

## The Gay Blade: Penetrating the Minds of American Youth

By Rita Killilea

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The question of the morality behind homosexuality has been the topic of debate within religious cultures throughout history. The comic *The Gay Blade*, written and published by Jack T. Chick reveals Christian Evangelist beliefs through the literal interpretation of the Bible. Written in 1984, in Ontario, California, the comic debates the morality of homosexuality touching on sensitive topics such as AIDS, homosexuality as an illness, and homosexuality as a sin. The year 1984 marked a crucial year in the developmental knowledge of the AIDS virus and the progression towards equal civil rights. The comic, published by Chick Publications, a series of gospel tracts aimed toward child and teen audiences, illustrates the evangelical outlook on homosexuality citing Biblical tracts as well as findings of Archaeological professors. Is homosexuality natural? Is it an abomination in the eyes of God? What are the consequences of homosexual acts? These questions sample some of the religious, political, and civil debates within American culture. This essay will outline the views of Biblical Literalists and the views of liberal Modernists when answering these questions.

A common argument when discussing homosexuality is whether it is a lifestyle choice or a naturally inherited state of being. Literalists believe that the lifestyle claim of a gay Christian is not supported in the Bible. They remain convinced that there are many Scriptures that go against a homosexual lifestyle such as, Genesis 19:1-13; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9. The Literalist argument is that any sexual act between consenting adults is a choice. They further believe that activists for

homosexuality tend to ignore the distinction between having a desire and acting on it.<sup>1</sup> Their argument is one of a classic fundamentalist view that the Bible reveals a historically accurate record of the infallible teachings of God. A common, and arguably Darwinist, theory Christians hold is that since homosexuals cannot procreate, they are of a weaker group. This in turn means that their culture will not survive in the vast scope of humanity. This idea is interesting because on one hand this could promote a Darwinist viewpoint, which directly contradicts traditional Christian views. According to Richard Dawkins, Professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University and author of *The God Delusion*, the logic of Darwinism concludes that those who survive become more selfish and that this selfishness is passed down genetically, referring to it as the “selfish gene.” This gene is the reasoning behind conducting one’s self as a Good Samaritan.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand it could be assumed that this idea reflects the natural will of God, and that going against that is a sin.

*“...be not deceived (misled): neither fornicators (the impure and immoral), nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuality), shall inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Cor. 6:9 & 10*

Here the text reads that no adulterers, fornicators, nor effeminate shall inherit the kingdom, which brings up the question of what homosexuals do inherit. For years researchers have been searching for a genetic link to sexuality. The evidence began to pile up in 1991, when studies showed that identical twins were more likely to have the

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<sup>1</sup> “Homosexuality and choice,” *Conservapedia*, 1993 [Online-database] available from [http://www.conservapedia.com/Homosexuality\\_and\\_Choice](http://www.conservapedia.com/Homosexuality_and_Choice); Internet; accessed on 15 May 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006) 215.

same sexual orientation than other pairs of siblings. That same year, a California scientist reported slight brain differences between gay and straight men, although the conclusion is disputed. And in 1993, an NIH researcher found a stretch of DNA on the X chromosome that seemed to harbor one or more genes affecting sexual orientation. In a study conducted in Italy, Andre Camperio-Ciani and colleagues found information leading them to believe that the genetic factors favoring homosexual offspring could make women more fertile. It has also been noted that homosexual males are more often the younger siblings in a line of brothers and that each subsequent male, was more likely to be homosexual. Scientists doing DNA studies on homosexual brothers pinpointed “culprit” genetic material to a region of the X chromosome that mothers pass on to their offspring.<sup>3</sup> Other information has proved that homosexuality can be inherited. For example, Ward Odenwald and Shan-Ding Zhang, two biologists specializing in genetics, used fruit flies to experiment with the homosexual inheritance theory. They did this by transplanting a single gene in the male flies, which in turn caused them to mate with other male flies. Odenwald and Zhang further asserted that a related gene exists in human beings.<sup>4</sup> And though no evidence has yet been found that the human gene has an effect on sexual preference, this find has generated headway in supporting the inheritance theory.

Homosexuality is often referred to as an illness in highly religious communities.

Chick’s tone reveals this view in the following quotation:

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<sup>3</sup> “How homosexuality is 'inherited',” BBC News: Heath, 2004 [Online Article] available from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983027,00.html>; Internet; accessed on 17 March 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Larry Thompson/Bethesda, “Search for a Gay Gene,” Time Magazine, 1995 [Online Article] available from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983027,00.html>; Internet; accessed 23 March 2009.

*They claim that they include 10 percent of the population but reliable studies indicate under 2 percent. Has such a condition ever existed before?*

By the end of the 19th century, medicine and psychiatry were disputing the law for jurisdiction over sexuality. Effectively this would decriminalise homosexuals because homosexuality would be considered a mental disorder, which they would have no control over.<sup>5</sup> However in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Though, up until 1992, the International Classification of Diseases continued to work with psychologists to treat Homosexuality.<sup>6</sup> According to the American Psychiatric Association sexual orientation is most likely determined by a number of factors from social upbringing, to genetics, to religions, to environment, rather than a single component. The APA further agrees that sexual orientation and gender identity are not a choice or a lifestyle, but rather part of who a person is, hence the use of the terminology “sexual/gender identity.”<sup>7</sup> Though the APA dropped homosexuality from defined mental

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory M. Herek, Ph.D., “Facts About Homosexuality and Mental Health,” *UC Davis Psychology Dept.* 1997-2009 [article online]; available from [http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/HTML/facts\\_mental\\_health.HTML](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/HTML/facts_mental_health.HTML); Internet; accessed 25 March 2009.

<sup>6</sup> King, M.; Bartlett, A., *British psychiatry and homosexuality*. (London: Brit. J. Psychiatry, 1999), 175, 106-113.

<sup>7</sup> “Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality,” *American Psychological Association*, 2004 [Online] ; available from <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=31>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2009.

illnesses in 1973, it wasn't until 1992 when the International Classification of Diseases decided to drop it from their psychiatric material.<sup>8</sup>

For Biblical Literalists, treatment of homosexuality is practiced in what are known as "Transforming Congregations." In 1988 the first Transforming Congregation was formed, lead by Reverend Robert Kuypers. The congregation decided that the best method of treating homosexuality was with a compassionate approach, which focussed on prayer rather than cold rejection.<sup>9</sup> By means of the Media, Fundamentalists have created organizations such as "Focus on the Family" and "Transforming Congregations" which stress that homosexuality is a sin, which can be reversed if the subject is willing to repent. Dr. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family routinely speaks on television shows, books, videos, and cassette tapes. Dobson, who will be further investigated later on, has a firm and fearful belief that if an end isn't put to homosexuality, the family unit will be destroyed and eventually mankind will cease to exist. He preaches that homosexuality is a preventable disorder that can be treated with reparative therapy.<sup>10</sup> One can argue that these religious movements see preaching and prayer as a method to furnish change. Anthropologists rationalize that altruistic giving, or in the case of the Transforming Congregations altruistic prayer maybe an advertisement of dominance or superiority; they refer to this as the Potlatch Effect. The concept of the Potlatch Effect is taken from extravagant festivals held by Indian tribes of the northern Pacific which

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<sup>8</sup> King, M.; Bartlett, A., *British psychiatry and homosexuality*. (London: Brit. J. Psychiatry, 1999), 175, 106-113.

<sup>9</sup> "Who We Are: Our Beliefs," *Transforming Congregations*, 2004, revised September 30, 2008 [Online] available from <http://www.transcong.org/1beliefs.htm>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2009.

<sup>10</sup> "Focus on the Family," *The Soulforce*, Article 130 [Online] available from <http://www.soulforce.org/article/130>; Internet; accessed 19 March 2009.

consisted of excessive giving.<sup>11</sup> In addition to their advertisement of superiority, one can further argue that through their preaching and prayer, these religious conservatives give themselves validation as citizens of the church.

As previously mentioned, Transforming Congregations and Focus on the Family believe that homosexuals are sinners. The comic takes homosexuality as a sin, including those who are exposed to it include everyone who has ever felt sexually confused, swayed by someone of the same gender, or witness' of homosexual behavior. When one thinks of "sin," the Ten Commandments are generally what comes to mind first. The truth is that sin, as translated from the Bible, is most accurately defined as missing the mark. The mark, in this case, is the standard of perfection established by God and evidenced by Jesus. Viewed in that light, it is clear that we are all sinners.<sup>12</sup> This idea is put in perspective in Romans 3:20 where it is declared that no one will be declared righteous by observing the law, but rather that through the law we become conscious of sin. God did not expect mankind to be righteous in all ways, rather God made prophecies to instill faith and conscience into mankind.

It is a common opinion amongst Fundamentalist Christians that homosexuals are susceptible to dire consequences. Proof in this case includes the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, more commonly known as AIDS. Over the course of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, advancements in scientific medicine and dramatic changes in living conditions in Europe and North America were rapid. In turn the threat of new serious illnesses receded. Thus it came as a profound shock when, after the first

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, MA. 215

<sup>12</sup> Reverend Peter Gomes (Harvard University), *For the Bible Tells Me So* [film] (2007)

cases of AIDS emerged in the early 1980s, and the global extent of the disease became known.<sup>13</sup> Some ten years after the publishing of *The Gay Blade*, Jerry Falwell, a Christian Evangelist pastor, would be quoted saying “AIDS is not just God’s punishment for homosexuals; It is God’s punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals.” Many Christians felt AIDS was the “gay man’s disease” and early on, in 1982, many even referred to it as “GRIDS” (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency Syndrome). In 1984, Dr. R. Gallo stated that there was “too much attention aided to Homosexuals who just happened to be exposed to it first.” The time of the AIDS eruption, many feared male homosexuals/bisexuals were carriers of other unknown lethal diseases. Though it has been noted that Venereal Diseases (STDs) declined from 1980-1997, which probably resulted from increased awareness of HIV, AIDS, and venereal diseases. The comic illustrates the aforementioned implication of AIDS and STDS, along with violence in the following quote:

*Average life expectancy for the male homosexual before AIDS was only 42 years because of venereal disease and violence. AIDS only reduced it to 39 years.*

Though Chick is not specific in what is meant by “violence” in this quote, it can be ascertained that he is referring to violence within homosexual relationships. According to the Domestic Violence Coalition, abuse in homosexual relationships is just as prevalent and just as lethal as abuse in heterosexual relationships.<sup>14</sup> However, in 1984 the Task Force reports 94% of respondents victimized by persons outside of the LGBT community. This census reveals that the majority of violence LGBT persons undergo is in fact by the hand of those in opposition to their way of life. The aforementioned classic

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<sup>13</sup> 370, Encyclopedia Americana (2003), v. 1, Scholastic Library Publishing, Connecticut

<sup>14</sup> GLBT Domestic Violence Coalition and Jane Doe Inc., 2005

interpretation of the Bible concerning Homosexuality has created an environment where LGBT youth feel a need to internalize. The consequences of this oppressive viewpoint are reflected in 1989 when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a report stating that up to a third of all teen suicides were committed by gay youths. No less than 10 years after this report numbers actually increase; Gay and Lesbian teens are three times more likely to attempt suicide, with young males at particular risk, according to The Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine.<sup>15</sup>

*“...be not deceived (misled): neither fornicators (the impure and immoral), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuality), shall inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Cor. 6:9 & 10*

Here the primary source describes homosexuals as effeminate. In 1986, the first study of effeminate young boys was conducted at UCLA. The study showed that the majority of boys with feminine behavior grew up to be homosexual.<sup>16</sup>

The traditional Fundamentalist view on scripture holds that same-gender intimacy is a sin. Biblical Literalists such as Dr. Richard J. Mouw, President of Fuller Theology Seminary, read that the clear meaning was that God disapproves with same sex genital intimacy. Others argue that natural and unnatural, meaning customary and uncustomary. It wasn't customary for men to have sex with men in Jewish context, but he saw it in the

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<sup>15</sup> Chris Hamilton, “Researchers Study Sexual Orientation and Suicide: University senior Erin Ferguson considers herself one of the lucky ones,” *Minnesota Daily* [Online Article] via the Soulforce, available from: <http://www.soulforce.org/article/653#olderdata>; Internet; accessed March 19, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Jane E. Brody, “Boyhood Effeminacy and Later Homosexuality,” *The New York Times*, 1986 [Online Article] available from <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/16/science/boyhood-effeminacy-and-later-homosexuality.html?sec=health&spon=&pagewanted=all>; Internet; accessed 26 March 2009.

Greek world, so his reference to uncustomary was really a situation of worshipping the wrong god, idolatry. This further exposed same sex relationship among Romans and Greeks. In other words, the true sin is the worship of something other than God. Since same-sex intimacy was a Greek/Roman practice, adoption of another culture was to turn away from Judaism.<sup>17</sup> Persons who strayed from the path of Judaism violated the Second Commandment, and became known as “idolaters.”

An issue with the Evangelist viewpoint is that it generally fails to take historical context into account when analyzing scripture. As mentioned earlier, Fundamentalists and conservative Christians believe that homosexuals are recruited from others through sexual molestation occurring at a young and impressionable age. In the Old Testament, there is a story featuring drunken incest between Lot and his two daughters which today is considered perversion. This example of the changing relationships that occur over time is reason why context of the bible in terms of historical periods need to be accounted for. Biblical Literalists fail to take historical and cultural context into account. The Old Testament tells the story of Lot and his rescue from the ancient city of Sodom located near the Dead Seas. Biblical Literalists, view the story as a political and moral platform against homosexuality. Other more liberal readers of the Bible view the story of Lot very differently; taking into account both the historical and cultural context. During that period in history (approximately 1900 B.C.) it was not uncommon for successors to rape their defeated opponents as a form of humiliation after battle. Liberal Christians argue that God wanted Sodom destroyed because of their displays of wickedness, which had nothing to do with sexual behavior. In the Old Testament things that were seen as being

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<sup>17</sup> Reverend Peter Gomes (Harvard University), For the Bible Tells Me So [film] (2007)

wicked, given the period in time and culture, included vanity, excellence, and pride. All of which were manifested through the ill nature of the people of Sodom.<sup>18</sup>

In the New Testament Paul describes same-sex relationships as being impure, that the only sexual nature is heterosexual. Traditionalists read this as a condemnation to any other form of sexual identity or behavior. However non-traditionalists argue that in their reading of the text it can be deciphered that what he is actually condemning, are homosexual acts by people identifying as heterosexual. Christian Literalists often quote texts from the bible that portray the view of "God's plan" for marriage to the exclusion of all other family /marriage types. However, many Christians turn a blind eye to other less popularized biblical texts that do in fact mention other family/marriage types that do not consist of a man and wife entering a committed monogamous relationship. Genesis 29 and 30 tell the story of Jacob who created a large family comprised of two wives and two female slaves.<sup>19</sup> In many cultures, even today, polygamy reflects social and economic status in a positive light. In modern, westernized culture however, the majority of the population looks down on polygamy as not only socially unacceptable, but immoral as well. The Bible actually cites eight different marriage types.<sup>20</sup> These marriage types included polygamy which was first practiced by Lamech in Genesis 4:19 who had two wives. Genesis 6 illustrates the relationship between a man, a woman, and her property –

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<sup>18</sup> "Definition for 'WICKEDNESS,'" in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Online*, [database online] available from <http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/W/WICKEDNESS/>; Internet; accessed March 19, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> "A Bible passage you probably won't hear mentioned in any religious service soon," *Religious Tolerance*, 2007 [Online] available from [http://www.religioustolerance.org/mar\\_bibl3.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/mar_bibl3.htm); Internet; accessed 22 March 2009.

<sup>20</sup> B.A. Robinson, "Same-sex marriages (SSM), civil unions & domestic partnerships," Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, 1997 [Online] available from [http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_marr.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_marr.htm); Internet; accessed 22 March 2009.

a female slave. Deuteronomy 21:11-14 describes how each captive woman would shave her head, pare her nails, be left alone to mourn the loss of her families, friends, and freedom. After a full month had passed, they would be required to submit to their owners sexually, as a wife.

Possibly the most well-known citing in the Bible concerning homosexuality would be Leviticus 18:22 which reads:

*“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.”*

When the term abomination is used in the Hebrew Bible, it is always used to address a ritual wrong, and never used as something being innately immoral. Leviticus 18:22 has received more attention than possibly any other biblical text. Often times Christian Literalists state that “The Bible is clear” and that homosexual acts are deviant and an abomination. However it is also said in Leviticus:

*11:10 And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you:*

*11:20 All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you.*

*11:21 Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth;*

During the ancient times biblical scripture was produced, many things such as eating pork, birds, shellfish were seen as abomination. As was mixing fabric for fear that Jews would intermix with Egyptians denouncing Judaism. Likewise to losing Hebrew culture,

Scholars studying the Bible believe that the idea of a man lying with a man would be better time spent procreating and expanding the Hebrew population.<sup>21</sup>

When discussing the “Gay Revolution” Chick tells of Lambda:

*The Greek letter lambda, the gay militants say, symbolizes unity in the face of oppression.*



The symbol of Lambda, originally chosen by the Gay Activists Alliance of New York in 1970, represents a group, which broke away from the larger Gay Liberation Front at the end of 1969, a few months after the Stonewall Riots.<sup>22</sup> Many argue that the fight for equal rights among the LGBT community began with the Stonewall raid of 1969, a mafia-run bar in Greenwich, NY that had many gay patrons. At some point during the raid, a punch was thrown and patrons began throwing coins at police officers symbolising bar pay-offs that bar-keeps paid to officers to keep from being shut down.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Reverend Susan Sparks (American Baptist Church), *For the Bible Tells Me So* [film] (2007)

<sup>22</sup> “Symbols of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Movements,” *Lambda GLBT Community Services*, 2004 [Online] available from <http://www.lambda.org/symbols.htm>; Internet; accessed March 24 2009.

<sup>23</sup> “Stonewall Riots,” in *An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Culture*, Copyright, 2004 [database online] available from [http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/stonewall\\_riots.html](http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/stonewall_riots.html); Internet; accessed 19 March 2009.

The 1980s mark a milestone in the quest for equality amongst peoples of all sexual and gender orientations. Chick addresses the viewpoint that homosexuals are desperate for equality in the following quote:

*Out of Satan's shadowy world of homosexuality, in a display of defiance against society, they come forth –those who suffer the agony of rejection, the despair of unsatisfied longing –desiring –endless lusting and remorse crying that gay is good –their tragic lives prove that there isn't anything gay about being “gay.”*

1984 was significant for San Francisco because it was the year Dan White, assassin of Mayor George Moscone and gay political activist Harvey Milk, was released from prison. It was the same year the National March for Lesbian/Gay Rights would take place in San Francisco. In 1984, California and Seattle passed the first non-discrimination act that specifically included protections of gays and lesbians.<sup>24</sup> After the 1977 Bill No. 67 in California, prohibiting persons of same-sex from entering lawful marriage was passed, Domestic Partnerships were born. Domestic Partnerships came to be in the 1980s, allowing same-sex couples some of the same rights designated to heterosexual couples within their own states, but did not include the thousand or so federal rights heterosexual

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<sup>24</sup> *Facts on File Weekly World News Digest With Cumulative Index* (Published by Facts on File Inc., NY) 22 E2.

couples were entitled to.<sup>25</sup> In 1984 Berkeley, California became the first municipal city to implement the domestic partnerships.<sup>26</sup>

However, opposition to gay rights continued when less than ten years prior to the publishing of *The Gay Blade*, educators were threatened their job security under Proposition 6 of 1978, which held that if educators displayed homosexual behavior inside or outside of the classroom, their jobs could be revoked. The Brigg's Initiative ultimately wanted to remove California gay and lesbian teachers from their positions because of a view that their sexuality would influence/ recruit children to acts deemed perverted by religious Conservatives.<sup>27</sup> Jesse Helms, a politician from North Carolina, was openly against homosexuality and was very active in blocking the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which has included antigay violence among the crimes to be monitored by law enforcement. Helms retaliated with the proposal of the Helms Amendment, which would have recognized the "homosexual movement" as a threat to society, and enforced laws that reflected what he considered to be the best interest of the public health. It further outlined that the Federal Government should not provide discriminations of the basis of

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<sup>25</sup> B.A. Robinson, "Same-sex marriages (SSM), civil unions & domestic partnerships," Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, 1997 [Online] available from [http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_marr.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_marr.htm); Internet; accessed 22 March 2009.

<sup>26</sup> "In The Supreme Court of California: In re Marriage Cases," *Court Info*, 2008 [Online] available from [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/archive/S147999.DOC](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/archive/S147999.DOC); Internet; accessed on 19 March 2009.

<sup>27</sup> "Family Code: Section 297-297.5," *Legal Info* [Online] available from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fam&group=00001-01000&file=297-297.5>; Internet; accessed 26 March 2009.

sexual orientation and school curriculums should not condone homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.<sup>28</sup>

In more recent years, the the Gay Rights movement has faced retaliation by new cries of religious Conservatives. These religious Conservatives argue that their equality is being threatened by denying their freedom of speech. In protest of the Day of Silence, Day of Defiance was created in 2007. A Day of Defiance was started because persons involved were concerned that students were only hearing one-sided, pro-gay arguments and were not being properly informed about the health and moral risks and instead were being brain-washed to the point that students were too afraid to defy a pro-gay society.<sup>29</sup>

Given the evidence presented it can be concluded that the early 1980s in California and in the United States reflects a dramatic turning point for the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender community. Increased awareness of AIDS, numerous sprouting gay activist groups, and rights provided through the development of domestic partnerships all reveal a growing and changing society. The issue of same sex marriage is especially significant in California today given the passing of Proposition Eight in November 2008, which reversed the authorization of same-sex marriage supported by courts in 2004. Domestic partnerships allocate many but not all of the same rights that heterosexual couples are entitled, to same-sex couples. Still in the United States very few are recognized as a “married” couple under the law. One can even say that domestic

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<sup>28</sup> Gregory M. Herek, “Jesse Helms: ‘If You Want To Call Me A Bigot, Fine,’” 2008 [Online] available from <http://www.beyondhomophobia.com/blog/2008/07/04/jesse-helms-if-you-want-to-call-me-a-bigot-fine/>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2009.

<sup>29</sup> “Pandemonium at high school as Day of Defiance challenges pro-homosexual ‘Day of Silence,’” *Mass Resistance* [online article] available from [http://www.massresistance.org/docs/events07/day\\_of\\_defiance/index.html](http://www.massresistance.org/docs/events07/day_of_defiance/index.html); Internet; accessed 23 March 2009.

partnerships resemble the “Separate but Equal” laws, in that they are a means of compromise. Same-sex marriage is recognized only at the state level, as the federal Defense of Marriage Act explicitly bars federal recognition of such marriages. This ultimately meant that outside of one’s state, these partnerships might not necessarily be recognized.<sup>30</sup>

Even if couples in domestic partnerships were to acquire all the same amenities heterosexual couples have the rights to, would there be a balance of equality then? Does a title really define a relationship? It depends on whom you ask. But really what business is it what a lawful bond between two people should be called, apart from anyone other than said couple? After all, religious ministers could keep to their beliefs, and not conduct marriage ceremonies they do not agree with, as they would with any heterosexual couples. Historical record illustrates how religious beliefs have interfered with civil rights in the past. Equality on the basis of sexuality shouldn’t be any different.

As of May 2009, there are three states which recognise same-sex marriage in the United States, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Iowa. It will become legal in Vermont starting September 1, 2009, and in Maine beginning September 14, 2009.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> DOMA Watch [Online Resorce] available from:

<http://www.domawatch.org/index.php>; Internet; accessed on 28 May 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Abby Goodnough, “Gay Rights Groups Celebrate Victories in Marriage Push,” New York Times, 2009. [Online Article] available from:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/us/08vermont.html>; Internet; accessed 28 May 2009.