

APRIL, 1971

DEAR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS:

I WISH THE FOLLOWING COULD HAVE BEEN SAID FACE TO FACE, BUT I AM CONTENT THAT IT WILL BE HEART TO HEART.

I AM A HOMOSEXUAL. THIS IS NOT SOME NEW AND FRIGHTENING FACET IN MY PERSONALITY. I AM STILL THE SAME GENE LEGGETT YOU HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN. WITH SOME OF YOU I HAVE FELT FREE TO DISCUSS THIS SIDE OF MY NATURE; WITH SOME I HAVE BEEN FEARFUL TO DO SO; WITH MOST OF YOU IT HASN'T BEEN NECESSARY - WE HAVE CONTINUED TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER AS WE ARE.

NOW BECAUSE OF SEVERAL EVENTS I FEEL THAT IT NEEDS TO BE AN OPEN UNDERSTANDING SO THAT TRUTH NEED NOT BE PROSTITUTED THROUGH EVASIONS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN MY RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH.

MOST OF THE MINISTERS AND LEADERS OF THE CHURCH HAVE KNOWN THIS ABOUT ME FOR SOME FIVE YEARS. WE HAVE LIVED BY AN UNSPOKEN AGREEMENT OF "YOU LEAVE ME ALONE AND I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE." IT IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT TO SAY THIS WAS NEITHER HEALTHY NOR CHRISTIAN. I UNDERSTAND MYSELF TO BE A METHODIST MINISTER FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. MOST OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM I NOW MINISTER KNOW THAT I AM QUEER AND ACCEPT IT AS A PART OF WHO GENE LEGGETT IS.

I AM NOT ASKING YOU TO CONDONE WHAT MUST SEEM VERY FOREIGN TO YOU. I ASK ONLY FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT. AS YOU MIGHT GUESS, THE CHURCH IS QUITE UPSET TO HAVE IT IN THE OPEN. IT WAS AT A CALLED EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE MINISTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST TEXAS CONFERENCE ON APRIL 17 THAT I ASKED MY BROTHERS TO DEAL PUBLICLY WITH WHAT THEY HAVE KNOWN PRIVATELY. THE PURPOSE OF THE SESSION WAS TO EXAMINE THE MINISTERIAL COVENANT. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT ACTION THE CONFERENCE INTENDS TO TAKE, BUT IT COULD INVOLVE A TRIAL. FOR THIS REASON I WANTED YOU TO HEAR IT FROM ME.

I'VE EXPLAINED ALL THIS TO JOHN, STEVEN AND MARK, AND YOU WOULD BE AS PROUD OF THEM AS I AM. AS MARK PUT IT, "QUEERS ARE JUST LIKE OTHER PEOPLE - THERE ARE GOOD ONES AND BAD ONES." FOR THIS BIT OF WISDOM I AM GRATEFUL TO FANNY.

I WISH THERE WAS TIME TO SIT DOWN AND TALK WITH ALL OF YOU ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN OUR RESPECTIVE LIVES. PERHAPS SOME OF US WILL. I AM EAGER TO SHARE MY CURRENT MINISTRY WITH YOU AND WILL PROBABLY DO SO IN SUBSEQUENT LETTERS. UNTIL THAT TIME, PLEASE WRITE ME AT MY NEW ADDRESS: HOUSE OF THE COVENANT, 3710 GILBERT, DALLAS, TEXAS, 75219.

LOVE AND PEACE,

*Gene*