

The unknown author of Hebrews in chapter 11 sets out to illustrate examples of great faith. He lists 17 leading Old Testament characters from Abel to Samuel only two of whom are women: Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and our friend Rahab. Deborah, the Joan d'Arc of the Old Testament, is conspicuous by her absence from this list. But Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, is certainly in good company in this chapter! Patriarchs, Judges, Kings, and Prophets are her companions in faith and we are particularly told (11:2) that she received divine approval.

In his emphasis on the need for good works in addition to faith James uses this woman (2:25) and Abraham as his two examples. Again—what noble company we find her in! Thus on both grounds so strongly espoused by the Church—faith and works—Rahab is a classic positive example.

What is scripture saying here? How does the lesson relate to the homosexual in today's society?

Like Rahab, many a homosexual is stigmatized by always being identified on the level of sexual promiscuity. Yet like Rahab any homosexual can become an instrument in God's hands. We have no indication that this woman changed professions after the conquest of her city; though to be sure, there is likewise no indication that she didn't. But the point is that regardless of her sexual morality she aligned herself with God and He worked His will through her. In later days two different New Testament authors, both aware of her moral reputation and her role as a collaborator, nevertheless realized that God's mercy and power has been made manifest through this individual.

In working out His master plan of destiny God uses all types and conditions of people. In the eyes of her biographers Rahab was a sinful wo-

man of low estate yet God worked through just such a person. She had put her faith in Him ahead of country or national gods and she then put her faith into action.

Scripture abounds with characters who were less than perfect by contemporary American standards. Indeed, even in God's sight many were sinners but again and again we see God working His will via them; sometimes in spite of themselves. How easy it is for us mere mortals to judge another when we are unaware that behind some outward expression the will of God is being brought forward. James must remind us, "But who are you that you judge your neighbor?" (4:12b) Jesus was misjudged by his own family and by the hometown folk of Nazareth.

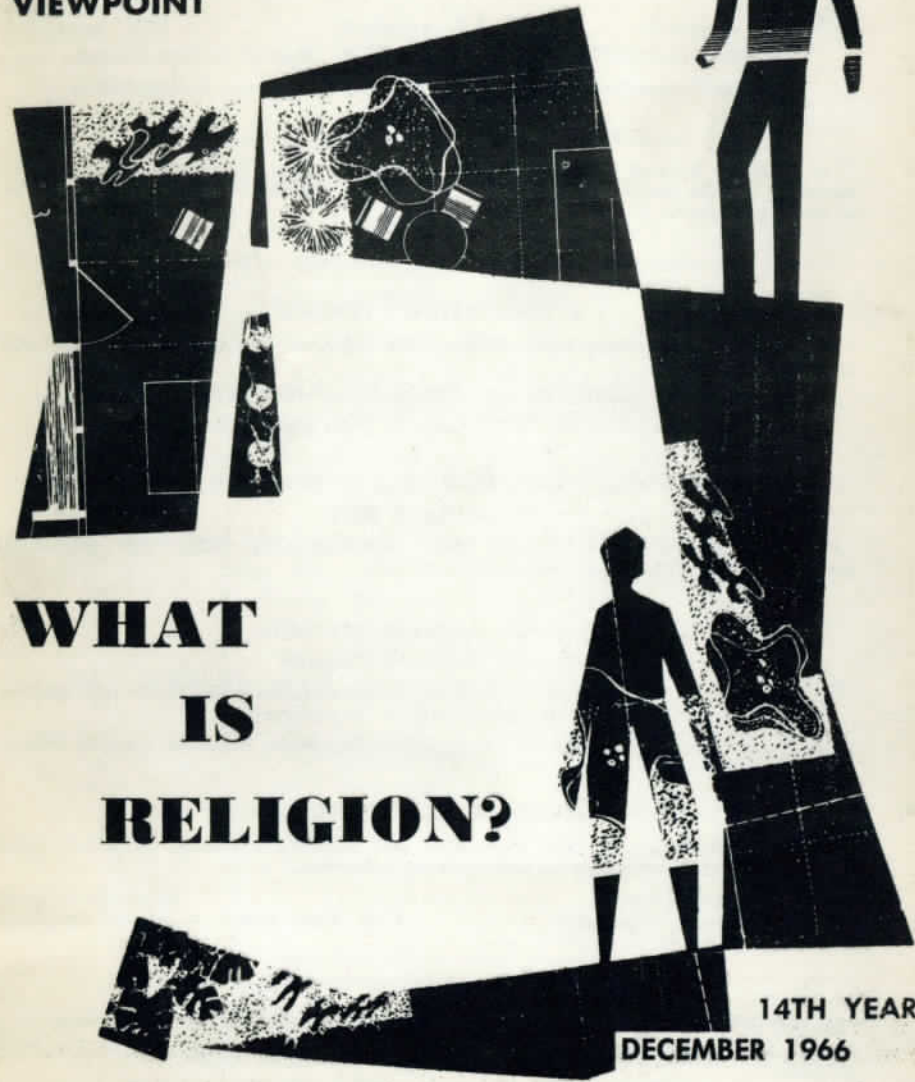
So, too, the homosexual. In the eyes of their contemporaries they are sinful persons of low estate yet God does work through such people if they place their faith in Him and then put their concerted faith into action.

In addition we see in Rahab, this Bible woman of ill repute, that God has not despised, rejected, condemned His children. As James says in 2:13b ". . . yet mercy triumphs over judgment." Our Heavenly Father—the Father of Jesus Christ—continues to show His mercy to harlot, heterosexual, homosexual in that He bids each one find himself or herself through faith and active works.

In effect this Bible story of Rahab is saying to today's overt homosexual: you can be an active laymen in your church or synagogue. I suspect there were other harlots in Jericho besides Rahab. But the point is she wan't just a harlot. She became a servant for her God because of her faith in Him. Likewise the homosexual. He need not be just a homosexual; for like Rahab he, too, may become a follower of the most high God and a co-worker with Him.

one

THE HOMOSEXUAL VIEWPOINT



FIFTY CENTS

WHAT IS RELIGION?

14TH YEAR
DECEMBER 1966

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EDITORIAL

Since 1950, Anglo-American Churches in America and England have shown increasing awareness of the moral problems raised by the presence of homosexuals, male and female, in their midst. There is nothing new about this condition. Homosexuality has not just recently come into existence, though it seems to have come more into public awareness. But since Justinian's time, most Churches have ignored the subject, or reacted hysterically, in mortal fear of fire and brimstone. Liberal or compassionate opinions, if any, were expressed in secret.

A few Churches are now in a limited way re-evaluating the rigid premises on the basis of which they have for so long cast stones of condemnation at homosexuals. The gratifying resolutions of the Church of England, of British Methodists, Quakers and Roman Catholics, and now of the United Church of Canada, as well as individual statements by several American ministers, pointing out that homosexuality is not of necessity a sinful condition, and that homosexual acts, while perhaps sinful, ought not be prosecuted by the state where not involving minors, force or public indecency, do much to repair the serious rift that has come between homosexuals and religion in our society.

Does this rift need repair? From the Christian viewpoint, where it really is Christian, homosexuals would need the Church's healing ministry as much as any group, and perhaps more, where they suffer as outcasts. For those homosexuals who honestly feel no need of religion, there is no personal problem, other than concern for friends caught on this demoralizing dilemma. Non-religious persons may even feel that any situation which points up the shortcomings of religion in modern society, and which turns people against such superstitions, is ultimately to the good. ONE is non-partisan in such disputes as between Christian and agnostic, Republican and Democrat. Our concern is with helping homosexuals to live happier, better lives. And most homosexuals we come across seem currently convinced that they do need religion, and specifically need acceptance by the Church of their choice.

A chill, Pauline atmosphere, charged more with guarding the faithful from contamination by sinners than with Christianity's historic mission to sinners, has made homosexuals conspicuously unwelcome in most churches—Catholic, Baptist, Unitarian, whatever. Many remain in the churches anyhow, generally living a lie, their strong religious impulse

(seeming almost stronger than in most heterosexuals) overriding all contradiction.

Of essence is the homophile's attitude toward his homosexuality. Few churches have room for him if he is frank, healthy and self-accepting. If he condemns and fights that part of himself, then *theoretically*, the Church should welcome him as a penitent sinner, and try to aid him in self-castration. Since all men are considered sinners, is the homosexual worse than the rest?

But are even the advanced Churches offering the homophile a grudging half-a-loaf? He might be grateful for that much, when so recently he was offered a stone, or dry crumbs at best. But is Ananias' stingy offering enough for the Church to give or for homosexuals to receive? Homophiles have given unstintingly to the Church. If all the hidden homosexuals, male and female, were suddenly removed from the Church today, or from the roster of the Saints, most church youth groups, choirs, seminaries, Holy Orders and charitable work would collapse. Up to now, these hidden millions have suffered in individual guilt-ridden silence, given their all to the Church, yet knowing they would be driven out if their secret were revealed.

Modern Churches have all but subordinated the Love ideal to procreation (a concern foreign to the early Church), but surely Love is something more than rutting. Despite a few random, probably mistranslated verses, the homophile can see no consistent scriptural or other reason to degrade that Love which David praised as "passing the love of women," and to which Ruth gave her inspired pledge.

Ought we view the Church as a jealous keeper of traditional intolerance, or as guardian of man's best instincts, a sound moral guide in a changing world? The Church in the past moved from an anti-sexual position to one approving and sanctifying heterosexuality. Can we hope that it may in time approve the love of David? First hostile to all sex, considering heterosexual marriage a necessary evil—allowable for weaklings—the Church in time espoused heterosexuality as sacramental and a Christian virtue. Now many Churches even frown on unwed clergymen. And the notion of heterosexual romantic love has been blown up in a few centuries from a despised heresy (which homosexuals were suspected of originating) to one of the most pervasive, spiritualized ideals in Christendom.

Meanwhile, all homophile acts, loves or leanings have until this decade suffered increasing religious condemnation as the vilest of abominations. Whatever a few honestly Christian ministers have said in private to the contrary, this destructive attitude was the official dogma of all Churches until those scandal-induced re-evaluations in England gave homosexuals a few grudging considerations.

If the homophile asks for a loaf, will the Church give him a stone, as in the past? Or is the Church's Christian responsibility fulfilled by granting him half a loaf? Some Churches now reluctantly concede that the homosexual condition is not of itself evil, yet they still demand that homosexuals deny themselves the rewards of homophile love. Are they not still maintaining an impassible gulf between the homophile and the Church? Will the Churches ever be Christian enough to bridge that gulf?

—Lyn Pedersen

The Church and the Homosexual

V. Rev. G. P. T. Paget King

It is unfortunately the fact that many homosexuals are deeply drawn to religion, but, on bringing their problems to the clergy, they are too often repelled with horror by men who know nothing of the subject — and thus are not merely driven away from the Church, but have deep guilt feelings implanted within them.

In view of the number of homosexuals and bisexuals in the world, one would expect that this problem would be dealt with thoroughly in the seminaries and in books of pastoral theology; in fact it is ignored. I have no idea how many clergy are readers of ONE (it ought to be sent to as many clergy as possible), but I imagine there must be a number. Here is a very valuable contribution one can make to the work of ONE, Incorporated—get together and work out a rational pastoral theology in the whole sphere of homosexuality. This may probably involve a complete re-appraisal of traditional Christian teaching in the whole realm of sex, and a new evaluation of the writings of St. Paul.

The two historic facts on which the whole subject depends are, first, that Christianity depends on and grows out of the Judaic religion, and second, that it came to birth in a period of extreme sexual license. For purely historical reasons the propagation of children was vital to Jewish existence, and as a quite natural result any sexual act which did not lead to conception was felt to be a crime against the nation—and therefore a sin against God. The apostles of the new religion had this teaching deeply ingrained in them; and when they went forth to preach the Gospel

of Love to a world given over to unbridled lust, it was natural that they should, like St. Paul, fulminate against immorality.

As a result of all this, it became a part of the Church's teaching (as it still is) that the sexual act is only lawfully performed between husband and wife, and then for the purpose of procreation only. (The Catholic theology of marriage, in which the union between husband and wife is a type of the union between Christ and His Church, is also important in this connection.)

Until the Reformation, while this remained the official teaching of the Church, the clergy were well versed in human nature and were too realistic to expect the average man always to live up to such austere teaching. It was the effort that counted — not how often one fell, but how hard one tried to do better. And there were far worse sins than the sexual ones.

It was the Reformation which really bedevilled the subject. For a living, teaching Church there was substituted an infallible Book—in place of the Incarnate Word, the written word. At a time when Christian love was forgotten and un-Christian hate split the Church of God, it was natural that texts should become battle-cries, and equally natural it should be the negative "Thou shalt nots" which became popular, rather than the positive "Thou shalt." But by now the religious leaders were going to war with their brethren, amassing wealth, claiming usury and generally committing most of the sins condemned by Christ. Lest their followers should criticize them for this, it was essential

to divert their attention from these things by fulminating against *their* sins — and from now on any sexual sin is utterly condemned; sexual sins, in fact, become almost the only sins. And this situation lasted until the present century. Any sexual act outside marriage, and any sexual act within marriage which could not lead to procreation, is sinful. Disobedience to Christ's supreme command to love one another is no sin at all.

Two world wars and a general slide from religion have led in our own days to a general abandonment of these narrow standards. Only the Catholic Church today maintains her old teaching, and every Catholic priest knows that that teaching (especially in regard to contraception) is disregarded by numbers of her faithful adherents. Only when it is a case of homosexuality do the old thunders still sound forth — and that even where no homosexual act is performed. One whose inclinations are homosexual is ipso facto an emissary of the devil, unfit to live.

Why is this? Partly no doubt because the heterosexual is usually quite unable to understand the homosexual — and what we do not understand we fear. Partly because we all tend to condemn in others aspects of our own personality which we refuse to recognize in ourselves. And partly because to denounce the homosexual provides a scapegoat and removes the necessity for looking too closely at heterosexual sins.

Is there in fact any justification in Christian teaching and theology for regarding homosexuality as superlatively evil? Certainly none that I can find. If we accept the traditional teaching that any sexual act not capable of leading to conception is sinful, then any homosexual act will be sinful. I am not here arguing the rights or wrongs of this view: I am

concerned here only to point out that if this is so, there are many other sex acts which are far more sinful than an act between two consenting adults of the same sex, especially if that act is an expression of mutual affection. Adultery today is taken almost for granted, yet it is obviously far more sinful than the homosexual act, if only because the rights of other parties are being usurped. I myself would argue that masturbation is more sinful than a homosexual act, inasmuch as it is an act of solitary gratification and, therefore, selfish. Contraception, at least to a Catholic, should be a much graver sin since by deliberate act a potential child is thereby deprived of the possibility of existence. In fact a careful examination of all the sexual sins will show that the sexual union of two adults of the same sex, drawn together by love (and God is love), is, at worst, a less grave sin than any other sexual sin. Yet many of the others are committed regularly by good Christians without any feelings of guilt, and without any serious condemnation. And it needs to be remembered, too, that sexual sins, springing as they do from our human nature, are in themselves far less serious than such grave sins as hatred, anger, malice and uncharitableness — which many Christians never seem to recognize as sins at all.


I am a Catholic priest. I accept my Church's teaching. I believe that every unmarried man and woman should *ideally* live in complete chastity. But chastity is a positive state — not a mere negative state of neurotic repressions — and it can be attained only by those who have advanced far along the path of spiritual attainment. For the average Christian it is not yet possible. Why should we condemn the homosexual and not the fornicator? Why should we condemn anyone? Christ condemned hypocrisy

—the woman taken in adultery he forgave. But hypocrisy seems to be regarded as a virtue today.

There must inevitably be homosexuals among the clergy of all denominations, as there are in every other walk of life. I call on them, and on all clergy who are sufficiently sym-

pathetic to read the pages of ONE, to get together to work out a positive pastoral approach to this whole problem. In the homosexual world are thousands who are hungering for spiritual comfort: we clergy desperately need clear guidance if we are not to send them away empty.

James Barr



On Organized Religion

Today, the Thought and Art of the world suffer from a truly splendid system of censorship designed via the Apostles' Creed to protect us from the horrors of sinful reality and executed to send us in carload lots to prison, impotency, or the psychoanalyst's chambers. The great argument of organized religion is as hollow as it is big: "We must be right. Look at the good organized religion has accomplished. If you take it away, what will be left to guide the poor ignorant and the ignorant poor?"

One might think systems of government, law, morals and social behavior had never developed before the year One, when we all know that communities of cow-worshippers, pig-scorn-

ers, blood-guzzlers and so forth have always functioned normally and lived peacefully within trading distance of one another so long as one group didn't get hungry or fancy the other for entertainment purposes as lion food. One is almost tempted to believe that the laws of economics, if not art, are nearly as important to mankind as the laws of God. As for the good that organized religion has accomplished, try balancing it with religious wars, persecution, frustration, poverty, and plain degrading beholdenness to other more powerful mortals, possessed too often with the instincts of brutes. The excesses of faith have broken up as many homes as the excesses of alcohol, dope, or vice. We must not ask organized religion to annihilate itself however, as it does us, but

only to contain itself within the limits of fair play and **stay out of politics, business, and art.**

More men have lived by the laws of economic necessity than have died by the laws of any priesthood, and the world is no worse a place now than it has ever been, contrary to the carefully calculated fears of religious and political leaders. Actually it grows steadily better in spite of the leashes and muzzles of those seers and knowers of the unseeable and unknowable.

But the soul saving politicians never stop trying. Within such groups lie the witch hunters of homosexuality. Yet ironically, the doctrines they preach swell the ranks of homosexuality every year. In our fight for survival, which is exactly what we are facing today, it behooves us to go to our church leaders and ask, "What do you think of homosexuality within the barbed wire of your beliefs?" If the answer is, "God help you, and we will try to with all the wisdom and understanding we can muster," you have made a rare and lucky choice. But if the answer is, in effect, "You are

abominable and vile and I intend to use my congregation to force our lawmakers to outlaw you," then batten down your hatches and get ready for a blow. You will be attacked (from the safety of their pulpits) by these dedicated servants of humanity. Most churches will reject you. They may offer you a deal and if you do not care for your integrity, you may do fairly well for yourself, especially at testimonial time. If you **do** care and you insist that any agreement give you as much consideration as any other member of the congregation, prepare for the worst. You'll probably be the subject of next Sunday's diatribe.

I have heard of only one church, located in Southern California, that opened its doors to meetings of homosexuals each week. But in this year of Our Lord 1954, the doors were slammed shut when the minister resigned. Where will it end? Perhaps, eventually, Nature will be allowed to show us the face of reality once more and we can dare live as **human beings** possessed of freedom and equality as Nature intended.



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GUILT AND THE HOMOSEXUAL

RT. REV. THOMAS MARTIN and
FATHER BERNARD NEWMAN

Certain Christians of the Orient, never influenced by the inquisition or later puritanism, give us an opportunity to see how many trends of religious thought have been led far afield. Varied interpretations, mistranslations and twistings of the words of Jesus the Christ cause many people to wonder just what is right. By our nature all of us who are sincere prefer to do what is good. Yet, what is good? "Right and good are the law to one's inner self, that innermost voice or urge." Not wantonness; far from it. It is the natural desires and traits a person is known to possess without influence or national custom.

To go back before the time of Christ, we find in the Bhagavad-Gita, Lesson XVIII, verse 47: "There is more happiness in doing one's own law without excellence, than in doing another's law well. In following the natural God-given traits one is never strained in his conscience." Not all of us are students and quite a few fail to comprehend mechanics, so in our work we progress when we follow our aptitude; that is when we listen to that inner voice. So, when following this method regarding our expressions and actions in love we go forward, evading the narrow path-



way. However, many will tell us that they were "taught this is very wrong." And this inner self is a part of the homophile, something that Jesus did not condemn, even though the Old Testament is very strong in the statements against these actions. Christ said he came to teach us a new law and had these things been obnoxious to him he would most certainly have lashed out against them.

Let us look into the incident of the Centurion's "servant" as is related in two of the Gospels: St. Matthew VIII, verses 5-13, and again in St. Luke VII, verses 2-10. This records one of the miracles the Savior performed in healing the Centurion's servant. St. Matthew uses the Greek word "pais"—meaning a youth. This word was so often used in relation to the youthful lover of a Roman soldier, especially an officer of the armies. Even the Centurion, knowing the hatred of the homophile by all the Jewish authorities, said that he was not worthy for Christ to enter under his roof—still, Jesus said: "I have not found so great a faith, no not in Israel." Take this and the fact that not once did Jesus make a statement against any homophile practice, how then can a Christian stand up and condemn what Christ did not?—Only by misinterpretations and the jumping to conclusions by early zealots who were troubled by "scruples."

Many who are so roundly condemned by ministers and priests have come to feel that religion is against them. Not CHRIST'S RELIGION! Even though many biased ideas follow the narrow teachings of those who twist things to follow their own interpretations, as one can see by the many variations in the statements of Saul of Tarsus who became Paul.

We are taught that it is wrong to become angry, yet Christ became so in the Temple forcing the money

changers to flee. He forgave many their transgressions, but never once did he forgive the homophile because he did not condemn them. Those who do so should remember that they may be one day subject to judgment for a lack of understanding of the truths of Christ.

According to the manner of thought in his day, Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, being described as "a glutton, a wine drinker and a friend of sinners," as is related by St. Luke VII, verse 34. Then, why is it that today so many churches literally "throw out" one who is a homophile, or anyone, for that matter, who fails to conform to a narrow point of view? Jesus, the Christ, was not one to do that! And, such is not the Christianity of Christ! So, there is not one true reason from Christ that a homophile should live with guilt.

We all know that David's love for Jonathan was greater than his love for a woman, as is related in II Samuel Chapter I verse 26, and we see where Christ healed the Centurion's lover. So, why should the homophile live with guilt? It is time for us to have a re-evaluation of interpretations.

For guilt let us substitute positive faith, a true knowledge of love for God, and then we will all see where we stand in our love for our fellow beings. Saint Thomas tells us in the Gospel recently uncovered in Egypt, but long known in India: "If you will have cast off the mantle of shame, when you shall be naked without having shame, — when you will be two in one body—Then you will know the nature God gave you." Let us all replace that "Guilt" by knowing ourselves, possessing happiness and refrain from things that are foreign to our natural traits, knowing ourselves for wherever our innermost true pathway may lead.



Rahab,

THE HARLOT OF JERICO

Reverend Robert W. Wood

In the following article, written especially for this issue of ONE, Reverend Wood, author of *CHRIST AND THE HOMOSEXUAL*,* offers the controversial thesis that at critical moments in spiritual history God totally rejects popular judgments of morality and often chooses for His highest missions those whom the world scorns and despises.

A Scriptural passage along the same lines reads (I Cor. 1:27, 28), "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are."

The discussion of the role of Rahab, which Reverend Wood presents, will stir some to review the vital part played in the history of Christianity by the deep love affair between Jonathan and David. Not only was this one of the most touching homosexual love affairs of all time, but it was because of this love that Jonathan more than once turned against his own father, King Saul, and saved David from assassination at Saul's hands.

Had Jonathan not so acted David would have been killed and the house of David, from which all four Gospels state that Jesus was descended, would never have been established. This being the case, can honest Christians deny, or refuse to acknowledge the debt they owe to homosexual love? For that matter, can honest Jews likewise deny that had not those two young men been deeply in love and acted in each other's interests, that Jewish history too would be a very different thing?

* *CHRIST AND THE HOMOSEXUAL*, by Robert W. Wood, Vantage Press, New York, \$3.95, 221 pp.

There are many significant aspects to the Christmas story. Prior to the star and the manger, even before the Annunciation and the Magnificat, comes the genealogy of Jesus as presented in the opening chapter of Matthew's gospel. Scholars recognize this as an artificial and inaccurate (compare with Luke 3:23-38) list of 41 generations but it is significant that five women appear on an otherwise all male family tree. In addition to his mother Mary, Jesus has listed Ruth, Rahab, Tamar, and the mother of Solomon who remains nameless. These last three are all of questionable moral character and at least two of the five were aliens.

Our interest centers on Rahab (Matthew 1:5) who here is listed as the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz and thus the mother-in-law of Ruth. Tradition says she was the wife of Joshua. The first is impossible and the second seems quite improbable. Besides appearing in the Christmas story this woman is mentioned in two other New Testament books: Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25. But it is the Old Testament book of Joshua 2:1-21 and 6:17, 22-25 that tells us the most about Rahab. The "Rahab" in Psalms 87 and 89 and Isaiah 30:7 and 51:9 is not the same person nor indeed even a human being.

It is significant that each time Rahab is mentioned outside the gospel (Joshua, Hebrews, James) her name is immediately followed by "the harlot". Apparently a reputation she never lived down.

We first see her befriending the two spies Joshua had sent to reconnoiter Jericho prior to invading this key citadel of the Jordan valley. Perhaps the spies figured they could pick up some carelessly dropped military information if they visited such a promiscuous rendezvous as Rahab's house. Fortunately for them and their

mission Rahab had already decided to throw in her lot with the invading Hebrews. When Jericho's equivalent of counter spies came looking for the messengers the harlot hid the latter and sent her own country's security force off in the wrong direction.

As a reward for her help the enemy spies promised their hostess to spare her house and all who were within when their army conquered the strategic city. Before long this came to pass as Jericho was reduced to ashes and all its people and animals put to the sword except Rahab and her family.

Now — what spiritual lesson might we learn from this tale of treason on the part of an immoral ancestress of Jesus Christ?

"Why did she do it?" and the more important, "What did two New Testament writers find in her behavior worth extolling?" are questions which offer highly significant answers for those concerned with the moral role of the homosexual in contemporary society. At this time in American history when spying is defended if we do it but highly condemned if it is done to us this 3300 year old story has even more pointed relevance.

When in later Jewish history Ruth switches gods, exchanging the pagan god of Moab for the God of Israel, she is highly praised. This is exactly what we see in this story of Rahab. The harlot tells it in her own words in Joshua 2:11 as she professes the God of Israel. It is this profession plus her good work in helping the Israel spies that not only saves her life and the lives of her family but makes her immortal in the pages of the New Testament. It is the old story of faith and works; not either one alone but in solid combination, done to the glory and in the service of the one true God: the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Joshua, and of Jesus Christ.