

Comments on the Studies of Dr. Irving Bieber

The Committee on Religious Concerns of the Mattachine Society of Washington wishes to call to your attention certain little publicized facts about Dr. Irving Bieber's studies. Dr. Bieber's claims have received some notoriety because of his support of the concept of cures for homosexuals.

Dr. I. Rubin's Discussion Guide No. 2 aptly designates Dr. Bieber's book, Homosexuality as "the best psychoanalytic comparative study of homosexuals and heterosexuals in therapy." We would have you take particular notice of the last two words which characterize Dr. Rubin's description of Bieber's work.

Dr. Bieber and his associates made a study of the results of the treatment of 106 homosexual patients who were ALREADY neurotic or psychotic, and who were then compared with non-homosexual neurotics.

This study extended over a period of many years and cost about a million dollars. According to the report the analysts were able to cure only 29 patients **THUS LEAVING 78 UNCHANGED** so far as their homosexual desires were concerned. The Bieber studies are often cited as evidence that homosexuals can change if "they really want to."

Although Dr. Bieber and his associates struggled through analysis and underwent the torment and difficulties that it entails, many of them for literally hundreds of hours, more than 70% **REMAINED HOMOSEXUALS**. It would seem to us that 73% failure is a large figure **AND THAT THIS IS THE REALISTIC FIGURE THAT SHOULD BE PUBLICIZED** in order to obtain better self-understanding by the homosexual and better acceptance of him by his society. **TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE 27% IS MIS-LEADING AND DANGEROUS.**

Of the 29 persons changed, 18 of them (62%) were in private therapy for 350 hours or more. Another 9 cases took between 150 and 350 hours. In only two cases was a change effected in less than 150 hours.

Dr. Bieber reports that 23 of the 29 changed patients consciously WANTED to change. The implication here, we believe, is also dangerous. He seems to say that the individual could change if he truly desired change, and that it is stubbornness or perversity which keep him from doing so. This attitude adversely affects the attitudes of the general public towards millions of homosexuals who are unable to change their sexual orientation.

Dr. Bieber's figures are also mis-leading in that they seem to say that 27% of ALL homosexuals who come for therapy can be changed. Dr. Bieber does not take into account those millions of homosexuals who do not (for many reasons) go into therapy. Most homosexuals, as the Wolfenden Committee pointed out, never go into therapy, and the overwhelming majority of homosexuals do not even desire to do so.

Dr. Bieber's sampling techniques are thoroughly inadequate. They do not - as has been shown - speak (even remotely) for all homosexuals, but only for a tiny minority of homosexuals who are in therapy.

Finally, since homosexuality is (as Freud said) no "vice, no degradation, nothing to be ashamed of" there is no good reason why homosexuals should feel compelled to seek to change their orientations, any more than heterosexuals should feel compelled to change their sexual orientations.