

Chapter 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS AND EVALUATION

4.1 Introduction

I started the process of applying to the department of correctional services for permission to visit prisons in the Gauteng province in order to conduct interviews with inmates and members in August 2005. For almost one year I was directed from one office to the other and at the end, it appeared I was knocking at the wrong doors. I was then given the correct department and office in September 2006. I visited the officials, collected the necessary documents and submitted my application. Professor Etienne de Villiers, my promoter, had to write a letter of motivation and verification. After a lengthy period the ethics committee of the department of correctional services requested me to supply them with additional information including a copy of my MTh dissertation. I was finally granted the permission during the first week of June 2007 to visit the prisons. The results that are analysed below are of interviews conducted in the following prisons in no particular order: Pretoria Central correctional services; Johannesburg (Sun City) correctional services; Leeuwkop correctional services and Krugersdorp correctional services. A small percentage of ex-inmates were personally sourced while the majority were interviewed at the Soweto NICRO offices and at Moroka Police Station.

4.2 NICRO

NICRO stands for National Institute for Crime prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders. They have regional offices in all nine provinces. I went through the Johannesburg regional office and was referred to the Soweto branch. My summation of the organisation is that it does a lot of good work in rehabilitating released offenders. They

have a number of good programmes but a great deal more can be done. Let me mention here that it became clear to me on account of my interviews with inmates that very few knew of the existence of this organisation and what help they can get from it. If some extensive marketing was done, a lot more could be achieved. For example, many inmates would have loved to study and do literacy courses or further their studies, but lacked the funds to enrol in the study programme in prison. It must again be said here that for many inmates to escape the traps of gangsterism, being a member of those engaged in studying, gives them respect. They are also seldom attacked by members of the different prison gangs. NICRO has a Study Fund for inmates and very few inmates knew of it and how to access it.

Another great service rendered by NICRO is the provision of bursaries for children of prisoners. If a prisoner is the breadwinner and has school going children, he can be helped and the children can get bursaries from the same Study Fund that makes funds available to prisoners. This is called The Esther Lategan Study Fund. This again is a service many inmates do not know of. The unfortunate part is that in cases where the services are known, very few make use of them. I do hope that this will not cause the organisation to adopt a defeatist attitude and stop trying to help by making these services more widely known

According to the 2001/2002 Annual Report, one can see the impressive job done by the organisation in the different provinces. They reported that, “47 victim support centres operated from police stations, courts, clinics, community centres and other venues” (NICRO Annual Report 2001/2002:4). They also reported that their community victim support programme which operated in seven of the nine provinces had reached over 34 800 individuals. My observation is that a lot is being done outside the prison walls and that a lot more visibility in prisons would make a greater difference to inmates.

My proposal is that NICRO should apply to the DOCS to be given an office in each of the correctional services centres, prisons. This will enable them to provide orientation to new inmates. This is where they can explain what help inmates can get from NICRO and how their children if the incarcerated parents are bread-winners can get help with bursaries and, lastly, how on release they can be further helped to be reintegrated back into their communities. Here NICRO officials can get details of family members and start to work with these people in helping them to cope with the absence of a family member and how the families can offer support to the member in prison especially by encouraging them to visit and send funds. It must be said again that the information gathered from inmates and former inmates is that the gangs, especially the Ninevites, would target the inmate who does not get any visits from family or friends and within a short space of time the callow inmate is subsumed into the prison gang lifestyle.

4.3 Summary of research procedures

The results of the interviews that were conducted were captured by the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria, (see appendix 3 and 4). Ms Jaqui Sommerville and her team worked very hard and efficiently in sending me the summary of outcomes as captured. I interviewed thirty members/warders in total. These were based in the four different Correctional Service Centres. I also interviewed a total of seventy four inmates and ex-inmates. Apart from the four Correctional Services Centres I visited, I also interviewed ex inmates who were on parole and reporting weekly at the NICRO offices and or at the Moroka Police Station. These men had served their sentences in different prisons and all these fell under category or code number five (5).

4.3.1 Research results on correctional service members

The officials/warders had twelve questions to respond to. Questions [Variables] one (1) to three (3) dealt with where they were placed, position held and number of years in service respectively. Questions [Variables] four (4) to seven (7), nine (9) and twelve (12) expected a yes or no answer with a not applicable where applicable. The answers to these questions were also given codes for example a YES = 1, a NO = 2 and a Not Applicable = 3. The other variables, as the results will show below, required sentence answers. I spent a bit more time on these variables, as will be seen below, talking to the members.

All thirty members answered variable one giving their place of work. Similarly, variable two had a hundred percent response in that all of them knew what position they held. These positions ranged from a C1 to C3 as a member warder to administrative officials and health and spiritual care officials. The next variable dealt with experience, how long the member has been in that position. The lowest serving member had been in their position for a period of seven months and the longest serving member had been with the department for thirty years. It was interesting to note that on the matter of inmate behaviour in prison, namely the question on whether inmates are told that sex in prison is prohibited, twenty seven answered in the positive, one in the negative and two did not know. In responding to the question whether, irrespective of the above, inmates do have sex in prison, twenty six said yes and four said no. The next variable dealt with the question whether the department provided inmates with free condoms. Twenty nine members answered in the positive and only one answered in the negative. Only three members said that some members do play a role in assisting inmates to have sex in prison. Twenty five answered that question in the negative and two did not know. The next question dealt with the reason for members to behave in this unethical way. One out of the thirty members gave two reasons. The other twenty nine responded in the following

way: six members thought that the reason for such behaviour by members is greed; the only second reason was given by one member as corruption. Twenty two members responded with a not applicable or that they did not know of any member behaving in that way. Two members did not respond to that question.

Variable nine asked whether members knew of any inmate who was forced or raped by other inmates. Eight members answered in the negative, saying that they did not know of or heard of inmates being raped. Twenty two answered in the positive, that they either knew or heard of inmates who have been raped or forced by other inmates to have sex with them. A follow up on the above question dealt with the place where the incidents of rape and or coerced sex took place. Twenty three members said that this happened in the communal cells and one said it happens in single cells. Six members said the question was not applicable or did not know as they do not think this happens in the first place. Questions/variables eleven and twelve dealt with solutions from the point of view of members. Variable eleven asked what the member thought the authorities should do to prevent inmates raping others or even having access to sex while in prison. Variable twelve dealt with a double barrel question which sought to find out if members felt that they were adequately trained to deal with all eventualities; and secondly to find out from those who answered in the negative as to what is needed to ensure that members would be equipped to deal with all eventualities.

Responses to variable eleven had seven different answers as to what authorities could do to curb sexual behaviours in prison. Five members gave three suggestions, thirteen gave two, ten gave one suggestion and two did not give any suggestion as to what the authorities should do to curb sexual activity in prison. Four members suggested that more members should be employed as the current number of members are not enough and are working under pressure and overworked. Only one member suggested that the

department should install CCTV cameras in the cells so that members can monitor cell activities and be able to respond to any misdemeanours. Five members suggested that the department should deal severely with both sexual perpetrators and officials who may be found guilty in playing a role in the sexual activity of inmates. Two members saw the solution by keeping inmates busy. The solution could be for the department to introduce more activities for the inmates to keep them busy. Six members suggested that gangs and known gang members should be dealt with in a way that will end prison gangs and overcrowding. All those who mentioned gangs mentioned overcrowding, almost as if gangs were seen to be thriving in overcrowded cells. An interesting suggestion came from six members saying that the authorities should allow more preachers to come into prison to preach to both inmates and members. They saw the solution in a spiritual level where one's attitude once changed supernaturally will bring about a change in behaviour. The highest number of members suggested separation as the solution. Thirteen members said that authorities should separate inmates, gang members from non-gang members, hardened criminals from petty crime offenders and first time offenders from repeat offenders. A few of the inmates mentioned the necessity to separate younger offenders from the older offenders, that a middle class of inmates should be created, when the juveniles who no longer fit the profile of juveniles and qualify as adults should be kept apart from the older men for several years until they can fend for themselves and are experienced enough to stand on their own.

In answering the first part of variable twelve, there were eleven who felt that members were well trained to deal with all eventualities pertaining to inmate problems and their duties. Thirteen responded negatively, saying that they felt members needed more training to be able to cope with their work adequately. Of these thirteen two gave both a yes and a no. Five members said it was not applicable and one member did not respond at all. The second part of variable twelve had five different suggestions as to what the

department should do to ensure that members are well trained to cope with their duties. One member gave three different suggestions, six members gave two suggestions, ten members gave one suggestion and thirteen did not respond at all.

The suggestion that was commonly cited as one that the department needed to concentrate on regarding the equipping of members to do their work well was cited by ten members. They felt that the department should run refresher courses for members. This was followed by the suggestion that the department should introduce and run courses on stress management. The feeling was that the members were working under stressful circumstances and looking after inmates - some of whom were incorrigible - was very stressful. The last area suggested as a need to enable members to do their work satisfactorily was the need to train members how to handle and work with inmates with the objective of rehabilitating them. The feeling here was that the switch from guarding and punishing inmates to working with inmates towards rehabilitation was too sudden a change for some members. The problem, I was told, was that some of the inmates were not interested in being rehabilitated. These are the men who made prison their home, especially recidivists with long sentences who do not dream of seeing the outside walls of prison. These are the hardened men who make life unbearable for some members. This suggestion for the training of members to handle and work with inmates with the objective of rehabilitation was subscribed to by five members. These then were the suggestions for change in the department as seen by members regarding sexual practices in prison and the equipping of members to enable them to perform excellently.

4.3.2. Evaluation of members' responses

The above results show that the respondents were not totally honest. This conclusion as will be seen is based on some of the answers given by the members when these answers

are compared with the results of the Jali Commission. Combining the question whether members are well trained to deal with all eventualities and the question whether inmates are specifically told that sex in prison is prohibited, the four members who answered in the negative are four too many out of the thirty interviewed. These could be some of the members who *unknowingly* did not enforce the rule, apart from those who did not enforce this strict rule of “no sex” knowingly, on purpose for personal gain or ill-gain to be politically correct. The other possibility is that these may actually be the members who may have been involved in assisting some inmates to have homosexual sex in prison. It was also very interesting to note that in answering the question whether inmates do have sex with other inmates in prison, twenty six answered in the positive. There was no indication of whether the members did anything on discovering that homosexual sex was taking place under their noses as the guardians and officials who are to see to it that rules are obeyed. There was no mention of any charges brought against those who broke the law or in the case of forced homosexual sex, no case opened against the perpetrators. Although the questionnaire did not have a question related to this aspect, McKenzie’s experiences in prison show that, of the male rape cases he saw at Grootvlei, no steps were taken against the perpetrators. This is what McKenzie says:

It’s at night when you hear the screaming. Somewhere, someone is being beaten or raped. The wardens that do work at night often cannot be bothered to look in on anything, because they’re using the time to study. Many a screaming inmate has received little more for his shrieks than a warden shouting, ‘Shut up!’ and banging his door.

(Cilliers and McKenzie 2006:115).

The other case was the one that led to his turning point, the rape of Wimpie and he explained that the wardens did not help and in spite of what they saw, they said there is no proof that the boy was raped. There is no mention of any steps taken against the men who raped Wimpie. There is also no mention of steps taken against the four inmates who raped the fifteen year old boy called Kenneth. Not only was there no mention of cases

opened against the four perpetrators, worse still, nothing appears to have been done against the warder who also raped Kenneth when he went to report that he was raped, namely Mr. Mohano who according to reports raped Kenneth not once but twice. “We talk about it in the cell and curse the wardens. It’s as if they have raped this boy to spite us” (Cilliers and McKenzie 2006:196).

This surely does not augur well with the behaviour of members, wardens. There may be a few members who may claim that most of the prison sex is consensual, and between adults. This argument would not stand because in prison sex is prohibited. The variable dealing with the provision of free condoms by the department to inmates, as mentioned above, had a ninety seven percent positive response and only one out of the thirty gave a negative answer. Off the record, after answering the question, a few members chatted to me about this controversial and contradictory action by the department. On the one hand they prohibit sex in prison and on the other hand they provide free condoms. The members I chatted to explained that it was confusing. They said sometimes it was difficult to enforce the ‘no sex in prison’ rule because, when asked by inmates what they were supposed to do with the condoms, when sex was prohibited, they found it difficult to give a decisive answer. It is to a certain degree understood that while the department prohibits sex in prison, knowing full well that in spite of that prohibition, it happens, they have to provide these condoms for those who want to safeguard themselves. This in a sense still does not make sense of being positive about what the department is all about. My believe is that the department should be very strict and not supply condoms and see how many will stop being involved in prison homosexual sex. There are currently some inmates who are HIV positive and some die of AIDS in prison even when condoms are provided. To me this is a matter of choice. If an inmate wants to be careless with his life, he will do so in spite of the provision of condoms. There are those who are HIV positive as McKenzie pointed out who do not care what happens to them in prison. The incident where an

inmate was sentenced by the prison gang member to be raped by HIV positive men in prison is one horrendous action that the provision of free condoms would not stop happening. Stopping gangs from operating in prison will do a lot in bringing some sanity into our correctional service centres. It has been mentioned above that the department does not provide free needles for drug users in order to stop them from infecting one another by sharing the same needle. Why not apply the same to condoms?

Perhaps the area that showed the lack of openness and honesty most, was the responses given by members to variable seven. This variable dealt with the complicity of members in inmates having access to sex in prison. Only three answered in the positive and twenty seven said that members do not play a role in assisting inmates to have sex in prison. When we look at the results of the Jali commission, the revealed facts in McKenzie's story and the numerous reports in papers and on our television programmes and compare that with the responses I got, one sees a very big difference. One wonders whether the members do not read newspapers or watch the reports on the television programmes. Their answers were an emphatic NO; that members do not play a role in assisting inmates to access sex in prison. This is the opposite of the truth and to me this spells trouble in that, if our members are not open to admit where some of their colleagues have erred, we have a long way to go. They are still in a stage of denial, the stage where one tells a lie so often that ultimately one tends to believe that the lie is actually true. McKenzie mentions how corrupt members acted with regard to selling young callow inmates to the older inmates for sexual purposes and to be turned out. For the members to deny complicity by any members really beats me.

Responding to the question of whether the members know of or are aware of inmates being forced by others to have homosexual sex, seventy nine percent said yes. This again proves that not only do inmates have homosexual sex in prison against the rules and with

the members' knowledge, but that there are many who are molested, indecently assaulted and turned out to be sex slaves of the powerful recidivists and probably members of the Ninevites gang operating in prisons. It would be interesting to know how many perpetrators were prosecuted after being found guilty and given further sentences. This I believe is another area that needs to be researched and attended to urgently by the department of correctional services. The twenty three respondents showing that the indecent assaults on inmates happened in communal cells highlighted the evils of overcrowding. The funny thing is that in normal life, one would not think of engaging in something so personal as sexual relations in a place where there was very little privacy. In prison the incidences of indecent assaults taking place in communal cells spell out some dynamics in prison life that the man in the street may not understand. It was only when I revisited the hardships of the homeless and people living a normal life in an informal settlement that I understood how in a place where privacy was unavailable, men could behave in such unethical ways. Nevertheless the problem of overcrowding was once more brought to light as a cause for this unbecoming behaviour by incarcerated men living in close proximity with other men they never chose to befriend or live with.

The last part of the interview questionnaire dealt with solutions. The idea was to lift the dark mood the reality of the evils of prison sex to a point of seeing that something can be done. The last but one variable asked, was what they, as members, thought the authorities should do to stop or curb the incidents of inmates indecently assaulting 'raping' other inmates. There were two second position popular suggested solutions from the members' point of view. These solutions were each affirmed by six members. The first solution was split into two in that it dealt with overcrowding as well as dealing with prison gangs. The second solution stated that the authorities should "Get more preachers to preach to inmates". It does show that among members, those who are close to inmates, there is an awareness that a spiritual encounter with Christ brings about a change in

behaviour. The top solution from the members' point of view was supported thirteen members. The solution is; "Separate inmates; gang members from non-gang members; hardened criminals from first time /petty offenders". It seems to suggest that the separation of inmates in whatever way will go a long way to minimising the problem of prison sexual behaviour among inmates. The last question members responded to dealt with the point whether they were equipped to do their job. The responses were not quite conclusive in that while eleven said yes and thirteen said no, the five who felt the question was not applicable made it difficult to draw a clear-cut conclusion. Nevertheless the response to this solution showed that members were in a way complacent. Those who felt that members needed refresher courses were in my opinion objective. Those who felt that members needed training in the rehabilitation of inmates were also objective and direct. Direct in that they acknowledged the difference in the old approach of guarding and punishing inmates and the current approach of working with inmates towards their rehabilitation. The interesting issue for me is that not many mentioned their need for stress management. The seven out of the thirty who said that there is a need for offering members a course in stress management were being realistic considering the kind of men they were in contact with and type of crimes these inmates were convicted for. In conclusion I found some members who are very passionate about their work and are concerned about the few who are tarnishing the image of good members.

4.3.3 Research results on inmates and ex-inmates

As mentioned above, there were seventy four inmates and ex-inmates who were interviewed. They all gave their consent to be interviewed. Fifty five inmates were visited in their different prisons correctional centres and nineteen ex-inmates were either free or free on parole and were interviewed at the NICRO premises, the Moroka Police Station and wherever I could arrange to meet and interview them. Variable one (1) dealt with the

name of the correctional service where the inmates are serving their sentences/former inmates served their sentences; variable two (2) asked whether they were inmates or ex-inmates. Variable three(3) and four (4) asked the question related to the number of years and months of their sentences and what period have been served to date or up to the time when they were released. Having dealt with variables one and two, variable three revealed that the total number of cumulative years of the sentences that these seventy four men were serving was one thousand and sixty two (1062) years. Answers to variable four showed that up to the time of the interviews, the total number of cumulative years already served, including those who were released was three hundred and eleven years and three months (311yrs 3mnths). There was one person with the heaviest sentence of ninety eight (98) years. The lightest sentence was one (1) year and there were two inmates and one ex-inmate with this sentence. The average length of the sentences would therefore be 14.35years and the average years already served would be 4.2 years .

Variable five dealt with the sexual orientation of inmates whether they were straight or gay. Seventy three (73) inmates indicated that they were straight and only one disclosed his status as gay. Variable six asked whether inmates were told on arrival at the prison of their admission to serve their sentence that sex in prison was prohibited. Twenty said that they were not told and fifty four said that they were told that sex was prohibited. Variable seven asked the straight men if they ever engaged in sex with another inmate in prison. Seventy one said no, two said yes and one did not answer that question. To variable eight, asking whether condoms were provided free of charge by the department of correctional service, sixty three said yes and eleven said no. Variable nine was directed to the gays to find out if they had regular sex partners in prison. The one gay person said no and the other seventy three were given an automatic not applicable response.

Variable ten asked whether the inmate/ex-inmate was ever forced by another inmate(s) to have sex with them. Nine said yes and sixty five no. Variable eleven was reversing the odds by asking whether the respondent ever forced an inmate to have sex with him. Only one responded in the positive and seventy three said no. Variable twelve asked whether the respondent knew or heard of an inmate who was forced / 'raped'. Sixty three said yes and ten said no and one did not respond to the question. Variable thirteen dealt with solutions. The respondent was to give a solution what he thought the authorities should do to reduce or stop inmates from being raped by other inmates. This question had twelve different answers as to how this problem could be solved. Three respondents gave five solutions; eighteen gave four solutions; twenty seven gave three; nineteen gave two; four gave one solution and three did not respond to the question.

The first solution suggested was that the department should deal with overcrowding and/or house inmates in single cells. This solution was chosen fifteen times; Twenty six of the respondents said that the authorities should separate inmates in several ways: recidivists from first time offenders; young offenders from the old and serious crime offenders from petty crime offenders. Twenty one respondents said they saw the solution to be the doing away with gangs in prison, that is, authorities should deal with prison gangs. Eight respondents mentioned that they think gang members should be separated from non gang members. Eight respondents said the remedy to this prison sex issue was allowing inmates to have conjugal visits either in prison or outside prison by allowing qualifying inmates to have week-end home visits. Sixteen respondents said the authorities should embark on encouraging family support in the form of visitations and funds being sent to inmates to buy the bare necessities. Fifteen responded that the department should implement an orientation for first time offenders so as to equip them with common do's and don'ts of prison life. Fifteen said the installation of CCTV cameras will solve this problem and fifteen said the department should deal with corrupt officials. Twenty one

supported a two in one solution, that the department should supply adequate food for inmates and that they should increase the number of recreational activities for inmates to combat idleness. Only three respondents saw dealing with drugs in prison as the solution. The last solution that was suggested to deal with this problem of forced homosexual sex was supported by forty five respondents. They said that the sex offenders should be isolated, separated from the rest of the inmates. This suggested solution was chosen by the highest number of respondents. These then are the results from the inmates and ex-inmates from the set questions as seen in appendix 1.

4.3.4 Evaluation of inmates and ex-inmates results

This evaluation will deal with those aspects of the results from inmates and ex-inmates that are more pertinent to our main concern, which is sexual practices in prison. The first aspect of the results that caught my eye was the variable regarding the dissemination of do's and don'ts of prison life. In responding to the variable whether they were told that sex in prison was prohibited, twenty out of the seventy four inmates/ex-inmates answered in the negative. This to me say that there are some members who either are not doing their job properly, by not telling all inmates when entering prison that sex in prison was prohibited, or that they themselves did not know that sex was prohibited. The other possibility is that although they knew, they did not do their job properly on purpose so as to be able to then facilitate the human trade in prison. The last reason why so many inmates were not given the rules of prison life regarding sex could be that these members took it as a foregone conclusion that whether they told the inmates or not, homosexual sex was happening in prison. So, better not waste their strength in telling incoming inmates not to engage in sex while incarcerated. The other interesting aspect is that even those who knew of the prohibition, still engaged in sex anyway. More interesting for me is that of those that I interviewed very few openly admitted having had a sexual experience

with an inmate in prison. It was always someone else out there, but not me. As for the core of the thesis, it became clearer that two main points were confirmed. Firstly, that men in prison were having homosexual sex with other men, and that secondly, there were those who forced others to have homosexual sex with them. The disheartening thing here is that the authorities did not appear to be doing anything to help the victims of sexual abuse. Sixty three of the seventy four said that they knew of or heard of someone in prison being indecently assaulted (raped) by other inmates. This again showed how personal this issue was. Not many of those I interviewed admitted to forcing some inmate to have sex with them or admitted to being forced by other inmates. I concluded that perhaps they felt this would make them appear weak to a stranger asking questions. The difficulty of divulging such intimate and personal matters to a stranger was not easy for many inmates. This aspect of men who in prison were forced to serve powerful inmates sexually and when they met their girlfriend or wife pretended to be fine, was explained by McKenzie in his story about prison life as he experienced it at Grootvlei prison.

It was interesting to note that when it came to the variable where they were given the freedom to contribute to possible solutions to curb these sexual practices, the inmates gave twelve suggestions compared to three given by members. This discrepancy proved the truth of one saying in one of our languages that goes: “*seso se baba mongway*”. Literally translated it would go something like; “The itchiness of a sore is known only by the one who scratches it”. In other words it is the one who is wearing the shoe who can tell where it pinches the foot. In this case, it is the one who is directly affected who will come up with means and ways of alleviating the problem. It was therefore no surprise that the inmates who are the ones affected by indecent assault by other inmates are the ones who came up with more solutions. Out of the twelve suggested solutions, two had high votes. One had fourteen ‘votes’ and the other one had twenty nine ‘votes’. The one with fourteen votes was suggesting that in order to prevent inmates to indecently assault

others is to separate inmates in different ways. Separate recidivists from first time offenders; the young from the old and serious crime offenders from petty crime offenders. The highest suggestion attracted twenty nine votes. It was suggested that the perpetrators of forced homosexual sex in prison, "rape", should be isolated. Off record some inmates touched on the attitude of members when an inmate reported a case of indecent assault "rape". They mentioned that in most cases the inmate is not taken seriously. This then leads to the victims hardly reporting such cases as the response from the members is not helpful at all.

Lastly, when I interviewed inmates and ex-inmates I found out that the ex-inmates were more open to discuss this issue in comparison to the inmates. I understood this attitude because the inmates, were not sure whether I could be trusted or not. In a way they did not want to incriminate themselves. My summation with hindsight of the situation is that I might have gained more trust had I gone in with one of the regular preachers or an independent spiritual leader, one that the inmates knew and trusted. The regular chaplains employed by the Department of Correctional Services were seen as part of the system. They could not be trusted one hundred percent because their pay comes from the department. So, where the results and answers from both inmates and members differed from the results of the Jali Commission and the experiences and report by McKenzie regarding his time in prison, I take it that the respondents were not being open and honest. Where the answers were similar to either the Jali report or McKenzie's experience, it made me feel that I was barking up the right tree and that there are some who are open and honest.

SEXUALITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY FROM AN EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE

5.1 Introduction

One of the main reasons why I am against sexual practices in prison as discussed above, is because I believe some of the reasons for society and prison officials allowing or accepting these practices may be a misunderstanding of sexuality. I will therefore discuss sexuality and homosexuality in particular and Biblical texts dealing with these topics. Like all human beings who treat subjects from their own religiously coloured perspectives, I will treat this sexual ethics topic from my Christian background. I will do this as an Evangelical and like all Evangelicals the world over, we have our foundation and stance rooted in the rich Judeo-Christian tradition. We believe in the inspiration of the Bible as God's Word and infallible in its original form and its final authority in life. Botha puts this aspect beautifully when he says: "A socio-historical overview of the sexual ethical codes within Judaism, Hellenism and early Christianity shows that very definite codes were in place. Early Christianity inherited its sexual ethics from Judaism and reinterpreted it in the light of the Gospel. The Christian community originated and existed within a Gentile world within which sexual immorality was rife" (Botha 2005:54).

5.2 Human sexuality

The basis for our doctrine on sexuality is found nowhere other than the Bible, which states categorically that God made 'man' (human beings) in His image; both Men and Women. This was not acknowledged by scholars of yesteryear like Tertullian who thought women were inferior and not made in God's image. He accused Eve as follows:

You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him to whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack; You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert - that is death - even the Son of God had to die.

(As quoted by Stott 1999: 286)

Tertullian saw women as not having God's image, contrary to Scriptures that clearly states: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27). Our doctrine of sexuality is built on this foundation. This aspect of sexuality is affirmed in the New Testament. In response to the question on divorce, Jesus started with creation and said "Haven't you read" he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female..." (Mt. 19:4)? Greenlee shares the same sentiments in his article on homosexuality in the New Testament, when he says the following: "There are two basic premises in the New Testament's treatment of sex. The first is that God "made them male and female" - two sexes, no more and no less (Mark 10:6) (Greenlee 1979:81).

Besides the fact that both men and women are made in God's image, we also need to note that male and female are also made for each other. When Adam was alone and lonely, God saw that it was 'not good' (Gn. 1:18). So God made Eve. God made them male and female to relate to each other. He made them to 'complement' each other, to celebrate their sexuality as male and female. He also made them and commanded them to procreate, to have children. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. (Gn 1:28) This aspect of procreation is not possible within homosexual relationships.

Male and female are to celebrate their sexuality within the God given parameters. These parameters are that non-genital relationships are to be enjoyed across the sexes, and

only within the confines of marriage are men and women to have heterosexual sex. This is our evangelical belief and practice. God forbids any sexual contact outside of marriage.

This however is not the only view. As Botha puts it:

Gay theologians claim that sexuality is neither right nor wrong; it is simply a gift from God. To be heterosexual or homosexual is not a question of sin or morality, but rather the product of God's infinite mind. The gay person therefore needs to be theologically enlightened to the point of accepting his sexual orientation as ordained by God.

(Botha 2005:14-15)

5.2.1 Evaluation/Critique

The above approach by gay theologians cannot be found in the Bible. What they say is a gift from God cannot be traced anywhere in the Bible. Nowhere does the Bible say that God made man, woman and homosexuals. Biblical texts will show this later. It is not clear how and where they find God's infinite mind regarding homosexual relations not being sin or a question of morality when the written text shows that God is against homosexual relations. Lastly, when they say that the gay person needs to be theologically enlightened to accept his orientation, will they be happy with an understanding of someone who claims to be theologically enlightened and has a sexual relationship with either his daughter or an animal?

5.3 Homosexuality

It is generally agreed that homosexuality is a condition and that those who fall under this condition are referred to as homosexuals. It is further alluded to that there may be those who may think they have the condition and those who do not have this condition but may feel that they ought to try it as a form of 'fashion'. Nevertheless I will restrict myself to those with the condition and the practice, be it for longer periods or short periods. I may

here and there use the terms interchangeably. For a better understanding of this aspect we now turn to the definitions.

According to Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, homosexuality is defined as follows: "A condition in which the libido is directed towards one of the same sex" (Taber 1976). And the Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English says the following about the homosexual; "A person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex" (Longman 1987:502). The Oxford Advanced Dictionary defines a homosexual as someone who is "sexually attracted to persons of one's own sex" (Hornby 1980:409). Lastly regarding definitions we look at what Grenz says about the term 'homosexuality': "The term, then, refers basically to the preference for sexual partners of the same sex or to the situation in which the erotic feelings are nearly exclusively triggered by persons of one's own sex" (Grenz 1990:225). From the definitions given above, it is clear that when we talk about homosexuals we mean people who are both sexually attracted to people of the same sex and have sexual relations with them. In general the term 'homosexual' includes both gays (males) and lesbians (females). In this discussion I will be referring to males, as our topic affects males in prisons and not females.

In addition to the definitions above, we need to immediately add that there are practicing and non-practicing homosexuals. I will concentrate on the issues relating to practicing homosexuals. Of these, there are four types I would like to discuss. The four types are the following: Transient Homosexuals, Transgenerational Homosexuals, Transgenderal Homosexuals and Egalitarian Homosexuals.

5.3.1. Transient homosexuals/homosexuality

This type is said to be a passing phase, an experimental stage that is not permanent. “Here the early relationships are usually of the same gender...Transient sexual acts at this time should not be confused with concretised homosexual choice; they are much more likely to be merely extensions of self-love” (Yerkes and Yerkes in Barnhouse and Holmes 1976:181). This is also seen as a stage where young men have strong friendships with other young men. In most cases these relationships are not sexual. It is a stage where boys shun a relationship with the opposite sex. The same I believe goes for girls. At this stage, they do not have sexual relations with other girls and have little or no interest in the opposite sex. In some cases this is a stage where people engage in a relationship with persons of the same sex as an escape route or healing period after a failed heterosexual relationship. After some time, they go back to live as heterosexuals. There are examples of women who were married and had children. The relationship went sour and instead of finding another man, they engage with a person of the same gender. This in most cases does not last for a life time and the person ends up with a partner of the opposite sex.

5.3.2 Transgenerational homosexuals/homosexuality

This kind of homosexuality takes place between males of different ages. Michael Vasey discusses this kind of homosexuality and quotes Greenberg who defines it as follows: “...In these societies, sexual relationships between older and younger men are an intergral part of initiation into the masculine role demanded by the needs of the tribe” (Greenberg in Vasey 1995:75-76). This is the kind of homosexuality that is also practised in prison. As already mentioned, the sad part is that the younger men in prison in most cases are forced to participate in this activity. Some unfortunately do not survive the

ordeal of being emasculated. Some either die from sexually transmitted diseases or commit suicide in prison. McKenzie says the following about suicides in prison:

In a year there can be fifty serious suicide attempts or more and its a strange year when even one succeeds. If you really want to put an end to yourself, you have to convince the guy watching you to do it too. The ones who do succeed are often the youngsters placed in solitary confinement for their safety after being raped. They set themselves alight. It happens twice, and on both occasions the boys burn themselves to death, dying agonisingly, hours later, on the hospital sheets.

(Cilliers and McKenzie 2005:137)

5.3.3. Transgenderal homosexuality

This kind of homosexuality is described as the one partner (of the same sex) plays the role of the opposite sex when engaging in the sexual act. The nearest in modern day society is that of transvestites. Greenberg, in describing it, says the following: “A common feature of this cultural form of homosexuality is the recognition that an individual is not suited to the particular culture’s form of masculinity or feminine identity” (Greenberg in Vasey 1995:76). In prison as already discussed earlier, this would be similar to cases where men become the prison ‘wives’ or prostitutes. These would be the good-looking men who are effeminate and sell sex (homosexual sex) for commodities such as food, cigarettes and or drugs.

5.3.4. Egalitarian homosexuality

This is the generally known homosexuality, which is called egalitarian homosexuality. This is where the partners of the same sex treat each other as social equals. Greenberg says that it “...relates to accepted sexual contact between people of the same sex where the partners treat each other as social equals. Many forms of such homosexuality are

widespread in traditional societies and are not treated as alternative to the important social roles of marriage or child rearing” (Greenberg in Vasey 1995:76).

This kind of homosexuality is also practised in prison. As seen earlier, it looks like we can safely say that there are two types of this egalitarian homosexuality. The first type is where the men practice ‘thigh sex’ where no penetration takes place. The second type is where homosexual sex actually happens between two men, performing anal sex where penetration takes place as seen in the self-confessed episode of Achmat when he was imprisoned at Pollsmoor prison in Cape Town.

5.4 Causes of homosexuality

The causes of homosexuality have not been conclusively researched and unanimously nor harmoniously resolved. There are always two views on what the causes are. There are those who claim nurture as the cause and those who claim that nature is the cause. Without going too deep into the whole debate of causes, there are these two that continue to be on the perennial agenda. Each supports one of the above, nurture or nature, namely the physiological causes and psychological causes. “Suffice it to say that the perennial debate of nurture or nature continues. Although there is no one conclusive answer to that question, from studies done and personal interviews conducted, I have found that the overwhelming majority of homosexuals have been nurtured. There are nevertheless those from childhood who have had this inclination or were sexually abused, who may claim the cause to be psychological and or physiological” (Shayi in Kretschmar and Ntlha 2006: 36).

I have not yet come across a scientific research regarding the homosexuals in prison as to whether the causes for their sexual behaviour were nurture or nature. From the accounts of the majority of homosexual acts in prison, it can be safely deduced that

circumstances and physical needs forced these men to act homosexually. Except for the minority of men whose sexual orientation is homosexual, the majority are 'turned out' as we have already seen, into becoming the 'wives', the 'laaities' by being 'raped' into submission or seduced and coerced into agreeing to homosexual acts because their needs are supplied by the perpetrator. This in a sense is corroborated by what the Jali Commission uncovered. One of the causes or mitigating circumstances in prison that forces the nurture of homosexual behaviour is overcrowding. In dealing with matters of sexual abuse in prison, the Jali Commission in their report said: "...overcrowding also encourages the sexual abuse of inmates" (Jali 2006: 43).

5.5 Key Biblical passages regarding homosexuality

There are a few Old Testament and New Testament passages that address this topic of homosexuality. The two Old Testament texts that are generally referred to regarding homosexuality are the Genesis story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gn 19:1-29 and Lv18:1-25 which deals with unlawful and prohibited sexual relations. The New Testament passages are Rm1:26-27 and 1Cor 6:9-10.

In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gn 19:1-29, the bone of contention between the pro-homosexual scholars who are predominantly liberal and those who are against the practise of homosexuality, mainly evangelicals, is around the meaning of the word *know*. It has traditionally been understood that God destroyed the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin of sodomy-homosexual activities. Liberal scholars later disputed that fact saying that it was not for homosexual acts but for being inhospitable. Sherwin Bailey based his arguments on the meaning of the word know: "Bailey points out that the word know has sexual references only 14 times out of a total of 943 occurrences. Therefore, he suggests, that the odds are against its having a sexual reference here"

(Oswalt 1979:73). Evangelical scholars have refuted this view of Bailey on the basis that in the context of the verse and chapter, the word does have sexual connotations even if in other contexts it does not mean to have sex. The verse referred to, reads as follows: “Look, I have two daughters who have never (*known*) slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof” (Gn 19:8). Oswalt says: “First of all, notice that both passages use the word *know* with unmistakable sexual connotations. Genesis 19:8 speaks of ‘daughters who have not known a man’ and Judges 19:5 says ‘They knew her and abused her all night.’ The context is clearly sexual and suggests strongly that when the inhabitants demanded to ‘know’ the visitors, they were speaking in sexual terms (Oswalt 1979:73). Oswalt is not a loner with this view. Several other evangelical scholars have the same exegesis of that passage including Richard Lovelace who said: “Lot’s offer of his daughters as sexual surrogates shows clearly that the men of Sodom did not simply want to become acquainted with the angelic visitors socially, and indicates that this passage is one of those in which ‘*yadha*’ (*know*) is used with the meaning of sexual knowledge” (Lovelace 1978:100). It is therefore clear that in this case, the word *know*, was used with sexual connotations. Not ordinary sexual connotations but homosexual sex. We then get a slight twist in this debate. Within the same camp of pro-homosexual practice we find two who differ with Bailey, namely Suggit and Hanigan. Both of these men agree that the condemnation is not for homosexual acts but for homosexual rape. This means that they are in agreement that the passage is about sexual activity. Suggit says: “The two passages most frequently quoted regarding homosexuality (Gn19:1-14 and Judges 19:16-30) are concerned not with homosexual intercourse by consent, but with homosexual rape. What is condemned is the abominable treatment of guests who would have expected to receive the hospitality customarily offered in early Semitic societies” (Suggit 1996:231). Hanigan says the following: “ ... what is condemned as sinful in the story is not simply homosexuality in general or even homosexual acts as

such, but the intent to commit homosexual rape in the context of an abuse of hospitality against a background of general depravity and disregard for God” (Hanigan 1988:38).

The interesting point here is that as alluded to above, the shift is now to rape and not homosexual acts as such. The fact that these two agree that the passage is about homosexual acts, cancels out Bailey’s argument that the word “know” in this passage did not have sexual connotations. For me, this argument that the passage is about homosexual ‘rape’ does not hold water in that homosexuality by itself is Biblically not acceptable as the next Old Testament passage states. What Suggit and Hanigan are arguing for any way, is exactly what happens in prisons. Men are ‘raped’ daily in our prisons and this is not acceptable.

The second Old Testament passage is Lv 18:1-25 dealing with sexual relations that are not permissible. The passage that deals with homosexuality in particular reads as follows: “You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination; [and] if a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is on them” (Lv 18:22). Clear as this passage is concerning homosexual sex, there are those who are pro homosexuality who interpret it differently. Some say that this passage is culture bound and does not affect Christians while others say that Christians are not bound by these laws. Suffice it to quote one scholar on each side of the divide. First is Suggit who says:

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

(Suggit in Hulley et al 1996:232)

It is worth emphasising the fact that in the passage above, it is not only homosexuality that is singled out as sinful. The treatment of sexual offences in the Leviticus passage includes heterosexuals. Oswalt explains that the treatment of homosexuality in this passage is not homophobia or being singled out but...”one more manifestation of a total approach to sexuality, an approach that denies any boundaries in creation...homosexuals are not being singled out as an oppressed minority” (Oswalt 1979:52). Suggit cites early authors who did not see Leviticus as evidence for Christian behaviour and that its regulations are scarcely relevant. How would he explain the inclusion of incestuous relations mentioned in Leviticus as wrong and unacceptable because in our modern day democracy these are also deemed illegal? The lists of forbidden relationships mentioned in Leviticus are repeated in the South African Manual for Marriage Officers with little variation. How does he explain that relevance? The misinterpretation of the Biblical texts by pro homosexual scholars is quite obvious and for evangelicals these misinterpretations will not change what the Bible explicitly say is sin. It is also worth noting that there is no sin in the Bible that is time-bound, that is, it used to be sin but now has graduated to be acceptable. I am not alone in critiquing this type of exegesis. Lovelace says:

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

(Lovelace 1978: 89)

The next passages are found in the New Testament. The first text reads as follows: “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their

perversion” (Rm1:26-27). There are several arguments around this passage. Let me mention just two of these arguments raised by the pro-homosexual liberal scholars. The first issue surrounds the meaning of nature and natural. The second issue again deals with the holiness code. John Boswell, one of the pro-homosexual advocates has this to say:

It is not clear that Paul distinguished in his thoughts or writings between gay persons (in the sense of permanent sexual preference) and heterosexuals who simply engaged in periodic homosexual behaviour. It is in fact unlikely that many Jews of his day recognized such a distinction, but it is quite apparent that whether or not he was aware of their existence - Paul did not discuss gay persons but only homosexual acts committed by heterosexual persons...

Nature in Rom 1:26 then, should be understood as the personal nature of the pagans in question.

(Boswell 1980: 110-111)

In addressing the nature/natural issue, Boswell says that Paul was talking against those heterosexuals who were experimenting with homosexual sex, which is against their given heterosexual nature, that Paul was not speaking against homosexuals whose given nature is homosexuality. But it must be emphasised that Paul was not addressing an individual's nature, he is talking about individuals reacting against God's given nature. Lovelace says: “Against nature simply means against God's intention for human sexual behaviour which is plainly visible in nature, in the complementary function of male and female sexual organs and temperaments” (Lovelace 1980:92). He is not the only one with this interpretation. The well known and internationally respected British evangelical scholar, John Stott says the following: “What Paul was condemning, therefore was not the perverted behaviour of heterosexual people who were acting against their nature, but any human behaviour that is against Nature, God's created order” Stott 1985:26). One of the contemporary evangelical scholars respected in South Africa, Michael Cassidy in responding to Boswell's kind of Biblical interpretation said: “In Romans 1 (Paul) takes this high ground of the creation ordinance and nature and the constituted order of things,

and condemns homosexual practice as changing the natural use (of sex) to one against nature” (Cassidy 1998: 2).

I must add my voice to the dissenting voices to Boswell’s exegesis of this passage. Mine is based on the change of protagonists in the armour of pro-homosexuality. Well-known Jewish leaders and figures like David and Jonathan are generally cited by those who are pro-homosexuality as examples of homosexual relations. Now, suddenly, Boswell turns around and says it is unlikely that the Jews of Paul’s day were aware of the difference between gays and periodic homosexuals. If this was the case, why are we not given examples of these homosexuals be they periodic or permanent? If there were no gays then, it therefore becomes clear that David and Jonathan were not gay. If so, those who cite them as examples would be wrong. Boswell also does not explain why Paul did not give examples of those who stuck to their ‘nature’ (as gays), and why if they did exist were they not commended either by him Paul, or anywhere in the Scriptures?

There are those who argue that Paul is against homosexual lust and not homosexual loving relations. One such scholar among others is Nelson saying: “In addition, in this passage we are given a description of homosexual lust (consumed with passion for one another), but hardly an account of interpersonal same sex love - about which Paul does not speak” (Nelson in Batchelor 1980:191). The word ‘passion’ which Nelson uses, or lust for one another, used in the passage implies mutuality. It means that the gay men in the passage lusted for one another, a mutual feeling; passion for one another. Keeping in mind that the word passion should not always be seen in a negative light, I believe a husband or wife, can love his or her spouse with passion and this would be commendable. We need to hastily add that nowhere in the whole Bible are we given a positive, commendable example of homosexual love as practiced then as an example to emulate. Each time homosexuality is mentioned, it is prohibited. Some scholars who are

homosexual protagonists cite examples in the Bible and wrongly interpret the relationship of these Biblical characters as being homosexual. One such scholar is Vasey who quoted the relationship between Jesus and John as one such loving relationship. I personally see this example as bordering on blasphemy if not blasphemy itself when Vasey says; “However, the natural reading of these texts with their detailed portrayal of great intimacy between two unmarried men (Jesus and John) provides a natural echo with the love that many gay people share” (Vasey 1995:123). It must be stressed that nowhere does the Bible say Jesus and John had a homosexual relationship. His love for all His disciples was Agape love, unconditional and platonic love.

Another scholar who added his voice against the pro-homosexual scholars is Van Der Lugt. Commenting on the passage in Romans he said the following: “Paul speaks clearly of homosexual practices being against nature and terribly wicked that no one can dispute it” (Van Der Lugt 1979: 77). He further responded to those who said that Paul was actually against the unbridled, promiscuous homosexuality that was linked to idolatry, and not against consenting homosexuals in a loving partnership. To these advocates Van Der Lugt said the following:

In response to this view, I wish to point out the context of these verses. They show us that homosexuality is the final state of sexual debauchery reached by people who wilfully reject God. This nauseating and pitiful perversion of human sexuality results from the fact that “God gave them up unto vile affections.” The apostle is here declaring that rejecting the Lord brings total disintegration, both moral and spiritual. When people are given over completely to the control of their passions, they exchange the natural use of sex for that which is “against nature.” In so doing, however, they do not find satisfaction.

(Van Der Lugt 1979:77)

This is so true when one considers the incidence of promiscuity among the active homosexuals as compared to heterosexuals. My summation is that the homosexuals find no satisfaction in their relationships because it is not natural. I further think that they are

perpetually trying to find what satisfies and breaks all moral norms because they find no written code of discipline anywhere for them to follow, so they formulate their own principles as they go along and change them when it suits them. Unlike heterosexual relations, there are guidelines and examples to follow and emulate.

The last New Testament text that is also always touched on regarding the prohibition of homosexuality is 1Cr 6:9-10. This text does not go unchallenged by those who are pro-homosexuality. The text reads: “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God” (1Cr 6:9-10). The above text gives a list of people who commit sin and thus will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Among these are homosexuals. The bone of contention again happens to be semantic, the meaning of words. Those who challenge the meaning of the words used here are those who claim that homosexuality is not prohibited. The words in question are *malakos* and *arsenakoitai*. Boswell argues as follows;

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

(Boswell 1978:106-107)

Boswell does not do justice to the explanation of the two words. Firstly in the context of the other words used, he does not explain why if the word *malakos* means ‘gentle’ among other meanings, the gentle or the ‘sick’ will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Wouldn’t this fly in the face of the understanding of the qualities of gentleness? Gentleness is generally

accepted as a virtue, one which Jesus Himself posses and said the following “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt 11:29). Paul further includes gentleness as one of the fruit of the Spirit in Gl.5:22-23 against which there is no law. Secondly, he fails to mention the words he claims arsenakoitai got confused with, which he claims meant disproved sexual activity and got equated with homosexuality. On the other hand we find evangelical scholars who give the definition of the words as found in the context of the whole story and says the following; “The two Greek words malakoi and arsenakoitai should not be combined, however, since they have precise meanings. The first is literally ‘soft to the touch’, and metaphorically, among the Greeks, it meant males (not necessarily boys) who played the passive role in homosexual intercourse. The second literally means ‘male in a bed’ and the Greeks used this expression to describe the one who played the active role” (Stott 1985:24). Greenlee when responding to Boswell’s argument said the following:

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

The second word...*malakos*. The basic meaning of this word is ‘soft’...The same lexicon gives the *malakos* the further meaning of ‘soft’ ‘effeminate’ especially of *catamites*, the term *catamite* being defined as ‘men and boys who allow themselves to be misused sexually’.

(Greenlee in Keysor 1979:97-98 and 102)

It is clear from the above that while liberals try to argue for the acceptance of homosexual practices on the basis of their Scriptural interpretation, evangelical scholars interpret the same passages in a more in-depth and contextual manner showing that homosexual practices were not acceptable and should not be accepted now as an alternative sexual expression. Discussing the same issue of homosexuality Botha comes to the same

conclusion that homosexuality should not be accepted as an alternative sexuality. He mentions some who argue in the opposite and some who argue in his favour. One such scholar is Bahnsen and this is what Botha says;

Contrary to this Bahnsen argues that tolerance of homosexuality is based on doctrinal premises that deviate from biblical teaching. This deviation constitutes an antipathy to biblical revelation. Scripture is to be understood to condemn both homosexual orientation and homosexual acts for there is no need in ethics to distinguish them. Bahnsen is strongly supported by Gagnon in his arguments that the Bible unequivocally defines same-sex intercourse as sin, inasmuch as same-sex intercourse constitutes an inexcusable rebellion against the intentional design of the created order.

(Botha 2005: 44)

It is clear from the texts we discussed above that while liberals argue for the acceptance of homosexual practices, evangelical scholars argue and show that homosexual practices were not acceptable then, and that these should not be accepted now as an alternative sexual expression let alone a Christian lifestyle. I agree with both Field and Lovelace in summing up the New Testament texts regarding homosexual practices. “Viewed in its theological context, then, the New Testament teaching on homosexuality takes on an impressive unity... So, despite the very important modern distinction dividing inverts from perverts, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the New Testament puts a theological veto on all homosexual behaviour however well motivated it may be” (Field 1980:17). Lovelace puts it as follows; “This survey of texts specifically related to homosexuality has shown that there is no warrant in scripture for any form of homosexual behaviour to be considered a legitimate expression of the will of God. Nothing speaks for this, and everything speaks against it” (Lovelace 1980:102). It is therefore clear on these texts that homosexual acts are not accepted as a legitimate sexual expression from a Christian perspective. Before we look at the different positions adopted regarding homosexuality we revisit a fresh debate on the exegesis and hermeneutical style of Jones

regarding David and Jonathan We will then look at the position adopted by our government as seen in the constitution and Bill of Rights/Human Rights.

5.5.1 Jonathan and David revisited

This in a sense is a postscript to the much maligned and misinterpreted relationship of David and Jonathan. I just could not keep mum when Scripture is misinterpreted and the exegesis thereof done out of context. I am here referring to the contemporary issue of gay unions. The Anglican Church in England went through a tough patch where clergy debated and opposed the ordination of practicing gay priests. This issue was recently revisited when Bishop Jones suddenly turned round and apologised for having opposed the ordination of Jeffrey John as Bishop of Reading. This apology is based on a misconstrued and misinterpreted portion of Scripture quoted out of context citing David and Jonathan as a “gay couple”. It is this example that Bishop Jones cites that called for a response as it comes at a time when this debate seemed to have been laid to rest.

Shaun de Waal reported this matter in the *Mail and Guardian* online of 08 February 2008. In this article entitled “The Bible may sanction gay unions” de Waal quotes from an essay that Bishop Jones wrote entitled ‘Making Space for Truth and Grace in a Fallible Church’. In this essay, Bishop Jones claims that the Bible may sanction gay unions as seen in the relationship between David and Jonathan as he urges the Anglicans to;

“...acknowledge the authoritative biblical examples of love between two people of the same gender, most notably in the relationship of Jesus and his beloved [John] and David and Jonathan” (de Waal *Mail and Guardian*; 8-14 Feb. 2008 page 7).

I will not here repeat what I said earlier regarding the neo-blasphemous suggestion of Jesus as a homosexual. What I find intriguing is the new twist and angle to the pro homosexual unions matter that Bishop Jones brings by implying that David and Jonathan

were 'married' 'officially united' to an extent that king Saul saw David as his son-in law.

Jones says the following:

The story of Jonathan and (later king) David in the Old Testament book of Samuel hints in a different direction, recounting that they "made a covenant, because he [David] loved him as his own soul". The word "covenant" is used elsewhere in the Bible (Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14) for a marriage covenant.

(Shaun de Waal *Mail and Guardian* 08-14 February 2008 page 7)

Jones then drives his point home implying that David was married to Jonathan by saying the following: "Later king Saul, Jonathan's father, also offers David his daughter saying: "Thou shalt this day become my son-in-law a second time.' When Jonathan dies, David laments: 'Thy love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women'" (de Waal *Mail and Guardian* 8-14 Feb. 2008 page 7).

Bishop Jones here is not being fair. He combines the offer that king Saul made of his daughter to David with Jonathan's death as if the two events followed each other, whereas that is not the case. It will be remembered that King Saul offered his oldest daughter to the man who would kill Goliath. King Saul did offer David his daughter after David killed Goliath but David declined and that daughter was married by someone else. David actually did not see himself as worthy to become the king's son-in-law because of his status. As recorded in the book of the prophet Samuel: "But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" So, when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah" (1Sm. 18:18-19). The verse that Bishop Jones quotes comes after David declined the first offer to become the king's son-in-law. It so happened that the king's second daughter Michal was in love with David and when the king found out, he then offered her to David and this is the context of the offer, not that David was already the king's son-in-law, but that he now had a second chance to become

the king's son-in-law. It will also be remembered that this comes at the time when the king was jealous and afraid of David and wished him dead. He had hoped that somehow David would be killed because the bride price he asked was very ridiculous in that he asked for one hundred foreskins of the Philistines. "I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may become a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law" (1Sm 18:21). These then are the circumstances and context of King Saul's utterances of a second opportunity because the first opportunity went a-begging. David was in a sense being offered a second bite of the cherry.

Lastly then, on this supposedly erotic love between people of the same gender, the understanding is that homosexually inclined people are only sexually attracted to people of the same sex. It has not been explained how David and Jonathan, if they had this relationship and it was known and accepted, both had families. How can they be attracted to both sexes and have children if they were homosexually inclined or if they had a homosexual orientation? The homosexuality protagonists are quick to quote the relationship of these two men as homosexual. What they seldom and actually hardly quote are the details of these men's relationship. The biblical context actually show the opposite of what they want people to believe. What they do not quote reads as follows: "Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn *friendship* with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever'. Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town" (1Sm 20:42). Here Jonathan mentions a sworn *friendship* and no more. He mentions that this sworn friendship was to extend to their descendants. If these two were homosexuals they would never have had thoughts of having children. As Jews, would they have had a homosexual relationship in defiance to their God's command and even taken an oath in the name of the Lord?

In concluding this new twist by Bishop Jones, I would like to add my voice to those of Peet Botha and Taryn Hodgson that nowhere in the Bible do we come across homoerotic relationships that are commended on or praised. Right through scripture all we see is the prohibition of same sex erotic relations. Whenever same sex relations are mentioned in a positive light, these are platonic, phileo-type relationships. We see Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego in the Old Testament as very close friends and no eroticism in their relationships Paul travelled a lot with Silas in the New Testament and there is no mention of these two having a homo-erotic relationship. As Botha puts it: “I have shown adequately in the previous chapters that the Bible rejects homosex every single time it is discussed, irrespective of the type of homosexuality mentioned. This message of the Bible portrays unashamed tension between the standard of God’s word and the culture around it” (Botha 2005:218-219).

Two issues surround David’s stature that neither Bishop Jones nor the pro homosexual scholars adequately address. Firstly to say that if David was homosexual, when he committed adultery with Bathsheba why was he not rebuked for changing his nature of attraction, if that is what he was? Secondly, for those who say Paul was against those whose nature was heterosexual but who practised homosexual acts, why did Paul not give an example of men whose nature was heterosexual and who acted homosexually as it would then appear David was such a man according to these proponents of this school of thought? Or, if David was homosexual and later ended up as a heterosexual, a very viral man with many wives, and many children, why do they say that homosexuality cannot be “cured”?

The other point concerns Jesus and John who are cited as an example of same gender love. It is contemporarily confusing. Who was Jesus? There are those who like Bishop

Jones claim the above by quoting iconography that depicts John leaning on Jesus' chest as a sign of this relationship.

In the New Testament John is referred to consistently as “the beloved disciple”, while other disciples are not given this distinction. Christian iconography frequently showed John resting his head on Jesus' shoulder or chest, in a pose of physical intimacy and mutual comfort.

(De Waal Mail and Guardian 8 to 14 Feb 2008 page 7)

On the other hand there are those who like Dan Brown in the Da Vinci Code claim that Jesus was a married man. The claim is that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. Brown's claims are based on the same iconographical depiction of someone sitting next to Jesus at table on the last night having the Last Supper. Brown, however, claims that the person sitting next to Jesus is not a man, and that it is not John the beloved, but that this person is in fact Mary Magdalene. This, according to Brown, is the code that needs to be deciphered as the “holy grail” the position of sitting at table by two people who were married. Who is telling the truth? Who does the man in the street believe? Would we not end up sowing a lot of confusion and thus leading people astray and helping God's enemy in ensuring that people do not get to know the truth that would lead them to saving faith in Jesus?

Committed Christians believe and teach that Jesus Christ was a heterosexual male who never sinned and never got married. Brown teaches that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene. Bishop Jones claims together with others that Jesus Christ was a homosexual. Of the three schools, who do people believe? It must be said that reading into texts is a dangerous thing. A simple but not simplistic approach for me is to take the text as is and not put iconography above the text of the scripture. Firstly, common sense tells me that the person who depicted the Last Supper, if not Leonardo Da Vinci himself, painted this famous portrayal hundreds of years after the event. It is not a painting that was done by someone who was an eye witness. In similar iconographies Jesus is often

depicted as a white man. It is a known fact, as scholars have revealed, that he was more brown than white as seen by the people of that region. We therefore cannot pin our hopes and factualise matters of primary importance based on hearsay. Responsible scholarship is needed when dealing with matters as important as these that pertain to faith and eternity. Sexuality surely touches the core of mankind. To let loose and do and teach as we please outside God's plan for mankind is not responsible scholarship.

5.6 Different positions regarding homosexuality

There are different positions regarding homosexuality. The following are four major positions regarding homosexuality as summed up by Townsend when he discusses the topic. He lists them as follows; 'rejecting punitive', 'rejecting compassionate', 'qualified acceptance', and 'full acceptance'. He explains these positions as follows:

A rejecting punitive stance rejects homosexual behaviour and orientation as incompatible with Christianity and, often buttressed by cultural stereotypes, is hostile towards people who are homosexual.

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

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

Full acceptance stresses the unitive purpose of sexuality as central in God's sight and regards the procreative purpose as by comparison, incidental. Same-sex relationships can fully express the central purpose for sexuality so homophile attraction may be affirmed. All sexual acts should be evaluated by their relational qualities: what matters is whether

or not a particular relationship or action will enhance human fulfillment, faithfulness between persons, genuine intimacy and mutuality. The gender of the persons concerned is immaterial.

(Townsend 1994:1)

Some conservative evangelicals and the biblical fundamentalists, usually adopt the first rejecting punitive position. The adoption of this position is rarely divorced from the phobia they have which is based on the sexual violence of male homosexuals. Drakeford explains why people have a phobia, a fear of male homosexuals as opposed to lesbians saying; “Another factor is the perfectly justifiable fear people have of the use of force in sex. Most people have the idea that certain male homosexuals are child molesters and rapists, but lesbians are thought of more as feminine, soft, and unlikely to resort to force” (Drakeford 1977:58). Drakeford’s view has been proven correct in the cases we have already seen in prisons but should not be generalised to an extent of stereotyping all homosexuals. Nor should this approach be ethically universalised because this will be unfair and a distortion of homosexuality just as one would be wrong by assuming that all heterosexuals contracting marriages before they are twenty five years old would end in divorce, as a result of research done on only a limited number of couples.

I fall under the group of conservative and radical evangelicals who adopt the position of rejecting compassionate. This is a position where the struggling homosexual would be treated the same as the alcoholic and adulterer who is struggling with their behaviour. All these would be welcomed into the Church to pursue their quest to follow Christ. Without being homophobic, I believe it is a humanely and ethically acceptable approach for us to adopt the rejecting compassionate position as evangelicals, the same way as Jesus did with the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:3-11). The challenge is to love the sinner with a view of helping while not condoning the sin. “...then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin” (Jn 8:11). As evangelicals and the Church in general, we have failed the homosexuals in that we have treated them differently to others

in the Church who may be struggling with different sins in their lives. We generally would have in the Church someone who may have been found guilty of perjury or fraud, but the Church will find it difficult to have a known homosexual who would be non-practising as a member. On the other hand, the homosexuals have made it difficult for the ultra-right conservative evangelical. Being in a state of denial, the homosexuals are persistent that they are born like that and must be accepted. The problem I have with some homosexuals is not too different from the problem some of these ultra-conservative evangelicals have with them. When homosexuals insist that theirs is not a sinful practise but a God-given orientation that they want to express, would that not be the same as a kleptomaniac who would want to be accepted by the community because he says that is his orientation, that is how God made him? This then is my point of rejecting the practise of homosexuality in or out of prison. It is not an alternative sexual practice acceptable from a Biblical or Christian ethical position.

In 1997 the Baptist Union of Victoria assigned a task group to research and ask members to submit their views regarding their understanding of the Bible in relation to homosexuality. Their objective was to then arrive at a consensus so as to resolve whether to ordain persons who engage in homosexual practices. Their resolution was that the Baptist Union of Victoria shall not ordain persons who engage in homosexual practice. They arrived at this resolution after receiving submissions and doing a thorough research. Their summary, after receiving all the submissions, that I agree with, reads as follows:

The approach to Biblical teaching on the subject of homosexuality, as in all matters of faith and doctrine, was expressed by Paul to Timothy: "All scripture is inspired by God for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness." Today the Bible is still the word of God and the text says what it means and means what it says. The Old Testament in all references prohibits homosexual practice. The New Testament likewise in every reference not only condemns it, but Paul saw it as a sign among many, of the brokenness of God's creation. Jesus does not mention it, but He does not mention rape, incest, child abuse, and other

questionable practices. However He totally endorsed the Old Testament teaching. In so doing, He endorsed the teaching in these matters, and this became the foundation of the early church. It was the word of God. It still is.

(Baptist Union of Victoria Report: 16)

This stance of rejecting homosexual practices is aligned to biblical truth and acceptable societal behaviour. This is both a deontological approach in that homosexual acts are seen as being wrong in themselves and in the prison scenarios we have discussed it is teleologically wrong in that even the end results are not desirable. It cannot be ethically accepted, as the act does not yield the greatest joy, good or happiness to a greater number of people. I therefore see the practice of homosexual acts in prison and out of prison as sinful, unethical and socially unacceptable. From a historical perspective, it is generally known that homosexuality was practised in some societies but never was it sanctioned and morally accepted as a normal lifestyle. One can look back at the Greco Roman times of Julius Caesar and beyond and we find that these behaviours were known but talked about in hush-hush voices. They did not publicise this nor went up to the rooftop and shouted at the top of their voice for the world to hear. Today is different in that we see annual gay/lesbian marches on our television screens. There are annual gay and lesbian marches in cities such as San Francisco, Amsterdam and even our own Johannesburg. What was and is morally and ethically unacceptable as the Bible calls it sin is today paraded as good. In the days gone by, the same approach was adopted with the practise of prostitution. It was known to be happening but the community never accepted it as a normal moral behaviour. We read of temple prostitutes who were the practice of pagan communities that God commanded His people Israel that they should not copy the evil practices of the nations of the land they will be occupying. Prostitution is known to be the “oldest business” Today the tables are turned round. In Amsterdam it is legalised and in our own country it is not politically correct to call one who practices it a

prostitute. They are now called sex-workers. Be it as it may, it is shunned and known to be a sin. Why not homosexuals?

5.7 South African legal position on homosexuality

From a legal point in our country, homosexuality is a sexual orientation that the constitution allows and protects (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 Chapter 2 clause 9:3). It must be said here that what the state accepts is not necessarily right. As Christians and evangelicals in particular, our guide is God's Word. As mentioned above, during the apartheid era, it will be remembered that inter-racial marriages were legislated as illegal by the government while the Church in general accepted these marriages except for those few Churches that were pro-government. If an inter-racial couple wanted to get married, they had to do this the neighbouring independent states like Lesotho, Botswana or Swaziland. A couple like this would not be allowed to live as husband and wife in South Africa as South Africans. This is the reason many such couples had to live in exile. Today the State not only acknowledges homosexuality as an acceptable sexual orientation as seen above in the constitution, but has legalised same sex unions. After the ruling of the Constitutional Court on the first of December 2005 that the prohibition of homosexuals to 'marry' was unconstitutional, the government/parliament was given one year to rectify this constitutional discriminatory act. On the 30th November 2006 while the State President was out of the country on parliamentary duties, the deputy president Mrs Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka signed this bill. She was at the time the acting state president. This Civil Unions Bill was passed by the South African parliament earlier during the month of November. This was a big victory for the same sex marriage proponents and a small victory for the Church and all who opposed this bill. The small victory for the Church is that the definition of marriage was not

changed and this union between people of the same sex is not called marriage but a 'civil union'. The Church opposed this bill because the Bible categorically states that God ordained marriage for heterosexuals as seen in what Jesus said in response to the question posed by the Pharisees regarding divorce and said:

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

(Mt 19 4-5).

The Bible does not talk of the man leaving his parents to be joined to another man or a woman leaving parents to be joined to another woman!! The Constitution and Human Rights and the Civil Union Bill may accept homosexual unions but it will not make it Biblically correct. There is no record in any of the holy writings of religions practiced in South Africa or elsewhere in the world of same sex unions. South Africa became the first country on the continent of Africa to legalise same sex unions. The Bible contains no record of same sex unions. Evangelicals hold on to the truths and record of scriptures for good examples to follow and bad ones to avoid.

5.7.1 Implications of the Civil Unions Bill

The enactment of this bill has far reaching ramifications especially for the department of correctional services. We hear of heterosexuals who in the past have requested special permission to get married where one partner was in prison. Where the permission was granted and special arrangements made for the consummation of the marriage, we know that such couples do not live together in prison as husband and wife. The spouse is separated from the partner until her spouse is released. Even when visiting, they would not be allowed to have sexual contact. The problem of the same sex civil union bill being passed is this as I see it. What will the government or department of correctional services

do when two inmates approach the officials and request to be “married”? The department will be obliged to give permission and then the “couple” will then go back to their cell or cells. They will then live together as a legally united couple having homosexual sex. At the same time they will be sharing a cell with married heterosexual men whose wives are not allowed to come and live with them in prison. This will be compounding the discrimination heterosexuals already suffer in that even outside of this bill, they live with these men who are homosexuals in prison, who are having homosexual sex with their partners whilst they are denied this right. The question is whether the department will take steps to separate these couples once they “marry”? If not, why not allow heterosexuals the same right? If they would separate them, what stops them from separating the homosexuals who are currently practising and living together in prison in their mkhukhus?

The term mkhukhu is a local township lingo meaning an informal self-build (sometimes) illegal dwelling. In the townships it is usually made of some timber and corrugated iron. In the prison setting, mkhukhu is used to denote a private secluded corner in a communal cell. This privacy in a communal cell is made of blankets and sheets to create a separate room where the known homosexuals have their beds put together to make a double bed that they use as their private room so that at night or whenever they feel like having homosexual sex they go in and use it. It is a separate bedroom within a communal cell. It is in a sense illegal because all inmates are supposed to sleep alone, separate from others in their own beds or space allocated to them. Heterosexuals in prisons are experiencing this discrimination on a daily basis. Worse still, as already mentioned, where the gangs are operating, some of the heterosexuals end up being molested and indecently assaulted, “raped”. Have we ever heard the voice of the heterosexuals shouting loud that they are being discriminated against? No. The simple reason is that these shameful acts are a hush hush issue. Even in cases where one is indecently assaulted, they seldom tell others apart from those who witnessed the act. As seen in the

McKenzie case, the officials do not take it seriously. These men feel degraded and even after being released, they struggle to come to terms with what happened to them in prison. There is therefore a possibility of communal cells being turned into mkhukhus and as time goes, homosexuals in prison will make the correctional service centres their homes.

There is a second problem I foresee with the implementation of this bill. This problem may seem a bit removed from our main point of discussion, but it should be noted that it has to do with ethical issues. The problem will arise and it has already raised its ugly head in other parts of the world. In the case of two men adopting a child, socially how are they going to raise this child? The first commandment with a promise reads: "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Ex 20:12). How will the child fulfil this law and secondly how will the child address these men?. To link this matter to our main concern, we need to be reminded that in the prison scenarios we have seen the older men prefer younger men as partners. It is this aspect of the same sex civil unions that may open the door for these partners to adopt and bring up a child so as to indoctrinate him and turn him into a 'wife'. Some may adopt or foster children with evil intents. One such case among many that are not reported found its way into the print media in England. In *The Times* of June 2006 two men who were in a civil partnership for five weeks were found guilty of abusing boys they were fostering. Apparently they have done this before but were not arrested. Helen Nugent reports as follows:

A gay foster couple were jailed yesterday for sexually abusing boys in their care...Wakefield Metropolitan District Council approved Wathey and Faunch as foster carers three years ago but within months they were assaulting boys from troubled homes, the court was told. The two were found guilty of abusing four boys aged between 8 and 14. Judge Sally Cahill, QC said that neither men had showed any 'empathy, remorse, or any responsibility for their actions'.

(*The Times* Saturday June 24 ;2006 page 15.)

These are but a few of the problems our societies are facing and may in the future be experiencing among others as a result of this bill.

5.8 Challenges facing the Church

As noted above, there are numerous challenges facing the evangelical church regarding these issues of sexuality and the practise of homosexuality. Regarding the sensitive issue of homosexuality, the evangelicals need to be armed with knowledge. Without detracting from the fact that homosexuality is not an acceptable chosen lifestyle whether by choice or orientation, we must support them in their quest for some and not all civil rights. I believe that homosexuals, among others, have the same right to nominate anyone of their choice to benefit from their medical aid or insurances. There are still people in the Church who are homophobic and harbour hatred for homosexuals. There is no room in Christianity for hatred except for sin. In concluding what the Church ought to do pastorally on this issue, Vibert says:

We must speak to the Christian Church
With biblical teaching;
to reduce fear and homophobia;
to equip them to bring others to Christ;
to help them to model Christ-likeness to the world around

(Vibert, 1995:25)

I agree with Vibert. We need to do much more than we are doing for the good of both heterosexuals and homosexuals. On the one hand when evangelicals stick to the God ordained approach to sexuality and identify our weaknesses in handling the issue of homosexuality, it is disheartening to see no reciprocation from homosexuals.

Jacques discusses sex and the society in his book *Ethics and the Christian life*. In this chapter he looks at the history of sexual behaviour and comments on Ancient Greece. He

notes how homosexuality was treated in a casual way and says it looks like we are approaching a time where we may find ourselves in a similar situation. In order for Christianity and, I believe, Christian ethics to maintain a moral stance that is acceptable we need to stick to the Biblical norms. I further agree with Jacques when he says the following:

It looks as if we need to revive something like the scholastic distinction between formal and material sin. A formal sin is an action which is wrong and done by the agent knowing it to be wrong. He is therefore to be blamed for what he has done. A material sin, however, is one which is wrong in principle, but which, because he was misled, confused, ignorant, or blinded by some compulsion, the agent did not see to be wrong and so he is not to be blamed for doing it. The value of this distinction is that it allows the Church to regard certain actions as wrong while not blaming those responsible because for various reasons at the time they were not aware of the wrongness of what they did.

(Jacques 1976:119)

He concludes by showing how some homosexuals would fall under the first group by virtue of the fact that they do know that what they do is wrong and somehow they justify themselves and do it nevertheless. On the other hand, there will be those who may be brainwashed and end up thinking that they are not doing anything wrong as they are convinced they are made that way. These are the ones who at the end when confronted with facts, do repent and either stay celibate or struggle until they live a normal heterosexual life. These are the ones we can easily categorise as having committed the material sin. The problem is that those who admit that what they do is sinful are few and far in between. The majority are those who are articulate and sometimes very violent. Ours is to love them while showing that what they do is not acceptable, loving the sinner and hating the sin.

5.9 Challenges facing homosexuals

We have neither seen nor heard homosexuals admitting their shortfalls. For those who claim to have sexual feelings exclusively for people of the same sex and want to act on it, will it be acceptable to them if those who may claim they have sexual feelings exclusively for children under the age of twelve to act on that? I believe as much as we expect the latter group not to act out their feelings lest they be charged with paedophilia, that homosexuals can also discipline themselves on account of the fact that nowhere in the Bible has homosexuality been accepted or recommended. The challenge therefore to homosexuals is to come to grips with a God-perspective of their chosen lifestyle and admit their error. The other challenge is for homosexuals to read the Bible and not misinterpret it to suit themselves. Still another challenge is that instead of parading their shameful acts, to consider the kind of society we will live in in the future where many may 'come out of the closet' and openly tell the world and ask to be accepted as their sexual feelings are for animals only and not other people; or those who like Jeffrey Dammer whose appetite for meat was human flesh, if they were to say they want to be accepted by society and their dietary preferences should be respected. Would the homosexuals be happy to live in a country where this kind of lifestyle was the norm? Thus my point of rejecting the practise of homosexuality be it as a free person or in prison.

5.9.1 Sexually transmitted diseases

Last, but definitely not least, the challenge homosexuals face is the high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Although sexually transmitted diseases are not peculiar to homosexuals, what is significant is that when we consider the low percentage of the incidence of homosexuality as researched by Schmidt;

What is the percentage of the population then, that consistently desires or practices same sex relations? The NORC data provides an estimate that of the approximately 6 percent who experience same sex relations ever, the number of currently active homosexuals is 0.6-0.7% of the US adult population

(Schmidt 1995:103)

The proportional number of homosexuals suffering from these diseases compared to heterosexuals, it is very high (in the US). I believe that it is not different in the rest of the world including our country. The main reason for this threat that places homosexuals in the high risk bracket is their promiscuous behaviour. Williams quotes Don Clark, a homosexual proponent who said the following:

Clark advises sex with friends rather than strangers, where sex is a friendly interaction to be offered to each other...
The heterosexual marriage role model does not work for most gays. As they relate to several sex partners, they should remember that the more one loves, the more capable one is of loving. Thus there is no reason for jealousy unless there is a feeling of love being withdrawn.

(Clark 1978;43)

William's investigation of this promiscuous behaviour of homosexuals is not the only one. Schmidt also arrived at a similar conclusion after his research on the incidence and prevalence of homosexuality. This is what he said:

We can quantify the phenomenon of homosexual promiscuity, especially among males, more specifically. The numbers are astounding. Bell and Weinberg found that 74 percent of male homosexuals reported having more than one hundred partners during their lifetime, 41 percent more than five hundred partners, 28 percent more than one thousand partners. Seventy five percent reported that more than half their partners were strangers, and 65 percent reported that they had sex with more than half their partners only once. For the previous year, 55 percent reported twenty or more partners, 30 percent fifty or more partners. The numbers for homosexual women were considerably lower: 60 percent reported fewer than ten partners lifetime, and only 2 percent reported more than one hundred partners; for the previous year, only 3 percent reported twenty or more partners, one percent-fifty or more partners.

(Schmidt 1995:106)

It is this promiscuous lifestyle of homosexuals that puts them in a higher risk category for contracting sexually transmitted diseases. A research done in Australia by Sherrard and Forsyth proved this point as they reported their findings as follows:

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

Conclusion: Gonorrhoea in homosexually active men has increased disproportionately to the rate of infection in heterosexual men in recent years, despite intensive education and counselling aimed at the gay community.

(Sherrard and Forsyth 1993:450)

This disproportional infection between homosexual and heterosexual men was also found in San Francisco. Jackson, an Englishman, visited this city to study the community care of people with HIV/AIDS. This is what he reported.

San Francisco is a compact city with a population of about 724 000. By March 1995, 20 962 cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) had been reported in the city, mostly among gay white men, with 13 892 deaths. In the USA as a whole, 401 749 cases of AIDS had been reported by the end of June 1994, with 224 423 deaths (data from the San Francisco Department of Health AIDS Office)... It was at the city clinic that 6 704 gay men were recruited between 1978 and 1980 for ongoing studies into hepatitis B. Retrospective study of their blood samples showed that 75% had been infected with HIV by December 1993, 40% had been diagnosed as having AIDS, and 31% of the latter had died.

(Jackson 1996:178)

The above statistics show that homosexual males accounted for about 40% of the total number of infections in the country whereas they only make up around 1% of the whole population. It must also be borne in mind that although these figures are more than ten years old, whatever improvements gained, to date it will still not be proportional. Vasey in his research also commented on the disproportional infection of homosexuals in England regarding AIDS (Vasey 1995).

The American figures may appear to be a bit out of date in that they are just over ten years old. The fact is this phenomenon does not easily change. Kennedy and Newcombe quoted some results of a research done in 2004 by Sprigg and Dailey. The Family Research Council put these results together. The situation regarding homosexuals and AIDS in America as summarised is as follows:

They point out that homosexuals in America still represent the greatest population with HIV infection. This is because of unhealthy sexual practices. "The high rates of HIV infection among homosexual men are largely due to two behavioural factors the practice of anal intercourse, which facilitates the transfer of the virus far more easily than vaginal intercourse, and the practice of having sexual relations with multiple sex partners, which multiplies the opportunities for acquiring and transmitting HIV.

(Kennedy and Newcombe 2004:90-91)

To end this section of the challenges facing homosexual men and the risk they run of contracting sexually transmitted diseases more than their heterosexual counterparts, I would like to look at the research conducted in South Africa. Statistics compiled by Zwi and Bachmayer from 1982 to 1989 of HIV/AIDS infections led them to say the following:

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

(Zwi and Bachmayer 1990:317)

We are made aware daily that this disease is colour blind, status ignorant and sexual orientation unaware. It is generally accepted that today the tables have turned in such a way that there are more heterosexuals suffering from HIV/AIDS simply because there are more heterosexuals than homosexuals. Nevertheless it is still important for active homosexual men to be aware that this danger has not abated nor disappeared. Much as it goes for heterosexual males, more so for homosexual males as their promiscuous

lifestyle puts them in this high risk category. It is also interesting to note that the department of correctional services has reacted to the dangers of this scourge in providing free condoms in correctional services. Generally speaking, when I casually asked some officials off the record why this conflicting action, it was mentioned that the reality is that men will not abstain from satisfying their sexual hunger. Therefore the government is trying to minimise the rate of infection and even to avoid any libel cases against them by anyone who may contract the virus while serving his sentence. It was also interesting to note that one of the main reasons generally cited is that inmates contract the virus, because they share contaminated needles as they inject themselves with drugs. Now, in order to minimise this infection all what the department is doing is to educate the inmates and warn them not to share needles. I have not yet come across a South African prison where free needles are made available to inmates. My point is this, that much as it would be ridiculous for the state or correctional services to offer free needles, as this may be equated to the state now sanctioning drug use, why has the correctional services not seen the provision of condoms in the same light? Both drugs and sex are prohibited in prison. Nevertheless, for the active homosexual inmate, here is one challenge they have to face and tackle if they are to see and enjoy the free world as healthy men after serving their sentences.

The above figures and comparisons may appear to be a bit outdated. The fact is, we still find the pattern of behaviour among homosexuals continuing to date. Kennedy and Newcombe assert that this is the case in their book looking at the reasons for rejecting same sex marriages. They corroborate the above-mentioned promiscuous behaviour of homosexuals and the different sexually transmitted diseases that homosexuals are more prone to contract as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. This is what they said concerning the American situation:

In the late 1980s, we were warned that AIDS was going to break out

and overtake the heterosexual population in America. That did not happen. In the United States, HIV and AIDS are still largely homosexual diseases. In Africa, AIDS appears to be more of a heterosexual disease, but that's what happens when widescale promiscuity is coupled with poor hygienic conditions. Sexual promiscuity - whether homosexual or heterosexual - exacts a price.

(Kennedy and Newcombe 2004:90)

For us in South Africa, within the heterosexual population, those who succumb quickly to the devastating effects of AIDS are not only those with poor hygienic conditions but especially those who are poor. Poverty is the number one enemy of those who were previously disadvantaged. From this point, one can see why our president kept on talking about fighting poverty! Opportunistic diseases find themselves a home in the bodies of the many poor people who sooner rather than later have to bid the good life good-bye with no smile but a smirk on their faces.

5.9.2 Early death

The other challenge that homosexuals should face is that of early death. Kennedy and Newcombe touch on this aspect in discussing the deadly lifestyle of homosexuality. It will be interesting to find out what figures our country can come up with, regarding this challenge of early death for active homosexuals. The one aspect that was recently commented on was on SABC 1 on the 19h00 news on the 14 November 2007 on HIV/AIDS. Partly because of the virus, life expectancy in South Africa is now forty-seven years. Later on the same day on SABC 3 on the late news at 22h00 the report from the World Bank published their results on Sub Saharan Africa. It was reported that because of the effects of HIV/AIDS and malaria the average lifespan of people in Sub-Saharan Africa is thirty-five years. From these figures it is clear that the average life-expectancy in Sub-Saharan countries is estimated at a much lower average compared to other countries. In

comparison with the life expectancy figures of active homosexuals in America, we can see some commonalities despite the fact that ours are figures of both heterosexuals and homosexuals living with HIV/AIDS. The fact is, the lifestyle of homosexuals is one that makes its followers prone to contracting diseases leading them to an early death than normal. This is not always exposed or openly discussed.

The other generally known fact is that HIV/AIDS is devastating the economically active populations of the world. The figures range from between twenty-five years and the early forties, men and women at the height of their productive years. We hear of high numbers of orphans in Africa, these being young people anywhere between the ages of three to teenage years. In parts of Africa we hear of child headed households homes where both parents succumbed to the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

The fact is, as revealed by Kennedy and Newcombe, that when discussing homosexuality, it is portrayed as an alternative lifestyle without explaining the risks. I look at this in a similar light where rights are flaunted and demanded without emphasizing the responsibilities that goes with these rights. It is like someone selling a policy with low premiums and high yields without explaining or directing the client to the small print that contains exclusions and conditions that may result in the client not buying that policy. Research has revealed the following regarding the lifespan of homosexuals according to Cameron:

He points out that the average homosexual lifespan is somewhere in the late thirties, early forties for gays. Somewhere from early to middle forties for lesbians. He pored through approximately seven thousand obituaries from eighteen different homosexual publications all over the country. "What we found was this: for gays, if they died of AIDS, the average age of death was 39. If they did not die of AIDS, their average age of death was still very young, about 42. For lesbians, it ran at 44.

(Kennedy and Newcombe 2004:88)

This pattern of many deaths among homosexuals was corroborated by an ex-gay who was interviewed on American television. He was around thirty-five years himself as reported by Kennedy. This is what he said: “At this point in my life, there have been at least 94 people that I know who have died of AIDS - personal friends in the past three years” (Kennedy and Newcombe 2004:89). I take it that many will agree that this is a high rate of deaths under normal circumstances. This then is what anyone who contemplates an active homosexual lifestyle should consider before embarking on it. It must be said that like the small print of many a contract, this is hidden from many a homosexual and needs to be highlighted like many killers such as cigarette smoking and the abusive use of drugs. Is forewarned not forearmed?