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"Not even one person should be abandoned by society"

To the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting March 2, 2007
26 Pages

Commentary begins in indented paragraphs starting on page 4.
References can be found beginning on page 23.

Case 2 - Appeal against the Decision of the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing on Public Complaints about RTHK's Television Programme "Hong Kong Connection" (鏗鏘集) broadcast on the Jade Channel of TVB on 9 July 2006 from 7:35pm to 8:00pm

A member of the public appealed against the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing's (CTEL) decision on 22 complaints concerning the RTHK's television programme "Hong Kong Connection" (鏗鏘集) broadcast on the Jade Channel of TVB on 9 July 2006 from 7:35pm to 8:00pm. The substance of the complaints was that -

- a. the programme was biased towards homosexuality, promoted homosexuality and contained discriminating elements;
- b. it was unsuitable for broadcast at the scheduled time and exerted a bad influence on children and youths;
- c. it was unfair to Christians as a whole as the reference to opposition from a Christian in the programme gave viewers a misleading impression that all Christians were irrational;
- d. it did not mention the undesirable aspects of homosexuality such as AIDS; and
- e. it did not contain a warning caption.

The BA noted that the programme, entitled "同志. 戀人" and featuring the personal experiences of a pair of lesbians and a gay man, was produced by RTHK and broadcast on TVB Jade at 7:35pm-8:00pm during the family viewing hours (FVH), and that the broadcast of the programme was preceded by an advisory caption "本節目涉及同性戀題材 敬請留意" ("Please note that the programme concerned matters relating to homosexuality").

The BA considered the allegations (c) to (e), i.e., that the programme was unfair to Christians; that the programme did not mention the undesirable aspects of homosexuality such as AIDS; and that the programme did not contain a warning caption, unjustified. The BA upheld CTCL's previous decision that these aspects of the complaints were unsubstantiated as -

1. the programme did not contain anything which was misleading and unfair to Christians. The reference to opposition from one individual Christian shown in the programme did not amount to a generalization that all Christians were irrational;
2. the major cause of AIDs was unprotected sex rather than homosexual sex; and
3. a warning caption was provided at the beginning of the programme.

The BA, however, considered that the programme was presented in the form of a documentary and that the contents of the programme about homosexuality and the legalization of homosexual marriage were controversial in many societies including Hong Kong. The programme was therefore a factual programme dealing with matters of public policy or

controversial issues of public importance in Hong Kong and should be subject to the impartiality rule under the relevant code. However, the programme presented only the merits of homosexual marriage and featured only the views of three homosexuals on the legislation of homosexual marriage, rendering the presentation unfair, partial and biased towards homosexuality and having the effect of promoting the acceptance of homosexual marriage.

The BA also considered the programme unsuitable for broadcast within the FVH as children and young viewers watching the programme might have no knowledge of homosexuality and might be adversely affected by the partial contents of the programme if parental guidance was not provided.

RTHK was **strongly advised** to observe more closely paragraph 2 of Chapter 2 (family viewing policy), paragraph 1 of Chapter 7 (likely effects of all material shown on television on children), and paragraphs 2 and 3 of Chapter 9 (impartiality) of the Generic Code of Practice on Television Programme Code.

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting Meeting on Monday, 12 March 2007, at 1:00 pm in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building Agenda

- I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting**
- II. Information paper issued since last meeting**
- III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**
(1:00 pm - 1:05 pm)
- * IV. Issues relating to the editorial independence of the Radio Television Hong Kong and the yardsticks of the Broadcasting Authority in imposing sanctions**
(1:05 pm - 3:05 pm)

Meeting with the Administration and deputations

1. Amnesty International Hong Kong Section Limited (LC Paper No. CB(1)865/06-07(01) - issued on 8 February 2007 - English version only)
2. Spiritual Seekers Society Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(1)892/06-07(01) - issued on 8 February 2007 - English version only)
3. Hong Kong Journalists Association (LC Paper No. CB(1)892/06-07(02) - issued on 8 February 2007 - English version only)

- * V. Outcome of public consultation and subsidiary legislation to be made under the auction arrangements for the spectrum for CDMA2000 services**

(3:05 pm - 3:45 pm)

VI. Report on the Cyberport Project

(3:45 pm - 4:30 pm)

VII. Any other business

(4:30 pm)

* All other Hon Members of the Legislative Council are invited to take part in the discussion of items IV and V. Agenda item V relates to a legislative proposal.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 February 2007

amnesty international
國際特赦組織香港分會有限公司
Hong Kong Section Limited

To the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

30 January 2007

Concern on the judgment of the Broadcasting Authority over an appeal against the decision of the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing on the complaints regarding the RTHK program “Hong Kong Connection” on the topic of homosexuality

On Fairness to Christians

Amnesty International Hong Kong Section (AIHK) welcomes the Broadcasting Authority’s decision upholding the previous CTEL decision that the complaints of the program being unfair to Christians are unjustified; that it was rightly pointed out that the major cause of AIDS was unprotected sex and not homosexual sex; and a warning caption was provided for the program.

However, AIHK disagrees that the program was found partial and biased, and was judged to be unsuitable for family viewing.

The English in this statement by AIHK reads incorrectly. AIHK cannot disagree that the program was found partial and biased, and was judged to be unsuitable for family viewing, for this was the Broadcasting Authority’s ruling. AIHK can, however, suggest that it finds that the program was not partial, biased or unsuitable for family viewing, in opposition to the finding of the Broadcast Authority. However *Caring Friends* finds that using a television

broadcast to encourage young people into homosexuality or normalize homoerotic activities is definitely in violation of family viewing and the interests of Hong Kong. The practice of homosexuality has long been demonstrated to take an average of 20 years from a person's life, even for those primarily having sex with one homosexual partner. (see references) Meanwhile, introducing oral and anal sex, even suggestively, into mainstream society and especially the vulnerable and children is unconscionable, unfair and counterproductive.

On Impartiality

AIHK found that the program was presented with the “personal views” of the interviewees, and has complied with paragraph 4 of Chapter 9 of the Generic Code of Practice on Television Program Standards:

“In achieving due impartiality, the term “due” is to be interpreted as meaning adequate or appropriate to the nature of the subject and the type of program or program segment. Due impartiality does not mean that “balance” is required in the sense of equal time or an equal number of lines in the script being devoted to each view, nor does it require absolute neutrality on every controversial issue. Judgment will always be called for by the licensees.” (Paragraph 4 Chapter 9 of “the Code”)

Caring Friends again finds that AIHK has violated the correct understanding of the English. The phrase, “nor does it require absolute neutrality on every controversial issue” clearly contains the corollary that there are indeed some controversial issues that demand absolute neutrality. If the *Gay Lovers* broadcast is not one of these highly controversial issues then there would be no argument. But the fact is that the material is highly controversial, especially in Chinese culture and this is the prime concern. Limited viewpoints were forced upon a public ill prepared for the content, the direction of the reasoning or the insufficiency of such.

The effects of such a verdict is limiting the major sources of information on sexual orientation to the general public, which is part of the Hong Kong government response to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and to the UN Commission on Human Rights:

LC Paper No. CB(1)865/06-07(01)

(English version only)

“Sexual orientation: this is a sensitive issue that impinges on deeply ingrained values and notions of morality. Our considered view is that, at this stage, self-regulation and education, rather than legislation, are the most appropriate means of addressing discrimination in this area. For this reason, we have sought to address discriminatory attitudes through public education and administrative means, with a view to fostering in the community a culture of greater objectivity, tolerance and mutual respect. Inevitably, these measures will need time to take effect as we cannot expect public

attitudes to change overnight.”(Paragraph 354 (b) on Hong Kong SAR government on Article 2 of the Covenant, 4 March 2004)

AIHK is concerned that this decision will inhibit and result in self-censorship amongst the media when talking about the homosexual community in the future.

Caring Friends wonders where are the examples of self-censorship among the media? Yet if there would actually start to be a balance of views on homosexuality from the public, could this not be a good step? Why is it that the media has demonstrably omitted time and again certain, deeply established views about homosexuality in discussing the origins, merits of homosexual practices and the effects of these? Surely the public discussion of health, scientific, emotional and psychological aspects of homosexuality merits public scrutiny. This would lead to a more knowledgeable and understanding public based on public education about homosexuality. In fact a self-examination by the media seems to be the only route to improvement, as no other mechanism exists to redress inept, biased or libelous reporting, apart from prosecution in court.

This would be in contradiction to the government’s objective of fulfilling its obligation to Article 2 of the ICESCR, especially on addressing discriminatory attitudes toward homosexuals by public education and administrative means, with a view to fostering within the community a culture of greater objectivity, tolerance and mutual respect.

Respect is not garnered by having representatives of the gay community on television suggesting that their actions must be loving, healthy and meritorious apart from producing any published evidence of such. Meanwhile a lengthy and growing list exists of scientific studies that find excessive violence, depression, suicide, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, blood diseases and rampant promiscuity. (see references) Painting only a rosy picture of, “we two members of the same sex love each other and so the public must accept our definition of love, our actions as healthy and all of our sexual behavior is meritorious” is absolute nonsense. Being able to look good on camera and perhaps ensnare some of the unknowledgeable public is not at all the same as producing clean records of health for the majority of gays in Hong Kong.

Before anyone jumps on the above as discriminatory, there is no discrimination in telling the truth so that homosexual persons might appreciate the dangers and risks of their actions. Further, there are often reasons why an individual has entered homosexuality. The discovery of these can lead to limiting or removing the risk of infection. This goal for reducing or eliminating infection must be shared by all of society. To suggest otherwise would definitely be discriminatory to the individuals involved, their partners,

friends, family and society at large.

On Whether the Program is Suitable for Family Viewing

AIHK is concerned that a program with subject matter on homosexuals and homosexual relationships would be judged to be unsuitable for the viewing of children when the HKSAR government has presented to the UN Committee on Rights of the Child on educating the public (including children) on the issue on sexual orientation, and to present public education to the public (including children) on issues on equal opportunity on sexual orientation. The program in question contained no nudity or violence that would be considered unsuitable. The mere mention of the subject matter of homosexuality should not be considered unsuitable. In fact, it could be considered as part of public education that the government said is the “best way forward”:

Indeed, the mention of homosexuality in a seemingly benign form could certainly seem as, “the best way forward”. But who decided this? Which government official approved the broadcast? Was it not a very small group of individuals who thought that they’d like to make the *Gay Lovers* broadcast? Whom did they consult? In what way was this production reflective of the good of society, the way that the government wants to handle the education of the public in the area of homosexuality, and the appropriate use of public funds? Why is it that only a few get to have a voice on this crucial issue?

The latest HIV figures for Hong Kong establish that an individual is more than 35 times more likely to be homosexual and HIV positive than heterosexual with HIV. So who at RTHK really cares about the homosexual persons caught up in this horrible illness? Who is orchestrating a comprehensive plan to reduce this problem? Indeed, how does the promotion of homosexuality on prime time family viewing work **in any way** to reduce the disastrous HIV rate for our homosexual friends and neighbors? If RTHK wants to use a narrow interpretation of homosexuality and propose same-sex ‘marriage’ as though it comes without consequences to all, to whom will it be accountable for the many known deleterious side effects from such an ill-thought, limited view of homosexuality totally lacking in discussion or objectivity. For a broadcast to paint homosexuality as only a matter of feelings is reprehensible, damaging, ill advised and hurtful to all.

There is no ‘right’ to unduly influence children to accept or participate in sexual activities that can be and frequently are deleterious to the participants. The coercive influence upon children whose parents did not supervise their TV viewing is unfair and fails to appreciate human development and the inability of children to grasp and evaluate the potential harm in sexual activities where the risks are not presented.

The HKSAR government is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities for all, considering that all forms of discrimination - including racial discrimination - are wrong. At the same time, we believe that each form of discrimination has its own characteristics, including the particular ways in which they may be manifest in Hong Kong. Therefore, strategies for combating them must be appropriate to the particular form of discrimination that they are intended to address. Thus, in the case of discrimination on the grounds of sex, disability and family status, we have considered the legislative approach to be appropriate. In the case of discrimination on the grounds of race and sexual orientation, our considered view – following extensive research and public consultation - has been that, for the present, a combination of administrative measures and public education offers the best way forward. (Paragraph 90 of the HKSAR report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child “On Promotion of equal opportunities in respect of race and sexual orientation”, 24 September 2004)

Since, “The HKSAR government is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities for all”, is there any just reason why a highly contentious issue in Chinese society, that of same-sex ‘marriage’, should be treated with only the minority view represented? Should the health aspects, scientific concerns, psychological and psychiatric findings be overlooked? Why was the result of same-sex ‘marriage’ in a society, the adoption of children by gays and the effects of homoerotic sex mentioned? And why was the broadcast deliberately intolerant of all other potential changes to the definition of marriage? Why is only one group allowed to question the definition of marriage? For if the definition of marriage is altered for one small group, by what right does the government not change the definition for any and all who want to have their definition used?

Yes, the HKSAR is one of many who find the centuries-old definition of marriage to be foundational to society. It indeed discriminates by placing known and agreed-upon limitations. Marriage is restricted by age, number of persons, family background, consent and gender.

1. Age - you must be a certain age to marry, so you cannot marry a 5-year-old
2. Number of persons - is restricted to two, only two people can be in a marriage together at one time
3. Family Background - you cannot marry a relative, your father, your sister, your cousin or an uncle and so on.
4. Consent - both parties must agree to the marriage and preferably their family and friends and the public should have the opportunity to voice any objections to the marriage and question whether or not it should take place, as in one of the participants is already married, is wanted for a crime, is carrying disease or cannot consummate the marriage through sexual intercourse. Where this is unknown to the other individual intending to marry, this person can stop the wedding.
5. Gender - only a man and a woman can marry

Once any change is made to the above centuries-old rules for marriage, a government will be seen as intolerant if it does not allow all other regulations to be changed. So how can you favor one certain group and only one change in the definition of marriage and not others? On what basis is one group better than another? Once any change is made to the definition of marriage, the remaining tenets are merely subject to the whims of the day.

The proliferation of homoeroticism in society has never been demonstrated to be meritorious. Indeed how is it possible to separate high risk and tolerable aspects of homosexuality? The adoption of same-sex 'marriage' has to necessarily endorse, sponsor and promote homosexual practices dangerous to the participants and counterproductive to the goals of society. Surely Hong Kong is not in need of more sexually transmitted diseases, more cases of HIV among the gay/homosexual community, nor of more young people experimenting with homosexual sex under the assumption that the government approves and blesses this. Let anyone who has evidence otherwise, produce it.

One of the findings of the government study into public attitudes to homosexuality is that very few people said they knew or had LGBT friends or acquaintances. This program helps to redress this situation.

Few Hong Kong people may have friends who have attempted suicide, who have a serious addiction or a rare illness. This does not mean that these members of the public have to be subjected to exposure to members of these groups. Few may have a friend who is abusive or who cheats on his taxes but this does not categorically mean that they need to have one.

AIHK is concerned over the effects of this verdict, which may cause self-censorship of the media, and may limit sexual or other minorities from presenting views that may consider "controversial" to the Broadcasting Authority.

AIHK urges the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting to consider the negative impacts of the recent verdicts, and issue a clear statement to safeguard the media's freedom to work on subject matters that may be considered controversial, but have a positive value on society by promoting tolerance and respect, and reducing discrimination.

The media already has tremendous freedom and privilege. Many cases can be quickly found to establish that the media can and does produce libelous, unresearched, one-sided articles and material which counter the interests of the society, the HKSAR and individuals and groups. Anyone who claims that there are undue restraints on the media, in comparison to the abuse of power and privilege accorded to the media, should at least produce these examples. Those with demonstrable violations of their freedom of speech, their livelihood, their reputation and the cause of justice in society are just itching to be heard at

a fair hearing. No, there is no overt evidence of a negative impact on the media simply because the *Gay Lovers* broadcast was reprimanded for violating community standards.

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To the Panel of Information Technology and Broadcasting

Concern on the judgment of the Broadcasting Authority over an appeal against the decision of the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing on the complaints on RTHK program “Hong Kong Connection” on the topic of homosexuality

The Spiritual Seekers Society is a mainly Christian religious group which supports the rights of minorities such as homosexuals. We hope that they could have rights to marriage as recognition of their love and commitment.

There exists no explicit ‘right’ to self-abuse. Two males may indeed agree to participate in anal sex BUT there is no ‘right’ as such. Participation in a high-risk, detrimental, unhealthy and often life-reducing practice does not meet the criteria of a ‘right’. So exactly which legitimate rights does the Spiritual Seekers Society wish to see implemented? There can be no doubt that homosexual persons have commitments to homosexual practices but these do not automatically coincide with the goals of furthering or developing society through the raising, educating and maturing of children to take upon the many roles required for the functioning of the HKSAR. No evidence finds consensus, or even comes close, that two members of the same gender make better parents by virtue of the fact that they are having sex. On the contrary many written cases record extensive and tragic abuse of adopted or fostered children in the name of justifying the homosexual parenting experiment.

Meanwhile there is solid evidence from thousands of case files that homosexual couples live even shorter lives than homosexuals who are not living in relationship with a partner. Additionally, all homosexual persons in the United States and Scandinavia have already been found to live an average of 20 years less than their heterosexual married counterparts. (see references) Is there really a need to deprive children of the benefit of a parent for so many years just so that these children can experience homosexual parenting?

We welcome the Broadcasting Authority's (BA) decision of upholding the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing's previous rulings that the complaint of the program being unfair to Christians is unjustified, and also rightly pointed out that the major cause of AIDS being unprotected sex and not homosexual sex, and that a warning caption has been included in the program.

It is correct that unprotected sex is a principle cause of AIDS. However, it is also correct, according to the just-released HIV statistics, that an individual is more than 35 times as likely to be HIV positive and homosexual as heterosexual. This shocking imbalance surely illustrates that those in homosexual sex activities are not wearing a condom or alternatively are experiencing a high rate of condom failure or misuse. There exists no value at all in presenting homosexuality as deemed to be a loving and caring act by some without also including the known detriments. This is akin to a program on target practice using guns without any recognition of the fact that guns can be used to injure, maim or kill.

Many variations of homosexual sex activities can be and are highly risky, injurious and dangerous. New HIV cases are not the only concerns. There is a known and documented spike in violence in gay relationships. The suicide rate is much higher among homosexual persons, even in regions that are exceedingly gay-friendly. There are blood diseases; physical, bodily damage; loss of function; sexually transmitted diseases and concerns for rampant promiscuity. Yes, we certainly hold concerns for anyone who attempts to have many sexual partners, regardless of their sexual orientation. But studies, like the Bell and Weinberg study, (See references) have found a vastly higher component within homosexuality pursuing and having sex with hundreds of partners.

Spiritual Seekers Society was puzzled, however, by the decision of the BA that the program was found to be biased. In Hong Kong, many homosexuals are living a secret life because of the negative public attitudes toward them, and the program concerned has given the public an opportunity to take a glimpse on the life of them. The handling of this sensitive subject matter was balanced, and encouraging, as it is not sensational but a very **realistic portrait** of real people.

Putting a nice face on homosexual sex and providing only the pleasant feelings, the kindness of the participants and their own definition of love is clearly biased. True love means a sacrifice of one's own interests for the health and well-being of another. Where were the photos of the many gays in Hong Kong who are HIV positive? Where are the hospital and medical results showing much higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases? Where were the early death statistics? Where did it say that homosexual persons legitimately

cannot give blood or sperm donations as the risk of infection to the recipients is too high? Where were the bodies battered physically or abused through out of the ordinary homosexual practices? (This appeared most recently in South China Morning Post of Thursday, February 15, 2007 entitled, “A third of same-sex partners suffer abuse”. The article pointed out that, “a survey of homosexuals and bisexuals found a third had suffered some form of domestic abuse.” So if SCMP can provide such data, why would RTHK ignore this? And where were the high rates of substance abuse found in the homosexual population?

Yes, the broadcast was a realistic portrait of how real gay people see themselves. BUT in no way was this a realistic portrait of the effects of homosexuality in society or the approach a compassionate society should take. Sure, we would all like to believe that sexual feelings of attraction by two members of the same gender can be productive, healthy and represent maturity in society, but WHERE IS THE EVIDENCE? Sadly the production was much about feelings and far divorced from the reality of documented experiences, even apart from any reservation held by some members of the public. Just looking at homosexuality itself, the sexual behavior of homosexual persons, much needless tragedy, heartache and damage takes place.

This type of program is actually much needed, and should be **encouraged** instead of discouraged. The negative messages against homosexuals based on bias, fear or misunderstanding has dominated the media, and this type of program is much needed in striking a balanced view on homosexuality.

Just where are these negative messages against homosexuals in the media? In the past 30 months, the vast majority of the references to homosexuality in South China Morning Post, certainly in articles, have been vastly positive. Some documentation of, “The negative messages against homosexuals based on bias, fear or misunderstanding has dominated the media” would indeed be useful. But rather this is a highfalutin statement of hyperbole with no substantiation or proof possible in the English newspapers of Hong Kong. Meanwhile HK Magazine, Gmagazine and others are exceedingly gay-promoting. Nonetheless, there’s more than ample evidence of the endorsement, sponsorship, acceptance, over the top treatment, and even going out of its way to find gay-friendly stories from far away lands in South China Morning Post.

We concern that the government has taken a lead in discriminating against homosexuals, and not fulfilling its obligation to create a society of **harmony**. We also like to remind that Hong Kong is an international city, and there are citizens and residents in Hong Kong who are same sex couples married in other countries.

No country gives a driver’s licence to children. This is known as just

discrimination. Presently cases of proposed discrimination involving sexual orientation can be taken to the Hong Kong government's Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Unit and processed there. If Spiritual Seekers wishes to bring up cases of discrimination, they should. But to declare the HKSAR as discriminating rather than merely pursuing its own interests and the stated intentions of members of the public, is again bogus. For where is the discrimination in wanting to protect children and in asking for balance – **MERELY THE FAIR DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC**. How can a relative few demand that the public endorse problematic sexual activities – in total opposition to the interests of the health, stability, longevity and prosperity of the society?

We do think the attitude of tolerance and respect should be taught to **children**. As this program promotes tolerance and respect instead of bias, it should not be considered unsuitable for children. A survey done by the HAB has shown that most people in Hong Kong do not have homosexual friends; we encourage children to watch such programs to gain understanding on homosexuals. How LC Paper No. CB(1)892/06-07(01) (English version only) can we promote understanding when the views of homosexuals are being discouraged or deemed too controversial?

Many people confuse the use of the word 'tolerance'. For example, we tolerate evil. We allow it. We do not endorse it or approve it. When someone slaps us, we can tolerate that if we choose. We are not forced to tolerate someone slapping us. The word 'tolerate' is never used with something good. For example, "We will tolerate the rebate of income tax money". In this there is nothing to tolerate. Everyone can make some use of extra money so this good is something that does not require toleration.

Spiritual Seekers have done the homosexual community a disservice in stating that, "We do think the attitude of **tolerance** and respect should be taught to **children**.", for tolerance indicates that there are some negatives associated with homosexuality, some drawbacks, some problems with the homosexual life and children should simply put up with these, should not be provided with the inconsistencies in the homosexual life or worry about their classmates who experience internal problems as a result of their homosexual practices or leanings.

Up till this point The Spiritual Seekers Society has found only merits for homosexuality. But perhaps now the reality of a bigger picture, more specific problems, dilemmas within homosexuality itself apart from public opinion, and the problem of foisting this on to children is beginning to dawn. For indeed there are many problems and handling this simply as, "Well we must really tolerate and put up with and look the other way and smile at all that is going on

in homosexuality”, is a grave injustice for all. Rather we do need to identify what is taking place and address the actual concerns.

If the **subject matter** were on whether we should legalize same sex ‘marriage’, then an opportunity should be given to those who are against the proposal. But that is not the case for the present program. The segment of the program which mentioned same sex marriage was presented in a neutral manner. The interviewees’ wishes should be considered expressions of *personal feelings*. The mentioning of the option of registered marriage in other countries should also be considered to be presentation of *fact*.

In fact the kindly, benign intention of slipping in a same-sex ‘marriage’ presentation to open the door ever-so-slightly did not happen to pass without public attention or scrutiny. But if the public was not ready for this limited and biased approach, could this not have been determined in advance? Could not the government or public agencies have been consulted for their wisdom? No, in fact the issue of same-sex ‘marriage’ has always been one of poor research, of feelings of some homosexuals – not all homosexuals by any means, and of the workings of a minority of individuals and groups to delude society or avoid a democratic vote. A proper, rational discussion of the pros and cons, the needs of society, the health of individuals, the effect of sponsoring and endorsing homosexuality on the health care budget, on the health of individuals and especially the well-being of children has always been foregone in other countries. May it not be so in Hong Kong. Simply because other nations have not consulted their population in order to change the centuries-old, accepted definition of marriage does not mean that Hong Kong must act like lemmings and make a pointless, counterproductive or detrimental plunge as well.

Negative comments on minorities, especially sexual minorities, should be discouraged as it promotes disharmony and disrespect toward minorities. And we would not consider it a balanced view when a positive presentation of homosexuals has to be coupled with negative and insulting comments on them.

Why are such ill-thought comments tolerated on a website? This TV broadcast of *Gay Lovers* was obviously not aired live. Therefore any recorded comments would have to have passed a review of standards. This is the prime issue here that the comments made on the broadcast did not pass societal standards. How can anyone suggest that comments on sexual minorities would necessarily have to have promoted disharmony and disrespect? Certainly if someone states that they were ‘born gay’ and someone else does not believe that a person can be ‘born gay’ then there is room for disharmony but not necessarily disrespect. It is fraudulent to suggest that everyone in society must agree with everyone else. Is there not some disharmony between the rich and the poor, employer and employee, the MTR and passengers wanting to get a seat? There will always be some disharmony and this cannot be avoided. But

that pre-recorded comments for TV broadcast had to be oppositional, uncaring, offensive or without working toward resolution and improvement of conditions and assistive to the participants is unfounded.

We urge the Panel of Information and Broadcasting to take a stand in upholding the **freedom** of press and the freedom of expression of RTHK in producing positive programs on controversial topics, and to send a clear message to the public that more programs like this are **encouraged** for public education.

There's no problem in programs like this and they can be useful - provided that the broader base of society is included. The problem all along comes in ensuring that a narrow, ill-researched, poorly thought out and exclusive presentation does not become imposed upon the public at their own expense and with potential to indoctrinate children who cannot have sufficient awareness to recognize the issues.

1 February 2007

The Spiritual Seekers Society can be reached by contacting its president Mr Szeto, Lok-tin Alexander at 6171 7271 or alexander.szeto@gmail.com

SUBMISSION ON BROADCASTING AUTHORITY ACTION ON GAY LOVERS PROGRAMME

1. The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) is seriously concerned about a serious advice issued by the Broadcasting Authority (BA) to Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) on January 20th 2007. The serious advice related to an RTHK programme on gay lovers, which the BA considered to be "unfair, partial and biased towards homosexuality and having the effect of promoting the acceptance of homosexual marriage".

2. The HKJA is concerned that a programme which presents in a neutral manner the views of homosexual couples and individuals should be considered to be biased towards homosexuality. Indeed, the authority ruled that the programme violated paragraphs 2 and 3 of chapter 9 of the Generic Code of Practice on Television Programme Standards.

RTHK could produce a program on polygamy and feature men who currently have more than one wife. As Hong Kong has fewer men than women, this would seem to be advantageous to some. However women should justly and fairly be allowed to comment. Focusing only on the wishes of some men would be seen as discriminatory. So why is the homosexual community accorded special privilege as though it is not a component within the larger society?

3. Chapter 9 deals with accuracy, impartiality and fairness. It requires reporting to be "dispassionate and give viewers an even-handed account of events". It also notes that due impartiality "requires the licensees to deal even-handedly when opposing points of view are presented in a programme or programme segment."

At issue is that the program was not at all even-handed, without any particular reason for this, without repentance, without really caring about deeper needs of those in the homosexual community. Why should a public broadcaster not also be able to be caring about the significant detrimental experiences within a homosexual life apart from society's impressions? Where were the facts regarding the calamities common to homoerotic sexual activities? To be sure, why was the broadcast of *Gay Lovers* reduced to a matter of feelings of the few participants while ignoring the many greater real questions of origin, damage, longevity, illness, violence, depression and suicide? Surely the public deserves more professionalism than this.

4. However, at the same time the code does not require "absolute neutrality" on every controversial issue (paragraph 4). It also notes that "it is not always possible for principal opposing viewpoints to be reflected in a single programme or programme segment" and that "it is not always necessary to ensure that in a single programme or programme segment all sides have an opportunity to speak" (paragraph 6).

See page 5, paragraph 4 of this report.

5. What is far more important is that impartiality and fairness take place over a period of time, as reflected in paragraph 6. The HKJA therefore considers that the BA has adopted an overly narrow interpretation of the code and has thereby exerted undue pressure on RTHK's editorial independence - a right which should lie with the broadcaster if media freedom is to be upheld.

Can the HKJA actually have any role at all in ensuring that, "impartiality and fairness take place over a period of time"? CERTAINLY NOT! As RTHK has been unabashed, unrepentant and impenitent about the *Gay Lovers* broadcast and clearly only wishes to represent the narrow views presented, is there any hope for impartiality and fairness to arise – even though public money is being used and RTHK should be accountable to the public? If RTHK went ahead without public consultation as it did, then refuses to admit any wrongdoing at all and cannot appreciate the larger picture in this issue – that of reducing HIV statistics and sexually transmitted diseases among the homosexual community, violence, depression, suicide, promiscuity and psychological difficulties, what hope is there realistically for either progress for individuals in homosexuality or fair treatment for the public? In fact did RTHK really hope to make homosexuality more accessible and improve

relations in society by avoiding or overlooking the many complications within the homosexual life? Room clearly exists for handling this whole topic better but HKJA certainly cannot be much of a voice when it has provided no clear mechanism for achieving the mandate of fair and impartial coverage, let alone bring this to pass.

6. We also ask whether the BA has misunderstood the nature of the programme, which focused on the concerns of homosexual people. It was meant to bring to light their concerns, not to advocate their views. This is a common documentary technique, which would be destroyed if rigid adherence to impartiality was imposed. We question what the public reaction would be if RTHK broadcast a programme focusing on heterosexual couples, and the broadcaster sought a comment from homosexuals. Programming does not work that way.

The *Gay Lovers* broadcast both presented concerns AND advocated the views of the homosexual participants. What the broadcast intended and what actually happened in the minds of the public are obviously the issues here. Having five Hong Kong homosexual people say that they want to see same-sex 'marriage' is advocating their views on a highly controversial topic. So what say did the millions of Hong Kong citizens have on the broadcast? Virtually none. So countless numbers of Hong Kong citizens were not represented at all. Broadcasters should be able to determine which views are appropriate. If indeed comments were aired from homosexuals on heterosexual couples then the public would judge whether or not the comments were fair. That's the way that programming works. You don't simply throw out comments and expect that the public must accept them without thinking. Again it would have been helpful for RTHK to have consulted with the public ahead of time. However the level of adamancy from RTHK would leave open the possibility that it sees itself as beyond reproach and not accountable to the persons who fund it.

Caring Friends calls upon RTHK to create a TV broadcast to present the larger picture of the questions of same-sex 'marriage' and of homosexuality in society. This time the wisdom of the public and public agencies should be sought. There are many opinions and much research has been done. The public should have this available so that there can be more understanding of what homosexuality entails, so that gays are not ostracized, so that public standards are identified and so that the public is actually involved democratically in these issues. Simply showing gays as nice people does not get to the heart of the reasons for discrimination, if indeed that was a hope of the producers. Rather than being an isolated presentation of a few voices, *Caring Friends* calls on RTHK to include many perspectives toward creating more understanding and harmony in society. While this is a big task, RTHK surely sees itself as competent to address this.

7. The HKJA is also seriously concerned about the intervention of the Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology, Joseph Wong, in the controversy. The policy bureau issued a press release on January 21st giving the impression that Mr. Wong was summoning the Director of Broadcasting, Chu Pui-hing, to explain himself after RTHK issued a statement on the issue. We LC Paper No. CB(1)892/06-07(02) (English version only) believe that RTHK has every right to express its views, and that there was no intention on its part not to comply with the BA's ruling.

8. This case also highlights the issue of whether the BA - as it is now constituted - can faithfully reflect the range of views within society. It consists of 12 members, including three from government. It includes only one member who has worked previously in the broadcasting industry. The complaints committee, which considered the complaint against RTHK, consists of six Broadcasting Authority members and five co-opted members. The authority refuses to reveal anything about the co-opted members, citing privacy concerns.

Clearly a public review agency must operate freely of coercion and there's no immediate problem with individuals being unnamed. For once an individual is known, he or she can be persuaded through a wide range of means, any of which is likely not in the public's interest. *Caring Friends* finds no just reason why the private lives of Broadcast Authority members have any direct bearing on their ability to carry out public duties. Over time the public can certainly monitor all decisions so this arrangement is not without checks and balances.

9. We believe it is time for the government to rethink how it constitutes the Broadcasting Authority and its committees and whether they should continue to operate behind closed doors on issues which are clearly in the public interest.

This is a strange request from HKJA which itself operates behind closed doors on reviews of complaints against the media. In a case that I brought to the attention of HKJA over a period of four months in 2005, I was not allowed to meet with any HKJA staff or join in sessions to discuss the complaint. I was limited to making phone calls and often the person responsible was not even in Hong Kong. Perhaps the HKJA itself should consider its own policy to operate behind closed doors and the effectiveness of that. My complaint was never properly adjudicated, in large part because the HKJA lacked transparency.

10. We therefore call on the government to take the opportunity, as is likely when a new Communications Authority is formed, to ensure that a full range of Hong Kong viewpoints is included on the body. This can be achieved by allowing community organisations to nominate representatives - for confirmation by the Legislative Council.

11. The government should also open up all meetings of the authority and its committees, with closure only allowed if commercial secrets are being discussed. In such cases, the authority should give valid reasons for the need to go into closed session.

12. The democratisation of the broadcasting oversight system should go ahead, to ensure

that the full spectrum of views in Hong Kong is represented, and to ensure that the authority no longer goes down the road it has just taken - of interfering in the editorial independence of broadcasters.

COMMENTARY by *Caring Friends*

A geographical and political unit such as Hong Kong has a duty and obligation to clearly define how it wishes to govern itself, establish and enforce regulations and laws for the benefit of the state and its people. No government benefits from being forced to adopt measures against the interests of all. The *Gay Lovers* broadcast dealt with a highly contentious topic, that of any two people declaring that sex alone must be of benefit to the state where they live. However, Hong Kong's representatives and definitely its people in just democratic fashion must openly and freely decide which living and social arrangements to sponsor, endorse and bless and which ones it cannot. This is inherent for the life, prosperity, viability and freedom of the state. A major goal for any government is the orderly, proper development and care of children to maximize their maturation and future contribution to the ideals which best benefit the state. This should not be manipulate, obfuscated or unduly influenced by anyone.

Caring Friends finds many irregularities and oversimplifications in the *Gay Lovers* broadcast. The issues are far more complex than merely having gay couples state that they feel sexually attracted and wish to marry. The state itself must not be forced into acquiescing that sexual activities for their own sake must automatically have benefit for the individuals and for the government. Take for example a room full of adults. Each one could pledged to have sex with all other adults in the room and be very sincere in their intention but no obvious benefit would come of this for the state of Hong Kong. In fact there could be and likely would be definite harms arise from such an arrangement – even with the stated and signed agreement of all of the participants.

The principle topics in the *Gay Lovers* TV broadcast were discrimination against homosexual persons and secondly the desire of gay and lesbian couples to marry. However the material was handled in a circuitous and incomplete fashion in that the actual objections that the public holds to homosexuality were not clearly stated, nor why these objections are invalid. Actually the broadcast seemed to imply that all forms of homosexual practice have to be good merely because the participants agree. Certainly if one of the goals of the TV program was to reduce discrimination against homosexuals, then the reasons for the discrimination, how it has arisen and the problems it creates should be covered. This cannot effectively be done simply with comments from those who feel that they have been discriminated against. The goal for

harmony in society is commendable but forcing people to adopt beliefs that they do not understand or cannot support, and this with their own tax dollars, is duplicitous, coercive and unconscionable. The fact that RTHK finds that there could have been nothing wrong with its presentation calls into question how the public is being served, the importance of everyone having a say in the democratic ruling of the region of Hong Kong and the just treatment of all.

Overlooking the vast body of information about the origin of homosexuality certainly simplified the presentation. But was this helpful? For apart from knowing how someone has entered homosexuality how is the public to better understand this condition? If RTHK wanted to generate sympathy and understanding, should not the latest information on the development of homosexuality in an individual have been presented? Should not the actual realities of older gays have been included? Homosexuality looks attractive to young participants but this often changes as individuals gain new perspectives from years of homosexual practices.

Perhaps RTHK staff is unaware of the huge amount of research and data on the effects of homosexual sex. Here again it would have helped if knowledgeable individuals and agencies had been consulted. For while we can wish everyone well in society, the results of long term participation in homosexual sex have grave ramifications for psychology, psychiatry, health, disease, blood conditions, viability and longevity, violence and injury, depression and outlook, suicide and promiscuity. While the *Gay Lovers* broadcast was short, no mention was made of the many known and documented shortcomings, dilemmas, injury and damage due to homosexual activities. This begs the question. Was RTHK staff unaware of these or did they avoid looking at the major issues in homosexuality? We all like a nice story where all is peace and love but when this is not the reality, who should be responsible for ensuring that a full and correct view is provided? *Caring Friends* trusts and hopes that such a corrective and balanced broadcast will be a part of RTHK as a responsible component of HKSAR.

It would be remiss not to make comment on homosexual persons for the bulk of this presentation has been about homosexuality rather than the individual practices of the homosexual condition. Many in homosexuality make the claim that they were born that way. (See references) In fact this is so common that often it is believed that there exists evidence for this view. But any evidence is only cursory. In fact there are no replicated scientific studies to point to a genetic origin for homosexuality. If there were, homosexual proponents would readily be able to quote these.

Homosexual persons are, by and large, just like anyone else, and often

indistinguishable from anyone else. In fact they generally have to reveal their sexual orientation in order for anyone to know. A life in homosexuality often has specific concerns connected to homosexual practices. Certainly these people should not be unfairly discriminated against but by the same token neither should there be a blanket endorsement of their actions, views or demands. The realities of the homosexual experience, in all details, is necessary rather than simply urging the public not to make any critical remarks, assessments or analysis.

Clearly anguish exists in a homosexual life for the majority of participants – even apart from anything society says or does. The nature of the activities, the deliberate attempt to avoid conception of new human life; the high risk components; the physical, emotional, mental and health damage; and the overall avoidance or failure to mature into a manhood or womanhood complimentary to society's development all can be and are sources of anguish for anyone in homosexuality. In the English version of *Gay Lovers*, the gay male provided a rare, candid statement in saying, "it's not easy at all for a gay man to find a steady partner". This was to illustrate the importance of his steady relationship with one male partner. Of course the obvious corollary of this that the greater majority of homosexual males pursue highly promiscuous sex was left out. (See references) Again, providing only positive details demeans the public's intelligence and makes for a production of limited use, evident bias and questionable quality. The English version went on to state of the two gay males, "We are husbands to each other", definitely not a family-friendly statement that parents want their children to ponder or emulate.

An anonymous, apparently experienced gay male wrote a letter into SCMP that was published on September 2, 2005. He stated: "As a gay person myself, I can say that being gay is in every way as crippling to one's life as a physical disability – in fact, more so, as one is destined to be deprived of a normal family life. Writing about himself and all of the homosexuals he knows, he states, "we all have to deal with the same unspeakable anguish and stigma as long as we live." He also expresses that he has made many attempts to leave homosexuality but has been unsuccessful, although he'd like to succeed. Yet some have left homosexuality through finding the roots of their condition and the ability to confront these issues. Yet overwhelmingly these ex-gay voices are muted, usually by the same media that sees same-sex 'marriage' as some sort of an answer. Yet the publication in SCMP of the gay male's lament of not ever having a normal family life indicates that same-sex 'marriage' is not the decisive solution many purport it to be. The problem with the *Gay Lovers* broadcast is that it avoided many of the questions. Hopefully this will be redressed in future TV presentations for why should RTHK be immune from rectifying obvious shortfalls, inadequacies and limited information?

Dr. Joseph Nicolosi heads up the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, an American organization of more than 1,100 therapists and counselors. In his book, *A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality*, he writes: "The scientists whose research supposedly proved the "born that way" theory now agree it is a myth." The scientists, "admit that it is the addition of environmental (that is, parental, social, and experiential) influences that beckon the individual through that door to be confirmed as homosexual." Of course a part of this is the possibility of introducing youth to homosexuality just as they are introduced to video games, alcohol, or body piercing. Certainly only some are vulnerable to this suggestion BUT will RTHK have any responsibility for acting as an implanter of the suggestion into Hong Kong youth? Probably not.

So why is there an interest in people leaving homosexuality? This is a human freedom of choice of one's associates and type of life. Those who leave homosexuality cannot contract the wide variety of infections, including HIV, from homosexual sex. Many find a peace of mind and an unexpected emotional improvement as well. Of course anyone can leave homosexuality for a period of time and re-enter if they so choose. However no healthy society exists where persons are damaged into homosexuality, experience of the many hardships in the homosexual life and then exit this world through an early death. (See references)

There is far more material than can fit into a summary review of the *Gay Lovers* broadcast. In the interests of Hong Kong and all of its citizens I hope that the additional documentation is allowed to come forward. Surely the air for legitimate research, actual case studies, the full range of homosexual experiences and the potential for leaving homosexuality for those who so choose has been unduly stifled for a long time. *Caring Friends* looks toward a time of the fresh air of open and sincere discussion rather than that the public continues to be fed platitudes and mechanical propaganda.

Hong Kong has a marvelous opportunity before it to realistically assess the situation of its residents in homosexuality and propose effective solutions rather than merely submitting to the adoption of same-sex 'marriage' as if it has some magical power to reverse the true dilemmas and actual harms within the homosexual condition.

Yours truly
Gordon Truscott
Chairman
Caring Friends

The following are included without prejudice to illustrate a sampling of the serious health hazards and homosexual practices that endanger the participants. These present a clear wakeup call for all of society to learn more about homosexuality in order to minimize damage to its participants and emotional, mental and health cost to Hong Kong citizens.

REFERENCES

In a study of 6,574 obituary notices for homosexual persons taken from 18 different U. S. gay publications, the average age at death was 42, but it was 39 for those who died of AIDS. Only 9% of homosexual males reached age 65, but 2% if they died of AIDS. This compares with 80% of married, heterosexual males reaching age 65, a massive difference in longevity when comparing life styles (p. 252). (Cameron, P., Playfair, W. and Wallum, S, *The Longevity of Homosexuals: Before and After the AIDS Epidemic*, Omega: Journal of Death and Dying, Vol. 29, #3, 1994).

Hong Kong's AIDS Consultant, Dr. KH Wong

http://www.info.gov.hk/aids/english/surveillance/latest_stat.htm#

Homosexual relationships, are usually much shorter lived than heterosexual relationships. A major study by the Kinsey Institute revealed that 78% of male homosexual "partnerships" (relationships entered into with an intent of commitment) lasted less than three years. Only 12% lasted five years or longer. (Bell and Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women*, (New York, Simon and Shuster, 1978, p.314). Certainly, this shows a pattern of broken relationships that must be painful for many (and affects children,

The Kinsey study also found that 75% of homosexual males surveyed, had more than 100 partners in their lifetime. These many partners could not meet the needs for security, trust, faithfulness, understanding, sympathy, patience, listening, or meaningful friendship.

Gay authors, Dr. David Island and Patrick Letellier, in their book, *Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them*, propose that much more violence exists in homosexual relationships than in male-female coupling. They call for greater help for gays who have been battered by their partner, as Letellier was.

Homosexual men are six times more likely to have attempted suicide than are heterosexual men. (Bell and Weinberg, *Homosexualities*, Table 21.12).

Studies find that between 25 and 33% of homosexual men and women are alcoholics. (Robert J. Kus, Alcoholics Anonymous and Gay American Men, *Journal of Homosexuality*, Volume 14, No.2 (1987), p.254). Abuse of alcohol, drug use, smoking and other high risk activities frequently accompany homosexuality.

Statistics give evidence of widespread sexual compulsion among homosexual men. The Kinsey study cited above revealed that 43% of the homosexual men surveyed estimated that they had had sex with 500 or more partners; 28% with 1,000 or more partners. (Bell and Weinberg, *Homosexualities*, p.308).

The same Kinsey study revealed that homosexual men have to a great extent separated sexuality from relationship. The survey showed 79% of the respondents saying that over half of their sexual partners were strangers. Seventy percent said that over half of their sexual partners were people with whom they had sex only once. (Bell and Weinberg, *Homosexualities*, p. 308-9). This reveals deep dissatisfaction and disregard to the harm and injury to self and other gays.

In a survey reported in the official publication of the American Public Health Association, 78% of the gay respondents reported that they had been affected by a sexually transmitted disease at least one time, and this in an era when there were far fewer sexually transmitted diseases. (Enrique T. Rueda, *The Homosexual Network*, Old Greenwich, Conn., The Devin Adair Company, 1982, p.53).

Condoms do not protect fully protect users against HIV and fail as much as 15% of the time each year. In four years a person has a higher risk of having a condom failure and contracting any illness than in remaining healthy. Condoms, even when used 100% of the time, fail to give adequate levels of protection against many non-HIV sexually transmitted diseases such as Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia, Herpes, Genital Warts and others. The only safe sex is, apart from abstinence, mutual monogamy with an uninfected partner. (Sex, Condoms, and STDs: What We Now Know. Medical Institute for Sexual Health. 2002)

Up to June 2004, over 70% of all AIDS diagnoses in Canada in males, were in homosexual men (13,019 out of 19,238). Meanwhile, 60% of all positive HIV tests are found in homosexual men. This contrasts with just over 15% of both male and female positive HIV tests, together, which are due to

heterosexual contact. (Public Health Agency of Canada. HIV and AIDS in Canada. November 2004).

A British study found that 60% of homosexual men engage in anal sex, frequently without condom and even, if they know that they are HIV positive. (Mercer CH et al. Increasing prevalence of male homosexual partnerships and practices in Britain 1990-2000. AIDS. 2004; 18: 1453-8) As a result, a large number of diseases are associated with anal intercourse, many of which are rare or even unknown in the heterosexual population such as: anal cancer, Chlamydia trachomatis, Cryptosporidium, Giardia lamblia, Herpes simplex virus, HIV, Human papilloma virus, Isospora belli, Microsporidia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and C and others. (www.netdoctor.co.uk; www.gayhealthchannel.com). The risk of contracting HIV increases significantly among those engaging in anal intercourse.

Health Canada (2000), in a study of the high risk behaviours of young gay men in Vancouver, found that 40% of them had engaged in “barebacking” or unprotected receptive anal intercourse in the past year. This is alarming as a study conducted in south Florida, found that 75% of HIV positive men, who knew they were infected, engaged in unsafe sex anyway (in Jonas, August 27, 1997).

Another study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine, showed that only 7% of HIV positive men were voluntarily notified of their infection by a sex partner (in *The War Against the Family*, Stoddart Publishing Co., Toronto William Gairdner, 1992, 402).

A 1982 study by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control found that gay people with AIDS had an average of more than 1,100 lifetime partners.

(Heterosexual) Marriage is associated with greater happiness, less depression, less alcohol abuse and less smoking. Marriage gives a beneficial effect in terms of reducing alcohol abuse, especially for men, and reducing depression for both men and women. (Gardner J, Oswald A, Is it Money or Marriage that Keeps People Alive? August 2002. Wilson CM and Oswald A: How Does Marriage Affect Physical and Psychological Health? A Survey of the Longitudinal Evidence.

Far higher rates of promiscuity are observed even within ‘committed’ gay relationships than in heterosexual marriage. In Holland, male homosexual relationships last 1.5 years, and gay men have an average of eight partners a year outside of their supposedly “committed” relationships. (XyWrite M, et al. The contribution of steady and casual partnerships to the incidence of HIV

infection among homosexual men in Amsterdam. AIDS. 2003; 17: 1029-38.) Gay men have sex with someone other than their primary partner in 66% of relationships within the first year, rising to 90% of relationships after five years. (Harry J. Gay Couples. New York. 1984)

In an online survey among nearly 8,000 homosexuals, 71% of same-sex relationships lasted less than eight years. Only 9% of all same-sex relationships lasted longer than 16 years. (2003-2004 Gay & Lesbian Consumer Online Census; www.glcensus.org) This lack of continuity with biological parents, the frequent breakup of the gay couple charged with their care, and having promiscuous gay adults as role models, greatly inhibits and limits child development.

In Canada's debate of same-sex marriage, a Compas poll found 66% of Canadians opposed to enacting same-sex marriage legislation just prior to the government adopting it. (Same-Sex: Public Embraces Gay Rights, Opposes Gay Marriage, Advocates National Referendum, Feb. 2, 2005, www.compas.ca)

The division of the U. S. Public Health Department with a view to health for everyone on the planet is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Their 2006 website, <http://www.emedicine.com/med/topic2342.htm>, finds that "Homosexual men have the highest rate of sexually transmitted diseases."

May we all work toward understanding the realities in homosexuality, the misconceptions, dangers and pitfalls and labor to reduce suffering, disease and distress.

END