

Homophobia, Part 2 of 2: The Seeker

"It wasn't easy finding your office," said my visitor as he took a seat. "This building is like a rabbit warren."

"Yes," I said, "for the first couple of years I worked here, I had to leave a trail of crumbs each day to find my way back out. We haven't met, have we?"

"No, I'm over in Antediluvian Studies — I'm a grad student. My name's Adam, Adam Apollolas."

"M.E. Theophilus." We shook hands.

"You *are* the same Theophilus who wrote the 'Homophobia' dialogue for *Nounless Webzine*, aren't you? I was hoping to talk with you about it."

"Busted," I smiled. "What would you like to know about it?"

"Was it based on a real conversation?"

"Yes and no; it was a composite. A homosexual student really did visit to accuse me of saying that 'gays have sex with animals,' which of course I didn't say, and the rest is from real life too, but not necessarily from the same conversation."

"But it can't possibly be true that all of the homosexuals who speak with you are as angry and closed-minded as he was."

"No, of course not."

"Then why did you portray him that way in the dialogue?"

"Would you have me pretend that *nobody* in the homosexual life is angry and closed-minded? *He* was. So are a good other people — you should see my letters. I try to show my readers the dynamics of more than one kind of conversation. You see, when people have honest questions you try to answer them, but when they only churn out smokescreens, then you have to try to blow the smoke away."

"So you'd be open to a different kind of conversation."

"Of course," I said. I smiled. "Are we, perhaps, having one right now?"

His eyebrows lifted. "Am I that obvious?"

"It was just a shot in the dark. So what did you really want to talk about?"

"I'm not very ideological, but I guess you could call me a Seeker. See, I've been in the gay life for five years, but lately I've been having second thoughts. I'm not asking you to convert me, understand? I thought I'd just hear what you have to say, then go away and think about it."

"What have you been having second thoughts about?"

He hesitated. "Are you going to use this conversation in one of your dialogues?"

"If I did, I'd make sure you couldn't be identified. You can speak freely."

"Well —" he hesitated. "One thing is intimacy. I've never had problems finding sex, but it's more or less anonymous. That didn't bother me at first, but now it's getting me down."

"Is the sex always anonymous?"

"No, the first time I had gay sex was in a steady relationship. I've been in two or three others, too — for a month, two months, a year. But they were never what you'd call faithful, know what I mean? It's as though there had to be other sexual outlets for the relationship to work at all. I'm starting to want — I don't know. Something else."

"I follow you."

He paused. "Another thing. I want to be a Dad. That doesn't fit the stereotype, does it? Are you surprised to hear me say it?"

"Not at all."

"Then you're the only one who isn't. My friends don't get it. One said, 'Why don't just get a turkey baster and make an arrangement with a lesbian?' But that's not what I want." Another pause. "I used to say to myself, 'Get used to it. You can't have everything you want.' But that doesn't work for me any more."

After a second he spoke again. "There's one more thing."

"What's that?"

"God."

"God? How so?"

"Oh, I go to church sometimes. Now *that* must surprise you."

"No. What kind of church?"

"Different kinds. I didn't go to any church at first. My family never went to church. Most of my gay friends don't have any use for God. Then I started going to a gay church, and that was

okay for awhile. But I think I might want the real stuff, do you know what I mean? Or else nothing."

"I think so. You don't have any doubts about what the real stuff is?"

"No. I'm not saying I believe in Jesus, but —" He thought for a moment. "The gay church said you can be a Christian and still live a gay life. I don't think I ever really believed that. I read a book that the minister in the gay church recommended —"

"Yes?"

"The title was something like *Sex and Dirt*. I'm leaving something out. Hold on, it'll come to me."

"Never mind, I know the book."

"Oh, good. Then you probably remember how the author argues that when the Bible lays down rules about sex, they're just purity codes - not moral laws - so you don't have to keep them."

"Sure."

"He had me going for a while - right up to where he said 'that's why even having sex with animals is okay,' or words to that effect. Just what the guy in your dialogue falsely accused *you* of saying gay people think. I could see that the author's conclusion followed from his premises - but after that, I didn't have any use for his premises, if you see what I mean."

"I see exactly what you mean. So where does all this leave you?"

"Like I said, I want to hear you out, and then I'll go away and think about it."

"That's fine, Adam, but just what is it that you want to hear me out about?"

"I think what I'm missing is the **Big Picture** about sex. If there is a **Big Picture** about sex."

"There is indeed a **Big Picture** about sex."

"Draw it, then. Paint it. Lecture me, even. That is," he added, "if you don't mind."

I had to laugh. "You asked me before if I was going to use this conversation in one of my dialogues. If I do, nobody will believe it. They'll call it contrived."

"Why?"

"Because you've set the stage too well. Your 'second thoughts' anticipate everything I'd like to say. And now you ask for a lecture!"

"After seven years of college, I'm used to lectures. You do your professor thing, and I'll listen. If I want to argue — believe me, I know how — I'll come back another day."

I collected my thoughts. "All right, Adam. The main point of Christian sexual morality is that human nature is *designed*. We need to live a certain way because we're designed to live that way."

He said, "I can see design in an organ like the heart. Human nature — that's a little too big for me."

"Then let's start with the heart. Do you see how every one of its features works together toward its purpose, its function?"

"Sure. You've got nerves and valves and pumping chambers, all for moving blood."

"Right. If you think about the sexual powers instead of the heart, it's just the same. The key to understanding a design is to recognize its purposes. For the heart, the purpose is pumping blood; for the sexual powers — you tell me."

"Pleasure?"

"Think about it. Would you say pleasure is the purpose of eating?"

"No, I'd say nourishment is the purpose of eating, and pleasure is just the result of it."

"If you *did* think pleasure were the purpose of eating, what would you do if I offered you pleasant-tasting poison?"

"Eat it, I suppose."

"And what would happen?"

"I'd get sick."

"But if you understood that nourishment were the purpose of eating and pleasure merely the result, *then* what would you do if I offered you pleasant-tasting poison?"

"Refuse it and ask for food instead."

"It's the same with the sexual powers. Pleasure is a result of their use, but not the purpose of their use. The purposes can tell you which kinds of sexual activity are good and which aren't; by itself, pleasure can't."

"So what are the purposes of the sexual powers?"

"You've told me already; you just didn't realize you were doing so."

"I have? When?"

"When you were telling me your second thoughts about the homosexual life. There were three of them. What was the first one about?"

"Intimacy. Bonding."

"And the second?"

"Having children."

"Then you won't be surprised to hear that one inbuilt purpose of the sexual powers is to bond a man with a woman, and another is to have and raise children."

"If bonding is good, why not use the sexual powers to bond a man with a man?"

"Has that worked in your case, Adam?"

"Well, no. That's what I was complaining about."

"You see, that's no accident. Bonding man with man is contrary to the design."

"You say that, but how do you *know*?"

"There are two reasons. First, man and woman are complementary. They're not just *different*, they *match*. There is something in male emotional design to which only the female can give completion, and something in female emotional design to which only the male can give completion. When same mates with same, that can't happen. Instead of balancing each other, they unbalance each other."

"What's the other reason?"

"The other reason is that the linkage of same with same is sterile. You've complained about that, too."

"But sometimes a man can't produce children with a woman, either."

"The mating of same with same isn't *accidentally* sterile, Adam, as the union of a particular man with a particular woman might be; it's *intrinsicly* sterile. A husband and wife who are unable to have a baby haven't set themselves against their own inbuilt purposes. A man and man who have sex together have."

He grinned. "There's always the turkey baster."

"But when your friend made that suggestion, you refused, didn't you? What was your reason?"

"I'm not sure. I just think a kid needs a Mom and a Dad."

"That's exactly right. Male and female complement and complete each other not just in having children but in rearing them. Women are better designed for nurture, men are better designed for protection. Besides, two Dads can't model male-female relationships. Neither can two Moms. Neither can one."

Adam was silent as he digested this. "You know," he said finally, "this isn't at all what I expected you to talk about."

"What did you expect me to talk about?"

"Disease." He paused. "Now that I think about it, you didn't say much about disease in that dialogue I read either. Though you mentioned it."

"I should think you already know the deadliness of your way of life."

"I suppose so. But it does seem unfair. Why should gay sex be less healthy than any other kind?"

"Don't we come right back to the design? Start with the fact - how shall I put this -- that not all orifices are created equal."

"Hmmm."

"Hmmm?"

"I think I'll go do what I said I'd do: Go away and think about it all. In the meantime, Professor, I think you have a problem."

"Do I?"

"That is, if you do intend to use this chat of ours in one of your dialogues."

"And what might this problem be?"

"We've talked too long. That homophobia dialogue of yours was only about 1500 words. This one is way over."

I smiled. "I'll talk to my editor about it."

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