

Open Hearts, Open Doors:
How Catholic Campus Ministers Approach Lesbian and Gay College Students
by
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Honors in Studies in Religious Worldview and Sexuality
from the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
at the University of Michigan

2012

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Acknowledgments

I am incredibly grateful to several people who helped me to complete my thesis. First and foremost, my three advisors, Dr. Brian Malley, Dr. David M. Halperin, and Dr. Terence McGinn tirelessly supported me at every stage of my work. Without their guidance, I could not have hoped to undertake so immense a journey, nor would the process have proved nearly so rewarding. Next, Jennifer Mills, MPH, assisted me with the analysis of my data by running statistical tests, without which my results would not have been possible. Finally, I am hugely indebted to the campus ministers that generously took the time to fill out my survey, yielding the data upon which this entire project was based.

Abstract

With this study, I investigated the attitudes and approaches of Catholic campus ministers toward lesbian and gay students on American college campuses. My methodology included sending out a survey to campus ministers across the United States that asked them a series of questions about (1) the characteristics of the college or university where they work, (2) how they prioritize the importance of Catholic doctrine about the sinfulness of homosexual acts against the Church's desire to welcome lesbian and gay people when they talked with lesbian and gay students, and (3) whether they believed lesbian and gay students have distinct needs from straight students. The data indicate that most campus ministers prioritize talking about the Church's desire to welcome gay and lesbian people and comparatively deprioritize discussion of the sinfulness of homosexual acts. Regarding whether lesbian and gay students have distinct needs from those of straight students, campus ministers are divided, with approximately half (49%) believing that lesbian and gay students have distinct needs. This study also suggested how these results varied according to several other factors, including whether a university where a campus minister works is public or Catholic, the proportion of the student body that is Catholic, and the campus ministers' perception of the political beliefs of their colleges' student bodies.

Catholic campus ministers at colleges and universities have the significant job of helping Catholic students deepen their faith. One particular group of people that Catholic campus ministers face unique challenges in caring for is lesbian and gay students. Catholic doctrine states that homosexual acts are sinful. At the same time, homosexuality is slowly becoming more widely accepted in the United States, as demonstrated by the growing number of states that have legalized gay marriage. Because of this conflict between public sentiment and doctrine, Catholic campus ministers face a unique challenge as they try to minister to lesbian and gay Catholics.

In their mission to promote Catholicism and to help Catholic students maintain their faith, Catholic campus ministers play a vital role in the Church's efforts to keep faithful followers. If a person who identifies as gay or lesbian believes that being Catholic means that he or she cannot be in a sexual relationship, he or she could face cognitive dissonance or a potentially very difficult decision. Some people, when presented with that option, may well choose Catholicism over sex. Choosing to be celibate, however, constitutes a significant sacrifice for most people, and many people choose to engage in sexual and romantic relationships with same-sex partners. If people consistently decide to leave the Church because of their sexual orientation, the Church will lose followers. Additionally, if people perceive the Church as "homophobic," it may not just lose those who decide they want to have homosexual sex, but also anyone who supports gay marriage or who believes that supporting it is more imperative than belonging to the Catholic Church.

It is also possible that someone may choose to disobey Church doctrine and remain Catholic. Many people try to maintain their Catholic identity while pursuing homosexual relationships or supporting people who do. For those people, the policies of campus ministry

programs may make a difference. Whether or not a campus ministry program insists on a strict understanding and application of Church doctrine could be a deciding factor in whether or not an individual identified as lesbian or gay chooses to remain Catholic in college.

I am heavily involved at St. Mary Student Parish, the parish connected with Catholic Campus Ministry at the University of Michigan- Ann Arbor. The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor has a very large number of Catholic students, and therefore, the Catholic Church provides a relatively large amount of resources to St. Mary Student Parish. Additionally, St. Mary Student Parish is run by Jesuits, an order of Catholic priests which emphasizes education and careful spiritual discernment to make important choices. Because of my experiences with the campus ministry offered at St. Mary Student Parish, I have specific expectations and biases about how campus ministry should be run.

One of the particular programs I am involved in at St. Mary Student Parish is its ministry for lesbian and gay students. My involvement in this ministry made me decide to research how Catholic campus ministers at other schools approach ministry to lesbian and gay students. In order to counteract potential biases resulting from my familiarity with St. Mary Student Parish, I started off my research into Catholic lesbian and gay ministry with conversations at three different campus ministry programs, which prefer to remain anonymous, and one Catholic bishop. I used the connections of campus ministers at St. Mary Student Parish to select the campus ministers that I talked to, and I crafted questions, listed in Appendix A, to explore their campus ministries' approaches to lesbian and gay ministry. I intentionally selected schools that used different approaches to lesbian and gay ministry from St. Mary Student Parish. While the three ministries and the bishop cannot be considered a representative sample of campus

ministries across the country, my conversations with them helped to broaden my understanding of the issues such ministries face when engaging with gay or lesbian students.

A few common themes emerged from these interviews and allowed me to craft three more specific central research questions: how likely are Catholic campus ministry programs to present the Church's teachings on homosexuality in their entirety to students? What factors do they perceive as having the greatest influence over their approaches to lesbian and gay ministry? Do these programs see a need for a distinct lesbian and gay ministry on college campuses?

I hypothesized that campus ministers tend to avoid emphasizing the Church's teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual acts. The ministers I talked to discussed the fact that all students sin, and many commit sins related to sexuality. They believed that if they actively condemned all forms of sexual sin, it would scare the majority of their students away. They believed that first and foremost, it was their responsibility to welcome students, and they did not see it as their business to ask students about their sexual lives, unless the students chose to talk about it.

My second hypothesis was that campus ministers perceive their local bishop as having a significant amount of power over their programs for lesbian and gay students. The campus ministers I talked to all referred to their bishops as people who enforce the application of Church doctrine. They also perceived their bishop as someone who could potentially shut down their campus ministry. These perceptions are in line with the job description of a Catholic bishop, and therefore, it seems likely that these beliefs would be widespread.

Finally, I hypothesized that campus ministers would not generally see a specific lesbian and gay ministry as necessary. The campus ministers I spoke with said that, in general, they perceived their campuses as quite welcoming for lesbian and gay students, and that included their church. The campus ministers believed that lesbian and gay students could just be involved

in their more general programming because of the welcoming attitudes of students. In this study, I set out to find out how widespread these observations were in the United States.

Literature Review

There are three areas of research that relate to how campus ministers might approach ministry to lesbian and gay students. On the institutional level of the Church, the Vatican has released several doctrinal statements about homosexuality over the last 30 years. Scholars have analyzed this Church doctrine on homosexuality and how it relates to the history of Christianity and sexuality. The definition of Church doctrine is not completely agreed upon by theologians and philosophers, but for the purpose of this paper, it means any statement about Catholic faith or morality made by a Catholic bishop and contained in a document approved of by the Vatican. Catholic doctrine instructs Catholic people how to behave, and therefore could be relevant to understanding the behavior of Catholic campus ministers. Other research has looked at how Catholics apply that doctrine in the United States, examining organizations that identify as Catholic and how they relate to the institutional Church. The approaches used by these organizations could potentially influence campus ministers, who may choose either to reproduce these approaches or to depart from them. Regarding campus ministry in particular, scholars have described how university staff and students handle the intersection of homosexuality and Catholicism on Catholic campuses. The research done on these Catholic schools has focused on small samples of students and schools, but may indicate wider patterns in the United States.

Doctrinal Background

Catholic campus ministers have the responsibility of helping Catholic students live by and understand Church doctrine and tradition. Therefore, statements made by the Church

hierarchy about homosexuality serve as guidelines for campus ministers, and could be important in understanding their actions.

Long before it started to discuss homosexuality, the Church referred to sex between two people of the same sex as the sin of *sodomy*, which also more generally referred to any sexual act that could not lead to pregnancy as well as more specifically to anal sex. Boswell (1980) examined the history of homosexuality and Christianity up through the fourteenth century. Jordan (1998) specifically examined the eleventh-century origins of the term *sodomy* and its implications, starting with some scholastic theologians and then moving through several key points in history where the usage and understanding of *sodomy* changed, concluding with the modern definition.

In 1975, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (SCDF), which oversees Catholic doctrine, released a statement that, for the first time in Church doctrine, chose to distinguish between sexual orientation and sexual acts. According to the SCDF, sexual orientation is an "innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable" (para. VIII) that motivates sexual behavior. It emphasized that simply being homosexual was not sinful because people have no control over their sexual orientation. However, it also stated that scripture and Church tradition have always considered homosexual acts to be sinful, and therefore, it labeled homosexual acts as "intrinsically disordered." The distinction between orientation and behavior became an essential part of how Catholic doctrine discussed sexuality and its implications.

Some Catholics, according to the SCDF, "judge indulgently, and even excuse completely, homosexual relations between certain people" (Section VIII, para. 1) because people do not have control over their sexual orientation. The SCDF explained that ministers were mistaken in

excusing a behavior just because of an orientation. Even if homosexual individuals have no control over their sexual orientation, they are still responsible for their behavior. Therefore, if a person chooses to have homosexual relations, he or she is committing a sin. The SCDF encouraged Catholics to be supportive and respectful of homosexual people, but to be clear about the sinfulness of choosing to act on their orientation.

In 1986, the SCDF made another statement to expand upon and to emphasize certain parts of their 1975 statement. It expressed concern that some pastors and ministers misinterpreted the SCDF's teaching that a homosexual orientation was not sinful and incorrectly believed that a homosexual orientation was neutral or even good. In this document, the SCDF clarified that a homosexual orientation is "objectively disordered" because it tempts people to perform homosexual acts, which are "intrinsically disordered." While they condemned hate crimes and discrimination against homosexual people, they were very clear that viewed homosexuality as a perversion:

But the proper reaction to crimes committed against homosexual persons should not be to claim that the homosexual condition is not disordered. When such a claim is made and when homosexual activity is consequently condoned, or when civil legislation is introduced to protect behavior to which no one has any conceivable right, neither the Church nor society at large should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground, and irrational and violent reactions increase (para. 10).

The SCDF viewed a homosexual condition as disordered because it tempts people to sin, but its views went even further than that. In that excerpt, the SCDF stated that violence against gays was a natural reaction against a society that accepts homosexuality. It shows how emphatically

Church doctrine portrays acceptance of homosexuality as contrary to human nature. From the Church's standpoint, acceptance of homosexuality naturally leads to violence.

Because the SCDF viewed a homosexual orientation as a strong tendency toward sin, it stated that homosexual individuals need special concern and pastoral attention, but it also emphasized that they have the same need to be nourished on multiple levels as heterosexual individuals. It insisted that the Church refuses to view people as "homosexual" or "heterosexual," but instead chooses to view all people as children of God. The SCDF's description of the special concern and pastoral care that ministers ought to provide lesbian and gay people emphasized that a pastoral minister must not remain neutral, ambiguous, or silent about homosexuality: "departure from the Church's teaching, or silence about it, in an effort to provide pastoral care is neither caring nor pastoral" (para. 15). Catholic doctrine requires that ministers challenge homosexual people who accept their orientation and choose to enter homosexual relationships. Any pastoral work for people with homosexual orientations must clearly state and support the Church's teaching on homosexuality.

The most recent summary of Church doctrine on homosexuality appeared in another publication by the SCDF, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), which serves as a reference guide to Catholic doctrine for all Catholics. Its section on homosexuality is brief, but it is perfectly clear that acting on a homosexual orientation is sinful;

Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved. (para. 2357)

However, the SCDF also again stated that homosexual people “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided” (para. 2358).

The United States Catholic Conference (USCC) (1997), which oversees the application of Catholic doctrine in the United States, also released a statement on pastoral care of homosexual people. The bishops mainly intended this document for parents, but it ended with some suggestions to Catholic ministers. It encouraged them to be available to parents and families of gay and lesbian individuals who need help; to welcome gay and lesbian individuals into the community; to learn more about homosexuality and Church teaching; to use the terms *gay*, *lesbian*, and *homosexual* accurately; to keep a list of agencies that offer support to gay and lesbian people and support Catholic teaching; to establish support groups for parents and family; and to learn about HIV/AIDS. Most important, this statement devoted significantly more space to discussing how to love and accept lesbian and gay people than it did to emphasizing the sinfulness of homosexual acts, although it presented forthrightly the Church’s stance on homosexuality.

In addition to specific pastoral instructions on homosexuality, the USCC (1985) also released a more general document that described campus ministry and its purposes. While this document did not treat homosexuality directly, it presented a framework for the pastoral care of all people, including lesbian and gay people, by campus ministers. First, the USCC emphasized the importance of campus ministry in providing students with a Christian community and in reaching out to alienated students. Next, it encouraged campus ministers to help students feel confident proclaiming their faith to others. The USCC noted that campus ministers ought to be a resource for students going through periods of doubt and questioning, which is a natural part of

faith. The USCC also described the challenges of moral relativism. It pointed out that some campuses presented morality as completely relative, whereas they should emphasize the idea of objective right and wrong. The USCC highlighted that campus ministers have an important role in combating moral relativism and developing a Christian conscience based on Church teaching. The bishops did not list homosexuality as a particular occasion for moral relativism; rather, they focused on sexual ethics in general and on premarital sex and abortion in particular. The USCC next discussed the importance of social justice as a focus within campus ministry. To conclude, the USCC described the importance of offering opportunities to students for personal and leadership development through campus ministry.

While the USCC's document on campus ministry did not treat homosexuality directly, its later specific guidelines on homosexuality fit into its overall approach to campus ministry. It is easy to extrapolate that campus ministers are expected to welcome homosexual people, while simultaneously helping them to avoid moral relativism by being clear about the Catholic Church's position about homosexuality. Just like the USCC's document on pastoral care of homosexual people, the document on campus ministry focused on the importance of welcoming people into the Church, although it also underscored the importance of helping Catholics follow Catholic doctrine.

While these five documents are the most relevant to my study, they do not represent every single statement the Church has ever made on homosexuality or deviant sexual activity in general. Jordan (2000) and Maher (2008, 2009) provide information about and thorough analyses of Church documents that discuss homosexuality.

Application of Church Doctrine on Homosexuality to Catholics in America

There are approximately one billion Catholics throughout the world, and so the application of Church doctrine could look vastly different in various cultures. Campus ministers have the particular responsibility to apply Catholic doctrine within the United States. Therefore, research about the ways which Americans have applied Catholic doctrine about homosexuality could aid in understanding approaches that campus ministers could potentially take.

While many of the Church documents discussed welcoming gay and lesbian individuals into the Church and ending unjust discrimination against them, those documents all assumed that they needed to address the conflict caused by an individual's sexual identity. Jordan (2000) discussed the rhetorical devices and aspects of Church documents that make it difficult, if not impossible, for people within the Church, such as campus ministers, to discuss homosexuality openly and honestly. He showed, for example, that the Church documents never talk directly to lesbian and gay people, but rather talk about them; they overly simplify the complexities of the lived experiences of lesbian and gay people in order to focus on moral imperatives; and they talk as though there are no gay priests, bishops, or lay ministers. Jordan pointed out, further, that homosexuality is consistently framed as a problem in Church writing. Jordan explained that by framing homosexuality in this manner, theologians not only instruct priests, ministers, and family members how to manage their reactions to homosexuality, but also to assume in the first place that homosexuality is a problem.

The Church is not alone in its assumption that Christianity and homosexuality are incompatible. Many of the psychological studies about this intersection start with the assumption that being both homosexual and religious causes conflict that needs to be reduced (Barret & Barzan 1996; Bartoli & Gilem (2008); Brooke (1993); Lease (2005); Sherry, Adelman,

et al. (2010); Yarhouse & Tan (2005)). These studies report that it is possible for a gay or lesbian to have a positive relationship with religion but only, in most cases, after some psychological intervention. These studies also take for granted that a person's sexual orientation is more deeply rooted in the person than his or her religious identity.

Lesbian and gay groups have supported the assumption by theologians and social scientists that there is a conflict between embracing a homosexual identity and adhering to a religious faith. Jordan (2011) explored not only how Christian churches discuss homosexuality, but also how lesbian and gay groups have reacted to Christianity throughout the 20th century. He stated, "On the ground, in messy fact, the [gay and lesbian] groups overlapped...with religious congregations or denominations. But in their rhetoric, many liberationist authors agreed with Red Butterfly [a gay liberation group] in declaring a new beginning, a new birth, the only religious rite for which was 'the baptism of billy clubs'" (Jordan, 2011, p. 106). Before the protest against the police raid at the Stonewall Inn, many gay activist groups worked with churches in various capacities. After Stonewall, these alliances still existed in some capacity, but the newly emerging groups asserted that they did not. The "baptism of billy clubs" refers to the billy clubs held by police officers. The liberationists wanted to eliminate any associations with Christian baptism and instead focus on a political rebirth, which consisted in resisting the police who attacked gay people. Jordan cited two people who went even further: he wrote, "Gearhart and Johnson concur that 'the majority of Gay people in 1969, activists and non-activists alike, viewed the church as hopelessly homophobic and anti-life.' That is an unsupportable claim historically, but an important tenet in the new rhetoric" (Jordan, 2011, p. 113). Regardless of whether gays and lesbians actually turned away from religion, gay liberation groups declared that they were doing that very thing, contributing to the perception that this was a reality.

It is problematic to presume that being both religious and homosexual necessarily produces a conflict. Given the right conditions, a person who engages in homosexual sexual activity could attend a Catholic church without feeling any guilt, depending on the policies of a specific Catholic church or organization. Researchers have examined gay Catholic organizations like Dignity or New Ways Ministries and LGBT parishes from the sixties, seventies, and eighties, when gay neighborhoods were still very common and large. These works showed that there have been many gay Catholics who managed both their sexual identity and their religious identity in a positive manner. Primiano's (2005) ethnographic examination of a Dignity chapter at a parish in Philadelphia in the 1980's serves as an example of this kind of study. Another is Godfrey's (2007) ethnographic study of Most Holy Redeemer in San Francisco, which has traditionally had a large lesbian and gay population.

Those religious organizations, chapters, and parishes ministered to gay Catholics who considered both their sexuality and their religion to be important and positive parts of their lives. However, the SCDF's (1986) statement on the pastoral care of gay and lesbian individuals changed how those organizations and parishes functioned. Primiano (2005) argued that the SCDF's statement caused bishops and priests to scrutinize and remove chapters of Dignity and other similar organizations from Catholic parishes. As a result, these organizations no longer appeal to the faithful as they once did and their membership has declined accordingly. For example, after the release of the 1986 document, Dignity's membership dropped from 5000 in 1986 to 3800 in the beginning of the 1990s to just 2500 members at the beginning of the 21st century (Primiano, 2005).

The only group for gay and lesbian Catholics approved by the Vatican today is Courage. Courage follows a twelve-step model to help Catholics who identify as lesbian or gay accept

their sexual orientation and live a life of chastity, where they do not engage in any homosexual behavior. The program is organized by chapters throughout the United States and the rest of the world. It has received the Vatican's endorsement because it teaches Catholic doctrine about the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, even as it also tries to bring lesbian and gay people into the Catholic Church.

Attitudes of Catholic Lay People

As Catholic campus ministers try to apply Catholic doctrine in the United States, they must take into account the particular opinions and needs of Catholic college students. The attitude of Catholic lay people toward the authority of Catholic bishops impacts how effectively Catholic campus ministers can preach Church doctrine. Campus ministers need to adjust their approach to communicating Catholic doctrine depending on how a Catholic student views the authority of the Church and identifies with Catholicism.

While the enforcement of Church doctrine by the hierarchy of the Church had a significant impact on the lesbian and gay groups that had formed within parishes, it did not have as powerful nor as lasting an impact on the beliefs of Catholic lay people. For example, according to a survey conducted in June 2011 by The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 46% of Catholics in the US support gay marriage and only 42% oppose it. Support of gay marriage indicates opposition to Church doctrine on homosexuality.

Maher (2001, 2004) did a survey of incoming freshmen at a Midwestern Catholic university regarding their opinions about homosexuality. He discovered that students who had graduated from Catholic high schools had more favorable attitudes than the general student body about homosexuality, and he attributed those attitudes to the education in social justice that Catholic students had received in their high schools (Maher 2001, 2004). In general, Maher,

Sever, and Pichler (2008) found that college-aged Catholics are likely to be accepting of homosexuality and to question Vatican authority in general. They found that personal experiences, especially knowing a lesbian or gay person, were the largest contributors to having a dissenting opinion from Church doctrine on homosexuality.

Harris (2001) looked specifically at Catholics in college who identify as lesbian or gay and how they overcome obstacles related to understanding their own sexual identity and its relationship to religion. Harris found that neither “scriptural literalism” nor adherence to religious authority had significant correlations with difficulties with accepting a homosexual identity. Rather, an individual’s ability to form personal religious beliefs and make their own personal religious decisions was correlated with better sexual identity development. Insofar as campus ministers can support or hinder a student’s ability to form these personal religious beliefs, they can affect an individual’s ability to develop his or her sexual identity.

Campus Ministry Approaches to Lesbian and Gay Students

While many of the organizations for gay and lesbian Catholics may be shrinking, campus ministry could provide a different means of Catholic outreach to lesbian and gay people. Research on Catholic lay opinion about homosexuality indicates that while Church doctrine is one way of predicting how a campus ministry might minister to lesbian and gay students, the dissenting opinions of some lay Catholics, particularly college-aged Catholics, may give rise to other patterns in outreach on the part of campus ministry.

Maher (2009) discussed his experiences as a campus minister working with lesbian and gay students at Catholic colleges and made some recommendations to other campus ministers. He started off by highlighting the important role religion plays in people’s lives, stating, “In my experience, religion is a source of great joy and meaning and direction and is also a source of

great pain and confusion and isolation for many people” (p. 1144). Because Maher believed that certain forms of religion can be helpful to people and other forms of religion can be harmful, he argued that it is important for campus ministers to be conscious of the impact they have on the lives of lesbian and gay students. He observed,

On the one hand, religious people are supposed to be compassionate, and people expect that of ministers. On the other hand, we are expected to be sexually repressive and squeamish. When that doesn't happen, it opens up the possibilities that “Maybe Mom and Dad can talk about this more than I think,” “Maybe my friends really can handle this,” and “Maybe my life isn't as closed to some possibilities as I thought.” (pp. 1144-1145)

For Maher, religion can be the deciding factor in how a lesbian or gay student handles their coming out process and understands their sexual identity.

Maher acknowledged that it can be difficult for campus ministers to talk about Church teaching with students, especially when the teaching is controversial. Despite that difficulty, he also recognized the importance of campus ministers being able to articulate and discuss Church teaching clearly. He recommended three steps: “allow the young person to bring up the question; answer it honestly, and know the teaching in all its complexity with its positive and negative points; decide in advance what of your personal opinions you are willing to share in what forums” (p. 1149). Maher highlighted the importance of a campus minister's awareness of his or her personal opinions, but also of his or her attentiveness to a student's questions and needs. He implied that the personal opinions of campus ministers may deviate from Church teaching, especially when he stated that the teaching has positive and negative points. His advice to “decide in advance what of your personal opinions you are willing to share in what forums”

also implied that campus ministers may deviate from Church teaching, and seemed to encourage them to be strategic in how they communicated about this deviation. He advised campus ministers to know the entirety of the Church's teachings and to be comfortable with their own opinions so they could talk productively with students.

Love (1997) described the situation that lesbian and gay students faced at one particular Catholic college. He noted that "the institution was perceived as being focused on service to others, spirituality, caring for the individual, and educating the whole student, yet lesbian, gay, and bisexual students experienced hatred, pain, loneliness, anger, helplessness, rejection, and isolation in that setting. Furthermore, they did not see themselves as having avenues to discuss or explore their sexuality" (p. 386). Additionally, "the school emphasized multiculturalism and diversity, yet avoided and resisted dealing with sexual orientation" (p. 388). Love pointed out that the Church teaches about the importance of social justice, love, and acceptance, but simultaneously teaches about the immorality of homosexual actions. Lesbian and gay students at this school perceived those teachings as contradictory, and it caused them much conflict, resulting in difficulties with fitting in and feelings of invisibility (Love 1998).

Despite Love's (1997, 1998) observations about the school as a whole, he made different observations about the campus ministry program at the school. He found that the campus ministers were more inclined to challenge the Church's official teachings and welcome and embrace lesbian and gay students. He explained that these campus ministers worked closely with the students on a personal level and therefore saw how some school policies harmed the students. Additionally, he noted that the campus ministers felt that while official Church teaching condemned homophobia, some of the members of the Church hierarchy openly condoned it. The ministers understood the entirety of the Church teaching but felt that it was

necessary to emphasize the part about welcoming and accepting lesbian and gay people. They also felt that they had the ability to emphasize this part of the teaching because, as campus ministers, they had a lot of credibility on the subject of Catholic teaching and were not perceived as having an ax to grind. According to Love, the lesbian and gay students involved with this campus ministry program considered themselves to be quite serious Catholics and felt that God was calling them to work on issues related to sexual orientation.

Conclusion

Much of the research on homosexuality and Christianity in the modern Catholic Church has focused either on theological statements issued by bishops or on gay Catholic organizations that have shrunk drastically or no longer exist in the way they once did. While analysis of Church doctrine is one way to approach the study of Catholicism, another important piece is the way that lay people experience Catholicism and apply Church doctrine to their lives. In the 1970's and 1980's, groups like Dignity were a large part of this experience for lesbian and gay Catholics. While those groups still play a part, it appears that many lesbian and gay Catholics have either left the Church or have turned to different methods of being Catholic. The work by Maher, Love, and Harris signals campus ministry as an area of interest for understanding how gay and lesbian Catholics experience their religion today.

Maher, Love, and Harris focused on a small sample of Catholic schools to see how campus ministry affects gay and lesbian students. No research thus far has tested how applicable their observations are on a larger sample size of campus ministries. This study seeks to determine if campus ministries across the United States conform to the observations by Maher, Love, and Harris. Their findings about Catholic schools tended to follow the same patterns as the conversations that I had with Catholic campus ministers. Their research supports my initial

hypotheses that Catholic campus ministers do not emphasize the sinful nature of homosexual acts. However, their research also implies that if campus ministers really do perceive bishops as wielding authority over their programs, as I hypothesized, they will have to conform more strictly to official Church doctrine, since the bishops have affirmed the importance of explicitly stating Church teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual acts when doing ministry for lesbian and gay students. Under these conditions, the ministers may worry that it would be difficult for a specific ministry to lesbian and gay Catholics to meet the bishops' standards; that, in turn, would support my hypothesis that many campus ministers do not see a specific ministry to lesbian and gay Catholics as important.

Methods

To test my hypotheses, I decided to send out a survey to a large sample of campus ministers across the United States. This survey would ask participants about their approach to handling outreach to lesbian and gay students. It would also elicit information about the school where the ministers work. I hoped the survey methodology would allow me to paint a larger picture of the state of campus ministry and its approach to lesbian and gay students.

Participants

Participants in my study were all Catholic campus ministers at colleges and universities. Based on certain hints gathered from my conversations with campus ministers before starting my study, I asked for as little identifying information as possible on the survey in order to ensure that the participants knew that the survey was completely anonymous. Instead, I focused on characteristics of the participants' workplaces. These characteristics provided insight about the schools where the campus ministers worked but did not identify any individual school. For data about the campus ministers' school characteristics, see table D1.

The study received an exemption from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor because it was an anonymous survey.

Recruitment

I emailed a survey to the 1,934 Catholic campus ministers listed in the Catholic Campus Ministry Association's (CCMA) 2010-2011 directory, which lists both members and non-members of the organization. However, 83 of those people were not currently involved in campus ministry and 439 of the email addresses were inaccurate. This left a total of 1,419 eligible participants who received the survey. At least one campus minister from each diocese in the CCMA handbook was invited to take the survey, with only three exceptions: no survey was sent to a campus minister in the diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, LA; Baker, OR; or Brownsville, TX. Campus ministers in all 50 states who were working at both private and public colleges and universities received the survey.

I used various strategies to heighten the probability that campus ministers would complete the survey, which they could do between December 21, 2011 and February 5, 2012. Each potential participant received an individual email with a greeting that included his or her name: I wanted to give each of them the feeling that he or she had been individually selected to fill out the survey. Additionally, I identified myself as a Catholic undergraduate in order to appeal to their mission of serving Catholic undergraduate students. Participants were also promised that the survey would not take very long and would be completely anonymous. Finally, all participants were presented with a link at the end of the survey that would give them access to some of the results of the survey on April 15, 2012. Once the participant clicked the link to the survey in the email, they could immediately begin the survey. For the full text of the email I sent out, see Appendix B.

Ultimately, 591 people opened the survey, but only 471 completed it in full. Of the incomplete surveys, eight people answered at least one of Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, or Q15. Those questions went beyond simple demographic information and related to the opinions of the campus ministers on lesbian and gay ministry, so these participants were included in analysis, bringing the final number of participants to 479, thereby yielding a response rate of 34%.

Procedure

I created a survey using Qualtrics and sent out this survey to participants by email. For the full text of the survey, see Appendix C. The survey began with questions about university characteristics that were mostly intended to see if there was a correlation between a specific reality on a campus and the campus minister's attitude toward lesbian and gay ministry. Some of the demographic questions, however, were intended to test a campus minister's perception of his or her university rather than to document an objective reality. For example, question 7 asked, "Overall, would you describe the political attitudes of the students at your college or university as more liberal or conservative?" Campus ministers were forced to choose between liberal and conservative, although they were allowed to skip the question. Obviously, all college campuses are likely to have both liberal and conservative students. Additionally, because "liberal" and "conservative" are subjective points on a political spectrum, it is not necessarily meaningful to group all liberals or conservatives. However, the purpose of this question was not to measure the actual political environment of any given college or university. Rather, it was to test if there was a correlation between a campus minister's perception of his or her school's political environment and his or her attitudes toward lesbian and gay ministry. I viewed most of the answers to the university characteristics questions as inflected by the campus minister's subjective perception to some degree.

After the characteristics questions, I asked campus ministers whether or not their campus ministry programs included any events, regular meetings, or programs specifically for lesbian and gay students. Based on the answer to this question, I divided the campus ministers into two groups for analysis. I asked campus ministers who did offer some sort of events, regular meetings, or programs for lesbian and gay students about what they offered. I asked campus ministers who did not have any particular offerings for lesbian and gay students about how they handled individual lesbian or gay students who came to their programs. While these two groups are clearly related, they were asked slightly different questions on the survey, requiring in turn distinct analyses.

In the next question, the campus ministers were presented with various items they could do or discuss with lesbian and gay students, and they were asked to rank how they would prioritize those options. The goal of this question was to test my first hypothesis: namely, that campus ministers are likely to play down the Church's teaching that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. I wanted to find out how Catholic campus ministers reach out to lesbian and gay students and, in particular, to what degree they emphasized or de-emphasized official Church teaching about homosexuality. Participants had seven different items they could rank according to the relative importance they ascribed to them, but the two options I was most interested in were:

- To help participants understand and accept the part of the Church's teaching as described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that says: 'Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life.

They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.”

- “To help participants understand and accept the part of the Church’s teaching as described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that says: ‘[Homosexuals] must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.’”

I quoted the catechism as a representation of Church doctrine because it is meant as a brief summary of the Church’s whole teaching. Furthermore, the catechism reflects a split in attitude toward homosexuality that appears to reproduce a basic division in contemporary Catholic doctrine, a division that also recurs in official pronouncements. From the many writings published by the bishops that discussed ministry to lesbian and gay Catholics, two major themes emerged: (1) the importance of welcoming gay and lesbian individuals and treating them with respect, and (2) the importance of being clear, when presenting the Church’s teachings to lesbian and gay people, about the sinfulness of homosexual actions. Therefore, I selected the two parts of the catechism that most directly dealt with these two themes. The rest of the options in this question were all ones that a campus minister could choose when working with lesbian and gay students, such as praying, counseling, and reading scripture, but they were meant mostly as distracters from the actual purpose of the question.

The next question tested my second hypothesis. I wanted to find out how much influence campus ministers believed that local bishops had over their interaction with lesbian and gay students. Taking into account the comments made in conversations I had had with campus ministers, I also wanted to find out how much influence the pastor or main priest at the campus ministry program had over the programming for lesbian and gay students. Similar to the

previous ranking question, the other options (such as the pope or Catholic students on campus) were meant as distracters from the two choices of primary interest to me.

The final question that I used to test my hypotheses asked participants, “Do lesbian and gay students have different needs from heterosexual students, or can they be served in approximately the same ways as other students?” This question was meant to test whether or not campus ministers believe it is important to have a distinct ministry for lesbian and gay students. It was also meant to test how campus ministers address the fact that Church doctrine says that lesbian and gay people need special pastoral care but does not distinguish between people based on their sexual orientation.

To finish the survey, participants were asked to elaborate on their answer to the question about the needs of lesbian and gay students and also to provide any additional comments. I decided to ask them to elaborate because Church doctrine both states that lesbian and gay people need special pastoral care and that they have the same needs as heterosexual people to be cared for spiritually on multiple levels. I wanted to determine if campus ministers’ explanations of their responses would match these two parts of Catholic teaching. I also gave campus ministers the chance to provide any additional comments about the survey as a whole so that they had the opportunity to indicate any problems they had with the survey or add anything that the survey did not ask about.

Results

Campus Ministers Offering Lesbian and Gay Events, Meetings, or Programming

In the overall sample, 29% of respondents work at a campus ministry that offers some sort of regular meetings or programming for lesbian and gay students. To analyze the factors that might determine whether or not a campus ministry is likely to offer programming for lesbian

and gay students, a Chi-Square analysis was performed to correlate the presence of such programming with other characteristics of the school. The results of this analysis are listed below:

- Campus ministers at Catholic schools were more likely than campus ministers at public schools to work at a campus ministry with programming for lesbian and gay students, $\chi^2(2, N = 478) = 46.78, p < 0.0001$.
- Campus ministers at schools with more than 50% Catholic students were more likely than campus ministers at schools with 0-20% Catholic students to work at a campus ministry with programming for lesbian and gay students, $\chi^2(2, N = 474) = 42.05, p < 0.0001$.
- Campus ministers who perceived the political environment of their school as liberal were more likely than campus ministers who perceived the political environment of their school as conservative to work at a campus ministry with programming for lesbian and gay students, $\chi^2(1, N = 468) = 4.46, p = 0.04$.
- Campus ministers who described their school as in an urban environment were more likely than campus ministers who described their school as in a rural environment to work at a campus ministry with programming for lesbian and gay students, $\chi^2(2, N = 478) = 17.82, p = 0.0001$.
- Campus ministers who stated their school offered at least one resource for lesbian and gay students were more likely than campus ministers who stated their schools did not offer any resources for lesbian and gay students to work at a campus ministry with programming for lesbian and gay students, $\chi^2(1, N = 479) = 8.41, p = 0.004$.

Ranking of the Two Parts of Church Teaching

To analyze the questions where campus ministers prioritized their goals when interacting with lesbian and gay students, the Friedman Test, as described by Ipe (1987), was performed. The test showed that, on average, campus ministers are highly likely to prioritize discussing the Church teaching about how lesbian and gay people need to be welcomed and respected in the Church and highly unlikely to prioritize the teaching that homosexual acts are sinful. For the specific rankings given to each of these items both in the overall sample and broken down by school characteristics, see table D2. For p-values and other statistical values, see table D3. The Savage test was performed to show that within schools without programming for lesbian and gay students, ministers at public schools ranked the importance of teaching the sinfulness of homosexual acts slightly higher than did ministers at Catholic schools, $p < 0.0001$. Additionally, within campus ministries without programming for lesbian and gay students, campus ministers at schools with a lower proportion of Catholics ranked the importance of teaching the sinfulness of homosexual acts slightly higher than did those at schools with a higher proportion of Catholics, $p = 0.0014$. Finally, using the Wilcoxon test, it was shown that campus ministers at programs without anything specifically for lesbian and gay students ascribed slightly greater importance to teaching that the Church welcomes lesbian and gay people than did campus ministers at ministries with specific programming for lesbian and gay students, $p = 0.003$.

Influences on the Outreach to Lesbian and Gay Students

I decided not to analyze the question about the influence of various factors on campus ministers' pastoral care for lesbian and gay students. That decision was prompted by my reaction to the written comments at the end of the survey. Campus ministers had many complaints about this question. Some respondents indicated that they were unsure whether

“pope” referred to the current pope or to the office of the pope. Other respondents stated they would have liked to see “Catholic doctrine” as an option, rather than having to choose among individual people like the pope, bishops, and priests. Still others seemed uncertain about how to compare the influence of the pope and the influence of Catholic students because they both influence the programs, but in very different ways. Because of the confusion and uncertainty of the ministers, this question was not a valid test of my hypothesis.

Whether Lesbian and Gay Students Have Distinct Needs

In the overall sample, campus ministers were divided on whether or not lesbian and gay students have distinct needs from heterosexual students. Forty-nine percent of the respondents stated that such students had distinct need, whereas 51% said they did not. Again, a Chi-square analysis was performed to determine whether or not there was any correlation between a campus minister’s school’s characteristics and the minister’s belief that lesbian and gay students had distinct needs. The analysis showed that campus ministers at Catholic schools are more likely than campus ministers at public schools to believe that lesbian and gay students have distinct needs, $\chi^2(2, N = 465) = 15.08, p = .0005$. Campus ministers who work at a campus ministry that has lesbian and gay programming are more likely than campus ministers who work at a campus ministry that does not offer programming for lesbian and gay students to believe that lesbian and gay students have distinct needs, $\chi^2(1, N = 466) = 23.36, p < .001$.

The comments campus ministers wrote after this question were similarly divided. Several respondents insisted they viewed all students as children of God, and did not distinguish between people based on sexual orientation. For example, one respondent stated, “Our outreach is all about providing opportunities for ALL students to integrate their faith into their understanding of who they are and how they are called to respond to the God who made them.”

They explained that they offered individualized care to each student, regardless of their sexual orientation. Other respondents noted that lesbian and gay students had different struggles from heterosexual students and needed special attention to overcome these struggles. The following is an example of this type of response: “Many students who identify themselves as GLBTQ face discrimination and stereotypes that heterosexual students do not face on campus, in addition to issues with bullying and hate crimes.” A few respondents stated that some lesbian and gay students perceived hostility or challenges within the Church, resulting in a need to do special outreach to lesbian and gay students. One such respondent explained,

The main difference is the great need of stressing their self-worth and dignity. I find that many feel they are unwanted or "cut off" from the faith community. My main goal is to express that they are a GOOD child of God.

Written Responses

A few common themes emerged from the comments offered by campus ministers at the end of the survey. A small number of the campus ministers admitted to disagreeing with Church teaching on homosexuality. For example, one minister stated, “The Catholic church is deficient on the whole issue of sexuality. It goes from theory to practice, rather than the other way around. As an institution it does not LISTEN to people.” More common, but still relatively rare, were comments that indicated support of Church teaching, while simultaneously admitting that it was not necessarily productive to emphasize unduly the Church’s teachings about the sinfulness of homosexual acts. One such response was, “While I honor the Church's beautiful understanding of sexuality, I also think that we, as Catholic ministers, must provide more Christ-centered pastoral care to gay and lesbian students.”

While some campus ministers chose to voice either support or criticism of the Church's teachings on homosexual sexual acts, a general desire to welcome lesbian and gay students was a much more prevalent theme. For example, "The Catholic Church, in my opinion has not done enough to welcome the LGBT community. It is extremely frustrating, and in my opinion, not in alignment with the values of Jesus." This statement does not necessarily express that the campus minister disagrees with Church doctrine, but rather states that ministers ought to be doing more to reach out. Other ministers expressed absolutely no support or criticism of the Church's teachings and policies, but instead commented on welcoming lesbian and gay students. One such respondent said the following:

Great care and compassion should be exercised when working with lesbian and gay students, but special treatment is not the answer because it only enforces differences instead of promoting unity and charity. Understanding the challenges that face lesbian and gay students is very important for every campus minister so that an environment of tolerance and charity can be created. This should be an environment felt by all students involved, so they can learn and propagate the same charity outside of the campus ministry setting.

Regardless of their feelings about Church teaching, most respondents clearly prioritized welcoming lesbian and gay Catholics over anything else.

While the overwhelming majority of responses fit this description, there were two responses in particular that stuck out as contravening this pattern:

- On the one hand, they are venomously opposed to religion, but then ask what religion has to offer them. They become the angriest at Christianity, primarily Catholicism, which is very much on record with the policy of "hate the sin, but

love the sinner." On the other hand, the Muslim faith would have them killed, and they say nothing. Again, I find the gay/lesbian community to be closed in upon itself and fundamentally confused. If they want to live a life of depravity, then let them do so. If Christians want to believe that it is a life of depravity, that should be our right as well. If they believe their rhetoric of "tolerance," "diversity," and "inclusivity," then they must be willing to extend these values to everyone, including the Catholic Faith, and not just to others who think like they do.

- I participated in a campus wide forum last semester representing the Catholic Church on a panel of people from many faith traditions. We were put on the spot by one of the campus gay groups, who demanded to know what we could and would do for them. My response was "Why do you care?" It is clear what Scripture and Tradition both teach about the gay lifestyle. No church or denomination can force a gay person do anything. This being the case, why don't they just go off and celebrate their sodomy and not worry about what the Church teaches? The gay movement is not interested in conforming to Christian teaching; it is demanding that Christianity be re-made to accommodate it.

Two aspects make these comments particularly notable. First, they were the only two comments in the surveys that chose actively to criticize the political agenda of lesbian and gay groups. It is likely that other campus ministers feel similarly to them, as the political agenda of lesbian and gay groups often is hostile toward Christianity, but only these two comments exclusively devoted their response to commenting on this hostility. While many ministers may have agreed with Church teaching, their focus was on trying to welcome lesbian and gay students into their

program and on helping them to benefit from living a life that the minister believed was right. The other interesting aspect of these comments is that both of them expressed the view that lesbian and gay students have a right to live their lives as they want. While these two respondents clearly condemn the choices of lesbian and gay students who live sexually active lives, they also show no desire to stop them from doing what they want, so long as lesbian and gay people let Catholics believe what they believe.

Many campus ministers noted in their comments the existence of tensions and dilemmas in lesbian and gay ministry. They commonly expressed some level of frustration with the current state of lesbian and gay ministry within the Church. One respondent offered a critique of the Church's language:

I find the word that the church uses, "disordered," is a hindrance in reaching out to students. I have been told by my pastor that I HAVE to use that word, but I feel that when the conversation comes up with students that the walls go up and I am unable to tear down the walls of mistrust and anger. I explain what the church means by disordered, but there is no way of "digging myself/church out of the hole" after that.

This comment does not necessarily indicate outright disagreement with Church teaching, but rather expresses frustration at the lack of proper language with which to communicate with lesbian and gay students pastorally. Other campus ministers expressed a more general desire for improvement, stating things like "This is an area of ministry that needs much more guidance, information and development" or "The Catholic Church ought to struggle with this issue more openly and honestly."

Discussion

In general, the research I carried out showed that campus ministers tend to avoid emphasizing the Church's teaching that homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered" and should not be accepted under any circumstances. Simultaneously, ministers are much more inclined to focus on helping a student understand that the Church welcomes all people, including people who identify as lesbian or gay. This result supports my initial hypothesis. Another conclusion from the data is that campus ministers are divided on whether or not lesbian and gay students have distinct needs from heterosexual students, which does not support my initial hypothesis that they would tend to think that lesbian and gay ministry was not necessary as a distinct ministry.

Ranking of the Two Parts of Church Teaching

To understand fully the results of the survey, it is important to consider the comments provided by the participants at the end of the survey. While it is clear that campus ministers often do not emphasize the Church's teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual acts when talking to lesbian and gay students, the written responses indicate that the campus ministers' choice not to prioritize this Church teaching does not necessarily imply that campus ministers disagree with it. Rather, their omission to prioritize the importance of teaching the sinfulness of homosexual acts springs from a desire to be welcoming and to bring lesbian and gay Catholics into the campus ministry program.

From the responses, it was also clear that many campus ministers are ready and willing to discuss ministry to lesbian and gay students in an open manner in order to work on finding solutions to tough dilemmas. But they feel that the Church does not currently allow them to do so. The campus ministers' sense that they could not talk about homosexuality reflects the reality

described by Jordan (2000), when he argued that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church tries to discourage Catholics from discussing homosexuality outside of the limited language and ideas presented in documents released by the Vatican. The comments offered by respondents and the simple fact that 479 people completed my survey show that many campus ministers are ready and willing to talk about homosexuality, but also that they do not necessarily feel that the hierarchy of the Church allows them to do so.

While the whole sample of campus ministers showed tendencies to not prioritize insisting on the Church's teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual acts, the finding that campus ministers at public schools rank the importance of the Church's teaching about the sinfulness of homosexual acts slightly higher than do campus ministers at Catholic schools is surprising. It might seem logical that campus ministers at Catholic schools would be more likely to support Church teaching. However, this result is in line with Maher's (2004) finding that students who went to Catholic high schools were likely to be more supportive and accepting of lesbian and gay peers than students who went to public high schools. Maher explained that the emphasis on social justice at Catholic high schools, especially Jesuit schools, may result in more tolerance of diversity, including sexual orientation. Because many Catholic colleges and universities are also run by Jesuits, it is possible that this effect also applies, and the campus ministers at Catholic schools may be more likely to avoid teachings they view as hurtful to lesbian and gay students out of a commitment to social justice. Another potential explanation is that at public schools, campus ministry has the responsibility to teach Catholic doctrine to its students because they do not hear any of it in the classroom. In such circumstances, campus ministries may hew more closely to official Church doctrine. At Catholic schools, by contrast, students have other venues where they can learn theology, and so campus ministers might feel less pressure to teach it. One

final potential explanation is that campus ministers at public schools might be more sensitive and reactive to the secular culture of the university. They might feel more inclined to emphasize Catholic doctrine in order to balance the non-Catholic perspective of their university. At a Catholic school, because Catholicism is more integrated into the university's whole culture, campus ministers may feel less urgency about emphasizing Catholic doctrine. These hypotheses must remain speculative for the moment. They will need to be tested by further research.

Another surprising result of my research is that campus ministers without specific programming for lesbian and gay students rank teaching that the Church welcomes lesbian and gay people slightly higher than campus ministers that do offer programming for lesbian and gay students. One might expect a campus ministry with programming for lesbian and gay students to be more inclined to emphasize the welcoming and respectful atmosphere of the Church in general. More research needs to be done to determine what this data could mean, but one possible explanation is that campus ministers who offer programming for lesbian and gay students might feel that the programming that they offer implies that the Church is welcoming and respectful of gay and lesbian students. If they feel that way, it might seem less necessary to state it explicitly.

There was not a distinguishable difference in how campus ministers chose to prioritize Church teaching according to whether the ministers perceived their schools to be liberal or conservative. That is surprising, because people may expect the political environment of a campus minister's school to influence how they do ministry. Some people may expect campus ministers who work at what they perceive to be liberal schools to react to that political culture by emphasizing more insistently the Church's teaching on homosexuality. Others may expect that a Catholic ministry at a liberal school may become more liberal because of the environment and be

more supportive of lesbian and gay people. However, the data indicates that a campus minister's perception of his or her political environment does not, in fact, affect the strategies he or she is likely to use in order to minister to lesbian and gay students.

Whether Lesbian and Gay Students Have Distinct Needs

While campus ministers largely agreed on how to prioritize the two aspects of Church teaching, they did not express agreement about whether lesbian and gay students had needs distinct from those of heterosexual students. This split makes sense when considering the mixed messages on the needs of lesbian and gay people that are contained in the formulation of Church doctrine by the Vatican. The Church teaches that lesbian and gay people need special pastoral care and attention; the Church also insists that the Church does not distinguish between people based on their sexual identity. The comments from campus ministers on this question lined up with these two pieces of Church teaching. On the one hand, some campus ministers said that it was counterproductive to consider the struggles of lesbian and gay students as different from those of heterosexual students. Those ministers often likened the Church's teachings about homosexuality to the Church's teachings about premarital sex in the context of heterosexuality. On the other hand, other campus ministers expressed the view that lesbian and gay students do have different needs and that those needs should be addressed. Those campus ministers who did believe that lesbian and gay students have different needs from straight students offered two kinds of explanations. Some campus ministers pointed out that lesbian and gay students face discrimination both inside and outside of the Church; it is on account of that discrimination that lesbian and gay students need special care. Other campus ministers recognized that the celibacy that the Church's teaching on homosexuality imposes on lesbian and gay people is not easily or

widely embraced in our society, and so lesbian and gay students might need extra help in following that teaching.

Campus ministers at Catholic schools were more likely to believe that lesbian and gay students had distinct needs than were campus ministers at public schools. This difference could be explained by the fact that campus ministers working at Catholic schools also are more likely than campus ministers at public schools to have a lesbian and gay ministry in the first place. Catholic campus ministry at Catholic schools has more funding and support than campus ministry at public schools. This might give campus ministers at Catholic schools more power and flexibility to offer more specialized and focused ministries, such as lesbian and gay ministry. Alternately, campus ministers at Catholic schools might believe that the moral and intellectual environment at Catholic schools created particular needs on the part of lesbian and gay students.

Limitations

While 591 participants started my survey, only 478 completed it. The number of participants who stopped indicates that the survey may have offended or frustrated the participants in some way, or it may have failed to speak to their values or experiences. Several campus ministers expressed some level of frustration with the survey in their responses and expressed concern that the results of the survey might be used to draw conclusions that did not accurately reflect reality or were malicious in intent. One campus minister, for example, who did complete the survey, put the point as follows:

I question if you are really seeking the truth or pushing an agenda via your thesis? The Church does not need any more agenda pushers. She needs faithful men and women to show the love of Christ and help bring others to Him. If I am wrong with my interpretation of this survey and your thesis then I apologize, but if I am not then take my

words to heart and help the Church do not hurt her anymore through agenda driven dissent.

Other campus ministers stated that the choices presented to them in the ranking questions did not capture what they would actually do when interacting with lesbian and gay students, and they wished they had been able to write further commentary on each question. These campus ministers did not indicate which options that they would have liked to be offered instead or which choices they would have liked to be taken out. The one observation that did appear several times was that campus ministers' highest priority is listening to a student first, rather than meeting a student with a set agenda.

Nonetheless, campus ministers who expressed explicit dissatisfaction with the survey were a minority. The vast majority of respondents either did not write comments or wrote comments about their programs rather than about the structure of the survey. Various respondents also expressed excitement about my research and the survey itself. This enthusiasm and support for my survey represents a potential bias in the responses.

The question that asked participants to rank their priorities when interacting with lesbian and gay students may have also confused certain participants. One participant summarized the problem with this question quite well:

In regard to the question about the "purpose" of a conversation with GLBT students: I usually let the student guide the conversation - I try not to dictate what the student "should" know or want. Consequently, I found that question a little hard because I wanted to know if the student was asking for something in particular. Some want to know Church teaching, some want comfort, some have needs entirely unrelated to their sexual orientation.

For some of the campus ministers, my question unintentionally implied that campus ministers went into conversations with lesbian and gay students with set agendas, regardless of potential differences in the needs and desires of individual students. A better version of this question would have asked them to reflect on their past conversations rather than how they approach conversations: “In the past, when you have worked with self-identified lesbian and gay students on issues relating to their sexuality, what are some of the most common things that you have discussed or done with them based on the needs they expressed to you?” The question would have allowed campus ministers to add items to the list or remove items from the list.

Conclusion

The data shows that the majority of Catholic campus ministers want lesbian and gay students to feel welcomed in their programs, whether or not the minister agrees with Church teaching on homosexuality. Additionally, campus ministers believe that communicating the Church’s teaching on homosexual acts as intrinsically disordered and sinful is not productive. If this really is the attitude of campus ministers, it is somewhat in conflict with the instructions from the bishops on lesbian and gay ministry. Even campus ministers who agree with Church teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual acts still contravene Episcopal instructions, which state that any ministry and outreach to lesbian and gay people that is sanctioned by the Church needs to make the Church’s teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual acts absolutely clear.

The overwhelming supportiveness Catholic campus ministers show for lesbian and gay students confirms the findings of Love (1997, 1998). Regardless of how the institutional Church discusses homosexuality, campus ministers show a desire to welcome lesbian and gay students to their program and they recognize, whether they agree with Church teaching or not, that lesbian and gay students face many challenges both inside and outside of the Church. Campus ministers

want to help the students overcome those challenges. The work by Maher and Love focused on a relatively small sample, often of students or staff at just one school, and always looked at students at Catholic schools. My survey shows that the conclusions they drew about campus ministers, specifically about the tendency of such ministers to focus on accepting and supporting lesbian and gay students, are true on a larger scale, at both Catholic and non-Catholic schools. .

My research only represents one piece of a larger discussion that is still in its early stages. While my work attempts to uncover the current state of lesbian and gay ministry at colleges and universities, it does not explain why campus ministers responded the way that they did. Additionally, my question about how campus ministers view the influence of their bishop on their programming remains unanswered. Future research that examines how campus ministers view this authority would be highly useful in explaining how Catholic campus ministers relate to Catholic doctrine and tradition in regard to homosexuality. Additionally, further qualitative investigation could explain why campus ministers choose not to emphasize Church teaching that presents homosexual acts as sinful. It is possible that most campus ministers really do believe that those acts are sinful, but just do not know how to present their belief, and need further support from the Church to do so. It is also possible that many campus ministers really do not agree with Church teaching, but just do not feel comfortable expressing their dissent. These two alternatives have extremely different implications about the future of campus ministry and the situations that campus ministers face. It is important to discover which of them is more reflective of reality.

Another matter that needs to be further explored is the actual approach that campus ministers take in reaching out to lesbian and gay students, and how successful different approaches are. Further research could examine how many gay and lesbian students actually

participate in various programs and how the programs with the most students manage to bring in so many students. From my research, it is clear that a large number of campus ministers are invested in finding the answers to these questions, as they try to minister as effectively as they can to lesbian and gay Catholics on college campuses.

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Appendix A

Initial Interviews Questions

“I am trying to understand how Catholic Campus ministers approach lesbian and gay students in light of the Church’s policies on homosexuality.”

Background/General Information

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your career in Campus Ministry? [if it doesn’t come up, ask about education, where the person grew up, education, age)
2. How would you describe your role at this particular campus ministry? Do you think others would describe your role in the same way?
3. Can you tell me about the history of this campus ministry?
4. What is the present structure of this campus ministry? How many staff work here and what are some of its major programs and goals?

General Questions about Lesbian and Gay Ministry and its History

5. How does this Newman Center approach ministry to lesbian and gay-identified students? How does this approach fit in with this campus ministry’s overall programming and goals?
6. When did this campus ministry first start trying to minister to lesbian and gay students as a particular group of people?
7. What were some of the early programs or ideas used to outreach to lesbian and gay students?
8. How does this campus ministry’s lesbian and gay Ministry compare with the Vatican’s teachings on homosexuality?

Evolution of the Campus Ministry’s Lesbian and Gay Ministry

9. How has this campus ministry’s lesbian and gay ministry evolved over time?
10. Were there any points in history where this campus ministry’s lesbian and gay ministry was significantly different from how it is today? Please describe.
11. Have there been any conflicts or controversies as this campus ministry’s lesbian and gay ministry has evolved over time?

“Success” of Lesbian and Gay Ministry at this Campus Ministry

12. Would you consider lesbian and gay ministry at this campus ministry to be “successful”? Why or why not?
13. How many students are involved at this campus ministry? How many of them do you think identify as lesbian or gay?

Survey Questions/Development

14. If you received a survey in the mail asking about your campus ministry's lesbian and gay ministry, would you fill it out? Why or why not?
15. Are there any incentives that would encourage you to fill it out?
16. Would being able to see some or all of the results of the survey be a good incentive?
17. What type of information would you like to know about lesbian and gay Ministry at campus ministries across the country?
18. Can you think of any questions that would discourage you from wanting to fill out the survey?
19. Did any information come up today that you would hesitate to include in a survey, even if it was anonymous?

Conclusion

20. Is there anything else you would like to share about your campus ministry's lesbian and gay Ministry?
21. Are there any resources you can refer me to such as books, other people, or websites to learn more about lesbian and gay ministries at campus ministries?
22. Can I contact you again in the future if I have any brief questions of clarification?

Appendix B**Email Sent Out to Campus Ministers**

Dear (Name),

My name is Andrew Brown, and I am a Catholic undergraduate student at the University of Michigan, as well as a parishioner at St. Mary Student Parish. I am writing a Senior Honors thesis about how Catholic campus ministry programs approach ministry to lesbian and gay students.

I am wondering if you would be willing to fill out a survey about how your campus ministry program works with lesbian and gay students. It should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete, and is 100% anonymous. You will not be asked to put in any information that identifies you individually or the school where you work.

(At this point, campus ministers were presented with a link to the survey)

If you could fill out this survey, it would be really helpful to me! Additionally, I hope that this research will be useful in helping Catholic campus ministers more effectively reach out to lesbian and gay students. If you fill out this survey, you will be given a link at the end that will allow you to see some of the results by April 15, 2012. I hope that these results will both be interesting to you and useful for considering approaches that other campus ministry programs are taking!

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me back.

Sincerely,

Andrew Brown

Appendix C

Survey

Q1 Do you or have you worked with Catholic campus ministry in a university or college setting?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

(If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey)

Q2 Is the college or university where you do campus ministry a public, private, or Catholic private school?

- Public (1)
- Private (2)
- Catholic Private (3)

Q3 Approximately what percentage of the students at the college or university identify as Catholic?

- 0-5% (1)
- 6-10% (2)
- 11-20% (3)
- 21-50% (4)
- more than 50% (5)

Q4 Approximately how many students are actively involved with your campus ministry program? “Actively involved” means attending Mass most Sundays and involvement in at least one additional program or activity at your campus ministry.

Q5 What is the approximate size of your college or university's student body (graduate and undergraduate)?

- 0-500 (1)
- 501-1000 (2)
- 1001-5000 (3)
- 5001-10000 (4)
- 10001-20000 (5)
- 20001-30000 (6)
- 30001-40000 (7)
- 40001-50000 (8)
- more than 50000 (9)

Q6 How would you describe your college or university's setting?

- Urban: The college or university is part of a larger city (1)
- College town: The college or university takes up a large portion of the city (2)
- Rural: The college or university is part of a small town that would not qualify as a city (3)

Q7 Overall, would you describe the political attitudes of the students at your college or university as more liberal or conservative?

- Liberal (1)
- Conservative (2)

Q8 Does your college or university have any of the following resources available for students who identify as lesbian or gay? (Choose all that apply.)

- An office dedicated to lesbian and gay students (1)
- A staff member working with lesbian and gay students (2)
- Information for lesbian and gay students online or in print (3)
- None of the above (4)

Q9 Does your campus ministry program include any events, regular meetings, or programs specifically for lesbian and gay students?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer the following question if Yes is selected as answer to previous question:

Q10 Please rank the goals of these events, meetings, or programs for lesbian and gay students.

You can click on and then drag the items. Please place the most important item on top, and go from there.

_____ To help participants understand and accept the part of the Church's teaching as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that says: "Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved." (1)

_____ To help participants understand and accept the part of the Church's teaching as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that says: "[Homosexuals] must be accepted with

respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” (2)

_____ To help participants meet other people who identify as gay or lesbian (3)

_____ To pray together (4)

_____ To read scripture together (5)

_____ To provide counseling and/or general support and guidance (6)

_____ To encourage students to get involved with other campus ministry programs you offer (7)

Answer the following if No is selected as the answer to the previous question:

Q11 If a student who identified as lesbian or gay came in to talk to one of the staff members at your campus ministry program, please rank the goals of that conversation. You can click on and then drag the items. Please place the most important item on top, and go from there.

_____ To help the student understand and accept the part of the Church’s teaching as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that says: “Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.’ They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.” (1)

_____ To help the student understand and accept the part of the Church’s teaching as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that says: “[Homosexuals] must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” (2)

_____ To suggest ways that student can meet other lesbian and gay students (3)

_____ To pray with that student (4)

_____ To read scripture with that student (5)

_____ To provide counseling and/or general support and guidance to that student (6)

_____ To encourage that student to participate in one of your campus ministry programs (7)

Q12 Please rank (with most influential on top) the forces that affect how your campus ministry program chooses to approach ministry to lesbian and gay identified students.

_____ the pope (1)

_____ the local bishop (2)

_____ the pastor or main priest who works with your campus ministry program (3)

_____ the policies of your college or university (4)

_____ Catholic students at your college or university in general (5)

_____ Catholic students at your college or university that identify as lesbian or gay (6)

Q13 Do lesbian and gay students have different needs from heterosexual students, or can they be served in approximately the same ways as other students?

They have different needs from other students. (1)

They can be served in approximately the same way as other students. (2)

Q14 (Optional) Please elaborate on your answer.

Q15 (Optional) Do you have any additional comments or thoughts?

Appendix D

Table 1

Characteristics of Schools Where Campus Ministers Work

	Campus Ministry Holds L/G Events				Total	(%)
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)		
University Type	139	(100.0%)	339	(100.0%)	478	(100.0%)
Public	27	(19.4%)	165	(48.7%)	192	(40.2%)
Private	27	(19.4%)	74	(21.8%)	101	(21.1%)
Catholic	85	(61.2%)	100	(29.5%)	185	(38.7%)
Student Body: % Catholic	137	(100.0%)	337	(100.0%)	474	(100.0%)
0-20%	17	(12.4%)	131	(38.9%)	148	(31.2%)
21-50%	62	(45.3%)	141	(41.8%)	203	(42.8%)
>50%	58	(42.3%)	65	(19.3%)	123	(25.9%)
University Size	116		297		413	
<10,000	84	(72.4%)	172	(57.9%)	256	(62.0%)
10,001-20,000	18	(15.5%)	71	(23.9%)	89	(21.5%)
20,001-30,000	14	(12.1%)	54	(18.2%)	68	(16.5%)
30,001-40,000	10	(8.6%)	17	(5.7%)	27	(6.5%)
40,001-50,000	4	(3.4%)	12	(4.0%)	16	(3.9%)
>50,000	9	(7.8%)	14	(4.7%)	23	(5.6%)

University Setting	139	(100.0%)	339	(100.0%)	478	(100.0%)
Urban	97	(69.8%)	172	(50.7%)	269	(56.3%)
College Town	30	(21.6%)	90	(26.5%)	120	(25.1%)
Rural	12	(8.6%)	77	(22.7%)	89	(18.6%)
University Political Environment	135	(100.0%)	333	(100.0%)	468	(100.0%)
Liberal	90	(66.7%)	187	(56.2%)	277	(59.2%)
Conservative	45	(33.3%)	146	(43.8%)	191	(40.8%)
≥1 University LGBT Resource	139	(100.0%)	340	(100.0%)	479	(100.0%)
Yes	130	(93.5%)	284	(83.5%)	414	(59.2%)
No	9	(6.5%)	56	(16.5%)	65	(40.8%)
Do lesbian/gay students have different needs?	135	(100.0%)	331	(100.0%)	466	(100.0%)
Yes	90	(66.7%)	139	(42.0%)	229	(49.1%)
No	45	(33.3%)	192	(58.0%)	237	(50.9%)

Table 2**Median Rankings of the Catechism Teachings on Celibacy and Welcoming**

Characteristics	Holds L/G Events		Does not Hold L/G Events	
	Celibacy	Welcoming	Celibacy	Welcoming
University Type				
Public	7	3	6*	2
Private	7	3	7*	2
Catholic	7	3	7*	2
Student Body: % Catholic				
0-20%	7	2	6*	2
21-50%	7	3	7*	2
>50%	7	2	7*	2
University Political Environment				
Liberal	7	3	7	3
Conservative	7	2	7	2
Total Sample	7	3*	7	2*

* This difference in ranking based on school characteristic is statistically significant (p<.01)

Table 3

Statistical Values Demonstrating Significance of Table 2

Characteristics	Degrees of Freedom		<i>F</i> statistic	<i>p</i> value
	Between-Groups	Within-Groups		
Campus Ministries w/ L/G Programming	144	828	3.37	<0.0001
University Type				
Public	32	156	2.11	0.0014
Private	32	156	2.43	0.0002
Catholic	90	504	4.15	<0.0001
Student Body: % Catholic				
0-20%	22	96	2.59	0.0008
21-50%	67	366	2.42	<0.0001
>50%	63	342	4.63	<0.0001
University Political Environment				
Liberal	95	534	3.52	<.0001
Conservative	35	174	1.65	0.019
Campus Ministries w/o L/G Programming	345	2034	5.58	<0.0001
University Type				
Public	170	984	5.75	<0.0001
Private	79	438	5.02	<0.0001
Catholic	105	594	7.01	<0.0001
Student Body: % Catholic				
0-20%	136	780	5.02	<0.0001

21-50%	146	840	5.68	<0.0001
>50%	70	384	7.07	<0.0001
University				
Political Environment				
Liberal	192	1116	5.36	<0.0001
Conservative	95	534	5.21	<0.0001
