

## CHAPTER 4

### SEXUAL ABSTINENCE:

#### ***THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM***

In the midst of a society characterised by risky representations of male sexuality, many Faith Based Organisations propagate abstinence outside marriage. In many circles, these organisations are well known for their stance of abstinence outside marriage. Many of these organisations have a strong theological/philosophical base which serves as a reference point for their stance of abstinence. Christian Action Fellowship, the evangelical Christian organization I was doing a research in, seems not to be an exception in this regard. CAF's theology is heavily informed by what Galli (1999) amongst others call American Evangelicalism - as opposed to European Evangelicalism. This is not peculiar to CAF, the movement has a huge influence on the South African Evangelical movement in general (Gifford 1988). In the case of CAF, this is reflected in the fact that a disproportionate number of its library books are authored by advocates of this movement.

It appears that little, if any, has been written about the subject of abstinence and sex in the South African expression of evangelicalism. Certainly, CAF's library does not have material written in South Africa by South Africans addressing the subject. It is against this backdrop that I draw from the literature produced from the American Evangelical fold. In particular, I draw from *Campus Life* magazine. *Campus Life* is published by the American conservative Protestant publication called *Christianity Today* (Stafford 2001). The latter is the unofficial mainstream voice of the conservative evangelical movement in America (Herman 1997, Toulasse 1993) -

what has come to be called American Evangelicalism. Given the status of *Christianity Today* in conservative evangelical circles in the United States and given the influence that the latter has on South African evangelicalism we can, with confidence, surmise that how *Campus Life* represent abstinence embodies much of the general sentiment of South African Faith Based Organisations like CAF. It is in the light of this that I review articles from the *Campus Life* on the subject of sexual abstinence.

The subject of abstinence and/or sex does not feature much in *Campus Life*. Nevertheless, in my review of *Campus Life*, from 1999 to 2001 I detect some consistency in terms of representation of the subject in those articles that do address sex. It seems that sexual abstinence is simply understood as not engaging in sexual intercourse or coitus. The concept “sex” is represented as an equivalent of coitus for the most part. For a review of how the magazine deals with the subject, I hope an analysis of some comments on the subject would suffice to drive the point home.

#### **4.1. Definition of Sex**

##### **4.1.1. Abstain; Sex is Wrong Outside Marriage**

Stafford (2001: 38), a columnist for *Campus Life*, does not pull punches when advocating abstinence outside marriage to the campus life magazine's Christian student audience:

So what's is God's view of sex? Simple: sex is wonderful within marriage. Outside marriage it is an offence to the inventor.

To Stafford, sex outside marriage is wrong because "God" views it as wrong. It is from the Bible that Stafford (2001: 38) seems to access God's view of sex:

According to the Bible, only the commitment a man and a woman make in the ceremony of marriage counts.

From Stafford's comments, it becomes clear that sex outside marriage is not permitted, but it is not clear as to what constitutes sex.

#### **4.1.2. Don't Go Too Far**

In his work *10 Ways to Practice Purity*, Hutchcraft seems helpful in an endeavour to understand what is actually prohibited, when it is being said that “sex outside marriage is wrong,” though he also does not provide a clear-cut definition of sex. Nevertheless, in his list of list of suggestions to avoid sex, I detect a particular understanding of sex. This seems to equate sex with sexual intercourse. For example in his first suggestion he states:

Rather than making the innocent expressions a mere prelude to the heavier stuff, make the most of them. Let holding hands mean something. Express tenderness by simply putting your arms amongst each other. Make sure a kiss communicates true feeling and isn't just the first step to further physical involvement (Hutchcraft 2001:34).

From this suggestion, it becomes clear that to Hutchcraft, holding hands, putting arms around the loved one and kissing are merely “innocent expressions” of love and do not constitute sex. Sex seems to suggest something other than and beyond all these “innocent expressions.” The latter are but acts that could lead to sex if approached with the wrong understanding but are not in and of themselves sex. This is fact is further driven home by his second suggestion:

It is okay to express your love in little ways, but don't start messing with the wrong package that is sex. To get real practical, avoid French kissing, petting and anything that is sure to ignite the fires of passion (Hutchcraft 2001: 34).

This understanding seems to elucidate the meaning of the concept of sex even further. French kissing and petting are not sex but acts that are not encouraged because they can lead to sex. Thus my observation that what is "wrong" is not holding hands, putting arms around one another, kissing, French kissing and petting but something else called sex. This, I surmise, is sexual intercourse. One can only surmise since the literature reviewed does not make mention of both the concepts coitus and sexual intercourse in relation to abstinence but only mentions "sex."

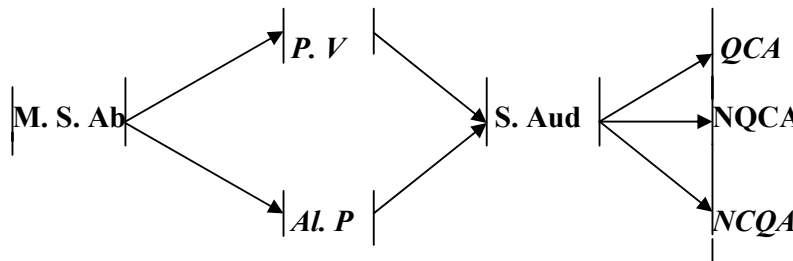
## **4.2. Sexual Abstinence and Factual Discourse**

### **4.2.1. From God to Science**

From the foregoing discussion we learn that arguments for sexual abstinence are, for the most part, grounded in the Bible and God. It seems that many authors of *Campus Life* are interested in extending their sphere of influence beyond an audience that uncritically accepts the invocation of the Bible and God. This seems to be particularly the case in literature produced for promoting HIV preventive youth behaviour that upholds pre-marital sexual abstinence. I refer to the audience constructed in the process of pursuing the vision of reaching out to a greater share of the youth population as a "sceptical audience." Of course, this audience is imaginary. It seems that the authors construct this audience as a way of positioning their work to reaching out to a more diverse audience, that includes unquestioning Christians, questioning Christians and enquiring non-Christians.

It also appears that the sceptical audience is constructed in a way that its scepticism is largely informed by its encounter with, what I call, "peer views." This encounter

happens in the classroom and in other places where youth meet and discuss. Peers views are views that invoke pre-marital sexual activity as inevitable and normative. *Campus Life* also seeks to engage the alternative paradigm pertaining to preventive youth behaviour. This paradigm invokes the condom as the ideal HIV preventive mechanism. It seems that it is important for *Campus Life* to take this paradigm claims head on since it seems to endorse peer views on youth sexuality. When advancing its case to a sceptical youth audience, *Campus Life* resorts to measures, other than mere invocation of God and deference to biblical authority. Among these, are debate, science and logic. These are deployed to rationally advance pre-marital sexual abstinence as the best option of prevention to a sceptical audience. The diagram below, portrays the flow.



This diagram represents the direction of flow of the message of sexual abstinence from the “pulpit” to the audience that it is envisaged for. The message is presented in such a way that it engages peer views as well as ideas from the alternative paradigm. It is meant to reach the audience having engaged ideas that the audience is familiar with and that have a potential to affect their reception of the message of sexual abstinence.

**M. S. Ab: Message of Sexual Abstinence.** This message is preached by the evangelical faith based organisations in the advancement of pre-marital sexual abstinence. This message is tailored to address the questions that are raised by both peer views and the alternative paradigm.

**P. V: Peer Views.** These are views invoking pre-marital sexual activity as inevitable and normative. These are views are often encountered by young people in their day-to-day interactions with fellow young people.

**S. Aud: Sceptical Audience.** An imaginary audience constructed for the purposes of developing relevant messages on preventive youth behaviour for a youth audience

**Al. P: Alternative Paradigm.** This is a paradigm of academic thought about HIV/AIDS and sexuality that invokes the condom as the ideal HIV preventive mechanism

#### **Real Audiences**

**NQCA: Non Questioning Christian Audience.** This is an audience that uncritically accepts claims advanced by church authorities.

**QCA: Questioning Christian Audience:** This is an audience that, though found within the evangelical Christian ranks, are critical of some claims advanced by authorities

**QCQA: Non Christian Questioning Audience:** This is a non-Christian audience that is critical of the claims advanced by authorities within the evangelical Christian fold.

#### **4.2.2. Grounding in Science and Logic**

In addition to biblical quotations, authors are at pains to demonstrate the sensibility of the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence using logic and drawing from scientific evidence. This is meant to challenge, through debate and argumentation, the truth claims of the alternative paradigm pertaining to HIV preventive youth behaviour. Wetherell (1996: 152) argues:

people's versions of actions, features of the world, of their own mental life are usually designed to counter real or potential alternatives and are part of ongoing arguments, debates and dialogues.

Proponents of sexual abstinence in *Campus Life*, utilise, in addition to the Bible, and, just like their secular opponents, the insights of science and logic to advance their version of ideal youth preventive behaviour and to counter alternative views. In the project of advancing pre-marital sexual abstinence, they engage in debate over what constitutes ideal preventive youth behaviour. Below, I give a classic example from the magazine. This is an argument made for pre-marital sexual abstinence. It advances pre-marital sexual abstinence as a better HIV preventive mechanism to the condom. This argument is advanced through a more technical form of writing using factual discourse, that is, deploying logic and drawing from the insights of science:

There is a 10 to 25 percent chance of pregnancy every year in women who are depending on condoms for contraception." Why? Sometimes the condom is worn incorrectly. Sometimes it breaks. And sometimes sperm cells simply pass through microscopic holes in some condoms. The failure rate of condoms for preventing the spread of AIDS is likely much higher than for preventing pregnancy, since HIV cells are as much as 500 times larger than sperm cells. The food and drug administration reports that "leakage of HIV sized particles through latex condoms was detectable for as many as 29 of the 89 condoms tested." The FDA concludes that condom use "substantially reduces but does not eliminate the risk of HIV transmission." Another expert reports that the rubber comprising latex condoms typically includes holes that are 50 times larger than the AIDS virus. Additionally, AIDS can spread through sexual contact any day of the month, while a woman can get pregnant only a few days out of each month. So the only "safe sex" is no sex. Abstinence is the only guarantee that you won't get pregnant or acquire sexually transmitted diseases (Moring 1994: 18).

Much argument for sexual abstinence as a correct and ideal preventive youth behaviour by authors of *Campus Life* is advanced through a rather technical literary



genre using factual discourse. This discourse is meant to legitimate the authors' biblical accounts of youth behaviour, that is, behaviour characterised by pre-marital sexual abstinence. Another dominant form of literary genre used by *Campus Life* authors to communicate to their audience is the narrative genre. Still, in this genre, in addition to God and the Bible, science and logic are deployed to legitimate pre-marital youth sexual abstinence. I will now focus my attention on how the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence is advanced utilising narrative.

#### **4.3. Utilising Narrative**

In dealing with the subject of youth sexuality, authors in *Campus Life* tend to resort to the narrative genre in advancing their version of preventive youth behaviour. In short they relate stories. Some of these narratives are fictional, while others are advanced as true stories. They usually vary in how they are structured and related. Nonetheless, some of them retain almost the same narrative structure. In the chapter, I reflect these elements of narration in the magazine. I will discuss three narratives in a way that they reflect these tendencies pertaining to narration in *Campus Life*.

In deploying the narrative, the authors utilise several strategies to advance their version of ideal preventive youth behaviour. Amongst strategies the authors utilise I observe "identification." This strategy seems prominent among strategies used to advance the magazine's version of preventive youth behaviour. It permeates the works of all the narrative works meant to advance sexual abstinence as the correct preventive youth behaviour I have come across in *Campus Life*.

In his work, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud (1984) uses the term “identification” in two ways. The one is the process by which human beings attempt to match objects and events in the environment to their subjective unconscious wishes. Freud also uses the term to describe the tendency to increase personal feelings of recognition by affiliating oneself psychologically with a person, group, etc. It is in the latter sense that I draw from Freud. However, I use the term in a slightly different sense. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the term is used to refer to an experience flowing essentially from a particular person to another. Applying Freud’s usage of the concept to our case it, identification would mean something that happens to increase feelings of recognition on the part of the author/speaker with the audience’s conflicts and questions that arise from their encounter with peer views and also with an alternative paradigm pertaining to youth preventive behaviour. It is the author that identifies with the other and not the reverse.<sup>10</sup> I extend the term to refer also to an experience of recognition and affiliation engraved by the author on the audience. The author uses his knowledge of the audience to evoke an experience from the audience that would identify with his narrative. The author does this by engraving a particular awareness on his audience. This awareness involves alternative discourses on youth pre-marital sexuality. It is important to the author that the audience see her as recognising and, at times, acknowledging the legitimacy of these discourses. It seems that to the author, key to identification with her project on the part of the audience, lies in her being seen as recognising and, at times, acknowledging alternative claims on youth pre-marital sexuality. It is from this

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<sup>10</sup> In this case, the subject identifies with the authors reality/experience

activity that she moves onto openly advancing her version of youth preventive behaviour.

In producing these narratives, the authors use the strategy of identification to bridge an ideological gap that might stand between them and a sceptical youth audience. This audience is part of the larger audience that the authors of the narratives in *Campus Life* seek to address. The first narrative I discuss in this chapter is the love story of Rick and Missy.

#### **4.3.1. The Narrative about Rick and Missy**

The story of Rick and Missy is a fictional narrative of two “love birds” that resorted to a particular lifestyle to avoid pre-marital sexual activity. This is a lifestyle that upholds pre-marital sexual abstinence and undermines pre-marital sexual activity among youth involved in male-female romantic relationships. The anonymous author (1994) advances this lifestyle and sells it to people involved in these relationships. The logic seems to be that, since it has worked for Rick and Missy, it can work for every other young person. She advances it as a possibility against peer views that seem to render it impractical and unrealistic. In this narrative, the author uses the strategy of identification to advance his version of preventive youth behaviour upholding sexual abstinence. What follows is the process involved in applying this strategy.

In the narrative, the author attempts to close the gap between herself as a person with a firm position on youth sexuality that his audience is critical of and her audience by appealing to popular images pertaining to male-female romantic relationships.

Within a month, they were going out every weekend. They were far gone in love. Some of it was physical. A lot of hormones were flying. But the overwhelming sense was that they belonged together. They cared about the same things. They could talk. Rick was so kind to her- he would call up just to say he loved her. He brought her gifts. They were soon far past holding hands and kissing. It didn't seem wrong; it seemed warm, close, intimate. They couldn't get tight enough to each other. They even talked about marriage (1994: 2).

Thus, through constructing her narrative in a way that highlights such features as "going out every weekend," "going far in love," "being physical," "hormones flying," "having a sense of belonging to each other," "caring about the same things," "being able to talk," "Rick calling just to say he loved Missy," "Rick giving gifts to Missy," the author seeks to produce an experience of identification with the narrative from his audience. The rationale seems to be that if the audience can identify with the narrative then their defences against his version of preventive youth behaviour would soften. She does this through utilising images associated with male-female romantic relationships. Through these images, the sceptical audience can identify with the author's story as it unfolds. The audience is made to see the author as recognising peer ideas on male-female romantic relationships affecting the audience, to a greater or lesser extent. Through awareness of recognition of the dominant peer views pertaining to male-female pre-marital romantic relationships, identification with the author's project can happen. Identification is the author's key to softening the barriers and thus closing the gap between the author's firm position and a sceptical audience.

The author seeks to further engrave identification by projecting herself as recognising and even acknowledging of the irrationality of the idea of pre-marital sexual abstinence among peers. To clarify the insights in the narrative the author resorts to a non –narrative a rather more technical literary genre:

What about Rick and Missy? What are the issues they should consider? If you stood up in class and proposed following God's Word as it relates to sex, people would think you were trying to outlaw happiness (1994: 2).

This is another strategy that the author utilises to draw the audience closer. She demonstrates awareness of views concerning youth, sexuality and God upheld by peers. To the author, awareness of recognition of peer views on the part of the audience should suffice to break the guard and pave way for identification with her project.

The author also seeks to close the gap between herself behaviour and her audience furthermore by invoking God in relation to pre-marital youth sexuality.

... God is not against sex. He considers it something good. It was after all his idea... The all-knowing God who invented sex should know how it can best be celebrated. God wouldn't sacrifice his own son to redeem us, and then turn around to arbitrarily spoil our fun (Campus Life 1994: 2).

The author is from a Christian doctrinal background where the notion of God is central to the belief. By portraying God, her object of worship, as recognising and seemingly acknowledging the fun brought by sex, the author attempts to redeem God in the eyes of the audience that had conceived him as anti-fun. Thus, redeeming God to the sceptical audience would intelligently produce feelings of identification with

the author's God on the part of the sceptical audience and thus draw the audience close to her version of preventive youth behaviour and to finally accepting her version of preventive youth behaviour.

In the light of Wetherell's (1996) argument that people participate in argument and debate when they advance a position, the author, in addition to advancing her version of preventive youth behaviour, can also be seen as undermining arguments against peer views of sexuality in relation to youth. This aspect in the author's narration is clearly reflected in the following passage that is meant to briefly explain her narrative:

A lot of people feel it's spoiling their party if someone says sex before marriage is wrong. But where exactly is this party? Some individuals are having fun, but people on the whole are having a miserable time. You can't cut the statistics to read any other way, AIDS, millions of divorces, adulteries, abortions, unwanted pregnancies add to something other than fun. When God gives directions for sex, he does it either to protect us from harm, or to provide for our needs (1994: 2).

The story of Rick and Missy is an example of how authors in *Campus Life* deploy stories to advance their version of preventive youth behaviour. In the story we see the author using the strategy of identification to bring her critical audience closer to her version of preventive youth behaviour with the hope of ultimately winning them into it. She does this with the intention of subverting alternative peer discourses pertaining to sexuality in relation to youth. Thus, this process of subversion is deemed to function effectively in the absence of defences when the audience feel at home with the author's narrative. I will now look at the "true narrative" of A.C., a young basketball player who successfully managed to uphold preventive youth behaviour characterised by sexual abstinence in the midst of huge pressure brought by peer behaviour.

#### **4.3.2. The Narrative about A.C. Green**

Wilt Chamberlain, the former pro basketball star, brags that he's slept with more than 20,000 women. Whether or not he's exaggerating isn't the point, but this is: for professional athletes, sex is readily available, round the clock. Beautiful women are literally waiting at every turn, ready and willing to go all the way. Sports stars call them groupies Moring (1994: 18).

With these words the author, Moring introduces the main character in his story. He introduces the character, against a backdrop of images that are meant to strike a familiar chord on his audience. The author seeks to stimulate the imagination of his target audience through creating an imaginative space that places available (available to the star) beautiful women alongside airports, hotels, restaurants. This space is conducive for sexual intercourse. The author deliberately deploys imagery that is associated with stardom and wealth in a patriarchal context. He familiarises the story to his audience with the hope of bridging the gap that exist between his position in relation to youth sexuality and his target audience. Popular images associated with stardom, wealth and sex are meant to endear him to his audience. They suggest recognition and acknowledgement of the world of peers.

The author imagines that his audience will draw from the dominant peer discourse to reason out the outcome of his character's encounters with available beautiful women at airports. He envisions his audience reflexively seeing his character approaching a tempting, available, beautiful woman, asking her out for lunch or dinner, and the next thing finding himself in bed with her. The introduction is meant to serve the purpose of drawing his audience closer and lead them to this conclusion. The telling of this narrative can be understood as "part of ongoing arguments, debates and dialogues"

(Wetherell 1996: 150). It is discourse aimed at advancing the author's version of preventive youth behaviour over competing peer versions. The author creatively utilises narrative to knock his version onto the heads of his audience.

The author, in the story, can be seen as deploying the strategy of identification from the very outset of the telling of his story. With his introduction of the story of A.C., the author seeks to bridge the gap that might exist between the narrative and his target audience. He seeks to bring the audience closer to his version of preventive behaviour by stimulating his audience's imagination in a particular direction only to subvert it. He deploys rhetoric aimed at advancing his version of reality pertaining to youth behaviour.

The introduction is meant to send the message that he recognises the dominant peer views pertaining to the lives of the rich and famous. This is the discourse that associates fame, wealth and uncontrolled pre-marital sexual activity. The message that he recognises the discourse is meant for a sceptical audience that is affected by peer views. Demonstration of recognition serves to pave the way for identification with the author's project on the part of the sceptical audience. Identification is meant to further pave way for subversion of this view and its implications that it is impossible to abstain. He does this through advancing a version of preventive youth behaviour that promotes pre-marital sexual abstinence:

They hang out every where-- airports, hotel lobbies, restaurants and  
sports arenas--always trying to catch our eyes.  
And a quick thrill.  
But they won't get very far with A.C.  
He is a virgin and proud of it (Moring 1994: 18).



He goes on to put words in his character's mouth. The character would advance his version of preventive youth behaviour characterised by pre-marital sexual abstinence:

It really comes down to respecting yourself. A lot of people say they respect themselves, but they're not true to that. I'm waiting until I'm married to have sex (Moring 1994 :18).

Thus, the author can be seen as tailoring his story in a way that responds to his imagined audience's conflicts and questions. The author actively injects his version of preventive youth behaviour in his audience minds by purging out the one he imagines as negatively affecting his audience.

In the narrative of A.C. the author sees it as important to give logic and coherence to his character's argument. This serves to place his character firmly in the world of debate.

Wetherell (1996: 220) contends that in narrative the author:

is not describing the nature of the world and giving his reactions to it, but is constructing a world. The sense he finds is not a natural property of the world but is worked up through representation and argument and is an attempt to persuade the person listening to him. The speaker is trying to present an account in a way, which seems coherent and logical.

Wetherell's insights definitely find reflection in the author's argument for sexual abstinence against views from the alternative paradigm of preventive youth behaviour:

Abstinence is the only form of safe sex. Condoms aren't as successful as many would have you believe. They have a hard enough time stopping a woman from getting pregnant, let alone blocking an HIV virus, which is much smaller than sperm.

Through constructing logic in his character's argument the author seeks to undermine peer views and views from the alternative paradigm, on youth behaviour in relation to sexuality. He attempts to do this by firstly endowing his character with a particular attribute. He constructs his character in a way that it becomes informed on discourses of youth sexuality that are popular among the audience's peers and are endorsed by the alternative paradigm pertaining to preventive youth behaviour. Through this character the author recognizes this discourse. This attribute serves to endear him to the audience. It creates identification with his project since he recognizes the very discourse that generates the audience's sceptical position. From the mouth of A.C. Green the audience is made to hear:

People say well everybody is doing it.

But that's not true. You can wait. You don't have to have sex, and you don't have to feel that you're less of a human being because you choose not to participate. You're just as fun, just as good-looking and just as exciting as anybody else who's currently doing it (Moring 1994: 18).

A.C. is different from his basketball crew. He deliberately chooses a life of pre-marital sexual abstinence. It works for him. Through the strategy of identification the author draws his audience closer to his claims. He understands and even acknowledges peer views. It is difficult to abstain. However, through A.C. Green the author is saying abstinence is possible. Not only is it possible, but also it is ideal and safe. The same author, constructs another narrative, aimed at driving this point home. It is a "true story" of Justine, a young, football player, whose story is a testimony to the virtues of sexual abstinence outside marriage. This narrative follows the same narrative structure as the foregoing one. The two narratives exemplify a tendency among authors of *Campus Life* to follow the same structures of narrating stories. This

tendency is also evident among works produced by different authors. I surmise that the logic behind is consistency in conveying messages.

#### **4.3.3. The Narrative about Justin**

Justin, a wide receiver for Buffalo Bills, had joined some teammates for a night in the town. After dinner, they wound up at a club down by the lake. Soon, Justin's teammates began disappearing. One by one, they left the club and headed down to the dock, where they hopped aboard boats-- with beautiful young women Moring (1996: 26).

With these words the author, Moring introduces the main character. He introduces the character against a backdrop of images that will stimulate the imagination of his target audience. By placing available beautiful women alongside the lake, the dock and boats after dinner, the author creates an exotic context that fires the imagination of his audience. This context is conducive for wild sexual activity. The author utilises peer discourse that marries male power with female sexual conquest, thus striking a familiar chord in his audience. By manipulating this discourse and thus stimulating the imagination of his audience (that is aware and affected by the discourse), the author seeks to produce a feeling of identification with his version of preventive youth behaviour on the part of the sceptical audience. He imagines that his audience will draw from peer discourse to reason out the outcome of his character's encounters with available beautiful women at airports. He envisions his audience reflexively seeing his character leaving the club and heading towards a tempting beautiful woman, who is seated next to the lake. He sees his audience imagining his character grabbing the woman's outstretched hand, and the next thing finding himself under the moon, in the boat with her engaging in sexual activity. By sending these messages, his introduction is meant to serve the purpose producing identification with his narrative since he

recognises and seem to acknowledge the logic of peers. The telling of this narrative can be understood as "part of ongoing arguments, debates and dialogues" (Wetherell 1996: 150). Through the strategy of identification, the author seeks to bring the audience closer to his story so that he can eventually enlighten it to his position.

He does this by demonstrating recognition of a peer discourse that associates fame, wealth and sex. This message of recognition is meant to bridge the gap that might exist between his narrative and his target audience.

The author follows the same narrative structure that he deployed in the preceding story. He places this story within a particular version of youth behaviour only to subvert it rhetorically and advance an alternative version that promotes pre-marital sexual abstinence:

Justin says the scene described above is almost an everyday occurrence for pro athletes. "That is just the way it is," says Justin, "if I wanted to be promiscuous, night in and night out, I could be. But that's not what he wants. Safe sex? Not for Justin. He'd rather save sex for marriage (Moring 1996: 26)

The author goes on to put words in his character's mouth that advances his version of preventive youth behaviour:

But the biggest blessing of choosing abstinence is this, you give a little of yourself away. By the time you are married, how many pieces have you given out? How many do you have left? (Moring 1996: 26)

As if this is not enough, the author lends some credibility to his character's argument by placing it within the debate between the author's paradigm of preventive youth

behaviour and the alternative paradigm. The credibility would, of course, be enhanced by the character's biography.

Abstinence is the only form of safe sex. Condoms aren't as successful as many would have you believe. They have a hard enough time stopping a woman from getting pregnant, let alone blocking an HIV virus, which is much smaller than sperm (Moring 1996: 26).

Having accomplished the task of placing the character's position within the debate, the author then takes peer discourse to task. The author constructs the central character in his narrative in a way that it becomes well informed about the dominant discourses on youth sexuality amongst his audience. Through this trait in his character, the author can be seen as recognising peer views. By making his character to utter the phrase "as many would have you believe" (Moring 1996: 26), the author articulates peer views pertaining to youth sexuality. Thus Justin is constructed as a well-informed person who understands what many people say about youth sexuality. This attribution to Justine is meant to serve the purpose of identification. It is meant to endear the author to his audience since he understands its conflicts and the sources thereof. It is meant to bridge the gap between his version of preventive youth behaviour and his audience. The proximity thus constructed is meant to put the audience in a position in which the alternative message to that it harbours can thoroughly penetrate it.

It is not blind faith. This is practical faith. It's God's formula for having a relationship that's real and sustaining and fulfilling for both people (Moring 1996: 26).

Thus, if his audience thought that peer views and messages stemming from the alternative paradigm on preventive youth behaviour are a more realistic and practical

message to address the spread of the HIV/AIDS it learns that the message of sexual abstinence is actually a more practical message than alternative discourses.

By highlighting and responding to a peer view that adherence to sexual abstinence is blind faith the author attempts, once more time, to close the gap between his firm position and his audience. He seeks to do that through dispelling all possibilities of thinking of his character as queer. It is important that his character be viewed as a normal young man, who shares attributes with his target audience. This would definitely endear him to his audience.

With those convictions, Justin must have a pretty easy time resisting the temptations, right? Wrong? As Justin says, he is a normal 23 years old guy with active hormones and a healthy sex drive. And since he does not even have a girl friend, it would be easy to give in (Moring 1996: 26)

From analysis of the message of sexual abstinence placed within the context of narratives, we see how *Campus Life*, through the strategy of identification advances pre-marital sexual abstinence as an ideal youth behaviour. *Campus Life* utilises the narrative mode to gain entrance into already existing debates about youth behaviour and sexuality. There seems to be a peer view that at best, suggest that pre-marital sexual abstinence is difficult and at worst, that it is impossible.

The authors of *Campus Life* seem to approve of the idea that it is difficult to abstain but disapproves the idea that it's impossible. According to literature in *Campus Life*, it is possible to abstain from pre-marital sexual engagement, and, it is actually the best version of preventive youth behaviour in the midst of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The alternative paradigm that deploys science and logic to advance the condom as the best

device to use to prevent HIV infection is also taken to task. It is challenged on the very tools of logic and science it uses. To the authors, the very science that is made reference to by the alternative paradigm actually supports the idea that pre-marital sexual abstinence is the best form of prevention against contracting HIV.

Through the strategy of identification, the authors express their recognition of other discourses pertaining to youth behaviour in relation to sexuality. However, the authors soon subvert these discourses by strongly advancing pre-marital sexual abstinence as an ideal practical possibility. The authors use the strategy of identification to reach out to the sceptical audience. This is an imaginary audience that is greatly affected by these views.

#### **4.4. God: A Resource for Identity Transformation**

The Promise Keepers (PK) movement is an example of a focused initiative by evangelicals in America. The Promise Keepers vision is clearly about the transformation of masculine identity. As stated in the vision part of its FAQ's statements "men transformed worldwide." Thus, Promise Keepers, in its own terms, is involved in the activity of masculine identity construction. God in the form of Jesus Christ and as enshrined on the Christian Bible is a major resource utilised in the activity of masculine transformation. Connecting to God through prayer and the reading of the Christian Bible is key to masculine identity transformation. PK FAQ's provides verses in the Bible that are important for this identity transformation. special prayers such as prayer of conversion, deliverance among others are also conducted to facilitate the transforming relationship between men and God. All of these points at a

particular belief: a belief in God as a resource necessary for the transformation of masculine identity. God is invoked as a factor that makes a difference in terms of masculine transformation between secular organisation that also seeks to facilitate masculine transformation and the PK. The transformed man is the kind of men who assumes the responsibility of leadership in his community and family. Much of the social ills in modern society stems from the fact that men lost their role in the primal past documented in the classic Biblical story of Adam and Eve. It is this role of leadership that needs to be restored. Thus a good relationship with God is expected to have crossover effects in a sense that when achieved, it restores the damaged relationship between husbands, their wives and their children (<http://www.promikeepers.org>).

The PK idea of emphasising men's leadership role has attracted criticism and scorn in many circles especially feminists ones. The movement has been accused of perpetuating relations of male domination and women's subordination and thus deemed a cultural backlash to the gains that have been achieved in the area of gender relations by women's movements against the patriarchal system and other movements supporting these movements. The argument below represents many such views:

As feminists we have long urged men to take responsibility in their home, as the Promise Keepers claim to do. However, when they say "taking responsibility" they mean taking control. Promise keepers openly call for wives to "submit" to their husbands. Promise keepers do not encourage a relationship of equals in marriage. Rather, they call for men to "take" their role as the leader of the family. <http://erightsforall.com/now/winterparknow/pkeepers.htm>



Some of the statements issued by foremost leaders within the movement seem to legitimate the claims made by feminists and other movements against women oppression. A case in point being a statement made by Tony Evans:

I am not suggesting that you ask for your role back, I am urging you to take it back. There can be no compromise here (<http://www.now.org/nnt/10-97/wiepoint.html>).

Bill McCartney, suggestion of solving family disputes when in a stalemate does not redeem this image either:

If there is an irresolvable situation in the home, then the husband should take the leadership of the situation over his wife and children (<http://asf.coloradon.edu/forums/socgrad/oct97/0023.html>).

Whilst critiques of the movement claim that the PK movement seeks to entrench patriarchal relations of domination and subordination between men and women. The movement's supporters argue that the movement does not enforce patriarchy but responsibility amongst men.

Frankly, what I expected was chest-pounding, whooping males shouting their superiority as red-faced, bug-eyed speakers urged them to dominate their wives, take back America from foreigners and gays, and vote Republican. The only one of these that I saw were speakers and men that I talked to focused on a renewed relationship with God, honouring commitments, supporting and loving wives and girlfriends, breaking free of addictions and encouraging one another in the process. There was no focus on domination and even politics.

In my opinion, the kind of men who attends PK events are the kind of men that society needs to keep functioning. Are they perfect? Of-course not. But they're trying. They're not walking away from responsibility. (<http://www.public.iastate.edu/html>)

Whilst the debates on the role of promise keepers on contemporary society rages on, closer inspection of the messages that the movement sends out reveal that the movement construct masculinity in complex and seemingly contradictory ways. Hence, the multiplicity of interpretations and understandings of the role of PK in

contemporary society. The very messages that the PK movement sends out about itself express this complexity. We will look at several passages that reveal this situation:

#### **A Grateful Wife**

My fiancé attended your conference on Friday and Saturday in Rochester. On Friday we had one of the worst fights during our life together. I was ready to throw in the towel. I couldn't get through to him, and wasn't sure if it was a waste of time, because his mind wasn't open enough to listen to a different point of view.

I can honestly tell you that the man that came home that night was the man I fell in love with, and more. For the first time he not only made me feel loved but cherished. Joe had a renewed sense in God and his importance in our lives. I don't believe that Joe will never have glimmers of the selfishness that he was exhibiting on Friday, but I do have the faith to believe that you gave him tools to deal with the feelings. I would like to thank you for saving our lives.

#### **A Grateful Father and Husband**

I always thought I was pretty good father and husband, but, wow, I was wrong. Again I was the one doing the thinking and not God. God revealed to me during this conference I had a lot of room to grow and grow I did, during that weekend. The first thing that I did when I got home was to sit my wife and two daughters down, I got on my knees and apologised to them for not being the father, husband and leader I was supposed to be. Thanks God they forgave me, and so did God.

#### **A Grateful Father**

I squeezed in between the seats, knelt before my son and using my bottled water I washed his feet and dried them with a T-shirt. I asked his forgiveness for not being readily available, since my divorce 17 years ago. I told him I am proud of him as he is my son, and a brother in Christ. I stood to hug him, and surprised myself. I cried like a baby in his arms. All the years of my pent up hurts and regrets came pouring out like a busted dam. God was moving in many other areas in me and my son over that weekend. God is good, my son is already looking forward to PK 2003 in Baltimore.

(<http://www.promisekeepers.org/meet12.htm>)

Thus, though the movement has been accused of promoting the “macho man,”<sup>11</sup> this is a man who can ask for forgiveness to his wife, spend time with his family members

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<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.rapidnet.com/njbeard/bdm/psychology/pk/>

and even weep before his child. To be sure, there is an extent to which this movement, with its emphasis on men's leadership over his wife and children upholds patriarchal relations in society. Nonetheless, promotion of the emotional aspect of men does not sit well with the stereotype of the traditional patriarch. Johnson (1997), also realises this issue on his reflections of PK. He notes some points of convergence between PK activities and feminist ideals. However, he also identifies a major point of divergence.

What I am saying is that many men are coming to terms to the conclusion that significant changes in their lives are needed to live up to their obligations and to live more fulfilling lives.

The promise keepers are addressing in their mission statements many of the "problems" which the social construction of masculinity that have been proposed by feminist academics, such as; such as male-male intimacy, lack of male influence, lack of male influence in socialization of children, primacy for one's occupation to men's identity, inability to show affection and love, unhealthy focus on consumption of consumer goods. These issues are all being addressed within the PK.

These issues of masculinity often get lost among the discussions about their anti-gay/lesbian ideology and their patriarchal discourse (e.g. "if there is a irresolvable situation in the home, then the husband should take the leadership of the situation over his wife and children; **paraphrased from Bill McCartney: founder of the PK).**

**Brett**

**Johnson;**

(<http://csf.colorado.edu/forums/socgrad/oct97/0023.html>)

To be sure, the PK movement is, for the most part, focused on family relations, that is, man's role in the family. It does not seem to have a strong focus on the role of young men in society. Nonetheless, some elements from the movement are reflected in some strands within South African evangelicalism. The following chapter highlights the imprints of PK ideals on some sermons advancing the message of sexual abstinence.