

**THE FORMATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE FAMILY AND
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: THE IDENTIFICATION AND
PREVENTION OF THE PROBLEM OF HOMOSEXUAL TENDENCY AND
PRACTICE**

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Abstract

Homosexuality has become an issue for many societies. Generally, it is regarded as an anomaly, yet it seems to be on the increase. This paper examines the nature of homosexuality and the practices associated with it, and the roles the family and educational institutions can play in its identification and prevention. The paper also argues that prevention is better than cure and that the family is the preeminent place to begin the formation necessary to socialize children appropriate and protect them from "fishing" and "grooming". The paper also outlines the importance of educational institution in the formation necessary to prevent homosexual practices. The paper also identifies moral and religious education as the only education capable of bringing about true formation. This approach hinges on the fact that the man's identity as imago dei demands a coherence of his life with the divine ethos, and that formation of conscience must start early so that those with predisposition can be equipped with the skills necessary to understand the demands of their state and the work for the grace to respond positively to God's invitation to share in His life. Finally the paper recommends proactive education and integral socialization of the two sexes with members of each group from early on in their lives as a clear path to prevent homosexual practices.

Keywords: Educational, Institutions, Identification, Prevention, Homosexual
Tendency, practice

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Introduction

These times are markedly strange days. There is no gainsaying the fact that there is a crisis of value in the world today. Traditional values, such as respect for others, hard work, love of children, morality, sexual integrity etc., have become extinct in many societies and efforts are being intensified by others to see to their eradication in other places where these values still exist. But as these values go, so do society. To prevent this, society needs to be proactive and this paper advocates the formation of children and youth within the ambient of the family and through the formal process of education. There are key concepts that need clarification, such as children, youth and the family and then educational institutions. A proper understanding of these key concepts will help us to situate the problem of homosexuality and ground our programme of intervention in real life context with the highest prospect of success.

Clarification of Terms

1. Children

This is usually used to designate persons between birth and puberty. The legal definition of a child generally refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority.²⁸⁶ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines child as "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". This is ratified by 192 of 194 member countries. Biologically, a child is generally anyone between birth and puberty or in the developmental stage of childhood, between infancy and adulthood.

2. Youth

Youth, on the other hand, is internationally used to designate persons between 13 years of age and late 20s. In most cases, they include the unmarried male and female who are still in their 20s. Using Erick Erikson stages of human development, the youth group will comprise the adolescence (12-18 years) and young adulthood (18-24). These two stages of life are characterized by intense hormonal changes, membership in social groups, and development of life-long relationship leading to very intimate relationships. These stages could possibly be the incubating stage for homosexual tendencies. What is also clear about this

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²⁸⁶ Wikipaedia Accessed April 23, 2015

age group is that there is fluidity about the age scope, often ranging from 14 to 35 among the member states of the United Nations; hence to establish uniformity, the United Nations defines *youth* as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. This distinction was set in 1981 because it must be stated that under the 1979 Convention on the *Rights of the Child*, those under the age of 18 are regarded as children.²⁸⁷ In the same vein, the 2009 National Youth Policy of Nigeria actually indicates that those between the ages of 18 to 35 should be regarded as youths.²⁸⁸

3. The Family

The family is the nucleus of the society, and traditionally made up of father, mother and their children. In the African context, the family is not just the immediate parents, the extended family is regarded as part of one's family, hence uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces are part and parcel of the family. The family is also regarded as the basic unit of society. As the family goes, so does the society. The family is the first agent of socialization and formation for children. John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio* said that "the future of the world and the Church passes through the family."²⁸⁹ It is thus imperative that the family be safeguarded from corruption and value erosion at all cost because families have the duty of raising children in the spirit of Christian faith, in good morals and values. This is also in line with the vision of the Second Vatican Council, when the Council fathers assert that "All who influence society and its various groupings should actively contribute to furthering the cause of marriage and the family."²⁹⁰ It is in this sense that homosexual activities must be seen as inhibiting the full flourishing of family life by advocating a lie as the real thing or as a true manifestation of the human relationship.

4. Formation

Socialization is essential for societal integration and every member of the community goes through a process and programme of socialization appropriate for the age. Education is one of such, and it could be formal or informal. It is crucial to note that due to the privileged position of parents, the home is the first place of formation and parents the first teachers of their children. The home environment is therefore crucial to the provision of wholistic education of the human person. Formation rightly understood is more than education; it is a

²⁸⁷ Furlong, Andy (2013). *Youth Studies: An Introduction*. USA: Routledge. pp. 2–3.

²⁸⁸ Nigeria 2009 National Youth Policy

²⁸⁹ *Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, n.75

²⁹⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, n.52

deliberate process of developing something into a particular thing, or developing in people the capacities that help them to act in a given way. Formation is much more than the accumulation of knowledge; it involves the translation of knowledge into action. It is in this wise that the identification and prevention of homosexual tendency and practice call for formation and not just theoretical awareness. Changing attitudes and behaviours is not just about acquisition of knowledge; it involves the transformation of the will to do the right and the precise education of the will to choose the good, without which the prevention of homosexual practices will be extremely difficult to actualize. What is the problem?

5. Homosexuality

This is generally defined as sexual desire or behavior or attractions and relations directed toward a person or persons of one's own sex. The prefix, *homo* has two backgrounds; In Latin 'homo' means man, for instance, 'homo sapiens' to denote 'modern man', and from its Greek root, it means 'same'. *Sexual*, of course, means sex related. Homosexuality then involves sexual attractions, desire and behaviour directed principally towards one's own sex. According Linus Umoren, "homosexual is used to describe an individual's sense of sexual, personal and social identity based on same sex attraction, behaviours expressing them, and membership in a group of others who share the same feeling."²⁹¹ While the term 'homosexual' technically refers to both male and female, in real life, female homosexuals are referred to as 'lesbians'. In the same vein, while some may use the term "Gay" to designate a male homosexual, it is more appropriately used "to designate those who have accepted homosexual identity; who involve in homosexual cultural activities and claim that they are comfortable in that life."²⁹² In a world rooted and depended on the complementarity of the sexes, for its existence, and survival, homosexuality then comes across as an aberration. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sheds more light on the true nature of homosexuality by describing it as "relations between men or between women who experience an *exclusive or predominant sexual attraction* towards persons of the same sex."²⁹³ It is precisely this understanding that led John Paul 11 to assert that:

²⁹¹ Linus Umoren

²⁹² Linus Umoren

²⁹³ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2357

Sexuality by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death...²⁹⁴

Homosexuality then would be a contradiction of true human sexuality. Homosexuality is a complex reality, it is a sexual orientation, and it is a form of identity. As a sexual orientation, it is regarded as an alternative to being straight, which is a relational exchange between two people, always involving a male and a female, whereas, homosexual orientation involves principally two males or two females. As an identity, those who describe themselves as being homosexual claim it is "Who they are." Thus in the core of their being, they feel an inner attraction to persons of the same sex, though some have been observed to act the opposite sex's role even in gay relationship. James Leslie McCary describes it as "manifest sexual relation" to a member of the same sex. Hence, it is not only about an inner awareness of self but also external manifestation.

Identification of Homosexual Tendencies

It is important to make a distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual act. Sexual activities, be they overt or covert, between two people of the same sex is regarded as homosexual act, "whereas homosexual orientation refers to a sexual drive or attraction toward an individual of the same gender without any display of such behavior."²⁹⁵ The implication is that it is possible to have the orientation without engaging in the act. In the Church's veritable tradition, *Personae Humanae* issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith in 1975, has shed further light on the way the Church sees homosexuality. For instance, it asserts that there are some who are gay owing to false education, or lack of normal sexual development, other curable non-biological causes. At the same time, the document recognizes that there are some people who are pathologically homosexual. It would thus seem the basis for asserting that homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered."²⁹⁶ John Paul II in his famous book *Love and Responsibility* asserts that since same-sex attractions are almost

²⁹⁴ Familiaris Consortio , 11

²⁹⁵ Linus Umoren

²⁹⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2357

never freely chosen, they are not in themselves sinful, “they are part of the disorder of the sexual appetite caused by original sin.”²⁹⁷

In most cases in the past, homosexual acts are performed in secret, such that it was difficult to adjudge people as homosexual if they didn’t declare themselves to be so. Today, however, more and more men and women are ‘coming out of the closet’ to declare their sexual orientation. Careful study of these people allows us to make the following about homosexuals:

- a. Homosexuals ordinarily would engage in a relationship with a partner also of the same sex.
- b. This other person should be seen as the one who complements the partner. In other words, the relationship assumes a ‘veil of complementarity of the sexes’, where one partner is always a male and the other a female. McCary identifies three patterns of homosexual expression:
 - (1) Active, wherein the individual plays the male role regardless of his own sex,(2) passive, in which the participant, whether man or woman, plays the female role, and (3) mixed, in which the individual assumes an active role on time and a passive role the next. The mixed role is the pattern most frequently followed by homosexuals.²⁹⁸
- c. Certain traits are noticeable in the one who plays the feminine role. Often, this partner looks feminine if he is a male, acts and speaks like a female and tends to pay undue attention to his physical appearance. Ordinarily this partner, who acts as the female in the relationship still dresses as a man.
- d. The situation is slightly different when we look as lesbians. In this sequence, one of the women in the relationship also acts a man. This again is an attempt to fulfill the complementarity of sexes; however, one of these women could often be mistaken for a man through her mode of dressing that is often masculine and the male mannerisms that tend to stand out in such relationships.

²⁹⁷ Christopher West, *Theology of the Body Explained: A commentary on John Paul II’s “Gospel of the Body*, Pauline Books: Boston, 2003, p.149

²⁹⁸ McCary, 280-281

- e. It is this special characteristic trait that tends to suggest to people that one is likely to be a person with homosexual orientation or identity. This then makes 'fishing' for partner easy and grooming relatively straight forward since the tendencies and preferences are fairly visible and known.
- f. While anecdotal evidences suggest that the homosexual tendencies could be discerned early in life, it seems safe to locate its definite force in late adolescence, typically between 18 years and 24 years. This is because prior to that stage of life, children often congregate according to their sex and this is continued until early adulthood when they begin to form intimate relationship. It is at this stage that those who depart from the norm become obvious.
- g. Principal homosexual practices include masturbation, sodomy, *fellatio*, *cunnilingus* and interfemoral coitus. Masturbation is the production of sexual gratification through stimulation of the genitals by manipulation. Sodomy refers to the use of the anus for copulation. *Fellatio* from the Latin word *fellare*, to suck, hence, this is the stimulation of the genitals using the mouth. *Cunnilingus* is from two Latin words *cunnus*, meaning the vulva, and *lingere*, to lick, this is therefore, the oral-genital stimulation of the female's vulva or clitoral area. Finally, interfemoral sexual intercourse takes place when the space between the thighs is used.²⁹⁹

It is must be asserted that based on the Church's analysis, homosexuality is not normal and this assertion is supported by Scripture (Gen 19:1-19, Roma 1:24-27; 1Cor 6:10; 1 Tim 1-10). But the Church did not stop there, she recognizes the fact that this is not a condition or identity that some people have chosen, but that "for most of them it is a trial."³⁰⁰ They are therefore deserving of compassion and the sensitivity of others in the society.

Homosexuality is regarded as unnatural because its acts, attitude and behaviour quite often contradict the divine will, who created human "male and female". Homosexuality then becomes an affront against God; it is a denial of God and enthronement of the self on the altar of sexual gratification. It is only in this climate that homosexuality can flourish, therefore, parents and religious bodies must be involved in the education of children to channel their behaviour, attitudes and actions towards the truth and the Good.

²⁹⁹ Cf. James Leslie McCary.

³⁰⁰ CCC 2358.

The Place of Education in the Identification and Prevention of the Problem of Homosexuality

Etymologically, education is derived from two Latin verbs “*educare*” which means to nourish, to bring up or to raise; and “*educere*” which means “to draw out”³⁰¹ Education then is a complex process that must involve the whole person. From the etymology, we see that the formal emphasizes training, that is, inculcating in the learner, what the society or some experts considered important for the individual and the society. Viewed as such, parents must know the moral norms and the values of their society and ensure that the behaviour of their children are in tandem. On the other hand, when the focus is on *educere*, the attention shifts to personal development. Here, the learner is not seen as a *tabula rasa*, an empty slate. Rather, the person is seen as an embodiment of talents, latent traits and skills and the goal of education is to help bring them to the fore. The first helps in the process of initiation, and the second helps the individual to be able to make meaningful contributions to his or her society while accomplishing life’s goal.

The Vatican Council II document on education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, states that “true education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duty, of which he will, as an adult have a share.”³⁰² The foundation for this type of education and formation must be laid in the family. There, children are to be helped to cultivate good habits, display good conduct and exhibit good judgment. Children must be helped to develop as members of the community and not apart from the community or against the community. This is what is otherwise known as socialization, that is, the process by which people, especially the young ones are trained to behave in a way acceptable to their society. Furthermore, as could be seen from the different levels of education, education is age appropriate. Educators are, therefore, called upon to introduce children to the right curriculum, so that the appropriate foundation may be laid. If this is done, crisis peculiar to particular ages can be identified and resolved.

³⁰¹ V. R. Taneja, (ed) *Educational Thought and Practice*, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2001

³⁰² Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum Educationis* Rome, 28th October 1965, no. 6.

The Family

The Domestic Church, the family, is an educational institution and a necessary one. In fact, it is first and foremost in the family that proper and true education begins. In the African context, the family is not just nuclear; uncles and aunties and in-laws are regarded as members of one's family, this shows the extended nature of families in Africa, such that the extended family members also have roles to play in the formation of children. Hence the African adage, "it takes a woman to give birth, but it takes the whole village to train a child." The family and the family environment are crucial to the formation of good character. It is because of this that most educationists are in agreement that the home environment plays a vital role in the education of children. Here, habits, behaviours, attitudes, opinions and beliefs are not only caught but also taught. Parents must thus ensure that children are helped to grow in wisdom and not just acquire knowledge; they are to help children become matured individuals and not just grow physically.

The family has something in its favour to be the preeminent place for the formation of people with homosexual orientation or identity. Since they are also called to chastity like every other person and must therefore be schooled in the virtue of self mastery or control that enables them to act with true Christian freedom. John Paul II argues that

Education for chastity is absolutely essential, for it is a virtue that develops a person's authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of respecting and fostering the 'nuptial meaning' of the body. Indeed Christian parents, discerning the signs of God's call, will devote special attention and care to education in virginity or celibacy as the supreme form of that self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality.³⁰³

Parents can help lay the foundation that the moral standards expected of straight people are also expected of them and there will be no room for deviant behaviours. Other institutions will then have something to build on.

Children and youth must be taught that homosexual acts are morally wrong because they are contrary to natural law and do not proceed from the sexual complementarity but pretends to celebrate it. This can be done and should be done even before children are exposed to *peer pressure and other societal pressures*. The loving embrace of parents and their support will go a long way to serve as

³⁰³ Familiaris Consortio 37

insulation for children who may be going through the crisis of understanding who they are and what is happening to them. This is what John Paul II meant when he said that:

Education in love as self-giving is also the indispensable premise for parents called to give their children a clear and delicate sex education. Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person – body, emotions and soul – and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love.³⁰⁴

Educational Institutions

Apart from the family, educational institutions also play important roles here. It is a collaborative venture; hence *Gravissimum Educationis* recommends that “all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right.”³⁰⁵ True education is therefore religious in nature; without this religious basis, it leaves man superficially rooted only in the physical whereas, man is more than matter. Man, as a being with spirit and soul lives with a destiny that true education helps him to attain.

Religious education is, therefore, crucial to the formation of persons totally integrated in themselves and to their society. No wonder at a Conference in 1976, the Christian Council of Nigeria asserts that Religious education is a process which,

...seeks to convey the truth of the Christian faith to individuals so meaningfully that they will become Christians disciples and be built up to do the will of God in every relationship, at home, in the Church, in society at large, and within the changing situations of each generation.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Familiaris Consortio, 37

³⁰⁵ Gravissimum Educationis, 1

³⁰⁶ Institute of Church and Society, “The Continuing role of the Church in Education” Church and Society Papers, no 2. Ibadan: Institute of Church and Society, 1976, p.8

True education must lead to what is otherwise known as AGIL, that is, *Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Latency*. Man is a social animal and living in society demands conformity to certain norms set and valued by the society. Parsons was very instrumental in the conception of AGIL and in summary it means:

- a) *Adaptation*: is the capacity of society to interact with the environment. In this context, I am using it to refer to the ability of individuals in the society to adjust to their environment.
- b) *Goal Attainment*: is the capability to set goals for the future and make decisions accordingly. This deals with the pursuit of a goal or an end and its accomplishment. While individuals have their goals, individual goals must not undermine the collective good.
- c) *Integration*, is otherwise called harmonization of the entire society, and it is a demand that the values and norms of society are solid and sufficiently convergent. In other words, the values and norms of society are reasonable enough to be a unifying factor.
- d) *Latency*, or latent pattern maintenance, challenges society to maintain the integrative elements of the integration requirement above. This means institutions like family and school, which mediate belief systems and values between an older generation and its successor, have in built capacity to impact society.

Applying AGIL to homosexuality shows the inability of some members of the society to be properly socialized, mostly due to poor education. There is also manifest their inability to integrate into a cohesive system with other members of the society such that they often present themselves not only as different, but as opposed to the rest of society, thereby undermining the distinctive culture of the society.³⁰⁷

Consequently, wholistic education is required for all children. Such an education must take care of not only the intellectual aspect of man, but also the affective needs. True education is thus a composite of intellectual and spiritual formation, moral and psychological and social development. It is because of this complex mix that formal Institutions have been set up to meet these human needs. With

³⁰⁷ Cf. Richard Omolade, *A Systems test of effectiveness of elementary schools in Nigeria*. Doctoral Dissertation present at St. John's Univeristy, New York, 2007, p.59

this in mind, The *General Catechetical Directory* asserts that “the definitive aim of Catechesis is to put people, not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ.”³⁰⁸ This means that if this goal is borne in mind in the education of children, even those with homosexual orientation can be helped to be in communion and intimacy with Christ, this will in turn help them to live chaste lives without succumbing to the allures of homosexual acts, often referred to as depraved acts, or acts arising from bad education or base instincts that have not been conformed to the gospel values.

From the foregoing, it should be clear that both the family and educational institutions must be involved in the social, moral and religious education of children in order to help form well integrated persons. Abegunrin supports this when he said that “moral and religious education are primarily aimed at developing in the individual the good qualities that will help to live a good life following the example of Jesus Christ who by the experience of faith and the account of history was full of virtues to the point that even non-believers agree that indeed Jesus Christ is of absolute virtues.”³⁰⁹

One of the benefits of moral and religious education is the mastery that individual cultivates following proper education. This mastery is otherwise to be referred to as self-control that is essential to interpersonal relationship. Hence, Abegunrin asserts that “without self-control, one is bound to disrupt the happiness and order in the society by acting according to the promptings of the human irrational passions; the spirit of tolerance disposes one to accept the human differences in ideology and behaviour which brings about the uniqueness of creation in its varieties.”³¹⁰

In other words, we recognize the differences in human nature and the unique nature of persons with homosexual orientation. But this recognition does not translate to permission to act the way they feel or an approval of the consequent homosexual activities. Moral and religious education is thus vital to help these people develop an informed conscience that will aid them to act in a morally good manner, that is, in accord with right reason, and in fidelity to the demands of their relationship with Christ, who calls them to union with him. In other

³⁰⁸ GCD 80

³⁰⁹ Gabriel Abegunrin. *The Value of moral and religious education in Nigeria: The Contribution of the Church Towards National Development.*” Being Convocation discourse delivered at the Convocation ceremony of St. Peter and Paul Major Seminary, on 14th May, 2015

³¹⁰ Abegunrin, *Ibid.*

words, even homosexuals must have the right moral compass to guide their attitudes and behaviour. This is exactly what is expected of the “straights” also.

The Necessity of Informed Conscience

Conscience (the Latin word, *conscientia*, means ‘knowledge with another’, knowledge within oneself).³¹¹ Conscience is today used to denote the capacity for judging the rightness or actions. Following the intense pluralism of this era, and the attendant relativistic culture, Munoz was lead to assert that “Clearly, when the idea of man is altered and confused, that of his life, his behaviour and morality is also altered.”³¹² A true understanding of human nature is necessary and a well structured moral and religious education is thus an essential tool in this regards. In other words, the formation of a good conscience is good, and everyone is called upon to be a conscience to his society. This means that what is needed is not just a tool we can use when the need arises. Human judgments are not acts of certain faculties, but of the whole person. For it to be effective, therefore, it has to be formed, so that human activities can attain wholeness. Adesina, in his Convocation discourse of 2015 describes formation of the conscience as “a matter of acquiring the necessary skill for making right moral judgment in order to be orientated towards good both for the self and for the larger society.”³¹³ For persons with homosexual orientation, conscience formation helps to make decisions that are properly oriented towards the truth of their nature as revealed by God and of their final destiny.

Prevention

Owing to various reasons, the Boarding system was introduced into education where care of children by parents was transferred to the school and precisely to matrons or housemasters, technically referred to as *in loco parentis*, that is, “in the place of a parent”, supposedly in that environment. This approach was that pupils/students stay in schools’ hostel for the duration of the term and are not under the care of their natural parents. In the School environment the matrons and housemasters fulfilled the functions of parents. As School hostels may have

³¹¹ F.L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone (eds). “Conscience) in *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, 2007

³¹² Munoz L. *Virtues: An Inquiry into moral values for our times*. Sefer Books: Ibadan, 1996

³¹³ Francis Adesina, *Conscience Formation towards integral and National Development*. Being Convocation discourse delivered at the Convocation ceremony of Ss. Peter and Paul Major Seminary, on 14th May, 2015.

hundreds of students, they are further divided into dormitories of about ten or more students depending on the overall population and the available of dormitory space.

The boarding system is often organized along sex line such that boys are housed together and girls together in different dormitories. The system is also found in Universities and colleges today, with a slight difference being that as adults, they tend to fend for themselves whereas at the elementary and secondary schools level the children are taken care of by the hostel staff.

There are advantages and disadvantages such as the removal of family stress and pressure from students, which allows them to focus more on their educational goals. There is also the better use of time, since time is well structured in the hostel for various activities unlike in the home. There is also more focus on learning and regimental life which tends to be a more conducive atmosphere for lifelong habit of discipline and orderliness. Some of the disadvantages include the segregation of boys from girls. Experts have alluded to the fact that this could foster the problem of lack of integral socialization. Since the sexes live apart, the social skills gained by living together with mates and different sexes are often lacking. The boarders are exposed to typical traits inherent in their groups, such as sexual experimentation with their likes in the process of self discovery and understanding, the result in some cases is homosexuality and lesbianism. This is often the case when some are not even born with the orientation. The fact that proximity to only members of their sex is there, makes grooming possible and easy. Special attention must be paid to same sex schools so as to curb the threat of grooming and initiation to homosexuality and lesbianism.

Proactive Education

Effective identification and prevention of homosexual practices must be hinged on proactive education. The provision of what is called “co-education” system of education is a proactive step to socialize students to learn about the other sex, to relate with the other sex and appreciate the complementarity of sexes. In a co-educational environment, those with homosexual orientation can easily be identified, and helped.

Integral to proactive education is laying a solid foundation for moral development and not allow children to pick and choose moral imperatives of their choice as they go along. According to Cardinal Robert Sarah, “We no longer

know what is evil and what is good. There are a multitude of points of view. Today, we call white what we once called black, and vice versa. What is serious, and make no mistake about it, is the transformation of error into a rule of life..."³¹⁴ No wonder, Akinwale argues that according to Aquinas, "the duty of the wise man is refutation of error and teaching of right doctrine. The former is necessary but insufficient without the later."³¹⁵ This type of education requires a collaborative effort from parents, the School and the Church. This led John Paul II to assert that:

Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents.³¹⁶

Homosexuality cannot be eradicated by wishing it away, since not everyone involved cultivates the orientation, some people, it has been said, have certain predispositions. Therefore, to prevent its occurrence in the young who may be lured to cultivate it as a lifestyle, teaching of the right doctrine is of paramount importance. Education, especially age appropriate education is necessary. It is through education, especially moral and religious education that children can be brought to respect moral norms of their society. Hence, sexuality education is not just about understanding the physical changes in boys and girls, it is also about understanding how to respond appropriate based on one's identity as a person created *imago Dei*. "For this reason the Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles. That would merely be an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus leading to the loss of serenity – while still in the years of innocence - by opening the way to vice."³¹⁷

In other words, true education imparted to children, must have both moral and religious content. The family is better equipped to lay the foundation for the

³¹⁴ Cardinal Robert Sarah, Sermon Delivered to Seminarians of the Community of St. Martin, accessed <http://www.courageouspriest.com/cardinal-robert-sarah-divine-justice-fall> on June 13,2015

³¹⁵ Anthony Akinwale, *The beauty of Christian Humanism (3)* Published in the Independent, A Catholic weekly, no 2695, June 7, 2015.

³¹⁶ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* 37

³¹⁷ *Familiaris Consortio*, 37

former, and institutions both religious and educational, are better equipped to play decisive roles in the latter.

Conclusion

Man has been created in the image and likeness of God and destined for union with God. This man is not a sexless person, since male and female God created them. This complementarity of sexes is to be recognized, appreciated and taught to children as early as possible in their formative years. Furthermore, if wholistic or integral chastity is taught as a requirement for everyone, then, persons with homosexual orientation will recognize that their peculiar state is not a license for sexual experimentation or excursion but rather an invitation to respond in a special way according to their way of life to the salvific invitation of God who calls them to a loving relationship with Him. The family must be a place of succor for persons with homosexual orientation, not to condone their homosexual practices, but to offer them guidance in their search for life's meaning, and identity. In the final analysis, education will benefit all, the persons with homosexual inclination, and those who relate with them. The goal is to integrate everyone in a healthy relationship that is truly complementary, life-giving and life-sustaining. This task is not going to be easy, but the parents' education of children demands trust and courage, communion and sharing, as John Paul II noted:

Even amid the difficulties of the work of education, difficulties which are often greater today, parents must trustingly and courageously train their children in the essential values of human life...The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulties are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Familiaris Consortio, 37