



Courage & EnCourage  
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## ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

**When: Sunday July 18, 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.

We have enclosed a letter by Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I. Archbishop of Chicago to the priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago for two reasons: it is a very encouraging endorsement of the Annual Courage Conference taking place this year within his Archdiocese; and it also serves as an appropriate final reminder for you to make the effort to attend the conference. If you are a member of the clergy or someone with ministry responsibilities, we urge you to at least attend the "clergy track" on Friday, July 30<sup>th</sup>.

Within the last few years we have been receiving more and more inquiries from parents who have a daughter who has "come out" to the family and self identified as lesbian. We believe that the enclosed article on *Female Homosexual Development* is informative. While the focus of the article is on women, many of the conclusions regarding the origins of same-sex attraction apply to both men and women.

It should be noted that we are also sending our letter and enclosures via email, and if you would prefer to receive it electronically, please let us know. The Diocese of Lansing has blessed us with a small budget, but every savings is helpful. Perhaps you might even consider a small or large donation to help defray the cost of mailing and materials.

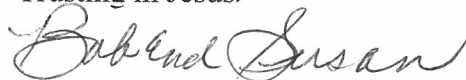
**Remember please** that we unite to pray each Thursday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in reparation for our sins and the sins against human sexuality such as same-sex behavior and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as intercessors 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 July 18th meeting, **our next regular meeting is September 19<sup>th</sup>**. We are **not** meeting in August because of our attendance and efforts at the Annual Courage Conference. Susan and I present a workshop at the conference, and we traditionally do not meet in August.

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about the issue of same-sex attraction in your lives, call us at 517-351-3315 or email us at [caverart@comcast.net](mailto:caverart@comcast.net)

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

Trusting in Jesus.



Bob and Susan Cavera

"When life becomes more than we can stand: kneel."

Dale Schoening



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

June 22, 2010

Dear Father,

I would like to invite you to a series of talks arranged by the *Courage* ministry for clergy and seminarians of the Archdiocese of Chicago. These talks will take place on **Friday, July 30, from 10:30 – 3:30 at Mundelein Seminary**. *Courage* was founded by the Servant of God, Terrence Cardinal Cook, to provide spiritual and social support to men and women struggling with same sex attraction (SSA). What began as a work of the Archdiocese of New York is now an international apostolate, helping men and women with homosexual attractions to live chaste lives in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. A related ministry, *EnCourage*, likewise offers assistance to parents or family members of those living in a "gay lifestyle."

The program will be of great benefit to those who are ministering in parishes or school settings. Janet Smith, Ph.D., a professor of moral theology at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, will give a presentation on how to speak about homosexuality in a pastoral way. Two psychologists – one of whom is a priest – with abundant clinical experience related to same-sex attraction will provide information about the nature of the condition itself. There will also be a witness talk from a *Courage* member.

I have known Father John Harvey, OSFS, the first director of *Courage*, for many years, and I respect the good work he has done for the Church. Father Harvey is now 92 and retired, but his work is being continued by Father Paul Check, a priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport, who was appointed by Archbishop Dolan to succeed Father Harvey.

The maternal solicitude and concern of the Church for men and women with SSA is expressed with clarity and compassion by the organization *Courage*. As clergy, it is important that we deal thoughtfully and sensitively with one of the most demanding challenges we face today. There is much confusion about homosexuality and about what should constitute the proper pastoral response on the part of the Church. There is also a great deal of suffering associated with this condition. *Courage* shares the moral teachings of the Church in a joyful and hopeful manner, and I strongly encourage your attendance at these talks. **Please RSVP, indicating you that you are registering for the "clergy track," no later than Tuesday, July 27, by calling 847-566-8290 or emailing [night@usml.edu](mailto:night@usml.edu).** Lunch will be provided free of charge, and the talks will be held in the Conference Center, Room C202.

During these summer months, you are in my prayers; please keep me in yours.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Chicago



# NARTH

National Association for Research and  
Therapy of Homosexuality

888-364-4744 (toll-free)

www.narth.com

## Female Homosexual Development

It is often claimed that sexual orientation is an innate and normal variation of sexuality and therefore immutable or unchangeable aspect of a person's core self or identity. But, there is no conclusive evidence that female homosexuality is innate or solely genetic or biologically based. (1, 2, 3) Most respected scientists agree that homosexuality is due to a combination of social, psychological, and biological factors.

Dr. Dennis McFadden, a University of Texas neuroscientist who has studied lesbianism, explains:

"Any human behavior is going to be the result of complex intermingling of genetics and environment. It would be astonishing if it were not true for homosexuality." (4)

In a study exclusively focused on the causes of homosexuality in women, a popular researcher on the genetics of homosexuality, Dr. Michael Bailey, of Northwestern University, and his associates, admit that "although both male and female sexual orientation appear to be at least somewhat heritable, environment also must be of considerable importance in their origins." (5)

In Bailey's most recent study on the genetic and environmental influences on sexual orientation, he again admits that while genetic factors are implicated, environmental factors are also important. (6)

After reviewing all major biological explanations and studies on homosexuality, Byne and Parsons proposed "an interactional model in which genes or hormones do not specify sexual orientation per se, but instead bias particular personality traits and thereby influence the manner in which an individual and his or her

environment interest as sexual orientation and other personality characteristics unfold developmentally." (7)

### Why Are the Psychological Factors Not Acknowledged?

Dr. Rogers H. Wright in his book *Destructive Trends in Mental Health*, states:

"Gay groups within the APA have repeatedly tried to persuade the association to adopt ethical standards that prohibit therapists from offering psychotherapeutic services designed to ameliorate "gayness" on the basis that such efforts are unsuccessful and harmful to the consumer. Psychologists who do not agree with this premise are termed homophobic. Such efforts are especially troubling because they abrogate the patient's right to choose the therapist and determine therapeutic goals. They also deny the reality of data demonstrating that psychotherapy can be effective in changing sexual preferences in patients who have a desire to do so." (8)

In fact, an investigation of the developmental factors correlated with homosexuality would constitute career suicide for most researchers. As Dr. Jeffrey Satinover explains:

"The research agenda is being distorted by the political requirement that no...associated traits should be discovered, and that homosexuality should be falsely presented as directly inherited." (9)

There is, in fact, a wealth of older research identifying many common developmental, temperamental and family patterns connected to homosexuality. This research has never been scientifically refuted. (10, 11)

## Fluidity of Homosexual Attraction

In more recent studies the fluidity of homosexual attraction in women has been emphasized. Dr. Ellen Schechter of the Fielding Graduate Institute presented her research to the American Psychological Association. Her qualitative study included in depth interviews with 11 women who had been self-identified as lesbian for more than 10 years. All of these women were currently in heterosexual relationships, which had been ongoing for more than a year. (12)

These findings support the research of Dr. Lisa Diamond who concluded, "Sexual identity was far from fixed in women who aren't exclusively heterosexual." After following 80 non-heterosexual young women (lesbian, bisexual and unlabeled) over a two-year period, Dr. Diamond found that half of the women "reported multiple changes in sexual identity, and nearly one fourth of lesbians pursued sexual contact with men." (13)

Dr. Kenneth Zucker, in his careful analysis of the innate/immutable argument of homosexuality, rostered a plethora of studies to support his conclusion that "sexual orientation is more fluid than fixed." (14)

Dr. Kristine Falco, a gay affirmative therapist, in her book on *Psychotherapy with the Lesbian Client*, objects to the notion that sexual identity is an either/or proposition: lesbian or heterosexual. She believes sexual identity falls along a continuum, especially for women, and notes, "both identity and behavior can fluctuate over a woman's lifespan." (15)

The concept of sexual fluidity, defined as the spontaneous evolution or transformation of one's sexual preferences, is different from the concept of changeability involving intentional effort directed towards altering or changing one's sexual preferences. As mentioned, many researchers attest to the reality of female sexual fluidity. This does not directly translate into proof that any woman can easily change or alter her same sex attraction. It does however confirm that sexual feeling and behaviors are not absolutely immutable or unchangeable. The degree to which a woman can or will experience change will be uniquely determined based on her history and motivation to do so.

## Temperament

Therapist and teacher, Janelle Hallman, summarizes the most common traits she has seen in her work with women and same sex attraction. She describes above average intelligence, far reaching giftedness and creativity, curiosity and keen observance, deep sensitivity and capacity to feel, a strong sense of justice,

energetic, active and often athletic, and natural abilities and interests outside of stereotypical female interests (gender nonconformity) as the main qualities observed in these women. (16) Many of these traits can cause a girl to "feel different" from other girls, creating a gender insecurity or inferiority. In fact, "gender nonconformity in childhood may be the single most common observable factor associated with homosexuality," as well as "the retrospective sense of having been different from other children," says Dr. George Rekers, professor of neuropsychiatry at the University Of South Carolina School Of Medicine. (17)

Janelle Hallman states, it is the interaction of her unique innate characteristics and traits (nature) with her surrounding environment and relational experiences (nurture), resulting in a variety of perceptions, beliefs, responses and internalizations, that forms all that is human, including the possibility of same-sex attraction. In understanding female same sex attraction, it is therefore important to look at how a little girl perceives and processes the effects of her environment or experiences of relationship. That is why two children can grow up in the same family and yet describe their family and childhood experiences differently.

"Sexual orientation is assumed to be shaped and reshaped by a cascade of choices made in the context of changing circumstances in one's life and enormous social and cultural pressures." (18)

## Mothers and Fathers

**Relationship with Mother.** Typical in the history of women with same sex attraction are failures of attachment with the mother resulting in disidentification (rejection as role model). This can arise from:

- 1) A real maternal deficit or weakness arising out of mother's personal attachment history and developmental difficulties,
- 2) Actual maternal neglect, abuse, abandonment or trauma,
- 3) Accidental or uncontrollable separation, such as death, adoption, major illness, or mandatory absences due to the necessity of work,
- 4) A defensive detachment arising out of the daughter's perceptions, sensitivities and immature conclusion and/or beliefs with respect to mother, or
- 5) Difficulties during pregnancy, birth and after birth. (19)

A disruption in attachment means that many women with same sex attraction most likely lacked consistent moments of caring attunement. They may have missed



significant ongoing experiences of being the object of another's undivided, engaged, and regulating attention.

Dr. Elizabeth Moberly states, "to the very young child, the parent is his or her source of being, and so one's very being is felt to be endangered if the attachment to the parent is disrupted." (20) Moberly first proposed the model of "defensive detachment" from the same-sex parent as a cause of homosexuality, although the concept of defensive detachment itself was not new. Moberly states:

"...one constant underlying principle suggest itself from amidst a welter of details: that the homosexual-whether man or woman has suffered from some deficit in the relationship with the parent of the same-sex: and that there is a corresponding drive to make good this deficit-through the medium of same sex or "homosexual" relationships." (21)

She theorizes that this disruption interrupts the process of gender identification and role-modeling that typically occurs through that attachment. The child defensively withdraws from identification with this primary love source and sets up within herself what Moberly calls a "reparative love urge." (22)

Moberly presents the female "reparative drive" as an unconscious search for mothering. She also notes that defensive detachment can spontaneously resolve, and that no parent is necessarily culpable in disrupted attachment and that an event causing trauma in one child might not necessarily be so for another. (23)

**Relationship with Father.** Women dealing with same sex attraction more often than not report difficulty in their relationship with father and describe their father in negative terms, such as angry, weak, cold indifferent, remote, or sick. (24) Yet, in many cases, women claim that they were closest to their father, feeling like his best friend, or identified with and desired his power and freedom. This can result in a disowning of her femininity as she is treated like a son or one of guys.

**Marital Distress.** In their path analysis for lesbianism, Bell et al. found a "negative relationship between parents" as a possible contributing factor in why a girl might disengage from either parent and move toward homosexuality. (25) On going problems in the marriage can cause either parent to become dependent on the daughter to meet their emotional needs, forcing the daughter to lose respect for both parents.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Although sexual abuse does not directly cause same sex attraction, studies report male sexual abuse of lesbians as

generally being twice as high as of heterosexual women. that is, on average, 50 percent of lesbian women report a history of sexual abuse. (26, 27) If family relational dynamics and gender nonconformity are already in place, sexual abuse can clench the direction of detachment, gender insecurity, and disidentification possibly leading to same sex attraction. Sexual abuse can be emotional, verbal, or physical. A girl who is sexually objectified though inappropriate sexual comments, denied age appropriate privacy or whose father has voyeuristic tendencies, has been sexually violated without ever being touched. (28, 29)

### **Eroticization of an Emotional Need**

In work done at Wellesley College, the Stone Center, the importance of "self-in-relation" has been identified in women's development, individuation and maturing process. The development of empathy and mutuality are seen as foundational in women's experience of this "self-in-relation," and is believed to originate in the mother-daughter relationship. (30) Jean Baker Miller, a developmental theorist states, "women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then maintain affiliation and relationships." (31)

Carol Gilligan, a developmental theorist and feminist writer, also validates the importance of the mother-daughter relationship. She describes a woman's development as, "individuating in the context of relationship," which is maintaining connection with family while striving toward the goal of developing her talents and abilities, as her individuation occurs. (32)

According to therapist Mary Beth Patton, a women dealing with same sex attraction is longing for a connection with the feminine in herself that was denied in her own development because of an inadequate identification and attunement in relating to mother. This longing often transforms into emotional dependency with another woman and is generally the defining feature of female homosexuality. Rather than finding the feminine in herself, she looks to another female to give her the identification and connection she is missing. (33)

Psychoanalyst Dr. Elaine Siegel describes this experience of the little girl who later turns to homosexuality. She states:

The women dealt with this basic lack of attunement to their infantile needs with great adaptive strengths and an amazing variety of creative maneuvers that nonetheless express: Mother didn't teach me who I am. Therefore, another like myself must show me that I have a sexual self. But the mirroring they received from their female lovers was as distorted as



their primary maternal experience had been, locking them into the never-ending cycle of the repetition compulsion. (34)

### How Society Influences a Gay Identity

We live in a society where children are experimenting with adult sexual activities while their sexual identity is still solidifying. Finding the right sexual partner or experimenting with a variety of sexual situations is often presented as the key to happiness and the solution to everyday problems and dissatisfaction with life. This is true of many young women dealing with same sex attraction. This desire to find one answer and a quick gratifying solution to a deep, painful and complex situation is a diversion from the grief work and painful understanding that will lead to change and growth.

### Summary

Women who deal with same sex attraction, possess a history of disidentification with their mothers, and therefore with their femininity. This leads to a longing for connection with the feminine that becomes sexualized in adolescence or adulthood. Without a secure attachment to mother, she fails to identify with mother as a female role model losing the opportunity to develop trust and a healthy gender identity. Because of an empty or distorted view of her feminine self she has an inability to connect in a healthy way with other girls. Her sexual development is arrested.

This can create an underlying depression and anxiety within the little girl that may follow the remainder of her life. She does not have a sense of well-being and lives with restlessness within her as she searches for security and stability. She seeks validation for her dependency needs that were denied as a child and longs to be connected with a loving caretaker and ultimately with herself. Rather than finding the feminine within her, she looks to another woman to give her the identification and connection she is missing.

Like all other deep-seated identity issues, same sex attraction is difficult to overcome. Psychotherapy consists of understanding the emotional roots of the attraction, strengthening feminine identification, grieving the losses of childhood and learning to meet same sex needs for attention, affection and affirmation with emotional dependency and in a non-erotic manner.

### Endnotes

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