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The Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual

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On May 24, 1965, the Mattachine Society of Washington's Committee on Religious Concerns met with clergymen for a second time at the American University to continue dialogue established between members of the homosexual and religious communities. The Committee on Religious Concerns was instrumental in the forming of an entirely new and separate organization: The Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual, which is presently comprised of nine clergymen and several M.S.W. representatives. Co-Chairmen have been elected: one distinguished clergyman and one Society member. Plans for further organization of the new Council are under way.

It is clear that clergymen do not wish to ignore the problems of the homosexual. To an attentive and respectful audience, M.S.W. representatives explained the difficulties homosexuals face as a result of the denial of their citizens' and taxpayers' rights by the Civil Service Commission, the Armed Services, the Job Corps, the Veterans Administration, and other agencies of the Federal Government.

The clergymen were also informed that newspapers often discriminate against the homosexual by failing to report truly significant occurrences and by seizing instead upon non-representative, sensational circumstances which befall some homosexuals and reporting on these, using such loaded words as "pervert" and "deviate."

The troubles encountered by homosexuals when they wish to peacefully and lawfully assemble were discussed. Homosexuals do not and cannot feel safe in public places such as nightclubs, restaurant and bars. The fear of raids, of plainclothesmen, of picture-taking Federal investigators overshadows them.

Homosexuals receive undesirable discharges when they are discovered in the Armed Services, and these unfair dismissals permanently damage the employment opportunities of young

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people and often blot their entire lives.

The vicious circle created by the Federal Government when it fires homosexuals for their alleged vulnerability to blackmail was also described.

The clergymen demonstrated eagerness to learn more about homosexuality and strongly supported the Mattachine Society of Washington in its stand to fight for the homosexual citizens' civil liberties.