

Gay Libs 'Crash'

Methodists Meeting

By ID. The Austin Statesman

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● GAY

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SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Members of the Gay Liberation Front disrupted a Methodist meeting Monday night, demanding "reparations" from the church and voicing support for a self-described gaymen and ministers, most of them startled and indignant, overwhelmingly defeated a motion to grant the group an audience.

But a shouting match developed and a compromise was reached — the Gay Libs were given the final five minutes of the program to present their demands.

The confrontation came at the opening session of the annual Southwest Texas United Methodist Conference meeting in a downtown church.

One of the demands was for the Methodist Church to "cease the harassment" of the Rev. Gene Leggett of Dallas, a Methodist minister

who has stated publicly he is a homosexual.

Leggett, an Edinburgh native and graduate of Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, is a minister of drama at the Dallas Theater Center.

Methodist officials said they plan to recommend to the conference that he surrender his credentials as a minister — which he said he "cannot in good conscience" agree to do.

Leggett operates a "House of the Covenant," which he calls a home "open to the flow of 'straights' and homosexuals."

The Gay Lib group called on the church to provide full support, including financial aid, for Leggett's house, which they said is the church group's "only link to the gay community."

No action was taken at once.

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on the demands, also including one that the church make "sizeable reparations to gay people in the form of programs, facilities and money."

When delegates to the meeting at first refused to hear the Gay Libs, the small band of young men stood their ground and demanded to be heard.

Men in the crowd of more than 600 persons converged on the spokesmen as if to take them away.

Scores of people began talking. Others shouted at the Gay Libs. Some giggled.

"Why will you not listen to us?" shouted one of the spokesmen, Jim Digger, 24, of Dallas.

The meeting was recessed and the crowd rose to its feet.

Several men stood on pews for a better view of the Gay Libs.

Church officials finally restored order after taking call for the "authenticity of life" with Digger and another spokesman, Pat Brown, 26, of San Antonio, who said he was

a founder of the San Francisco Gay Liberation Front.

Delegates agreed by a narrow margin to allow the group five minutes after one speaker said it was the church's duty to listen to them and another asserted they would be "betraying" the church if they allowed any group to disrupt the meeting.

As the vote was taken on a show of hands, a man in the audience shouted, "Bishop, they (the homosexuals) also are voting!"

"I was voting for my freedom, which I've never had," retorted Brown, a long-haired young man wearing a leather see-through vest and carrying a leather purse.

At the close of the meeting, Stephen Allain of Denton, who said he was a North Texas State University student, read a list of 10 demands from a pink leaflet, copies of which the group distributed earlier in the evening.

The demands included a "gay life style" be accepted. The church was urged also to recognize the

rights of sisters learning to love sisters and of brother learning how to love brother — and that this be called gay."

The group's statement charged that it "cannot be historically denied that the church as an institution has covertly and systematically condoned and implemented the oppression of homosexual women and men."