

## APPENDIX C

### An Affirmation in Koinonia

To the Members of the House of Bishops and through them to the whole church:

We the undersigned bishops want to thank the committee that created the Pastoral Teaching on Human Sexuality. That document in its various drafts forced the whole church to wrestle with issues that affect vitally the lives and hopes of a sizable group of the members of this church. This document also made our faith community better able to deal with the subject of human sexuality around which there has always been great fear, great misunderstanding, great misinformation, and great prejudice.

We also value the collegiality of this House of Bishops and want to continue the mutual respect for our differences that is certainly part of the meaning of collegiality.

We are aware, however, that this convention by various resolutions has taken stands before on very emotional subjects such as capital punishment and abortion and has called this church to various boycotts of products to achieve what the majority believed was a moral agenda. On the role and place of women in the total life of this church, this body has spoken by amending the constitution and canons to give the decision of General Convention the force of law. We are also aware that even with these official actions no one has suggested that those who hold contrary opinions are somehow violating the collegiality of this house or that they were not welcome to continue to bear witness and indeed to act on their consciences in these matters. Collegiality has meant that we have agreed to respect each other and to live with our differences. It has never been a strait jacket that we forced one another to wear in order to pretend that a consensus existed where in fact one did not exist.

In the discussion on the Pastoral Teaching on Human Sexuality, we heard hints that collegiality was being interpreted in a more restrictive way. Perhaps even more importantly we heard voices of discouragement from some members of our Christian family, who had begun to trust that their church would share with them more of God's love and less of the church's judgement. This discouragement was produced primarily by press reports attempting to interpret the meaning of the action of this house in adopting the amended statement. It seems to hinge on the decision of this house to circulate with the committee's document a second statement produced by a group of bishops from the Southwest. This perception has had the effect of tilting the carefully crafted work of the committee back to a place where some members of our church no longer feel included, where those living in non-traditional relationships might no longer expect to find a place or a welcome in the Body of Christ and where gay and lesbian clergy might question whether or not their gifts are still wanted by the church they love.

It is for those reasons we feel that this statement must also be made from a different perspective to this convention and to the whole church as part of the dialogue lest anyone think consensus has in fact been reached on these issues or that there is no change occurring in this vital area of our life.

We believe that sex is a gift of God.

We believe that some of us are created heterosexual and some of us are created homosexual.

We believe that both homosexuality and heterosexuality are morally neutral, that both can be lived out with beauty, honor, holiness, and integrity and that both are capable of being lived out destructively.

We believe that wherever sexuality is lived out destructively this church must witness to it negatively. We oppose all forms of promiscuous sex, predatory sex, sex that does not honor one's partner or that does not hold that partner in commitment and love.

We believe that marriage is to be held in honor and that marriage represents the highest form of human commitment that a man and a woman can make to each other. We believe that through marriage both the husband and wife are called to holiness.

We believe that celibacy is an honorable vocation for some of God's people and that those who have chosen to live in celibacy for whatever reason have gifts to give that will enrich both the church and the social order.

But we also believe that those who know themselves to be gay or lesbian persons, and who do not choose to live alone, but forge relationships with partners of their choice that are faithful, monogamous, committed, life giving and holy are to be honored. We will continue to relate to these couples with our support, our pastoral care, our prayers and our recognition, in whatever form is deemed appropriate, that God is indeed present in their life together.

We also believe that the ordained ranks of the church are open to all baptized Christians and that through our regular screening process we will determine who is both called and qualified. We are aware of the presence in the church of gay and lesbian clergy. We bear witness to the fact they have served and continue to serve this church with effectiveness and integrity. Some of them are single, many more of them are living in committed partnerships. They serve this church today as bishops, priests and deacons. In all these orders they have won the respect of their ecclesial communities. Like the gay and lesbian population as a whole, many of our gay and lesbian clergy have gravitated into urban areas, where they live out their priestly vocations. In some urban areas the number of gay and lesbian people exceed thirty five percent of the total population. These gay and lesbian clergy work heroically and successfully in difficult assignments. By their willingness to accept and acknowledge their own sexual orientation and by the very witness of the committed nature of the lives they live with their partners, they have brought both the hope and love of Christ to communities of people long oppressed, long denigrated, and long judged by various religious authorities to be inadequate human beings in whom the image of God is somehow flawed.

We pledge to these clergy, whom we honor as part of this church, our support and protection and we will continue to hold them to no standard higher than that we would hold any heterosexual priest whether he or she be single or married.



We also recognize that by canon law the choice of fit persons to serve in the ordained ranks of the church is not the prerogative of bishops alone, but of the whole church. We pledge ourselves to ordain only those persons whom the testing and screening process reveals to be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ. But let there be no misunderstanding, our lives and our experience as bishops have convinced us that a wholesome example to the flock of Christ does not exclude a person of homosexual orientation nor does it exclude those homosexual persons who choose to live out their sexual orientation in a partnership that is marked by faithfulness and a life giving holiness.

We want this house and the whole church to know that we can be faithful to Christ and to our ministries as bishops in no other way than by affirming these principles. We trust this *dialogue* on human sexuality will go on for all of us have more to learn. But we make these comments publicly not just to prevent future misunderstanding in this house, but also to send a message of hope to a significant part of the Body of Christ, that in our own inadequate way we try to represent.

Robert Anderson  
George W. Barrett\*  
Allen Bartlett  
Lane Barton\*  
George E. Bates  
Charles E. Bennison\*  
Roger W. Blanchard\*  
Frederick Borsch  
John Burgess\*  
William Burrill  
John Burt\*  
George I. Cadigan\*  
Sergio Carranza  
Otis Charles  
Steven Charleston  
David Rae Cochran\*  
Ned Cole\*  
Daniel Corrigan\*  
Walter Dennis  
Robert Dewitt\*  
Jane Dixon  
Herbert A. Donovan  
Joe Doss  
A. Theodore Eastman  
William H. Folwell  
J. Clark Grew  
Frank Griswold  
Edwin Gulick  
San Hampton  
Barbara Harris  
Harold Hopkins

George Hunt  
James Jelinek  
David Johnson  
Edward W. Jones  
Rustin Kimsey  
John M. Krumm  
Edward Lee\*  
William Marmion\*  
Larry Maze  
Coleman McGehee  
Jack McKelvey  
Mary Adelia McLeod  
James Montgomery  
James H. Ottley  
Vincent Pettit  
Quinland Primo  
Jose Antonio Ramos  
Thomas K. Ray  
F. Rues-Froylan  
David Richards\*  
Walter C. Righter  
Hays H. Rockwell  
Tom Shaw\*  
Richard L. Shimpfky  
Bennett J. Sims  
Robert R. Spears\*  
John S. Spong  
Daniel Swenson  
William E. Swing  
Chester L. Talton  
Frank J. Terry

Douglas E. Theuner  
Richard M. Trelease\*  
Frank Vest  
Orris G. Walker  
Leigh Wallace  
Arthur E. Walmsley  
William W. Wiedrich  
Fred Wolf\*  
Stewart Wood

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\*These bishops asked to have their names added in the weeks immediately following the General Convention