

Theologian speaks on homosexuality

The Houston Post
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A Cambridge theologian has developed a "theological approach" to understanding homosexuality, which he explained during the recent international convention in Dallas of the Metropolitan Community Church, which has a major outreach to gays.

Dr. Norman Pittenger, an Anglican professor at King's College, Cambridge, told his audience that "the world in general has missed the point on sexuality and Christianity."

"The point is not the physical aspects of sex, but the dynamics of human love and its expression," said Pittenger, who termed human love "very Godlike."

"We must stop thinking of sex as either good or bad," he said. "Any sexual expression that doesn't hurt anyone is good. Sexuality that expresses deep human emotion is better — and sexuality in the context of meaningful relationships that include God is best."



Dr. Pittenger

Most discussion of homosexuality has been undertaken from a psychological, sociological or ethical stance, the theologian pointed out.

"I have sought to base my argument for acceptance of the homosexual man or woman on theological considerations, from a Christian understanding of the meaning of human sexuality in all its various expressions."

Pittenger, who has lectured at the Institute of Religion here, described God as "the cosmic lover."

"This cosmic lover and his love are the strongest and most enduring of all powers, despite the appearance that force or coercion is more effective than love," he said.

"God not merely is love, he is ceaselessly and unfailingly in action as love. To be truly human is to be a human lover, nothing more and nothing less. As men move in that direction they are moving toward the fulfillment of the divine purpose for them..."

God is open to and ready for an illimitable variety of modes and ways of acting and loving, Pittenger asserted. "The man who loves God must love his brethren — and conversely, the man who genuinely loves his brethren is truly loving God. Why is this? Because God is love and (in Tolstoy's words) 'where love is, there God is.'"

Man is a psychosomatic being, a complex unity of matter and mind, stuff and spirit, body and soul, Pittenger said. "Man's bodyness is as much his manhood as his rationality or spiritual capacity. And in consequence, loving and learning to love involves as much his body as his spirit."

The majority of men, perhaps some 85 to 90 per cent, direct their sexual desire to persons of the opposite gender, but between 10 to 15 per cent direct it toward the same gender, Pittenger said.

"For that minority, which would mean perhaps 20 to 25 million Americans, for example, or five to eight million Britons, the natural tendency is toward another man or boy, girl or woman."

"Hence whatever we say theologically about human sexuality must have its relevance for these people, as well as for the majority who are heterosexually built," Pittenger said.

But are not homosexually inclined persons abnormal or deviant?

"Who is to establish what is truly normal for men and women?" the theologian answered. "In my own view, it is normal for them to express their sexuality in a desire to love another of their race through mutual giving and receiving, through as

much personal relationship as is possible and through a concern for others in every area of their personhood.

"It is abnormal to hate, to be cruel and hurtful, to treat persons as things, to act irresponsibly toward them and with them," Pittenger added.

"To act in this latter fashion is indeed deviant. It is to act subhumanly and to violate the very nature of the love toward which men are meant to be moving. But that is not the same as saying that love for persons of the same gender, sexual interest in them and desire for sexual contacts with them is abnormal or deviant."

And what about the Biblical passages which are taken to condemn homosexual contacts as inherently sinful?

"I can only reply that we must read the Biblical material in the light of its context, with regard for the conditions prevailing at the time and in recognition of the ideas of sexuality prevalent then."

"In the New Testament, St. Paul is plainly a representative of the tradition he inherited as a faithful Jew. So far as I know, nobody but a Biblical fundamentalist would claim that every word of the Apostle is divinely inspired and hence authoritative for all time."

—CHARLENE WARNKEN

Sit-in reported at church

Sixteen members of Houston's Metropolitan Community Church staged a "sit-in" Sunday at the Waugh Drive Baptist Church in protest to anti-homosexual pamphlets the church has been distributing throughout Houston.

"They came and were very quiet and did not disturb the service," said the pastor of the Baptist church, the Rev. Harold T. Pultz. "It is a criminal offense to disturb the service."

Pultz admitted that members of his church had been engaged in distributing the church's July bulletin, which contains a message from him condemning homosexuality.

"We will continue to distribute the pamphlets," Pultz said. "We believe that homosexuality is one of the grossest sins a person can commit — and no homosexual has the right to be a member of a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching church."

Pultz said he does not regard the Metropolitan Community Church, which has a major outreach to gays, as a "real church."

"It is an organization of gays, not a church," he insisted. "You cannot have a church that is based on a direct opposition to the Bible."

Pultz complained that he had re-

ceived "several rather vicious phone calls and letters" protesting his church's stand on homosexuality. "But we will continue to preach about the danger of it becoming popular, as it is today," he said.

The Rev. Robert Falls, pastor of the Houston Metropolitan Community Church, said his members had visited the Baptist church "in the love of Christ."

"We went strictly to worship with our Christian brothers. We decided that if they abused us, we would take it and would leave if they asked. But there was no clash."

Falls reported he had received three calls from members of the Baptist church who told him they were unaware of the pamphlet distribution. "Two of them inquired about membership in our church," he said.

Falls was one of 3,000 gays attending the international convention of his church recently in Dallas. He was named chairman of a commission to study the feasibility of religious orders within the church. He also is directing plans for a retreat house for gays to be established in Snyder.

first time. He has established a Citizens' Action Center and a Senior Citizens' Advocate. He has expanded park services and under his administration the need for public art is finally being recognized.

And, working hand in hand with City Controller Leonel Castillo, he has made Houston the most financially healthy major city in the United States.

Fred Hofheinz has been good for Houston, and he has been especially good for our neighborhood. Under the progressive leadership of the Mayor, Montrose/Fourth Ward/Heights can continue to thrive as a neartown home for cultural and social diversity.

We urge you to work for the survival of the New Spirit in our City.

Reelect the Mayor November 4.

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Dr. Milton Lower
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*Affiliations for identification purposes only

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Montrose/Fourth Ward/Heights needs Fred Hofheinz.
Call 224-3305 to find out how you can help.

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901 Henderson Street
3 — Hogg Junior High School
1100 Merrill St.
4 — Travis Elementary School
3311 Beauchamp Ave.
30 — Gregory Elementary School
1400 Wilson St.
32 — American Legion Post 52,
3006 Brazos and Anita
33 — Wharton Elementary School
900 W. Gray
34 — Felix Mexican Restaurant
904 Westheimer

Precinct No. 37 — American Legion Post 416
2715 Waughcrest Drive
38 — Woodrow Wilson Elementary School
2100 Yupon St.
39 — S. P. Martel Auditorium
3511 Yoakum Blvd.
40 — Poe Elementary School
5100 Hazard and South Blvd.
53 — Harvard Elementary School
810 Harvard
55 — Jones Chapel Methodist Church
302 W. 8th
57 — John R. Reagan High School
13th at Arlington St.

Precinct No. 58 — Helms Elementary School
503 W. 21st St.
59 — Field Elementary School
E. 17th and Studewood
123 — Montrose Elementary School
4011 Stanford
200 — Harris City Center of Retarded
3550 West Dallas
209 — Mt. Sinai Baptist Church
908 West 8th St.
340 — West End Civic Club Bldg.
4617 I.2 Katy Freeway
402 — Harper Elementary
3200 Center



Last year we worked for what we believed.
At noon on January 14th, 1975 in the Chambers
of the House of Representatives, we get our
second opportunity to further our beliefs. Hope
you have a Happy New Year and that we will
see you at the Inauguration.

Ron Waters
Marjon Bryan
Ed Burton
Mitch Green