REVIEW OF RESEARCH

SOME BACKGROUND ON ADDRESSING THE TOPIC OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

MICHAEL J. MAHER
Loyola University Chicago

The Catholic Magisterium has made a distinction between homosexual orientation (disordered, but not sinful), homosexual activity (sinful, but judged "with prudence"), rights of gay and lesbian people, and the Church's pastoral responsibilities to gay and lesbian people. Both the Vatican and the American bishops have clearly stated that the topic of homosexuality must be addressed in Catholic education, but the emphasis on how it is addressed differs between the Vatican (emphasis on finding causes and cures) and the American bishops (providing pastoral care and inclusion). Research indicated that some American Catholics may be very supportive of the rights of gay and lesbian people even if they disapprove of their sexual activity. It also appears that American Catholics are becoming more positive in their attitudes toward homosexuality over time. The Vatican has been directly confrontational with many gay and lesbian Catholic groups, expressing concern that they disregard the teaching against homosexual activity in their quest to meet pastoral needs. Some dioceses have begun to train their secondary school staffs on issues of homosexuality and to include the topic in the curriculum. On the other hand, gay and lesbian students at Catholic colleges, universities, and seminaries have a history of confrontation with Catholic educators.

While the topic of homosexuality in public education has received a good deal of attention in recent decades, relatively little has been written on the topic from the perspective of Catholic education. The purpose of this article is to review some field research into the current landscape in order to contribute to a dialogue that will bring about action in Catholic schools.

Coleman (1995, 1997) has argued strongly that the teachings of both the Vatican and the United States Catholic Conference compel Catholic high schools to address the topic of homosexuality. School faculty and staff must

Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, Vol. 6, No. 4, June 2003, 498-515

know the Church's teaching and be able to respond to students who identify as possibly being gay or lesbian. Schools must not only uphold the Church's position against same-sex sexual activity but also must uphold the Church's position against homophobia, according to Coleman. Also, schools should have support groups for students questioning their sexual orientation, but caution should be exercised in how those groups are conducted.

Thurston (1989) divided the contemporary Catholic positions on homosexuality into three camps. The first is the *traditional position,* which is represented by the Vatican documents under John Paul II and which focuses on the immorality of homosexual "genital activity." The second is the *mediating position,* which does not challenge the theology of the traditional position but focuses on the pastoral role of the Church in the care and respect for gay and lesbian people. The third position is the *revisionist position,* which seeks to overcome the traditional position through new understandings of the human person based on modern social and physical sciences and which challenges previous understandings of sacred scripture. Thurston argued that the revisionist position uses a strained exegesis by projecting something uniquely contemporary (the late 20th century homosexual) into a history not its own (biblical times). Thurston proposed that the gay liberation movement has created something completely new and that theological reflection should be based on contemporary experiences rather than grappling with sacred scripture.

Nugent and Gramick (1992) concluded that the Catholic hierarchy has written more on the topic of homosexuality in the last three decades than in recent centuries as a response to growing gay and lesbian movements. In *Building Bridges*, Nugent and Gramick chronicled the history of the development of the gay and lesbian movement within the Church. Similarly, Smith (1994) argued that during the 1970s and 1980s American culture, including many religious bodies and some Catholic institutions, was becoming more tolerant of gay and lesbian people. American Catholics became more tolerant of gay civil rights during this period, but not more tolerant of same-sex sexual activity. The Vatican reacted by emphasizing a split between homosexual orientation and homosexual sexual activity. The Vatican also emphasized the need for nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation. McNeill published his book *The Church and the Homosexual* in 1976. The controversy over the book and McNeill's ministry to the gay and lesbian community resulted in his expulsion from the Jesuit Order in 1987 (McNeill, 1993). Fr. Richard Woods' 1978 book, *Another Kind of Love*, did not receive as much attention as McNeill's, but it was also a landmark publication. More recently, Fr. Richard Peddicord (1994, 1996) argued that the Church's concern for social justice takes priority over its sexuality teaching when dealing with the issue of gay and lesbian rights.

STATEMENTS FROM THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY

ISSUES OF MORALITY

Both the American bishops and Vatican Congregations have issued a number of statements on the topic of homosexuality in recent decades. While all documents touch on a number of issues, those from the American bishops tend to place greater emphasis on the pastoral care of gay and lesbian people while those from the Vatican tend to place greater emphasis on the immorality of homosexual sexual activity.

Responding to liberal trends within the Church, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) released the *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics* (*Persona Humana*) in 1975. The document emphasized that trends away from condemning homosexual behavior were wrong; the document stated that homosexual acts are morally wrong and that homosexuality is a disorder. It also made a distinction between those who may be acting out of homosexuality that is transitory or reversible and those for whom it is a permanent condition. Those with the permanent condition should be treated with understanding. The statement, "Their culpability will be judged with prudence," caused later debate.

Coming shortly thereafter, the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) released *To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life* in 1976. This document made a clearer distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual sexual activity. While teaching that homosexual sexual activity is morally wrong, it emphasized that persons who have a homosexual orientation are not at fault. It also placed further emphasis on the rights of gay and lesbian people not to be treated with discrimination and the responsibility of the Church to welcome them, care for them, and seek justice for them.

Responding to the growth of Catholic ministries to gays and lesbians, including the organization "Dignity," the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released the *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* in 1986. This document gave strong emphasis to the teaching that homosexual sexual acts are morally wrong and argued that the issue was beyond debate in the Church. It also emphasized that while homosexual orientation is not a sin, it is a disorder. It also placed special interest in divorcing gay and lesbian Catholic groups (such as Dignity) from the local Catholic communities if they did not strongly and publicly uphold the Church's teaching against homosexual sexual activity. It did, however, acknowledge that the Church must provide pastoral care to gay and lesbian people and their families, but under close scrutiny of local bishops. It also condemned discrimination and violence directed against gay and lesbian people.

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), emphasis is on homosexual sexual acts being immoral and homosexual orientation being a disorder, but it also acknowledges that the number of gay and lesbian people is "not negligible" (article 2358) and that they must be treated with respect.

HOMOSEXUALITY AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has emphasized that children have a right to sex education (Vatican Council II, 1965). The theme that sexuality is a gift from God is present in all magisterial statements. The USCC has emphasized the integration of sex education into the larger curriculum. "Education in human sexuality focuses on development of the total Christian person, along with the development of the family and community.... Even though sex education should have its own curriculum, it should be integrated into other content areas and classes" (USCC, 1981, p. 67). This is a logical flow from the perspective that sexuality is an integrated part of personhood. "Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality in and through which we, as male or female, express our relatedness to self, others, the world, and even God" (USCC, 1991, p. 9).

Both the American bishops and Vatican Congregations have also issued a number of statements that include the topic of homosexuality in Catholic education. Both emphasize that homosexuality must be addressed in Catholic education. In general, those from the American bishops tend to place greater emphasis on the pastoral care of gay and lesbian young people while those from the Vatican tend to place greater emphasis on finding causes and cures (or at least means of control) of homosexual behavior.

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education issued *Educational Guidance in Human Love* in 1983. The document placed emphasis on not avoiding the topic of homosexuality with students, but finding its causes and seeking cures. The Church's condemnations of homosexual sexual activity must be presented to the student, but the student must also be received with understanding. The Pontifical Council for the Family issued *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family* in 1996. The document placed emphasis on curing or controlling homosexuality in children, but also emphasized that gay and lesbian people should not be discriminated against.

For some time, the American bishops, through the United States Catholic Conference, have indicated that homosexuality should be included in Catholic education (USCC, 1979, 1981). The strongest statement, however, came with the USCC 1991 *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*. The document emphasized sexuality as an integral part of identity. It remarked on the distinction between homosexual attraction as a temporary phase for some but as a lifelong condition for oth-

ers. Emphasis was clearly on modeling and teaching respect for gay and lesbian people, but the Church's condemnation of homosexual sexual acts must also be taught. Emphasis on the pastoral responsibility of the Church was very clear. Another interesting feature was that the document calls upon people to overcome their homophobia. It also stated that parents and teachers must realize that an adolescent or adult may be struggling to accept his or her own homosexuality. It also acknowledged that the distinction between being homosexual and performing homosexual acts is a difficult one.

> Educationally, homosexuality cannot and ought not to be skirted or ignored. The topic must be faced in all objectivity by the pupil and the educator when the case presents itself. First and foremost, we support modeling and teaching respect for every human person, regardless of sexual orientation. Second, a parent or teacher must also present clearly and unambiguously moral norms of the Christian tradition regarding homosexual genital activity, appropriately geared to the age level and maturity of the learner. Finally, parents and other educators must remain open to the possibility that a particular person, whether adolescent or adult, may be struggling to accept his or her own homosexual orientation. The distinction between *being* homosexual and *doing* homosexual genital actions, while not always clear and convincing, is a helpful and important one when dealing with the complex issue of homosexuality, particularly in the educational and pastoral arena. (USCC, 1991, p. 56)

In 1997, the USCC, NCCB Committee on Marriage and Family issued *Always Our Children: Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers*. Clear emphasis of this document was on acceptance of gay and lesbian sons and daughters and acceptance of self as parents of gay and lesbian children, but still acknowledging that homosexual sexual activity is unacceptable according to the Church. The Committee recommended that Church ministers accept gay and lesbian children and adults, welcome them in the faith community, provide pastoral services for them, and educate themselves on gay and lesbian issues.

ATTITUDES OF CATHOLICS

In this section, findings from mostly survey/statistical studies are presented. They have been divided into categories of general Catholic population, Catholic youth, and Catholic educational professionals. This section deals with issues more broadly than the topic of homosexuality because they are pertinent to this discussion. How Catholic schools value community and how Catholics recognize moral authority, for example, does affect how the Catholic community approaches the issue of homosexuality. Unfortunately, specific statistics about the attitudes of Catholics on the topic of homosexu-

ality cannot be concluded from an overall look at these studies; numbers are simply not consistent between studies. Most likely this is due to the wide variety of wording of survey items used in these studies. Some differences may be due to regional factors. It does appear that American Catholics are becoming more positive in their attitudes toward homosexuality over time.

GENERAL STUDIES

A 1998 study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago found that American Catholics are more accepting of homosexuality than American Protestants. Of Catholics, 33% agreed that homosexuality is "not wrong at all," compared to 19% agreement for Protestants. At the same time, 51% of Catholics indicated that homosexuality is "always wrong" (Smith, 1999). Also with NORC, Greeley (1991) reported that the attitudes of American Catholics had not changed greatly during the1980s on the morality of homosexuality (two-thirds stating that it was "always wrong") but that Catholics had become more supportive of the civil liberties of gays and lesbians. On the other hand, Kapp (1999) argued that decreased Catholic affiliation with the Democratic Party in recent decades is influenced in part by the party's liberal stance on gay and lesbian issues.

D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Meyer (2001) reported on findings from their 1999 studies of Catholics. They divided American Catholics into three age groups: Post-Vatican II (ages 18-34), Vatican II (ages 35-59), and Pre-Vatican II (60 and older). The researchers found that younger Catholics saw moral decision making based more on the individual conscience rather than on the authority of the Church. Of the Post-Vatican II cohort, 56% indicated that individuals should have the final say on homosexuality, while only 36% of the Pre-Vatican II cohort agreed with this statement. This was a shift from these same age cohorts in their 1987 study. In 1987, 47% of the Post-Vatican II cohort indicated that individuals should have the final say on homosexuality, and only 18% of the Pre-Vatican II cohort agreed with this statement. When compared by gender, in 1987, 31% of Catholic men believed that Church leaders were the locus of moral authority on the issue of homosexuality compared with 23% of women. In 1999, the percentage of Catholic men agreeing with this had increased slightly to 33%, while the percentage of Catholic women had decreased to 17%. The authors argued that Vatican II and the positions of the Catholic hierarchy following the Council emphasized the role of individual conscience for Catholic questions of morality, but that Pope John Paul II has worked to re-centralize the Catholic hierarchy in moral decision making.

CATHOLIC YOUTH AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Fee, Greeley, McCready, and Sullivan (1981) studied attitudes of youth and adults in the United States and Canada on a number of topics. Of American Catholic youth, 77% agreed with the statement that sex between two persons of the same sex was wrong. There was no significant difference between their responses and those of American Protestant youth. Interestingly, French-speaking Canadian youth were much less likely to agree with the statement (50% agreement). Adult Catholics showed about 68% agreement with the statement, while unchurched adults only showed 30% agreement. Catholic youth tended to disagree with Church teaching on a number of social issues, such as birth control, divorce and remarriage, mercy killing, and abortion in the case of a defective baby, but they tended to agree with Church teaching on the topics of abortion on demand and homosexuality.

In a 1983 survey study of seniors graduating from Catholic high schools in the Washington, DC, area, McAuley and Mattieson (1986) found that 30% of students agreed that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle.

Kane (1987) conducted a study of 1,643 freshmen at two metropolitan colleges. Kane found no difference in attitudes toward homosexuality among college freshmen between those who attended Catholic high schools and those who attended public high schools. This is interesting given that significant differences were found in their attitudes on other social issues such as prayer in public schools, euthanasia, capital punishment, aid for the oppressed, and the role of teachers in instilling moral values in their students.

McNamara (1992) found that support for a city ordinance to protect gay and lesbian people from discrimination grew in seniors at a Catholic high school from 44% support in 1977 to 52% in 1989. Female support grew merely from 50% to 53%, but male support grew from 35% to 50%. McNamara also found that seniors valued the aspect of community in the Catholic high school. Seniors appreciated Church teaching on moral issues, but were more likely to rely on their own consciences for moral decision making. They felt that Catholic education had caused them to probe social issues more deeply.

DiGiacomo (1993) found that males in Catholic high schools experienced peer pressure to have sex with girls in order to avoid being labeled as gay.

This writer's own research indicates that students who graduate from Catholic high schools tend to have more positive attitudes toward homosexuality than those who graduate from non-Catholic high schools (Maher, 1997, 2001).

In a review of studies into Catholic education over a 25-year period, Convey (1992) found that students in Catholic high schools displayed values that were less self-centered than values of students in public high schools.

Students in Catholic high schools were found to support equal opportunities and rights for women. Interestingly, studies did not indicate that students in Catholic high schools felt a strong responsibility to work for creating a more just society. Convey argued that, in general, Catholic high school students do not value justice as strongly as they should, given the emphasis on justice education in Catholic high schools. Researchers found that Catholic high schools placed greater emphasis on community as a part of their culture than did public high schools. Catholic high schools were more successful in achieving community for a number of reasons, including their smaller enrollments, their emphasis on shared religious identity and values, and through intentional efforts. In studies that compared the cultures of coeducational and single-sex schools, the role of "adolescent subculture," which valued physical beauty and heterosexual popularity, was a key factor. Studies indicated that this subculture was strongest among boys in single-sex schools and lowest among girls in single-sex schools.

PROFESSIONALS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Kushner and Helbling (1995) conducted a survey of Catholic elementary school teachers in the United States on a variety of topics and compared responses to previous studies also sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). The survey included a few items about gay and lesbian people. Of Catholic elementary school teachers, 52.2% believed that a teacher in a Catholic elementary school should not be terminated if it is discovered that he or she is homosexual, while 34.6% indicated agreement that homosexuals should not be allowed to teach in Catholic schools. The vast majority (84.8%) agreed that Catholic elementary schools should have a "comprehensive sex education program." With the statement, "I think boys should be encouraged as girls are to be gentle and caring," 98.3% expressed agreement. Teachers were asked to rank in order elements that they believed were most important in Catholic schools on a number of topics. "Compassion," "An understanding of what it means to treat others justly," "Tolerance," and "A healthy self-concept" were ranked among the highest.

Harkins (1993) had conducted a similar study of Catholic elementary school principals. The majority (64%) of principals agreed that homosexuals should not be hired to teach in Catholic elementary schools. Males (73%) were more likely to take this position than females (62%). Those who were principals in inner-city schools were less likely to take this position (50%) than those in other schools (65.5%). Given a choice of 35 statements to select as the most important elements for Catholic elementary schools, the top two choices were, "There is a schoolwide emphasis on treating others with respect" (61.8% selected) and "Students know that the school cares about them" (60.2% selected).

In a 1984 study of Catholic secondary school teachers conducted by the NCEA, Benson and Guerra (1985) reported a number of interesting findings. Civil rights protection for homosexuals was supported by 44% of teachers. This was higher than the average support in the general adult Catholic population as compared with other studies. The majority (62%) of teachers believed that sexual relationships between two consenting adults of the same sex were "usually morally wrong" or "always morally wrong." The top characteristics that teachers felt Catholic schools should emphasize (out of 17 options) were "A healthy self-concept" (98%, most popular), "Compassion" (79%, second most popular), "A vibrant, mature religious faith" (72%, third most popular), "Tolerance" (69%, fourth most popular), and "Understanding and commitment to justice" (68%, fifth most popular). On an item asking teachers what are the most important teaching goals (out of 13 options), the most common answer was "Help students develop a compassion for other people" (82%).

In a study of Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Campbell (1991) found that most believed that their seminary training did not prepare them to work with gay Catholics. Years of pastoral experience and also the experience of counseling gay and lesbian people were seen as most effective to prepare for this work.

Litton (1999) had a number of interesting findings in a study of gay and lesbian teachers in Catholic elementary schools. The teachers chose to work at Catholic schools because of their religious beliefs, but they also saw conflicts between their religion and their lifestyles. They experienced oppression, feared coming out to students (despite believing there would be some benefits to it), and believed their administrators would not support them coming out. While most were open about their sexual identities with only a limited number of colleagues, most also felt that many of their colleagues knew. They worked to create schools that were more inclusive and more in keeping with their view of the Gospel, the call to love one another. They believed that they needed to work harder to be the best teachers in order to make it more difficult for their administrators to dismiss them.

GAY AND LESBIAN CATHOLICS

While there have been only a few studies into the experiences of gay and lesbian Catholics, they tend to show a group of people who overcome social and ecclesial obstacles in order to come to happiness in their adult lives, sometimes within the Church. Negative statements from the Vatican do seem to hinder this process for them.

In a study of gay and lesbian Catholics, Harris (2001) found that internalized homophobia and sexual identity development were not related to scriptural literalism or to religious commitment. Lower internalized homo-

phobia and higher levels of sexual identity development were related, however, to the gay or lesbian Catholic being able to derive personal religious beliefs and make personal religious decisions independently from other authorities such as family, clergy, and religious institutions.

Toman (1997) found that gay Catholic men who were more religious during their adolescence had greater difficulty with their coming out process, but that this did not prevent these same males from eventually achieving an affirmative gay lifestyle later in adulthood.

O'Brien (1991) conducted a survey of gay and lesbian adult Catholics, mostly through the organization Dignity. O'Brien found that gay and lesbian Catholics were comfortable in their sexual orientation for the most part, sought long-term relationships, and found the organization Dignity to be a source of spiritual growth. O'Brien compared this to responses in a "control group" of heterosexual Catholics and concluded that gay and lesbian Catholics' comfort with their spirituality and their sexuality was not significantly different than that of their heterosexual counterparts. O'Brien contrasted this to the presentation of homosexuality in the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 1986 *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons.* O'Brien characterized the Vatican's view of gay and lesbian Catholics as unhappy, spiritually disconnected, and uninterested in committed relationships and characterized the Vatican's view of Dignity as non-spiritual and sexually promiscuous.

Gay and lesbian Catholics have formed a number of different organizations and ministries in recent decades. The Catholic hierarchy has been openly hostile toward groups that are ambiguous or disagreeable to the Church's condemnation of homosexual genital behavior. The most known such organization is Dignity.

Primiano (1993) studied the Philadelphia Dignity Chapter from 1986 to 1987 and discovered that the *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* threatened the local Dignity chapter's existence. Tew (1996) argued that Dignity provided a culture that bridged gay experiences and Catholic experiences for its members and thereby assisted its members in identity integration. It also provided an environment that celebrates difference. According to Tew, Dignity also provided a form of resistance to the Catholic Church without compromising its commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Sr. Geannine Gramick and Fr. Robert Nugent founded *New Ways Ministry* in 1977 to promote reconciliation between gay and lesbian Catholics and the Church (Nugent & Gramick, 1992). In 1999, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ordered the two to separate themselves from *New Ways Ministry* and any pastoral work with gay and lesbian people, and the Congregation also restricted them from leadership roles in their orders (Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 1999).

"Courage" was co-founded in 1980 by then Archbishop of New York Cardinal Cooke and Fr. John Harvey. It is an organization for gay and lesbian Catholics who wish to live a life of chastity and offers support groups based on a 12-step model. It boasts 50 chapters in North America, Australia, and Europe. It also boasts Vatican endorsement (Harvey, 2001).

CURRENT PRACTICES

There have been some instances in which Catholic education has begun to openly address the issue of homosexuality. This section provides some examples. In some cases, this has been a willing venture on the part of schools and school administrators. In others, it has been forced upon them.

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

A few dioceses have begun actively to address homosexuality in Catholic secondary schools. The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is one example that has attracted a good deal of attention. The archdiocese had been progressive in the area of Catholic sex education for some time. In 1985, the Catholic Education Center of the archdiocese produced a video series for high school students titled *Issues in Sexuality* that included one video, *On Homosexuality*, developed by J. P. Johnson with Fr. John Forliti as the theological consultant. Archbishop John Roach gave his imprimatur to the series, which was distributed by the Wm. C. Brown Company (Likoudis, 1987).

In 1995, the Schools Team of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis created "The Pastoral Care and Sexual Identity Study Group of Saint Paul and Minneapolis." The group set forth four goals: to provide a workshop for teachers, administrators, and counselors on the topic of sexual identity; to train faculty to become "safe staff"; to teach students and teachers that homophobic behavior is unacceptable; and to form an interschool support group for students. The Study Group set to work with tangible results; some Catholic high school student newspapers devoted special issues to gay and lesbian students telling their stories, principals addressed the student bodies on the unacceptability of homophobic behavior, teachers and other staff attended workshops, and counselors posted flyers raising gay and lesbian issues. The group enlisted the help of the organization "Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays" (PFLAG) to form a support group for gay and lesbian Catholic high school students. The Study Group put forth new goals of training the boards of directors of the Catholic high schools, developing a parent support group, and finding ways to support gay and lesbian Catholic school teachers and staff. The group felt it was not contrary to Catholic identity to make these efforts. Rather, it was intrinsic to the Catholic identity to promote justice and dignity for all persons (Gevelinger & Zimmerman,

1997). The group held its first forum for Catholic secondary school boards on November 3, 1997. The forum included a presentation by Fr. Richard Sparks, CSP, a specialist in Catholic sexual ethics, and a presentation by parents with a gay son who had gone through the Catholic educational system (Bayly, 1998).

Archbishop Flynn defended the work of the committee in his regular column in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Spirit*. He emphasized that the group and its work were guided by two principles: the Catholic Church's calling of gay and lesbian people to chastity and the Catholic Church's teaching about the dignity and needs of gay and lesbian people (Flynn, 1998).

CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

While gay and lesbian organizations at American colleges and universities have become the norm, the road to acceptance for gay and lesbian student organizations at Catholic colleges and universities has not been easy. In general, the experiences of gay and lesbian students at Catholic colleges and universities seem to be more "in the closet" than at public colleges and universities.

The "Gay Rights Coalition of Georgetown University" battled in court for recognition by the university for nearly a decade. Its success in the case was considered precedent-setting. The court decided that Georgetown University had denied the group recognition, not based on Catholic teaching, but rather based upon the sexual orientation of the members of the group (Nordin, 1989; Rullman 1991).

Fr. Richard Salmi (1994) reported that hate crimes against gay and lesbian students were on the rise at college campuses. Because gay and lesbian students feared self-disclosure, stereotypes could continue that perpetuated homophobia at Catholic colleges. Also, inability to self-disclose hindered the development of gay and lesbian students. Salmi argued that Catholic colleges must work at making their campuses places where gay and lesbian students could be open and still be safe.

Gutierrez (1987) has argued that Catholic colleges must undergo cultural changes to become more welcoming to gay and lesbian students. These cultural changes must involve all levels of the college staff, faculty, and administration and must be in dialogue with the college's religious values.

Love (1997, 1998) conducted an in-depth study of one U.S. Catholic college as it dealt with the issue of homosexuality. Invisibility had marked the experiences of gay and lesbian students at the college. Homosexuality was "suddenly" a topic in the college in 1991. Gays and lesbians along with heterosexual "allies" formed student and staff organizations, and several departments within the university held special workshops and events around the

topic of homosexuality. By 1993, the organizations had died out. Love (1998) identified several "cultural barriers" such as homophobia, heterosexism, discomfort with sexuality, and stigma as well as several "institutional barriers" such as perceptions of Catholicism, fear of external and typically peripheral constituencies (Church officials, donors, alumni, parents, etc.), and lack of appropriate ways to discuss sexual orientation. Faculty who had worked on the projects were not punished for this, but they were also not rewarded or recognized for their efforts. Love found that Catholicism did not cause homophobic barriers in the culture, but also that Catholicism was used to justify these barriers. Love (1997) also found several contradictions. The college upheld the values of service, care for the person, and educating the whole person, but gay and lesbian students experienced hatred and rejection. Many students did not uphold in their actions Catholic teaching on other sexuality issues, such as premarital sex and birth control, but they use Catholic teaching to condemn homosexuality. The school upheld the values of diversity and multiculturalism, yet resisted inclusion of gay and lesbian topics and persons. Love pointed out some interesting paradoxes as well. Support came often from the department of campus ministry and the department of religious studies. Many of the gay and lesbian students and their allies were very religious Catholics who saw their work on gay and lesbian inclusion as a "calling from God." Because it became less socially acceptable to make homophobic comments on campus, gay and lesbian students had greater difficulty knowing who was homophobic, and thereby who to avoid. While the college administration was known to be supportive of gay and lesbian causes, fear crippled the administration's ability to be leaders on the topic. Strong homophobic backlashes indicated that real progress was being made, while easy, visible changes resulted in no substantial cultural changes.

GAY SEMINARIANS

One unfortunate outcome of the recent priest sex abuse scandals has been a movement to eradicate gay seminary students. Pope John Paul II, Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls, and Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone have all stated that seminaries must screen out homosexual candidates (Rossini, 2002; Thavis, 2002). The Sacred Congregation for the Religious, a Vatican congregation, stated in 1961, "Advancement to religious vows and ordination should be barred to those who are afflicted with evil tendencies to homosexuality or pederasty, since for them the common life and the priestly ministry would constitute serious dangers" (Rossini, 2002). Nugent and Gramick (1992) had noted that there has been increased discussion of gay seminary candidates in Rome and elsewhere. Nugent (1989) argued that American Catholic seminaries had begun in the 1980s to try to eliminate gay students. Several writers

and researchers have argued that a large number of Catholic seminarians are gay, and the percentage seems to be growing (Cozzens, 2000; Greeley, 1989; Jordan, 2000; Maher, 2002; Sipe, 1990; Stuart, 1993; Thomas, 2000; Wolf, 1989).

STUDIES OUTSIDE THE US

The issue of homosexuality and Catholic education has not been limited to the United States. It is worth noting, however, that there seems to have been more written on the topic in the English-speaking world.

In Great Britain, 1988 legislation prohibited schools from teaching that homosexuality was an acceptable lifestyle. This was repealed in Scotland in 2000. Studies indicated that Scottish Catholics are more liberal in their tolerance of homosexuality than Protestants (*Sunday Herald*, 2000). In anticipation of the ban being lifted, the Scottish Catholic Education Commission produced *Relationships & Moral Education*, a textbook that taught that homosexual sexual activity is morally wrong, but also promoted acceptance, respect, and compassion for gay and lesbian people (*Catholic World News*, 2000).

In Canada, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association published (with the guidance of Bishop Henry of Calgary) *A Resource for an Inclusive Community: A Teacher's Guide for and about Persons with Same Sex Attractions* in 2001. The guide made a strong distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior and placed its overwhelming emphasis on ending discrimination of gay and lesbian students in Catholic education. It also argued that while homosexual sexual acts could be judged, those who commit them could not. Also in Canada, however, an Ontario Catholic high school student had to sue his high school for the right to take a male date to his senior prom (Warner, 2002).

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (1996) raised concerns with the legislature regarding a bill designed to prevent hate speech against gays and lesbians. The bishops wanted assurance that Catholic schools would be exempt from the bill. Other studies indicate that gay males in Australian Catholic secondary schools experience homophobia and violence. This is especially true at all-male schools (Plummer, 1999; Rosser, 1992).

CONCLUSION

The Magisterium has made a distinction between homosexual sexual orientation and homosexual sexual activity. Homosexual orientation is not morally wrong, according to the Magisterium, but it is seen as a disorder. Homosexual sexual activity is always morally wrong, according to the Magisterium, but those who engage in homosexual sexual activity should be "judged with pru-

dence." The Magisterium has also recognized that gay and lesbian people experience discrimination and has condemned this discrimination. The Magisterium has called upon the Church's ministers to provide pastoral care for gay and lesbian people, to defend the rights of gay and lesbian people, and to welcome gay and lesbian people into the Church. In general, the Vatican has placed greater emphasis on the immorality of homosexual sexual activity while the American bishops have placed greater emphasis on the pastoral needs of gay and lesbian people. Both the Vatican and the American bishops have clearly stated that the topic of homosexuality must be addressed in Catholic education, but the emphasis on how it is addressed differs between the Vatican (emphasis on finding causes and cures) and the American Bishops (providing pastoral care and inclusion).

It is difficult to form a composite picture of the attitudes of American Catholics on the topic of homosexuality; different surveys have yielded different results. It does appear that the distinctions drawn by the Magisterium are useful; it seems that some American Catholics may be very supportive of the rights of gay and lesbian people even if they disapprove of their sexual activity. It also appears that American Catholics are becoming more positive in their attitudes toward homosexuality.

Gay and lesbian Catholics have organized groups based greatly on meeting their own pastoral needs, but also including political elements to change Church teaching in some cases. The Vatican has been directly confrontational with these groups, expressing concern that they disregard the teaching against homosexual activity in their quest to meet pastoral needs.

There have been a limited number of examples of Catholic education including the topic of homosexuality. Some dioceses, such as Saint Paul and Minneapolis, have begun to train their secondary school staffs on issues of homosexuality and to include the topic in the curriculum. Other examples, such as gay and lesbian students at Catholic colleges, universities, and seminaries, have a history of confrontation between gays and lesbians and Catholic educators.

REFERENCES

Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association. (2001). *A resource for an inclusive community: A teacher's guide for and about persons with same sex attractions.* Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Author.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. (1996). *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee inquiry into sexuality discrimination, July 19, 1996.* Sydney, Australia: Author.

Bayly, M. (1998, Spring). Bringing home the message. *Rainbow Spirit, 1*(1). Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://www.mtn.org/~cpcsm/rsv1-1/bringing.htm

Benson, P. L., & Guerra M. J. (1985). *Sharing the faith: The beliefs and values of Catholic high school teachers.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Campbell, T. J. (1991). Catholic priests and the pastoral care of homosexuals and homosexual persons with AIDS (Doctoral dissertation, United States International University, 1991). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 52*(02), 569A.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1994). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Catholic World News. (2000, January 14). Catholic students to be taught about homosexuality. Retrieved September 24, 2002 from http://www.cwnews.com/Browse/2000/01/12022.htm

Coleman, G. D. (1995). *Homosexuality: Catholic teaching and pastoral practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Coleman, G. D. (1997). The teacher and the gay and lesbian student. *Momentum, 28*(2), 46-48.

Convey, J. J. (1992). *Catholic schools make a difference: Twenty-five years of research.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Cozzens, D. B. (2000). *The changing face of the priesthood: A reflection on the priest's crisis of soul.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.

D'Antonio, W. V., Davidson, J. D., Hoge, D. R., & Meyer, K. (2001). *American Catholics: Gender, generation, and commitment.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

DiGiacomo, J. (1993). *Morality and youth: Fostering Christian identity.* Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward.

Fee, J. L., Greeley, A. M., McCready, W. C., & Sullivan, T. A. (1981). *Young Catholics in the United States and Canada: A report to the Knights of Columbus.* New York: William H. Sadlier, Inc.

Flynn, H. J. (1998, December 3). Chastity and love both at core of our teachings. *The Catholic Spirit.* Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://www.thecatholicspirit.com/archives.php?article=202

Gevelinger, M. E., & Zimmerman, L. (1997). How Catholic schools are creating a safe climate for gay and lesbian students. *Educational Leadership, 55*(2), 66-68.

Greeley, A. (1989, November 10). Bishops paralyzed over heavy gay priesthood. *National Catholic Reporter,* pp. 1, 3-14.

Greeley, A. (1991, December 4). Live and let die. *The Christian Century,* 1124-1125.

Gutierrez, F. J. (1987, March). *Managing the campus ecology of gay/lesbian students on Catholic college campuses.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American College Personnel Association, Chicago.

Harkins, W. (1993). *Introducing the Catholic elementary school principal: What principals say about themselves, their values, their schools.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Harris, J. I. (2001). Religious variables relevant to internalized homophobia and sexual identity development (Doctoral dissertation, Texas Tech University, 2001). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 62*(05), 2516B.

Harvey, J. (2001). *Courage and encourage.* Reprinted with permission from Courage. Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://catholiceducation.org/articles/homosexuality/ho0038.html

Jordan, M. D. (2000). *The silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in modern Catholicism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kane, J. P. (1987). A comparative study of Catholic and public school high school graduates on the differences in attitudes toward selected contemporary and moral issues (Doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall University, 1987). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 48*(11), 2843A.

Kapp, L. J. (1999). The political values and voting behavior of American Catholics: Changes and continuities from 1984 to 1998 (Doctoral dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1999). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 60*(09), 3511A.

Kushner, R., & Helbling, M. (1995). *The people who work there: The report of the Catholic elementary school teacher survey.* Washington, DC: The National Catholic Educational Association.

Likoudis, J. (1987, November). Fr. John Forliti "On homosexuality." *SERVIAM Newsletter.* Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://credo.stormloader.com/Morals/forliti2.htm

Litton E. F. (1999, April). *Stories of courage and hope: Gay and lesbian Catholic elementary school teachers.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Love, P. G. (1997). Contradiction and paradox: Attempting to change the culture of sexual orientation at a small Catholic college. *The Review of Higher Education, 20*(4), 381-398.

Love, P. G. (1998). Cultural barriers facing lesbian, gay, and bisexual students at a Catholic college. *Journal of Higher Education, 69*(3), 298-323.

Maher, M. J. (1997). *The dis-integration of a child: Gay and lesbian youth in Catholic education.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, Saint Louis, MO.

Maher, M. J. (2001). *Being gay and lesbian in a Catholic high school: Beyond the uniform.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Maher, M. J. (2002). Openly addressing the reality: Homosexuality and Catholic seminary policies. *Journal of Religion and Education, 29*(2), 49-68.

McAuley, E. N., & Mattieson, M. (1986). *Faith without form: Beliefs of Catholic youth.* Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward.

McNamara, P. H. (1992). *Conscience first, tradition second: A study of young American Catholics.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

McNeill, J. J. (1993). *The Church and the homosexual* (4th ed.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Nordin, V. D. (1989). GRC v. Georgetown: Autonomy and nondiscrimination. *Thought and Action, 5*(2), 37-47.

Nugent, R. (1989). Homosexuality and seminary candidates. In J. Gramick (Ed.), *Homosexuality in the priesthood and religious life* (pp. 201-218). New York: Crossroad Publishing.

Nugent, R., & Gramick, J. (1992). *Building bridges: Gay and lesbian reality and the Catholic Church.* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications.

O'Brien, T. (1991). A survey of gay/lesbian Catholics concerning attitudes toward sexual orientation and religious beliefs. *Journal of Homosexuality, 24*(4), 29-44.

Peddicord, R. A. (1994). A studied ambiguity: Catholic moral teaching on the question of gay and lesbian rights legislation (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ottawa, Canada, 1994). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 56*(11), 4435A.

Peddicord, R. A. (1996). *Gay and lesbian rights: A question—sexual ethics or social justice.* Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward.

Plummer, D. (1999). *One of the boys: Masculinity, homophobia, and modern manhood.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

The Pontifical Council for the Family. (1996). *The truth and meaning of human sexuality: Guidelines for education within the family.* Rome: Author.

Primiano, L. N. (1993). Intrinsically Catholic: Vernacular religion and Philadelphia's "Dignity" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1993). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 4*(06), 2186A.

Rosser, B. R. S. (1992). *Gay Catholics down under: The journeys in sexuality and spirituality of gay men in Australia and New Zealand.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Rossini, E. (2002, September 15). Pope to Church: Risky seminarians must go [Electronic version]. *National Catholic Register.* Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://www.ncregister.com/Register_News/091002sem.htm

Rullman, L. J. (1991). A legal history: University recognition of homosexual organizations. *Association of College Unions—International Bulletin, 59*(2), 4-9.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1983). *Educational guidance in human love: Outlines for sex education.* Rome: Author.

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1975). *Declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics.* Rome: Author.

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1986). *Letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church on the pastoral care of homosexual persons.* Rome: Author.

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1999, July 13). *Notification regarding Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, and Father Robert Nugent, SDS.* Rome: Author.

Sacred Congregation for the Religious. (1961). *Careful selection and training of candidates for the states of perfection and sacred orders.* Rome: Author.

Salmi, R. P. (1994). Changing attitudes toward lesbian women and gay men among college freshmen: The effects of a campus intervention program (Doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 1994). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 55*(06), 1425A.

Sipe, A. W. R. (1990). *A secret world: Sexuality and the search for celibacy.* New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Smith, R. L. (1994). *AIDS, gays, and the American Catholic church.* Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press.

Smith, T. W. (1999, January). *American Catholics* (Report of the National Opinion Research Center). Chicago: University of Chicago.

Stuart, E. (1993). *Chosen: Gay Catholic priests tell their stories.* London: Cassell Publishers.

Sunday Herald. (2000, January 23). The truth: We're a tolerant nation. Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://www.sundayherald.com/print6461

Tew, M. A. (1996). Organizational mediation of gay Catholic identity and social schisms: An ethnographic analysis of Dignity/USA (Doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1996). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 57*(04), 1393A.

Thavis, J. (2002, March 6). Vatican spokesman's comments highlight debate over gay priests. *Catholic News Service.* Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cnc/20020306.htm

Thomas, J. L. (2000). AIDS in the priesthood [series]. *The Kansas City Star.* Retrieved September 24, 2002, from http://www.kcstar.com/projects/priests

Thurston, T. M. (1989). Homosexuality and contemporary Roman Catholic ethical discussion (Doctoral dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, 1989). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 50*(07), 2119A.

Toman, J. A. (1997). Dual identity: Being Catholic and being gay (Doctoral dissertation, Cleveland State University, 1997). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 58*(05), 1942A.

United States Catholic Conference. (1976). *To live in Christ Jesus: A pastoral reflection on the moral life.* Washington, DC: Author.

United States Catholic Conference. (1979). *Sharing the light of faith: National catechetical directory for Catholics of the United States.* Washington, DC: Author.

United States Catholic Conference. (1981). *Education in human sexuality for Christians: Guidelines for discussion and planning.* Washington, DC: Author.

United States Catholic Conference. (1991). *Human sexuality: A Catholic perspective for education and lifelong learning.* Washington, DC: Author.

USCC, NCCB Committee on Marriage and Family. (1997). *Always our children: Pastoral message to parents of homosexual children and suggestions for pastoral ministers.* Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Vatican Council II. (1965). *Declaration on Christian education.* Rome: Author.

Warner, M. (2002, May). The high school prom—with a twist. *Education Law Alert.* Retrieved September 24, 2002, from www.blgcanada.com

Wolf, J. G. (Ed.). (1989). *Gay priests.* San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Woods, R. (1978). *Another kind of love: Homosexuality and spirituality.* Garden City, NY: Image Books.

Michael Maher has served as the chaplain to the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago since 1996. He is the author of Being Gay and Lesbian in a Catholic High School: Beyond the Uniform *(Haworth Press, 2001). This research began at Saint Louis University (Maher, 1997). Many thanks are due to Michael Grady, Paul Shore, and Richard Peddicord, all of Saint Louis University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Michael Maher, University Ministry, Loyola University, 25 E. Pearson, Room 1461, Chicago, IL 60611.*