Master's Theses

Theses and Dissertations

1998

Awakenings: Developing a Pastoral Response to Gay Male Adolecscents Within a Catholic School System

Gerard J. Brady

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AWAKENINGS: DEVELOPING A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO GAY MALE
ADOLESCENTS WITHIN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN PASTORAL COUNSELING

INSTITUTE OF PASTORAL STUDIES

BY

GERARD J. BRADY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JANUARY 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

To my birth parents

Syd and Helena Grace

and to my parents who raised me

Jim and Eileen Brady

who have awakened within me the gift of life

Thank you

AWAKENINGS

He stroked my hair, touching the back of my neck with his fingers now and then.
It was the nicest thing anyone had ever done for me. And the softest.
He cared - that I might be hurt, that I might fall off the stool.

He put his arms around my shoulders. I put my arms around him and hugged him,
pressed my face against his chest and listened to his heartbeat through his shirt.

It was like coming home, like finding the place you've always wanted to be,
and I could have stayed there forever holding on to him.

"Peter"
by
Kate Walker.

Our hands brushed again and his little finger hooked mine,
but I wanted people to know that we were in love so I took his whole hand.
He turned sharply down an alley and we found ourselves against a wall.
He looked around. "Not here, we can be seen."
Another sharp turn down another alley.
He took my hands and leant against a large green roller-door.
We were standing holding hands, looking.
I think this was the first time that we had ever really looked at each other.
Boys do not look at each other like that.

I reached out and touched his hair.
He turned and kissed my hand.
I moved closer until we were standing against each other.
He smelt like soap and clean clothes.
Gentle.
Just holding and kissing gently.
Little angel kisses.

If this had been it, if I had died then, I would said it was enough.

"Holding The Man"
by
Timothy Conigrave.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact that specific social factors have on gay adolescent males in a Catholic school system. By using a socio-historical methodology, it is proposed that the convict era has influenced certain negative attitudes to homosexuality in the Australian culture. Particular developmental models will be used to understand the meaning of adolescence and sexuality. By drawing upon recent research articles and related literature in psychology, social work and counseling, certain implications become evident for youth, family, and the school system. In examining various theologies of sexuality, a theo-ethical framework of sexuality is proposed which will enable the gay adolescent male, and those who support him, to gain a greater awareness of his personhood. A pastoral plan has been developed as a way of assisting and challenging the Catholic school system to attend to the needs of adolescent gay males.

CHAPTER I

CLAIMING THE AUSTRALIAN STORY - USING A SOCIO-HISTORICAL METHOD TO CRITIQUE AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES TO GAY CULTURE.

Homosexuality continues to be a contentious issue for Australian society. It seems to touch a raw nerve in the culture. What is it about homosexuality that causes people to react in extreme, and sometimes, violent ways? Why are homosexual people rejected in their own society? What happens in a society when a particular group such as homosexual people are isolated and treated differently to others? Even as far as families are concerned, forces are at work which cause children to be isolated and rejected. Where have these attitudes originated which cause gay and lesbian people to be viewed with suspicion and fear?

If a nation is going to change its attitudes to gay and lesbian people then it needs to be prepared to go back into its story and re-examine the perspective from which its history has been written and the way it has been presented to its people. The people who write history are interpreting the events and experiences from a particular perspective. A culture's history is recorded in such a way that expresses what is valued and what it considers to be degenerate. The specific parts of a nation's story which have never been referred to, or deliberately ignored, highlight those critical aspects that have been buried in the unconscious psyche of the nation itself. No part of a people's story can ever be obliterated. It requires energy to keep a culture's story repressed. If the nation is to

become healthier and more wholesome, this hidden part of the nation's story will need to be re-claimed.

Foundation of a Convict Settlement

In efforts to uncover the origins of Australian attitudes to homosexual people it will be important to see if any connections exist with its earlier foundation. This great land had been occupied for centuries by the aboriginal peoples. As a result of the European explorations, this continent was visited by the Dutch and Portuguese in the seventeenth century and named Terra Australis. When Captain James Cook claimed Australia in July of 1770 as a British colony, it was assumed the land did not belong to anyone. The aboriginal peoples were not considered to be the rightful care-takers of this land. From the British perspective, this vast land was an undeveloped and under-utilized colony which had all the potential to be created as a penal settlement whereby Britain could resolve its burgeoning domestic crisis of offenders.

The arrival of Captain Arthur Phillip in Sydney Cove on January 22, 1788 with the first fleet of convicts from Britain created an historical imprint on the nation's psyche. The British Government sent its undesirable penal population to this distant and isolated continent. One writer suggests that this was a form of ritual cleansing of the British homeland by extraditing its criminal element (Morris, 1995). So began the tragic story of a white invasion of an aboriginal land. With the Anglo-European invasion of Australia another culture began to penetrate the aboriginal occupied continent. The British culture

brought its own attitudes and values to this land. This was not a free society that was being established. The majority of those sent to Australia in this period were incarcerated. The land that had once been the homeland of a semi-nomadic aboriginal tribes was transformed into a penal colony.

The Emergence of Same-Sex Behaviors

Even in these foundation years attitudes were being formed regarding sexuality in this far away land. What is clear from historical records is that same-sex activity was practiced by a significant number of the inmates and became a cause of concern to authorities. Some of the earliest historical material raises concerns about sexual activity in the penal colony. As a result of inquiries into the convict system in the Australian colonies in 1812 and 1837-8 it has been possible to gain insight into some crucial aspects of convict life which depict the type of sexual activity which occurred among convicts (French, 1992).

One of the most significant investigations at the time was conducted in 1837-1838 by a British Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry into the Transportation system of convicts to Australia. This Select Committee came to be known as the "Molesworth Committee" named after its chairman, James Molesworth. Documentation from these hearings reveals extensive same-sex activity occurring in the penal colony (French, 1992). These official reports describe the penal colony of Norfolk Island, a small island off the

coast of Australia. In a report from a colonial magistrate, Robert Pringle Stuart, there is

clear evidence of rampant sexual activity among the inmates:

> On the doors [of a ward] being opened, men were scrambling into their own beds
> from others, in a hurried manner, concealment being evidently their object. It was
> evident that wardsmen, not being liable to supervision, nor having any external
> support, did not exercise any authority and were mere passive spectators of
> irregularity, which prevails here at night to an enormous amount (French, 1992,
> p.182).

Church authorities became increasingly disturbed by the reports that filtered back

to them about the colony. While serving as the Roman Catholic Vicar General in the

colonies, D. William Ullathorne published a pamphlet entitled *The Catholic Mission In*

Australasia. This pamphlet formed the basis of his report to the Cardinal Prefect of

Propaganda Fide in Rome on the state of the Catholic missions in Australia. In his report

Ullathorne refers to a "...class of crime ...which St. Paul, in dealing with the vices of the

heathens, has not contemplated" (Fogarty, 1992, p.63).

The historical records of this period associate same-sex activity with the social

environment of the penal system. In other words the activity is interpreted in terms of

buggery[1], a criminal offense punishable under British law. The punishment outlined in the

early days of colonial rule by Captain Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of Australia, was

outlined in his letter to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Sydney in London on February 28th

1787. He writes:

---

[1] While "sodomy" is the acceptable legal term, "buggery" was also a legal term used to refer to the specific
sexual act which was an act capable of being performed by mixed gender couples as well as by male only
couples or performed with animals (Fogarty, 1992). Derivations of "buggery" have made their way into
Australian expletives. Slang terms such as "You bugger!" or "Well, I'll be buggered!" would be
commonly heard in Australian parlance.

There are two crimes that would merit death - murder and sodomy. For either of these crimes I would wish to confine the criminal till an opportunity offered of delivering him as a prisoner to the natives of New Zealand, and let them eat him. The dread of this will operate much stronger than the fear of death (French, 1993 p.40).

There is no ambiguity about the seriousness of this act and the way it was regarded by the authorities at the time. Of the dozen or so executions for sodomy up to 1840 some were for offenses committed with boys; other instances included rape (Fogarty, 1992).

In Van Diemen's Land (later named the State of Tasmania) many more men were executed for having sex with each other. French (1993) maintains that the high incidence of sodomy on the Island of Tasmania was due to it being the place where the worst offenders in the penal institution in Australia were sentenced. Life for a convict was generally a great deal harsher here than elsewhere in the colony. Van Diemen's Land had been proposed as an appropriate place to introduce a Probation System which was to be highly structured and based upon humanitarian reforms. The reality was quite different. Due to poor planning, a major recession, incompetent administration and human frailty, the system was doomed to failure from the outset (Smith, 1991). Dozens, sometimes hundreds, of men would be enclosed together in vast barracks at Port Arthur. Alternatively, because Van Diemen's Land was an isolated island, this meant that many convicts were left largely unsupervised in group huts in the bush areas surrounding the convict townships as there were no means of escape. Many of the prison officers were unqualified, and were often former convicts themselves, which led to inadequate supervision of the inmates and created opportunities for corruption (Smith, 1991).

The herding of men together in close confinement inevitably led to a massive increase in institutional homosexuality. In 1846 Earl Grey in London received the following report:

> My informant told me that the state of vice and moral debasement at the gangs which he visited, was something so shocking that it made his blood curdle to think of it. He told me that he had no doubt that more than two thirds of the members of these gangs were living in the systematic and habitual practice of unnatural crimes, that people were actually paired together, and understood as having that revolting relationship to reach other; that his own host, the physician, came to a knowledge of these things by the loathsome diseases, resulting from them; that the language of these places was such as one might imagine to flow from the such contamination; that the crime was punished by whipping, and sometimes not at all; that the violence and fury of these unhappy people was sometimes excessive; and that the whole scene was such as not to be fitly described in words (Smith, 1991, pp.43-44).

Reasons for Same-Sex Activity

The Oppressive Penal System

An inquiry conducted into the penal system of Van Diemen's Land by Port Phillip's Lieutenant Governor, Charles Joseph LaTrobe, reveals other interpretations of same-sex activity. Interestingly, the section of his report dealing with sexual activity on the island was suppressed by the British House of Commons. What his report does make clear is that same-sex activity was widespread in Van Diemen's Land in the 1840's and 1850's (Smith, 1991). Furthermore, his report tends to indicate that the same-sex activity that was practiced by the convicts was much more than institutional homosexuality of the type that is commonly associated today with modern prisons where men who have no other

outlet have sex with (and often rape) other men. What LaTrobe's report indicates is that the sexual activity was closely associated with a whole culture of anti-establishment rebellion which had become a way of life for many convicts under the Probation System (Smith, 1991).

The occurrence of same-sex activity is also described from the perspective of a convict, Thomas Cook, who wrote a book entitled *The Exile's Lamentations* in the early 1840's. He recounts the "unnatural propensity" of convicts assigned to road gangs and sent to Norfolk Island. The "horrid contagion" that affected convicts, according to Cook, was a direct consequence of the tyrannical power structure inherent in the colonial penal system. He argued that the penal system was to blame for nurturing buggery : "...the practice which was engendered at the Penal Settlements... where [the convicts] were tortured by Tyrants [sic.] in a manner that tended to brutalize all Nature" (Fogarty, 1992, p.62). Cook maintains that because the male convicts were unable to gain access to women for sexual purposes, their "lax morals gave way and they indulged... in every filthy and unnatural propensity with each other" (Fogarty, 1992 p.62).

Institutionalization

French (1993) would argue that much of the penal sexual activity was similar to the "institutionalized" homosexuality not any different from the same-sex activity which occurs in incarcerated environments today such as prisons. Nevertheless, it is important to note that French (1993) does not discount that some of the sexual activity may have been

motivated for other reasons. A report on the convict system on Norfolk Island made reference to one hundred and fifty (male) couples: " I am told and I believe that upwards of one hundred, I have heard as many as one hundred and fifty, couples can be pointed out who habitually associate for this most detestable intercourse, and whose moral perception is so completely adsorbed that they are said to be married, man and wife..." (French, 1993, p.182).

Would the sexual behavior of these men be different if they had been able to live in a more gender-balanced environment? It can only be conjectured that the sexual expressions could have been different. However, the context for such sexual activity can not be overlooked. These men were isolated from their home country and living in a harsh penal environment. Such a setting had to elicit harsh and severe practices among the convicts themselves. People who live in socially and oppressively corrupt surroundings eventually absorb some of its cruelty. Therefore, when reference is made to same-sex behavior this does not rule out the possibility of rape and severe abuse being part of the convict system at that time.

Gender Imbalance

In his testimony to the Molesworth Select Committee on Transportation Ullathorne, a Roman Catholic priest, maintained that crimes of buggery were not uncommon in the barracks of Sydney and among farm workers. During further questioning he stated that "unnatural crimes" were also very common on Norfolk Island

and at Moreton Bay. During his last visit to Norfolk Island in the 1830's he had been told by prisoners that up to two thirds of the Island were implicated in "unnatural crimes". When questioned as to the reason for the widespread nature of such crime Ullathorne answered: "I think the temptation to crime will be very great as long as the disproportion [in the sexes] is so considerable." He went on to state that among confined convicts: "It is impossible that [buggery] should cease so long as they are crowded together" (Fogarty, 1992, p.63).

Clearly Ullathorne believed buggery occurred as a direct result of the particular social conditions that prevailed in the colonies. He proposed that the solution to the situation was to send out shiploads of females from England and Ireland to Australia. Clearly he viewed the problem to be primarily one of gender imbalance. No other explanations were put forward to explain the sexual activity which was occurring at that time. Indeed his proposal of increasing the sex ratio in the colony was adopted by the authorities in the 1840's under the free transportation act which brought large numbers of women to the colony. Ullathorne's testimony also served another purpose. By describing in graphic detail the sexual aberrations occurring in the distant colony, the anti-transportation proponents were able to put moral pressure on the authorities to abolish convict transportation (Morris, 1995). This evidence indicates that same-sex activity was used as a way of influencing political decisions.

It is important to make some distinctions about same-sex activity. More recent

research does not make any distinction between same-sex activity of the colonial years and

homosexuality. Those writers who support this interpretation argue in favor of a

homosexual sub-culture in the colony (Fogarty, 1992). They assume that male

homosexuality existed as a social category at the time of the white settlement of Australia.

However, other writers maintain that the accounts gleaned from official reports and

investigations by certain historians do not pay enough attention to the social and historical

genre at that time. These writers argue that same sex-activity needs to be understood from

its sociological perspective, whereby the socially isolating circumstances of that historical

period led to the practice of same-sex activity (Fogarty, 1992). According to these writers,

to argue conclusively that such practices indicate the emergence of a homosexual culture

per se would be extrapolating historical material. Fogarty(1992) cautions the reader of

Australian history:

> Recent accounts of colonial 'homosexuality' generally assume that male
> homosexuality existed as a social category at the time of white settlement. This
> assumption is made despite an ever increasing volume of work (from both
> historical and related disciplines) that indicates that the homosexual did not exist as
> a social genus until the second half of the nineteenth century (Fogarty, 1992, p.59).

Such a warning does not necessarily discount the possibility that some men were

involved in a close and intimate relationship which would be viewed in today's terms as a

gay relationship. In this historical period homosexuality was not known by those terms.

However, it does not discount that some people seemed to experience a relationship that

emerged from their identity as a homosexual person rather than merely engaging in same-sex activity as a substitute or release for their sexual feelings due to their incarcerated situation. In fact, some evidence indicates that intimate sexual relationships occurred between convicts. In October 1846 John Price, the civil Commandant, wrote to the Comptroller-General enclosing a letter written by one of the convicts condemned to death for his part in a mutiny. Price writes: "Disgusting as is its nature, I feel it would be a dereliction of my duty did I not transmit so convincing a proof of the horrid crime that I am satisfied prevails here to a great extent, a crime that can only be prevented by the erection of separate sleeping apartments and the constant inspection of the wards "(Smith, 1991, p.44). The enclosed letter, written by an anonymous convict, provides insight into his close relationship with another inmate:

> Dear Lover,
> I hope you wont [sic.] forget me when I am far away and all my bones is moldered away I have not closed an eye since I lost sight of you [sic.]your precious sight was always a welcome and loving charming spectacle. Dear Jack I value Death nothing but it is in leaving you my dear behind and no one to look after you [sic] But I hope you will be aware of the delusive of man. the only thing that grieves me love is when I think of the pleasant nights we have had together. I hope you wont fall in love with no other man when I am dead I remain your True and loving affectionate Lover[sic.] (Dessaix, 1993, p.20).

Does this mean that same-sex activity was merely a sexual substitute due to the incarceration of men in a penal environment where their access to women was generally non-existent? While some historians are cautious about accrediting the early colonial penal system with a dominant homosexual influence, it does seem apparent that some same-sex relationships existed for other reasons than heterosexual substitution or release of sexual

tension. According to Fogarty (1992), evidence was given before the Molesworth Committee that partnerships of some duration formed between some male convicts. Indeed, his interpretation needs to be similarly critiqued in its historical context just as Fogarty himself has argued. Considering that writers of this period did not have access to a language that described homosexuality, it would seem probable for those writers to explain the reasons underlying same-sex activity from their own heterosexist viewpoint. Be that as it may, the above letter suggests that an intimate friendship was shared by these two men. The fact that the anonymous convict describes himself as "your True [sic.] and loving affectionate Lover" (Dessaix, 1993, p.20) reveals a deep and lasting relationship from his viewpoint.

There is considerable evidence not only of same-sex relationships during the convict period but also a same-sex culture which defied attempts being made to create a "normalized" society based upon heterosexual marriage. Indeed Morris (1995) suggests that the common reporting of same-sex activity was politically motivated and eventually led to the cessation of transportation of convicts from England and Ireland. In his report Charles LaTrobe, the Lieutenant Governor of Port Phillip, states: "There can be no doubt but that to a certain extent, the public mind has become familiarized to the idea and mention of it [same-sex activity], and consequently tainted" (Morris, 1995, 115).

The evidence from the Molesworth Committee shows quite unmistakably that more than same-sex activity was involved in the phenomena described to the British parliamentarians. It was reported that some men spoke of their partners as "fancy girls", meaning that there was an on-going relationship which not only satisfied sexual pleasure

but met the emotional and affective needs of the men involved in this type of relationship.

According to one writer, it would appear that there was some type of social institution

built around same-sex relationships that modeled or mimicked the conventional

heterosexual paradigm (Simes, 1992).

Silencing Same-Sex Activity

What meaning can be attributed to the evidence that is gradually surfacing from

this era? A vital clue to interpreting the information seems to be contained in the language

used to describe the activity being reported. The Molesworth Committee refers to this

activity as an "unnatural crime". The British parliamentarians and the Australian witnesses

knew what was meant by this phrase. It did not have to explained or clarified in the

Committee hearings. The use of the term "unnatural" implies not only a legal terminology

but also a Christian philosophy about sex which upheld that the only true "natural"

purpose of sexual intercourse was procreation and that all other non-reproductive sexual

acts were in contrast unnatural. Is it not significant that the language used to describe this

"unnatural crime" of buggery became translated as sodomy, the etymology of which lies in

the story of Sodom and Gomorrah? Such language clearly relegates this type of activity to

a criminal offense, punishable by the law of the land. The fact that Captain Arthur Phillip

aligned sodomy with murder as " two crimes that would merit death" (Simes, 1992, p.35)

indicates the seriousness of the crime. A definite moral code was being applied to sexual

activity and it was being re-inforced by the law of the land. Those who upheld such a code seemed to accept unquestioningly the Christian philosophy of sex (Simes, 1992).

It appears certain expressions of sexual activity were ignored or allowed to occur without prosecution from the authorities, while other types of sexual activities were classified as illegal. What motivated the establishment and interpretation of a moral order by a particular group of people which led to the enforcement of these laws? Certain heterosexual behaviors were tolerated, if not totally ignored, while others such as sodomy were reported as moral depravity, punishable by the severest penalties. A prevalence of sodomy and other "unnatural crimes and unnamable offenses" under the notorious Probation System of convict discipline in Van Diemen's Land between 1839 and 1846 was one of the reasons that the system was eventually abandoned and its Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, was recalled (Dessaix, 1993). Underlying the laws and their enactment were the particular bias and prejudice of the ruling people of this era who established a moral code which became part of the legal system of Australia.

There appears to be adequate evidence which confirms the colony was known for its moral laxity and for its tolerance of a vast range of sexual improprieties (Wotherspoon, 1988). Apart from the well-publicized unconventional arrangements which existed among the colony's heterosexual lower orders, marines and convicts alike, there were noted incidents of the ruling class establishment flouting the sexual conventions. David Collins, the first Judge Advocate and later appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, quite openly kept a mistress as did Governor King. Acting Judge Advocate, Richard Atkins, fathered three illegitimate children. Indeed the census of 1806 reveals the

widespread nature of loose legal arrangements listing 395 wives in the colony and 1035

living together without being married. Compared to the 807 children born in wedlock,

there were noted a list of 1025 illegitimate children (Wotherspoon, 1988, p.12). Such was

the perceived immorality of this colony that its first chaplain complained that he was

surrounded by the "...depravity of the convicts and of the higher orders of society"

(Wotherspoon, 1988, p.12).

Some contemporary cultural historians claim that the word homosexuality did not

exist until the late nineteenth century implying that the activity that took place in this

period needs to be understood from some other perspective (Fogarty, 1992). From the

research referred to earlier, it seems evident that there were different expressions of

sexuality apparent in this convict era. It would seem clear that close, loving relationships

did exist as well as other abusive practices such as rape and sexual abuse. If, in writing the

history of this period, all that was mentioned were the sexual practices of sodomy or

buggery, then history defines itself only in terms of specific sexual activities. Such

historical interpretation defines people merely by describing their activity and denies

recognition of other possible meanings underlying the activity. Considering that this part

of colonial history has been written from a dominant heterosexist perspective interprets the

history of a significant group of convict people. If the story of some of these convict men

could be re-claimed and told from the perspective of their relationships, then the emphasis

might be entirely different. The description of what took place could well cover the

spectrum of intimate, loving relationships to other forms of abusive activities.

Associating same-sex activity with the colonial convict system of the early nineteenth century enabled the ruling classes to relegate certain unacceptable sexual behaviors to a particular class. By locating homosexuality within a separate convict system, the authorities distinguished who was moral and who was deviant. It became clear that the convicts were characterized as being deviant in contrast to those who were not incarcerated and who became the moral custodians. The danger with this type of thinking is that it leads to splitting things too easily into good and bad, moral and immoral. Splitting was initially defined by W.F.D. Fairbairn to describe the way a child dealt with an inconsistent and unsatisfactory world (Cashdan, 1988). In a child's growing up phase the primary care-taker, who is invariably the mother, is oftentimes experienced as good when the infant's needs are being gratified. However, there are those occasions where the mother frustrates the desires of the infant and the child feels rejected. The infant is consequently faced with a dilemma. While the child feels frustrated because they are not able to control the mother's behavior, they simultaneously experience strong feelings of attachment to her. According to Fairbairn the child copes with this dilemma by constructing an inner world where mother's behavior is divided into good and bad components (Cashdan, 1988). "The result is an inner world that is split into "good" and "bad" internal objects, each corresponding to the gratifying and ungratifying aspects of the mother" (Cashdan, 1988, p.10).

When these same principles of splitting are applied to what was occurring in the new found colony of Australia, similar patterns can be detected operating within the culture itself. In circumstances where society is not able to sustain itself and can not hold

both "the good" and "the bad" aspects of its development, then splitting occurs. In order to be accepted and avoid the pain of isolation and abandonment people become defined in terms of good or bad. Splitting is a powerful and appealing way to make sense of complex experiences, especially when they are confusing or threatening. This is characterized when a group, who is threatened or dissatisfied, creates an evil enemy against which the good insiders must struggle (McWilliams, 1994). The Australian colony, from the outset, was split into free settlers and convicts. As a way of dealing with their painful isolation, people repressed their feelings which led to "feelings of frustration, persecution, and denigration" (Cashdan, 1988, p.11). The convict population took on the projection of society's unsavoury elements which provided a way for the ruling class to deny the complexities of the situation. Because same-sex activity came to be only associated with the convict population, it was viewed in pejorative terms. Anyone who participated in this type of activity was seen to be depraved and not normal. Such a reaction fueled a dualistic type of thinking which in turn lead to the categorization of people into 'normal' and 'abnormal'. When minority groups become devalued, the tendency is to dehumanize them and brand them with derogatory terms such as "faggots", " dykes", "poofters" and "sissies". When splitting becomes distorted, it becomes dangerous.

The Legacy of the Convict Era

What impact does the convict era have on the fashioning of attitudes and values in the present context of Australian society? While there are differing interpretations given to

same-sex activity and its causal factors, it is apparent that this foundational period of Australia's colonial history was quite familiar with common occurrences of same-sex activity. Australia was an isolated continent with little direct interference from the colonial powers in Whitehall. How has this historical genre influenced the way Australians think about homosexuality today?

As a way of responding to these questions the State of Tasmania will be used as a microcosm of the convict era to see if any influences have filtered down into the present era. Tasmania is an island State of Australia, situated two hundred miles south of the coast of the mainland and it harbored the worst of the criminal element from the Australian penal system. One writer has interpreted the establishment of the Port Arthur penal system in Van Diemen's Land as a form of ritual cleansing from the mainland convict system. Additionally, this island was selected for its distance and isolation to receive those members of its population that the British Government considered to be a blight on its name. The convict population of Van Diemen's Land was split off and isolated from the mainland of Australia. These were the undesirable and unwanton element of society who could be disposed of under the guise of Transportation (Morris, 1995). They were sent to Van Diemen's Land.

What then precipitated the change of name in the middle of last century from Van Diemen's Land to Tasmania? One writer believes that the naming was symbolic of a change of identity whereby the past was cut off and forgotten. In family systems theory the concept of emotional cutoff describes the way people commonly deal with unresolved fusion to their families of origin, namely, by insulating themselves or "cutting themselves

off" emotionally from the parental family (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The cut-off can be expressed in various ways such as physical distancing, emotional withdrawal or avoidance of emotionally charged areas. It becomes apparent that this is what happened to Tasmania. In order to avoid its painful past, it was easier to deny the convict era and all the activities that were associated with it.

Because Tasmanians are 'islanders', their geography can fuel an illusion that they can possibly create or maintain a social structure untarnished by outside influences. In many ways this type of thinking established the penal system in Tasmania and has continued to shape its history. Van Diemen's Land was considered *Terra Nullis* by those at Whitehall who determined its fate. It was selected per se for its distance and isolation to receive those members of the population that the British Government considered a blight to its name. Could this in fact have been a type of ritual cleansing of the homeland whereby the ruling classes managed to define a social purity that suited them (Morris, 1995)? Tasmania is a classic example of splitting whereby society lived under the illusion that certain groups were good and moral while others were immoral and bad.

In more recent times the development of the social history approach has enabled the stories of the convict people to be re-claimed and interpreted from another perspective. As a result of research it become known that certain documents had been suppressed, or partly destroyed or altered. It is evident that a particular viewpoint about the history of the convict people was being generated for Government officials. Morris (1995) argues that it was in this very period that the seeds of an homogenous Tasmanian myth were being sown and the roots of its history were detached from its painful

beginnings. The campaign by the Chief Justice (1886-98), Sir William Lambert Dobson, to have all convict buildings destroyed certainly gives the impression that attempts were made to remove a major part of colonial history.

The brutal beginnings of European occupation of this island continued to have a ripple effect upon the formulation of colonial life. In 1850 about half of the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land were or had been convicts. For half a century one half of the population of the island had been engaged in disciplining and policing the other half. Indeed some of those involved in enforcing the law had been convicts themselves. In this same period free settlers were petitioning the British Government to stop transporting convicts to Van Diemen's Land. The outcome of this debate was that the colonists stayed and transportation ceased (Morris, 1995).

A nation's history can not be denied. The crucial elements that have formed its mores, its thinking, along with its emerging attitudes and values becomes part of its history. What happens when a nation allows part of its story to be forgotten or denied? Using insights from psychology it is possible to see how these effects are played out in a nation's psyche. Family systems theory maintains that the dynamics that operate in a microcosm, such as a family group, are also apparent in the way larger groups function. It seems helpful then to apply the insights gained from the study of family systems to a macrocosmic understanding of a nation's psyche.

According to Taub-Bynum "the family unconscious is composed of extremely powerful affective energies from the earliest life of the individual" (Ivey, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, 1993). Essentially, the life experiences of an individual in the family of origin

enters their whole being in both positive and negative ways. Experience in the family is transmitted to the child and becomes very much a part of the child's way of interpreting the world. The underpinnings of this dynamic are found in object relations theory. What occurs in a child's life experience is influential in framing the way that they will interpret events and continue to make meaning of their experience as they progress. Certain pathological roots can be traced to early childhood development where a child was deprived or denied their basic needs. The construction, development and recognition of the family of origin become crucial in understanding the individual's development.

Taub-Bynum relies upon the insights gained from Jungian psychology for his concept of the multicultural or collective unconscious (Ivey, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, 1993, p. 176). Jung talks of the collective unconscious as drawing on all thought and behavior patters over time. Using Jung's constructs, it has been proposed that much of a person's collective unconscious is the repository of that person's earliest 'world'- the family. The family and the culture are intricately interwoven in the psychology of an individual. The family is the first place where culture is experienced and learnt. As Ivey (1993) goes on to state: "The interplay between individual and family affective experience is the formative dialectic of culture. It is not really possible to separate individuals, family and culture for their interplay is powerful and persistent" (Ivey, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, p.176).

When the individual is considered within the expanded context of the family unconscious, it can be seen how each person's dynamic functioning is caught up in the functioning of significant others who share the same field of consciousness, energy and experience. There it is possible to witness the expression of symptoms and behaviors, both

somatic and psychological, in an individual as well as the family group. However, the interrelationship does not stop at the family of origin level. At a more complex level, Taub-Bynum points to intergenerational transmissions of symptoms in a family (Ivey, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, 1993). For example it is possible to trace alcoholism down through a series of generations in one family system.

What are the implications of this theory when applied to a society's psychological development? The importance of emphasizing the relevance of the extended family field is that a person can come home again to their origins (Friedman, 1985). Gaining a better understanding of the emotional process still at work within a nation's culture can aid significantly in the resolution of its current emotional problems. Additionally, specific patterns of behavior, perceptions and thinking have an uncanny way of re-appearing in national forums. When a particular culture is able to see beyond the horizons of its own present socio-history and observe the transmission of such legacies from one generation to the next, it can be helped to distance itself enough from being bound in a specific cultural pattern and become freer to make changes (Friedman, 1985).

Is it not significant that the State of Tasmania has been involved in a drawn out battle over homosexual law reform since the 1980's? In fact what initiated the commencement of debate regarding the State's laws was a courageous appeal made on behalf of a gay activist to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in September 1993. Those who were actively working towards law reform had to appeal to the Federal Government to intervene on their behalf because the Tasmanian State Government was

not receptive to any repeal of the law. Those involved in the law committee focused their

energies on the appeal of sections 122 and 123 of the Criminal Code namely:

> 122. Any person who -
> (a) has sexual intercourse with any person against the order of nature;
> (b) has sexual intercourse with an animal;
> (c) consents to a male person having sexual intercourse with him or her
> against the order of nature, is guilty of a crime.
> Charge: Unnatural sexual intercourse.
>
> 123. Any male person who, whether in public or in private, commits any indecent
> assault upon, or other act of gross indecency with, another male person, or
> procures another male person to commit any act of gross indecency with himself or
> any other male person, is guilty of a crime.
> Charge: Indecent practice between male persons (Morris, 1995, pp.6-7).

The Tasmanian Government refused any reform on the basis that the laws were

necessary for securing public health and morals. The Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights

Group argued that anti-gay laws violated the principles of human dignity. To underline

their argument they submitted a list of vilifying statements made by figures of authority in

Tasmania, highlighting the linkage between Tasmanian law and anti-gay prejudice.

The chamber of the Legislative Council, the Upper House of Government, has the

power to reject changes to law reform from the Lower House. From within this influential

body came such disparaging comments from its honorable members:

> ...I believe we ought to be...tightening up the laws, making them a little more
> drastic than they are now, a little more draconian, and maybe we would influence a
> few of them [gays] to take the plane north...where it has been decriminalized. do
> not let them sully our state with their evil activities. Hon. George Brookes, MLC
> (Morris, 1995, p.105)
>
> [The police need to]...track them down and wipe out, like murderers, drug addicts
> and deviant AIDS carriers...when I hear a minister of the Crown making reference
> to the decriminalization of homosexuality I feel sick in the guts... Hon. Richard
> Archer, MLC (Morris, 1995, p.105).

In 1992 the Tasmanian Government sent its rejection of law reform to the Federal Government which, in contrast, stated that it had "no wish to challenge the admissibility of the communication on any ground" (Morris, 1995). In November 1992 the United Nations Human Rights Committee declared the Tasmanian gay law reform case admissible, and wrote to the Federal Government seeking Australia's views on the case. In essence the Federal Government dismissed the Tasmanian Government's arguments about public health and morality and concurred with those contesting this unjust law that Tasmania's laws violated the right to privacy. Most importantly, it agreed to accept a United Nations Human Rights Committee finding that the State laws of Tasmania violated the right to equality before the law (Morris, 1995). In its submission the Federal Government stated: "The Australian government acknowledges that the prohibition on sexual acts between male persons discriminates on the grounds of sex..." (Morris, 1995, p.111).

In regards to the public health issue raised by the Tasmanian State Government, the Federal Government indicated that "...the Australian Government's National HIV/AIDS Strategy declares that 'laws...penalizing homosexuality...impede public health program promoting safer sex to prevent HIV transmission, by driving underground many of the people at risk of infection...' " (Morris, 1995, p.111). As for the moral imperative of maintaining the laws, the Federal Government responded: "In view of the actual legal and social situation in all of Australia but Tasmania, the Australian Government does not accept that a complete prohibition on sexual activity between men is necessary to sustain the moral fabric of Australian society" (Morris, 1995, p.111).

What makes this situation stand out in Australian law was the fact that the Federal Government and all other State Governments, except the Tasmanian State Government, had reformed their laws in respect to homosexual acts between consenting adults. Even more significantly, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, made up of nineteen independent members from a range of different countries, ruled that Tasmania's anti-homosexual laws breached international standards on human rights. Nevertheless, there was strong resistance in this small State toward reform of laws associated with homosexual behaviors. A significant factor in the debate was the focus of the law on the homosexual acts per se. Interestingly, a similar refrain was evidenced many years before in the Molesworth Select Committee Inquiry of 1837-38 where people highlighted sodomy as the worst evil perpetrated by the convict system. In trying to prove that the act was unnatural, immoral, and unhealthy the debate moved into categorizing and denigrating those who participate in such an act as unnatural, immoral and a health risk to the State.

Yet how was is that this small State seemed to muster such energy to hold out against the Federal Government of Australia and even the United Nations Human Rights Committee? Here was a State where a variety of sexual practices, both heterosexual and homosexual, had been tolerated and even condoned in its early history yet this was never referred to in the homosexual law reform debate. Was this part of the nation's story that had been kept secret? Family systems theory speaks of "family secrets as the plaque in the arteries of communication; they cause stoppage in the general flow and not just at the point of their existence" (Friedman, 1985, p.52). If similar dynamics are played out in a

larger social system, such as a State, then these forces become controlling within the public forum. Friedman (1985) highlights certain characteristics about family secrets:

- family secrets divide families;

- they create unnecessary estrangement's and false collusion's;

- they distort perceptions whereby family members will become confused or misled by information because they are being given only certain pieces of information, not the whole picture;

- they exacerbate other pathological processes unrelated to the content of the particular secret, because secrets generally function to keep anxiety at a higher energy levels (Friedman, 1985, pp.52-53).

In reviewing the painful outcome of the homosexual law reform debate in Tasmania many of these factors were operative in the society. A State not only became divided over homosexual law reform but also over its attitudes to its gay and lesbian people. No longer were gay people given the status of people but, by mere fact of the law, were discriminated against and treated as sub-human. Various groups, such as fundamentalist religious groups, politicians, and community leaders who would not normally associate with each other, were brought together in a cause to keep their State 'pure'. The general debate which was reported in the press and media tended to focus on the rights of gay people to participate in consenting sexual acts which denied them their humanity. Similarly, the social history of the Tasmanian people was not as accessible in the late 1980's as it is nowadays. People were not aware of the tragic story of their

colonization and, if they were, it was never proclaimed publicly. The level of anxiety that fueled this debate is captured in the warning of a highly respected law reformer in Australia, the Hon Justice M. D. Kirby CMG, when he wrote: "It would seem a fair bet that the energy and hatred voiced by many Tasmanians against their fellow citizens, who happen to be gays or lesbians, will not dissipate. It will be handed to succeeding generation unless something is done to arrest the hatred" (Morris, 1995, p.ix).

To bring the socio-historical outline to a conclusion at this point would not be doing justice to the origins of homonegativity[2] in Australian society. By focusing on the way the State of Tasmania handled the public debate on homosexual law reform reveals how its unresolved history re-surfaced in the fears generated within the psyche of the people. The interplay of the pats and the present are intricately linked and can not be separated even by a century! The hopeful sign is that two young men were prepared to take their case all the way to the highest authority in the land and even further. According to Murray Bowen, a founding father of family systems, when some-one in the system is prepared to seek their own identity and work towards differentiating from the emeshment of the group then some possibilities for health can emerge from within the system. He maintains that: "Differentiation begins when one family member begins to more clearly define and openly state his own inner life principles and convictions, and he begins to take

---

[2] Homonegativity has been more recently used to describe a wide variety of reactions to homosexuality. While homophobia is included within this broader term, there are reactions to homosexuality that are not phobic as such. According to Waldinger (1990) "a phobia is an obsessive, persistent, unrealistic fear of an object or situation" (p.66) or in this case, a person. While some responses to homosexuality are fueled by fear, not all responses are phobic. Homonegativity refers to the negative association that people attach to homosexuality which may or may not be attached to fear. In this work, homonegativity will be used as a generic term, whereas homophobia will be used when speaking more directly about obsessive, persistent and unrealistic fears.

responsible action based on convictions..." (Richardson, 1987, p.42). Applying Bowen's concept to the Tasmanian homosexual law reform situation, it would seem that the continued efforts made by particular individuals to re-claim the social history of their State have surfaced the unspoken fears and prejudices that have laid dormant for too long in the culture. By bringing the State's "family" secrets out into the open, these individuals heightened the potential to shift the thinking and activity of the system itself. The homosexual law reform debate required people to become more informed, more educated about health issues and more aware of how the present laws were denying people their humanity.

This dynamic of differentiation offers a hopeful outlook for examining the social impact of history and culture on the life of adolescent gay males. Given the negative attitudinal climate that large sections of the Australian public have toward homosexuality, this would explain why a group of our most precious people, our youth, deny their identity, seek seclusion and become marginalized. There is an urgent need to find ways of addressing this negativity. Re-claiming the story of Australia's colonial history is a crucial beginning toward greater acceptance of sexual differences in our society.

CHAPTER II

UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Is it possible to comprehend the complexities of adolescence? In this time of life a young person appears to be on constantly shifting terrain. At certain moments it is relatively easy to understand and connect with an adolescent but on meeting them at the next encounter it is as if another person has emerged. Quite often the rapid physical changes point to the dramatic emotional changes occurring within the person. Indeed, this is a watershed time in young people's lives where the threads of earlier experiences of childhood are tentatively brought together in an attempt to claim and establish more of their identity. Put in this way, it is a crucial stage in the adolescent's growing awareness of who they are as a person and what they are meant to become.

In trying to attend to the young person in this time of life it is important to see their growth as evolutionary. This adolescent time in a person's life is not something which follows sequential steps. It is better described as one step forward and two steps backwards as the young person re-claims areas in their development that need to be nurtured in order to move onwards. Because this is a period that can be unpredictable, there is a tendency to bring control into the process which attempts to define and categorize the person enough so they can become manageable! On the contrary an evolutionary approach acknowledges the emergence over time of a person's identity. Such

an approach not only highlights the dynamic involved in a person's developmental growth but also acknowledges the myriad of internal forces at work in the person.

The focus of adolescent development will be confined to high school age for the purposes of this paper. The traits of adolescence certainly continue to emerge beyond these years with recent studies indicating that the on-set of adult responsibility is being experienced later in the Western cultures. Nonetheless, the 12 to 18 year old group is the population which this paper is attending to and it is important to acknowledge this restraint from the outset.

Erikson's Developmental Crises

Some key elements of developmental theory provide helpful insights in understanding the intricate shifts that occur within the life of a young person. One major theoretical work that has offered a greater awareness of human development was constructed by Erik Erikson. By applying psychoanalytic understanding to sociological settings, Erikson noticed a continuum of development within the person. In devising his theory he situated the person within the context of family and social background (Maier, 1965). He presented each stage of human growth as a dialectic tension whereby various key issues needed to be resolved sufficiently before moving on to the next period of life issues. Viewing adolescence from this context, Erikson maintained that the person needed to face and resolve the crisis of basic ego identity. During this phase people begin to form a sense of who they are and what they are meant to become. This is a time of integration

where the adolescent incorporates that sense of self which has emerged out of the earlier developmental tasks. As they come to a greater awareness of themselves they rely heavily upon what others think of them, particularly their peer group.

Adolescence provides an opportunity for the person to develop their own internal authority. This oftentimes leads to confrontations with external authority figures, such as parents, caretakers and teachers. This provides them with the chance to distance themselves from given patterns of thinking and behavior. Even though the authority figures who the child has grown up with are questioned or rejected, the young person seeks out the authority of the peer group to provide security for their new-found freedom. Experimentation provides the young person with opportunities to try out all sorts of different behaviors, attitudes and values to see which best suits them and, more importantly, which gains them acceptance within the peer group. Erikson maintained that falling in love during adolescence was a way of discovering something valuable about themselves rather than engaging fully with the other in a mutual relationship. To fall in love with another person gives the person an experience of discovering their own self-worth in a projective manner (Erikson, 1963).

Erikson believed that various conflicts were experienced in each stage of growth. Each crisis offered opportunities for people to open up to others and feel their vulnerability while at the same time allowing their new found strength to emerge and carry them on the journey. The Chinese character for crisis is depicted as containing both opportunity and danger (Kegan, 1994). The various developmental crises reflect the dynamism contained within Erikson's construction of a person's growth pattern. For the

adolescent who emerges from this stage with a strong sense of their own identity, they are equipped to face adulthood with a greater certainty and confidence. As they develop the capacity to resolve their inner conflicts, the adolescent becomes more comfortable with who they are and rely less on the approval of others. In moving toward young adulthood, the young person is able to depend more on their own inner authority and trust that authority to lead them in forming their own moral values (Linn, Fabricant, & Linn, 1988).

For those who are not able to resolve the crises of adolescence, they can become confused about who they are, where they belong, and what they believe in (Erikson, 1968). As a way of escaping the turmoil of adolescence this type of person invests themselves in their peer group to receive confirmation of their self-worth. If, during this stage, the young person begins to identify with and develop a negative self-image as an alternative to discovering their true worth, this will be acted out by involvement in oppositional and delinquent behaviors. Promiscuous acting out behavior at this age is another way the person seeks self-satisfaction and compensation of unmet needs that have not been resolved throughout their earlier developmental phases (Erikson, 1963).

Erikson's model provides an effective backdrop for considering issues of identity formation that emerge for adolescents as they come to a greater awareness of their sexual identity. As in any attempt to capture the developmental phases of a person's life, it can be elusive and difficult to confine in any one theory. Another major factor in understanding the adolescent is trying to ascertain how that person makes meaning of their life experiences. It is one thing to interpret the broad range of experiences by observing the young person; it is another to try to gain entry into the world of the adolescent and make

sense of the meaning they attribute to these experiences. Is it possible to understand a person's growth by gaining an appreciation of the way they make meaning of their lived experiences? How do young people go about making meaning of their lives? How can this young person be helped to change and evolve?

Keagan's Constructionist Approach

Robert Kegan (1982) offers a process which provides an understanding of how people go about meaning-making in their development. Using the Piagetian approach of constructing meaning from concepts, Kegan (1982) integrates his knowledge of object relations theory with the theories of Kohlberg and Erikson to examine the forms and processes from the inside of the person. Are there "universal processes of constructing, defending, subordinating, surrendering, and reconstructing a meaning" (Kegan, 1982, p.12)? What does it actually mean for the person when their world view begins to fall apart and they are caught up in a process of breakdown and breakthrough? Kegan's constructive-developmental framework offers insight into the evolution of meaning and he proposes it "as the fundamental norm in personality" (Kegan, 1982, p.15).

Because the very nature of this model is evolutionary it acknowledges that the important aspects of personality development are occurring in the present situation. All the ingredients of development are contained within the dynamism of the person. Kegan does not see the necessity of a person having to return to earlier unresolved life experiences in order to move on. What needs to be attended to is how the person is making meaning of

their present stage of development. The possibility for developmental change and growth are contained within the present process. The meaning-making takes place in a different way at each stage of evolution. What needs to be attended to is the meaning that the young person gives to their present lived experience. In listening to the meaning that the person attributes to their experience will reveal where the person is in their culture of embeddedness.

Kegan's framework provides a way of getting inside the processes that Erikson devised. Erikson interpreted developmental theory more in terms of crises which needed to be resolved and key tasks to be resolved before the person could satisfactorily move on. Kegan prefers to focus on what is happening within the person at a particular moment in their development. Rather than requiring people to return to an earlier stage and deal with unresolved issues, Kegan (1988) believes that the person needs to remain in their present crisis and find other ways of making meaning of their experience. Building on Mahler's concept where the infant was "hatched out" of the world with mother, Kegan uses this idea to describe what he calls "embeddedness" (Kegan, 1982). He indicates that a person does not just go through one experience of being hatched out of the infant environment. Rather, Kegan indicates that this experience is continuously repeated as the person moves from one experience of embeddedness to another. The distinctive features of infancy (fusion, differentiation, belonging) are a constant theme which keeps re-playing in a person's life (Conn, 1989). While these distinctive features keep recurring, the person finds new forms of making meaning of themselves and the other in their world view. As the young person discovers newer and different ways of making meaning of their

experience, they are enabled to move on into another stage of embeddedness where the process continues.

At each stage of development, Kegan (1982) believes that the person is embedded in a "holding environment" similar to that described by Winnicott. In his writings, Winnicott focused on the quality of the actual relationship offered by the mother to her infant. This relationship was one where the infant could expect a secure and stable relationship with a mother who was committed to providing for his needs (Scharff & Scharff, 1992). The holding environment was crucial in providing a context in which development took place in the infant's world. Here the infant was fused with mother and eventually became enabled to distinguish self from mother due to the effective holding environment that was provided. The environment offered by the mother was a very physical care-taking relationship characterized by a devotion and preoccupation with her infant. The infant 's capacity to discover their very self was dependent upon the mother's capacity to provide a secure holding relationship (Scharff & Scharff, 1992). The mother became "the environment mother" and provided the support required for the infant to explore their feelings and take risks. Such an environment allowed the infant to relate to the mother as an "object" of love and aggression (Scharff & Scharff, 1992).

The Culture Of Embeddedness

Kegan (1988) uses this symbolic understanding to describe a psychosocial environment or holding environment which he referred to as "the culture of

embeddedness". This is the particular form of the world in which the person is embedded in the various movements of evolution that take place within each developmental phase. Whereas Winnicott viewed the holding environment as intrinsic to infancy alone, Kegan sees it being part of every stage of development throughout life. He maintains: "There is not one holding environment early in life but a succession of holding environments which holds us [with which we are fused] and which let go of us [from which we differentiate] (Kegan, 1982, p.116)."

As the person evolves in development, there is never a time when they are totally individuated or fully separated from their psychosocial environment. There is always a part of the person which is embedded in their environment. This provides enough security for the person to make new meanings of life. In this dialectical framework there is a constant state of movement. What is appealing about Kegan's model is that it incorporates the learning's gained from earlier developmental struggles into a person's present meaning-making process. In this regard a person does not repeat the identical meaning-making of their childhood experience but rather they bring to their present experience the strengths and insights gained from earlier struggles with those issues, to make new meaning of their current situation. They are constantly being involved in differentiation and individuation throughout their developmental life.

Kegan calls the holding environment a culture of embeddedness wherein the person rests securely. This culture of embeddedness is the particular form of the world in which the person is at that particular moment in their evolution (Kegan, 1988). Each stage of development has its own unique culture of embeddedness whereby the person is held

securely as they negotiate the anxiety of differentiation. There are three major functions that occur in each stage of embeddedness: holding on, letting go and remaining in place. Firstly, holding on or attachment to a certain way of being refers to whether the person is being held in a particular environment while also attending to the manner in which they are being held in that environment. The person makes meaning of their world and interprets things through this channel of understanding.

Secondly, the culture of embeddedness must let go. The intricate nature involved in meaning-making teeters on the edge of something new emerging which means letting go of former ways of making sense of life. As the self continues to evolve, the person is caught in a balancing act whereby a part of them is secure while another part is verging on the possibility of losing balance. These familiar ways of making meaning are thrown out of balance and no longer satisfy the needs of the person. This provides the opportunity for the system to topple over and fall into another way of making-meaning that is suitable for the person's developmental stage. This process is, by its very nature, paradoxical, for the environment must be able to hold on and let go simultaneously. When a person is in a healthy holding environment it provides what it takes for separation to occur. Meanwhile, something is being lost in this movement toward differentiation. For this function to occur there needs to be a security in the holding environment both internally and externally that allows the person to be held without being constrained (Kegan, 1982). The adolescent requires enough self security in themselves to take the risk required to unbalance the equilibrium and be held as they discover a totally new way of making meaning. They also

require an environment of home, school and peers that provides enough security for them to become different without becoming lost.

Finally, the culture of embeddedness needs to "remain in place during the period of transformation and re-equilibration" (Kegan, 1982, p.129). If the culture disappears at exactly the same time when the person is experiencing a loss of themselves as they knew it then they are left anchorless. What the person separates from, they find anew. In this regard "...development is not a matter of differentiation alone, but of differentiation and integration (Kegan, 1982, p.67).

Kegan's Stages Of Balance

How might this model help in understanding adolescence? Within each major stage of development there is a dynamic of balance and de-stabilization at work. The holding environment provides the impetus to shift the person's balance enough for them to topple over, let go and eventually reintegrate into another culture of embeddedness whereby the process repeats itself. In exploring the period of early adolescence Kegan refers to this as the imperial balance (Kegan, 1982). During this time the child has already begun to experience themselves as a child in relation to a parent rather than being an impulsive self whose life is totally bound up in the life of the parent. The young person gradually comes to an awareness that they have their own private world distinct from that of their parents. This is expressed in the adolescent's need for privacy both in their external world and inner world. Having the capacity to take command of impulses means the young person

discovers they can have impulses without being them. There is a growing sense that the young person is attaining independence in their own thinking which contains a certain degree of power for them.

Every new balance of interior freedom carries new risks and new vulnerabilities. As the young person comes to awareness that they have something to do with what happens in the world, then they interpret things going good or bad as dependent upon them. This is a time when the young person has to have a sense of exercising control over their world. In encountering another, the young person sees them as a means by which they "either do or do not meet their needs, fulfill their wishes or pursue their interests" (Kegan, 1982, p.91). The external world still plays a significant part in this period of life. As the evolutionary process continues, the person comes to realize that *I am* no longer my needs but rather *I have* needs. There are choices that can be made about the needs rather than being controlled by them. The person has let go of a particular way of making meaning of their life by being held in an environment that enables them to change perspective.

As the person experiences the re-integration of the imperial balance they become embedded in the interpersonal balance around mid-adolescence and beyond. Kegan (1982) describes this movement of the self as if it recognizes its many parts and is able to engage in conversation with them. Whereas the imperial stage was about discovering I am more than my needs, the interpersonal balance is best captured by *I am my relationships*. However the limitation of the self is that it is not able to step outside of the relationship. Who I am becomes *the* relationship. According to Kegan: "There is no self to share with

another; instead the other is required to bring the self into being. Fusion is not intimacy" (Kegan, 1982, p.97). The young adult is embedded in the peer relationship and the meaning-making can not comprehend that the "I" exists separately from the other.

A person in the interpersonal balance is not good at interpreting the meaning of anger. For a person to become angry with another indicates that the person has developed an sense of self that is separate from the other. It appears that when people in this stage are in situations which would make others feel angry such as when they are being taken advantage of or victimized, they do not feel this at all. Instead they are more likely to feel sad, wounded or incomplete because they can not know themselves separate from the interpersonal context in which they are immersed (Kegan, 1982).

The struggle of adolescence is to come to a declaration of themselves that is separate from their relation with the other. The self requires a holding environment from both within and without so that the person is no longer *the* relationship but has a sense of being a separate entity. The capacity to become separate allows the person to acknowledge that they are a person in their own right and they have feelings separate from the other. But this balance requires a self that has made meaning of their experience to know that the other can survive my feelings. In differentiation from embeddedness in interpersonalism the meaning-making that occurs makes a self which is able to maintain coherency in relationships and in doing so achieves an identity (Conn, 1989). As the person moves into early adulthood, or the institutional balance as Kegan (1984) refers to it, they discover they can transcend relationships enough to experience a new capacity for

independence. The re-integration which occurs in the stage enables the person to have an

independent self that is separate from, and not owned by, their various relationships.

CHAPTER III

ENGAGING GAY ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY - ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH, FAMILY, AND THE SCHOOL.

The insights from developmental theory provide a framework which can assist in understanding what adolescence can mean for the emerging gay male. Adolescence is that time of life when sexual awareness surfaces questions for the young male person regarding his identity and his sexuality. This is a vital period in life where the young person continues to individuate from significant others while, at the same time, integrating newly discovered roles, role expectations and identities into a core sense of self (Newman & Muzzonigro, 1994).

Adolescent Sexuality

Three significant phases appear to emerge in the unfolding of adolescent sexual development. Cates (1987) described the three phases as early, middle and late adolescence. Early adolescence is characterized by the initiation of emotional withdrawal from parental figures. The roles and boundaries that have been defined become questioned as challenges emerge between inner and outer authorities in the adolescent. While friendships have a tendency to be self-absorbed and insular at this time, they do provide the foundations for adulthood (Cates, 1987). With the onset of puberty, the sexual dimension of both self and relationships emerges. As outlined in the previous chapter, the

42

young person is embedded in a culture of their own needs and they are unable to separate themselves from their needs (Kegan, 1982). During this period, Cates (1987) maintains that sexual activity often reflects self-exploration. This seems to be exemplified in masturbatory activities which combine the fantasy of sex within the safety of self. Sexual activity with peers continues the exploration process while examining the changes that are occurring within the body. Cates goes on to say that "Homosexual activity at this stage is considered exploration rather than a life adjustment" (Cates, 1987, p.355).

Middle adolescence is a period where the values system of the young person is in flux. Frequently the adolescent moves away from parental values and adopts those of his peer group. Increased identification happens simultaneously with differentiation from significant others. Relationships become more intense as they are viewed more as mutual interactions (Cates, 1987). However, as previously mentioned, this is a time where the adolescent's meaning becomes immersed in relationships. They are unable to separate themselves from their relationships (Kegan, 1982). Sexual activity moves to a level where sexual identity becomes more prominent. The potential beyond curiosity and physical satisfaction are realized. This is a time where the adolescent can decide to accept and examine same-sex attractions or to suppress their existence. Acceptance often results in the young person admitting their same sex-orientation. Erikson (1962) captured this well when he described the adolescent as discovering their own self-worth in a projective manner.

The focus of the third stage of adolescence is preparatory for young adulthood. Educational and vocational choices set directions for the future life goals. Relationships,

including sexual behavior, tend to encompass further explorations in friendships while some consistent pattern becomes more evident (Cates, 1987). As the person emerges from that culture of embeddedness where they were immersed in their relationships, they begin to experience that they have relationships and are separate from them (Kegan, 1982). The experiences of sexual, emotional and social attractions seem to merge into patterns of behavior that culminate "in the assumption of an identity" (Cates, 1987; Erikson, 1962). For an adolescent, who is attracted to a same-sex orientation in this phase of development, he will have identified with being gay and differentiated from the majority of heterosexual youth. His socialization patterns become more identified with the gay male subculture.

It seems apparent that there are significant differences between gay and lesbian youth as they come to acknowledge their sexual identity. Studies indicate that gay males sexually act on their same-sex feelings earlier than females after they become aware of their same-sex attractions. While lesbian youth tend to internalize their understanding and experience their same-sex attraction more from an emotional and intellectual level, gay males tend to act out their attractions (Besner & Spungin, 1995). Lesbian youth focus more on their feelings and see themselves more than just being identified as homosexual. The way gay males tend to avoid being identified as gay is to avoid their feelings. The homosexual self-label seems to be more threatening to males than females (Besner & Spungin, 1995).

It is important to approach the above synthesis of various adolescent stage development theories with some caution. These theories might lead people to assume that youth move through these three developmental periods in a linear fashion and emerge with

a clearer sexual identity. Due to the varying degrees of self exploration and sexual experimentation that occur for the adolescent, it is oftentimes difficult to define a person's orientation or identity clearly. For an adolescent male attempting to make meaning of what is happening for him, it can be a confusing time in his life. It will be important to clarify the meanings that the adolescent gives to homosexuality and subsequently how he attempts to make sense of these meanings for himself.

Defining Terms

Traditionally, social science has attempted to differentiate between sexual actions, tendencies, and psychological identities of individuals. In particular, researchers commonly distinguish between homosexual behavior, orientation, and identity. According to Savin-Williams (1990) homosexual orientation is present from an early age of life, perhaps even at conception. It is thought to comprise a dominance of sexual feelings, erotic thoughts or fantasies, and/or behaviors which the person desires with members of the same sex. Orientation comprises a natural at-home-ness with another of the same sex and a feeling of being drawn to that person of the same sex. While this does not necessarily mean that the person is engaging in sexual activity, it clearly indicates that the person is naturally drawn to someone of the same sex. Orientation, while not distinct from, is not the same as homosexual activity or the homosexual stimulating experience contained in sexual behavior between members of the same sex (Savin-Williams, 1990).

Sexual identity, as defined by Savin-Williams (1990), represents a consistent, enduring self-recognition of the meanings that the sexual orientation and sexual behavior have for the person. Monteiro and Fuqua (1995) nuance this definition by adding that "male homosexual identity occurs when a person designates his sexuality as central to his definition of self" (Monteiro & Fugua, 1995, p.161). It is this last concept, viz. homosexual identity, which most closely approximates the common definition of "gay".

While these definitions help clarify differences between the three areas it is important to recognize there is a lot of interplay between the three. By focusing on sexual activity alone to gain understanding of an adolescent's growing sense of their identity would misconstrue the meaning of identity and orientation. Studies indicate that among teenagers many forms of sexual activity with partners varying in age, sex, and other-person variables are commonplace regardless of self-labeled or self-professed sexual orientation and identity (Savin-Williams, 1990). In our society same-sex behavior among teenagers is quite common, including incidental homosexual activities of otherwise predominantly heterosexually oriented adolescents (Anderson, 1995). The relationship between homosexual activity and homosexual identity is neither fixed nor absolute. As Troiden mentions "a certain amount of independence exists between sexual behavior and sexual identity" (Troiden, 1988).

Studies collated by Savin-Williams (1990a) point to the complexity of sexual identity. While some gay and lesbian youth are virgins, some heterosexual adolescents engage in extensive and prolonged same-sex activities.

There can thus be little doubt that not only does homosexual behavior occur during adolescence, it may also be quite prevalent. Such behavior, however, may or may not be indicative of a homosexual orientation or identification. Given the complexity of whether one defines homosexuality by reference to orientation, behavior, or self-label and the fact than many teens experience a diversity of sexual behaviors and an emerging sexual identity over a period of several years, a process that may not be completed until young adulthood, it is difficult to assess the prevalence of a homosexual orientation among adolescents. Despite this handicap, it is abundantly clear that gay and lesbian youth exist during childhood and adolescence - with or without homosexual behavior and/or a homosexual identity (Savin-Williams, 1990a, p.204).

This complexity highlights the difficulty a young person experiences in attempting to name his sexual identity. Prior to research into adolescent sexual identity, writers assumed that the task of adolescence was to emerge as a heterosexual. Any homosexual activity that took place during this evolutionary phase was viewed as a normal part of their exploration (Savin-Williams, 1990b). While this may have relieved anxious parents, it certainly left the adolescent with mixed messages about what it meant to be 'normal'. From this type of thinking it was understood that homosexuality was an expression of maladaptive behavior and stunted growth (Cates, 1987). Some sections of society still continue to argue that a teenager lacks the maturity to determine his sexual orientation to be gay and that this is merely an adolescent fantasy phase that he will outgrow. Such thinking is based upon the assumption that a homosexual orientation is an achieved status, obtained through social conditioning or circumstances. Glasser (1977) argued that adolescents must "make the choice to progress to heterosexuality." (Savin-Williams, 1990, p. 207). Even up to the present time, research conducted among health care providers indicates that strong residues of this type of thinking still exist (Street, 1994).

There are adolescents who have identified their predominant sexual attraction to a same-sex person. This process of actually naming his orientation to himself and others is called "coming out" and is associated with coming out of the closet to reveal one's true identity. A great deal of research has been conducted retrospectively with homosexual adults asking them to identify what occurred for them as they came to a clearer awareness of being homosexual. It seems there is little or no prospective research on the development of sexual orientation (Anderson, 1994). According to Ellis (1996) there appear to be three major obstacles which confront those who seek estimates of sexual orientation. They are listed as follows:

1. Some people are difficult to classify in studies because they have attractions for both sexes in varying degrees or their sexual attractions change over time.

2. There is uncertainty about whether sexual orientation refers to sexual preferences or to behaviors.

3. It is difficult to obtain information from representative samples of adults who are willing to answer intimate questions about their sexuality.

However, research conducted over recent years points clearly to rough estimates of the prevalence of homosexuality based upon a criteria that tends to overlap:

- fantasies about same-sex relationships;

- engagement in intimate same-sex relationships;

- exclusive long-term preference for same-sex relationships (Ellis, 1996).

According to reports of adult lesbians and gay men, the onset of homosexual

arousal, homosexual erotic imagery and homosexual romantic attachment occurs

predominantly during adolescence with a majority having had experiences before fifteen

years of age. Gay males tend to be aware of their same-sex attractions around 12 to 14

years of age, which is earlier than females (Anderson, 1994). Moreover, gay males

experience significant physical homosexual body contact in the same period. While there is

wide individual variation, gay males tend to begin homosexual activity during early or mid

adolescence. Males are more likely to act on their same-sex feelings a lot sooner than

females. The average age of the first same-sex experience for boys was 13.1 years while

for girls it was 15.2 years (Anderson, 1994).

Another study reported by Savin-Williams (1990a) noted that 41% of gay males

had same-sex activity during childhood (5-9 years) and this proportion steadily increased

to 59% during pre-adolescence (10-12 years), 70% during adolescence (13-17 years) and

96% during late adolescence (18-24 years). The percentages of heterosexual adolescents

engaging in homosexual behavior was considerably lower, with a noticeable decrease after

the preadolescent age. From both of the above studies it would seem feasible to conclude

that those who have identified themselves as same-sex oriented have a far greater

likelihood of engaging in prepubertal sexual contact with other males (Savin-Williams,

1990a). This is important information in understanding the coming out process for gay

adolescent males.

Most often, awareness of their homosexuality appears to happen suddenly with

adolescents, even for those teenagers who have frequently participated in same-sex

activity or have had homoerotic experiences earlier in adolescent or childhood. Anderson (1995) maintains there are many reasons why gay adolescents or even preadolescents come to this seemingly sudden awareness of their gay sexual orientation. It appears that many adolescents gain the cognitive capacity for abstract thought and formal reasoning at this particular stage of development, which enables them to integrate their past experiences with their current situation. Kegan (1982) points out that their meaning-making evolves to another level, providing them with the capability of interpreting their experiences in a new light. As puberty begins, sexual arousal associated with particular stimuli, along with erotic imagery, masturbation, and romantic attachment all increase dramatically and are likely to have strong homosexual content (Anderson, 1994). Another strong defining characteristic of this period is when their peers make choices to invest themselves in other-sex relationships and heterosexual activities. This leaves the gay adolescent asking himself why he is different and, more importantly, why and how he feels differently. He is now required to make a new meaning for himself as a result of these factors. The anxiety that accompanies this phase points oftentimes to the painful recognition of identity and of difference.

While recognizing the findings of the above research, it does not give any clear insights into what may actually cause homosexual orientation. In 1990 the "Kinsey Institute Report on Sex" asserted that it is still unknown what causes homosexuality (Coleman, 1995). While many theories have been proposed, they do not seem to comply with all the complexities that emerge in the study of homosexuality. Current theory is that there are probably many developmental paths by which a person becomes homosexual,

ambisexual[3] or heterosexual. What can be informative to the discussion is to outline some of the proposed major causes that have been attributed to a homosexual orientation. These causes include: genetic, prenatal/hormonal, adult (postnatal)/hormonal and psychological factors.

(a) Genetic Factors:

Early research into the causes of homosexuality suggested a strong genetic component, but these results did not withstand further tests. From studies conducted with identical and fraternal twins and in near-relatives of homosexuals there is circumstantial evidence which suggests some degree of genetic influence in the development of the homosexual orientation of some people. Other findings are pointing to the possibilities that variations in sexual orientation may be the result of differences in brain structure (Coleman, 1995).

(b) Prenatal/Hormonal Factors:

As a result of a number of natural and accidental occurring conditions, it has been shown that some human fetuses can radically alter their physical development, brain

---

[3] The term "ambisexual" acknowledges the broad spectrum of sexual orientation and sexual identity which includes bisexual, transgendered and transexual people. While a person may experience a strong sense of being drawn to a particular orientation and find satisfaction in its expression, there may be other factors that interact in the evolutionary process which cause the person to question their identity. Ambisexuality assumes that identity may unfold as part of a developmental process, therefore this terminology is prefered to bi-sexuality and will be used throughout this paper.

functioning, gender orientation, and sexual behavior. This occurs when the fetus has been exposed to abnormal hormonal levels during development (Coleman, 1995). Proponents of this research suggest that this may indicate that prenatal factors influence homosexuality. Based on controlled experiments with numerous animal species, a theory has been developed that supports the preference of members of the same-sex when the region of the brain in and around the hypothalamus is exposed to levels of testosterone around the time of being sexed perinatally at puberty. As a result of these experiments same-sex preferences can be induced with regularity in laboratory experiments by manipulating perinatal hormone controls (Ellis, 1996). While the evidence reveals the complex nature of biological factors that ultimately lead to a person's preferred sexual orientation, there is nothing definitive about what causes homosexuality.

(c) Adult/Postnatal Factors:

Research conducted some years ago suggested that there was a difference between the levels of certain sex hormones found in homosexuals compared to heterosexuals. further research done in this area indicates that there is no substantial hormonal difference between homosexual people and their heterosexual peers (Coleman, 1995).

(d) Psychological Factors:

Traditional psychoanalytic theory has oftentimes been used to outline the causal

factors of homosexuality. Relying upon Freudian theory, it has been proposed that

homosexuality is the result of an unhappy childhood and an ineffectual parent-child

relationship. This theory held that if a boy has a father who is distant, unavailable or

rejecting and a mother who is smothering, controlling or seductive then this can cause

frustration for the boy who desires to identify with the father. As a result of this

frustration, the young boy has to deal with the ambivalent feelings of fear of the male

figure while yearning for closeness. Alternatively, he tends to reject women because of his

mother's dominance and smothering relationship (Coleman, 1995). Freudian theory

maintains that the boy avoids heterosexual activities both because he fears the

aggressiveness of other males with whom is supposedly competing, and his fear of

women's sexuality. His longing to be close to a male figure leads him to seek relationships

with other men. Additionally, the occurrence of separation or divorce has been attributed

as another mitigating factor in the cause of homosexuality as it was thought to interfere

with the resolution of the Oedipal complex in the child (Robinson, Walters & Skeen,

1989).

While a lot of evidence has been put forward to confirm this theory, it is still

inconclusive. This is partly due to the manner in which the research has been conducted

and the contamination of evidence due to the bias of the therapists (Coleman, 1995).

Other studies have not substantiated the theory that there is a negative link between

patterns of relationships in families and sexual orientation. In contrast, many studies report positive, early parent-child relationships (Robinson, Walters & Skeen, 1989).

The other major psychological theory relevant to this discussion is learning theory. This suggests that early sexual and other learning experiences shape sexual orientation. One theorist maintains that homosexuality is a developmental problem resulting from impaired relationships invariably between father and son. As a result of failing to relate to the father figure, a boy can not fully internalize male gender-identity, and becomes homosexual (Coleman, 1995). As infants, both boys and girls identify with the mother figure as the primary source of nurturance and care. While the girl maintains this link with mother, the boy later has the additional developmental task of discovering what it means to be male by shifting identification to the father figure. This relationship seems crucial to the development of a masculine personality for the boy. According to this theory if there is a major deficiency in the relationship between father and son then there is a strong possibility of homosexuality developing.

Extensive research conducted over a ten year period found that family backgrounds had little or no effect on a person's eventual sexual orientation (Belsky, Lerner & Spanier, 1984). Results from their findings indicated that no particular phenomenon of family life could be singled out as particularly consequential for the development of either homosexuality or heterosexuality. Although there are indications that the manner in which parents rear their children affects their child's functioning, it would be inappropriate to ascribe too much influence to parents (Belsky, Lerner &

Spanier, 1984). Homosexual children come from the spectrum of family backgrounds ranging from neurotic to normal.

From this outline, it confirms that no one theory can explain the complexity of homosexuality. Nor, indeed, can any one theory outline casual factors for heterosexuality! There appears to be a variety of factors which could be influential in the development of homosexuality within a person. It would seem likely that each person's homosexuality develops from a unique combination of causal factors. Considering that the specific causes of homosexuality are still unknown highlights the complexity of this issue and signals caution with any attempts to be definitive.

The Coming Out Process

In recent years various theoretical models have been proposed in regards to the coming out process. These studies have been based upon retrospective research conducted with gay adults. Interestingly, all models share some common features that are influential in their development. Firstly, nearly all the models view homosexual identity formation occurring within a climate of stigma and isolation which influence identity development and personal adjustment. Secondly, homosexual identities are portrayed as developing over a long period of time and they involve a number of significant shifts or growth points (Troiden, 1988b). Thirdly, coming to an awareness of personal identity involves increasing acceptance of the term homosexual as applied to the self. Fourthly, there is an increasing need to seek out frequent social contact with other gay people over time. Finally, it is

reported that gay people have an increased desire to disclose their identity, over a period of time, to at least some significant others who are not homosexual (Troiden, 1988b).

Stage theories suggest that the coming out process includes a gradual acknowledgment and integration of a gay identity. Those who commence a coming out process in childhood recognize feeling different. Earlier studies found that, although many in a heterosexual sample also reported feeling different as children, a higher percentage of the homosexual sample recalled these feelings and expressed quite different reasons compared to the heterosexuals. According to Newman and Mussonigro's (1993) research, this period referred to as "sensitization" may set the groundwork for the acquisition of a homosexual identity. They suggest it could well precondition gay youth to the idea that they are unlike many of their peers (Newman & Mussingro, 1993). Some further research is required to ascertain whether the difference felt by a child who grows up to be same-sex oriented is actually part of his identity. Their use of the term "precondition" implies that conditioning is linked to a preference for sexual activity rather than it being a part of a person's identity. While this might be the case for some youth, the issue of sexual orientation is distinctly different to that of conditioning people to prefer a particular expression of their sexuality. The use of this term is confusing and could lead to down-playing the actual orientation of a young person who is gay and has no choice in the matter.

Berger's (1989) model of homosexual identity formation delineated the process more specifically. Initially there is a period of identity confusion which results from the disharmony between overt and covert behaviors and self image. This seems to precede the

entire process and acts as a catalyst for changes in the self image of the person who identifies himself later as gay. Four essential movements of identity development are common to many of the proposed theories.

The first stage is called sensitization by Troiden (1989a). This usually occurs prior to puberty. In this period the youth possesses some initial cognitive and emotional realization that he is 'different' and that having a same sex orientation may be a relevant issue. Feeling alienated both from himself and others, he does not disclose anything about his orientation. Only a minority of gays started to see themselves as sexually different before age twelve. The significance of this stage resides in the meanings that are retrospectively attached to childhood experiences, rather than in the experiences themselves. At this stage social and cultural interpretations about what is gender appropriate and acceptable can be highly influential in forcing a person to self-label as gay because they see and experience themselves as different (Troiden, 1989a).

The second stage arises from the need to reject the idea that the negative identity assigned to the gay person applies to oneself (Martin, 1982). As the young person moves into the second phase, some verification of his identity continues as he experiments and tests out the experience. It is during this period of development that the young person begins to apply meaning to their childhood perceptions of self as different. By early to middle adolescence a large majority of gays have experienced both heterosexual and same-sex arousal and behavior. Due to the dichotomization that occurs in predominantly first world countries regarding sexual orientation "it is not surprising that adolescent gays are uncertain and confused regarding their sexual orientations" (Troiden, 1988b, p. 107). As a

general rule, gay males come to an awareness of their same-sex attractions at an earlier age than females. There are several noticeable reactions in this stage. The gay person can respond by using denial, repair (seeking professional help to change), avoidance, redefinition or acceptance. Self-labeling and association with peers are the first steps toward establishing a new gay identity. Alienation from heterosexuals is evident.

During this third phase the young person becomes more accepting of his identity and prefers interactions with other gay people. The quality of initial contacts with other gay people is highly influential on the person's willingness and confidence to pursue their self-exploration or retrieve from it. Identity management continues through the phases as the person decides to either conceal their gay identity or be selective in their disclosures. Self-acceptance or coming out to oneself, is an on-going phase and involves a synthesis of behaviors and self-image. The person moves from an awareness of same sex attraction to the acknowledgment that he is gay (Newman & Muzzonigro, 1993). There is a noticeable shift to a positive identity of self .

The final phase is an integration process of gay identity. Troiden describes this commitment " as a feeling of obligation to follow a particular course of action" (Troiden, 1988b, p.110). Development of a same-sex love relationship and disclosure to non-homosexual peers and family (coming out to others) marks the onset of this phase, indicating a commitment to a gay life-style (Anderson 1994).

In examining several of these identity formation models, there is an indication that self identifying as a gay adolescent is independent of sexual experience and labeling by others. However, these factors often occur simultaneously along with the conflict that

accompanies the struggles of coming to own one's true identity and sexual orientation. Results of studies (Savin-Williams, 1990) conducted with a specific group of gay youth who had come out, found a recurrence of certain common characteristics. Among those noted were:

- These youth were socially and politically involved with other gay and lesbian youth. They described the early onset of homosexual feelings as being something beyond their control. As part of their coming out experience they had numerous homosexual experiences. They regularly frequented gay bars.

- There was a general feeling of acceptance by family members and friends. This seemed to lead to having more friends and not feeling isolated anymore.

- Due to the coming out experience they tended to feel accomplished and self-sufficient as compared to feeling competitive or forceful.

- These youth were usually older and well educated, coming from white, urban families.

- Possessions and good looks were not intrinsic to their sense of well-being. They measured their self-esteem by their friends, career, and academic achievements.

- This group appeared to be politically more liberal and supportive of the feminist movement (Savin-Williams, 1990).

These characteristics give some indication of the factors than are influential in the coming out process for a particular group of gay adolescents. This study (Savin-Williams, 1990) points to the different factors that create a possible holding environment for certain

youth to come out. Some caution needs to be exercised in applying these characteristics to gay youth in general. It needs to be acknowledged that the findings were taken from a certain group of the adolescent gay population. The majority of young people who were part of this study were white, urban, older and well-educated and belonged to a support group (Savin-Williams, 1990). Further research with other gay youth needs to occur before these findings can be generalized.

Disclosure To The Family Of Origin

It is generally accepted that approximately 5% to 10% of the United States population defines itself predominantly as gay or lesbian. Homosexuals are the focus of a complex set of social prejudices which have escalated in recent times due to the advent of the AIDS epidemic. Considering that this is a minority group of society and is often subject to hostility and rejection it is important to examine how the family deal with the fact that one of their number is homosexual.

Traditional psychoanalytic theory maintained that adult homosexuality originated from disturbed parent-child interactions from the early childhood period. Disturbed relationships with parents epitomized by smothering, seductive mothers and distant, rejecting fathers, were thought to interfere with the resolution of the Oedipal complex. Because these issues could not be resolved, it was argued, the young person became homosexual (Robinson, Walters & Skeen, 1989). This type of thinking has caused parents to assume a lot of guilt for their child's sexual orientation. The negative link between

patterns of relationships in families and sexual orientation has not been substantiated in later studies. Recent research indicates that when comparing homosexuals with heterosexuals the results consistently confirm that there is no difference in the way both groups view their parents and their upbringing (Strommen, 1989).

It seems natural that adolescents fear disclosing their sexual preference to their parents and family since they anticipate responses of shock, anger and denial. In Straight Parents Gay Children (Bernstein, 1995), numerous stories are reported where youth have been affirmed, and eventually understood, by compassionate parents. Equally there are stories of further abuse, rejection and isolation of the teenager after they have disclosed their sexual orientation to their family. Physical and verbal abuse by parents and expulsion from home are not unusual responses as reported in data gathered from the Institute for the Protection of Lesbian and Gay Youth in New York City (Zera, 1992).

Research done by Savin-Williams (1989a) explores the degree to which parental attitudes toward their gay adolescent's sexual orientation affects the young person's comfortableness with their sexual orientation and their self-esteem. The period of middle to late adolescence was chosen for investigation since this was seen to be a more stabilized time of self-concept for young people. Of the 317 respondents completing the questionnaire there was a ratio of two to one male to female. 78% were in the age range 19 to 22 years, the majority (78%) being college students. Primarily the population was Caucasian (91%) consisting of a variety of religious affiliations with significant minorities being Catholic (34%), Protestant (32%), and one third other. There was a strong rural town representation (44%) along with 27% from middle sized towns and 17% from larger

metropolitan areas. Most of the families were professional (34%) or lesser professional (35%) with 18% being blue collar workers.

In identifying this sample population, the research provides only a limited picture of gay adolescents and their families. It also points to some very significant omissions from the research. Only 9% included in this research were from other ethnic backgrounds. A significant majority from the lower socio-economic scale are not represented. There were relatively few respondents from junior or senior high school age youths in this sample reflecting the invisibility of this significant group to researchers, health care providers and even youth themselves (Savin-Williams, 1989a). Conclusions drawn from this research need to be critically examined due to the limited sample. The results also point to the difficulty of obtaining a far broader spectrum of adolescents who are gay. Many choose to remain anonymous while others do not have access to established support groups. Those from poorer, ethnically varied families who live in larger cities are under-represented in most research work.

It was expected that the research would confirm that the greater the degree of parental acceptance of their adolescent's sexual orientation, the more likely would the adolescent feel comfortable about being gay. While this was confirmed for females it was not the case for males. Gay males who were most comfortable with their sexual orientation had the highest levels of self-esteem. Only if their parents were perceived as important components of their sense of self-worth did that have any bearing on the results. This study highlighted that not all significant others are crucial for one's self-evaluation (Savin-Williams, 1989a).

This same sample population was used to explore the significance of parents in the coming out process of their adolescent family member. Based on the earlier analysis of Savin-Williams (1989a), there was reason to believe that parents do play a significant role in the developing sense of sexual identity for their gay adolescent even though the theoretical coming out literature appears to contradict these findings. Savin-Williams (1989b) ascertains that three significant variables influence the coming out process for adolescents. They are:

1. The young person reports satisfaction and contact with the parent.

2. The parents are married rather than separated.

3. The parents are young rather than old.

While these variables were significant for lesbian adolescents they were not crucial for the male. The results from the data showed that the variables were not related to an adolescent male's report of coming out to his parents. However, the variables did serve as clear correlates to his sense of self-esteem level. This means that if the parents are important to their gay son's sense of self-worth then this would influence his predicted comfortableness with being gay. This in turn seems to have had a strong influence on his level of self-esteem. The self-esteem of boys is grounded more in the various aspects of family relations such as communication, and physical and emotional support (Savin-Williams, 1989b). It could be expected that one of the critical factors in the coming out process for boys is their level of self-esteem. What Savin-Williams (1989b) does suggest is that the parents' involvement in the coming out process of gay males is more directly related to the part they play in their son's development of his self-worth.

Before parents know that their child is homosexual, there is an assumption that the child will be part of the accepted heterosexual majority. Dreams and plans are connected with the young person's future. When the parents learn of a family member's homosexuality they have to adjust to the fact that their child is part of an ostracized minority. This will also have implications for the family in terms of its relationships and status within the local community as neighbors and friends become aware of the family member's orientation. Parents have to come to terms with the dreams they held for their child which more than likely included a traditional marriage, and children (and grand-children). Instead, they need to find ways of accepting a different kind of identity and behavior for their child (Robinson, Walters & Skeen, 1989).

Indeed research has uncovered a grieving process that parents go through as they attempt to understand the impact of homosexuality on their lives as much as that of their own child (Borhek, 1993; Bernstein, 1995). In a survey of 402 parents of gay and lesbian children from the northeastern, southern, midwestern and western regions of the United States it was found that many parents experienced a grief process (Robinson, Walters & Skeen, 1989). Fear of the spread of AIDS or that their child might contract the virus or suffer the effects of backlash were concerns for most parents. It is worth noting that three times as many mothers responded than fathers. The socio-economic background of the parents is similar to that of the Savin-Williams' (1989a) research project. All these parents belonged to established support groups for parents of gays. Due to this fact, much of the research points to positive ways many of these parents have dealt with their child's sexual

orientation. It is uncertain how parents who do not belong to support groups deal with the same crucial issues. Further research work is required in this area.

In studying the responses of these parents who became aware that their adolescent was gay, it could be detected over time that there was a five stage progression of mourning and loss in dealing with their emotions. The stages seem to move from shock, denial, guilt, anger and possibly into acceptance. Despite the fact that the parents in this study were liberal and well educated, almost all of them indicated initially some form of negative reaction on learning that their adolescent was gay (Robinson, Walters & Skeen, 1989). While a common pattern could be detected regarding parental responses, their movement through the stages varied considerably. There are a significant and important group of parents who still go unheard in these surveys. They are from minority groups who are poorer, ethnically varied and lacking any organized support structures.

Although the greater number of these parents in this study had worked through their feelings of loss and arrived at an acceptance level, some had not reached that level of acceptance despite the fact they were in a support group. This seems to indicate that they were stuck at a stage or regressed to earlier stages from time to time. It may be better to view the process as a cyclical movement forward and backward over time as the family faces different aspects of its life cycle. One writer proposes that it takes parents two years to work through their grief and come to accept their child's same-sex orientation (Borhek, 1993).

Healing, similar to that of an actual death, proceeds at different paces for different people. However, unlike a death, this grief is often restricted to certain members of the

family or peer group. Due to the stigmatization of homosexuality in society " there are few rituals which enable the coming out process to be acknowledged, accepted, approved and celebrated" (Bernstein, 1995, p.20). Families have to find their own way of dealing with the coming out process. However, this does not mean they have to do it on their own. It seems clear from research that those who have access to support groups are far more enabled to cope with the pain, confusion and stigma that is part of their lives now that they know their child is gay. This process seems to be more accentuated for adolescents because they are, at the same time, going through struggles with their own emerging sexuality, its ambiguity and cultural stigma and fears for their future (Coleman & Remafedi, 1989).

Two studies based upon a family systems perspective have attempted to identify specific patterns of reactions that occur in a family as a result of a child's disclosure. They have also attempted to isolate variables that dictate the nature of parental response to the disclosure. This process has been described as a progression through a series of stages for the family members which include:

- *Subliminal awareness* where the young person's gay identity is suspected due to behavioral or communicational patterns.

- *Impact,* characterized by the actual discovery or disclosure.

- *Adjustment* where the young person is urged to change orientation or keep the homosexuality a secret which will preserve family respectability and acceptability.

- *Resolution* where the family mourns the loss of the fantasized heterosexual role and dispels negative myths about homosexuality.

- *Integration* where a the new role of the adolescent and new behaviors for dealing with homosexuality are enacted (Strommen, 1990).

While these stages capture significant movements within a family process, it is possible for family members to remain stuck at a particular stage or return to a prior stage during the process. Strommen (1989) cautions that families may stay fixed at any of these levels indefinitely rather than achieving the desirable goal of integration. It seems the movement through these stages is determined by three aspects of the family system:

1. the capacity of the family to be cohesive or experience closeness among its family members;

2. the regulative structures or rules that govern family member behavior;

3. the family themes that give definition to the values and behaviors that determine a family's view of themselves and their interaction with the wider, local community (Strommen, 1989).

Research has primarily been focused on the reaction of parents to their child's disclosure of homosexuality with little discussion on the effects of disclosure on siblings. Current research reveals that family members are usually disclosed to one at a time and oftentimes siblings are chosen prior to the gay member revealing their orientation to their parents (Strommen, 1989). This being the case, the way siblings react will enhance or stifle any further revelation by the gay adolescent. Some findings indicate that siblings tend to isolate the disclosing family member by identifying the person with cultural gay

stereotypes (Strommen, 1989). Ways need to be found to work more closely with this significant group in the family system to help siblings cope with the impending changes and deal with their reactions to homosexuality.

The main difference that can be detected between the reactions of siblings and parents is that the siblings do not take on guilt or self-blame for their orientation of their gay family member. The evidence suggests that heterosexuals in a family setting react more negatively to homosexuals of their own sex than those of the other sex. This alerts families and those who work with them to the likelihood that the same-sex family members are the ones most likely to demonstrate the most difficult reactions. Men seem to have the greatest difficulty in this area by reacting strongly to family male gay members coming out to them (Strommen, 1989). Further research is required to enlighten this important component of the coming out process and its effects on family members.

Members of the family of origin who have not featured in studies are grandparents. Due to the role they hold in the family, it seems most probable that their influence not only effects their own children but also their grand-children. Grandparents have only recently been included in studies to ascertain what effect they may have on the coming out process within the family of origin. The findings make in unclear whether their reactions are different from, or similar to, that of the parents (Strommen, 1989). The reactions of grandparents to homosexuality, as well as considerations of disclosure to them by homosexual family members, requires further research. In light of the influence that grandparents can exert over the family their responses need to be carefully considered.

The values and attitudes that a family has adopted can be detected through the inter-generational system. If changes in attitudes to homosexuality within a family of origin are to occur, then it will be helpful to know more about how the different members of the family system react to homosexuality within their family system. Such research has the potential to uncover ways in which family systems can change their perceptions of a gay family member and come to a greater acceptance of them in the broader family context.

Problems Confronting Gay Adolescents

The onset of puberty brings with it increased attraction toward others that might be expressed both sexually and affectionately. For a young male who is attracted sexually to other males, he is required to make sense of this attraction in a milieu that is predominantly heterosexual. Such a climate presumes that he will act out his sexual attractions according to heterosexual expressions. If he experiences same-sex attractions or has sexual encounters incongruent with his own internalized expectations this could lead to greater distress and increased feelings of guilt and shame (Newman & Mussonigro 1993).

A common way of coping with these incompatible impulses and the accompanying painful feelings is to move into denial. Some will attempt to repress all same-sex urges and attractions in order to preserve their sense of what is culturally acceptable. Anderson (1994) contends that some gay teenagers frequently begin, or continue, heterosexual

activity despite an awareness of their homosexuality. In a more recent Chicago study of lesbian and gay teens, three quarters of those surveyed had experienced heterosexual intercourse. Compared to gay men, more lesbians had experienced heterosexual intercourse by their adult years (Anderson 1994). Heterosexual dating may become more frantic at this time as a way of dealing with the fear of rejection by peers.

Most gay adolescents go through a period where they attempt to alter their sexual orientation or at least hope these feelings will go away (Troiden, 1988b). Involvement in compulsive body building can be a way a boy might try to look different so he will not be recognized as a stereotypical gay. Displays of aggressive or over assertive behavior can also be accompanied by antisocial behaviors. Efforts are made to avoid masturbation due to the usual scenarios of homosexual fantasies that accompany the activity. Quite often guilt or shame result when this can not be mastered (Anderson 1994).

Avoidance is another strategy for dealing with gay identity confusion. Efforts are made to stay away from those situations where their feelings, emotions and inclinations will be evident to them. This can lead some to pursue a heterosexual relationship and sexual relations with the other sex as a way of proving that their same-sex feelings are only transitory.

For some others, they attach themselves to anti-gay propaganda and activity as a way of distancing themselves from their homoerotic feelings. By projecting their fears onto the gay population they avoid having to come to terms with their own identity. Another form of escapism is through substance use and abuse. By using these chemical means the feelings of anxiety, depression and confusion can be masked (Troiden, 1989b).

The gay adolescent who has opted to conceal his sexual orientation and remain "in the closet" (a term derived from the metaphor "skeleton in the closet") does so to secure his acceptance in certain settings and maintain established relationships with his peers (Martin, 1982). This is often a very lonely time for younger adolescents or preadolescents who are not effectively equipped both cognitively nor effectively to work through the issues and make meaning of their new found phase of development. Whatever the experiences that lead to a growing personal awareness of their same-sex orientation, most gay teenagers can vividly recall a period of intense anxiety when they first realized that they suddenly belonged to a group that is often vehemently despised. In coming to name their feelings it seems to bring on an identity crisis. This conflict is produced by the juxtaposition of the negative ideas of homosexuality learned throughout childhood with the newly discovered awareness of their own attractions and identity. This self-recognition seems to occur quite suddenly in contrast to the lengthy, and oftentimes, painful process of understanding and accepting one's sexuality (Anderson 1994).

The harsher socialization pattern for boys has been compounded by a boy's difficulty in understanding what is expected of him from the culture. Boys often rely on the stereotypic definitions of masculinity and do so to the detriment of having frequent, intimate and close interaction with a sensitive man (Bolton & MacEachron, 1988). What seems to be emulated in the Australian culture and presented as the paradigm of manhood is the strong, independent male reminiscent of the rugged, early colonial settler. For many young Australian male youth they act with bravado around their "mates" while hiding or

cutting off their feelings of intense isolation. Such an image causes boys to over-react to anything gentle, aesthetic, or artistic for fear of being branded a "poofter"[4]

Indeed there appears to be a strong tendency in the Australian male to put down women and speak in a derogatory manner about women's qualities. In boys' schools the comment quite often called out across the football field when someone makes a mistake is "What a sheila!" or "You're a girl!" Such comments quietly work their way into the male psyche and instill a particular image of what a man is meant to be and how he is meant to act. Living in this type of climate induces sex-role anxiety in boys which expresses " ...itself in overstraining to be masculine, in virtual panic of being caught doing anything traditionally defined as feminine, and in hostility toward anything even hinting at femininity, including females themselves" (Bolton & MacEachron, 1988, p. 264).

Homonegative Attitudes:

This marked sense of being different is further contrasted in the peer group where heterosexual dating becomes the acceptable norm for teenagers. The person who desires a same-sex relationship sees his peers engaging in acceptable forms of affectionate and sexual behaviors and is unable to do likewise with his partner (Reynolds & Koski, 1994). This creates further isolation for the gay teenager. A study by Marsiglio (1993), using data from a 1988 national survey of male heterosexual youth 15 to 19 years, indicated that the vast majority of young males (89%) found sex between two men "disgusting".

---

[4] This is an equivalent Australian derogatory term for a gay male.

The research, conducted with 1,463 respondents, concluded that persons who hold negative attitudes toward homosexuals are most likely to be male, single, less educated and more fundamentalist in their religious attitudes. These youth tend to come from predominantly country areas where they have contact with more traditional gender role attitudes and lack personal association with gay or lesbian people. Only 12% of the sample felt they could befriend a gay person. A study conducted in Sydney, Australia (Van de Ven, 1994) to ascertain similarities and differences in homonegative and homophobic reactions of undergraduates, high school students and young offenders showed that the findings were congruent with other previous studies. The sample of males used in this study were "more hostile towards homosexuals on the variables of cognition, homophobic guilt, homophobic anger and behavior" (Van de Ven, 1994, p. 122).

Homophobic regimes in schools are a powerful influence in reinforcing dominant ideas about masculinity and femininity. A framework released for Australian schools on gender equity states:

> ... the fear of being labeled gay or lesbian puts great pressure on all students to prove their heterosexual credentials by conforming to a narrow range of body images, or by becoming sexually active, or by engaging in sexual conquest, or by sexualizing opposite-sex relations, or by getting a boyfriend or girlfriend, or by curtailing intimacy with same-sex friends. This places huge constraints on the range of behaviors possible for either girls or boys (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p. 41).

The crisis of self concept occurs because the gay adolescent seems to be involuntarily relegated to a group who is extremely ostracized in our culture. The stigma happens because of homophobia, an unreasonable or irrational fear or hatred of

homosexuals or homosexuality. Marsiglio's (1993) research provides some basis for believing that homophobia is prevalent among young adult males. Not only are these attitudes internalized within individuals but their effects are also evident within organizations and institutions as depicted in the Gay Law Reform Bill in Tasmania, referred to in an earlier chapter. Similarly, in the United States a controversy over the Rainbow Curriculum, which incorporated lesbian and gay and bisexual issues into a school curriculum, led to the dismissal of the school chancellor [president] in New York City in 1992 (Reynolds & Koski, 1994). Such actions display that institutional prejudice is deep-seated and needs to be addressed at all levels of our society.

Due to the stigmatization of homosexuals in our culture, adolescent males who identify themselves as being gay initially make one of three choices in dealing with their newly found feelings.

1. They try to change their feelings about their orientation.

2. They continue to conceal their feelings.

3. They accept their feelings (Anderson, 1994).

Homonegativity and violence are inter-related. The difficulties that young gay people have to deal with are compounded due to these forces. The Gender Equity Taskforce for Australian schools recognized this: "For students who are gay or lesbian, or who are perceived to be gay or lesbian, the impact of homophobic taunting and violence can become intolerable, leading some students to leave school or contemplate suicide (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p. 41). This behavior plays havoc with a young person's sense of themselves and ultimately forces them into further seclusion.

Support Groups:

Apart from being ostracized from his peers, the gay adolescent male is more than likely isolated from other effective homosexual role models. Until the 1980's there were few support groups established for adolescents who were gay. In May 1979 <u>Gay Life</u>, a local gay newspaper in Chicago, reported the first meeting of a new youth group at *Horizons*, a house established "to specifically provide support to homosexuals in Chicago" (Herdt & Boxer, 1993, p.70). The article acknowledged a new phenomenon of gay culture in Chicago namely the existence of gay youth. The initial meeting looked at issues surrounding the problems and aspirations of gay high school students "who are living at home, going to school and trying to cope with the success-oriented, straight society their families represent" (Herdt & Boxer, 1993, p.71). The writer applauded the youth for coming out of the closet and expressed surprise at learning of the existence of the new generation of gay people.

Contemporary research indicates that other groups are now being established to support the needs of adolescent gay youth. *Outright* is a gay youth group located in Durham, North Carolina and meets after school hours. It was established in the 1990's to help adolescents who were struggling with issues of sexuality, particularly those issues which surround homosexuality and ambisexuality. Although the gay community has been developing effective resource groups for adults, the needs of the adolescent and young adult group were not addressed (Singerline, 1994). While initiatives are increasing, it needs to be kept in mind that most research has taken place in larger city urban areas of

the United States. The young gay male who grows up in country regions is less likely to have access to gay support groups. Additionally, they are further isolated if can not get to meetings because they do not possess a car license. Even those who grow up in suburban areas report that poor public transportation prevents available access to support groups and services (Mercier & Berger, 1989).

It is difficult to ascertain what initiatives have been taken in Australia to assist and support young gay males in their search for identity. It could be assumed that there is consistency in trends similar to those apparent in the United States. It could be assumed that more opportunities for support are offered to city dwellers than rural youth in Australia. This would certainly be the next stage for further research into this topic. However, what appears to be emerging from the research is that there is a growing awareness of support for gay youth in certain areas of the United States. In an article in the Chicago Tribune on Tuesday, March 25th 1997, it was reported that a student had been elected by students city wide to be their representative on the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees (Section 2, p.7). He is the first openly gay student to hold such a position. These initiatives offer possibilities that could be explored by Australian youth.

Institutional Denial:

Even though there has been a lessening of the pejorative attitudes towards gay people in some parts of the United States, the denial of rights to gay people is also embedded in institutional forms such as Government policies and other State

organizations. Similar attitudes can be found in Australian society where they become more prevalent in isolated areas particularly when certain attitudes and values remain unquestioned. An example contained in a research paper refers to a decision by the United States Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of a Georgia law maintaining that the right to privacy does not extend to homosexual activity (Bozett & Sussman, 1990). Another example appeared in the Herald-Sun newspaper in New South Wales (a State of Australia) which carried a story on 4/2/1997 of a 14 year old gay teenager who claimed he was bashed at school and his home daubed with anti-homosexual slogans. He was planning ground-breaking legal action against a Sydney high school that he maintains failed to protect him. In a writ that was to be served on the New South Wales Department of School education, he alleged the school breached its duty of care to provide him with a safe environment (Herald-Sun, 1997, p.16)

Homosexuality and emotional related issues among same-sex individuals are almost universally ignored in sex education curriculum in schools (Street, 1994). Teachers are apprehensive about parental pressure while wondering at the same time if they themselves might be accused of pushing the gay agenda (Savin-Williams, 1990a). In the private school sector, policies are created by other governing bodies such as church authorities and diocesan offices to name a few. This is particularly the case in Catholic schools which are required to endorse traditional Church teachings. There are wide ranging implications for teachers in these schools. For teachers who are gay or support gay issues, they are required to explicitly teach and publicly adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church. School curriculums generally contain little or no reference to

homosexuality or homosexual issues. Moreover, addressing homosexual related issues in sexuality classes can be even more harmful because of the negative reactions of young adolescent males who espouse the cultural clichés which are derogatory of gays. This is a real challenge for schools, especially Catholic schools which proclaim a social justice stance for minority groups, to examine curricula in the light of what is now known about the pain that adolescent gays have to go through in school settings.

Depression and Suicide:

Depression is another of the social outcomes encountered by young teenagers as they work through their gay orientation. The possibility of losing friends and the loss of status among his peers can place enormous stress on the adolescent. They experience loss through the absence of close friends and their peer group. This sense of loss may also become internalised and less readily recognized by appearing as loss of self-esteem, reputation or sense of worth (Hunter & Schaecher, 1987). Isolation, accompanied by a feeling of alienation, has the potential to shift the person into depression.

Alienation can often lead a young person to contemplate and even attempt suicide. A United States Public Health Service report indicates that gay youth are estimated to be at much higher risk for suicide than are their heterosexual peers (Street, 1994). Recent research conducted with predominantly white, middle-class, nonclinical samples of gay and ambisexual young gay males support clinician's observations that gay and lesbian adolescents are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than are their

heterosexual peers (Rotheram-Borus, Hunter & Rosario, 1994). Another study conducted in Minneapolis found that 30% to 34% of the recruited gay male youths had attempted suicide and that close to one half (44%) had tried to kill themselves more than once. Among older gay adolescents and young adults in Los Angeles, 20% had attempted suicide and 46% re-attempted suicide at least once. According to this study, those who attempted suicide when they became aware of their homosexual orientation were significantly younger than those who did not attempt. They were more likely to "come out" in isolation and feel rejected by others (Rotheram-Borus, Hunter & Rosario, 1994).

A further study, conducted with predominantly ethnic groups in New York City, confirmed the findings of previous studies. One third of the young people had attempted suicide, and of those who had attempted more than half had made more than one attempt (Rotheram-Borus, Hunter & Rosario, 1994). These studies substantiate the prevalence of suicide among gay and ambisexual male youth. The findings from this study in New York City need to be treated with some caution and cannot be generalized to all gay youth for two reasons:

1. Firstly, this study was conduced with a particular population of youth who are in a large urban setting with access to recreational and social services.

2. Secondly, the youth who came forward for this study had already identified as gay which means this sample contained an inherent bias (Rotheram-Borus, Hunter & Rosario, 1994).

While acknowledging the limitations of studies conducted with a controlled sample group, the findings do show an over-all consistency across some major cities in the United

States. These findings point to a stressful life encountered by gay male youth. It may be that the stress related to coming out and subsequent reports of physical abuse by parents supersedes other sources of stress encountered by gay youth. Nevertheless, considerable non-gay stress factors were detected in the lives of gay and ambisexual youth. They reported three to five times more negative stress than did their contemporary heterosexual youth (Rotheram-Borus, Hunter & Rosario, 1994). Such stress factors may be directly related to the arguments that parents have with their child about his gay identity. Other factors may be disruptions that occur among peers when they discover a person's orientation or the subsequent intimidation that occurs in the school yard which leads to decreased school attendance.

Violence:

Another fearful repercussion for gay males is that they can be the victim of physical attacks, abusive behaviors and hate crimes. According to Community United Against Violence, a San Francisco based social service agency, 60% of all anti-gay assaults are perpetrated by young men under the age of 21 years (Kielwasser & Wolf, 1994). In the Chicago area, Horizon's Anti-Violence Project documented 15% more incidents of violent behaviors in 1996 than the preceding year. Across the nation, eight of the fourteen national tracking programs reported increases in incidents of anti-lesbian, gay, ambisexual violence, with only six programs reporting decreases (Horizons Anti-Violence Project, 1996). Of the increased incidents that were reported, it was alarming to discover

that the intensity and viciousness of the violence had also increased. The Report by

Horizons and The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs states: "In the Chicago

area alone, 32% of those attacked suffered physical injury or death. 46% of those hurt

required some type of medical attention, including 16% who were seen in emergency

rooms or similar setting and 8% who needed to be hospitalized. 22% of those who needed

medical attention did not receive it" (p.4).

Nationally, the primary offenders continue to be teenagers and young adults, with

67% of the known offenders under 30 years of age compared to 68% in 1995. Neither

home nor places of employment can be assumed to be safe places for gay men and

lesbians. According to the report, in 1996, 25% of all bias-related incidents occurred in a

street or public place. This was followed by 22% of offenses occurring in or around a

victim's private residence and 13% occurring in the workplace (Horizons Anti-Violence

Project, 1996).

Another accentuating factor in the area of violence is the part played by law

enforcement agencies. The report conducted by Horizons notes that there was a significant

difference between the estimated reporting rate for all crime compared to reported

incidents enacted against gay, lesbian and ambisexual people (Horizons Anti-Violence

Project, 1996). The low reporting rate is attributed to the mistrust and fear of a secondary

victimization occurring by the law enforcement agencies. This seems to be substantiated

when "nearly half (49%) of the victims who sought police assistance said the police

response was indifferent (37%) or verbally or physically abusive (12%) (Horizons, 1996).

Although these reports focus on specific areas of the United States, their findings

are alarming and point to the risks that gay males can encounter. As the Report concludes:

> ...in sum, 1996 was a year where not only more violence was perpetrated against
> lesbians and gay men, it was also committed by more people, in a much more
> intense and violent manner. Furthermore, it permeated practically all facets of
> people's lives, reaching into their homes and their places of employment. This
> stark reality paints a frightening picture of what it is like to be lesbian or gay in this
> country (Horizons Anti-Violence Project, 1996).

While it is not possible to make similar comparisons with Australian trends, these

figures raise very serious concerns for the safety and protection of this minority group in

the United States. Further research needs to take place to ascertain the reasons underlying

this violent behavior and victimization. The fact that most of the perpetrators are in

particular age group raises serious questions for educators and parents. Where do such

violent values and tendencies find their origins? Is it possible to connect the repressed

homosexual fear in male figures with the violence that they project on to their victims?

Could it be that when family, legal and community groups remain silent to these violent,

and sometimes lethal attacks, they are colluding with perpetrators who thereby conclude

that such violence is acceptable? Whatever the reasons, the above findings demand further

research so that the causes underlying these disturbing behaviors can be unearthed and

appropriate changes can occur which will create a climate of safety and acceptance of

people's differences.

Pastoral Questions And Implications

When young adolescents come out as homosexuals they can experience a series of insults to their self-esteem which interferes with their developmental tasks. Families may respond with homonegative reactions either directly or indirectly in the form of hostility, ridicule or denial. Other efforts to silence the adolescent's orientation by attempting to stop contact with friends or force the young person to seek counseling in the hope of changing his orientation are further means of denying the young person his true identity (Mercier & Berger, 1989). The manner in which a family responds to their adolescent who identifies being gay is an important, if not crucial, factor in the coming out process. There is still need for further research to know the direct impact on the adolescent by the family of origin.

Being with a family who is coming to terms with their son's sexual orientation requires patience and acceptance of their confusion, mixed feelings and prejudices. In allowing each member to express themselves and to surface their concerns will enable the unspoken fear to be brought out into the open. By offering opportunities for parents and family members to connect with support groups founded for gay people's families, the counselor enables the family to see how others are dealing with this issue. Perhaps the response of a mother to her son's coming out puts it into perspective:

> I thought she would be disgusted and spit in my face or something. But she said she was afraid that my life would be very hard, and that I would be hurt. She was concerned about me, that I would lonely without a family of my own. If anything she felt she loved me more because of all the hurdles and things I would have to face (Tremble, Schneider & Appathurai, 1989).

Adolescents are in a process of understanding and integrating their sexual identity. For young people who feel attracted by same-sex relationships, they are required to face a multitude of unique stressors and challenges. Gay youth are an isolated part of the population. This continues to be exacerbated by the silence that confronts them about homosexuality in health care circles, or when they study sex education and attend schools that assume all youth are heterosexual. The widely quoted estimate that 10% of the Western population is gay indicates that this is a significant minority group. This particular group of young people need to be accepted for who they are so that they can develop to their fullest potential. Pastoral counseling has a unique opportunity to respond to this minority group.

One thing is becoming increasingly clear and accepted in the psychology field, namely, that sexual orientation is relatively fixed by early childhood through processes that are beyond the control or the choice of an individual. A theological understanding is necessary to provide a foundational basis to help young people sort through the complexity of their feelings around same-sex orientation. To condemn any homosexual action as intrinsically evil while, at the same time, saying that the homosexual is loved and accepted by God is paradoxical and enters the field of mental and ethical gymnastics.

It is evident that a pastoral response must embrace adolescent youth who are working through their same-sex orientation. Other minority groups such as ethnic minorities, have been assisted through the establishment of effective network groups that give a sense of worth and enable them to gain of sense of power and direction for their lives. In a similar way, support groups are a necessity for gay youth and need to be

available to them in different settings such as health care centers, schools and after school programs. The family also needs to be involved in this process. This is not to deny that it could be difficult. As far as possible a family needs to be given time, effective information and gently assisted to own its fears, prejudices and natural tendencies. Helping someone acknowledge and own their sexuality is fraught with much anxiety and fear but efforts must be made to support this silent, minority group.

There is still a long way to go to bring this whole issue out of the closet. Having been in Catholic boys' schools for close to twenty years I do not recall an in-service or a staff meeting which set aside time to ponder the issue of homosexuality for the youth who were in our care. It seems as if the whole institutional system has created an atmosphere of denial which avoids any mention of the issue. For an adolescent working through his sexual orientation, it must be just so painful to encounter the silence while also knowing that he belongs to a repressed minority who is never given a voice in the school system. Similarly, it is just as confusing for peers of the gay person, when one of their number eventually comes out later in life when he is in the safety of a large, anonymous university setting where he can draw upon the support of gay groups.

There is a need in the Catholic community to continue to understand the gay adolescent by developing a theological under-pinning that gives hope, understanding and dignity to the person. While it is helpful to have psychological insight into the reasons for homosexuality, in the long term reasoning is not enough. The heart of the matter is the young person, his life, his dreams, his pain and his fear. Perhaps if that became the focus of Church documents then a more positive, accepting and helpful vision might be offered to

people and their families. God's dream for humanity has already been expressed in the flesh and blood action of His Son. Ultimately the life of Jesus was totally given in love to humanity. So too is each one of us called to be a human lover, much and all as this is fraught with dangers, fears, mixed motives and confusion. By our very nature, we are constantly being drawn out of isolation to become intimate with our God and others. People, especially gay people, can not be deprived of this deep human need. Even more so is there an obligation for the family and community of young adolescents to bring this dream to its fruition by providing their love, direction and wisdom.

CHAPTER IV

CONSTRUCTING A THEO-ETHICAL FRAMEWORK TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF GAY MALE ADOLESCENTS.

What is it that leads a person to want to express themselves relationally and sexually with another of their own sex? Where exactly do these feelings come from and how can a person respond authentically to them? What principles can a person rely upon to help them make effective moral and ethical choices? These questions continue to exercise the fields of inquiry in science, psychology, sociology, and theology. Much has been written about the origins of homosexuality and is referred to earlier within this work. From what is known, the matter is highly complex and any conclusions are tentative and dependent upon further research and inquiry. No one particular theory can respond to the many different ways people describe about their experience of growing up which led them to acknowledge their same-sex orientation. Considering that the nature of homosexuality is so intricate, gay adolescents need the insight and wisdom that ethics and theology can offer them in their search to clarify their gay identity and find worthwhile meaning in their lives.

In developing a theo-ethical approach which will assist adolescent gay youth explore and discover their sexuality, it is essential to explore the meaning of sexuality from a much broader context. A framework that is going to be helpful for gay adolescents will, in its foundational principles, be helpful for all adolescents. While this particular

framework is being developed for students in Catholic schools and will draw from the

Christian traditions, especially the Catholic Church traditions, it would be hoped that what

emerges is relevant to, and supportive of, many adolescents irregardless of their faith

expression. To develop a relevant Christian ethical framework all these areas need to be

acknowledged as vital parts of the discernment process:

- the use of sacred scripture;

- the Christian wisdom that has been passed down through the tradition;

- the available knowledge from the natural and social sciences;

- the contemporary experience of the faithful;

- the insight that comes through prayerful reflection and the searching of the
  heart (Coleman, 1995).

As part of this process a theoretical framework called social constructionism will

be utilized as a means of critiquing the theo-ethical sources. This theory maintains that

what has been passed on as knowledge through scripture, tradition or the social sciences

has been interpreted through various filters. Knowledge is not wholly objective but rather

it is constructed according to values and symbols that have been internalised by persons

through interaction with their culture. According to social constructionism, people are

responsible for the ways that they interpret and give meaning to reality (Smith, 1994).

With this in mind, social constructionism will help situate and critique the particular

theologies and ethical principles that have emerged as a result of their various cultures and

the social interactions of human beings.

Social constructionism is a helpful means of uncovering and interpreting what has become part of the tradition and the culture. Particular emphases have been placed upon Church teachings as a response to the socio-cultural climate of the times. Moreover, the writers of pastoral letters, encyclicals, decrees and theologies are products of their cultures and their times. These sources offer particular understandings of sexuality and need to be listened to respectfully and carefully. However, a degree of caution needs to be exercised when reading these materials. Particular attention needs to be paid to the way the culture and times influenced the way they were written.

Human Sexuality: A Context for its Meaning and Morality

Treating gay and lesbian youth with respect and care in Catholic institutes begins with an understanding of sexuality. But what view of sexuality? People's attitudes and values about sexuality are initially formed in the context of the family with its particular socio-historical culture. As the infant develops within the family system there is a sense of taking in the values and attitudes that are prevalent in the home environment. The ways people relate to each other in the family, express affection, and engage in dialogue about aspects of sexuality are influential in forming a person's view of sexuality. However, there are also the hidden messages in a family system which are even more influential. There are certain aspects of sexuality that are never spoken about and certain ways of relating that lead to isolation or abuse. Similarly, there are cultural values which are stifling and oppressive of a person's sexuality but they are never critiqued or questioned. Media and

advertising have an effect, both consciously and unconsciously, on forming people's values and attitudes about their sexuality.

When a person begins to uncover their attitudes and values about sexuality, it is important for them to understand the various influences that have been part of their meaning-making processes. As they go about discovering the meaning of their sexuality, they encounter other forces, both positive and negative, that are at work in their culture, their family and their own inner world which impact on them. In developing a framework for sexual morality these influences need to be acknowledged and critiqued. The first creation stories in Genesis 1:1-2:4 have been used by Christian traditions as a foundational building block for understanding sexuality. The human person is made in the image and likeness of the creator (Gn. 1:26) thereby becoming a co-creator with God. Understood from this context, people were called by God to "Be fruitful, multiply …"(Gn.1: 28). This procreative ideal was taken on by traditional Catholic morality as normative. The ideal sexual act was free, with another human of the opposite sex within marriage with a spouse. The criteria for determining the goodness of sexual behavior was conformity to the procreative potential (O'Connell, 1986). This led to specific, definitive teachings about sexuality.

The conceptual framework from which these teachings emerged suited a specific period in socio-history. In a time where there was high infant mortality required a couple to have 6.5 children if they wished to continue the family line. The average age of a couple's life was fourteen years before one of the partners died. The discovery of penicillin indirectly influenced people's sexual patterns and sexual behaviors. As infant mortality

plummeted and adult life expectancy increased considerably, people's life-styles were

revolutionized. No longer was there a need for a families to have such large numbers of

children in order to continue the human race. With more children surviving infancy,

families had to have the financial resources to sustain a large family. Engaging in sex for

pro-creation alone no longer had the urgency and requirement it had in previous periods of

history.

When Pope Pius XII acknowledged in 1956 that marriage was love-making and

life-giving, he reinstated a view of sexuality that had been neglected for centuries in moral

thinking. In other words, there was another legitimate purpose for sexual relations and

that was to express love. This dual purpose of conjugal relationships was reiterated by the

Second Vatican Council. In "Gaudium et Spes" the Council stated the acts of conjugal

love were "to preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the

context of love"(Abbott, 1966, # 51). This shift in the magisterium's emphasis on

sexuality opened the way for people to wonder about the meaning of a sexual relationship.

The magisterium recognized that a shift was occurring in the purpose of sexual

relationships, yet the teaching authority of the church seemed incapable of developing

another paradigm. In its attempts to keep applying a framework which coincided with

sexual practices of people in a former cultural-historical setting, the church lost touch with

the reality of people's lived experience. When the Council Fathers acknowledged that love

was just as important as procreation then the way became open for people to question the

meanings of sexual expression. Could it be that people committed in a stable relationship

could express their love without necessarily being open to the possibility of creating

another life? Indeed the emphasis became focused upon the way the couple were in

relationship with each other. Sex became an expression of their relationship and not just an

act on its own.

Indeed, while various exceptions to the norm were acceptable, the over-riding tenet was

still very much governed by the traditional natural law mentality[5] . When natural law is

viewed from the traditional perspective of a given code to which a person must adhere, it

tends to focus predominantly on "natural" and "unnatural" acts. Certain physical sexual

acts such as heterosexual genital intercourse are believed to be natural, while other acts

such as masturbation and homosexual relations are defined as unnatural. Such

interpretations rest on the assumption that there is a fixed, unchanging human nature

(Nelson, 1978). Consequently the act itself becomes the focal point. Meanwhile, the

variety of meanings that might be associated with the physical acts or the context in which

the act occurs are not taken into account. Efforts needed to be made to create another

sexual paradigm which was relationally based. While drawing from the wisdom of the

church's teachings, this paradigm also needs to rely on the wisdom gained from other

disciplines such as sociology, psychology and biology.

---

[5] In Roman Catholic moral theology, natural law had played a significant role in establishing moral
norms. It is a term that has many different interpretations and meanings. Natural law points to the human
way of participating in the eternal law (Gula, 1981). How that participation occurs is open to a variety of
interpretations. Throughout history, two interpretations of natural law have been the most influential. One
approach viewed natural law as having an innate power to which people ought conform. This power was
based upon reason, prudential and thoughtful judgment. The other view was based upon living in
conformity with the facts of life. Accordingly, moral obligation and moral norms arose from physical
properties, operations, and the goals of the "natural" powers or structures of life (Gula, 1981).

Scripture And Homosexuality

One of the foundational areas in the development of a theo-ethical framework is scripture. As the inspired word of God, the scriptures reflect upon the salvation history of the people of God. These stories, passages, poetry, wisdom literature, teachings, and sayings have been passed down through time. They were written at a particular time for a particular people within the context of a cultural-historical setting. When the scriptures are read from a social constructionist viewpoint, the reader needs to acknowledge that the writer was immersed in an cultural-historical world and told the story for a particular purpose.

To read the scriptures in isolation from their particular context, can lead to a literalistic interpretation of texts. The reader, by gaining an appreciation for the times and the cultural setting along with the issues the people were addressing, contextualizes the scriptures by understanding the social construct. In so doing not only does this inspired Word of God have meaning for the people it was originally written for, but it brings new meaning to contemporary situations. As people prayerfully reflect on the Word of God in the on-going history of salvation and in their own lived experience, they are helped to uncover new insights and find new directions. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council puts it this way:

> Since God speaks in sacred Scripture through men (sic.) in a human fashion, the interpreter of sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words (Abbott, 1966, #12).

Brawley (1996) notes that there are six frequently used biblical passages that refer to same-sex acts and relations. They are Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, Romans 1, I Corinthians 6, I Timothy 1. These are the texts that are appealed to in various attempt to give meaning and insight into homosexuality. In the reading and exploration of these texts, Brawley makes a very pertinent point that needs to be acknowledged from the outset. He makes a distinction between same-sex relations and what is meant nowadays by the term "homosexuality". In making this distinction, he alerts the reader to be cautious about reading the present day meaning and ramifications of homosexuality into texts which interpreted actions and relations differently for their times:

> Indeed, in order to prevent reading our own modern understandings of homosexuality anachronistically back into the biblical texts, I think we should stop talking about what the Bible has to say regarding "homosexuality". As has often been noted the term "homosexuality" was coined only in the nineteenth century and in present-day parlance is used most often when talking about sexual orientation, which involves much more than sexual action. Since the ancients did not have our notions of "heterosexual" and "homosexual" sexual orientations, to persist in using these terms when discussing "biblical sexual ethics" (yet another artificial construct) is misleading at best (Brawley, 1996, p.140).

In what ways can these biblical passages enlighten an ethical understanding of homosexuality? The bible nowhere condones same-sex actions and relations and, in a few places, (Lev. 18, Rm. 1) explicitly condemns some of them (Brawley, 1996). While this could bring discussion to a definitive conclusion there is another question that needs to be asked. What is it that is being condemned in these passages and what makes the actions sinful?

The Sodom and Gomorrah story in Genesis 19:4-11 is frequently used as the basis for condemnation of homosexual practices. Traditionally this text has been interpreted

from the viewpoint that homosexual practices had brought a terrible divine vengeance upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The association of the criminal act of sodomy along with its prescription as a sin in the moral text books certainly seems to give credence to this accusation (McNeill, 1985). Later biblical writers were not as focused on the homogenital acts per se but rather the underlying offense that was perpetrated. Jeremiah writes that Sodom's sins were adultery, persistent lying and an unwillingness to repent (23:14). Ezekial claims that the crimes of Sodom's people were pride, gluttony, arrogance and complacency (16:49-50) whereas the Wisdom literature speaks of insolence and inhospitality (19:13-14) (Coleman, 1995). Legends of a similar character exist in the folklore of surrounding cultures and these stories emphasize the refusal of hospitality which was considered a serious offense (McNeill, 1985).

Homogenital acts were one among many sins for which scripture condemns Sodom. However in this story the particular emphasis needs to be carefully noted. The acts were not between consenting adults but were, in effect, homosexual rape. As Lisa Sowle Cahill writes: "The historical setting renders the act and outrage not only as an instance of sexual violence, but also because it would have amounted to a vile betrayal of the duty of hospitality, without which travelers could not even have survived in the Near East" (Quoted in Coleman, 1995, p.60). Viewed from this perspective, it would seem evident that the contemplated sexual abuse of visitors was the primary offense committed by the men of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This same text from Genesis is referred to in the letter to the Catholic bishops entitled "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" (Origins, 1986). Keeping in mind

social constructionist theory it is interesting to note the emphasis given by the Vatican authorities. It says "...the deterioration due to sin continues in the story of the men of Sodom. There can be no doubt of the moral judgment made there against homosexual relations" (# 6). While there is no doubt about the sinfulness of the situation, the issue is whether the moral judgment was ultimately about homosexual relations as is implied in the Vatican document. The acts contemplated by the men of the town are expressions of a far deeper, more pervasive sin. The underlying offenses of this story are inhospitality, sexual abuse of visitors and the contemplated rape of Lot's daughters. The focus on homosexual acts per se distorts the meaning of the story. To use a text in this manner to justify the moral judgment of all homosexual relations is very dubious.

The texts from Leviticus (18:21b-23 and 20:13) specifically condemns "a man lying with another male as with a woman". These texts are contained within the Holiness Code of the people of Israel and was written around 6th century BC. This Code intends to establish clear boundaries for the people of Israel in maintaining their identity and integrity as the people of the one true God. The prohibition of males lying with males, like many of the other laws contained in this Code, was written with the intention of identifying and condemning practices that had been foreign to Israel's life but had crept in due to their association with neighboring tribes (Coleman, 1995). While homosexual activity is condemned, it is condemned from the perspective of a tribal proscription imposed on its members to clearly separate their practices and rituals from other tribal rites that had inculcated their religious rites. The emphasis points to ritual cleanliness and proscriptions against defilement rather than a moral code about homosexual relations (Thurston, 1990).

People might be led to think that the teachings contained in the New Testament will be clearer, less ambiguous and not as contextually complex. Again, the social constructionist theory warns the reader against simplifying any text. For Paul and the Jewish thinkers of that time such as Philo and Josephus, along with first century Greco-Roman moralists, such as Seneca and Plutarch, same-sex acts were seen as willful promiscuous activity (Soards, 1995). Writers of this period seemed convinced that homosexual behaviors necessarily involved one person's exploitation of another.

In the New Testament, Paul has the most to say about sexuality. Brawley (1996) maintains that I Corinthians 7 is an exhortation to mutuality and reciprocity with Paul assuming that the relationship is set within a monogamous relational context for all sexual expressions. This text places the emphasis of sexual relationships on the mutual fulfillment rather than procreation which, in turn, will lead to the strengthening of the relationship. Paul takes relations between men and women to be normative but does that mean to the exclusion of all homosexual relationships?

Some argue that Romans 1 is an explicit judgment by Paul about homosexuality. The context for this teaching is situated clearly within Paul's basic theological view that the believer was to proclaim God's righteousness. God's wrath is inflicted on those who do not acknowledge and honor God. Within the broader context of Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul outlines the human predicament and humanity's need for God's saving grace. All human depravities are a result of the human person's unrighteousness. Because the Gentiles fell into idolatry, God exchanged in them the natural for the unnatural (Coleman, 1995). In his condemnation of Gentiles and their idolatrous behavior, Paul resembles his

Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries who accused Gentiles of the same things in much the same way (Brawley, 1996).

Some authors argue that the New Testament writers, especially Paul, were reacting strongly against the practice of pederasty (an active adult man with a passive, early adolescent boy). Further research on Greek and Roman attitudes concluded that "commercial exploitation and pederasty especially among older men and immature boys was disapproved" (Soards, 1995, p.48). The Greeks, long before the New Testament era, expressed acceptance of, and praise for, other kinds of homosexual relationships which were to be distinguished from pederasty which was condemned as an unacceptable form of sexual behavior. The Romans had clear disdain for forms of homosexuality other than pederasty as is exemplified in the life of Julius Caesar who, at the commencement of his adult life was a catamite to Nicodemus, the king of Bithynia. This was later referred to in derogatory terms and Caesar was ridiculed for his sexual involvement with the king (Soards, 1995).

The writings of Paul indicate that he shared four presuppositions with fellow Hellenistic Jews regarding homosexual activity among Gentiles. These are:

1. It was supposed that anyone who sought same-sex activity and intercourse was going against a "natural" desire for the other sex. To engage in such actions seemed to imply a deliberate, free choice. This type of thinking did not take into account what is now known about sexual orientation and the complexities that surround this issue. The growing body of psychological evidence indicates that some people do not choose their orientation but rather it is innately within them.

2. It was commonly supposed that homogenital acts were intrinsically lustful and that all who engaged in them had an insatiable sexual appetite. According to Brawley (1996), the forms of homogenital activity that were commonly referred to in Paul's time were pederasty, male prostitution, and situations where masters forced their male slaves to play a receptive role and passive sexual role. These sexual expressions were willful and excessively lustful. Nevertheless, no mention is made by Paul of consenting adult relationships that are mutually entered into by both partners.

3. The thinking of that time indicates that people thought that sexual intercourse required one partner to be passive (the female) and the other to be the active partner (the male). If sexual activity is interpreted from this perspective then it could be seen to be demeaning for the adult male to play the passive or receptive role.

4. Finally, there were fears that homogenital practice could lead to the extinction of the human species. Brawley (1996) makes the point that Philo and others of that era wrongly presumed that those who participated in same-sex practice became sterile.

What then can be said about the significance of Romans 1:24-27 in the formulation of a theo-ethical framework? From the research done by Brawley (1996) it seems evident that Paul's assumptions would be explained quite differently today. The underlying question is what constitutes "unnatural". According to Coleman (1995) even though pederasty may be the example that Paul had in mind when he wrote of "unnatural relations" (Rm.1: 27), he argues that "...it seems a strain on credibility to think that he does not mean "unnatural" in somewhat the same sense we would use the term in reference to deviant sexual activity" (Coleman, 1995, p.67). What appears to be

overlooked by Coleman is that the sexual activity referred to as "unnatural" was in fact exploitative and abusive of people. Is it possible then, a priori, to equate all homosexual relationships with those "unnatural relations"? Such a conclusion moves well beyond the socio-historical understandings of homosexual relations of that era and can not be adequately substantiated.

What is at the heart of Paul's teaching about homosexuality? It would appear he bases his belief of homosexual conduct on practices that involve rebellion against the Creator and creation; that it surrenders to lust; that it does debase a person's identity and exploits another. But what of a relationship that attempts to be respectful, caring, loving and mutually giving and receiving? The condemnatory terminology that Paul uses could well be applied to any relationship that is abusive, disrespectful, exploitative and rejecting of God's love.

Having examined and critiqued some contemporary scriptural research, it is clear that there is no easy way to obtain clear, precise meanings from the texts. There is a need for another starting point in devising a theo-ethical framework that will be relevant for gay adolescents. If scripture is not the starting point in devising a theo-ethical framework for gay adolescents, what is? Scripture has to play a significant part in the process but the crucial aspect will be the way in which scripture is integrated into the process. When the focus of this framework becomes the person in relationship with God and others, then the way the scriptures are brought into the conversation will be for a different purpose altogether. Scripture will not be used to justify or condemn particular acts but rather to access the meaning of the text. What is essential in the use of scripture is what it has to say

about the quality of relationships that God initiates with the people of faith and the manner in which those relationships are acclaimed.

In assisting young people to reflect on their relational experiences, it is important to help them critically examine ways their relationships can become more honest, faithful, self-giving and constant. Our youth deserve to have access to the wisdom that has been passed down through the ages. The task of the educator is to draw upon that wisdom in ways that it speaks to the experience of young people and enlighten their understanding of themselves, their God and others. Can they be helped to develop a quality of insight that will give them skills to reflect upon:

- what is (and is not) taking place within their relationships;

- what type of conduct is being played out between the people concerned;

- what level of commitment is being nurtured in their relationships;

- how respect, care, honesty and prayer are lived out within their relationships.

To commence with scriptural texts that denounce sexual acts, activities, and conduct forces the conversation into delineating what can and could become sinful and what could be permissible. This not only deprives gay adolescents of the wisdom that is contained within scripture about ways to respectfully nurture relationships but it also denies them the possibilities of learning to love and discovering God's love in another.

Moral Theology And Homosexuality

Four moral theological positions are offered by James Nelson (1978) which summarize the differing views about homosexuality. The first approach views homosexuality as outright sinful and maintains that anyone who acts upon their sexuality in this manner deserves to be punished. Nelson (1978) refers to this theological category as rejecting-punitive. Such thinking underlies those who uphold that AIDS was sent by God as a punishment on the homosexual community. For centuries this approach has been used to justify the persecution, discrimination and outright rejection of gay and lesbian people. Its theology is based upon a literal interpretation of certain biblical texts and attempts to prove that God condemns those who act on their homosexuality by reference to certain specific biblical texts which have been taken out of their context. This stance upholds sexual abstinence at the least or sexual re-orientation if the homosexual person is to be saved from eternal punishment and condemnation by God.

The next approach relies heavily upon a traditional interpretation of natural law as a basis for its rejection of homosexuality. It is referred to as the rejecting-nonpunitive approach. Karl Barth would be a strong proponent of this cause. He argues that men and women come into fullness of their personhood only in relation to persons of the other sex. To seek that form of human intimacy by means of a person of the same sex is viewed as seeking a substitute and reflects a psychological or social sickness (Nelson, 1978). By focusing specifically on the command given in Genesis by God to be fruitful and multiply this approach argues that homosexuality goes against God's natural command to produce

and is therefore unnatural. According to Nelson (1978) this view equates an aversion to homosexual activity with an aversion to persons. Those who seek same-sex union are searching for self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency, hence homosexuality becomes a form of idolatry whereby "the gay person is simply loving in the other the reflection of the self "(Coleman, 1995, p.7).

This theological stance differs considerably from the rejecting-punitive response because it recognizes that the person is loved and accepted by God. Homosexual acts must be condemned, but in the light of grace the homosexual person must not. Nelson (1978) has aligned this particular position with the stance of the Catholic Church. According to Coleman (1995) "this is a false assumption which tends to misrepresent the nuanced complexity of Catholic teaching" (p.8). Coleman maintains that the Church does not condemn the homosexual orientation but it does not believe that the attitudes and assumptions about homosexuality can be equated with heterosexuality. "In the Church's teaching, heterosexuality is normative and genital activity is legitimate only in the context of heterosexual marriage" (Coleman, 1995, p.8).

The third approach offered by theologians about homosexuality is termed qualified acceptance (Nelson, 1978). This approach is more open to contemporary psychological and medical research. While recognizing that gay and lesbian people are created by God and are children of God, their acceptance is qualified by inferring that there is something distorted and limited about their way of life. One theologian describes the distortion similar to "the varied distortions of the created order in which all fallen people share" (Nelson, 1978, p.196). A similar type of thinking is evident in the "Declaration on Certain

Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics" (1976) when it states that homosexuals "...must be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties and their inability to fit into society" (#8). A committed homosexual relationship is distorted, according to this type of thinking, because it is based on an limited expression of relationship.

The view put forward by these proponents looks at homosexuality as deficient and limited, lacking the normal, natural ingredients of wholesome relationship. It assumes that people who attempt to live out their homosexuality will be confused and unable to live a wholesome life. This position relies upon a traditional interpretation of the natural law. In spite of its acknowledgment of other sources of scientific wisdom, its endpoint still views homosexual relationships as being handicapped in some way. By continuing to label same-sex behavior as a perversion of God's natural law, gay and lesbian people are ostracized and seen to be not normal because they participate in "abnormal" acts. Their humanity is being judged by the acts they participate in while no attention is given to the quality of their relationships.

Those who use this notion make the distinction between premoral/ontic evil characteristics contained in human action and a moral evil. In this regard, premoral/ontic evil refers to the lack of perfection in the action under consideration. It is argued that anything that prevents the full-actualization of the person's well-being and their social relations, reflects some aspect of premoral/ontic evil. Given the reality of the human condition the moral person is urged to live in ways which minimize the premoral/ontic evil

by ensuring that as much good as possible is done and as little evil as necessary is avoided (O'Connell, 1986; Gula, 1988).

The final theological position accepts homosexuality as another authentic expression of personhood. Homosexuality can be viewed no differently than left-handedness or right-handedness, yet there is no denying its difference per se. Among those who advocate this position, there are varying positions based upon alternative assumptions. Some would propose that homosexuality is more of a given than a free choice (Nelson, 1978). Such advocates would no doubt agree that homosexuality for some people is genetically determined and nothing can (and needs to) be done to alter the person. Others hold the conviction that same-sex relationships can be legitimate ways of expressing personhood to its best potential as God intended for any individual. In 1963 the English Quakers put forward the view that homogenital acts are, in themselves, morally neutral (Genovesi, 1987). This stance attempted to shift the focus from judging external genital acts based upon isolation and outward appearance only. Instead the Quakers wanted to establish norms which would protect and nurture the relationship. To ensure that relationships would be protected they condemned any kind of sexual activity that depersonalizes or exploits another: "...seduction and even persuasion and every incidence of coitus which, by reason of disparity of age or intelligence or emotional condition, cannot be a matter of mutual responsibility" (Genovesi, 1988, p.284).

This particular viewpoint certainly highlights the distinction between action and personhood. This is a crucial element in attempting to develop a theo-ethical understanding of homosexuality for it emphasizes the personhood of people. They are not

their acts! To enter into an understanding of what is taking place in a same-sex relationship then the criteria for what makes any relationship healthy, safe, morally responsive and responsible need to be applied across the board. Ultimately in any moral critique of genital activity the quality and nature of the personal relationship within which this activity occurs needs to be given full consideration. According to Gula (1989), Thomas Aquinas considered that an act in itself cannot be accurately evaluated as moral or immoral apart from considering the intention of the person acting. What is required is an understanding of the meaning underlying the intention of the act. To stipulate an act as intrinsically wrong disassociates it from the person and their intentions.

The viewpoint expressed by the Quakers is contrary to traditional Catholic teaching on homosexuality. Certain theologians saw the Quaker stance as being too extreme because it is not open to procreation and no explicit mention is made of a commitment to permanent fidelity (Genovesi, 1988). It would appear that Genovesi (1988) relies on traditional natural law as a basis for his argument. He maintains that the true richness of sexuality is revealed only in so far as its expression reflects the qualities of God's love for humanity and the full expression of this is equivalent to procreation based on God's creative love for us. Additionally, Genovesi (1988) argues that this full expression of human sexual love which occurs within a personal relationship involves a commitment to permanent fidelity in imitation of God's covenantal love.

The language used by the Church from the 1970's up to the present continues to

speak of homosexual acts as intrinsically disordered[6]. In a letter addressing priestly

formation in the 1970's a distinction was made between the homosexual act and the

person. Similar references have been made in the "Declaration On Certain Questions

Concerning Sexual Ethics" (1978) but this letter acknowledges the further distinction

between those who indulge in homosexual activities and those who share in a permanent

relationship:

> A distinction is drawn, and it seems with some reason, between homosexuals whose tendency comes from a false education, from a lack of normal sexual development, from habit, from bad example, or from other similar causes, and it is transitory or at least not incurable; and homosexuals who are definitely such because of some kind of innate instinct or pathological constitution judged to be incurable (#8).

Interestingly, while acknowledging the difference, the Declaration does not continue to

explore the ramifications of what this means for homosexual people. It merely denounces

those who enter into "homosexual relations within a sincere communion of life and love

analogous to marriage... For according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations

are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality" (#8).

---

[6] The Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics states: "For according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality. In Sacred Scripture they are condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God...but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of " (#8).

In 1986 the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" a letter addressed to the Bishops of the church. In this letter mention was made of the condition or tendency of homosexuality to be "ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder" (# 3). As part of this section of the letter it mentions that "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil..." (#3). This implies that the homosexual state lends itself to sinful actions. Using this form of logic, could the same thing be said about wealth? While the Vatican authorities nuance aspects of homosexuality between the homosexual condition and individual homosexual actions, their fundamental argument still remains firmly based on the traditional natural law theory which states that the act per se is wrong: "These [individual homosexual actions] were described as deprived of their essential and indispensable finality, as being 'intrinsically disordered' and able in no case to be approved of " (#3). Similarly, the New Catechism promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1992, confirms the Church's condemnation of homosexuality based upon natural law. It states:

> Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered'. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances could they be approved (# 2357-69).

Traditional moral theology claimed that certain actions (e.g. masturbation, contraception, sterilization, divorce and direct killing of the innocent) were in themselves

intrinsically morally evil because they acted against nature or were assumed to take on the role of God (Gula, 1989). This continues to perpetuate mixed messages about gay and lesbian people who hear that if they engage in sexual activity in their relationship then they are participating in something intrinsically evil while, at the same time, their person continues to be loved by God. This style of thinking and teaching reinforces a form of dualism because it artificially distinguishes between a person's actions and the very essence of their being. A person's actions are an integral part of their being and are expressed in the intimacy of a relationship with a significant other. This means that the focus of theo-ethics today needs to be situated firmly within the relational context of people's lives.

The social construct concerning homosexuality, which forms the foundational thinking of magisterial theology is primarily based upon procreation. What if procreation was interpreted from another perspective? An insight that could be offered here comes from listening to present day writers speak of the "generativity of celibacy". Many celibate religious find they can give expression to their generativity in their ministries, artistic pursuits, and new found expressions of justice. In other words, if procreation is fundamental to a full expression of human sexual love then the creative activity might be better understood by the quality of love that evolves in the relationship. Surely the desire to nurture an honest and trusting relationship is critical to providing an environment where love is experienced and treasured. This in itself is a life-giving engagement in the pursuit of love. Could same-sex relationships be seen as a place where the couple's sense of their own self worth is strengthened and enables each of them to contribute more effectively to

the creative activity of the world (Genovesi, 1988)? The generations of noted homosexual people who have given of their creative talent to enhance the culture of the world bears witness to this outlook.

The structures whereby people are able to express their committed, permanent fidelity have been constructed from a heterosexist understanding of commitment. Up to recent years there has been no civil or religious recognition of any other form of relationship. If there is no accessibility to authentic public structures that affirm other forms of committed relationships then people are being excluded from giving full expression to their love. Is it then any wonder that homosexual people struggle to draw support from family, friends and the wider community because their relationship is given no credence or worth? They become two people merely living together and the quality of their love is never acknowledged publicly. In the long run it is the wider community who is being deprived of the potentiality of love that homosexual couples can offer the world. Often such relationships are disguised, kept secret or denied which only adds to the pain and frustration of the couple. The structures that deny gay and lesbian couples the right to permanency in relationship, by their very nature, seem to encourage lack of stability, lack of permanency and an enticement to be promiscuous. These people are deprived of having their love recognized and celebrated publicly. It seems a little ironic that religious life celebrates a person's willingness to dedicate their life to celibate love and heterosexual marriage is sacramentalised, yet people who want to enter into a committed same-sex relationship are not able to give expression to their love in a public liturgy.

The paradigm of sexuality used by the Church continues to isolate gay and lesbian people and leaves them subject to further discrimination and oppression in the public sector. The document entitled "Some Considerations Concerning the Catholic Response to Legislate Proposals on the Non-discrimination of Homosexual Persons" was released to the United States bishops by the Office of the General Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in June, 1992 (Smith, 1994). This document was a reaction to legislation in parts of the United States and Italy which had outlawed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and made public housing available to gay couples. The document rejects the idea that sexual orientation is a protected category like race, sex, age or religion. Following the theme of previous magisterial documents, it asserted that homosexuality was a disordered inclination and homosexual expression is not a human right (Smith, 1994). The Church continues to use a paradigm that is based upon a particular interpretation of the natural law theory and it comes to its conclusions by means of a deductive process. The Church authorities are unable to move outside of a deductive methodology which is locked into a particular social construct regarding homosexuality.

Attempts have been made by revisionist theologians to devise a way out of this conundrum. As distinct from official church teachings, they propose an alternative that recognizes a stable, committed homosexual relationship in the light of mutual support, love and a mutual desire for growth. Whatever the genital activity is that occurs within these unions, it is viewed as a premoral wrong but not as an objective moral wrong (Genovesi, 1988). This permits such activity to occur. Unfortunately, the primary emphasis of this type of theology continues to be fixed upon the sexual act which occurs

between two people. It passes over the most crucial aspect which is the quality of relationship between the two people.

A far more realistic and healthy way of creating a theology which enhances the growth of people in a same-sex relationship requires theo-ethical guidelines that apply the same rules to all relationships be they heterosexual, homosexual or ambisexual. The sexual action has, for too long, overshadowed the relational aspect of what is happening between the two people., Gay and lesbian couples who have remained in stable relationships and have a desire to nurture their faith together need to be part of a consultative process in order to help Church authorities understand the meaning of gay relationships. These silent voices can contribute their wisdom to a conversation which will lead to the creation of a new paradigm of sexuality. Gay and lesbian people need to be involved in sharing their lived experience with theologians and Church authorities and to engage with them in reflection upon the wisdom of scripture, tradition and the social sciences. This same method has proved to be most effective for American Catholic hierarchy in its efforts to dialogue with all cross-sections of the American people of all faith traditions about social injustice and nuclear disarmament (Smith 1994). Why can't a similar process be utilized to give voice to another minority group who have been neglected and forgotten for too long? In gathering people from all walks of life who are earnest about creating a new paradigm of sexuality and allowing them to respectfully listen and reflect on the issues, can allow a view of sexuality to evolve which is based on relationality.

Sexuality is integral to a person's growing awareness of themselves and in this regard it gives expression to the underlying love that emanates from the relationship.

When relationships are valued primarily for who people are, rather than what they do, then it follows that certain actions will announce the love, truth and justice that is being strived for along with denouncing anything that is exploitative, abusive or depersonalizing of another. This implies that people have to be encouraged to take their commitment seriously and this will happen only when civil and church authorities affirm same-sex relationships and set in place structures that enhance the potentiality for love.

Pastoral Implications for Adolescents

The more that young people can be invited to consider the gifts and joys of sexuality along with the subsequent responsibilities that accompany their relationships, then there is a greater chance that they will begin to find ways of expressing their sexuality in healthy ways. If they are not given any means or ways of knowing what is appropriate or helped to examine their own readiness for sexual involvement, then Christian educators are falling short of the mark. The sexual attraction to another, be they straight or gay, is a yearning to express something of who that person is, to be excited by the passion, to be caught in the exhilaration and to learn from the mistakes and failures that evolve in any relationship. Creating a theo-ethical model requires Catholic schools to take risks. There is a need to educate youth to understand their sexual identity so that can explore its meaning and be helped to find ways of expressing themselves as sexual beings. At the same time a suitable holding environment needs to be created which helps them devise appropriate boundaries that protect them from exploitation, abuse, and manipulation.

If adolescents are going to be assisted to grow up in wise ways then they need wise, prudent people who will act as their educators. Gay adolescents need to be able to have access to gay adult teachers and role models in their lives who take the Christian way of life seriously so that they can see that it is possible to grow up gay. They need teachers who will engage them at their level of conscious awareness and take them beyond that. This does not mean that teachers have to change what they believe in necessarily. What it does require of teachers is that they be open to keep examining and re-examining their values and be prepared to enter into conversation with young people. As Kegan (1995) says so aptly it "requires a continuous stepping outside of one's own view"(p.55) and in so doing making that viewpoint an object rather than a subject in relation to other views. Can the Catholic school risk in itself enough to create another paradigm for adolescent sexuality that involves teachers, students and parents in a conversation of discovery?

A theo-ethical framework for gay adolescents needs to acknowledge the studies and research about adolescent sexual activity. Studies recently conducted in the United States indicate that teenagers engage in sexual behaviors that put them at risk for contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV. Studies conducted among school-age youth found that 39.6% of ninth graders, 47.6% of tenth graders, 57.3% of eleventh graders, and 71.9% of twelfth graders reported having had vaginal intercourse. 19% of all high school students studied in that report had four or more partners (Hunter, 1996). Adolescence is a time of exploration and discovery. This period of sexual exploration and risk-taking seems to becoming more and more hazardous for teens in the age of AIDS. Hunter (1996) quotes from recent research that shows " young gay males

have an alarming HIV seroprevalence rate. Evidence suggests there is an increasing rate of sexual risk-taking among young gay men as well. This increase in exposure predicts a possible 'second wave' of new HIV infections" (p.6).

Young people need opportunities where they can be respectfully listened to and helped to explore what it is they are searching for in their relationships. By using theo-ethical principles based upon relationality, respect, justice, and love, they can be helped to stand back and evaluate what is happening in their relationships. The above figures regarding HIV infections are scary. While it may evoke a reaction in some quarters of the Church to speak even stronger and more defensively out of its traditional teachings on sexuality, the figures point to the reality that a considerable number of adolescents either do not heed the teachings of the Church or are unable to relate them to their experience. Gay adolescents need to be helped to find ways of integrating their sexual identity according to healthy, life-giving principles which will lead them to make informed choices about their life and how they want to be in relationships and express themselves sexually.

Other ways need to be proposed that assist young people to discover and learn ways of integrating their sexual identity. The magisterium has consistently taught that sexual activity outside the boundaries of marriage is not permissible. To live in accordance with this teaching, people are required to abstain from all sexual acts. Chaste living has been upheld by the Church as a way of living that all Christians are called to follow whether they be married or single. Unfortunately, the virtue of chastity has become associated more with the avoidance of "occasions of sin". This pejorative interpretation of chastity limits its possibilities. From as early as 400 AD, Cassian, one of the early Church

Fathers, made the distinction in his writings between continence (sexual abstinence) and the virtue of chastity which he equated with sexual maturity (Sipe, 1995). This way of life that leads to sexual maturity could be very appealing to young people. A person wanting to live a chaste life is required to be dedicated and prepared to give themselves to a disciplined way of living. These qualities are evident in the lives of many young people. There is value in re-claiming the virtue of chastity, whereby young people are being offered a choice to explore a way of living that is alternative.

Considering that abstinence from all genital sexual activity does prevent risk from disease and undesired pregnancies, it does have some strong recommendations going for it. But could another meaning be given to this teaching so that its emphasis is primarily focused upon the virtues associated with living this type of living? Rather than the emphasis being on the denial of sexual activity (abstinence), there is a need to acclaim the gift of being a sexual person. Young people need to be guided by the underlying principles that affirm respect for self and others in relationships, along with a determination for a relationship not to degenerate into a craving to possess and dominate. The virtue of chastity keeps pointing to a way of living that is based upon discovering relational maturity. However, choosing a chaste way of living needs to be nurtured in ways that young people can be helped to discover its wisdom and be taught skills that will assist them in living this out. For too long chastity has been proclaimed by the one word "DON'T". It is time to develop programs that assist young adolescents to learn how to "DO" chastity.

Since adolescence is a movement toward integration and maturity then this virtue could provide valuable insight for people who are wanting to integrate their sexual identity in their efforts to live chastely. At the same time adolescence is also a time of exploration and breaking away from norms that have been given them. This means that learning to live chastely does not happen overnight, nor does it come easily. It is part of an unfolding journey where young people often discover the virtues of chastity by the inevitable mistakes and struggles that occur along the way. Through prayerful reflection, and honest attempts to commit themselves to be respectful of others they can be led to discover the inner freedom of this virtue. Chastity is not something that is attained once but rather a way of living that needs to be constantly reviewed and worked on.

The present climate of our Western culture offers mixed messages to adolescents be they gay or straight. It proclaims abstain from sex (meaning intercourse) or engage in safer sexual practice by wearing a condom. There is need to work through a sexual continuum which helps youth understand that there are a variety of sexual responses. The language of the locker room is about scoring. In other words our present culture has highlighted sexual penetration as the climax to sexual activity. Sex education classes seem to highlight two basic choices of abstinence or use of a condom without offering any other way of understanding a continuum of sexual responses (Kegan, 1995). How would it be if our culture recognized that adolescent development is a continuum and so too is their growth in sexuality? Could youth be helped by an ethical framework that attempts to assist people come to awareness of the meaning of their relationships? When young people can be respectfully helped to reflect upon who they are and how they are expressing

themselves sexually in a relationship, this may provide the moment for greater truth to emerge. Is there a way of offering another model that is attuned to the increasing number of adolescents who are becoming sexually active? This model would help them remain safe and more respectful of their partner while at the same time realizing that their sexual explorations may lead to climax without penetration? In other words can sexual expression be named as a continuum from hugging and kissing right through to climaxing without intercourse?

Would this free up the culture to then proclaim that until the person is prepared to enter a serious, committed relationship and accept the consequences that accompany intercourse (from a child to possible STD infections) then they do not engage in this form of sexual expression (Kegan, 1995)? Presently the Catholic school system keeps proclaiming the ideal (abstinence) while aware that the sexual activity of young people is increasing, accompanied by continued risks to their health and personhood. The sacredness of the person needs to be affirmed in all expressions of their sexual identity. The real challenge is to come up with a framework that pays heed to adolescent sexual development and continues to provide safe boundaries for young people in a time of increasing sexual exploration and experimentation.

Presently the magisterium of the Church is constrained by its teachings. While it affirms the dignity of the individual as a child of God, it disapproves of any homogenital acts which are seen as intrinsically evil. Always the Church insists the sinner can be welcomed back into communion with God through reconciliation. The conundrum that does not seem to be resolved is how can love be truly present in a relationship where the

sexual expression is continually labeled as intrinsically evil? The way the Church addresses this issue is to counsel people to live in the relationship chastely (which means abstaining from all forms of genital acts). In the "Principles to Guide Confessors in Questions of Homosexuality"(1978) devised by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops it reads :

> The confessor should encourage the person to form stable relationships with persons of both sexes...If the homosexual [person] has progressed under the direction of a confessor, but in the effort to develop a stable relationship with a given person has occasionally fallen into a sin of impurity, he should be absolved and instructed to take measures to avoid the elements which lead to sin without breaking off a friendship which has helped him grow as a person (#9).

While the Church traditionally views those people who participate in homogenital acts are always engaged in sinful behavior, the counsel given above does give credence to the possibilities for love that enable people to grow in gay relationships. Be that as it may, the structures of the Church continue to exclude gay couples from being supported in a vowed life that would represent God's steadfast love. God does care about relationships and showed this in a most dramatic manner by entering fully into relationship with humanity through Jesus. What needs to be acclaimed in a theo-ethical framework for gay adolescents is that the character of the relationships with one another is inseparable from the character of the relationship the person has with God (Choon-Leong Seow, 1996). These two types of relationships mirror each other. God's love for the people is manifest in a constant, undying commitment and each Christian is called to participate in a similar journey.

At no one time are relationships lived perfectly or righteously whether the person be, straight, gay or ambisexual. People struggle with the scars of sinfulness which manifest

themselves in relationships that get damaged and fractured. Adolescents are calling out to people to find ways of helping them live this journey in the best possible manner: no, not perfectly for sure, but to find ways, hopefully many ways, of honoring their differences. Dare we not continue the conversations that open up these ways. Was this not the ordinance set before the people of faith as they entered their journey into the Exodus: "Choose life, then, so that you and your children may live" (Deut. 30:19). Is not that the obligation that is passed on to us?

CHAPTER V
WEAVING THE THREADS INTO A PASTORAL PLAN FOR A CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

What does the gay male youth need in this transition time of adolescence? For a start, the young gay male is required to deal with all the developmental tasks associated with adolescence. These include the shifts that occur between family and peer groups along with emergent social skills that come with intimate relationships. Added to this complex matrix, the young gay person has to work through the meaning of being gay. What is this experience like for him?

Issues Facing The Gay Male Adolescent

The gay adolescent male realizes that he belongs to a minority group that is stigmatized. Yet, unlike certain ethnic minorities, the gay youth lacks the opportunities to receive positive socialization in early childhood from family members about being gay. Typically, the gay youth grows up in a heterosexual oriented family. Depending on the family environment, he will, nonetheless, receive mixed messages about homosexuality from school, religious affiliations, peers and his culture. Within the predominantly heterosexist culture, it is assumed he will fall in love with a girl, become married and have children. However, these values and beliefs are discordant with his own self-identity. This

places him in isolation as he continues to feel more and more different in a culture that is not interested in understanding what it is like to be gay.

Gay adolescents grow up in an environment which provides little or no access to accurate information about being gay. Usually they do not have association with role models who are gay. Ironically, gay adolescents have been relatively unsupported by the adult gay communities because of lingering myths that associate homosexuality with recruiting and, even worse still, pedophilia (Gonsiorek, 1987). Isolated from peer support groups or effective gay role models compounds the young person's sense of being on their own. The young person is left to find their own contacts and this can lead to transitory encounters in gay bars, public toilets or other public meeting places.

Conformity ranks high in adolescent peer groups. Peer groups can be intolerant of any differences, especially if the differences have to do with sexual identity or sex roles. While young gay males may not experience rejection or ostracization directly, they witness it enacted in the school yard or by the peer group and learn what could happen to them if their difference is discovered. Their hidden sexual orientation creates an increasing sense of distancing from their peer group (Boyer, 1989). These feelings of isolation and alienation are reinforced by negative societal attitudes towards homosexuality and the homosexual. From the impact of these forces, a young person could easily develop a sense of inferiority about his sexual identity and feel worthless in himself. Dependent upon the intensity and constancy of these feelings, it is possible to see how this could develop into depression and lead to risk-taking behaviors such as attempted suicide. Recently, a framework for gender equity was released for Australian schools. It gives credence to the

pressures that Australian gay and lesbian youth have to sustain: "For students who are gay or lesbian, or who are perceived to be gay or lesbian, the impact of homophobic taunting and violence can become intolerable, leading some students to leave school or contemplate suicide" (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p.41).

Gay youth not only risk peer rejection but they also face the added fear of ostracization by family members. As was referred to earlier in this work, parents can feel guilty and blame themselves for their son's orientation. They can also be overwhelmed by fear as they try to imagine what life might be like for their son. A young person may also be psychologically at risk by living in a home where people refuse, or are not able, to talk about the issue. Research figures give clear indication that a considerable number of youth are ejected from their home and, in more severe cases, are physically abused by family members (Telljohann & Price, 1993).

In general, lesbian, gay and ambisexual adolescents are at a higher risk for substance abuse, clinical depression, prostitution, AIDS, running away, truancy, academic difficulties and dropping out of school (Reyonds & Koski, 1994). Gay youth tend to experience more psychological stress and lower self-esteem than other teens in their age group. Considering these cumulative effects that confront gay male teenagers, it is important to examine the support structures that are currently available to young people and the effectiveness of these services.

The development of a pastoral plan can benefit greatly from the findings of recent research. By paying careful attention to the concerns that surface, those involved in research can offer ways of responding to the needs of gay adolescents. It is difficult to obtain true representative samples of the homosexual population. This points to an area of limitation in studies of homosexual populations generally. To find a representative sample who are prepared and open to be involved in such research seems to be difficult given the negative attitudes to homosexuality in society. In a study conducted by Mercier and Berger (1989) on the social service needs of adolescents, they conceded that their survey highlighted this inadequacy. The respondents recruited for their study were contacted through lesbian and gay social networks. This means that adolescents who did not seek help from any organization or who had no gay or lesbian friends were not included in their research. This is a noticeable gap in the study for it would be important to have information regarding the way other homosexual adolescents, who do not belong to organized support groups, come to an awareness of their sexuality. It can not be assumed that they find it more difficult. Some may have found their own ways of establishing informal networks which support them. This area would benefit from further research.

Younger adolescents, those under the age of 18 years, have been under-represented in the majority of studies conducted with gay and lesbian youth. Berger's studies conducted in 1982, 1983 and 1987 maintained that teenagers during these earlier years did not yet possess levels of self-awareness that would lead them to seek out the

support and company of peers with similar orientations. However, the Kinsey Institute has

shown that gay men report homosexual feelings in their early adolescent years around the

age of 13 years. This could suggest that youngsters at this stage may benefit from contact

with peers in the lesbian and gay community as a way of assuring them that their feelings

are legitimate (Mercier & Berger, 1989).

In ascertaining where homosexual adolescents turn for advice and guidance,

Mercier & Berger (1989) indicated that 90% turned to friends first and foremost. Next in

line were their own gay support groups which, as the authors state, is not surprising since

the majority of the participants belonged to gay support groups. About half turned to

parents or boy or girl friend. Relatively few sought help from adults or siblings. Even

fewer called on services offered by the gay and lesbian community which seems to suggest

that adolescents do not find the help they need, particularly if these groups are designed

specifically for adults. What needs to be acknowledged is that the majority of these

participants were already in some form of functioning gay group which was offering them

support (Mercier & Berger, 1989). In other words, the participants in this study may not

have needed to access any other types of services due to the support they were already

receiving. An oversight of this study conducted by Mercier and Berger (1989) is their

failure to outline the type and quality of support services that were being offered by the

various gay support groups. Having a list of resources that were helpful to gay adolescents

would offer future service providers with some clearer directions to pursue. If in fact the

respondents were satisfied with their support group then there would be no immediate

need to turn to an adult group for additional support.

Quite surprisingly, this study reported few problems associated with alcohol or drug abuse. What was more commonly reported by over half of the respondents were the difficulties they had experienced with depression. Relatively few stated that they had attempted suicide. The study acknowledged that perhaps the sample of individuals represented was skewed due to the fact that they had been able to successfully negotiate formal and informal services within the homosexual community. The question which remains from this study is, how do other homosexual youth deal with similar issues without the friendship networks and organized group support encountered by this sample group (Mercier & Berger, 1989).

The youth who were targeted in this study reported that if they had a problem, they generally consulted with more than one resource. 71% reported that they consulted with three or four groups or people and 25% sought help from five to six resources. 30% of the youth were quite fearful of their parents finding out about their identity. In listing their concerns about using a homosexual community resource they included:

- no transport or inappropriate times for meetings (20%);

- being seen entering a place that was for gay, lesbian or ambisexual youth (20%);

- lack of information about where to access such places (20%);

- a fear that parents will find out (18%) (Mercier & Berger, 1989).

It is worthwhile commenting that only 32 responses were used in this chart (N=32) out of a possible 49. No explanation was given for this or why 17 responses were not included. The authors do concede that this study may under-represent the magnitude of

this problem since the sample is skewed in favor of older adolescents who generally have access to cars (Mercier & Berger, 1989).

In this study by Mercier and Berger (1989) the participants were asked to rate how helpful *they thought* fourteen different resources would be in offering them assistance. This reveals a weakness of the study because the authors drew conclusions from speculative opinions offered by adolescents rather than from their actual experience of using the listed resources. It would have been more accurate to have obtained information about the resources they had used or had thought about using. However, the perceived helpfulness provided by school counselors raises some very pertinent questions for people involved in pastoral counseling. Friends were listed as 90% helpful, homosexual support groups (87%), other lesbian/gay resources (65%), support group for families (64%), counselor/therapist (63%). School counselors were listed at 15% helpful, 41% unsure and 43% unhelpful, while perceptions of religious counselors were listed as 9% helpful and 31% not sure and 60% unhelpful (Mercier & Berger, 1989).

Even though it is a limited sample group, concerns do surface about the perceptions youth have of school and religious counselors. This confined study indicates that these youth did not perceive the helpfulness of both groups of counselors. Granted these are perceptions and not experiences per se, the results do raise serious some questions about these two sources of possible support. In gathering information about the needs of young homosexual adolescents it would be important to include specific questions about why they would or would not seek the advice of a school counselor or religious counselor. It is easy to speculate about possible reasons such as the

uncomfortableness of the young person discussing religious issues surrounding

homosexuality or whether the young person might feel pre-judged by the counselor.

Whatever the reason, it seems an important area to explore further so that better

assessment can take place to ascertain if these counselors could be more helpful for this

group of young people.

A more recent study conducted by Telljohann and Price (1993) asked gay

adolescents if they could talk to their school counselor concerning their homosexual

orientation. 25% of the males had been able to talk with their school counselor. The

percentage was similar for the girls. The majority of the respondents were white

adolescents (62%) with 17% being African American. 62% of those who responded were

attending school (Telljohann & Price, 1993). These results seem to confirm Mercier and

Berger's (1989) speculation that only a minority of youth are approaching school

counselors.

Already it seems evident that the major group who are most significant to gay and

lesbian youth are their peers so perhaps it is far better to start with peer conscientization as

part of school educational programs in sexuality and human relations rather than tackle

homosexuality directly. The awkwardness experienced by the adolescent in dealing with

attitudinal and moral values that are immediate to their experience is something educators

are aware of in planning lessons. Creative and almost indirect ways have to be found to

help them explore issues with their peer group in a more objective, less threatening

manner. As a result of gathering effective information about what gay youth need to assist

them in their on-going journey to maturity, there is a need for people to work co-

operatively in devising helpful programs and strategies. A valuable starting point for curriculum designers, school teachers, religious education teachers and those involved in health and human relations would be to learn to work together as a team in designing curriculum that would deal sensitively and informatively with gay issues. Additionally, teachers need help in exploring the issues so that they have the skills to conduct effective and respectful class-room discussions.

Another support group who have been studied in regards to the effectiveness of their services are physician and health care providers. Research was done by Telljohann and Price (1993) with 120 homosexual adolescents, of whom 74% were males and 26% females. The majority of the subjects were Caucasian (62%) with 17% being African-American. Only 18% of the males reported that they had been able to discuss their gay orientation with a physician. While this is a very limited study it does offer cause for concern that these adolescents did not feel comfortable talking with a health professional about their orientation and related areas of concern (Telljohann & Price, 1993). What are the ramifications of this research? What areas of deficiency is it pointing to in the health care system? How can these areas be addressed in ways that build alliances between gay youth, health care workers and those who are involved in education in a Catholic school system?

Components of a Pastoral Plan

The sobering results of the studies referred to above need to be taken into account in terms of devising a pastoral plan for adolescent gay youth. What is meant by a pastoral plan and how can it assist gay male adolescents in their human development? A pastoral plan designed for gay male adolescents in a Catholic school system aims at attending to their needs and attempts to offer them support while respecting their uniqueness as people created in the image of God. A pastoral response is concerned with the dignity and integral growth of the young person. As stated in the guidelines of a Catholic school system:

> We are made in the image of God (Gn.1:27) and at the core of the Church's pastoral action is a deep respect for the innate dignity and uniqueness of individual persons.
> As an agent in the mission and ministry of the Church, the Catholic school is required to receive and educate its students with respect and love. In a community that provides a strong sense of well being, belonging and security, students are given every opportunity to be affirmed in their dignity and worth, confirmed in their personhood, and assisted to grow to the fullness of their potential (CECV Policy 1.14,[7]. 1994, p.2).

In suggesting a variety of experiences for those who work with gay male adolescents, this plan will offer, what has been referred to earlier in this work as, a holding environment for these adolescents in need of support. The holding environment creates a safe place for the various groups who are responsible to and supportive of gay

---

[7] The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) published guidelines to assist the school community in developing its own pastoral care policy. The revised addition was completed in 1994 entitled "Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools". This document has been used in the formulation and delivery of pastoral care policies and practices. These guidelines are listed as CECV Policy 1.14

adolescents, to examine, question and explore the meanings and experiences of what it is like to be gay.

This pastoral plan acknowledges that there are significant groups in the Catholic school who are integrally connected with the gay male adolescent as he comes to awareness of his sexual identity. This plan in written with these groups in mind:

- school administrators including board members;

- school personnel includes teaching and library staff;

- counseling services and chaplaincy;

- ancillary staff (such as secretaries, business-office personnel), sports coaches ;

- gay male adolescents;

- the student peer group;

- parents of gay male students;

- parents of students.

Relying on the shared wisdom of the social sciences, research information, and the cultural heritage, a pastoral plan attempts to integrate the insights gained from theo-ethical studies and pastoral counseling. A pastoral plan attempts to weave together these elements in a way that will respect the differences of teenagers. The components integral to this pastoral plan are:

1. changing the thinking and the values of the people in the school system;

2. conscientizing the school curriculum;

3. attending to the gay student and his needs;

4. attending to the system by developing a model for change.

1. Changing the Thinking- Changing the Values

How can Australian Catholic schools be helped to be made more aware of the plight of the gay and lesbian students who are searching out their identity in adolescence? In what ways can a conversation be developed around homosexuality which will bring about attitudinal and structural changes in schools? Perhaps it is important to recognize that much is already happening in the Australian Catholic school system to address issues related to difference in the school system. School subject choices have broadened considerably in the past five years in the States of Victoria and Tasmania. Curriculum initiatives attempt to integrate mutli-culturalism across the spectrum of teaching practices. In recent years efforts were made to create better environments in schools for educating girls into the future. In 1996 a symposium addressed the education of boys into the future by the Christian Brothers' Education Commission in conjunction with the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne. In other words there is a growing climate that is far more accepting of differences and a willingness to encourage girls and boys to develop their potentiality without being constricted by cultural or sexual stereotypes.

Yet while Catholic schools point to their mission statements as the encapsulation of their vision, gay and lesbian youth still continue to be discriminated against and referred to as "poofters", "faggots" and "leso's", not only in the school yard, but in staff rooms. Considering that policies have been set in place by the Catholic Education Commission to

safe-guard people from sexual harassment,[8] a climate still exists in the Catholic school which prevents gay and lesbian people being accepted and valued for who they are as people. Can anything be done to bring about change?

If there is to be a significant shift in understanding the gay and lesbian student in the school system then the administrators, teachers, parents and student body need to be involved in processes that help them critique their own values as well as the values of the school. The climate and culture of a school reflects the values it espouses. This was pointed out in a recent framework for Australian schools: "The organizational culture of the school is a vital area for analysis in terms of the role it plays in developing and promoting constructions of gender which are constraining and limiting, or equitable and encouraging" (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p.40). A helpful starting point is to affirm the climate of difference that presently exists within the school culture. However, if values of difference are to be translated into the arena of sexuality then people need to be helped to look at what has formed their value system both explicitly and implicitly. Reference has been made in previous chapters to the way a culture absorbs certain values and attitudes.

People's knowledge about sexuality is historically, socially, and culturally formed and passed on, both in healthy and unhealthy ways, to the next generation. To help people uncover the influences that have formed their thinking and beliefs about homosexuality requires a reflective process. Gula outlines "a tentative model of pastoral moral guidance"

---

[8] A Draft Policy Statement was released by the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne, 1996. It contains the principles for ensuring an environment in Catholic schools where people will be treated with respect, dignity and freedom. It states: "The Catholic Education Office is committed to the principle that all people should be able to live and work in an environment which preserves and nurtures each person's innate dignity and which is free from sexual harassment. Any report of sexual harassment will be treated seriously, sympathetically and confidentially by the Office" (CEOM Policy, 1996, p.1).

(Gula, 1988, p.309) which is based upon a critical reflection method. What this model offers is a way of engaging people in a critique of their values system and helps them examine how they have arrived at their decision. This model has also been applied by O'Connell (1991) as a way of outlining the necessary elements of a moral decision-making process. The integral components are:

      a) intuition or feelings

      b) experience

      c) rational analysis and argument

      d) community

      e) modeling

      f) imagination

      g) narrative.

These elements can be used as a way of engaging people in re-viewing their beliefs and decisions about homosexuality. This model provides a way of opening them to a wider perspective and appreciation of the issue. Such a process could be effectively used with school groups (e.g. administrators, staff, students and parents) as a way of helping them articulate their values and attitudes about homosexuality.

a. Intuition or Feelings:

Often the act of moral decision is an affective act which emerges from people's felt sense of something being right or wrong. It seems to be based more on a gut reaction to a

situation (O'Connell, 1991). People's feelings about sexuality, and in this case

homosexuality, are often reflective of family, social and cultural "norms" that have been

assimilated into the culture. Within the Australian culture, there are divisive reactions to

homosexuality. People blame gay and lesbian people for the spread of the AIDS virus[9].

They feel homosexual practices are not natural. People's beliefs systems are often based

upon their feelings than anything else. However, the basis of these feelings have been

influenced, both consciously and unconsciously, by family, cultural and societal *mores.*

When cultural *mores* become deeply ingrained in a culture, it is difficult to question

them. Because certain beliefs have been accepted unequivocally about gay and lesbian

people they, in turn, give form to principles which clearly state what is and what is not

acceptable in the culture. The assumptions upon which these belief systems are based,

become entrenched. To understand the world of gay and lesbian youth, requires people to

develop a sense of the complexities that these young people have to face. People need to

be helped to enter the world of these young people and develop a felt sense of what it

looks like from their perspective. In this way, people can be helped to feel the injustices,

the fears, the violence and respond to these situations from the basis of gospel values.

---

[9] In blaming homosexual people for the spread of the AIDS virus, encourages society to split into good and bad or moral and immoral. When a group is cut-off and blamed for the infection of people with the AIDS virus, it naturally leads to scape-goating gay and lesbian people. It is disturbing to note that in The Australian Bishops' Conference statement entitled "AIDS- A Challenge to Love" they state: "In Australia, homosexual practices have been the principal cause of the transmission of this disease. Even heterosexual spread of the contagion can often be traced to earlier infection of the transmitting partner through homosexual practices" (Australian Bishops' Conference, 1988, p.2). Such a statement places culpability on the homosexual community and makes them a scape-goat while allowing the rest of society to escape from its ultimate responsibility for the health and well-being of all people, whether they be straight or gay.

b. Experience:

Feelings are born out of experiences and express what people believe in. These beliefs have emerged from, and have been reinforced by, their experiences. People hold different values because their experiences have been different. A key to helping people change their value systems is to immerse them into alternative experiences. The use of contemporary film, literature and documentary which presents gay youth as ordinary people who are discovering their identity would be very helpful. Similarly, for teachers, administrators, students, and parents, to have the opportunity to listen to gay and lesbian people speak about living their lives as sports people, lawyers, artists, blue-collar workers would help normalize the exaggerated feelings that stereotype gay and lesbian people.

c. Rational Analysis:

Current studies conducted in Melbourne, Australia, about the sexual practices of adolescent youth confirm similar studies carried out in the United States. The results of these findings, referred to in an earlier part of this work, can be used to expand people's rational analysis. Not only do contemporary studies present disturbing facts and figures about adolescent sexual activity but they invite parents, teachers, and peers to wonder, and be concerned about, the implications of these findings. Additionally, by providing an overview of how traditional morality came to express particular views about sexuality and how changes have occurred over the years to challenge those assumptions would be an

integral part of helping people shift in their thinking. When people are better able to understand the socio-historical roots of certain ideas within a context of the times and societal needs, then there is hope that they can be helped to explore the present needs of youth. In time they can be helped to develop a contemporary theology which addresses those needs.

d. Community:

Values are proclaimed by communities not individuals as such. For values to survive, the community needs to insist on their practice and agree on what is good, acceptable and morally right (O'Connell, 1991). The community needs to come to a better understanding of adolescent sexuality so that effective guide-lines and boundaries can be put in place to protect and nurture youth while, at the same time, allowing people to be different. Society is geared primarily toward heterosexism and assumes that all youth are heterosexual. When people can be led to value difference, especially sexual differences, then gay youth will find a place where they belong in society. At the same time, adolescents need the support of clear norms and boundaries which will guide them and direct them to express their sexuality in healthy ways.

The present climate of our Western culture confronts all youth, be they gay or straight, with a mixed message. Society proclaims that youth must abstain from sex (meaning intercourse) altogether or engage in safer sexual practice by wearing a condom. The pressures that are placed on youth to be sexually active come through media, soap

operas, multi-media advertisements and sometimes cultural expectations. The language of

the locker room is about scoring. There seems to be a conspiracy of silence around helping

youth understand their sexual drives and helping them find others ways of responding to

these needs.

With only two choices being highlighted to abstain or use a condom, no other

option is given to view sexuality in other terms (Kegan, 1995). In other words our present

culture has highlighted sexual penetration as the climax to sexual activity. How would it

be if our culture recognized that adolescent development is a continuum and so too is their

growth in sexuality? Could youth be helped by means of an ethical framework to

acknowledge their sexual drives while at the same time helping them reflect upon their

sexual responses. Youth need to be given necessary skills which will help them reflect

upon the way they want to express themselves sexually with another person. They need to

understand their feelings and their reasons for feeling this way about the other person.

This in turn will help them become more self-aware of what they are wanting to express

about themselves in their relationships.

A way needs to be developed based upon adolescent sexual development whereby

youth are made aware of the continuum of sexual expression and are taught to choose

what is best for them and the other person. With the increasing number of adolescents

becoming sexually active, it seems no other viable alternatives are being offered which

work. Education in sexuality needs to be holistic and based upon theo-ethical principles

which develop self-awareness and responsibility among youth while protecting them. The

educational model needs to be respectful of the different moral levels of adolescent

development. In this climate, is it possible to teach youth to remain safe and more respectful of the other person which, for some, may lead to climax without penetration? In other words can adolescent sexual expression be named as a continuum from hugging and kissing right through to climaxing without intercourse?

Would this free up the culture to proclaim that until the person is prepared to enter a serious, committed relationship and accept the consequences that accompany intercourse (from a child to possible infection) then they do not engage in this form of sexual expression (Kegan, 1995)? Presently the Catholic school system keeps proclaiming the ideal (abstinence) while aware that the sexual activity of young people is increasing accompanied by continued risks to their health and personhood. The sacredness of the person needs to be affirmed in any sexual expression. The real challenge is to come up with a framework that pays heed to adolescent sexual development and continues to provide safe boundaries for young people in a time of exploration and experimentation.

e. Modeling:

If gay and lesbian youth are to find wholesome ways of living their lives then they need to be able to look to people in the Catholic school system to provide an avenue for effective modeling of personhood. People learn about how to live successfully by watching others. For this group of adolescents who are a silent minority in the school system, there is a need for them to have effective gay and lesbian role models who they can look up to

and feel assured that it is possible to be who they are and still be normal. The values that they see witnessed before them becomes the real teaching.

f. Imagination:

Moral judgments emerge from feelings which are shaped by experience and that experience takes place in groups by means of watching others model a healthy way of living and relating (O'Connell, 1991). However, to engage active imagination as part of formulating moral judgments draws upon another part of the psyche. By imagining what it would be like to be gay or lesbian, and not be overwhelmed or fearful of this prospect, enables a young person to try on differing expressions of themselves in their imagination before venturing out into their world.

The use of film and theater provide alternate ways of engaging young people's imaginations. A film released in 1995 entitled "Beautiful Thing", depicts the world of two teenage boys growing up in an inner city area of England who develop a close friendship. As the film unfolds it becomes evident that one of the adolescent boys is in love with the other. While he is aware of his sexual orientation, his friend initially appears unaware of any sexual attraction but as the story unfolds he in turn has to deal with the confusion and choices that accompany acknowledgment of attraction to his friend. While the film focuses on the relationship that develops between the two boys, it avoids explicit, erotic scenes. By presenting the relationship in this manner, "Beautiful Thing" connects with the

experiences many adolescents have of "falling in love". The only difference is that the young people who fall in love are of the same sex.

The film has a way of representing the similarity between what happens when gay boys enter into a relationship with each other and what occurs for heterosexual adolescents who fall in love with each other. By exploring the feelings of these two boys and the way they deal with their relationship, the film offers another expression of who people might fall in love with and how they might express their love. The issues that have to be worked through for people in relationship are similar to those that gay people encounter in their relationships, but there are some significant differences. Societal and family disapproval create a burden for gay youth. Such common issues arise in the film as who to tell; how open they can be with each other about feelings; and how they can balance time spent with each other compared to friends. The difference that is unique to gay couples is the stigmatization they feel inflicted on them by the local community and their subsequent ostracization in the neighborhood. These two aspects are dealt with well in the film "Beautiful Thing".

It can be seen from this example that what is helpful about contemporary film, and theater is the deliberate movement to normalize homosexuality and present these relationships in similar ways to other forms of adolescent relationships. When gay young people can see acted out before them a "normal" story of two people falling in love then it provides them with assurance that their feelings, fantasies and yearnings are shared by others. They are no longer alone in this journey out of the closet. Such presentations in film or on stage can give the opportunity to others, who have little or no experience of

what it is like to be gay, to see what the world might look like from this perspective and become more empathetic.

g. Narrative:

When imagination is given expression it can develop into story telling. Story telling is being appreciated today as an art form on its own. People can be invited into using their imagination through the medium of story (O'Connell, 1991). Here is a way people can be empathically placed in the situation of another and experience the world from another perspective entirely. In subtle ways, people's values systems are exposed in the world of story and they can be left to modify their beliefs and moral sensibilities due to the impact the story has on them.

The amount of literature that is available describing young people's experience of growing up lesbian or gay is on the increase. The Australian non-fiction story entitled "Holding The Man" by Timothy Conigrave (1995) describes the way two young teenagers at Xavier, an elite Jesuit High School in Melbourne, fall in love with each other. By means of inviting the reader into the autobiographical world of the writer, it is possible to sense what it is like to grow up gay. Conigrave (1995) provides the reader with the opportunity to confront cultural taboos against gays, see the discriminatory expressions in the Australian culture and experience two young men come to terms with their love, their estrangement and subsequent relationships that develop. The reader is also brought into

the struggle that these two young men experience in dealing with AIDS while trying to stay in love with each other.

A story such as this has the capacity to demythologize the gay fantasy stories which focus primarily on the erotic episodes of love-making. This autobiographical account has the capacity to immerse a reader into the wider, conflictual world where people fall in and out of love with each other and families struggle with acceptance and denial of the sexual identity of their sons. This story reflects on the experience that is common to people's relationships. When people's lives are situated in the nitty gritty of life where they struggle to be with each other faithfully, it has the capacity to capture the normalcy of a relationship, be it gay or straight.

2. Conscientizing The School Curriculum

How schools might work towards supporting and assisting those gay adolescents who are enrolled in their system is a daunting task. For change to be effective and long lasting, the school system has to be prepared to critique its values and mission statements in the light of what is being passed on to students in the written curriculum and "the hidden curriculum" (Egan, 1979, p.113). While schools may espouse gospel values and articulate those values in a school mission statement, what continues to coexist in schools are those unstated norms, values, and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying school structures. These structures exist, not only in the classroom, but also in

the school system and the wider cultural context. As the Gender Equity Taskforce for

Australian Schools reiterated:

> Both the formal and informal curriculum are extremely important in the formation
> of gender identity. So much attention is now being paid to reform of the formal
> curriculum because not only is female almost invisible within it, but also because of
> the ways in which female is constructed in texts. At the same time, a powerful
> informal curriculum also teaches children what it is to be female and male.
>
> Therefore, responses to the demands for gender equity require more than just
> change to the formal messages which we give students through the curriculum.
> Gendered understandings are not formed simply through families or schools or
> peers, but through the myriad of relations with individuals, communities and
> institutions. What is important is that schools find ways to engage with students to
> actively draw on ideas and practices from their social context in order to help girls
> and boys come to see the powerful understandings and practices that sanction
> alternative ways of being (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p.29).

How might this be played out in a school setting? Most Catholic school mission

statements espouse the individual worth of each person as a person created in the image

and likeness of God. These statements articulate how this value will be lived out in its

admission policy, codes of conduct, and variety of curricula options to name just a few.

However, in a particular class-room a teacher may make a derogatory remark about a

particular ethnic group in the school. At one level people's individual differences are

respected and valued but at another level what is taking place in the class-room

discussions is undermining this value.

In order the bring the various forces into play that form the values of the school it

is important to make the hidden curriculum public. This involves more than teaching

students the skills of clarifying their personal values. According to Egan:

...it means that the school itself, through its teachers and administrators, must clarify its own values publicly and teach its students the skills of clarifying and identifying the values that institutions, including the school itself, enshrine and promote. The school, then, would become a forum in which cultural influences in society would be examined and critiqued, and students would be encouraged to take a proactive stance towards cultural influences instead of surrendering passively to the many forms of enculturation promoted by the various institutions of society (Egan, 1979, p.114).

To bring this about would require a commitment on behalf of school administrators to want to examine the attitudes and values that are prevalent in their school. To make this more specific, schools that are wanting to support gay youth will need to find ways of bringing into the open the different values about homosexuality that operate at a hidden level in the school. Policy development in the school can work at several levels to help a school become specific about its particular purpose or mission. The process can be educative, if used properly. It can contain specific teaching moments and by involving people in personal reflection and assisting them to name their values and attitudes, people will be required to deal with different perspectives of homosexuality. This can become an effective educational tool when people can be engaged by an insightful facilitator to re-examine why they believe what they believe. Additionally, by enabling staff groups, parents and student groups to participate in the decision making process, a model of collaboration is being taught to people. This type of movement toward a more participatory ownership of school policies is becoming more evident in Australian

Catholic school systems [10]. When a cross-section of a school shares the responsibility for decision-making then there is a far better chance of the policies being owned, claimed and implemented.

What criteria is useful in determining effective policies for schools which are committed to educating its community on gay issues and supporting gay youth in the school system? A helpful starting point was outlined in 1993 by the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian youth. It recommended the following:

- Anti-discrimination policies which includes sexual orientation for students and teachers. These policies need to be included as part of teacher contracts.

- Policies which guarantee equal access to education and school activities.

- Anti-harassment policies and guidelines which deal with handling incidents of anti-gay language, harassment or violence.

- Multi-cultural and diversity issues.

- Training teachers in suicide prevention and violence prevention which is mandated as part of the teacher and school accreditation.

- School based support groups for gay and straight students.

- Curriculum which includes gay and lesbian issues.

- Information in school libraries for gay and lesbian adolescents (Besner & Spungin, 1995, pp.41-42).

---

[10] A policy statement developed by the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne (CEOM), on "Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting for Catholic Schools, P-12" speaks of the Catholic school community being committed to co-responsibility and collaboration which are expressed in a number of key partnerships. It goes on to outline four major areas of partnership which exist between students and teachers, colleagues, the school and the parents, the school entering into co-operative relationships with business, industry and the tertiary sector. (CEOM, 1994).

These recommendations challenge the Catholic school system to look for ways that will bring about change[11]. However, these changes have to viewed within a far broader context. The insights from social constructionist theory come into play here. What needs to be carefully examined is how boys are presently being educated in the Catholic school system and, more importantly, what they are being educated to become. The hidden curriculum of the school system can easily perpetuate a stereotypical image and model of maleness which is re-inforced by staff, coaches and the curriculum. No matter how much is printed about expanding the opportunities for boys to experience different ways of being male, the hidden curriculum will continue to work against any changes. A framework recently released for all Australian schools on gender equity clearly addresses this issue:

> Research confirms that children do not learn how to be female and male in passive ways. Rather, individuals actively develop a sense of themselves as gendered people by interacting with the myriad of messages and practices which they encounter...As girls and boys develop a sense of self as gendered beings, they come to actively desire ways of being that can be potentially limiting rather than liberating...The role of language is crucial in this process. Language shapes reality, and it limits what ideas and concepts are available in a particular situation (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p.25).

A symposium conducted in Melbourne in 1996 focused its attention on the education of boys in Catholic schools. This was a joint venture by the Catholic Education

---

[11] The National Catholic Education Commission, a group authorized by and responsible to the Australian Bishops' Conference, recently published guidelines for school policies in regards to gender equity. In these it states: "Harassing behavior which exercises power over others because of gender, violates the dignity of the human person and is unacceptable. The Christian vision of Catholic education demands that sex-based harassment and sexual harassment is recognized, identified and attended to in just manner. All Catholic educational organizations should have in place policies and grievance procedures to deal with and to eliminate sexual harassment and sex based harassment of students and staff " (National Catholic Education Commission, 1997, p.3).

Office and the Religious Order of the St. Patrick's Province of the Christian Brothers.

Interestingly, none of the papers that were produced from the symposium specifically

addressed the gay male adolescent. However, the speakers did challenge the Catholic

school to be a transformative agent in educating males to be different. This call for

difference is foundational for gay adolescent males who need to be accepted for who they

are. Male stereotypes constrict young men to be a certain image of male and act a certain

way. When these stereotypes can be unfettered and people can be allowed to grow up in

environments that hold them as persons and not as images or things, then there is hope for

the adolescent male who wants to claim his true identity.

Key issues raised at the symposium on boys' education have implications for a

school system and the way it educates its boys. These issues are:

1. In Australia in 1994, 1 in every 34 of all male deaths was caused by suicide, the

highest risk rate being young, country men. This startling figure indicates that men in

Australian society are not happy (NPDP no.5, 1996). Being a male in the nineties is an

overwhelming burden for a significant group of men. What are the causes of such

despondency?

2. At the present time at almost all levels of Australian schools, but especially in the

primary (elementary) school area, the great majority of teachers are female. Many

schools have no men in them. At the same time many boys, perhaps 1 in 3, have no

male figures at home and no men actively engaged in their lives. In these instances

schools become one of the few places to offer surrogate fathering or male mentoring (NPDP no.5, 1996). Where will boys learn what it means to be male?

3. Over 80% of non-readers and problem-learners are boys. Boys need role models who can show them that learning is a masculine activity. Male educators can show boys the world of literature, writing, the arts and learning is part of the male world. Boys need assurance that male teachers are interested in them and not remote, critical, or uncaring. The Men's Movement traces many boys' problems, particularly violence and misbehavior, to an unconscious expression of father-hunger (NPDP, no. 5, 1996). Oftentimes by acting out, boys and young men express the desire to be engaged, valued and disciplined by firm, loving male figures. What changes need to occur in the professional development of male teachers so they can become effective role models for young boys and adolescents?

4. Since most principals of Catholic schools are men, this continues the myth that men have to be in charge. For men who occupy leadership positions in schools there is a need for them to be learn ways of exercising leadership which is based upon respect, firmness, care, co-operation. Boys will learn from observing these male leaders that males do not have to be dominant, dis-respectful, over-powering and aggressive.

From the issues raised at this symposium there is a desperate need for a new vision and set of role models for maleness for young boys. To bring this about, those men who

are currently working in Catholic schools require special mentoring and training.

Professional development of male teachers needs to address these areas:

- Training in human development and in counseling and conflict resolution.

- Understanding that boys who lack affection will often develop aggression as a substitute[12].

- Meeting father-hunger needs in boys who have little or no access to father figures and learning appropriate ways to care for fatherless boys.

- Learning skills that address poor behavior and acting out while assuring the boy that he is valued and cared for (NPDP, no.5, 1996, p.10).

This symposium clearly is calling for a new paradigm of maleness in the Australian culture. The Catholic school system can be an instrument of change in a culture that has relied upon a model of maleness that is dysfunctional and obsolete. A particular model of masculinity has become embedded in the Australian culture. Violent behaviors are intricately linked to these gender issues. When a drastic social change is called for, it seems the cultural psyche responds by violently resisting another way of being. Because Australian men are not coping with the pressures forced upon them, oftentimes they react by becoming violent. Consider the impact this behavior has on boys. The Gender Framework warns:

---

[12] One outward manifestation of this problem is the amount of violence and bullying evidenced in schools. A recent survey conducted by the Center for Adolescent Health in Melbourne, Victoria, showed that 76% of the 2,500 school students surveyed indicated that violence occurs often or sometimes in school. Just under a quarter of the respondents had witnessed physical fights. the problem seems to be compounded by the lack of meaningful bullying and harassment policies in schools. NPDP, no.5, p.13.

...unless we assist boys to challenge aggressive behavior, we will be unable to eliminate sex based harassment and violence against girls and women in the home, at school and in the workplace. We will not be able to eliminate bullying and homophobic victimization. And we will also be failing to ensure that the burden of unpaid work is distributed more equitably than it is today (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p.40).

From the perspective of education and mental health in Australia, the presenters at this conference are alerting the Australian culture to its deficiencies. Men are needing other men to show them how to be different and live in more wholesome ways. As male stereotypes become broken open, a place will be found to include young gay males in an expansive vision of what it means to be a man. The school system has the potential to be a transforming agent within the culture. The Gender Equity Taskforce saw the school as an integral part of social construction :

Schools are reflections of our society, and exploration of the role of violence in the construction of dominant masculinity is fundamental to developing a strategy for challenging the pervasiveness of violence in out communities and schools. Violence and sex-based harassment of girls in schools must be seen as part of this larger problem of unequal power relations between the sexes, in the school, home, and work place (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997, p.40).

If gay youth are going to feel safe in their school and society then deliberate efforts have to be made to break the cultural stigma inflicted by male stereotyping. Men have to be helped to re-claim their masculinity, which lead them to discover and develop different ways of relating and being male.

3. Attending To The Gay Student: Developing a Model for Pastoral Counseling

Considering the degree of need and the neglect of the school system, gay adolescents require a strong support system within their daily educational environment. Yet, the statistics of research previously referred to in this chapter show that school personnel, especially school counselors and chaplains, are not a major source of support to gay students. Another study quoted by Reynolds and Koski (1994) examined the perception of gay youth to educators and counselors. While a weakness of this report was the omission of specific details, the authors state " that many [of the youth] saw their counselors as ill-informed, unconcerned, and uncomfortable talking with them. The study also demonstrated that nearly two-thirds of the school counselors surveyed expressed negative attitudes and feelings about lesbian, gay, bisexual people and issues" (Reynolds & Koski, 1994, p.91). Further investigation is required to ascertain the reasons for this, nevertheless the findings are challenging. If this trend is to change, then counselors and chaplains need to review the way they function in the school setting. Additionally, they need to do some personal evaluation of their role, especially their feelings toward gay youth.

Throughout the literature reviewed by Reynolds and Koski (1994), it emphasized that counselors who work with gay youth "need a high degree of self-awareness and sensitivity and need to have addressed their own attitudes and biases" (p.90). In order to effectively meet the needs of gay students in the school system, counselors and chaplains need to provide the following:

- support and affirmation of the person;

- knowledge and accurate information;

- role modeling;

- the capability of being counselor, consultant, and advocate (Reynolds & Koski, 1994).

Counselors need to be conscious of the attitudes and feelings that homosexuality generates within them so that counter-transference issues do not interfere in the counseling process. Indeed, some counselors may be unable to provide an appropriate holding environment for gay youth because of their prejudices or fears and may need to refer them to other services. Robinson (1994) maintains that the primary responsibility of the school counselor is to understand the unique stressors that gay students have to confront by helping them cope with the social and educational barriers of homonegativity. Furthermore, they need to provide appropriate information regarding available resources and how to access them.

Recent research offers some positive directions for school counselors working with gay youth. While these suggestions do not cover all aspects of counseling, they focus on important areas that need to be part of a counselor's role.

a. Developing self-awareness:

School counselors can be assisted in becoming more aware of how they are responding to gay people and related homosexual issues through effective supervision. By bringing issues from a session with a student to supervision and exploring how the counselor and the counseling relationship was effected, the counselor can be assisted in uncovering resistances. Other practical ways can be:

- wider reading and research;

- commitment to ongoing professional development;

- exploring the impact that same-sex experiences have had on the counselor;

- examining the messages that were passed down through the counselor's family of origin regarding sex and sexuality (Robinson, 1994).

b. Acceptance of the Student:

School counselors need to listen carefully to the young gay person who comes to them for assistance. It can not be assumed that the issues will be necessarily related to the person's sexual identity or orientation. The issues that gay adolescents deal with are most often issues to do with adolescence. Sometimes being gay impacts on these issues but not always. In the initial interview it is important for the counselor to include questions relating to sexual identity, sexual practice, and health. The counselor needs to be aware of language by asking inclusive, open questions which respect the student. Questions such as:

" Do you have special friends? Are you involved with anyone in a relationship?" break out
of heterosexual stereotypes by acknowledging other types of relationships.

c. Student Support Groups:

Support groups offer students the opportunity to develop social skills, learn about
differences, and practice assertive skills against bullying. To offer a school based group for
gays would be still a difficult thing to do in the majority of Catholic school settings. While
creating problems for administrators, it could also lead to students being labeled and
further isolated. By offering broader, inclusive topics, gay students will feel more at ease
being included with other students who are concerned with similar issues. Developing
special interest days or workshops that deal with specific issues (ways to unlearn violence;
assertive training skills; communicating with difficult people; HIV/AIDS; different
expressions of masculinity, suicide prevention) provide nonthreatening ways of linking in
gay issues to school based programs. So much is dependent upon the training, awareness,
skill and sensitivity of the group leaders.

d. Developing Resources and Referral Sources:

The school counselor needs to be aware of local, accessible resources that are available to
young people. These resources may be offered by the gay community as well as local
community health centers. It is far better for counselors to have met with the people who

staff these services so that they are aware of the values and attitudes of the organizations. Being able to refer students to gay publications, local support groups and helplines give students a variety of ways of becoming informed. If a student needs to be referred for professional health services, it would be important for the counselor to keep developing a list of gay-affirmative therapists, physicians, and therapy groups.

e. Providing Information:

Literature that outlines such things as sexual health information, telephone and email help lines, and mental health seminars needs to be accessible to students. By displaying materials on school notice boards, students can be made aware of resources available ot them outside the school setting.

f. Facilitation of Programs:

Most Catholic schools have staff development programs outlined for the year. By working with the school administration and the staff development committee, the counselor can advocate gay students' needs. Integrating issues that are pertinent to gay students into staff workshops helps demythologize homosexuality. Workshops which address education of boys, violence in the school, widening the curriculum, educating for difference are a few examples of where gay perspectives can be integrated into the program (Robinson, 1994).Teachers need to have ready access to information regarding

gay issues. School counselors need to work closely with librarians in building up both teacher and student resources in the library. Videos, tapes, literature, and school programs dealing with homosexuality, homonegativity, homosexual development and other related areas need to be included.[13]

g. Pastoral Counseling:

The pastoral counselor, in working with gay youth, needs to keep asking how this young person can be helped in their personal and spiritual growth. Because many gay youth suffer from self-esteem problems, anxiety, or chronic self-dissatisfaction they can use unhealthy defense mechanisms such as denial or repression (Shelton, 1995). A young gay person needs to be helped to find ways of having their human needs for affection and companionship met. From his pastoral counseling experience Shelton (1995) believes these issues need to be addressed as part of the counseling situation:

I. Helping the young person explore their sexual identity as well as helping them name what it is they believe being gay is all about. He warns against forcing the person to claim an orientation but rather to guide the student through the maze of questions or issues they want to explore.

---

[13] A video was released in 1994 by the NSW Department of School Education. Sydney entitled "Mates: HIV AIDS Discrimination". It is designed to assist schools in the prevention of prejudice-related violence by including curriculum material. By dealing with HIV and AIDS related discrimination, students will be assisted in learning to recognize and understand differences which is the first step towards countering homonegativity and homophobia (NSW Dept. of Education, 1994, p.6).

II. Another issue that needs to be raised with the student concerns his disclosure of his sexual orientation and identity. Helping the student look at the implications of who he intends to tell, and his reasons for disclosing, will make him aware of possible ways of being supported or alienated. The pastoral counselor needs to gauge the strength of the young person's self-identity to see how capable they are of coming out without being overwhelmed by the experience.

III. Due to feelings of isolation and confusion, young people need to be carefully attended to in the counseling process. Any hint of suicidal ideation or attempt must be taken seriously and effective mental health structures be set in place to secure the young person's vulnerability.

IV. Pastoral counseling needs to provide an avenue for young people for moral development. They need help to understand the developmental and relationship issues in the context of their experience. Helping them explore their experience as part of their spiritual development is a key component of pastoral counseling.

By helping older gay adolescents discover ways of living their lives built on committed love in their relationships, they can be given encouragement to explore the meaning of relationships and mutual fidelity. Committed relationships built on the values

of committed love and mutual fidelity can further the spiritual and psychological growth of the gay person and his partner (Shelton, 1995). The Christian meaning of respect for life, care of the person, and faithfulness need to provide a backdrop for the pastoral counselor. These questions outlined by Shelton (1995) provide a guide for the counselor:

- What are the developmental issues that underlie this adolescent's sexual behavior?

- In what ways is this sexual behavior leading to growth and integration in the adolescent's emotional and spiritual life? How much awareness does the adolescent have of the growth taking place in their lives at this moment?

- To what extent is the adolescent deepening insight into his own self and relationships with others?

- Does this relationship lead this young person to seek further growth in his relationships?

- Does the relationship reflect the values of responsibility and commitment?

- What is the level of commitment expressed in this relationship? Can the adolescent talk about this?

- Does the adolescent have a realistic sense of the relationship? (p.174)

The difficulty confronting the pastoral counselor is when the gay adolescent is not committed to a mutually loving and faithful relationship. While Shelton's (1995) questions are appropriate for older adolescents, they may not have meaning for adolescents who are younger. Being that time of life where experimentation and risk-taking behavior are

evident, adolescents need adults who can help them establish safer, healthier, and more secure boundaries in their short-term or casual relationships. Challenging questions need to be asked of young people who are not committed to a relationship but are engaging in short-term or casual sexual relationships, group sexual activity, cruising, and promiscuous behaviors. While acknowledging the adolescent's needs for closeness, affection and intimacy, these young people may have no-one who is capable, or willing, to question their motives for acting out sexually in their relationships. The pastoral counselor can provide the means for the adolescent's growth by use of what Shelton (1995) calls "loving challenge" (p.175). Loving challenge includes:

- Helping the adolescent name what is healthy about the relationship. The counselor needs to explore both the physical and emotional aspects of the relationship. By helping the young person name feelings of jealousy, deceit, resentment, dishonesty and how they deal with these feelings will indicate the quality of the relationship.

- Exploring the reasons underlying the sexual behavior by helping the adolescent come to some understanding of developmental issues and/or psychological conflicts. Sometimes sexual behavior is a way of getting back at people or compensating for lack of love in other fundamental relationships. Those gay adolescents emotionally deprived of love at home, and isolated from their peers, could well be driven to casual sex as a way of getting their needs answered.

- Obtaining a clearer understanding of the adolescent's support systems including family members, peer group and other support groups helps put the person's life in a realistic perspective. If they are isolated, unsupported and feeling lonely then acting out sexually may be the way they find release. Helping the adolescent develop other support systems can lead to greater psychological and spiritual health.

- If the young person can be helped to see more clearly what sort of needs are being met in the relationship and where those needs are coming from, they might find other ways of getting those needs met.

- Asking the young person to consider if God's presence is evident within the relationship might help them name what is good and what is lacking for them.

- Helping the young people explore the meaning of the relationship is important. Such questions as: " What does your relationship reveal about you?" " What meaning do you find in having sex with this person?"

- Deepening the adolescent's self-knowledge by asking them how they take responsibility for their sexual behavior.

Finally, a prudent pastoral approach with a sexually active adolescent requires the counselor to bring up discussion of condom usage in the confidential setting of the session. Framing the discussion within the context of responsibility and respect for both the adolescent and his partner Shelton (1995) maintains these points need to be made:

- Inform the adolescent that condom usage is safer sex but not safe sex. Condom usage only reduces the risk of HIV and STD but does not completely safeguard it.

- Express concerns regarding the adolescent's sexual behavior.

- Reflect with the adolescent and help him name his responsibility within the relationship.

- Use the questions from loving challenge to help the adolescent explore his needs and see the relationship in a broader context (p. 183).

4. Attending to the System: Developing a Model for Change

In research Egan (1979) conducted regarding systemic change in institutions, he proposed a process that would lead an institution to become aware of what it was trying to do. Applying these same principles of Egan's (1979) process to a school system will provide a framework which addresses ways of evaluating what is taking place within the school system itself, as well as proposing ways of bringing about effective change in the system. Eight steps are outlined to assist a system evaluate its purpose (Egan, 1979). This process provides a backdrop for a Catholic school to examine its current response to gay

adolescent students. In working through the process, schools can be assisted in developing effective goals and strategies. This process provides an element of hope for gay youth because it brings the issue of homosexuality out into the open. In giving a voice to homosexual issues, it has the potential to empower the school to feel more confident about addressing a sensitive and controversial issue. A school that is prepared to bring this whole area out of the closet, can give courage to this silent minority in the school and encourage them to claim their identity. An overview of Egan's (1979) process follows which has been applied to a school system.

a. Diagnosis:

This requires information gathering by finding out the different values and attitudes of the people in the system, what they are thinking about the issue, and where there is evidence of tension and lack of clarity. For the purpose of a pastoral plan it will be necessary to know what sorts of attitudes are prevalent within the school regarding homosexuality and what attempts are being made to address the needs of gay youth in the school.

A helpful way of gaining access to people's attitudes and values is by means of a confidential, random survey or questionnaire whereby all groups are represented. Issues that would be targeted would include:

- what do they think about homosexuality?

- where have they formed those opinions from?

- what type of education takes place in regards to homosexuality?

- what is taught about homosexuality in your curriculum? what do you think and how do you feel about that?

- what resources exist in the school about homosexuality?

- where might students go to find out about homosexuality?

- what ways are gay students assisted and discriminated against in the school?

Additionally, some open ended responses would be a means of coming to a clearer perception of the values and attitudes that people hold regarding homosexuality. An example of a situation that might be included in a student survey would be:

- A friend of yours gives you some indication that he thinks he may be gay:

    What would be your reaction?

    What would you say to him?

    What might happen to your friendship?

- If he informed you that he felt he was gay and wanted to know where he could go for advice or support:

    Where would you recommend he go?

    Why?

Similar situations could be presented to school administrators, staff and parents for discussion. The purpose behind such a public survey would be to find out information as well as bringing the topic out into the public arena. In directly raising issues about homosexuality, it would probably cause reaction in the Catholic school system. The

process would need to be facilitated by a skilled person who could utilize such energy for further work with staff groups as well as providing guidelines for class-room discussion. Perhaps some schools may choose to include the issue of homosexuality as part of a survey concerning the ways the school was dealing with differences in the school (e.g. ethnic/racial, curriculum options, extra-curricula options) which would create a wider forum for discussion.

b. Focusing:

Focusing is used to assist the school to center on elements in need of renewal in the system. As part of this process it will be important to outline recent research conducted with gay adolescents. This will help school personnel gain a better picture of some of the major issues facing gay youth. A helpful basis for discussion is contained in the two earlier sections of this chapter which include issues facing gay adolescents and social service needs of gay adolescents. As a result of the discussions, staff personnel would be led to list the various ways gay adolescents are presently being ostracized in the school system by such means as:

- bullying - physical, emotional or psychological violence in class-rooms;

- lack of reference to gay issues in school sexuality programs;

- lack of reference to gay issues in the wider school curriculum;

- lack of library resources;

- lack of helpful referral agencies;

- lack of training for school counselors regarding gay issues.

c. New Perspectives:

Having gathered information from sections (a) and (b) about the ways that the needs of gay students are not being attended to in the school, there is a need to present the information to groups across the school including administration, staff, coaches, parents, student leadership teams and students. This acts as a way of raising the consciousness of the school institution to the needs of a particular minority group in their midst. Selection of pertinent material from Chapters One, Three and Four of this work which outlines some socio-historical reasons for homonegativity as well as understanding the psychological underpinnings of gay sexuality and a theo-ethical model for change would be useful at this stage of the process. The intention of introducing other understandings of homosexuality into the forum at this time would be to assist the participants to expand their knowledge and their understandings of what it means to be gay. By constantly critiquing the discussion in the context of Christian principles and gospel values, the participants would be required to re-examine their own value systems in the light of gospel values.

By incorporating the seven-tiered dynamic of Christian moral decision-making, people would be led to explore their own values system and be helped to move toward another, more inclusive, moral decision-making mode. These seven areas include:

- intuition or feelings

- experience

- rational analysis and argument

- community

- modeling

- imagination

- narrative

and are outlined earlier in this chapter. By combining these two approaches in a series of workshops with school personnel, they would be exposed to other perspectives about homosexuality which are understanding and respectful of the needs of gay youth.

d. Goal Setting:

An outcome of the group discussions held in the work-shops would be a list of initiatives which could be implemented in the school system. It is now a matter of deciding which ones can be effectively implemented at this stage of the process. By constant reference to gospel values and Christian principles, people would be helped to articulate their reasons for choosing particular initiatives. Decision-making skills are needed in order to choose the best among possible goals. The group would benefit from facilitation that would keep critiquing the goals selected against the backdrop of the enunciated values in the gospel and Christian principles. For goals to be effective they need to have these characteristics:

- be clear

- be concrete

- be specific

- be behavioral

- be attainable

- be adequate to handle the problem (Egan, 1979, p.143).

The goals need to specify what skills will be taught and indicate the manner in which they will be evaluated.

e. Possible Programs:

Different means for achieving established goals are considered in this section. Egan (1979) refers to this as an "expanding step" and warns against choosing the way of implementation too quickly. Egan recommends that the group enter into divergent thinking and techniques for this part of the process by using brainstorming techniques (Egan, 1979). Having done this step in the process, it would be beneficial to hear how other schools have initiated concrete changes which respect the sexual differences of students. Certain relevant findings from recent research would help people see the issue from a broader perspective. It follows that those who are going to be implementing the programs and be affected by their goals and means must be involved in establishing them.

f. Choice of Programs:

The school now needs to commit itself to specific programs in order to achieve the goals it has articulated. To do this effectively, the group needs decision-making skills. These skills include:

- the ability to clarify gospel values and Christian principles and apply them to the choosing process;

- the ability to evaluate means according to the task and people-needs of the school and the possible tensions of conflicts that might exist between the two;

- the ability to see programs as means and not ends in themselves (Egan, 1979, p.144).

In selecting school personnel to be part of initiatives for gay youth, it is important to help these staff clarify their reasons for wanting to be part of the initiative. While energy and enthusiasm are helpful qualities, these particular programs require that people be committed to marginalized youth and are prepared to work together with colleagues and other groups to bring about change. They most certainly will require the support and strength of their group to sustain probable resistance and opposition from within the Catholic system.

g. Implementation:

Implementation includes launching the program and maintaining the momentum in it. The effectiveness of the program depends on two critical elements according to Egan (1979):

- whether it contains a clear, step by step progression toward the goal and

- whether other basic principles of human behavior such as modeling and reinforcement are used to maintain the program.

Implicit in Egan's (1979) statement is the level of commitment shown not only by those involved in the programs but other school personnel who may not be part of the program. If certain staff are critical of the initiatives or do not agree with what is being introduced, they act as a "hidden curriculum" force. Resistance areas have to be brought out into the open and worked through publicly. While this requires preparation and energy, if it is not attended to then the long term spirit and energy of the group will be lacking.

Indeed, if a group began to see that their program was a means of expressing their faith commitment to the marginalized, then this could act as an energizing force for them. By incorporating gospel based reflection into this process, the group might experience this as a process of personal and institutional transformation within the school system rather than a project.

h. Evaluation:

This is a critical element of the process. Program evaluation is possible only when goals are behaviorally clear thereby providing explicit criteria for evaluation (Egan, 1979). Evaluation goes hand in hand with goal setting. As long as goals can be clearly articulated and enunciated in practical ways which describe the way they are being implemented, then they can be evaluated. The more esoteric the goals, the less clear they can be put into practice. The goals need to be integrated with foundational gospel values and Christian principles so that the initiatives devised for gay adolescent males are based upon values of respect, justice, dignity, and compassion.

Conclusion

Developing a pastoral plan requires much energy. There is not one way of doing this but what it does require is attentive listening to the world of the young gay adolescent to elicit his needs at the time. Those involved in developing pastoral initiatives for gay adolescents need to be people of integrity. They need to have support groups around them who keep questioning, challenging and loving them as they try to sort through the complexities of standing along-side an oppressed, minority group. This is not a task for the faint-hearted. It requires courage and honesty beginning with their own lives first and foremost.

The richness of a pastoral plan is that it can facilitate people in understanding the world of the gay adolescent from other perspectives. In so many ways its intention echoes the spirit of Jesus. At the heart of this plan is the loving concern for the individual person and this must never be lost. This plan has the potential to bring about healing by leading people back to re-claim their history and story. Those involved in this process can be helped to discover again the meaning of these words:

> The spirit of the Lord is on me,
> for he has anointed me
> to bring good'news to the afflicted.
> He has sent me proclaim liberty to captives,
> sight to the blind,
> to let the oppressed go free,
> to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord (Luke 4: 18-19).

The gay adolescent is calling out for help. There is a need in the Catholic community to understand him by developing pastoral initiatives that bring hope, understanding and dignity to him. Throughout this work connections have been made between the socio-historical and cultural influences and their continuing influence upon Australian society. From a family systems perspective, it becomes clearer that the isolation and oppression of gay youth is a legacy of a societal system which refuses to own its past. The way Australian culture deals with homosexuality mirrors this resistance by continuing to deny gay people their true place in society. When gay male adolescents continue to be ignored, silenced, and intimidated in the Catholic school system, then the system itself is colluding with the oppression of the past which continues to be lived out in the present. Certainly, what is called for now is a school system that is willing and courageous enough

to provide a holding environment that will sustain and support the passage of gay youth through their developing adolescent years despite the pressures from culture and society.

By re-claiming relationality as a foundational dimension of human sexuality, it is possible to believe that life can be different for gay adolescents as they come to value their own personhood and celebrate their gayness. At the heart of a person's seeking their own, true identity is the deep need to be accepted by significant others. This acceptance is no easy task for it requires the other to be a person who is prepared to create a safe enough environment for the gay adolescent male to know he is accepted, loved and held, no matter what happens.

While it is helpful to have psychological insight into the reasons for homosexuality, in the long term reasoning is not enough. At the heart of the matter is the young person with his dreams, his pain, and his fears. God's dream for humanity has already been expressed in the flesh and blood action of His Son. Ultimately it was a life given totally in love to humanity. So too has each person the potential to be a human lover, much and all as this is fraught with dangers, fears, mixed motives and confusion. Every person yearns to be drawn out of isolation and to become intimate with God and others. People can not be deprived of this; nor can young adolescents who are needing the love, direction and wisdom of others to bring this dream to its fruition.

The early Christian community affirmed the dignity of each person in its early proclamations. The gay male adolescent has so much to offer our community and needs to hear clearly, loudly and publicly these words again so that he will realize what it is God wants for him:

But you are a chosen race,
a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people set apart,
to sing the praises of God
who called you out of darkness
into his wonderful light.
Once you were a non-people and now you are the People of God;
once you were outside his mercy;
now you have received mercy.
I Peter 2 : 9-10

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, W. (Ed.) (1966). The documents of Vatican II. New York: America Press.

Anderson, D. A. (1994). Lesbian and gay adolescents: Social and developmental considerations. High School Journal, 77(1), 13-19.

Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (1988). AIDS - A challenge to love: A pastoral statement by the Catholic Bishops of Australia. In AIDS Education Manual for Catholic Schools. Melbourne: Catholic Education Office Publishers.

Besner, H. F., & Spungin, C. J. (1995). Gay and lesbian students: Understanding their needs. Washington: Taylor & Francis.

Belsky, J., Lerner, R., & Spanier, G. (1984). The child in the family. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Bernstein, R. A. (1995). Straight parents gay children: Keeping families together. N.Y.: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Bolton, F. G., & MacEachron, A. E. (1988). Adolescent male sexuality: A developmental perspective. Journal of Adolescent Research, 3(3-4), 259-273.

Border, W. (1987). Archbishop Border's pastoral letter: Human Sexuality. Origins, 16(46), 807-815.

Boyer, D. (1989). Male prostitution and homosexual identity. Journal of Homosexuality, 17(1-2), 151-184.

Bozett, F. W., & Sussman, M. B. (1990). Homosexuality and family relations: Views and research issues. Marriage and Family Review, 14(3-4), 1-8.

Bradley, S. J., & Zucker, K. J. (1990). Gender identity disorder and psychosexual problems in children and adolescents. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 35(6),477-486.

Brawley, R. L. (Ed.) (1996). Biblical ethics and homosexuality: Listening to scripture. Westminster: John Knox Press.

Brown, J. C., & Bohn, C. R. (Eds.) (1989). Christianity, patriarchy and abuse: A feminist critique. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.

Cahill, L. S. (1989). Catholic sexual ethics and the dignity of the person: A double message. Theological Studies, 50, 120-150.

Cashdan, S. (1988). Object relations therapy: Using the relationship. New York: Norton & Co.

Cates, J. A. (1987). Adolescent sexuality: Gay and lesbian issues. Child Welfare, 66(4), 353-364.

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. (1994 RevisedEd.) Pastoral care of students in Catholic schools. Melbourne: Vital Instant Print (Aust) Pty. Ltd.

Coleman, E., & Remafedi, G. (1989). Gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents: A critical challenge to counselors. Journal of Counseling and Development, 68(1), 36-40.

Coleman, G. D. (1995). Homosexuality: Catholic teaching and pastoral practice. New Jersey: Paulist Press.

Coleman, P. (1989). Gay Christians: A moral dilemma. London: SCM Press.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1986). The pastoral care of homosexual persons. Origins, 16(22), 378-382.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1975). Declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics. Melbourne: A.C.T.S. Publications.

Conigrave, T. (1995). Holding the man. Melbourne: Penguin Books.

Conn, J. W. (1989). Spirituality and personal maturity. New York: Paulist Press.

Cramer, D. W., & Roach, A. J. (1988). Coming out to mom and dad: A study of gay males and their relationships with their parents. Journal of Homosexuality, 15(3/4), 79-92.

Dallas, J. (1996). In defense of clinical treatment for homosexuality. Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 15(4), 369-372.

Dayringer, R. (1996). Homosexuality reconsidered. The Journal of Pastoral Care, 50(1), 57-71.

Dessaix, R. (Ed.) (1993). Australian gay and lesbian writing: An anthology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dworkin, S. H., & Gutierrez, F. J. (Eds.) (1992). Counseling gay men and lesbians: Journey to the end of the rainbow. V.A.: American Association For Counseling And Development.

Erikson, E. (1963). Childhood and society (2nd ed.). Canada: McLeod.

Erikson, E. (1968). Identity: Youth and crisis. NewYork: Norton.

Elia, J. (1993). Homophobia in the high school: A problem in need of a resolution. High School Journal, 77(1-2), 177-185.

Ellis, L. (1996). "Theories of homosexuality." In R. Savin-Williams, & K. Cohen (Eds.). The lives of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: Children to adults. Orlando: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 11-34.

Ellis, L. (1996). "The role of perinatal factors in determining sexual orientation." In R. Savin-Williams, & K. Cohen (Eds.). The lives of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: Children to adults. Orlando: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 35-70.

Fairchild, B., & Hayward, N. (1983). Now that you know: What every parent should know about homosexuality. U.S.A.: Harvest Books.

Farley, M. A. (1986). Personal commitments: Beginning, keeping, changing. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Fortunato, J. E. (1982). Embracing The exile: Healing journeys of gay Christians. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Fogarty, W.(1992). "Certain habits": The development of a concept of the male homosexual in New South Wales law 1788-1900. In G. Simes, & G. Wotherspoon (Eds.). Gay perspectives: Essays in Australian gay culture. Sydney: The University Of Sydney, 59-76.

French, R. (1992). 'Where the action was': Archival sources for gay history in Australia. In G. Simes, & G. Wotherspoon (Eds.). Gay perspectives: Essays in Australian gay culture. Sydney: The University Of Sydney, 181-195.

French, R. (1993). Martyrs. Outrage, 125 October, 40-42.

Friedman, E. H. (1985). Generation to generation: Family process in church and synagogue. NewYork: The Guildford Press.

Gambone, P. (1991). The language we use up here and other stories. U.S.A.: Dutton.

Garanzini, M. J. (1989). Psychodynamic theory and pastoral theology: An integrated model. Journal of Homosexuality, 18(3-4), 175-194.

Gender Equity Taskforce for Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training, and Youth Affairs. (1997). Gender equity: A framework for Australian schools. Canberra: ACT Government Printer.

Genovesi, V. J. (1988). In pursuit of love: Catholic morality and human sexuality. Delaware: Glazier Inc.

Gonsiorek, J. C. (1988). Mental health issues of gay and lesbian adolescents. Journal of Adolescent Health Care, 9(2), 114-122.

Grimsley, J. (1995). Dream Boy. NewYork: Algonquin Books, Chapel Hill.

Gula, R. M. (1989). Reason Informed By Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality. New York: Paulist Press.

Gula, R. M. (1982). What are they saying about moral norms? New York: Paulist Press.

Hamilton, N. G. (1992). Self and others: Object relations theory in practice. New Jersey: Aronson Inc.

Harbeck, K. (1994). Invisible no more: Addressing the needs of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth and their advocates. High School Journal, 77(1-2), 169-176.

Harris, E. L. (1996). And This Too Shall Pass. NewYork: Doubleday.

Herdt, G. (1989). Introduction: Gay and lesbian youth, emergent identities, and cultural scenes at home and abroad. Journal of Homosexuality, 17(1/2), 1-42.

Herdt, G., & Boxer, A. (1993). Children Of horizons : How gay and lesbian teens are leading a new way out of the closet. Boston: Beacon Press.

Heron, A. (Ed.) (1994). Two teenagers in twenty: Writings by gay and lesbian youth. Boston: Alyson Pub.

Helminiak, D. (1994). What the bible really says about homosexuality. San Francisco: Alamo Square Press.

Horizons Anti-Violence Project. (1996). Anti-lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered violence in 1996: A report by Horizons anti-violence project and the National Coalition of anti-violence programs. Chicago: Horizons.

Holtzen, D. W., & Agresti, A. A. (1990). Parental responses to gay and lesbian children: Differences in homophobia, self-esteem, and sex-role stereotyping. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 9(3), 390-399.

Hunt, M. (1989). "Theological Pornography: From Corporate to Communal Ethics." In J. C Brown and C. R. Bohn (eds.). Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 89-104.

Hunter, J., & Schaecher, R. (1987). Stresses on lesbian and gay adolescents in schools. Social Work in Education, 9(3), 180-190.

Ivey, A. E., Ivey, M. B., & Simek-Morgan, L. (1993). Counseling and psychotherapy - A multicultural perspective. Boston: Needham Heights.

Jones, S. L., & Workman, D. E. (1989). Homosexuality: The behavioral sciences and the church. Journal of Psychology and Theology, 17(3), 213-225.

Kegan, R. (1995). In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Kegan, R. (1982). The evolving self: Problem and process in human development. (12th printing). Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Kerr, M. (1988). Family systems theory and therapy. In M. Kerr, & M. Bowen, Family Evaluation. New York: Norton, 226-264.

Kielwasser, A. P., & Wolf, M. A. (1994). Silence, difference, and annihilation: Understanding the impact of mediated heterosexism on high school students. High School Journal, 77(1-2), 58-79.

Krysiak, G. (1987). A very silent and gay minority. School Counselor, 34(4), 304-307

LaFontaine, L. (1994). Quality schools for gay and lesbian youth: Lifting the cloak of silence. Journal of Reality Therapy, 14(1),26-28.

Linn, M., Fabricant, S., & Linn, D. (1988). Healing the eight stages of life. NewYork: Paulist Press.

Looy, H. (1995). Born gay? A critical review of biological research on homosexuality. Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 14(3), 197-214.

Leupnitz, D. A. (1988). The family interpreted: Psychoanalysis, feminism, and family therapy. U.S.A.:Basic Books.

Macleod, M. (Ed.) (1996). Ready or not: Stories of young adult sexuality. Sydney: Random House, Australia.

Macourt, M. (Ed.) (1977). Towards a theology of gay liberation. London: SCM Press.

Marsiglio, W. (1993). Attitudes towards homosexual activity and gays as friends: A national survey of heterosexual 15 to 19 year old males. Journal of Sex Research, 30(1), 12-17.

Martin, A. D. (1982). Learning to hide: The socialization of the gay adolescent. Adolescent Psychiatry, 10, 52-65.

Maylon, A. K. (1981). The homosexual adolescent: Developmental issues and social bias. Child Welfare, 60(5), 321-330.

McCall, L. T. (1996). Coming out while staying in: Struggles and celebrations of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the church. Ohio: United Church Press.

McNeill, J. (1988). The church and the homosexual. Boston: Beacon Press.

McWilliams, N. (1994). Psychoanalytic diagnosis: Understanding personality structure in the clinical process. New York: Guildford Press.

Mercier, L. R., & Berger, R. M. (1989). Social service needs of lesbian and gay adolescents: Telling it their way. Journal of Social Work and Human Sexuality, 8(1), 75-95.

Morris, M. (1995). The Pink Triangle: The gay law reform debate in Tasmania. Sydney: UNSW Press.

Myers, M. F. (1982). Counseling the parents of young homosexual male patients. Journal of Homosexuality, 7(2-3), 131-143.

National Catholic Education Commission. (1997). Towards gender equity in Catholic education. Canberra.

National Professional Development Program at the Catholic Education Office (1996). Celebrating the education of boys in Catholic schools. Victoria: Buscombe Vicprint Ltd.

Nelson, J. B. (1978). Embodiment: An approach to sexuality and christian theology. U.S.A.: Augsburg.

Newman, B. S., & Muzzonigro, P. G. (1993). The effects of traditional family values on the coming out process of gay male adolescents. Adolescence, 28(109), 213-226.

Nugent, R., & Gramick, J. (1992). Building bridges: Gay and lesbian reality and the Catholic church. Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications.

O'Brien, T. (1991). A survey of gay/lesbian Catholics concerning attitudes toward sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Journal of Homosexuality, 21(4), 29-44.

O'Connell, T. (1991). Horizons A Pastoral Survey: Transmitting moral values. Chicago Studies, 30, 236-249.

O'Connell, T. (1990). Principles for a Catholic morality (Revised ed.). NewYork: Harper Collins Publishers.

O'Connell, T. (1986). Sexuality and the procreative norm. In F. E. Greenspahn (Ed.). Contemporary ethical issues in Jewish and Christian tradition. New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 81-110.

Pausacker, J. (Ed.) (1996). Hide and seek: Stories about being gay and lesbian. Melbourne: Reed International Books, Australia.

Pollack, R., & Schwartz, C. (1995). The journey out: A guide for and about lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens. NewYork: Viking.

Powell, R. E. (1987). Homosexual behavior and the school counselor. School Counselor, 34(3), 202-208.

Preston, J. (Ed) (1992). Flesh and the word: An anthology of erotic writings. New York: Dutton.

Remafedi, G. (1985). Adolescent homosexuality: Issues for pediatricians. Pediatrics, 24(9), 481-485

Remafedi, G. (1987). Male homosexuality: The adolescent's perspective. Pediatrics, 79(3), 326-330.

Reynolds, A. L., & Koski, M. J. (1994). Lesbian, gay and bisexual teens and the school counselor: Building alliances. High School Journal, 77(1-2), 88-94.

Richardson, R. W. (1987). "Differentiation of self" as a therapeutic goal for the systemic pastoral counselor. Journal of Pastoral Psychotherapy, 1(1), 33-45.

Ricketts, W. (1986). Homosexuality in adolescence: The reification of sexual personalities. Journal of Social Work and Human Sexuality, 5(1), 35-49.

Robinson, B. E., Walters L. H., & Skeen, P. (1989). Response of parents to learning that their child is homosexual and concern over AIDS: A national survey. Journal of Homosexuality 18(1/2), 59-80.

Robinson, K. E. (1994). Addressing the needs of gay and lesbian students: The school counselor's role. School Counselor 41(5), 326-332.

Rofes, E. E. (1989). Opening up the classroom closet: Responding to the educational needs of gay and lesbian youth. Harvard Educational Review, 59(4), 444-453.

Rofes, E. E. (1994). Making our schools safe for sissies. High School Journal, 77(1-2), 37-40.

Rosser, B. R. (1992). Gay Catholics down under: The journeys in sexuality and spirituality of gay men in Australia and New Zealand. C.T: Praeger.

Rotheram-Borus, M. J., Hunter, J., & Rosario, M. (1994). Suicidal behavior and gay-related stress among gay and bisexual male adolescents. Journal of Adolescent Research, 9(4), 499-508.

Savin-Williams, R. (1989b). Coming out to parents and self esteem among gay and lesbian youths. Journal of Homosexuality, 18(1/2), 1-35.

Savin-Williams, R. (1990a). Gay and lesbian adolescents. Marriage and Family Review, 14(3-4), 197-216.

Savin-Williams, R. (1990b). Gay and lesbian youth: Expressions of identity. NewYork: Hemisphere Publishing Co.

Savin-Williams, R. (1989a). Parental influences on the self esteem of gay and lesbian youths: A reflected appraisals model. Journal of Homosexuality, 17(1/2), 93-109.

Scharff, J. S., & Scharff, D. E. (1992). Scharff notes: A primer of object relations therapy. New Jersey: Aronson Inc.

Shelton, C. M. (1995). Pastoral counseling: With adolescents and young adults. New York: Crossroad.

Simes, G. (1992) The language of homosexuality in Australia. In G. Simes & G. Wotherspoon (Eds.). Gay perspectives: Essays in Australian gay culture. Sydney: The University Of Sydney, 31-57.

Singerline, H. (1994). Outright: Reflections of an out-of-school gay youth group. High School Journal, 77(1/2), 133-137.

Sipe, R. (1996). Celibacy: A way of loving, living, and serving. Missouri: Triumph Books.

Smith, A. (1991). Sodomy in the colony: Was there a gay subculture in Van Diemen's Land? Outrage, 95(April), 43-45.

Smith, M. J. (1983). Black men/white men: A gay anthology. San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press.

Smith, R. L. (1994). AIDS, gays, and the American Catholic church. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.

Soards, M. L. (1995). Scripture and homosexuality: Biblical authority and the church today. Westminster: John Knox Press.

South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools. (1995). Policy statement on HIV/AIDS (Revised 1995). South Australia: Published by the Commission.

Strivers, R. L., Gudorf, C. E., Evans, A. E., & Evans, R. A. (1989). Christian ethics: A case method approach. New York: Orbis Books.

Stemmeler, M. L., & Clark, J. M. (Eds.) (1990). Homophobia and the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Dallas: Monument Press.

Street, S. (1994). Adolescent male sexuality issues. School Counselor, 41(5), 319- 325.

Strommen, E. F. (1989). "You're a what?": Family member reactions to the disclosure of homosexuality. Journal of Homosexuality, 18(1/2), 37-58.

Strommen, E. F. (1990). Hidden branches and growing pains: Homosexuality and the family tree. Marriage and Family Review, 14(3/4), 9-34.

Struzzo, J. A. (1989) Pastoral counseling and homosexuality. Journal Of Homosexuality, 18 (3-4), 195- 222

Sullivan, T. (1984). Adolescent homosexuality: Social constructions and developmental realities. Journal of Child Care, 1(6), 11-27.

Telljohann, S. K., & Price, J. H. (1993). A qualitative examination of adolescent homosexuals' life experiences: Ramifications for secondary school personnel. Journal of Homosexuality, 26(1), 41-56.

Tigert, L. M. (1996). Coming out while staying in: Struggles and celebrations of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the church. Cleveland: United Church Press.

Tremble, B., Schneider, M., & Apparthurai, C. (1989). Growing up gay or lesbian in a multicultural context. Journal of Homosexuality, 17(3/4), 253-267.

Troiden, R. R. (1988) Gay and lesbian identity: A sociological analysis. New York: General Hall Inc.

Troiden, R. R. (1988a). Homosexual identity development. Journal of Adolescent Health Care, 9(2), 105-113.

Tsiolkas, C. (1995). Loaded. Sydney:Vintage.

Unks, G. (1995) (Ed.). The gay teenager: Educational practice and theory for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents. New York: Routledge.

Van de Ven, P. (1994). Comparisons among homophobic reactions of undergraduates, high school students, and young offenders. The Journal of Sex Research, 31(2), 117-124.

Waldinger, R. J. (1990). Psychiatry: For medical students. Washington: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.

Walker, K. (1993). Peter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Walling, D. R. (Ed.) (1996). Open lives safe schools. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Wells, P. (1991). Dangerous desires. U.S.A.: Viking.

Woods, R. (1988). Another kind of love. Ft. Wayne: Knoll Publishing Co.

Working Group Of Gay Catholic Pastors. (1989). Called to blessing: A pastoral letter on faith and homosexuality from the working group of catholic pastors the Netherlands. M.D.: New Ways Ministry.

Wotherspoon, G., & French G. (1988). Gay history: Collection of articles. Outrage, 57 (February), 8-15.

Wotherspoon, G. (1992). Private vice to public history: Homosexuality in Australia. Public History Review, 1, 148-159.

Young, G. (1994). The isle of gothic silence. Island, 60/61(Spring/Summer), 31-35.

Zera, D. (1992). Coming of age in a heterosexist world: The development of gay and lesbian adolescents. Adolescence, 27(108), 849-854.

VITA

The author, Gerard John Brady, was born in Warrnambool, Victoria, Australia. In March, 1971, he enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program at Melbourne University, receiving this degree in March, 1981.

Pursuing his interest in religious education and theology, Gerard Brady enrolled in the Bachelor of Theology program at Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne, where he received the Diploma of Theological Studies in March, 1983. He completed the degree of Bachelor of Theology in March, 1993, which was conferred by the Melbourne College of Divinity.

With the encouragement and financial support of his province community of [Irish] Christian Brothers, Gerard Brady enrolled in the degree of Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling at Loyola University Chicago in August, 1995. He was granted an assistantship in the Institute of Pastoral Studies and a tuition fellowship by the Graduate School of Loyola University. He completed the degree of Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling in 1998.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Gerard John Brady has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Paul Giblin
Assistant Professor,
Institute of Pastoral Studies
Loyola University of Chicago

Dr. Mary Elsbernd
Associate Professor,
Institute of Pastoral Studies
Loyola University of Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling.

July 22, 1998
Date

Paul R. Giblin
Director's Signature