

1/11/89

# The Reactor

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## Unanswered Questions

Fred Metz was a gentle, softspoken man in his 40s. In his quiet, unassuming way he did yeoman work for the Democratic party in the Bay Area. He was a civic activist in the best sense. He also helped his friend Nick Carpenter take the responsibility for raising Nick's younger brother. Both he and Nick took on major responsibility for helping the low-wealth Laguna Salada school district raise private funds when the California legislature failed its responsibilities to treat all schools equally in funding.

Most of us suspected Fred was a homosexual, long before he died of AIDS, but Fred never spoke of it, at least in my presence. He did not allow his homosexuality to intrude on the rest of us. It was a subject that did not come up.

Even when he was so obviously ill on a return visit to Pacifica during the 1987 Fog Fest, Fred did not discuss the subject, at least in my presence. Fred was simply a gentle, kind person who did his best, and in the end, lost to a plague that we cannot yet control. I'm glad he was a fellow Democrat. Fred was a fine man.

It is ironic, and sad, that something he never forced on his friends and acquaintances while he lived should have been made such a big issue after his death. I deeply regret that Russell Kassman chose to deprive Fred of the dignity of silence on a subject he himself did not bring up publicly.

When I was a child I was taught that mankind has free will, and we do, on many things. However, there are some things we cannot choose, like the color of our ear lobes, the amount of natural hair growth on our heads at age 50, and the length of our big toe.

A jury would have to agree that there is at least a reasonable doubt, contrary to my friend R. E. Meyers' opinion in last week's letter, that homosexuality is a personal choice. It may be. It may not. We don't honestly know. It may even be that it's a personal choice for some people and not for others. If homosexuality is inborn in some fashion, then it is no more reasonable to try to change the person than to demand that he or she stop being bald or stop growing toenails. Since we really don't know, we should at least step carefully.

Barbara Draxler says the solution to AIDS is abstinence. Of course she is right, and millions of American teen-agers and young adults are keeping themselves safe and pure by practicing abstinence. Thank God they are, or the rate of sexually transmitted diseases, out-of-wedlock pregnancies and abortions would be worse than it is. Ms. Draxler's solution is to teach teen-agers to uphold the moral values found in Scripture.

This is a fine solution for those kids who listen, who do what they are told, who are completely obedient at all times, who think their parents are always right.

Of course, it also calls for perfect parents and perfect teachers who have and deserve the profound respect of their children.