

al's choice. For that reason, homosexuals should not be condemned, nor should they be required to change their orientation prior to admission into the believing community.

Although sexual orientation is involuntary and should not be made a criterion for acceptance into the church, all people freely actualize their sexual orientations, whether heterosexual or homosexual, through desire and activity. The biblical witness asserts that homosexual activity is sinful, running counter to God's intention for humanity. For that reason, the church should not whitewash this sin, any more than it should pass over gossip, slander, deceit, disobedience to parents, ruthlessness, greed, drunkenness, or adultery (other sins on Paul's list). The church is called to love the sinner, but to reject the sin.

It is a difficult agenda to accomplish. Both intolerance and accommodation have characterized the history of the church. But neither reflects a Christian concern for one's brother or sister. The church must instead seek to provide both acceptance and evaluation, allowing expectations for personal growth into heterosexuality to develop as psychological maturation is achieved.

Notes

¹See James B. Nelson, "Homosexuality and the Church," *Christianity and Crisis*, Vol. 37, April 4, 1977, pp. 65-68, for this typology. See also my chapter "Homosexuality and the Evangelical," *Evangelicals at an Impasse* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), pp. 113-145.

²Ralph Blair, Letter to the Editor, *Eternity*, July 1977, p. 56.

³Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Homosexuality: A Methodological Study in Christian Ethics," paper presented to the American Academy of Religion, 1979.

⁴E. Mansell Pattison and Myrna Loy Pattison, "Ex-gays: Religiously Mediated Change in Homosexuals," *American Journal of Psychiatry* (forthcoming), paper to the American Psychiatric Association's meeting, Chicago 1979.

⁵William Masters and Virginia Johnson, *Homosexuality in Perspective* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1979).

⁶P. Myerson and H. Lief, "Psychotherapy of Homosexuals" in *Sexual Inversion*, ed. by J. Marmor (New York: Basic Books, 1965); M. Woodward, "The Diagnosis and Treatment of Sexual Offenders," *Brit J Delinq* 9: 44-59, 1958, quoted in Pattison and Pattison, "Ex-Gays."

⁷See Arthur H. Cain, *The Cured Alcoholic* (1964).

⁸See Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), p. 106; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 140.

⁹Walter Wink, "Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality," *The Christian Century*, Vol. 96 (Nov. 7, 1979), pp. 1082-1086.

¹⁰Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), p. 23.

¹¹Don Williams, *The Bond That Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?* (Van Nuys, CA: B.I.M., Inc., 1978), p. 117.

¹²Williams, pp. 139-49.

¹³Jay Grimstead, "Review of *Homosexuality and the Church*," by Richard Lovelace, *Themelios*, Vol. 5 (Sept. 1979), p. 35.

¹⁴Wink, p. 1085.

ROBERT K. JOHNSTON is visiting professor of theology and Old Testament at New College, Berkeley. This article was edited from a talk originally given to the American Scientific Affiliation. The full transcript has been printed in two parts in the *Reformed Journal*.

HAVE YOU SEEN JESUS MY LORD?

A friend of Radix, who teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) to foreign students, gave the following letter to each student after the final exam.

You are a unique and wonderful person, and I have enjoyed having you in my class.

Here are some things I want each of my students to know. (If you know them already, then you understand.)

The God who made the stars made you.

The God who made the trees and flowers made you.

This God loves you. He is always watching you and listening to you. You can talk to this God. He wants you to love him, too.

The world is messed up. People kill other people. People hate other people, and they hurt others. I hurt people, and you do too. All of these bad things are called sin. Sin makes us far from God.

The God who made the stars came to earth. This God came here 2,000 years ago in Israel, near Jerusalem. When God was on earth, his name was Jesus. God came to us, even though he knew some people would kill him. We should die to pay for our sins, but Jesus died for us. Jesus died, but then he came alive again. Jesus died so that we can live forever with God in heaven.

We can be close to God, like children to their mother and father. First, we tell God, "I want to learn about you." Then we tell God, "Sometimes I do bad things. I am glad that you died for my sins." Then we say, "I love you. I will be your servant."

God talks to people in all countries, in all religions. You can learn more about God by reading a book in the Bible, or by talking to someone who is a servant of God. I hope you choose to become a follower of Jesus.

Whatever religion you are in, do not forget these two things:

God loves you.

You can talk to God.

I hope you will finish college, and then I wish you a successful, happy life.

P.S. You can find the places in the Bible where it says these things.

The Gospel According to John, chapter 3, verse 16—
"God loves everyone in the world."

The Letter to the Romans, chapter 3, verse 23—
"Everyone has sinned."

The Letter to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 8—
"Jesus Christ died for us."

The Gospel According to John, chapter 1, verse 12—
"You can become the children of God."

