

Study Supports the "Weak Father" Theory of Homosexuality

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In a just-published study of Roman Catholic seminarians in Canada (Seutter & Rovers, 2004), the authors report that 24 respondents who were self-identified as homosexual had a significantly lower mean level of intimacy with their fathers than did 130 heterosexually identified respondents.

The study did not find significant differences between these groups for 1) intimacy with mother; 2) a sense of intimidation in relationship with father; or 3) an intimidation with mother, although the latter comparison approached significance, with homosexual seminarians reporting greater mother intimidation.

Seutter and Rovers make several observations about their results. While strongly supportive of a multi-factorial, interactionist perspective on the cause of same-sex attractions, the authors observe that:

"These findings can be seen to be compatible with the hypothesis of the father-son unit as the basis for analysis of homosexuality. These results are also consistent with family-of-origin theory, which emphasizes the

centrality of the child-parent relationship, such as the male child's [lack of] relationship with his father....

"The point is that the father-son relationship is an essential place for therapeutic investigation, and therapists might be leaving pieces of unfinished business if they shy away from it." (pp. 46-47)

The authors further note that their findings suggest the value of a male therapist when working with a male homosexual client who has unfinished emotional issues with his father.

They caution that their results should not be taken as an unequivocal indication that addressing father-son issues with the homosexual male will influence the client's experience of same-sex attraction.

Reference

Seutter, R. A., & Rovers, M. (2004). Emotionally absent fathers: Furthering the understanding of homosexuality. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 32*, 43-49.