

Coming Out Gay, Coming Out Christian: The Beginnings of GLBT Christianity in San Diego, 1970-1979

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Can a person be a practicing homosexual and a Christian at the same time? Before the late 1960s, the integration of these seemingly contradictory terms was uncommon. By 1979, however, the concept of a homosexual Christian produced San Diego's first coalition of gay religious groups, Ministries United for Gay Understanding. For gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) individuals making a claim on the Christian identity, this represented a significant paradigm shift that allowed the gay community to produce its own concept of the relationship between homosexuality and Christianity: fully gay, fully Christian.

This paper shows how certain members of San Diego's GLBT community began to define themselves as both gay and Christian between 1970 and 1979. In the early years, GLBT Christianity developed in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which appealed primarily to the homosexual community, and in Dignity, an organization of gay Catholics that did not have the sanction of the Roman Catholic Church. After 1975, Integrity, an organization of gay Episcopalians, and a group called Lutherans Concerned worked to be accepted as integral parts of their mainstream churches. By 1979, these four groups, through the Ministries United for Gay Understanding, asked San Diegans to accept that they could be both gay and Christian.

This paper emphasizes four themes. First, the institutional movement was founded on the premise that practicing homosexuals could be fully Christian. Second, the movement went from trying to create separate gay spiritual institutions to arguing for inclusion within mainstream denominations. MCC and Dignity are examples of gay faith communities willing to create gay spaces separate from mainstream Christianity. Integrity and Lutherans Concerned, meanwhile, sought to work within established denominations. Third, MCC and Dignity led GLBT Christians' outreach to the San Diego community. Fourth, gay Christians in San Diego contributed to the national movement of GLBT Christianity. Given San Francisco's reputation as a center of gay culture, few people realize that Southern California, especially Los Angeles and San Diego, were early catalysts both theologically and institutionally for GLBT Christians.

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The homosexual rights movement developed between 1945 and the passing of civil rights legislation in the mid-1960s. Historians have identified events of the post-World War II era as crucial to the creation of a sustained movement. For example, Allan Berube and John D' Emilio identified war mobilization and post-war politics as important factors in a group "awakening" as they allowed gay men and women to interact in new ways, even as they became targets of institutionalized discrimination by the military and government.¹ Reports on sexual behavior published by Alfred C. Kinsey in 1948 and 1953 also stimulated a powerful change of consciousness within the GLBT community. Kinsey suggested that a higher percentage of males and females engaged in homosexual acts than society previously accepted. He argued that homosexuality was not a disease of the select few, but a sexual preference of many Americans. Many churches and church leaders immediately challenged the Kinsey Reports.² Billy Graham stated, "It is impossible to estimate the damage it will do to the already deteriorating morals of America." His view was supported by the head of the Union Theological Seminary who saw Kinsey's report as "a prevailing degradation in American morality approximating the worst decadence of the Roman Empire."³ Nevertheless, Kinsey's reports changed "the nature of public discussion of sexuality as well as society's perception of its own behavior."⁴ While their validity continues to be challenged, the reports made sexuality a topic in public discourse.

In the wake of 1960s legislation protecting the legal rights of African Americans and women, many gays and lesbians took hope and began to create organizations, institutions, and communities for themselves.⁵ While the more confrontational gay liberation movement looked to overthrow patriarchy, advocates of the gay civil rights movement attempted to transform existing patriarchal institutions and neighborhoods. In San Diego, the emergence of the Hillcrest neighborhood as a gay "haven and home" typified national trends of what Michael Dillinger calls "gay-motivated positive gentrification," or more simply "the investment of the gay community in itself." Dillinger describes how the gay and lesbian community transformed Hillcrest from a run-down neighborhood of an "aged population" into the center of gay culture and vitality.⁶ Similarly, some GLBT community members sought to extend this transforming concept into the Christian sphere. By 1979, four well-established GLBT Christian groups were promoting gay Christianity to the San Diego public.⁷

The confluence of homosexuality and Christianity in San Diego began in April 1970 when the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) created an environment for gays and lesbians to integrate their sexuality and faith. Led by Reverend Troy Perry and Howard Williams, this extension of the Los Angeles home church opened in Hillcrest and encompassed parishioners from diverse Christian traditions.⁸ Since orthodox theology had been used to condemn their sexuality, MCC used a new theology to affirm homosexuality as a gift from God. Locally, it was the first church of this kind and provided the foundation on which GLBT organizations could create gay, Christian spaces in San Diego. Both MCC's theology and warm, accepting fellowship were important in grounding the concept of GLBT Christianity for the local gay community.

MCC San Diego adopted a dual-purposed gay theology, or what Perry called "liberal evangelical" theology.⁹ First, it attempted to discredit the so-called "lobber passages" in the Bible used to condemn homosexuality. "Llobber

passages” was a term used within the gay Christian community to describe the verses that argue that homosexual acts are sinful. Perry pointed to the misuse of scripture against minority groups throughout history: “I knew the church had held biblical interpretations—sometimes for centuries—that it later came to see as misinterpretations. Sadly, this happened with the biblical justification of slavery, the oppression of women, and acceptance of racism. In each of these cases, the Church came to admit that centuries of biblical interpretation were in error.”¹⁰ MCC recast the “clobber passages” with new meanings. The church argued that Sodom and Gomorrah were not destroyed because they tolerated homosexuality, but because they had a widespread distain for social justice. In addition, Perry reinterpreted the sexual prohibitions listed in the Apostle Paul’s letters when he said, “I do believe that the apostle Paul, according to the original Greek of Romans 1:26-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10, condemned temple prostitutes—both male and female—and pederasts. But he did not condemn homosexual persons *per se*. On the other hand, he probably wasn’t even aware of the possibility of loving, committed same-sex relationships.”¹¹ In short, MCC rejected the literal interpretations of the scriptures commonly used to attack homosexuality as sinful, saying that they were based on a misreading of the original languages and cultural ignorance of early Christianity.¹²

Gay positive theology argued that homosexuality was not a detriment to the Christian identity but, instead, a gift from God. The MCC community contended that Jesus and many of the disciples chose alternate and possibly gay-affirming lifestyles. For example, they used Jesus’s description of eunuchs “being born” to argue that Christ did not expect everyone to create a heterosexual union. Perry also used Galatians to contend that fear of God, not “respect of persons,” defined the Christian life.¹³ This attitude asserted that, far from being a detriment to Christianity, GLBT Christians could be instrumental in fulfilling Jesus’ Great Commission. Perry stated: “God is using you to do His will. It says in the Bible, God’s people are peculiar and there is no one more peculiar than us.”¹⁴ Instead of accepting the traditional view that homosexual acts were sinful, MCC told its parishioners and the gay community how their current lifestyle could be used for the glory of God.

Gay positive theology became the foundation of an environment that pulled GLBT Christians into new spaces. Original members of MCC often felt that they had been pushed out of mainstream churches. Now, they were pulled into a community that celebrated the confluence of the homosexual Christian. More than a faith community, MCC created a space that allowed GLBT Christians to identify with other gays and “come out” safely.¹⁵ As Pat McAaron, an early MCC parishioner states, “With MCC I found comfort, friendship, in a time of great adjustment for me. Through my experience at MCC I knew more people within the gay community.”¹⁶ MCC was, above all, a place where GLBT Christians were pulled and pushed to safely explore a homosexual version of Christianity outside popular traditions. In this respect, it did not differ from other MCC sister churches across the nation and world.¹⁷

Many of the gay and lesbian organizations in San Diego had their roots in the MCC community. Historian Frank Nobiletti suggested that San Diego “had a powerful ‘Gay Church’...with strong leadership that offered stability, open arms to the community at large, and a physical base, even in the early days.” He pointed

out, "The *Prodigal* newsletter, published biweekly by the MCC, was San Diego's first regularly published gay publication. In gay communities where isolation had been the hallmark, the importance of this institution cannot be over estimated. It went far beyond church news, covering the whole emerging community and became a springboard for other publications."¹⁸ MCC San Diego, the third MCC congregation to be organized in California, combined a Christian evangelical purpose with openness to become the early center of gay social, cultural, and political activities.¹⁹

The early success of MCC San Diego led to the creation of Dignity, a gay, Catholic group. Patrick Nidorf formed the organization in 1969 as a venue for members to openly discuss sexuality and faith. Although the group quickly moved to Los Angeles to meet greater demand, many gay Catholics remained in San Diego.²⁰ McArron, a Catholic expelled from a seminary following accusations, attended MCC. He stated, "When I attended MCC it had a Catholic feel to it. I believe that was due to the early church leadership having a Catholic background."²¹ In 1972, McArron was informed about a Dignity advertisement in the *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR). He wrote the organization and visited with the president of Dignity in Los Angeles: "I informed him that I knew of no one in San Diego who was gay and Catholic. After assuring me that he would take care of that minor detail, I returned to San Diego all fired up and filled with enthusiasm."²² On May 30, 1972, the San Diego chapter of Dignity had its first meeting with an attendance of twelve, including two former nuns, and soon began to hold masses at Old Town's Cardijn Center.²³

Could one be a practicing homosexual and Roman Catholic at the same time? McArron believed that MCC had demonstrated the ability to integrate homosexuality and Christianity. It would be a challenge to integrate homosexuality and Catholicism, particularly given the fact that the Roman Catholic Church continued to oppose such practices as birth control. Yet this was the chasm Dignity sought to bridge, at least in theory.²⁴ Its mission statement read: "We work for the development of sexual theology leading to the reform of its teachings and practices regarding human sexuality, and for the acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender peoples as full and equal members of the one Christ."²⁵ Unlike MCC, which detached itself from established traditions, Dignity sought to reform the Catholic Church from within.

Members of Dignity gradually came to realize that their reform efforts would have little effect. Their mission statement was rejected by the Roman Catholic Church and, in 1975, the Vatican produced a "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics." It stated: "At the present time there are those who...have begun to judge indulgently, and even excuse completely, homosexual relations between certain people. This they do in opposition to the constant teaching of the Magisterium and to the moral sense of the Christian people."²⁶ Nevertheless, members of Dignity felt a need to maintain a bond to the institution that had defined their faith for millennia. By 1979, Dignity, like its predecessor MCC, was not a reforming organization but a community of gay Catholics who affirmed the possibility of integrating their traditional faith with homosexuality.

In the end, Dignity did not reform the institutional church but, like MCC, attempted to create new spiritual homes for gay Christians. Dignity San Diego established communities where Catholics could be openly gay and re-establish their "dignity."²⁷ McArron explained, "Initially, Dignity was organized to

bring gays and lesbians in communication and open discussion to help create a community.”²⁸ The organization sought to relieve the loneliness often felt by GLBT Catholics and to “reinforce their sense of self-acceptance and dignity and encourage full participation in the life of the Church and society.”²⁹ Social psychologists Donileen R. Loseke and James C. Cavendish suggested that Dignity was more a “support group” for sexually marginalized Catholics than a reformation.³⁰

While MCC was content to create a new environment detached from mainstream influences, Dignity tacitly sought and needed a relationship with its mother church. Catholic parishioners relied upon the Church to receive the Eucharist, last rites and other blessings. Off-duty priests, known as chaplains, visited Dignity meetings and served the Eucharist regularly through the year and less frequently during the summer. McAaron explained: “Why am I doing this? If we, the GLBT community, walk away from the R[oman] C[atholic] C[hurch] we feel we would lose credibility. We want to remain with the identity of a RCC organization.”³¹ According to some, it was more complicated to be a gay Catholic than to be a GLBT Christian. MCC leader David Farrell attempted to describe Dignity members’ relationship to the Catholic Church: “You know, I really love my mother. She doesn’t know me real well. And I know she’d be freaked out by some aspects of my life. But I could never simply reject her . . . It’s like my relationship with the church. I have to live with her and she has to live with me.”³²

In the 1970s, Integrity and Lutherans Concerned began working for the normalization of homosexuality within mainstream denominations. Integrity, an affiliate of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, was founded in 1975 by Louie Crew in San Francisco. Lutherans Concerned, an organization within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) was formed in 1978.³³ These groups differed from MCC and Dignity because they sought to include homosexual Christians within their churches without any distinction. They sought nothing less than the removal of the qualifier *homosexual* from the term homosexual Christian. Locally, the chapters remained very small.³⁴

Integrity and Lutherans Concerned expanded the agenda of the GLBT Christian movement. It was no longer enough to create independent gay spaces; GLBT Christians now wanted to reform existing mainstream denominations. One unnamed Lutherans Concerned member stated that their goal was to remove the taboo status of homosexual from GLBT Christianity: “. . . We are trying to change the attitude toward the homosexual as someone utterly different from the heterosexual.”³⁵ By the late 1970s, the reform language focused on the possibility of gay, or rather openly gay, leadership in mainstream denominations. Notable discussions followed the ordination of an openly lesbian priest, Ellen Barrett, in New York in 1977. During the visit of Integrity’s President John Lawrence to San Diego in 1979, Episcopalians began to talk about the possibility of openly gay priests. Although Lutherans Concerned and Integrity forced their denominations to clarify their policies toward these issues, immediate reform did not occur and has not occurred to the present.

In 1979, MCC, Dignity, Integrity, and Lutherans Concerned worked together to create the Ministries United for Gay Understanding. In addition to ministering to their own members on issues such as harassment of gays, the coalition worked to promote public understanding of GLBT Christianity through meetings – including a local GLBT ecumenical council in 1979 – and radio and television shows. While

the addition of Integrity and Lutherans Concerned brought GLBT concepts of Christianity to mainstream denominations, it was the groups who created uniquely gay spaces, MCC and Dignity, who led the coalition's outreach to the public.³⁶ The nominal reception was cold. MCC's efforts to broadcast on Christian television and radio met with cancellations, forcing them into legal battles over breach of contract. Two developments at this time began to distract attention from the "gay Christian" cause. Increasingly the issues of homosexual rights were being folded into the larger civil rights movement. Meanwhile, the conservative backlash against homosexual rights led by popular singer Anita Bryant and the Religious Right reached its zenith.³⁷

By 1979, the confluence of homosexuality and the Christian faith in San Diego was firmly rooted. Beginning as a conceptual issue in the late 1960s, the idea of gay Christianity moved from creating gay spaces at MCC and Dignity to arguing for normalization in established churches by Integrity and Lutherans Concerned. The early movement then culminated in a united front to promote gay understanding among members of the public.³⁸ How much did this movement accomplish? Not only did both MCC and Integrity open new local chapters in 1979 and 1980 respectively but, even more important, these GLBT Christian institutions survived a conservative backlash during the 1980s and the loss of many members to AIDS.

The formative years of the GLBT Christian movements discussed in this paper are important and raise other significant issues. All four of the groups studied, or their related successors, are still active in 2007, and they have variously struggled and succeeded. There have been problems of leadership, difficulties finding places of worship, political opposition, and theological controversy. Some churches' opposition is as firm as ever; others continue to work on policies of inclusion. Much remains to be studied. There are other gay Christian and Jewish organizations, gays who remained within their churches, and varying policies of churches regarding gay membership and leadership. It is clear from this research that the interactions of gays with their churches, and of the churches with their gay members, have and will continue to play pivotal roles in a movement important in San Diego, the nation, and the world.

NOTES

1. Allan Berube, *Coming out Under Fire: the History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Free Press, 1990); John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: the Making of the Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
2. For a good discussion of mainline churches, homosexuality and the response to this report see, Melissa M. Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions: the Early History of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches," *Religion and American Culture* 11, no. 1 (2001), 92-95. An article that deals with more recent issues is James K. Wellman Jr., "Introduction: The Debate Over Homosexual Ordination: Subcultural Identity Theory in American Religious Organizations," *Review of Religious Research* 41, no. 2 (1999): 184-206.
3. Cited in Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* (Advocate Books: New York, 2005), 278-79.
4. William Cochran, Frederick Mosteller and John Tukey, "Statistical Problems of the Kinsey Report," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 48, no. 264 (1953): 673-715. "Our own opinion is that KPM are engaged in a complex program of researching involving many problems of measurement

and sampling, for some of which there appear at present to be no satisfactory solutions. While much remains to be done, our overall impression of their work to date is favorable" (674). See also Erdman Palmore, "Published Reactions to the Kinsey Report," in *Social Forces* 31, no. 2 (1952), 165, 167, 172; Vern L. Bullough, "Alfred Kinsey and the Kinsey Report: Historical and Lasting Contributions," *Journal of Sex Research* 35, no. 2 (1998): 127-31; Roy A. Burkhardt, "Church Can Answer the Kinsey Report," *The Christian Century*, 65 (September 15, 1978), 942-943. For a good report on how certain Christian institutions responded with social science research, see Joseph K. Folsom, "Kinsey's Challenge to Ethics and Religion," *Social Problems* 1, no. 4 (1954): 164-168. It is interesting that a constant theme is the contestation of theological norms using biblical exegesis and social science data; both sides of this social movement were concerned with using their centers of learning—especially Midwestern colleges for gay Lutherans—to assert their views.

5. Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions," 88-89. Founder Troy Perry's frequent references to Martin Luther King Jr. are particularly important. For the influence of civil liberties on American attitudes toward homosexuality, see Jeni Loftus, "America's Liberalization in Attitudes toward Homosexuality, 1973 to 1998," *American Sociological Review*, 66, no. 5 (2001), 12-13; Alan S. Yang, "Trends: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (1997), 5.

6. Michael E. Dillinger, "Hillcrest: From Haven to Home," *The Journal of San Diego History* 46, no. 4 (2000): 144-163.

7. Wilcox describes the factors that led to GLBT Christianity and the reasons for its longevity. Like other authors and the subjects of our interviews, Wilcox emphasizes the civil rights aspect of the GLBT Christian movement. Many of her conclusions are beyond the scope of this study, but similar research is needed for both San Diego and Los Angeles GLBT Christian organizations. Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions," 83-108 *passim*.

8. Lee Bowman, interviewed by Kaylin Raigoza and Christopher Rhamey, written transcripts, San Diego, CA, February 16, 2006. In the late 1960s, a number of GLBT Christians began a series of Bible studies in the home of Rev. Ed Hansen, pastor of Chollas View United Methodist Church. After learning of MCC Los Angeles, Howard Williams of the Hillcrest group asked Perry to meet with them. For several months Perry commuted from Los Angeles to San Diego until a formal MCC church could be organized. The institutional commencement of MCC San Diego was preceded by a weekend revival led by Perry in early March, 1970.

9. Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions," 89.

10. Troy Perry, "Metropolitan Community Church Announces Theological Breakthrough," Scouting for All: Committed to Scouting, Open to Diversity, www.scoutingforall.org/aaic/2002042501.shtml (accessed April 2006).

11. Perry, "Metropolitan Community Church Announces Theological Breakthrough." See also W. Bernard Lokenbill, "Observations on the Corporate Culture of a Gay and Lesbian Congregation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 3 (1998), 444; "Gays and the Gospel: An Interview with Troy Perry," *Christian Century* 113, no. 27 (1996), 897.

12. For a study on the role of scripture in gay Christian identity integration, see Eric M. Rodriguez and Suzanne C. Ouellette, "Gay and Lesbian Christians: Homosexual and Religious Identity Integration in the Members and Participants of a Gay-Positive Church," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 3 (2000): 333-342.

13. Perry, "Metropolitan Community Church Announces Theological Breakthrough."

14. Rita Gillmon, "Area Church's Ministry Includes Homosexuals," *San Diego Union*, May 13, 1978, B3.

15. Interviewed members often equated their treatment in mainstream churches with Stonewall Riots in San Francisco. The push factors are the theme in an informative *San Diego Union* article that focuses mostly on obstacles as well as the gay perspective in 'choosing' or not choosing to be gay. Rita Gillmon, "Area Church's Ministry Includes Homosexuals," *San Diego Union*, May 13, 1978, B3. During our interviews, however, we noticed that the push factors were equally or more important than the pull factors, that is, the gay community and the possibility of a gay Christian, in creating GLBT Christianity. This is also the theme of Rodriguez's and Ouellette's research on individual integration of gay Christians. The push and pull factors of the early MCC are described in Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions," 98-100.

16. Pat McAaron, interviewed by Megan Dukett, written transcript, San Diego, CA, April 31, 2006.

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17. Rodriguez and Ouellette, "Gay and Lesbian Christians," 333-342 *passim*. It was somewhat ironic that a Christian church became as a focal point for gay activities as "the Church" was often accused of oppressing homosexuals.

18. Frank Nobiletti, "The Radical Transformation of Gay and Lesbian Life in San Diego: 1970-1975," conference paper presented in a graduate seminar at University of California, San Diego, March, 1990, version 3, 13, 16. Nobiletti is currently the president of the Lambda Archives and an adjunct professor at San Diego State University. The Lambda Archives is a rich source of GLBT information, with a special emphasis on the San Diego area, <http://www.lambdaarchives.org/>. The Greek letter "Lambda" was chosen because it signifies unity under oppression and is often used as a GLBT symbol.

19. Although MCC became one of the most significant organizations within the homosexual community, MCC did not consider itself a "gay church." According to the *Prodigal* newsletter, a name taken from the parable of the prodigal son, "MCC is not a gay church...This is what MCC is about. MCC opens its doors to all! MCC rejects none! To date, the group feeling most rejected, and flocking to MCC's doors are the gays," *The Prodigal*, 2, no. 24 (1971). *The Prodigal* was published as an organ of Christian outreach to the Homophile Community by the Metropolitan Community Church of San Diego, California. It was chartered on June 7, 1970 and edited by John Wild, Jr.

20. Dignity USA: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Catholics, "Highlights of Dignity USA's History, 1969-Present," www.dignityusa.org/archives/history.html (accessed April 17, 2006). Until the late 1970s, Dignity had no home. Patrick Nidorf resided in San Diego through 1970 but meetings took place in Los Angeles. An advertisement in the *Los Angeles Free Press* preceding the first official meeting states: "Join *Dignity*, a Catholic group of intelligent gay men and women. We share successful ways of bringing dignity into our lives. Honest talk/sensitivity/sincere people. Applicants screened. Write: Fr. Pat, Box 4486, N. Park St., San Diego, CA 92104." The first Dignity newsletter, written by Nidorf and issued one month after the above advertisement, shows that the men needed rides to meetings in the Los Angeles area. *Dignity* 1, no. 1 (1970), www.dignityusa.org/archives/FirstNewsletter.pdf (accessed May 10, 2007).

21. Pat McArron, interviewed by Megan Dukett, April 31, 2006. It is thought that Dignity founder Nidorf left for Los Angeles due to a lack of interest locally, leaving MCC to lay the foundation for GLBT Christianity. However, MCC's founding members remember a number of Catholics in leadership. This problem leads the authors to wonder about the cohesion of the gay, Christian community at this time. It is certainly easy to imagine a movement that grows outward from the center, MCC, and there is certainly some evidence to support this. But there is evidence that points to a less linear growth, helping to explain why MCC, rather than Dignity, attracted gay Catholics in San Diego. Later, this helps clarify the confusion between Integrity's original founding in 1975 and the unconnected Integrity organization in 1980.

22. Dignity USA, "Highlights of Dignity USA's History," www.dignityusa.org/archives/history.html (accessed May 10, 2007).

23. Jeannette De Wyze, "Does the Lord Love Homosexuals?" *The Reader* 8, no. 32 (1978), 8. The church bureaucracy notified Dignity they needed to have the blessing of the diocese and the directors of the Cardijn Center's directors to continue meetings. Dignity countered by threatening to post the names of all gay priests in the area. Nothing more was said of the issue.

24. The distinction between practicing and non-practicing homosexuality is important in the Catholic Church. Homosexuality itself is not a sin, but the practice of it is. De Wyze, "Does the Lord Love Homosexuals?" 8; Donileen R. Loseke and James C. Cavendish, "Producing Institutional Selves: Rhetorically Constructing the Dignity of Sexually Marginalized Catholics," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2001): 347-362. Especially interesting is the interstitial location of GLBT Catholics in their own traditions and GLBT Christianity. They are outsiders in Catholic tradition, but because they value their Catholic roots, they may also be uncomfortable in places like MCC. This is discussed by Loseke and Cavendish. However, the authors do not account for the Catholic background suggested by McArron nor do they show the common link between Dignity and Integrity after the mid-1970s. The latter could have been helpful in arguing that GLBT Christians from similar traditions identify strongly with each other. Evidence from San Diego suggests that GLBT Catholics were not necessarily dissatisfied with MCC but that they were not numerous.

25. Dignity USA, "Statement of Position and Purpose," <http://www.dignityusa.org/purpose.html> (April 13, 2006)

26. "Declaration for the Doctrine of the Faith: Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,"

www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFCERTN.HTM (accessed April 14, 2006). A copy of Dignity's reaction to the Vatican's statements can be found on *The Voice of Integrity*, <http://www.integrityusa.org/voice/1976/February1976.htm>. It is summed up by this excerpt: "The present Vatican document, while urging a 'sensitive pastoral approach to the homosexual,' does little more than repeat the traditional, unenlightened condemnation of homosexual expression, based on the presupposition that human sexuality is God-given and moral only in heterosexual marriage for the purpose of procreation. Such a narrow understanding of human sexuality has been seriously challenged by a large number of American Catholic theologians who recognize the broader purpose of human sexuality as an expression of unselfish love between two people, as a responsible communication of their love and shared life."

27. De Wyze, "Does the Lord Love Homosexuals?" 1.
28. Pat McAaron, interviewed by Megan Dukett, written transcript, San Diego, CA, April 31, 2006.
29. Dignity USA, "Statement of Position and Purpose."
30. Loseke and Cavendish, "Producing Institutional Selves," 350.
31. Pat McArron, interviewed by Megan Dukett, written transcript, San Diego, CA, April 31, 2006.
32. De Wyze, "Does the Lord Love Homosexuals?" 8.
33. 1978 is the first recorded or remembered date of Lutherans Concerned in San Diego. It comes from an article on MCC in *The San Diego Reader*. Kenneth Marks at the Lutherans Concerned Archive directed the authors to Lutherans Concerned's *The Gay Lutheran* (1974-80), a newsletter printed in Los Angeles. Editors sometimes referred to California members but most likely meant the large organization of gay Lutherans in Los Angeles and San Francisco. There is no mention of San Diego. The number of Lutherans Concerned organizations grew from four in 1975 to eleven in 1977, flourishing in cities where there were Lutheran colleges or seminaries, neither of which San Diego possessed.
34. Integrity's existence prior to 1980 is not remembered by current leadership. It seldom reported any activity to the national body's journal (*The Voice of Integrity*), and it also contributed little monetarily to the national organization. Yet in May 1976, the local Integrity chapter was recognized by San Diego's bishop, Rev. Robert M. Wolterstorff, and given permission to convene meetings without Eucharist. In addition, local newspapers included information on Lutherans Concerned when reporting on MCC and Dignity in the 1970s.
35. Rita Gillmon, "Gay Church Disputes Broadcast Cancellation," *San Diego Union*, June 26, 1979, B1.
36. "Coalition Will Meet," *San Diego Union*, June 16, 1979, A-12; Gilmon, "Gay Church Disputes Broadcast Cancellation"; "He Has the Last Word," *San Diego Union*, 30 April 1980, D-1. There is also evidence of institutional cooperation between Dignity and Integrity. A notice reads, "*Gay Christian Workshop* in San Diego. Dignity and Integrity are joint sponsoring a workshop on 'Homosexuality and the Church Today' with Fr. Tom Oddo as the keynote speaker, on Friday, 18th June. For information, contact Dr. Lazenby at our SD chapter, listed on our back page," *Integrity: Gay Episcopal Christian Forum*, 2, no. 8 (1976), <http://www.integrityusa.org/voice/1976/JuneJuly1976.htm> (accessed May 10, 2007).
37. De Wyze, "Does the Lord Love Homosexuals?"; Rita Gillmon, "Gay's Ministry Role Is Studied," *San Diego Union*, September 1, 1979, B3.
38. Although there were differences among these groups in terms of beliefs and desires, there seems to be ample evidence to call the front "united" during this time period. As an excerpt from *The Voice of Integrity* attests: "In a Winter issue of *The Gay Christian*, the Rev. Troy Perry, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, the religious group with a special outreach to the Gay community, affirmed his personal interest in continuing to confront the established churches: 'The time has come when we must be vocal in our demands for equality in the established Church. We must refuse to be put off by some unconcerned denominational officer whose only concern is not to rock the boat in the area of social justice for fear of losing his or her safe position. We must attack the complacent attitude of those who, if they are not for us, must be considered against us.' The MCC founder has been most supportive of INTEGRITY from the beginning and published material in *Forum* No. 2. Likewise, INTEGRITY remains constitutionally committed to ecumenical action in the Gay community," *Integrity: Gay Episcopal Forum* 1, no. 9 (1975), <http://www.integrityusa.org/voice/1975/August1975.htm> (accessed May 10, 2007).