

Deprivation of Rights from Homosexuals

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For Mr. Morrison

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Preface

The objective of this report is to provide an understanding of the status of homosexual rights in the world today. This report will look at the issue from all viewpoints in order to clarify the reasons why there is an existence or inexistence of rights pertaining to gays in different areas of the world. This issue, like many or all world issues, is like a face. The face is all you see, the way gays are treated and dealt with today. But behind the face are the muscles that move it, the reality and the reasons that cause this issue to appear the way it does. This report will travel beneath the exterior to investigate these reasons. The social and political factors are the two most influential things keeping the issue in the state it is in today. These factors will be explored in order to fully understand the status of the issue and the reasons behind that status.

The face of this issue is not a pretty one. The factors beneath it lead to the oppression, violence, social hatred, emotional abuse, and overall suffering that homosexuals experience in certain parts of the world. This treatment is caused by a lack of acceptance of gays in a society. The lack of acceptance causes the lack of rights. Rights as simple as the right to be with the person you love are removed from gays in much of the world. Approximately 45% of the countries in the world consider same-sex acts illegal and punishable by law. That means that the controversy, in a political sense, is split almost down the middle. Some argue that real homosexuality does not exist, and those who participate in homosexual acts are immoral and could easily be as attracted to the opposite sex as they are to the same sex. Others argue that gays cannot help their sexual attraction to the same sex, and that opposition to homosexuality is the same as racism; they hate people simply for the way they are. It is unlikely that gays choose to be homosexual in a society where they are subject to hatred and violence. But besides the question of whether or not they choose it, they should not suffer as much as they often do.

Summary

The goal of this report is to enlighten the reader on the topic of homosexual rights and acceptance by coming at this issue from many angles and looking at it from a world standpoint. To understand the state of homosexual acceptance and rights today, a background of the issue must be highlighted. Homosexuality itself is not an issue; it is the attitudes that others have toward it that makes it one. At one point, society didn't think twice about homosexuality, but attitudes have changed. The background will explore these changes and the reasons behind them, and will demonstrate why the issue and the attitudes surrounding it exist. Activism exists in order to change these attitudes to be more beneficial for everyone. Peter Tatchell's aid in the movements toward acceptance and rights will be explored in this report. The religious aspect which often holds these movements back will be looked at through Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Although all oppose to homosexuality, they all produce different attitudes about the people involved in homosexual acts. Three case study countries from three different areas of the world will be studied to achieve a specific understanding of the status of the issue in these nations. The first country, Zimbabwe, displays how gays are exploited for the gain of a few political leaders, and the attempts that have been made at overcoming it. Secondly, a look at the island of Fiji will demonstrate how pressure from within and outside influences can create a difference in the treatment of gays in a country. Lastly, Saudi Arabia will be studied and will expose the religious reality of conservative Islam and the affects it has on the daily lives and persecution of gays in the country. Furthermore, the role of international organizations in these countries and the rest of the world will be highlighted. Once the rest of the world has been studied, Canada's role played in the issue will be looked at. As a country, we are considered a leader in the liberation of homosexuals, but have lacked much involvement with countries that need a push toward acceptance. Finally, possible solutions will be explored, and the question of whether or not outside countries should help at all will be thoroughly examined.

Historical Background

Although the term “homosexual” was only coined in 1848, homosexual men and women have always existed.¹ It can be argued that the initial cause of homophobia was the idea that sex is for procreation only.² This led to the belief that it is wrong for two men or two women to have sex, because there is not a possibility for procreation (this caused oral sex and other forms of non-procreative sex to be considered wrong as well). The ideas became imposed onto the family value, leading to opposition of gay marriage.

Before the 13th century, the Roman Catholic Church celebrated homosexuality. Priests were allowed to marry other men, and did so often³. But plagues such as the bubonic plague around this time slashed the European population, and refocused the minds of the people on repopulation. This occurred as Protestantism was on the rise, and it threatened the Roman Catholic Church. In an effort to sustain the popularity of the Church, there was a re-establishment in the Roman Catholic views of sex to suit the population’s values. It focused the idea of sex solely on procreation because it attracted people to the religion; they wanted and needed to procreate and repopulate. This led to a newly negative view of homosexuality because it could not assist in population growth.

Through the 15th to 18th centuries, explorers and missionaries from Europe expanded the Roman Catholic Church to America, Asia, and Africa. As the religion became integrated into the common beliefs of the people and governments, laws were created to reflect the society’s opinions. Thousands were persecuted under sodomy laws (although heterosexuals were also charged for sodomy, which includes anal and oral sex between any two people, the focus was on homosexuals). Canada introduced the death penalty for “relations between people of the same sex, even if they are consensual and occur in the privacy of a home” in 1841.⁴

¹ William Naphy. Born to be Gay. [Stroud: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2004.] p 206

² IBID. p 32

³ Comite des Droits des Gais et Lesbiennes CSQ. Historical Background of Homosexuality. 4 March 2010
<http://www.csq.qc.net/sites/1676/documents/english/rappel_historique_ang.pdf>

⁴ IBID.

By the late 19th century, people began to consider homosexuality medically rather than biblically.⁵ With this, came the idea that homosexuality is a disease or disorder which has external causes and can be cured. Studies through the late 19th and 20th centuries searched for causes and pitched that heredity, hormones, genital malfunction, childhood crisis, inadequate parenting, and adolescent peer relationships are possible causes.⁶ Attempts to “cure” gays involved psychotherapy, shock therapy, discontinuation of gay sex, or prescribed heterosexual sex.⁷ After therapy, some patients suppressed their desire for the same sex, but continued to feel homosexual urges. There is not one credible case where a homosexual patient was “cured”. In fact, the therapy tended to have emotionally scarring effects because the patients were often forced to have sexual relations with members of the opposite gender. Gays were treated as if they required help; they were looked down upon and seen as unhealthy.

By the 20th century, there was rigorous public hate and outrage between gays and heterosexuals worldwide. In February of 1903, the police of New York raided a gay bathhouse, arresting 26 men and imprisoning 7 for up to 20 years on charges for sodomy.⁸ In 1921, an attempt was made to criminalize lesbianism in England, but it failed.⁹ This was the time when gays became fed up with the horrible attitudes and treatment they faced, and began to speak out for themselves in many parts of the world. In 1958, the Homosexual Law Reform Society was formed in the U.K. In 1979, a Swedish group of gays staged a plan to make a point that homosexuality is not an illness, and many called in sick to work with “a case of being homosexual”.¹⁰ In just a few months, Sweden disregarded homosexuality as an illness, the first country to do so. Gay rights advocates were proving to gain influence. Countries that were going to decriminalize homosexuality did so at this time; over 42 countries legalized

⁵ John Alan Lee. Homosexuality. 4 March 2010.

<<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0003826>>

⁶ IBID.

⁷ Richard A. Isay. Being Homosexual: Gay Men and Their Development. [Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1989.] p 113

⁸ Brian Donovan. “The Arston Bathhouse Raid of 1903: Character, Class, and the Legal Construction of Sodomy”. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal Convention Center, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Aug 11 2009, 5 March 2010.

<http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p104567_index.html>

⁹ “LGBTQ Timeline”, University of Alabama. 6 March 2010. <<http://bama.ua.edu/~safezone/timeline.pdf>>

¹⁰ “If homosexuality is a disease, let’s all call in queer to work: ‘Hello. Can’t work today, still queer’”, LGBT Laughs. Feb 2010. 4 March 2010. <<http://lgbtlaughs.tumblr.com/post/342998700/if-homosexuality-is-a-disease-lets-all-call-in>>

homosexuality or removed sodomy laws used to charge gays. Many other countries became strongly opposed to homosexuality and gay marriage such as Uganda, Jamaica, and Zimbabwe. At this time, the gap grew between those accepting and opposing.

Today, male homosexual acts are illegal in about 85 countries, and for females in at least 50 countries¹¹. While some nations accept gays and allow homosexual behaviour, many use violent means of enforcing their laws such as lashings in many of the Middle Eastern countries or the death penalty in plenty of Africa like Uganda.¹² Also in many nations, homosexuals do not enjoy the rights that heterosexuals do. Gays living in countries without anti-discrimination laws to protect them face difficulty becoming employed, for example. Homosexual couples who are not able to marry cannot receive the marriage benefits given to other couples. This not only directly affects their employment or financial situations, but their emotional state. By keeping these laws in place, it makes the homosexual citizens feel less than equal to heterosexuals. They feel unaccepted, intolerable, and wrong. Outside attitudes toward one's homosexuality can be, and often are, devastating.

Many nations and people are considered "gay-friendly" because they are considered accepting of homosexuals. But there are few that reach out to help other countries' situations as well. There is debate over whether or not countries have a responsibility to help gays out of oppression in other nations, and whether outside countries can help at all. This will be discussed in the section of the report dealing with possible solutions.

¹¹ "LGBT rights by country or territory", [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_by_country_or_territory). 7 March 2010.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_by_country_or_territory>

¹² Martin Morrow. "Forbidden Love", [CBC News Online](http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2008/07/16/f-jihad-for-love.html). 16 July 2008.
<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2008/07/16/f-jihad-for-love.html>>

Contributions of Expert Peter Tatchell

Peter Tatchell is one of the founders of OutRage!, one of the most influential gay rights advocate groups in the world. Peter Tatchell will be mentioned later in the report about his personal and direct influences in Zimbabwe and Saudi Arabia, but he has influenced much more of the world than this.

While staying very active in the politics of England, Tatchell has managed to found OutRage! and fight for equality all over the world. By making very small changes often, he has made his influence huge. His way of creating change and awareness is unique. Tatchell once stated in an interview, "Much of the OutRage! agenda is explicitly non-conformist. We don't want to 'fit in' with a screwed up, oppressive system. We want to change society in ways that will liberate people of *all* sexualities."¹³ Tatchell gives a voice to oppressed homosexuals in a way that considers *everyone*, not just gays. His logic and wish to help everybody is what makes him so persuasive. A very recent example is his personal involvement in the protest against Nigeria's candidacy to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games. He stated for OutRage! that, "We urge that Abuja, [Nigeria] is not accepted as the host city for the 2014 Commonwealth Games unless the state and federal government agree to improve Nigeria's human rights record, including an end to the state-sanctioned persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Nigerians."¹⁴ Nigeria's human rights record is filled with homophobic hate crimes. There will be many athletes, coaches, and visitors in the city during the games and there is fear for their safety. Tatchell is not only worried about the gays within the country, but also the welfare of any visitor.

This is just one minor example of Tatchell's action to protect and earn rights for gays. He has personally influenced specific issues pertaining to homosexuals in a huge number of

¹³ Jack Nichols. "Peter Tatchell: Outrage in Action" Gay Today. Accessed March 9, 2010. <<http://www.gaytoday.com/garchive/interview/013100in.htm>>

¹⁴ "Nigeria "unfit" to host 2014 Commonwealth Games" OutRage! March 8 2010, <<http://outrage.org.uk/?s=peter+Tatchell>>

countries including England, Jamaica, Nigeria, Argentina, Denmark, Germany, the United States, Iran, and plenty more.¹⁵

Although Tatchell is one of many activists leading the gay rights movement today, each individual who takes a stand and leads others in the fight for rights is extremely vital. Without many leaders, there can be none.

Role of Control

There is not one person or group of people that holds control over the state of homosexual rights in the world. Many different sources lead to general opinions in different areas. As mentioned before, the issue is influenced most by social and political factors. Media and government are the largest influences in the general ideas and opinions of the population, which often lead to the regulations and laws created by the government. In other cases, the government does not reflect the opinions of the population.

The media has an enormous effect on the way a population thinks. Because there are so many conflicting ideas about gays, the media portrays many different ideas and stereotypes. Some media sources depict gays in a controversial way, in an attempt to attract the largest audience possible. This controversy is what causes influence on the way people already think. When people see, hear, and are surrounded by a different image of gays, they begin to believe it is true. When the media portrays a positive gay “image”, it has a positive effect on the opinion society has toward them. But when gays are viewed negatively in the media, the effect works the same way. Specifically in television shows and movies, it is difficult for the creators of the programs to construe a gay person in contrast to a straight person. This has caused them to adopt “signs” of homosexuality that lead viewers to understand the sexuality of a character quickly.¹⁶ The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) believes that in some cases, this categorization of homosexuals has a negative effect, because people begin to think that

¹⁵ IBID.

¹⁶ Matthew Wood. “The Portrayal of Gays and Lesbians on TV, and How Viewers React”, 7 March 2010. <<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/mtw9402.html>>

they can quickly assume whether a person is gay or straight, and sum them up by their appearance. That is not true, and depersonalizes gays into being simply 'gay', and nothing else.

Governments around the world hold huge control over the issue of gay rights, because they are the last decision-makers in the laws and regulations relating to homosexuals. They also have partial influence over the opinions of their people, because they choose what government advertising to use (public service announcements), and what issues to "make important". Politicians play up certain issues that they believe are the most important or will get them elected. In other cases, outside influences modify the government's actions, such as religion. This will be discussed later in the report. Homosexual issues and rights have very rarely been a topic that politicians wish to take on.

Arguably, gay rights activists that rebel against the government hold some control. An example is the "Stonewall Rebellion" of 1969. The Stonewall Inn was a popular gay bar in New York City. Gay hangouts in N.Y. often faced police raids, and they became a common occurrence. But a raid of the Stonewall Inn did not go as planned, and officers were faced with outrage and violence from the customers of the inn. The following night, over a thousand people returned to the scene and rioting further ensued.¹⁷ This began a gay rights event that ended up influencing the United States to slowly remove sodomy laws used to persecute gays, state by state. Slowly, gays are having enough influence, as others are becoming more tolerant and accepting, which returns rights to homosexuals.

Religious Influence

As reviewed in the background section of the report, religion has always had great deal of influence on the issue of homophobia and the rights homosexuals are given. The largest and most influential religions today are Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism.

¹⁷ R. Marc Kantrowitz. "40 Years of Gay Rights: New York's Stonewall Rebellion", Massachusetts Bar Association. June 2009. 5 March 2010. <<http://www.massbar.org/for-attorneys/publications/lawyers-journal/2009/june/stonewall-rebellion>>

Technically, Christianity opposes homosexuality. The Christian view is one that condemns homosexual acts because those who commit them are considered to have chosen to become immoral and wrong during their lifetimes. Specific biblical quotes are often interpreted to condemn any act between two of the same sex, such as "you shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."¹⁸ Others take a more broad view at the Bible's perception of gays. In his book, A Nation by Rights, Carl F. Stychin quotes Reverend Meshoe, president of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP):

From Adam and Eve to Madam and Steve:

Reshaping Christian Nationalism

I wish to remind those of us who have forgotten that in the beginning God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. To build a family, Adam needed Eve, and not Steve! Even today, Eve needs Adam, and not Madam, to build a family. Nation-building cannot be possible while we try to legally destroy family values and the moral fibre of our society with clauses in the Constitution that promote a lifestyle that is an embarrassment even to our ancestors.¹⁹

In 2000, the ACDP increased their number of councilors from 7 to 70, proving they have a large influence over the African governments.²⁰ Africa is merely one example; countries worldwide have Christian influence. Christianity and its influence over government is the gateway to its influence over gay rights. If Christianity takes importance over other religions in the government, the general Christian opposition to homosexuality will be reflected in the laws and acts created or changed.

The Christian view opposes gays because those who commit homosexual acts are believed to choose the wrong gender for sexual partners. The Jewish view is one that believes all men are wrong naturally; they have to suppress any desires that are immoral, including all

¹⁸ (Lev 18:22-23).

¹⁹ Carl F. Stychin. A Nation by Rights. [Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1998] p 79-80

²⁰ "Our History", African Christian Democratic Party. <<http://www.acdp.org.za/index.php?page=history>> accessed 7 March 2010

negative traits and 'animal passions'.²¹ Homosexuality may be, for some men, one of these animal passions that he must overcome in order to have a more ultimate meaning.²² The difference this causes from the Christian view of gays is not the opposition; Judaism opposes homosexuality as well. The attitude and reasons behind the opposition are different. Writer Eytan Kobre describes that "Judaism cannot make peace with homosexuality because homosexuality denies many of Judaism's most fundamental principles. It denies life, it denies God's expressed desire that men and women cohabit, and it denies the root structure that Judaism wishes for all mankind, the family." The Jewish view is more positive than most religions' views. While many religions, like Christianity, condemn the person who commits homosexual acts, Jews condemn the act rather than the person. As mentioned before, man must suppress his natural traits and desires. For one man, this may be his anger. If he makes a mistake once or twice and fails to suppress this anger, he is not condemned to hell. The same is for a person who has homosexual attractions. He may fail to suppress his sexual desires for the same gender, but he is not condemned for it. The act is condemned and he must strive to suppress his sexual desires. This leads to a positive view of the person, and a negative view of their acts. The person is accepted, and if they choose to continue their involvement in the religion, they are given support to suppress their sexual desires for the same sex.

Islam is also strongly opposed to homosexuality. A famous quote from the Qur'an (the sacred writings of the Islamic faith) is "Of all the creatures in the world, will you approach males and abandon those whom God created for you as mates?"²³ When various scriptures are compared, it appears that Islam, Christianity, and Judaism have very similar views towards gays. Although they are all opposed, they do hold different attitudes and beliefs about homosexuals. Similarly to Judaism, the Islamic faith believes that when a person is born homosexual it is seen as a test or disadvantage. Just as deaf or blind people, they are respected because they have a more difficult challenge to overcome than others.²⁴ Still, the religion and tradition of Muslims is

²¹ Eytan Kobre. "Homosexuality and Judaism" March 8 2010, <<http://www.simpletoremember.com/articles/a/homosexuality-and-judaism/>>

²² IBID.

²³ (Surah 26:165)

²⁴ Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood. Teach Yourself Islam. [London: Hodder Education 2006] p 166

harsh and specific. Where many Christians point out that homosexuality is not “natural” and is therefore wrong, Muslims consider it a mute point. They believe Allah (God) has forbidden homosexual acts, and if you accept Allah you accept these rules, no matter what is natural or what is not.²⁵

Countries which have a population of mainly Islamic faith tend to have laws against homosexual behaviour. Examples include Qatar, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and more. It is clear the Islamic religion has unimaginable influence over the government, and in turn the rights that the government allows or forbids homosexuals to enjoy.

The Buddhist religion is very debatable in terms of homosexuality. Of the five precepts (vows of abstinence taken by Buddhists), the third relates to sex. Buddhists vow to abstain from “sexual misconduct”. The debate is over what “sexual misconduct” really is, and what it includes.²⁶ Although the Dalai Lama recently stated that “if you want to be a Buddhist you cannot be a homosexual, full stop”, it is still up to the individual to decide what the religion is to them.²⁷ This causes the possibility for a unique opinion of the religion. Most mainly Buddhist countries are accepting of gays. An example is Cambodia, which is very accepting of homosexuals. This is similar in Mongolia and Japan.

Religion has always played a major role in homosexual rights issues, and will continue to. Beliefs are tied to religion too tightly to ever avoid or end this. This is both positive and negative, because it fights to defend and persecute homosexuals.

²⁵ John Bowker. What Muslims Believe. [Oxford: Oneworld Publications 2009] p 53

²⁶ A.L. De Silva. “Homosexuality and Theravada Buddhism”, BuddhaNet Magazine Articles. 6 March 2010.<<http://www.buddhanet.net/homosexu.htm>> accessed 4 April 2010

²⁷ IBID.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's social and political histories make it an important African country to consider in terms of homosexual acceptance and rights. Traditionally, many African countries considered homosexuals important, and gays had a niche in the society. Some of these traditions still exist today, in very small numbers. For example the Kwayama of Angola have individuals associated with magic and religion. The role of spiritual leader in the society is usually filled by a woman, but men can take the role as well. They also dress like women and may become the 'wives' of other men. Similarly, the Zulu tribe of Africa use 'mediums', which are people that have contact with the dead to provide guidance for the living. The job is considered women's work, but cross-dressing men often adopt the role. Zimbabwe is no different; the 'Ila' are usually female mediums but cross-dressing men can and do assume the role.²⁸ This niche which used to be large has shrunk to an almost inexistence. The fact that it did exist largely at one time proves that influences in history have completely changed the views of the people. To understand the status of those views today, and to properly consider ways to improve that status, one must consider these past influences.

Over the period of exploration and colonialism, the acceptance of gays in Africa plummeted. The Europeans brought with them their negative views of homosexuality. Through mission work and conversion of Africans to religions against homosexuality like Christianity, Africans themselves lost their acceptance. Black homosexuals were tortured, beaten, and given death threats by both whites and blacks. Small parts of traditional history remained, but soon most gays would choose to keep their sexual orientation a secret, in fear of their own safety. In 1890, the British South Africa Company occupied Mashonaland, Zimbabwe, and introduced a colonial court system. In 1892, 1.5% of all cases tried were homosexual cases, but there were zero cases of heterosexual rape or assault!²⁹ The system was clearly plagued

²⁸ Naphy, *op. cit.* p 113

²⁹ *IBID.* p 225

with huge bias and injustice. After independence in 1980, a popular new belief arose that homosexuality did not exist before outside influences, and that it is a “white man’s disease”.³⁰

Countries near Zimbabwe were slightly less harsh and violent, like South Africa, which took the lead and created a constitution which criminalized discrimination based on sexual orientation in 1996.³¹ South Africa was the first country to do this in Africa, and only fifth in the world. But Zimbabwe did not follow the positive lead. Only a year after the creation of South Africa’s new constitution, the President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe called for the arrest of Zimbabwe’s previous president, Canaan Banana, for sodomy.³² He was found guilty of eleven charges including indecent assault, after the state made allegations that he had misused his presidential power to influence men like security guards to accept sexual advances. Although most believe he really was gay, Banana said that homosexuality is “defiant, abominable, and wrong”³³, and that the charges were laid to ruin his political career. While out on bail before he could be imprisoned, Banana fled to South Africa, believing Mugabe was planning his death. He returned a year later after being convinced by Nelson Mandela to face the ruling. He was sentenced to ten years in jail but Mugabe let him out after only six months. After Banana’s death from cancer in 2003, his widow explained what she felt were Mugabe’s real intentions:

“Mugabe used the issue of my husband’s sexuality as a way of mobilising opinion against [him]. Mugabe was jealous of Canaan’s role in the OAU, which offered him an international platform not available to Mugabe. Canaan was also regarded as the most likely contender to Mugabe’s position. The attack on Canaan was an attempt to eliminate any hint of opposition.”³⁴

³⁰ Jessica Joseph. “Why We Hate Homosexuals So Much”
< <http://jessiegirl.blogspot.com/2005/11/why-we-hate-homosexuals-so-much.html>> accessed 3 March 2010

³¹ Robb WJ Ellis. “What Is It With Mugabe & Gays?”
< <http://mandebvhu.instablogs.com/entry/what-is-it-with-mugabe-gays/>> accessed 3 March 2010

³² IBID.

³³ F. Laneur. “It’s Official – Zimbabwe’s Gays Have No Rights”
< www.samesame.com.au/news/international/5228/its-official--Zimbabwes-gays-have-no-rights.html>
accessed 3 April 2010

³⁴ IBID.

Banana's position in the OAU (African Union) made him pretty popular in the eyes of the Zimbabweans, which made Mugabe fear loss of his presidency to him. Although Banana's homosexuality is debatable, Mugabe could use it to be rid of the political opposition, so he did. The president is also notorious for intimidating voters into voting for him, and hampering the opposition. His elections are unfair and unjust, so he remains the president even without the true support of the Zimbabweans.

Because Mugabe was a close friend of Banana, he had to distance himself after the arrest to show he wasn't at all supportive of gays. He wanted to portray himself as the 'protection from perversity' and a promoter of 'family values', in order to get re-elected in a country that is generally not accepting of gays. He took on a strict opposition, calling them "repugnant to my human conscience"³⁵, and saying they are "lower than dogs and pigs"³⁶. Since then, homosexuals in Zimbabwe have been treated horribly, with their president condoning murder, torture, and detention without trial. In the case of two journalists suspected of homosexual acts:

"Military interrogators beat both men all over their bodies with fists, wooden planks and rubber sticks, particularly on the soles of their feet, and gave them electric shocks all over the body, including the genitals. The men were also subjected to 'the submarine' - having their heads wrapped in plastic bags and submerged in a water tank until they suffocated."³⁷

Mugabe had ordered the military to torture the men for writing papers which exposed the corruption of the Zimbabwean government, and has since been heard saying they "got what they deserved"³⁸

This sparked the an angry explosion of the people and gay rights groups in Zimbabwe, including the international activist group 'OutRage!'. In 1999, OutRage! decided to arrest President Mugabe for inciting anti-gay hatred and more predominantly, torture. Under the

³⁵ Naphy, *op. cit.* p 224

³⁶ *IBID.* p 224

³⁷ Peter Tatchell. "How Mugabe Resisted Arrest", *New Statesman* 04 March 2002.

³⁸ *IBID.*

constitution, citizens could make arrests “where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a person has committed a crime”.³⁹ After a mysterious call telling OutRage! founder Peter Tatchell where Mugabe was going to be in three days, he came up with a plan for the arrest. On October 30, 1999 in London, Tatchell and three other volunteers surrounded Mugabe’s limousine and opened the back door. Tatchell grabbed him by the arm and read to him the arrest, “President Mugabe, you are under arrest for torture. Torture is a crime under international law.”⁴⁰ After the arrest, police were not interested, and courts dropped all charges. Tatchell was charged for public disorder, despite his attempts to explain that what he did was legal.

Today, Mugabe remains the president of Zimbabwe. This year, a new constitution was created. The most prominent gay activist group in Zimbabwe, Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), asked for lesbian and gay inclusion, recognition, and protection to be written in, and for decriminalization of homosexual acts. Mugabe replied to the request by calling it “insanity” and “madness”⁴¹. Now, the constitution is completed and no change has been made in regard to homosexuality. Instead, the attacks made towards gays by the church and politicians have created an environment of complete intolerance. Sodomy laws are being used increasingly often. The GALZ legal advisor, Derek Maty, says the “effect of the sodomy laws is to help blackmailers”.⁴² Extortionists are using the laws to their advantage, and threatening supposed homosexuals of exposure unless they are paid off. In one case, victim of extortion Keith Goddard received a series of letters from an extortionist demanding money and threatening exposure of his sexuality. When he took the letters to the police, they charged the extortionist with blackmail but also charge Goddard with sodomy. Both cases are now in the courts and have become internationally controversial. But when Mugabe faces overseas opposition to the treatment of gays in the country his response is “The world can go to hell”.⁴³ Mugabe’s attitude towards outside influences has caused the inability of international rights groups to help gays in

³⁹ IBID.

⁴⁰ IBID.

⁴¹ Barry Bearak, Alan Cowell. “Zimbabwe Shrugs Off Gay Rights”, The New York Times 26 March 2010: A4.

⁴² “Homosexual and Hated in Zimbabwe”, BBC News 12 August 1998.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/143169.stm> accessed 30 March 2010

⁴³ IBID.

Zimbabwe. Many believe that what keeps Mugabe motivated against homosexuals is not a real personal hatred of them, but a political campaign with the goal of maintaining his power.

A solution to the horrors of Zimbabwean torture and lack of gay rights is far from at hand. In the report Peter Tatchell wrote about his arrest of Mugabe, he notes that “If the government had ordered Mugabe's arrest in 1999, he would have been unable to return to Zimbabwe to continue his despotic rule.”⁴⁴ He believed that if the Commonwealth could agree to issue warrants for Mugabe’s arrest, he may eventually be arrested by state police. But in 2003, Mugabe pulled Zimbabwe out of the Commonwealth. In order for the murder and torture of homosexuals to end, a total attitude change of the people needs to occur. Groups like OutRage! And GALZ have the belief that making the voice of gays heard and creating awareness can eventually change the attitude of the society, which leads to the election of a government with a better attitude as well. Probably the most common belief is what writer Glenn Church believes. “Nothing on the issue is likely to change soon”.⁴⁵

Fiji

Although Fiji is an extremely small nation, “hidden” by the Pacific, it is an important country in the understanding of gay rights in the world. Although it was colonized, many parts of the world now forget that it is there, leaving it to ‘do its own thing’, while other countries suffer pressure to accept homosexuals.

Similar to Zimbabwe, Fiji’s first people practiced homosexuality. Little is known about the early history of Fiji’s gays, but anthropologist Weston LaBarre believes the first settlers in Fiji, the Austronesians, practiced ritual homosexuality since the Stone Age.⁴⁶ Little changed in the sense of homosexuality when the Melanesian settlers arrived in Fiji about a thousand years later in 300 BC. It was in the 1870s when Fiji became a British colony that the negative view of homosexuality arrived.

⁴⁴ Tatchell, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Glenn Church. “No Gay Rights In Zimbabwe Constitution, Say Mugabe and Tsvangirai” *Foolocracy* 28 March 2010.

⁴⁶ David F. Greenburg. *The Construction of Homosexuality*. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990] p 33.

The British criminalized homosexual activity as sodomy and enforced laws, with their view of the Fijians as barbaric people. They also introduced missions which converted many Fijians to Christianity, and brought over 60 000 Indian labourers to work in the sugar cane industry, who carried their Hindu beliefs with them. Today, Fiji is considered a Christian nation, with 58% of the people identifying as Christian. There is a large Hindu population with about 34% of the population that identifies as Hindu.⁴⁷ Because intolerance was taught to the Fijians as part of the religion, gays were treated with utter disrespect by society and the military, being physically and emotionally abused; beaten and emotionally harassed.

Through the 20th century, little changed because Britain maintained tight control over laws and the church within the country, not allowing room for the attitudes of the people to change. The people also fully accepted the ideas of the Christian and Hindu religions. It was after independence, with a new sense of freedom, that the gay rights movement began to grow and have influence in Fiji. However, a large group of Christians in the nation, including the Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, believe that because homosexual activity is considered a sin, it should not be legal. In 2005 on a local radio show in Fiji, Qarase said “the Bible clearly states that homosexuality is a sin and Fiji’s law reflects that”.⁴⁸ Qarase has also been heard saying that foreign countries and international human rights groups should stay uninvolved in the country’s affairs, including homosexual rights issues.⁴⁹ The Prime Minister was making a statement relating to the country’s recent debate over whether homosexual activity should be decriminalized. The country has laws against discrimination based on sexual orientation, but old laws still existed from the colonial period, which made sexual activity illegal between two men, until 2010.⁵⁰

What makes Fiji’s situation complex is the growing gap between the anti- and pro-gays, with more people taking a stronger stance on their positive or negative views towards

⁴⁷ Nicole George. The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 20 “Contending Masculinities and the Limits of Tolerance: Sexual Minorities in Fiji”

⁴⁸ “Fiji Prime Minister Tells Gays to Mind Own Business” 365Gay. 13 April 2005.

<<http://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/world/fiji/finews010.htm>> accessed 4 April 2010.

⁴⁹ IBID.

⁵⁰ IBID.

the movement. While pro-gay groups are becoming louder and larger, anti-gay groups are extremely violent, inducing fear in the attempt to scare gays out of the spotlight and accept that they don't deserve any rights. Certain areas are very anti-gay while in others, gays walk down the street holding hands and host 'gay parties'. But there are large, strong, and violent gay hate groups in Fiji. An example of their violence is in the murder of two gay men found decapitated in their home in Suva, Fiji. In July 2001, 39-year-old John Scott and 53-year-old George Scrivener were the victims of a tragic hate crime. 23-year-old Apitia Kaisau claims to have killed the pair "in retaliation for their 'sexual exploitation' of him over many years" and is in custody.⁵¹ It is not known if he belonged to a hate group or if the murders were motivated purely personally, but the general consensus is that Kaisau is lying and the murders were simply tragic hate crime. Following the murder, Scrivener's family had the body viewed by a pathologist who concluded that the man's fingernails had been torn off; he had been tortured before he was murdered. The pathologist said that there was no way only one person could have killed the men in such a way. Despite the efforts to convince police that there should be more than one suspect and that torture was involved, the police commissioner stated that Kaisau is the only suspect and he will receive trial without consideration of the possible involvement of torture. Many Fijians argue that their police commissioners do not care about finding real justice in the case because it involves gay men.⁵²

A large factor in slowing the homosexual acceptance movement is the Methodist Church. In 2003, the President of Fiji's Methodist Church called for all homosexuals to be stoned to death following the ordination of the first gay bishop in the Anglican Church. The gay bishop, Josateki Koroi, called the statement "unchristian" and said that "Christianity does not teach discrimination."⁵³ The Methodist Church also hosts anti-gay marches and raids, and is suspected of being involved in many personal attacks on gays in the country.

⁵¹ Barbara Dozetos and Gregg Drinkwater. "Theories Abound In Killing of Gay Couple in Fiji" [Gay.com](http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/sexualminorities/Fiji%20CU%20SO.pdf) 13 July 2001 <<http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/sexualminorities/Fiji%20CU%20SO.pdf>> accessed April 4 2010.

⁵² IBID.

⁵³ "Fiji Gay Stoning Call Criticised" 10 November 2003 <<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=7202>> accessed 4 April 2010.

A prominent event in Fiji's recent history is the arrest of a tourist from Australia and a local man in 2005. Australian Thomas McCosker went to Fiji in 2006 on a vacation. After meeting a Fijian man, they had relations in a hotel. Afterwards, the Fijian man stole money from McCosker's wallet. After being stolen from, he called the Fijian police. The police ended up arresting both men for having sexual relations together, and they received two years imprisonment, but the Fijian man was not charged for stealing. The judge of their case was heard saying that they did "something so disgusting that it would make any decent person vomit."⁵⁴ Outside countries like America and Australia fought to get the men out of jail, but Fiji reminded other countries to stay out of its issues. By finding a lawyer from behind bars, the men managed to get out of jail after three months, arguing that because there were anti-discrimination laws protecting homosexuals, the laws against homosexual acts were invalid.⁵⁵

The McCosker case led to real international involvement in the rights of homosexuals in Fiji. It drew attention to the country's human rights in international news and raised awareness worldwide. After the case, Fiji experienced enormous pressure to do many things, like stop beating prisoners in jails and citizens on the street, as well as reestablish their laws, including decriminalize homosexuality. Many citizens were against the change including, of course, members of the Methodist Church. After McCosker's release from prison under the belief that the laws against homosexual acts were invalid, the Church planned nationwide gay-hate marches.⁵⁶ Although the Methodists in Fiji represent an extreme response, many other Christian denomination Churches opposed McCosker's release. Qarase knew that if he supported what the Bible supports, he could stay in power over a population that is strictly Bible-driven as well. Most of the opposition claimed that it was strictly wrong to change the laws because the Bible clearly states homosexual activity as a sin. Unlike in Canada, where many Christians accept homosexuals or are homosexual themselves, Christianity in Fiji is much

⁵⁴ Peter "Escaping from the Darkness of Paradise" Radio New Zealand International. June 2007
<<http://www.globalgayz.com/country/Fiji/view/FJI/gay-fiji-darkness-at-noon>> accessed 3 April 2010.

⁵⁵ IBID.

⁵⁶ "Fiji Methodists Plan Mass Anti-Gay Marches". Radio New Zealand International. 14 October 2005
<<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=19906>> accessed 2 April 2010.

more conservative and strict. But once the world was aware of Fiji's lack of human rights, Qarase experienced more pressure worldwide to change Fijian laws and stop the abuse of gays.

An example of the pressure placed on Fiji at the time is from the UN. On February 11, 2010, Fiji underwent its first Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN, which is a review of its human rights record.⁵⁷ Fiji received negative reviews by the UN and Amnesty International. Although not directly relating to decriminalizing homosexuality, the review discusses the mistreatment of prisoners (who may be imprisoned for homosexual acts), and harassment and detention of supposed criminals (who may be homosexual).⁵⁸ A couple weeks after the review on February 26, the Criminal Penal Code was replaced by the new Crime Decree, in which there were no laws against homosexual acts.⁵⁹

It is now feared, though, that gays will now experience more social abuse from those who opposed the change and are now angered. The Women's Action for Change Group spokesperson Peni Moore expresses her concern:

"If there's a lot of pressure by the church, and condemning, it will mean that gay people will still have to be very very careful [and] will in fact emotionally suffer more abuse if it's too publicly discussed. In the past when anything to do with gay rights has been brought up members of the community have faced continuous verbal and physical abuse."⁶⁰

Although there have been no reported cases of abuse yet, it is still early, and Moore's expectations are likely to come true. There is also a fear that the existing pressure from opposed groups will become stronger and Qarase will recriminalize homosexual acts. It is true that the only way to change the governmental stance on homosexuality is to change the

⁵⁷ "Document - Fiji: Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review: Seventh session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council" 1 September 2009. <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA18/001/2009/en/360aaa4a-1d9e-4283-a784-1c3743b55eb4/asa180012009eng.html>> accessed 1 April 2010.

⁵⁸ IBID.

⁵⁹ IBID.

⁶⁰ "Fear of Backlash in Fiji Over New Gay Rights" Radio New Zealand International. 03 March 2010. <<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=52250>> accessed April 1 2010.

people's stance first. A homosexual man living in Fiji named Sefanaia Waqabaca, or Sefa, believes that acceptance comes when gays are allowed to marry. He thinks that one of the reasons people look down on gays is that they picture a lifestyle of multiple sexual partners and STDs, like his parents did. The importance of AIDS to the creation of this idea will be discussed later in the report. Sefa thinks that "marriage is a good way to prevent or reduce this. It would bind couple[s] together which would mean less promiscuous sexual behaviour."⁶¹ On the other hand, introducing marriage to a culture with extreme social and religious views against homosexuality would cause raids and possibly create even more social abuse towards gays. Although Fiji's stance on homosexual rights is on shaky ground, the country truly has come a long way from the complete lack of acceptance it experienced in the colonial period.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is similar to other Middle Eastern countries, which share in their intolerance of homosexuals. Because of Saudi's legal system and traditions of the general treatment of their prisoners, being arrested for a homosexual act in the country could possibly lead to death. Unlike Zimbabwe and Fiji, Saudi Arabia does not follow the same kind of colonial history. Still, there is evidence of homosexuality being accepted in its history. Arabic literature from as late as the 14th to 18th centuries speaks of homosexuality casually and sometimes even sympathetically. Many poems and prose discuss love affairs between men and boys.⁶² It was acceptable in the Middle Eastern culture for a man and a boy to be affectionate. What was unacceptable was intercourse between males. However, it was believed to happen often. The Qur'an specifically forbids homosexual acts, so it is questionable why these societies allowed it. As author Khaled El-Rouayheb writes in his book discussing homosexuality in Islam, "What Islamic law prohibits is sexual intercourse between men... Many of [the writers of the period] did not believe that falling in love with a boy or expressing this love in verse was ... also

⁶¹ Ruby Taylor-Newton. "Please Don't Judge Us" *Fiji Times*. 21 March 2010.

⁶² Khaled El-Rouayheb. *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009] p 1.

illicit".⁶³ What seems to have changed is the interpretation of the Qur'an and the increased conservative attitude towards it. It is unclear when or why this shift occurred, but by the 19th century the attitude had changed completely, especially in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is a nation that functions based on formal Islamic religion. It is the only Arab country that uses the Islam religion as its only legal code. Major cities stop functioning five times a day for prayer to Mecca, the holiest city in the world according to the Qur'an. People live their lives in complete accordance with the Muslim religion, or chance a run-in with one of the most harsh and strict legal systems in the world. 100% of the population is Muslim because practicing other religions is prohibited. Between 85% and 90% of Saudi Arabia's population is conservative Sunni Muslim, with the remaining belonging to the Shia Muslim denomination.⁶⁴ Shia Muslims tend to live in the east of the country, making up about three quarters of the population living near the Persian Gulf.

The King of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al Saud, need not worry about pleasing his people to become re-elected; he will stay in power until he dies or is unable to rule.⁶⁵ This allows him to treat his people the way he prefers, without worrying too much about his popularity within his people. What he does need to be cautious about is possible assassination if he makes too many radical changes. This has led him to follow the lead of past Kings and continue torturing and abusing those who go against the rules of the Qur'an. It is also the explanation for continued traditions with little change throughout the country's history.

Gay rights group OutRage! has labeled Saudi Arabia one of the most homophobic countries in the world. When speaking of homosexuality, the government often uses the term "shameful situation".⁶⁶ Gays are brutally tortured by government officials. In Saudi, homosexual acts can be punishable by execution, and it is mandatory that lashings occur for all cases in which men have been proven 'guilty' of gay sexual intercourse. The Hadith, or Islamic

⁶³ IBID. p 3

⁶⁴ Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood. Teach Yourself Islam. [New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007] p 283.

⁶⁵ IBID.

⁶⁶ Maryam Namazie. "Saudi Shame" Gay Times. June 2005

<www.maryamnamazie.com/articles/saudi_shame.html> accessed 03 April 2010

law, states “Kill the one who sodomises and the one who lets it be done to him.”⁶⁷ Usually, men receive between one hundred seven thousand lashes as punishment, which can be a fatal punishment depending on how many are given at one time. Because the Saudi government rarely provides fair trials to suspects, with the defendants’ lawyers behind bars during the event, there is little chance of avoiding torture or even execution after arrest.

News reports covering the arrest, torture, or imprisonment of gays represent an almost insignificant percent of the total mistreatment that occurs in Saudi Arabia. Because of censorship, whatever news that gets out of the country gets out by chance, by someone knowing someone else. Still, the reports of abuse of homosexuals are immense. In January 2002, two men were arrested simply for being in a relationship. In April of 2009, over a hundred men were arrested for ‘deviant behaviour’ after attending a gay wedding. The men were sentenced to between 200 and 2000 lashings, and imprisoned for between six months to a year.⁶⁸ In June of 2009, 67 men were arrested for cross dressing. Human Rights Watch researcher Rasha Moumneh commented, “If the police in Saudi Arabia can arrest people simply because they don't like their clothes, no one is safe.”⁶⁹ Cross-dressing is not accepted in the country because it mixes the two sexes in front of the eyes of the people. But men may let other men know that they are gay by speaking or acting as a ‘gay person would’. Because of the strict laws against *civilian* violence, the abuse of gays by people that do not hold authoritarian positions rarely occurs.⁷⁰ And being gay is not a problem, as long as the public does not know that a person is having sexual relations with another person of the same gender. Although the majority of Muslims strongly oppose homosexuality, they do not mind if another person chooses a gay lifestyle. The capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, is often called a “gay heaven” because a large part of its population lives this lifestyle. Author William Naphy believes:

⁶⁷ IBID.

⁶⁸ Patrick Letellier. “Gay Men Flogged and Tortured in Saudi Arrests” Gay.com 8 April 2005
<http://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/world/saudi_arabia/saudinews038.htm> accessed 4 April 2010.

⁶⁹ “Saudi Arabia Drop ‘Cross-Dressing’ Charges” Human Rights Watch. 24 June 2009.
<http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/sexualminorities/SaudiArabia_%20HRW062409.pdf> accessed 4 April 2010.

⁷⁰ John Bowker. What Muslims Believe. [Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2009] p 12

“The Islamic reaction [to homosexual acts] has been less harsh and more accommodating of same-sex acts and attraction, as long as the requirement for procreation is fulfilled. This is largely because of the paramount Muslim concern for segregating the sexes – effectively, the trade-off is that some same-sex activity is ignored in order to maintain the sexual cloistering of women.”⁷¹

Naphy explains how the government really feels; they condemn homosexuality but tolerate homosexual acts as long as the person involved still procreates. The problem (and violence) arises when men choose to be strictly homosexual and not marry. There is so much abuse, violence, and strict opposition toward gays from the government, that it causes curiosity as to why anyone takes the risk in order to practice their homosexual tendencies. The truth is extremely complex. It is ‘easy’ to be gay in Islamic culture, even with the enormous risk that must be taken. This is because men and women are always separated, and it is considered wrong to be alone with a member of the opposite sex whom one is not married or related to. Men are more accessible to other men than women are. Because of the inaccessibility of women, some men choose to have sex with other men to fulfill sexual ‘needs’. This does not degrade a man’s masculinity if he assumes the ‘active’ role.⁷² On the other hand, if a boy and girl are caught on a ‘date’ they may be dragged to a police station. Coffee shops that allow only men are the perfect place to meet other men in a romantic fashion. But the men must remember that even though this prominent gay lifestyle exists, if a man is caught having sex with another man he may be beheaded, and he can be sure that he will be tortured with lashes.

Homophobia is so intertwined with the religion and the government it could never be taken away from the country. What needs to change is the government’s ability to torture and imprison men for consensual gay sex. Many international gay rights activists and groups understand that they do not have the power to change traditions that have existed Saudi Arabia for centuries. The Muslims will never fully accept sexual relations between men as morally right. When international gay rights groups do try to have influence, they do it outside the country where it is safe, and with the goal of stopping the torture and horrible

⁷¹ Naphy *op. cit.* p 268

⁷² Nadya Labi. “The Kingdom in the Closet” *Atlantic Magazine*. May 2007.

mistreatment, rather than to gain acceptance. The gay rights group OutRage! mentioned in the case study of Zimbabwe is attempting to have influence in Saudi Arabia. After the sentencing of two gay men to 7 000 lashes for sodomy, which may have been fatal (the group could not gain access to further news coverage), fifty students planned a picket of the Saudi Embassy in London. Protest organizer Scott Cuthbertson said the group was protesting the “continued criminalisation, imprisonment, torture and murder of LGBT people in Saudi Arabia.”⁷³ Activist Peter Tatchell commented, “7,000 lashes is a form of torture, calculated to cause maximum, prolonged suffering,”⁷⁴ The protestors also hope to cause the cancellation of King Abdullah’s visit to the Saudi embassy. Protestor Brett Lock said, “Next week’s State Visit by King Abdullah should be cancelled ... The Queen should not be welcoming to Britain the head of a corrupt, tyrannical regime,”⁷⁵

As Westerners, we look down on the society for their ‘homophobic’ treatment of gays. There is a point made from the other side, which argues that homosexuality is truly degrading of the traditions and religion within the country. Mecca and Medina, the two holiest cities in the world according to the Qur’an, are within the country, so in a way the nation is a representation of the Islam religion. If they let go of traditions that have been a part of the Saudi lifestyle for centuries, where do they stop? Will women stop wearing the sacred Hijab? Will people start making the choice not to pray to Mecca for the required 5 times a day? Advocates for change argue not for the approval of homosexuality in Saudi’s legal system but for a change in the way the government ‘punishes’ for it. Lashing is torture and torture is always wrong. But the fight for freedom in Saudi Arabia is often considered a lost cause. The extremely strict rules and carved-in-stone traditions leave little ‘wobble room’ for gay rights advocates to work with. The repressive nation will continue to commit human rights crimes to those citizens who choose not to live by its specific standards, without much possibility for change of any kind.

⁷³ Tony Grew. “Gay Activists Picket Saudi Embassy” [PinkNews](http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-5818.html). 22 October 2007. <<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-5818.html>> accessed 4 April 2010.

⁷⁴ IBID.

⁷⁵ IBID.

The Roles of International Organizations

Because the fight for homosexual rights depends first on a fight for general acceptance, organizations play a huge role. By creating awareness and providing an outlet for the voices of gay activists, they lead the way in the fight for gays worldwide. Because gay acceptance is an issue that interferes with countries' religious beliefs, traditions, and views, gay rights activists are not welcome in the countries where they are most needed. As mentioned in the case studies of Zimbabwe and Saudi Arabia, international gay rights organizations are seldom allowed to function within the borders of the nations. OutRage! managed to overcome this by starting divisions in Zimbabwe before Mugabe could catch it. Other international organizations such as ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association, have had large influence over the fight for gay rights worldwide. The largest supporter of gay rights as human rights is the United Nations.

United Nations

The United Nations has had immense influence in the struggle for worldwide gay rights. Being a powerful group, the UN can apply pressure to countries in need of reassessing their stance on homosexuals and rights.

One of the ways the UN aids in the development of homosexual rights and acceptance worldwide is by helping other, small NGOs gain power and influence over countries foreign to them. In 2006, the United Nations held two meetings to present 20 countries with seven NGOs they may be interested in becoming involved with in their country. Among the NGOs was Canada's 'Coalition gaie et lesbienne du Quebec'. The mention of an organization committed to gay and lesbian acceptance and rights sparked debate, but sure enough piqued the interest of a couple countries, including France.⁷⁶ The role of the 'Coalition gaie et lesbienne du Quebec' will be discussed later in the report.

⁷⁶ "Committee on ngos recommends seven organizations for consultative status with Economic and Social Council" United Nations. 12 May 2006. < <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ecosoc6199.doc.htm> > accessed 4 April 2010.

The UN called for a worldwide decriminalization of homosexuality in a declaration presented to the UN's 192 member countries in 2008. Of the total, 66 signed. The United States was the only Western country that chose not to sign the declaration, claiming that there were too many legal technicalities to be sure of anything at that time. All of Europe signed the declaration. It was a huge step forward thanks to the United Nations to get such a large number of nations addressing the issue at one time. Although the number of countries that chose not to sign was fairly large, the declaration accomplished its goal; to spark debate and lessen the taboo of discussing the issue.⁷⁷

In October of 2010, Uganda created an "Anti-Homosexuality Bill" which would criminalize the publication of any literature which promotes homosexuality and recognizes it positively. The bill has yet to be put in front of the country's legislature. The UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay spoke out against the new bill, saying "this type of discrimination is unacceptable".⁷⁸ With the support of the UN, many Ugandan societal groups actively opposed the bill. Pillay remains hopeful that the bill will not pass. Her opposition to Uganda's bill is one of many oppositions or encouragements towards activity in foreign countries relating to homosexuality. The United Nations is known for its protection of human rights worldwide, and plays an important role in the movement towards worldwide social and legislative acceptance.

ILGA

ILGA is an enormous organization that supports smaller gay rights NGOs known as members. In annual conferences, the member organizations meet to guide plans for the year and work together. Their mission statement is, "ILGA's aim is to work for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people and their liberation from all forms of discrimination. We seek to achieve this aim through the world-wide cooperation and mutual support of our members." The organization is always backing many small- and large-scale events and movements throughout the world through its members.

⁷⁷ David Crary. "United Nations: First Gay Rights Declaration Wins Much Support, United States Opposes It" The Huffington Post. 19 December 2008.

⁷⁸ "'Anti-Homosexuality Bill' threatens fight against HIV, UN expert warns" UN Daily News. 22 January 2010 <<http://www.un.org/news/dh/pdf/english/2010/22012010.pdf>> accessed April 4 2010.

In May 2009, ILGA, with the help of its members, collected information regarding gays in 10 countries including Malta, Kyrgyzstan, Ireland and Uganda. The shocking information and specific reports about torture, discrimination, and abuse is available to all gay rights groups to share and inform the general public of the horrors. The group hopes to inform the public of the issue's 'sharp corners' and create positive attitudes for change.⁷⁹

On March 5 2010, ILGA is hosted a workshop with the goal to raise awareness and share ideas about how to confront homophobia in the education systems of the world. Gay rights NGOs from Canada, Spain, Uganda, and Chile were present. The workshop had a panel of experts about homophobia within the education system to inform about the situation and induce proactive behaviour. This is one of many workshops hosted by ILGA and its members, and altogether they produce a large influence over people in the world.⁸⁰

ILGA's affect on the worldwide gay rights movement is massive and unimaginable. Its sphere of influence surrounds the world, making big changes with many small steps. Its ability to get people working together is great, and the organization can be thanked for much of the movement towards acceptance.

OutRage!

UK-based international gay rights organization OutRage! involves itself with homosexual rights issues worldwide as an individual organization and as a member of ILGA. The organization protests the abuse, torture, exploitation, and lack of human rights provided to homosexuals in the UK, Asia, the Americas, and as mentioned in the case studies above, Africa and the Middle East. Being a member of ILGA gives it an international influence and provides the group with funding when required. The group's ideas are based on the understanding that creating awareness and sparking discussion and debate can create change and speed a process of worldwide acceptance. Their Statement of Aims is:

⁷⁹ "Working to End Violence Against LBT Women" ILGA News. 22 February 2010
<<http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/miNVsqN1G9>> accessed April 5 2010

⁸⁰ Cerith Sanger "Homophobia Within The Education System" ILGA News. 26 February 2010.

OutRage! is a broad-based group of queers, committed to radical, non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to:

ASSERT the dignity and human rights of queers;

FIGHT homophobia, discrimination and violence directed against us;

AFFIRM our rights to sexual freedom, choice and self determination⁸¹

OutRage! does this creatively, without causing violence at all. In 1994, the group chose ten popular bishops in the Church of England and asked them to “Tell the Truth” about their sexuality.⁸² The plan worked, ensuing huge discussion and debate, and leading to the Church’s issue of a condemnation of homophobic discrimination. Although only a small step in one area, OutRage! makes many small steps in many areas, leading to a large, worldwide influence of the issue. Peter Tatchell, one of 30 founders of OutRage! in 1990, has been quoted saying, “From many small streams, a mighty river flows. We are the small streams that can make a mighty river for human freedom.”⁸³ Another example of OutRage!’s international influence is in Russia. In 2006 when Moscow was gearing up to celebrate its first gay pride parade, the mayor opposed and put a ban on the parade. OutRage! was protesting at the Russian embassy in London and in Moscow itself against the ban, which led to a lift of the ban, allowing the celebrations to be enjoyed by all.⁸⁴

Among the large goals and plans of OutRage!, one of its main tasks is to help out the individuals – those people in situations where a louder voice needs to be heard. In 1999, a postal worker in Cambridge told the organization that he was being harassed at work, and neither his manager nor union was any help to him. So OutRage! went to the post office and occupied it and the national head office. By doing so, they created enough awareness to make

⁸¹ John Beeson. Submission to the Home Office Sex Offences Review Team. March 8 2010.

<<http://outrage.org.uk/?s=mission+statement>>

⁸² Peter Tatchell. “OUTRAGE!” Peter Tatchell. < <http://www.petertatchell.net/>> accessed April 5 2010.

⁸³ IBID.

⁸⁴ “Outraged Europe Protests Gay Parade Ban by Moscow Mayor” UK Gay News. 2006.

<<http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/2006march/0201.htm>> accessed April 5 2010.

the post office embarrassed, and managed to get the harasser disciplined and the Post Office Code changed to disallow discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Canada's Status

Not unlike many places in the world, Canada had a cultural niche for homosexuals before the arrival of colonists. In the case of North American aboriginals, a person called a *berdache* was a male, who took on the dress, behaviour, and work of a woman. These people were looked up to, and it was even considered good luck to have a berdache in the extended family because popular superstitions claimed it would bring wealth to the family. But with the decline of indigenous religion and tradition, the number of berdaches also declined. The last one died in 1879.⁸⁵

As they did to Zimbabwe and Fiji, colonizing Europeans carried with them a set of assumptions about 'civilization'. This led them to view our indigenous people as barbarous 'wild men', without virtue. They created missionary institutions to 'civilize' the people, and as a part of the process, gays were abolished as perverts and pedophiles, and were burned and murdered. Gays were outraged at the time, and often questioned if they really were immoral, wrong, pedophiles. The Canadian natives were too oppressed to fight back. Ever since independence from Britain, Canadians homosexuals have been fighting for recognition, acceptance, and equal rights.⁸⁶

By the 1900s, blacks were being discriminated against and began to fight back. Homosexuals followed their lead and by the 1960s they had declared that they were a legitimate minority group who deserved protection from discrimination and equal rights. But it was in 1965 when Everett George Klippert was arrested for 'gross indecency' after being investigated for arson and, while proven not involved in the arson, admitted that he had had

⁸⁵ Naphy, *op. cit.* p 188

⁸⁶ IBID.

consensual sex with other males and was homosexual.⁸⁷ The decision to throw Klippert in jail was backed by the Supreme Court of Canada. His case was one of the catapulting moments in gay rights history of Canada. Activist groups were outraged. The first large-scale rally for gays was held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. In 1973 the first Pride parade was celebrated nationally.⁸⁸ Although homosexuals were continually being arrested, gay activists were having national influence, proven when consensual sex between men was legalized in 1969 and Klippert was released. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau commented, "I think the view we take here is that there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation."⁸⁹ In 1974, rights activists were loud enough to bring it to the attention of the American Psychiatric Association that gays did not need a 'cure', and that no body type or personality type was associated with homosexuality. The movement continued, and by November of 1975, foreigners who were homosexual were allowed to immigrate to Canada. Canada began serving as an escape for gays living in countries with harsher attitudes. By 1992, 7 of Canada's provinces and territories had created anti-discrimination laws based on sexual orientation. This led to an increased comfort with being homosexual in Canada, which was demonstrated when many respected stars and political figures were more open about their homosexuality. An example is Svend Robinson, who was elected M.P. for British Columbia in 1979, and lived with another man, Max. Although he never mentioned or fully admitted he was gay, it was obvious to the public because he had made no attempt to hide it. His openness was acceptable; he was re-elected seven consecutive times.⁹⁰

Acceptance was growing among the Western population until the New York Times wrote a story in 1981 headlined, "RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS".⁹¹ The 'cancer' would later be identified as AIDS. In the news story, doctors were quoted saying, "most cases had involved homosexual men who have had multiple and frequent sexual encounters with

⁸⁷ "Same Sex Rights Canada Timeline" [CBC News In-Depth](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/samesexrights/timeline_canada.html). 1 March 2007.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/samesexrights/timeline_canada.html> accessed April 5 2010

⁸⁸ Carl F. Stychin. *A Nation By Rights*. [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998] p 99

⁸⁹ "Same Sex Rights Canada Timeline" [CBC News In-Depth](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/samesexrights/timeline_canada.html). 1 March 2007.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/samesexrights/timeline_canada.html> accessed April 5 2010

⁹⁰ Svend Robinson. "About Svend". Accessed May 8 2010. < <http://www.svendrobinson.com/2.html>>

⁹¹ Lawrence K. Altman. "RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS" [The New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com). 3 July 1981.

different partners, as many as 10 sexual encounters each night up to four times a week.”⁹² The new existence of AIDS caused gays to be looked down upon as ‘dirty’ or ‘infected’ people with many sexual partners, damaging their reputation which was already on ice. Activists managed to overcome this obstacle by campaigning and informing the public that AIDS was not a ‘gay disease’ because many heterosexual men and women were infected as well.

In June of 2001, Leger Marketing produced a poll of over 1500 Canadians over the age of 18, inquiring about their views of gays. The result was that 77% “felt that homosexuals were just like everyone else”, and 76% believed “homosexuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals”.⁹³ The study also found that retirees tended to be less accepting, while young and middle aged people tended to view homosexuals positively. A new, young, accepting generation had been born. In 2005, Canada became the fourth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

Although Canada is one of the most accepting countries in the world, age of consent in Canada remains higher for anal sex, at age 21, than other forms of sex.⁹⁴ Although this is not specifically discriminative against gays, it does imply that homosexual relations, which often involve anal sex, are less approved of than heterosexual relations, which commonly do not involve anal sex. Although the laws are only used in cases involving underage sex and rape, this is a controversial issue in Canada because they remain imbedded as part of the legal system, a reminder that we are not completely accepting. In 2008, a change was made to the age of consent to change the age for vaginal sex from 14 to 16, but left the age for anal sex at 18! Hence, the gay rights movement continues, after the fury from advocates that Canada would leave out gay teens.⁹⁵ Gay rights advocate Ellen Friedrichs writes in her blog, “Age of consent

⁹² IBID.

⁹³ Melanie Nash. “Homosexuality in Canada: A Deviant Practice?” 17 November 2003.

⁹⁴ John-Henry Westen. “Gay Activists Ask Canada to Lower Age of Consent for Anal Sex, National Post Agrees” Life Site News. 14 February 2006. <<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2006/feb/06021403.html>> accessed April 4 2010.

⁹⁵ Ellen Friedrichs. “Changes to Canada's Age of Consent Laws Leave Out Gay Teens” GLBT Teens. 25 May 2008. <<http://gayteens.about.com/b/2008/05/25/changes-to-canadas-age-of-consent-laws-leave-out-gay-teens.htm>> accessed 5 April 2010.

laws are designed to protect teens from adult predators. But sometimes they end up punishing kids who are involved in non-coercive sexual relationships.”⁹⁶

Although we do not totally and completely embrace homosexuals in Canada, our country is generally more accepting than many foreign countries. Therefore, we provide to foreign countries the help of strong organizations which have been through (and are currently in) a mostly successful gay rights movement. An example is the ‘Coalition gaie et lesbienne du Quebec’. The CGLQ is a Quebec-based organization which, as a member of ILGA, fights for worldwide gay rights. The organization is responsible for the collaboration of French-speaking group members of ILGA and has been given the task of organizing the 24th world conference of ILGA, to be held in Quebec City.⁹⁷

National Post writer Diane Francis believes that Canada (as well as the U.S.) is not doing enough to help gays suffering in foreign countries like Saudi Arabia. She argues that we have the ability to force countries out of their abuse and mistreatment of their people. Francis believes we need to impose “human-rights investment bans against Saudi or others, who indulge in human rights abuses according to our definition of them. They should be barred from any more ownership in our economies until they reform.”⁹⁸

Still, Canada plays an important role in the worldwide fight for acceptance and rights because we act as an example for other countries to follow. Advocates campaigning in other countries can look to Canada for inspiration; understand that we live in an accepting environment. In some areas gay couples live amongst straight couples, and no one thinks twice about it. (See interview in Appendix). Canada is active in its role of supporting other countries to fight for freedom as we have.

⁹⁶ IBID.

⁹⁷ “Presentation of the CGLQ” Coalition Gaie et Lesbienne du Quebec.
<<http://www.cglq.ca/public/page.php?lang=AN>> accessed 5 April 2010.

⁹⁸ Diane Francis. “Is This Why Iran Has No Homosexuality?” Financial Post. 22 December 2007.
<<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/francis/archive/2007/12/22/iran-is-this-why-you-have-no-homosexuality.aspx>> accessed 2 April 2010.

Possible Solutions

Controversy surrounds the different solutions applied to the issue of gay rights. Although two groups of people may agree that homosexuals deserve equality, they may disagree on the means of getting to their goal. While some solutions require a complete lifestyle change of everyone in a society, others are much less extreme. The debates are centred on which solution, or set of solutions, is the most practical and will provide true equality with the least amount of negatives.

Socialism

Writer Norah Carlin examines socialism as a solution to gay oppression in her report, "The Roots of Gay Oppression". She believes that both gay consciousness and gay oppression are specific to capitalist society; the belief that one needs to define himself as gay or straight and suffer the consequences of his decision is an idea that has only existed since the industrial revolution. She states, "The struggle against gay oppression is therefore a struggle to end capitalist society and its particular distortions of sexuality and gender. It is central to our argument that this can only be achieved by a socialist revolution carried out by the working class."⁹⁹ Many socialists say that capitalism suppresses natural human sexual impulses, but that specific gender roles will not exist in a socialist society, which would remove the 'oddness' others see in homosexuals. Also, socialist theory revolves around an attitude of equality and acceptance of all, which is required in the fight for homosexual rights. When no one is there to take rights from gays, they are free to enjoy their sexuality.

Unfortunately, socialism has many downfalls. It requires all the people of a society to share the wealth and resources of that society, thus removing the right to own land. There is also the point that when everyone is given the same living conditions, people choose to 'slack' because their position is guaranteed to matter how hard they work. The society suffers when people choose not to work their hardest. Arguments for and against socialism deserve their own paper; the system still deserves recognition as a solution to homosexual oppression.

⁹⁹ Norah Carlin. "The Roots of Gay Oppression" International Socialism Journal 42. Spring 1989.

Education

The goal of teaching young children about homosexuality is to introduce them to the concept before they are too old and consider it new, different, and odd. If a new generation grows up with a positive outlook on homosexuality, they are more likely to run a society which respects gays and treats them with equality. The education can be given through public schooling, children's books, or having conversations with parents. This solution is being tried out here in Canada. Books which discuss homosexuality in their plots will be available and perhaps read to students in school libraries. Steve Bertram, a gay man living in Barrie agrees that having children always surrounded by the alternative lifestyles leads to a real change in attitude later in life. "I think when kids grow up with it around them they are a lot more accepting of it." (See Appendix).

The books being provided are mostly fairy tales which students can relate to. One example is a story about a "spacegirl with two mothers".¹⁰⁰ More controversially, pro-gay videos may also be shown in the United States. One video, which has been ordered by 200 U.S. schools, depicts a boy going to the beach and getting changed into a bikini in the women's changeroom, proclaiming he is gay.¹⁰¹

There was obvious opposition by many parents of students who were to watch the video. One of the reasons that parent Troy Silva opposes the education in schools is that at such an early age, the school is "going into subjects that we have not even broached with our children yet." Many parents are in outrage, while others agree that teaching children about alternative lifestyles will have a positive influence. What needs to occur is a compromise; perhaps parents can come to a common ground by voting on an age and level of exposure to be provided in schools. Until time has passed and studies can be done to illustrate the positive or negative effects of this type of education, it will be controversial. It is unfortunate that the first students must serve as the "test" to see what affects it has.

¹⁰⁰ David Wooding. "Pro-Gay Kids' Books Launched". The Sun. 12 March 2007.

¹⁰¹ "Homosexuality Promoted in Elementary Schools" Online Video. YouTube.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFrud098I74&feature=related>> accessed 5 April 2010.

Activist/Support Groups and Campaigning

Much of the success of the gay liberation movement can be owed to the organization of activists. In the past, they have been able to come together and work against oppression as one large, powerful force. As mentioned before, many leaders together must fight for rights. Each individual is vital, but it is also vital that they come together to be stronger. ILGA is an amazing organization that gets the people coming together. ILGA needs to maintain this organization of its large number of member NGOs in order for the liberation movement to continue. Every year, ILGA puts even more huge accomplishments under its belt. If the movement's ability to work together suddenly vanished, it would slow down and die, allowing powerful leaders to exploit gays to their advantage. The liberation must continue to save lives and influence different corners of the world.

The main reason that the organizations are so powerful is their constant campaigning for gay rights issues. Public opposition, protests, marches, rallies, even arresting a Prime Minister in Zimbabwe as previously mentioned, make the voice of the oppressed heard. Campaigning is the transportation device used to share information and opinion with force. It demonstrates the outrage experienced by the people, and depending on the situation can completely change the outcome of a situation.

Separation of Church and State

Although it would only prove useful in countries where there is an attempt made to protect the religion of the people, separating the church and state is a compromise that may please most. In some Western countries and countries where homosexual acts have become legal, the 'new' debate is over whether gays should be allowed to marry. Married people receive certain benefits such as 'entitlements' which homosexual couples cannot enjoy if they are not allowed to be wed. Activist David Marhoffer makes the point that "handouts have been called by courts 'entitlements', which falsely presupposes that one person is 'entitled' to enjoy the tangible fruits of another person's labor when the government extracts them from the

latter through the coercion known as taxes.”¹⁰² The controversy surrounds religion, with the argument that marriage is a religious bond between two people; and the religious institutions oppose homosexual acts. Therefore, homosexuals should not be wed. But instead, take marriage away from the government and place it in the hands of the religious institutions. In place of marriage, provide the state with the ability to ‘civilly unionize’ a couple.

The idea of separating the church and state can also be considered useful in terms of other rights. For example, the right for two men or women to have sex. The government should allow any forms of sex as long as it is consensual and the people involved are within the age of consent. Leave it to peoples’ personal choice in religious institution (or lack thereof) and their own personal conscience to make decisions of such a personal nature.

Of course, this change, especially in certain countries which depend on a church-state balance, could cause outrage. After the initial outrage passed, though, citizens may feel they have not lost but gained from the separation.

Throughout the history of the gay rights movement, a number of these solutions have been utilized both successfully and unsuccessfully. Different levels of extremism exist in different parts of the world, causing the requirement of many combinations of solutions. In many parts of the world, a solution would not help at all, in fact it could cause even more issues. An example is the case study Saudi Arabia. If gay rights advocates began protesting in Saudi Arabia, they would be killed, and harassment of other homosexuals may worsen once the topic was brought to the forefront. ‘Doing nothing’ for the issue in specific areas is probably the most beneficial for everyone. However, if gay rights organizations stopped functioning, the most likely outcome is moving backward into a more homophobic society. The best solution is probably to continue advocating for positive change to keep the liberation moving.

¹⁰² David Marhoffer. “Same-Sex Marriage and the Entitlement Problem”. [Intellectual Conservative.Com](http://www.intellectualconservative.com). 18 February 2004. <<http://www.intellectualconservative.com/article3148.html>> accessed April 5 2010.

Conclusion

Worldwide, the state of the issue of gay rights has come a long way, but there is still far to go. Through this report, it has been demonstrated that homosexuality is a natural part of humanity, and gays should not be subject to any form of unfair treatment. They are often exploited for the advantage of political leaders and the general public must be aware of the hardships gays face living anywhere in the world. Although certain countries' political and social movements have reached the point where acceptance of homosexuals is beneficial to those in power, other countries' governments would suffer or lose power if they were to announce gays were given equality. Once the people of a country have accepted gays, the government of that country will benefit from providing legal equality to homosexuals. If a government were to suddenly consider gays as equals in a country where the general population does not agree, they would lose their power to another person or group which does agree with the public. Acceptance leads to rights, because the government needs the people to accept gays before they can provide them with the rights they deserve. It is the unfortunate truth that those with the most power over gay rights cannot lead the movement, but instead have to follow it. The organizations involved in liberating gays worldwide are succeeding, even if slowly. Although it is unfortunate, it is the homosexuals that have the responsibility of standing up for themselves to cause the change in the society's views and keep the movements in motion. They have been working positively and to interrupt the process would be a mistake. It is definitely a slow-moving, difficult process, but one that must be completed in order to gain acceptance. Once acceptance exists, equality and rights can exist, and gays can be free from the oppression they face today in many parts of the world.

Appendix

Interview with Steve Bertram, a married homosexual man living in Barrie.

When were you born?	I was born in Barrie in 1963.
Where did you grow up?	Barrie also.
How difficult was it to keep your homosexuality a secret, or were you always open about it?	I wasn't open about it until I was in my early 30s; Barrie wasn't a very accepting place. No one really questioned because, well with the younger kids now it's more accepted, back then they didn't really think about it. Now it's out in the mainstream.
When you came out, what changes did you face?	It was hard to bring my partner to certain social events. You know, we still are introduced as friends at some events, which is funny because we're married!
What effect has your sexual orientation had on your career?	It hasn't had any effect on my career because I work for myself, so the only thing is the social events. It's not a problem, though, it hasn't stopped me from doing anything in my career.
When you married, what changes did you face?	Just acceptance of family. There were a few family members that didn't feel it was appropriate. They were fine for us to live together but not to marry. They were kind of religious, so.
How do you feel the level of acceptance has changed recently, in the past couple decades?	Greatly increased. Maybe more so for women than men, more to show affection is easier for them. But for us it has been a lot better now. We live beside a family with kids and they've never thought twice of Steve and Pete being together. As far as the kids know, we just <i>are</i> . I think when kids grow up with it around them they are a lot more accepting of it.
What are your feelings towards gay rights in Canada? Are you pleased?	Yeah, I think I'm pleased. Sometimes I feel that the more "out there" gay activists are, they maybe hurt the cause, but the ones that are more apathetic, not out in people's faces are better. Pete and I are okay to help other people, answer questions, but we're not that into demonstrating, maybe that's because the generation before us has done all the work. It's great that if the community can see other gay families fitting in and functioning it's good. The 40-60 year old generating has a hard time with it, but my grandparents were fine with it. It goes to show the differences and how changes in attitudes can

	happen so fast.
How big a role do you think religion plays in the acceptance of gays?	I think it's a big issue because its Roman Catholics are blasphemous and it's a sin to practice being gay. But the United Church and the Anglican Church are becoming accepting. The older priests and ministers are the ones that have issues with it.
Do you have any ideas about what should be done to solve gay issues in the world today?	I don't know how you go about changing another country's culture , I guess it starts with accepting in some of the major countries like us Canada, England, but in the Middle East women don't even have proper rights so how are you going to get gays to get acceptance? People in other countries that are threatened can come to Canada to feel safe.
Do you have a favourite gay star or someone you look up to?	Rosy O'Donnell, before she got a little too aggressive. But I don't know, George Smitherman, he's open and he's out there, not people who are afraid to hide it. They can't come out because of their career. Ellen's come a long way to show it.