Homosexuality in Botswana and in the Hebrew Bible: An impression
J Stiebert
(University of Botswana)

ABSTRACT
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This paper has two parts: the first offers an impression of how homosexuality is being discussed in the public in Botswana; the second outlines the main theological positions in contemporary debates. From here it goes on to explore the social circumstances that could have given rise to those texts of the Hebrew Bible that allude to some form of sexual activity between members of the same sex. The argument developed in this paper is that the Hebrew Bible does not explicitly or unambiguously condemn either homosexual orientation, or most homosexual behaviour, and indicates that the complexities of the ongoing theological debate on this topic are very much in evidence in Botswana.

1 INTRODUCTION
Homosexuality is both a global and a divisive issue; hotly debated in the media, in private, public and in academic spheres. In all of these contexts religious - including biblical - arguments are often put forward, and it has been claimed not infrequently that the Bible condemns homosexuality. In recent years, however, a number of commentators have argued that biblical grounds for disapproving of homosexuality are ambiguous, even insubstantial (see Helminiak & Spong (1994), Olyan (1994), Vasey (1997) and Nissinen (1998)). The texts of the Hebrew Bible that mention some form of sexual activity between members of the same sex are, first of all, sparse: two stories of threatened male rape (Gn 19; Jdg 19), two terse laws in Leviticus (Lv 18:22; 20:13) and some statements in the Pauline writings (Rm 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:11). At a stretch, Jude 7-23 might also qualify. Furthermore, it is necessary to try and understand these references as far as is possible within their literary and social contexts. If no such effort is made, there exists a much greater likelihood that modern interpreters of these texts (blinded by their own socio-cultural assumptions) fail to recognise how differently homosexual behaviour has been conceptualised and evaluated in other times and places.

First, I will offer an impression of how homosexuality is being discussed on a public level in Botswana. I am aware that my insight is restricted, due above all to the fact that I am a recent arrival to Botswana. I have, therefore, chosen the word “impression” deliberately. I have confined my account to the perception that can be gleaned from reports in local or national publications, and I acknowledge the limitations of this narrow approach. It is not my intention to say anything definitive about homosexuality, theology and/or Botswana, but rather to formulate a theological contribution to the ongoing debate, in the hope of stimulating more discussion. My assumed audience is Christian (or Christian-influenced), because it is in such contexts that homosexuality is (in my experience) being discussed most prominently in contemporary Botswana. I hope that this contribution is not irrelevant to contexts in other places and religious traditions.

Following on from this, I will outline the main theological positions in contemporary debates and then explore the social circumstances that could have given rise to those texts of the Hebrew Bible that mention some form of sexual activity between members of the same sex. I will argue that the Hebrew Bible does not explicitly or unambiguously condemn either homosexual orientation or most homosexual behaviour; and I will indicate that the complexities of the ongoing theological debate on this topic are very much in evidence in Botswana.

This paper, therefore, has a relatively narrow focus. The texts of the Hebrew Bible feature prominently in Christians’ debates on homosexuality and therefore require elucidation. I will not, however, be examining the New Testament passages relevant to this topic, as this is beyond the scope both of this paper and my expertise. I accept that this could be said to present an incomplete picture. The final three texts cited above all provide discussions of New Testament references. Additional useful readings can be found in the editions by Malcolm Macourt (1977) and Timothy Bradshaw (1997).

2 HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE MEDIA IN BOTSWANA: NEWSPAPERS FROM THE EARLY MONTHS OF 2000
Carnal attraction and carnal relations between members of the same sex exist in Botswana as they do all over the world (see Baum (1993) and Parrinder (1980)). Botswana has Zimbabwe on its north-eastern border, and it was at the Harare International Book Show in 1995 that President Robert Mugabe voiced his much publicised anti-homosexual opinions, which have made him a target of gay rights groups internationally. To the south of Botswana, meanwhile, lies the Republic of South Africa, whose 1997 Constitution and Bill of Rights prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (see section 9, subsections 3 and 4). In 1999, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Bill went even further and defined “marital status” as including...
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like John, claims that he was “born like that”. While he abhors male
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Hambira, Synod Secretary of the United Congregation al Church in
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On 9 March the Mmegi Monitor also published a response to the
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to stand up to rational scrutiny”.

On 22 March The Midweek Sun published a letter by Rev. Rupert Hambira, Synod Secretary of the United Congregation al Church in
Southern Africa, in which he says: “I am a church man and call for tolerance and compassion.

On 10 May The Botswana Gazette contained an anonymous con-
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“same sex relationships... in which the partners share a reciprocal duty of support”. The polemics surrounding homosexuality, clear already from this contrast, have begun to be in evidence in Botswana’s press. In the first five months of the year 2000, homosexuality has been discussed in a variety of ways in several of the major publications. On 8 March 2000 in an article in The Midweek Sun, Bashi Letsididi reported on a panel discussion on homosexuality held at the University of Botswana on 2 March 2000. The article describes the contributors exploring the range of questions and opinions concerning such matters as whether homosexuality is a matter of biological predisposition or choice. Medical doctor, Dr Evans Tsombela, is cited as calling homosexuality “unchristian, unsociable and unsocial”, emblematic of the escalation of sin that has been gathering pace from the time of creation. He argues, furthermore, that homosexuality is alien to African societies, that no African language has an original word for it and that it was invented in the West and subsequently introduced to Africa. Tsiboe Motswagoge, a lawyer, argues that homosexuality is sinful and that he supports the point of view of President Robert Mugabe. Professor of Sociology, Neo-Cosmos, however, warns that his opinion is “controversial” and argues that intolerance (including sexual) relations between people of the same sex have always been a part of all societies, including African ones and that persecution of homosexuals is a punishable offence). As well as his elation at visiting a gay club in South Africa, John refers to himself as “gay not by choice, this is how I was born and this is how I want to live”. The article does not comment on either the rights or wrongs of John’s conduct, but does refer to homo-
Non-erotic physical affection between men: cism in the few (less than explicit) biblical passages is to some extent while such a relationship Nissinen 1998:55, note 93). Along with Martti Nissinen I would say that sometimes (in my view wrongly) been described as homoerotic (see David and Jonathan (1 Sm 18:1-4; 20:16-17, 41-42; 2 Sm 1:26) has homosexual expressions. The close and affectionate relationship between prohibited - is permissible?) There is no allusion either to any range of receives no mention. (Would this indicate that lesbianism - as it is not homosexuality. Sexual attraction between two women (lesbianism) rarily to orientation, not to behaviour. The Hebrew Bible has no word for eventuate from that attraction.

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The second is the liberal approach. The emphasis with this position is on the quality of a relationship, as opposed to the nature of sexual acts. Sexuality is morally neutral: a loving relationship between two men, or two women, is no less a blessing than a loving relationship between a man and a woman. The fourth is the lesbian and gay approach. This position has affinities with other theologies of the oppressed, such as liberation theology. It is not based on personal experience (see Griffith 2000). The fifth approach is that of queer theology, which emerged in the 1990s and represents a coalition of solidarity among all those who defy heterosexual normativity. This theology is essentially postmodern and includes also the voices of the bisexual and trans-gendered.

It can be inferred from the newspaper articles summarised above that the first four positions are represented in Botswana. This testifies to a diversity that is sometimes ignored by the media in the West. Sollis has demonstrated this with reference to the British media’s coverage of the Lambeth Conference of 1998. At this conference a liberal position towards homosexuality was proposed, but some bishops, particularly from non-Western churches, felt that this position was indeed the case in many other parts of the world.

3 HOMOSEXUALITY AND THEOLOGY

David Sollis (2000) has identified five distinct theological approaches to the issue of homosexuality. The first is the conservative approach, as reflected in, for example the “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Question of Homosexual Person” (published by the Catholic Truth Society 1986). According to this approach homosexuality is wrong and rejected unequivocally. Reasons are often derived from such texts as Genesis 1:27. Some advocates of the conservative position distinguish between homosexual orientation and homosexual acts, and regard the former as morally neutral but the latter as reprehensible and unnatural. According to this position only two vocations exist for the Christian person - to marry or to live a celibate single life.

The second is the liberal approach, which tries to balance scriptu- ral evidence with recent findings and conclusions of the biological and social sciences. Sollis cites an example the statement by the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England (Issues in Human Sexuality, Church House Publishing 1991). Most advocates of this position would say that the lifelong, monogamous union between a man and woman is the Christian ideal but that loving and faithful partnerships between members of the same sex can also be ways to understanding and growing in God’s love.

The third is the radical approach. The emphasis with this position is on the quality of a relationship, as opposed to the nature of sexual acts. Sexuality is morally neutral: a loving relationship between two men, or two women, is no less a blessing than a loving relationship between a man and a woman. The fourth is the lesbian and gay approach. This position has affinities with other theologies of the oppressed, such as liberation theology. It is not based on personal experience (see Griffith 2000). The fifth approach is that of queer theology, which emerged in the 1990s and represents a coalition of solidarity among all those who defy heterosexual normativity. This theology is essentially postmodern and includes also the voices of the bisexual and trans-gendered.

4 HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE HEBREW BIBLE

Next, I would like to show why there is justification for a less hostile attitude towards homosexuality. Certainly, the scriptural evidence of the Hebrew Bible where sexual acts between members of the same sex is concerned is ambiguous and complex (see Stiebert & Walsh 2001). Those who claim that homosexuality is wrong “because it says so in the Bible“; ought to have first, a firm understanding of what is meant by “homosexuality”; secondly, a good grasp of what is said in the Bible; and thirdly, reasons for their outright rejection. To address the first point and give a brief definition: homosexuality is the predisposition of some groups of people to be sexually attracted to persons of the same gender as opposed to those of the opposite gender. Sexual activity may or may not eventuate from that attraction.

In contemporary discourses the term “homosexual” refers prima- rily to orientation, not to behaviour. The Hebrew Bible has no word for homosexuality. Sexual attraction between two women (lesbianism) receives no mention. (Would this indicate that lesbianism - as it is not prohibited - is permissible?) There is no allusion either to any range of homosexual expressions. The close and affectionate relationship between David and Jonathan (1 Sm 18:1-4; 2016-17, 41-42; 2 Sm 1:26) has sometimes (in the past wrongly) been described as homoerotic (see Nissinen 1998:55, note 93). Along with Martti Nissinen I would say that while such a relationship is conceivable, the recognition of homoeroti- cism in the Bible (or explicit) biblical passages is to some extent due to a projection of modern Western perceptions of exchanges of even non-erotic physical affection between men.

“In the contemporary Western world, men’s mutual expressions of feelings are more restricted than they were in the biblical world. Men’s homo-sexuality apparently was not part of the sexual taboo
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In the contemporary Western world, men’s mutual expressions of feelings are more restricted than they were in the biblical world. Men’s homosexuality apparently was not part of the sexual taboo

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Ditshwanelo held a workshop, which led to the formation of Legabibo (“Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana”). A human rights charter was produced and adopted later that same year. Ditshwanelo and Lega- bibo continue to facilitate public awareness of gay human rights issues. All of these publications taken together, suggest that there is a wide spectrum of opinion in Botswana regarding homosexuality (as is indeed the case in many other parts of the world).
I imagine many readers of the story of David and Jonathan in African contexts also think of any form of homoerotic activity.

What is mentioned (though neither frequently nor insistently) is some form of sexual act (possibly anal penetration) between two men. In the two biblical narratives of Genesis 19 and Judges 19 threatening men demanded “to know” male guests. The sexual nature of this knowledge is clear. What is at issue here is primarily (gang) rape and the consequent humiliation of male visitors. Neither text suggests, however, that the men threatening rape are homosexual. As Rictor Norton points out with regard to Genesis 19, “Either the inhabitants of Sodom are heterosexual, or Lot is incredibly stupid to offer them his virgin daughters” (Norton 1977b:58). In Judges 19, furthermore, the Levite’s concubine is sexually abused, which seems to suggest that inevitably it is the men of Gibeah who are heterosexual. Sodom’s sin is not confined to such a usage. The fact remains that Sodom’s sin is not “detestable things” is from the Hebrew noun שָׁפַעְתָּם, sometimes translated “abomination”. This word can indeed refer to sexual transgression, but is not help the poor and needy” (NIV). True, Ezekiel 16:50 reads, “They were haughty and did detestable things before me” (NIV). The word for expressions, is, however, elusive. Jerome Walsh, for instance, has argued precisely “the lying of a woman” means  and whether the prohibition is more cautious:

A counter-argument, however, which incorporates a detailed discussion of Hebrew idiom, is proposed by Saul Olyan. His conclusion is more strongly condemned in Genesis 19 (and in the similar story of Jdg 19, too) is not so much the men’s sexual (homosexual or otherwise) but their brutality and infringements of codes of hospitality. While the name “Sodom” usually brings the word “sodomy” into the mind of the modern reader, the earliest interpretations of Genesis 19 in fact do not emphasise the sexual nature of the sin of Sodom. There are frequent references to Sodom in the Hebrew Bible, but when the city’s sins are described in more detail, it is pride, the ill treatment of foreigners and judicial offences that receive attention.

Our account of the Leviticus couplings, all of which are prohibited in legal materials outside of the Hebrew Bible is insufficient to support this view. Such a generalization is more easily defended for adultery, incest, and human-animal coupleings, all of which are prohibited in legal materials outside of the Holiness Source” (Olyan 1994:205).

As Nissinen explains, sexual transgression becomes the focus only of later interpretations, such as those of the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, the Vulgate, and the Wisdom of Solomon. In the New Testament, Ezekiel 16:49, for example, a chapter filled with obscene sexual images – which may well be the reason for the rabbinical prohibition of public readings of this chapter (Meg 4:10). Sodom is here condemned for pride, social injustice and lack of hospitality – not for sodomy. The verse reads, “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters were arrogant, overconfident, they did not help the poor and needy” (NIV). True, Ezekiel 16:50 reads, “They were haughty and did detestable things before me” (NIV). The word for “detestable things” is from the Hebrew noun שָׁפַעְתָּם, sometimes translated “abomination”.

This word can indeed refer to sexual transgression, but is not confined to such a usage. The fact that they do not refer to sexual relations between men as one of the sins of Sodom suggests that within the context with which the Hebrews were familiar, i.e., the sin of Sodom was not primarily sexual immorality, but violence, arrogance and disregard for hospitality.

Alongside the narratives of Genesis 19 and Judges 19 are two succinct laws in Leviticus. These could be said to be direct and unequivocal. A counter-argument, however, which incorporates a detailed discussion of Hebrew idiom, is proposed by Saul Olyan. His conclusion is more cautious:

“This Israelites abhor male coupleings, as has been generally assumed up to the present? Certainly the evidence of the Hebrew Bible is insufficient to support this view. Such a generalization is more easily defended for adultery, incest, and human-animal coupleings, all of which are prohibited in legal materials outside of the Holiness Source” (Olyan 1994:205).

While precisely “the lying of a woman” means and whether the prohibition should be extended to comprise a comprehensive range of homosexual expressions, is more easily defended for adultery, incest, and human-animal coupleings, all of which are prohibited in legal materials outside of the Holiness Source” (Olyan 1994:205).
between men is mentioned. The narrative passages condemn the men described as pornographic. In the apocryphal book The
homosexual orientation. It contains four passages where a sexual act explicitly defined as sodomy, even in a chapter that could justifiably be
down (Walsh 2001). The word for
"detestable things" is from the Hebrew noun ?????, sometimes translated
persuasively that the laws have in view
expressions, is, however, elusive. Jerome Walsh, for instance, has argued
should be extended to comprise a comprehensive range of homosexual
sodomy. The verse reads, “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom:
prescribes the death penalty for both men practising such an act. What
precisely “the lying of a woman” means and whether the prohibition
brought the word “sodomy” into the mind of the modern reader, the ear-
ner of codes of hospitality. While the name “Sodom” usually
explicitly forbid by the laws of Sodom. There are frequent references to Sodom in
as one of the sins of Sodom suggests that
the last interpretations of Genesis 19 in fact do not emphasise the sexual
in the Hebrew Bible, but when the city’s sins are described in more detail, it is
true, the ill treatment of foreigners and judicial offences that receive attention.

Let us look at Ezekiel 16:49, for example, a chapter filled with
obscene sexual images – which may well be the reason for the rabbinical
prohibition of猪肉 eaters, for instance, is clearly
Bible has nothing to say about
“abomination”. This word can indeed refer to sexual transgression, but is
male-male sexual expressions (Walsh 2001).

As Nissinen explains, sexual transgression becomes the focus on
the Hebrew Bible, but when the city's sins are described in more detail, it is
true, the ill treatment of foreigners and judicial offences that receive attention.

To summarise briefly: we have provided a brief definition of
sexual assault of the men of Sodom. The fact that they do not refer to
as the sin of Sodom. There are frequent references to Sodom in
the narratives of Genesis 19 and Judges 19 threatening men
men threatening rape are homosexual. As Rictor Norton points out with
imagination many readers of the story of David and Jonathan in African
social injustice and lack of hospitality – not for
social injustice and lack of hospitality – not for
prostitution is a reference to Lot and the men of Sodom. In the New Testa-
We can now return to the law of Leviticus 20:13. What
Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 both prohibit that a man lie with another man
infringements of codes of hospitality. While the name “Sodom” usually
it is pride, the ill treatment of foreigners and judicial offences that
As Rictor Norton points out with
researchers have not been able to provide a clear answer.

mon, too, it is xenophobia that is cited as the sin of Sodom. In chapter 19
mention of those who “practised a more bitter hatred of stran-
gers”, who “refused to receive strangers when they came to them” and were
stricken also with loss of sight - just as were those at the door of the
righteous man” (RSV), which (it can be assumed with relative cer-
tainty) is a reference to Lot and the men of Sodom. In the New Testa-
ment also it is immediately following travel instructions at the event of
encountering inhospitable citizens who do not receive the disciples, that
Jesus alludes to Sodom (Mt 10:15; Lk 10:12). There is no mention of
either homosexual orientation or practice. The author of Leviticus and the
Wisdom of Solomon most probably knew the story of the attempted
sexual assault of the men of Sodom. The fact that they do not refer to
sexual relations between men as one of the sins of Sodom suggests that
within the context with the law, it was not possible to determine whether
physical expressions of
political or cultural context, the Hebrew Bible has nothing to say about
sexual immorality, but violence, arrogance and disregard for hospitality.
As Nissinen explains, sexual transgression becomes the focus only of
later interpretations, such as those of the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Philo and the Qur’an (Nissinen 1998:93-95).

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Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 both prohibit that a man lie with another man
(literally) “the lying of a woman”. Such an act is ???. The latter law
proscribes the practice of this act for both men and women in an act. What
precisely “the lying of a woman” means and whether the prohibition
should be extended to comprise a comprehensive range of homosexual
expressions, is, however, a matter of debate. Jerome Walsh, for instance, has argued
persuasively that the laws have in view only anal intercourse between
males, but no other male-male sexual expressions (Walsh 2001).

To summarise briefly, we have provided a brief definition of
homosexuality and its occurrence in the Hebrew Bible. We have
noted that the Hebrew Bible has nothing to say about
homosexual orientation. It contains four passages where a sexual act
between men is mentioned. The narrative passages condemn the men

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threatening such an act. What is condemned above all, however, is the threat of rape and humiliation, which is indicative of a most serious breach of hospitality. We have seen, too, that some form of male-male sexual act is prohibited in Leviticus and, as it incurs the death penalty, we can assume that whatever precisely it was, it was very seriously condemned. As we have seen, the legalistic aspect of our analysis is admis to the elusiveness of the Hebrew idiom of these laws (an idiom which occurs in these two terse legal texts only) let us probe the pro-\_bable reasons for the existence of the laws in order to determine whether the laws still hold the same relevance and significance as they did in earlier times. Four main reasons have been suggested for the existence of these two laws. The first proposes that the reason male-male sexual acts were rejected by the Hebrews is to their association with idolatrous activities (see Norton 1977a). As Olyan points out, this is probably the least convincing of the arguments, because it relies on a narrow and unemotional translation of the word "\_natural\_" as well as the (too readily) ideal idea that Leviticus 18:21 refers to child sacrifice to an alleged god called Moloch. Idolatry in the Judaic tradition is, of course, a cardinal sin and an asso-\_ciation with idolatry has been used to account also for other legal stipu-\_lations such as dietary laws (Ex 23:19; Dt 14:21). However, consid-\_ered obsolete by most Christians and a connection with idolatry might therefore be said to be insufficient to justify the rejection of homosexua-\_lity on the grounds of Leviticus 18:21 and 20:13. It has been argued that the prohibition "\_do not boil a kid in its mother\_s milk\_" (Ex 23:19; 34:26; Dt 14:21) is derived from the rejection of such a practice in Canaanite worship. As a consequence of this law (mentioned three times with the prohibition for a man to lie with another man occurs twice) orthodox Jews to this day do not consume dairy and meat products in one meal. Most Christians, on the other hand, do not follow such dietary restric-\_tions.

The second reason centres on the idea that homosexuality is "\_unnatural\_". First of all, a thought: something truly "\_unnatural\_" indeed be prohibited against? Holding our hands in the fire is unnatural behaviour but it would be nonsensical to have a law that says, "You shall not hold your hands in the fire." Instead, there are laws against adultery and sexual acts between men precisely because they are considered "\_natural\_" and because sexual acts are practised - possibly because for some people they are considered either "\_natural\_", or at least very real desires. It can and has been argued that they are only the desires of unnatural people – but it none the less appears to be the case that "\_natural\_" and "\_unnatural\_" are relative designations.

Mary Douglas (1966) argued that the ancient Israelites designated as ??? all those things (be it creatures, substances or activities) that are defined as classification, or that were not proper to their kind. The desig-\_nation, therefore, belonged to a particular worldview or system of ideas. She explains, for instance, that the pig is deemed unsuitable for con-\_sumption not because pigs are somehow disgusting or because pig flesh is more liable to cause diseases, but because pigs do not fulfill the particular standards that define a "\_proper\_" or "\_clean\_" land animal. Unlike the dog, the pig has its tail, but does not chew cud, therefore it is deficient (Lv 11:3-7). Likewise, shellfish are deficient because proper sea-dwelling creatures have scales and fins but shellfish do not. The reason why shellfish are not proper to their kind and therefore not fit for consumption (Lv 1:9-12).

Following the line of this argument, a "\_proper\_" man is sexually active, a "\_proper\_" woman sexually receptive. A sexual act between two men is envisaged as contrary to nature. Adam is envisaged as nymn \\

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The second reason centres on the idea that homosexuality is "unnatural". First of all, a thought: would something truly "unnatural", indeed be prohibited against? Holding our hands in the fire is unnatural behaviour but it would be nonsensical to have a law that says, "You shall not hold your hands in the fire". Instead, there are laws against adultery and sexual acts between men precisely because a homosexual sexual act is unnatural and because sexual acts are practised - possibly because for some people they are considered either "natural", or at least very real desires. It can and has been argued that they are only the desires of unnatural people – but it

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interpreted as obscuring Israeltie lines of descent; while bestial acts, as well as the offering of one’s children to foreign gods, likewise waste Israeltie seed. Also prohibited is intercourse with a menstruating woman – this, too, is very unlikely to result in conception. If this is our rationale and we justify the legislation on the grounds that semen is being wasted, then the implication has to be that all sexual activity that does not maximise conception is also improper. This would mean that the use of contraception is unacceptable and would also prohibit masturbation and sexual acts where semen is ejaculated only after a person has fallen to the ground, or when she is past the age of conceiving. There are indeed Christians who do uphold these views. For the majority of Christians, however, who do not: is this argument for prohibiting homosexuality acceptable? Are any of the laws in Leviticus 18 and 20 so far acceptable?

The fourth reason, which strikes me as closest to the mark for accounting for the emergence of the laws of Leviticus, concerns purity and pollution (a theme central to Lv as a whole). It has been argued that mixing of defiling emissions is at issue in several sexual proscriptions. Mixing the semen of two men, or the semen of humans and animals, or semen and menstrual blood might all be said to be particularly contaminating. Both the menstrual blood and semen are considered not as it is; when mixed they could be said to constitute a double threat. Again, if this is our reason for rejecting homosexuality, then the purity laws cannot be followed so selectively, or as part of other complicated prohibitions must be taken into account also. Homosexuality would according to this stance be considered objectionable not because it is morally reprehensible (any more than menstruation is morally reprehensible), but because it is defiling.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Recent articles published in mainstream newspapers of Botswana suggest that homosexuality is being discussed there as it is in many other parts of the world. Although the media in Britain, for instance, has sometimes captured the public perception that the debate on the topic of homosexuality beyond the Western world is univocally hostile, newspapers of Botswana indicate that there exist a variety of points of view. There are people in Botswana who maintain a conservative position as regards heterosexual marriage. My hope is that the debate on homosexuality with all its complexities is alive and well in this country. There are still, however, many people who do not uphold these views. For the majority of Christians, however, who do not: is this argument for prohibiting homosexuality acceptable?
opposite gender (which is how this word is generally understood in con-
temporary debates) is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. There are, however, four texts that refer pejoratively to sexual acts between men. (Lesbianism receives no mention.) The two narrative texts in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 both concern the threat of male rape. As is suggested by the earliest usages to Sodom in the books of Ezekiel and The Wisdom of Solomon (as well as in the Gospels), Sodom’s sin was primarily asso-
ciated not with sodomy but with arrogance, violence and above all a lack
of hospitality. The two narrative texts may tell us that raping a man is wrong,
but they do not in Botswana who maintain a conservative stance, with
regard to homosexuality, but there are also more liberal voices, as well
as nationals of Botswana who have publicly professed their homosexual
orientation (though anonymously).
Focusing on texts of the Hebrew Bible where some form of sexual
activity between members of the same sex is mentioned, it emerges that
there is actually very little to go on. Homosexuality, a sexual orientation
whereby individuals are attracted to members of the same rather than the
HOMOSEXUALITY IN BOTSWANA

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Israelite seed. Also prohibited is intercourse with a menstruating woman
or when she is past the age of conceiving. There are indeed Christians
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problems which must be taken into account also. Homosexuality would according to this stance be considered objectionable not because it is morally reprehensible (any
more than menstruation is morally reprehensible), but because it is defil-
ing.

My aim has been above all to draw attention to the fact that the
debate on homosexuality with all its complexities is alive and well in
Botswana. I have tried to highlight some of these complexities from a
theological perspective with special reference to texts of the Hebrew
Bible and by drawing attention to the importance of attempting to under-
stand these texts within a social framework. My hope is that the debate
will continue and that such notions as care and compassion  for the
stand these texts within a social framework. My hope is that the debate
Bible and by drawing attention to the importance of attempting to under-
account for the rejection of homosexual acts by pointing to associa-
tions with idolatrous practic es, to the idea that semen is being wasted, to
a blurring of boundaries and to purity concerns. All of these reasons pose
problems for all but the most fundamentalist of Christians –  and
some problems for all but the most fundamentalist of Christians –  and
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standing of these texts within a social framework. My hope is that the debate
will continue and that such notions as care and compassion for the
socially vulnerable (for which there is considerable support in both the
Hebrew Bible and the New Testament) will not be neglected.
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Paulus se retoriese strategie in Galasiërs 3:1-14

D F Tolmie (Universiteit van die Vrystaat)

ABSTRACT

Paul’s rhetorical strategy in Galatians 3:1-14

The aim of this article is to demonstrate an approach to the rhetorical analysis of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians that differs from the typical approach followed by researchers, namely the forcing of ancient rhetorical categories on the letter. Instead it is proposed that Paul’s rhetorical strategy should be analysed in terms of a grounded theoretical approach. This is demonstrated by a systematic analysis of the Paul’s basic rhetorical strategy, as well as of all the supportive persuasive techniques, in Galatians 3:1-14 (subdivided as Galatians 3:1-5 and 3:6-14).

1 INLEIDING

In ‘n vorige artikel (Tolmie 2000:353-370) het ek ‘n analise van Paulus se retoriese strategie in Galasiërs 2:11-21 gedoen. Hierdie artikel sluit daarby aan deurdat ek hier Paulus se retoriese strategie in die gedeelte wat direk hierop volg, naamlik Galasiërs 3:1-14, bespreek. Vir die retoriese analise volg ek dieselfde prosedure as in die vorige artikel: in plaas daarvan om (soos by e navorsers) ‘n bepaalde vooraf gekose retoriese model (antiek of modern) bloot op die teks te gaan toepas, kies ek vir die soort benadering wat bekend staan as ‘n grounded theoritical approach – ‘n benadering waarvolgens ‘n teoretiese raamwerk ontwikkel en begrond word sonder dat die navorser vooraf ‘n formele teoretiese raamwerk formuleer om data te verklaar, maar dat die data stap vir stap met mekaar vergelyk word in ‘n poging om konseptuele kategorieë daar te stel waardeur die data verklaar moet word (Ellis 1993:469-483). Soos aangedui in die vorige artikel behels hierdie metode in die praktyk dat die navorsers die Galasiërbrief perikoop -vir-perikoop moet ondersoek en sistematies al die oorredingstegniee wat Paulus gebruik, uitleg. Die doel van hierdie artikel is dus om die individuele oorredingstegnieke en die oorkoepelende retoriese strategie in Galasiërs 3:1-14 te identifiseer en te beskryf.
