

HOMOSEXUALITY STUDY GROUP - MINORITY REPORT

By Philippa Peacock

Thank you for the opportunity of attaching a minority report to the excellent report which Brian Talbot has written for our group.

I merely wish to state why I believe that homosexuals should be allowed to have their relationships blessed in the New Church and how we might be able to counsel them.

1. I believe that homosexuality is a natural state - present in both animals and humans. Barnet Hospital conducted a survey which showed that there are more people who are 100% homosexual than people who are 100% heterosexual and that most people's sexuality is somewhere in between the two.
2. Leviticus 18:22 does state that 'If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination'. This was for several reasons, the Hebrew prescientific understanding was that male semen contained the whole of nascent life and that the woman provided only the incubating space. The injunction was to 'be fruitful and multiply' and when a tribe was struggling to populate a country in which its people were outnumbered procreation was valued highly but nowadays we are facing uncontrolled overpopulation and global warming.
3. Swedenborg never actually mentions 'homosexuality'.
4. Swedenborg's ideas on homosexuality, if he did have any, would have been affected by the times in which he lived. In those times women and children were the property of their husband and slaves were not allowed to marry.
5. The United Nations report on the well being of children puts UK and US at the bottom of the list of 21 other countries though the UK and the US are rich countries. The countries at the top of the list are the more liberal countries where homosexuals are treated more equally and children do not feel stereotyped. The UK and US are both aggressive - entering the war in Iraq when other countries objected. The UK and the US both treat matters of health in an inappropriate way - the US refusing to sign the Kyoto Agreement on Global Warming and the UK having a national health service which is over riddled with regulations and rapidly disintegrating.
6. I believe it is nonsensical to agree to gays being allowed to become ministers, run Sunday schools, act on committees, adopt children and not give them our fullest support and blessing.
7. Even catholic countries, like Spain, support homosexual marriage.
8. Desmond Tutu stated at the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple at Southwark Cathedral on 1 February 2004 'To discriminate against our sisters and brothers who are lesbians or gay on grounds of their sexual orientation for me is as totally unacceptable and unjust as apartheid ever was'.
9. I believe it is necessary to comply with the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law and any difference in the way we treat homosexuals and heterosexuals might be thought discriminatory.
10. If we ever have any openly gay minister then he/she could offer any openly gay member of the congregation counselling rather than directing them to a specialist

counsellor. Also, the homosexual might just want general counselling from the minister and not specialist counselling - would this not be acceptable?