

THE NATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOMOSEXUALS MEET WITH CLERGY

WASHINGTON AREA COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL FORMED

The second meeting, here in Washington and in the eastern part of the country, between representatives of the homosexual community and members of the clergy, took place on Monday, May 24, 1965.

Highlight of the three-hour meeting was the formal establishment, as a continuing organization, of The Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual. For the present, pending the adoption of a formal internal structure, the Council has two co-chairmen --- one, a distinguished local clergyman; the other, a member of the Nattachine Society of Washington.

Nine clergymen of the following denominations were present: Congregationalist, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Methodist, and Roman Catholic.

Among the areas in which the Council will work are:

- (1) To seek to remedy the alienation and estrangement which now exist between the individual homosexual and the religious community.
- (2) To explore the question of the role of the clergy in the homosexuals' fight for his civil liberties and his human rights, and in his effort to eliminate the adverse discrimination which he faces.

The May 24 meeting was devoted primarily to discussion of problems of the denial of civil liberties to homosexuals.

Another meeting of the Council is planned for June 25.

For additional information, contact:

THE MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- I. It is the purpose of this committee to approach the clergy, the leaders, and the laity of all religious groups in the metropolitan area of Washington, D. C., in order:
 - A. To effect the integration of the individual homosexual into the religious life of the community:
 1. By discussing with clergymen, religious leaders, and laity, singly and in groups, a clarification of the place and the role of the homosexual, as such, in the various religious congregations, leading to elimination of the rejection encountered by most homosexuals in most religious bodies.
 2. By establishing a referral service composed of knowledgeable clergymen, so that homosexuals, their parents, and their families, who desire assistance in regard to spiritual and religious problems involving homosexuality may be referred to an appropriate counsellor.
 3. By acting as liaison, as may be needed, between the religious community and the homosexual community of the greater Washington area.
 - B. To enlist the moral support and the active assistance of religious groups in metropolitan Washington, in the homosexuals' struggle for civil liberties and for human and social rights, acting with the assurance that religion seeks to promote basic freedoms for every individual, as irrespective of sexual orientation as of religion and race.
 - C. To inform the clergy, the leaders, and the laity of all religious groups about homosexuals and homosexuality:
 1. By aiding religious groups and religious leaders in the obtaining of accurate information (traditionally difficult to secure) about homosexuals and homosexuality, and suggesting informative publications and recommending or furnishing qualified lecturers on the subject of homosexuality.
 2. By encouraging inter-religious discussion of homosexuality, and providing clergymen and religious leaders who believe that society should no longer ignore a social problem of vast dimensions, with legitimate opportunities for inter-group exchanges of opinion.
- II. It is not a purpose of this committee to promulgate any spiritual or theological doctrines, but instead to ask each religious body constructively to approach, in its own way, the social, spiritual, and religious problems which arise as a result of present discriminatory attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexuality.