

TANGAZA

COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

**HOMOSEXUALITY A PASTORAL ISSUE:
A MISSION PERSPECTIVE.**

**ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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BACHELOR OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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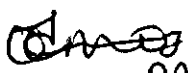
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for academic credit to any other institute. All sources have been cited in full.

Signed  Date 5 - 2 - 2001

Christopher Emokhare


fr Charles Mark Odony

DEDICATION

To all those homosexuals who are struggling to put together their dual identities as Catholics and Homosexuals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Ashira ladonai ki gaoh gaah
 Micha mocha ba elim adonai
 Mika mocha ne darba ko desh
 Na chitah v'chas d'cham zu ga al ta*

*I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously
 Who is like you, Oh Lord, among the celestial.
 Who is like you, majestic in holiness.
 In your love, you lead the people you redeemed.*

My sincere appreciation goes to all who have contributed to the success of this project, I thank the staff and students of the Society of African Missions (S.M.A) Langata, Nairobi for their moral, spiritual and financial support at different stages of this project.

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.0 The Problem.

The only sexual orientation accepted by society with absolutely little or no question at all is that between people of the opposite sex- man and woman. Any other sexual bearing tending to drift from the accepted sexual relation is highly abhorred and regarded with distaste by the society. This needs not to be over stressed because there are countries that have accepted and even legalised sexual relationships between people of the same sex- homosexuals. In the United States of America, Denmark and the Netherlands, for examples, marriages between same sex is widely practised and allowed.

Until recently in Africa, public comments on homosexuality have been fairly infrequent. There exists a culture of silence within which the questions of sexuality - of any kind - are not often debated openly and frankly. One can argue that this is partly because of the lacuna created when old mores are no longer upheld, especially in communities going through urbanisation. In the old days, sex education was transmitted to the young during initiation rituals, but where traditions are breaking down this no longer works.

In Africa the issue of homosexuality is rearing its head and more than before public commentary on it has been uniformly hostile. Thus, we hear President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe denouncing homosexuals. Echoing a widely held view that homosexuality is a white importation to Africa; Kenya President Daniel arap Moi has claimed that “ words like lesbianism and homosexuality do not exist in African Languages ”¹ While Kenya’s principal immigration officer, Frank Kwinga, agrees, arguing that “ Homosexuality is... morally unacceptable in our

¹ Mail and Guardian, (Johannesburg) Sept. 29,1995.p.3.

country”²

Consequently, a missionary coming from another culture and background is faced with the reality of homosexuality. One can argue that the Roman Catholic Church teaching is clear on this issue and therefore there is no need for a priest or pastoral worker to worry when faced with this pastoral issue. But, there are loopholes here and there when the issue comes up in pastoral field.

Priests and pastoral workers find themselves entangled in their personal convictions, the civil law and what the Church teaches, when it comes to deciding what to do. It is in this light thus that we shall be embarking on the greasy journey into the world of homosexuals. We are going to see what pastoral effect it has on the Church and how we can care for homosexuals pastorally. An attempt will be made to reconcile our cultural background with what we are experiencing at the mission without biases. We shall also be looking at the concept of mission in relation to homosexuals. Are homosexuals among those to be ministered to?

Can we realistically talk about an African homosexual community? Is there any need to cure homosexuals of their disease? -that is if we believe that they are sick people. What is the origin of homosexuality? Is homosexuality a Western phenomenon? These are some of the questions we shall be asking ourselves during the course of our journey together in the homosexual ‘world’.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

It is my aim in this project to see and evaluate the whole issue of homosexuality in relation to mission. As someone preparing to go on mission and coming from a different culture and background, one is certainly going to face lots of ‘culture shock’. Homosexuality as one of

² The Guardian (London) Nov.3,1993,p.12.

the pastoral issues that face ministers need to be approached in the right manner. I hope to expose this pastoral issue that is always treated as a plague and as something that is not to be discussed publicly. This project is intended as a contribution to the meagre work on homosexuality as a pastoral issue. I hope priests, pastoral workers, family members of homosexuals and the rest of us will get a clearer 'picture' of what homosexuality is; its 'mystery' and thus be better informed.

1.1.1 Methodology

This project has been divided into four chapters; so as to achieve my aim and objectives. In chapter one I shall give a general introduction of the work, the study, my aims and objectives of undertaking this project, methodology, the reason for choice of the topic.

Chapter two will look at homosexuality; Clarifying some terms. We shall also see same sex relationships in Africa. Chapter three will focus on what scripture has to say about homosexuality. The interpretation giving to scriptural texts that point to homosexual behaviour will also form part of this chapter. The last chapter is a general conclusion of the project. In it I shall be looking at the concept of mission; the Catholic Church's teaching on sexual ethics in general and homosexuality in particular. Pastoral care for homosexuals and my own personal contribution to the treated topic.

1.1.2 Choice of Topic

When attending a seminar course in Tangaza College - *Reflection on Marriage*. I was startled at the reaction of my classmate when the lecturer mentioned the issue of homosexuality as a pastoral issue. The students were alarmed and most of them condemned homosexuals and homosexuality and said they would rather have nothing to do with them. Unfortunately most of them are priest -in- training, then I wonder what will be their reaction when they become priest and are confronted by homosexuals in their missions.

It is in this light that I decided that there is need for an education in this regard. "*Ignorance is not an excuse*". There are so many prejudices, misconceptions, labelling and uninformed pastoral workers out there without a minimal knowledge of who homosexuals are and what homosexuality is; How to cater for family, friends, associates and even homosexuals themselves. I am amazed at how 'heads turned' each time I walked into the college library and picked a book on homosexuality or any related topic!

The choice of my topic is based on this premises. It is an attempt to bring into light the issue of homosexuality. To oppose the conception that it is a Western import and to find a tangible and open way of discussing it - to be comfortable in it discussing it. To see ways of caring pastorally without undermining the Church's teaching on homosexuality. It is my fervent hope that this work will be enlightening for me as well as anyone who comes in contact with it.

CHAPTER TWO

ORIGIN AND THE NEED FOR DEFINITION OF HOMOSEXUALITY.

No man for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without getting bewildered as to which may be the true.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*.

2.1 Introduction.

Despite the growing amount of information about homosexuality no one knows how it comes about. "Most "definitive" explanations explain too much or too little; one hypothesis account for a few "cases", but no known theory can explain the facts in the great majority of them"³. Cultural explanation and differences appear to be less significant than was previously thought pattern differs enormously from place to place and from one period of time to another. The so-called experts on this subject continue to disagree among themselves on what the cause of homosexuality really is.

It seems evident that homosexual preference is not strictly innate, that is, a condition rooted in the physiological make up of a person, but is rather a behavioural expression of gender identity acquired at an early age as a disposition which is confirmed by later experience - just as in the case of heterosexual orientation. This orientation begins so early and its direction is so strong, at first unconscious, that it becomes practically equivalent to one innate personality structure. According to one author "...even if the psycho-physiological and socio-cultural origin (or causes) of the varieties of homosexual orientation are one day discovered and techniques for altering sexual preference are perfected homosexuality will still remain a mystery"⁴.

Nevertheless, an opinion common to experts is that there are multiple origins and causes

³ Richard Woods. *Another Kind of Love*. (Washington, Knoll Publishing Company Incorporated. 1988); Pg.25.

⁴ *Ibid*. Pg.26.

of homosexuality-genetics, hormonal, psychological, situational - all these may lead to it. It is not fully clear.

Despite the growing interest in and research about the phenomenon of homosexuality we do not know what cause or combination of causes account for a person's sexual orientation, be it homosexual or heterosexual. We do know that individual do not consciously and deliberately choose their sexual orientation nor can they simply decide to change the orientation they find themselves to have. that is the reason, incidentally, why we must conclude that there can be no moral stigma attached to being a person homosexually oriented any more than there is any moral merit to being a person of heterosexual bent⁵

While there are numbers of proponents of theories about causes of homosexuality, none have enough supporting proof to be fully persuasive or to have won wide acceptance. In short we do not know the causes of people's sexual orientation: we do not know whether a change is totally possible, we do not even know whether such a change would be desirable in practise. Consequently, as the author of the study of *Human sexuality* put it, "it is difficult to say anything about homosexuality that is not a provisional nature"⁶. The possibility of changing one's homosexuality to heterosexuality is an issue that is raising questions among experts on this field. There are a number of studies on this area and these studies claim a certain amount of success. Some homosexuals have been help to change the sexual orientation from homosexuality to heterosexuality. Psychological method used have ranged from psychoanalysis to directive behavioural sex therapy.

There are reports as well of change via religious means through a church lay counselling and healing ministry. Why would someone opt for a change? The conversion from homosexuality

⁵ James Hanigan. *Homosexuality*. (New York. Paulist Press. 1988); p.24

⁶ Anthony Kasnik, et al. *Human Sexuality, New Direction in American Catholic Thought*. (New York. Paulist Press. 1977); p.187.

to heterosexuality is aimed at what? . The origin of homosexual orientation, the need for a change and the problems to which it may give rise to remain a matter of controversy.

2.2 Some definitions.

At this point, let us now look at what homosexuality is by way of definition. We have to realise that a major difficulty underlying any discussion of the phenomenon of homosexual experience is that of definition. What exactly is meant when the term “homosexuality” is used? Is it a state of mind or a form of behaviour? Must it be conscious? Is it a universal ontogenic aspect of all human behaviour, or is it a reflection of a specific type of psychopathology? Is it an outgrowth of individual family disturbances, broad socio-cultural influences, or biological or genetical factors?

The word homosexuality has nothing to do with males; simply because both men and women are liable to homosexuality. The term *homo* is from Greek meaning “same”, not from Latin *homo* meaning man. We can define homosexuality as *a persistent, post-adolescent state in which the sexual object is a person of the same sex and in which there is a concomitant aversion or abhorrence, in varying degree to sexual relations with members of the opposite sex*. This aversion and abhorrence should not be seen as a total absence of ability in homosexuals to have heterosexual relations on their part. It's not uncommon or strange to see an individual who is known to be a homosexual cuddling or playing with a baby. There are cases of homosexual couples applying for adoption. Some even spend millions on having a surrogate mother carry their fertilize sperm (British gay couple Barie Dewitt and Tony Barlow seek the help of Rosalind Bellamy ,an American and a mother of four to be a surrogate mother to their twins. (*East African Standard. Wed, Sept 8.1999*).

Let us look at some other definitions of homosexuality. At his trial Oscar Wilde define

homosexuality as “The love that dares not speak its name”⁷ The group for the advancement of psychiatry define it this way:

Homosexuality is a sexual patter in which there is an erotic interest in one’s own sex, replacing to a greater or lesser degree heterosexual interest and behaviour. An individual should be considered to be a homosexual, who after adolescence repeatedly or exclusively prefers sexual activity with the same sex.⁸

Reverend Williams Tobi, a cannon lawyer, offers this definition:

Homosexuality may be described as that condition of psychosexual immaturity characterized by a predominant erotic attraction for a sexual object of the same sex. It constitutes a sexual anomaly that is an either -or condition but admits of great variations... in its rare extreme form, this condition includes a complete absence of attractions toward the opposite sex together with a concomitant positive disgust for sexual relations with the opposite sex.⁹

One Br. Oliven emphasizes other aspects of the homosexual state:

This is a chronic, usually life- long disorder of the total personality, although manifestation is the abnormal direction of the sex drive. Homosexuality is basically a medical (probably chief psychiatric) problem. But because of its relative incurability, the fairly frequent tendency of these patients to seduce others, and because of the almost instinctive animosity the homosexual inspires in many normal people, in practise it has remained rather more a social than a strictly medical problem?¹⁰

⁷ Cited in Arno Karlen. *Sexuality and Homosexuality*. New York: W.W. Norton, Company Incorporated. 1981,255.

⁸ “Report on homosexuality with particular emphasis on this problem in Government agencies” Compiled by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry. (3617 w.6th avenue. Topeka, Kansas), Report no.33, January,1955.

⁹ John R. Cavanagh. *Counselling the Inverts*.(Milwaukee. Bruce Publishing Company.1966); p.19.

¹⁰ John. Op. Cit., p.19

note- The word “gay” is often used synonymously with homosexual, but there are significant differences

These are some of the numerous ways in which the term homosexuality is define. There is a major point cutting through all these definitions - it is the fact that homosexuality has to do with sexual orientation towards or between persons of the same sex- "man to man, woman to woman". We will be right to say that no one " definition" captures all that needs to be said about the homosexual orientation. There is a definition given in the *encyclopaedia of Bioethics* and it seems to represent the orientation most accurately and unbiasedly:

"A homosexual person sustains " a predominant, persistent and exclusive psychosexual attraction toward members of the same sex. A homosexual person is one who feel sexual desire and sexual responsiveness to persons of the same sex and who seeks or would like to seek actual fulfilment of this desire by sexual acts with a person of the same sex"¹¹

The above definition on a closer look shows that it contains certain commonly employed understanding. The understanding that homosexuality is an integral part of one's psychosexual makeup; this psychosexual orientation indicates a fundamental attraction toward persons of the same sex, but does not preclude an interest in, care for and attraction toward members of the opposite sex. It respects the important distinction that the homosexual person has a desire for and a psychosexual responsiveness to persons of the same sex and would like to act upon this sexual fulfilment, but perhaps might not do so, for any number of complicated reasons. Consequently, a person can be homosexual in orientation without having acted upon this

between the two terms. Homosexual signifies sexual attraction towards members of one's own gender whether or not it is express in overt behaviour or even consciously recognized. Gay is older, narrower term, referring primarily to the awareness and acceptance of homosexual orientation and, to some extent, sharing that awareness with others, that is, being "out of the closet" Gay consciousness also includes a wide range of personal and social sensibilities differing in certain respect from those of heterosexual ("straight") persons. In this sense, gay need not connote overt genital activity.

¹¹ Warren T. Reich. ed., *Encyclopaedia of Bioethics*. New York: The Free Press, Vol.2,1978. p.671.

psychosexual attraction.

2.3. CATEGORIES / VARIATIONS IN HOMOSEXUALS

When we talk about homosexuality, it is always good to have at the back of our minds that this comprises of female homosexuals - known as lesbians and male homosexuals known as gays. The terminology generally used for male homosexuals is "gay". Some writers indicate that the word gay has its origin in the usage given to the 17th Century troubadours, the actual origin of this term others will say remains somewhat obscure. Gay is an adjective and not a noun. To do so is an attempt to sum up the entire person with those three letters. We want to believe that there is much more to life than one's sexual behaviour. Although it is an essential part of who a homosexual is, but most homosexuals would refuse to be identified solely by their sexual behaviour.

While a large number of women would prefer the term "Lesbian". The word derived from *Lesbos*, a Greek Isle where the poetess Sapho taught young women. She was believed to be a homosexual. However some women are not at ease with term lesbian just as some homosexual males do not like the term gay. Generally speaking, however, **gay** and **lesbian** (This term is associated with the people who are comfortable with their orientation) are the terms that homosexual people prefer.

Human sexuality, you would agree with me is complex, variable, and developmental. Thus, we are faced with lots of variations when it comes to the issue of homosexuality. Let us look at some of them.

A. Contingent homosexual.

This term contingent homosexual describes those heterosexual persons who engage in some homosexual activity in one of three kinds of situations: experimental, variational and situational.

I. Experimental. This refers to those instances of adolescent sexual exploration which are caused by curiosity, ignorance, or the non-availability of opposite sex peers. Experimental homosexuality is understood by many to be a relatively harmless part of growing up which has no long-range developmental value.

ii. Variational. This has to do with those heterosexual adults who have become bored with conventional forms of sexual release and wish to test their ability for homosexual orgasm. An adult who wishes to try a homosexual way of sexual behaviour.

iii . Situational. This seems to be the most prevalent. In prisons, military camps, boarding schools, seminaries, convents and other one-sex environments, some individuals will tend to focus their erotic drives upon the available partners in the institution. These individuals who are heterosexual usually move away from homosexual behaviour once they leave the confines of such restricted one-sex environment (homosocial).

B. Transvestism and homosexuality.

This refers to the propensity in some individuals to dress in the apparel of the opposite sex as defined by a particular culture. This is easily confused with popular images of homosexuality. In fact, some transvestites are homosexual. But a higher proportion seem to be heterosexual and the vast majority are males.

C. Bisexuality and homosexuality.

There is a great deal of views over whether the phenomenon of "bisexuality" really exists. This term was introduced by Sigmund Freud - he restricted the use of the term bisexual to the potentiality for both heterosexual and homosexual attraction in the evolution of each individual's sexual identity. This has to do with ability to be able to have sexual activity with persons of the same sex and of the opposite sex. For some, it is doubtful whether bisexual performance can be sustained over a significant portion of one's life. This is to say that one is

either a homosexual or bisexual.

These are some of the numerous distinctions that separate or rather capture the homosexual experience. It is geared towards distinguishing a true from a false homosexual.

2.4 THE WORLD OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Is there another world for the homosexual? The world of lesbian and gays is the same world everyone else shares; Funny enough they read the same newspapers, shop at the same supermarkets, go to the same cinemas, and attend the same Churches as their heterosexual neighbours. But as a subculture, homosexuality has its own language, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions, in many- perhaps most- instances fairly sharply divided along male -female lines. Consequently, there are elements of conflict with many customs, values, beliefs, and institutions of the dominant "straight" society (heterosexuals) which gives the gay world the character of a counter culture.

The power and the use of language is one of the instances of distinctiveness of the homosexual world, it provides a useful index to important ideas, cultural patterns, and values.

1. Gay. As earlier stated gay is an adjective, but is used frequently as a noun. Richard Woods says " gay often refers to life-style or to the whole homosexual subculture, it further designates persons who have accepted their homosexuality as an integral part of their personalities, and are privately and to a greater or lesser extent publicly comfortable as being known as homosexual"¹² Gays are referred to as being "out of the closet" or simply "out", this is distinction from persons whose homosexuality is hidden or clandestine.

2. Lesbian. This is a term most homosexual women prefer in describing themselves. It was adopted in memory of the Greek poetess *Sapho of Lesbos*, an island in the Aegean sea. She lived

¹² Richard Woods. Op. Cit., p.64.

in the seventh century BC, the first recorded woman poet. and the first romantic poet. She gathered around herself a poetic cycle of young women who worshipped Aphrodite and the Muses. She may or may not have been a homosexual.

3. *Straight.* This is a common name for heterosexual, both male and female, those who live in the “straight world” are seen as not manifesting anything gay.

4. *Coming Out.* This refers to the acceptance, recognition, and acknowledgment of ones homosexuality, usually in terms of an actual event. To be “brought out” would mean being sexually initiated into the gay world, usually by a more experienced partner; this does not mean or refer to passing, single or childhood experiences. To be “out of the closet” means to be open, no more secrecy of ones homosexuality.

5. *Cruising.* This refers to the participation in a process of mutual search for sexual partners, in gay cycles, cruising refers to the visual scrutinizing of a potential partner, sometimes including mutually provocative eye-contact, whether at bars, the theatre or opera, in a supermarket, car park or just anywhere.

6. *Trade.* It refers to a male, frequently claiming to be heterosexual. He seeks sex with a gay partner but refuses to perform any acts he believes to be “feminine”.

There is lots and lots of jargon employed by homosexuals- gay or lesbian. These expressions they employ to designate people, behaviour, dress etc. The special language employed serves many purposes: “it ties people together verbally almost as if by code, often in the form of double meanings and connotations conveying subtle shades of meaning only other gay men or women would understand or appreciate”¹³ For the homosexual, it also serves as an instrument of verbal exclusion from the straight world.

¹³ Ibid. p.67.

The homosexual world is a world dominated by tight conventions, customs and styles in everything from apparel, cosmetics, and hair to rituals of dance, new drinks, and topics of idle conversation. This “world” is closed knitted. Outsiders are rarely welcome. The reasons for this vary from place to place.

The gay world is no different to the straight world, from small town to big cities joined together by bound of human weakness, sin, and culpability as much as by bonds of support, cooperation, and celebration. Richard Wood has this to say about the homosexual world “It is not just a subculture, the gay world is also a microcosm of society as a whole, merely manifesting in sharper relief the vices and virtues of dominant culture, minus much of the bland in-between”¹⁴

There are so many positive things happening in the gay world- for as a condensation of the wider society, it is also abundantly rich in important human values. There is intense loyalty, lasting friendship, trust, optimism and collaboration. Genuine love and companionship are not lacking, nor are humour and depth. There is grave danger of closing one’s eyes to the positive side of homosexual life because we are more distracted than homosexual themselves by the surface tension and homosexual sex evident in many public homosexual haunts and habitats.

2.5 HOMOSEXUALITY - AFRICAN HOMOSEXUALS

Among the many myths Europeans have created about Africa, the myth that homosexuality is absent or incidental in African societies is one of the oldest and most enduring.

Stephen O. Murray

The East African standard newspaper published in Kenya, Nov. 16, 1998 - edition has on its sports column “*Lesbianism sweeps through fledgling women’s soccer*” The writer of the

¹⁴ Ibid. p.75.

article following a tip-off set out to establish whether lesbianism has really invaded women's soccer in Kenya. Thus the next question that should come to mind will be; are there homosexual in Africa? Some Africans see homosexuality as a morally decadent value from the Western world. It is describe as repugnant and a foreign value, largely borrowed from the West.

Historical and biological data give sufficient evidence to conclude that homosexuality has existed in all places and times and has even flourished in periods of great artistic and cultural vitality: e.g. in da Vinci, Michelangelo, Wilde etc. It is now an established fact that homosexuality has existed in all times and all culture. In different cultures it has been lived and identified in different ways. In some places it is punished under the law (i.e. In Kenya, homosexuality is an offence actionable under section 62-cap 63 of the penal code). In other places it is ignored. While still in other places, it is associated with some beneficent or ambivalent deity; it seems, for example, that this was with the people of Corinth whom St. Paul addresses in the New Testament.

The varieties in homosexuality seem to reflect the different mythological and religious conceptions in each culture. So far as we know, homosexuality has existed in all times and in all places. What changes from culture to culture is the way people interpret it. It would be interesting to explore the place of homosexuality in various societies through history, and do a comparative study. But it would be quite an enterprise; thus our focus in this section will be the Continent - Africa (bearing in mind the aim of this work). Does this phenomenon really exist in Africa? If it does exist how? And why? What is the basis for it in the traditional Africa religion or what values does it carry?

2.5.1 AFRICAN HOMOSEXUALS

In a large number of descriptions of African societies, the ethnographers have used a blanket statement that "sexual perversion", sodomy, and homosexuality do not exist or are

unknown. A description by Paul Parin, Fritz Margenthaler, and Goldy Parin- Martthey is typical of this perspective:

Manifest homosexuality does not seem to occur among the Dogon men. A number of older, worldly-wise men whom we questioned about this had never heard of homosexuality. When explained to them what it was they said it might be good if there were something like that among the Dogon, then the young men would not be kept away from their work by thinking about amorous adventures with girls; they would satisfy their sexual needs with their comrades at work and then could immediately go back to work. A few Dogon had heard that homosexuality occurs among Muslim peoples.¹⁵

We should note that there are several African societies in which an exclusive homosexual orientation is not socially recognized but homosexual physical relationships are important or encouraged. We need to mention also that the predominantly oral character of African traditional religions and the tendency to privacy in sexual matters that is characteristic of most societies - African included. Consequently there has been very little opportunity for observers to acquire a systematic understanding of African attitudes about homosexuality. Nevertheless the difficulties of acquiring accurate data about African sexuality, it appears that there are three types of homosexual relations existing in some African communities and these have widely varying degrees of religious significance.

1. Egalitarian Homosexual Relationship.

This type of homosexual relationship is practised during adolescence and abandoned at the time of marriage. Among the Kung of Southern Africa, "sexual relations between boys

¹⁵ Arlene Swidler. *Homosexuality and World Religion*, (Pennsylvania Trinity Press International. 1995). p.20.

involving manual stimulation and anal intercourse are regarded as a form of sexual education that will be extended into heterosexual relations as boys physically and emotionally mature"¹⁶

Among the Fon of Benin Republic and Nyakyusa of Tanzania, egalitarian relationships among males developed during their rites of passage from childhood to adulthood when they were isolated from females. This relationship among young men are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. The homosexual relations cease with marriage. Among the Nyakyusa of Tanzania, adult males who continue to be sexually involved with men are seen as irrational, and their action are seen as a sign of witchcraft.

Forced sexual relationships between males are likened to witchcraft, that is, as spiritual assault on the life force of the victims. Although there are reports of homosexual relationships among adult men in other communities, they tend to be socially condemned and fairly rare... forced sexual relations or sexual relations with men during a phase of life when one should be fathering children are seen as lessening the procreative power not only of the individuals involved but of their families as well¹⁷

Women are involved in this type of homosexual relationships as well, but in a sharp contrast to men. Women tend to enter into this relationship with other women as adult more frequently than as adolescents. In the societies that egalitarian homosexual relationships exist, there seem to be two causes for this "girls are often married into polygynous households where they might have little or no attention from their husbands but considerable interaction with other women and they are often married at a younger age than boys"¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid. p.22

¹⁷ Ibid. p.23

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 23

2. *Transgenerational Homosexual Relations*

Transgenerational homosexual relation is marriage between man and boys. This type of homosexual relationship lays emphasis on the adult partner providing social and spiritual guidance to his companion in his transition to adulthood. As we know that in many oral cultures, knowledge is passed from elders to younger people through personal instruction.

Among the Azande of the Sudan, these marriages form part of a transition from boyhood to adulthood. These marriages we need to mention required the permission of the father of the younger boy and the payment of bride wealth to the father. Evans- Pritchard described these relationships “ if the boy was a good wife to his husband five spears might be paid for him, and for another as many as ten might be paid... They did for their husbands everything a wife does for her husband. This included fetching water, cooking, and sharing a sleeping mat”¹⁹. This is referred to as bachelor marriage - the boys are referred to as “wives”, they were not considered to be women but men in training. They (the “wives”) accompanied their husbands to battle and learned the ways of warriors.

In southern Africa- there is a difference in the expression of this type of homosexual relationships. This relationship developed as a result of male migrant labour to diamond, gold, and coal mines to which men were not allowed to bring their wives. Senior miners would take new miners as wives, teach them the ways of the mine and the nature of its work, and offer them protection in exchange for cooking and sexual favours. Some new comers give in into this relationship out of social pressure and the threat of physical force. But, in all it is important to note that the senior partner in this relationship frequently had to pay bride wealth to the boy whom he

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 26

desired to marry. Nevertheless, those involved in this relationship often save the bride wealth they received to help them pay bride wealth when they are ready to marry. We need to note as well according to Arlene Swidler “it appears that neither anal sex nor oral sex was socially acceptable in such relationships. Rather the active partner place his penis between the thighs of his more passive partner and reached orgasm through genital friction”²⁰

3. Transgenderal Forms Of Homosexual Relations

Here biological men assume a transgender role as women- wearing clothes and hair styles, performing women’s work, and marrying men. This is mainly found among the Otoro of the Nuba hills in the Sudan and among the Khoisan people of Southern Africa. It needs to be mentioned that among four Bantu- speaking societies “the transgender role is closely associated with various types of religions, authority, ranging from prophets to spiritual healers.... Although there is no indication that they had sexual relations with men, it is clear that they did not have sexual relations with women”²¹

Among the Hausa people of Nigeria and the Wolof and Lebou of Senegambia-(these societies are overwhelmingly Muslim societies) there are men who assumes women roles. In these societies men who assume women’s role are closely associated with cults whose origins are associated with their non-Islamic religions. The type of relationship that exist here is done so as to encourage the possession of spirit, since it is a belief that women are seen to become possessed easily by the spirits.

2.6 Conclusion.

Generally speaking within African communities, one finds that homosexual relations exist

²⁰ Ibid. p.27

²¹ Ibid. p.31

in a variety of forms. Egalitarian relation exists among men primarily during adolescence and are seen as part of the sexual transition from boyhood to marriage and parenthood. Egalitarian relations among women are common among married women who live in polygynous situations who seek to create supportive relationships.

Transgenerational homosexual relation tend to be view as a bond between a more experienced elder, who may still be an adolescent, and a younger person who needs a teacher about the responsibilities of his or her gender as adults. It is closely linked to other forms of education through initiation schools and student-teacher relationships that are the most common form of instruction in Africa traditional religions.

While transgenderal homosexual relations is seen in connection with religious institutions. This is always as a response to a dream or visions, certain men assume women dress and like women, marrying men, and become powerful diviners, healers. We need to stress here that it's their ability to draw on the distinctive powers of the feminine as well as the masculine that gives them their usual spiritual powers.

Chapter Three

Scripture and Homosexuality.

All the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture. In the sacred books the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talk with them. and such is the force and power of the word of God that it can serve the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life (Dei Verbum, no. 21).

3.1 Introduction.

In this chapter we shall be looking at the Scripture(s). We shall be examining what the Holy Bible has to say about the issue at hand- homosexuality. Christians worldwide see the Bible as the source book and the ultimate authority for Christian faith and life. The Bible is considered as God's word. Today there are doubts in the minds of many, when it comes to the applicability of the contents of the Bible to our present post-modern world (era). The relevance of the Bible is put to interrogation and scrutiny. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Bible has to be corrected for its cultural conditioning before it can be of any use to Christians as a guide book. The question that is frequently asked is not what the Bible has to say at a particular point, but rather what this means! Thus, the problem of interpreting a particular text rears its head. There has been lots of confusions, arguments and misunderstandings among scripture scholars, moralists and others on this issue. Let us look at some of the texts (Biblical) that points to homosexuality.

3.2 The Old Testament Account.

3.2.1 Creation Account in Genesis.

A look at the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 gives us the pattern of marriage that God presented in the beginning. However there are people who are opposed to this kind of

thinking, arguing that the world evolved and one should not be tied down to static ways of doing things. Still others will argue using Genesis 1:27,28 which reads “ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; Male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them; “Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground”. This account we should say clearly indicates that the divine purpose in creating sexual differentiation was based on mutual love and procreation. They were made male and female.

As male and female God blessed them. The sexuality, including its expression in all the mutuality of love culminating in sexual intercourse, had his approval and distinct blessing. The first obligation that God laid on human being at the very beginning was, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth...Nothing could underline the naturalness, goodness and centrality of human sexuality more emphatically than the fact that the first obligation God placed upon people he had made required the expression of sexuality in intercourse.”²²

The creation of Adam and Eve is an example intended to set a pattern for marriage. The relationship established in marriage is one which is to take precedence over the parent /child relationship. It is one which is close and exclusive, “ A man will... be united to his wife and they will become one flesh”. This we would say includes a reference to sexual union (As the apostle Paul insists, I Cor. 6:16); but it almost goes beyond it. “The joining of Adam and Eve, and their uniting as one flesh was not simply permitted by God, or even mandated by God. He actively

²² Brian Edwards and Andrew Anderson: Editors. Homosexuality- The Straight Agenda. Day One Press. England. 1998. p.77.

brought it about”²³. Some claimed if God wanted homosexual relation he would have created another man to be with Adam.

3.2.2 The Sodom and Gomorrah Story in Genesis.

Please my friends, be not so depraved. I have two daughters who have never had intercourse with a man let me bring them out to you that you may do with them what you will; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof. (Genesis.19: 7-8).

The aforementioned quotation from the book of Genesis has been generally interpreted as an act of homosexual practice on the part of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was taken for granted that the sin for which the cities were destroyed was that of the habitual indulgence of perverse homosexual practices among men. Some of the questions that comes to mind are; what was the meaning of the encounter of Lot and his angelic visitors with the angry inhabitants of Sodom? Is there any proof to believe that these people were addicted to male homosexual practices and were punishable accordingly? Why has the homosexual interpretation of the story become so well established?

According to D.S. Bailey who published the first major book in challenge of the interpretation of this story in the modern era. He argued that “ The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a historical event, probably due to natural causes, and that there is no reason to think that the reason was sexual, still less it was for homosexual sin”²⁴. According to him the Old Testament shows Sodom as a symbol of utter destruction, but nowhere was it specified that the

²³ Ibid .p77

²⁴ Edward A. Malloy. Homosexuality and The Christian Way of Life. University Press of America. New York. 1981. p.188.

sin committed was homosexuality. He went on to argue that even the New Testament condemnation of homosexuality made no mention of Sodom in this regard. Bailey says the attribution of homosexual practices is based usually on the demand the Sodomites are said to have made of Lot: "Bring them (Lots Visitors) out unto us, that we may know them". The Hebrew word "to know" (*y`adhá*) can mean "engage in coitus". This however, Bailey argues is not necessarily the meaning of the word in this passage. "The Hebrew- English Lexicon of the Old Testament notes that of the 943 uses of *y`adhá*, it is used only 10 times without qualification, apart from this text in Genesis and its derivative in Judges 19:22, to denote sexual coitus. And, again with the possible exception of this text, it always refers to heterosexual coitus. The word normally used in the Old Testament for both homosexual and bestiality is *Sh`akhabh*"²⁵

Bailey argues that the passage can be interpreted thus: since Lot was a *g`er* a stranger or alien in Sodom, he may have gone beyond his right by receiving and entertaining foreigners whose intentions might have been hostile and whose credentials, it seems, had not been examined. Thus, the question "Where are the men who came to you last night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them" provides a sufficient and reasonable explanation to the Sodomites demand.

What, then, could we say was the nature of the sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah? Bailey refers us to the passage "We are told in the passage itself in Genesis that these cities were wicked and grievously sinful, but the writer does not specify the nature of this iniquity more exactly"²⁶.

The sin of the Sodomites Bailey would later say was primarily sin of inhospitality to strangers. This confirmation of the interpretation of the primary sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as lack of hospitality occurs in the New Testament where Christ is recorded as discussing the

²⁵ John J. McNeill. *The Church and the Homosexuals*. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.44

²⁶Ibid. p.44

problem of lack of hospitality of his disciples (Luke 10:10-13). There is no where in the Old Testament that the sin of the Sodomites is identified explicitly with homosexual behaviour. In Ez. 16:49-50, for example, we read: Behold, this was the sin of your sister Sodom; she and her daughters lived in pride, plenty, and committed abomination before me; so I swept them away, as you have seen” Isaiah talks of lack of injustice, Jeremiah cites moral and ethical laxity. The Deutero-canonical books usually identify the sin as one of pride and inhospitality. Wisdom (19:13-14) for example clearly identifies the sin as one of inhospitality! “...Whereas the men of Sodom received not the strangers when they came among them; the Egyptian made slaves of the guests who were their benefactors”. It would seem fairly certain, then, that the sin of Sodom was understood in Biblical times as primarily one of inhospitality according to Bailey.

Those who challenge Bailey’s interpretation argue that he goes overboard in playing down the threat to commit homosexual acts. Tom Horner, for example, contends that the act in question was homosexual rape. There is no other way of seeing it differently. “They were ugly, callous, dirty-minded and unfeeling rapists. There is no point in trying to depict them as anything else. Their intention was homosexual rape...”²⁷ Horner argues furthermore that the verb “*yadha*” can mean anything but “to have sexual intercourse with”. While from a different theological position Don Williams would preserve the same homosexual interpretation of the threatened acts, but once again as a matter of rape and not as a sensual pleasure seeking. “What then is the sin of Sodom? The clear answer from the text is homosexual rape. There are three aspects to Sodom’s sin. The law of hospitality is broken, the distinction between angels and man is threatened, and the prohibition of sex between male is violated”²⁸

²⁷ Tom Horner. *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978),p.48.

²⁸ Don Williams. *The Bond That Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split The Church?* (Los Angeles: Bim,1978),p.61.

We could say then that a credible case can be made for the position advocated by the critics of Bailey. The act in question was homosexual rape and the context in which the threat was carried out in our view constituted a violation of hospitality. We are not sure whether Sodom was a society which tolerated widespread homosexual practices. The elements of facts and legend are so intermingled that we can not get a true depiction of the characteristic sin(s) of the Sodomites, as interpreted after the events of the destruction of the town. In the form in which the story appears, its probably the violence of the rape, as much as the sex of the participants, which made the deed so offensive.

Bailey's efforts to defuse the story of all homosexual implications remains unconvincing. Sexual rape was bad enough, but homosexual rape implied a more degrading form of abuse of the strangers who came to town. At this point in history it is probably impossible to separate the meaning of the story from the relevant details which make it memorable. The word "sodomy" we will say captures the staying power of the biblical reference.

3.2.3 LEVITICUS: 18:22, 20:13 (The Holiness Code)

"You must not lie with a man as with a woman. This is a hateful thing (Lev. 18:22). The man who lies with a man in the same way as with a woman; they have done a hateful thing together; they must die, their blood shall be on their own heads (Lev.20:13).

All those who commented on the aforementioned verses from the book of Leviticus never disputed its interpretation. These passages are interpreted as legal prohibition against male homosexuality. The verses prohibit sexual intercourse between men. The holiness code in which this law stands (Lev. 17 - 26) had its origin in the 6th century B.C. the reason for this legislation made plain early on in the code, was to establish the "holiness" of the Israelite over / against their neighbours. " You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you shall not

do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall do my ordinances and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the Lord your God” (lev.18:3-4).

The Israelites were required to maintain their identity and integrity as the people of one true God in this holiness code. The outright condemnation of males lying with males, as it is done in other land shows that the practice is essentially foreign to Israel’s life. These two verses are important and they serve as the best available evidence for ascertaining the establish Jewish legal judgement about homosexual activity between men. We can presume that this was the position of the early Jewish community. Only with the Pauline mission to the Gentiles did new experience of homosexuality have to be taken into account.

3.2.4 The Relationship Between Jonathan and David.(Book of Samuel)

In various parts of the first and second books of Samuel, we experience a very cordial and loving relationship / friendship between Jonathan and David. Traditionally this has been interpreted as nothing more than a good friendship. Nevertheless, this has not prevented some commentators from opening up the possibility of homosexual dimensions to the relationship. Tom Horner in his book *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times*, argues the case for the homosexual interpretation on exegetical grounds.

Horner says that in the ancient middle East there were three types of homosexual practitioners: Aristocratic lovers, homosexual prostitutes, and average citizens. All were married except some of the second category. The Jonathan-David romance would have been an example of the aristocratic or noble lovers’ tradition. Horner suggested that it was the discovery of this relationship that prompted the attempt on David’s life by King Saul. Jonathan he said was able to warn David in time.

At the death of Jonathan and Saul, David composed an elegy in testimony to his love for

the two men (Samuel 1:19-27). The key verse is 1:26 where David says “ O Jonathan, in your death I am stricken, I am desolate for you, Jonathan my brother, your love to me more wonderful than the love of a woman.” Taken out of context this declaration seems to offer support for Horne’s case. However, since there is no explicit treatment of the matter of homosexuality and since both David and Jonathan were married (David eight times with many children), it is unlikely that Horner’s arguments holds’ water - not convincing. The conclusion of D.S Bailey represent the prevailing consensus “The homosexual interpretation of the friendship between David and Jonathan...rest upon a very precarious basis ”²⁹.

3.3 NEW TESTAMENT CONTEXT.

3.3.1 I Corinthians. 6: 9, 10

“Neither the sexually immoral nor the adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkard nor slanderer nor swindler will inherit the kingdom of God” This passage from the letters to the Corinthians clearly shows that God declares homosexual acts to be sinful. Paul groups a series of behavioural patterns which are properly identified with the way of evil-sinful. Among these ‘catalogues’ are two references to homosexual acts.

It is argued by Vasey, Bailey and others that this passage along with others in the Bible appears to be talking about homosexuality rape, religious male prostitution and pederasty. But a closer look at the passage will help us clarify the message intended. They talk about lying with a man as one lies with a woman. As the editors of the book - *Homosexuality: the Straight Agenda*

²⁹ D.S Bailey. *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London; Longmans, Green and Company. 1955,p.56.

will put it.

..it appears that in 1 Cor. 6:9 Paul possibly invented a compound Greek word for homosexual (*arsenokoites*), meaning precisely one who lies sexually with a man or one who beds a man when there were various other Greek words he could have used if he wanted to refer to homosexual rape, male prostitution or pederasty.³⁰

The word *arsenokoites* was believed to have been derived by Paul or someone else from the Greek Septuagint version of Leviticus 18 :22 and 20: 13 where the terms *arsen (male)* and *koite (Bed)* are used. The use of this term by Paul, linked with the command in Leviticus, makes it clear that its all monoerotic behaviour that is prohibited not otherwise as claim by Vasey and others. It is not just homosexual rape, male prostitution or pederasty that is wrong it's homosexual activity as such that is wrong as claimed by the text.

Vasey and others seem to think that the Bible, for cultural reasons, condemns certain sexual practises, such as anal intercourse, not minding those involved. But the Bible makes it clear that homosexual sex of any kind is included in the category of sin, along with the heterosexual sin of adultery and fornication.

3.3.2 Romans 1:26 -27.

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

This is the only time in the whole Bible that we encounter the outright condemnation of

³⁰ Brian Edwards and Andrew Anderson. Homosexuality: The Straight Agenda. Day One Publication. United Kingdom.1998.p104.

female homosexuality activity. In this text, Rom 1:26 - 27, Paul supposes that homosexual behaviour is something that is freely chosen by an individual; in Greek as in English the verb "exchanged" and "gave up" imply a conscious decision to act in one way rather than another. Thus, Paul associates this choice with insatiable lust; the men, Paul says were "inflamed with lust for one another". Paul regards such activity as a violation of the created order; "natural" heterosexual relations were abandoned in favour of those which were "against nature". This in our view demonstrates Paul's view that homosexual activity is sinful. According to Alex Mac Donald "This ought not to be considered a culturally conditioned view anymore than his (Paul's) view of greed, malice, gossip, envy, murder, strife, deceit (v.29). He is simply confirming God's moral law".³¹

3.4 Conclusion.

Having gone through what some Biblical texts have to say about homosexuality. The various interpretations of texts, their flaws and strengths. The emerging discovery of what homosexuality is and who homosexuals are, is it possible then to come to a (or some) tentative conclusion on what the scripture has to say about this issue.

As earlier stated that the Bible is the central document for any formation of the Christian ethical imperative. This truth in our view needs to be asserted strongly, especially in the Catholic ethical community which has not always acted accordingly with an appreciation of this reality. We need to keep in mind as well that the Bible is also a document of the Church, a Church which preceded it in existence, determined its canonicity and continues to provide a context for theological discourse within which it may be properly interpreted.

³¹ Ibid .p.104

What then has the scripture have to teach or tell us about homosexuality? The Bible teaches that homosexuality as it was known and practised in the Judeo- Christian world of the middle East was considered as reprehensible conduct for a Christian person. Since homosexuality was not a major problem in the New Testament community of the Church, thus it receives relatively little attention in the Gospel and letters. This is not a way of playing down the immensity of the issue at hand.

There are opinions that any defender of the possibility of moral homosexual conduct and moral homosexual relationship among Christians (Catholics) must be ready to overcome and give scriptural texts teaching against it. For in our contemporary handling of this issue, defenders of homosexuality seem to be going against the temperament and this would not bring about a quick reversal of opinion.

It's viewed that in the scriptures there is a basic attitude toward sexuality in the light of which homosexual acts are seen as evil. Since scripture does not deal with all the cases in which homosexual acts occur, there is need for caution for applying the scripture's notion that homosexual acts are evil, moreover, the fact that some Biblical passages traditionally related to homosexual acts may have other meanings suggests that homosexual acts may not be as great as a preoccupation in the Bible as we have tended to think. The hermeneutic problem comes to mind here. The scripture we know do not fully explain the morality of all specific cases of sexual behaviour whether in regards to homosexuality or in regard to other issues in sexual morality.

There is need to note that those Biblical passages that refer to and point out the evil of homosexual acts are passages that were written in relation to particular problems and situations. Romans 1:26-28, which is one of the closest statements against homosexual acts in the Bible is written in the context of idolatry of pagan culture and its context. The same sort of things can be said about other passages where homosexual acts are certainly mentioned.

In conclusion, although homosexuality cannot be proven absolutely from scriptural evidence alone. There are some with the believe that there appears to be sufficient basis from which to say that both Old and New Testament writers express disapproval of homosexual behaviour per se. The reason one could say are not always clearly stated, which certainly makes the biblical, moral and pastoral task more difficult. The debate is still on about the whole issue of what the Holy scripture has to say in regards to homosexuality, its interpretations, its applications, its authourity etc.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

"...absolutely not. I see myself different in a whole lot of ways. I also see myself as very human, and over the years I have tried to be human and compassionate as a priest to people who were different and in all types of tight corners. Today, perhaps, I find myself needing a bit of understanding and compassion".

(A dissident Priest, Bishop Pat Buckley, acknowledging his homosexuality).

4.1 Introduction.

In the previous chapters we saw what and who homosexuals are. We went further to discover what the Bible has to say in regards to the same issue. In this chapter thus, we shall be looking at mission in relation to the challenges that it faces. Homosexuality as one of the pastoral issues that faces missionaries from either a background that abhorred or embraces homosexual relations. It needs to be noted that mission workers are frequently caught up in a crossroads between what the Church teaches and their own personal convictions which is often based on experience. Their stand when it comes to taking a position about the issue of homosexuality sometimes comes into conflict with the Church's teaching. The Church has a mission.

The Church's mission therefore need not to be seen as to a particular set of people in the world, but rather to all. In mission, the Church is challenged to stretch itself and grow to its full Gospel potential. When the Church is truly missionary it is outward looking and outward moving, exploring and discovering ever more fully the implications of its essential vocation as sacrament of God's loving embrace of all humanity.

Mission in its simple meaning means, "God's turning towards the world that He created in a creative love, redemptive and transforming power"³² This turning we must states takes place

³² Micheal McCabe. Mission Today: Towards a New Mission- Mission as Exploration and Transformation. An article published in Society of African Mission Bulletin. No.105. June 1999.P.8

in ordinary history and is not confined or restricted to the activity of the Church. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter "*Redemptoris Missio*" speaks of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit which "are universal. Limited neither by space nor time"³³(RM 28).

Consequently, our task in this chapter is to see whether we can reconcile mission and the often contentious issue of homosexuality. We shall be looking at what the Catholic Church has to say about sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular. Pastoral care for homosexuals and other related issues will be brought into the limelight. It is my hope that we may be able to reach some conclusions on the treated topic: *Homosexuality a pastoral issue; a mission perspective*.

4.2 Missionary Encounter: Mission To All.

It is no more a debate that the Church has a mission to the world, a mission that reflects the love of God for all peoples and nations. The mandate given in the Holy Bible seems clear "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" Mk. 16:15. Through Jesus Christ, God has made it possible for all men and women of all races, tribes, colours etc to come under His rule and live for his glory.

The growing confusion in regards to the use of the word mission has brought the need to define what mission is all about? It needs to be noted that there are various concepts of mission today. As Arthur F. Gasser and Donald A. McGavran put it "mission is a vast enterprise made up of many kinds of missions, many kinds of activities, carried on cross-culturally by many kinds of Christians"³⁴ One will be right thus to say that a great diversity in reasons / motives has led to

³³ Austin Flannery. Editor. Vatican Council II. St. Pauls Publisher. Bombay. 1995. P.664.

³⁴ Arthur F. Gasser and Donald A. McGavran. Contemporary Theologies of Mission. Baker Books House. Michigan. 1983. P.16.

many kinds of mission.

Here our task will be to expand the idea of the Christians and in particular Catholic missionary encounter - as a mission to all. We shall be basing our argument(s) on the great command given to the disciples by Jesus Christ. When we look at mission, cleaving to the classical biblical way of regarding it, it can be defined as:

Carrying the Gospel across cultural boundaries to those who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ, and encouraging them to accept Him as Lord and saviour and to become responsible members of His Church, working, as the Holy Spirit leads, at both evangelism and justice at making God's will done on earth as it done heaven"³⁵

The Catholic missionaries are thus call to a task that is not solely their but that of their master whom they proclaim - Jesus Christ. The aforementioned definition of mission does not confine it only to verbal announcement of the Gospel. Rather, it is of the same idea with the vast majority of ways that may be used to communicate the gospel across linguistic and cultural blockades to those who are yet to hear it. Through education, social action, dialogue, medicine, literacy programmes, proclamation etc. All these are mission if their purpose is to witness to Christ that all people may come to know Him, love Him, Believe Him, be found in Him, become members of His Church, and create in the segments of society they control, a social order more agreeable to God.

In the word of the familiar axiom -“ outside the Church, no salvation” which used to be the concept, the primary motivation for the Church's missionary outreach some years ago - this has since changed. The second Vatican council stated clearly that “ God 's Spirit is active among

³⁵ Ibid. P. 26.

all peoples and offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery"³⁶ In another word the followers of other religions could be saved without becoming members of the Catholic Church. Salvation comes from God. God is present everywhere and He is salvifically active in ways unknown to us. Thus the Church role in mission is subordinate to , and at the service of, God's mission. The Church is neither the source nor primary agent of mission. God is.

In the Holy Bible, St. Paul speaks of the mystery of God's plan for the salvation of people (1 Tim 2:4) - a plan to unite all things in heaven and on earth in Christ (Eph.1:10), and to reconcile all things in Christ (Gal. 1:20) in the book of Revelation, John speaks of a new heaven and a new earth in which God will come to dwell with his people. "Behold God's dwelling is with the human race. God will dwell with them and they will be God's people"(Rev. 21:31).

The importance of these images of the mission of God in the world is their universal nature. They embrace the entire human race and the whole of creation. There is today widespread acceptance of this large understanding of God's plan of salvation and his grace for all peoples and every aspect of their lives.

" To say that the Church is the sacrament of God's love is a statement of commitment as much as a statement of fact. It is an expression of Church's essential vocation to be true to this vocation, the Church cannot limit its outreach to one group of people. It must reach out to every corner of the globe and bring to all peoples the full riches of Christ."³⁷

Missionaries are thus challenged to be ready to enter into the lives of people among whom they live, to experience their daily struggle for survival, to share their pain and their celebrations,

³⁶ Austin Flannery. Op. Cit. P. 657.

³⁷ Michael McCabe . Why Mission? An Article Published by Intercom Magazine. A Pastoral and Liturgical Resources for People in Ministry. Oct. 1998.P.11.

to be in touch with their experience of God and their history as people loved and saved by God.

The missionary must not impose his or her own agenda on the people they serve. The Church's mission is not to transport in new places the Church as it has existed in Western world. It is concerned with creating something new, by incarnating the Gospel among every people and every culture.

The concept which best conveys God's missionary agenda is the biblical concept of the reign of God. Michael McCabe put it thus

The coming reign of God was not only the central theme of Jesus' teaching; it was the event which determined all his actions; his table-fellowship with sinners and outcasts, his healings and exorcism, his forgiveness of sins etc. as manifested in Jesus' word and deeds, God's reign means good news for the poor, healing for the sick, and liberation for the enslaved and oppressed³⁸

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord”(Lk. 4:18 -19).

4.3 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HOMOSEXUALS.

4.3.1 The Church Reflection on Sex and Sexuality.

Catholics are the products of a long theological tradition. Over the centuries there has been careful reflection on human sexuality and sexual morality in the light of scripture. This has come a long way from the apostolic times to the present. Catholic scholars, saints, and pastoral

³⁸ Michael McCabe. *Mission Today : Towards a new Mission - Mission as Exploration and Transformation*. An article published in *Society of African Mission Bulletin*. No .105. June 1999. P.9

leaders have sought to understand, in the light of God's revealing word, the meaning of human sexuality. Nevertheless, we need to note that during this long history, errors have unquestionably been made; but history as we know is also a story of development in doctrine towards a clearer understanding of the nature of sexuality as revealed by God and uncovered by human reflection.

As the authors of *Catholic Sexual Ethics* put it;

The growth in the Church's understanding of human sexuality has not been haphazard but systematic, for it has been directed by an awareness of fundamental truth about human nature and destiny which are grounded in Scripture, proclaimed by the developing theological tradition.³⁹

Consequently, this tradition has always taught and teaches now that the union of man and woman in marriage is good, indeed holy. Also, that the virtue of chastity is of great importance for all persons, male and female, married and unmarried, so that they might fully have freedom of self-possession and not be taken over by unworthy sexual desires. Furthermore, it says that some sorts of sexual activity - fornication, adultery, contraception, and sodomy for instance are simply incompatible with the form of living appropriate to someone who has become one body with Christ through baptism, and whose body is a living tabernacle of God.

It will be an interesting venture to embark on a detailed history of the developing Catholic theological tradition on sex and sexuality. This will no doubt will take us back to the early Christian and Patristic thought, looking at what the early Church Fathers like St. Augustine of Hippo, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa etc said about the issue. The teaching of the Medieval theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure and others would have shown us their contribution and views. However, we shall be looking at what the present situation is,

³⁹ Ronald Lawler et al. *Catholic Sexual Ethics*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division. Huntington. 1985. P.31.

bearing in mind that it is based on reflection of what has been. Our focus thus will be on the Church's teaching on Homosexuality.

4.3.2 The Church Teaching on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics.

"This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body" (Gen. 2:24). The main objective of this sexual union was perceived to be the procreation and rearing of children. "God blessed them saying to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it" (Gen.1:28). These passages from the scripture, took Adam and Eve to be the prototypical couple symbolizing the divine purpose for human sexuality. In the encyclical of Pope Paul IV - *Humanae Vitae*, the Pope stressed the need for a genuine and proper reflection on the issue of marriage and life. " Married love particularly reveals its true nature and nobility when we realize that it takes its origin from God, who "is love", the Father "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named"⁴⁰ It went further saying, that marriage is far from being as a result of chance or the blind evolution of natural forces. But, rather that it is " The wise and provident institution of God the creator whose purpose was to effect in man His Loving design"⁴¹

In the letter to the Bishops of the Catholic church on the Pastoral care of Homosexual Persons, October 1,1986. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith call for " Special concern and pastoral attention should be directed toward those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that the living out of orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option. It is not"⁴² (No.3). The Sacred Congregation re- instates that, the Church, obedient to the

⁴⁰ Claudia Carlem. *The Papal Encyclicals 1958-1981*. The Pierian Press. U.S.A. 1990. P.225.

⁴¹ Ibid. P.225.

⁴² Congregation For The Doctrine of Faith. 1986. "Letters to The Bishops of Catholic Church on The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Person.

Lord who founded her and gave her the sacramental life, celebrates the divine plan of the living union of men and women in the sacrament of marriage. It is only in the marital relationship that the use of the sexual faculty can be morally good. A person engaging in homosexual behaviour therefore acts immorally.

To choose someone of the same sex for one's sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the creators sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complimentary union, able to transmit life, and so it thwarts the call to life of the form of self-giving which the gospel says is the essence of Christian living. This does not mean that homosexual persons are not often generous and giving of themselves, but when they engage in homosexual activity they confirm within themselves a disordered sexual inclination which is essentially self-indulgent. "As in every moral disordered, homosexual activity prevents one's own fulfilment and happiness by acting contrary to the creative wisdom of God. The Church, in rejecting erroneous opinions regarding homosexuality, does not limit but rather defends personal freedom and dignity realistically and authentically understand" (*cf. No.7*)⁴³

The aforementioned quotation states the Church stand on the attitude to homosexuals and homosexuality. The Congregation also states in the letter the recognition "of the distinction commonly drawn between the homosexual condition or tendency and individual homosexual actions. These were described as deprived of their essential and indispensable finality, as being "intrinsically disordered" and able in no case to be approved of (*cf. No.8, 4 - Declaration on Certain Questions concerning Sexual Ethics. Dec.29,1975*).

Given the Church position on homosexuality and homosexuals. How then are the pastor, pastoral workers, family members of homosexuals to react to them? What are the pastoral

⁴³ Ibid. No.7.

approaches that should be implemented? Is there any place for homosexuals in the Catholic Church? Can homosexuals live a happy life? These questions lead us to our next sub-heading.

4.4 PASTORAL CARE: HOMOSEXUALS.

Human sexuality itself is mysterious and tragic in the positive sense of the word tragedy, like the word cross. (Le Mystere Humain de la Sexualite).

God does not love someone any less simply because he or she is a homosexual. (The National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family says in a Statement titled "Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions For Pastoral Ministers. October 1, 1997).

Most priests approach the counselling of homosexual problems with mixed feelings. Lack of adequate information, fear, prejudices, mistrust and feeling of inadequacy makes the prospect an unsettling one. The priest and those involved in pastoral care are often as disposed as the next man to accept the stereotype which society has identified as " the homosexual type". Rape, pre-occupation with effeminacy, seduction of the innocent, perversion of morality - these, and similar associations, have prompted many priests to give short shift to a puzzled, struggling, unhappy soul who has dared to reveal the psychological and moral burden which he has hitherto carried alone.

Often the cold reception which many homosexuals received from an uninformed, ineffectual, and sometimes even hostile priest can lead one to understand why so many of them leave the Church in frustrated rebellion or deep despair. It is the characteristic of the homosexual persons to feel that society has abandoned them. It is easy therefore, for homosexuals to conclude that the Church has abandoned him too.

Pastors attitudes to homosexuals must change. We must not be fooled into thinking that this problem is relatively rare. We must not also tie it down to a Western pastoral issue. According

to the author of *Personality and Sexual Problem - in Pastoral Psychology, 1970*. Attitudes are changing towards the whole issue of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular.

Happy, social attitudes are changing somewhat. "Homosexuality" is not quite the dirty word it used to be. In certain cycles at least, it can be talked about quietly and dispassionately. With continued enlightenment of the public, some of the more repulsive, distorted and judgmental interpretations of the problem will disappear. ⁴⁴

This does not mean that the pastor should neglect the official Church teaching in regards to homosexuals. "Nevertheless, increasing numbers of people today, even within the Church, are bringing enormous pressure to bear on the Church to accept the homosexual condition as though it were not disordered and to condone homosexual activity...the Church's ministers must ensure that homosexual persons in their care will not be misled by this point of view, so profoundly opposed to the teaching of the Church" (No.8)⁴⁵ Thus, as it turns out that homosexual persons often approach the clergy and reveal their problem. One of the reasons is because they feel the priest will listen to them. If, however, the homosexual should fail to receive a sympathetic reception, which unfortunately often seems to be the case, he could easily lose all hope. Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* says "...pastors of souls must therefore exercise patience and goodness: but they are not allowed to render God's commandments null, nor to reduce unreasonably peoples responsibility"⁴⁶

So, what are the practical approaches to a homosexual person? What can one do when confronted by a homosexual?

⁴⁴ William C. Bier. *Personality and Sexual Problems*. New York. Fordham University Press. 1964. P.178.

⁴⁵ On t The pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons. Oct. 1986.

⁴⁶ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter. *Humanae Vitae*, 29: AAS 60 . 1968.P.501.

The priest needs to be better informed on psychological matters in general, and on this problem in particular. The seminary training should expose seminarians into pastoral counselling and psychology. Those priests who are already caught up in the parish work should find time to attend workshops, conferences so as to keep in- touch with what is happening. It is important for the priest as well to note that the person who engages in homosexual activity is not necessarily a homosexual. Some people engage in homosexual activity out of the living condition they find themselves, i.e transitional homosexuals. This set of people tend to live a heterosexual life after leaving this set up.

Those who counsel homosexuals must be personally and fervently convinced that, in the eyes of God, the homosexual is as capable of fruitful, chaste, and holy life to the same capacity, as the heterosexually- oriented person. Such a counsellor must be deeply persuaded that the homosexual can, through psychological help and sacramental guidance, avoid inevitable occasions of sin.

The priest counsellor can help homosexuals to regain a conviction of his own worth - to regain his self esteem. By stirring up new hope in the real possibilities of a chaste life, the homosexual can also strengthen his faith in the bounty of God's grace and his own ability to cooperate with it, and can thereby stir up a new and deep supernatural charity which can prompt him to lead a useful, altruistic, and devoted life at the service of God and of his neighbours.

The pastoral worker, minister and priest cannot go wrong in helping to minimize undue fear and guilt which is part of psychological mechanisms of most homosexuals. To stress the concept of mortal sin, damnation, the foulness of the occasions of sins, and like matter is more likely than to increase the number of falls. The confessor, therefore, should be careful not to instill more fear in already frightened human being.

The minister should maintain a list of agencies, community groups and counsellors or

other experts to whom they can refer homosexual persons or their parents and family members when they ask for specialized assistance. Recommended agencies that operate in a manner consistent with Catholic teaching.

Because of negative valuation of homosexuality many persons find it necessary to conceal not only their sexual behaviour but their orientation as well. Thus, one of the most painful and urgent issues confronting many homosexuals is the degree to which it may be possible to be frank about homosexuality with family members and with heterosexual friends and associates. Pastoral care may be helpful in facilitating mature judgement with respect to this issue. The pastor can help establish a support group or promote any existing ones for homosexuals and their parents. This would seek to help both parties to come in terms with the issue at hand.

Above all the priest must show the mercy of Christ to his troubled penitent. He must be accommodating and forgiving; he must not show amazement or disgust. He must assure the homosexual that he is not evil. He must help the homosexual person to accept the fact that something is wrong, that there is a block to natural desires for which he/she is often not responsible. He must convince his discouraged penitent that God loves him or her as much, and perhaps more, than the heterosexual oriented people around him. He must persuade the homosexual person that this tendency can be lived within a life of tranquil self-control and sublimation most pleasing to God and most meritorious for him who practices it. When the homosexual slip and falls, the priest can face this failure with the same patience, tolerance and readiness to help which he brings to other penitents. A true representative of his compassionate Lord, the priest can commend the struggling homosexual to the grace of the Church in a seventy-seven-fold extension of heaven's mercy.

4.5 GENERAL CONCLUSION.

So here we are. Who am I? Why am I what I am? At the beginning of this book I told you how I feel about people trying to find reasons for me. I am what I am, and I fully embrace that. I am human-much to the amazement of some people.

(Quoted from Being Different: The Autobiography of Jane Fry. Edited by Robert Bogdan).

As we round up this work, it's good to note certain ideas elucidated in this project. All along we have seen the whole conception of homosexuality, we looked at the 'world' of homosexuals - among the many other items treated. Furthermore, we plunge into the Scriptures to see how it treated the issue and how authors interpret the texts that has to do with homosexuality. Also, we try to reconcile the concept of mission with homosexuality. Exposing the idea that mission is mission to all - and an encompassing venture, that cover all.

More than before pastoral ministers and priests are faced with how and what to do when confronted by a homosexual person. This in my view is not the problem, but, rather, the problem is how to implement what their faith teaches and what they personally believe. Personally I believe that homosexual people are normal people in the strict sense of the word normal. They are like you and I, with lots of potential, strengths and weaknesses. Their sexual orientation is only what people believed differentiates them from heterosexual persons. Homosexual person therefore "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity"⁴⁷. They, as is true of every human being need to be nourished at many different levels simultaneously. This nourishment includes friendship, which is a way of loving and is essential to healthy human development as well as one of the richest possible human experiences. Friendship can and does thrive I believe outside genital sexual involvement.

There are countries who have legalised homosexual relationships. And, now people are

⁴⁷ The Catechism of The Catholic Church. Pauline Publication Africa. Nairobi.1994.P.543.

talking of homosexual marriage, i.e “Danny Kamau a Kenyan young man married to a 56 year old David White a London business man”⁴⁸. The ordination of homosexual ministers into religious life. The presence of homosexual ministers and priests in the Church. All these and many more other related issues rearing its head call for a thorough reflection on the part of the Church in my view. The traditional Catholic Church stand seems to echo two major points. First, it encourages the homosexual person to cooperate with God’s grace in order to live a chaste life. Secondly, it stresses the need for concentration on the person, not on the homosexual orientation itself. At the same time not forgetting that the Church frown at homosexual activity because it “prevents one’s own fulfilment and happiness by acting contrary to the creative wisdom of God”⁴⁹

As earlier stated, my hope is that ministers and priests would continue to educate themselves and to look for ways in which homosexual persons will not suffer unjust treatment because of their orientation. I would like to see in our teachings, pastoral care and public advocacy that we continue to strive to be faithful to the Church teaching on homosexuality. Moreover, that we uphold the values of marriage and family life, defend the basic and fundamental human rights of all and condemn violence, hatred, prejudices and bigotry directed against any person - including homosexuals.

Homosexuals on the other hand have an obligation, and therefore a right, to organize and attempt to enter into a dialogue with Church authorities. Those who have strayed out of the Church are welcome back in so far they are willing to cooperate with the grace of God that helps both heterosexual and homosexual persons. According to an authour “on the other hand, we must not fall into error of pan-religionism. *Gratia perficit naturam* is never apt here. There is

⁴⁸Sunday Standard Newspaper. Published by The Standard Limited. Nairobi, Kenya. August 13 editions. Front page “*The Muranga Boy and His British ‘Husband’*”

⁴⁹ On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual. Sacred Congregation for The Doctrine of Faith.

no magic quality to the genuine reformation of any life...”⁵⁰

As an African training to become a missionary priest. I see myself challenged to strike a balance between my traditional African values and the fledging contemporary sexual moral issues. Being brought up in a society that condemn outrightly same sex sexual relationships one is no doubt face to face with a dilemma. Nevertheless, the call for equal treatment, respect for human rights and the fight against any form of discrimination is a genuine one that must be uphold. The approach that I see fit in regards to this issue is that of a father in a family who sees to the welfare of his household. Encouraging both the good and the bad, showing tenderness, welcoming those who have stray back with an open arms and a listening ear. Readiness to help and to accept that we are all different and that someone’s sexual orientation cannot be used to define the person.

As concluding remarks, the concluding word of moral guidance to homosexuals by St. Augustine should be a hopeful and encouraging promise “God does not command the impossible, but in commanding advices you to do what you can and to pray for help to do what may seem impossible, and he gives you the help to make it possible”⁵¹.

I also share the same view with the authour of the book: *The Homosexual Question - Marc Oraison*, as a concluding note.

I hope my final points may be a wide open window, bringing light and fresh air to a subject that has been hidden away. Through the faith of Christ, heterosexual men and women know that life is an ambivalent experience, and that they must walk through life with a sense of fundamental insufficiency. Through faith, homosexual men and women know that they participate in this same journey with an even

⁵⁰ William C. Bier. Op. Cit. P. 192

⁵¹ (*De Natural et Gratia*, C.43.so (CSEL 60.270) Quoted in “*Critical Sexual Issues*” edited by Donald G. McCarthy et al.

more radical awareness of human failure. Together, as brothers and sisters, we all follow the way of the cross"⁵²

4.6 Extract From A Gay Man's Diary.

A text from a gay person's personal diary (Brian Mcnaught) about why he likes being gay. *" I will like to share with you a selection from my book .A **Disturbed Peace** , about why I like being gay. Too often, in our attempt to communicate the pain of growing up, we forget to say that we also celebrate our homosexuality. This selection helps point that out. It is called **" I LIKE IT"**.*

I LIKE IT.

The young medical student finally blurted out the question which had been gnawing at him. "Do you ever regret being a gay?"

"No," I said with a growing smile. " Sometimes I regret being so totally identified with my sexual orientation, but I never regret being gay".

"Wouldn't you really rather be straight?" asked one Jewish talk show host. "Would you rather be Christian?" I asked.

"Think of all the hostility you face," commented one black woman. "Because of that, wouldn't you prefer being heterosexual?"

"Who's telling who about hostility?" I queried. "How much would it take before you wished you were white?"

As supportive as they might become, many straight people have a lot of difficulty thinking of homosexuality as an intrinsic part of a person's psychological make up. Even if they can be convinced that gay people didn't choose to be gay, they still need to hear us admit we would rather be like them. I like being gay. I like knowing there is something very unique and

⁵² Marc Oraison. Op.Cit. P.132

even mysterious about me which separates me from most of the rest of the world. I like knowing that I share a special secret with a select group of men and women who lived before me and with those special few who will follow.

I like walking at life's edge as a pioneer; as an individual who must learn for himself the meaning of relationship, love of equals, sexuality and morality. Without the blessing of the Church and society. I like knowing that if I settle into a particular frame of thought, it is because I have found it appropriate and not because I was raised to believe that's the way things must be.

I like knowing that I can go anywhere in the world and meet someone who will smile that knowing smile which instantly says "Yes, I know; me too. Isn't it nice to be alone? Hang in there." It is a twinkle and a smile which results not from being white or male Catholic or American or African. It is a secret smile which only gay men and lesbian exchange.

I like exchanging that knowing smile with waiters in Galveston, flight attendants in Terre Haute, theatre ushers in Detroit, salespeople in Boston and sun bathers in Sarasota. I like to give and receive those smiles at Mass, at lectures, in department stores, at the Laundromat and on the street. I like the feeling I'm not alone.

I like believing the studies which indicates gay folk are generally smarter, more creative and more sensitive than non-gay folk. It makes me feel 'chosen'. I like knowing that a gay man's dinner party will usually be more artistic and that a gay disco will generally be more fun.

I like knowing that there is far less class division to be found at most gay parties. Janitors and lawyers and truck drivers and librarians are bound to unknowingly bump elbows.

I get a kick out of knowing that anti-gay people are probably wearing clothes designed by a gay person, living in a home decorated by a gay person, attending a gay play performed by a gay person and participating in a Sunday service celebrated by a gay person.

I laugh when I think of anti-gay men cheering gays on the football field and learning about other scores from a gay sportscaster. I especially love the thought of anti-gay Catholics praying to gay saints.

I like being gay for all of these and many more reasons. Primarily, though, I like being

gay because it is an essential aspect of who I am ... and I like myself.

(Extract from the book: Homosexuality and the Catholic Church. Edited by Jeanine Gramick. Cf. Bibliography).

4.7 Some Basic Terms.

- Homosexuality** - *Sexual orientation towards members of one's own sex.*
- Homophobia** - *Intense dislike, hatred or fear of homosexuals and homosexuality (also adjective: "homophobic").*
- Homosexual Behaviour** - *Engaging in sexual acts with members of the same sex (but not necessarily seeing oneself as having a homosexual identity - see identity).*
- Homosexual** - *A person who is sexually attracted to members of the same sex - used both as noun ('he is a homosexual') and an adjective (he is 'homosexual')- see gay.*
- Gay-Homosexual** - *(as adjective: 'a gay Kenyan'), or as a noun in plural ('gays'). Sometimes used only for male homosexuals, as in the expression ' gay and lesbian'- see lesbian.*
- Lesbian** - *A woman who is attracted sexually to other women.*
- Bisexuality** - *Attraction to, and or engaging in sexual acts with, members of both one's own and the opposite sex.*
- Sodomy** - *A concept used to cover all forms of sex considered perverse; sometimes used for male homosexuality, sometimes for anal sex, sometimes for sexual act with animal.*
- Bestiality** - *Having sexual intercourse with an animal.*
- AIDS** - *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a sexual transmitted disease which is transmitted by the HIV virus.*
- Gay and Lesbian Community** - *Groups of gays and lesbians for whom their gay or lesbian identity*

central to their personality, and who have together with others for social, counselling or lobbying purposes.

Identity

- The sense a person has of her / his own individual nature and personality and of the way this leads the individual to identify with specific groups of people (for instance, by way of language group, nationality or sexual orientation). Most people see themselves as having a set of different identities, for example as woman and both African and coloured and teacher. Acknowledging a gay or homosexual identity can mean identifying as a member of a gay or lesbian community- see community.

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