

## Catholic Medical Association Rejects A.P.A. Stance on Homosexuality

*A group of psychiatrists recently presented a position paper which opposes their parent organization, the American Psychiatric Association. The paper is entitled "Homosexuality And Hope: Statement Of The Catholic Medical Association." For the full text of the statement, readers may contact the Catholic Medical Association at 1-877-CATHDOC or visit their website at [www.cathmed.com](http://www.cathmed.com).*

*Their statement reads, in part:*

Catholic Medical Association supports the teachings of the Catholic Church, [which states that] "...tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered...Under no circumstance can they be approved."

In many cases, psychological disorders create in the individual a vulnerability to temptation which may lessen or even extenuate moral culpability. Such vulnerability does not, however, negate free will, or eliminate the power of grace.

...Some persons freely chose to engage in homosexual acts; for others the temptation toward homosexual acts is rooted in psychological or emotional trauma...Some surrendered to homosexual temptations because they were told that they were born that way and that it is impossible to change one's sexual orientation....

The research referenced in this report counters the myth that homosexuality is genetically predetermined and unchangeable, and offers hope for prevention and treatment.

...If there is no credible evidence that homosexual attractions are genetically determined, why has the idea received so much publicity? It is possible that the search for a biological cause may be part of a political agenda. Several studies have suggested that when people believe that homosexuality is genetically determined and immutable, they are more likely to respond positively to demands for changes in laws and in religious teachings.

...In the histories of homosexually attracted persons, one frequently finds one or more of the following:

Alienation from the father in early childhood, because the father was perceived as hostile or distant, violent or alcoholic.

Mother was overprotective in first 5 years (boys).

Mother was needy and demanding (boys).

Mother emotionally unavailable during the first 4 years (girls).

Parents failed to encourage same-sex identification.

Lack of rough-and-tumble play in the first 2 years of life (boys).

Failure to identify with same / sex peers in first five years.

Dislike of team sports (boys).

Lack of hand / eye coordination and resultant teasing by peers (boys).

Sexual abuse or rape.

Parental loss through death or divorce.

Separation from parent during critical developmental stages.

In some cases, homosexual activity is a symptom of a more serious psychological problem, such as borderline personality disorder or pathological narcissism. In a few cases, homosexuality appears later in life in a response to a trauma such as abortion. If the emotional and developmental needs of each child are properly met, a homosexual outcome is unlikely.

...Aggressive intervention, if supported by the parents, can often have a positive outcome. The earlier the intervention, the better. Unfortunately, many parents who report these symptoms to their pediatrician are told not to worry about it. The symptoms often seem to disappear when the child enters the second or third grade, but many have only gone underground, to reappear as intense same-sex attraction.

It is important that pediatricians, clergy, teachers, parents, and the public know the symptoms which signal that a child is at risk for same-sex attraction and know where to find appropriate help for such children.

...Gay-rights activists have insisted that at-risk adolescents and children be turned over to gay support groups which will help them "come out." There is no evidence that participation in such groups prevents the long-term negative consequences associated with homosexuality.

*continued*

**Therapy.** Those promoting the idea that sexual orientation is immutable frequently quote from a published discussion between Dr. C. C. Tripp and Dr. Lawrence Hatterer (1971) in which Dr. Tripp stated:

“... there is not a single recorded instance of a change in homosexual orientation which has been validated by outside judges or testing. Kinsey wasn't able to find one. And neither Dr. Pomeroy nor I have been able to find such a patient. We would be happy to have one from Dr. Hatterer.”

To which Dr. Hatterer replied:

“I have 'cured' many homosexuals, Dr. Tripp. Dr. Pomeroy or any other researcher may examine my work because it is all documented on 10 years of tape recordings. Many of these 'cured' (I prefer to use the word 'changed') patients have married, had families and live happy lives. It is a destructive myth that 'once a homosexual, always a homosexual.' It has made and will make millions more committed homosexuals. What is more, not only have I, but many other reputable psychiatrists (Dr. Samuel B. Hadden, Dr. Lionel Ovesey, Dr. Charles Socarides, Dr. Harold Lief, Dr. Irving Bieber, and others) have reported

their successful treatments of the treatable homosexual.”

Reviews of the literature on treatment and surveys of therapists demonstrate that treatment for unwanted homosexual feelings is as successful as treatment for similar psychological problems: about 30% experience a freedom from symptoms, and another 30% experience improvement.

**The Goal of Therapy.** Those who claim that change of sexual orientation is impossible, usually define change as total and permanent freedom from all homosexual behavior, fantasy, or attraction in a person who had previously been completely homosexual in behavior and attraction. Even when change is defined in this extreme manner, the claim is untrue. Numerous studies report cases of total change have been reported.

For a Catholic, the goal of therapy should be freedom to live chastely according to one's state in life. Some of those who have struggled with homosexual temptations believe that they are called to a celibate life. They should not be made to feel that they have failed to achieve freedom, because they do not experience heterosexual desires. Others wish to marry and have children. There is every reason to hope that many will be able, in time, to achieve this goal.