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John F. Harvey

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An In-Depth Review of *Homosexuality and the Christian Way of Life*

Rev. John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S.

Father Harvey, who is associated with the Cluster of Independent Theological Schools in Washington, D.C., is a frequent contributor to Linacre and has given numerous retreats for homosexuals.

Edward A. Malloy wrote this book, published by the University Press of America in 1981, as a response to the revisionists on the question of the morality of the homosexual way of life. He observes that every discussion of disputed moral issues goes through three stages: "The first stage is usually a challenge to the inherited tradition. The second stage is a response from the defenders of the tradition. The third stage is the development of a new consensus. Depending on the outcome of the debate in the first two stages, this new consensus may represent either a reaffirmation of the tradition or a significant modification of it. As I view the present controversy, we are in the second stage. It is my conviction that the revisionists have not made their case" (preface, viii-ix). The book goes on to show why the revisionists have not made their case.

Before undertaking an ethical analysis in the second part of the book, the author presents in the first part a description of the homosexual way of life. Beginning with language and definitions, he presents a cross-section of writers, each of whom tends to stress one or another element in the complex definition of homosexuality. Malloy takes exception to my description of homosexuality "as a neurosis of personality producing a sexual propensity for persons of one's own sex associated with fundamental repugnance for intimate relations with the opposite sex" (p. 8). That description is 14 years old, but I still believe on the basis of wide pastoral experience that it is applicable to the vast majority of homosexuals whom I have known. Of course, I would want to nuance that description by pointing out that the confirmed homosexual tendency is usually situated in a matrix of neurotic behavior rather than in isolation, but that in exceptional situations one meets homosexual persons who show no evidence of concomitant neurotic patterns.

Again, in the context of my writings, I have stressed that the repugnance which many homosexuals feel concerning relations with the

other sex is not a *psychic* repugnance to the other sex, but simply a lack of any attraction for physical-genital relations with the other sex. If one wishes to say that many homosexuals are indifferent to genital relationships with the other sex, I could accept that. There is no doubt, moreover, that some homosexuals have warm relationships with women, developing a degree of psychic intimacy which helps them in their loneliness, and gives them support in their endeavor to lead a Christian way of life. Certainly, then, I do not wish to preclude male-female friendships among homosexuals, but, indeed, to encourage them. At the same time I perceive in the vast majority a lack of attraction for physical relationships with the other sex and, consequently, I would not counsel marriage.

Malloy believes that my stress on the homosexual's lack of attraction for physical relationships with the other sex does not account for the many homosexuals and lesbians who have entered into marriage. Without developing my response, suffice it to say that the experience of counseling homosexuals, both male and female, has given me an insight into the kind of repugnance which they generally experience in genital intercourse with their spouses. Male married homosexuals often fantasize a homosexual relationship in order to have intercourse with their wives. Again, the sight of the nude body of the wife does not generally excite these men. There are, of course, exceptions to this phenomenon found in some individuals who appear to be bisexual.

On the issue of bisexuality, Malloy believes that the term *bisexual* should be regarded as an adjective and not a noun, "that is, it qualifies the range of sexual experience of some persons who are basically either heterosexual or homosexual" (p. 16). In this I agree with him on the basis of both study and counseling experience, but the question remains controversial.

Wisely, Malloy cautions his readers not to equate the homosexual tendency with the total person. We do the homosexual person a disservice whenever we fail to see that a homosexual tendency is but one dimension of the complex mystery of the human person. The difficulty is in convincing the person to see himself as much more than "gay" or "lesbian." Again, following the study of Allen Bell and Martin Weinburg, *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversities Among Men and Women*, Malloy calls for an awareness of the complexity of the homosexual world, and the need to avoid simplistic abstractions in discussing these realities.

Like other authors, Malloy would like to argue with the use of the term "gay" to connote the homosexual way of life, since it is a distortion of an ancient English word. Homosexual persons suffer so much interiorly in the course of a lifetime that the use of the term to denote the male homosexual person is inappropriate. But, since the term *is* used to denote the male homosexual, we shall have to live with it.

The other terms, widely used in the polemical literature, are homophile and homophobe. A homophile is one who supports the movement for homosexual liberation, particularly in the area of civil rights. A homophobe is seen as one who opposes this same liberation. While Malloy sees ample evidence of unreasoning fear and hostility toward homosexuals and some justification for the use of the term, he also notes that the term is used to denote persons who, for moral reasons, oppose homosexual activity. This, he asserts, is a form of name-calling which muddies the waters of debate.

Treatment of Homosexual Cultures

Malloy's treatment of homosexual cultures in history is too brief to be very helpful, but at least he stressed the truth that even those cultures which allowed a greater degree of freedom in sexual expression still refused to accept homosexuality "as a normal and desirable behavior pattern. Always, homosexuals have been a minority (most often not a self-conscious group) who suffered social stigma and various degrees of persecution and suppression in the hands of the majority of citizens. . . . Finally, there is no major religious tradition which gives its official approbation to homosexual conduct" (p. 35). It is unfortunate that Malloy's work was at press at the same time as *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* by John Boswell. I conjecture that Malloy would not agree with the general thrust of Boswell. (See my review in *Linacre Quarterly*, August, 1981.)

Malloy offers some good insights about effeminacy. In itself, it does not mean that one is a homosexual, but in the popular mind its manifestations are considered to be a certain mark of the homosexual. This heterosexual interpretation is resented by most homosexuals, some of whom overreact by exaggerated masculine mannerisms (machismo).

Addressing himself to male/female relationships among homosexuals, Malloy discovers that they leave much to be desired. Lesbians seem to go their separate way rather than mingling with male homosexuals. Male homosexuals, however, often relate well to their mothers, or older women. The reasons for this distance between male and female homosexuals are conjectural and demand more study. Particularly worthy of research is the mounting hostility of lesbians (p. 44).

In the chapter on statistics and homosexual activity, Malloy believes that it is extremely difficult to analyze the data of Kinsey and subsequent researchers. One of the critical problems in trying to make sense of such studies is that of the definition of the homosexual person. If one uses a rigorous definition, such as Malloy, then the number of male homosexuals will be approximately 4 percent of the

male population and 2/3 percent of the female population, or approximately 4 million males and 3.1 million females. But if one includes in his definition of a homosexual those who have had a transient experience, sometimes even one overt act, then the number of homosexuals in America will increase to the point where one may begin to believe those propagandists who hold that one in ten males is homosexual. But we have no way of knowing the interior dispositions of those responding to the questionnaires because they often lack insight into themselves. Again, one may wonder about the truthfulness of some of the replies. Despite these reservations, however, we may say that homosexuals constitute a small but noteworthy percentage of the population.

I may add, as Malloy does, that this kind of study does not consider either moral values or the attitudes of persons toward such values. Yet they generate some important questions: "Would more people become homosexual if they thought it was less aberrant? Would homosexual activists be able to proselytize more effectively if they seemed to be on the cutting edge of the sexual revolution?" The use of statistics on the discussion of homosexuality may serve two purposes: (1) it makes the issue more manageable for public discussion of policy decisions concerning homosexuals, and (2) it allows gay spokespersons and their opponents to maximize or minimize the significance of such public policy decisions. Malloy believes that gay activists like to use exaggerated statistics — e.g., the claim that 20 percent of the male population is gay — to shock the public into remedial action, usually in the area of civil rights.

With regard to homosexual activity, Malloy alludes to the frequency of masturbation consequent upon homosexual fantasy, and this he finds in both males and females. He also remarks upon the fact that a large percentage of lesbians has had previous heterosexual genital experience. He refers to it as a "startling fact" (p. 58). In a study I made of lesbians (*Linacre Quarterly*, May, 1979), I noted the same pattern, but I did not find it "startling." It seems that lesbians differ markedly from male homosexuals in that they usually do not identify themselves as homosexuals until they have attempted a heterosexual genital relationship. The greater stability of lesbian relationships is another significant difference between male and female homosexuals. Still another difference is the lessened emphasis on age and genital activity among lesbians. Lesbians seem more amenable to acceptance of continence than do their male counterparts. Having stated this, we admit that there is a great deal we do not know about lesbian life.

Reviewing the various theories concerning the origin of homosexual orientation, Malloy comments on the sexual variation theory as including elements worthy of deeper study. This theory holds that homosexual orientation is not a form of neurosis, but simply a variant lifestyle. The question is one of adjustment: the need to help the

homosexual to adjust better to himself/herself and to his/her environment. According to Mark Freedman, "Sex is only a means of satisfying a bodily need and, therefore, a source of temporary pleasure" (p. 79). As long as one is master of his personal involvement, he need not worry about his sexual orientation. That is a matter of personal adjustment. In short, the homosexual way of life is simply another variant of normal sexual behavior.

The new researchers call upon homosexuals to move in the direction of a gay identity which is the path to wholeness, health, and peace. C. A. Torpp stresses that homosexuals frequently retreat into patterns of denial. They should admit their homosexual proclivities and form a realistic lifestyle.

Malloy finds some good insights with the more recent debate whether homosexual tendency is a kind of sickness. This he formulates with this proposition: "A homosexual person should be considered mentally ill only if he/she is unable to function as a responsible member of society" (p. 88). By minimizing the claims of the sickness theorists, Malloy hopes to clear the way for the ethical analysis of homosexual activity. Then the ethicist will be dealing with individuals who are capable of making informed moral judgments about their sexuality.

"But, to say that homosexuality is not usually a form of mental illness is different from accepting its equivalency with heterosexual normalcy" (p. 90).

Hope for Change

From his survey of the literature on the possibility of the homosexual changing his/her sexual orientation, Malloy concludes that for a small percentage of adult homosexuals, there is hope for a change in sexual orientation. But even in this small percentage, Malloy does not include what he calls "true adult homosexuals," whom he describes as "persons male or female who experience in adult life a steady and nearly exclusive erotic attraction to members of the same sex and who are indifferent to sexual relations with the opposite sex" (pp. 11-12).

There are several factors, Malloy continues, which militate against the sexual reorientation of the homosexual person. The first is the time, expense, and trained personnel required for the counseling process. The second is the age factor. After a certain age, one can be deeply immersed in the homosexual way of life, and there is little chance that it can be changed. In the practical order, it would seem that such treatment would have more success with those in their 20s or 30s who are disenchanted with the homosexual way of life — or who consider themselves as bisexual.

Malloy alludes to the propaganda of the Gay Liberation Movement as discouraging some young men from seeking such cure, and he is on

target, particularly when we consider that some teenagers and young adults may be confused about their sexual identity. (See Harvey, "The Impact of Gay Propaganda Upon Adolescent Boys and Girls," *The Priest*, March, 1980, pp. 15-24.)

The question of possible cure arises in some marriages where the homosexual person is desirous of reversing his tendency. Here Malloy is accurate in his assessment of the motivation which keeps a homosexual person in the marriage for a considerable time after he/she realizes that it should be terminated. Marriage has the attraction of home and family and does provide a social cover. The position of the Church is that a marriage between a confirmed homosexual person with a heterosexual person is invalid because of psychological impotence in the homosexual person. This means that such a person cannot really relate as a spouse to the other heterosexual spouse.

Like many others, including myself, Malloy favors a multi-dimensional explanation of why some percentage of the human race is homosexual. He also supports the theory that homosexual tendency is the result of many influences *after* birth and that sexual identity is not firmly fixed until the late teens or even early 20s. At the same time he recognizes that the more active one has been in the gay subculture, the more difficult it will probably be to change, and "the prospects for sexual reorientation are minimal" (p. 98).

Turning next to the social institutions of the homosexual world, which Malloy rightly regards as significantly influential in the behavior patterns of homosexuals, he considers the lesbian phenomenon. Admitting the inadequacy of the available evidence, Malloy sees the lesbian as less dependent on established public institutions than homosexual men are; that is to say, lesbians do not need the gay bars, baths, porno movie houses, parks, and beaches. If lesbians go to a bar, it is not primarily a cruising experience. Again, lesbians come to know one another in loosely structured friendship cliques and are generally spared the fearful hunt of the male homosexual. Lesbians also experience more lasting friendships than male homosexuals, probably because of factors common to women as such and because of less stress on the need for genital expression in the relationship.

There are, of course, negative factors in these relationships, among which are pervasive jealousy, suspicion, mutual recrimination, depression, and paranoia, often leading to suicidal tendencies or alcoholic addiction. Much remains unknown about the forms of lesbian relationships, and our pastoral approach will improve when we come to a deeper understanding of individual lesbians.

The world of the male homosexual is different from that of the lesbian. Impersonal sex in places where there is the least chance of detection by police is the rule. Anonymity is preserved. "There is a premium on youth and genital endowment and masculinity" (p.112). Money is seldom exchanged in these silent ritualistic encounters. In

this world of covert sex, frenzied pleasure is the goal. Once attained, the participants go back to their regular pursuits. All these features are graphically portrayed in John Rechy's novels, *City of Night*, *Numbers*, and *Sexual Outlaw*. These novels capture "the simultaneous sense of lure and self-destruction which seems to haunt its regular participants" (p. 113). In Malloy's perspective, this kind of homosexual activity must be considered in the formulation of any ethical theory of homosexuality. Similar to such anonymous sex, but on a more organized level, is the gay bath where promiscuity and protection go hand-in-hand. But the central social institution of the homosexual world is the gay bar, which serves a multiplicity of purposes from sexual marketplace to refuge from a hostile society to a communication center. In these bars, which cater to various kinds of homosexuals, individuals find a sense of autonomy and a sense of belonging to the homosexual world.

Malloy points to the problems inherent in the gay bar situation. It is a model of promiscuous relating, designed for the youthful and the beautiful. Since the main purpose of the bar is to provide an open environment for drinking, mixing, and cruising, alcoholism becomes a problem for many gays.

Another form of homosexual relating is found in the social cliques where homosexuals who want no part of the gay bar, bath, or movie-house scene seek to socialize with other homosexuals. The place is usually a private home. The occasion is a dinner party or an outing to the theater. This leads individuals to pair off for various lengths of time. "Sexual belonging seems to far outweigh sexual availability as a stimulus . . . for these groups" (p. 125). These persons feel the need to get away from the heterosexual environment into one which is more congenial.

Malloy completes his section on forms of homosexual behavior by analyzing the data provided by Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg in their 1978 study: *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women*. Approximately 5,000 men and women in the San Francisco Bay area participated in the study. A five-fold typology of homosexual life emerged:

- 1) Close-coupled. Quasi-marriage between two men (67 out of 485).
- 2) Open-coupled. Involved in a marital relationship, but not exclusively (120).
- 3) Functional — single. Sexually active. Many partners. Low level of regret (102).
- 4) Dysfunctional. Sexually active, promiscuous, numerous problems and regrets (86).
- 5) Asexual. Low level of sexual interest and activity. Many problems and regrets. Less exclusively homosexual, more covert (110).

Bell and Weinberg conclude that there were many more involved in a coupling relationship which was not exclusive than there were couples involved in a monogamous quasi-marriage. The latter is seen as more difficult. Again, the homosexual couple may have a more divergent view concerning the nature of infidelity than a heterosexual couple. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that there exists "no socially recognized procedure by which such a relationship is formally begun" (p. 128).

Study's Weakness

The critical weakness of the study is that it lacks even a rough estimate of how many homosexual partnerships have lasted for 5, 10, 20, or 40 years. To be sure, there are some. Furthermore, in the homosexual community there is divergence of opinion whether the close-coupled or open-coupled arrangement is preferable. Some have stressed that the gay couple should imitate the heterosexual couple in monogamy, and have some liturgical ceremony in which they pledge truth to each other. Others regard this as too restrictive. Thus, the confusion concerning what constitutes a gay couple renders ethical analysis more difficult. "What is in doubt is whether exclusivity for a lifetime is ever considered desirable and/or possible by homosexuals who enter such relationships" (p. 130).

Malloy sees the following sociological problems in coupling relationships: (1) the absence of sexual differentiation with a corresponding loss of mystery and allure; (2) the impossibility of children; (3) legal and economic sanctions which prevent a genuine sharing of goods; (4) a high level of promiscuity patterns of interaction prior to entering the relationship; (5) the onset of old age and the desire for security. Nothing is passed on to the next generation. Thus, while such couplings incorporate more values than impersonal sex, the continuity and exclusivity of these relationships remain in doubt.

Malloy believes that the Gay Liberation Movement has affected individual homosexuals, whether the latter join it or not. There are today many who proclaim themselves to be homosexual. Those who prefer to keep their homosexual tendency secret, except from a few trusted persons, realize that they have many more options of homosexual behavior than were present 20 years ago. Despite the efforts of gay apologists to promote the values of the idealized gay couple, however, others feel that the majority of homosexuals do not want this option. There is much evidence that the majority tend to stay in the gay bar, bath, or special social clique scenes.

At the end of this chapter are found two interesting observations. Commenting on Bell-Weinberg's 1978 study on *Homosexualities*, Malloy believes that the authors make a convincing case that homosexuality is not necessarily pathological, that is to say, not a mental

disease. From this Malloy concludes: "Therefore, the ethical analysis can be freed from the strictures of the disease model and re-established in the value realm where it belongs" (p. 141). I would agree with Malloy, but I would add that one must consider each person individually to see whether elements of compulsion are present because such an impediment reduces the imputability of the person's behavior. The second observation concerns gay activism. One finds a prevalence of persons who have had a ministerial or religious vocation. As Laud Humphreys puts it, such persons are usually possessed of special verbal skills along with "a fosteral sensitivity" for afflicted persons (quote by Malloy, p. 143). I would agree with this point, adding that their theological reasoning is usually weak.

In treating the civil law and homosexuals, Malloy alludes to three forms of discrimination against homosexuals: (1) the civil law ban against homosexual acts, which remains on the statutes of all states except Illinois; (2) the policy of the federal government which generally has excluded homosexuals from government employment and from access to security clearances; and (3) the complete rejection from induction or enlistment in the armed services. Here it is noted that lesbians are rejected just as male homosexuals, although in other areas of American life, lesbians are left alone. Malloy argues for a change in the existing laws, basing his position on the following empirical facts. (1) The laws are ineffective. The vast majority of homosexuals is not directly affected by the existing legal situation. It is not an effective deterrent. (2) The laws are capricious. The range of penalties attached to sodomy vary greatly, and even in the case of felony arrest situations, the judiciary is reluctant to impose "even minimally unpleasant penalties" (p. 153). (3) The laws can only be enforced when the police use illegal tactics, such as entrapment. (4) The laws create a condition where wealthy, powerful homosexuals can be extorted and blackmailed. It seems that those who are best off and who have not acknowledged their homosexuality publicly are most vulnerable to blackmail. For all of these reasons legal reform is called for. "The side effects of laws prohibiting homosexual acts between consenting adults in private seem to be harmful enough to outweigh the social good achieved by having them on the books" (p. 155).

At the same time Malloy qualifies his position by suggesting the kinds of conduct that should not be protected. Offenses against minors are a proper area of legal concern. Adults in their relationships to non-adults must recognize a heightened level of responsibility. The adult offender should undergo mandatory psychiatric treatment or go to prison. Eighteen years should be the beginning of adulthood. A second form of prohibited conduct should be offenses against public decency. Here no distinction between heterosexual and homosexual behavior is implied. In most instances, cultural mores provide protection. A third

form of offense, homosexual prostitution, is not so clearcut an issue. Here Malloy believes that all forms of prostitution should be *regulated* . . . by the civil authority: "A policy of tolerance, with regulation, seems to be the better alternative" (p. 157). A fourth type of prohibitable offense is homosexual rape, which is widespread in prison life. These acts go unreported or unpunished because of either the indifference of the authorities or the lack of sufficient guards. Efforts should be made to enforce such laws. I agree with Malloy on these qualifications. However, I also believe that it is practically impossible to give full protection against rape in the present condition of many prisons.

I also agree with Malloy that there should be no interference with consensual acts done in private by adult homosexuals. This is not an approval of homosexual conduct, but simply a realistic appraisal of the ineffectiveness of the present laws and the concomitant evils of corruption of public officials in the present situation. But this policy of non-interference should not be extended to the creation of a category of homosexual marriages, nor to the right of adoption of children by homosexual couples. Again, with Malloy, I support laws against discrimination in housing and employment for homosexuals. At the same time I would qualify my position on proclaimed homosexuals as teachers. The right of the proclaimed homosexual to teach must be weighed against the rights of the students whom he is teaching and the rights of the parents of these students. It is not a question of sexual solicitation or seduction by homosexual teachers. It is a question of role models, and the student and parent are entitled to role models who at least do not attack the family structure of our culture.

One may argue that we really do not know what impact gay teachers as role models have on their students. Parents particularly, however, have good reason to believe that the overall impact of proclaimed gay teachers will not be supportive of family life and, therefore, they may exercise their right to prevent such gays from teaching their children. While Malloy does not come to this conclusion, he moves in this direction when he says: "... The public proclamation of a countercultural identity by a significant other such as a teacher can have profound effect on the interpretation of the world which is available to impressionable youngsters" (p. 159). Although Malloy stresses as a cause of alarm seductive or promiscuous behavior by homosexual teachers, he fails to emphasize the long-term effects of the proclaimed gay teacher as a role model. This, I believe, is the more cogent reason, abstracting, as it does, from personal behavior of the teacher.

I would agree with Malloy also in regard to the abrogation of discriminatory laws in the field of government service. Concerning the military laws about homosexuals, there is need for reform. This might begin with the elimination of the dishonorable discharge for homo-

sexuals, except in those instances where heterosexual offenses would be similarly punished. Such a discharge has blackballed men and women from gainful employment.

In order to make an ethical analysis, Malloy describes some of the constitutive elements of the homosexual way of life. On the negative side he points out that participation in homosexual activity is not sufficient grounds for inclusion in the homosexual way of life, and absence of homosexual activity is not sufficient grounds for exclusion from this way of life. A gay celibate may consider himself a part of the homosexual way of life. A preference for any particular form of physical sexual expression is not determinative of the homosexual way of life. Thus, oral and anal intercourse are found among both homosexual and heterosexual persons. Again, style of dress and physical posture are not reliable criteria for the homosexual way of life. High levels of creativity, of refined esthetic sensibility and flamboyant dynamism are not typical manifestations of the homosexual way of life. Adult interest in sexual relations with children or young adolescents is not common in the homosexual way of life.

Self-Conscious Sexual Identity

On the positive side, Malloy sees the homosexual way of life as a matter of self-conscious sexual identity. "Only the individual can accurately say to her or himself that 'I am a homosexual' and know that it is an honest appraisal of one's sexual possibilities" (p. 168). Presumably, one is not capable of this kind of introspection until one has achieved adulthood. It is often preceded by a period of confusion and self-doubt. Now one knows his sexual identity, and, henceforth, life is seen from a different point of view.

In addition to conscious realization of one's sexual identity, many homosexuals feel the need to disclose their identity to one or a few trusted friends and, as time goes on, to further reveal one's self to a small group with whom one associates.

Malloy adverts to the temptation of the homosexual to allow the sexual dimensions of his person to become the focus of his identity. This often happens to the homosexual who devotes all his attention to the homosexual subculture.

Malloy describes the interlocking network of social institutions which sustain the homosexual way of life. There is the promiscuous scene (public restroom, jokes, etc.). One step above this kind of homosexual activity is the bath, which does not involve the risk of arrest or of violence found in the first kind. Then comes the gay bar, which, unlike the first two, has its lesbian counterpart. It remains, however, predominantly masculine. It is a sexual marketplace, a center of communication, and, on occasion, a rallying point for homosexual causes.

Social cliques are a fourth class where the focus is not on place, but on special relationships within a group. These groups tend to exclude non-homosexuals from the mainstream of their lives. There may or may not be an active sexual relationship between members within the group. Those not sexually engaged are called "friends," rather than lovers. Another term for "friend" is "sister." These patterns of interaction are found more frequently among lesbians, who prefer the quiet and unobtrusive style of small groups.

The fifth type of institution is the homosexual couple. Here there is a variety of understandings between the partners concerning the kind of commitment they wish to make with one another. Relatively few imitate the model of faithful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Many regard their relationship as the primary one, but not excluding other affective and genital relationships. The available evidence, moreover, would suggest "that lesbian couples are more stable and longer lasting than male unions" (p. 173).

The sixth form of institution is the homophile organizations, of which there is a great variety. With the Gay Liberation Movement has come a significant change in the social climate; the emergence of activist groups working for legal, economic, and cultural transformation. Although the majority of homosexuals do not join these activist groups, they are interested in whatever successes are achieved by the minority.

These different forms of homosexual life patterns support the openly gay life, and the more involved one becomes in them, the less the probability that one will be able to pull back and to seek some other kind of life.

Having described some of the characteristics of the homosexual way of life, Malloy observes that it severely limits one's ability to render negative judgments on the basis of consistent criteria about any kind of sexual behavior. There is no acknowledged moral requirement for membership in this way of life. It must remain open to a variety of sexual expressions, from sado-masochism to stable relationships. To be consistent in advocating a gay lifestyle, one must accept promiscuity as well as the steady relationship, otherwise, one threatens the very freedom of sexual self-determination which is the root principle of gay liberation. With this conclusion I agree. The only kinds of behavior which gay leaders can disapprove are those involving violence and seduction of the innocent.

One controversial point about the origins of homosexual behavior is raised by Malloy, namely, does "intense recruitment to the homosexual way of life create more homosexuals than there would be otherwise?" (p. 176).

Malloy responds that it all depends. He adverts to the fact that a certain percentage of young people of late high school and college age

have confused or uncertain sexual identities. "For them, active and self-conscious involvement in the gay subculture may trigger, especially over a protracted period of time, a stronger inclination in that direction than would have been the case However, this is only true if there is a real homosexual potential in the individual" (p. 176). I would agree with this position, as I have written in the *Priest* (March, 1980).

Malloy, however, believes that the same recruitment and the other supports of the homosexual way of life do not affect those who have already identified their sexual orientation, except to encourage them to find opportunities to express it. Again, I would agree that open gay life can be a real temptation to the adult homosexual, a temptation made all the stronger by the support of the gay community.

The homosexual way of life exhibits certain negative characteristics which can be said to shape, in many instances, homosexual interactions. Gossip, suspicion, and distrust create turmoil in the homosexual community. Jealousy may lead to violence when the other partner is "unfaithful"; if it does not lead to violence, it may provoke bitter recriminations and character assassinations.

While authority problems are found in the heterosexual community as well, there seems to be a higher degree of such in the homosexual community. Oftentimes, relationships with parents were the beginning of authority problems, and later hostility toward other persons in controlling positions is related to the childhood rebellion.

The homosexual way of life then finds a common focus in the "ultimate commitment to unrestricted personal sexual freedom. . . . [T]his liberation conviction is at the heart of their common identity with other homosexuals. To accept homosexuality as a way of life is to call into question any attempt to enforce sexual standards of a more restrictive sort, whether based on political, social, or religious grounds" (p. 181).

In the second part of his book, Malloy offers some Christian ethical reflection on the homosexual way of life, beginning with the scriptural evidence. As homosexuality was known and practiced in the Judeo-Christian world of the Middle East, it was considered to be reprehensible conduct for a Christian. Since it does not seem to have been a major problem in the New Testament community of the Church, it does not receive much attention in the gospels or the epistles. Nonetheless, "any defender of the possibility of moral homosexual conduct and moral homosexual relationships among Christians must overcome and explain away an obvious Scriptural teaching against it" (p. 208). Thus, the teaching Church will continue to interpret the Scriptures as opposed to homosexual conduct. While this does not terminate the discussion, it does reinforce a continuation of the magisterial condemnation. Again, the better arguments against such conduct will be

rooted in an understanding of biblically-rooted values rather than in the examination of specific texts. At this juncture Malloy might have stressed more the covenant of permanent, monogamous, heterosexual union as the norm of sexual activity in the New Testament.

Scriptures Can't Spell Out Moral Roles

Rightfully, Malloy stresses that the Scriptures alone are not sufficient for the resolution of most moral problems. They can provide a unique vision of faith, but they cannot spell out moral rules in terms of universal application. For more concrete resolutions of moral questions, the guidance of the teaching Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the faithful to understand how biblical values of sexuality are applicable to personal conduct.

I have several difficulties with Malloy's scriptural analysis. Earlier in his discussion of the homosexual way of life, Malloy had stressed that it tended to unbridle sexual expression without concomitant responsibility (p. 208). But in his review of McNeill's position, he seems to give too much credit to the idea that the Scriptures were not really addressing the question of the steady homosexual relationship in which some degree of human affection may be involved. Granted that the sacred writers did not have the kind of psychiatric knowledge which we are supposed to have, but they never made any exception to their consistent condemnation of homosexual acts. Personal orientation and motivation are not found in the pertinent texts on homosexuality. The sacred writer simply chose to condemn homosexual acts. Still we can use arguments beyond the scriptural texts to show that the steady homosexual relationship is not compatible with the Christian way of life. In short, the Scriptures indicate indirectly that the steady homosexual relationship is wrong, but this must be buttressed with arguments from the tradition of the Church and from the nature of the homosexual act.

Another difficulty I have is the meaning of the following sentence: "The Christian community has inherited a bias, a deep-seated aversion to homosexual conduct, which is expressed in passing in the Pauline Letters" (p. 208). The word "bias" connotes that the basic reason for one's conduct is prejudice. Likewise, the expression "deep-seated aversion" connotes an attitude not based upon rational thought. I think this gives the impression that the early Christian community did not have any rational arguments or faith convictions for opposing homosexual conduct. I believe that Malloy would hold that, mixed with myths about the personality of homosexuals, there were some solid reasons based upon reason and faith for not accepting homosexual conduct as good for the Christian.

In reviewing authors arguing against the acceptability of the

homosexual way of life, Malloy sees Philip Keane's views as more nuanced than my own. I am represented correctly as holding that a person who is confirmed in a homosexual orientation must choose complete abstinence from genital intercourse as an acceptable ideal for living the Christian life. Keane, on the other hand, introduces the distinction between moral and ontic evil as a way of justifying the steady lover, homosexual relationship. Thus, it is not a question of Keane being nuanced and Harvey being oversimple, but of two theologians differing radically in the principles at the roots of their argumentation.

In the final analysis, either Keane or I am correct in our teaching on this subject. I have argued elsewhere against the basic notions of proportionate good reasoning. (See *Australasian Catholic Record*, October, 1979; also, *Principles of Catholic Moral Life*, ed. by William May, 1980.) Although later (p. 229), Malloy wonders about the value of the distinction between ontic and moral evil, he seems, at this point, to approve of Keane's practical conclusion, namely, "the subjective factors of the person's concrete situation must always be taken into account before an accurate assessment can be given of the moral evil involved" (p. 222). This statement, however, can be understood in two different ways. It can mean that a person's guilt for an objectively evil act is reduced significantly because of lack of advertence or of freedom, or it can mean that the subjective factors of human effectivity can render homosexual acts morally good while remaining continually evil. I can agree with the former interpretation, while I regard the second as a form of proportionate good reasoning, that is to say, one in which the good consequences of the action are considered as outweighing the defective nature of the act itself, which is termed "ontic" evil. The factor of intentionality becomes determinative of the morality of the act.

In evaluating McNeill's arguments in favor of homosexual activity, Malloy makes a good point when he says that "the problem with homosexual sexual sharing is that even with all the best intentions, the acts themselves cannot achieve either the creation of another human being or the effective symbolization of such a possibility" (p. 226).

He also responds to the familiar argument of homosexual spokespersons who claim that homosexual acts are "natural" to homosexuals. This sort of appeal tends to collapse the full dimensions of the sexual possibility into a matter of attraction and erotic drive. What the homosexual advocate proposes is only natural in a restricted sense of the term. The choice about the specifics of one's life as a sexual being should take into account the experience and wisdom of the whole human community which has persistently refused to consider non-generative sexual relationships a proper realization of the natural species — affirming sexual finality" (p. 227). This position is reaffirmed in the *Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics* when it says that,

"according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality" (par. 8).

After adverting to the fact that natural law arguments against homosexuality concentrate on the physical structure of the sex act and its ability to establish a procreative context for lovemaking, Malloy alludes to similar arguments of Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse which stress psychological relatedness between the sexes. Barnhouse argues that the true religious goal of human sexuality should be seen not as *satisfaction*, but as *completeness* (emphasis of author). "Without this goal of completeness, satisfaction pursued as an end-in-itself deteriorates into lust" (quoted by Malloy, p. 230). She sees homosexual practices as grounded in the denial of half the image of God. Thus, Barnhouse calls homosexuality "symbolic confusion" (p. 230).

Michael Novak adds that even in the context of permanent commitment and perfect mutuality, overt homosexual acts do not symbolize the Catholic sense of earthiness and harmony (Malloy, p. 230).

William Muehl argues that momentary experiences of pleasure and appeals to a loving will are "not sufficient to validate sexual relations between persons of the same sex" (Malloy, p. 231).

All these arguments from psychological symbolization are powerful in Malloy's view. He puts it well: "The effective union of opposites in heterosexual intercourse symbolizes the human and religious desire for shared intimacy in a way that same-sex genitality is not able to" (p. 234).

Malloy does not subscribe to the alcoholism analogy with homosexuality because it promotes a sickness model of interpretation of the homosexual condition. At the same time, he admits that the health homosexual who is leading a chaste life has an obvious similarity with the recovered alcoholic: one forsakes genital expression of sexuality, the other gives up drinking. I would add another very important similarity from my work of group counseling in New York City, namely, that both the recovered alcoholic and the chaste homosexual need group support and a spiritual-ascetical plan of life. Both persons need to find friends to break through the walls of isolation which have led them into drink or promiscuity. Again, while there are exceptions, many homosexuals tend to be compulsive in their sexual behavior.

On this point, I tend to disagree with Malloy's observation that "homosexual behavior does not seem to be any more compulsive than heterosexual behavior" (p. 236). In my pastoral counseling over the years, I have encountered far more homosexuals who are both promiscuous and compulsive than those who are usually continent or those involved in a so-called faithful relationship.

Malloy reviews the arguments of the ethical revisionists — those who argue for the moral acceptability of the homosexual way of life.

Malloy divides the revisionists into two general groups: the

moderate revisionists, who want to develop an ethic for homosexual relationships which resembles that applied to heterosexual couples, and the radical revisionists who consider the Christian sexual ethic as no longer viable.

Malloy faults Goergen for vagueness: "Goergen has made the word 'homosexual' mean so many things that we cannot be sure where he comes on ethically" (p. 246). He finds a similar hedging in Roger Shinn. The position of Helmut Thielicke is reviewed. It is a very nuanced condition which makes room for some homosexual activity, although such is contrary to the order of creation. H. Kimball Jones argues in a similar vein: "The homosexual person should be encouraged to form mature sexual relationships — remaining faithful to one partner." Malloy believes, however, that Kimball Jones is not dealing with the majority of homosexuals who are not involved in faithful relationships. At the same time he does not describe what a "responsible homosexual being" might look like (p. 252).

Malloy Finds Defects

Malloy finds many defects in Charles Curran's application of "compromise theory" to the condition of the homosexual. He holds that Curran has not provided an ethic for homosexuals. He likewise faults Ralph Weltge for not providing a critical appraisal of a whole way of life. John vonRohn and Theodore Jennings share in the defective positions of Curran and Weltge. They do not seem to integrate their ethical reflection with pastoral application.

In his summary of moderate revisionists, Malloy believes that their proposals are lacking in realism: "It capitulates to the new without any sure idea of where it is leading."

Turning to the radical revisionists, Malloy finds various expressions of dissatisfaction with the traditional Christian teaching on homosexuality. The first subgroup sees all forms of sexual behavior as morally neutral in the physical order. Norman Pittenger, an Anglican process theologian, is a persuasive advocate of the position which Malloy rejects as "facile" because it does not take sufficient account of the structures and limits of human relationships. He judges that John McNeill's book "is a poorly constructed attempt to justify homosexual relationships by selectively presenting the evidence about the nature of the homosexual way of life. At best, his ethic would apply to a small percentage of gays . . ." McNeill really holds that "the structures and embodied forms of sexual existence have no significance" (p. 271).

Malloy goes on to review and reject a series of writers, including the authors of *Human Sexuality* and Gregory Baum, all of whom stress the moral neutrality of homosexual acts and the need for the overt homosexual to be accepted fully by the Christian churches.

Incidentally, Malloy sees a number of major flaws in *Human Sexuality* which reduce the cogency of its arguments in favor of homosexual relationships. He finds *Human Sexuality's* position "extremely derivative" from presuppositions already rejected by Malloy (p. 289, m. 39).

Malloy turns next to an ethical appraisal of the "ecclesial integrators" who hold in common that we should bring homosexuals more completely into our fellowship and liturgy, while accepting their sexual behavior as a variant from that of the heterosexual. Richard Woods, O.P., and Barbara Geittengis are examples of this approach whose weakness is its failure to confront the ethical issue. The Church must face both the ethical and pastoral issues if it is to keep some semblance of integrity: "A radical disjunction between theory and practice gradually calls into question the viability of the teaching" (p. 279).

Finally, we have the sexual anarchists who would reject completely the present structures of Christian family and marriage. Sally Gearhart, for example, regards the structures and teachings of the "Christian Church" as opposed to *feminism*. Heterosexual marriage above all is oppressive. Of the three stances described, the ethical libertarians, the ecclesial integrators, and the sexual anarchists, the last is at the heart of the homosexual dialectic.

Anyone familiar with gay movements and literature would agree with Malloy. After this thorough overview of various opinions concerning the morality of homosexual activity, Malloy formulates his own ethical judgment on homosexual activity. He proceeds in three stages: (1) a sketch of some of the components of the Christian way of life, (2) an understanding of sexuality control to the way of life, and (3) the conclusion that the homosexual way of life cannot be reconciled with the Christian way of life.

Before sketching a Christian way of life, Malloy rightly feels the need to build a case for a distinctively Christian ethic, which he sees as "Church-based, self-consciously historical, creative trans-temporal, sacrificial, transformative, heroic, inclusive, active, and repentant" (p. 304). These qualities form a *context* within which particular moral teachings are learned, and the Christian way of life is understood. Malloy then describes the Christian way of life and its response to violence and wealth and its utter dependence upon prayer. Then he concentrates on the Christian way of life and sexuality. Instead of dwelling on specific texts referring to sexual behavior, he interprets the scriptural teaching on sexuality in a thematic fashion, beginning with the two creation accounts in the book of Genesis, investigating the language of covenant, showing how the celibate life of Jesus was not an asexualization, and drawing out the implications of the resurrection for our continued bodily life. From this perspective, the Christian achieves a balanced understanding of his sexual nature while

avoiding both angelism and the worship of orgasm. To keep this precarious balance, three virtues are crucial: chastity, love, and faithfulness.

Chastity is correlated with maturity and wisdom. It is necessary for every state of life — indicating appropriate expressions of affection through touch and suppressing inordinate movements of sensuality.

Love plays the critical role in the Christian's understanding of sexuality. "Love, of course, need have nothing explicit to do with sexuality (as in 'washing feet' . . .) yet sexuality to be authentically realized must have something to do with love" (p. 317). Malloy goes on to describe the different forms of love — from the human to the divine as found in the crucifixion of Christ.

Faithfulness is "a painstaking, exasperating human activity" (p. 320). In the Christian way of life, faithfulness to promise begins not in the exchange of mutual affection between sexual partners, but in the baptismal commitment to abide in response to God's love. This enablement from God helps the person in all dimensions of human life, including the sexual. It involves both exclusivity and permanence of commitment. "For all of its history, the Church has seen monogamous marriage as the context which best promotes the full realization of sexual expression while preserving the priority of these values" (p. 322). Until recently, however, it has never been suggested that the homosexual forms of relatedness might also be a viable moral alternative in the Christian way of life. To this suggestion, Malloy directs the question of whether the Christian community can approve the genital expression of homosexual orientation.

In chapter 7, Malloy has brought together a number of characteristics found in the homosexual way of life. In chapter 9, he has formulated negative judgments based upon biological finality and sexual symbolization. In chapter 11, he first describes the characteristics of the Christian way of life and then contrasts them with the homosexual way of life in order to show their irreconcilability.

How does *chastity* fit in with the homosexual way of life? It does not because "the common denominator or the pattern of social organization of the homosexual subculture is a basic commitment to unrestricted personal sexual freedom" (p. 324). There is no generally accepted criterion which can limit or restrict the person from this behavior. Those theologians who argue for the stable couple relationship should remember that this is not the *typical* arrangement in the homosexual way of life and it is not what the articulate homosexual spokespersons regard as the fullness of homosexual potential. Malloy does not see how habits of chastity are possible within the homosexual way of life.

How does *love* fit into the homosexual way of life? Without denying that homosexuals are capable of intense and satisfying love,

Malloy asserts that it is not clear whether a *sexual* dimension to the relationship contributes to or inhibits such a development. Malloy further argues that the procreative context of heterosexual marriage "provides the opportunity for the growth of a love which carries the partners beyond the original focus in each other to the wider dimensions of joyful and serious service of a broader community" (p. 326). The homosexual community is tragically deficient of this kind of structured love. The homosexual group or couple have no value outside of themselves (like the rearing of children) to bring them to let their experience of love overflow into the world around them.

How does *faithfulness* fit into the homosexual way of life? It is not clear how faithfulness to promise can be considered as an integral part of the homosexual way of life. In promise-making, the *form* and the *content* of the promise must ring true. In the homosexual way of life, neither is adequate to a Christian interpretation of the sexual possibility. The *form* is deficient because neither Church nor civil society has seen fit to provide a social expectation within which such expressions of commitment have any binding force. The *content* is also deficient because no one knows for sure what the words should say. There is no workable model of homosexual commitment. The evidence is wanting that homosexual couples can achieve a "stable, loving, and faithful bond." Indeed, the majority of participants in the homosexual way of life are not really interested. They are more concerned with *self* and promotion of homosexual liberation. This evidence and reflection lead to the conclusion that the homosexual way of life, as it has evolved in the social structures and practices of the homosexual subculture, is irreconcilable with the Christian way of life.

Faithfulness and Homosexuality

In his last chapter, Malloy translates his ethical conclusions into pastoral practice in the ongoing life of the Church. The first problem area he treats is homosexual marriages, which he regards as an ontological impossibility. That is to say, the conditions necessary for the sacramental celebration of the relationship cannot be realized by a homosexual couple. For this reason, he is opposed to any change in Church practice which would give the appearance of approving stable homosexual relationships. At the same time, he feels that such relationships need to be tolerated in pastoral practice, although they can never adequately represent the Christian understanding of human sexuality. As long as these couples engage in genital expression of their love, I would not even tolerate them.

The second problem area treated is the ordination of homosexuals to the priesthood and the acceptance of homosexuals into religious life. Malloy believes that "it is proper for the bishop and/or the

seminary authorities to refuse to ordain Catholic seminarians who insist on manifesting publicly their homosexual orientation." He sees it as a "matter of communication of a vision of celibate ministry in the Church" (p. 346). Malloy opposes the trivializing of sexual conduct so that it has no decisive influence on a person's qualifications for ordination. I agree. Turning to the question of religious life accepting homosexuals, Malloy spells out procedures under which homosexual persons can be admitted to the religious life. He adds that he knows a number of "exemplary religious who are homosexual and who have witnessed to their ability to lead healthy celibate lives" (p. 352). I can witness to that as well. He cautions those religious orders, however, who are known to admit homosexually-oriented persons to be careful that they do not create an image which would not be attractive to heterosexual candidates.

The third problem area is homosexual churches and homosexual church organizations. He gives one a good overview of such organizations, but I believe he is too optimistic concerning *Dignity*, which is a national organization of gays. There may be individual units of *Dignity* which espouse the teaching of the Catholic Church on both the necessity and viability of celibacy for the homosexual person, but I have seen little evidence for such in their monthly *Newsletter*. Indeed, Malloy qualifies a cautious approval of *Dignity* with the observation that "at times *Dignity* has settled for being a place of refuge where all styles of accommodation to the homosexual way of life were tolerated indiscriminately. In those instances it has ceased to represent a specifically Catholic perspective" (p. 356). My experience with *Dignity* would lead me to the conclusion that *usually* it does not represent a Catholic perspective. In New York City, a group of Catholic homosexuals has organized an alternative to *Dignity* called *Courage*, whose purpose is to give spiritual and psychological support to its members in the practice of complete abstinence from genital relations. It is a form of group spiritual direction in which I have been the moderator since October, 1980. It continues to grow.

The fourth problem is really a challenge to the pastoral counselor to respond to the needs of the homosexual person. Malloy makes the following points: (1) The Church must continue to preserve the integrity of its teaching office. Discussion among theologians and other professionals should continue, but diversity of opinion should not obscure the fact that the condemnation of homosexual activity represents the working consensus of the Church. After all, the homosexual way of life cannot be reconciled with the Christian way of life. (2) Sexuality is only one facet of the self and must not be allowed to usurp the primary place. Man is not only a sexual being, but also a political being, a social being, a creature with a relationship to the Creator. (3) Homosexual behavior is not necessarily of the greatest gravity. (4) Some forms of the homosexual way of life are more

destructive than others. (5) "Homosexual couples, consciously committed to a permanent and exclusive relationship, offer the best hope for the preservation of Christian values by active homosexuals" (p. 359). Malloy argues that a number of theologians have reasoned that "for those homosexuals incapable of living a celibate life, such a private arrangement is surely preferable to the other alternatives of Christian homosexuals who are capable of such a commitment" (p. 359). (6) The celibate option for Christian homosexuals should continue to be presented as the most consistent response to the Christian ethical judgment. Here Malloy adverts to the tendency in our day to view any restriction of human freedom as harsh, but he points out that we expect heterosexuals to remain chaste under difficult circumstances as unmarried, as divorced persons, as widows/widowers, and we should be consistent in our ethical demands for both heterosexuals and homosexuals. (7) Christian homosexual persons should strive to develop friendships with Christian heterosexuals. He adds that this should be done with prudence. It can be a great help. Finally, Malloy suggests that the most pressing need is to have the assistance of dedicated Christian homosexuals in the formulation of a comprehensive pastoral strategy for homosexual persons. With this I agree, and with all the other points made, excepting number 5.

The weakness of Malloy's argument in number 5 is the presumption that normal homosexuals are *incapable* of the celibate life. Making allowances for certain homosexuals who are deeply compulsive, I believe that those homosexuals who have freedom in their sexual activity can cooperate with the grace of God to lead the celibate life. Granted, certain human factors are also helpful, like deep friendships and support groups. Nonetheless, the Catholic doctrine on the sufficiency of grace to do the explicit will of God in the observance of appropriate chastity demands that we do not accept the presumption that free homosexuals cannot live the life of complete abstinence from genital intercourse. Working with *Courage* in New York confirms my adherence to this position. I believe that we deprive homosexuals of an opportunity to grow spiritually when we tell them that homosexual activity — even of the "faithful" type — is permissible for them. In the vast majority of instances, these unions will be beset with all kinds of jealousy and possessiveness, and will remain sterile.

Conclusion

Although I have not agreed with Malloy on a few points in the complex problems of homosexuality, I recommend this book as a comprehensive, critical, and compassionate treatment of the homosexual phenomenon. It is scholarly and balanced. It makes use of empirical data, while not neglecting Catholic sources on the principles of human sexuality. Its conclusions are carefully nuanced. It is a real contribution to the field.