

DARCY MACK

DR. JOHN GIGGIE

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How did Christian attitudes in the Tuscaloosa area toward homosexuality change over time?
- How did Christian attitudes in the Tuscaloosa area toward homosexuality compare to national Christian attitudes toward homosexuality?

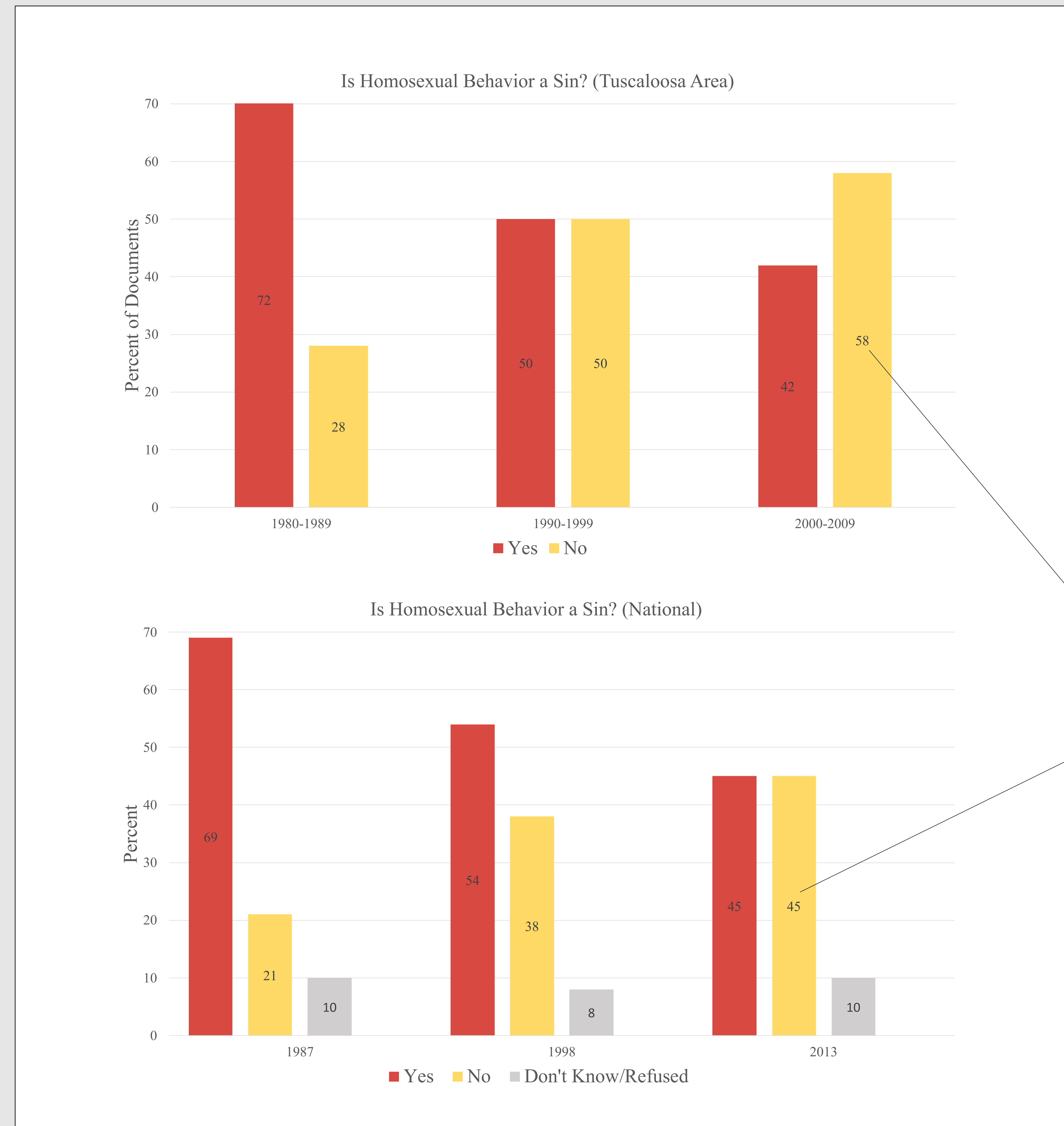
METHODS

- Forty-six documents (1983-2009) from around the Tuscaloosa area were gathered from the Miller-Stephens collection.
 - The majority of these were letters to the editor from local newspapers and columns written by locals.
 - Each expressed an attitude toward homosexuality through the lens of Christianity.
 - They were divided by whether or not the writer expressed the belief that homosexual behavior is a sin.
- National surveys that asked “Is homosexual behavior a sin?” were gathered using the iPoll distribution service. These were from 1987, 1998, and 2013.

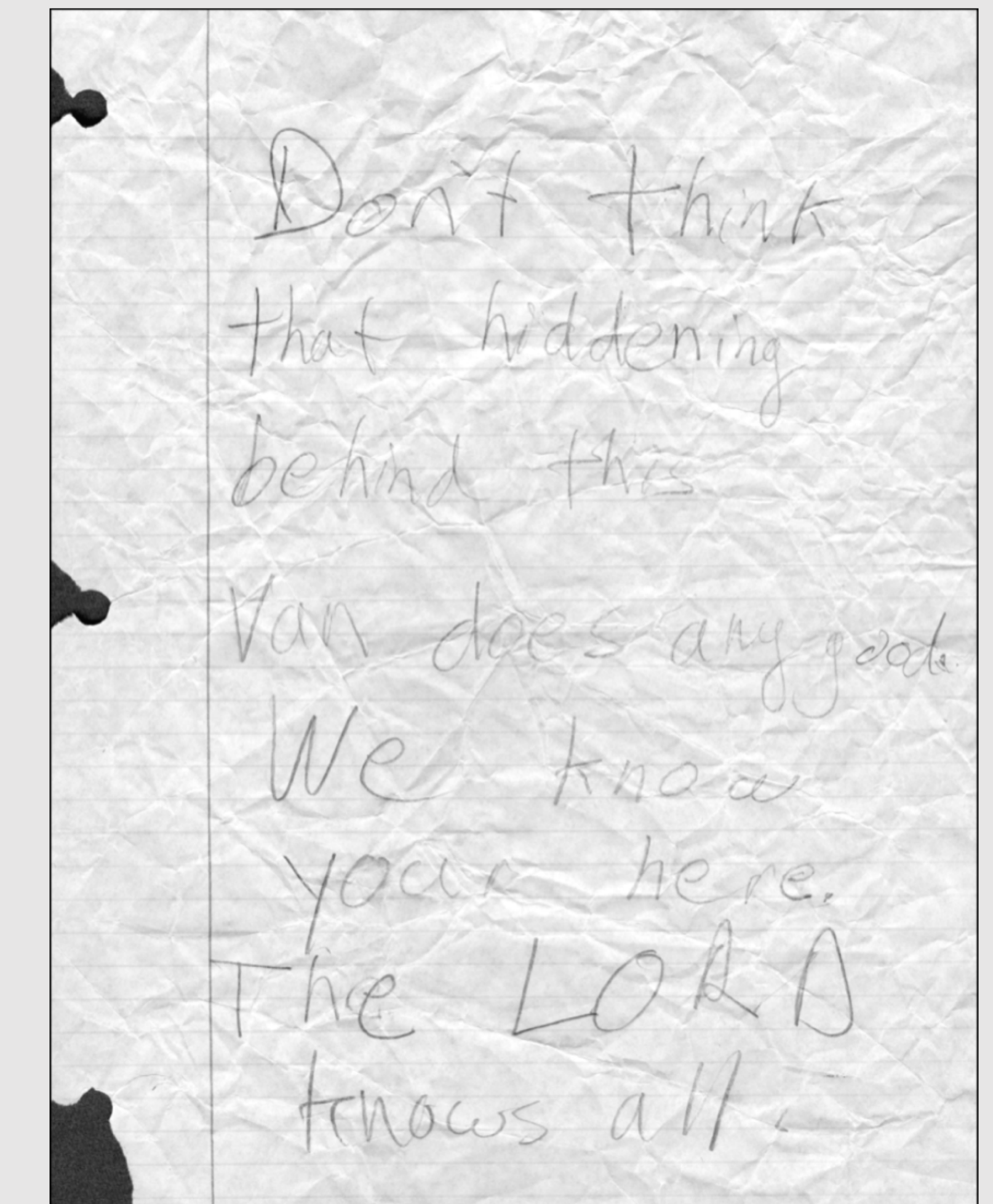
RESULTS AND SIGNIFICANCE

- On both a local and national level, there was a significant increase in the percent of acceptance of homosexuality over time.
- By the late 2000s, the Tuscaloosa area had both a higher percentage of pro-gay sentiments and a lower percentage of anti-gay sentiments than national samples, despite being a stereotypically conservative area.
- This is likely due to:
 - The work of local queer organizations, like the University of Alabama’s queer student organization and the Tuscaloosa Community Gay/Lesbian Organization: Just by existing these organizations brought more visibility to the queer movement. They also fostered a more accepting environment through efforts like forming a religious affairs committee and holding events like a queer conference in 1996.
 - College towns generally tending to be more liberal than other places in the South and throughout the nation.

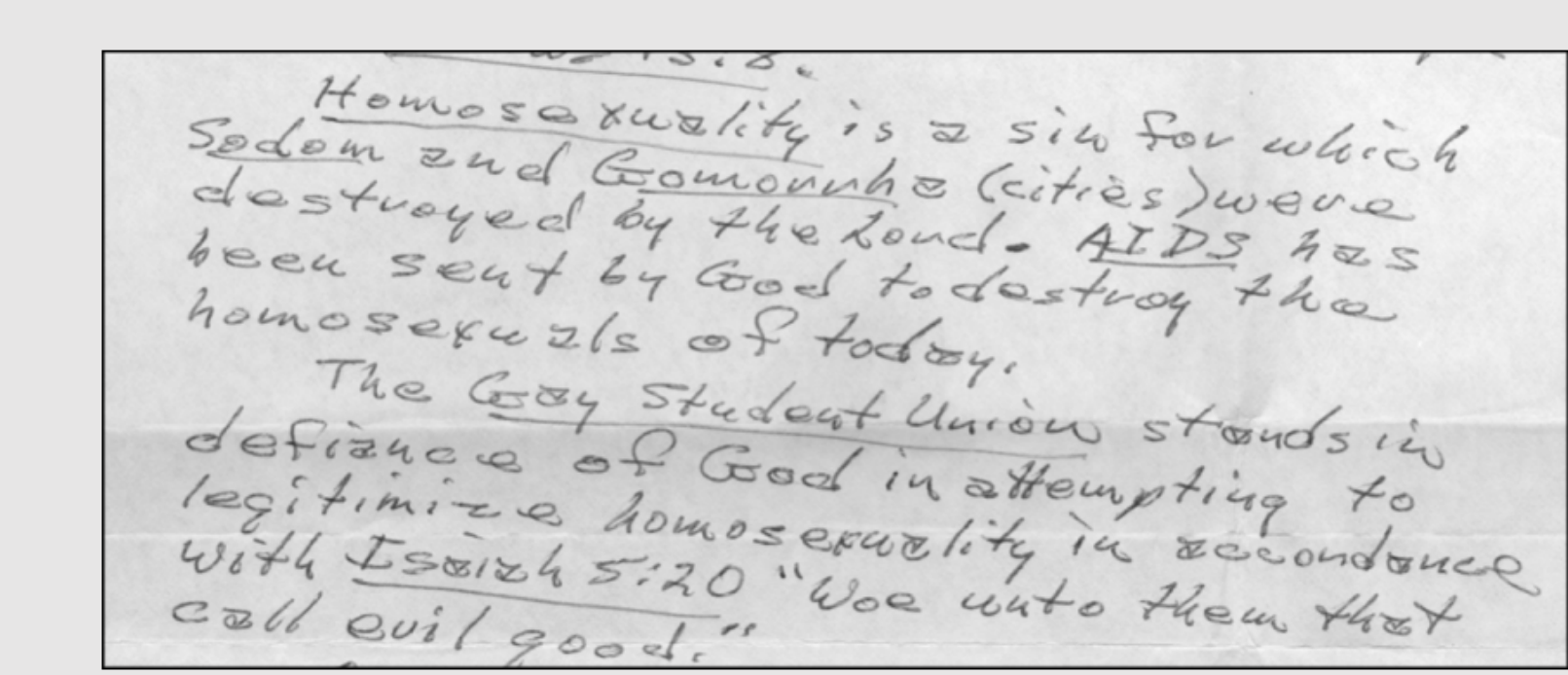
FINDINGS



EXAMPLES



The Tuscaloosa area had a 13 percent higher rate of acceptance than the nation as a whole.



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