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THE
GAY SWITCHBOARD
OF HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

P.O. BOX 872
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17108

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The July meeting was held at one co-director's. Now September is at the other co-director's apartment. The meeting is 7:00 P.M., but a back porch supper is planned for 6:00 P.M. Don't eat Sunday eve. Sept. 13 and just bring a hardy contribution for GSH and enjoy.

Sept. 13, six in the evening, 26 S. Third Street, Hbg. Summer's soon gone and fall is upon us. There is much important business at the Sept. meeting. Please don't miss it.

SEPTEMBER TRAINING

Training for new volunteers will take place on September 14, 21, and 28. Anyone interested may contact the switchboard during the week of Sept. 8-11 for place and time, after letter of application's rec'd.

If I let people walk on me...That's my fault.

Eleanor Roosevelt

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP

A local differently-abled woman is organizing a support group for lesbians with physical, mental or emotional limitations. Those with invisible problems, such as epilepsy, diabetes, etc., are welcome. Call Sue at 944-9485.

ONLY A HEART.

I am not a cadaver
To be pilferaged and bled white.
I am a man
With a spirit and a heart
A hope and a dream
For giving these days of
Abundant life.
Like a brook I fall free
Of shackles in heart
And like a brook, I
Carefully touch the stones
And trees with concerned breast
Seek to understand the importance
Or your acts
The heart often tollerates
Unfortunate abuse
Carefully then, gather this
Brook in your arms
And should we find our hearts
Strangers
Kindly, with thought, open
A protective gate for my release.
If I should hesitate,
Fear not --
Brooks flow freely....
And mend,
I will.
Your memory will be sweeter
Your name, a treasure
And my heart in joy
Celebrates.
Kindly remember my care
Happy then am I
Alone with healthy mind
And heart

CHRISTMAS CARD SUPPORT

The Switchboard kicks off a drive to raise funds selling Current Greeting Cards. They are inexpensive and beautiful. If a Switchboard doesn't show you their catalog ask to see it and get ready for Christmas helping the Switchboard.



Comment —the editor

"All is fair in love and war?"

During the Revolutionary War in this country, the British had some strange ideas concerning war. First, they were proud British subjects and they wore Red coats. The fact that red was easily visible and made them better targets for the enemy was not as important as looking good! Secondly, they held the belief that men in battle should never hide, but face the enemy forthright. Only cowards would hide behind trees to fight and certainly not men! Those two beliefs alone were enough to undo a powerfully organized army that fell to defeat at the hands of a disorganized, poorly equipped group of volunteers fighting for independence.

The Americans of 1776 didn't play by the "rules" and they won the war! Is that also true of love? Love is as puzzling as war and while they're extreme opposites, they seem to parallel one another in many ways. But there are differences and the generalization never note these.

Love is.... patient. It is kind. It is not jealous or envious. It doesn't boast or puff up its chest. It's not haughty. Not selfish. Not rude. Love doesn't even demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It doesn't hold grudges and hardly even notices when other do it wrong. Does that sound like war?

War is impatient. Greedy. Envious and jealous. It boasts! It is selfish and rude. Always demands its own way. It is irritable and touchy; holds grudges and makes note of every injustice as fuel for its survival.

If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.

In love like a British soldier some stand in red coats where the enemy can easily shoot them in the back. Why are they so foolish? Perhaps because love is... kind? No. To act the part of a British soldier concerning love is the ultimate victory. For the American soldier's attitude in love may protect the loved one from potential lovers, but drains all the lover's feelings for that sad soldier. The lover will resent

the prison because love cannot survive in cages.

To package love in an essay; in a song; a work of art... just hopeless. But like British soldiers we battle for certain victory... in love. Wisdom alone will bring "meaning". And is the meaning all that important? Love is so precious and so rare. To go beyond the charades into the reality of the spirit's brightest hope is my wish for each of you.

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HITE REP'T: MALE SEXUALITY

Both homosexual and heterosexual males said they would welcome more caresses and foreplay; at the same time, however, they admitted having difficulty expressing such "unmanly" desires to their partners. Over and over again, the men in Hite's sample expressed resentment at being typecast as the everready, do-it-all maestros of sexual relations---although some of the same men admitted being intimidated by sexually aggressive females. Asked about their feelings, many men seemed to be filled with rage. "Yes, I usually take the initial sexual advance...and every other advance...and every other advance after that...and I'm damned tired of it," said one. "I make the first phone call, I make the first date...I touch her and I (make love to) her...It's no wonder we grow up to think of women as objects, because that's exactly what many women act like."

NOW, THE TROUBLE WITH MEN
Newsweek/June 15, 1981

FROM GOD PART II

In the June newsletter, we began exploring the area of homosexuality and the Bible. As responsible gays (and prepared switchboard volunteers) we must be ready to suggest some alternatives to those who have heard and believed that God condemns all homosexuals. Many times the Bible is used as a weapon against us to support that premise. Yet if the Bible is studied objectively, the passages that are most commonly used as bludgeons will be clearly seen for what they actually teach: which is not a wholesale censure of homosexuals. In the last article, we looked at one of the most misused of the passages, I Corinthians 6:9. The terms used in this passage ('malakes', 'arsenokaites') do not refer to homosexuals in general: they refer to abuses of homosexuality (male prostitutes and homosexual offenders). To discover this, the tools that are needed are the Greek New Testament and an open mind (not deserted, just willing to see what is really written). Another passage, maybe the most well known of all, can be explored and understood in a very similar fashion.

When the subject of homosexuality is raised in connection with the Bible, the discussion of Sodom is usually imminent. This event from Biblical history (Genesis 19:1-29 ff) is one which is commonly misunderstood and grossly misemployed as a proof text of God's unconditional hatred of and vengeance toward homosexuals. However, if one simply reads the text, they will see a very different event than what is commonly presented. There is so much that could be said, but there are a few major points that bear remembering:

- All the men in the city were present (vs 4). If all of the men were homosexuals, there would have been no Sodom after one generation. Even Lot's Sons-in-law were there (vs 14). Therefore, heterosexuals were a part of this crowd of men. If this incident had been meant to show God's condemnation of Sodom due to homosexuality, then the group would have been exclusively homosexual.

- The intent of the attack was violent humiliation (gang rape) not sexual pleasure. Therefore the punishment Sodom suffered was not because of homosexuality, nor was it because of this incident alone: much had been done before this that had displeased God but we are not told the specifics. Note that Lot offered his daughters (vs 8). If this had been a group of men looking for homosexual pleasure, Lot would have had no reason to offer his daughters, but he recognized the intent or significance of the request. In concurrent literature, there is evidence that most cultures practiced a similar act of defense for their cities. The city was a political/cultural unit responsible for protecting itself. If strangers entered the city gates, they could be instrumental in the overthrow of that city by outside forces. Therefore, one technique the men of a city used to debase and divest strangers of power was gang rape. It was for this purpose that the men of Sodom gathered before Lot's house. It was an act of violence intended to humiliate and disgrace the strangers. It was not an act rising from homosexual orientation or influenced by the sexual desires of those involved.

- A very sound principle of hermeneutics (the interpretation of scripture) is to use other scripture to help shed light on difficult or unclear passages. If all of the references to the Sodom incident are explored, it can be clearly seen that Sodom's fate was not a result of homosexuality. One of the best explanatory texts is Ezekiel 16:49-50. This passage lists the sins of Sodom in order to show the wickedness of the nation of Israel compared to the notorious Sodom. Please note what is mentioned (arrogant, overfed and unconcerned, they did not help the poor and needy, they did detestable things, and they were haughty) and what is not mentioned (no specific mention of homosexuality). If the events which occurred at Sodom were meant to be a key proof text of God's condemnation of homosexuals, then why isn't homosexuality specifically mentioned? Also Jesus' reference to

(continued ~~page~~ page 4)

Sodom in Luke 10:8-12 (immediately preceding the parable of the Good Samaritan) points to Sodom's severe inhospitality and rejection of God's messengers (and message), not homosexuality. Therefore, Genesis 19:1-29 cannot be used to suggest God's unconditional wrath against homosexuality.

- A final point which most people either ignore or neglect is an incident that is recounted in Judges 19. It is an incident precisely parallel to what occurred at Sodom, only it involves an Israelite town and the actions of the Benjamite men of that city in response to the presence of a visitor. The social function of gang rape and the insignificance of sexual orientation is highlighted in this account which provides a very helpful glimpse into the social/cultural/religious dynamics applicable to the Sodom event. Sodom's sin was gross inhospitality, misuse of others, greed, selfishness, etc. (see Ezekiel 16:49-50) not a need and desire for emotional and physical intimacy with those of the same sex.

Much more could be explored concerning the details of the Sodom passage in scripture. However, in consideration of the above points: what the passage actually says and what other passages add to our understanding of the Sodom incident, it is clear that Genesis 19:1-29ff cannot be used legitimately as a weapon to support the unscripural attitude and belief that homosexual orientation is wrong and condemned by God.

Too often we shy away from unfamiliar or uncomfortable topics. This is only natural. And the Bible has been a source of extreme discomfort for most gays due largely to misuse and misunderstanding. Yet we must be able to redress these scriptural misconceptions with legitimate explanations, appropriate reasoning, and valid interpretive processes. This will not be easy, nor will it be rapidly accepted; but we have a responsibility not only to ourselves, but also to the countless numbers of men and women who face the abysmal struggles of self-acceptance, self-awareness,

and self-love. God does not hate gays; God does not condemn gays; and the Bible gives no support for such a view. Let's be prepared to share this with others as our involvement with the switchboard gives us the opportunity.

FATE OF NEWSLETTER

In May, of this year, a series of meetings ensued concerning the future of this newsletter. The response to it has waned since those meetings began. It's creation is Switchboard '81's contribution to the Gay people of this area. We may have failed to publicize it properly. **But**, decisions will be made concerning its fate. The decision will be based upon the importance of this newsletter to you by the new administration (Switchboard '82).

Is it important to you that this newsletter continues to reach out? Only you can answer that question. Doing nothing is an answer to the new administration. Letting Switchboard personnel know your feelings (positive or negative) is a better answer. The ball is in your court!

The newsletter is not easily made possible each month. But it has been rewarding to our membership being able to touch you with their varied concerns. Perhaps it is unimportant. The readership shall decide that.

Caller: 8/12/81 OF NOTE:
"You people have been very helpful to me. I want to say thank you and keep up the good work. It's nice to know I can call someone when I have a problem."

ANOTHER 2¢ WORTH...

Since this is the middle of the year, and I have been co-director for the Switchboard for six months, and since Colin has been writing this column for the last few months, I thought it was time for you to hear from me and my two cents worth.

The last six months have been mindgrowing, mindblowing, interesting, informative and nerveracking! So I thought you might like to know what I feel about being co-director. (If you aren't interested, stop reading now!)

Being co-director means that I get to hear all those interesting, wildly imaginative reasons people have for not being able to person the telephone or attending one of the business meetings.

1. "I forgot the date!" (It's always the first Sunday of each month!)
2. "I didn't get my meeting notice!" (Meetings are always the first Sunday of each month!)
3. "I couldn't find the meeting place!" (Meanwhile I know he has been fucking the host!)
4. "I overslept!" (I wish I would have!)
5. "I got drunk!" (Boy, I wish I would have!)
6. (My favorite of all!) "My kitchen sink fell off the wall!"

Being co-director means I get to hear all these gems and more. But I also get to hear about all the calls and "Why doesn't that guy do what I tell him?" I guess sometimes we forget that we are not the all-answering-service; nor do we wish to be.

Being co-director means that I get to know the ins and outs of our very fine organization. The goods and the bads! I get to think through all our problems. The big and the small! (Oh, well, I don't need all that sleep anyway!)

Being co-director means I have trouble with my personal relationships. Because I have to help with the streetsales two Saturdays in a row or I have to take a night that the phone hasn't been covered. (Oh, well, I didn't need that fucker anyway!)

Being co-director means I have to beg, borrow or steal to see that our budget is met. (I'm trying to lose weight!)

Being co-director means that I get to stand in the bar (somewhat unknown) and hear some asshole badmouth the Switchboard and know I can't say anything because he had called a few nights before for VD Clinic information.

But being co-director means I also get to hear someone's rebuttal on that badmouther. Someone who will have a story about how our Switchboard has helped him. Its times like these I know that this man is only one of the 2,400 calls we will handle this year and I know that it is all worth it!

With a smile,

Chuck

THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a creation of Switchboard '81. The cost is only \$3. for CURRENT year subscription. If you are not on the mailing list there is one way to get there-- send GSH \$3. -- you name and address and you'll be gettin' the news.

GSH Box 872 Harrisburg, Pa. 17108

Please enter my name as a subscriber to the GSH Newsletter for the current calendar year @ \$3.

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Please make checks payable to either GSH or Tom Basehore (tres.)

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Nuts!