



Courage & EnCourage
228 North Walnut Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933-1122
517.351.3315
Facsimile: 517.342.2468
caverart@comcast.net

ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: **Sunday February 21, 2010 from 2:30 to 4:00pm**

Where: **Holy Spirit Parish
Winans Lake Road
Hamburg, Michigan**

Directions: US-23 to Silver Lake Rd. Exit (exit #55) West on Silver Lake Rd. to Whitmore Lake Rd. (a short distance). South on Whitmore Lake Rd. to Winans Lake Rd. (a three way stop). West on Winans Lake Rd. approximately one mile to entrance marked with a sign for Holy Spirit Cemetery and Holy Spirit Rectory and School. Turn left. We meet in portable classroom number four. Look for Encourage signs.

Hopefully, you have noticed that the stationery is different from what we normally use, and there is a reason for this. **We moved.** Courage and Encourage has always been a Lansing Diocesan Ministry established in 1989 by the now retired Bishop Carl Mengeling. Our office and official address was located in our local parish in East Lansing, and it was from there that we mailed our letters and responded to requests. The new Bishop for the Diocese of Lansing, Bishop Earl Boyea, has continued to be very supportive so much so that we have been asked to move to the Diocesan offices in Lansing. While our mailing address has changed, it appears that our phone number will remain the same. We think the move will be good for the ministry as it places us more central to the authority and resources of the Diocese. **Please make a note of the address change.**

One aspect of this change is that all the clergy (priests, deacons and parish administrators) will now receive the letter and enclosures via email. We will also email those of you who have responded to our inquiry as to whether you would like to receive the communication electronically. If you are a member of the clergy, and you would prefer to continue to receive our mailings via regular mail, please let us know and we will accommodate you. If you are not a member of the clergy, and are currently receiving our mailing by regular 'snail' mail, and you would prefer to receive it electronically, call us at 517-351-3315 or email me at caverart@comcast.net

This month we have enclosed (attached) an article by Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D. entitled *Gay as Self-Reinvention*. The article addresses the issue of the development of the 'gay identity' and we think is an excellent resource. We hope you find it insightful. Dr. Nicolosi represents the National Association For Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) and membership in this organization is available to all of us. We would urge you to join by way of their web site at www.narth.com They offer volumes of scientific research and information that is very helpful in growing in knowledge about same-sex attraction.

Remember please that we unite to pray each Thursday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in reparation for our sins and the sins against human sexuality such as same-sex attraction and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally we pray as intercessors for all our loved ones who will, like the prodigal, someday return home. We generally follow the model given to us by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the booklet *Holy Hour of Reparation* published by CMJ Marian Publishers. If you would like a copy of the booklet, we have a small supply in our office or you can order one by calling the publisher at 1-888-636-6799. "That the necessity of reparation is especially urgent today must be evident to everyone who considers the present plight of the world, 'seated in wickedness'. The Sacred Heart of Jesus promised to St. Margaret Mary that He would reward abundantly with His graces all those who should render this honor to His Heart." (Pope Pius XI Encyclical *Miserentissimus*)

Please note if you cannot attend the February 21st meeting, our next regular meeting is March 21, 2010. We hope to see you there.

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about this issue in your lives, call us at 517-351-3315 or email us at caverart@comcast.net

We look forward to meeting with you. Let us always remember, however, to always respect the right of each to complete confidentiality.

Trusting in Jesus,

Bob and Susan Cavera

"Praised be God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation! He comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from him."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Gay as Self-Reinvention

by Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D.

I would like to propose a socio-analytic view of the formation of gay identity. This view is based upon the perspective I have gained from the clinical treatment of over 400 homosexually-oriented men during eighteen years as a practicing psychologist.

"The gay identity" has been portrayed as a civil-rights and self-determination issue. We Americans, who love freedom, have loved it too much and have lost our moorings. Our most influential institutions--professional psychology and psychiatry, churches, the education establishment, and the media--have fallen to the gay deception. Because gay is, I am convinced, a self-deceptive identity.

"Gay" is Not "Homosexual"

First, let's begin with the understanding that I will *not* be speaking about the person who struggles with same-sex attraction, but rather the *gay-identified* person--which is to say, that person who is ego-invested and personally identified with the idea that homosexual behavior is as normal and natural as heterosexual behavior.

Secondly, I wish to clarify my belief that there is no such thing as a gay person. Gay is a *fictitious identity* seized upon by an individual to resolve painful emotional challenges. The man who recognizes that he has a homosexual problem and struggles to overcome it is not "gay." He is, simply, "homosexual."

To believe in the concept of a *gay identity as valid*, a person must necessarily deny significant aspects of human reality. The foundation typically begins with a significant denial of human reality during early childhood.

I'd like to propose a three-step, psycho-social model for the development of a gay identity--first, beginning with the prehomosexual child and his gender distortions; second, with his later assimilation into the gay counterculture, which fosters those same distortions about self and humanity; and finally, concluding by describing how the gay community's self-deception has expanded into the further deception of a large portion of society.

Early Gender Identity

Let's begin with the child. At a critical developmental period called the gender-identity phase, the child discovers that the world is divided between male and female. Which one is he going to be? He is personally challenged to assume maleness or femaleness -- "Am I a boy? Or am I a girl?" We'll be talking primarily about boys, because there are some more complex variations for the lesbian.

Confronted with the reality of a gendered world, male and female, and forced to make a choice, the child may first resort to an avoidance strategy--regressing into an androgynous phase: "I need not relinquish the benefits of either sex. I can be both male and female." However, reality pushes in and language now enters, and he hears "he" and "she," and "his" and "hers."

Both sexes are first identified with the mother, the "first love object"--but the boy has the additional developmental task of disidentifying from the mother to move on to the father. We must make no mistake about this: masculinity, as Robert Stoller said, is an achievement. The child--especially the boy--has to work not only for the acquisition of identity, but for the acquisition of gender. Every culture that has ever survived understands this matter of the "achievement" of gender, and will support and assist the boy through rites of passage and male initiation.

Increasingly today, we are abandoning support of our boys' formation of masculine identity; particularly the support needed from the parents. For the boy, the father is most significant in the identification process. If he is warm and receptive and inviting, the boy will disidentify with mother and bond with father to fulfill his natural masculine strings. If the father is cold, detached, harsh, or even simply disinterested, the boy may reach out, but eventually will feel hurt and discouraged and surrender his natural masculine strivings, returning to his mother.

There is no convincing scientific evidence of a "gay gene," but certain boys do seem especially vulnerable to homosexual development. Clinical experience tells us that the boy who is sensitive, passive, gentle, and esthetically oriented may be most susceptible to retreat from the developmental challenge to gender-identify with his father. A tougher, bolder, thicker-skinned son may well succeed in pushing through an emotional barrier. The sensitive son seems to decide, "I can't be male, but I'm not completely female either; so I will remain in my own androgynous world, my secret place of fantasy."

And, as we shall see, this quality of androgynous fantasy endures into adulthood: in fact, it is a fundamental feature of gay culture. This fantasy contains within it, not only the narcissistic refusal to identify with a gendered culture, but also the refusal to identify with the *human biological reality* upon which our gendered society is based. In fact, gender--a core feature of personal identity--is central to the way we relate to ourselves and others. It is also a central pathway through which we grow to maturity.

A host of studies confirm the correlation between childhood gender nonconformity, which is suggestive of gender-*identity* confusion, and later homosexuality. Not all homosexuality develops this way, but this is a common developmental pathway. We hear echoes of this theme over and over in gay literature--the repeated story of the prehomosexual boy who is isolated and "on the outs" from male friends, feeling different, insecure in his masculinity and alone, disenfranchised from father, and retreating back to mother. Camille Paglia, a lesbian activist, says she struggled with a "massive gender dysfunction" throughout childhood. Andrew Sullivan, the gay

author of *Virtually Normal*, was asked by a young classmate, "Are you a girl or a boy in there?"

Because gender was such a source of pain in childhood, the annihilation of gender differences is, not surprisingly, a central demand of gay culture. Gays often call their attitude "an indifference to gender." Daryl Bem, a gay psychologist, describes his version of utopian society as a "non-gender-polarizing culture" in which everyone would potentially be anyone else's lover. Other gay writers insist on an "end to the gender system."

Detachment from Self and Others

So we see that the man who accepts the gay label in adulthood, has typically spent much of his childhood emotionally disconnected from people, particularly his male peers and his father. He also was likely to assume a false, rigid "good little boy" role within the family.

One of my clients said, "I was a non-entity. I didn't have a place to feel." Another man said, "I always acted out other people's scripts for me. I was an actor in other people's plays."

One client said, "My parents watched me grow up"; and hearing this, another client added, "I watched *myself* grow up." Do you hear that quality of detachment from self? -- "I *watched myself* grow up." No wonder the pre-homosexual boy is often interested in theatre and acting---"Life is theatre. We are all actors. Can't reality just be what we wish it to be?"

In the absence of an authentic identity, it is easy to self-reinvent. Oscar Wilde (who probably was the first person to give a face to "gay"), said, "Naturalness is just another pose."

Without domestic emotional bonds to ground him in organic identity, the gay man is plastic. He is the transformist, a Victor-Victoria, or the character from "La Cage Aux Folles." He is pretender, jokester--what French psychoanalyst Chasseguet-Smirgel calls "the imposter." He is what the gay, Jungian psychotherapist Robert Hopcke calls "the outsider, the trickster, the androgyne--the person who breaks the boundaries in our society."

Freud said, "The father is the reality principle." Father represents the transition from the blissful mother-child, symbiotic relationship into harsh reality. But the pre-homosexual boy says to himself, "If my father makes me unimportant, I make *him* unimportant. If he rejects me, I reject *him* and all that he represents." Here we see the infantile power of "no" -- "Father has nothing to teach me. His power to procreate and affect the world are nothing compared to my fantasy world. What he accomplishes, I can dream. Dream and reality are the same."

Rather than striving to find his own masculine, procreative power...moving out into the world, trying to impact it...he chooses, instead, to stay in the dreamy, good-little-boy role. Detached, not only from father and other boys, but from maleness and his own male body--including the first symbol of masculinity, his own penis--an object alien even to himself. He will later try to find healing through another man's penis. Because that is what homosexual behavior is: the search for the lost masculine self.

Since anatomically grounded gender is a core feature of individual identity, the homosexual has not so much a sexual problem, as an identity problem. He has a sense of not being a part of other people's lives. Thus it follows that narcissism and preoccupation with self are commonly observed in male homosexuals.

The Identity Search is Felt as Homoeroticism

Now in his early teenage years, unconscious drives to fill this emotional vacuum--to want to connect with his maleness--are felt as homoerotic desires. The next stage will be entry into the gay world.

Then for the first time in his life, this lonely, alienated young man meets (through gay romance novels from the library, television personalities, or internet chat rooms) people who share the same feelings. But he gets more than empathy: along with the empathy comes an entire package of new ideas and concepts about sex, gender, human relationships, anatomical relationships, and personal destiny.

Next he experiences that heady, euphoric, pseudo-rite-of-passage called "coming out of the closet." It is just one more constructed role to distract him from the deeper, more painful issue of self-identity. Gay identity is not "discovered" as if it existed *a priori* as a natural trait. Rather, it is a culturally approved process of *self-reinvention* by a group of people in order to mask their collective emotional hurts. This bogus claim to have finally found one's authentic identity through gayness is perhaps the most dangerous of all the false roles attempted by the young person seeking identity and belonging. At this point, he has gone from compliant, "good little boy" of childhood, to sexual outlaw. One of the benefits of membership in the gay subculture is the support and reinforcement he receives for reverting to fantasy as a method of problem solving.

The Fantasy Option

He is now able to do collectively what he did alone as a child: when reality is painful, choose the fantasy option. "I have merely to redefine myself and redefine the world. If others won't play my game, I'll charm and manipulate them. If that doesn't work, I'll have a temper tantrum."

For that lonely child, what awesome benefits of membership he receives by assuming the gay self-label! He receives unlimited sex and unlimited power by turning reality on its head. He enjoys vindication of early childhood hurts. Plus as an added bonus, he gets to reject his rejecting father and similarly, the Judeo-Christian Father-God

who separated good from bad, right from wrong, truth from deception. Oscar Wilde said, "Morality is simply an attitude we adopt toward people whom we personally dislike."

Next, we move on to look at the third level: "How has this group of hurt boys and girls--now known in adulthood as the gay community--managed to promote their make-believe liberation not only to popular culture but to legislators, public-policy makers, universities, and churches?"

There are a number of ways, but three such avenues stand out for mention.

The first is the civil-rights movement, probably the single most influential force in forming the collective consciousness of American society in this century. Gay apologists have used *authentic rights issues* as a wedge to promote their redefinition of human sexuality and, essentially, human nature. And one powerful tool that has been used time and time again is the Coming Out Story. It is that same generic story that has been repeated almost verbatim for thirty years now--from the committee rooms of the American Psychiatric Association in 1973, to the Oprah Winfrey Show.

I have seen religious clergy warmly applauding coming-out stories. And why not? Because "finding oneself" and "being who one *really is*" are popular late-twentieth-century themes which have a heroic and attractive ring to them. Certainly the person telling the story is sincere. He means what he says, but the audience rarely looks beyond his words to understand his coming-out in the larger context.

A second factor is that sexuality itself is in crisis, with fundamental changes now taking place in our definition of family, community, procreation, marriage, and gender. All of these changes have occurred in the service of an individual's right to pursue sexual pleasure. But historically, although the gay- rights movement followed along on the coattails of the civil-rights movement, it continues to draw its ideological power from the sexual-liberation movement.

There is at this time, a cultural vulnerability to gay-lib rhetoric. Chasseguet-Smirgel says the "pervert" (in the traditional psychoanalytic sense of the term) confuses two essential human realities: the distinction between the generations, and between the sexes. In gay ideology, we see just this sort of obliteration of differences.

Similarly, Midge Decter tells us we are a culture that treats our children like adults (we have only to look at sex education in elementary school), at the same time that adults are acting like children.

Ours is a consumer-oriented society, and consumer products shape our views of ourselves. Marketing strategists are all-too-ready to target consumer groups. Gay couples are called "DINKS"--dual income, no kids. And that means expendable income. Merchants have always been ready to cater to gay clientele, and merchant-solicitors have given the gay community the face of legitimacy. Today, nearly every major corporation offers services specially tailored to homosexuals--corporations

like AT&T, Hyatt House, Seagrams, Apple Computer, Time-Warner, and American Express. Alcohol and cigarettes are popular gay items. We see gay resorts, gay cruises, gay theatre, gay film festivals. Gay magazines, movies and fiction give face and theme to individuals whose essential problem is identity and belonging. Luxury items--jewelry, fashions, furnishings, and cosmetics are ready to soothe, flatter, and gratify a hurting minority. But beyond material reassurance, these luxury items equate gay identity with economic success-- "The gay life is the good life."

Yet "gay" remains a counter-identity, a negative. By that I mean it gets its psychic energy by "*what I am not*," and is an infantile refusal to accept reality. Through justification offered through today's liberal-arts education, it is easily rationalized by the arguments of deconstructionism.

Deconstructionism and the gay agenda are perfectly compatible. They conform to a number of corresponding, modern movements, including the trend against "species-ism"--promoting the idea that man must lay no claim to being above animals. Animal liberationist and founder of PETA Ingrid Newkirk says that "a rat... is a pig...is a dog...is a boy."

There are also movements to break down the barriers between the generations, evidenced by psychiatry's recent loosening of the diagnostic definition of pedophilia, and the publishing of the double *Journal of Homosexuality* issue, "Male Intergenerational Love" (an apologia for pedophilia). There are popular movements (primarily gay and feminist) to deny any mental and emotional differences between the sexes, and--even more alarmingly--nature-worship movements which resymbolize the instincts as sacred.

The founder of the deconstructionist movement is Michel Foucault, a gay man whose philosophical views emerged out of his own personal struggle with homosexuality. Foucault actually had the outrageous plan to deconstruct the distinction between life and death; in his later years, he was obsessed with the idea of simultaneously experiencing death and orgasm. He eventually succeeded, as Charles Socarides says, in "deconstructing himself" (he died of AIDS in a sanitarium).

And so through deconstructionism we see animal confused with human, sacred confused with profane, adult confused with child, male confused with female, and life confused with death -- all of these, *traditionally the most profound of distinctions and separations*, are now under siege through modern deconstructionism.

"Gay" in Film Mythology

In the recent animated Disney film, the Lion King, we see the age-old generational link in the proud and loving relationship between the father Mufasa, king of the lions, and his little son Simba, the future king. They live in the balanced, ordered world of the lion kingdom. Now we also have this other character Scar, the brooding,

resentful brother of the king, who lives his life on the outside and is full of envy and anger. It has been argued that Scar is a gay figure.

In the film, it is Scar who ruptures the father-son link between the generations. He kills the Lion King while aligning himself with a scavenger pack of hyenas. Thus Scar turns the ordered lion kingdom into chaos and ruin. But before all this occurs, we hear a brief, light-hearted dialogue between the young male cub, Simba, and his uncle Scar.

Laughingly Simba says, "Uncle Scar, you're weird."

Meanfully, Scar replies, "You have no idea."

The Way Out

And so we have seen that gay is a compromise identity seized upon by an individual, and increasingly supported by our society, in order to resolve emotional conflicts. It is a collective illusion; truly, "the gay deception." But I have seen more men than I can count in the process of struggle, growth and change. The struggle is a soul-searing one, challenging, as it must, a false identity rooted in one's earliest years.

As adults, these strugglers have looked into the gay lifestyle and returned disillusioned by what they saw. Rather than wage war against the natural order of society, they have chosen to take up the challenge of an interior struggle. This is, I am convinced, the only true solution to an age-old identity problem.

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For more information see: [Joseph Nicolosi.com](http://JosephNicolosi.com).

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