Introduction to This Issue

The *Reformed Review* is pleased to present this issue on "Homosexuality and the Church." The church in the Western world finds itself deeply challenged by how to think about same-sex orientation and practice and how to relate to same-sex oriented people in the church. Many experts believe that it is the most difficult challenge the church has faced in modern times.

The Publications Committee of Western Theological Seminary asked our writers to reflect more deeply on this challenge and what can be done about it. So they do not restate old arguments, but try to move understanding deeper and the discussion to a new level.

James Brownson, professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary, opens the issue with a probing treatment of current attitudes to "committed same-sex relationships." Brownson's piece is an irenic, thought-provoking contribution to the topic, exploring the strengths and weaknesses of a pastoral accommodation approach to some committed homosexual relationships.

Robert Gagnon authors our second piece in this article. Gagnon is an associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and widely acknowledged as the world's leading expert on the topic of the Bible and homosexuality. After opening with a helpful explanation of why there is so much disagreement in the church over homosexuality, Gagnon then offers readers of the *Reformed Review* the most incisive, up-to-date treatment of scholarship on the biblical witness to homosexuality available anywhere.

The Publications Committee asked me to supplement these two articles with a shorter piece applying the issue more directly to the situation in the RCA. With its concurrence, I have focused an "Editorial Afterword" on the formal dialogue that the RCA is beginning on homosexuality and the church.

The Publications Committee and the authors of this issue hope that it will contribute positively to theology and life in the Reformed Church in America, and other denominations as well.

Robert E. Van Voorst
Editor