

NC 0021037 4



**National College of Art and Design,
Faculty of Fine Art, Department of Painting.**

**A GAY CHRISTIANITY: DECONSTRUCTING THE
CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE OF COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY.**

BY: COLUM KEATING

**Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complimentary Studies
in Candidacy for the Degree of B.A. in Fine Art 1996.**

Acknowledgements.

**I would like to thank my personal tutor, Gerry Walker,
for his assistance and guidance.**

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Introduction.

The issue of how Christian Churches are dealing with their increasingly visible gay population is one of the most contentious issues in Christianity today. More and more gay Christians are no longer putting up with the exclusion of an enormous piece of their personhood from their dealings with other Christians. Many committed gay couples are attempting to claim their place in the Church, often confronted by, amongst others, those who would be consistently 'liberal' in regard sexual liberation of exclusively heterosexual issues. This is an issue that stirs up great emotion, often becoming overwhelmed by stereotype, myth and clouded prejudice when attempts at rational discussion occur.

Some gay Christian commentators cite Biblical same-sex relationships, the best known being that of David and Jonathan and (whatever kind of relationship that existed between) Jesus and the 'Apostle he loved' as 'justification' for the intimate love of gay lifestyles. However, most gay Christians will not need these Biblical citations nor my thesis nor the Church to know they are loved by God and that their lifestyle is right for them.

At Sunday Church Services and Masses everywhere, prayers are consistently said for those effected by varieties of hatred and oppression as well as those who are confused, 'down and out' and suicidal; but, excluded from these prayers, are those

who suffer at the hands of the 'holy hatred' of gayness, the oppression of homophobia and those young gays and lesbians who are in the majority within their age group suicide category.

In this paper, I wish to expose the justification of this above behaviour and attitude and all other forms of anti-gay 'Christian' behaviour and argument to be unjustified and invalid.

In Chapter One, I will expose the weakness of the primary Biblical verses used in arguments which hold homosexual activity to be deviant.

In Chapter Two, I will expose the inconsistencies in Christian Tradition in regards homosexuality and will show the rigid heterosexist Christian discourses on sexuality to be fundamentally inconsistent with the living teachings of Jesus of Nazareth

And in Chapter Three, I will define contemporary eschatology's exclusion of the gay and expose the condemning of homosexuality to be fundamental in the maintaining of the patriarchal monoliths that are the contemporary Christian institutions.

I write this paper as a Catholic believer, with the intention of it articulating a foundational argument upon which the pro-gay half of Christian debate on the issue can develop their argument, particularly (if the chance ever occurs) in the Catholic Church.

Chapter One

Deconstructing the Primary Biblical Verses.

Previous to the 'Wolfenden Committee Report', 1957, there had been no solid, commonly used word pertaining to 'homosexuality' within the Bible text.¹ The Bible had undergone translation on quite a number of occasions since it's birth; and although this freshened it up giving new vernacular expression, it also obscured the deeper original meaning and intentions.

Many hermeneutic efforts have taken advantage of this obscurity, proceeding "under the weight of a variety of distorted prejudices - from homophobic rejection to homophilic acceptance" (Monti, 1995, p.105); but of course no homophilic acceptance has existed since the days of St. Paul's letters, and never has an official homophilic church hermeneutic existed.² Homophobic rejection and assumption has, however, abounded mostly within conservative Biblical publications, where commentators and translators write very plainly of the depraved homosexual content of the relevant verses.³ Other moderate publications are quiet and imply, on some occasions non judgementally, homosexual endeavours. Peter Coleman has said the word 'homosexual'

occurs only once in the New English Bible of 1970, not at all in the Jerusalem Bible 1966, nor in the Common Bible, and ecumenical edition of the Revised Standard Version published in 1973. It is found in the Good News Bible of 1976; in the New International Version of 1979, where the equivalent phrases is 'to have sex with', the homosexual meaning made clear by the context (Coleman, 1989, pp.38-39).

The 'Good News Bible' and the 'New International Version', affiliated to the new wave of 'Conservative Evangelicals', contain the most explicit convictions of the Homosexual nature of the activities within the 'suspicious texts'; complimenting

these texts with the relatively casual use of the historically loaded terms, 'pervert', and 'perversions'.

The nine biblical references to homosexuality, or implied homosexuality, collectively constitute a brick at the heart (a strategic position) of the heterosexist conceptual wall, the frontier between meritorious existence and damned depravity; if we take the brick away or weaken it, the wall collapses. I will proceed to take this brick away, uncovering their accurate meaning and exposing the justifications of institutional hatred of the 'sins' of Gay and Lesbian lovers to be based on very weak biblical evidence.

The following is a critical evaluation of what are universally considered to be the primary 'offending' texts.

Genesis 1:10

Familiar to all persons aware of Christian, Islamic and Jewish indignation towards homosexuality is the phrase 'Sodom and Gammorah'. It is commonly believed that God destroyed the City of Sodom for it was full of 'homosexual vice'; and in the popular mind the terms 'Sodomite' and 'Sodomy', just as they relate to the legal term for anal intercourse are most associated with God's wrath against those who deviate from 'nature'. Jeffrey Weeks points out "the term Sodomite, as Foucault has put it, was a temporary aberration" (Weeks, 1985, p. 90).

In the Old Testament Book of Genesis, the catastrophe which over-took the two main cities of Southern Palestine are events which occurred within the long narrative of Abraham, the 'Saga of Abraham'. Coleman explains

The lives of the Patriarches in those chapters have been called 'Sagas' by which is meant not merely records in a factual sense, but the expression in literary form of how people 'think of their history' (Coleman, 1989, p. 42).

In this story the Lord is about to destroy the city of Sodom and wills Abraham to visit the town and see if the destruction is justified. Abraham intercedes for the city and the Lord agrees not to destroy it if 10 good men are to be found there. So the Lord departs with 2 angels for Sodom in order to find these men and gains refuge for the night in Lott's (Abraham's nephew) eastern hospitality.

However, that night after supper the townsmen gather at Lott's door and a riotous scene occurs. The men call on Lott 'to bring them out' so that 'we can have intercourse with them' (Genesis 19:3-8).⁴ Lott replies, 'no my friends, do not be so wicked' and offers his 2 virgin daughters instead; but at that instance the Lord gives Lott and his family the chance to escape and proceeds to destroy the city.

D.S. Baileys' 1955 indepth linguistic study of the translation of the Hebrew expression '*yadah*' meaning 'to know', led him to conclude that the mob were exercising their 'civic right to know the purpose of these visitors', for they could have been spies and 'these were dangerous times'.⁵ The traditional interpretation of *yadha*, 'coital carnal knowledge' was valid but Bailey argues it to be unlikely for out of 945 occurrences of it's use, only 10 times did it relate to sex, all of which

resulted in pregnancy. Baileys' insights, however, have not fared well outside gay apologetics; a broader deconstruction is needed; we need to focus on Lott's failed attempt at making heterosexual the potential offence and the outcome of his failed endeavour.

Lott offered his daughters out of what he saw as his moral obligation to preserve the Lord. This offering would have been somewhat of an over reaction if all they asked "was a check on the bona fides of the visitors" (Coleman, 1989, p. 46). It is clear the men were definitely intent on the ritual of buggery for it seems the dismissed option of raping the female was of inferior value. Perhaps this dismissal was, for these men, a quantitative issue; the quantity and distribution of two people versus three; but more likely is that anything other than penile/anal penetration with a man would be insufficient for the purposes of the men of Sodom (not necessarily assuming homosexual lust). We must remember that each and every man in the society was struck blind, as punishment, and that in an average society, at most, 15-20% could have intended on engaging in these acts out of sexual lust.⁶ It is most realistic that the men were engaging in buggery for humiliation and debasement purposes, a common ritual preformed against defeated enemies in the Middle East. This buggery was performed for final humiliation purposes and was a lustless act. It is clear that, collectively, all the men warranted God's wrath for this depraved ritual, which was a total breach of the Sodomite people's sacred religious duty, hospitality.

The Yahwehs develop, within the story of Sodom of the 'Saga of Abraham', the growing relationship between Abraham and his God; the Sodom text is no more

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2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend in the relationship between the variables studied.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It highlights the potential applications of the research in various fields and the need for further investigation in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a conclusion and summarizes the key points of the study. It reiterates the importance of the research and the need for continued efforts in this field.

6. The sixth part of the document includes a list of references and a bibliography. It cites the works of other researchers in the field and provides a comprehensive overview of the literature related to the study.

7. The seventh part of the document contains a list of appendices and supplementary materials. It includes additional data, charts, and tables that are not included in the main body of the document.

8. The eighth part of the document provides a final summary and a list of key findings. It highlights the most important results of the study and provides a clear and concise overview of the research.

than a tool to illustrate this.⁷ This developing relationship within the texts also gives the Yahwehs the opportunity to develop themes of inhospitality and wickedness. In all of this they are initiating the underlined theme of the Bible, 'the just shall live by faith' and the 'universal justness of God'. The sin of Sodom as termed by the rest of the Bible, including Jesus of Nazareth, is solely a sin of inhospitality.

Tony Bowden argues that the breach of hospitality which is traditionally interpreted in the passages of the '*Talmud*' and '*Deuterocanonicals*', had, overtime, become homosexualized as a sin through interpretation of it's commentary in the '*Palestinian Pseudepigrapha*'.⁸ Bowden shows that the issue in the Pseudepigrapha was primarily the fact that they wanted to change 'the order of nature' in the desire to molest the visiting angels rather than any homosexual intent; but alas, this Pseudopigrapha conversation about the 'order of nature' became the starting block for later commentators minds to run allegoriously and metaphorically wild, as was the case with the Inter-testamental writer Philo, who greatly influenced the first Christians.

The sin of Sodom was solely the sin of racist humiliation of others and the breach of the sacred religious duty, hospitality.

Leviticus 18 and 20

In Babylon as Israel's temple stood in ruins in Canaanite occupied land, the priestly traditions of the temple were, for the first time, being adapted within Israel's social systems. The authors (two separate authors) wrote two verses, both constituting

legal codes, which apparently prohibited homosexuality, like as if God had spoke such commands from the sky; however, linguistic and social deconstruction tells us a much deeper story.

The first prohibition within the text is a command which Moses made to the exiled Israelites at Sanai in which he imposes on a social level a strict pure/impure strategy of oppositions, all of which happened to be once significant to temple purity and could continue it's uniqueness outside the temple, now in the nomadic social life of these exiled people. These were oppositions in relation to food, the body, death, and the feminine body. Julia Kristeva makes it clear that this was "an imposition of a strategy of identity which in all strictness is that of Monotheisms" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 94).⁹ The second of these prohibitions is post exilic, it is much less original, it is not inspired, it has no demanding urgency and seems more likely to be a call for non-transgression of an existing sin.

Hebrew Linguistic studies of the "Thou shall not lie with a man as with a woman" of Moses' demand reinforces this notion of a 'Strategy of Identity'. These prohibitions were tools in achieving a separate identity, 'a separate speaking being' or 'society'. Within the Moses text, *zimmah* is the word used for general wickedness related to the impurity of non-homosexual acts and *to'ehab*, which in it's most accurate sense is an utterance closer in meaning to idolatrous wickedness, is used in relation to not only homosexuality, but masturbation, bestiality, sex during the menstrual period, and specific practices related to the Canaanite tradition of ritual temple prostitution. In this strategy of identity a monothestic identity was constituting itself against its erotic other.

Leviticus 18 is a demand of Moses and is emphatic and blunt; there is a death penalty for offenders. In contrast the post exilic Leviticus 20 addresses a different generation centuries later; 'if you lie with a man' emphasises conditionalness, an element of individual conscience and free will; it's nearly 'defilement from within' suggesting, you impose the death penalty on yourself. It is evident that a fixed irreproachable, unquestioned monothestic subjectivity was firmly in place or in other words, 'taboo' is firmly established.¹⁰ This taboo, like many others, was inseparable from the morality of this society.

The authors of Leviticus 20 saw it appropriate to elaborate to it's subjects on the kind of offences they were asked not to commit, a fact which has been consistently over-looked in institutional theology. The nature of homosexuality in Moses' Leviticus 18 was an unspecified *to'ebah*; it was outright abomination against religious truth and was identified as such to forge new social identity. Centuries later, the 'free willed', 'conscience informing' Leviticus 20 subdivides *to'ebah* into *anomia*, a word related to violations of law or justice and *bdelugma*, a word related to infringements on ritual purity; in this context homosexuality is termed *bdelugma*. Kristeva maintains that "through sustained abomination (of which homosexuality is *bdelugma*) Judaism parts the ways with sacrificial religions" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 95).

Using *bdelugma* in the elaboration of this taboo, the author implies that they should abstain from such homosexual acts as part of their distinction from other sacrificial erotic based temple tribes/societies who in some cases, and this is where emphasis on parting the ways is found, practiced *bdelugma* homosexual ritual

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prostitution. Deuteronomy 23:18 and Kings 14:24 gives weight to this view, where *qudeshim* - the cult prostitute, is said to be this version of *to'ehab*.

The offence of engaging in 'homosexual activity' is more specifically and primarily, the offence of cultic ritual prostitution (heterosexual/homosexual). Such prohibition belonged to a system of taboos of a particular kind which existed when, as Kristeva would argue, a patriarchal social structure was constituting itself against 'maternal other'.

The New Testament

In the New Testament the 3 verses traditionally used in condemning homosexual activity are found in St. Paul's epistles to the 3 great churches of the day, the Corinthian Church, the Roman Church and the Church of Timothy.

The early reformist, conversionist Christian Church had a zeal and an exuberance which appealed to those "oppressed and wearied by the prevailing decadence" (Coleman, 1989, p. 73); a decadence of a pagan morality which they, both Gentile and Jew, regarded as a degenerative 'pop-Hellenism', lacking all the nobility if it's original Athenian precepts. Those potential Christians which were not directly oppressed were informed of this decadence through the lurid writings of the '*Satyricon*' which illustrated the activities of brothels, male gymnasia, sex slavery; and also the customs of pederasty which were considered praiseworthy and normal amongst this prevalent homophilia.¹¹ These converts and potential converts were delighted to assert their coming of self consciousness in adopting a radical repugnance of this 'idoltrous behaviour' and its identity. The zealous and

evangelical alternative lifestyle which seemed to be in the right place at the right time was that of St. Paul's Christian vision which preached the new brand of morality of the gospels along with his own sexual morality, a morality of the revived Old Covenant values of monogamy, chastity and fidelity.

1 Corinthians 6:9

If we want to understand the precise connotation of the verses concerning homosexual acts in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Timothy 1:10, we have to over-come the difficulty of the notorious translation of the two Greek words '*arsenokoitia*' and '*malakoi*'.

Malakoi pertains to softness, as in clothing that is soft to touch. Aristotle refers to it as unrestrained bodily pleasures; or moral weakness in sexual terms. The synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Luke terms it as soft living in contrast to asceticism (with no sexual implication). Metaphorically amongst the Greeks this meant he (male) who plays a passive role in anal intercourse or catamites but as a word on it's own it does not necessarily relate to specific homosexual indulgence; Catholic teaching traditionally uses it as a word for masturbation and in Modern Greek it is used as a derogatory term the equivalent of which in the English language is the term 'wanker'.¹² Interestingly it is not used in Paul's reference to Sodom in Romans 9:29 nor is it, as a homosexual label, to be found anywhere else in the Bible.

Arsenokoitia sexualizes *malakai*. As a word it is not found anywhere else in pre-Paulian etymology.¹³ It is a compound word, quite literally the compound, 'male-

fuck'. Paul uses it in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Timothy 1:10 and it is usually suggested by scholars that Paul coined the phrase. In the second century Aristide used the word to denote "an obsessive corrupter of boys" (Bowden, 1994, p.9). John Boswell surmised that right up to the fourth century *arsenokoitia* and *malakai* were regarded as male prostitutes but were later confused with a variety of words.¹⁴ By far the strongest evidence against using either of these words as referring unambiguously to all homosexual acts, is seen in the Early Church Fathers use (lack of use) of them in relation to these acts. The fact is, the Church never used them at all. Even the most notorious Church historian in this regard, Peter Damian, whose native tongue happened to be Greek and who insistently sites this Corinthian passage as primarily condemning homosexuality found he could not use either of these words in relation to mere homosexuality.

Studies will continue on the meaning of these words but the very fact that there is so much discussion and debate over there meaning, makes it difficult to use them definitely in relation to all homosexual activity.

Romans 1:18-32

The different Biblical translations of Romans 1:18-32 all point to the same thing, women who have given up or exchanged natural acts (often said to be intercourse) for unnatural acts. Essentially they all seem, for the reader, to be pointing to the same thing - a concern with the natural.

Lesbian mutual masturbation via a fake phallus was an activity Paul would have been aware of through his encounters with Greek culture; however this does not

necessarily mean he is talking about lesbianism here. It seems just as valid, if not more valid, to suggest that he is slating heterosexual anal intercourse or oral sex.

The key phrase in this verse is '*para phuisin*' where '*para*' is against and '*phuisin*' is against nature. A more conservative exegesis may argue a kind of natural law polemic using the more abstract aspects of the Greek philosophical approach to nature.¹⁵ At this point this polemic must be discounted for Jewish culture viewed nature in terms of Jewish tradition and Jewish precepts, that is, rules of conduct. Paul writes within these conceptual bounds and had never written otherwise. One brief illustration of this is that the story of Sodom is seen as changing the order of nature; the sacred custom of hospitality was in this case nature.

Paul also talks of men's 'lust for each other'. Here there has been, and is, a weighty conservative argument that he is expressly not talking about issues of pederasty or ritual male prostitution. There is a conviction that he is condemning bisexuality but this is argued from too many modern presuppositions. Paul's faith and his instructions to others follow lines of belief that 'disorders' like homosexuality (and bisexuality) would be wiped out on 'true conversion'. In this context against nature as Paul and Jewish society would term it was not against a personal nature (or personal essence) as some gay apologetics like John Boswell would see it. Indeed, linguistically '*kata*' would seem most appropriate in this context if some sense of 'natural law' or personal nature was an intrinsic part of Paul's argument.

Idolatry and homosexual/bisexual activity were one in the same. We know Paul is talking in these terms because of his use of '*planaw*' (such perversions or going astray from religious truth), illustrated in the examination of the Corinthian texts. For Paul idolatry is the 'root tap of evil' and he brings up this issue of idolatry in his address to the Gentile audience at the start of his letter, leaving the Jewish audiences uncertainties over sin until later.¹⁶ Knowing homosexuality's exalted status in pagan society was abhorred by a Jewish society who felt it to be symbolic of the decadence of a world that they regarded as decaying, Paul proceeded to lay out his own notion of living in accordance with God's Kingdom and his religious truth. His judgement and condemnation of *arsenokoitia* and *malakoi* satisfies the Jewish fears of potential tolerance on the admittance of Pagan Gentiles and he satisfied also a certain number of Gentiles whose Stoic gurus would have held the same abhorrence. Paul simply

adapted a standard piece of Jewish propaganda familiar to all his readers and unquestioned at this time..... Paul's condemnation could be taken as a typical piece of preachers polemic against the sins of the day (Coleman, 1989, p.77).

Homosexuality/idolatry was the intersecting unifying point, an issue upon which Jews and many Gentiles agreed. For it's unifying purposes it was placed at the commencement of his letter which was not only to judge a long list of vices but was to contain comments on religious cultural issues which were in some cases contentious to Jewish converts and in other cases contentious to Gentile converts. It is imperative to note that Paul is not addressing morality in talking about homosexuality (whatever form it takes), it is instead 'unseemly' or 'dishonouring' behaviour for a Christian - the real climatic moral condemnation within the letter

comes in the long list of vices at the end of the chapter. Paul is only using 'homosexuality' as the launching point of his argument.

1 Timothy 1:10

In this text the word *arsenokoitia* is used as in Corinthians. 'Homosexual perverts' is the general translation and it is posited amongst condemned gross offences of the Decalogue Categories; offences like matricide, kidnap and perjury.¹⁷

This letter has however major chronological difficulties and obscurities. Scholars have outlined four difficulties, vocabulary incompatibilities, biographical difficulties, theological difficulties and difficulties pertaining to the type of Church organisation described. Traditionally scholars have understood the text to be of 55CE but contemporary scholars claim to have enough evidence to place it in the 2nd Century CE. It is believed that if the letter was of 55CE it was probably dictated by Paul to his secretary who was free to use his own words to some extent. It was, however, a 2nd Century CE letter and it is agreed that the unknown author simulated apostolic authenticity with use of St. Paul's linguistic characteristics which included an unsympathetic use of the word '*arsenokoitia*' which as we have already seen was coined by Paul in Corinthians.

For this reason 1 Timothy 1:10 does not in itself introduce anything additional in content or context to the general Paulian directives.

Summary

The direct Biblical evidence for condemning homosexuality is quantitatively weak and in no way does any of the suspect verses seem to be referring to any kind of behaviour which takes place in the lifestyles of monogamous (Christian/non-Christian) gay and lesbian lovers of modern times. Indeed, comfort can be taken in the fact that throughout the entirety of the Gospels, Jesus said nothing on the matter.

However, to engage in a hermeneutic deconstruction of Biblical verses on homosexuality alone and claim the invalidity of anti-homosexual arguments would be “a form of ‘biblicalism’ not dissimilar from the fundamentalist activity of ‘relative biblicalism’” (Monti, 1995, p. 99).¹⁸

As to prevent this, the rest of this paper looks at the history of the Christians discourse of compulsory heterosexuality; and its constituency in the broader argument about sex in our contemporary existence, our modern/post-modern existence.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

¹ 'The Wolfenden Committee Report' held the results of a survey in which Christians for the first time expressed their attitudes to 'homosexuality' and the 'Bible'.

² Joseph Monti used homophilia as a generic name of those who suggest same sex relationships to be on a "higher" and "purer" plane for they are less complicated than gendered differences - he further notes that only in this very limited sense does homophilia parallel homophobia.

³ 'Conservative Evangelicals' are commonly known as Christian Fundamentalists (introduction to James Barrs book, '*Fundamentalism*', 1985).

⁴ New English Version Bible, 1970.

⁵ D.S. Bailey submitted this study to the Wolfenden Committee in 1957.

⁶ Although I am illustrating a point by using a modern scientific statistic I consider this valid at theologians agree that the Yahweh would have known that not all the men of this society could have been driven by homosexual lust.

⁷ The Yahwehs were the authors of this 'saga'.

⁸ An argument developed in 1994 within 'Toward a Christian Ethic on Homosexuality', Tony Bowden's, recently published, dissertation presented to Queens University of Belfast as part of the Bachelor of Theology Degree 1994.

Definitions: The Talmud is a Jewish religious book.

The Deuterocanonicals, like the Palestinian Pseudepigrapha are books of the Old Testament and New Testament, whose full canonical status is not universally acknowledged in Christianity.

⁹ See pp. 90-112, '*The Semiotics of Biblical Abomination*' in '*The Powers of Horror*', Julia Kristeva, 1982.

¹⁰ In '*The Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*', by Robert Winthrop. Winthrop explains that taboo, whether observed or transgressed "is symbolically significant and emotionally charged, that which is taboo is forbidden, not merely by the law, but through tradition..... from the perspective of the given culture..... both act and avoidance are transcendentally necessary".

¹¹ '*The Satyricon*' was, at this time, a popularly read Jewish book which contained writings that focused heavily on the idolatrous activities of pagans.

¹² Malakai is used in the 1967 Greek Catholic Catechism as a term for masturbation.

¹³ Etymology is that part of philology which traces the origins of words; the derivation or history of any word.

¹⁴ John Boswell devoted 12 pages of an appendix to the usage and meaning of the word arsenokoitia in his book '*Christianity, social tolerance and homosexuality*', 1980.

¹⁵ Exegesis is the science or art of literary interpretation particularly of the Bible. The Greek philosophical approach to nature involved the notion of a body/soul axis of two dimensions which contrasted heavily with the more unified cultural notions of nature in the Hebrew tradition.

¹⁶ p. 76, '*Gay Christians: A Moral Dilemma*', 1989 by Peter Coleman.

Coleman paraphrases the theologian T.W. Manson in saying, "the two counts in the indictment are idolatry and immorality, idolatry being the root tap of evil".

¹⁷ The Decalogue Categories was a listed religious expansion on inappropriate behaviour which violated the Ten Commandments.

Matricide definition: the killing of a mother.

¹⁸ Biblicalism is an activity of using all methods of contemporary exegesis to discover the original meaning of a text and then to reconstruct that without any further argument.

Chapter Two

Inconsistencies in Church History and Church Teaching.

Post Paulian theology was allegorical in a way which seems ridiculous to us today. Typical of this period was the unique of the Apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas (now irrelevant in Christianity) which linked Levitical prohibitions on eating hares (which were believed to grow an annual extra anus) to the tendency to desire homosexual anal sex. Intersecting with this kind of theology was a radical growth in asceticism and montanism which in a prevailing sense of immanent widespread disorder and doom became the driving force behind the Christianization of the Roman Empire; almost in the same manner in which radical right wing philosophies brought Nazism to power in 1930's Germany.¹

At this time austere 'Councils of Perfection' were in session establishing ideals which excited Church leaders such as St. Jerome and Anthony of the Monastery, who in their ministries advocated apathy toward emotion and a sexless ideal in the concept of holiness and purity. Precaution against temptation was paramount, even monks were prohibited from sharing a donkey. Springboarding from this austere age was the theology of the former Gnostic Manichaeist, Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430).²

The most significant offering of Augustine, the Christian Platonist, was his introduction of a semiotic framework to biblical interpretation, "freeing the reader of Biblical texts both from crude literalism and the dangers of arbitrary allegorizations" (Jeanrond, 1994, p. 23). However, in stifling one (irrational) evil he instituted another (rational) evil, that of Manichaeist patriarchal Christian male privileged 'signifier'.

Augustine had an obsessive concern with the 'sliminess of the flesh', (that is his own flesh) and postulated the body to be the locus for all that threatens our attempts at control. What John E. Fortunato calls the 'Orthodox Heresy, Disembodiment' was to be found at the heart of his theology.³ Augustine embraced a radical misogyny and chauvinism, seen in his huge book '*The City of God*' Womanhood, which he blamed for all his own particular 'wicked ways', was responsible for inflaming his lust. Also, the condition of sex acts with woman, needed institutional legitimation with only procreation absolving blame. The validity of sexuality was, with the firmly acceptance of Augustines Theology, was entrenched within a solely heterosexual realm.

Augustines patriarchal legacy was the Gnostic institutionalization of concupiscence, a negative essentialism, avowing the murky otherness of woman; and the legitimation of sex acts by procreation alone.⁴ This legacy was to inspire Thomas Aquinas, some 850 years later, to develop his essentialist heterosexist 'Natural Law' theories within his '*Summa Theologicae*' - the cornerstone of modern Catholic theology and sex dogma.

Nevertheless, in the post Augustine - pre Aquinas era church attitudes towards homosexual acts reached a sphere of mildly subdued tolerance. After about 3-4 hundred years, Augustines ridged concepts went into decline with the introduction of a restrained church appeasement to the 'secular' cultural phenomenon of 'romantic love'. The early medieval period saw urban societies growing up as well as homosexual subcultures. Notable practising homosexual figures of the time were Richard the Lionheart, St. Aelred and Archbishop de Tours. Also, a

mild tolerance existed in the most significant church locations in Europe.⁵ In 1102 a bill at the Council of London condemning homosexuality was spurned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Anselm who couldn't understand the idea of such a bill. Around the same time, Peter Damian called for extreme punishment for homosexual offenders but was reprimanded by Pope Leo IX, who didn't even want 'offending' clerics to be removed from office. These were also years, where a moral apathy existed toward a sexual side in the relationship between master and student in the monastic life. However, this tolerance was on a gradual decline.

The Penitentials, the comprehensive guide to penance for sins, although not making homosexual acts a blanket mortal sin, offered quite a strict penance which varied from the light 20 days of prayer for sodomy between two boys to the heavier 20 years for sodomy involving an Archbishop. However, a couple of decades after these Penitentials, the city of Jerusalem fell to the Moslems and the Christians were defeated in the last battles of the 'Crusades' (1270 A.D.), and a certain group of scapegoats came about. Heretics were found, Jews, Muslims, gays; inquisitions were established and the dark ages had begun. The church, in a reactionary formula reinforced and adapted the Augustinian theology within Thomas Aquinas' systematic theology, *Summa Theologicae*.

Natural Law, Procreation and the Virgin Mother.

Thomas' undertaking marks the period in theological hermeneutics where the "sacred biblical texts were increasingly reduced to providers of proofs for speculative theological thought ventures" (Jeanrond, 1994, p. 30); thought

ventures which were entirely speculative, male, heterosexually assumptive and patriarchally bias.

The massive work '*Summa Theologicae*' yields a sexual ethic which empowered the heterosexist body of Christianity with a seemingly perpetual armour of 'reasoned' and 'rational' natural law. In this book, Thomas presents his academic sexual morality amalgamating a lot of Augustinian Gnosticism and sex morality and Aristotle's precepts that 'pathology resulted from lust filled sexual activity'. He once said it was impertinent for most people to criticize Aristotle. His work breaks with the hyper ascetic Cartesian Dualism of trouncing the body while purifying the spirit, placing a little more affirmative thought on the body and taking seriously the theological fact that at the end of time the spirit would assume it's resurrected earthly body.⁶ A measure of the intensity of scholastic debate surrounding the conceptualization of the body is most explicit in the great debates over the physical resurrection of Christ's circumcised earthly foreskin.⁷ Aquinas made the body sacred and proceeded to grid and fix the naturalness of it's function and to glorify procreation in a way that is neither appealing to women or persons of homosexual orientation.

Aristotle's discourse on sexuality was of great influence on Aquinas'. Homosexuality, for Aristotle, possessed a lack of self restraint at its source. All sex, when lustfully desired, led to pathology. As Michel Foucault puts it

Aristotle explains that for the natural desires that are common to everyone the only offences that one can commit are quantitative in nature; they pertain to 'the more' (*to pleion*); so that natural desire only consists in satisfying needs; 'to eat or drink whatever offers itself

till one is surfeited is to exceed the natural amount [*tōi plēthei*]
(Foucault, 1985, p. 45).

Through his observations made on homosexual activities of animals which were denied access to their existing opposite sex mates, Aristotle postulated homosexual activity to be a species of bestiality as well as a species of lust, because of its 'irrationality'.

Sperm was the key to the whole question of sexuality, power, knowledge and ordered society. It was sacred and essential for rationality and physicality; a vast quantity of it existed to build up physical strength and enhance mental rationality, whilst a small quantity was appropriated to the equally valorous activity of extrusion into woman in order to produce embryos and regeneration. Spermless woman was therefore irrational, passionate, natural and dangerous, lacking reason. As St. Jerome was to put it years later in the Christian context "Woman is the flame, man is the tinder and the Devil, bellows" (Warner, 1985, p. 253).

For the privileged male - self mastery, that is governing oneself, mastering and managing one's estate and then participation in the administration of a city were three practices of the same type. Irrational, stupid bestial loss of sacred sperm in the act of homosexuality (no homosexual sexual orientation assumed) was stereotyped as characteristically 'womanlike', 'weak' and 'effeminate'. For Aristotle, those who invited homosexual sex engaged in the role of a woman; it was puzzling for 'no free man should allow himself to be so weakened by desire as to allow himself to step outside of the ferociously maintained hierarchy that placed all free men in their dealing above women and slaves'⁸

St. Thomas spiritualized the rational potency of sperm and it's proprietor and declared all male homosexual acts to be contrary to the nature of man; "all homosexual acts between males is against nature and inconsistent with right reason since it necessarily involves the pursuit of venereal pleasures in such a way as to exclude the possibility of generation" (Foucault, 1980, p. 22). Like contraception and enjoyable sex, gay sex, was that which animals did not engage in. Such observations lent themselves to this 'pseudo theological brand of behavioural sciences' where homosexual sin occurred in "the violation of the first principles of nature, in sins against God given reason"; a refusal to use your intellect (and conform to nature as Thomas observed it), a dispositional disorder (*complexia Mala*)⁹ (Pronk, 1993, p. 27).

This Thomasian declaration is today, a modern article of Catholic faith, one of many discourses on sexuality (the others being not so direct) which justify the labelling of homosexual act and orientation as deviant or, more accurately, 'objectively disordered', inspite of modern, more objective, scientific studies proving the existence of 'voluntary' homosexual sex lives in animals.¹⁰ One is valid in saying here, as feminist theologians say, that, "perception is foundational to conception, all knowing, is body mediated. " (Loades, 1990, p. 205).

The misogynist Christian intellectual class have further preserved compulsory heterosexuality and it's inherent patriarchal conceptions and values through it's representation of womanhood. Woman (both 'straight' and 'lesbian') is told of her Christian redeemability through fulfilling her potential virtue in chastity or virginity and potential valour in the procreational function. Woman, if outside

worldly marriage, was to quench her sexuality and become an uncorruptable sealed vessel.¹¹ Being the sexless other meant the sexless Christ could spiritually penetrate her; this was the way in which she gained a spiritual life - a 'rational' understanding of God's laws; she was no longer in the sphere of the woman who inflamed and distracted the rational mind of man.

In procreation, according to Aristotle and Aquinas, the male semen was the 'prime agent', providing the rational thinking being whilst the female body alone provided the matter.¹² This was the single valorous achievement of the married woman. However, one could say that the ultimate embodiment of compulsory heterosexuality (especially for womanhood) exists where virtuous virginity and valorous procreation meet, in the form of Mary the virgin mother of God and most especially her Catholic status as paradigmatic woman.

Julia Kristeva, in her essay '*Stabat Mater*', conflates the whole area of Catholicism, love, desire and the 'problem' of femininity/vaginal sexuality through exploring the Churches use and development of the concept of the 'virgin birth'.¹³ Using and adapted Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic terminology, she states that the 'Law of the Father', that through which language signifies, domesticates the power of the mother. She has argued motherhood to be the threshold of nature and culture. The mother possesses a semiotic, which for man is an unknown quantity, a maternal jouissance and a primary narcissism which is outside the bounds of speaking linguistic communication.¹⁴ However, language "threatens to make her subject rather than object" (Moi, 1986, p. 50); Christianity's maternal semiotic is focused in the symbol of the virgin, and its threat to the Symbolic Order is thus

controlled.¹⁵ The 'virgin birth' covers over the tensions between the maternal and the symbolic in glorifying Mary's virtuous faith and her act of giving matter to the seed of God, the Father's word (phallogocentric word).¹⁶ She is the paradigmatic mother, ensuring the power of the paternal on the pregnancy of the child in her womb and its social development. In her, Christian motherhood finds itself fixed within a structure asking women to strive toward her unattainable ideal. Kristeva says, "the particularities of the maternal body compose women into a being of folds, a catastrophe of being that the dialects of the Trinity and its supplements would be unable to subsume" (Moi, 1986, p. 182-183).¹⁷ Through paradigmatic mother - the ideal of the virgin, the repression of these unique particularities of the maternal body, that is the semiotic, occurs, only leaving her joy in her pain. This discourse of motherhood, depersonalizes the woman's experience, dragging it out into the public where it is lawed and paternalized.

Kristeva's study of the patriarchal heterosexual symbolic boundaries, especially the prohibitions against the maternal semiotic chora, through the 'cult of the virgin', comes in a specific search for a "post virginal discourse on maternity" (Moi, 1986, p. 101).¹⁸

These further discourses on womanhood, vaginal sexuality and the sanctified values of the family have controlled threats to heterosexual society and 'norms' covertly ensuring homosexuality to be outside the pale, outside the natural law. Sadly, even when these misogynist hegemonies are challenged by radical feminist theologians, their challenge still takes place within the patriarchal arena and is often essentialist - an act of complicity with all those discourses which exclude women

from the order of representation. Often this heterosexist existentialism tends toward a victim mentality such as in the case of Mary Daly, who expresses her grievances with the male Blessed Trinity through a homophobic language seen in the use of phrases like “the homosexual orgy between Father and Son and the floating dragqueen of the Holy Ghost” (Loades, 1990, p. 193).

It is obvious to gay Christians that such arrogant fixing of genders and ‘proper gender activities’, is contrary to what Christianity should be; and this obviousness comes about in knowing the Holy Spirit, which was supposed to have inspired such fixing, was inconsistent with the antinomianism of Jesus’ earthly personality.¹⁹

A God for Everyone.

The community of slaves that is Patriarchal Christianity, anxiously, fearfully and possessively demands the activities of gay people to exist imprisoned within its concepts. As Alfred Reynolds passionately puts it “His (Jesus) teachings and His life have been sticks with which to beat His people; the law He had lived by has been abandoned without being replaced by love”²⁰ (Reynolds, 1993, p. 319).

The Hebrew patriarchal society was no more than a locus upon which Jesus of Nazareth presented his radical revision and challenge to the social/religious privileges, canons and temple ritual purity precepts (that is defilement from without).²¹ He, in his public ministry, used as a tool, the prevalent patriarchal scriptural imagery within his parables. In no way was he a mere exegete of Old Testament scripture, nor was he controlled by it.²² A good illustration of Jesus staying within the structure in order to change it comes in what Diane Jacobs-Malina expresses, “Jesus chose men as disciples because they had free access to

public places. He then expected them to act in public not as typical Mediterranean males, but like himself" (Manilla, 1995 p. 22). Jesus broke all major social taboos on engagement with women.

No institution was founded by Jesus and it is unlikely that he ever wanted a written account of his life or his work. James Barr suggested that he, like his contemporaries, would have been sympathetic towards platonic notions of the 'power of orality', and would have assumed the deliverance of his life and his teaching to take the course of this socially prevalent tradition.

In his book, *'The Theology for the Third Millenium'*, Hans Küng says that

the crucial challenge to repudiate the ideology of our church offices (administration) lies in Jesus' complete disinterest in the erection of an institutional church and the creation of such offices.... Will Jesus Christ himself once again become the criterion of church offices in a new consistent fashion (Küng, 1991, p.96).

Unarguably, St. Paul's influence on institutional Christianity blurs the image of the teacher. He is the main contributor to the cult of Christ's suffering, which, as Luce Irigaray points out "had little to do with the life of Jesus of Nazareth, apart from the accident of his passion and death" (Differences, Vol. 1, 1989 pp. 59-76). Paul was a convert, a former persecutor of Christianity, who, contemporary scholars believe had never met the earthly Jesus. About two decades after Jesus' death, two oral traditions were in circulation, in which Paul was in reception of both; one was the teaching of His (Jesus) life, the other of the significance of His (Jesus) death; however, all of Paul's retractorly epistles to the great Mediterranean church communities, almost exclusively focus on the latter. His eschatology

requested meritorious behaviour in anticipation of Christ's glorious 'Kingdom' on earth, 'why bother with temporal matters, stay with the soul!'

Jesus' sayings, the body/soul dichotomy are almost totally lacking. The only occasion when He talks of it is Matthew 10, where He undercuts the dualism others allude to, the same dualism, which elevated the soul above the body, the same dualism which took grip in the church during the period of the 'Acts of the Apostles' and their evangelical enterprises. Paul contributed to this unwarranted transformation in Christeology in introducing Hellenistic adaptations to both oral traditions. The Jewish/Hebrew linear, unified body and soul existence was amalgamated with the Hellenist concept of infinity; the result, an eschatology mishmash of immortal souls in linear time.

When Paul was martyred, the remaining Christian community felt itself obliged to deal with the nonfulfillment of their immediate apocalyptic expectations. Their solution placed the Kingdom - the second coming, within death time; eternal happiness became situated in a linear slot after death. The futurising of eternal happiness lent itself to blindness of earthly, moment to moment, happy realities; further, it paved the way for a plethora of institutional binary oppositions, right/wrong, eternal/temporal, natural/unnatural and the regulation of it's people through the threat of, what Bede Griffiths calls "surely the most terrible doctrine ever preached by any religion, eternal punishment" (Griffiths, 1983, p. 109).

In Mark 12:28-31, Jesus talks of 'the first of all commandments - love God with all your heart, soul and strength and love your neighbour as yourself'. This love

commandment took a radically liberal tone for its day; sexual morality, as we know it today, was not a core issue for Him. In contrast, however, Paul, who had repudiated the *Torah* as a means of salvation; saw salvation as warranting austere, zealous, cautious behaviour.²³ He insisted on a strict adherence to Levitical sexual prohibitions and had no time for any form of antinomianism. The christological heritage of Paul, left the belief that “Jesus was using the word ‘love’ as a headline, and not as an editorial blue pencil” (Field, 1988, p. 26).

The ‘Love Commandment’, although maybe not of situational morality, does fundamentally call for a self awareness and sensitivity to real life beyond compulsive lawfulness or spiritual ego, (self interested satisfying of cravings for a heaven). Julia Kristeva's analysis of *the Apostles Creed*, which Christianity inherits from Paulian theology, considers Christianity to be fundamentally a discourse in desire for the unattainable, where the desexualized incarnated Jesus, born of virgin birth is the ‘focal point of fantasy’.²⁴ Christianity is also a religion of practised renunciation and repression instead of seeing people, things and situations for their value and worth.²⁵ Such practices empower the ‘demons’ being renounced and repressed, often, unaware to the religious person, leading to a spiritual version of the psychological ego defence mechanism - projection²⁶

In Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom, he says, “Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Jesus, as the ‘Awareness’ spiritual writings of the late Anthony de Mello say, was giving a directive that Christians return to a state of childhood, for children are indiscriminate and have no ideologically impaired vision of other

1. The first part of the report discusses the general situation of the country and the progress of the work in the various departments. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

2. The second part of the report deals with the internal affairs of the country, including the administration of justice, the education system, and the health services. It also mentions the progress of the various public works projects.

3. The third part of the report discusses the external affairs of the country, including the relations with the neighboring countries and the international community. It also mentions the progress of the various diplomatic missions.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the financial situation of the country, including the state of the treasury, the public debt, and the progress of the various financial reforms.

5. The fifth part of the report discusses the social situation of the country, including the progress of the various social reforms, the state of the labor movement, and the progress of the various social services.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the military situation of the country, including the progress of the various military reforms, the state of the armed forces, and the progress of the various military projects.

7. The seventh part of the report discusses the progress of the various public works projects, including the construction of roads, bridges, and railways, and the progress of the various public utility projects.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the progress of the various social services, including the progress of the various social welfare projects, the progress of the various health services, and the progress of the various education projects.

9. The ninth part of the report discusses the progress of the various diplomatic missions, including the progress of the various missions to the neighboring countries and the progress of the various missions to the international community.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the progress of the various financial reforms, including the progress of the various reforms of the tax system, the progress of the various reforms of the public debt, and the progress of the various reforms of the financial system.

11. The eleventh part of the report discusses the progress of the various social reforms, including the progress of the various reforms of the labor law, the progress of the various reforms of the social security system, and the progress of the various reforms of the social services.

12. The twelfth part of the report deals with the progress of the various military reforms, including the progress of the various reforms of the armed forces, the progress of the various reforms of the military equipment, and the progress of the various reforms of the military training.

13. The thirteenth part of the report discusses the progress of the various public works projects, including the progress of the various projects of road construction, bridge construction, and railway construction, and the progress of the various projects of public utility construction.

14. The fourteenth part of the report deals with the progress of the various social services, including the progress of the various projects of social welfare, the progress of the various projects of health services, and the progress of the various projects of education.

15. The fifteenth part of the report discusses the progress of the various diplomatic missions, including the progress of the various missions to the neighboring countries and the progress of the various missions to the international community.

16. The sixteenth part of the report deals with the progress of the various financial reforms, including the progress of the various reforms of the tax system, the progress of the various reforms of the public debt, and the progress of the various reforms of the financial system.

17. The seventeenth part of the report discusses the progress of the various social reforms, including the progress of the various reforms of the labor law, the progress of the various reforms of the social security system, and the progress of the various reforms of the social services.

18. The eighteenth part of the report deals with the progress of the various military reforms, including the progress of the various reforms of the armed forces, the progress of the various reforms of the military equipment, and the progress of the various reforms of the military training.

19. The nineteenth part of the report discusses the progress of the various public works projects, including the progress of the various projects of road construction, bridge construction, and railway construction, and the progress of the various projects of public utility construction.

20. The twentieth part of the report deals with the progress of the various social services, including the progress of the various projects of social welfare, the progress of the various projects of health services, and the progress of the various projects of education.

peoples' realities until they are contaminated by religious and cultural programming and conditioning. Alas, many Christians, often unaware to themselves, love in terms of their religious/spiritual desires, cravings, attachments and conditionings; and often as if on unaware spiritual 'automatic pilot', do not question the version of love they introject. Many do not see gay and lesbian reality.

Summary

It would seem neither the biblical texts nor church history is overwhelmingly anti gay as many claim. What is, however, consistence in church history is that anti gay reaction occurs in eras where scapegoats are needed.

St. Thomas' concept of Natural Law, which props up so many of the churches discourses on sexuality, is an arrogant heterosexist boxing of God and is totally contrary to Thomas' own main theological/spiritual argument, that the highest knowledge of God is 'God as unknowable'. Further, this natural law ideology although maybe having an ally in the eschatology of the Pauline church is, however, inconsistent with the earthly teachings and Kingdom teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER TWO

¹ The movement called 'Montanism' was an ascetic movement influenced by the Hellenist philosopher Philo, 20 BCE - 50CE.

² p. 15, *Catholics and Sex*, 1992, by Saunders and Stanford.

Gnostic Manichaeist was a Gnostic Sect which believed all matter to be evil and which rejected marriage, sex and procreation and elevated the status of virginity in Christian religion.

³ pp. 41-46, *A.I.D.S. and the Spiritual Dilemma* by John E. Fortunato, 1987.

⁴ Essentialism within sexual politics is the word given to the belief in the essence of masculinity and femininity.

The Gnostic institutionalization of Concupiscence, in other words, was the strict anti-temporal moral discourse on lust (the inclination against right reason and a giving way to the propensity of human nature towards sin, particularly sensual sin) p. 104, *The Catholic Concise Encyclopaedia*, 1956 by Robert C. Broderick.

⁵ p. 11, *Toward a Christian Ethic on Homosexuality*, by Tony Bowden.

⁶ Cartesian Dualism is term used for the body/soul axis in institutional Christianity.

⁷ p. 244 *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender, the Human Body in medieval religion*, 1991 by Caroline Walker Bynum.

⁸ p. 30 *The body and Society: Men and Women and Sexual Remunciation in Early Christianity*, N.Y. Columbia Press, 1988.

⁹ See pp. 400 - 404 *Introduction to Psychology*, 11th Edition, 1993.

¹⁰ The use of the term 'objectively disordered' in relation to homosexuality was introduced by the 'Vatican head of theology', Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in his letter on 'Pastoral Care' of homosexuals, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 1986 (the Catholic Media Office, 1986).

St. Francis de Sales had long held Elephants to be the prime example for married couples for he observed their engagement in sex was for procreational purposes only.

¹¹ See pp. 241-266, *Sieve of Tuccia*, 1985 by Marina Warner.

¹² p. 210, see endnote 7.

¹³ Julia Kristeva is one of France's foremost feminist intellectuals, as a psycholinguist who practices "semanalysis" - the exploration of the ideologies behind the structure of particular texts, she examines the relationship between the Semiotic (or pre-oedipal) and what she terms as the repression of the feminine in 'Phallogocentric Western culture'.

¹⁴ Jouissance is a term used by feminists to describe a state of delightful play and pleasure with no limits. It is most attributed to the writing of the feminist psychoanalyst, Luce Irigaray, who, however, seems to tie it solely to the female body

The primary narcissism occurs in the undecidability between mother and child, where the mother's identification is not with a separate other, but with herself.

¹⁵ The Symbolic Order within Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, is that which is entered into on the occurrence of the child's Oedipal crisis. It is linked to the leaving of the Imaginary and the acquisition of language.

¹⁶ Phallogocentric is a term used in Irigaray's work and refers to language, i.e. language which is pervasively masculinist in which she says 'woman constitutes the *unrepresentable*'.

¹⁷ In '*Witnessing to the Faith of the Church*' the Lenten Pastoral of Desmond Connell D.D., Archbishop of Dublin, we see a typical Catholic affirmation of the virgin's 'true nature', it is stated that "in Mary we see the reversal of Eve's condition. In the first place, she is a virgin and her virginity relates her directly and in the first instance not to man but to God, she is not called to subject herself to a husband for the sake of natural fertility, but to be open in faith to the word addressed to her by God and to accept the coming of the Holy Spirit as the source of a fullness that is divine".

¹⁸ The Semiotic chora is the maternal body's experience which is not described in words. Chora is the Greek word for enclosed space or womb.

¹⁹ Antinomiasm is used in this context to talk of one who believes human love to be superior to strict adherence to moral law.

²⁰ Alfred Reynolds, author of '*Jesus verses Christianity*', 1993 explains that much Greek translation of uniquely Hebrew notions and customs became Hellenized and thus lost their original intention.

²¹ Kristeva points out on p.144 of '*Qui Tollis Peccata Mund*'. ('*The Powers of Horror*', 1982) that defilement from without occurred in Old Testament social laws and in contrast, the Gospel and New Testament letters, talk in terms of defilement from within, she quotes Jesus in Matthew 15:11, where He affirms "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man".

²² Exegete: an interpreter of biblical scripture.

²³ The Torah was the Old Testament teachings, doctrines and moral/social laws.

²⁴ pp. 37-45, '*In the beginning was love, psychoanalysis and faith*', 1987 by Julia Kristeva. In this text, Kristeva examines the psychological structure of religion and its connection with psychopathology. In '*Credo in Unum Deum*' she analysis the Apostles Creed.

²⁵ pp. 63-66, '*A call to love*', 1993 by James R. Dolan SJ.

²⁶ Projection according to p. 730 of '*An Introduction to Psychology*' is as Freud describes, where the individual represses his or her own unacceptable impulses and then expresses hostile attitudes toward others who are perceived to possess those same impulses. For example, a person who is fearful of his or her own possible homosexual feelings is likely to deny and repress such feelings and then to display hostility toward gay people.

Chapter Three

Exclusion from the Kingdom.

The orthodox Catholic institution calls its members to conscious adherence to a virtue life, vigilant policing vices which are identified and located for the believer by the institution. When transgression occurs, the Roman Catholic Church, which perceives itself to be the Blessed Trinity's political apparatus in guiding souls, calls for confession. This institution, in its own understanding, holds a sacred chronological link to St. Peter through the Papacy and, therefore, believes itself to hold the keys which Christ gave to Peter in order to inaugurate the Kingdom on earth; and further, it believes it has, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the authority along with scripture to establish an unquestionable 'God given' criteria of good and bad, moral and immoral, sexually moral and sexually immoral. Confession is as Michel Foucault has stated "the general standard governing the production of true discourse on sex" (Foucault, 1980, p. 162). The Kingdom of Heaven, in death time, is the reward for those who tend toward perfection, or in other words, those who live their lives in total adherence to the institution's moral discourses. The threat of eternal punishment, Hell, further regulates conscience.

In this orthodox understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven as a reward for strict adherence, the gay or lesbian person is called by the Catholic Church to

.....fulfil God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifices of the Lord's Cross, the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

Homosexual persons are called to chastity by virtue of self mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach perfection.¹ (Veritas, 1994, p.505).

The 'Christian Conservative Evangelical' movement (or Christian Fundamentalism) of the Protestant tradition provide an equally imprisoning attitude towards gay and lesbian sexuality. This phenomenon unilaterally asserts that "from creation to the coming of the Kingdom, homosexual acts (whatever they may be) have no place in God's plan" (Field, 1988, p. 25). The variety of studies which are available in contemporary theological hermeneutics are disregarded as engagements of human pride and folly, for the Bible is inherent, the very word of God. James Barr observes "They (Fundamentalists) have a tendency to look at philosophy not as a guide in logic and method but as a kind of shadow theology, providing ideas about God and the nature of man which stands parallel to those of theology" (Barr, 1981, p. 275). The advice in Colossians 2:8 "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy" is zealously adhered to; and by these zealous standards a critique of patriarchy in Christianity would be innately blasphemous.

As a movement, Christian fundamentalism intersects with every Protestant denomination and is intellectually informed by a fraternity of scholars who publish under the Inter Varsity Press Group.² One of their unique attributes is the illusion of autonomy and objectivity. Scholars and ordinary believers affirm themselves to be somehow outside of the ideological arena. Objectivity regarding knowledge of God and His will is confidently asserted; they believe themselves to possess a 'purer' and 'truer' knowledge, and look disdainfully on 'the subjective knowledge of others'. The myth (in terms of not having any biblical substance) of the Holy Spirit working through scripture is also asserted and harmonization of Old and New Testament scripture or relative biblicalism, an act which ironically "reduces

Jesus to a mere exegete" (Barr, 1985, p.15) strengthens presupposed right wing ideological arguments, especially in areas of sexuality.

'Personal revelation' is regarded as the result of a geometric progression in faith. The individual gains super confidence in the idea of being the 'lucky individual' saved by Jesus, the personal saviour; gaining 'revelation' is the by-product of accepting the 'politically right wing word'. The Holy Spirit imparts revelation to these lucky people, and often in sexual matters this revelation egotistically maintains the political presuppositions of 19th Century sexology which viewed 'homosexuals' as an aberration.³ For those of right wing political views this is a very comfortable faith and a very secure Kingdom for there is no apparatus from within it to deconstruct the belief system. With the strict belief that liberal religious counterparts will not gain salvation, the gay or lesbian person within such denominations feel obliged to change and engage in life long self-violence and life long effort at gaining deliverance and reorientation 'through the Spirit'.

'Moderate' mainstream Catholics and Protestants have redressed the balance of the Kingdom by directing attention to and reaffirming Luke 17:20-21. Asked by the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God was to come, He (Jesus) gave them this answer, "the Kingdom of God does not admit of observations and there will be no one to say 'look here, look there!'; for you must know, the Kingdom of God is amongst you."

Professor Pheme Perkins explains that "Jesus shatters the expectations about the coming of the end of the world which up to this point had been heavily linked to

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country.

2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the environmental situation of the country.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the international situation of the country.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the future of the country.

9. The ninth part of the report deals with the conclusion of the report.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the appendix of the report.

11. The eleventh part of the report deals with the bibliography of the report.

12. The twelfth part of the report deals with the index of the report.

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19. The nineteenth part of the report deals with the list of definitions of the report.

20. The twentieth part of the report deals with the list of footnotes of the report.

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scripture and Christ's references to the Kingdom" (Perkins, 1990, p. 58). Jesus pictures people foolishly looking up to the heavens, trying to decipher symbolic prophecies out of the course of history when, in actual fact, the Kingdom is 'right there'. The unusual expression '*entos hymin*' which is used in Jesus' illustration is translated as 'within you', 'among you' or 'within your reach'.

This very powerful translation discredits and makes heresy of the seemingly "exclusive focus on transcendence which ultra traditional right wing Catholics and Fundamentalists fall into" (Peck, 1993, p.207). This dispels the heresy of orthodoxy or the spirituality of docetism.⁴ 'The Kingdom amongst us' is potentially a self liberating approach to life and religion but it can also be a discourse of an equally imprisoning nature as that of the orthodox version of the Kingdom. The problem comes in some unchallenged notions, two of which come from the broader Christian family, one of which comes for the gay or lesbian person.

The rarely challenged assumption that one can experience the Kingdom in good feelings you attain from being charitable and campaigning for good causes is so dangerous. Unconsciously, Christians pick safe causes of 'Liberation Theologies', involving themselves in issues of racism, third world politics and sometimes (but rarely) feminist theologies but they never engage in gay liberation theologies, for only in these other 'safe' theologies, which have universal overtones of approval can one gain the Kingdom of good feelings. These Christians subconsciously have a 'love shopping list', seeing and pleading the causes and realities of 'approved' issues but scared to transgress into the sexual politics of gay and lesbian Christian

realities. Is this Christian love or just a fulfilment of the unconscious desires of a 'spiritual ego'? The great self awareness spiritual writer of the Far Eastern Christian tradition, Anthony de Mello terms this as the 'Masquerade of Charity'.⁵

Another rarely challenged notion is that of forgetting yourself and going out to help others, 'losing yourself in giving'. This 'neo pelagianism' lends itself to passive or submissive attitudes toward church ideology, for one is too involved in this enjoyable work to question received beliefs.⁶

The issue of self development is of a similar nature. Within this 'Kingdom among us' spirituality, the gay person is encouraged to make compensations for the renunciation of their 'sexual desires' by developing 'fully' their non-sexual side. Because of the apparently liberating nature of this pursuit, a danger exists in losing sight of the oppressive nature of the 'regime of truth' which forces them to pursue such compensatory pursuits in the first place.

Maintaining the Patriarchal Monolith.

Jeffrey Weeks says the assuming of a gay identity is a 'cage and an opportunity'.⁷ Kenneth Plummer elaborates on this in saying "self categorisation, may control, restrict and inhibit, but simultaneously it offers 'comfort, security and assuredness'" (Weeks, 1991, p. 75); alas, this is the nature of identities especially 'deviant ones'. Today a growing number of gay and lesbian religious and lay Christians are taking their places in the world of identity, enjoying acceptance in a growing number of denominations. The United Methodist Churches and the Anglican Church are currently reassessing their attitudes. The Dutch Reformed

Churches have already in their G.K.N. Report taken the step of advocating that the Bible only condemns 'homophilic' glorification over heterosexuality. But above all others the Episcopal Church is the most gay-friendly, accepting gay and lesbian people and their lifestyles, with Bishop John Shelby Spong being one of the most outspoken Christian advocates on gay and lesbian rights.⁸

John McNeills book '*The Church and the Homosexual*' was the first challenge to the Catholic Church, taking issue with the double standard of the prohibition on 'homogenital activity' by playing the natural law card whilst allowing non-procreational sex in the menopause and the 'rhythm method' of contraception. Since then, egalitarian schools of moral theology and gay and lesbian advocacy groups (most challenging the repudiation of 'homogenital activity') have evolved such as R.E.A.C.H. in Ireland (1986). Real voices from within started to make uncomfortable sounds.

Michel Foucault maintains that discourses on sexuality obscure certain political bases. It is clear as I have identified in this paper that the Christian base is that of a comfortable heterosexist patriarchy. Foucault has also maintained that to be on the margins was not to be powerless.⁹ Gay Christians have the power to conflate the heterosexist, given thought of Christian faith in commenting on the 'idolatry of clinging to inflexible heterosexism as if it were a god'. Such an awakening is an upsetting phenomenon for Church authorities.

In recent years within the Catholic Church especially during the reign of Pope John Paul II, a 'phallic panic' or conservative reactionary attitude has taken grasp of the

Catholic Magisterium.¹⁰ However, since roughly 1986 this panic has evolved into a shrewd neo-conservative strategy. In spite of a dwindling congregation and an obvious wide range of political views amongst their enduring few, the Catholic Church has from the top embarked upon the enunciation of the anti pluralist notion of a one true Catholic uniform identity. This identity and its power potentialities, is addressed in the *'Postmodern Church'* 1990 by Bishop Jeremiah Newmann. Newmann, the late bishop of Limerick was one of the Churches most ardent exponents of orthodox Catholic intellectualism. In this book he talks of a new conservative church, conserving that which it perceives to be the common good; and the Church of Pope John Paul II which has searched and has now found a new niche, from which it will once again have a strong voice, within this 'Postmodern condition'. It would seem from his writing that this is a church led by a Pope who is adopting an approach which "can attune and is attuned to secular ways of thinking" (Newmann, 1990, p. 133). He conceives that one can exploit this attuned knowledge (without compromise), through solely critiquing the oppressive aspects of liberalism, relativism and individualism and thus attempt to convince the world of the 'truth of Catholic belief and lifestyle'.

Newmann considers pluralism to be destroying identities. He critiques the intellectual apparatuses which have established the difference in the binary opposition of the religious and the secular. On the role of post-structuralists, semeiologists and deconstructionism he comments, "the search for meaning degenerates into mere rhetoric" (Newmann, 1990, p. 22). Such devaluation also permeates the 1994 *'Veritas Splendor'* encyclical on the Churches moral teaching,

most obstinately in chapter 3 entitled "*Less the cross of Christ be emptied of it's power*, 1 Corinthians 1:17".¹¹

In the 1994 book '*Crossing the threshold of Hope*', Pope John Paul II elaborates on his fears and concerns about what he considers to be the basic threat posed not only to the church but to western civilization, 'moral relativism'. He says

Pope Paul VI sensed this deeply and knew that it was his duty to undertake the battle against such relativism for the sake of the essential good of man. With his encyclical '*Humanae Vitae*' he puts into practice the word of the Apostle Paul who wrote to his disciple Timothy "Proclaim the word; be persistent whether its convenient or inconvenient..... For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, (2 Tim. 4:2-3)" (John Paul II, 1994, p. 172)¹²

This kind of unwavering endorsement of the very controversial issue of *Humanae Vitae* smacks of an inflexible authoritarian attack on all aspects of personal moral decision making or of any kind of doctrinal deconstruction.

The fundamental strategy of the church in maintaining the heterosexist metanarrative of patriarchy comes in the conclusion of Bishop Jeramiah Newmanns book, where he addresses that other area of life so greatly effected by the tyranny of patriarchy - womanhood. The church in it's attunedness to secular ways of thinking, knows what not to advocate, and thus engages in a sophism in blinding and narrowing the vision of its unquestioning flocks who introject their truths. Newmann engages in a piece of propaganda disfavouring alternatives to the Catholic status quo. For his female readers he posits Post-modernity as "another masculine invention engineered to exclude women" (Newmann, 1990, p. 151). For his male and 'pro-family' readers he stereotypes the many varied types of

feminism to be that of 'existentialist feminism'.¹³ Here he plays on the fears of 'pro-family groups' and at the same time implies lesbians to be the root of family disintegration.

This is the sophism of the existing church, who have a vested interest in demonizing feminism and post-modernism for certain audiences in order to ensure that, in the popular Catholic mind, the common ground, the intersection of the two in the form of the gay/feminist critique of patriarchy does not become an issue of justice or conscience.

These Catholic intellectuals are naturally hostile to indigenous self deconstruction; it would seem Vatican II more than sufficiently reconciled itself with the 'secularist' understanding of life. Gay Catholics in loving intimate relationships are not 'true Catholics' for they dangerously poke their deconstruction and tales of oppression into the Catholic sexual morality cocoon. Gay Catholics don't possess the prescribed militant ignorance which all 'true Catholics' should have.

Within this maintaining of patriarchy, the hierarchy have been assisted by a new wave of right wing Catholic fundamentalist lay 'visionaries' and 'prophets'. These prophets receive messages of a millenarianist nature, mostly from the Virgin Mary who validates their austere conservatism in the wake of immanent doom and the onslaught of the Anti-Christ. A typical example of such visionary in Ireland is Christine Gallagher. Her messages, rich in traditional Catholic imagery, tell of the Virgin Mary promising chastisement on all those who do not surrender, the loss of many lives in a battle between good and evil and an era of purification. She claims

the Virgin Mary is deeply hurt by recent changes in Irish society. The Virgin states "the sins of the flesh will draw many to hell" (Petrisko, 1995, p. 133), and also states that the Pope is aware of the world's destiny and is taking the proper measures to help in the salvation of many. Further, Christine Gallagher talks about the Anti-Christ's involvement in the 1992 Maastricht Agreement; she believes the Virgin Mary to be pointing to the Anti-Christ's involvement in liberal legislation on abortion, "which it (the Maastricht Agreement) would consider a service and the practice of homosexuality, a personal right" (Petrisko, 1995, p. 99).¹⁴

Such visionaries universally express the invalidity of liberalism or even politically moderate thinking when the time of judgement comes. Because of the nature of the Bible and the Catholic culture, which is apparently rich in supernatural occurrences and apparition, few Catholics, even of a relatively liberal political nature would outrightly dismiss such prophecies for fear of their eternal destiny. Pope John Paul II's nearly universally conservative hierarchy remain silent on such prophecies neither condoning nor condemning the fear it brings about; for these prophecies have a life of their own and their residue almost always benefits the Church's conservative causes.

The present condition of the Catholic ruling on homosexuality has a great deal to do with the personal theology of Cardinal J. Ratzinger, Vatican Chief Theologian, and the sympathetic ear of Pope John Paul II.

In 1986, at the height of the A.I.D.S. panic, Cardinal Ratzinger, a man interested in addressing what he perceived to be 'the shadow side of the post-conciliar Church', wrote a letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church on the pastoral care of homosexuals, which furious gays have since dubbed 'the Hallowe'en Letter'.¹⁵

Previous to this letter, since 1976, small windows of tolerance had been opening but all this was dashed in the words "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency toward intrinsic moral wrong".¹⁶ Ratzinger knowing scriptural condemnation was in short supply, fell back on the classic Catholic justification of the Magisterium or Holy Spirit inspired tradition. "The Scriptures are not properly understood when they are interpreted in a way which contradicts the Church's living Tradition. To be correct, the interpretation of Scripture must be in substantial accord with the Tradition" (Ratzinger, 1986 p. 1).¹⁷

This argument is flawed for as I have already pointed out in this paper, church history is inconsistent in its approach to homosexuality; there is no pure living tradition in this case. Here once again, St. Paul, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas stand on an equal par with the Son of God.

The 'true Catholic identity/behaviour' issue arises in Ratzinger's call to ban meetings of previously Church backed support groups from Church property, for "a truly pastoral approach will appreciate the need for homosexual persons to avoid the near occasions of sin" (Ratzinger, 1986 p. 2).¹⁸

Effectively here he has done all in his power to silence gays. He further goes on to express his deepest convictions that homosexuals must carry the weight for A.I.D.S., advocating that self denial is a self sacrifice which “will save them from a way of life which threatens to destroy them” and complains that “even when the practice of homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well being of a large group of people, it’s advocates remain undeterred and refuse to consider the magnitude of the risks involved” (Ratzinger, 1986 p. 4).¹⁹

There are two ways of interpreting this last sentence either these are his implicit scientifically uninformed motives for redressing the 1976-1986 slide into tolerance, for , as he sees it, as being for the gay Catholic's own sake; or he is scapegoating homosexual behaviour for the A.I.D.S. crisis and uses this crisis as a tool in attracting the attention of the scared heterosexual majority away from the deconstructed tolerant attitudes which Ratzinger knows would destabilize patriarchy and it’s host of other sexual discourses. The latter interpretation in the light of my argument seems most plausible.

In the years since 1986, ‘the Hallowe’en Letter’ has evolved into the 1992 Vatican declaration on the ‘intrinsically evil nature’ of homosexual acts and further into the 1994 declaration which stated it was ‘morally justifiable to discriminate against homosexuals’. Fr. Pat Buckley, the dissident Irish priest commented (as most likely did all priests administering pastoral care to gays and lesbians) “such incitement to hatred is criminal and only a notch or two down from condemning gays to the concentration camps and gas chambers” (Buckley, 1994, p. 14). The Vatican, seemingly knowing that many found such bluntness distasteful, played

around with the words with the result being the more palatable 1994 Catechism version of this declaration, “every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided” (Vatican, 1994, p. 505) However, the ‘unjust’ in this sentence is unclear and unelaborated, leaving believers free to engage in a kind of Catholic ‘relative morality’ of their own.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER THREE

¹ p. 505, No. 2358, 6th Commandment, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, Vertias Publications.

² The I.V.P. is an international religious press group which publish solely the religious convictions of politically right wing theological scholars.

³ Sexology is the scientific study of sex and sexuality, that notoriously, during the 19th Century engaged in activities that scientifically helped to establish the dichotomy of deviant 'homosexuality' and normal 'heterosexuality'. An aberration is the deviation from type, it is a term often used to distinguish that which is deviating from that which is correct and proper.

⁴ Docetism is a heresy of the 2nd Century. It is not truly a Christian heresy, i.e., arising from the denial of dogma by the faithful, but it arose from another heresy, Gnosticism. The Docetae taught that Jesus was not real, but only a phantom.

⁵ pp. 19-25 'Awareness': Anthony de Mello, 1990 by J. Francis Stroud, S.J.

⁶ Pelagianism is a 'heresy', begun shortly after 400A.D. by a British monk, Pelagius - it's teachings rejected the doctrine of original sin, emphasising the natural over the supernatural to the extent that it was impossible to attain salvation without grace, you work to get into heaven. This teaching, however, was refuted by St. Augustine and was condemned by the Councils of Carthage (411A.D).

⁷ p. 75, 'Against Nature', 1991 by Jeffrey Weeks.

⁸ p. 76, 'Is it a Choice', 1993 by Eric Marcus.

⁹ Theories found consistently in the 'Archaeology of Knowledge', 1986 by Michel Foucault.

¹⁰ The phrase 'phallic panic' is attributed to the writings of Luce Irigaray.

The Catholic Magisterium is the power given by Christ to the Church, which He founded, together with infallibility by which the church teaches authoritatively the revealed truth of scripture and holds forth the truth of tradition of salvation of men.

¹¹ pp. 153-180, 'Veritas Splendor', 1994 by Pope John Paul II.

¹² 'Crossing the Threshold of Hope' is the book form of an interview which the Italian journalist Vittorio Messori and Pope John Paul II made in 1993.

¹³ On p. 33 of 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' in 'Blood, Bread and Poetry', 1987 by Adrienne Riche, existentialist feminism is attributed to the work of Simone de Bouvoir and in latter days to Nancy Charadow. Riche points out that these existentialists feminists view lesbian existence within the parameters of an alternative to heterosexual existence.

¹⁴ pp. 97-101, 'The Sorrow, The Sacrifice and The Triumph: The Apparitions, Visions and Prophecies of Christine Gallagher', 1995 by Thomas W. Petrisko.

¹⁵ p. 249, *The Theology of Cardinal Ratzinger*, 1989, Aidan Nichols notes that Cardinal Ratzinger is synonymous for expressing his 'post Vatican II pastoral Church *shadow side*' views in an interview to *'Jesus'*, a monthly publication of the Italian Catholic Church. From this single interview he has gained public recognition as a most notorious conservative theologian.

¹⁶ *'A letter on the Pastoral Care of homosexuals, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith'*, 1986, issued by the Catholic Media Office.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion.

Within this thesis I have shown that most Christian Churches maintain in their beliefs that there is no mansion for practicing gay and lesbian lovers within the Kingdom of God. I have explored the developments in the last twenty years which have resulted in the Catholic Magisterium's labelling of homosexuality as intrinsically evil, and the quashing of debate in as much as it could; and it's declaring of discrimination to be justifiable. I have exposed that at the heart of these actions is, fundamentally, a more than eager desire to maintain the patriarchal Christian religious system of which homosexual deviance is an integral part.

I have shown up the inconsistency of Church history in regards homosexuality, exposing the justification in being anti gay existing in the Churches claim of the consistency of Holy Spirit inspired Tradition to be fallacy.

I looked at St. Thomas' concept of Natural Law, which props up so many of the Churches discourse on sexuality, and exposed it to be an arrogant heterosexist boxing of God, an ideology, which has an ally in the eschatology of the Pauline Church, but is inconsistent with the earthly teachings of Jesus of Nazareth who said nothing about homosexuality in His ministry.

Also, I showed that the direct Biblical evidence for condemning homosexuality is quantitatively weak and showed that the primary verses could not be, in any way, referring to the lifestyles of monogamous gay and lesbian lovers.

This thesis has fundamentally argued the invalidity of taking justification for being anti gay from the words of the Bible and Christ's teachings. As a Christian Catholic, I see general potential for change in attitudes towards gay and lesbian intimate physical relationships in quite a number of Christian denominations, but believe, in the case of Catholicism, that push towards this can only occur outside the clerical Church. I believe this push is in the hands of lay people and feel the signs are fairly good, with a growing number of Catholics of all sexual orientations seriously engaging in the 'logic' of unconditional love found in the spirituality of contemporary Christian spiritual directors, such as Anthony de Mello and Bede Griffiths who spiritualities of the far-eastern Christian heritage focus on the divesting of one's conditionings in order to escape the traps of concepts with the will to see concrete realities. When taken seriously, these spiritualities evoke an awareness of where second-hand imposed ideologies cloud visions of reality.

I would hope the institutional Church will be over-taken, overwhelmed by the sensitivity to life in the moment of such spiritualities and their effects on people. Hans Küng believes that "no regressive or repressive religion whether Christian, Islamic or Jewish or whatever provenance - has a long-term future" (Küng, 1990, p. 414). The institution of Christianity must, if it is to be authentically Christian, (and for that matter, have a future) be willing to learn from Job who declared "I search out the cause of Him I did not know" and attempt to remove the ideological barriers which prevent it from seeing, responding and loving it's gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.

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