

Refuting Homosexuals who Use the Bible to Defend Homosexuality

Does the Bible Condemn Homosexuality? An Interview with Dr. Reverend Cheri DiNovo.

As the interview with Dr. DiNovo is conducted, Robert Sungenis will provide rebuttal to DiNovo's arguments.

Introduction by *The Turning*: As the debate rages over the legality and morality of same sex marriages, many Christians rely on the Bible as their guide. Many believe that the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality, and they provide specific passages to back up their claim. We decided to give the other side of the debate a chance to answer. So, we interviewed Dr Reverend Cheri DiNovo, a United Church Minister who has performed a dozen same-sex marriages in Canada. She has also written a Ph.D. thesis on the subject of how Christianity deals with the outcasts of society.

In this interview, we asked Dr. Reverend DiNovo to explain her perspective on three often-quoted biblical passages that seem to condemn homosexuality.

THE TURNING: Well, let's go through the Bible and take a look at some of the passages which people often quote when condemning homosexuality. Starting in the beginning with Genesis 19, we have the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot invites two men into his home, not knowing that they are really angels. Soon, a crowd forms outside the house, demanding that the strangers be sent out so they can be raped. Lot refuses, and offers his virgin daughters instead. How do you read this in terms of an attitude towards homosexuality?

DiNovo: Well, first of all it's important to remark that this passage is not about homosexuality. In fact, it has nothing to do with homosexuality. It's about welcoming, it's about the theology of hospitality, which is the great theology, biblically speaking, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations. So, always and everywhere, the bible tells us to be welcoming and hospitable to strangers, especially strangers who are not like us. So here come some strangers into your town, so what do you do with them. The great sin of Sodom, for which it was punished, is the abuse of the strangers. It has nothing to do with how they were abused. That is irrelevant to the story. Anything could have happened. It is the fact that they were abused at all that is the point of the story.

It is not a question of sexual ethics, because it is absurd to say that it's okay to send your virgin daughters out to be gang-raped, but it's not okay to have strangers gang-raped. And that would be an absurd reading of it, but that would be a literalist reading of it, if you want to take it at face value, without any thought involved. I think there's a great deal of prevarication when talking about this. People just throw Sodom and Gomorrah out as if they know what it's about. They either don't know what it's about or if they've actually studied the bible in obvious detail, they'd see that it's not about homosexuality. It's a smokescreen.

R. Sungenis: To those who know better, it is uncanny the excuse that Sodom and Gomorrah was about “hospitality” has actually remained in the apologetic of the homosexual advocates for so long, being that it is one of the most ridiculous answers ever devised by intelligent men. I remember I first heard the “hospitality” excuse when I was in college in 1978. I took a minor in Psychology and in a class on Abnormal Psychology the professor, with tongue in cheek, stated that the more popular explanation psychologists were giving at that time concerning the story of Sodom and Gomorrah was that it had nothing to do with homosexuality; rather, it was about the sin of “inhospitality.” I remember distinctly, as soon as he uttered those words, the whole class went into hysterical laughter. And that, of course, is what we can do with “Reverend Cheri DiNovo’s” present advocacy of the “hospitality” argument.

Any biblical exegete worth his salt would tell DiNovo that in order for “hospitality” to be the central focus of the Genesis narrative, there would have to be some mention of “hospitality,” or some similar term, as that which was the object of God’s concern regarding the events occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah. As it stands, there is not one word about hospitality.

The only time hospitality is part of the narrative is when Abraham meets the three strangers who eventually condemn Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 18:1f). To show kindness, Abraham and Sarah provide nourishment for the three strangers.

Second, Genesis 18:16-33 provides us with the actual conversation between God and Abraham concerning the fate of the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah. Verse 20 states: *“The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.”* Thus, the Lord has ALREADY seen the sin of Sodom, and it is exceedingly perverse. Hence, this couldn’t be the sin of “inhospitality” because the event concerning Lot and the men pounding on his door seeking to consort with the angels has not yet occurred. That event won’t occur until the next chapter, Genesis 19. So “Reverend Cheri’s” argument is completely anachronistic, not to mention completely bogus.

Evidently, the Lord had been observing the sin of Sodom for quite some time, and it is the very reason he has come to Abraham. So perverse and so complete is the sin of Sodom (long before Lot’s door is accosted) that Abraham finds himself bargaining with God not to destroy the city if he can find 10 righteous people. Evidently, Abraham can’t find even 10 righteous people, and thus God plans on destroying the whole city.

Granted, Genesis 18 doesn’t tell us what the sin of Sodom is, but that information is supplied in Genesis 19:5 when the men at Lot’s door say: *“and they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us **that we may have relations with them.**’”* (NASB)

The clause **“that we may have relations with them”** is from the Hebrew word יָדָה YADAH, which means “to know,” and is often used in idiomatic form to represent sexual relations (cf., Gn 4:25: “And Adam knew his wife and she bore a child”). We know that sexual relations is the meaning of YADAH in this context because it is used again in regard to sexual relations with Lot’s daughters, as Lot says in verse 8: “Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations [YADAH] with man” (NASB).

It is obvious to any unbiased exegete that the context of the narrative demands that sexual relations is the focus of the passage.

How else do we know that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah involved illicit sexual relations? We know it from the many commentaries in Scripture on this very event. In fact, “Sodom” is used as a figure of sexual sin and is referred to as the place of divine judgment over two dozen times in Scripture (cf. Dt 29:23; 32:32; Is 1:9-10; 3:9; 13:19; Jr 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lm 4:6; Ez 16:46-56; Am 4:11; Zp 2:9; Mt 10:15; 11:23; Rm 9:29).

But more importantly, there are two explicit passages in the New Testament that tell us precisely that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was sexual in nature. First there is 2 Peter 2:6-8:

*“and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the **sensual conduct of unprincipled men** (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented **day after day by their lawless deeds**)”*

The words “sensual conduct” are the Greek ἀσελγεία ἀναστροφῆς ASELGEIA ANASTROPHES. The first ASELGEIA, appears 9 times in the New Testament and is usually translated as “lasciviousness” (Mt 7:22; Rm 13:13; 2Co 12:21; Gl 5:19; Ep 4:19; 1Pt 4:3; 2Pt 2:18; Jd 4), which refers to one having lustful, lewd or wanton thoughts or behavior.

We also note here that the men of Sodom were tormenting Lot “day after day.” Hence, this is not merely a one-time occasion of force exerted at Lot’s door, but a continual display of lascivious behavior long before the angels ever arrived.

Then there is Jude 7:

*“just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these **indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh**, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”*

Here it is even more explicit as to the nature of the sin of Sodom. The clause **indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh** is from the Greek ἐκπορνεύσασαι EKPORNUESASAI and ἀπελθούσαι ὀπίσω σαρκός ἑτέρας APELTHOUSAI OPISO SARKOS HETERAS. The first is a combination of the Greek PORNEIA, which is derivation for our English word “pornography,” and the prefix “EK,” which means “out of.” The second phrase literally means “going after different flesh.” The operative word here is “different,” which is from the Greek HETERAS. In this context it refers to sexual relations that are “different” than normal sexual relations, i.e., homosexual relations.

Hence, DiNovo’s interpretation of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah doesn’t stand a snowball’s chance in hell of being accepted by reputable biblical exegetes.

There is one curious fact we also need to mention. The mere fact that DiNovo feels compelled to answer the Bible shows that she implicitly regards the Bible as a practical authority on the issue. If she didn't esteem the Bible, then all she would need to do to answer the narrative is say: "The Bible is not an authority, and therefore we are not compelled to answer its assertions." Instead, DiNovo implicitly subjects herself to the authority of Scripture, and thus, if she is wrong about her interpretation of Scripture (which we have clearly shown), then she will also suffer the condemnations Scripture specifies for those who practice or advocate homosexuality.

THE TURNING: And yet, this story has cast an enormous shadow over Christianity. We speak of 'sodomy' because of this story. It suggests that church leaders over the centuries have considered this story to be about homosexuality.

DiNovo: I know, and isn't that absurd. That truly is prevarication, it clearly speaks to an agenda of the church, and that agenda is about hegemony and control, and it's always about control over those places where people feel the most vulnerable, and that's in their sexuality and in their ethical dealings with each other. Where the church wields the hammer the most, that's where you should question it the most. This is one of those texts that has simply been abused by the church.

R. Sungenis: Unfortunately for DiNovo the "absurdity" lies in the fact that she carries a Ph.D. and purports to speak as an authority on biblical exegesis, but she obviously knows very little about it. Instead she speaks of the Church as having an "agenda" when it gives an interpretation of the passage that is opposite her interpretation. It's all about "control" as far as DiNovo is concerned. But, of course, where would the world be without "control." The very fact that the interviewer from THE TURNING doesn't get up and rape DiNovo and stick a knife in her chest is that there are certain "controls" our society puts on immoral and deviant behavior.

THE TURNING: I guess it begs the question, had the angels appeared as women, what would have happened in the house?

DiNovo: Well, the same thing, it would have made no difference, except that sodomy wouldn't be a part of our vocabulary. But another thing to point out about the biblical period: there was no such thing as homosexuality in the biblical era, neither in the Hebrew scripture era nor in the New Testament era. Homosexuality did not exist as a term or as a person. Homosexuality as a person was invented in the nineteenth century, as a pathology.

R. Sungenis: Now we see DiNovo attempting to base her argument on etymology. Granted, the technical term "homosexuality" wasn't used prior to the nineteenth century. It originated as a clinical term to describe what was commonly understood in all previous generations as sexual relations with someone of the same sex. Often the Hebrew or Greek did not assign one word to describe an action or state, but used several words. For example, Hebrew did not have a word for "uncle," and thus whenever an uncle is in view the Hebrew would describe the person as "your father's brother." The same was true with homosexuality. It was described by various phrases in both Hebrew and Greek. Hebrew used "a man who lies with a male" (Lv 20:13). Greek would refer to them as "abandoning the natural function of the woman" or "burning in lust towards one another, men with men" (Rm 1:27).

But at one point the Greek does, indeed, describe homosexuality with one word. In 1 Cor 6:9, St. Paul uses the word ἀρσενικοῖται (ARSENOKOITAI) stating that such persons will not inherit the kingdom of heaven: “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, **nor homosexuals.**” This word appears one other time in the New Testament, 1Tm 1:10: “and immoral men and **homosexuals** and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.”

The Greek word ARSENOKOITAI is a combination of the words ARSEN = “male”; and KOITUS = “sexual copulation.” We have a word in English, “coitus,” which means sexual intercourse. So here we have a word in Greek that is about as precise as a word can be to describe two males having sexual relations. The word ARSENOKOITAI literally means “male sexual relations.”

We also find the word ARSENOKOITAI in classical Greek literature many years before and after the New Testament made use of the word. It appeared in the *Revenue Laws of Ptolemy Philadelphus* 6, 10, 25; *Anthologia Palatina* 9, 686, 5; and *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum* viii, 4, p. 196, 6; 8; and the *Sibylene Oracles* 2, 73 and *Polycarp to the Philippians* 5:3. The pedigree is established, and thus, any claims to “homosexuality” surfacing as merely a “nineteenth century” classification is simply fallacious.

DiNovo: At the time the Bible was written, both the Hebrew scripture and the New Testament, homosexual acts were just variations of sexual acts. We remember that during the Greek era when the New Testament was written, homosexuality between an older man and a younger man was seen as a very common form of mentoring. It was average, it was not frowned upon.

R. Sungenis: Notice how DiNovo tries to confuse the issue by implying that merely because some in the Greek culture considered homosexual acts as normal, and because this practice took place during the writing of the Scripture, it is safe for her to conclude that the writers of Scripture condoned homosexuality just as did the citizens of the Greek culture. How DiNovo arrives at this bit of convoluted logic she does not tell us, but there it is nonetheless. In DiNovo’s view, certain people in the “Greek era” become the standard upon which all behavior is judged, and somehow they attain mastery over the biblical writers who specialized in judging moral behavior. Suffice it to say, DiNovo’s understanding of history and culture is, shall we say, a little askew. Many in the “Greek era” were either immoral or amoral. It was precisely for the deterioration of their society through illicit sexual relations that they were eventually conquered by the Romans. But both the Old Testament and New Testament writers were adamantly against all homosexual acts. All one need do to verify this is to read the writings of the early Church Fathers on the issue. Below are just a few who have written on the issue:

Chrysostom: *"But when God abandons a person to his own devices, then everything is turned upside down. thus not only was their doctrine satanic, but their life was too....How disgraceful it is when even the women sought after these things, when they ought to have a greater sense of shame than men have"* (**Homilies on Romans**, 4).

Chrysostom: *"This is clear proof of the ultimate degree of corruption, when both sexes are abandoned. Both he who was called to be the leader of the woman and she who was told to become a help meet to the man now behave as enemies to one another. Notice how deliberately Paul measures his words. for he does not say that they were enamored of one another but that they were consumed by lust for one another! You see that the whole of desire comes from an excess which cannot contain itself within its proper limits. for everything which transgresses God's appointed laws lusts after monstrous things which are not normal.*

"The normal desire for sexual intercourse united the sexes to one another, but by taking this away and turning it into something else, the devil divided the sexes from each other and forced what was one to become two, in opposition to the law of God...The devil was bent on destroying the human race, not only by preventing them from copulating lawfully but by stirring them up to war and subversion against each other" (Homilies on Romans, 4).

Cyprian: *"If you were able...to direct your eyes into secret places, to unfasten the locked doors of sleeping chambers and to open these hidden recesses to the perception of sight, you would behold that being carried on by the unchaste which a chaste countenance could not behold. You would see what it is an indignity even to see...Men with frenzied lust rush against men. Things are done which cannot even give pleasure to those who do them." (To Donatus, 9).*

Severian: *"Paul did not say this lightly, but because he had heard that there was a homosexual community at Rome" (Commentary from the Greek Church).*

Ambrosiaster: *"It is clear that, because they changed the truth of God into a lie, they change the natural use (of sexuality) into that use by which they were dishonored and were condemned to the second death. For since Satan cannot make another law, having no power to do so, it must be said that they changed to another order and by doing thing which were not allowed, fell into sin" (Commentary on Paul's Epistles)*

R.Sungenis: end

DiNovo: Where we see Paul and others in the New Testament railing about what seems like homosexuality, what they're actually railing about is manipulation of youth. It's really more pedophilia that they're railing at in that context, especially among the Greeks themselves and the whole Greek mythic structure. They're railing against the Greek way of life. And part of that way of life was this initiation procedure with young boys, and it's really pedophilia, and the kind of power imbalance which that implies is really the problem.

So, homosexuality is really a bad translation in this context. There were no 'homosexuals' at that time, there were only adults having sex in various ways, and one of those was having sex with their own gender.

R. Sungenis: We see that DiNovo is adopting the same kind of convoluted logic she used previously. Here she attempts to make a connection between what the Greeks rationalized for sexual behavior and what the New Testament writers condemned. In DiNovo's contorted logic, because the Greeks allowed grown-males to have sexual relations but frowned upon grown-

males having sex with young males, to her this means that the New Testament writers accepted grown males having sex but not young males. That DiNovo actually thinks she can get away with this is rather amazing. There is not the slightest hint that the New Testament writers condoned grown males having sex. In fact, every reference we have in the New Testament concerning homosexual relations refers explicitly to grown males engaging in sexual relations. There is not one reference to youths being abused. Now, if DiNovo would like to disprove this fact, she will need to cite passages in the New Testament that prove her point, not just assert as fact the very thing she is required to prove.

THE TURNING: So, just to put that in context, would most of the men who were having sex with boys also be married to women?

DiNovo: Oh, absolutely. This was a patriarchy, so you want your name to be carried on. You have to remember that marriage was not what it is now, either. Marriage in biblical times was usually polygamy, and women had the status of cattle, they were purchased with gold, and they were really there to have children for the men. They were not seen as a man's prime object of sexual attraction. Maybe there was a component of that, but that was not really the key component. Marriage was to produce children. And to produce the patriarch's children, with the patriarch's name.

So marriage didn't have very much to do with sex, and the classic example of that is Solomon and his thousand wives. That's in the same breath as the Ten Commandments' injunction against committing adultery. Well, what does it mean not to commit adultery in a community that would allow you to have one thousand wives? How much energy does one guy have, you know? Clearly, there's something else at work here than sexual prohibition. Again, we have to see things in context, in terms of the differences between their world and our modern world.

R. Sungenis: DiNovo claims that “marriage was not what it is now...Marriage in biblical times was usually polygamy, and women had the status of cattle...” On the one hand, we can agree that “marriage was not what it is now,” but perhaps not the way DiNovo expected. At least in biblical times we didn't have throw-away-marriages like we have today. Divorce was practically unheard of in biblical times, but today, for the first time in history, we have a divorce rate of 50% for first marriages and 60% for second marriages. Some improvement. Today we have homosexuals getting married, something previous societies did not practice, especially “biblical times.” Today we have teens having babies and getting married, something that was quite rare in older times. So if DiNovo's point was to make a case that marriage today is better than it was in previous times, she needs to look again.

DiNovo then asserts that “marriage in biblical times was usually polygamy.” This is also fallacious. There were only certain instances of polygamy in the Old Testament, and there are none recorded in the New Testament. Adam had one wife. Noah had one wife. Abraham had one wife at a time, and only took Hagar as a concubine when Sarah wasn't producing children (an act that was condemned by God). The Mosaic law made a stipulation against polygamy in Dt 17:17: “He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away.” Those who had multiple wives were going against what God had ordained. David did so, and he also committed

adultery and murder. Solomon did so, and his multiple wives did precisely what Dt 17:17 predicted, since 1 Kings 11 tells us of Solomon's apostasy.

DiNovo also says that "woman had the status of cattle." Of course, her intention is to create the impression that women were treated no better than animals, but that is simply not the case at all. Wives were the possessions of the husband, but that was stipulated in the Mosaic law in order to protect the wife legally and financially. As a legal possession of his, the husband was obligated to provide for his wife. This was especially needful when the marriage deteriorated. The same is true today. If a marriage deteriorates and the husband and wife divorce, the wife is entitled to at least half of the assets of the marriage, and that is because she is legally attached to the husband and his assets. The husband cannot simply dispense with the wife and have her fend for herself.

Lastly, DiNovo claims that: "Marriage was to produce children. And to produce the patriarch's children, with the patriarch's name." This implies, of course, that no man in the ancient world looked upon his wife with love and affection. According to DiNovo's distorted view of life, the wife existed merely to produce children but the husband actually got more pleasure in having sex with males. Unfortunately for DiNovo, the exact opposite is true. All one need do is read the literature from these periods to see that love and fidelity were of the utmost concern in society, both in Hebrew and Greek culture. No society could survive otherwise. It has been shown time and time again that as soon as a society condones or institutionalizes homosexuality, it is not long before that society crumbles. It was only the marginal quarters of society that engaged in deviant sexual behavior and who then sought to institutionalize that behavior, much like we see today.

Leviticus: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is an abomination." 18:22

THE TURNING: Okay, well, let's continue our march through the Bible, and get to Leviticus, where God says to Moses, among many other things, " You shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is an abomination."

DiNovo: Okay, so, here you have the Jews differentiating themselves from the other great cultures of their day. In Leviticus you will find another six hundred strictures as well, including against eating shellfish, as well as spitting on the floor, prohibitions about women having their periods. There's all sorts of stuff there that we would now throw out, with very little thought. We would say, this is a people with very little in common with our people who have prohibitions for all sorts of strange reasons, and this would be of interest to a cultural anthropologist maybe, but it is certainly not anything we're going to live our lives by.

This is Rabbinical wisdom, this is not mine: the ban against homosexual sex acts is of the same order as not eating shellfish. So, if the Religious Right condemned the eating of shellfish in the same breath as homosexual acts, then maybe they would have it in context.

R. Sungenis: DiNovo's twisting of Scripture is precisely why it is absolutely necessary to understand Scripture and how it is written. First, notice that in her attempt to dismiss the Old Testament as irrelevant to today, she has implicitly admitted that the Old Testament condemned homosexuality. DiNovo's only escape from the Old Testament's condemnation is for her to say that it was merely "Rabbinical wisdom," or something akin to the condemnation of eating

shellfish. In DiNovo's view, homosexuality was condemned in THAT day, but not in ours, since we don't subscribe to Old Testament laws any longer.

Previously, DiNovo argued just the opposite. She argued that the incident at Sodom and Gomorrah was not about homosexuality but about hospitality, as if to argue that there was nothing wrong with the men of Sodom seeking to have sexual relations with Lot's friends, as long as they did it hospitably. But now DiNovo is arguing that the Old Testament did, indeed, condemn homosexuality, but she insists we can dispense with that prohibition because we are not required to follow Old Testament law any longer. Do you see the duplicity in her argument? DiNovo wants to have her cake and eat it, too. On the one hand she wants to argue that there was nothing wrong with homosexuality; but on the other hand she wants to argue that homosexuality was condemned, but we need not follow that condemnation any longer, otherwise we will be required to abstain from shellfish. Thus, her own illogic shows the fallacious nature of her argumentation.

Now, let's deal with the issue of Old Testament law. DiNovo is certainly correct in arguing that the Mosaic Law is obsolete. We are not under it any longer. In fact, anyone who puts themselves under the Mosaic Law will be condemned (Gal 3:10-12; 5:1-4). The New Testament makes a specific point of the Old Covenant's obsolescence in several places (2 Cor 3:6-14; Hebrews 7:18; 8:7-13; 10:9). This would include the laws against homosexuality and the laws against eating shellfish. But what DiNovo doesn't tell you is that, in the New Covenant (which replaced the Old Covenant), *the Church re-established the moral code of the Mosaic Law, including the condemnation of homosexuality*. Under the stipulations of the New Covenant, the Church has the right to re-establish any law from the Old Testament she desires to have (cf., Mt 16:18-19; Acts 15:1-12). That is why we see 9 of the 10 commandments re-established in Romans 13:9-10 (minus the law on Sabbath-keeping). That is why St. Paul can continue to denounce homosexuality in Romans 1:18-24 and 1 Cor 6:9 and 1 Tm 1:10, since he, as a New Testament apostle, has the authority to either keep or dispense with Old Testament moral and civil provisions. He does so in other ways in, for example, 1 Cor 9:9 when he uses the Old Testament law against muzzling the ox as a support for his wages as a minister.

DiNovo: What's really true about Leviticus, and what kosher is about, is being mindful. Mindfulness about what you do, how you do it and why you do it. Mindful about the fact that God is aware of what you are doing, and God is present in what you are doing, and so you do it in a spirit of holiness. That holiness is imbued in every moment of your life. So, when you're washing your dishes, what fork you use, what you eat with, all of this has to do with God in some beautiful and brilliant way. So, it's not about what fork you use, it's not about who you sleep with, it's about the mindfulness in which you engage in sexual acts, it's not about eating shellfish, it's about the mindfulness of the food that you put into your mouth - where did it come from, what pain when into producing it. So, that's what Leviticus is about, and this is what gets lost.

R. Sungenis: Now do you see why the Bible warns us in 2 Cor 11:14-15: "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness"? Notice how DiNovo speaks of "God" so flowingly and caringly! This woman is an expert.

In any case, let's follow DiNovo's argument to its logical conclusion. Let's say that some man decided to rape DiNovo, and then beat her to a pulp. Let's say he decided to rape her children and keep them as sex slaves. According to DiNovo's above argument (e.g., "So, it's not about what fork you use, it's not about who you sleep with, it's about the mindfulness in which you engage in sexual acts"), as long as the man rapes her and her children "mindfully," there should be no problem. Perhaps he can really be a nice guy when he's doing it, and offer them monetary compensation for the slight inconvenience they will endure. Of course, DiNovo will argue, "But rape is against the law and every notion of decency we have in society." And I will argue: "Why, yes, you are quite correct. But then again, homosexuality is against the law and every form of decency we have in society." And then DiNovo will argue that homosexuality should not be in the same category as rape; and I will argue that they should. And I will argue based on what Scripture has stated about both rape and homosexuality. In the Old Testament, both were capital crimes that resulted in execution by stoning. In the New Testament, although the civil magistrate has the power to execute, still, both rape and homosexuality are considered capital crimes that will disinherit one from the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor 5:1-8; 6:9-10). Now, unless DiNovo can show us from sound biblical exegesis why these conclusions are not true, then she, as a "Reverend" who speaks about a God who "is aware of what you are doing," is required to abide by them. So far, DiNovo has shown us anything BUT sound biblical exegesis. Even her knowledge of Hebrew and Greek history is askew. Suffice it to say, she has not proved her case.

THE TURNING: We've received a fair bit of mail at the magazine from people who read the Bible quite literally ...

DiNovo: I wish they did! I wish they read it more literally, I wish they actually read it. My problem with literalists and fundamentalists is that they don't actually read it, because if they did, it would be very difficult to uphold these kinds of arguments, the hatred of homosexuals, for example. It simply isn't there. What they have done very successfully is taken one passage out of context, without studying it, and then used that to beat up their neighbors. I really wish people would study the bible more, it's not a question of studying it less, or being less literal. I wish people would actually study the words there, i.e., being a bit more literalist about it. That would lead to a whole different conclusion.

R. Sungenis: Now we see DiNovo actually digging her grave a little deeper. She says that she wants us to read the Bible "literally"! Well, I don't know how much more literally we have to read it than the foregoing examination of the context and words that we pointed out in the biblical narratives and injunctions. How much more literal can we be than parsing the Greek word ARSENOKOITAI into its constituent parts, that is, a combination of the words ARSEN = "male"; and KOITUS = "sexual copulation," an action that St. Paul condemns in 1 Cor 6:9?

Incidentally, you will notice above how "Reverend Cheri" tries to misdirect the argument by attempting to make a connection between biblical interpretation and "the hatred of homosexuals," as if sound exegesis of Scripture is somehow going to lead one to the conclusion that homosexuals are to be "hated." This is the typical homosexual ploy – mark yourself as a group that is "hated" and thus draw on the natural sympathies of people to accept you. This has been a very successful ploy. It has developed into the establishment of "hate law" crimes in Canada. The homosexuals in the United States are desperately trying to make it law in our land.

But it is nothing but a clever ploy. The fact is, sound biblical exegesis of Scripture leads us far away from the conclusion that we are to “hate homosexuals.” If we hated them we wouldn’t say anything to stop them. Does a mother who scolds and disciplines her child for bad behavior hate her child? No, in fact, Scripture says that those who don’t discipline their children “hate” them (Pro 13:24).

THE TURNING: And if you go down that Leviticus list, it says you should never even see your own sister naked. So, if this is what God said to Moses, and hence to the rest of us, how does one pick and choose out of that list?

DiNovo: The bible is designed to be read in community, and then to be debated and discussed. It's not a fait accompli. This is why in the midrashic traditions there are libraries full of texts asking 'what does it all mean?' And we Christians have libraries full, called theology, asking 'what does it all mean?'. The reason for this is that we don't know, we can never know for sure. So this is a book that is meant to be read out loud in community, so we can all hear it, all think our different thoughts, and then we all come together to discuss it. That is the purpose of it, and that was the way it was meant to be used. It was originally a partly oral tradition handed on down, and discussed, 'What does this mean? What do you think this means, these words of our tribal elders? What implications does this have for our lives?' It's not an immediate prescription. This is a book that is designed to engender a lot of things, prayer among them, worship, all sorts of things, but it was never meant to be read as a prescription for people.

R. Sungenis: So according to DiNovo the only thing the Bible is supposed to do is generate “discussion” amongst its readers, but never dogmatic conclusions. Unfortunately for her, the Bible itself says just the opposite. How did the list in Leviticus 20 originate? If DiNovo’s thesis were correct, Moses should have never produced such a list. He should have just kept “discussing” with his elders “what does it all mean?” but never come to a dogmatic conclusion. But how many times do we have Moses making dogmatic decisions for the people of Israel? Moses was so busy making decisions that he had to hire 70 elders to help him! (Number 11:16f; Exodus 18:17-27). If DiNovo’s thesis were correct, then the New Testament Church should have just kept saying “what does it all mean?” but never come to any hard and fast rules. But this isn’t what the New Testament tells us. Right from the get-go decisions were made that determined the course of history (Acts 1:20; 5:1-10; 15:1-12; Rom 13:1-10; etc., etc.). But in the world of “Dr Reverend Cheri DiNovo” and her “United Church” (whatever that is), there are no rules, just discussion; and if your discussion ends up condemning something she likes to do, then its back to the discussion table until she can convince you that there are to be no rules against her desires. Moreover, DiNovo is making it sound as if its so hard to figure out whether a male rectum is the proper receptacle for the male organ. She’s trying to make the nature of homosexuality into one of the great mysterious doctrines of the Church (e.g., the Trinity, the Incarnation, etc.). But it’s not. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that rectums are not sexual organs and that male bodies don’t produce children. It’s all very simple, but “Reverend Cheri” wants “discussion” in the hopes of turning you away from your common sense, and deceiving you just as the devil deceived Eve into thinking she could become a god. It’s all very old, but the devil is always looking for a new crop of naïve believers just as R. J. Reynolds is always looking for a new crop of naïve smokers.

DiNovo: You know, you look at the stories in the Bible, and you wonder how does this show me how to live my life? I mean, the story of Jonah or Noah -- what we are we supposed to do, when it rains go out and build an ark? It would be an absurd way of reading it, we don't read any text that way. What we do is that we read it and then we discuss what it really means, and that's exactly the tradition from which it comes, and has been from the beginning of it's writing.

R. Sungenis: Notice how DiNovo tries to trivialize the story of Noah. Unfortunately, she hasn't read the account of the Flood "literally" as she hoped everyone else would read the Bible. She ignores the fact that God communicated with Noah and told him there was going to be a flood, not a normal rainfall. It would not be absurd at all to build an ark if God himself told you to build it because a flood was coming (you know, that God that DiNovo said is a God who "is aware of what you are doing, and God is present in what you are doing, and so you do it in a spirit of holiness"). Thus, unless God comes down and tells DiNovo that she should build an ark when it starts raining, she can go outside and merely open her umbrella. Of course, that knowledge only comes from reading the Bible literally, without a homosexual bias.

THE TURNING: Well, let's jump ahead then to the New Testament. In Corinthians there is a section which reads:

'Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived, neither fornicators nor idolaters or adulterers nor homosexuals nor sodomites nor thieves nor covetous nor drunkards nor revilers nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.' (9-10)

Homosexuals are clearly mentioned, at least in this translation. What is this text trying to say?

DiNovo: What if all of our emails which we sent to our friends would be saved for two thousand years, collated, put together as a series of letters, written basically as holy scripture? There'd be some pretty wacky stuff in them. And some of our emails were clearly meant for particular people at a particular time, for a particular situation.

The letter to the people at Corinth was exactly that - written at a particular time, to a particular people, in a particular situation.

At Corinth they were having basically orgiastic meetings, people kind of blending in an interesting (sexual) way, taking what was in the old pagan religions and in the new Christian story. Among the Greeks, there were temple prostitutes, and so here in Corinth you had this decidedly unJewish living out of the story! There were wild parties, fornication and all sorts of wild things happening. So Paul is kind of ranting at them here, saying clean up your act, this is not what church should be about. Now, again, we have to remember that Paul himself is a human, this is not the word of God. This is the word of a first-century male, and he is writing in a patriarchy, and he is writing to a culture that he finds loathsome as a Jew. He grew up with Leviticus, where you're supposed to be mindful of everything you did, with rigid rules about everything they did. And although he railed against the Pharisees for doing that, he was also offended by the Greeks who had thrown all of those rules out - "Do what you want, let's party, let's blast!" So, here he is trying to reign in what has become a little too Greek for him.

R. Sungenis: In case you weren't aware, DiNovo's above argument has become commonplace for any group today who wants a sure-fire way of dismissing the condemnations in the New Testament against their favorite sin. All one need do is say that St. Paul was writing only to the people of his day; that he was not inspired by God and thus was merely giving his male-dominated opinion. Problem is, St. Paul never says this about his own writings; and if we are going to read the Bible "literally" (as DiNovo demanded previously), then we're going to need a little help from St. Paul in order to make such dogmatic conclusions about his writings (Incidentally, whatever happened to the "discussion" DiNovo was pushing? Why is she making such hard and fast conclusions concerning St. Paul's intentions and purpose in writing his epistles?). If Paul doesn't claim to be writing "only for his time," then how does Reverend Cheri reach such a conclusion? It's certainly not based on the biblical text.

In fact, if we search St. Paul's writings, he makes a point to tell us that his injunctions are for all time. For example, in 2 Tim 3:1-7, St. Paul says that in the "last days" the same sins that were prevalent in his day will appear once again. He names about 20 different sins. Incidentally, he says in verse 6-7: "For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." I would suggest that "Reverend Cheri" is one such woman – "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

In 2 Thess 1:5-10, St. Paul speaks of the future coming of Christ who will judge all ungodliness. Nowhere does Paul ever claim that homosexuality was taken out of the category of ungodliness, nor any other sin. In 2 Thess 2:3-9 he speaks of a "falling away from the faith" that will occur before Christ returns. In 2 Cor 5:10 and Romans 14:10-12 he speaks about all of us having to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to answer for all the good and bad things we have done. Does that sound like Paul is saying that he was only speaking to the culture of his day? Unless DiNovo can show us places in Paul's writing where certain prohibitions were no longer considered sins by either St. Paul or the rest of the New Testament writers, then she is required to stick to the "literal" interpretation of Scripture and not think otherwise. It's easy to make claims. Backing them up is another ball game altogether.

DiNovo: He also says that women shouldn't speak at church, and he seems to support slavery in one passage. Again, do we need to accept that? Of course not, it's ludicrous.

R. Sungenis: It's only "ludicrous" for someone who has virtually dismissed whatever she doesn't want to obey in the New Testament. Unless designated to speak by an official authority, women shouldn't be speaking in Church. That's only common sense. And this was not something St. Paul dreamed up. He says in 1 Cor 14:33-35 that it was from "the command of the Lord" and "the law" that such things should be enforced. That throws the "cultural" argument out the window.

THE TURNING: I wonder if we can end this by talking about where Christ himself would stand on this. Christ to my knowledge doesn't say anything about homosexuality or homosexual acts. However, he does say quite a lot about judgment and whether human beings should be judging each other.

DiNovo: Christ basically says, 'judge not' . That sums it all up, 'judge not'. Love thy neighbor as yourself. Well, your neighbor is an adulterer, your neighbor is a fornicator, your neighbor is a homosexual. This is your neighbor. Who do you think your neighbor is? Sometimes your neighbor is your enemy, this is the person you must love as yourself. Your neighbor is not the person who looks just like you and thinks just like you.

So, in light of that, what does it mean to love your neighbor? Does it mean to judge them, to harass them? To force them to change to become more like you? Absolutely not. Does it also mean to accept everything that your neighbor is doing? Not that either, because clearly, at some point, one draws the line. Jesus drew the line many times. He drew the line at stoning the adulterous woman. He made declarations in terms of justice. Certainly when you look at his ministry, it is based on justice and love.

R. Sungenis: So in DiNovo's book it's okay to "draw the line many times," just as long as you don't draw it over her favorite sins, like homosexuality. For DiNovo, to love her is to accept her homosexuality (or lesbianism, as the case may be). If you condemn it, you don't "love" her. Funny. Wasn't it Jesus who laid down some of the harshest condemnations in Scripture against those who sinned (cf., Matthew 23)? Wasn't it Jesus who said that if you even look at a woman with lust you have already committed adultery in your heart, and are unfit for the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:32)? Jesus forgave the adulterous woman when she repented of her sin, and told her never to commit the sin again. He would tell the same thing to DiNovo. Likewise, Jesus will forgive DiNovo, but no sooner, when DiNovo admits that homosexuality is a sin and that Jesus and the rest of the Church have condemned it. Incidentally, if we read the Bible "literally" (as DiNovo once demanded) it tells us that Jesus gave authority to the Church to bind and loose in regards to faith and morals (Matthew 16:18-19). Thus, it is no surprise to find St. Paul, speaking for the Church, against homosexuality (Rom 1:18-24; 1 Cor 6:9).

DiNovo: So what is Christ calling us to do in a situation? And that's the great question for a Christian. And it is a question, it's not a pat answer, it's a real question. Every situation is a little bit different, so we can't always rush in with pat answers, the way the church is wont to do. There's all sorts of reasons. The Church has been an agent of patriarchy and that doesn't die overnight. One can quickly see, if you're a feminist at all, why you wouldn't want adultery or sleeping with homosexuals. In a patriarchy, whether in the 1st century or in Genesis, you want the bloodline to be clear, and you want property to be passed along. Follow the money. And that's where this comes from, it's an overlay over what's holy in the Bible.

THE TURNING: I saw a man on CNN the other night who is the father of a homosexual son, and this issue had split his family in two. His son was no longer welcome in the house, he said with apparent sincerity that he loves his son, as all fathers do. However, he felt his son's homosexual lifestyle was endangering the young man's soul. He couldn't stand by as a father and look aside. What advice would you give that father in light of your reading of the Bible?

DiNovo: I always find it interesting that Christians can read the passages about not judging and then immediately do exactly that. I would immediately call the father's attention back to his own life, his own lifestyle, who he really is, and what he really did. In the same way as Jesus said, it's not even what you do, it's what you think. Okay, let's look at your thoughts now, and see if there's any sin there. And if there is any sin there, you had better pack up your stones and go

home. To be biblical about it, he is judging, whether he wants to admit to it or not. And that is what all people do who hurt their own children. I mean, how horrible is that, to turn away from your own child, how unbiblical is that? So, is it loving, is it just? One would think as a community that is sitting together, praying together, that one would say no, it is neither loving nor just.

R. Sungenis: This is the common ploy of those who practice sin but don't want it pointed out by others. Invariably, reference is made to Jesus' statement in Mt 7:1: "Judge not and you shall not be judged." What DiNovo doesn't tell you is that in the context Jesus is speaking to "hypocrites" (verse 5), that is, those who have unconfessed sin in their own life but make it a practice to point out the sins of others. The typical example of such hypocritical behavior were the Pharisees, the very people who were twisting the law in order to escape condemnation.

But for those who have confessed their sins, yet see a bother commit a sin, they have an obligation, not just a right, to bring that sin to his attention so that he will be compelled to repent of it. That is why Jesus teaches in Mt 18:15-17 that we are to go to our brother and tell him his sin. If he doesn't listen to us, we bring it to his attention again with witnesses; and if doesn't listen to them, we bring the matter to the Church; and if he doesn't listen to the Church, we ignore him, just as the father of the above son has been doing. For those in deep sin (such as sexual sin), the Church is to excommunicate them until they repent (1 Cor 5:1-13).

THE TURNING: From a parental perspective, we try to instill rules that our kids can live by, and many, many people look to the Bible as essentially a rule book, what behaviours are allowed or not. But what you've just said could be interpreted as ' you know what, anything goes, just love your kids through it.'

DiNovo: Well, the thrust of the bible is anti-morality. People are always aghast at that, but that is exactly what it is. Certainly, the thrust of Jesus' ministry is against the morality of his day. He breaks just about every rule, including the commandments. He works on Sunday, and he calls for us all to stand on the side of the marginalized. And to be welcoming to everyone. Now, look at how the church is actually marginalizing people. Look at gays and lesbians, they are so marginalized, we've forced them to start their own church. And women have been marginalized for millennia. Then you've got to ask are we really being faithful, are we really being biblical? That would be the way to approach it. And then, when you look at your own children and your own life, you ask yourself: ' how am I living my life now? Am I living it with a profound and deep ethicality that is not just what ruling class morality says I should do? Am I standing up for the downtrodden? Am I welcoming the marginalized, am I welcoming everyone? Those to me are the overriding ethical demands placed upon us by Christ, and upon our children.

R. Sungenis: This is about as perverse as it comes. DiNovo is trying to put those who practice immoral behavior in the category of those who are "marginalized" and "down trodden"! Instead of encouraging these people to repent of their lascivious and deviant life-style, she attempts to make them victims of prejudice. And then she tries to back it up by claiming that Jesus "breaks just about every rule, including the commandments. He works on Sunday"! What "rule" did Jesus break, pray tell? If DiNovo is talking about Jesus breaking man-made rules, yes, he certainly did so (Mt 15:1-7). But laws against homosexuality are not man-made rules. We

already saw that it was God himself who brought the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Unless DiNovo can show us by the rules of biblical exegesis that the sin of Sodom was “inhospitality” and not homosexuality, then she has no case.

As for the “commandments,” Jesus never broke any. If DiNovo thinks that allowing a man to get his ox out of the ditch on the Sabbath is breaking the Sabbath, she needs to think again, for a law greater than the Sabbath supersedes the Sabbath law in those cases.

Most of all, however, Jesus wasn’t “welcoming to everyone.” To the Pharisee who refused to see and repent of their sin Jesus had the harshest condemnation in Scripture (Mt 23:12-39). To all those who reject Jesus, he will reject them (Mt 10:33; 2Tm 2:11-13). Likewise, those who refuse to repent of homosexual sin will be rejected by Jesus.

DiNovo: That doesn't mean that everything goes - absolutely not. It means you are always working for justice. There is always a struggle to be involved in, and there is always someone to be stood up for, and that shifts, of course, depending on the context. But that's always where you should stand. In terms of your own personal ethicality and morality, that comes to play very nicely to, which is to say, 'who's hurt, who's bleeding in my life right now?' There's the call of Christ to you, to stand with the wounded. That's what's important. Sexual ethics, every kind of ethics comes from that same place. And keep in mind: we will never, never be perfect. This is the great 'joy' of original sin (laughs), we are always going to be separate from God and Christ. This is the great lie of Gnosticism, the great lie of the prophets of perfection. We're never going to be there, nobody is. How dare anyone set themselves up as holy over us, to say that you're worse than I am. That's the most unchristian attitude I can possibly imagine. If someone passes themselves off as holy and enlightened, run the other way and hold onto your wallet! They're charlatans for sure.

R. Sungenis: In essence, DiNovo is claiming that anyone who tells her that homosexuality is a sin is someone who “sets themselves up as holy over us.” But once again, this is just a ploy to make the weak Christian feel guilty for condemning homosexuality. The homosexuals really know how to work on one’s emotions. The appeal to “judge not” is as old as the hills, and it is probably the one Scripture that is the most abused of all passages. Unfortunately, the homosexuals know how to exploit it to their advantage. It is truly amazing how hard homosexuals try to convince people that what they practice is normal and non-sinful. As the old saying goes, “they protesteth too much.” But if there is one thing Scripture is very clear about: homosexuality is not only a sin, but one of the worst kinds of sin, and it will receive an even greater punishment in hell.

ABC Answers Objections to its Homosexual Programming, Telling Christians to Get Their Heads Out of the Bible and into the Declaration of Independence.

Jim Neugent is a coach in Childress, Texas. He wrote to ABC (American Broadcasting Company) the following email in protest over the airing of "The Practice," which carried a homosexual storyline.

Jim writes:

My name is Jim Neugent. I wrote to ABC (on-line) concerning a program called "THE PRACTICE." In last night's episode, one of the lawyer's mothers decided she is gay and wanted her son to go to court and help her get a marriage license so she could marry her 'partner.' I sent the following letter to ABC yesterday and really did not expect a reply, but I did get one.

My original message to ABC was:

ABC is obsessed (or should I say abscessed) with the subject of homosexuality. I will no longer watch any of your attempts to convince the world that homosexuality is OK. THE PRACTICE can be a fairly good show, but last night's program was so typical of your agenda. You picked the 'dufus' of the office to be the one who was against the idea of his mother being gay and made him look like a whiner because he had convictions. This type of mentality calls people like me a "gay basher." Read the first chapter of Romans (that's in the Bible) and see what the apostle Paul had to say about it.... He, God and Jesus were all 'gaybashers'. What if she'd fallen in love with her cocker spaniel? Is that an alternative lifestyle? (By the way, the Bible speaks against that, too.)

Jim Neugent

Here is ABC's reply from the ABC on-line webmaster:

How about getting your nose out of the Bible (which is ONLY a book of stories compiled by MANY different writers hundreds of years ago) and read the declaration of independence (what our nation is built on), where it says "All Men are Created equal," and try treating them that way for a change! Or better yet, try thinking for yourself and stop using an archaic book of stories as your lame crutch for your existence. You are in minority in this country and your boycott will not affect us or our freedom of statement..

Robert Sungenis: A few months ago I wrote a commentary for CAI explaining why our American system of government and its founding documents have a time bomb in them -- allowing social libertarians, such as those who occupy the offices of ABC, to sanction the grossest immoralities as statements of freedom. Since neither the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, nor and any other federal document addresses the moral areas of society, for many years these documents have been wide open for anyone to exploit in the name of "freedom." It was just a matter of time before we saw it happen, and now it is happening with a vengeance.

The average society, according to the historian Arnold Toynbee, lasts about 200 years until it starts to decline. He writes that, out of the 19 societies catalogued from the beginning of written history, all of them declined and fell due to moral corruption. Only two societies did not succumb to moral corruption, and they survived indefinitely. (One of them was western Christianity, namely Catholicism, the Holy Roman Empire and beyond). Unfortunately, the institutionalization of homosexuality (e.g., homosexual marriage; homosexual rights, etc) is, Toynbee says, the final and most devastating immorality, since shortly thereafter the society completely collapses. No society has ever survived long after homosexuality was legally condoned and permitted.

But there is something even more interesting in the answer given by the ABC spokesman. Listen to his reasoning: "the Bible (which is ONLY a book of stories compiled by MANY different writers hundreds of years ago....stop using an archaic book of stories as your lame crutch for your existence." Sound familiar? It sounds as if the ABC spokesman took a page right out of Historical Criticism's handbook written by the theological liberals of the past hundred years, for they tell us essentially the same thing about the Bible that ABC believes. My, my. What goes around comes around. It didn't take long at all for the secular society to get wind of what the biblical critics were saying about the Bible. In fact, ABC has aired dozens of programs over the last 20 years featuring liberal bible scholars who have no hesitation going on camera saying precisely the same thing that Jim Neugent received in his email from ABC, that is, that the Bible is full of mistakes, it is culturally outdated, it is antisemitic, it is ignorant of modern lifestyles, etc. Unfortunately, there is little difference between today's bible scholar and an employee of ABC.

The only thing that is a little surprising is that ABC would respond so forcefully and personally against one of their patron's complaints. That is quite out of the ordinary in the industry. On the other hand, it really isn't surprising, for like the homosexuals themselves, ABC is also coming out of the closet, as are many other media outlets. It is like an avalanche of moral decay. No longer will they sit back and receive complaints with docility. No, they also have turned the corner. The homosexual issue has a way of doing that. It brings out the absolute worst in the people it possesses. It turns them into demon-like figures who are obsessed with their sin, for that is all their day consists of -- anticipating the next opportunity to engage in their craft. To cover it up, they will attack their accusers with a vengeance that we see generated by no other sin on earth. Homosexuality is truly the most insidious of all human ills. There is only one way to deal with it, and that is to destroy it and its perpetrators. That, God will do when the wickedness of homosexuality reaches its fullness.

National Catholic Reporter endorses Homosexual Marriages; EWTN reveals USCCB still deliberating whether to ordain homosexuals; a second look at Cardinal Esteves' Vatican statement about ordaining homosexuals

R. Sungenis: Well, if you haven't heard it by now, you will. In one of the most audacious and unbelievable moves within a Catholic organization, the *National Catholic Reporter* has come out of the closet and endorsed homosexual marriage. Let me say it again in case you didn't believe your eyes the first time: the National Catholic Reporter has come out of the closet and endorsed homosexual marriage. We knew from past positions that they were as liberal as Ted Kennedy, but I guess we didn't realize the depths to which that sorry excuse for a newspaper would actually sink. This is a paper that is financially supported by the subscriptions it sells through Catholic dioceses, religious orders and major Catholic publishers, and which won a General Excellence Award from the *Catholic Press Association* at one time. They have now used the homosexual issue to, once and for all, reveal their true demonic colors. In a statement the NCR released they said:

The ruling by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts allowing same-sex civil marriage is a beneficial step along the path of human understanding and human rights.

Now you can see why St. Paul says: "Now the Spirit manifestly says that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared." 1 Timothy 4:1.

We are very near the end, folks. The rampant spread of homosexuality is one of the surest signs of God's ensuing judgment. There is no turning back. It will only get worse and worse until, like Lot, they will be banging at your door wanting to have sex with your children. It is that bad.

Where is the Vatican and the USCCB on this? Well, after having gone through the homosexual/pedophile scandal of 2002, which had been brewing for the previous 30 years since the end of Vatican II, the USCCB, through the National Review Board, is, get this, "considering" whether or not to ordain homosexuals! On a recent Eternal Word Television Network's Town Meeting featuring the National Review Board's report, the spokesman told Raymond Arroyo they were still debating whether to ordain homosexuals. Can you believe this? Talk about bold and in your face. (Unfortunately, EWTN and Raymond Arroyo have already decided to bow to anything the bishops say, and thus hardly an eyebrow was raised at the network).

The recent moves by the NCR and USCCB go hand-in-hand with homosexuality. It is the most insidious sin known to man. Once they are out of the closet, they are as bold as they can be. They will not stop until they see homosexuality permeate every part of our lives. You can depend upon it.

And why might the USCCB and its National Review Board think that they might have the prerogative to decide whether or not to ordain homosexuals? Well, let's go a little deeper into this arena. Back on May 16, 2002, Jorge A. Cardinal Medina Estévez issued the Vatican's official statement on homosexual ordination. While most people praised this statement, I saw a giant loop hole in it. Here is what the cardinal said (note the clauses I have underlined):

The Congregation for Clergy has sent this Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments your Excellency's letter, asking us to clarify the possibility that men with homosexual tendencies be able to receive priestly ordination. This Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, conscious of the experience resulting from many instructed causes for the purpose of obtaining dispensation from the obligations that derive from Holy Ordination, and after due consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, expresses its judgment as follows:

Ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood of homosexual men or men with homosexual tendencies is absolutely inadvisable and imprudent and, from the pastoral point of view, very risky. A homosexual person, or one with a homosexual tendency is not, therefore, fit to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. I take the opportunity to send you my most cordial greetings.

Yours sincerely in Domino
Your Most Reverend Excellency,
Jorge A. Cardinal. Medina Estévez, Prefect

You can read the statement at <http://www.adoremus.org/Notitiae-Ordination.html>.

First, notice that the cardinal did not forbid, by a clear and concise Vatican edict, the ordaining of a homosexual. He merely said that such a person is “not fit to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders.” Now, unless something got lost in the Italian translation, why did the cardinal choose to give his statement in the form of the subjective condition of the homosexual (i.e., “not fit”) rather than just say:

“Homosexual persons are forbidden to be ordained at any time or for any reason. Further, homosexuality is a sin of the highest order, and it is incumbent upon the person to renounce his sin, for until one does, one cannot partake in any sacrament, let alone ordination.” That would have been a short, clear, dogmatic, pastoral and unequivocal statement. No loop holes, no excuses.

Second, and probably more important, observe how the cardinal introduced his reasoning. In the sentence prior he says that ordination to the diaconate or priesthood is “absolutely inadvisable and imprudent and, from the pastoral point of view, very risky.” Now wait a second here. Is the Vatican in control of this situation or not? Are they the authorities here or not? By the looks of the statement, the cardinal is merely dispensing *advice* (i.e., “absolutely inadvisable”). But ordaining homosexuals is not a matter of “advice,” no matter how strong the advice may be; rather, homosexuality is a serious breach of God’s laws that must be eradicated by a strong hand stating that it is a heinous sin and in no way is it ever possible for a homosexual person to be ordained, and that the Vatican will not allow it, under pain of excommunication.

That the cardinal is continuing the “advice” approach is confirmed by his next choice of words, saying that ordaining homosexuals would be “imprudent.” Here we have one of the worst sins ever to infest mankind, but all the cardinal can say is that ordaining a homosexual person would be “imprudent”?! Driving my car 15 miles per hour over the speed limit is imprudent. Not paying my mortgage on time is imprudent. But thinking of ordaining a homosexual to the priesthood is not “imprudent,” it is an absolute outrage, an abominable sin that cries to high heaven for judgment, a perversion so disgusting we fail to find the proper words to describe it.

As if that’s not enough, then the cardinal concludes his statement that ordaining a homosexual is “very risky.” This choice of words confirms his intention. His intention is not to condemn, outrightly, the ordaining of homosexuals, but to craft his language in such a way that it appears he is disallowing homosexual ordination, but to those who want it, he is keeping the door open. If something is “very risky” that doesn’t mean that it is being forbidden. Playing Black Jack in Las Vegas is “very risky,” but no one is telling the gambler he can’t do it. Playing the stock market is often “very risky,” but there is no law against it. When someone says that something is “risky” as opposed to just outrightly condemning it, he is allowing the person to think that, even though the behavior might cause problems, it still might be allowed.

Now, if you were an editor of the NCR, or a member of the USCCB and had a bent toward homosexuality, and you had seminaries in your diocese that housed homosexuals (statistics reveal that upwards of 50% of priests are homosexual, and they graduated from these very seminaries), and you were trying to look for loopholes in the cardinal’s statement, yes, you would see a gapping hole, one large enough to drive a truck through. You would see that the Vatican is not outrightly condemning the ordaining of homosexuals, but merely giving pastoral

advice that it is “inadvisable, imprudent and very risky,” but leaving the final decision up to the bishops. This is what the so-called “collegiality” interpretation of Vatican II has given us -- a Vatican who is either too timid to make a firm decision or simply no longer in a position to lay down an unequivocal and uncompromising edict against ordaining homosexuals. No wonder the spokesman on EWTN for the National Review Board could say, with an unconcerned smile, that the USCCB was still “considering” whether to ordain homosexuals or not. The reason is that the USCCB, of which some statistics say about 30% have homosexual orientations, is in control, since they have received no firm command from the Vatican to the contrary.

Apart from a little wrist-slapping, the Vatican has done absolutely nothing about the world-wide homosexual problem in the priesthood. One cardinal said that if the Vatican were to crack down, it would topple the Church, since so many bishops are homosexual. Perhaps that is the reason we have such weak and ineffective statements like those given by Cardinal Estevez. And you can bet your bottom dollar that the Vatican will have nothing to say about the *National Catholic Reporter's* recent endorsement of homosexual marriage. The fact is, folks, our Catholic Church has been overrun by homosexuals, and it is they who are setting many of the policies in the Church, especially those pertaining to homosexuals. God help us all. As John says in the Apocalypse in a metaphor about the Church: "the great city which mystically is called Sodom...where also their Lord was crucified." We are seeing "Sodom" in the Church today. And with John we say: "Come, Lord Jesus."

The Bishops' Homosexual Agenda and the "Good Touch/Bad Touch" Program.

R. Sungenis: If you haven't heard about it yet, you will. Coming to a diocese near you is the American Catholic bishop's latest effort to promote their homosexual agenda, and at the same time, put it all under the guise of concern for children. Their plan? To blame sexual predation on the fathers of families rather than on fathers in Roman collars exposed in the recent homosexual/pedophile scandal. This, they think, will get the focus off of the homosexual infested priesthood and put it on the heterosexual community. How will they do this? One way is by implementing the “Good Touch/Bad Touch” child abuse program as a mandatory course for all Catholic parochial schools and religious education programs up to the sixth grade level.

If you haven't heard of Good Touch/Bad Touch program, its inventor is secular psychologist Pamela Church who resides in Cartersville, GA. She has a website promoting this program at www.goodtouchbadtouch.com. and it has been in existence since 1983. As you will see, there is nothing Catholic about it, nor does Ms. Church make any claims to being affiliated with any religious body. Ignoring its lack of spiritual foundation, the archdiocese of Los Angeles (any surprise there?) and the diocese of Richmond, VA, have already put the program into use. Of course, everyone knows about the notorious Cardinal Mahony from Los Angeles, a man who probably has a special place in hell prepared just for him. Despite their cellophane attempt at appearing concerned for children, the Los Angeles diocese has done more to promote and cover up the abuse of children than any one single organization in the world. Not far behind, the Richmond diocese is notorious for being one of the most liberal in the country, so we're not surprised to see them in the running either.

But now there is a new advocate to this illustrious group. Although known as a “conservative” diocese just a little less than ten years ago, Arlington Virginia’s newest bishop, Paul Loverde, has decided to make Good Touch/Bad Touch mandatory in all the diocesan parochial schools and religious education classes. This is quite ironic if you know the notorious history of Loverde. As reported by *The Remnant*, and detailed by Steve Brady at *Roman Catholic Faithful*, Loverde is the man who recently fired Vocations Director, Fr. James Gould, because Gould would not allow practicing homosexuals to enter the diocesan seminary. Not too long afterward, Loverde was embroiled in a blistering scandal brought out by the sworn testimony of Fr. Haley, wherein Haley gave evidence not only of a network of homosexual and sexual predator priests working in the Arlington diocese, but clear indications revealing Loverde’s attempt to cover it up, including threats against Haley, many of which he carried out. Of course, prior to his entrance into Arlington, Loverde was known for supporting two homosexual civil rights bills when he was a bishop in Connecticut in 1991, laws that allow homosexuals to adopt children and act as foster parents, as well as allow the state to impose quotas for homosexuals on employers (*The Remnant*, November, 2001).

So here we have a bishop who, shall we say, is in bed with the homosexual community, imposing a so-called “child abuse program” upon his own diocese, but a program that not only says nothing about the documented evidence of fathers in Roman collars abusing children, but points the finger, rather brazenly, at fathers of families in his own diocese! Can you imagine the gall of this man?

The utter irony of Loverde’s rationale, of course, is that the Arlington Diocese’s website (www.arlingtondiocese.org/protect/news/2003/031120_notice_parentmtg.html) claims that Good Touch/Bad Touch is being implemented in obedience to “The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, developed by the Bishops at their meeting in Dallas, 2002, to respond to the sexual abuse scandal in the Church...,” but what the website doesn’t tell you is that the supposed “Charter” was drafted for the very purpose of protecting young adolescent boys from homosexual predators with Roman collars, and says nothing about their parents! This is not hard to gather if one reads the Charter. The first sentence states: “The Church in the United States is experiencing a crisis without precedent in our times. The sexual abuse of children and young people by some priests and bishops, and the ways in which we bishops addressed these crimes and sins, have caused enormous pain, anger, and confusion.”

There is something else that happened at the Dallas meeting that curious readers will want to know. It was at this very meeting that Bishop Bruskewitz of Lincoln Nebraska stood up in front of the entire assembly of bishops and demanded that they do something about the dire homosexual problem in the priesthood. Unfortunately, not one bishop seconded his motion. The issue was squashed, never to appear again. In fact, in closed door meetings, I have it on good authority that Bruskewitz told the other bishops he was going to bring the homosexual issue to the floor, not only because it was an insidious problem in itself, but because of its direct connection to pedophilia. It was in that meeting that the bishops tried to dissuade Bruskewitz of his intentions, knowing, of course, that EWTN’s cameras would be rolling.

So it is obvious what Loverde is doing in Arlington. With recent statistics showing that one-fourth to one-third of America’s bishops, as well as one-third to one-half of America’s priests,

are practicing homosexuals, the attempt to implement the Good Touch/Bad Touch program is an absolute outrage, especially considering Loverde's homosexual agenda. As the Good Touch/Bad Touch program is gaining steam, meanwhile Loverde's diocese is still full of homosexual priests, many of them teaching the program! The homosexual network is as strong as ever, despite the barrage of negative publicity for the diocese on local and national news (prompted by the *Roman Catholic Faithful's* exposure of Loverde), and despite public protests broadcast on local Virginia TV in front of the Arlington chancery office. Loverde is about as hard as they come. He is an expert at manipulation and cover up. He once told Fr. Haley, "You better keep your mouth shut. You don't know what I can do to you."

This is one of the very reasons I left the Arlington diocese. I wouldn't have been able to stand the sight of a harbinger of homosexuality giving the charism of Confirmation to my 13 year old son. Perhaps, in his perverted way, Loverde is using Good Touch/Bad Touch to get back at the hundreds of parishioners that excoriated him for the way he handled the Haley case, which invariably implied that Loverde himself was involved with the cover up of homosexuality. Perhaps Good Touch/Bad Touch is an "in your face" retaliation against the parents in the diocese of whom he has made so many enemies. He could very easily be thinking: "You point the finger at me, I'll return the favor and use my authority to point it right back at you, using the very children you say I and my fellow bishops abused."

Loverde's stance is made all the more outrageous when we consider the information recently released by the *Dallas Morning News* which conducted an in-depth three month study of the role of America's bishops in the pedophile scandal. It found that TWO-THIRDS of America's bishops were involved in the cover-up of the abuse of our dear children. TWO THIRDS! This is an absolute outrage. If there was ever a time I could wish that certain individuals were damned to hell it is now, but I won't let myself get carried away. You know how I feel, and I'm pretty sure you feel the same way.

When we look at the way Loverde is trying to implement the Good Touch/Bad Touch program into the Arlington diocese we see all the marks of clandestine Gestapo-like tactics. First, parents who want to examine the materials are told by Catherine Nolan (the diocese "Victim Assistance Coordinator") that they can do so only "when supervised by a trained teacher in the program." Sorry, no independent thinking here. If you object to anything, the "trained teacher" will be there to set you straight. Why is this the case? Because Pam Church, the non-Catholic creator of the program, makes it a compulsory because, as she claims, "some people always look for negatives." This is proven also by the fact that parents are barred from the classrooms where Good Touch/Bad Touch is taught.

Does this sound anything remotely like the "Charter" the bishops adopted in Dallas in which the first paragraph of the Preamble reads: "We acknowledge our need to be in *dialogue with all Catholics, especially victims and parents*, around this issue," or their concluding statement which says "...we do wish to affirm our concern especially with regard to issues related to *effective consultation of the laity and the participation of God's people in decision making* that affects their well-being"? Somehow Ms. Church and Bishop Loverde think they have built up immunity to negative assessment just because they are dealing with child sexual abuse. Loverde has reinforced this intrusion by several other gestapo-like tactics, namely, by completing the training

in August 2003 of 60 diocesan individuals to teach Good Touch/Bad Touch before parents ever knew anything about the program, which knowledge came to them in only one presentation meeting allowed by Loverde on November 30, a meeting that was preceded by no formal notice to the parishioners, and which was scheduled on the Sunday after Thanksgiving when many families were away for the holiday.

Second, the Gestapo-like tactics make it mandatory for all parochial school and religious education children up to the sixth grade level. There is little recourse to “opt-out” of the program as there are for certain sex education courses offered by various dioceses. In fact, considering what happened in Georgia where the Good Touch/Bad Touch program originated in government schools, parents who choose to opt-out may eventually be labeled “uncooperative,” either by the civil or ecclesiastical authorities, and find themselves becoming targets of the local child advocacy organizations. Until its entrance into the schools, Good Touch/Bad Touch was used only in crisis rape programs and Child Protective Services. Obviously, it has now reached a level in which the medicine has become worse than the disease, since fringe cases of child abuse are now becoming the reason to undermine parental rights and make parents the primary suspects of child sexual abuse. Good Touch/Bad Touch breeds disrespect and encourages children to be suspicious of their own parents, while regarding themselves as the ultimate authority over their lives. This is no exaggeration. In the November 30, 2003 meeting when Bishop Loverde made this program known to the diocese, a film was presented which demonstrated preschoolers learning the Good Touch/Bad Touch program. The film showed them standing with their fists clenched and outstretched saying over and over again, “It’s my body, it’s my body...” Despite all this Nazi-like training, there is not a sentence in the bishop’s Dallas Charter concerned about parental abuse of children. This is not surprising, since in Catholic families parental sexual abuse is negligible compared to the rest of the world. The only thing the Charter allows is the following:

Dioceses/eparchies will establish ‘safe environment’ programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parent, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses/eparchies will make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.

Despite the merits of the program in the eyes of the secular society (e.g., the same merits they would give to Alcoholics Anonymous or other such psychological-oriented self-help groups), this non-discriminatory, blanket bureaucratic approach is, by Christian standards, both an abuse of the child and the parent – the child because the program has absolutely no sensitivity to the damage explicit sexual teaching does to the psyche of a small child; and the parents because it forcefully treads on their God-given rights to be the “first educators” of their children’s sexual knowledge, as mandated by the Vatican itself. Good Touch/Bad Touch teaches children that when it comes to sexual judgments or accusations they are NEVER wrong, and the program actually prepares them to testify in court against their parents.

Waste no time in reacting to this abomination foisted on us by the homosexual and homosexual-friendly bishops of the United States. I recommend that you pull your children out of any

Catholic school that promotes this program, stop giving your money to the Catholic Church in that diocese, refuse any donations to the Bishops' annual appeal, and send letters by the thousands to the chancery office telling them that you have put up with all you can take and refuse to put up with any more.

And speaking of homosexuality among our bishops and priests, did you ever wonder where all this kind of perverse thinking originates? Well, look no further than the very cardinals elected under Pope John Paul II. While there is much talk of who will replace John Paul II when he dies, one of the names that keeps resurfacing is that of Belgium Primate, Godfried Cardinal Danneels, age 70. This is rather amazing considering the pro-homosexual agenda of Danneels. In 1983 Cardinal Danneels opened the "Center of Welcome for One and All" at the Catholic University of Louvain solely for the benefit of homosexuals. Related to this is the fact that Belgium has recently passed a law allowing homosexuals to marry, and two faculty members of the University of Louvain, Oliver De Shutter and Jean-Yves Carlier, together with six professors from the Free University of Brussels, published an article in *Le Soir* defending the thesis that marriage between homosexuals should be allowed. It is these circles of people in which Danneels moves. Not surprisingly, when asked by a group of young people what he thought about homosexuality, Danneels answered:

The question is not what one thinks about it; it is simply a fact. To be homosexual is a natural disposition, just as being heterosexual. One chooses neither one nor the other. The question is rather: What do I do with it?' I know excellent priests who are homosexuals; I also know excellent priests who are heterosexuals. Celibates are not 'nothing,' that is, neuter.' We are always one or the other. But it cannot be denied that homosexuals are deprived of certain dimensions of existence: the distinction between man and woman, between parents and children. This clearly distinguishes them from heterosexuals. But this is no reason for excluding them.

When asked whether he thought that a child adopted by homosexuals would not be as happy as one raised by heterosexuals, Danneels responded:

A heterosexual marriage is richer because it can procreate its own children. [But] a lesbian couple can have children, thanks to artificial insemination, though this is a technical act. Psychologists will tell us whether this can create a problem.

And, of course, all this debauchery goes on without John Paul II lifting one finger to take these derelict prelates out of office. In fact, not only does he refuse to demote them, he actually encourages them. This is proven by the way the Vatican is now treating Cardinal Bernard Law, the kingpin of the pedophile scandal in the United States. Just one year ago, the newspaper headlines spared no ink in exposing Law and they were integral in his forced resignation from the Boston Archdiocese, the fourth largest in the United States.

On December 13, the Pope accepted Law's resignation. You would think that after this unprecedented breach of protocol that Law would be severely disciplined, if not because of his own derelict actions, at least as an example to the world that the Vatican absolutely deplors this kind of conduct. But instead of discipline, Law is consistently offered the most prestigious places of honor at the Vatican, along with preferential treatment fit for a king. He also retains his

membership on seven Vatican Congregations that oversee the church worldwide, which responsibilities bring him frequently to Rome. One of the offices he holds is to the Congregation for Bishops, which recommends appointments of new bishops in all the dioceses of the world. In the past year (2003), he met twice with John Paul II, received places of honor at various Vatican ceremonies, including Mother Teresa's beatification and the Pope's anniversary celebration, as well as being invited to open house meetings with the thirty recently installed Cardinals. In fact, as John Allen, columnist for the *National Catholic Reporter* opined: "When I watch Cardinal Law being greeted at public events in Rome, what I notice so often is a kind of warmth and sympathy for him that I really don't think existed before the scandal."

This special treatment of Law, along with the Vatican's modification of the June 2002 Dallas Charter which relieved US bishops of any responsibility or repercussions over their ill-fated decisions to cover up the pedophile priests, and provided various canonical loopholes to excuse giving penalties to the guilty priests, we can easily see that, like the Italian mafia which occupies the same country, the good-ol' boy mentality at the Vatican is alive and well.

What is the future of the homosexual onslaught in the world? Considering that homosexuality is one of the most insidious, resistant and in-your-face sins of all the sins of mankind, don't expect it to go away any time soon. It will get so bad that the whole society will be permeated with homosexuality, in one form or another. Remember, Abraham could not find ten righteous people in Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities, cities which comprised thousands of people. It will be the same in our cities. Homosexuality will either be practiced outright or it will be condoned by almost everyone. There will be no escape. If you don't think this will happen, just take a gander at some recent activity in Europe, Canada and Australia to protect homosexuals. We're next, and don't count on our illustrious bishops to help stop it.

The Irish Times, Dublin, Ireland, August 2, 2003: Legal warning to church on gay stance, by Liam Reid

Dublin: Clergy and bishops who distribute the Vatican's latest publication describing homosexual activity as "evil" could face prosecution under incitement to hatred legislation. The Irish Council for Civil Liberties has warned that the language in the 12-page booklet is so strong it could be...in violation of the 1989 Incitement to Hatred Act. Those convicted under the Act can face jail terms of up to six months. ...Under the Act literature which is threatening, abusive or insulting, linked with the intent of stirring up hatred, is illegal. <http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/front/2003/0802/720611077HM1POPE.html>

365GAY.COM, Toronto, Canada, August 2, 2003: Distribute Vatican anti-gay marriage document and face jail, Irish priests warned.

Dublin: Priests and bishops are being warned that they face charges in Ireland if they distribute the Vatican's denouncement of gay marriage. The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) said Friday that priests who quote sections of the document, hand it out, or send it to politicians or other citizens could be prosecuted under Ireland's strict incitement to hatred legislation. <http://www.365gay.com/NewsContent/080203irishPriests.htm>

The Daily Telegraph, London, England, October 11, 2003: Bishop's anti-gay comments spark legal investigation, by Richard Alleyne

London: A bishop who angered homosexuals by suggesting they seek a psychiatric cure is to be investigated by police to see if his outspoken views amount to a criminal offence, it emerged yesterday. ...Cheshire Police have said that they are to investigate his comments, made in the local paper, the Chester Chronicle, after receiving a complaint that his views may incite people to turn against homosexuals. ...A spokesman for the force added that it would send a copy of the article to the Crown Prosecution Service to see if any offence had been committed. ... (The Rt. Rev. Dr. Peter Forster) spoke out after spending 18 months helping to write the Church of England report "Some Issues in Human Sexuality - A Guide to Debate." He told the newspaper that his research had led him to believe that homosexuals should seek medical help. He said: "Some people who are primarily homosexual can reorientate themselves. I would encourage them to consider that as an option, but I would not set myself up as a medical specialist on the subject -- that's in the area of psychiatric health." [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;\\$sessionid\\$YQBIUBXQNFN1HQFIQMGCFFOAVCBQUIV0?xml=/news/2003/11/10/nbish10.xml&sSheet=/portal/2003/11/10/ixportal.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;$sessionid$YQBIUBXQNFN1HQFIQMGCFFOAVCBQUIV0?xml=/news/2003/11/10/nbish10.xml&sSheet=/portal/2003/11/10/ixportal.html)

Sunday Herald-Sun, Melbourne, Australia, December 7, 2003: Imam accused of gay hatred, by Ian Haberfield

Victoria, Australia: Police are investigating claims that one of Australia's most senior Islamic clerics has incited his followers to attack homosexuals. A complaint made to Victoria Police alleges the chairman of the Board of Imams, Rexhep Idrizi, was reading from the Koran when he made derogatory comments about homosexuals and said they should have "their heads chopped off". Imam Idrizi's alleged outburst occurred before 1000 worshippers at a prayer service to celebrate the conclusion of fasting for Ramadan at the Albanian Mosque in Drummond St, Carlton. Imam Idrizi, whose son was jailed last year for bashing gays, said yesterday the claims were unfounded and he had a video of the service, in Albanian, to prove it. "It's just spite from idiots," he said. "All I said was that homosexuality is prohibited in Islam." http://heraldsun.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5478,8085518%255E2862,00.html

The Massachusetts Decision on Gay Marriage and Its Connection to the American Catholic Church

R. Sungenis: I'm sure you've all heard that, on November 18, a day that will live in infamy, Massachusetts' highest court ruled 4-3 that the state's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional and gave lawmakers 180 days to come up with a solution that would allow gay couples to marry.

The court's majority opinion stated:

Whether and whom to marry, how to express sexual intimacy, and whether and how to establish a family - these are among the most basic of every individual's liberty and due process rights...And central to personal freedom and security is the assurance that the laws will apply equally to persons in similar situations.

Barred access to the protections, benefits and obligations of civil marriage, a person who enters into an intimate, exclusive union with another of the same sex is arbitrarily deprived of membership in one of our community's most rewarding and cherished institutions.

This is indeed a sad day for America. It was almost inevitable, however. As with the Supreme Court decision allowing abortion in 1973, this present decision once again shows that the American system of government is no better than any other system, and in fact, is probably worse, since its built in "freedoms" allow such heinous sins to accelerate at an unprecedented pace. In fact, we could say that the demise of American morality was actually built into the American system of government. The "right to privacy" and the "right to individual morality," which were claimed as the legal basis by the Massachusetts court, are the essential teachings of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Those in our courts who use "privacy" and "individuality" arguments are indeed correct in saying that they come from our American constitutional documents. The cat is out of the bag, as it were, and there is little we can do to stop it.

We have painfully discovered, once again in history, that government is only as good as the people who run it. Our "checks and balances" may stop a tyrant from continuing his rule, but it simply can't stop the tyrant from aborting a baby or practicing homosexuality. An intelligent and educated person who desires these sins can use the very documents of the American institution to accomplish his goals, since those documents not only give him the freedom to pursue selfish interests, but they fail to address the most important areas of life: sex and conception. The failure of the framers to address these areas has resulted in all the abortion, homosexuality, pornography, teen pregnancy, adultery and divorce that we see today, and it will only get worse, since there is no legal basis to stop it.

Freedom is like fire. When it is controlled and guided, it can be a wonderful source of energy, heat and light. When it is uncontrolled, it will destroy faster and more intensely than anything known to man. We get reminders of this quite often, as we did in the recent fires of California where hundreds of homes were destroyed in a matter of days. Analogously, the same thing is happening in America today with the fire of "freedom." It is burning out of control, and it is ruining the moral houses of everyone in America.

Freedom is a two-edged sword. When you give people freedom without a moral compass, the freedom will become more dangerous than if the people had little or no freedom, for they will use their freedom to practice their sins. The one thing we have come to find out about "The Great American Experiment" is that it contained a giant loophole for the proliferation of evil that lurks inside each one of us. At least the Romans lasted for six centuries. America will last barely two, for it is heading into moral debauchery faster and more intensely than Rome ever did, and the internal destruction that comes with it. No society in history has ever survived the institutionalizing of homosexuality. They have all collapsed, and rather quickly.

And where does the American Catholic Church stand in all of this? Unfortunately, it is the most to blame. The bishops of American Catholicism, as David Carlin tells in his new book "The Decline and Fall of the Catholic Church in America" (Sophia Institute Press, 2003) have abdicated their roles as the moral leaders of the country. Their voices are practically mute against

the tide of sin we see increasing all around us. Not only do many of them fail to preach against these sins, they often sanction them, and, in fact, have become directly involved in them. We decry the Massachusetts decision to allow gay marriages, but we have recently discovered that between one-fourth and one-third of the U.S. bishops themselves are homosexuals, and upwards to fifty percent of the priesthood is homosexual, and nothing is done to stop it.

What do you think the secular society thinks when it sees men of God engaging in these sins? They say, "If they can do it and get away with it, why can't we?" Most of the bishops condone contraception, which then leads to abortion and which many of them also countenance, some overtly, some secretly. In the very heart of Massachusetts they give communion to known abortion advocates (e.g., Edward Kennedy) and annulments to known adulterers (Joseph Kennedy) and thereby show the world that the Catholic Church condones sin today. They hide their aberrant priests and give excuses for the worst scandal ever to hit the Church - the molesting of our precious children. In short, they have made American Catholicism a shambles. Their list of sins and negligences could fill a book.

As Jesus said to the Church, "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its savor, it becomes worthless, and men will trodden it underfoot" (Matthew 5:13). That is what is happening today in America. Americans have trodden underfoot the Catholic Church, because it has become worthless salt that has lost its savor. When you see the moral debauchery occurring in this country, yes, we can blame the American people and fault their government, but the real blame is on America's bishops and priests. Conversely, when the Church sets a good example, the non-Christian world inevitably follows to a very high degree. The Church is man's moral compass and the restrainer of evil. It becomes so by penetrating the only thing that stops evil from proliferating - men's consciences and their innate fear of God. But when man's conscience is no longer properly informed, and the fear of God's wrath is made into a myth of olden times, then men's evil will proliferate.

You can rest assured that God's wrath will descend upon them very shortly. The decision in Massachusetts today is one of the last before the surge of evil completely breaks the damn, and then God will intervene (pun intended).