

ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS

What should be the attitude of the church toward homosexuals and homosexuality?

For the Bible - believing Christian, there can be no doubt that homosexuality is a grievous sin in the sight of God. The awful catalog in the first chapter of Romans of the sins practiced by the ancient pagan world began with this sin:

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. -Romans 1:26, 27 (KJV)

The term "sodomy," named after the inhabitants of Sodom whose homosexual perversions caused God to rain fire and brimstone on their city in the days of Abraham (Genesis 19:4, 5, 12, 24), has for thousands of years been synonymous with this unique form of ungodliness. That it is basically a sin of rebellion against God is evident from the above passage in Romans.

The "cause" for which God "*gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves*" was that they had decided to "*worship and serve creation more than the Creator*" (Romans 1:24-25 - KJV).

Because such behavior is essentially animalistic, rather than human, sodomites are actually called "dogs" in the Bible. Note the strong prohibition in the Old Testament theocracy established under Moses.

There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto the Lord thy God. -Deuteronomy 23:17, 18 (KJV)

We can be sure that, if these practices were abominations to God then, He has not changed His opinion about them today.

The same terminology appears in the description of the holy city in the last chapter of the Bible.

Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers,

and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. -Revelation 22:14-15 (KJV)

Thus, sodomites-like sorcerers, whoremongers (same word as "fornicators"), murderers, idolaters and lovers of lies-should undoubtedly also be excluded from church fellowship. If such a person, professing to be a Christian, persists in his sin, he should be put out of the church, like the one who had committed fornication with his stepmother (I Corinthians 5:1).

Now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat... Therefore, put away from yourselves that wicked person. -I Corinthians 5:11, 13 (KJV)

Homosexuality, like all other types of fornication, has no place in the family of God. Regardless of what modern promoters of "gay liberation" might wish to believe, sexual perversions are not inherited genetically but rather are learned behaviors and willful sins. Like alcoholism and other such sins of the flesh, they may become very difficult to give up for those who have been enslaved by them, but God is able to give deliverance to any who sincerely desire true freedom and salvation. To "straight" Christians in the church, however, the familiar old admonition to "hate the sin, but love the sinner" surely applies in such cases. Homosexuals, long accustomed to being looked upon with disgust by most people, are understandably anxious for acceptance by society. Nevertheless, they must not be encouraged to continue in their wickedness, for it may well cost them their eternal souls. Instead, they need to be "loved into the kingdom," being delivered first of all from their rebellion against God, then to Christ for salvation and cleansing. Notice Paul's testimony concerning the very real possibility of such deliverance:

*Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. -I Corinthians 6:9-11 (KJV)*

When there is true repentance and the sin is forsaken, then such a person should be lovingly received into the fellowship of believers (or back into that fellowship, if previously excommunicated), like any other repentant and believing sinner. This is the example given in the case of the incestuous Corinthian:

Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort

him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. -II Corinthians 2:6-8 (KJV)

In spite of great pressure today from humanists and other liberals to get homosexuality recognized as an acceptable - if not even preferable - life style, the Bible makes it plain that it is really unnatural and animalistic wickedness that must be rejected by true Christians.

At the same time, we cannot forget that Christ died for their sins, as well as ours. They are still objects of His sacrificial love, and we should seek earnestly to bring them to Him for cleansing and deliverance.