

Theology Matters

A Publication of Presbyterians for Faith, Family and Ministry

P.O. Box 10249, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0249 May/June, 1995

The Bible and the Practice of Homosexuality

by James R. Edwards*

The English word "homosexual" is a derivative of two words, the Greek word *homo*, meaning "same," and the Latin word *sexus* meaning "sex." "Homosexual," therefore, means same-sex activity, male with male, or female with female. In contemporary parlance male homosexuals are often called "gays," and female homosexuals "lesbians." The word "homosexual" is of relative modern origin, having been first coined about 1890. English translations of the Bible naturally do not use this modern term. The Scriptures are nevertheless acquainted with same-sex activity, and on each occasion where it is referred to it is condemned. The following is an examination and evaluation of the relevant Biblical evidence on the subject.

Old Testament

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The most explicit and important reference to homosexuality in the Old Testament occurs in the Holiness Code of Leviticus. Leviticus 18:22 specifically states, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable." The commandment is repeated in Leviticus 20:13, with the prescription of the death penalty for its infraction, "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads." In the Leviticus 18 passage the mention of homosexuality occurs in contexts of gross immorality: the verse preceding the prohibition of homosexuality in 18:22 forbids child sacrifice, and the verse following forbids bestiality. Moreover, in both passages male homosexuality is called an "abomination." The Hebrew word for "abomination," *tohehvah*, means an object of loathing. It is the strongest condemnation in the Old Testament for violations of an ethical and religious nature.

Objection: Some argue that *tohehvah* refers to ritual (i.e., Jewish cultic infractions) as opposed to moral violations incumbent on all persons. They argue, for example, that the prohibition against homosexuality in Leviticus is analogous to the prohibitions against eating pork or having sexual intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period. If these commandments have lost their validity for us today, why should the prohibition of homosexuality be maintained?

Response: The Old Testament does not place homosexuality in the category of ritual or cultic infractions. *tohehvah* occurs in Leviticus only in 18:22, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 20:13, where it refers to the gross immorality of the Canaanites. The Greek translation of the term in the Septuagint, *bdelygma*, also means something detestable, arousing God's wrath. It too is reserved for grievous moral offenses. Moreover, the same word for "abomination" occurs in a list of *Gentile* sins in the Apocrypha in *Wisdom of Solomon* 12:23, which indicates that *bdelygma*, like *tohehvah*, is used with reference to human moral offenses, not Jewish cultic violations. (For further examples, see Deut. 12:31; 18:9, 12; 20:18; 1 Kings 14:24; 2 Kings 16:3; 21:2; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:2; 36:14; Isa. 44:19.)

The Reformed theological tradition, in particular, differentiates between cultic laws and moral laws in the Old Testament, the former being fulfilled in Christ, the latter retaining their moral force. This is evident in Scripture itself. Jesus, for example, permitted the eating of unclean foods (Mark 7), but he upheld the heterosexual model of creation (Mark 10:6-9). It is equally significant that although ritual prohibitions in the Old Testament are often ignored or violated by the early church, the prohibition against homosexuality is never questioned, but repeated and maintained in the New Testament and early church.

* The Rev. James R. Edwards, Ph.D. is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and professor of religion at Jamestown College, Jamestown, ND.

Other Old Testament Texts

In addition to these explicit prohibitions of homosexuality, the Old Testament elsewhere describes homosexual acts in equally reprehensible terms.

Genesis 19 and Judges 19

Genesis 19 and Judges 19 describe attempted homosexual gang rapes. Genesis 19:4-8 reads,

Before the men lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.' Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, 'No, my friends. Do not do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But do not do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.'

Similarly, Judges 19:22-24 reads,

While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, 'Bring out the man who came to your house so we may know him.' The owner of the house went outside and said to them, 'No, my friends, do not act so wickedly; seeing that this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing. Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, do not do such a disgraceful thing.'

Objection: Despite the plain meaning of these passages, a revisionist interpretation argues that the sin described here is not one of homosexuality but one of inhospitality. The supposed inhospitality consisted either in Lot's having received and entertained two foreigners whose intentions might be hostile toward the community (since Lot was himself a foreigner), or in the inhospitality of the men of the town toward the strangers, or in both. The verb "to know," it is argued, does not carry sexual connotations in Genesis 19 and Judges 19, but only the intent to become acquainted with the strangers.

Response: This interpretation is unpersuasive. It is highly questionable, first of all, whether inhospitality was forbidden as a sin in the Torah, and its punishment was certainly not ordained in the destruction of a city. More importantly, context and vocabulary in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 clearly indicate an attempted homosexual assault on the guests, since both stories indicate that the aggressors were (or would have been) satisfied by the surrendering of women to be sexually molested. The verb "to know" is a translation of the Hebrew **יָדָע** (*yada*), which in Genesis 4:1, for instance, carries sexual connotations. That is the clear meaning of the verb in Genesis 19:8 in reference to the "daughters who have not known a man"; the context of Genesis 19:5 likewise demands the meaning of a (homo)sexual assault. In Genesis

19:7 Lot begs the men of Sodom not to do this wicked (**רָעָה**, *tareu*) thing. These observations vigorously deny the suggestion that the men simply wanted to become acquainted with the strangers. Finally, in Genesis 19:13 the outcry of God against Sodom is so great that the city is destroyed. The same is also true in the Judges passage. In Judges 19:22 the Hebrew verb is also **יָדָע** (*yada*), again with homosexual connotations. And in v. 23 the deed is called (**רָעָה**, *tareu*), "a wicked thing."

Further references to Sodom's sins frequently allude to or mention the sin of homosexuality. Jude 7 castigates the Sodomites who "indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust (Greek = "other flesh"). Second Peter 2:7 refers to Genesis 19 with the expression, "the licentiousness of the lawless." The Greek word for "licentiousness," **ἀσελγεία** (*aselgeia*), is a strong term describing debauchery, sexual excesses, and brutality. In Ezekiel 16:46-50 Sodom is cited as a model of moral corruption, whose sin is called "abominable."

Extra-biblical texts similarly refer to Sodom's homosexual sin. The *Testament of Naphtali* 3:4-5, in the Pseudepigrapha, warns not to "become like Sodom which departed from the order of nature." The first century Jewish philosopher Philo (*On Abraham* 133-136) vigorously condemns Sodom, where "men mounted males without respect for the sex nature." The Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 1.200-201) speaks of the "Sodomites" . . . outrage to the youthful beauty" of the men Lot had received under his roof. The homosexual attack is alluded to in 3 Maccabees 2:5, where "the people of Sodom . . . were notorious for their vices," and in Jubilees 16:6, which refers to "the pollution of Sodom."

The church fathers, likewise, regarded the "Sodomites' offense, like that of the men of Gibeah (Judg. 19:22) [as a] demand for carnal knowledge of a neighbor's guests" (M. Pope, "Homosexuality," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* [Supl], 415). The divine displeasure with Sodom is signaled by its annihilation, which, incidentally, appears throughout the Biblical tradition as the symbol *par excellence* of divine vengeance (e.g., Matt. 10:15; 11:23-24; Luke 10:12, Rom. 9:29, and elsewhere in Philo and Josephus).

The attempted homosexual assaults in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 were not the extent of the sins committed, of course, as the subsequent rape of the women indicates. In the corrupt moral climate of Sodom, however, the rape of women was viewed as the lesser of two evils in comparison to a homosexual assault.

Deuteronomy 22:5

Deuteronomy 22:5 also bears a relationship to our subject. The text reads, "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination (**תּוֹהוֹוָת**, *tohavath*) to the Lord your God." The mention of transvestitism and its association with "abomination" is likely a reference to sexual inversion (see M. Pope, *IDB*[Supl], 416).

Deuteronomy 23:17-18

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 is also a relevant text.

Let there not be a female temple prostitute among the daughters of Israel, and let there not be a male temple prostitute (כַּהֲדֵשׁ, *kahdesh*) among the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot (זֹהֲנָה *zohnach*), or the wages of a dog (כֶּהֱלֵב, *kehlev*) into the house of the Lord your God in payment for any vow; for both of these are an abomination (טוֹהַבְּחַיִּית, *tohavvath*) to the Lord your God.

Objection: It is sometimes suggested that this text does not refer to homosexuality, but only that it forbids Israelites from participating in Canaanite fertility cults.

Response: The rabbinic tradition was agreed that Deuteronomy 23:17 referred to passive sodomy (*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin* 54a-54b), although opinions varied whether it was punishable by death. Deuteronomy 23:17-18 must be read in conjunction with 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46, and 2 Kings 23:7, all of which allude to the presence of cultic prostitution, including male prostitution, in Jerusalem in the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries B.C. These texts, along with 1 Kings 15:13, suggest that the queen mother maintained a fertility cult to the goddess Asherah in the Jerusalem temple (see S. Ackerman, "The Queen Mother and the Cult of Ancient Israel," *JBL* 112/3 (1993) 385-401). The following points are worthy of mention in connection with this evidence. First, since temple worship in Israel was limited to males, male cult prostitutes or "dogs" would have to refer to homosexual cult practices. Second, although homosexual practices were obviously infertile, homosexual copulation (along with heterosexual copulation) was apparently believed to effect fertility in a magical way. Finally, and most importantly, the reform effort associated with King Josiah (and Deuteronomy is generally associated with that reform) strenuously and systematically uprooted these sexual cult practices.

Note I:

Homosexuality and the Order of Creation

The argument that homosexuality is a God-given orientation or lifestyle, as is commonly asserted today, cannot be considered apart from reference to the order of creation in Genesis 1-2. Genesis 1:26 states that humanity is created in the image of God, and that being male and female reflect that image. The argument is frequently heard today that a sexual act is moral in so far as it expresses true affection between consenting individuals and gives pleasure to them. This is, however, neither a Biblical nor a moral argument, for as such it can be used to justify, in addition to homosexuality, adultery, group sex, sex with children, and even sex with animals. It defines a human person simply as a sentient being, which leads to a disembodied kind of love, whereas the image of God that is expressed in maleness and femaleness assumes a distinctiveness and continuity of self, sexual nature, and moral activity. The Apostle Paul, as we

shall see, in fact appeals to this design in creation when he discusses the aberration of homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27.

Heterosexual union, as guarded and preserved in the covenant of marriage, is not simply a human choice ...but an order of creation

God created the human race not in uniformity, but of complementary sexes, male and female, whose union is described as "one flesh." Heterosexual union, as guarded and preserved in the covenant of marriage, is not simply a human choice or one variety of sexual union among many, but an order of creation. It is a holy vocation in the sense that only this form of union allows humanity to fulfill God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). Male and female thus find their mutual fulfillment, as well as their procreative function, in their complementary opposite, a teaching that is reaffirmed in the New Testament in Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:6-8; and 1 Corinthians 11:7, 9.

It is often observed that Jesus made no pronouncement regarding homosexuality. It is sometimes inferred from this that homosexuality was therefore of no moral concern to our Lord. It should be noted, however, that on the question of marriage in Mark 10 Jesus corrected the liberal divorce policy of the tradition of the elders, which appealed to the Torah (Deut. 24:1,3), by citing God's design and purpose for marriage between one man and one woman in Genesis 1-2. If, according to Mark 10:6-12, the only alternative to faithful heterosexual marriage that Jesus permitted was that of celibacy, how probable is it that he would have accepted homosexual marriage, which was unequivocally repudiated in the Old Testament and Judaism?

Note II:

Cultural Attitudes toward Homosexuality in the Ancient Near East

It is often asserted that ethical teachings in the Bible, and specifically teaching regarding homosexuality, are culturally conditioned, i.e., that they were biased by the culture(s) in which the Israelites and early Christians lived, and hence cannot be regarded as absolutes for our day. The following evidence dispels this notion in the case of homosexuality.

In Mesopotamia, legal texts virtually ignore homosexual acts;

Among the Hittites, there was apparently no prohibition of homosexual acts;

In Ugarit, no information is available on the subject;

In Egypt, pederasty (adult males engaging in sexual intercourse with boys) was disapproved, but otherwise homosexuality was evidently not proscribed;

In Greece, homosexuality was as a rule viewed (and promoted) as a higher form of sexuality (e.g., Plato's *Symposium*).

In Rome, the Greek norm was adopted and carried to more decadent extremes, although the Stoic ideal of monogamy attempted to counterbalance otherwise widespread moral degeneracy.

The Biblical position on homosexuality does not reflect cultural norms, but more often than not, opposes them

As this review indicates, the Ancient Near East was ambivalent or permissive regarding the issue of homosexuality, and sometimes affirmative of it. The Biblical position on homosexuality does not reflect cultural norms, but more often than not opposes them. It is thus erroneous to assert that the Bible's position on this question is culturally determined.

New Testament

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

The earliest New Testament text bearing on homosexuality is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10,

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Neither fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Two terms in the above text deserve attention. The first is *μαλακοι* (*malakoi*), which the NRSV translates "male prostitutes." The denotation of *μαλακοι* (*malakoi*) in Greek literature is "soft," such as soft garments worn by fastidious people (Luke 7:25). It can, however, carry a connotation, as it does here, of "soft" persons or passive homosexual partners, specifically "men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually" (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 489 [including a list of references in secular Greek literature where *μαλακοι* (*malakoi*) carries the same meaning]). The recent *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (2.381) defines *μαλακοι* (*malakoi*) in 1 Corinthians 6:9 as "reprehensible examples of passive homosexuality." The translation of this term in the Latin Vulgate, *mollis*, carries a corresponding sense. The presence of *πορνοι* (*pornoi*, fornication) and *μοιχοι* (*moichoi*, adultery) in this passage clearly indicates that *μαλακοι*

(*malakoi*) is to be understood in the sense of sexual immorality.

The second term is *αρσενοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*), which the NRSV translates, "sodomites," a term deriving from the infamy of Sodomy described in Genesis 19. Although this is the first occurrence of the term in Greek literature, there can be no doubt about its meaning. A compound word, *αρσενοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*) means "(males) going to bed (or copulating) with males."

Objection: It is sometimes argued that the above two terms condemn only pederasty, i.e., sex between an adult male and a "call boy," rather than homosexuality between consenting adults.

Response: A number of scholars have argued convincingly that Paul coined *αρσενοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*) from the presence of two adjacent words in Leviticus 20:13 (*αρσενος κοιτην*, *arsenos koiten*; see D. Malick, "The Condemnation of Homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9," *Biblioteca Sacra* 150 [1993] 479-492). Leviticus 20:13, it will be recalled, is the strongest prohibition of homosexuality in the Old Testament. If, as appears likely, the Apostle Paul has this text in mind in utilizing *αρσενοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*) in 1 Corinthians 6:9, then the term cannot be limited simply to the Greek practice of pederasty, as John Boswell and others argue, but must be seen as an all-encompassing condemnation of homosexuality (as in Lev. 20:13), including consenting adult homosexual relationships. Hence, Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich (p. 109) correctly define the term as "a male homosexual, pederast, sodomite," as do Liddell, Scott, and Jones in the definitive *Greek-English Lexicon* (p. 246). *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (1.158) defines the term as "referring to a male who engages in sexual activity with men or boys."

The term appears again in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 1:10 where it is paired with *πορνοι* (*pornoi*, fornicators), again establishing an illicit sexual practice. A century after Paul (about A.D. 155), *αρσενοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*) was used by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, in his epistle to the Philippians (5:3) warning young men "to cut themselves off from the lust of the world." Polycarp then quotes 1 Corinthians 6:9, and refers to the behaviors described therein as "iniquity" (*ατοπα*, *atopa*). The Latin Vulgate translates *αρσενοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*) as *masculorum concubitores*, which, according to Cassell's *New Latin Dictionary*, means "the lying together or copulation of men." Cassell's includes passages from Cicero and Vergil where it carries this same sense.

Romans 1:26-27

The most unequivocal condemnation of homosexuality in the New Testament occurs in Romans 1:26-27,

Therefore God handed them over to dishonorable passions, their women exchanged the natural drive for the unnatural drive (*χρησις*, *chresis* = "relations" or "functions," especially of sexual intercourse), likewise also the men, having left the natural desire for women burned in their desire for one another, men for men,

working out the shameful and receiving the just punishment that their error (or wandering) necessarily caused.

Objection: It is sometimes suggested that this passage is not a condemnation of homosexuality *per se*, but of persons who "exchange" their natural heterosexual orientation for homosexual acts.

Response: This view wrongly projects the modern concept of personality orientation onto the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul does not address the origins, motivations, or gratifications of homosexuality, including the modern concept of "sexual orientation." Arguments from such causes, whatever their biological, psychological, or sociological merit, would simply have been seen by the Apostle as further manifestations of the power of sin to confuse and blind human thinking (Rom. 1:28). The proscription here, as everywhere in Scripture, refers solely to *homosexual acts*.

Idolatry and homosexuality, ... represent theological and moral rebellion against God.

Romans 1:26-27 actually broadens the Biblical condemnation of homosexuality to include the practice of lesbianism. In Romans 1:26-27 homosexuality is cited not because it is worse than other sins, but because it illustrates the problem of idolatry in 1:18-32. As Gentiles "exchanged" the truth of God for a lie and worshiped the creation instead of the Creator, so lesbianism and homosexuality "exchange" a natural relationship for an unnatural one. Idolatry and homosexuality, in other words, represent theological and moral rebellion against God. The failure to worship and glorify God results in idolatry, and the failure to find one's sexual fulfillment in the opposite sex results in homosexuality. Idolatry and homosexuality inevitably result in an inversion or turning back on self for a fulfillment that God intended to be completed by the other. The result is alienation from God.

That "unnatural relations" (*παρὰ φύσιν, para phusin*) carries the sense of something contrary to the order of nature is evinced by its usage again in the analogy of the olive tree in Romans 11. There Paul writes that Gentiles "were cut off from their natural stock (*κατὰ φύσιν, kata phusin*) of the wild olive tree and ingrafted into the unnatural (*παρὰ φύσιν, para phusin*) cultured olive tree" (Rom. 11:24). Not surprisingly, *παρὰ φύσιν (para phusin)* becomes used for homosexuality in several subsequent Greek writers (see Athenagoras [13]; Philo [*On Abraham* 135-136, *On Special Laws* 3.39 preserves a stinging rebuke of pederasty as the "pursuit of unnatural pleasure," *τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ἡδονὴν διώκει*]; Plutarch [*Dialogue on Love* 751-752]; Dio Chrysostom [*Discourse* 7.135, 151-152]; Josephus [*Against Apion* 2.199, 273, 275]; and the *Testament of Naphtali* [3:3-4]).

Note III:

Why are References to Homosexuality Relatively Infrequent in the Bible?

The frequency (or infrequency) of a statement is not necessarily an indication of its importance. Marriage vows, to take but one example, are said only once, but few will want to argue from this that they are of little importance. Nevertheless, it is often argued that because homosexuality is mentioned relatively infrequently in the Bible that it was relatively unimportant, and should be regarded so today.

This is an unwarranted conclusion. For one, the Hebrew tradition showed reticence and restraint with regard to explicit sexual references. Whenever possible, it employed euphemisms (e.g., the verb "to know") in order to avoid references to genitalia and to genital acts. This same reticence applied to acts of same sex intercourse.

Second, and more importantly, same-sex activity stood in obvious variance to the design of creation, wherein male and female become "one flesh," in both pleasure and procreation. The scarcity of references, in other words, is exactly what we would expect in a tradition that universally affirmed the God-giveness of heterosexuality and deplored deviations from that norm. Other acts that the Old Testament regarded as deplorable (e.g., child sacrifice) are mentioned no more frequently than homosexuality. This same argument, incidentally, applies to the relative infrequent mention of homosexuality in modern reference works. To cite but two examples. The fifteen-volume *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1912; supplemental volumes, 1955) contains no entry on the subject of homosexuality. Again, Oxford University Press's two-volume *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* (1992!) contains no entry on the subject. Surely few will argue that the omission of the subject in these works is due to the fact that homosexuality is either widely approved, or of little moral importance. The answer, rather, is that it has been considered self-evident that the Judeo-Christian tradition always and everywhere condemned the practice of homosexuality. Hence the point needed not be re-established or elaborated. The reason homosexuality is under discussion today is not because the Scriptures are unclear on the subject, but because modern sexual practices have radically changed.

A third reason for the relative infrequency of the subject relates to the ethnic environment in which the Biblical writings arose and to which they were addressed. A general pattern can be observed. Where Biblical authors were writing to Jews living in a Jewish environment, references to homosexuality are relatively infrequent. The reason for this is because homosexuality was (and still is) a rare phenomenon in Jewish society, and hence posed little problem. The pattern changes, however, when Judeo-Christian authors began to address their counterparts in the Hellenistic Diaspora where homosexuality was widely practiced, and where it threatened the purity of faith and life. This explains the vastly increased number of condemnations of homosexuality in the extra-Biblical books of the Pseudepigrapha during the intertestamental period, which by and large were addressed to faith communities in the Diaspora (e.g., Pseudo-Phocylides 3; Sibylline Oracles 2.73;

3:185; 3:596; 4:34; 2 Enoch 34:2; Jubilees 13:18; 16:5-6; 20:5; 3 Maccabees 2:5; Pseudo-Philo 8:2; 45:1-6; and in the Testaments of Naphtali 3:5; Isaac 5:27; and Jacob 7:19-20). Each of these references expressly prohibits and condemns the practice of homosexuality.

A similar pattern is evident in the New Testament. Thus, Jesus, who moved in a predominantly Jewish milieu, made no reference to homosexuality, whereas Paul, who ministered in a Hellenistic milieu, makes specific reference to it in obvious places like Corinth and Rome. This pattern persists in the extra-Biblical books of the New Testament Apocrypha. The Apocalypse of Peter (32), for example, which probably arose in Egypt in the first half of the second century, contains the following passage: "There is no rest from torture, [for those] who defiled their bodies, behaving like women. And the women with them, these were those who behaved with one another as men with a woman."

A survey of the Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence regarding homosexuality results in a massive and unqualified condemnation of the practice. Richard Hays rightly summarizes the evidence thus: "Every pertinent Christian text from the pre-Constantinian period . . . adopts an unremittingly negative judgment on homosexual practice, and this tradition is emphatically carried forward by all major Christian writers of the fourth and fifth centuries" ("A Response to John Boswell's Exegesis of Romans 1," *JRE* 14/1 (1986) 202).

Note IV: Homosexuality and Idolatry

Along with the increase in references to homosexuality in Biblical and extra-Biblical works directed to the Diaspora, there is a similar tendency in the same works to refer to homosexuality in conjunction with idolatry. This is, as we have seen, the case in Romans 1:18-32, and is more often than not the case in the texts cited above. Idolatry was regarded as the single greatest threat to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The mention of homosexuality in conjunction with idolatry thus indicates its seriousness as a moral offense in the eyes of that tradition.

Note V: Homosexual Orientation and Moral Accountability

Many homosexuals claim that they have no awareness of having chosen homosexuality. A conclusion sometimes drawn from this is that the individual has no capacity to choose sexual orientation, and hence that sexual orientation is beyond moral prescriptions, including those of Scripture. "Sexual orientation," as noted earlier, is a modern concept that is alien to Scripture. The Biblical and extra-Biblical texts cited above refer solely to sexual practices. The gospel does not address sin at the level of creation, but at the level of redemption. That is to say, Scripture does not give conclusive answers as to why things are the way they are in

the world, but it does speak of their transformation by the power of God. Thus, although human beings do not choose the state into which they are born, they do have a choice over how they respond to their state. Hence, a predisposition or orientation toward a certain course of action does not produce a "right" to do it, or justify acting upon it. The current state of behavioral research indicates that sexual orientation is more a function of post-natal psycho-social development than of biological constitution. Human sexual behavior is the product of a network of interacting factors, and *human choice cannot be eliminated as one of them.*

Whatever the ultimate causes of homosexuality, the church should not fall into the error of thinking of homosexuality as a behavior that cannot be resisted. "It must be made quite clear that the genuine invert is not necessarily given to homosexual practices, and may exercise as careful control over his or her physical impulses as the heterosexual" (Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* [London: Archon Books, 1975], p. xi). This salutary statement was written by a scholar who *advocated* homosexual causes. To be human means to be able to make moral choices. The gospel does not make moral demands that believers cannot fulfill, and that includes the Biblical proscriptions against homosexual practices.

The gospel assures believers of forgiveness and grace as they struggle with sin

The gospel assures believers of forgiveness and grace as they struggle with sin. Paul establishes grounds for this hope immediately following mention of homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9, "And that is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." In 1 Corinthians 10:13 Paul states, "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it." Again, in Galatians 5:1, Paul speaks of Christian freedom as receiving God's gracious word of justification, and of a subsequent reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit and resistance to the works of the flesh.

Conclusion

Without fail, Biblical and extra-Biblical sources condemn the practice of homosexuality. There is no text in Judeo-Christian literature from Leviticus to Constantine that condones it. This should be sufficient and compelling evidence against accepting the practice of homosexuality as a gift of God, or as an alternative and morally justifiable lifestyle. Churches, particularly those whose creedal traditions assent to the authority of Scripture, must give full weight to the Scriptural position on this subject in both their teaching and in the ordering of their life. The above evidence argues that the church cannot ordain self-avowed practicing

homosexuals to the offices of ministry and maintain fidelity to Scripture and creeds.

At the same time, the gospel requires love and understanding of persons of homosexual lifestyle, and the offering of all available help to those who desire it. Persons of homosexual inclination who choose to remain celibate and resist their temptations through faith, prayer, and abstinence have every right to the sacraments and offices of the church, including ordination, that are open to every other sinner who, by God's grace, struggles against sin and relinquishes his or her life to the transformation of the gospel.

Bible's prohibitions against homosexuality a reflection of the surrounding culture?

What arguments have you heard which advocate for homosexual practice? What responses can you offer to those arguments based on Scripture and Dr. Edwards's discussion?

How does homosexual practice effect one's relationship with God? If homosexual practice is a form of idolatry, why is it crucial that the church continue to condemn homosexual practice?

What can you and your church do to teach the biblical view of homosexual practice? What can you and your church do to minister to people struggling with their sexuality?

Brief Summary of Edwards's Article

Old Testament

1. Leviticus 18:22, 20:13. The most explicit and important reference to homosexuality in the OT occurs in the Holiness code of Leviticus. Some argue that the prohibitions against homosexuality are cultic infractions analogous to eating pork and that they have lost their validity for us today. However, the OT does not place homosexuality in the category of ritual or cultic infractions. It is significant that although ritual prohibitions in the OT are often ignored or violated by the early church, the prohibition against homosexuality is never questioned, but repeated and maintained in the NT and early church.

2. Genesis 19 and Judges 19. They both plainly condemn homosexual acts. While some suggest Genesis 19 and Judges 19 deal with inhospitality, this interpretation is unpersuasive. The verb used, "to know," clearly carries sexual connotations. References to Sodom's sin of homosexual practice are mentioned in the NT, extra-biblical works, and the church fathers.

3. Deuteronomy 22:5. Condemnation of transvestitism is a reference to sexual inversion.

4. Deuteronomy 23:17-18. Homosexual temple prostitution is condemned.

Note I: Homosexuality and the Order of Creation. Some argue that homosexuality is a God-given orientation and therefore is moral if it provides pleasure. This is not a biblical or moral argument for as such it can be used to justify, in addition to homosexuality, adultery, group sex, sex with children, and even sex with animals. Instead, Scripture teaches that God created the human race not in uniformity, but of complementary sexes, male and female, whose union is described as "one flesh." Heterosexual union, as guarded and preserved in the covenant of marriage, is not simply a human choice or one variety of sexual union among many, but an order of creation.

Note II: Cultural Attitudes toward Homosexuality in the Ancient Near East. It is often asserted that ethical teachings in the Bible, and specifically teaching regarding homosexuality, are culturally conditioned, i.e. that they were biased by the culture(s) in which the Israelites and early Christians lived, and hence cannot be regarded as absolutes for our day. However, the Ancient Near East was ambivalent or permissive regarding the issue of homosexuality and sometimes affirmative of it. The Biblical position on homosexuality does not reflect cultural norms, but more often than not opposes them.

New Testament

1. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. It is sometimes argued that this passage condemns only pederasty rather than homosexuality between consenting adults. However, research indicates that the term Paul uses is a reference to Leviticus 20:13 which contains the strongest prohibition of homosexuality in the Old Testament. The New Testament, early church fathers, and Latin Vulgate similarly use the term to refer to adult homosexual acts.

2. Romans 1:26-27. The most unequivocal condemnation of homosexuality in the NT occurs here. However, it is suggested that this passage is not a condemnation of homosexuality *per se* but of heterosexual persons engaging in homosexual acts against their nature. This view wrongly projects the modern concept of personality orientation onto the Scriptures. The proscription here as everywhere in Scripture, refers solely to homosexual acts. Paul links homosexuality to idolatry. Idolatry and homosexuality represent theological and moral rebellion against God.

Discussion Questions:

What does the Old Testament say regarding homosexual practice? What does the New Testament say? Are the

Note III: Why are References to Homosexuality Relatively Infrequent indication of its importance. Marriage vows, for example, are meretricious and restraint with regard to explicit sexual references. In addition, the scarcity of references, is exactly what we would expect of heterosexuality and deplored deviations from that norm. Lastly,

Jewish environment references to homosexuality are relatively infrequent because homosexuality was rare. The pattern changes, however, when Judeo-Christian authors began to address their counterparts in the Hellenistic Diaspora where homosexuality was widely practiced.

Note IV: Homosexuality and Idolatry. The mention of homosexuality in conjunction with idolatry indicates its seriousness as a moral offense in the eyes of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Note V: Homosexual Orientation and Moral Accountability. Many homosexuals claim that they have no awareness of having chosen homosexuality, hence that orientation is beyond moral prescriptions, including those of Scripture. The gospel, however, does not address sin at the level of creation, but at the level of redemption. The gospel does not make moral demands that believers cannot fulfill, and that includes the Biblical proscriptions against homosexual practices. The gospel assures believers of forgiveness and grace as they struggle with sin.

Conclusion. Without fail, Biblical and extra-Biblical sources condemn the practice of homosexuality. There is no text in Judeo-Christian literature from Leviticus to Constantine that condones it. Churches, particularly those whose creedal traditions assent to the authority of Scripture, must give full weight to the Scriptural position on this subject in both their teaching and the ordering of their life. The church cannot ordain self-avowed practicing homosexuals to the offices of ministry and maintain fidelity to Scripture and the creeds. At the same time, the gospel requires love and understanding of persons of homosexual lifestyle, and the offering of all available help to those who desire it. Persons of homosexual inclination who choose to remain celibate and resist their temptations through faith, prayer, and abstinence have every right to the sacraments and offices of the church.

Resources on the Bible and Homosexual Practice

SPEAKERS

Rev. James Edwards, Ph.D. is a Presbyterian minister, Professor of Religion and Chairman of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Jamestown College. Dr. Edwards studied at Whitworth College, Princeton Seminary, Zurich and Tubingen and holds a Ph.D. in New Testament from Fuller Seminary. Dr. Edwards's article on homosexual practice appears in this issue of *Theology Matters*. Dr. Edwards has participated in several presbytery debates on homosexual practice from a biblical perspective. Dr. Edwards can be reached at Jamestown College, 6020 College Lane, Jamestown, ND 58405.

Mr. Thomas E. Schmidt, Ph.D. is an Associate professor at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA 93108. Dr. Schmidt is a Presbyterian. He has degrees from Wheaton College, Fuller Theological Seminary and Cambridge University. His latest book, *Straight and Narrow? Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate* will be available from InterVarsity Press, May, 1995. This book deals comprehensively with homosexual practice as a moral issue, examining it from a biblical perspective. It also contains chapters on the causes and medical problems associated with homosexuality. Dr. Schmidt has participated in several presbytery debates on homosexual practice from a biblical perspective.

ONE-BY-ONE MINISTRY

A new Presbyterian ministry has formed to assist churches in establishing ministries to men and women seeking freedom from sexual brokenness including homosexual behavior. The *One-by-One Ministry's* mission statement is, "to educate and equip the church to minister the transforming grace and power of Jesus Christ to those who are in conflict with their sexuality." One-By-One is a relational ministry equipping churches to come along side individuals struggling with their sexuality. The way this is done will vary from helping churches set up formal support groups to teaching individuals how to reach out to others within their congregations who are in conflict with their sexuality. Kathy and Jim Moore, co-directors of the ministry can be reached at P.O. Box 10055, Rochester, NY 14610.

STUDY MATERIALS

"A Declaration of Faith and Life" study guide and workbook.

In January, 1994, leaders of 11 renewal organizations within the Presbyterian Church(USA) met in Louisville, KY and issued a joint statement on human sexuality called *A Declaration for Faith and Life*. The statement is patterned after the Barmen Declaration with clear delineation between Biblically based teachings and false teachings. The accompanying study guide exegetes the applicable Biblical texts, cross references to the confessions for teachings contrary to Scripture. The introduction to the study guide is suitable for use in a Sunday School class, or ad hoc study group. The materials could be covered section down into smaller units could easily find enough material for

Presbyterian Coalition, P.O. Box 22227, Louisville, KY 40252. The *Declaration* including the Study Guide is available for \$2.00; a workbook is available for \$1.00. Add \$2.00 to the total order for shipping and handling.

VIDEOS

(These videos were created as part of "The Path to Freedom: The Church and Homosexuality" Conference held at Brighton Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY, November 9-13, 1994. Co-sponsored by Brighton Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian & Reformed Renewal Ministries International,--PRRMI. The following descriptions were provided by PRRMI.)

Videos Recommended by PRRMI:

- If you are a church leader: 1, 2, and 3.
- If you are struggling with homosexual feelings: 2, 6, and 10.
- If you are a family member: 2, 5, and 9.
- If you wish to establish a ministry in your church: 1, 4 and 7.
- If you are a counselor: 2, 8, and 10.

1. "Homosexuality and the Church" by Joe Dallas
Formerly a gay activist, now set free from homosexuality, Joe Dallas challenges the Church to repent of former attitudes/actions and provide redemptive ministries to those who struggle with homosexuality. 75 min.

Joe Dallas is pursuing a Masters degree in counseling psychology. He is founder and program director of Genesis Counseling Center in Orange, CA. He lectures extensively; is an author and contributing editor.
2. "Reparative Therapy" by Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D.
This nationally known psychologist, author and speaker explains the cause and treatment of homosexuality. 75 min.

Joseph Nicolosi, has a Ph. D. in clinical psychology. He is founder and clinical director of Thomas Aquinas Psychological Clinic in Encino, CA. He is a nationally recognized author and speaker on the cause and treatment of homosexual behavior. He also counsels those seeking help for homosexual behavior.
3. "Answering the Pro-Gay Theology" by Joe Dallas
An examination of Scripture texts often used by the pro-gay community and why their interpretation runs contrary to the Church's position from the time of Christ to the present. 75 min.
4. "The Church and Homosexuality" by Rev. R. Carter Blaisdell, Associate Director of PRRMI
Gives the Scriptural and Presbyterian Church (USA)'s present position on homosexuality. 18 min.

A panel of five experts respond to challenging questions from the conferees. 60 minutes.
5. "The Homosexual Struggle for Couples" by Richard and Patty Clark
A couple shares how they supported one another during the process of Richard's struggle to work toward freedom from homosexuality. 90 min.
6. "An Overview of the Transition Process" by Joe Dallas
A change in sexual orientation is possible; until then, the struggles, types of sexual and emotional changes which a person can reasonably expect, and the ethical and spiritual issues are dealt with in this workshop. 90 min.
7. "Establishing a Ministry Within the Church" by Jim & Kathy Moore
Some practical steps to begin a ministry at your church. Jim and Kathy direct the Malachi Ministry of Brighton Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York. Malachi, which was started in 1989, ministers to men and women coming out of homosexuality. 90 min.
8. "Why You Are Not a Homosexual" by Alan Medinger
The Director of Regeneration Ministries, Baltimore, himself delivered from homosexual desires, challenges the use of the word, "homosexual," as a primary way to identify oneself. 90 min.
9. "Ministering to Family Members" by Willa Medinger
Wife of 34 years to Alan Medinger, describes the stages one might expect a spouse, parent or loved one to go through upon learning about a family member's homosexual feelings or activity. 90 min.
10. "Counseling the Homosexual" by Joe Dallas
For those interested in counseling, this workshop gives current theories on origins of homosexuality, setting reasonable goals, discusses blocks to the therapeutic process, and gives a model for counseling. 90 min.
11. "Obstructions to Healing" by Kathy Moore and Theresa Latini
A discussion to help people understand and break through com
Theresa share from personal experience and their Christian cou
12. "Ministering to People with AIDS" by Jeanne Linqvist, M.D.

A hospital Medical Director of Infection Control who resides in San Mateo, CA, ministers to people with AIDS and challenges the Church to become better informed and more involved. 90 min.

13. "Overcoming Passivity" by Joe Dallas

Passivity is a common problem with many people, especially those in recovery. How passive attitudes are learned, played out, and can be overcome with communication strategies. An excellent resource for both men and women. 90 min.

"Overcoming Passivity" is given when all 12 tapes in the series are ordered at the same time. Or this video can be ordered separately at the regular price.

Tapes are \$10.00 each, with \$2.00 postage and handling per tape. Make check payable and mail to: Presbyterian & Reformed Renewal Ministries International(or PRRMI), P.O. Box 429, Black Mountain, NC 28711-0429, phone (704) 669-7373, fax (704) 669-4880

AUDIO TAPES

Two audio tapes by Dr. Thomas E. Schmidt on the Bible's teaching on homosexual practice will be available at the end of June from One-by-One Ministry at P.O. Box 10055, Rochester, NY 14610. The two cassette series is \$5.00 which includes shipping and handling. Checks can be made payable to One-by-One Ministry.

Bible Study of the Gospel of Mark

CHAPTER 3

(chapter 4 will follow in the next issue)

of THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Observe the Text to understand the author's meaning:

Read 3:1-6. What day is it? Where does Jesus go? Whose domain is this? Why do you think the man with the withered hand is there? What is the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees?

Read Ex 20:8-11, 23:12, 31:12-18, 34:21, 35:2-3; Lev 23:3; Deu 5:12-15. What is God's law regarding the Sabbath? What was the purpose of the laws regarding the Sabbath? Did God's law say that healing was considered work and could not be done on the Sabbath? Whose "law" defined healing as work and in violation of the Sabbath?

What is the priority of the scribes and Pharisees? What is their concern? If Jesus obeyed their law, what would Jesus do? What does Jesus do?

What should the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees have been to Jesus' miracle? How do the scribes and Pharisees interpret Jesus' action? When Jesus breaks the law of the scribes and Pharisees what is their response? Do they seek his repentance and restoration? What do they seek?

Read 3:7-12. What is the response of the people to Jesus? Look at a map to locate the cities they are coming from. What are they responding to? Why are they coming to Jesus?

What is the response of the unclean spirits to Jesus? What do they do in his presence? Do you see this as a royal act--bowing before the king? What do they cry out? Compare this to Mk 1:1. Who is the first to acknowledge who Jesus is? Contrast this with the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees? What is the response to Jesus of the unclean spirits? the people? the scribes and Pharisees?

Read 3:13-19. Jesus "summons" those whom he wanted. What is the author saying by using the word "summons" instead of "called" or "suggested" or "asked"? In a similar way how do you interpret the word "appointed." Who sends them to preach? Who gives them "authority?" to do what? Although the disciples are given authority whose authority are they under? Explain. Jesus very intentionally appoints those whom he summons. How do you explain the summons and appointment of Judas, "who also betrayed him?" Do you think Judas is appointed because Jesus was unaware he would betray him? Any other explanation?

Read 3:20-21. What does Jesus' own people, perhaps his family, think of his popularity? If you were part of Jesus' family or close friends what in the text might cause you to react the same way? What was their measure of sanity? What was Jesus' measure of appropriate behavior?

Read 3:22-30. Notice where these scribes are from. These are the senior, "high-up" scribes. What comment do the scribes now confront Jesus with? They acknowledge Jesus' ability to cast out demons but who do they say is the source of Jesus' authority to do this? What does it mean when

Jesus replies, “Can Satan cast out Satan?” Then in that context, what does it mean when Jesus says, “A house divided against itself cannot stand?” Explain. Now relate that to the sentence about a one entering a strong man’s house. What is Jesus saying? Jesus uses logic here beginning with the fact that brokenness is not caused by God. Read Isaiah 49:24-26.

The demons call Jesus, “Son of God.” The scribes say he is acting on authority of Satan. What are the scribes doing?

Jesus has been identified with the Holy Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit, by the authority of God that Jesus heals. But, instead of seeing Jesus’ works and attributing them to the Holy Spirit, who do the scribes and Pharisees attribute the good works to? Now explain in light of vs 22-27, what it means to “blaspheme the Holy Spirit?” Why is that an eternal sin? See Isaiah 5:20.

Read 3:31-35. Notice his mother and brothers recently arrived looking for Jesus. Twice it mentions the multitude who “were sitting around Him” in vs 32 and 34. Would you agree that Jesus is not rejecting his mother and brothers but is “adopting” those who come to him as adopted brothers and sisters. Read Rom 8:12-17, Gal 4:4-7, Eph 1:5.

Interpret the Text

- 1) What do we learn about “authority” in this chapter?
- 2) What is the response to Jesus of the people? of the scribes and Pharisees? of his family? of the disciples?
- 3) Two eternal statements are made: some will be guilty of eternal sin and others will be Jesus adopted brother, sister and mother. What are the characteristics of the two groups?

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

(Compare these notes to your thoughts after you have looked at the passages and answered the questions yourself)

Mark 3:1-6. The man no doubt came to the synagogue to worship God and seek his mercy. Jesus brings healing and restoration to the man. Yet, the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees is not joy at this display of God’s power, authority and mercy. Instead, they seek to destroy Jesus.

While the multitudes are described as “amazed” and recognize Jesus’ authority and are drawn to him, the scribes and Pharisees have a killing hatred of him and want him dead. The very ones entrusted to bring people to God and his mercy instead stand ready to destroy Jesus to protect their own authority and power.

Calvin writes, “It is a fearful monstrosity that the leading doctors of the Law, at the helm of the church, should act like bandits ready for murder. But this is bound to happen when men’s malice breaks out; they want to kill whatever thwarts their desires, even if it is of God.”

The Herodians were probably Jews who supported Herod and therefore Roman rule. The scribes and Pharisees join with those who would normally be their enemy in order to oppose Jesus.

Mark 3:7-12. People come literally from north and south, east and west to see Jesus. The word “multitude” is used three times in vs 7-9. Jesus is a celebrity with a large following.

Jesus perhaps silences the unclean spirits because although they recognize him, they are not to be his witnesses.

Mark 3:13-19. Jesus in a royal act as king “summons” those whom he “appoints” and grants them “authority” to do his work.

Jesus no doubt knew that Judas would betray him. Calvin suggests that Jesus appointed him a disciple to show us that the future of the church does not depend on us and our faithfulness but rather on Jesus and his work. Even when Jesus’ own disciple betrays him, God will cause that sinful act to submit to his purpose and plan of redemption.

Mark 3:20-21. The people were concerned with practical issues of eating. Jesus was concerned with doing the will of his Father and healing the people.

Mark 3:22-30. Jesus uses logic to clearly show the scribes the fallacy of their argument. The scribes would say that Satan causes people to be demon possessed. But if Satan causes demon possession why would Satan give Jesus authority to cast out those demons. Jesus observes that Satan’s kingdom cannot prosper if Satan undermines his own work. Then Jesus goes on to say, if Satan, the ruler of demons, causes people to be demon possessed, for Jesus to cast out demons, he must be more powerful than Satan. To undo Satan’s work, he must first, “bind” Satan. Therefore, his authority is greater.

While the demons of Satan recognize Jesus as the Son of God, the scribes--the religious leaders--who should recognize Jesus as the Son of God, instead claim he is Satan’s agent. They attribute Christ’s authority to Satan and claim God’s authority for themselves.

To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to attribute God’s actions of healing and redemption to Satan. Repentance and forgiveness require that we recognize God’s will and work and repent of having turned away from them. The scribes and Pharisees have turned the norm upside down--they reject God’s will and adhere to their own. There is never repentance for turning from Jesus because they have rejected him as being from Satan.

News from Aroun

A new book, *Sisters Struggling in the Spirit*, copyright, 1994, has been published by the Women's Ministries Program Area, National Ministries Division and Christian Faith and Life Program Area, Congregational Ministries Division, of the PCUSA. The book identified as "A Women of Color Theological Anthology" includes essays by Re-Imagining conference 1993 speakers: Delores Williams, Kwok Pui-Lan, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, and Jacquelyn Grant. The book includes a preface by Patricia Gill Turner, Associate, Leadership Development and Spiritual Growth, Women's Ministries Program Area, National Ministries Division, PCUSA. The 1994 GA passed a resolution saying the Re-Imagining Conference "criticized and ridiculed" basic tenets of the Christian faith including the incarnation and atonement of Jesus Christ.

The PCUSA's official denominational publication, *Presbyterian Survey* included in their March, 1995 issue an article, "What's All the Fuss About Feminist Theology" written by Rev. Shelly C. Wiley. Also included is an essay

by Re-Imagining speaker Delores Williams, identified as a reprint from *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*(Orbis Books, 1993). Delores Williams' statement at the Re-Imagining Conference that "I don't think we need a theory of atonement at all...I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff," became a focal point in the ensuing reaction that rocked the denomination. According to PCUSA news briefs, the deficits of the *Presbyterian Survey* in the past have been absorbed by the denomination.

According to *Women*, a publication of the Women's Ministries Program Area, National Ministries Division, PCUSA, August 7-14, PCUSA supported Ghost Ranch Conference Center, will host a conference, "The Church in Solidarity with Women." Leaders include Mary Ann Lundy, dismissed by the denomination for her leadership in Re-Imagining and now serving with the World Council of Churches, and Susan Halcomb Craig, Associate Director of the Women's Ministries Program Area.

Come Join Us Working for Renewal in the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Join us in being a voice calling the Presbyterian Church(USA) and individual Presbyterians back to Reformed Christian faith rooted in Scripture and our Confessions while also rejecting false gods and their ideologies.

Yes, I believe theology matters and would like to receive the publication *Theology Matters*

Yes, I would like to contribute to the work of Presbyterians for Faith, Family and Ministry
 PFFM is in the process of applying for nonprofit IRS status

Comments:

Name	Church	Presbytery
Address	City	State
		Zip

**Mail to: Presbyterians for Faith, Family and Ministry, Inc.
 P.O. Box 10249, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0249, (703) 552-5325**

Presbyterians For Faith, Family and Ministry, Inc.
 P.O. Box 10249
 Blacksburg, VA 24062-0249

Bulk Mail Permit
PAID
 Permit No. 72
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

Address Correction Requested