

**HOMOSEXUALITY : A SOUTH AFRICAN
EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE**

by

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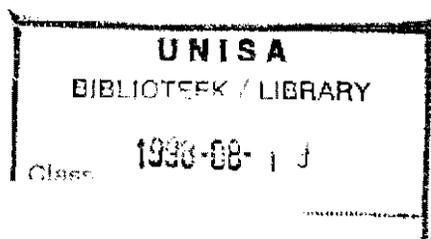
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HOMOSEXUALITY: A SOUTH AFRICAN EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE

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SUMMARY

This dissertation deals with the sensitive topic of homosexuality. For the most part, the Judeo-Christian tradition regards homosexual practice as sin, and an unacceptable alternative lifestyle for Christians. We looked at the current evangelical ethical position in comparison to this tradition and a liberal approach.

Homosexuality is the phenomenon of sexually desiring and having sex with people of the same sex. Evangelicals uphold the centrality of the Bible as God's Word and the supreme guide for faith and practice. Three different sets of questionnaires were completed by homosexuals, evangelical leaders and members respectively and the data analysed.

Old and New Testament texts showed that homosexuality is biblically never accepted. Data from homosexuals showed that more than fifty percent homosexuals have had sex with people of the opposite sex, thus not 'exclusive'. Data from evangelicals in South Africa, showed that homosexuality is not an acceptable lifestyle, especially for Christians.

KEY TERMS

Homosexuality, Heterosexuality, Heterosexism, Sexuality, Homophobia, Evangelical, Ethical, Deontology, Teleology, Liberal, Pastoral relevance, Incidence of homosexuality, Transgenderal, Transgenerational, Egalitarian and Transient homosexuality, Rejecting punitive, Rejecting compassionate, Partial acceptance, Full acceptance, Contemporary arguments.

INTRODUCTION

It is during the infancy of our young democratic South Africa with all its teething problems that I write on the subject of homosexuality. I am fully aware that this is not merely a theoretical or cerebral subject that can be treated lightly; it touches the lives and emotions of a great many people.

Our newly established democracy correctly embraces and upholds international human rights. It appears, however, that the application of human rights is wrongly interpreted. The interpretation seems to mean doing away with accepted moral values of the society rather than truly promoting human rights. Human rights involve freedom but freedom is not equal to permissiveness. The demand, for example, for the church to recognize same sex relationships as legitimate, points to this misinterpretation. Care needs to be taken, to ensure that both human rights and moral values are upheld. Upholding one at the expense of the other will prove unhelpful at the end of the day.

THE TOPIC

The topic of my dissertation is: *Homosexuality; a South African, Evangelical Perspective*. The empirical research involves people mainly around Johannesburg. Some of the works of prominent South African authors such as John Suggit and Steve de Gruchy, influential personalities such as Archbishop Tutu, and evangelical leaders such as Michael Cassidy, to mention a few, will be quoted in this dissertation. These will represent views from both sides, those in favour of homosexual practice and those against the practice of homosexuality. Homosexuality can be defined as a state where a person is sexually

aroused by, and has sexual genital intercourse with people of the same sex. Thomas E. Schmidt defines homosexuality as follows;

Homosexuality is the desire for and the phenomenon of sexual behaviour between members of the same sex. The words 'desire' and 'between' imply that the behaviour involves mutual adult consent (Schmidt 1995:30-31).

In this dissertation, the term 'homosexual' is used specifically for those who practice homosexuality, and refers to both male and female. There are those who prefer the usage of the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian', for males and females respectively. All these three terms are hereafter used interchangeably and without discrimination.

The term 'Evangelical' on the other hand includes all Christians who believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word and is the supreme guide for faith and practice. These Christians are men and women who are members of different denominations irrespective of the fact that some of the churches they belong to, may not generally be known as 'evangelical' churches. In defining evangelicals and their common areas of convergence and affirmations, Schmidt says:

First, evangelicalism affirms the centrality of Jesus. More specifically, Jesus is the only Son of God who willingly suffered death and then triumphed over it in order to set every person free from the consequences of human rebellion against God...The second affirmation of evangelicalism, wrapped up in the first, is the primacy and finality of the Bible's authority for faith and practice (Schmidt 1995:17-18).

Concentrating on South Africa, Louise Kretzschmar defines evangelicals as follows;

Evangelicals in South Africa share a commitment to a perception of the Bible as authoritative for faith and witness. A commitment to Bible study, personal devotions (for example having a regular quiet time), the preaching of the Word, and theological education all bear testimony to this love of the Bible (Kretzschmar 1998:169).

Although Kretzschmar and Schmidt write from different backgrounds, they share some common perspectives. There are other definitions of 'homosexuality' and 'evangelical' which are explored further in chapter one.

Homosexuality is a very controversial issue, which if not handled with care, can be divisive. The question is whether homosexuality is an acceptable form of sexual behaviour or lifestyle. In the West, there is a fair degree of social acceptance, but is there a similar degree of acceptance in our society? Do gays and lesbians receive equal treatment? From a general Christian point of view, I believe there are as many answers to these questions as there are groups, denominations and individuals within the denominations. I therefore intend to restrict myself to an evangelical perspective. This does not mean that all evangelicals have exactly the same view as it will later be explained. The different views will be discussed and my own view elucidated.

THE AIMS OF THIS DISSERTATION

Most of the Judeo-Christian traditions, including the evangelical tradition which affirms the primacy and finality of the Bible's authority for faith and practice, regard homosexuality and homosexual acts as sin. One of the aims of this dissertation is to determine if the age-old traditional evangelical view on homosexuality is still upheld. I further intend to determine what percentage of the evangelical churches and leaders who completed the questionnaire which appears both in chapter two and the appendix, ordain practicing gays and lesbians. I will also assess the number of churches who have within their members homosexuals who are either practicing or not practicing. From the homosexuals who completed the questionnaire which appears in chapter two, this study seeks to determine and evaluate their religious legitimation for homosexual behaviour.

Another aim is to establish the number of homosexuals who are 'out of the closet', and to see which of these have had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex so as to work out those who may be exclusively homosexual and those who may be going through an experimenting period with the possibility of either becoming permanently homosexual or heterosexual. A further aim is to establish from the respondents the number of homosexuals who were sexually abused as children and those who were forced to engage in their first sexual experience with a person of the same sex. This will help to determine the influence that experience may have on the establishment of homosexual tendencies. Other experiential factors that will be looked at are: whether there is a common age at which homosexuals discover their preferred sexual expression/ sexual orientation, and to also find out how many homosexuals were brought up in single parent families.

RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

This topic is relevant to the evangelical church for a number of reasons. Firstly there is the theological relevance and secondly the pastoral relevance. The recent and ongoing 'coming out of the closet' of homosexuals in South Africa, calls for the evangelical church to deal with this issue openly. This can be done through seminars, discussion groups, research, and dialogue. The Bill of Rights and our new Constitution has opened the door for issues such as this one to be openly discussed. The relevant clause reads as follows:

Every person shall have the right to equality before the law and to equal protection of the law. No person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly and without derogating from the generality of this provision, on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language
(chapter 3, section 8, Const. of the Rep. of S.A. Act.no.200 of 1993).

The fact of the matter is that during the apartheid era, when the Government acted unilaterally and in an authoritarian way, many issues of sexual morality were legislated

against. Such issues were State controlled and seldom questioned as it was supposed by many that South Africa was a Christian country.

The Government had strict laws on moral issues in society. For example, abortion except under certain strict conditions, was outlawed. There were strict censorship laws. Anything that appeared to be pornographic in films, books and magazines, was not allowed to come into the country. Any person contravening such laws was heavily fined or faced a jail sentence. Gambling was also forbidden. Thus, the church had very little to do in addressing issues such as these, as they were outlawed and illegal.

Unfortunately, it was this strict morality of the so called Christian country which was one of the chief contributing factors that blinded many inside and outside the church so that they did not resist the gross violations of basic human rights by the State on its citizens who were 'black'. The Group Areas Act, which legislated against and divided people according to their colour and language groups, also played a large part in ensuring that different 'groups' did not know what was actually happening in each other's place of residence. It is a fact seldom known by the public that within Soweto, Blacks were further divided into areas according to language, for example, there are Sotho, Xhosa or Zulu sections in the different parts.

The church was in certain instances divided by law into racial groups, and language groups. The Afrikaans speaking Dutch Reformed Church was the unofficial 'State' Church, backing the government in most of these repressive laws. Thus the church and the state were almost one. Christianity was generally regarded as the State religion and other religions were not given equal treatment. The unequal treatment did not end there. Anyone, even Christians who overtly opposed or questioned any unjust government law, would be

labelled a terrorist or communist and would be arrested, charged with treason, and face possible life imprisonment if found guilty. Today we have a clear-cut division between the church and the state. The constitution allows all religions to enjoy the right of equal treatment by the State.

It is now the duty of the church to stand on her own and challenge any personal and social moral issues that are unacceptable to her, even if the state may legalise them. Today, while we all enjoy political freedom, there is moral permissiveness. For example, pornographic material is now readily available even at supermarkets. Abortion is legalised and prostitution may also soon be legalised, (under the more 'politically correct' language, it is expressed as 'commercial sex workers'), with the unfortunate result of further increasing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and the debasing of women. The evangelical church must get ready to address these and other moral issues both sensitively and appropriately without any fear of repression or government interference. The evangelical church should also be dealing with issues such as poverty, unemployment and homelessness. The latter group of issues fall outside the scope of this dissertation which deals with matters of sexual ethics, and will therefore not be dealt with. Homosexuality is one such issue under sexual ethics that needs to be addressed. The whole church and evangelicals in particular cannot afford the luxury of becoming armchair spectators.

THEOLOGICAL RELEVANCE

The church and particularly evangelicals need to set up theological and ethical commissions to research pertinent issues thoroughly and to then respond accordingly. For those who for so long have been hiding behind 'State theology', there is neither room for

complacency nor fence-sitting. There is a need to respond to moral issues theologically. If ever there was a time when this was sorely needed, the time is now.

Some of the denominations in the West are trying to make their theological stance clear. The Anglican church in England has done a thorough study of human sexuality including homosexuality and has issued a statement as a guide for all its members and the church in general. In 1991, the House of Bishops, the highest decision making body in the Anglican church, issued a forty eight page document entitled *Issues in Human Sexuality* in which among other things they addressed homosexuality. Their official position for members and clergy on homosexuality was recorded as follows;

On the one hand homophile orientation and its expression in sexual activity do not constitute a parallel and alternative form of human sexuality as complete within the terms of the created order as the heterosexual but homosexual people are in every way as valuable to and as valued by God as heterosexual people.

It follows from this that, although the authors cannot commend the physical expression of a homosexual orientation, the church needs to respect the decision of those who are conscientiously convinced that...they have more hope of growing in love for God and neighbour with the help of a loving and faithful homophile partnership, in intention lifelong, where mutual self-giving includes the physical expression of their attachment.

With regard to homosexual clergy,...There should be no problem in the case of 'those who wish it to be known that they are homophile in orientation, but who are committed to a life of abstinence'. A community which cannot accept such an honourable candour is not worthy of the name of Christian. There is however, a contradiction involved in clergy continuing in the ministry who have declared themselves to be engaged in active homosexual relationships because they are effectively denying the church's understanding of sexuality as set out elsewhere in the report (House of Bishops 1991:41).

In brief then, the Anglican church in England tolerates, albeit reluctantly, practicing homosexuals in an intended lifelong partnership as members and communicants. The same does not apply to the clergy. Clergy who have a homosexual orientation but do not practice

homosexual acts, are allowed to serve as clergy. But the ones who are practicing homosexuals are not allowed to serve as clergy.

The above position has over the years been challenged by Anglicans who are pro-homosexual. Some bishops have tried to get the church to a position of altering the statement so that self-confessed practicing gay and lesbian clergy are also accepted. Their efforts have not been successful. At the last Lambeth Conference held in England in June of 1998, the statement of 1991 and official church position on human sexuality and homosexuality was again upheld and endorsed. This position is known and understood by both clergy and lay-persons. The widespread knowledge of this position is seen in an article entitled *OUTING THE FAITHFUL* in which ordinary church members had knowledge of some clergy who were active homosexuals and questioned their continuing service as clergy. The article by H. Gibson reads as follows;

The church of England does not condemn homosexuality as such. It welcomes lay parishioners in stable same-sex relationships and condones gay leanings among clergy. Where it draws the line is at accepting sexually active gays and lesbians as priests (Walsh in *Time Magazine* of March 27 1995:62).

In South Africa, each evangelical church should have its own official statement on human sexuality and homosexuality in particular. This need is more pressing for those churches who did not engage in theological discussions or research issues of this nature before.

PASTORAL RELEVANCE

There is even a greater need for the evangelical church to respond to the needs of homosexual men and women pastorally. There are homosexuals who are Christians, who are struggling with their sexual 'orientation'. We need to be equipped to respond pastorally

and avoid the temptation to have a 'holier than thou' attitude. John Stott when discussing the issue of homosexuality and how the church is to respond pastorally, says the following:

At the heart of the homosexual condition is a deep loneliness, the natural human hunger for mutual love, a search for identity and a longing for completeness (Stott 1984:321).

The above statement is true for both homosexuals and heterosexuals. Both share a common humanity with emotions and needs. Just as heterosexuals need and do receive pastoral care and counseling, the same is to be accorded to all homosexuals. This pastoral care or counseling is not however to be forced on anyone. Only those homosexuals who avail themselves, ask for, or are in need of pastoral care are to be helped. In the latter case of need, the onus will be on the pastor and the church leadership to be perceptive and to respond accordingly. Care must however be exercised so that none will feel forced or excluded from receiving pastoral care.

After introducing the topic, which is not just cerebral or entertaining mental gymnastics, but a topic that touches lives and emotions of people, the aims of the dissertation are outlined. The relevance of the topic both theologically and pastorally is discussed, showing the need for the church to stand on her own and defend her stance on moral issues and to act with love and care. Then there is a brief outline of the methods that will be employed and my personal approach in discussing this topic of homosexuality.

METHODOLOGY AND MY OWN APPROACH

A more detailed discussion on methodology and my background will be dealt with in chapter two. Suffice it to say here that this research will employ both empirical and theoretical methods of gathering data which will be analyzed through my evangelical spectacles. My own approach therefore will be influenced by evangelicalism.

Starting with the theoretical method, written sources in the form of books and journals containing articles on the subject of homosexuality will be selected, read and analysed. The selection process will be such that the material covers views in favour of a homosexual lifestyle and those that are against a homosexual lifestyle. The empirical method of data collection took the form of the drawing up of questionnaires, their distribution for completion, collecting and analysing the data from the completed questionnaires. Field trips were also undertaken where church leaders and individuals were interviewed, and their responses noted and analysed. This topic is being approached from an evangelical point of view with the presupposition that homosexual practice has always been seen as sin from a biblical point of view. Our Judeo-Christian tradition as recorded in Holy Scriptures, nowhere talks of homosexuality as an alternative and acceptable lifestyle for Christians. As mentioned under aims, it is from this premise that I work, to further establish if there is a change of attitudes within evangelicalism with the changing times.

We are further dealing with this topic of homosexuality from a theological ethical point of view. Ethical thus means something morally correct and beneficial. The goodness or badness of the practice of homosexuality, the rightness or wrongness of it and the goals and consequences of the practice of homosexuality are examined. This dissertation will try to find an answer to the question whether homosexuality is right or wrong in and of itself, from an evangelical ethical point of view. This means evaluating homosexuality from an evangelical understanding of what makes a practice 'morally correct' or 'morally valuable'.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one deals with human sexuality, the definitions of homosexuality, the causes and incidence of homosexuality. We also look at who the evangelicals are, the different positions Christians adopt and the positions evangelicals adopt regarding homosexual practice.

Chapter two deals with the methodology used, my own background and the analysis of the responses from the three different questionnaires completed by evangelical leaders, evangelical members and the gays and lesbians of one church in Johannesburg, and those who are adherents of other faiths or of no faith at all, who are members of an organisation called the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

Chapter three deals with the Bible and homosexuality. It looks at the different approaches adopted by liberals and evangelicals to Old Testament and New Testament texts dealing with homosexuality. Chapter four ends with an evangelical view of homosexuality looking at creation, sexuality and marriage, contemporary arguments in support of homosexuality as compared to evangelical views, and proposes a possible way forward.

The conclusion contains a summary of the main points gleaned throughout the discussion. The appendices contains the three sets of questionnaires that were used to gather data, and the statement and position paper on homosexuality from the Cape Town Baptist Church. The bibliography contains a list of all consulted sources, both primary and secondary sources.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS HOMOSEXUALITY AND WHO ARE THE EVANGELICALS ?

In the introduction we looked at the topic, aims, relevance of the topic and had a brief look at the method and the approach followed in discussing this crucial topic. We now move on to define human sexuality and homosexuality. We look at the possible causes commonly mentioned and the different views of and attitudes to homosexuality. We then discuss who the evangelicals are and the different positions adopted by evangelicals regarding homosexuality and homosexual practice.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Oxford dictionary defines sexuality as follows;

The fact of belonging to one of the sexes and or sexual characteristics or impulses (Oxford Paperback Dictionary 1983:608).

The Longman's dictionary defines sexuality in what I think is a noncommittal way in that it does not mention the sexes. It says the following;

Interest in, the expression of, or the ability to take part in sexual activity (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1987:959).

The Oxford Dictionary does not specify how many sexes there are or what they are. But even less satisfactory is the Longman's Dictionary in that it talks of anyone with the ability to take part in sexual activity. A better definition is the one given in the Dictionary for Christian Ethics it says;

In human beings, however, nature is never untouched by history, and the sexual differentiation is more than biological. It extends also to gender identity...for Christian theology, which thinks of human beings not simply

as free spirits but as embodied creatures, gender identity must be grounded in biological sexuality without being reduced to it. Rigid role distinctions between men and women would reduce gender to sex, construing human nature as all finitude and no freedom (Atkinson et al 1995:72).

The above definition somehow ties the former two together. It clarifies the issue of sexes by mentioning them specifically as men and women. It is, however, important not to reduce sexuality to the 'ability to take part in sexual activity' only, because there are men and women who choose not to take part in sexual activity and live celibate lives. This decision and lifestyle neither reduces nor nullifies their sexuality. Their maleness and femaleness still remains whether they engage in sex or not. To end this section, it is proper to define human sexuality from a biblical perspective. The story of the creation of human beings in Genesis puts it this way;

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

From this text we see that the two sexes that were created in the beginning are male and female. It is these two who are later instructed to be fruitful and to fill the earth. Therefore, sexuality means being one of the two sexes, male or female. As for the taking part in sexual activity, it is to take place between male and female. Further, from an evangelical point of view, this male to female sexual intercourse should take place within the confines of a monogamous marriage. This is the pattern we see in creation, the beginnings of the human race and in the Bible as a whole. Stanley Grenz discusses human sexuality and says the following;

Further, sexuality is a dimension of our existence as embodied persons. As we will see later, at its core this embodied existence includes a fundamental incompleteness, one which is symbolised by biological sex and is based in our sexuality. Through sexuality we give expression both to our existence as embodied creatures and to our basic incompleteness as embodied persons in our relationships to each other and to the world. Our sexuality, then, calls us to move toward completeness.

It forms the foundation for the drive which moves male and female to come together to form a unity of persons in marriage (Grenz 1990:20).

WHAT IS HOMOSEXUALITY?

According to Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, homosexuality is defined as follows;

A condition in which the libido is directed towards one of the same sex (Taber:1976).

The Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English defines it as follows;

A person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex (Longman 1987:502).

The first definition mentions the libido which is directed to same sex, without specifying people or animals, and the second definition mentions people specifically. In both definitions it is assumed that both male and female are included and that the definitions mainly refer to practicing homosexuals because if a person is attracted to someone of the same sex but does not act on these feelings, that is, if he or she does not practice, how would one know that the person is a homosexual? Grenz on the other hand expands on his definition and says;

The term, then, refers basically to the preference for sexual partners of the same sex or to the situation in which erotic feelings are nearly exclusively triggered by persons of one's own sex (Grenz 1990:225).

Homosexuals can be divided into two categories. They can either be practicing or non-practicing. Within these two categories, there are some who are exclusively homosexual, that is, those who are not sexually aroused by the opposite sex and will not cohabit with them. There is yet another category of people who are sexually aroused by both males and females. These people may cohabit with whosoever they feel aroused by at that time. These people are generally called bisexuals. Besides these differences between practicing,

non-practicing homosexuals and bisexuals, homosexuality is very diverse. Alan Bell says the following about this diversity;

We shall, therefore, begin speaking in terms of the homosexualities, and when we speak about a particular individual who is erotically aroused by a person of the same sex and /or who engages in sexual behaviour with a person of the same sex, we try to specify the type of homosexual he or she happens to be (Bell in Twiss 1978:9).

This homosexual diversity, as we will see, brings into play people who have homosexual sex for a time, and later stop, those who time and again will, for the fun of it have homosexual sex while having an ongoing heterosexual relationship, and those who will start their sexual lives as heterosexuals but later in life end up as homosexuals, and so on. The following therefore, are a few of the different types of homosexualities and their brief definitions. The list is not in any way exhaustive.

TRANSIENT HOMOSEXUALITY

Transient homosexuality is said to be a passing phase. It is believed that a great number of people, especially men, go through this phase at one time or another. The most common time for this to happen is said to be the time when young people reach the teenage stage. R. Yerkes and C.Yerkes in discussing adolescent sexuality say the following about this particular stage;

Here the early relationships are usually of the same gender...Transient sexual acts at this time should not be confused with concretised homosexual choice; they are much more likely to be merely extensions of self-love (Yerkes and Yerkes in Barnhouse and Holmes 1976:181).

TRANSGENERATIONAL HOMOSEXUALITY

This kind of homosexuality takes place between males of different ages. Michael Vasey discusses this kind of homosexuality and quotes Greenberg who defines it as follows;

...In these societies, sexual relationships between older and younger men are an integral part of initiation into the masculine role demanded by the needs of the tribe (Greenberg in Vasey 1995:75-76).

TRANSGENDERAL HOMOSEXUALITY

This type of homosexuality is explained as the one partner (of the same sex) who plays the role of the opposite sex in the sexual act. The nearest in modern day examples is that of transvestites, people who derive sexual pleasure from wearing the clothes of the opposite sex. Greenberg says;

A common feature of this cultural form of homosexuality is the recognition that an individual is not suited to the particular culture's form of masculine or feminine identity (Greenberg in Vasey 1995:76).

EGALITARIAN HOMOSEXUALITY

This is perhaps the one type of homosexuality with which most people would be familiar.

...relates to accepted sexual contact between people of the same sex, where the partners treat each other as social equals. Many forms of such homosexuality are widespread in traditional societies and are not treated as alternative to the important social roles of marriage or child rearing (Greenberg in Vasey 1995:76).

From the few types of homosexualities defined above, it can be deduced that there is no one overall kind of homosexuality. At the onset of sexual activity, an individual may engage in sex with a person or people of the same sex and later change to be heterosexual for the rest of his/her life. On the other hand one may have sexual relations with people of the opposite sex and then later change to homosexual relations for the rest of one's life. Homosexual activity may be a passing phase to be outgrown by some or a lifelong sexual preference. Having discussed what homosexuality is and having looked at the different types of homosexualities we now discuss some of the causes of homosexuality.

THE CAUSES OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The question of the causes of homosexuality has never been adequately and conclusively answered. The causes are numerous and in each individual there may be a combination of factors or causes that may have led to the person's homosexuality. In discussing the causes, I am not in a position to treat all cited or suspected causes. Few of the commonly discussed causes are revisited here. Two of the most common possible causes of homosexuality always discussed are the physiological or biological and the psychological causes.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CAUSES

The physiological or biological causes concentrate on genes. A lot of scientific research to prove this theory is currently inconclusive. Discussing this aspect of causation Vasey says the following;

Any attempt to summarize the current state of scientific discussion has to acknowledge its transitory and speculative character...(Vasey 1995:143).

Earlier researches were negative about the possibility of genetic or hormonal imbalances causing homosexuality. The reason for this negativity is possibly that if there was a hormonal imbalance or genetic defect, homosexuality would then be seen as an abnormal state that needed curing. One such research was the Kinsey report quoted by Drakeford saying;

There is no need of hypothesizing peculiar hormonal factors that make certain individuals especially liable to engage in homosexual activity, and we know of no data which prove the existence of such hormonal factors. There are no sufficient data indicating that specific hereditary factors are involved (Drakeford 1977:42).

Some years later J.M. Bailey and J.C. Pillard carried out a research on 110 identical and fraternal twins who were homosexual. Their findings were that fifty two percent of identical twins, were both homosexual, while only twenty two percent of the fraternal twins

were both homosexual. This led Bailey and Pillard to conclude that there is a possibility of a genetic cause for homosexuality in the high rate of identical twins seeing that they share common genes. Several years later other researches reported to have found a 'gay gene'. This was later proved to have been erroneous. Nevertheless research is continuing. In 1996 Mary Jean Scott Silk writing on the causes of homosexuality said the following about biological causes;

There are indications in recent scientific literature that some male homosexuality may have a partial genetic basis. Since there is presently a great deal of scientific work being done in order to identify individual genes on human chromosomes, it is likely that there will be a great deal of progress within the next ten years concerning all genetic manifestations, including homosexuality (Silk in Kretzschmar and Richards 1996:174).

The implications of this is that, if one was said to be born a homosexual, one makes no choices about one's sexual orientation. From an evangelical ethical perspective the fact remains, however, that even if one was said to be born a homosexual, one has to take responsibility for one's actions. One has a choice whether to engage in sexual acts or not. Even heterosexuals have to make choices and take responsibility for their actions.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES

There are several factors under psychological causes that are said to play a part in homosexual orientation or condition. Psychological factors are said to be either one, or a combination of the following; an absent father and a dominant mother, a child brought up in a single parent family or some emotional and social factors arresting the development of the young person's sexual growth. Grenz says the following ;

Most authorities attribute the homosexual condition to a combination of psychological and sociological factors which prevent the individual from achieving full and free personal relationships with the other sex (Grenz 1990:203).

Townsend quotes Jones and Workman when discussing the causes of homosexuality in the *Cambridge Papers* and concludes by saying the following;

There is a general if informal consensus today that no one theory of homosexuality can explain such a diverse phenomenon. There is no completely determinative cause. There appears to be a variety of facilitating influences. While homosexuality can develop without genetic or hormonal factors being operative, it generally does not develop without the influence of learning and socialization (Jones and Workman in Townsend 1994:3).

The two causes defined above i.e. physiological and psychological are brought together in current debates about causation in what is popularly termed the nature vs. nurture debate. In this debate, the issues are simply to determine whether homosexuality is caused by nature (genetic) or whether it is nurtured (a result of learning and cultivating the habit). In conclusion we may say that this phenomenon of homosexuality may be caused by either nature or nurture, or a combination of both. It must nevertheless be noted that genetic causes have not been conclusively proved. Discussing views of people who are pro-homosexual practice, Williams come to this conclusion regarding causes;

For George Weinberg the causes are simply unknown. If we are gay by nature, then God has made us so. If it is our socialisation which forms sexual identity, however, then the causes are not necessarily natural or divine (Williams 1978:45).

THE INCIDENCE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The incidence of homosexuality is determined mainly by statistics. The reliability of such statistics cannot be said to be foolproof. The first scientific research on the incidence of homosexuality was conducted by Dr. Kinsey in the mid-forties. He concluded that in America there was a figure of ten percent of men who for most or part of their lives were exclusively homosexual. David Field addressing this issue in Britain estimates the incidence to be about five percent in comparison to the estimated ten percent in America. This is what he says;

Reliable statistics are notoriously hard to come by, but in medical circles opinion is hardening that the figure may be as high as 5% of the total population...the number who actually practice as homosexuals is probably lower (Field 1980:3).

Field goes on to give a summary of other researchers and their findings saying that Norman Pittinger quotes 5% of British men and women and F. E. Kenyon who quotes a figure of one in twenty-five men and one in forty-five women in Britain to be homosexual. He ends by saying;

Those who put forward these figures are the first to admit that they do so only tentatively (Field 1980:3).

Subsequent to the Kinsey report on the incidence of homosexuality and the figures quoted by Field, a number of other researches have been conducted and have come up with a figure of between 1% and 2% as being more realistic. The South African Christian author and a leading evangelical in the Anglican church, Michael Cassidy, in addressing the long standing Kinsey 10% figure, quotes recent research figures as follows;

The 10% figure is a myth which is contradicted by almost all recent studies. Schmidt says the number of currently active homosexuals in the States is 0.6% to 0.7%. Less than 1%. In Britain it is established at 1.1%. In the Netherlands 3.3% of men and 0.4% of women (Cassidy 1998:1).

This ten percent 'myth' figure was again negatively commented on, even by homosexuals in the United States after an article appeared in *Time Magazine* in 1993 entitled 'The shrinking 10%'.

In seeking to win political clout and public acceptance, gays and their leaders have long sought refuge in numbers - specifically in the 10% figure for homosexuality that Alfred Kinsey turned up in 1948 study of human sexuality...it was also good propaganda. It became part of our vocabulary, says Karma (co-founder of Act-Up). Democracy is all about proving you have the numbers. The more numbers you can prove you have, the more likely you'll get your due (quoted by Court and Whitehead 1996:343).

Thomas Schmidt also comments on the incidence of homosexuality working from the Kinsey figures and comes up with a smaller figure as he says the following;

What is the percentage of the population, then, that consistently desires or practices same-sex relations? The NORC data provides an estimate that of the approximately 6 percent who experience same-sex relations ever, the number of currently active homosexuals is 0,6-0,7% of the US adult population (Schmidt 1995:103).

It can be seen that the incidence of homosexuality has for some time been exaggerated to as high as ten percent. In the eighties Field and others estimated it at 5%. Recent and more reliable modern research is coming up with figures ranging from 0.6 % to about 2% at the most. The view that, if it is high, it would mean that it is an inborn God given sexual orientation on par with heterosexuality, surely falters. The above recent figures of the incidence of homosexuality show that the figures are much lower than Kinsey and the gay groups have claimed. It is important therefore to note that, unlike in politics, where most decisions are taken based on democratic principles, majority backing or numbers, Christians do not always depend on democracy or numbers to help them to make decisions. The Bible and God's guidance have always been the final authority. A few examples here are worth mentioning. First we can take the example of how the Israelites managed to enter Canaan, the promised land. Moses sent out twelve men to spy out the land. On their return, ten were negative and only two were positive, reporting that in spite of the giants they saw, God would give them the land. It was a matter of two against ten, and if the majority was to determine the decision, the Israelites would never have later entered Canaan. The second example is that of the apartheid system that 'democratically' voted so that Black South Africans did not have the vote and were regarded as non-citizens in the country of their birth. The church does not always depend on democracy to make decisions on moral issues. We as evangelicals do not depend on numbers to decide whether adultery is to be accepted

or not, so we do not need to depend on democracy or numbers to help us decide whether to accept homosexual practice or not. Numbers do not help to make a moral decision. However, in this dissertation the figures of between 1% and 2% will be adopted and used as they are the most recent and scientifically researched and accepted figures.

HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

The incidence of homosexuality leads us to a more sensitive discussion of homosexual behaviour. It is a generally known fact that homosexuals, or most homosexuals, do not find it easy to relate to one partner for a long time, let alone for life. This behaviour of homosexuals being more promiscuous almost as a rule negates the case of those who argue that homosexual relations can be as meaningful as heterosexual monogamous marriages. This behaviour of being promiscuous is backed by one of the proponents of homosexual practice, namely Don Clark. He says the following, as quoted by Williams, in response to the question 'if gay is good, why then is there the high degree of promiscuity in the gay community'?

Clark advises sex with friends rather than strangers, where sex is a friendly interaction to be offered to each other....

The heterosexual marriage role model does not work for most gays. As they relate to several sex partners, they should remember that the more one loves, the more capable one is of loving. Thus there is no reason for jealousy unless there is a feeling of love being withdrawn (Clark in Williams 1978:43).

This view is unacceptable to evangelicals who adhere to heterosexual monogamous marriages. This view and behaviour is not an isolated case. There are other scholars who have cited this behaviour among homosexuals like Schmidt in his treatment of the incidence and prevalence of homosexuality. He says the following;

We can quantify the phenomenon of homosexual promiscuity, especially among males, more specifically. The numbers are astounding. Bell and Weinberg found that 74 percent of male homosexuals reported having

more than one hundred partners during their lifetime, 41 percent more than five hundred partners, 28 percent more than one thousand partners. Seventy-five percent reported that more than half their partners were strangers, and 65 percent reported that they had sex with more than half their partners only once. For the previous year, 55 percent reported twenty or more partners, 30 percent fifty or more partners. The numbers for homosexual women were considerably lower: 60 percent reported fewer than ten partners lifetime, and only 2 percent reported more than one hundred partners; for the previous year, only three percent reported twenty or more partners, one percent- fifty or more partners (Schmidt 1995:106).

If the above was said to be astounding, the figures given by Alan Bell are even more astounding. Discussing the behaviour of American white male homosexuals he says the following;

A modal view of the white male homosexual, based on our findings, would be that of a person reporting 1000 or more sexual partners throughout his lifetime, most of whom were strangers prior to their sexual meeting and with whom sexual activity occurred only once. Only a few of these partners were persons for whom there was much care or affection or were ever seen socially again. During the past year, twenty-eight percent reported having had more than fifty partners; however, thirty-one percent claimed to have had ten partners or less (Bell in Twiss 1978:17).

The above statistics are not only astounding but unacceptable. The standard of unacceptability is not one sided, as it would apply for both heterosexual and homosexual practice. These figures are twenty one years old, but nevertheless do show us that same-sex lifelong relationships are by far the exception. The next aspect of homosexuality has to do with sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS.

HOMOSEXUALITY AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Sexually transmitted diseases are not peculiar to homosexuals. There are some diseases that attack both heterosexuals and homosexuals. There are however some diseases that are mainly found among homosexuals as some of the survey results quoted below show. One of

the main reasons for dealing with this section on sexually transmitted diseases, is that when we consider the low percentage of the incidence of homosexuality, the proportional number of homosexuals suffering from these diseases compared to heterosexuals, it is very high. It is therefore worth noting that some of the diseases are a result of male homosexual sex acts. These are linked to the high degree of promiscuity among homosexuals. Several scholars have commented on this aspect. San Francisco in the States is one city with a big community of homosexuals. John Drakeford says the following about the figures of new cases of syphilis;

Another less attractive side of homosexuality is the hazard of venereal disease. An investigator with the San Francisco Bay City Clinic says it is not unusual for some homosexuals to have as many as fifty or sixty contacts a month, and all of this activity has taken its toll. Amid a rising tide of venereal disease which is reaching epidemic proportions, investigators in the San Francisco area have reported that up to 40 percent of new cases of syphilis occur among male homosexuals (Drakeford 1977:92-93).

Another city known to have many homosexuals is Los Angeles. William McKain jr. writing about ministry and homosexuality touches on this aspect of venereal diseases as well. He quotes figures of cases of syphilis from the Los Angeles County and other major cities saying;

Dr. Walter H. Smart, head of the department of venereal diseases in the Los Angeles County, has reported that 50 percent of the syphilis and 20 percent of the gonorrhoea in Los Angeles County is accounted for by homosexual persons. An Associated Press release from London on 12 June 1972, quoted Dr. R D Catterall, head of the Middlesex Hospital's Department of Venereal Disease, as writing;

In some large cities such as London, New York, Copenhagen and Paris, more than half of the infectious syphilis seen in hospitals is occurring in homosexual men, many of whom are quite young. Homosexual men tend to be very promiscuous and change their sexual partners frequently. It is still believed that it is impossible to be affected by homosexual relationships. In fact, it is just the opposite of the truth, and today homosexual men form a group which has one of the highest incidences of sexually transmitted diseases in the world (McKain in Keysor 1979:198).

It is indeed worrying to note that as many as fifty percent of the syphilis cases were accounted for by a group of people who in general make up between one and two percent of the national population. From a teleological ethical point of view, that is, looking at the moral consequences, one is concerned about two things. Firstly, the degree of human suffering and secondly the amount of money spent by the State in looking after these people who need medical care. It is tax payer's money that is being used to care for an abnormal proportion of a group of people suffering from a disease that is in a sense self-inflicted. At the same time there may be people who are desperately in need of medical care for other diseases and yet may not be able to be helped because of the high demand by syphilis sufferers on State facilities and funds.

The above figures are about twenty years old. Having learnt from past mistakes, one would expect matters to improve with time. But not so with STD's especially among homosexuals. Figures for later years of gonorrhoea and AIDS continue to be disconcertingly high among homosexually active men. Jennifer Sherrard and D. Barlow reporting in *The Lancet* of January 1993 on the results of their research on gonorrhoea in men say the following:

There were 492 episodes of gonorrhoea in 436 men, including 60 infections in 54 homosexuals, 9 (17%) of whom were HIV antibody positive (Sherrard and Barlow 1993:245).

Another high incidence of this sexually transmitted disease among homosexuals as compared to heterosexuals, who are in the majority, was recorded in Victoria, Australia again by Jennifer Sherrard and this time with Jocelyn Forsyth. They say the following:

Results: Overall, gonorrhoea is declining in Victoria in the general population but has risen sharply in recent years in homosexually active men. An increased number of cases of rectal gonorrhoea in men has also been noted...

Conclusions: Gonorrhoea in homosexually active men has increased disproportionately to the rate of infection in heterosexual men in

recent years, despite intensive education and counselling aimed at the gay community (Sherrard and Forsyth 1993:450).

The disproportionate increase of infection in homosexuals as opposed to heterosexuals is further explained in figures and graphs in their article. They show first a significant decrease in 1985 and then an increase in 1988, 1989 and a further significant increase in 1991. This latest increase which was the biggest to date accounted for 109 cases among homosexuals out of 209 cases of gonorrhoea, a 52% difference.

Going back to San Francisco, this time looking at the findings of Dr. David Jackson, from England, who visited the city with the aim of studying the community care of people with (HIV) disease, he reported as follows:

San Francisco is a compact city with a population of about 724,000. By March 1995, 20,962 cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) had been reported in the city, mostly among gay white men, with 13,892 deaths. In the USA as a whole, 401,749 cases of AIDS had been reported by the end of June 1994, with 242,423 deaths (data from San Francisco Department of Health AIDS Office)...It was at the city clinic that 6,704 gay men were recruited between 1978 and 1980 for ongoing studies into hepatitis B. Retrospective study of their blood samples showed that 75% had been infected with HIV by December 1993, 40% had been diagnosed as having AIDS, and 31% of the latter had died (Jackson 1996:178).

Talking about the whole city, the incidence of HIV and AIDS sufferers is accounted for by twelve percent women, 40% gay and 65% people of colour. The above statistics show that there is a high proportion of homosexuals who suffer from STD's compared to heterosexuals. As already mentioned, it raises questions of legitimate use of State funds for a certain group of people who account for between 1% and 2% of the population.

Michael Vasey writes on the same subject but from a British perspective. The picture is not too different. When one compares the total population and the cases particularly of AIDS sufferers, it is indeed a worrying situation. The problem of this high incidence of sexually

transmitted diseases among homosexuals can be accounted for by unprotected sex. The main problem with AIDS is that at the moment there is no cure. Vasey takes an optimistic view by stating that one day there will be a cure, forgetting that countless numbers are currently dying as a result of this menacing scourge. Secondly, as mentioned all over the world, the tragedy of AIDS is that it decimates communities and most of the casualties are in their economically productive years. Vasey says the following;

HIV/AIDS is an illness that will one day be conquered like TB or syphilis, or eliminated like smallpox. It is having its most terrible effects in Africa where it risks decimating whole age groups in nations struggling with other problems that have political or natural causes. However, the fact that this virus began its onslaught on prosperous Western societies by attacking gay people has had profound results for gay people and for wider Western culture. The advent of AIDS has deeply affected gay communities. At an individual level the story has often been terrible - great suffering and poverty, rejection by hostile communities and bewildered families. However, its effect within the gay communities and on their relationship with wider society has been to transform both their self-understanding and their public image. It has led to a significant reordering of the symbolic map by which gay people recognize themselves and are understood by others. This symbolic reordering has occurred in three areas: it has shifted the focus from sex to people; it has revealed the human qualities present in the gay social vision; it has contributed to a new cultural dialogue with death (Vasey 1995:238).

A group calling themselves Intercessors for Britain, also tackled the issue of AIDS among the homosexuals. The results are also just as shocking for Britain. Out of the total population of the country only two percent are homosexual and yet the cases of AIDS are seventy five percent among male homosexuals. This is not an acceptable proportion. The group has this to say;

Dr. Trevor Stammers, a tutor at St. George's Hospital Medical School, London, has also stated, "The commonest viral infections among homosexuals are anal warts, herpes and hepatitis B and A. About two thirds of male homosexuals have the virus for anal warts which is also strongly linked to the development of anal cancer... AIDS remains mainly a homosexual disease. The Public Health Laboratory reported at the end of 1993 that approximately three quarters

of all the cases were amongst homosexual men. The 1992 SIGMA study stated that 'all the men who tested antibody positive (ie.HIV positive) had engaged in anal intercourse previously'.
(Intercessors for Britain 1998:2)

I need to hurriedly add that the AIDS cases quoted above which affect homosexuals are not universal. In Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS has devastated whole villages of economically productive men and women who were heterosexuals. In our part of the world AIDS is a menace to both homosexuals and heterosexuals.

The South African scenario is not far from the statistics of Europe and America. One important factor to be noted, however, is that our figures are not always as accurate as those from abroad. The main reasons for this are the fact that HIV/AIDS is stigmatised, and people who are infected sometimes do not know they are infected. This means there is under-reporting of HIV/AIDS. When one tries to link HIV/AIDS with homosexuals, the figures again are not foolproof because homosexuality was outlawed until 1994, and homosexuals were 'in the closet'. Nevertheless, not all the figures are inaccurate.

Anthony Zwi and Deborah Bachmayer compiled some statistics of AIDS and HIV infections from 1982 to 1989. They come up with the following figures and summations.

A combination of the pattern common to homosexual and bisexual men which has occurred in the USA and much of western Europe, and that of heterosexual spread which has occurred in much of central and southern Africa, has been evident in South Africa. Of the 326 South African cases of AIDS, 231 (71%) were whites, 79 (24%) were Africans, 13 (4%) were coloureds, and 3 (1%) were Indians. For all races combined, 216 (66%) of the cases were in men who have sex with men...(Zwi and Bachmayer 1990:317).

The above figures and proportionate percentage of homosexual cases compared to heterosexual cases is very high and unacceptable. From 1992 to 1995 in AIDS Analysis Africa (Southern Africa Edition) edited by A.W. Whiteside, we find statistics of cumulative

AIDS cases with a growing number of homosexual infections. A point worth noting is that all the recorded cases among homosexuals, are those of homosexual and bisexual males.

The numbers of AIDS infections were as follows, in chronological order:

1992: Total 1178 cases, 372 among homosexual and bisexual males.
1993: Total 2697 cases, 437 among homosexual and bisexual males.
1994: Total 5702 cases, 512 among homosexual and bisexual males.
1995: Total 8405 cases, 535 among homosexual and bisexual males
(Whiteside 1992-1995: 11,11,12,11).

Whiteside in the 1995 edition of this journal says the following in the notes on interpretation of data:

As with all HIV/AIDS data, these have to be treated with some caution. As reporting of AIDS cases is not compulsory, the figures in Table 1 are certainly underestimates (Whiteside 1995:11).

Besides the very high percentage in 1990 of 66% of cases among homosexuals, the above figures are eleven percent and below. Thus, whilst in South Africa, the figures show that the number of HIV/AIDS cases among heterosexuals is growing very quickly, there are still large numbers of homosexuals affected by this virus.

The article produced by the group called Intercessors for Britain, goes on to explain that Dr. Elizabeth Duncan, a gynaecologist in Edinburgh, says that in mature women, the lining of the vagina is thicker than the anus. From this she says that it is clear that the body was not constructed for anal intercourse. It is a generally known fact that anal intercourse is one of the most common means of homosexual genital sex acts, and it is one of the major contributing factors to HIV infections and other sexually transmitted diseases. Besides the fact that the Bible does not approve of homosexual practice, evangelicals consider the above facts concerning the negative consequences of homosexual behaviour to support our strong disapproval of homosexual practice.

WHO ARE THE EVANGELICALS ?

Having defined what homosexuality is and having discussed some of its causes and consequences, it is appropriate at this stage to further discuss who the evangelicals are, because I am addressing this topic of homosexuality from an evangelical ethical perspective. I further discuss what evangelicals believe and later explain the position they hold regarding homosexuality as opposed to positions held by other Christians.

It used to be generally accepted that to differentiate between evangelicals and ecumenicals or non-evangelicals in South Africa was a simple task. On the one hand, the mainline churches such as Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans and Presbyterians were the non-evangelicals. On the other hand, those churches such as Nazarenes, Baptists (Union and Convention), and Assemblies of God, were known to be the evangelicals. Other denominations that did not embrace evangelicalism were the Traditional Independent Churches or Indigenous African Churches like the 'Apostolic' and 'Zionist' churches.

In reality, it is not as simple as that. One may find people who are committed evangelicals by belief and lifestyle in those 'non-evangelical' churches. The opposite is also true that in some churches that are known to be evangelical, one may find people who are not evangelicals. To define the term 'evangelical' is therefore not a simple and straight forward thing. The word 'evangelical' means different things to different people. John Allan discusses evangelicals and says;

Some think of brash, loud-mouthed, self-obsessed preachers like Elmer Gantry; or of unctuous, sanctimonious non-conformist clergymen in the novels of Charles Dickens. To other people the evangelicals are associated with noble causes whether campaigning against slavery, aiding prisoners, or running rescue missions (Allan 1989:2).

The word evangelical is derived from the Greek word 'euaggelion' which simply means good news of the Gospel. Allan goes on to explain how in the sixteenth century some people were seen as and labelled as rebel thinkers because they saw the church slipping away from the genuine Christian message and they used the word evangelical to mean the original Christianity. He says:

So evangelical came to mean a return to basics, a desire to be faithful to the spirit of the New Testament. And evangelicals today would claim that their ideas are no exotic, esoteric development of Christian theology they simply represent the original, orthodox faith of the church, which is as valid today as it has ever been (Allan 1989:2).

In the same book Billy Graham defines evangelicals as follows;

Thus evangelicals have always given priority to evangelism. Evangelicals may disagree on some minor points of doctrine or practice, but they unite on their common commitment to evangelism (Allan 1989:i).

The above statement is particularly true in our South African setting with churches like Baptists (Convention and Union), African Evangelical and The Alliance Church in S.A. on the one hand and Assemblies of God, Full Gospel and Rhema churches on the other hand who differ and disagree on the issue of the doctrine of The Holy Spirit, but are generally in agreement on the principle of the importance of the Great Commission as recorded in Matt. 28:19-20. In general, and following the past political divide in South Africa, we now can safely say that evangelicals can be divided into three groups, according to the findings of Louise Kretzschmar who when dealing with evangelical spirituality and divisions between South African evangelicals says the following:

If we consider the period 1948-1990, evangelicals in South Africa can be divided into at least three groups; conservative, moderate and radical (Kretzschmar 1998:163).

Conservative evangelicals are conservative both theologically and politically, Biblically neo-fundamentalists, they were supportive of the Government of the day. Radical

evangelicals on the other hand are radical, both theologically and politically, they believe in adhering to all the principles of historic evangelicalism including social involvement. During the apartheid years pre-1990, when there was a struggle for freedom, these were the men and women who challenged the *status quo* with notions of total political transformation. The moderates tried to span the gulf between the two and desperately tried to be neutral, supporting the 'God-given Government'. Most of these groupings of evangelicals were members of EFSA (The Evangelical Fellowship of South Africa). The majority of the membership of EFSA were the white English speaking evangelical churches with a few black churches. In the mid eighties the Black radicals, out of frustration at the lack of progress, came together and critiqued their own theology and practice. I attended the first two meetings and agreed with the end product but, unfortunately, my name was mistakenly left out of the list of signatories. These findings were recorded in the EWISA (Evangelical Witness In South Africa) document which was published in 1986. This publication was followed by *The road to Damascus-Kairos and Conversion* in 1989 in which my name appears as one of the signatories. Immediately after the publication of the EWISA document in 1986, Concerned Evangelicals (CE) was formed as a uniting body for radical evangelicals concerned with the total well-being of human beings, embracing a holistic approach.

In the early nineties the two organizations representing evangelicals in South Africa, namely EFSA and CE started talking about the possibility of uniting and forming one body to represent South African evangelicals in general. The official launch of this new body TEASA (The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa) was in 1995. Evangelicals are currently united and represented by this one body within which one can still find conservatives, moderates and radicals. The statement of faith of TEASA reads as follows:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Bible as originally given by God are divinely inspired, trustworthy and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God created the universe and pronounced it good
3. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God visible in a body, born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless human life. During his earthly ministry he did miracles. He died in our place to atone for our sins. He was buried, and on the third day arose from the dead. He ascended into heaven. He is the only Mediator and Saviour of the world. He will personally return in power and authority.
4. Humankind, male and female, was created in the image of God, with consequent dignity, delegated authority and creation stewardship. As a result of the fall, all people are lost and sinful, in need of salvation.
5. Salvation is available only through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and his salvation are received by repentance and faith, apart from human effort, as the Holy Spirit brings about the new birth.
6. The Holy Spirit indwells, empowers and equips each believer, thereby obliged and enabled to live a holy life, to witness, and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in his Kingdom concerns, including worship, prayer, evangelism discipling, compassion, justice and righteousness.
7. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are spiritually united with each other. They comprise the church, the Body of Christ of which he is the Head.
8. All the dead will be raised on the Last Day: those who are saved to eternal life, and those who are lost to eternal condemnation (Statement of Faith of TEASA).

DIFFERENT POSITIONS REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY

Having discussed who the evangelicals are, and what they believe, we now should look at what their attitude to homosexuality is and what positions they adopt. Before we do that, it is also necessary to mention the different positions that are generally adopted in relation to homosexuality. Townsend, in his discussion of views adopted by Christians about homosexual behaviour, identifies four positions. He lists them as 'rejecting punitive', 'rejecting compassionate', 'qualified acceptance' and 'full acceptance'. He explains these four categories as follows;

A rejecting punitive stance rejects homosexual behaviour and orientation as incompatible with Christianity and, often buttressed by cultural

stereotypes, is hostile towards people who are homosexual.

A rejecting compassionate approach regards homosexual behaviour as contrary to God's creative intent and never permissible for Christians. However, actions and orientation are distinguished and the church is to welcome into the community of forgiven sinners all who will follow Christ irrespective of sexual orientation.

The position qualified acceptance amounts to saying; the homosexual person is rarely, if ever, responsible for his sexual orientation; the prospects of developing heterosexual orientation are minimal; celibacy is not always possible; stable homosexual unions may offer the prospect of human fulfillment and are obviously better than homosexual promiscuity. Homosexuality is never ideal because God's intention in creation is heterosexuality, attempts to develop heterosexual desires must be made, but occasionally and reluctantly, one may accept a homosexual partnership as the only way for some people to achieve a measure of humanity in their lives.

Full acceptance stresses the unitive purpose of sexuality as central in God's sight and regards the procreative purpose as by comparison, incidental. Same-sex relationships can fully express the central purpose for sexuality so homophile attraction may be affirmed. All sexual acts should be evaluated by their relational qualities: what matters is whether or not a particular relationship or action will enhance human fulfillment, faithfulness between persons, genuine intimacy and mutuality. The gender of the persons concerned is immaterial (Townsend 1994:1).

EVANGELICAL POSITIONS REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY

Of the four positions described above, evangelicals adopt the first two only. These would be the positions 'rejecting punitive' and 'rejecting compassionate'. Most of the conservative evangelicals adopt the position of 'rejecting punitive' or 'rejecting compassionate'. This is because of their biblical fundamentalism. Their rejection of homosexuality and adoption of the punitive stance is based on the stance of the early church. Richard Lovelace quotes S.Bailey who, although writing in favour of homosexuality, admits that the early church did not approve of homosexual behaviour, and says;

...such practices (homosexual) were generally denounced mainly on

the ground that they are in themselves unnatural (Lovelace 1980:17).

The hostility of conservative evangelicals may be the result of their knowledge of the nature of homosexuality as was practiced in the early days which involved paederasty. Added to this, some homosexuals have been very militant in attempting to get recognition and acceptance. Drakeford talks about the difference between male and female homosexuals. He explains why people have a *phobia*, a fear of male homosexuals saying;

Another factor is the perfectly justifiable fear people have of the use of force in sex. Most people have the idea that certain male homosexuals are child molesters and rapists, but lesbians are thought of more as feminine, soft, and unlikely to resort to force (Drakeford 1977:58).

The other two groups of evangelicals, namely the moderates and radicals, adopt the position 'rejecting compassionate'. Some of the conservatives may also adopt this position. The difference between these two positions is that in 'rejecting compassionate', there is no fear or hatred of the person with a homosexual orientation whereas the 'rejecting punitive' position shows fear or hatred for the person with a homosexual orientation. The moderates and radicals who adopt this position of 'rejecting compassionate' would treat the struggling homosexual in a similar way to the alcoholic or adulterer who is struggling with their behaviour and would welcome them in the church to pursue their quest to follow Christ. What is not accepted is the action or practice of either drunkenness, adultery or homosexual sex for the Christian. This position is one that I also adopt as an evangelical. It will later be argued and explained how evangelicals approach the Bible and why we do not accept homosexual practice as a valid moral option for Christians. From an evangelical ethical position of deontology, homosexual practice is not right in itself. It goes against the principles of moral correctness and behaviour. From a teleological ethical position it is not acceptable because of the negative consequences for people, the homosexual first, and those who are close to him or her, be they family members, relatives or friends.

CHAPTER TWO

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES DERIVED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

In the previous chapter we discussed human sexuality and homosexuality. We looked at some of the causes and incidence of homosexuality, who the evangelicals are, four possible views with regard to homosexuality and the positions adopted by evangelicals. This chapter now looks at the methods applied in discussing this topic, my personal background as a radical evangelical and then the work on the analysis of the responses to the completed questionnaires that were sent out to the three separate groups of people; evangelical leaders, evangelical members and Christian homosexuals at the Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church (HUMCC) and those of other or no faith as members of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE).

METHODOLOGY

In the introduction it was mentioned that both theoretical and empirical methods of data collection will be employed in discussing this topic. Written sources were selected, read and analysed. In addition, South African evangelicals and evangelicals from outside South Africa were consulted and a range views on homosexuality were gathered. The results of this empirical analysis are discussed now and other views are further discussed in chapter three. Empirically, there were three different sets of questionnaires. A short pilot study of five people from each group was conducted. The questionnaires were afterwards adjusted prior to being distributed for completion by the different groups. After distributing them, they were collected for analysis. The type of questions in the questionnaires varied from

open ended questions, factual (sometimes called demographic questions), structured questions such as multiple choice and dichotomous (choosing one of the two given options) questions. These questionnaires appear below in the section dealing with the analysis and they appear again as part of the appendices.

The distribution of questionnaires was done personally, no questionnaires were posted. The collection was also done personally. In cases where I could not visit the church, I spent an extensive time with one individual, a member in good standing with the particular church, who then acted as the representative. This person was then responsible for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. I also used my work related trips outside South Africa, while attending conferences in Kenya and England, to ask evangelical leaders and members to complete the questionnaire for me. Interviews with a few of these leaders and some evangelical members were also held and the insights gleaned from these were very helpful in further confirming the results of the questionnaires distributed locally and my reading on the subject.

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed. Ninety seven were distributed among evangelical leaders, one hundred and five among ordinary evangelical members and ninety eight among homosexuals. The latter questionnaire was distributed among homosexuals who are Christians and members of one church in Johannesburg and those of other faiths or without any religious affiliation who were members of the organisation NCGLE. The aim was to get back fifty responses from each group, which is a fifty percent response, a scientifically credible and acceptable response rate. Some of the denominations that were selected to complete the questionnaire were; Anglican, Baptist Convention, Baptist Union, African Evangelical, Assemblies of God, International

Assemblies of God, Grace Bible Church, Church of the Nazarene, Alliance Church of South Africa, Apostolic Faith Mission, Full Gospel Church, and the Methodist Church. These churches were mainly around Soweto and Johannesburg. A few individual members and leaders from Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban also completed the questionnaire. Other small churches were also approached. The research among the gays and lesbians was restricted to one church in Johannesburg, the Hope and Unity Metropolitan Church (HUMCC) and one gay and lesbian organisation also in Johannesburg, namely the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian for Equality (NCGLE).

As far as the issues of biblical methodology or hermeneutics are concerned, the entire Bible formed the backdrop in discussing this topic in the context of the canon which affirms that the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation constitutes the authoritative norm of Christian truth. This is a great help in avoiding proof-texting in which only a few selected texts are cited to confirm one's point of view without considering the context of the whole of the Bible. This does not mean that my approach is theologically neutral because, as already mentioned, I approach this topic from an evangelical perspective.

It is also worth noting that while the entire bible formed the backdrop in discussing the biblical position on homosexuality, not all the texts dealing with homosexuality were used. Texts used are those that are commonly quoted and debated on, either arguing in favour of or against homosexual practice.

The next point I need to make is that the evangelical, ethical perspective dictates that theologically I approach this topic from a point of emphasising both a deontological point of view and a teleological point of view. Deontological ethics works from a premise that an act is right or wrong in and of itself and not because of the amount of good or bad its end

results produce. It is based on rules, norms and duties. Therefore, deontologically, one is to adhere to the norms of right, avoiding wrong, irrespective of the situation. Teleological ethics deals with goals and consequences not only for the individual, but also for the group, society or the world. This view is brought into play particularly when arguing about the amount of bad the end results of homosexual practice causes, under the sub-section of *homosexuality and sexually transmitted diseases (STD'S)* in chapter one. The other factor to look at is the goal of the individual. With homosexual practice one may say that the goal is the pursuit of happiness and self fulfilment. This may be seen not as a pursuit for happiness for all, but more for the individual, which pushes it closer to hedonism, a self-centred ethical theory which evangelicals do not subscribe to nor propagate. It is also a highly contentious issue as to whether a homosexual lifestyle leads to happiness for the individuals concerned.

MY OWN BACKGROUND

Any person attempting to address any topic, does so from a certain background. I am no exception. I am a Black male, born into a family of God-fearing, non-Christian parents. My father was semi-literate and my mother could neither write nor read. At a very early age my parents were separated and from the age of about eleven, I grew up in a single parent family with some support from family members and relatives. In all my life I have never been overtly sexually approached nor have I had any erotic feelings for someone of the same sex. I am a 'straight' person, married with four children. Like most Blacks in South Africa, I suffered under the apartheid system, although as a boy I did not fully understand what was happening. My first encounter with the harsh system of racial segregation was as a small boy in December of 1955 when we were forcefully removed under the Group

Areas Act, from Sophiatown and taken to Meadowlands in Soweto, where I grew up and went through my Primary and Secondary School education.

I became a Christian in my early twenties through the preaching ministry of conservative evangelicals. My Christian growth has been a mixture of evangelical teaching, Pentecostal exposure, and theological study at an Evangelical Anglican College in England and the ecumenical faculty at the University of South Africa. I started as a conservative and have grown to be a radical evangelical in belief and practice.

From an evangelical point of view, upholding the importance of the Bible and its teachings as binding to all who call themselves Christians, I work on the premise that homosexual practice is not acceptable for Christians. Adopting the position of 'rejecting compassionate', I work from a presupposition based on the fact that in the entire Bible, there is no mention of homosexuality in a positive light. No mention in the Old or New Testament of homosexual unions or marriages. Also that the texts that do mention homosexuality are opposed to such sexual practices. The Bible stresses not only heterosexuality in its discussion of sexuality, but heterosexuality expressed through marriage. This discussion will have this background knowledge as a point of reference for me, while trying to establish the current position of evangelicals and their attitude to homosexuality. In comparison to the age-old Judeo-Christian position of rejecting homosexual practice for Christians, it will be interesting to find out whether modern day evangelicals still uphold this stance or not, given the strong impact the gay community has had on society and also the impact the views expressed by those who are in favour of homosexual practice have had on society.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES FROM EVANGELICAL LEADERS

There were fifty responses from evangelical leaders, a 51.5% response. Ten of the fifty leaders who completed the questionnaire were not South Africans. One of the field trips included a trip to Kenya to attend a Conference on the church's ministry to the poor. At this Conference I requested these leaders to complete the questionnaire and spent time discussing this topic of homosexuality. The ten leaders comprised one American Baptist pastor, one Phillipino Renewal Catholic priest, one British Anglican Bishop, three Kenyans, two Zambians and two Malawians. The rest of the leaders who completed the questionnaire were from South Africa. Below I quote the questionnaire in full so as to illustrate and clarify the subsequent analysis of the questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLERGY / LEADERS

Please complete this questionnaire and either hand it to the appointed person or put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope and post it. Your co-operation is highly appreciated

Section A

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age Group: 26-30 31-35 35-40 41+
3. Marital status: Married Divorced Widowed Single
4. Church/Denomination e.g. Anglican, Assemblies, Baptist, Methodist, etc. _____
5. Your position in the church: Bishop Priest Rev./Pastor Elder Other
6. How long have you held this position? 1-5 years 6-10 years over 11 years

Section B

- 1 Does your church / denomination have a policy on the ordination into the ministry of active /practicing homosexuals? Yes No

2. If yes, which of the following is it?
 Practicing homosexuals are ordained into the ministry as Priests / Revs.
 Practicing homosexuals are not ordained into the ministry as Priests/Pastors/Reverend
3. On what is this policy based? Church/Denomination/Tradition Biblical texts
4. If based on Biblical texts, please write at least two such texts:
 i) _____ ii) _____
5. If your church / denomination does not have a policy, what is the reason?
 Homosexuality is not a problem
 The church / denomination is not aware of any homosexual clergy
 Denomination / church commission is still researching and discussing the matter
6. Does your church / denomination have as full (communicants / members) active homosexuals? Yes No
7. What is your personal view / conviction about homosexuality?
 a) Homosexuality is not a sin
 b) Homosexuality is a sin like any other sin
 c) I am still studying and researching it and have not yet reached a conclusion

The analysis of the responses of forty local evangelical leaders is as follows: Of the forty local Evangelical leaders, thirty-four were males and six were females. Eleven of them were in the age bracket between twenty-five and thirty years, three between thirty-one and thirty-five years, one between thirty-six and forty and twenty-five leaders were forty one years or over, the biggest number in any age group. This shows the seniority and experience of these leaders, adding credibility to their views. Twenty-nine were married, one divorced and ten were single.

The spread of the denominational representation was as follows: two from the Alliance Church of South Africa, three from the Apostolic Faith Mission, six from the Assembly of God (both assembly of God and International Assembly of God), fifteen from the Baptists (both Baptist Union and Baptist Convention), which was the biggest number of respondents, one was from the Church of England in South Africa, seven from the

Evangelical Church, four from community churches working interdenominationally and one each from the Full Gospel Church and the Nazarene Church.

The leadership positions held by these leaders were as follows: twenty-one Pastors, one Priest, six Elders and twelve 'Other', which includes Sunday School superintendents, youth leaders and Church Council chairpersons. Nineteen leaders have been in the position for between one and five years, eight between six and ten years, and thirteen have been in their position for over eleven years.

Responding to the question as to whether their denominations had a policy on ordaining practicing homosexuals, fourteen answered in the affirmative and twenty-six in the negative. The fourteen who had a policy indicated their policies are such that they do not ordain practicing homosexuals as Pastors or Priests. The twenty-six whose denominations did not have a policy, gave their reasons as follows: seventeen said they were not aware of any homosexual clergy, seven were still researching the topic and two said that homosexuality was not a problem, in the sense that there were no homosexual clergy in their congregation. In responding to the question whether they had practicing homosexuals as full members, thirty-seven answered in the negative and three in the affirmative. The three who said they had homosexuals as members qualified their answers by saying that these were active but 'seeking' homosexuals or ex-homosexuals. On a personal level, asked what their views were on homosexuality, thirty-six said they consider homosexuality as a sin just like any other sin, two said that the condition is not a sin, but that the practice of homosexuality is sinful. Only two said that they were still researching the topic.

The above data sheds some light on the attitude of some of South Africa's Evangelical leaders. It is clear that the overwhelming majority of these Evangelical

leaders consider homosexuality as a sin, rather than a valid alternative lifestyle. There was very little difference between these Evangelical leaders in South Africa and those from other African countries who responded to the same questionnaire. The leaders who responded are from all three Evangelical groupings of 'conservative', 'radical' and 'moderate'. Nevertheless, their views are in principle the same. Their attitude towards homosexual practice, particularly for Christians, is in keeping with evangelicalism. No strong evidence of the position 'rejecting punitive', but definitely the 'rejecting compassionate' attitude was displayed especially among those I interviewed. Those whose policies are based on biblical texts, use the following traditional texts namely, Romans 1:26ff, Leviticus 18:22, 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Genesis 2:18-25. These and other relevant texts will be dealt with later when presenting various arguments for and against homosexuality.

Nine of the ten respondents from outside South Africa were male and one female. None were forty-one years and older while one was in the age bracket between thirty-six and forty years old. Eight were married, one celibate and one single. The denominations represented were one each from Anglican Church, Charismatic Renewal Catholic, Church of God, Uniting Church and Reformed Church of East Africa. There were three Baptists and two Presbyterians.

The positions held by the respondents were as follows: two Bishops, six Pastors and one Priest and one 'Other' leader. The number of years these leaders have served in their positions were as follows: two had been in their positions between one and five years, two between six and ten years and five had been in leadership for more than eleven years.

Responding to the question whether their denomination had a policy on the ordination of practicing homosexuals into the ministry, four answered in the affirmative and the other six in the negative. The policy of all the above four was that active homosexuals were NOT ordained. Two based their policy on Biblical texts, one on Church Tradition and the last one on both tradition and biblical texts. Two of the common texts cited were Romans 1:27 and Leviticus 18:22.

Of the six who did not have a policy, two said it was because homosexuality is not a problem. The next two said that they were not aware of any homosexual clergy and the last two said that they were still researching the matter. On the question of having active members, seven said that they did not have active homosexuals as members. Three said they had. Of these three, one explained that the homosexuals they have as members, were those who were either seekers or ex-homosexuals. The other two did not explain.

Responding to the question as to what their personal convictions were, seven said that they regarded homosexuality as a sin like any other sin. Two said that homosexual orientation of itself is not a sin, the practice of homosexuality is sin. One was still researching the topic and had not yet reached a conclusion.

The above respondents cannot be accused of immaturity because of both their age and their experience as leaders spanning many years. The conclusion that I draw from the above information is that both policy and personal convictions show that the practice of homosexuality is regarded as sin rather than as a valid alternative lifestyle.

THE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES FROM EVANGELICAL MEMBERS

Again the complete questionnaire, this time, the one to evangelical members is quoted in

full, to clarify the subsequent analysis of the responses to the questionnaire, first by the forty local evangelicals, and then the ten evangelicals from outside South Africa.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

Please complete this questionnaire and either hand it to the appointed person or put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope and post it. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Section A

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age Group: 18-25 26-30 31-35 35-40 41+
3. Marital status: Married Divorced Widowed Single
4. Church/Denomination e.g. Anglican, Assemblies, Baptist, Methodist, etc.
5. How long have you been a member?
Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years over 11 years

Section B

1. Does your church/denomination have a policy on the ordination into the ministry of practicing / active homosexuals as Rev. /Pastor?
Yes No Not Sure
2. Does your church/denomination accept as full members, people who are active/practicing homosexuals?
Yes No
3. What are your personal views on these matters? (TICK ONLY ONE BOX UNDER 3, 4 & 5)
Active homosexuals should not be ordained as Rev./Pastor/Priest
Active homosexuals should be ordained as Rev./Pastor/Priest
4. Active homosexuals should be ordained as full members
Active homosexuals should not be accepted as full members
5. On what do you base your views/convictions?
Traditionally the church has held this view and I agree
The Bible does not condemn homosexuals
The Bible condemns homosexuality
6. If you say the Bible does or does not condemn homosexuality, please write at least two Biblical texts to support your view:
i) _____ ii) _____

There were fifty responses from Evangelical members, a 47.6% response, closer to the expected 50%. Ten from outside South Africa and forty local South African evangelicals. The forty locally based Evangelical respondents consisted of twenty two males and eighteen females. This was a younger group, as thirty of the forty respondents were under the age of thirty-five. Fourteen were in the age group bracket between eighteen and twenty-five years, eleven were between twenty-six and thirty years, five between thirty-one and thirty-five, two between thirty-six and forty years, and eight were forty-one years and older. Twenty-three were single, fifteen married, one widowed and one divorced.

The spread of their denominational representation was as follows: Alliance Church (four), Alpha and Omega (three), Apostolic Faith Mission (one), Assembly of God (four), Baptist (six), Evangelical Church (eight), three each from the Methodists, Nazarene, Grace Bible Church, and one each from Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Holiness Union, Ethiopian Catholic and Full Gospel Church. The respondents who are members of mainline churches such as Catholic and Presbyterian were approached by their evangelical friends who knew them to be evangelicals and who asked them to complete the questionnaire. The other not so well known churches like Holiness Union and Ethiopian Catholic are some of the new evangelical Churches that were started in Soweto. Of the forty respondents, two have been members for less than a year, nine between one and five years, twelve between six and ten years and seventeen have been members for a period of eleven years and more.

Responding to the question as to whether their churches had a policy on the ordination of practicing homosexuals, only two answered in the affirmative and thirty-eight did not have a policy. This is the biggest number so far recorded of members whose churches do not have a policy. An indication, perhaps, that these are the churches who in the past depended

on the government's legislated restrictive moral laws. Thirty-four said that their churches did not accept into membership any practicing homosexual, two said they did, and four did not respond to the question. Responding to what their personal views on these matters were, thirty-nine said practicing homosexuals should not be ordained into the ministry and only one was in favour of the ordination of active gays.

Twenty-five said that practicing homosexuals should not be accepted as members, thirteen were in favour of active gays being accepted as members, two did not respond. In answer to what they based their views on, two said they based them on Church tradition, twenty-eight on Biblical texts that condemn homosexuality, two said that homosexuality *per se* is not condemned, but the practice of homosexuality is condemned. The last eight based their views both on Church tradition and the Bible. The common Biblical texts mentioned were, once more, Romans 1:27, Leviticus 18:22 and Genesis 2:24.

The data gathered from Evangelical leaders and these evangelical members both inside and outside South Africa, sheds light on the subject of homosexuality. It is clear that not many churches have researched the topic and come up with a policy. Only twenty-two out of the one hundred respondents indicated that their churches had a policy. Of these twenty-two individuals, six had a common church name, a possibility of duplication, which would bring the number of churches with a policy on homosexuality down to eighteen. The interesting point is that the policy of all the twenty-two who have a policy, states that practicing homosexuals are not and should not be ordained into the ministry. Of the seventy-eight who did not have a policy, none of them indicated favouring, or having a practicing homosexual as a Pastor. Only one was in favour of active homosexuals as members. Seventy-six of the hundred respondents said they did not accept practicing homosexuals as

members, twenty-one said they had active homosexuals as members, most of whom were 'seekers' with the intention of stopping their homosexual practice, and three out of the one hundred did not respond to the question.

In summary, one can say that the overwhelming majority of those who responded to the questionnaire were not in favour of practicing homosexuals being ordained as clergy. There were, however, some who were in favour of accepting homosexuals as ordinary members if they were seeking help to discontinue being sexually active.

The ten respondents from outside South Africa were sourced at the same Conference in Kenya which the ten leaders were attending. They included three Zambians, three Zimbabweans, two Kenyans, one Indian from Madras and one British citizen. Six of these ten respondents were males and four females. There was one in each age group between eighteen and twenty-five years and twenty-six and thirty years, two between thirty-six and forty, and six were forty-one years old and above. Their marital status was as follows: two were single, one divorced and seven married. The spread of the ten Evangelical members' denominational representation was as follows: two from each of the following: Anglican Church, Assembly of God and the Baptist Church and one in each of the following: Apostolic Faith Mission, Africa Inland Church, Church of Christ and Faith Ministry churches. Two have been members for a period of between one and five years, one for a period of between six and ten years and seven for a period of eleven or more years. It is clear once more that their number of years as Christians suggests that their views are based on experience and, hopefully, biblical knowledge.

Responding to the question as to whether their denomination had a policy on the ordination of practicing homosexuals, two answered in the affirmative and eight in the negative. On

whether their church accepted as full members active or practicing homosexuals, one said 'yes', eight said 'no' and one did not respond. Responding to the question as to whether their denomination had a policy on the ordination of practicing homosexuals, two answered in the affirmative and eight in the negative. On whether their church accepted as full members active or practicing homosexuals, one said 'yes', eight said 'no' and one did not respond. Responding to the question what their personal views were regarding these matters, all ten said that practicing homosexuals should not be ordained as Pastors or Priests. Seven said active or practicing homosexuals should not be accepted as members, two said they should be accepted and one did not respond. Two based their convictions on Church tradition, and eight said that the Bible condemns homosexuality. The common Biblical texts cited were, Romans 1:27, Leviticus 18 :22 and Genesis 2:18ff.

In conclusion to the analysis of responses from the evangelical leaders and members, both inside and outside South Africa, the data is clear that the majority of these evangelicals view homosexual practice as sinful and not God ordained. Their views must be respected taking into consideration their seniority and experience.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES FROM HOMOSEXUALS

The responses from the gay community were fifty in total, a 51% response. These were divided into two groups. The one group was comprised of forty gays and lesbians who professed to be Christians, the other group consisted of ten who belonged to other faiths. The group of ten was sourced through the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE), while the first forty respondents were members of the Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church (HUMCC).

The background of the church (HUMCC), is looked at first. Then the entire questionnaire which the gays and lesbians completed is quoted in full. This is then followed by the analysis of the forty responses from these Christian gays and lesbians who were members of (HUMCC). Then follows the background of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) and this part concludes with an analysis of the responses from the gay and lesbians who were members of the NCGLE, who belonged to other faiths or no faith, but completed the same questionnaire as the Christian gays and lesbians.

HOPE AND UNITY METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church was established in 1994. This was necessitated by the insensitive way some Christian church ministers handled the issue of homosexuality and the way they treated homosexual Christians. The gay Christians felt attacked, unloved and isolated. They decided to come together in small groups to pray, discuss their problems and console one another. When the groups, which met in rented flats grew bigger, they decided to meet as a church on Sundays while continuing to meet in small groups during the week.

In 1995 they approached Rev. Thandekiso to be their pastor and he agreed. The group met in the afternoons on Sundays to allow some of the members who were still attending their churches to go to their services in the morning. On Sundays their attendance varied from twenty to thirty, and currently varies from seventy to one hundred. By April 1998 this church had eighty members.

In 1997 the church affiliated to the umbrella body for active gay Christians called The Metropolitan Community Church, an International body based in Atlanta in the United

States of America. It was then that Hope and Unity Church officially changed their name to the current Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church based in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire and hand to the person appointed to collect them or put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Section A

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age group: 18-25 26-30 31-40 41+
3. Religious affiliation: Christian Muslim Judaism Other _____
4. Sexually I prefer to be called: Gay Homosexual Lesbian or _____
5. How old were you when you discovered your sexual preference / orientation?
under 12 years 12-15 15-20 21+
6. Do other people know of your sexual orientation? (Have you come out of the closet?)
Yes Not yet
7. Are your parents supportive of your lifestyle? Yes No

Section B

1. I was brought up by : Mum & Dad Mum only Dad only
Relatives Orphanage Other
2. The dominant person at home was: Father Mother Other
3. The person I felt honestly loved me: Father Mother Father & Mother
4. The person whose love and friendship I really longed for: Father Mother
5. Were you ever sexually abused as a child? Yes No
If yes, by whom? Adult male Adult female
6. I had my first sexual experience with someone of the same sex at age:

under 12 years 12-15 15-20 21+

7. Where were you? Boarding school Prison Hostel

8. How old was your first same sex partner? 12-15 15-20 21-25 26+

9. Were you forced to engage in this sexual act? Yes No

10. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex? Yes No

11. Do you have an ongoing sexual relationship with someone of the same sex / gender?
Yes No

12. If the laws of the country changed would you marry this person? Yes No

RESPONSES FROM CHRISTIAN GAYS AND LESBIANS

I visited the HUMCC, introduced myself, explained to the pastor and members my objectives and asked them to complete the questionnaire. One member on the leadership team was assigned to collect the completed questionnaires. I was constantly in touch with this person and collected the duly completed questionnaires for analysis. Forty questionnaires were completed, that is, fifty percent of their church's membership.

The gender make-up of the forty respondents was thirty two males and eight females. The majority of this group was under the age of thirty. There were twenty- six between the ages of eighteen and twenty- five years old, eight were between twenty- six and thirty years and six between the ages of thirty-one and forty years old. There was no one above the age of forty-one years. This dominance of young people and the absence of mature older members in the church raises questions such as; Where are the over forties? Could it be that most of these young homosexuals will change and become heterosexuals when they reach the forties? Could the older homosexuals still be 'in the closet'?

The religious affiliation of all forty respondents was active Christians. Responding to the question of what they prefer to be called, five of the eight females said they prefer to be called 'lesbian', twenty-six men said they prefer to be addressed as 'gay' and five said 'homosexual'. Four did not respond to this question. Eight said that they discovered their sexual preference or orientation under the age of twelve, twenty discovered it between the ages of twelve and fifteen, ten between ages fifteen and twenty and two at twenty one and older. Responding to the question whether they have 'come out of the closet', twenty-nine answered 'yes' and nine answered in the negative. Responding to the question as to whether their parents approved of their lifestyle or whether they were supportive, twenty -one said 'yes', sixteen said 'no' and three did not respond (of whom one was an orphan). Although just over fifty percent enjoyed the support of their parents, this does not in any way mean that their lifestyle is socially acceptable, or acceptable to other Christian believers.

The questions in section B were set to further explore some of the much discussed possible causes of homosexuality. The responses to some of these questions revealed the fact that the questions in the questionnaire were not sophisticated enough to obtain clear answers. The frequently arrived at conclusion that most homosexuals are brought up by their mothers only, (single parent families) received some kind of support. Twenty said they were brought up by their mothers only and eighteen said both parents were present in their upbringing. Regarding the theory that mothers who are dominant usually influence their male children to be gay also got some corroboration because twenty-eight said the mother was the dominant person, eight said that their father was dominant, one said both parents were dominant and three marked 'other'.

Responding to the question of the person they felt honestly loved them, twenty-nine said it was the mother, three said the father, and eight said both parents loved them. These results, combined with the dominant mother responses, add to the weighting in favour of the theory that a dominant, overbearing mother may play a part in influencing the offspring to be gay. The responses to the question of whose love and friendship the respondents longed for seemed to be illogical on the part of longing for their mothers' love. Nine said they longed for father's love and friendship, four did not respond, while twenty-seven said they longed for the love of their mother. Why is it that from the twenty-nine who felt that their mother loved them, twenty seven indicate they longed for mother's love? How can one long for the love of the very person one felt loved him/her? Could it be that the love the mother expressed was more of a dominant nature and not that of friendship? These responses may be indicating that something was amiss in the relationship between child and parents which may have affected subsequent sexual identity development.

The theory that most homosexuals have in their past been sexually abused was not corroborated from these responses. Thirty-five said that they were never sexually abused as children and five said that they were sexually abused, a thirty-five to five weighting against the theory. Three of the five who were abused said that their abusers were adult males and the other two did not respond to the question as to who the perpetrator was.

In response to the question of how old the respondent was when he/she had the first same sex sexual experience, an unusual average age was noticed. Three said they had their first experience under the age of twelve, seven were between the ages of twelve and fifteen years. This is a rather early age for sexual experience, even for experimentation, especially for those who were under the age of twelve. For the seven who were between the ages of

twelve and fifteen, it is almost the same age as heterosexuals' first sexual experience or experimentation. Twenty-one were between the ages of fifteen and twenty years old and nine were twenty-one years and older.

Fourteen were in boarding school when they had their first same sex experience, two were in prison, both places of restriction showing some degree of involuntariness. Three were in a same sex hostel, three were *at home* (a category that does not appear on the questionnaire, but these respondents wrote it in themselves) and eighteen did not respond to the question. Answering the question whether the respondent was forced to engage in this sexual experience, the responses appear to be inconsistent. Thirty-nine said they were not forced and only one said he was forced. Four of the five who said that they were sexually abused said they were not forced to engage in their first same sex sexual experience.

The ages of the same sex partner reflected an almost normal pattern. Eight said their partners were between the ages of twelve and fifteen years old, fourteen were older than fifteen years, thirteen were older than twenty-one years and four were older than twenty-six. Only one respondent did not respond to this question. Twenty said that they have had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex while twenty said they so far had not yet had that experience. This is a fifty percent weighting in favour of the theory that not all homosexuals claim to be exclusively homosexual. The possibility of some of the present homosexuals later turning to heterosexual relations permanently, should not be ruled out.

Thirty-five had an ongoing sexual relationship with someone of the same sex and five did not. Responding to the question whether they would marry their partners if the laws of the country changed, thirty-eight answered 'yes' and two answered in the negative. Some of the thirty-eight positive responses cast a shadow of doubt as to the reliability of these

answers in that only thirty-five said they had an ongoing sexual relationship with someone of the same sex. Why is it that there is now an additional three who would marry this person that they did not have as a partner?

NATIONAL COALITION FOR GAY AND LESBIAN EQUALITY

The National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality of South Africa was established in December 1994. Before this time, many Gays and Lesbians were still 'in the closet'. The new Constitution of South Africa is said to be the first in the world which protects Lesbians and Gays and transgendered people against discrimination.

They claim to be an association of more than seventy-four gay / bisexual and transgendered organisations in the country. Individual membership is said to be several thousands. Their objective is to work for legal and social equality for their members. This includes law reform lobbying, litigation / advocacy and employment equity. From the time they came 'out of the closet', they say they have had among others the following victories... "the Gauteng Schools Act explicitly outlaws sexual orientation discrimination; The Department of Welfare has recognized that lesbian and gay youth are a vulnerable group and explicitly supports protection for lesbians, gays and bisexuals" (NCGLE pamphlet 1998). One member of this organization who serves on the staff was appointed to distribute my questionnaire and collect them from individual members after they had completed them. These completed questionnaires were then collected for analysis.

RESPONSES FROM GAYS AND LESBIANS OF OTHER FAITHS

Of the ten respondents, seven were male and three were female. Their age group spread was: six were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years old, two between twenty-six and thirty years old and one each between thirty-one and forty years, and forty one and over. The religious affiliation of this group was: one Muslim, one Jew, two no religion and six from a background of parents who have some Christian leanings but who are personally not Christians.

Four of the male respondents stated that they would like to be referred to as gay, three as homosexuals and the three females would like to be called lesbians. Responding to the question as to how old they were when they discovered their sexual preference or orientation, five were between the ages of twelve and fifteen years, four between fifteen and twenty years and one was above twenty-one. Eight were 'out of the closet' and two were not yet 'out'. Seven of those who publicly confessed their sexual preference said that their parents were supportive and approved of their lifestyle. The other three said they did not have that approval or support from their parents.

In section B as discussed above, the questions were set in order to solicit answers that may shed light on causation including the hypothesis that most homosexuals come from single parent families. From this small group of ten, seven were brought up by both parents, while only three were brought up by their mothers alone.

The second hypothesis regarding homosexual causality states that most homosexuals come from families where the mother is dominant and the father either passive or absent. From this group of ten, seven said that the mother at home was the dominant one. Three said the

father was dominant. Concerning the love of parents, eight said that they felt that it was the mother who loved them and two said both parents loved them. Concerning the issue of dominance and love, it appears that the mother in this case was both loving and domineering, a rare combination. If the above are regarded as contributing factors on homosexual causality, could it be that the mother's love played such an important role that it caused the male to become effeminate that he later acted the part of the loving mother? If this was the case, it would be in agreement with what Lawrence Hatterer in D. Williams' book says regarding contemporary views of homosexual causality.

The first perspectives on origins come from the family. The homosexual person may have a strong fixation toward his mother along with the inability to leave her. This causes over-identification with her and her feminine, passive role. There may also be a negative effect on the homosexual person's relationship to women because of his mother's dominant, binding, seductive, overprotective, passive-aggressive controlling or possessive behaviour (Hatterer in Williams 1978:25).

Answering the questions on whose love the respondent longed for, six said they longed for their mother's love. This is in contrast to the eight who said they felt their mother loved them. How can one long for the love of the very person one feels loves him / her? Four said they longed for the love and friendship of their father.

Responding to the question regarding the age at which one had the first sexual experience, three said they had it between the ages of twelve and fifteen years. Six had their first sexual encounter with someone of the same sex at the age of between fifteen and twenty and only one at the age of twenty-one years and above.

The follow-up question of 'locality', as to where one was when this first encounter took place, did not have a good response. Only four out of the ten responded. All four of them were at boarding school. The other six did not respond. One of the reasons for the poor

response to this question could be accounted for by the fact, indicated earlier, that the questionnaire did not have the category of *home* as an option. The ages of their same sex partners were as follows: one was between twelve and fifteen years old, seven between fifteen and twenty and one each at twenty-one plus and twenty-six plus. The next question asked was to determine whether the respondents were forced to engage in this first same sex sexual encounter. All ten responded in the negative. This means they all ventured into this experience willingly.

The next question was asked to determine if the respondents were 'exclusive homosexuals', that is, those who have never had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex. To this question, eight said that they have never had a heterosexual experience and two said that they did have sex with someone of the opposite sex. Eight said that they had an ongoing sexual relationship with someone of the same sex and two said they did not have it.

The last question, to determine what percentage would marry their same-sex partner if the laws of the country were to change, had a nine to one weighting in favour of marriage, a ninety percent for homosexual marriage against ten percent. Only one person did not respond to the question. It is important to note that the above is not to be taken or interpreted as a norm. We have seen in the section of the incidence of homosexuality that many homosexuals are promiscuous, they do not as a male have stable or life-long relationships.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The methodology used in the discussion of this topic was explained at the beginning of this chapter. This included the explanation of how the questionnaire was drawn up, the three groups namely evangelical leaders, members and homosexuals were sourced, for the

completion of the questionnaires and how the field study was done to gather the necessary data for analysis. Some personal background information was also supplied showing that the topic is being addressed from an evangelical perspective.

The analysis of responses from evangelical leaders showed that most of the churches that these leaders represented did not have a policy regarding homosexual practice or concerning the ordination of practicing homosexuals into the priesthood or as ministers. It further showed that although they did not have a policy, they did not ordain any practicing homosexuals. The analysis further showed that these leaders personally regarded homosexual practice as sin, just like any other sexual sin. The biblical texts that were cited are the same texts that are usually quoted in the debate about homosexuality.

The responses from evangelical members did not differ too much from those of the leaders. A few members said they would accept practicing homosexuals as seekers, that is, those who acknowledge the wrongness of the practice and need the church's help to stop practicing as homosexuals. Overall their responses were similar to those of the leaders, that is, they would not support the ordination of practicing homosexuals to serve as priests or pastors. They also regarded homosexual practice as sin, the same as any other sin. For those whose churches did not have a policy, they based their non-acceptance of homosexual practice on the same biblical texts as the evangelical leaders.

The analysis of the responses from the gays and lesbians also yielded a few interesting facts. Most of them were brought up by their mothers and the majority said that the person who was dominant at home was their mother. The hypothesis that states that family conditions such as these do contribute to causation of homosexual behaviour was further corroborated. About half of the respondents who said they were Christians said that they have had sexual

intercourse with someone of the opposite sex, something that means they are not exclusive homosexuals, and so the chances of them later reverting to heterosexual relations are not to be ruled out. It was also interesting to note the absence of the over forties among these homosexuals. In short, the questionnaires were helpful in terms of this dissertation in that they gave information concerning the views of evangelical leaders and members, as well as practicing homosexuals, concerning homosexuality.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BIBLE AND HOMOSEXUALITY

In this chapter we look at the two sides of the issue of homosexuality. We look at the perspective of the liberals who argue for a partial or total acceptance of homosexuality, and the evangelical perspective of rejecting homosexual practice for Christians. These two opposing views are discussed in terms of how the two groups approach the Bible, followed by how the groups interpret Old Testament and New Testament texts. It is here appropriate to define the term *liberal*. The term has a wide range of meanings. In theological terms, one finds liberal Protestantism, Evangelicalism and so on. For our needs, however, a few definitions should suffice. This is what Ferdinand Deist says concerning the meaning of liberalism:

In theology, the idea that all people are entitled to (rationally) question traditional beliefs and to arrive at their own religious convictions without prescription by ecclesiastical authorities (Deist 1984:143).

For the historical meaning, *Liberalism* is defined as follows:

The word, which came into use early in the 19th century, has been defined as the holding of liberal opinions in politics or theology: In theology, it has been used with many different shades of meaning. If taken to mean freedom from bigotry and readiness to welcome new ideas or proposals for reform, it is a characteristic which many people will readily profess, but in itself it gives no indication of their beliefs or aspirations...Liberal Protestantism, on the other hand developed into an anti-dogmatic and humanitarian reconstruction of the Christian faith which at one time appeared to be gaining ground in nearly all the protestant churches. The word is sometimes also used of the belief in secular or anthropocentric humanism which has its origins in the Renaissance and which is quite inconsistent with Biblical and dogmatic orthodoxy (Cross 1974:821).

In explaining Liberal Protestantism, Irving Hexham agrees mostly with what scholars say, and has an interesting addition about its character saying:

It was characterised by... (2) a confidence in the power of human REASON guided by experience; (3) a belief in FREEDOM (4) a belief in the social nature of human existence: (5) FAITH in the benevolence of God and the goodness of creation (Hexham 1993:136).

APPROACHES TO THE BIBLE - LIBERAL AND EVANGELICAL VIEWS

Questions are always being asked about the Bible. Is it God's Word, does it contain God's plan for our life and does the Bible reveal God's patterns of moral behaviour? John Oswalt addresses these questions regarding people's attitude to the Bible and says that there are three answers to these questions, namely, yes; no; and yes, but. He goes on to explain these three answers in the following way;

On the negative side, it is argued that the Bible is on exactly the same level as the holy books of other religions: the result of man's search for God. Thus, its pronouncements on ethics are no more binding than those of the Hindu Rig-Veda, for example.

The affirmative side holds that the Bible both records and is God's self-revelation in and through the historical experience of the Hebrew people.

The third alternative is the one heard most frequently today. I have called it the 'yes, but' response. This view affirms that God has revealed Himself to humanity but denies that the Bible is itself the revelation of God. Rather, the Bible is a human witness to, and interpretation of, whatever means God has chosen by which to reveal Himself. This means that only the broadest, most general principles may be said to derive from God. Specific statements are attributed to men (Oswalt in Keysor 1979:19-20).

Evangelicals adopt the affirmative, answering with a 'yes'. We believe that the Bible is God's word and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (see TEASA statement of faith in chapter one). This is the approach that is adopted in this dissertation.

The first and third alternatives are adopted by most liberals. The third alternative is used mostly when discussing this issue of homosexuality. Steve de Gruchy in his review

article of the book *Homosexuality and World Religions* has this to say with regard to the Bible and homosexuality;

A contextual and liberatory reading of the Bible will make us question the assumptions and mindset of the authors of scripture. If it is the case that these authors considered heterosexuality to be the only 'normal' human sexual orientation, or that they knew of only one type of homosexual relationship (such as cult prostitution or gang rape) then we must question whether the ethical position they arrived at can still guide the church today in dealing with (for example) adults in an egalitarian and loving relationship (same-sex) (de Gruchy 1995:90).

This view and attitude is not an isolated one held by de Gruchy only. There are other liberal thinkers, like John Suggit, who says the following when talking about the basis of the church's teaching;

In spite of its importance, the evidence of scripture is only one of the factors involved in determining the Christian attitude to this and other ethical issues. The wide divergency in methods of interpreting scripture today should remind us that the Bible was never meant to be a legal code for Christians as the Koran is for Moslems (Suggit in Hulley *et al* 1996:234).

It is this approach to the Bible by some liberals, and other combined approaches of not fully accepting the Bible's guidance and authority, which mark the difference between liberals and evangelicals. For a clearer picture of this difference, we now turn to Old and New Testament texts to see what these texts have to say on the acceptability or rejection of homosexual practice as an alternative lifestyle, especially for Christians.

OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS - LIBERAL AND EVANGELICAL VIEWS

There are several passages in the Bible regarding homosexual practice or some aspect of homosexuality. The most frequently quoted ones from both a liberal and evangelical perspective are here discussed. The first two texts are Genesis 19:1-14 and Judges 19:16-30. These two incidents are similar, although the end result was different. From a liberal

perspective this is what is said about the story of Sodom and its destruction by John Boswell:

On the basis of the text alone, there would seem to be four inferences one could make about the destruction of Sodom. (1) The Sodomites were destroyed for the general wickedness which had prompted the Lord to send angels to the city to investigate in the first place; (2) the city was destroyed because the people of Sodom had tried to rape the angels; (3) the city was destroyed because the men of Sodom had tried to engage in homosexual intercourse with the angels (note that this is not the same as (2): rape and homosexual intercourse are separably punishable offences in Jewish law); (4) the city was destroyed for inhospitable treatment of visitors sent from the Lord (Boswell 1980:93).

Boswell goes on to say that interpretation (2) above, has been ignored by biblical scholars both ancient and modern. He says that interpretation (4) has been favoured since 1955 by modern scholars. It was Sherwin Bailey who started this debate of arguing for the reason of inhospitality rather than homosexual practice for the destruction of Sodom. There are therefore two arguments that are posed against the above texts being interpreted to mean they prohibit homosexual acts. The first argument says that the word 'know' in Genesis 19 does not have sexual connotations because in the hundreds of instances where it is used, it does not always mean to have sex. Oswalt says;

Bailey points out that the word *know* has sexual reference only 14 times out of a total of 943 occurrences. Therefore, he suggests, the odds are against its having a sexual reference here (Oswalt in Keysor 1979:73).

Scholars have refuted this view of Bailey on the basis that in the context of the verse and chapter, it does have a sexual meaning even if in other contexts it does not mean to have sex. The example that is given by evangelicals to substantiate their claim is in Genesis 19:8 where Lot offers his daughters who have not *known* a man, in the place of his visitors. Oswalt says;

First of all, notice that both passages use the word *know* with unmistakable sexual connotations. Genesis 19:8 speaks of 'daughters

who have not *known* a man' and Judges 19:25 says, 'They *knew* her and abused her all night.' The context is clearly sexual and suggests strongly that when the inhabitants demanded to '*know*' the visitors, they were speaking in sexual terms (Oswalt in Keysor 1979:73).

Richard Lovelace commenting on the same passage says the following;

Lot's offer of his daughters as sexual surrogates shows clearly that the men of Sodom did not simply want to become acquainted with the angelic visitors socially, and indicates that this passage is one of those in which '*yadha*' is used with the meaning of sexual knowledge (Lovelace 1978:100).

The second argument that is given against the above texts disapproving homosexual acts is this. The passage is said to be condemning homosexual rape and not homosexual acts between two consenting adults. Suggit says;

The two passages most frequently quoted regarding homosexuality (Genesis 19:1-14 and Judges 19:16-30) are concerned not with homosexual intercourse by consent, but with homosexual rape. What is condemned is the abominable treatment of guests who would have expected to receive the hospitality customarily offered in early Semitic societies (Suggit 1996:231).

James Hanigan also has the same view on this passage concerning the sin of Sodom and says;

...what is condemned as sinful in the story is not simply homosexuality in general or even homosexual acts as such, but the intent to commit homosexual rape in the context of an abuse of hospitality against a background of general depravity and disregard for God (Hanigan 1988:38).

Most probably the rape interpretation of the passage could have been one of the reasons for the destruction of Sodom, but not in isolation from the homosexual act. It is true that rape in and of itself is wrong but in this passage it is connected to homosexuality. When taking the two arguments and putting them side by side, Bailey is saying in the first statement that the passage does not talk about sexual acts because *know* does not mean to have sex. Next we see Suggit who in the second argument agrees that *know* means to have sex, but he

isolates the sex act from homosexual consent and sees rape as the main reason for the judgement of Sodom

The next passage is Leviticus 18:1-25 which deals with unlawful sexual relations. We read in this passage of all sorts of unacceptable sexual relations such as adultery, incest, bestiality and homosexuality. In chapter 20 we read of the punishment for disobeying God and practicing the above. The passages specifically addressing homosexuality 18:22 and 20:37 reads as follows;

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination; [and] If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is on them.

On this text the liberal argues that somehow this was prohibited because it was practiced by idolatrous cultures. Others say that these prohibitions were culture bound, they no longer affect the modern Christian who does not worship idols. Suggit commenting on this passage says;

The law of Holiness (Lev.17-27) condemns sodomy and connects it with bestiality (18:22-23; 20:13-16). The adoption of this post-exilic position may well have been due to the close link between homosexuality and the heathen shrines. The regulations of the law of Holiness are what sociologists call 'boundary markers'. They indicate the practices which had to be observed if Israelites were truly to be seen, and were to see themselves as the people of the Lord....Not surprisingly, Leviticus was rarely cited by early authors as evidence for Christian behaviour, for which its regulations are scarcely relevant (Suggit in Hulley *et al* 1996:232).

In the above text, it is not only homosexuality that is singled out as unlawful and unacceptable. Incest, adultery and bestiality are also some of the sexual acts of which God does not approve. Adultery and homosexuality are condemned again in the New Testament and thus confirms this Old Testament view regarding homosexuality. Evangelicals do not

agree with the view that all these prohibitions are culture bound or time bound. In response to these arguments, Lovelace says the following;

The third argument against the relevance of these passages which argues that Christians are free from the Law, overlooks the fact that Christians have always recognised that the body of material in Exodus 20-40, Leviticus, and the rest of pentateuchal legislation (the ten commandments) does contain material which is of continuing ethical significance for Christians, including the ten commandments and a valuable deposit of social legislation (Lovelace 1978:89).

What reason do those who say homosexuality was prohibited simply because it was practiced by idolatrous nations give for the prohibition of incest, adultery and bestiality?

Within Christian morality it is a foregone conclusion that these are not permissible even to the point of not needing to be mentioned or repeated. Don Williams, writing from an evangelical perspective, says:

The Levitical code at this point is not some ancient, irrelevant law reflecting Israelite culture. It is not to be compared with other time-bound laws prohibiting the eating of pork or rabbit. It is the legal expression of God's will in creation and is therefore grounded in the fundamental assumptions of Biblical faith. To break this law is to revert to chaos. To keep this law is to live in harmony with God's will. There is no other option (Williams 1978:67).

The last Old Testament text to be examined is mentioned by Suggit saying;

Approval of erotic homosexual relations seems to be given by the story of David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-4 and especially 2 Samuel 1:26) (Suggit in Hulley *et al* 1996:232).

The text in question reads as follows;

I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother, you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women (2 Samuel 1:26).

I personally believe and understand the above text to be referring to a close, but not sexual friendship between two men. There is no mention of a sexual relationship between these two men. Theirs was a 'platonic' relationship. This view is held by many Christians based

on the fact that the Bible does not mention a sexual relationship between these men. The mention of love more wonderful than that of women can mean anything other than sex. But those who argue for homosexuality choose to read the erotic homosexual relations into this friendship so that they can argue their case. Furthermore, these people fail to explain why, if David and Jonathan were homosexuals, they both married and had families? They both fathered children. We do not read much about Jonathan's family, but we read of David's many children one of whom was Solomon, who succeeded David as king. On Jonathan's side we read of his son Mephibosheth who was the only survivor in the household of the late king Saul and was crippled in both legs (2 Samuel 9:1-11). David sought him out, treated him well, inviting him to dine with the king from that day onwards, showing him God's kindness for the sake of his father Jonathan. Furthermore, the protagonists of homosexuality do not explain why God would accept the practice of homosexuality by his chosen leader David, if the Israelites in the 'Holiness Code' were commanded not to do the awful things that other neighbouring nations in Canaan were doing, one of which was the practice of homosexuality. Also, one of the most notorious incidents of adultery was that of David and Bathsheba, hardly the action of a homosexual.

Although there are dissenting voices on the part of those commentators who are pro-homosexual practice, it has been and still is held by evangelicals that the Old Testament texts do speak against homosexual practice. Evangelicals uphold the importance of the whole Bible. The common-sense argument is that if the Old Testament was not meant for Christians as a guide, it would have been discarded and only the New Testament would have been used. Jesus himself said that he did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it, meaning that lessons in the Old Testament are valid for his followers, Christians.

NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS-LIBERAL AND EVANGELICAL VIEWS

There are several texts in the New Testament that address the topic of homosexuality but only a few will be discussed here. We now look at Romans 1:26-27; 1 Cor.6:9 and 1 Tim.1:10. Romans 1: 26-27 reads as follows:

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lust. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

There are three arguments among others surrounding this passage. The first one has to do with the question of what Paul meant by nature/natural. The second argument deals with the question of idolatry and the last one deals with the holiness code.

The first argument asks what Paul meant by nature/natural? John Boswell, one of the proponents of homosexual practice has this to say about the passage:

It is not clear that Paul distinguished in his thoughts or writings between gay persons (in the sense of permanent sexual preference) and heterosexuals who simply engaged in periodic homosexual behaviour. It is in fact unlikely that many Jews of his day recognized such a distinction, but it is quite apparent that whether or not he was aware of their existence - Paul did not discuss gay persons but only homosexual acts committed by heterosexual persons...Nature in Rom.1:26 then, should be understood as the personal nature of the pagans in question (Boswell 1980:110-111).

Boswell covers the first two arguments. He says that Paul is here talking against those heterosexuals who were experimenting with homosexual sex, which is against their given heterosexual nature; Paul was not speaking against homosexuals whose given nature is homosexuality. But Paul was not addressing an individual's nature, he is talking about an individual reacting against his/her God given nature. Lovelace says;

Against nature, simply means against God's intention for human sexual

behaviour which is plainly visible in nature, in the complementary function of male and female sexual organs and temperaments (Lovelace 1980:92).

Stott comments on the passage and says that the word nature in Romans 1 is the word, *phusis* the same word used in creation meaning the nature of God's created order. He succinctly says;

What Paul was condemning, therefore was not the perverted behaviour of heterosexual people who were acting against their nature, but any human behaviour that is against Nature, God's created order (Stott 1985:26).

This evangelical view is again mentioned by Cassidy, also in response to liberal arguments.

He says the following, echoing an evangelical perspective;

In Romans 1 he takes this high ground of the creation ordinance and nature and the constituted order of things, and condemns homosexual practice as changing the natural use (of sex) to one against nature (Cassidy 1998:2).

The second argument, that of idolatry is mentioned by Boswell saying Paul was speaking against the pagans. This view states that Paul was against homosexual sex practiced in an idolatrous way. He was against homosexual practice in a cult setting, as this was not allowed. Paul was, according to evangelicals, talking about the practice itself. As an Old Testament scholar Paul was well aware of the sexual prohibitions God had commanded his people to heed. Lovelace says;

The disorders in verses 24-32 are not wrong because they issue from idolatry, they are wrong in and of themselves...(Lovelace 1978:93).

The third argument takes us back to the holiness code which homosexual proponents say is outdated and we as Christians are no longer bound by it. They claim that Christ did away with the law and gave us love and we now operate under grace, and not the holiness code. So to the liberal, love is the deciding factor.

The next argument posed by those in favour of homosexual relationships claims that Biblically, most of those who wrote in opposition to it were unaware of modern day homosexuality which is based on love. Some go to the extent of saying that Paul in particular was writing against certain acts of homosexuality and not homosexuality as a whole. Responding to the above, Nelson says:

In addition, in this passage we are given a description of homosexual lust (consumed with passion for one another), but hardly an account of interpersonal same sex love - about which Paul does not speak (Nelson in Batchelor 1980:191).

The word 'passion' which Nelson uses, or lust for one another, implies mutuality. There is no rape implied here. It simply means that the gay men referred to in this passage together *lust* or have passion for one another. Passion on its own should not be regarded or seen in a negative way. I believe a woman can love her husband with passion, or a man can love his wife with passion and this would be commendable. I further could not see how Paul could be interpreted as referring only to *lust* in homosexuality and not homosexuality itself, as if the Bible somewhere sanctions homosexuality minus *lust*. There is no mention in the New Testament of homosexual love as practiced today or then, in a positive light, commended or praised in whatever form. A far-fetched example is cited by Vasey of homosexual love in the New Testament. Vasey sees homosexual love in the friendship between Jesus and John the disciple. This I also see as an overstatement of a point very close to blasphemy. He talks about their friendship as an 'intimate' friendship. I think the word intimate is not appropriately used for the friendship which Jesus had with his disciples which was pure, above board and platonic. This is the way Vasey compares the friendship of Jesus with his disciples and the love of homosexuals saying:

However, the natural reading of these texts with their detailed portrayal of great intimacy between two unmarried men (Jesus & John) provides a natural echo with the love that many gay people

share (Vasey 1995:123).

Vasey continues in this neo-blasphemous tone of likening Jesus' relationship with homosexuality as he says this:

The Gospel's portrayal of Jesus capacity for friendship leads to a devotion to Jesus the friend which is sometimes almost homo-erotic in tone-as in Samuel Crossman's hymn 'My song is love unknown'. This emerges starkly in a beautiful poem on a prayer by Thomas O'Neal. *Jesus forgive me for these nights spent in the arms of the other boy I love* (Vasey 1995 :123-124).

What is it that Vasey sees as homo-erotic in the friendship of Jesus and his disciples? What is it that he sees as beautiful in a poem that depicts pre-marital sex if the person expressing the above feelings and asking for forgiveness is a female? What is so beautiful in a poem that depicts and promotes casual sex or promiscuity if the lover is male and referring to his lover who in this case is a boy? Does this not damage the case for so-called loving same sex relations that can be as expressive as heterosexual monogamous marriages? The person here talks about the 'other' boy as if there is another known boy, apart from this other boy. This brings us to the point of consenting adults. What is beautiful about a man who has the same sex relationship with a boy and not an adult? Is this not a case of pederasty? In his attempt to depict homosexuality as good, I see Vasey going to the extreme by equating Jesus' friendship with homosexual love and damaging the cause which he was trying to defend, by quoting a relationship between a man and a boy, and seeing it as beautiful.

David Field discusses the issue of love critically from an evangelical perspective. Field concludes his argument by saying the following:

Despite the stress that Jesus laid on the necessity of a loving motive, he nowhere taught that a motive of love can justify anything. He never gave his disciples reason to believe that, because of his love teaching, they could turn a blind eye on the Old Testament laws which labelled some things as bad in themselves, whatever the motive (Field 1980:18).

To the above I would personally like to add the following comments. I again appeal to the sense of consistency. If the loving motive is to be regarded as the criterion for the acceptance of homosexuality, then apply it to all the others as well. In other words, if a man and a woman meet and fall in love with each other and are prepared to give of themselves selflessly in a sexual relationship, according to this argument even an adulterous relationship would be valid and justifiable. Then the same should go for heterosexual people who deeply love each other and have a loving motive with a strong relationship which is sexual even if they are mother and son. This I believe would not be acceptable to many proponents of homosexuality.

The love aspect can be summarized as follows. Love as *Agape* expresses the nature of God's love, *Eros* for husband and wife and *Phileo* for friends. It is therefore wrong to express the erotic love reserved for husband and wife outside of marriage or outside heterosexuality. God has set a boundary for intimate sexual relations and the boundary is heterosexual monogamous marriage. Any deviation from the above is unacceptable, be it incest, adultery, bestiality or homosexuality. Again it must be noted that homosexuality is not singled out but is part of the many unacceptable sexual practices. Lovelace says:

So it is clear that homosexual behaviour is not condemned in Scripture simply as an item in a list of cultural taboos which have no continuing significance for Christians. There are evident reasons why homosexual practice is biblically wrong. The image of woman, taken from man's flesh and becoming one flesh again with him in sexual union and marriage, is meaningless when applied to homosexual relations (Lovelace 1980:105).

The last two texts of the New Testament to be examined from a liberal and evangelical point of view, are the following: 1 Cor.6:9-10 and 1 Tim1:10

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves

nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

..for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine (1 Tim.1:10).

The two texts contain lists of people who commit sins. The first is that of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God because of the stated offenses. The second list in Timothy is a list of unrighteous people for whom the law was made and not for the righteous, according to Paul. The argument in both texts is about the meaning of the words used, whether these words are correctly translated to mean homosexual or not. The two words in question are *malakos* and *arsenokoites*. Boswell argues thus:

The first of the two, *malakos* (basically, 'soft') is extremely common Greek word...meaning sick, liquid, cowardly, weak willed, gentle.. The word is never used in Greek to designate gay people as a group or even in reference to homosexual acts generically...The second word *arsenokoitai* is quite rare, and its application to homosexuality in particular is more understandable. The best evidence, however suggests very strongly that it did not connote homosexuality to Paul or his contemporaries but meant 'male prostitute' until well into the fourth century after which it became confused with a variety of words for disapproved sexual activity and was often equated with homosexuality (Boswell 1978:106-107).

Boswell does not seem to define the words in the context of the verses and renders them a bit ambiguous in meaning. However evangelical scholars define these words in the context of the whole story and text as follows;

The two Greek words *malakoi* and *arsenakoitai* should not be combined, however, since they have precise meanings. The first is literally 'soft to the touch', and metaphorically, among the Greeks, it meant males (not necessarily boys) who played the passive role in homosexual intercourse. The second literally means 'male in a bed' and the Greeks used this expression to describe the one who played the active role (Stott 1985:24).

Commenting on the same terms and particularly to what Boswell says, Greenlee from an evangelical scholarly perspective says this:

The principal lexical item concerning same-sex activities is *arsenokoites* (in older Greek, *arrenokoites*). This word is found in the Sibylline Oracles and *Diogenes Laertius* which means it is as old as the New Testament. It therefore reflects no credit on the objective scholarship of a clergyman such as John Boswell who has stated that the word homosexual was not coined until the 1880's and that ancient people did not distinguish between homosexual and heterosexual persons.

The second word...*malakos*. The basic meaning of this word is 'soft'...The same lexicon gives the *malakos* the further meaning of 'soft' 'effeminate' especially of *catamites*, the term *catamite* being defined as 'men and boys who allow themselves to be misused sexually' (Greenlee in Keysor 1979:97-98 and 102).

It is clear from the above that while liberals try to argue for the acceptance of homosexual practices on the basis of their Scriptural interpretation, evangelical scholars interpret the same texts in a more in-depth way to show that homosexual practices were not acceptable, and should not be accepted now as an alternative Christian sexual expression. Field and Lovelace sum up this section of New Testament texts in the following way;

Viewed in it's theological context, then, the New Testament's teaching on homosexuality takes on an impressive unity...So, despite the very important modern distinction dividing inverts from perverts, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the New Testament puts a theological veto on all homosexual behaviour however well motivated it may be (Field 1980:17).

Lovelace comes to the following conclusion, also in line with what evangelicals believe.

This survey of texts specifically related to homosexuality has shown that there is no warrant in scripture for any form of homosexual behaviour to be considered a legitimate expression of the will of God. Nothing speaks for this, and everything speaks against it (Lovelace 1980:102).

In this chapter we have seen how some liberals view and interpret the Bible, and how evangelicals view and interpret the Bible. Whereas liberals sometimes do not see the Bible as being important in some matters, particularly this issue of homosexual practice, the evangelicals uphold the importance of the Bible.

We saw that the texts that speak about homosexual practice never address it in a favourable way. In response to this, the liberals argue that the prohibitions were meant for people of that age because their homosexual practice involved idolatry, whereas today, they claim there is no idolatry involved and above all, today the supreme law is love, and modern homosexuals base their relationships on love. Evangelicals, on the other hand, argue from an ethical point of deontology citing the wrongness of homosexuality in itself and especially that the biblical texts rejects homosexual practice.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EVANGELICAL VIEW OF HOMOSEXUALITY

In this chapter we look at the attitude of evangelicals towards homosexuality with reference to creation, sexuality and marriage. We look at the contemporary arguments in support of homosexuality and discuss these critically from an ethical point of view. We then suggest a way forward for evangelicals on this topic of homosexuality.

CREATION, SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

In the first book of the Bible, namely Genesis, we read of the creation of the world and all that is in it. All that God had created He pronounced to be *good*. Within all of creation God made human beings and commanded them to multiply and to rule the earth and all that is in it. After God had made human beings, all He had made was now no longer just *good* but *very good*.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God saw all that he had made and it was very good...(Genesis 1:27:31a).

Evangelicals see the creation of human beings as the pinnacle of God's creation. From this text one can see that there are only two sexes created, male and female and nothing in between. They are made for each other and are to express their sexuality as male and female and to procreate.

In the second chapter of Genesis we find an elaboration of creation, particularly in relation to human beings and how they were to conduct themselves. Some of the verses read as follows;

The Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him...Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man....For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be

united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (Gen.2:18,22;24).

Evangelicals believe that it is on these texts about creation that human sexuality stands. Heterosexuality or homosexuality either stands or falls on this crux of human sexuality and relationships. We see the complementarity and relational aspects of male and female with each other. It is interesting to note that to meet the man's loneliness, God made him a woman as a companion. Not only as a companion but gave her to him as his wife. This is the praxis for Christian marriage, heterosexual monogamous marriage within which sexual intercourse is to be enjoyed. Procreation is also possible within marriage, according to God's design. Michael Cassidy combines sexuality, creation and marriage together when discussing homosexuality and says:

This is the divine plan for marriage and sexuality established as a fundamental and basic creation ordinance (Cassidy 1998:2).

Natural procreation is possible in heterosexual sexual intercourse but it is not possible within homosexual genital sex. Homosexual unions lack the potential for obeying the command of God to be fruitful and multiply. Although the notion of enjoying sex within heterosexual marriage was not seen as God's intention by certain early Church and medieval theologians, except in the process of procreation, Protestantism corrected that view. Paul when advising the Christians in Corinth on marriage, said to married couples:

Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (1Cor.7:5).

It is interesting to note here again that in responding to questions about marriage, Paul does not advise the Christians at Corinth to engage in responsible homosexual unions. Had it (homosexuality) been an option apart from being misused by pagans in an idolatrous way,

this is the place where Paul would have advocated it, but he does not. Commenting on sex and heterosexual monogamous marriage in the Bible, Stott says;

In order to become one flesh, however, and experience this sacred mystery, certain preliminaries are necessary, which are constituent parts of marriage, "Therefore":

"a man" (the singular indicates that marriage is an exclusive union between two individuals)

"shall leave his father and mother" (a public social occasion is in view)

"and cleave to his wife" (marriage is a loving, cleaving commitment or covenant, which is heterosexual and permanent)

"and they will become one flesh" (for marriage must be consummated in sexual intercourse, which is a sign and seal of the marriage covenant, and over which no shadow of shame or embarrassment had yet been cast)

(Stott 1984:311).

From these four 'preliminaries' mentioned by Stott, a few comments are necessary in trying to compare heterosexual marriage and homosexual unions. The leaving of parents by the man may be possible by both heterosexual male as well as the homosexual. The public intent may not always be possible for the homosexual since society generally does not recognize and the church does not accept homosexual unions as God ordained. The social occasion may not be what it was intended to be. Recently, we saw on our electronic media, a report of two gay men who were *married* by an Anglican clergyman. This was on the Felicia Mabuza-Suttle Show of Sunday 18 October 1998. The *marriage* did not take place in the church, it happened in a private house according to the report by the gay man who introduced his partner who was also present. Clips of this event were shown with the other gay man dressed as a woman in a white wedding gown. This was the first open homosexual '*marriage*' in South Africa in which an ordained minister officiated. The interesting part for me is, when it came to the traditional announcement of; 'I now pronounce you man and wife' and also 'you may now kiss the bride', what did the minister say seeing that both of them were men?

The next point to make in connection with what Stott has mentioned, is the part of 'cleave to his wife'. In homosexual unions it is not appropriate. There is no wife as both are men and in the case of lesbians there would be no male as both would be women. The last point regards the becoming one flesh. As Stott explains that marriage must, after the wedding, be consummated in sexual intercourse, this would not be possible for the homosexuals. Becoming one flesh through sexual intercourse is and will not be the same as in homosexual intercourse. The term sexual intercourse has in mind male and female genitalia coming into play, and not male and male or female and female genitalia. Sexual intercourse is therefore not to be equated as the same as homosexual genital sex. We are here not talking about sex and the means to reach sexual climax (orgasm), for this can be done either by individual or mutual masturbation. We are here talking about the coming together of a man and his wife, sexually becoming one flesh! This would be foreign to homosexual unions as there is no complementarity of the sexes. Thus God ordained heterosexual monogamous marriage cannot be the same as homosexual partnerships. Homosexual unions are not to be equated to, nor paralleled with heterosexual marriage from an evangelical point of view.

On Sunday the fifth of April 1998 on SABC TV3, something quite historic happened. On the program called World Watch it was announced that the Netherlands has become one of the countries that recognizes gay and lesbian marriages. Homosexuals who live in the Netherlands and get married, will enjoy the same rights and privileges as married heterosexuals. The only law that has not been altered is the one governing adoption. Gays and lesbians will not be allowed to adopt children even if they may be legally married. The legislation against adoption of children by gays and lesbians, is in keeping with most Western countries. This move in the Netherlands does not affect evangelicals who continue

to see the only acceptable union as that between man and woman as Stott concludes his discussion on this matter saying:

Scripture envisages no other kind of marriage or sexual intercourse, for God provided no alternative. Christians should not therefore single out homosexual intercourse for special condemnation (Stott 1984:311).

Talking about marriage, we need to be careful that we do not unnecessarily offend those who are not married or not yet married. I am here referring to the error of the Catholics in the past when they elevated celibacy seeing it as superior to marriage, thus creating different classes of spirituality, or certain Protestants who so elevated marriage that singleness was looked down upon. We must make sure that we do not elevate the importance of marriage above that of singleness or visa versa. We must be careful that we do not cause the unmarried to feel or think that they are inferior or incomplete sexually. Both the married and unmarried are valued by God as created in his image as male and female. The following statement says it all;

...although marriage was a God-given and praiseworthy estate, the celibate life was a higher form of Christian (Catholic) faithfulness. Protestant thought in particular broke with that view, exalting marriage and refusing to distinguish higher from lower forms of Christian life... the unmarried believer belongs equally to the eschatological family of God realized even now in the worshipping church, for those who understand celibacy as their calling for dedication to God (Atkinson & Field 1995:72-73).

Jesus himself was born into a family with members who later got married and had families. He himself never got married. His sexuality as a male was not seen as lacking, nor was he looked down upon by the society of the day. Further, marriage is God ordained. This was affirmed by Jesus Christ when responding to the Pharisees' question about divorce. Jesus quoted the Genesis passage and said;

Haven't you read, he replied, that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become

one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate (Matt.19:4-6).

This response from Jesus has two implications. Firstly it serves to affirm marriage as ordained by God. That the becoming one flesh - sexual union of male and female, is to be heterosexual and monogamous. Secondly it serves to respond to those who say that Jesus did not speak against homosexual practice. Jesus' affirmation of heterosexual monogamous marriage, leads to the interpretation by evangelicals that he did not by implication support or say anything in favour of homosexuality, homosexual acts or homosexual unions.

CONTEMPORARY ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Besides the Biblical texts of the Old and New Testament discussed above, there are other arguments by liberals in support of homosexual practice. Some of these arguments are discussed below with some critique from an evangelical perspective.

A THEOLOGY OF GAY LIBERATION

As evangelicals adopting the rejecting compassionate position, we should be aware of the agenda of the Gay and Lesbian Christian Movement. In England they published a book entitled *Towards a Theology of Gay Liberation*. In it they argue for a free and random model of behaviour for homosexuals. We ought to be aware of this approach and be prepared to address it when it hits our shores. This is what they advocate, as quoted in Reform magazine:

The 'ideal' is where you have the free choice between a number of options in a society 'in which young people, as they grow up, will become aware of a wide variety of life patterns: monogamy-multiple partnerships; partnerships for life-partnerships for a period of mutual growth; same-sex partners; opposite sex partners; both; chastity;

living in community-living in small family units; and so on. A world, furthermore, where each young person becomes aware that each of these life patterns is held in equal esteem in society. So that each will feel free to choose the pattern or partners with whom they wish to share their lives - to choose the person or persons with whom it makes most sense to them to live (Reform Mag.1998;no.18:16).

The article goes on to talk about a sex guide for homosexuals which was seized by Customs from the LGCM. The contents of this guide is quoted again in Reform as follows:

The book recommends the baths as a place to achieve more sex per hour than anywhere else; it favours sexual orgies with a crowd; the word 'promiscuity' is dismissed as irrelevant; an unattached homosexual can have as much sexual experience as he wants; the book recommends having sex in threesomes (same sex or mixed); married homosexuals may have to deceive their wives about their homosexual activities, but it is best for the couple to agree to a promiscuous life style; sex in public toilets is accepted; if someone is looking for a homosexual prostitute (of course legally), the book recommends consulting a prostitution service rather than simply picking someone up; the book gives advice on the art of 'cruising'-(going on the streets or elsewhere to look for a stranger as a sex partner); sadomasochism is accepted; and ingesting human waste in the context of sexual activity is not ruled out (Reform 1998 No.18 :16).

The above statements give an ugly picture of the agenda of homosexuals. If widely known by people, especially those with a *phobia*, it will increase their fears of homosexuals. Outside of the Church, there are people who have a strong hatred for homosexuals and if they get to know of the above advocacy, they may become more violent. From an evangelical ethical perspective, it highlights the wrongness of homosexuality from a deontological ethical view. The actions of promiscuity and homosexual prostitution, which are encouraged, call for a teleological ethic which questions the motives and goals, and looks at the consequences of homosexuality which in this case would be bad and undesirable. Therefore, evangelicals from a theological and ethical point of view, coupled with what homosexuals advocate as seen above, totally reject homosexual practice and do not accept it as an alternative lifestyle.

ARGUMENTS FROM CHURCH TRADITION

Vasey talks about a Christian leader, Augustine (male) and his love for Alypius (male), in his struggles for sexual control. Vasey says that passionate same sex friendships continued in this era as a major strand of Christian culture. He says the following about it:

[for]... much of the period before the thirteenth century significant sections of the Christian world did not regard male desire for men with men as strange, did not think it particularly worthy of moral censure, and did not make such desire a ground for stigmatising certain individuals in society (Vasey 1995 :83).

I cannot see how this can be true, bearing in mind that the early Church denounced all forms of homosexual practice. This stance has been upheld by Christians ever since then. The above statement by Vasey seems to be opposed by Townsend as he says the following with which I am in agreement:

Until the post-war period in the history of the church there were few, if any, dissenting voices to the view that scripture and nature teach us that homosexual behaviour is without exception immoral. The last few decades have seen a re-appraisal by academic theologians, heated discussions in denominational bodies, and the emergence of organisations such as the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement promoting an active homosexual lifestyle as consistent with Christian teaching (Townsend 1994 :1).

The two views contradict each other. Vasey says that before the thirteenth century the Christian community was in favour of homosexuality. According to him, views started to change thereafter. On the other hand Townsend says that the Christian community never accepted homosexuality. They saw it as an immoral act. Recently, modern theologians have started to re-examine and challenge this long held view. When Vasey gives examples including Augustine, it does not mean that he (Augustine) legitimised homosexuality among Christians. This relationship of Augustine, if it did exist, does not make it (homosexuality) a morally acceptable lifestyle. Lovelace says the following about Augustine which shows that he did not approve of homosexual behaviour:

Augustine's treatment of this subject (homosexuality) in the confessions on the other hand, clearly reflects the influence of Genesis 19: those shameful acts against nature, such as were committed in Sodom, ought everywhere and always to be detested and punished. If all nations were to do such things, they would 'equally' be held guilty of the same crime by the law of God, which had not so made men that they should use one another in this way (Lovelace 1978 :18).

Apart from Augustine, Vasey goes on to quote some other Christian leaders from that era such as St. Aelred of Rievaulx, St. Sergius and St. Bacchus whom he claims had homosexual relationships. He says that in the classical culture of the Mediterranean, this kind of same-sex love was common. An interesting point that he makes is this:

Sexual acts (same sex) were seen as not expression of relationships but as acts done to another person and reflecting the order of society; hence it was considered shameful for a free citizen to play the passive role in oral, anal or intercrural sex (Vasey 1995 :81).

He goes on to say that Julius Caesar was despised for apparently having played the passive role in sex with the king of Bithynia. What I see as interesting is that he says that these sexual acts were not an expression of a relationship or of love, but that they were mere acts done to others. I see this as doing harm to the case that modern gay genital acts are a result of an egalitarian relationship. I believe that the above examples of Christian or other leaders who engaged in homosexual relations serve as a bad example, one that shows the fallen nature of humanity. What some Christians ostensibly did many years ago does not mean that it is correct and that others should follow their example. There are numerous things that some leaders did, which are recorded in the Bible. King David, for example, committed adultery with Bathsheba and further caused her husband to be killed in battle. This does not mean that his example is to be followed. In modern day England we read in the *Church Times* of some clergy who are homosexuals and active, and some who are not active. We further read of the Bishop of New York who would like the church to adopt the stance of

'total acceptance' for homosexuals and does not believe in the virgin birth of Christ and says the following:

The virgin birth understood as literal biology makes the divinity of Christ, as traditionally understood, impossible. So Jesus' nature must be re-examined (*Church Times* 22 May 1998).

Some of the above examples may be a true reflection of what the leaders did and said, but it does not mean that, because it was recorded, it is correct nor does it mean that we should imitate them. For evangelicals, the Bible is the supreme authority for faith and conduct. It is our guide and not what prominent leaders do or say, especially if what they say or do contradicts what the Bible says. The above examples of Christians who had same sex relations as reported by Vasey, do not in any way give us the latitude to do likewise. I do hope that Vasey does not mention these people as an example of what should be done. I also hope that he is neither subtly trying to say the church is wrong by not emulating these leaders, nor is he implying that the church is wrong by not accepting and recognising same sex relations. The Bible and history contain good examples to be followed and bad ones to be avoided.

CAN HOMOSEXUALITY BE MORAL?

Another liberal argument for homosexuality is made by Robert Wood based on three points. His argument is that homosexuality should not be labelled as immoral because it can be moral. His three points for homosexuality to be moral are:

- (1) for it's adverse effect on the birth rate
 - (2) as another avenue for sacramental love
 - (3) as a vehicle for self expression
- (Wood in Batchelor 1980 :165).

The first reason that Woods postulates for the moralising of homosexuality is what I consider to be bordering on blasphemy. He says homosexuality is:

... a God-created way of protecting the human race on this planet from the suicide of overpopulation (Wood in Batchelor 1980:165).

How can he say the above when God forbids His chosen nation Israel to practice homosexuality? Is he saying that God contradicts himself? Is Wood implying that God is incapable of providing His people with a method of curbing over-population, instead [if Wood is right] of contradicting Himself by providing people with a method that He himself commanded them not to practice? This is almost tantamount to saying that the atomic bomb used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was 'God's created way of helping to depopulate that part of the world', instead of admitting that it was some human beings' fault in killing and murdering other human-beings. Wood talks as if the whole world is living under the harsh and restrictive laws of pre-modern Catholicism when Catholics were not allowed to use any form of contraceptives. He talks as if the world is currently teetering on the brink of calamity through over-population. Over-population, though a serious threat, cannot be used as a justification for homosexuality. Secondly, he seems to be contradicting himself because he says that homosexuality is as old as heterosexuality. Now if this is true, in the early days when there was no threat of over-population, and there were fewer people on earth, what was homosexuality curbing, or what was it good for?

One country with the threat of becoming over-populated is China. To solve their problem the Government is limiting married couples to have only one child. If homosexuality was meant to curb over-population, why did the Government of China not encourage the people to stop marrying heterosexually and promote homosexual unions to curb their problem?

I believe that what Wood says is a weak point and will not enjoy popular support for more reasons than one. One other reason why this point is weak is this. He seems to forget that

not all married couples have children. There are millions of childless couples because of barrenness or deliberate choice. This can be seen as one of the God-created ways to curb over-population and not homosexuality. He further talks about the plight of the many children who need food and education and puts the blame on procreation. What he fails to do is to tell us what percentage of these children are born out of wedlock, which is an act of people's disobedience. It would be wrong for us to try and correct a wrong with another wrong.

The second reason is based on the view that homosexuality is an inherent sexual orientation. He says homosexuality is a vehicle for self-expression. He sees homosexuality or same sex love as a form of self-expression outside heterosexuality. He appears to have forgotten that not all heterosexuals are married. Apart from the question of marriage, sexual intercourse is not the only way for self-expression. There are countless natural and cultural ways of self-expression. This can be in the form of sports, arts, music and writing. For Wood to say that homosexuality is another way of self-expression, lowers human beings to a level of sexuality which is only expressed in sexual intercourse. We as human-beings are more than just sexual beings. Finally I see Wood's equating of homosexual love with the sacrament as bordering on blasphemy. How can he believe God's blessing is bestowed on homosexual practice when God says it is an abomination. Thus, I see all three reasons which he gives to suggest that homosexuality can be moral, as totally unacceptable.

CAN'T HOMOSEXUALS BE CELIBATE?

Paul writing to the Corinthians on matters of marriage had the following to say:

Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her husband. (1 Corinth. 7:1-2)

It is interesting to note that Paul does not advise Christians to practice homosexuality as an option. If Paul in the letter to the Romans was condemning only idolatrous homosexuality or homosexuality that led to idolatry as some claim he was, this would have been the ideal or opportune time for him to set the record straight. This is the time when he could have included responsible Christian same sex relations to correct the idolatrous heathen homosexuality. He did not include it because it is not an option for Christians. On the contrary if there are Christian homosexuals, they are advised to stay celibate. It is this advice that the proponents of free homosexual lifestyle oppose. They say that celibacy is a calling and should not be forced onto people whose only love expression is homosexual. As already seen, this is not expected of gays only, Paul is giving advice to all the Christians.

The Episcopal Church of Michigan reported on homosexuality as follows:

It is not likely to be forthcoming (encouragement) if the only word of the church to homosexuals is a word of condemnation and if its ethical counsel to them is to insist upon sexual abstinence. If the church has prized the potential for love in heterosexual relations, must it not also prize this potential in homosexual relations as well? (Batchelor Jr. 1980:128)

As already mentioned above, sexual abstinence is not only expected from homosexuals. There are millions of heterosexuals, who, in obedience to God's law spend their lives in celibacy. I further cannot see how the church is expected to prize the potential for love in homosexual relations because nowhere in the Bible is it ever commended. If the church was to do this, it would be directly disobeying God.

There are, on the other hand, those that I regard as applying emotional blackmail. In response to abstinence, they claim that if the gay person does not engage in sex, she or he would develop some mental disorders. Mc Neil expresses it as follows:

It (Catholic teaching) demands either conversion to a heterosexual orientation or abstinence, the former is impossible, and the latter in most cases leads to severe emotional disorders, and even mental breakdowns (Mc Neil in Lovelace 1978:52).

It is not entirely true that conversions of homosexuals to a heterosexual orientation is impossible. There are cases of men and women who have been helped through a multi-disciplinary approach to convert to a heterosexual lifestyle. Don Williams quotes Lawrence Hatterer's success in clinically treating Christian male homosexuals. The results were as follows:

Of one hundred and forty-four men who have been treated and followed up, forty-nine patients recovered, nineteen patients partially recovered, seventy-six remain homosexual (Williams 1978:28).

Charles Keysor mentions two testimonies at the beginning of his book of people who were positively helped and stopped practicing homosexuality. They say:

But today I am no longer gay. God intervened through two people who really cared about me...After many years of being a practicing homosexual, I am no longer gay. My healing and deliverance are now realities for which I am deeply grateful (Keysor 1979:11-12).

The last example I would like to refer to, of a successful treatment of homosexuals to heterosexuality, is mentioned by Williams P. Wilson in the book edited by Keysor. This is what he says:

Recently I have worked with seven male homosexuals and three lesbians. The outcome of the therapy of these ten patients has been a successful re-orientation of their sexual practices to heterosexuality in seven cases (Wilson in Keysor 1979:164).

Secondly, if lack of sexual intercourse for gays may lead to emotional disorders and mental breakdowns as Lovelace says, the same would be true for heterosexuals. If this was true, imagine how many people would be in our mental hospitals. Lovelace is not the only one who argues along these lines. Jones has a similar view as he says:

but it (sublimation) is rarely a full controlling factor. And the problem is compounded because forced abstinence from fear and guilt often leads to neurotic disorder (Jones in Batchelor Jr.1980 :110).

If the church was to believe this mental disorder notion, and sanction 'free sex', what kind of society would we live in? It certainly raises teleological ethical issues about the consequences of free sex. What moral standards would we have and insist on? I believe that if the church was to condone such sexual practices it would set a precedent that would open the flood gates for all sorts of socially undesirable practices and lifestyles, something we do not wish to see happening. Gays and straights share a common human sexuality. It is on this basis I propose we both agree with Harvey quoted by Lovelace saying:

... man is capable of overcoming lust through divine love infused in him by the Holy Spirit ... Sexual abstinence for love of God is possible for all, including the homosexuals (Lovelace 1978:43).

HOMOSEXUALITY AND RACISM

The last argument I would like to critically discuss is one that is put forward by Archbishop Tutu. In the foreword of the book *Aliens in the household of God*, he puts across the view that homophobia is to be treated in the same way as racism was fought within the apartheid system. Tutu argues that homosexuality is in the same category as gender or race, something that a person can do nothing to change. He says the church is committing a sin by not welcoming homosexuals. By doing this, the church makes them (homosexuals) doubt that they are also children of God. He says the following:

The church of Jesus Christ, far from being welcoming of all,...instead of being hospitable to all, it has made many of God's children outcast and pariahs on the basis of something which, like race or gender, they could do nothing about their sexual orientation. The church has joined the world in committing what I consider the ultimate blasphemy ... (Tutu in Germond & de Gruchy 1997:ix)

Tutu goes on to talk about Jesus and how He was on the side of those who were rejected. I do not agree with Tutu when he says that the homosexual can do nothing about his or her sexual orientation. We have just seen how some men and women who were practicing homosexuals did something about their orientation. They realised that they were doing what God did not intend them to do, they sought help, received treatment and were re-orientated to heterosexuality. Tutu speaks as if gays are a separate gender of their own, a created third gender, which they are not. He seems to conclude that all homosexuals are born like that, a conclusion that psychologists and others do not share. I agree with Muehl in his summation on this point as he says:

We know very little about the causes and nature of homosexuality ... There appears to be people who are born into a psychological sexual ambiguity. And there are obviously many who adopt it either in response to abnormal social isolation such as imprisonment, ... As a psychological phenomenon homosexuality still seems to be a profound mystery (Muehl in Batchelor Jr.1980:71).

It has definitely not been conclusively proved that all gays are born like that. For Tutu to therefore equate one's natural skin pigmentation with homosexuality is invalid. Further, finding fault with the church for holding on to what they have always believed is true biblical teaching is not correct. The church cannot sanction homosexuality when the Bible does not do so.

I agree with Tutu that Jesus always welcomed even those that the system rejected. Where I disagree with Tutu is when he wants the church to welcome homosexuals and affirm their lifestyle as if Jesus welcomed all and allowed them to continue living their lives as they did

before they encountered Him. He welcomed the lepers and healed them, He changed their lives. He welcomed the sinners and healed their diseases. Those whose sicknesses were caused by sin, He healed them and told them to 'go and sin no more.' The known principle that we as Christians have always embraced says that we must at all times love the sinner but hate the sin. As the church of Jesus Christ, we must make sure that we do this increasingly, including the love for the adulterer, the drunkard and the homosexual. God is holy, He hates sin, and calls all who follow Him to do the same.

While Tutu sees Jesus Christ identified with the "deprived, discriminated, oppressed and marginalised" there are two things he fails to appreciate. Firstly, that Jesus did not proclaim that the people suffering the above things were sinless. It would be wrong to think that we as Black people who suffered under apartheid and all the attendant atrocities, were sinless and thus merited Jesus' siding with us. We should be careful not to equate being marginalised with being sinless and so worthy of God's favour. The sinned against are not always sinless. Homosexuals may be suffering all the above and maybe more, but this does not render them sinless or give them the guarantee that Jesus is on their side.

Secondly, it must be noted that while Jesus identified with the despised and the marginalised, He did not do the things they did, thus stooping down to their level. Identifying with them, did not make Him to be like them. He came into a sinful world but was not contaminated by sin. As the church plays a role in society, these two facts must be borne in mind. We should not be blinded by sentiments that may have a wrong agenda under the guise of Christian love. As Muehl explains:

The demand for militant homosexuals today is for social and religious endorsement of gay relationships, the recognition of same gender sex as an expression of Christian love ...and the solemnization of their unions by the church (Muehl in Batchelor Jr. 1980:73).

Not all Christians will agree with the above statement, but the fact remains that the majority of gays do align themselves with that statement. The gays who are not militant may not DEMAND, but nevertheless they do want the recognition and endorsement of their partnerships by the church. There are two other points that Tutu mentions in his defence for gay and lesbian relations to be recognised by the church. He summarises the points as follows:

If the church, after the victory over apartheid, is looking for a worthy moral crusade, then this is it, the fight against homophobia and heterosexism (Tutu in Germond and de Grunchy 1997:ix).

I do agree with him on the point of fighting homophobia. There is no need for the church to continue being homophobic. We must all fight this fear of homosexuality and come to terms with the fact that the majority of gay people are not paedophiles or child molesters. In most cases it is the heterosexual person who is guilty of these ills, maybe because heterosexuals are in the majority. We should therefore embark on a campaign to educate the church on ethical issues such as homosexuality.

The second point that Tutu mentions is what he calls heterosexism. I do not agree with him on this one. Should all the 'straight' people who voice their opinion about the unacceptability of homosexuality be called those who practice heterosexism? He puts it in the same category as racism and sexism. If this is a phrase he is coining to denote people who believe that heterosexuality is the given norm of society, it is unfortunate. As Christians, there is no other sexual norm given to us to practice, but heterosexuality, and that for sexual intercourse to take place within marriage. We can and do relate to people of the same sex on a purely platonic friendship basis, and that is acceptable. Homosexual genital sex is not a given or acceptable Christian practice. It is therefore not right for Tutu to regard the church's stance and obedience to the Bible by not embracing homosexuality, as

being on par with racism. Treating fellow-human beings as sub-human as it was done under the apartheid system is wrong. We are all made in God's image. Homosexuals are not to be treated as sub-humans. What the Church does not approve of, is the practice of homosexuality. I therefore believe that it is wrong for those who do not accept homosexuality to be accused of practicing heterosexism, this is where I disagree with Tutu.

THE WAY FORWARD

We now look at the legal systems in regard to homosexuality. Addressing the British legal system, Vasey explains the relation of law to morality. He says it is unfair. He talks about the public discussions on homosexuality in 1986/7 when Lord Jacobovits proposed the criminalization of adultery, in the same way as homosexuality was a criminal offence. Although homosexuality is now no longer a criminal offense between consenting adults, addressing the inequalities, he says this:

The fact that our society does not bring heterosexual sexual activity outside marriage within the pale of the criminal law does not amount to a failure of moral nerve. It is based on an acknowledgment that the morality of sexual behaviour is better regulated within the normal processes of personal and community relationships (Vasey 1996:183).

Vasey says that homosexuality should be fully accepted. He would like to see the community taking the responsibility of sanctioning matters of sexual behaviour. There is an interesting point here. Whereas Vasey sees the importance of the morality of sexual behaviour as best regulated within the normal processes of personal and community relationships, it looks as if Vasey is not prepared to be consistent. When the society lays down the rules and is not happy to sanction same sex relationships, the proponents of homosexuality are the first to call upon the legal system to legalize it.

In our own country the Constitution makes it unlawful for anyone to be discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour or sexual preference, among others. It is therefore clear that all people irrespective of their sexual preference are supposed to be treated equally. There is to be no discrimination. Two cases have already been won on the basis of unfair discrimination.

A policewoman took the South African Police Medical Scheme to court for refusing to accept as beneficiary her nominated lesbian partner. She won the case on the grounds that she was unfairly discriminated against because she was paying the same amount as the others who had other beneficiaries. This was followed by a case in Namibia. The National Coalition for Gays and Lesbians of South Africa cited this case as another victory for gays. This case involved a woman who had a relationship with a Namibian woman for a period long enough to be accorded the status of permanent residence. This was refused on the grounds that they were not married. She won the case on the grounds that she was discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation, and was given permanent residence status. Precedences have been set both in this country and Namibia. As to how far these will lead, we do not know.

As evangelicals we are to see to it that homosexuals are not being unfairly discriminated against. This kind of support we can give on the grounds that homosexuals and heterosexuals share a common humanity. The second point to be noted is that while the State has legislated the equal treatment of all citizens, it has not yet and correctly so, from an evangelical point of view, sanctioned homosexual unions or marriages. If the state gets to the point of legally recognizing homosexual unions like the Netherlands as cited above, this will not in any way mean that the community, religious or otherwise, agrees. It will in no

way mean that the church will be bound to recognise or solemnize such unions. In the past, as already shown earlier, the State did sanction laws that were not acceptable to the community. Above all, as the church, there are principles under which we work that are not dictated to by the State. For example, we are not as evangelicals commanded by the State as to who to baptize, when and how. These decisions lie in the power of the church and not the State and its legislation.

We are not under the law as to whose marriage we should or should not officiate at, conduct, recognize and accept. So, while we do support homosexuals in their struggles for equal rights like equal job opportunities, equal wages and housing as fellow-human beings, we are not obliged to support them in everything they may want, such as homosexual unions. One such example, besides homosexual marriage, is that of child adoption. As evangelicals, we believe that the people who have been given the responsibility of bringing up children are parents in the form of man and woman, husband and wife. Children are to be brought up in heterosexual families according to God's plan. Where one parent dies, deserts or divorces the other, it is true that the child or children may be brought up by one parent. In most cases it is the mother. But it must be noted that this situation is a deviation from the norm, and is undesirable. When homosexual people want to adopt a child or children, it will be an unusual case because there would be no prior man/wife family set up. The child will grow up in a society of heterosexual families, but he or she will be confused because she or he will be brought up by two same sex people living together as 'a couple'. We do not agree with such a situation. As evangelicals we would not support such a move. It is therefore clear in this case that we are not to be dictated to by either the State or the gay and lesbian protagonists and lobbyists to do what they want. The current situation is such that the gay and lesbian lobbyists would like both the State and the church to recognise their

unions or partnerships as legal and binding. The church in particular is being pushed towards the point of solemnizing such unions, something with which evangelicals are in total disagreement.

HOMOSEXUAL AGE OF CONSENT

While on the one hand we have a constitution that outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sexual preference, on our statute books a homosexual act is still technically a criminal offense. We are expecting the Government, through an act of Parliament, to decriminalize all homosexual acts and sodomy. While supporting some of the unfair discrimination against homosexuals, the point of lowering the homosexual age of consent, is something evangelicals will not support. There are two reasons for this position of not supporting it. Discussing the whole matter of decriminalizing homosexual acts Cameron says the following;

The under age sex prohibition discriminates against gays and lesbians in two ways. First, the heterosexual age of consent is sixteen and not nineteen. For gays and lesbians the permitted age is considerably higher than in most Western European jurisdiction...

The criminal prohibitions on sex between men as well as the differential age of consent for gay men and women have a severely negative effect on the lives of these people (Cameron 1993:454-455).

Firstly I do not agree with Cameron on the point of wanting the age of consent to be lowered. It is not fair to lower this age because most evidence indicates that the incidence of homosexuality among adolescents is experimental and part of a stage through which they pass. If the age of consent is lowered, at the stage when these teenagers are experimenting, there is a strong possibility that they may be nurtured into a homosexual orientation and find themselves more confused and perhaps even unable to move on from the experimenting stage to live heterosexual lives. It is on this basis that the lowering of the age of consent should not be accepted or supported.

Secondly, the next point where there is disagreement with Cameron is his reason for wanting homosexual acts to be decriminalized. His reason is that this is a group of people who are vulnerable and open to blackmail. This is not a good enough reason because there are many heterosexuals who are also vulnerable to being blackmailed. One example is that of heterosexuals who have extramarital affairs say with prostitutes. If discovered by potential blackmailers, they too would be victims. If we agree with Cameron, we might as well lobby for the decriminalisation of say prostitution.

There is yet another reason in support for the decriminalisation of homosexual acts as given by Kerr and Clark. They cite it as suicide saying;

Young men and older men, whom Mel White knew personally or were men he heard about, couldn't deal with the terror of the consequences if they were truthful about their homosexuality. These were men who faced possible divorces, rejection by children, loss of jobs, excommunication, degradation, humiliation and even fear for their lives. Suicide sometimes appeared easier than dealing with all the people they knew they would hurt, including themselves (Clark and Kerr 1996:366).

To use the incidence of suicide as a reason to legitimize and persuade the church to accept homosexual practice is almost the same as emotional blackmail. It is not a good reason. For the sake of consistency we might as well consider all major causes of suicide and then let the church decide how she should handle all these cases. We cannot on the basis of these reasons of blackmail or suicide, support the decriminalisation of homosexuality or the acceptance by the church of homosexual practice as legitimate. There are other groups of people who are just as vulnerable, to the above reasons, like heterosexuals who get involved with prostitutes, who may also demand the decriminalising of prostitution in order to be free from possible blackmail and suicide.

A number of corrective measures as a way forward are now due. One of the first things the evangelicals must do is to denounce and discard homophobia. The definition is as follows:

Homophobia or the attitude of personal hostility towards homosexuals is a mixture of irrational fear, hatred, and even revulsion...(Stott 1985:28).

Cassidy in the introduction of his essay on homosexuality says the following;

..to express the view that homosexual practice or behaviour is not morally or biblically acceptable is not to be equated with homophobia. Homophobic responses to this issue are totally unacceptable and not in line with the biblical requirements of compassion, love and understanding (Cassidy 1998:1).

There is no room for Christians to hate, fear or to be hostile towards other human beings, irrespective of what they might have done. Homophobia comes as a result of ignorance on the part of the 'straight' Christians. In order for the evangelicals to be loving and compassionate, the renouncing of homophobia must be coupled with a massive campaign to educate the church about correct Christian attitudes to homosexuality. This educative campaign must be two-pronged.

Firstly, the aim should be to help evangelicals and 'straight' Christians to stop being self-righteous, and secondly, we should aim to help the homosexual Christians to stop the elevation of homosexuality. Allan Barker, an evangelical psychiatrist in England says the following;

We all share in the state of this world in some measure, whether we are homosexuals or heterosexuals, and there are no grounds therefore for self-righteous discrimination by the heterosexuals. But equally, there are no grounds for the idealisation of homosexuality and the equation homosexual with heterosexual (Barker:Guidelines no.59).

Our renouncing of homophobia must be followed by practical steps of accepting into our churches non-practicing gay and lesbian Christians. Our failure to do so will increase not

only the possibility of more homosexual churches being started, but our testimony will be diluted. We will be inconsistent and hypocritical by accepting the man or woman who struggles with adultery or alcohol, but failing to accept into our fellowship men and women who struggle with homosexuality. I am here referring to people who have come to accept their condition as incompatible with God's standards and expectations, and are getting help from the elders of their churches and other sources. The difficulty comes where the person does not accept that what he or she does or is struggling with, is not acceptable to God. Unfortunately, many homosexuals and some who may not be homosexual, but advocate that homosexuality be accepted, do not see homosexual practice as sin. Care must also be taken that in being consistent, equal treatment of both male and female homosexuals is exercised. In the past, the male homosexual was targeted and punished while the female homosexual was not.

A further note of caution to be taught and highlighted is that the evangelicals and Christians in general must be careful not to treat homosexuality as the worst sin, but to see to it that all Christians struggling with whatever kind of sin, are helped with love, care and compassion. On the part of homosexuals, it is important particularly for those who profess to be Christians, to stop going to churches that promote the homosexual lifestyle, churches like Deo Gloria in Pretoria, under the leadership of Sue Wellman and the HUMCC. One of the reasons we advocate for the discontinuation of churches for gays and lesbians is that it is not in keeping with God's way. Society would be in trouble if the step taken to have a church for gays was followed by other groups. What if adulterers, thieves, gluttons and drunkards/alcoholics were to start churches for themselves? Would this be acceptable? The adulterers church, the church of the alcoholics, would it be acceptable?

As a way forward, the next thing that evangelicals must do is to openly apologise to the gays and lesbians for the hurt we have caused them through our behaviour. True to say that our predecessor's knowledge of homosexuality was the Greek practice of pederasty and rape, and this brought about fear and hatred. We followed their example and did the same because very little was known about homosexuality because the gays and lesbians remained 'in the closet', for fear of reprisal. Today we know much more than our forefathers and ought to do better.

The Evangelical Alliance in England, under the leadership of Rev. Joel Edwards has recently taken the bold step of apologising to the gays and lesbians openly both on written and electronic media. Their 40-page report *FAITH, HOPE AND HOMOSEXUALITY*, contains both the apology and position of the Alliance on homosexuality. Reported in *Evangelism Today*, the position remains orthodox Christian teaching. It states:

That homosexual practice is sin, but is no greater than any other sexual sin, including adultery and fornication.....rejects all efforts to endorse sexually active homosexual partnerships as a legitimate expression of a Christian relationship, and resists church services of blessing for gay partners as unbiblical (*Evangelism Today* March 1998: 2).

While supporting homosexuals in some of their demands for equal rights, and no discrimination, we as evangelicals will not be forced to accept or to solemnize homosexual unions in the church, should the Government yield to the demands of the Gay and Lesbian pressure groups and legitimise such unions. What the State legitimizes does not necessarily mean the church should also legitimize. Barker sums it up by saying:

....the question is often asked whether we should support homosexual equality within the law and society. Certainly we should, for the law is discriminative against homosexuals. On the other hand, as Christians we cannot support that homosexuality is an equally valid sexual experience or even a higher sexual experience. Nor can we support the 'right' of the homosexual to practice as a homosexual if he is a Christian (Barker: Guidelines 59).

The support we give to homosexuals is not to encourage them to continue in their lifestyle, but to respect their God given humanity. We support the upholding of all human beings to be treated with respect and dignity, but we do not support their wrong behaviour. We do not support those whose hatred has been switched from hating sin to hating the sinner. We neither support the Christian homosexual who would like to practice homosexuality, nor do we support the gay 'bashers'. Evangelicals uphold the importance of the entire Bible and what it teaches as the supreme guide for all of life and conduct.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction of this dissertation, the topic was explained and the aims elucidated. Homosexuality was seen to be a pertinent issue, so South Africa having embraced democracy and human rights is now in danger of becoming morally permissive. Homosexuality was shown to be particularly relevant for the church, especially the evangelicals who need to deal with it in a sensitive but ethically and godly manner. The need for pastoral care was also cited and the methodology explained where deontological and teleological approaches were outlined. My own approach, as an evangelical was also explained.

In the first chapter we dealt with the definitions of homosexuality and evangelicalism. We looked at human sexuality which showed that only two sexes were created, male and female, and that we are to relate to each other sexually in a heterosexual way. We saw that homosexuality was the erotic desire for, and having sexual relations with people of the same sex. We saw that homosexuality was very diverse, that it can be temporary or permanent. We saw that it can be practiced in an egalitarian relationship or transgenerational, where the partners are not peers, one being much older than the other.

We then looked at some of the causes of homosexuality. The two causes normally debated are the genetic and psychological causes. The conclusion reached is that there is no one determinative cause that has been scientifically or medically proved to be the sole cause. The causes can be multiple or singular, but always there is the element of nurture. We questioned the view that choice and free will are not involved in homosexual behaviour. As human beings we cannot escape the issue of moral responsibility for our actions.

The incidence of homosexuality was for a long time thought to be ten percent of the population. Recent studies and research have come up with a figure much lower, somewhere between 1% to 2%. It is therefore clear from these figures that what was thought to have been a God given sexual orientation because of the high incidence, was actually very low and therefore throws doubts to its legitimacy. We further saw that homosexual behaviour is not what some proponents say it is. It is claimed that homosexual relations can be the same as heterosexual relations in that both of them can be permanent, statistics have shown that the much talked about homosexual life long one- to- one relations are the exception rather than the norm. Statistics further showed that there is a high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases among homosexual men in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts. This is where, teleologically speaking, homosexuality was seen to be ethically negative, looking at the amount of suffering this kind of behaviour resulted in for individuals and families.

We then discussed who the evangelicals are, and the different positions adopted by people in regard to homosexuality and the positions evangelicals adopted. Of the four positions cited, evangelicals were shown to adopt two positions, namely the position of 'rejecting punitive' largely by conservative evangelicals and the position 'rejecting compassionate' largely by radical and moderate evangelicals.

In chapter two we outlined the methodology employed in discussing this topic and then the analysis of the questionnaires followed. Further, my own background as a radical evangelical was explained, from which angle, with my presuppositions, this topic would be discussed. The analysis of responses from evangelical leaders showed that these leaders did not accept homosexuality as a valid lifestyle particularly for those who professed to be

Christians. This position was further supported by evangelical leaders from outside South Africa. The same pattern was followed by evangelical members. From this data analysis, it is very clear that the evangelicals who responded to the questionnaire are not in favour of a homosexual lifestyle. The analysis of the responses from homosexuals showed that very few of them could claim to be exclusively homosexual, because more than fifty percent had had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex. Most of them were brought up by their mothers alone and a great majority of those who were brought up by both parents said that the mother was the dominant person. There were indications that in some cases, homosexual behaviour of these respondents was partly a result of unhealthy parent to child relations. In other words, the causes could have been related to nurture rather than nature.

The third chapter dealt with the Bible and homosexuality. Here we saw how liberals who are more inclined to freedom and personal convictions rather than accepting doctrinal orthodoxy, interpreted the biblical texts that deal with homosexuality. To them the Old Testament texts that deal with homosexuality, are either time bound and no longer relevant to modern day Christians, or they argue that these were specific laws of holiness for the Jews. This can be seen in the interpretation of the Sodom and Gomorrah incident. Liberals cite the reason for the destruction of the city as inhospitality or intended rape. Evangelicals on the other hand see the reason for the destruction of Sodom as both inhospitality and attempted homosexual rape and homosexuality in itself as practiced by the citizens of that city. Some even go to the extent of citing the relationship between David and Jonathan as an example of homosexuality. On the other hand, we also saw how evangelicals interpreted the same texts, showing the relevance of Old Testament texts to modern day Christians and emphasising the fact that we regard the whole of the Bible as binding and not certain texts or parts of it.

The same pattern was followed in interpreting New Testament texts. It was clear, once more, from the discussion that the Bible does not speak favourably about homosexual practice at all. Some of the examples cited by homosexual proponents and liberals from the biblical texts, were mis-interpreted. The Romans 1:26-27 passage is taken as an example. Liberals argue that what Paul meant by nature or natural, and what he condemned, was the personal nature of the pagan heterosexuals who had homosexual sex, which was to them unnatural. The evangelicals on the other hand see Paul condemning any human behaviour that is against nature, God's created order. So, it is homosexuality that is condemned, men having sex with men and women having sex with women, instead of God's natural order of a man having sex with a woman. From an evangelical perspective of the biblical texts in both Old and New Testament, it is clear that homosexuality is not a Christian option. It goes against God's ordained order of sexuality.

In the fourth chapter we revisited creation, sexuality and marriage, where we saw how in the beginning God created male and female and ordained sexual intercourse to take place between a man and a woman within marriage. We saw how marriage is meant to be both heterosexual and monogamous, thus ruling out any demand by the militant and not so militant gay and lesbian organisations and individuals who would like the church and society to recognise their partnerships. Some of the contemporary arguments in support of accepting homosexual practice smirked of neo-blasphemy, like suggesting that God ordained homosexuality as a means to stop the world from being over-populated or that homosexuality was a sacrament. Others say the church is committing a sin by not recognising homosexuality as it, like race, is a given. However, these are two things that are not similar.

Nevertheless, from all the data, the conclusion we reach is that evangelicals in South Africa do not accept homosexual practice. We come to this conclusion taking into account the results of the analysis of data from South African Evangelicals. This data shows that we do not differ from other Evangelicals. The conclusion is that we reject homosexuality in practice and are willing and open to accept non-practicing homosexuals into our churches. We must lovingly help all Christians who may be struggling with sin irrespective of what kind it may be. When it comes to the possibility of homosexuals being healed, we need to hold a balanced view. Acknowledging on the one hand the possibility of healing such as that experienced by Andrew Comiskey who was an active homosexual but is now a heterosexual with a family. He wrote a book entitled *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness*, and because of that, Cassidy ends by saying, 'what can happen to one can by God's grace happen to all'. On the other hand, we acknowledge the fact that there may be others who may not be healed such as in the case of Mel White quoted by Clark and Kerr. White also wrote a book about his struggles entitled *Stranger at the Gate*, outlining how he tried to stop his homosexual practice, but is still not healed. Nevertheless, we ought to pursue the way of compassion as we seek to be Christlike in our dealing with fellow-Christians. I feel that in reaching this conclusion, I am in good company both with other Evangelicals, but more so, with the teachings of centuries of Judeo-Christian tradition, as recorded in the Bible which was written centuries ago and still is relevant today to guide the man and woman who wants to be obedient to God Almighty, our Creator, Saviour and Judge.

Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

Please complete this questionnaire and either hand it to the appointed person or put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope and post it. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Section A

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age Group: 18-25 26-30 31-35 35-40 41+
3. Marital status: Married Divorced Widowed Single
4. Church/Denomination e.g. Anglican, Assemblies, Baptist, Methodist, etc.

5. How long have you been a member?
Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years over 11 years

Section B

1. Does your church/denomination have a policy on the ordination into the ministry of practicing / active homosexuals as Rev. Pastor?
Yes No Not Sure
2. Does your church/denomination accept as full members, people who are active/practicing homosexuals?
Yes No
3. What are your personal views on these matters? (TICK ONLY ONE BOX UNDER 3, 4 & 5)
Active homosexuals should not be ordained as Rev./Pastor/Priest
Active homosexuals should be ordained as Rev./Pastor/Priest
4. Active homosexuals should be ordained as full members
Active homosexuals should not be accepted as full members
5. On what do you base your views/convictions?
Traditionally the church has held this view and I agree
The Bible does not condemn homosexuals
The Bible condemns homosexuality
6. If you say the Bible does or does not condemn homosexuality, please write at least two Biblical texts to support your view:
i) _____ ii) _____

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLERGY / LEADERS

Please complete this questionnaire and either hand it to the appointed person or put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope and post it. Your co-operation is highly appreciated

Section A

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age Group: 26-30 31-35 35-40 41+
3. Marital status: Married Divorced Widowed Single
4. Church/Denomination e.g. Anglican, Assemblies, Baptist, Methodist, etc. -----
5. Your position in the church: Bishop Priest Rev./Pastor Elder Other
6. How long have you held this position? 1-5 years 6-10 years over 11 years

Section B

1. Does your church / denomination have a policy on the ordination into the ministry of active /practising homosexuals? Yes No
2. If yes, which of the following is it?
Practising homosexuals are ordained into the ministry as Priests / Revs.
Practising homosexuals are not ordained into the ministry as Priests/Pastors
3. On what is this policy based? Church/Denomination/Tradition Biblical texts
4. If based on Biblical texts, please write at least two such texts:
i) _____ ii) _____
5. If your church / denomination does not have a policy, what is the reason?
Homosexuality is not a problem
The church / denomination is not aware of any homosexual clergy
Denomination / church commission is still researching and discussing the matter
6. Does your church / denomination have as full (communicants / members) active homosexuals? Yes No
7. What is your personal view / conviction about homosexuality?
a) Homosexuality is not a sin
b) Homosexuality is a sin like any other sin
c) I am still studying and researching it and have not yet reached a conclusion

Appendix 3

QUESTIONNAIRE [distributed to homosexuals at HUMCC and NCGLE]

Please complete this questionnaire and hand to the person appointed to collect them or put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Section A

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age group: 18-25 26-30 31-40 41+
3. Religious affiliation: Christian Muslim Judaism Other -----
4. Sexually I prefer to be called: Gay Homosexual Lesbian or-----
5. How old were you when you discovered your sexual preference / orientation?
under 12 years 12-15 15-20 21+
6. Do other people know of your sexual orientation? (Have you come out of the closet?)
Yes Not yet
7. Are your parents supportive of your lifestyle? Yes No

Section B

1. I was brought up by : Mum & Dad Mum only Dad only Relatives
Orphanage Other
2. The dominant person at home was: Father Mother Other
3. The person I felt honestly loved me: Father Mother Father & Mother
4. The person whose love and friendship I really longed for: Father Mother
5. Were you ever sexually abused as a child? Yes No
If yes, by whom? Adult male Adult female
6. I had my first sexual experience with someone of the same sex at age:
under 12 years 12-15 15-20 21+
7. Where were you? Boarding school Prison Hostel
8. How old was your first same sex partner? 12-15 15-20 21-25 26+
9. Were you forced to engage in this sexual act? Yes No
10. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex? Yes No
11. Do you have an ongoing sexual relationship with someone of the same sex / gender?
Yes No
12. If the laws of the country changed would you marry this person? Yes No

Appendix 4

11 December 1991

CAPE TOWN BAPTIST AND HOMOSEXUALITY

The subject of Homosexuality triggers off many reactions and emotional responses. Some would immediately recoil in disgust and condemnation while others would seek to justify and plead for acceptance. Because we as a church have had to confront and deal with this issue and are now having to discipline two people associated regularly with us (one a member and the other an adherent) who are practicing homosexual relationship we want to spell out briefly where we stand.

1. We believe the scripture, which is our guide for all of life and practice as God's inspired Word, clearly condemns homosexuality. Every time it is mentioned in scripture it is mentioned in a bad light. (Gen.19:1-11; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-25 Romans 1:25-27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:9-10)
2. We believe that, as is the case with all sin, God calls the Homosexual to repentance and to a change of a lifestyle. This repentance would involve both behaviour and practice as well as a seeking of God in terms of attitudes and mindsets, i.e, an ongoing repentance that leads to change.
3. We believe that, because of the radical power of the gospel of a resurrected Lord, the Christian Faith offers the hope for real change. (Eph. 2:1-10; 2 Cor. 5:17). This change is never easy nor simple to attain and involves a lengthy process. All believers are called to this process of change and renewal, not just homosexuals.
4. We affirm very clearly that God loves the Homosexual and as a church we are called to love. God distinguishes between the sin and the sinner. Sin is always judged (by God) while the sinner is called to repentance and offered new life because of God's grace and love. We further affirm that homosexuality is not "greater" than other sin and therefore attitudes of superiority, judgement and condemnation are to be rejected.
5. We commit ourselves to a ministry of love and compassion and the seeking of God for the deliverance of homosexuals. This is a church for sinners; repentant, looking for help, struggling sinners are welcome. Welcome on the clear understanding that we cannot compromise with sin but that sin is to be dealt with by the power of the Gospel of grace.
6. We recognise that for many, the ongoing struggle with temptation, thought patterns, discouragement and at times a sense of hopelessness persists. We do not believe this is a reason for condemnation or guilt, but certainly reason to continue trusting God for the completion of His work (1Cor 10:13; Heb 2:18). As a church we commit ourselves to lovingly stand with the individual in this process.

We wanted to make this brief statement in an attempt to be clear. There may well be questions asked of us, fingers pointed at us and the possibility for misrepresentation exists. We call on all members of Cape Town Baptist to be aware of the "planks in their own eyes" and to proceed as representatives of the Lord Jesus with love and sensitivity.

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