

OCTOBER, 1977

\$1.00

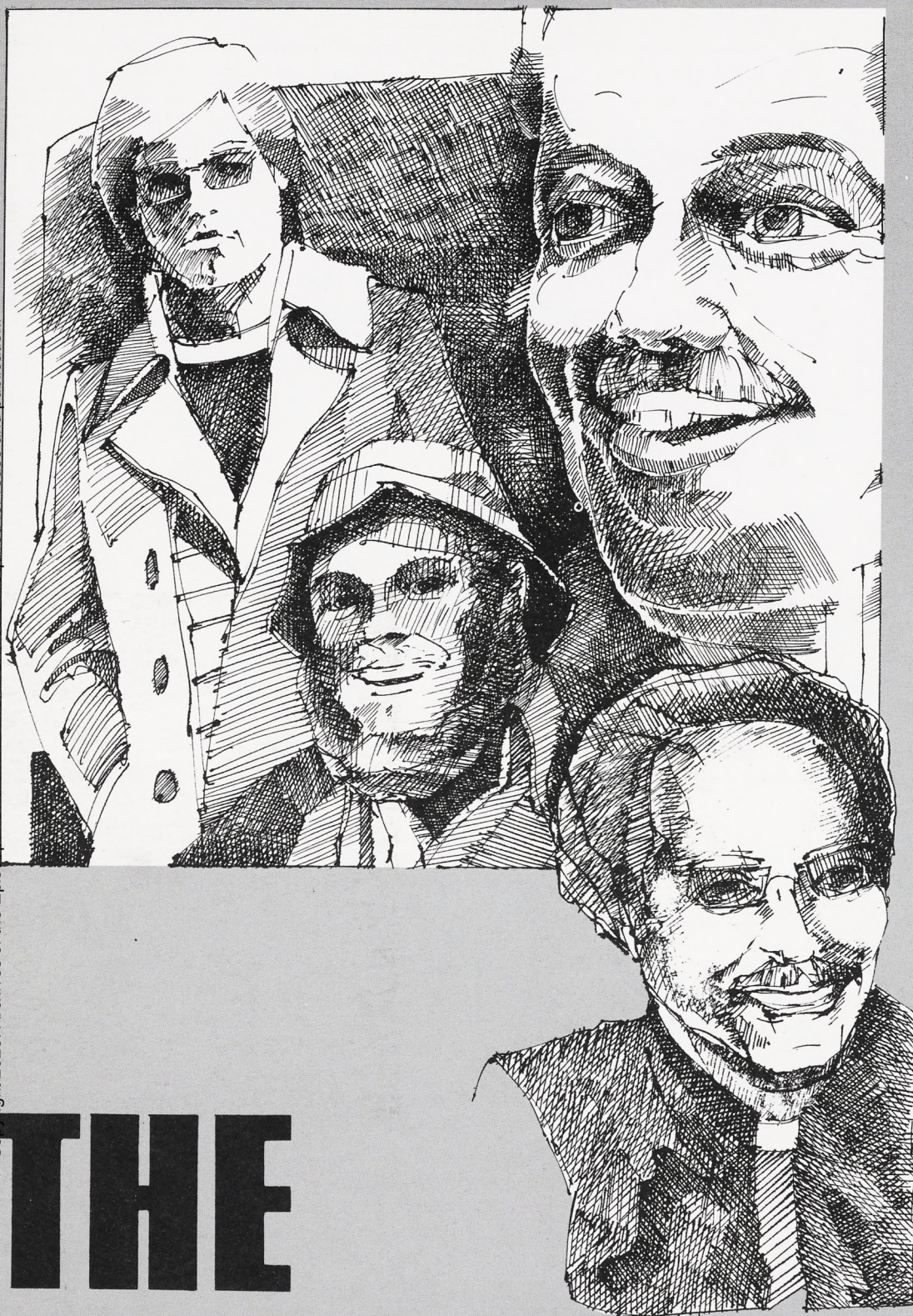
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES  
CHURCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AUSTIN, TEXAS

# Gays in the Church Speak for Themselves

- ellen barrett
- malcolm boyd
- ron wesner
- louie crew

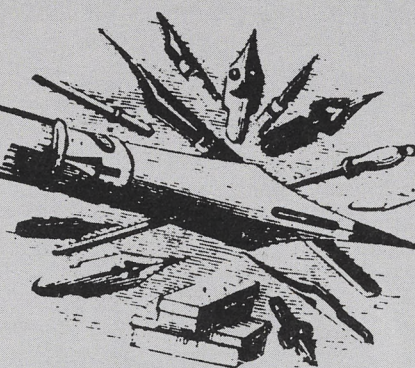
Copyright 2020. Archives of the Episcopal Church / DFMS. Permission required for reuse and publication.

# THE WITNESS





# letters



TO: The Rev. Ellen M. Barrett  
The Right Rev. Paul Moore, Jr.  
The Standing Committee of the Diocese of New York  
The People of the Diocese of New York  
and The Right Rev. C. Kilmer Myers,  
Bishop of California

FROM: Women clergy of the Diocese of New York

*Whereas* nothing in the canons of the Episcopal Church forbids the ordination of homosexual persons — closeted or avowed, latent or active; and

*Whereas* “sexuality” has never been set forth canonically in the Episcopal Church as an issue in ordination or licensing procedures; and

*Whereas* the decision of the 1976 General Convention not to consider the question of ordaining, or not ordaining, homosexual persons cannot be construed in any way as a prohibition against the ordination of such persons; and

*Whereas* many persons who are known to be actively involved in sexual relationships with members of the same sex have been — and continue to be — ordained, and licensed, as deacons, priests, and bishops of the church; and

*Whereas* candor about oneself has never been deemed an impediment to ordination and has in fact been expected in the canonical processes leading to ordination; and

*Whereas* Ellen Marie Barrett had fulfilled all canonical requirements, and was judged qualified for ordination by the General Theological Seminary, the Standing Committee of New York, and the Bishop of New York — all of whom were aware, at the time, of her sexuality; and

*Whereas*, with the permission of the Standing Committee of the Diocese and in the presence of other laypeople and clergy from the Diocese, the Bishop of New York, Paul

Moore, ordained Ellen Barrett to the diaconate and to the priesthood;

## THEREFORE,

1. *We extend our support to our sister priest, Ellen Barrett*, noting especially her call, her candor, her courage, and the irreversible sacramental validity and canonical regularity of her Holy Orders.

2. *We extend our support to our bishop, Paul Moore, and to the Standing Committee of the Diocese of New York*, noting especially the canonical precision with which they undertook the processes leading to Ellen Barrett's ordination; the strength and courage of their corporate conviction; and the justice of their willingness to treat Ellen Barrett as they would, and do, any person whom they believe to be spiritually, morally, academically, and otherwise canonically qualified for ordination.

3. *We urge the Bishop of California, Kilmer Myers, to re-issue* a license for Ellen Barrett to function as a priest in the diocese where she presently resides.

(Signed)

The Rev. Laurel Artress-Ulrich  
The Rev. Columba Gilliss, O.S.H.  
The Rev. Emily Hewitt  
The Rev. Carter Heyward  
The Rev. Barbara Schlachter  
The Rev. Julia Sibley  
The Rev. Mary Michael Simpson, O.S.H.

cc: Bishops of the Episcopal Church  
Women clergy of the Episcopal Church  
The Rev. Ronald Wesner, President of Integrity



# THE WITNESS

Subscription rates; \$9.00 per year; \$1.00 per copy. *The Witness* is published monthly by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Board of Directors: Morris Arnold, Joan Belknap, Robert L. DeWitt, Lloyd Gressle, Barbara Harris, John Hines, Brooke Mosley, Charles Ritchie, Helen Seager. Copyright 1977 by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Printed in U.S.A.

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Mary Lou Suhor, Managing Editor; Robert Eckersley, Peggy Case, Mary Ann Faix Nolan, Susan Small, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White Jr. Editorial and Business Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002. Telephone (215) 643-7067.

## Witness to Truth

Robert L. DeWitt

We have a problem, we Christians. It is an old one. It is the penchant for making the wrong decision when confronted with a new question. It seems usually to result from the tendency to fall back on old habits and attitudes, rather than to look openly at a question with fresh eyes. This failing seems particularly to pertain to questions concerning the proper understanding of natural science — the understanding of God's creation.

Galileo, in the 17th Century, was excitedly "thinking God's thoughts after Him," and his brilliance in astronomy provided proof that the planets, including this earth, revolve around the sun, rather than the earth being the center of the universe. The reaction of the church was to try him as a heretic and, under the threat of the penalty for heresy, to force the aging man to recant.

In more recent memory, the institution of human slavery was likewise defended by orthodoxy; texts from the Bible were found which forestalled for generations the acceptance of what is now an established and accepted fact of anthropology — that there are no inferior races of people in the human family.

Now comes the question of the relationship of the church to homosexuality, and once more we are asked to try to understand God's creation. It is a melancholy fact that the church, again, seems wont to fall back on old and accustomed attitudes rather than be open to a deeper and truer understanding of God's creation.

It is not accidental that the one diocese of the Episcopal Church which is most nearly open to a fresh understanding of this question is the Diocese

of Michigan. In that diocese the bishop initiated some serious study of the question of homosexuality in order that his people might inform their own consciences. Vestries, for example, were invited to inform diocesan council of their opinion on the question, but only after having done some serious study on the subject. As with astronomy and anthropology, human sexuality is more correctly understood if people engage in informed reflection than it is if they simply reflect the currently prevailing attitudes.

"Faith Alive," the new and vital charismatic group within the Episcopal Church, glories in and celebrates the experience of being in tune with and responsive to the movement of God's Spirit in the lives of His people. Several weeks ago, the board of directors of this fervently evangelistic group sent a resolution to the bishops of the Episcopal Church urging them "not to ordain professed and practicing homosexuals," and suggesting the bishops "pray about possible actions that should be taken in connection with those already ordained." It is not so much that their resolution was simply a reflection of the prevailing attitudes of the times, but that precisely this group, which seeks to bear testimony of the *aliveness* of God's Spirit in the hearts and minds of people, falls back on *proof-texts* to support that prevailing attitude.

We do have a problem, we Christians. When Jesus encountered an incorrect but fixed position or attitude on the part of people, a position which they sought to support by an appeal to the presumed witness of tradition, His response was to point out

(please turn to page 18)



# Ellen Barrett

## ...tired, angry and in pain



By BRIAN McNAUGHT

Detroit blacks have successfully petitioned their mayor to name the stretch of concrete which winds through the site of the 1967 riot/revolution the "Rosa Parks Boulevard." It has been 20 years since the elderly black woman from Montgomery, Alabama refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man, thereby igniting a successful boycott of the city's bus system and ushering in a new awareness of black power.

Rosa Parks and Ellen Marie Barrett share a common heritage. Both will be remembered in the annals of history long after the voices of their foes have been silenced by death and by the movement of the Spirit to renew the face of the earth.

As the first known woman in the history of Christianity to be ordained to the priesthood as an "acknowledged homosexual;" as a woman who's unintentionally controversial stepping forward has been the source of vicious hate mail, pulpit denunciations, House of Bishops' debates, speculation on "schism" and obvious entanglements to ecumenical dialogue, her presence in this issue of *The Witness*, devoted to an airing of personal perspective by gay Episcopalians and others, was seen by the editorial staff as being *essential*. At a time when much of Anita Bryant's rhetoric has focused on "liberal Churches ordaining homosexuals," this issue of *The Witness* without Ellen Barrett would be like a day without sunshine.

But Ellen is unable to write at this moment in her life.

Initially she jumped at the opportunity and talked excitedly about a "forward-thinking article based on the Theology of Liberation." It was our hope that she would tie her own experiences into the philosophy of Gustavo Gutierrez, the Third World theologian who is captivating audiences with his belief that truth about God and the Will of the Creator is most authentically realized in the real life experiences of persons struggling to liberate themselves from oppressions. To that we hoped the article would add an over-view of the recently-released findings of a growing number of other theologians who insist that the traditional Scriptural passages used to condemn homosexuals have been taken totally out of context. This type of presentation would complete the package and also be right up Ellen's alley. Ellen had told Bishop Paul Moore, Jr., the New York Prelate who ordained her to the priesthood January 10, 1977, that she couldn't afford to adopt a "defensive posture;" that "what I am trying to do is something creative, and not to have continually to be answering other people's questions and working from their point of view."

But that's not happening right now. Right now Ellen Marie Barrett is very tired, hurt and angry. She called and wrote an apology, themselves reflecting a frustration which pleaded "please don't make me explain." No explanation was needed. While some editors might have responded, "Come on kid, get with it. You're famous. You've been written up in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time* magazine and have the potential to be a real household word," there was an empathetic understanding that Ellen had reached a point we all reach at one time or another; a period of delayed shock we eventually work out; a "please leave me alone, I need to think" situation which defies much outside influence.

"I really wanted to write the article," she said, "but every time I tried to put down positive thoughts, I got angry." Then write about your anger, I told her. "I can't even do that. I can't verbalize it. Every time I try I lose the words."

What kind of an experience immobilizes a 31-year-old

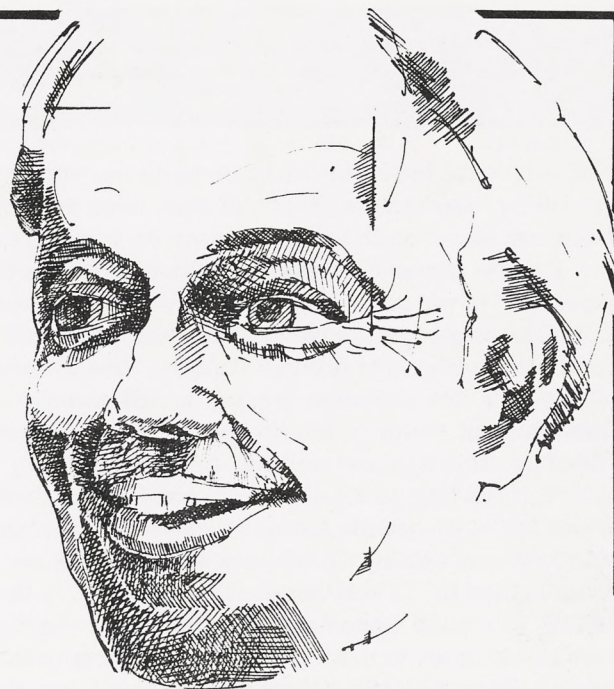
(please turn to page 6)



# Malcolm Boyd

## ...life without a mask

*The Rev. Malcolm Boyd, popular author, "night club priest," civil rights advocate and Vietnam War foe, came out of the closet in September, 1976, when he affirmed his homosexuality. Cautioned by friends that it would put "limits on my usefulness as a spokesperson for other causes," Boyd told his friend Roy Larson, religion writer for the Chicago Sun Times, "I'm tired now of all the preoccupation with public-relations packaging . . . I do not want anything more to do with masks." Currently on a national whirlwind speaking tour, having completed yet another book, Malcolm Boyd took time to respond to personal questions concerning his present attitudes and those of others to his latest civil rights crusade.*



***How are you doing as a person at this moment? Do you feel good, bad, energized or drained?***

You are really asking me what happens to a person whose mask has been shed. Speaking for myself, I feel better now than ever before. I am incredibly energized. This is because I acknowledge the mystery of my creation, and my own mission within it. The reality of my self, as a person created in God's image, is openly shared for the first time. Thank God, I did not go to the grave without sharing it — thankfully, gratefully, happily — with my sisters and brothers. My closet door is unhinged. Light and air are flooding into that claustrophobic dungeon cell in which I spent more than 50 years of my life.

There is a mystery about particular masks — of the Jew, the black, the gay. What does it mean to be the Jew, the black, the gay? What does God intend in the creation of people who must suffer in a particular way within the "normal majority" culture? What unique mission to others is involved in such creation? To what "vocation" is one called simply in terms of such creation?

A friend of mine, a Presbyterian minister who is gay, describes himself this way: "I am Cain wandering — in the land of Nod east of Eden with God's mark of grace upon me."

***What has "coming out" meant to you as a person, and most particularly as a Christian?***

To me as a person and particularly as a Christian, "coming out" means to be born again. It means shucking the secular false "security" of existing (even inside the church) in a tightly choreographed social lie. It means risking everything. Mustn't a Christian grow and evolve — and risk? Everlasting life requires many earthly deaths, in the Gospel sense of risk and faith.

I stayed in the Taizé Community in France for a while in 1957. The Rule of Taizé speaks of abandoning oneself: "March henceforth on the steps of Christ. Do not concern yourself in care for tomorrow . . . And so, renouncing henceforth to look back, and joyful with an infinite thankfulness, never be afraid to precede the dawn to praise and bless and chant CHRIST YOUR LORD." This provided the base of *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?*: "Never remain in your place but march — running to your goal on the steps of Christ."

The Taizé Rule speaks of taking risk for Christ's sake: "You would narrow your comprehension of the Gospel if, because you feared to lose your life, you would keep it yourself. *If the grain does not die*, you cannot hope to see your person open up in the fullness of the Christian life . . . like Abraham you can advance in this way only by faith and not by sight, being assured that he who will have lost his life on account of Christ will find it."

*(please turn to page 7)*



## barrett...

(from page 4)

woman who is bright, articulate and clever with expression? Why, nine months after your ordination do you suddenly lose your breath and wish to vanish in the crowd?

There is a marvelous scene in the film "Jesus Christ Superstar" in which the Nazarene is being approached by a multitude of persons, crawling from every direction with simultaneous pleas for healing. Initially, the face of Jesus displays the compassionate caring we all associate with God-Man but within a few moments his countenance is one of anxiety, fear and a plea for escape.

How did I get here? What went wrong? Is it the Spirit or just me? Do I hate the hate-mailers or try to understand where they are coming from? Some Christians tell me I am an abomination. Others tell me to go to hell. Is this the Church I love and seek to serve? Who am I serving? Some gays say I am perpetuating our source of oppression by staying within the Church. Some scream that I am perpetuating the evils of the priesthood by opting to be ordained! A heroine? The devil incarnate? Why me? Why now?

In April, 1977, Ellen Barrett was interviewed by Dean Gengle at the *Advocate*, a bimonthly national gay newspaper out of California. When asked by *The Witness* which source of information she suggested our using to write her story, Ellen stated the *Advocate* interview was the best that has been written. It is with their permission that we present a selection of those questions and answers.

(© 1977 Liberty Publications, Inc.) \* \* \*

I was born in Kansas and raised mostly in Virginia except for my father being in the diplomatic corps in South America for a couple of years. I went to high school in Virginia, and about the time when it seemed like everyone else in the world was being a college drop-out, I was a college drop-in. Finally I graduated from a small, Catholic girl's school in New England — Albertus Magnus in Connecticut. I worked in New York for a year, at the public library. I went to graduate school at NYU and got my master's in history; went to the seminary from there.

***Was yours a primarily Catholic background, then?***

No, I was raised an Episcopalian, but. . . in my late teens I was looking for answers and the Roman church had lots of answers; it wasn't until about seven years later that I discovered I wasn't asking the right questions.

***Were they theological, interpersonal or personal questions?***

Mostly theological. Most of the priests I knew who

were Episcopalians were very good at interpersonal relationships but couldn't explain much of anything. I picked up some Roman catechisms and they seemed to have all the answers very neatly stacked up. That appealed to me. But I discovered that I missed the freedom the Episcopal Church has, even though we fight a lot. We do manage to live together with a lot of very diverse opinions. It just seemed like a more congenial environment, so I came home.

***What about your decision to enter the priesthood — how did it happen?***

It was a decision I hadn't thought about since I was a little girl and I asked my mother "Why aren't there any women priests?" and she said "Because there aren't." Women don't do that. So I was working as a volunteer at one of the parishes in New York and two different people — without consulting each other — on the same day, said "Why don't you apply for ordination?" I said, "Huh? Who, me?" and thought about it, and did.

***Didn't you kind of suspect that your decision would create the controversy within the church that it did?***

It seemed like the right thing to do. I have sort of a thick Irish head. Being very stubborn, I decided that if I was going to do it at all, I was going to do it honestly. So I did.

I prayed. Sometimes it was more like yelling at God and saying, "Why did you do this to me?" A lot of good people have helped me out along the way.

I'd been doing gay movement work before I got into the church thing full time. Also a number of people in the seminary and the diocese were very helpful, even when it looked like I wasn't going to make it.

***Why is it important for anyone to be a priest, particularly a lesbian?***

In terms of the world at large, I suppose it isn't important. We're about as monumentally useless to anybody but Christians as anyone could be. I kind of like that.

***What is your use to Christians?***

I suppose we're sort of a focus point, a kind of cross-roads. I hate the sort of attitude that says that either we're some sort of magicians with strange, occult powers, or the attitude that says that priests are professional Christians 24 hours a day. I think any Christian ought to be a professional Christian 24 hours a day.

I see the priest's role as that of a focal point, bringing people's prayers and hopes and aspirations together and presenting them in a way that one person can do better than a whole group can. Committees never get very far, and congregations as a whole are an amorphous kind of

(please turn to page 8)



## boyd...

(from page 5)

*What reaction have you had from family, friends and those persons who before had made you their hero because of your sensitive prodding to personal prayer?* Every conceivable reaction — disbelief, rage, suspicion, hate, fury, and also quiet support, sharing secrets and pain, matter-of-fact acceptance, low-key dialog, gentle reaching out, and beautiful (indeed, vulnerable) manifestations of love.

All this has meant a Christian experience of growth for myself and a number of other people. I am deeply grateful that, turning 55 years, I have been blessed with this profoundly disturbing experience of “shaking up” by the Holy Spirit instead of “security,” being too easily “settled,” and false peace.

*Do you regret publicly affirming your homosexuality? Do you regret not doing it before?*

Instead of regret, I feel joy. I believe that my feelings are explained in this prayer that I wrote in *Am I Running With You, God?*

(Doubleday, 1977):

*I am Malcolm*

*This is my baptismal name.*

*I am male and a Christian.*

*I am an American and white.*

*And I am gay, as you know, Lord.*

*Essentially I am a person created in your image, God.*

*I am also a sojourner, a pilgrim, a runner, and one who wishes to be free but still belong to a community.*

*I never liked masks, yet have felt forced at times to wear them. I have lived in two different parts of life, seemingly split down the middle of my being. Let my naked face now be seen by others as it is seen by you, Lord. Let me look upon the naked faces of others in all their created and natural beauty, and not upon fabricated, complex, painted masks that obscure truth.*

*Let me move closer into wholeness, and help others to do the same, as I openly share the fullness of my being. Why should any part of my life be withheld from communication with others or treated in secret or shadowy way? For I am warmly and happily grateful for joy and love, and the unfettered sharing of these in your wondrous world.*

*I thank you with all my heart for my creation and wholeness, God.*

Do I regret not having “come out” before? No. God did not call me to do so. I was not yet ready.

*Taking into consideration the fact that you had a national reputation which you could fall back on in terms of continuing a source of income, do you feel it is good for other Episcopalian clergy to come out?*

Let me say, first, that I have been a “tentmaker” for many years. I am grateful that I’ve been able to work and earn my living this way. But it has never been easy or simple. Indeed, I risked the loss of this, too, when I came out.

Other gays — laity and clergy, Episcopalian or Roman Catholic or Protestant or Jewish — should come out only when they feel strongly that the moment has arrived when they can — when they must. No one should ever prod anyone else to come out. It is an incredibly sensitive, personal decision. There are gay bishops, priests, deacons, nuns, monks, ministers, rabbis, organists, church school superintendents, vestry members — women and men in every part of the church’s life. A few nationally-recognized American religious leaders have told me that they wonder if they will ever feel able to come out. It is not their gayness that stands in the way; it is public pressure and social oppression. Yet, for many closeted gays, existing inside the closet becomes intolerable; it even seems, in stark moments, a denial of the depth of the Christian life.

*What gifts do gay women and men have to offer the church?*

My answer to this question is this prayer that I wrote in *Am I Running With You, God?*:

*They’re prophets, Lord, and they’re gay.*

*They stand inside your church, and know a wholeness that can benefit it.*

*Long ago they learned that they must regard the lilies of the field, putting their trust in you.*

*Pressured to hide their identities and gifts, they have served you with an unyielding, fierce love inside the same church that condemned them.*

*Taught that they must feel self-loathing, nevertheless they learned integrity and dignity, and how to look into your face and laugh with grateful joy, Lord.*

*Victims of a long and continuing torture, they asserted a stubborn faith in the justice of your kingdom.*

*Negativism was drummed into them as thoroughly as if they were sheet metal. They learned what it is to be hated. Yet, despite such rejection, they insisted on attesting to the fullness and beauty of all human creation,*

(please turn to page 9)



## barrett...

(from page 6)

body in a lot of ways.

I really see the priest's role as being largely sacramental. And for myself — as a person who wants to keep on studying, questioning, learning, and as a teacher — maybe I see it as sort of a rabbinical role with the sacramental dimension added.

*In some of the previously published interviews with you, you've placed great emphasis on your scholarship. That's why I asked you the question about the priesthood. If you're being a focal point, and bringing these energies together, what part does your scholarship play? How do those two things come together?*

I see myself as a woman priest and as a gay priest representing to the church two groups of people who have frequently been left out of the church, consciously or unconsciously. I feel that as a scholar and teacher I can bring together the sense of inclusivity that I would also like to bring together at the altar.

For instance, what I hope is going to come together as my dissertation is going to be on women and the Church of England in the 19th century. It's kind of a detective story. There's not a whole lot written specifically, except for the revival of religious orders, but I get the feeling that a lot of our traditions that we think came down from on high to the Episcopal Church are really sort of layovers from the Victorian family. You know, "Daddy says it, therefore it's right."

I'd like to explore some of the things that that means. I want to figure out how the Episcopal Church got here from there. I have a strong suspicion that a lot of our background attitudes do stem from that period. I'd like to bring that into more conscious focus.

*There are many congregations, bishops and priests who are actively opposed to the fact that you were ordained. Some of them claim that you are not a legitimate priest. If these people don't believe that you are, in fact, an ordained priest, does that make you any less of a priest?*

I would say that it doesn't. We could get into a whole historical theological hassle about "where the bishops are, there is the church." At least according to St. Clement. If half your bishops say one thing and the other half say another, who's right? It's hard to say.

By any canonical standards of valid ordination I am validly ordained. As a matter of fact, Bishop Allin [the presiding bishop] has said that it is a valid ordination, although he thinks it was ill-advised.

A lot of bishops, clergy and laity too, who have opposed my ordination and say that they don't recognize it are the ones who don't recognize the ordination of women *at all*. My being gay is adding insult to injury. It's like some of the congregation who have withheld money from the diocese: frequently they're the one's who would be discontented over the women's issue, and if it weren't that it would be the prayerbook changes or something else.

*In looking at other traditions, other belief systems, do you think we will ever collectively outgrow the need for an organized belief structure?*

I would say probably not. I think the organized church structure may change radically so that it's not all that recognizable from today's perspective. I rather hope it does, since there are lots of things wrong with practically every way a church is organized. I have great discussions with people in women's groups and gay groups and the church, too, about how probably the only really dynamic and working organization is the small cell of people, about six, and as soon as it starts establishing rules and regulations it sort of kills itself. On the other hand, how can you reach more than a half-dozen people if you haven't got some kind of structure? There's got to be some openness to change that I think our structures have lost over the centuries. Structure, I think, is always with us.

*What would be the ideal structure for you? What would you like to work in?*

I haven't really had very many fantasies about what the ideal situation would be. I think the local parish, though not perhaps in its present form, is the main body of the church. I think that's really where the "action" is . . . That's where 90 per cent of our people are. I don't see myself on a parish staff anywhere. I rather like the set-up I have here in Berkeley, where I fill in on weekdays as extra or understudy, as it were. I'd like to teach in a university seminary or graduate school somewhere. But I'd always like to have a parish connection because I think one can become too "ivory tower" and lose track of where the church is. It really is out there with the 99 per cent and not with the one per cent of us who wear the white collars.

*How have things changed for you since you were ordained?*

Well, the hate letters have been a downer. I'm really not at my best early in the morning, and I get these things

(please turn to page 17)



## boyd...

(from page 7)

*including theirs, in your image.*

*They are alive and well and standing inside your church. Bless them, Lord, to your service.*

*What gifts does the church have to offer gay women and men?*

The sacramental life, the prophetic tradition, the whole Gospel, a theology that comprehends the incarnation and the atonement, the Great Commandments, and the self-righteous sharing of the love of Christ.

*Do you see what George Gallup predicts as a new "religious revival" in this country affecting the gay civil rights movement?*

Very much. Gays are as implicitly religious as non-gays, perhaps a bit more so. Living on the edge of society, and always confronting a Kierkegaardian abyss, gays are instinctively sensitive to the realities of God, life, death, success and failure. As I said in a recent interview in Boston's *Gay Community News*, I do believe that the spiritual-religious impulse is as central as the genital impulse. It's a part of life and always has been. Gays who are Christians understand this in a unique way. The gay civil rights movement will be greatly advanced by the "religious revival," especially by a healthy emphasis on the whole Gospel (social as well as personal) and the kind of Bible study advanced by Fr. John McNeill and others, that substitutes reason for fundamentalism. I speak of authentic "religious revival," of course. A phony travesty of it is blasphemy.

*What is the greatest obstacle the church has to overcome in effectively dealing with its gay brothers and sisters?*

I address this question in the Foreword to the American edition of *We Speak for Ourselves* (ed. by Jack Babuscio, London: SPCK). Fortress Press will publish it this Fall. As I state in the Foreword, organized religion often holds the keys to the closet. In the church, gays are stifled, too often denied human and civil rights. A major persecutor of gay people, the church adds salt to inflicted wounds when it refuses — or finds itself inadequate — to give effective pastoral help. When the church acts in a simplistically self-righteous — and, therefore, self-judging — manner toward gay people, by identifying the "sinner" and then

refusing to love the "sinner," a curious result is set in motion. Then, according to the book, "the promiscuity so vociferously condemned by heterosexuals (who blithely ignore their own . . .)" becomes "a direct by-product of those very prohibitions imposed by society against gay relationships."

The church has to overcome two main obstacles. First, it must deal with its own history in terms of people who claimed to be Christians and twisted the meaning of Holy Scripture so that it might seemingly support their hate — of Jews, of blacks, of women, of gays. *The Negro a Beast*, a "religious" book in 1900, argued against accepting the fact that blacks are created in the image of God. It did this *on the basis of* its interpretation of the Bible. Millions of Jews have been killed *on the basis of* interpretation of the Bible.

Second, the church must soberly deal with a complex question: Are not gays, as well as non-gays, created in the image of God? Or, did God make a mistake when he created gay people?

*Is God running with you, Malcolm, or have you become more comfortable walking?*

I began walking a few years ago. No, I wasn't comfortable doing so, for it is my nature to be a runner. Now I am running again. We gays are not so "settled" as other people, even if we happen to be married or occupy a place in a nuclear family ambience. We are not so "established" even if we happen to be recognized as establishment leaders. Always there have been so many masks to be worn. This is one reason why the gay bar is a central symbol in gay life. Masks, worn even — or especially — inside the church, can be taken off in the gay bar.

I wrote in *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* (Holt, 1965): "This isn't very much like a church, Lord, but many members of the church are also here in this bar. Quite a few of the men here belong to the church as well as to this bar. If they knew how, a number of them would ask you to be with them in both places. Some of them wouldn't, but won't you be with them, too, Jesus?"

The wandering Jew is an archetypal figure. So is the wandering gay, who knows the experience of no place to lay his head. A gay Christian recently told me: "No one can take another's place. But we all need someone to cry with, be with, laugh with. This is the reason why I find Barnabas so important a person in the New Testament. He was alongside of. He was *there*."

As I have learned to run again, I've come to a sense of self-knowledge, an altogether new awareness of awe in God's mystery, and the exciting discovery of wholeness in  
(please turn to page 18)





DR. SOL GORDON

*(Editor's Note: During the recent American Library Association convention in Detroit, the ALA Task Force on Gay Liberation sponsored an address by Dr. Sol Gordon entitled "It's Not OK to be Anti-Gay." Professor of Child and Family Studies and Director of the Institute for Family Research at Syracuse University, Gordon received his B.A. and M.S. from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of London. During over 25 years of practice as a child psychologist he has served as Chief Psychologist of both the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic and the Middlesex County Mental Health Clinic in New Brunswick, N.J., and has been Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of Project Beacon at Yeshiva University in New York City. He is author of many books on sexuality including "Facts About Sex for Today's Youth," "Facts About VD for Today's Youth," "Sex and Birth Control for the Mentally Retarded," "The Sexual Adolescent" and others. Following are selections from his delightfully humorous and insightful presentation.)*

Ladies and gentlemen, an American patriot once said, "If we don't hang together, we're going to hang separately."

If you scratch the surface of somebody who's anti-gay, you're going to find an anti-E.R.A., anti-Jew, anti-black. That's my main message.

The Bible has been abused for a long time in history.

## "It's Not To be Anti-Gay"

It's been used to kill Jews, to justify slavery, to promote inequality among women. I wonder what would happen if I got up in a church or synagogue and I said, "Well, ladies and gentlemen, if God wanted black people on this earth he would have created Adam and Sheba." What would happen if I would get up and say, "Listen, everybody, incest is *not* bad. It says in the Bible — don't you remember — that Lot slept with his daughters. Incest must be all right." What would happen? I would be considered an idiot because I quoted directly from the Bible.

Anita loves homosexuals — that's what she says — but I don't have a short memory. I remember when the bigots from the South would say, "We loves our blacks, our nigras; we loves them and they loves us too." With such friends, we don't need any enemies.

They're worried about gay people being teachers. I don't understand it. If there are 100 teachers and one might be gay, *all* the students are going to flock to the gay teacher for a role model? I don't understand. Are there no heterosexual models? If there is a gay model is the gay person the most attractive, the most interesting, the most exciting? Don't deceive yourselves. I would like to say, to declare without *any* equivocation, that there are some people who are straight who are also models!

Part two: I have a message for Jimmy Carter. I don't know if you read the newspapers and saw Carter's view on homosexuality. It's not bad. He says "I don't see homosexuality as a threat to the family." He is the first important person who has said that. Carter says, "What has caused the highly publicized confrontation on homosexuality is the desire of homosexuals for the rest of society



# Not OK Anti-Gay"

for reuse and publication.

Copyright 2020. Archives of the Episcopal Church / DFMS. Permission required

to approve and to add its acceptance of homosexuality as a normal sexual relationship. I don't feel it's a normal sexual relationship." But then he adds, "... but at the same time I don't feel that society, through its laws, ought to abuse or harass the homosexual." Not bad.

I would like, however, to say to Mr. Carter, to me the issue is *not* that homosexuals desire acceptance of homosexuality as a normal sexual relationship. That's *not* the main thing. The main thing that gay people are worried about and that I am worried about is the question of *rights*. If you don't think it's normal, I'm not that worried about it. There are some people who don't think that lustful thoughts are normal. I have real serious questions about celibates, but you know that the celibates are not really worried about my questions about them. They think they're normal, and, you know, they might be?

We have to raise some questions. They're worried about child molestation. Did it occur to anybody that 90 to 95 per cent of all child molestation is between heterosexuals? Heterosexual adults — usually a man — against a heterosexual child. And they point out statistics that of the number of people who are arrested that a disproportionate number are homosexuals. Well, it's like the judge in Wisconsin who says that rape is normal for young men who see scantily dressed women. A lot of people think it's OK for a boyfriend or husband or stepfather to sleep with a girl, because, after all, she must have provoked it. She's five years old. You know what it is? It's heterosexual! But if it's a man with a five-year-old boy, that's sodomy! Do you know that there are thousands and thousands of cases of incest and heterosexual abuse that nobody is recording.

We have to know that and say, "Listen, state legisla-

ture in Florida, how come you're so worried about homosexuals marrying and adopting children? Is that a really serious problem in the state of Florida?" Do you know what is really a serious problem in the state of Florida? Child abuse! There are one million cases of child abuse, thousands of them resulting in death, and you know who they are? They're heterosexuals! Maybe you ought to worry about child abusing parents who might adopt children and who might marry each other. Those are the questions we have to raise. We have to say that it's not that important that you worry about homosexuals adopting children because I have never heard a case of a homosexual parent who has abused children, but I have heard of one million heterosexual parents abusing their children. We have to raise those questions.

Part three: and some of you aren't going to like this part, and I don't care. A young man came to me for counseling and said, "I don't know how to say this, but I have to talk to somebody; I don't know how to say it." I said, "Say it, already." He said he's gay. Do you want to be gay? "No, definitely not; I'm terrified by the whole thing; I can't tolerate it; I don't know what to do. Can I trust you?" I said, "No." He said, "What do you mean? You're a psychologist; you're supposed to be trusted." I told him, "Me, you can't trust." "Why," he said? I told him, "Trust comes at the end, not at the beginning. All meaningful interactions involve risk. You have to risk the possibility that I might not like you, that I can't help you. Trust involves time. All meaningful interactions between people involve risk."

He said, "OK, I'll risk it." I said, "Do you want to be a homosexual?" He said, "My God, no." I asked if he had ever had any homosexual relations. He said, "What do you take me for?" I said, "I don't know yet." I asked if he had ever had any heterosexual relations and he said, "Of course not, are you making fun of me? I'm a homosexual." I said, "So far, you're an anti-sexual. Any homosexual I know is better off than you are." He said, "Oh, my God, am I that bad?" I said, "Yes. Tell me the story of your life. You have five minutes." He said, "Ever since I can remember I've had these homosexual thoughts and fantasies." I told him, "Stop, already. I know the rest of your life history. You felt guilty about these thoughts and as long as you feel guilty about a thought you'll have these thoughts over and over again. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Guilt is the energy for the repetition of unacceptable thoughts."

If there is one dynamic in all of sex education that I consider most important it is that all thoughts are normal.

(please turn to page 12)



# "It's not OK

(from page 11)

All thoughts, all wishes, all dreams, all fantasies are normal! If you have a thought that you're guilty about, you'll have that thought over and over again until it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If I walk down the street and I see a pretty girl that captures my fancy, I rape her. Now, the girl doesn't know about it, my wife doesn't know about it and it enhances my walk. But I don't want *you* to think that that's my total repertoire, because it isn't. I have all kinds of thoughts about men *and* women — and animals. (Editor's note: there was pronounced nervous laughter from the audience at this point.) Why is that funny? *Who* has *never* had a thought about an animal, stand up! (Following a pause and much more laughter it was clear that no one intended to stand.) That, ladies and gentlemen, is known as research. (Wild applause.) Who thinks that only Jimmy has had lustful thoughts? Gerry Ford has them; Mrs. Ford has them and some people in this audience as well. But where does an intellectually-minded young man go to seek his identity? To a psychiatric textbook. And he looks up homosexuality and he finds it and it says, "someone who has had sex with a member of the same sex . . ." and it doesn't exactly fit him because he's never had sex, so he goes to an advanced psychiatric textbook and what does he find? "Latent homosexuality." There he is, latent, and he hasn't done *anything* yet.

Well, I have messages for some of you, perhaps even for all of you. Latency is a figment of the psychiatric imagination. You might as well say, "all women are latently pregnant." We are *all* latent everything there is! We are all latent homosexuals! We are all latent heterosexuals! We are all latent bisexuals and we are all latent trysexuals. Would you like to know what a trysexual is? That's someone who tries everything!

They go around saying, "Oh, my God, what kind of society have we created? If ever a faggot approaches me, I'll kill him." Why do you have to kill him? Why can't you say, "No thank you"? Why can't you say, "Not tonight — maybe tomorrow — I'm busy — I have my period

tonight." Why can't you say (there are ten things you can say) so why do you have to kill him? Why have we restricted ourselves to one message.

We have a sort of weird society. I'm talking to my colleagues, university professors — having this intellectual conversation — and along comes a woman and they say, "Boy, did you see the boobs on her?" I say, "What's the matter? What kind of conversation is that?!! And do you know what they say to me? "What's the matter, don't you like women?" That's the level at which we have to communicate in our society. We can't talk the truth. We can't talk to each other the way we want to feel. At any point in any situation I have to somehow say, "wow," about somebody's ass, or somebody's tits, in order to be a male, in order to be masculine. And I want to spread around the message, if you're going to relate to somebody, if you're going to marry someone, don't relate to a *part* of a person. You can't have a conversation with an ass — even a smart ass.

We're going to have to carry the message, "People are people," and we're going to have to learn to relate to people *as* people, *not* as parts of people. And I refuse somehow to live a kind of life that says, "I can't allow myself to show any kind of intimacy with a member of my own sex for fear of being diagnosed."

I don't want to — I'm fed up — I'm sick and tired as a male of dying 10 or 15 years before women do. I don't want to do that anymore, you see. I'm fed up with the heart attacks and the ulcers. I want to be able to relate to people — and that's the message we *have* to offer. And I don't want to live in *fear*. I want to say what I feel and say what I think. And we have to give those messages to everybody.

And what happens? We create delusions and diagnoses that destroy and hurt people. We say that somebody who is afraid of homosexuals must be a latent homosexual. I say that somebody who is afraid of homosexuals is afraid of homosexuals. If you are afraid of dogs does that make you a latent dog? It is barbarous, this whole notion of latency. We have to accept people as they are. We are *all* latent.

There is only one definition of homosexuality, the way I feel about it, and that is, "A person who in his or her adult life has and prefers relations with members of the same sex." Period. I don't know if we among ourselves need a fancy explanation. Some people think it's convenient and strategic and political to consider it "constitutional." That's all right; I'm not worried about that. But after all the research that we know about — all that I have been able to review — I don't know why somebody



wants to be gay. All I know, with all of the research that we have been able to review and study — hormonal and hereditary and the whole thing . . . (You remember when you had to have a strong mother and a weak father? You remember that? It didn't work. There were *more* heterosexuals with that combination; everybody I *know* was a strong mother and a weak father. Do you know any strong fathers anymore?) . . . The only thing we know for sure about homosexuality is that they were probably brought up by heterosexual parents. That's the only thing we know for relatively sure — and we're not even sure about that, but it looks pretty good.

The issue is political. I'm not sure that everybody *has* to come out of the closet, you see; I'm not sure. And I caution some people who are contemptuous of those who remain in the closet. Until the National Gay Task Force has a fund of a billion dollars and states "We will support anybody, anybody's family, who has been fired from their job," we should be a little cautious. Not everybody is a hero and not everybody should be a hero in everybody else's situation. People also have a right to privacy. I admire greatly the people who have come out because they have made a political statement, and this political statement is important in our time — in just the same way that the women have had to come out and the blacks have had to come out. And of course there are going to be some people who come out who are *not* good for the cause in just the same way that there are some women who are not good for the cause and some blacks that were in the civil rights movement who went around and said that if you didn't sleep with me you're a racist. Well that black is not good for the cause, and there are some people who are flamboyant and provocative and they're not good for the cause. But we're not responsible for everybody and everything that happens. We're just going to have to say that we believe in this as a right; it's an inalienable right.

I am vitally concerned with the politics of this issue because I am a sex educator. And I want to tell you something about being a sex educator. We don't get too much in the way of hate mail, but 99 per cent of all the hate mail we get is anti-semitic. There is a close, powerful relationship between the anti-sex educators and anti-semitism. Here is a letter we just got: "Sex education in the schools is a filthy and obscene thing. No stranger has a right to talk about fornication to any child or teenager. To do so is to contribute to the delinquency of minors. It's just a plot on the part of Jews to first destroy the gentile family, then this gentile nation. It is succeeding only too well. May a curse be upon all of these sons of bitches."

You know this person is also anti-gay. He is also anti-

## To be Anti-Gay"

E.R.A. He is also anti-black, and that's the message we have to get across to people: that this is a conspiracy of the people who are bigots, who hated us from the start. And they're using the symbol of Anita Bryant as a way of saying, "Now Jews are all right, blacks are O.K., Cubans are O.K. but gays are going to destroy us." And once they have destroyed gays, they're going to move to Jews and then to blacks and then to Cubans. And we have to caution our old friends in the civil rights movement and say, "Let's stick together; let's not let these bigots deny us the unity that we all need because, if we're not going to stick together, we're going to hang separately."

That is my message to the people in Miami — like the blacks in Miami who forgot about the civil rights movement, the Orthodox Jews who forgot about what's happened to Jews, the Cubans who think that there's no connection between homosexuality and the fight against communism. These are *all* connected because freedom *is* connected, and we have to make this a political issue. If we don't stand together we're going to destroy each other.

Of course people who are in the gay part of the political movement need to concentrate, need to give it priority, in just the same way as Planned Parenthood must, in just the same way as I have to in terms of sex education. But, you know there are some universal concepts that must unite us all, and that is, equal rights for everybody.

Parents come to me and they say, "I'm a liberal. I'm a progressive. I fought in the civil rights movement, but between you and me, I don't like to admit this, and I feel a little guilty about it, but I don't want my children to grow up gay." And I say, "Liberal, liberated, wonderful parent, it's all right." You know if a parent says to me, "I don't want my children to have sex. I want them to wait until marriage," I say, "That's all right. Tell them. It's all right for you to convey your value system and it's all right for you to want to bring up a heterosexual child. But you know some of you, maybe five or ten per cent of you, are going to have to wonder; you're going to have to make some decisions. Suppose that at 20 your child announces

(please turn to page 16)



# Ron Wesner

## ...Integrity's offering

By the REV. RONALD D. WESNER



*"This whole venture is psychologically unhealthy, not to mention sinful. But I must say that my greatest problem is that, sooner or later, absolute loneliness is going to drive me out, either of hiding, or my mind! Sure, some of it is a matter of being horny, but there are various kinds of that. It's not the raw, 'I gotta get my rocks off' kind of horny that keeps me awake at night. It's the need to be tender, the need to share a field full of poppies, the need to be close, to hold, to be warmed and to warm, that hurts. . . . The point is I am not being as good a priest as I can be, and should be." — a letter from a hidden gay priest.*

*"I got big news for you, having to do with my life. I 'came out' in my small group last Thursday. I asked them how they were feeling about me—what I wanted to know was—were they experiencing me as warm and open—the answer was no, not really. They said my insights were excellent, and my group work was fine, but they felt a wall between me and them. It confirmed my suspicions that to hide my sexuality I hide too much of me. So I thought for a time. The leader, who knew what was happening, came over and sat close to me and held my hand. I told them. It went great. Their response was warm and open. . . . I know you know well the feeling of freedom when you don't have to hide with a group of people . . ." — a letter from a hidden gay seminarian.*

The Episcopal Church is in the midst of a controversy, the likes of which it has never seen before. Questions about sexuality, specifically about homosexuality, are being raised, debated, studied, and agonized over. The unique element in the debate, unique in the entire course of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, is that for the first time, homosexual persons themselves are a vocal part of this debate. No longer is the Church talking about "them," because we are raising our voices, asking to be a part of the discussion. We are now willing to talk openly about our lives, our struggles, our experiences, our issues. Our willingness to be candid, much more candid than our heterosexual sisters and brothers are with their stories, is a part of our strength and a significant part of the debate.

The primary voice of homosexual women and men in the Episcopal Church is found in Integrity, a three-year-old organization which now numbers more than 2,000 and has 30 chapters in cities from coast to coast, Canada, and is currently in discussion with gay Christians in Europe who hope to form chapters there.

Integrity has three stated purposes: to carry out an affirmative ministry with gay people, to work peacefully within the Episcopal Church to change attitudes regarding homosexuality, and to challenge the Church to work to change local, state, and federal laws which discriminate against gay people.

At the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, held in Minneapolis in 1976, six resolutions sent from diocesan conventions asked the General Convention to state that the Episcopal Church stood in opposition to the ordination of "avowed, practicing, open homosexual persons to the priesthood or diaconate." The debate was sparked by the ordination, and ensuing publicity, of Ellen Marie Barrett, a woman who chose to be honest about being a lesbian. Her choice was honored and respected by Bishop Paul Moore and the Standing Committee of the Diocese of New York. After faithful adherence to the



process, they approved her ordination to the diaconate and to the priesthood. It was her ordination to the diaconate which inspired the six negative resolutions from such dioceses as Milwaukee, Texas, and Upper South Carolina. These resolutions were all referred to the Standing Commission on Religion and Health. That commission has been charged to come to the next General Convention (Denver, 1979), with specific recommendations regarding the ordination of homosexuals. Since the Minneapolis Convention, many dioceses, including Washington, Pennsylvania, California, Southern Ohio, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh and Western North Carolina, have established their own commissions on human sexuality or homosexuality, to deal with this on a local level.

Integrity supports this process with great enthusiasm. The situation prior to the last three years has been one of confusion, silence, conspiracy of silence, and fear. The Church has ordained homosexuals throughout its history, but always with the tacit or stated assumption that the homosexual would keep silent about his (her) sexual orientation. The excerpts of two letters with which this article began indicate briefly and poignantly the stress and damage which this "conspiracy of silence" has given to the Church.

Integrity believes that the central issue of this debate is one of honesty. The dishonest heritage which we all have inherited has fostered the confusion and ignorance which has damaged the lives of untold thousands of men and women, not only homosexuals, but the families, friends, and parishioners of those homosexuals.

A conversation recently between a closeted (hidden) homosexual priest and this author contained most of the details of tragedy which have been repeated too many times over the centuries. While a seminarian he feared he was a homosexual and sought out a counselor. After many sessions the counselor declared he was "cured" and to "set the cure" the counselor advised him to fall in love with a woman. He followed the advice with sincerity and enthusiasm, met a woman, fell in love, and during the first 10 years fathered more than four children. Each child seemed to him to be a certification of his masculinity and heterosexuality, but the awareness that he was not "cured" grew in him as the children grew in his family. Now he is a successful parish priest with many of the symbols of stability and health — wife and several children — contemplating suicide because of the trap which separates him from his authentic self. His last words to me, recently, were, "And the sad part is that the Church is the last place

(please turn to page 16)

## Louie Crew



*Dr. Louie Crew, associate professor of English at Fort Valley State College, is the founder of Integrity, the national organization of gay Episcopalians and first editor of the Forum, newsletter of that caucus.*

(a villanelle)

### The Agony and the Ecstasy

Once bundled faggots burned till witches died.  
"Why won't you let me kiss you?" Jim asked Bill.  
On moonbeams fairies cross the countryside.

Invisibility is genocide,  
bloodless and quiet, but as surely shrill.  
Once bundled faggots burned till witches died.

No more must homoflesh be mortified.  
Each with her own her needs may now fulfill.  
On moonbeams fairies cross the countryside.

Phallae and mind through soul both coincide:  
erotophobes their fullness spill.  
Once bundled faggots burned till witches died.

Wet tongue against wet tongue with love applied  
the very thought of spirit does instill.  
On moonbeams fairies cross the countryside.

Nears a love that never has been tried:  
ours is the chance to sexualize goodwill.  
Once bundled faggots burned till witches died.  
On moonbeams fairies cross the countryside.

— Copyright 1977 by Louie Crew —



## wesner...

(from page 15)

where I can be honest." There are clearly no easy solutions to the dilemma of this man and his family, but avoiding honest conversations is the most bitter of all solutions.

In most of the denominational studies, such as that of the Presbyterian Task Force, diocesan studies, such as those of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, and Washington, and seminary studies, such as EDS, it is becoming clearer that those who approach this issue with openness and integrity of purpose are discovering that homosexuality is an authentic condition, void of generic pathology, and is a morally-neutral orientation. Myths of seduction, deviant role models, and promiscuity are all being consigned to their proper place: dustbins of ignorance, along with watermelon-eating blacks, and bank-owning Jews.

An impediment to these studies is that too many leaders of the Church are more sensitive to public opinion

## It's not OK...

(from page 13)

that they're gay. What are you going to do? Are you going to throw them out? Are you going to say, "It's because I was a liberated parent? I should have told my kids that the Bible says no." Is that what you're going to do?

It's all right for parents to say what they want and feel, but, you know so many parents these days are having some second thoughts. They have children who are gay and creative, working, functioning. They're happy. But they have other children or they see their friends' children who are drug addicts, in jail, insane, rotten kids. I wonder if they say, "I have a rotten kid, but I'm so grateful that he's heterosexual"? We're going to have to raise this kind of question among everybody.

And, finally, let me say that we're going to have to tie this all together with the women's liberation movement. We're going to have to say that we're all related to the civil rights movement, to the women's liberation movement because the women's liberation movement is the key to the liberation of all of us. We can't allow the enemy to define the women's liberation movement for us or to define who gay people are for us. We cannot allow the enemy to define us. In the same way, in the women's liberation movement

than to the findings of the commissions. The mood of many bishops, diocesan councils, and the Executive Council is one of economic concern and the marketability of the studies. Truth is feared when it opposes long-held myths. The fear of economic reprisals is inhibiting the support of these studies.

Some bishops are still advising their unmarried clergy to get married and raise families, even after some priests have disclosed their homosexuality to their bishops. Stones are being offered when bread is requested.

To this date, the only diocese which has experienced the process entirely — of study, education, debate and vote — is the Diocese of Michigan. Despite the courageous support of the bishop and the diocesan paper, the study was rejected by a close vote of the 1975 Diocesan Convention. One wonders what the vote would have been if the climate in that diocese had allowed the clergy and the laity, who are gay, to have talked openly about themselves.

Integrity is the tip of the iceberg, the proportionately small number of open gay people who are willing to talk with candor. But if these remained silent, even the stone would cry out — as they have in the past, with tragic and sordid headlines.

people are saying, "Women are aggressive these days. They're aggressive. They're so aggressive that men are impotent as a result of the women's liberation movement." I've got news for you. For every impotent man ten thousand of us have become liberated as the result of the women's liberation movement. And where do I get those statistics? I made them up! They make up *theirs* and I will make up *mine*! Women are assertive. The women's liberation movement is identified in terms of women who feel equal; equal responsibility, equal decision-making, equal opportunities for a career. It has nothing to do with whether they stay at home, go to work, have children or not. It has to do with equal opportunity, equal responsibilities, equal decision-making, etc. That's what the women's liberation movement is all about. Things are beginning to happen in this field because women have become assertive. They become aggressive when they don't get their rights, and there's a parallel here.

People in the gay movement need to become assertive and not allow the bigots to define the field for us. And when we don't have our rights, then we have to become aggressive. All of us. I hope that I *don't* have to say that I am gay in order to be able to say I am going to stand with you all in a common bond of solidarity. Perhaps I can say for the time being, "I am a human being and all of us must have the same rights."



## barrett...

(from page 8)

and open them and say "Oh Lord, why. . . why did they have to do this today?" But reading them over, I realize that the people who write these things are, if anything, more disturbed than they think I am. So in charity, if nothing else, I have to take it where they're coming from. But there are some really good letters too, and I've had a chance to go places and talk to people I haven't before, which is good. But I hate all the publicity and controversy. One somehow feels a bit raped — or at least very vulnerable.

*Do you think other lesbian priests will have as difficult a time as you have had? What would you advise women who want to become priests?*

I'm not the only gay priest of either sex in the Episcopal Church. I'm also not the only one who's been open about it. The crunch comes from my having been open about being gay before I was ordained. That's where the difference lies, I think.

We're in a period of backlash at the moment in the church, on the gay issue particularly. We did very well at the general convention last September. They declared that we were children of God along with everybody else. So now it's official. But I have a feeling that my ordination has brought forth only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the protest that's being raised. I think a lot of deep-seated feelings, very gut level, almost irrational, feelings have come up that are going to take a lot of time and energy to deal with.

In terms of looking at it politically, I would say that this was a time, perhaps, to be very careful in evaluating whether or not to come out before being ordained — even, perhaps, on friendly territory. It's going to be a lot harder for a while. On the other hand, I wouldn't advise anybody *not* to, necessarily. But look at it very carefully to see what the responsibilities are, and there are a lot of negative possibilities, too — either in being turned down for ordination or getting a heck of a lot of flack along the line.

*It sounds like you're saying it's not going to be any easier for those who come after you.*

I don't think it is going to be any easier. For a while yet, anyway. I think the collective process of evaluation has got to go on, and some of the initial anger and hostility and hurt have got to be healed over. It's sort of like walking for a long time and getting a blister on your heel; you can't walk very far in the same pair of shoes afterwards. You must build up a little bit of callous there. In a

way, I'm almost horrified at using that image, but I really think it's true. People's sensitivities having been so peeled down, they have got to heal a little, to allow a certain amount of distance. You can't really evaluate an experience without that distance. I don't think it's going to be any easier for a while. I don't see it as a major breakthrough, that now everything's going to be all right.

*Well, certainly the press will pay a little less attention to the next one, don't you think?*

Sure, in those terms it may be easier. But within the church, I don't know.

*Well, to use your metaphor, the shoe seems to have rubbed hardest in the area of human sexuality, in its entire range.*

Well, with the whole women's ordination thing, over the last six or eight years we've noticed how insecure people are with sexuality as a subject, and the sort of peculiar fantasies that people have of changing patterns in it.

*Do you think then, that the church's role in sex education has to change?*

Some things, like the women's movement and gay liberation have impinged on the church's consciousness enough that it's beginning to have to say, "All right, we've really got to look at this, and we've really got to see how we stand on sexuality in general." I think that's a good thing. I think it's very good that studies are being done and are coming up in major denominations. What I'm afraid of is that specific facets of the question of human sexuality will get swamped in vague, general statements.

The fact is that we have a group of people who are hurting from the church's attitude on sexuality, and they need to be dealt with in the here and now at the same time the whole question is studied. In the best of all possible worlds, we could study the whole question and then break it down into its various parts, but that's not how we live. It's a simultaneous set of problems. We live in the middle of a big question that has lots of little questions and they all need answers now.

I think the first step toward finding answers is admitting that we haven't got them yet.

\* \* \*

Some people climb mountains "because they are there." Rosa Parks stayed seated because she was "too tired to get up." Whatever combination of hopes, circumstances, and the Will of God were involved in Ellen Barrett's ordination to the priesthood, it was an act which has and will dramatically affect people's lives and the course of human events.

Be at peace, Ellen. It passes understanding.



## Witness to Truth

(from page 3)

how the graciousness of love goes beyond the cold disdain of the law, as typically interpreted.

Realizing our tendency as Christians to avoid openly looking at a question with fresh eyes, trying to "think God's thoughts after Him," this issue of *The Witness* seeks to shed some illumination on the subject of homosexuality.

When the church is seeking to deal with a matter involving people who, for whatever reason, are a problem to the church, it usually discusses them in their absence and not in their presence. By their exclusion from the discussions and from the decision making, those groups are effectively treated as non-persons. It is easier to deal with people judgmentally, and unjustly, when they are not present.

Yet, the ancient principle of jurisprudence insists that a person should be allowed to confront his accusers. For that reason, we have sought contributions to this issue from people who are homosexuals, that they might speak for themselves. We hope, thereby, that the on-going discussion in the church might be that much more honest, just, in touch with reality, and authentic.

We are delighted that Brian McNaught consented to be guest editor for this issue of *The Witness*. The Recipient of the 1976 Journalism Award for Best Magazine Article of the Year from the Catholic Press Assn., Mr. McNaught has had a prior relationship to *The Witness* in his assistance to us with special assignments of editing and re-writing. He is a freelance writer, columnist, lecturer and civil rights activist. A 1970 graduate of Marquette University's College of Journalism, Mr. McNaught is the former national director of Social Action for Dignity, gay caucus of the Roman Catholic Church.

## boyd...

(from page 9)

Christ.

*Where do you go from here, Malcolm? Your sexual-spiritual autobiography has been finished. You stand naked. What other area will you energize your spirit into?*

Yes, my candid personal autobiography *Take Off the Masks* will be published early in 1978 by Doubleday. I have begun work on my first novel, perhaps an even deeper look into the sexual impulse and the spiritual impulse.

I am not really looking for "another area." I am simply open to the Spirit. For one thing, if I live for 20 more years, I will be an "elderly person," a "senior citizen." I observe the grace and marvelous dedication — integrity, commitment, energy and openness — of my mother who is 80, and other friends, including David and Elizabeth Corrigan, and Paul and Marion Roberts. I cherish the experience of learning about old age from them. I hope that I may be equally creative and courageous in my own aging process. This is a matter of primary concern for me.

Meanwhile, I celebrate life with great zest, even youthfulness of soul and body. I have countless friends. I am filled with joy and gratitude. I love. I am evolving as a person and a Christian. How could I possibly ask for anything more?

## ESCHATOLOGY

My Church grew rich on tithes and invested in a bookstore  
in a neighborhood that grew too sleazy for Bible buyers

so my Church doubled its capital by selling the property to Allied Cinema, Inc., which placed thirty stalls under a blue light, each fitted with a double sofa, a screen, a projector, and a slot for quarters.

Troops of men came from the highways and hedges miles around there to discover in pairs simple affection, which my Church had never considered a profitable investment.

— Copyright 1977 by Louie Crew —

**THE COVER:** *The front cover, depicting the Reverends Ellen Barrett, Malcolm Boyd and Ron Wesner and Integrity founder Dr. Louie Crew was created by Boston-based artist Stephen Hultgren.*



# Three More Jailed In FALN Investigation

By MARY LOU SUHOR

Three brothers — one of whom was a consultant to the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs of Episcopal Church — were jailed in New York Aug. 22 for contempt of a Grand Jury investigating the FALN (Puerto Rican Armed Forces of National Liberation).

Their sentencing brings to nine the number of witnesses jailed in related inquiries in New York and Chicago since March 1.

Julio, Luis, and Andres Rosado were sentenced by Judge Richard Owen for refusing to provide fingerprints, palm prints, handwriting samples and voice samples. Luis had

kin and Maria Cueto, secretary and director of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and Pedro Archuleta, a community worker from New Mexico, who represented Chicano affairs on the Episcopal Church commission. All New York prisoners face possible incarceration through May 8.

In the most recent jailings of the Rosados, Attorney William Kunstler argued that the brothers were singled out for harassment because of their affiliations and political beliefs. All have been open advocates of Puerto Rican independence. Their offers to prove abuse of power by the FBI — including illegal wiretapping — were rejected by Judge Owen.

The brothers said they joined the six

entire economy.” (Coincidentally, the Rosado brothers were originally subpoenaed on the day the United Nations opened hearings on the applicability to Puerto Rico of UN Resolution 1514 on decolonization. U.S. administration specialists were surprised when representatives of nearly every organized political party in Puerto Rico — including advocates of statehood — criticized the island’s present status as “colonial,” according to the *New York Times*.)

Puerto Ricans favoring independence have suffered over 300 bombings, the Rosados said. “We have had our printing presses demolished, our newspapers seized, our deliveries sabotaged and our people arrested, beaten, jailed, framed, intimidated . . .”

The Rosados said that over the past two years FBI agents had visited countless of their friends and neighbors showing photos and describing them as “dangerous radicals” and inquiring about everything, “including our sex lives.”

“Our going to prison means much to our families. We are the principal providers. Our families will probably be forced onto welfare rolls — something we have tried to avoid at great costs . . .”

Julio, 38, former reporter for the *San Juan Star*, is presently a warehouseman and father of two with a third on the way. Luis, 26, also has two small children and worked as a porter. Andres, 32, is father of two and family counselor for a poverty program.

The Rosados urged that “the American people take notice of what their country is doing. They cannot ignore the desperate situation which is developing for the Puerto Rican people . . . . There is, in fact, an undeclared war going on,” they said.

*“We have had our printing presses demolished, our newspapers seized, our deliveries sabotaged, and our people arrested, beaten, jailed, framed, intimidated...”*

served as a consultant to the Hispanic Commission and, in 1977, as director of the Grand Jury Project of the National Council of Churches.

“We have killed no one, bombed no one, committed no crime,” the brothers said in a prepared statement. “We harbor no fugitives, and our fingerprints, voice prints and photographs are in the hands of the various agencies of the Federal Government.”

Three other witnesses had been jailed the previous week by a grand jury in Chicago. They are Juan Lopez, Jose Lopez, and Roberto Caldero, who had also refused to produce fingerprints which they claimed were already in the government’s possession.

Prior to that, three witnesses had been jailed March 1, March 8 and June 30. They are, respectively, Raisa Nemi-

others in prison — “none having been charged with a crime — except that of upholding the dignity of humanity, the rights of nations to be independent and the human rights of people to think freely and associate freely.”

“The American people know very little about us, and the little they know has been terribly distorted by a compliant press,” they said. “At best, the most well-intentioned journalists are ignorant about our history, our struggle, and Puerto Rican public opinion.”

The brothers said that after 80 years the United States has developed almost total dominance of Puerto Rico, “controlling commerce, communications, entry and exit to and from Puerto Rico, all laws (which are subject to the Appellate Courts in Boston) and the

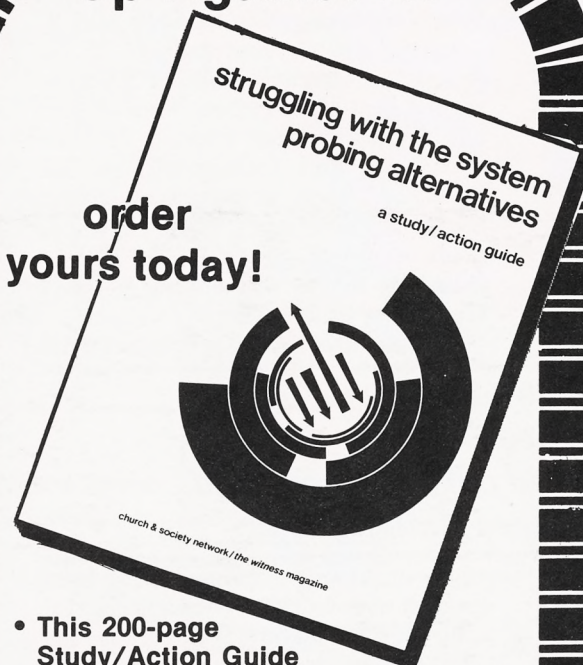


The Episcopal Church Publishing Company  
P.O. Box 359  
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002  
Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
North Wales, Pa.  
Permit No. 121

## Up Against It?

**order  
yours today!**



- This 200-page Study/Action Guide focuses on questions such as: *Why is our society dysfunctional for so many people? How might it be different? What forms of group action at the local level can make a positive contribution?*
- Readings include works by Harvey Cox, Gustavo Gutierrez, Sheila Collins, John Bennett, Robert Bellah, James Cone, Vida Scudder, Erich Fromm, Paul Sweezy, Saul Alinski, William Spofford, Sr.

Order from The Witness/Church and Society, Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002. Single copy \$5.75 (includes postage and handling).

Bulk discounts available.

WT0031758 1277 2 70101 01 710 \* \*  
ARCHIVS&HISTRCL COLLECTN  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
P O BOX 2247  
AUSTIN TX 78767