pharisees to enter with them into a debate about divorce.”

Steve reached for his Bible and began, “Haven’t you read that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh?’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate’ (Matthew 19:4-6).”

“The apostle Paul emphasized this as well in his first letter to the Corinthians.”

Steve turned the pages and began to read, “Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, ‘The two will become one flesh’ (1 Corinthians 6:16).”

⁵ Galatians 3:15-25

At this Connie held up her hand as if to stop her pastor. She had a puzzled look upon her face. “Excuse me, Pastor Steve; I’m not arguing about what you’re saying, but I don’t see what all this has to do with my sister and the whole issue of homosexuality.”

“Bear with me, Connie. I’m getting there. My first point is that at the beginning of the twentieth century many, many theologians, Lutheran, protestant and Roman Catholic, began to follow the lead of their European teachers and adopt the presuppositions of the higher critics of the Bible. These people said that the Bible has many human errors in it, that it is not the word for word inspired Word of God and that through human reason and science we are gaining new insights into God, His will and His plans for the human race. That’s why we have a writer like Dr. Fretheim who can claim that the *discovery*, if you will, of consensual and loving homosexual marriage is a new revelation from God given to us in our day. We Christians can, therefore, have no proper and God-pleasing objections to it.

“What this has done, essentially, is to set sex free from God. We no longer have any law of creation, that very law to which our Lord Jesus pointed in his response to the Pharisees when he said, ‘Haven’t you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female,’ and so forth. Instead we have no idea what the Creator had in mind other than that somehow He wants a sexually stable community. I have to assume that refers to no divorce, although that’s not certain either.

“What, in fact, has happened since the 1960s is that our entire culture has been set from any laws from God. Sexual intercourse itself is autonomous and romantic attraction—or lustful desire—is supposedly the proper foundation for any type of lasting and so-called loving relationship. In that we are following the lead of European culture, now far beyond us in so-called tolerance. The boundaries set up by God and reflected in the Levitical laws and elsewhere in the Bible are gone. In our culture we who refuse to set sex free are laughingly considered a narrow-minded and outdated minority. Free sex is touted and promoted in the media, movies, TV and books. The sexual act is now so explicitly portrayed that we have nothing any longer at which to be shocked.

“Perhaps you remember an old book that set the pace back in the 1970s by portraying all manner of sexual relations in explicit drawings. It was titled *The Joy of Sex*. That book was later followed by *The Joy of Gay Sex* and *The Joy of Lesbian Sex* with the

same type of unambiguous renderings. These books were but a tiny hint in those days of the thousands upon thousands of books and magazines, movies and DVDs widely available in the present time in any respectable bookstore.

“On top of that we’ve been sold a string of lies about human sexuality by the likes of Masters and Johnson, Alfred Kinsey and their followers. As a result of our new freedom we have rampant and rising rates of rape, divorce, unwed teen-age mothers, and thousands upon ten thousands of orphaned children.

“I need to make this point very clear, Connie. Since the outer boundaries set by God’s law have began to crumble, since sex has now become self-governing in our culture, sexual experience between members of the same sex is unavoidable. Here is why. If your sexual goal is pleasure and that pleasure is independent of the *one flesh* concept of marriage laid down by the Creator, and if you are free to deny that there even is such a principle, then there is no foundation left by which to judge any alternative practices other than what feels good to you. There are no objective laws left to guide us about the Creator’s will. Look at all the grief we have about our own Supreme Court and abortion. We are left to flounder about while our human science and reason come up with some new type of consensus long hidden from us by our Creator—if we even have a Creator. It is no wonder then that homosexuals demand that we show them compassion and pass laws in favor of same-sex marriage. They are, after all, only doing what it is their nature to do.”

“So what’s left?” asked Sam, now gaining some courage.

“Well,” said Steve, “Leviticus 18 anticipates that as well when it says, ‘Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion’ (Leviticus 18:23). That verse marks the current boundary line in our culture. We’re not there yet in any widespread way, but we’re certainly headed in that direction, especially since our *science* denies any spiritual side to our nature and claims that we are nothing more than intelligent animals evolved over countless millennia from lower forms of life. Already bestiality is portrayed frequently in pornographic books, DVDs and on certain websites. If we accept homosexuality as we have accepted adultery and abortion, bestiality will be next. It was recently suggested in such TV series as Rome. Perhaps it

will some day come to be accepted in our culture with mythic overtones similar to those in Rome's corrupt culture.”

At this Connie leaped from her chair and shouted, “What are you saying? Are you accusing my sister of . . . of . . . something as filthy as bestiality?” And with that she began to pick up her purse and coat and head for the door.

Pastor Steve remained on his chair, doing everything in his power to retain his calm. “Connie, please,” he said quietly. “I’m not talking specifically about your sister here. I’m only making the same point that our Lord Jesus made. The Lord also emphasized, and I quote, ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 5:17-19).”

Connie sat down and began to weep. Sam reached for her hand, but she drew it away. Steve waited until she gained her composure. Everyone was silent for several minutes. Finally Sam broke the silence to ask, “You said you had two points to make.”

“I do,” replied Steve. “So far I’ve only spoken about the Law and what it points to. As you both know the major purpose of the Law is to uncover our sin and lead us to acknowledge it before God. That being said, we have still not heard about God’s ultimate plan and will revealed in the Gospel. For that I turn to yet one more *one flesh* passage in the New Testament.”

Steve picked up his Bible again and began, “I’m reading from Ephesians 5: ‘Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

“‘Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up to her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as

their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body’ (v.22-30).

Steve put his Bible on his lap and looked up at both Connie and Sam. “I do not need to explain that passage to you two, because you embody it in your lives. You both love Jesus deeply and understand that Jesus has made you members of His body, the church. I also know that you are both committed to the *one flesh* understanding of marriage. You are one in your marriage, even though we all know your marriage, as with most, has been strained from time to time.”

“But Jesus has always forgiven us for our failures,” said Connie quietly, “and we’ve learned to forgive one another.”

“This helps me to make my second and most important point. As Paul says, Jesus feeds and cares for us in the church. He does this with the Gospel and with the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Notice then what Paul writes after he has made that point. I quote, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become *one flesh*. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church’ (v.31-32).”

Steve paused for a moment before continuing, waiting until he was certain both Connie and Sam were looking at him. “Connie, Sam, listen to me very carefully here. Paul says that in the original account of Adam and Eve becoming man and wife recorded in Genesis 2, we already have the Gospel. The full meaning of Adam’s and Eve’s union remained a mystery, hidden until the coming of Jesus. It was prophesied, for instance, by Isaiah when he, speaking for the Lord, said that one day the Lord would rejoice over Israel as his bride (Isaiah 62). Christ has now come to be that bridegroom, the second Adam, the husband who sacrificed himself to become the risen husband of the second Eve, the church. He and she are *one flesh*. He lives in her and she in Him. She has no life outside of Him. The two are bound together for all eternity, never to be separated.

“Let me take this a little further by reflecting upon another passage that speaks about this mystery. In his first letter to Timothy Paul writes, ‘Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He (Christ) appeared in the flesh, was justified by the

Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory' (3:16).

“The Greek word translated as godliness (*eusebeios*) refers to the worship of God, to piety, to the best and truest devotion to Him. In the letter's fourth chapter the Apostle emphasizes that the exercise of such piety brings the blessing of life now and in the future (4:8). In other words, Christ who has appeared in the flesh is our life. We believers are united to Him by faith. In this union we are *one flesh*, both now and forever. He lives in us and we live in Him. We have no other life than His. Paul teaches us to say, ‘I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20). All true devotion and piety flow from the life of Christ.

“And who is Christ? Paul writes in Philippians that He is by His very nature God. He has always existed as God. He did not have to pillage and steal His equality with God (2:6). As we recite in the creed, He is ‘very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.’ In and through Christ the Father pours out His grace upon His children. In and through Christ we become one with the Father.

“This is the deeper meaning of our Christian marriages. In our marriages we bear witness to the Gospel, to the *one flesh* that we are in Christ, to Christ living in us and we in Him. Christ is our husband. We are His bride. The Second Adam and His bride are bound together in an eternal *one flesh* covenant. Consequently for believers in Christ there can be no other definition of marriage. God has established marriage as the union of one man and one woman. This *one flesh* union points beyond itself to the union we have in Christ.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Apostle Paul is calling us back to God's original intention for marriage, the mutual submission of husband and wife to one another out of faith in their common Lord. This is a lifelong task of weaving lives together. Thus believing wives submit to their husbands as to the Lord and believing husbands love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy. This is not servile obedience, but a loving adapting and fitting in with one another. This is a dynamic relationship, filled with life and love, the same love that moved the Lord Jesus to save, cleanse, sanctify, nourish, cherish and glorify us, His bride. In this manner both

husband and wife reflect the grace we all receive in Christ. And please note the sharp contrast between this view of marriage and those that make the husband superior to his inferior wife, his servant, even his slave.

Any attempt at redefining marriage as the union of two members of the same sex is a rejection of Christ's revelation of the *one flesh* union of Himself and His bride.

"You two, Connie and Sam, are *one flesh* in Christ and in your marriage union you reflect your faith in Christ. You do that, Connie, by submitting in love to Sam and you, Sam, do it by loving Connie in the same way as Christ loved the church. In your Christian home your children are raised, protected and taught to follow your example. Your lives are your witness to Christ."

"I know what you're saying," said Sam, his face downcast. "I only wish I knew more about how to love and care for her that way. So often I make a mess of it and . . ."

Connie slid next to him on the couch. Putting one hand in his and gently lifting his chin with the other until he was looking into her eyes she said, "Sam, darling, you mean so much to me. You *are* my head. You feed, protect and care for me and the children in so many ways. Please do not be so hard on yourself."

Then turning toward Pastor Steve she said, "You've been a great help, Pastor. I don't think we need to revisit those other passages from Paul or the Gospels to argue about whether they are speaking about homosexuality or other kinds of perversions. What you've pointed out about the *one flesh* understanding of marriage clarifies everything. Marriage is indeed the union of one man and one woman. That was Christ's plan from the beginning. Moreover, the fact that marriage is a picture of Christ's love for his bride, the church, emphasizes the tremendous mercy and love of God for us all. Homosexual marriage twists and perverts all of that.

"I think I know what we as a family have to do now. I love Susan so much and I want her to know that, but what she is doing . . . Well, I'm not sure she'll accept what I have to say. In fact, I'm fairly certain she will not, but I know Daddy will. And so will Mama. We want Sue with us for the celebration, but we won't commune together. We'll, well, we'll have to work around that somehow. And we will."

"I'm certain you will," said Steve.

“How did Sue come to adopt this lifestyle if she wasn’t born that way?” asked Sam, shifting to the edge of his chair as if to stand up.

“There’s no simple answer to that Sam,” replied Steve. “It was a process involving her personality, all the experiences of her maturing years and, of course, the powerful influences of our culture.”

“Do people ever move out and decide to become heterosexual?” quizzed Sam, a troubled expression written across his face.

“Of course,” said Steve, “but it isn’t easy. There are people and organizations that specialize in that work. If you want to read about it, I can refer you to them and to several books written by people who have returned to heterosexual lives.”

“Naw, not for me right now,” said Sam. “I just wanted to ask. We got plenty of our own problems to deal with at the moment, but what you brought out, Pastor, well, we needed you to help us. And you have—greatly. For that I thank you.”

Sensing that the session was at an end, Steve reached out to them both. As they held hands he led them in prayer. “Lord Jesus, we thank you have you have called us into your body. We praise you that you have made us one flesh with you in our baptisms. We bless you for feeding us with your own precious Body and Blood week after week. We pray for Susan and her friend. We pray for all who have become deceived by the lies and confusion of Satan. We humble ourselves before you and ask that you will teach us to love them all, even as you love us. Bless this beautiful couple. Bless their family and help them to celebrate together the many years of blessings given to their father. We pray all this in your precious name, dear Jesus. Amen.”

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Leadership University – website providing information to conservative Christian leaders. Search for homosexuality –a large number of articles.
http://search.ccci.org/search?q=homosexuality&sitesearch=www.leaderu.com&site=clm_all&output=xml_no_dtd&client=clm_leaderu&sort=date%3AD%3AL%3Ad1&proxystylsheet=clm_leaderu&oe=UTF-8&btnG.x=80&btnG.y=13

National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality: N.A.R.T.H.
(www.narth.com)

“We believe that clients have the right to claim a gay identity, or to diminish their homosexuality and to develop their heterosexual potential.”

On the Origins of Homosexuality: Is a Person "Born that Way"?

The best overall summary of most respected researchers is that homosexuality (like most other psychological conditions) is due to a combination of *social, biological, and psychological factors*. <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/narth/homorig.html>

Organizations offering ministry to homosexuals and families

Basic beliefs:

1. That homosexual and lesbian behavior is a learned behavior and that God created people to be heterosexual.
2. That homosexuality and lesbianism is not really a sexual problem, but rather a search to fulfill an unmet love need.

- **Exodus International** Nationwide: 888-264-0877.
(<http://www.exodusinternational.org>)
- **Genesis Counseling**, Tustin, California.
(<http://www.genescounseling.org>)
- **Keys Ministry** (<http://www.keysministry.com/>)
- **Living Stones Ministries** On the west coast: 626-963-6683.
<http://www.livingstonesministry.org>)
- **Parents and Friends (PFOX)**. On the east coast: 703-360-2225.(<http://www.pfox.org>)

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What About Homosexuality? By *Alvin L. Barry* (former LC-MS President) (http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/wa_homosexuality.pdf)

What Causes Homosexuality? - A Review of Scientific Studies Examining What The Causes May Be. By *K. Ripston*, University of Massachusetts Amherst. (<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~kripston/homosexuality>)