pride and identity synthesis in her model. Identity pride is "characterized by feelings of pride towards one's homosexual identity and fierce loyalty to homosexuals as a group" (Cass 1984, p. 152). While there is considerably less shame attached to the homosexual identity than in previous stages, only a small portion of this sample would indicate 'pride' or a 'fierce loyalty' to the greater gay and lesbian community. Much more devotion is evidenced to other Adventist lesbians and gays. In fact, participants shared their wariness about many aspects of the larger gay and lesbian community. The stage of identity synthesis is characterized by the homosexual identity not being "seen as overwhelmingly the identity by which an individual can be characterized" (Cass 1984, p. 152). Adventist gays and lesbians did not generally take on the homosexual identity as the "overwhelming" identity. Since most participants identified themselves as Adventists in a fundamental way, homosexuality was not the defining characteristic for the majority of participants in this study. Therefore, they did not need to move away from the position of defining themselves solely as homosexual.

Consequences of commitment
Self acceptance

As a result of adopting homosexuality as a way of life, gay and lesbian Adventists experience a series of common
they liked him and liked what they saw of us together. There was a very touching moment one morning when we were visiting them when dad and mum drew us together and dad made a little speech saying how much they liked him and welcomed him into the family (Richard).

End of heterosexual marriage

For heterosexually married lesbian and gay Adventists in this sample, another consequence of commitment to homosexual identity was that their heterosexual marriages ended. One participant, at the initial stages of divorce, believes that ending the marriage was best for both his spouse and him.

Even if I found out that I have to be celibate, then that would be better for me than living like this. The church’s position is that even if you’re gay, you can find release with a straight woman and that is terribly wrong. That hasn’t helped me and she deserves more than that. She deserves someone to appreciate her in every way. I can’t appreciate her for the sexual creature she is (Mitch).

My wife and I attended support groups for persons in mixed sexual orientation marriages. We found out that the people who have sustained a mixed sexual orientation marriage were those who had an open marriage. I knew I wanted to be faithful to my wife, so for me having other partners was not an option. We decided that the best gift we could give each other was freedom. We were married 18 years. We were best friends with a shared history and through the divorce, we’ve been able to sustain that (Brandon).

"My ex-husband unselfishly allowed me to explore my sexuality and let me go when I had finally accepted my sexual orientation" (Meg).
A lesbian participant offered,

I've been dating Karen in another city for the last three weeks, and I am learning much about myself with her. I am constantly amazed at the fact that women are actually attracted to me. I am soaking up every compliment and every single, wonderfully warm sensation of touch, kindness, and desire. I am amazed at how 'natural' everything is between Karen and me (Joanne).

The majority of participants in this sample wanted to be in a committed relationship rather than experience a series of same-sex sexual encounters. While the participants varied greatly in the number of same-sex experiences, most were looking for a life partner.

This finding contrasts with other research on gay males. Risman and Schwartz, in reviewing sociological literature regarding homosexuality, found that "gay men, as everyone's research shows, are perfectly comfortable with nonmonogamous philosophy and . . . with institutionalized nonmonogamous partnerships" (1988, p. 136). This research supports the opposite finding among this population. Nearly all participants were either in a committed relationship or indicated that they were looking for a monogamous relationship.

**Outcomes of Identity Development**

I conceptualize the outcomes of identity development as a typology. A typology answers the question, "What are the topic's types?" (Lofland and Lofland 1995, p. 197). This
Conditions of Leaving the Church

There are three conditions under which lesbian and gay Adventists in this sample left the church. These conditions include: (1) no longer believing church doctrines (2) believing church doctrines, but could not conform to them or (3) feeling righteous indignation and leaving the church.

No longer believe church doctrines

The majority of participants who left the church did so simply because they no longer believed church doctrines. The fact that these people are gay or lesbian probably had no bearing on their decisions to leave the Adventist church. Nationally, the Adventist church experiences about a 50 percent drop-out rate as people change their religious beliefs (Willis 1998). Therefore, this finding is not an unexpected phenomenon.

After leaving the church one woman said, "I left because I no longer believed the doctrines nor the dogma of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, even in God. I believe that there is no one truth as SDA's claim" (Anna).

"Dealing with being gay had accelerated my process of questioning what I believed. I realized that it made much more sense for me to be a Jew than for me to remain an Adventist (Adam).

Believe church doctrines, cannot conform, leave

The second condition of leaving the church is that the participants believe the church doctrines, but realize that
Believe church doctrines, righteous indignation, leave

The third condition for participants leaving the church was to leave feeling righteous indignation. These participants leave the church because they don't find acceptance of their homosexuality within the church. In general, these participants believe most of the Adventist doctrines, but do not attend church because of the church's stance on homosexuality. Since the church holds to its position on the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, these participants made a decision to leave the church. They felt that the church had rejected them and in return, they rejected the church. The following quotes illustrate leaving the church with righteous indignation.

I am having to let go of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church refuses to 'officially' accept us [homosexuals] because we are unacceptable sinners in their eyes. My church. The church of my childhood. The church--just as much my family as my biological family. So tied up in my identity (Joanne).

With respect to institutional Adventism, I want no part of it unless I am welcome. Until gay acceptance is written as part of a policy of acceptance, I want no part of institutional Adventism. I have a wonderful worship community that I am a part of. I will not simply idolize my past, nostalgia, or familiarity (George).

Retain Adventist Identity Through Celibacy

Homosexuals who practice celibacy can hold church membership in good standing since the church's objection is focused on homosexual behavior. A small minority in this
remain members of the Adventist church and attend regularly. These participants are either in a committed same-sex relationship or are looking for a life partner, and participate in the gay community to some extent.

Despite the church’s official opinion, there are two things I’ve always been--always will be--a Seventh-day Adventist and a lesbian. God doesn’t expect me to try to be something I’m not, or say I can’t be something I believe in (Nan).

I am still a quite conservative Adventist. The Adventist lifestyle is something that works for me and something that I worked out with God on my knees after many hours of prayer and studying and tearful contemplation. The same goes for my homosexuality. I have peace in my heart that God accepts me as I am. Being the omnipotent God that He is, he knew I was going to be gay long before I was a gleam in my Dad’s eye. Now I see my homosexuality as a blessing. It took a long time to get there—34 years (Hans).

Conditions of integration

There are three conditions that facilitate the integration of gay or lesbian identity with an Adventist identity. These conditions include having an accepting church congregation, an accepting family, and a job that would not be in jeopardy if sexual orientation became known.

Accepting church congregation

The condition that appears mandatory for a fully integrated identity is having an accepting church congregation. Without an accepting church congregation, the participants’ church membership was withdrawn. While some participants
their lesbian or gay identity with an Adventist identity were in a position where their employment would be jeopardized by coming out publicly. Most are self-employed or work for non-church related organizations. Only one participant with a fully integrated identity, while not working directly for the Adventist denomination, is employed with an organization using the Adventist name. He reports,

I came out to my boss and she said, 'I don't see it (your sexuality) as an issue.' Then she told the president of the company, and the president said the same thing (Brandon).

However, there were a few participants who are not completely closeted gays or lesbians with a job that may or may not be in jeopardy if their sexuality was confronted. For example, single lesbian and gay Adventists, while not passing as heterosexual, are not living with a same-sex partner and are therefore not under scrutiny. It is unknown what might happen if these participants found partners and it became widely known in the work place.

Accepting family

Having an accepting family was another condition facilitating the integration of gay/lesbian identity with an Adventist identity. While the majority of families in this sample initially had difficulty accepting a gay or lesbian family member, over time they did accept the gay or lesbian member.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study examined the construction of personal identities among gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists and hypothesized that various conditions influence the process of identity construction. This chapter reviews the research questions and reviews how they were answered. The findings from the research questions are considered in light of the existing literature and research questions that remain unanswered are noted. Finally, this chapter discusses the sociological significance and implications of this study in terms of its contribution to symbolic interactionism.

Review of Research Questions and Answers

The first study question asked was "How do homosexual Seventh-day Adventists construct identities within a religious context that prohibits homosexual behavior?" Religious socialization provides the context for identity development among gay and lesbian Adventists. The reciprocal socialization efforts of the family, church, and Adventist education, maintain the conditions under which lesbian and gay Adventists construct their identities. Through a series of processes and stages, gay and lesbian Adventists develop
development, their strategies changed to accomplish identity work.

The final study question asked, "What conditions facilitate or impede identity construction among homosexual Seventh-day Adventists?" There were three primary conditions that facilitated having an integrated openly gay or lesbian Adventist identity: (1) an accepting church congregation (2) an accepting family and (3) a job that was secure regardless of sexual orientation and identity.

**Summary of Literature and Future Research**

This study confirms the findings from much of the homosexual identity literature that identify typical stages and steps in the homosexual identity development process (Cass 1979; Plummer 1975; Ponse 1978; Troiden 1988). The timing and order of these stages and steps, however, vary from one researcher to the next. Based on the findings from these data, this research does not support any linear model of homosexual identity development. Rather, the stages of homosexual identity development appear interrelated, blended, and repetitious.

A second contribution to the literature on homosexual identity development is the finding that concerns resisting homosexual identity. While some identity models mention denial as a resisting strategy, few researchers have ex-
that remains is, "How might other religiously affiliated homosexuals differ in identity construction from this sample of Adventist homosexuals?" In addition, an overall concern lingers about how to gain more comprehensive access to individuals who are deeply closeted. Do these individuals engage in identity exploration and resisting strategies? Do deeply closeted persons find some level of acceptance of their homosexuality and selectively come out to others? What kind of strategies do they use to stay closeted?

*Contributions to Symbolic Interaction*

What does this research tell us about the nature of human society? It confirms the stance of Blumer that "society exists in action and must be seen in terms of action" (1969, p. 10). Gay and lesbian Adventists discovered strategies to explore their identities, resisted homosexual identity development, found strategies to accept homosexuality, came out, and committed to homosexual identities.

This research also illuminates our understanding of the self as a social object. This study affirms and illustrates Mead's (1934) assertion that the self is a social construction since it arises out of social experience. Identity construction among lesbian and gay Adventists was never
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
SUBJECT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

BECOMING HOMOSEXUAL:
CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY IN A FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

Investigator: Rene' Drumm (817) 645-3921 ext. 245
Advisor: Dr. Brenda Phillips (940) 898-2117

Description of the Study
This research project examines how fundamentalist Christian homosexuals construct their identities in light of the conflict between their religious beliefs that prohibit homosexual behavior and their experience as homosexual persons. The primary method of study is in-depth interview. Data will also be collected by inviting individuals who have written an autobiography to submit it. The written accounts will be used to supplement and support the interviews.

You could make a valuable contribution to this process if you consent to an interview. If you have written an autobiography, you could submit it for analysis. Persons living within a 300 mile radius of the Ft. Worth/Dallas, Texas will be eligible for a personal interview. Others who wish to take part in this study may do so by submitting an autobiography. To qualify to participate in this study, you must be 18 years of age or older. In addition, you must at some point in your life have been (formerly or currently) a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and see yourself as a homosexual. You will be asked to share your life story, focusing on how you resolved (or are trying to resolve) the conflict between your religious beliefs and your experience as a homosexual person. The expected maximum interview time is 8 hours. However, you are free to offer as much or as little information as you would like and still participate in the study. You will be offered the option of breaking up the interview into two or more sessions for your comfort and/or convenience.

Risks to Participants
Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You will decide how long we will meet. You will determine how much information to share and how much to withhold. There will be no penalties for withdrawing from the study at any point. All information will be completely confidential, which means that all identifying details will be changed or deleted in the final report. No one will know that you participated in this study unless you share that information with someone else.

Almost all research carries some risks to participants. What follows are some of the risks I've anticipated along with the steps I've taken to minimize these risks. The first risk is the protection of your confidentiality and privacy. I'm taking these steps to minimize this risk:
(1) All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at my office. All identifying details will be removed/changed. An identification card with original information will be kept for each case on a 3" x 5" note card. These cards will be in a locked safe in my home. All computer files concerning this project will require a password and will be stored on a floppy disk. This disk will also be filed in the locked filing cabinet. I will transcribe the tapes and they will be destroyed immediately or if you wish, the tape will be returned to you. The transcriptions will be on file for 5 years, after that they will be shredded and burned. (2) Any written document
Agreement to Participate

Having read the above information, I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that:

(1) The expected maximum time involvement for the interview is 8 hours.
(2) The nature of my participation includes being interviewed about my life experiences.
(3) My participation is completely voluntary. I may end my involvement at any time without penalty.
(4) All of the information I give is to be kept confidential.
(5) All information is for research purposes only.
(6) The researcher will try to prevent any problem that could arise because of this research. I will let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and I understand that she will help me. I understand, however, that TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because I am taking part in this research.
(7) If I have any questions about the research or about my rights as a subject, I should ask the researchers: their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If I have questions later, or wish to report a problem, I may call the researchers or the Office of Research and Grants Administration at (940) 898-3377.
(8) If at any time during the process I have any questions, I may ask Rene' Drumm.
(9) I will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such taking, recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPEING

I do hereby consent to the recording of my voice by Rene' Drumm, acting on this date under the authority of the Texas Woman's University. I understand that the material recorded today will be used for research purposes. I understand that Rene' Drumm will transcribe the tape and it will be erased and destroyed after transcription or I may request the tape to be returned. I also understand that the identifying information from the transcription will be changed or deleted and then kept on file for five years. Following that time, all data will be shredded. I hereby consent to such use.

I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such taking, recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

____________________  ___________________
Signature of Participant  Date
APPENDIX B

Interview Guide
APPENDIX C

Figures
FIGURE 2. Homosexual Identity Development Processes and Strategies

- Separating sexuality and religion
  - Publications
  - Travelling out of town to explore covertly
  - Exploring heterosexual relationships
  - Going to gay bars
  - Engaging in same-sex experiences

- Voluntary
- Forced

- Identity Exploration

- Sense of Difference and Confusion
- Avoidance
  - Getting professional help

- Resisting Homosexual Identity
- Denial
  - Heterosexual marriage
  - Turning off feelings
  - Prayer
  - Claiming Bible promises
  - Using religious rituals
  - Immersion in religion
  - Seeking professional help
  - Attempting suicide

- Acceptance of Homosexual Identity
- Resignation
  - Re-interpretation of Bible texts
  - Changing view of God
  - Seeking approval of religious authority
  - Receiving a 'sign' of God's approval
  - Developing new role models

- Coming Out

- Commitment to Homosexual Identity

○ = processes to accomplish identity work
□ = strategies to accomplish identity work
APPENDIX D

Tables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning off feelings</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual marriage</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claiming Bible promises</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Using religious rituals</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immersion in religion</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking professional help</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempting suicide</td>
<td>10</td>
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N = 37 (respondents may use more than one strategy)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rejection by family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision to divorce</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forced out of residence</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of job</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church membership withdrawn</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being “lost”</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement toward commitment to homosexual identity</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 37 (respondents may use more than one strategy)
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH HISTORY

William Miller laid the foundation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New England in the 1830s. Miller studied the books of Daniel and Revelation and developed a time-line predicting the return of Jesus Christ, called the "Second Advent," in 1844. When Christ failed to appear, the Millerite group returned to their study of the scriptures to determine their error. Ellen G. White discovered that the significant event that was to occur on October 22, 1844 was one that happened in heaven rather than on Earth. As a result of this discovery, Ellen White became the church leader and continued to herald the soon return of Jesus Christ.

The belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ to Earth is a cornerstone of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thus, Seventh-day Adventists see it as their mission to evangelize the world. In addition, Seventh-day Adventists believe in the seventh-day Sabbath, worshiping on Saturday rather than Sunday.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world-wide church with a membership of more than 9 million. In the United States and Canada, there are 4,706 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist church is called the General Conference and is located in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a hierarchical structure administered by a national executive committee elected by its constituents. There are 11 world-wide divisions subdivided by regions and conferences (Ministerial Association 1988).