WHEN HOMOSEXUALITY COMES TO CHURCH

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BY
DARYL A. NEIPP

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Accepted by the Doctor of Ministry Committee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree

Committee Members:

__________________________________
Date____________________
Committee Chairman: Dr. Danny Cochran

__________________________________
Date____________________
Committee Member: Dr. Wayne Layton

__________________________________
Date____________________
Committee Member: Dr. Douglas Powell
ABSTRACT

WHEN HOMOSEXUALITY COMES TO CHURCH

DARYL A. NEIPP

Increasingly, the issue of homosexuality has become more and more accepted in society as a cultural norm, which in turn has forced pastors to deal with a subject that they, in many cases, feel unprepared to handle. While it is true that most pastors have formed a theological position on the matter, they have not necessarily thought through the counter arguments against the historic biblical position, nor have they waded through the scientific evidence in order to separate fact from fiction. Additionally, many simply have not had to previously deal with the issue so they have a hard time knowing exactly how to respond when it does show up within their ministry context. The purpose of this project then was to conduct research in regard to the biblical and the scientific records so pastors could be armed with the facts and consequently maximize their ministry potential. This project sought to combine both literary research and interview data so the final product would be of benefit to pastors as a practical resource for their ministries. As a result, resources, such as sermon manuscripts, a seminar outline, official church position statements, and organizational contact information was assembled for the express purpose of aiding pastors and their church ministries.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANE: Ancient Near East
APA: American Psychological Association
ESV: English Standard Version
GARBC: General Association of Regular Baptist Churches
GLAD: Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders
GLAAD: Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
GLSEN: The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
ISSI: Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity
KJV: King James Version
LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning
MCC: Metropolitan Community Church
NARTH: National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuals
NASB: New American Standard Bible
NCAVP: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
NGLTF: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
NHSLS: National Health and Social Life Survey
NIV: New International Version
NKJV: New King James Version
NLGJA: National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association
NYAC: National Youth Advocacy Coalition
OARBC: Ohio Association of Regular Baptist Churches
PATH: Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality
PFLAG: Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
PFOX: Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays
SAGE: Senior Action in a Gay Environment
SLDN: Service Members Legal Defense Network
SSA: Same Sex Attraction
SSB: Same Sex Behavior
SSO: Same Sex Orientation
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Every married student knows that getting through school is really only possible with the support of one’s spouse. This is certainly true in my case and I am grateful to have a partner who recognizes the value of education and never complained about the long nights. Instead Tina kept the boys out of the office and allowed me to have concentrated periods of computer time so I could complete this project. At the end of the day, this degree is hers as much as it is mine because it could not have happened without her!
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

Introduction

The cover of the May 21, 2012 issue of *Newsweek* made history earlier that year by dubbing Barack Obama the first gay president of the United States. Certainly the magazine editors intended this as a marketing ploy but the fact that it drew readership makes a statement about how polarizing the issue of homosexuality has become. Unfortunately, the debate has escalated to the point where it has become difficult to simply discuss the issues in a rational manner, and in the process the Christian community has become associated with hate groups or labeled as judgmental homophobes. David Kinnaman discovered in a study that over 90% of Mosaics and Busters feel that the term “antihomosexual” accurately describes Christians. From this he assesses: “When you introduce yourself as a Christian to a friend, neighbor, or business associate who is an outsider, you might as well have it tattooed on your arm: antihomosexual, gay-hater, homophobic.” For many Christians, the term *antihomosexual* accurately describes their position, however, *gay-hater* is not a phrase they feel is an

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1 Historically the term *gay* has not always been linked to homosexuality. Even more recently, *gay* has been utilized in an effort to minimize the offensiveness of the word *homosexuality*. However, *gay* and *homosexual* are now viewed as synonymous so the terms will be used interchangeably within this paper.


3 Kinnaman, 93.
honest representation. Still, it is important to recognize that regardless of how Christians may categorize themselves, this terminology accurately describes how many in society view them. The sad thing is that these charges are not entirely without foundation. One of the most prolific examples is Pastor Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church whose website address, www.godhatesfags.com, provides just a window into how this congregation feels about homosexuals. While this is an extreme example, more mainline evangelicals have also been known to make insensitive statements. Jerry Falwell, Sr., the founder of Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University charged that “AIDS is not just God’s punishment for homosexuals, it is God’s punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals.”

In a similar statement, Falwell extended blame for the 9/11 terrorist attacks to homosexuals: “I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way—all of them who have tried to secularize America—I point the finger in their face and say, ‘You helped this happen.’”

Pat Robertson, author and host of the 700 Club, compared homosexuality to

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5 Laurie Goodstein, “After the Attacks: Finding Fault,” New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/15/us/after-attacks-finding-fault-falwell-s-finger-pointing-inappropriate-bush-says.html (accessed January 10, 2013). This article provides some of the larger context of the theological conversation Falwell and Robertson were having on the 700 Club. Falwell later expressed regret for how his comments were taken. Similarly, Robertson clarified that terrorists were solely responsible for the 9/11 attacks. The point of including these quotes is not to disparage their character and accomplishments but rather to demonstrate that evangelicals have not always been tactful in their approach, which as evidenced by these examples, can cause more trouble than help. Even within the broader and proper context of these conversations, the timeliness of saying such things can be questioned. The original source for this quote is a 700 Club broadcast from January 13, 2001, which is no longer available, though portions remain accessible through YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-CAcdta_8I&feature=youtu.be (accessed January 10, 2013). The original newspaper source is: John F. Harris, “God Gave U.S. ‘What We Deserve,’ Falwell Says,” The Washington Post, September 14, 2001.
the Holocaust: “When lawlessness is abroad in the land, the same thing will happen here that happened in Nazi Germany. Because many of those people involved in [sic] Adolph Hitler were Satanists, many of them were homosexuals—the two things seem to go together.”

Boycotts have also been a common Christian response to homosexuality. In 1997, the Southern Baptist Convention approved a boycott against the Walt Disney Company due to its position on the issue. Likewise, the American Family Association has previously called for similar boycotts against Wal-Mart, McDonald’s, and Ford.

Certainly not all responses from the Christian community have been so critical. In fact, a growing movement of believers goes so far as to suggest that homosexuality is a gift from God. Author Mel White states, “I have learned to accept and even celebrate my sexual orientation as another of God’s good gifts and to take my place in the world as a responsible and productive gay Christian man.” Troy Perry, founder of Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) says: “How could we go on being ashamed of something that

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6 Pat Robertson, The 700 Club, January 21, 1993. Also found on the internet at “Anti-Gay Politics and the Religious Right,” People for the American Way, 1988, www.pfaw.org/media-center/publications/anti-gay-politics-and-religious-right (accessed January 10, 2013) and in print: Mel White, Religion Gone Bad (New York: Penguin, 2006), 239. At the researcher’s request, The 700 Club sent a DVD copy of this broadcast so the entire context of the conversation could be considered. It should be noted that twenty-one seconds after this quote, Robertson made the following statement: “What we want to do is to love them (homosexuals) and bring them into the kingdom.” Thus it appears that while Robertson passionately makes a connection between Satanism, evil, and homosexuality, his intent should not necessarily be characterized as uncaring.


9 Mel White, Stranger at the Gate (New York: Penguin, 1994), 311.
God created? Yes, God created homosexuals and homosexuality.”\textsuperscript{10} Brian McLaren, on the other hand, suggests a more passive approach:

Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements. In the meantime, we’ll practice prayerful Christian dialogue, listening respectfully, disagreeing agreeably. When decisions need to be made, they’ll be admittedly provisional. We’ll keep our ears attuned to scholars in biblical studies, theology, ethics, psychology, genetics, sociology, and related fields. Then in five years, if we have clarity, we’ll speak; if not, we’ll set another five years for ongoing reflection.\textsuperscript{11}

What does appear to be obvious is that the Christian community has chosen to respond to the issue of homosexuality in a variety of ways. Though in the minority, some evangelicals have chosen to support the pro-gay movement while many others continue to feed into the perception that Christians hate those who have engaged in this alternative lifestyle. Appropriately so then, the words “respond” and “response” will be key terms for this project. Not only is it apparent that the Christian community has not responded appropriately but it is unclear whether they even know how to do so. The student’s underlying hope, behind this research, is that wherever a reader might find himself or herself on the spectrum, that he or she will become equipped to respond properly to an issue that will continue to infiltrate both the culture and the church.

**The Context of the Project**

There are several contextual components that must be considered as relevant to this project. First, it should be understood that the final product of this study is aimed at pastors who are a part of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC).

\textsuperscript{10} Troy Perry, *The Lord is my Shepherd and He Knows I’m Gay* (Los Angeles: Nash, 1972), 3.

Therefore the direction of the study may very well be different than if Anglicans or Episcopalians were the proposed target because those groups are affirming of homosexuality. While the research side of the study should be applicable to all, the interview process and the resulting project will be most helpful to pastors who minister within the GARBC.

Second, readers should understand that the writer has firm presuppositions regarding the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. The student believes that every individual word of Scripture is inspired and not just the concept (Ex. 24:4; Isa. 30:8; 2 Sam. 23:2), that each word is inspired equally (2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 15:4; Jn. 10:35), that the Scripture is entirely free from all errors in their original writings (Jn. 17:17; Ps. 119:46; Mt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16), and that God’s Word is the final standard for everything people should believe and do since it gains its authority from God himself (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). These views stand in contrast to many in the Christian gay community who seek to lower the authority of Scripture. For example, in an official MCC document, Rev. Mona West states: “While the Bible is an important witness to the relationship between God and humanity, it is not the ultimate revelation of God . . . while the Bible may be at the center of matters of faith, it must also be in ‘conversation’ with tradition, experience, and reason.”

This approach is problematic, however, in that it removes any measured standard of truth. The student’s premise begins with the idea that God gave human beings the Bible with the intention that it be understood. Furthermore, it is without error, authoritative, and applicable today. This stance on the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture then lends itself to a literal method of interpretation. This is the

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method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether it is used in writing, speaking, or thinking. It has also been known as the grammatical-historical method in order to emphasize the fact that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations. The literal method of interpretation can contain figures of speech and parables but the context is always key. Literal interpretation seeks to discover the original usage of words as it was intended for its initial audience of readers.

Finally, readers need to understand that the topic of homosexuality is just one of many issues that falls under the larger umbrella of tolerance. The word *tolerance* used to mean something different than it does today. Josh McDowell cites an older edition of *Webster’s Dictionary* that defines *tolerate* as “to recognize and respect [others’ beliefs, practices, etc.] without sharing them.”13 However, tolerance in modern America has come to mean something far different because it is based upon relativism which purports that since all truth is equal then all subsequent beliefs, values, and lifestyles are also equal. The result: “Tolerance now demands an affirmation of virtually all behavior, no matter how immoral, unnatural, and bizarre.”14 The exception to this rule is people who do not subscribe to relativism. For example, Christianity believes that Jesus is the only way to God. It is an exclusivist approach that requires a belief in absolute truth—a recognition that not all beliefs, values, and lifestyles are indeed equal. Therefore, proponents of such an approach are labeled *intolerant*.

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When it comes to homosexuality, the issue of tolerance is extremely relevant. This was brought to attention in 2009 during the Miss USA pageant. Carrie Prejean, who represented California, was asked by one of the judges—gay celebrity Perez Hilton—about her stance on same-sex marriage. She answered, “I think that I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offense to anybody out there, but that’s how I was raised.” Traditionally, people would have taken that answer as her opinion even if they disagreed. However, the modern approach to tolerance demanded a far different approach. Hilton gave Prejean a zero for her answer which ultimately led to the loss of the contest and crown. As if that was not enough, Hilton described Prejean in an obscenity laced rant as having “half a brain” and said he would have stormed onto the stage and ripped off her tiara if she had won. Later he confirmed she had lost the crown because of that specific question. Clearly a difference of opinion on this topic was not to be tolerated and this is the cultural milieu within which the issue of homosexuality lies. Carrie Prejean was publicly berated simply for offering an opinion and pastors could face prosecution if some members of congress had their way. In reference to the Matthew Shepherd Hate Crimes Prevention Act, Eric Young writes:

The legislation is intended by its sponsors to protect homosexuals and transgendered people from violent hate crimes by expanding a list of federally protected groups to include sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability. But critics say Christian broadcasters and even pastors covering culturally unpopular views, such as preaching homosexuality as sin, could

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eventually face prosecution just for expressing their religious views because their teachings could be blamed for inciting violence.\textsuperscript{18}

While it may seem that a full acceptance of views would create peace, the opposite is true for the Christian who believes in absolute truth. The subject of homosexuality has a way of bringing the real issues surrounding tolerance to the surface. While this paper will specifically address homosexuality, readers need to understand that it is just a prime example of a deeper issue.

\textbf{Statement of the Problem}

The purpose of this project is to help pastors understand how to respond to the issue of homosexuality when it presents itself within the church so they can maximize their ministry potential. The implication made by this statement is that pastors do not fully know how to properly respond to homosexuals which is not meant as a criticism but rather a simple observation. The researcher’s primary motivation then is to fully understand the range of issues surrounding homosexuality so a godly approach can be incorporated. A secondary motivation is to equip pastors who also need to have a resource they can draw from in order to confidently minister to homosexuals. In turn this will allow them to teach their church members how to appropriately respond.

\textbf{Statement of the Importance of the Problem}

Until recently, homosexuality has typically been a cultural phenomenon that was generally regarded as unacceptable. For example, Gallup polling shows that the majority of adults now view homosexual relationships as morally acceptable. In 2002, this

viewpoint accounted for only 38% of Americans, but in recent years this has grown to 56%. Additionally, the view that homosexuals are born gay has risen from 13% in 1977 to 40% in 2012. Concurrently, the idea that one’s upbringing or environment is a determining factor in their sexuality has dropped from 56% to 35%.19

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Now that societal norms have begun to change in this arena, the church is also being forced to deal with this divisive and controversial issue. In many cases pastors are finding themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to make decisions on such matters without the benefit of fully studying the subject. Furthermore, generally speaking, Christians currently maintain much stronger viewpoints on homosexuality than non-believers. For example, Barna Research found that 85% of evangelicals believe a person chooses to be a homosexual. Consequently, many churches have developed an “us versus them” type of mentality and have become known for being intolerant and judgmental. Those who do embrace a homosexual lifestyle are often treated worse than an unbeliever, leaving a segment of the population without the hope of Christ. Dan Kimball makes this observation, “So picture being gay and wanting to seek counsel or spiritual advice. Why would I go to a church? They already have thrown heaps of guilt on me and condemned me before I’ve even stepped my foot in the door.” While churches do need to stand for truth, it seems that in the case of homosexuality, it has alienated an entire group of people. There was a time when the church could have gotten away with this but now that pro-gay sentiment is growing, it further demonstrates that the church is antiquated, out of touch, and irrelevant to most people’s lives. What needs to be understood though is that the issue of homosexuality is not going away. More and more Christians are feeling comfortable in viewing homosexuality as a genetic and inborn condition and therefore beyond the control of a person’s choosing. Furthermore, the cultural climate has pushed many Christians to soften their stance allowing it to become a

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21 Dan Kimball, They Like Jesus but Not the Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 140.
non-issue in their minds. As a result, more and more pastors are finding themselves having to address this issue, and doing so from a defensive posture. While it is hard to know how many homosexuals are currently attending churches, what can be said is that homosexuality has been pervasively growing. Thus pastors can expect that the likelihood of them having to directly address homosexuality is climbing at a strong percentage rate.

Like many pastors, the author of this paper did not see the significance of this concern until it became an issue in his own church. The problem, he discovered, was not just the person who was struggling with homosexuality but also the fallout from the congregation who sympathized with his plight. Because the author was forced to deal with the problem, he realized very quickly just how ill-equipped he was to do so. Therefore, though after the fact, this paper serves a very important purpose to the author’s ministry. The author desires to discover what the Bible does and does not say about the topic so he can clearly defend the Scriptural position on homosexuality. Viewpoints, both for and against homosexuality, will be evaluated on their merits against the context and exegesis of the Scriptural text. Additionally, the author seeks to discover where the truth lies in regard to the scientific research that has been conducted. These will be evaluated in light of their data collection methods and verification procedures. In short, studies should be able to stand up to the scrutiny and replication required of anyone who utilizes the scientific method.

Beyond the personal significance to the researcher’s ministry, he would like to see his findings assist others who may also be unprepared to fully engage the subject matter. To put it simply, there are three overarching goals the author wishes to accomplish in regard to pastors who may read this paper. The first is cognitive. It is the author’s desire
that pastors be given accurate and helpful information so they can be fully aware of the intricacies of the issue. Second, pastors should feel differently as well. It is the writer’s hope that pastors gain a sense of confidence in being able to sit down and work through the issues with the people in their churches. Third, pastors will be given the opportunity to do something with this material. It is the student’s anticipation that the material will be utilized, not only as a teaching tool, but also as a way to empower pastors to relate better to the homosexual population and thereby maximize their effectiveness in reaching them for Christ.

**Limitations**

The subject matter of homosexuality can be a very broad topic so some self-imposed limitations are in order. Though corresponding issues are important, the student cannot hope to cover the full range of related concerns. Therefore, the role of governmental policy making and the move to legalize same-sex unions will not be covered. The study will involve some discussion of same-sex marriage because the biblical foundation for heterosexuality is in play. However, same-sex marriage is a result and not the basis for this study. Additionally, the focus of this study will not emphasize the health risks of a homosexual lifestyle nor the prevention of such a choice. Though these topics are pertinent, they fall beyond the scope of what this paper can review. There is one other limitation that should be noted: The collecting of data will be restricted in large part to the United States. Some scientific studies will have an international flavor but the point of this research is to help pastors who currently minister in America. Therefore, while international studies may be utilized, the collection of such data will be measured against a relevant application in the United States.
Conclusion

The subject of homosexuality is extremely difficult to work through because the modern cultural climate has escalated it to the point where strong opinions abound on both sides. People have been generally thrown into one of two camps—those who stand against homosexuality and those who stand for it. As a result, Christians in particular have been lumped together with extremist views and criticized for being judgmental of a whole segment of the population. Even so, many pastors continue to dismiss these issues as irrelevant to their specific ministry. However, more and more homosexuals are either finding their way into congregations or are simply becoming more willing to disclose their orientation due to its now widespread level of acceptance. Pastors then are finding themselves ill-equipped to deal with the host of questions that accompany this difficult subject. The hope of this writer is that the material contained in this paper will provide pastors with a helpful resource for dealing with the issues related to homosexuality.
CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When it comes to any hot-button issue, it is important to recognize that both sides come to the table with a set of presuppositions which leads them through a rational train of thought resulting in a point of view. Often arguments and debates are focused solely upon the opposing perspectives and they work their way backwards through the finer points without ever fully disclosing the initial presupposition from which each side is working. Though the media has a tendency to report only the most scandalous representations of each side, the fact of the matter is, there is rationale behind each position. From the gay perspective, homosexuality is an alternative sexual orientation. It has nothing to do with morals; it is just different than how society has traditionally defined the norm. Their presuppositions could be outlined in this fashion:

1. Being gay is not a choice. Homosexuality is an inborn phenomenon.

2. Since homosexuality is inborn then it must be tied to identity. Consequently, homosexuality is not about what a person does, it actually defines who they are.

3. Since homosexuality is inborn either through genetics or the creation of God, then it should be viewed as normal and natural.

4. Since homosexuality is inborn and not the result of choice, then it should be protected like other minorities are protected.
Christians who hold to a traditional interpretation of Scripture also have presuppositions they bring to the debate. Their view contends that homosexuality is an immoral sexual act which is condemned by God. Their flow of rationale is outlined this way:

1. Though there may be many influences, being gay is an individual choice.
2. Since homosexuality is a choice it is not so much about identity but more about behavior.
3. The choice of homosexuality is not natural and goes directly against God’s intended design and order. Thus it should not simply be categorized as an alternative lifestyle but rather be seen as an act of rebellion.
4. Since homosexuality is a choice, it should not become a civil rights issue but should remain a moral one.²²

Clearly there is much to discuss on this topic. However, these outlines provide a good working idea of how defendants on each side get from Point A to Point B. The purpose of this chapter is really about examining the foundations. Certainly many of the resulting questions will be addressed but it is the foundational principles that form the rationale for each argument so this must be the starting point for the research.

The Biblical Record

It seems everyone has an opinion on the moral positioning of homosexuality. Author Eric Marcus clearly states, “No, homosexuality is not a sin, and it is not immoral.”²³ Matt Slick, on the other hand, contends that it is “clearly condemned in the

²² These presuppositions were summarized from observations Adam Hamilton made within the context of the United Methodist Church. Adam Hamilton, Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 168-183. Paul Hontz from Central Wesleyan Church in Holland, MI also did a sermon titled “Homosexuality” under the Think series which appears to have used the Hamilton book as a source: www.centralwesleyan.org/series_name/think (accessed January 10, 2013).

As with any other issue, there must be an objective standard by which opinions and viewpoints may be judged. Otherwise there really is no way to determine where the truth actually lies. Those who choose to argue for their perspective outside of the Bible only have science as a support base. However, much of the research in that field is still inconclusive. Another group of people have attempted to figure out how Scripture can be reinterpreted in order to support the pro-gay view. Neither of these approaches, though, is particularly helpful to the person who is honestly seeking to discover what God says on the topic. However, the burden of proof rests on those who are challenging the veracity of Scripture. If there are reasons to overturn the traditional understanding and interpretation of relevant passages on the topic then the supporting evidence for doing so must be extraordinarily solid.

Just as there are presuppositions for how people form their opinions on homosexual matters, the same could be said for the alternative viewpoint. As previously stated, the author of this paper upholds the inspiration and authority of Scripture as the sole basis for truth on all matters pertaining to this life. Many gay Christian leaders do affirm the Bible as their authority, however they would also equally hold to other sources of authority. Troy Perry, founder of the largest gay church in America, states: “Scientific information, social changes, and personal experience are the greatest forces for change in the way we interpret the Bible.” In other words, from his perspective, social change and personal experiences also serve as determinatives for truth. Patrick Cheng, also a minister in the MCC, admits that pro-homosexuality theology draws upon Scripture, tradition,

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25 Troy Perry, Don’t Be Afraid Anymore (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990), 339.
reason, and experience. However, even then Scripture is still not interpreted literally:

“Queer theology draws upon scripture... in creative ways. Although scripture traditionally has been used as a means of oppressing LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender] people, queer biblical scholars in recent years have not only countered these antiqueer readings with alternative readings, but they have also ‘taken back’ or ‘reclaimed’ the Bible by interpreting it positively and constructively from their own perspectives.”

It seems apparent that while these authors affirm the authority of Scripture, their definition of authority is quite different than a normal, literal approach would embody. Not only is the Bible placed on equal footing with other perceived sources of truth but then the actual words and understanding of the text must be changed in order to accommodate a gay theology. This is the opposite of how Scripture should be approached. The Bible should not be interpreted in light of a person’s actions. A person’s actions should be interpreted in light of what the Scripture says.

The Scripture does indeed address the issue of homosexuality but there are legitimate questions regarding the interpretation of such passages. This section will work through each of the relevant passages as they relate to the topic and address the correlating arguments that favor an alternative interpretation. In the process it will become apparent that there are textual limitations with many questions within the scope of homosexuality that will remain unanswered. Therefore this chapter contains a second major section that will examine the current scientific record of facts. This will allow for a broader depth of understanding on the main issues that are debated today.

The Foundation of Genesis

It is interesting that most pro-gay authors do not even bother with the creation account. This may be in part because of the widespread acceptance of the evolutionary theory which consequently causes the creation narrative to be viewed as myth. However, for those who hold to a literal interpretation of Genesis, the first two chapters provide compelling evidence that the created order was normative and established a model that was meant to be replicated. Still, the normative model is exactly what pro-gay advocates must address if they expect to refute the creation account. Jay Michaelson makes an attempt by saying that the norm in the Bible “was not heterosexual monogamy but polygamy, not to mention prostitution, arranged marriage, and marriage to young children.”

His contention is that Adam and Eve were not normative in the Bible so that cannot be the standard. However, if that were the case then polygamy, prostitution, arranged marriage, marriage to young children, and of course homosexuality must be viewed as valid. This is not Michaelson’s point though. He is trying to make an argument against heterosexuality as the norm with one set of criteria while not allowing the rationale to play out in the other direction. That aside, Scripture never endorses his proposed list of alternatives while it does clearly endorse heterosexual monogamy. As is often the case, proponents of pro-gay theology attempt to look beyond the clear teaching of Scripture to see what is not said and then they make an assumption based on what is not present. For example, Daniel Helminiak says of the creation account that an endorsement of heterosexuality does not imply a condemnation of homosexuality.

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it should be noted that by making this point he is at least putting heterosexuality on the table as a possibility for Genesis endorsement. Second, if heterosexuality is stated as the created order, then it is able to stand alone as a statement of truth. It is not necessary at that point for God to add a full list of deviant approaches. If nothing else, the fact that God only mentions one model makes a statement in and of itself.

The verses in question come from Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18, and 2:23-24. These passages contain descriptions of the created order and it should be understood that all of this came before the Fall. In other words, before sin had entered the world, the ideal is presented with God saying everything was good. As further evidence, Jesus directly quotes from Genesis in order to make a point about divorce. Though he was referencing marriage and not homosexuality, his point was in regard to the created order: “He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate’” (Mt. 19:4-6 ESV).

Paul uses a portion of the same verse to address the sanctity of the body in 1 Corinthians 6:16. Again, it was used in reference to something other than homosexuality but he specifically pointed to the created order as the ideal in order to support his argument.

The Genesis account establishes God’s original intent which was heterosexual in nature. It is true that the narrative does not provide specific commands about alternative sexuality but it does provide a basis upon which other Scriptures expand. Thomas

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29 The ESV (English Standard Version) is used for all represented verses and passages unless otherwise cited.
Schmidt states: “It is fair to say that the human author of Genesis was not consciously prohibiting same-sex relations when he wrote the creation account, but it is appropriate for us to explore the relevance of biblical commands about marriage and to evaluate modern homosexuality in light of Genesis.” 

Genesis reveals the identity and functions of two different human sexes who were made for one another. It provides the model for both sexuality and the family unit which is affirmed by both Jesus and Paul.

The Four Passages: Genesis 19

Without question, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is the most cited passage in regard to homosexuality. Traditionally the belief has been held that God destroyed these cities because of the prevalence of homosexuality—God’s judgment upon evil. However, two main objections are commonly cited as reasoning to form an alternative conclusion. The first is that the sin of homosexuality is never specifically identified in the text. The second is that the interpretation of a key word can radically change the connotations derived from the context.

The context of the story begins in Genesis 13 with the parting of ways between Abram and Lot. The land could not support the flocks of both so Lot chooses to move east toward the Jordan Valley. Then in verse 13, the author inserts a short comment before moving on with the narrative: “Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.” This is an important verse in the overall context, because pro-gay revisionists have attempted to say that Genesis 19 has nothing to do with wickedness.

30 Thomas E. Schmidt, Straight & Narrow?: Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 41.

31 Genesis 11:27 establishes Lot as Abram’s nephew.
While it is true that no sin is specifically identified, this verse clearly establishes the moral climate of the city.

In Genesis 18, Abram is visited by two angels and the Lord at which time it is revealed to him that judgment will be brought against the cities: “Then the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know’” (Gen. 18:20-21). This action prompts Abram to plead for the saving of these cities if as few as ten righteous men can be found. For the second time, the utter wickedness of the cities is presented. Again, no specific sin is identified but apparently things are so bad that not even a handful of righteous men can be recognized.

The story continues in Genesis 19 with the two angels coming into the city of Sodom to visit Lot. He apparently recognizes them as angels because he bows down to them and refers to them as lords. Regardless, Lot offers them housing with the hope that they will be on their way early the next morning. However, they counter by saying they will just stay in the town square. This prompts Lot to strongly urge them to stay with him which leads the reader to the conclusion that he was concerned for their safety. The angels comply and follow Lot to his house.

Verse four reveals that the angels are still not out of harm’s way: “Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter” (NASB). It has previously been established that the entire city is wicked. Additionally, it is apparent Lot was concerned for the safety of his visitors. Now a large group of men that is representative of the entire city, “young and
old” and “from every quarter,” surrounds the house. So the language up to this point clearly confirms an evil intent on the part of the city’s men.

All of this leads to verse five which provides the crux of the argument: “And they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.’” “That we may know them” is the phrase in question. The NASB translates this as “have relations with them;” the New International Version (NIV) states “so that we can have sex with them;” the New King James (NKJV) conveys, “that we may know them carnally.” However, a popular interpretation of this phrase by pro-gay advocates is “to get acquainted with” in the sense of hospitality. This may seem counterintuitive when the context has been established but it is the most accepted interpretation in pro-gay theology. This stems from the fact that homosexuality has not been explicitly identified and because of the variant interpretations of the word “know.”

The inhospitality view was created by Derrick Sherwin Bailey and published in 1975 under the title Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition. Though other authors have expanded on the interpretation over the years, Bailey remains the primary source for this analysis. His contention is that “since yada commonly means ‘get acquainted with’, the demand ‘to know’ the visitors whom Lot entertained may well have implied some serious breach of the rules of hospitality.”32 This is based on the fact that yada is used 943 times in the Old Testament yet only twelve times to denote sexual activity.33 However, there are several problems with Bailey’s argument, the first of which is apparent in the immediate context. Lot’s initial response is found in verses six and


33 Ibid., 2.
seven: “Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, ‘I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.’” Because Lot identifies the actions on the part of the men as wicked, it makes no sense to think they just wanted to get acquainted with the visitors. This is the same word used in Genesis 13:13 so it follows logically that what is taking place in Genesis 19 is the full expression of that wickedness.34

Lot’s second response is to offer his virgin daughters to the crowd as a bribe. Though it is difficult to understand why Lot would do such a thing, the wording still provides clues to the author’s intent behind yada.35 Verse eight states: “Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” The same Hebrew word, yada, is used here as it was previously in verse five. Clearly verse eight has sexual connotations in mind which implies the previous usage should be similarly interpreted unless something in the text distinctly suggests otherwise. P. Michael Ukleja observes: “In narrative literature of this sort it would be very unlikely to use one verb with two different meanings so close together unless the author made the difference quite obvious.” In this case, “the context does not lend itself to any other credible interpretation.”36

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34 James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, The Same Sex Controversy (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 34.

35 James White suggests that Lot knew his offer would not be accepted: “Lot knew these men. He knew their lifestyle, their activities. Seemingly a sort of truce existed between him and the homosexual inhabitants of Sodom: they did not seek to involve him in their activities, and he did not speak out against them. It is possible that Lot is simply buying time, knowing that, in fact, the offer will not be accepted, for these men simply do not have any desire for women. He may feel his daughters are perfectly safe, for those standing before him had shown a firm and unwavering desire for sexual fulfillment with men, not with women.” Ibid., 35.

It is true that *yada* can mean “get acquainted with” and it is true that in comparison to all of the Old Testament, it is only used in the sexual sense a few times. However, that does not mean a sexual sense is not warranted in the Genesis 19 context as has already been demonstrated. Beyond that though, it should be stated that the sexual connotation of the word is fairly normative in Genesis. Ukleja points out that of the twelve times *yada* occurs in Genesis, ten of those mean “to have intercourse with.” So it is not as if the Genesis 19 passage is setting a precedent. Just as Adam “knew” Eve in Genesis 4:1, so the context in Genesis 19 makes it apparent that sexual relations were what the author had in mind at the time of its writing.

Pro-gay advocates also cite additional passages that refer back to Sodom and Gomorrah as evidence that the stated sin was something other than homosexuality. Daniel Helminiak states: “The prophet Ezekiel (16:48-49) states the case baldly [sic]: ‘This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.’ The sin of the Sodomites was that they refused to take in the needy travelers.” However, the very next verse qualifies the sin further: “They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.” 2 Peter 2:6-7 provides further clarification of what this entailed: “If by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked.” Jude 7 also provides a relevant reference to the cities: “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural

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37 Ibid., 262.

desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.” When all of this information is put together, the final conclusion becomes clear. While it can be said that homosexuality was not the only sin, it is not fair to relegate the interpretation of this passage to inhospitality. Both Peter and Jude place the sin in terms of sexual immorality that is perverted and unnatural. It is therefore logical to conclude that homosexuality was one of the sins that caused God’s judgment to pour out upon these cities.

The Four Passages: Leviticus 18

While homosexual sin was not explicitly identified in Genesis 19, God’s command against it in the book of Leviticus is crystal clear. Leviticus 18:22 states: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” This concept is expanded further in Leviticus 20:13: “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.” These words are so clear that it is hard to argue with what the text actually says so the debate usually falls more on the side of relevance. First, pro-gay advocates argue that there was no way the original writers could have possibly understood the modern homosexuality phenomenon. Next, they reason that the teachings of Leviticus do not apply to people today. Finally, they claim that only a specific type of homosexuality was in question.

It is quite common for pro-gay writers today to simply dismiss the Leviticus passages outright as irrelevant on the grounds the writers back then simply had no context for understanding homosexuality as it is presented in the modern era. Mona West, an MCC pastor, writes:
The word “homosexuality” is a modern term and did not exist during biblical times. Biblical writers had no concept of sexual orientation or sexual development as we understand those today. Therefore, passages that reference same-sex sexual activity should not been [sic] seen as comprehensive statement concerning homosexuality, but instead should be viewed in the context of what the ancient world that produced the Bible understood about sexual activity.\(^\text{39}\)

Certainly, a case can be made that people living in the ancient Near East (ANE) did not fully understand the complexities of homosexuality. However, the same could be said for those who are alive today. The second section of this chapter addresses the scientific record which demonstrates just how inconclusive the modern understanding of the topic truly is. So to discount Leviticus based on that argument also opens the door to wrong conclusions that are drawn today.

The fact of the matter is, homosexuality was a known practice in the ANE. Alex Montoya contends that “the very existence of these prohibitions in Leviticus argues for the existence of these sexual vices in the pagan world which God expressly calls ‘abominations.’”\(^\text{40}\) Donald Wold, who has served as a professor of Near Eastern studies, dedicates two chapters in his book *Out of Order* to the homosexual practices of the ANE. He concludes: “A survey of ancient Near Eastern sources regarding homosexuality reveals that the practice existed widely. . .”\(^\text{41}\) Additionally, Ukleja points out: “Moses was not trying to establish an exhaustive code on the subject of sexuality; rather he was dealing with certain gross offenses of the seventh commandment that were common in the nations surrounding Israel at the time.”\(^\text{42}\) When it comes to the sin of the Canaanites,

\(^{39}\) West, “The Bible and Homosexuality.”

\(^{40}\) Alex D. Montoya, “Homosexuality and the Church,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 159.

a description of “wicked” is certainly fitting. Deuteronomy 12:29-31 provides this description:

When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, “How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.” You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

I Kings 14:24 also reflects a similar tone and message: “And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.” Finally, Leviticus 18:6-23 shows that the practices of the Canaanites included every form of incest, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality.

When deeper research is conducted, it is discovered that even the relationships within the Canaanite pantheon can be appropriately described as highly sexual in nature. Baal is presented as having sex with his mother Asherah, his sister Anat, and his daughter Pidray. In each case, these incestuous relationships are not cast in a negative light. As a religion of fertility, the Canaanite gods were involved with all kinds of deviant sexual behavior including temple sex, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality. For example, Inanna, a god known as the Queen of Heaven, “became the patron of eroticism

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43 Other references include: Lev. 18:24-25, 20:22-24, Deut. 9:5, 18:9-14, 1 Kgs. 21:26, 2 Kgs. 16:3, 21:2, Heb. 11:31.

44 Leviticus 18-19 contains a comprehensive list of sins which the Israelites were not to commit. However, according to Lev. 18:27 and 20:23, this was also a list of the sins of the Canaanites.


and sensuality, of conjugal love as well as adultery, of brides and prostitutes, transvestites and pederasts.”

Furthermore, Baal’s escapades are captured in “The Baal Cycle” poem:

Mightiest Baal hears
He makes love with a heifer in the outback
A cow in the field of Death’s Realm.
He lies with her seventy times seven
Mounts eighty times eight
[She conceives]es and bears a boy.”

It really should not be surprising that such aberrant sexual behavior would be found among the Canaanite people since the gods they worshiped practiced such deviancy themselves. It is for this reason the holy code in Leviticus came to be. Though homosexuality was but one of the stated evil practices, it is lumped into the larger pool of deviant behavior. The religion of the Canaanite people is described by Scripture in several ways. It is said to be evil (Judg. 2:11, 10:6, 1 Kgs. 22:52-53) and an abomination (Deut. 7:25-26, 20:18). Exodus 34:15 and Judges 2:17 go so far as to speak of their acts in terms of “whoring.” Then Deuteronomy 12:31 includes the words “for even” as an indicator of just how serious those abominations had become—even to the point of sacrificing children. This is the context within which the verses of Leviticus are found. While it is quite possible that those living in the ANE had no understanding regarding modern questions such as whether or not homosexuality is genetically inborn, they certainly understood the sexual act.

47 Gwendolyn Leick, Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature (New York: Routledge, 1994), 57.


49 Much of the information in this section was drawn and summarized from previous research conducted by the author of this paper. Daryl A. Neipp, “The Dilemma of Genocide in the Old Testament,” ThM Thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.
The second argument against taking the Levitical commands literally is that they are not valid today. There are some grounds to this perspective for the simple reason that many Christians no longer feel bound to the laws found in the Old Testament. It does seem inconsistent that Christians would condemn homosexuality based on the holiness code yet choose not to abide by the dietary restrictions and commands to stone adulterers and children who curse their parents. However, much of this tension can be resolved with a proper understanding of the Law.

First it should be pointed out that the moral implication of the Law did not apply only to Israel. This can be ascertained by the judgment that befell Sodom and Gomorrah as well as the Canaanite inhabitants of the Promised Land. Furthermore, verses 27-30 of Leviticus 18 reads:

(for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.

The directives of these verses are aimed at the Israelites but applicable to all as indicated by the first verse that refers to the people before them who took part in the abominations. If God’s commands were only meant for the Israelites then he would not have punished the other nations for their immoral behavior.

Dietary laws, on the other hand, were exclusively Jewish. These included restrictions on eating shellfish and pork but were repealed in New Testament Scripture. Additionally, other nations were not judged for failing to abide by these regulations since they only served the purpose of distinguishing Israel from other nations. This is true of
other parts of the Law as well, such as the role of the high priest, since it was done away with the perfect priesthood of Jesus Christ. In reality, there are two parts to the Law: a ceremonial aspect and a moral aspect. Greg Bahnsen distinguishes the two by saying “moral law defines justice while ceremonial law guides redemptive restoration.”

In other words, ceremonial law was meant to incorporate symbols and practices for the purpose of pointing the people toward Christ and his redemptive work on the cross. Thus the ceremonial restrictions were repealed with his death and the unification of the church with the Gentiles. However, the moral aspect of the Law has remained in effect and is often reiterated in the New Testament. The immoral practices contained in the Old Testament are just as immoral in the New Testament. Ukleja provides this clarification:

> When the statement is made that the Law has ended, this does not mean that God no longer has any laws or codes for His people. This does not mean that there are no moral precepts to be followed. The New Testament speaks of the “law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2), the “law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), and the “royal law” (James 2:8). This “law” includes numerous commands, both positive and negative, which form a distinct code of ethics for today. As a unit the New Testament code is new, but not all the commands in the New Testament are new. There is overlap, deletion, and addition. Some of the commands in the Mosaic code have been reincorporated into the New Testament code.

God has dealt with people differently over the course of time but his character has never changed. Thus it makes logical sense that while the ceremonial laws would change, the moral emphasis would remain. Furthermore, when it specifically comes to homosexuality, condemnation of this act clearly has not been repealed because it is repeated in the New Testament.

The final argument that is often offered as a way to subvert the normal reading of the Leviticus commands is to say that idolatry was the real sin of these passages. Daniel

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51 Ukleja, “Homosexuality and the Old Testament,” 266.
Helminiak states: “Leviticus condemned homogenous sex as a religious crime of idolatry, not as a sexual offense. . .” The problem with this line of reasoning is thinking that God only condemns homosexuality when it is tied to idolatry. The assumption is that homosexuality is acceptable under certain circumstances when in reality either avenue is unacceptable. Furthermore, verse 23 of the same passage (Lev. 18) adds bestiality to the list of perverted things. Certainly, this practice would not be viewed as morally acceptable under any condition, yet this is the case Helminiak and others are advocating though the flow of the passage does not allow for that rationale.

These two short verses in the book of Leviticus form some of the strongest evidence against same-sex behavior (SSB). The alternative arguments presented do not deal so much with the verses themselves because of the clarity they contain. Rather, arguments fall into the realm of relevance which still does not stand up to scrutiny.

Though the Old Testament does not thoroughly deal with the subject, Robert Gagnon is correct in his assessment: “There is not a single piece of evidence anywhere in the Old Testament that even hints at a favorable attitude toward any kind of homosexual relationship.”

The Four Passages: Romans 1

When it comes to the issue of homosexuality, the Bible takes a unified position in both Testaments. What is condemned in the Old Testament is also denounced in the New Testament as morally deplorable. The apostle Paul brings up the topic in several different places with the implications appearing to be quite clear. However, pro-gay advocates

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52 Helminiak, *What the Bible Really*, 45.

have countered the traditional interpretations with their own definitions and perspectives. Three main arguments will be considered as they relate to Romans 1:18-32.

The first argument centers on the meaning of “unnatural” in verse 26. The broader context is combined with verse 27 and reads: “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error” (NASB). Daniel Helminiak contends that the word does not contain moral or ethical connotations since the same word in Romans 11:24 refers to God. Therefore he concludes that this behavior may be unusual or peculiar but not a statement on morality. However, this makes no sense when the full weight of the passage is considered. The entire context points toward rampant unrighteousness. The verses before Romans 1:26-27 use the following words and phrases to describe what is taking place: “ungodliness,” “unnaturalness,” “did not honor him as God,” “[did not] give thanks to him,” “became futile in their thinking,” “their foolish hearts were darkened,” “they became fools,” “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man,” “lusts of their hearts,” “impurity,” “dishonoring of their bodies,” “exchanged the truth about God for a lie,” “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,” “dishonorable passions.” Then after Romans 1:26-27, the list continues: “debased mind,” “unnaturalness,” “evil,” “covetousness,” “malice,” “envy,” “murder,” “strife,” “deceit,” “maliciousness,” “gossips,” “slanderers,” “haters of God,” “insolent,” “haughty,” “boastful,” “inventors of evil,” “disobedient to parents,” “foolish,” “faithless,”

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54 Helminiak, What the Bible Really, 65-66.
“heartless,” “ruthless.” In light of the overwhelming contextual evidence, it seems ludicrous to think that Paul would have used the word “unnatural” to mean something that did not have moral and ethical connotations.

On a related note, some pro-gay advocates suggest “unnatural” only refers to what is unnatural to the person. In other words, if homosexuality is natural to a person then they should fully pursue that orientation because it is natural to them. Also, it would be unnatural for a homosexual to pursue heterosexuality because that would go against their created order. The problem with this line of thinking is that God has already established what is normative in regard to sexuality and it pertains to all mankind and is not up for consideration on an individual basis. God previously established the normal pattern of male and female becoming one flesh in Genesis and it was reaffirmed by Christ in the New Testament. To say that there is such a thing as natural homosexuality is to subvert the created order and the meaning of the Romans passage.

Another angle pro-gay advocates take is to say that the real issue in the passage is idolatry. Szanzoni and Mollenkott state: “The passage in Romans quoted earlier says nothing about homosexual love. The emphasis is entirely on sexual activity in the context of lust and idolatry.”55 It is true that sins in this chapter are placed in the context of idolatry. However, that does not mean the other sins are not actually sins, it just means they have a relationship to the sin of idolatry. Even outside of idolatry though, each sin listed is still a sin. It is not appropriate to single out homosexuality and say that it is not a sin outside of the context of idolatry when Scripture makes it clear that any form of homosexuality under any circumstance is a perversion of the natural created order. Even

the text itself seems to point back toward the created order as its subtext. Robert Gagnon refers to this as an intertextual echo and provides several examples:

Romans 1:23 echoes Genesis 1:26:

Let us make a human according to our **image** and . . . **likeness**; and let them rule over the . . . **birds** . . . and the **cattle** . . . and the **reptiles**. (Gen. 1:26, italics added)

And they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the **likeness** of the **image** of a mortal **human** and of **birds** and of four-footed **animals** and of **reptiles**. (Rom. 1:23, italics added)

Romans 1:26-27 echoes Genesis 1:27:

And God made the human; according to the image of God he made him; **male** and **female** he made them. (Gen. 1:27, italics added)

Even their **females** exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise also the **males**, having left behind the natural use of the female, were inflamed with their yearning for one another, males with males. . . (Rom. 1:26-27, italics added)\(^{56}\)

The point of these echoes is that idolatry and homosexuality are not mutually exclusive. Both play a role in subverting the natural created order. This conclusion is a result from the previous verses (Rom. 1:19-20) that refer to natural revelation: “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” Before homosexuality is even mentioned, the assumption is made by Paul that certain conclusions can be deduced through God’s natural revelation of himself. Gagnon further clarifies this point: “The sin of idolatry is coupled with the sin of same-sex intercourse because Paul considered both to be absurd denials of natural revelation. The evidence from nature—male-female compatibility in anatomy, physiology (e.g.,

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\(^{56}\) Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 77-78.
procreative potential), and various interpersonal traits—provides convincing clues regarding God’s will for sexual expression.”57 The normal created order is the foundation for establishing what is natural and what should be considered a perversion of that. There is no reason to think that this passage of Scripture creates an exception for differing forms of homosexuality.

The final argument pro-gay advocates often use against a traditional interpretation of this passage was introduced by John Boswell. His contention is that the passage is referring to homosexual acts that are committed by heterosexual persons. Again this is closely related to previous arguments regarding the use of the word “unnatural.” However, Boswell approaches it from a slightly different angle. While a previous argument insisted the word referred to a perversion of homosexual love, Boswell goes a step further by saying Paul’s condemnation is against homosexual acts committed by heterosexual persons.58 In both cases, the previous rebuttal still applies. Boswell attempts to move the argument into the debate over choice. In his view a real homosexual will do what is natural to him because he or she was born that way. However this is forcing something into the text that simply is not there. Paul makes a clear statement about homosexuality and it is not appropriate to insert additional meaning in order to make a case. Paul never clarified his remarks to fit only a certain group of people. His point is clear throughout the chapter that the desire to twist and exchange God’s intended created order and design is representative of ungodliness.

57 Ibid., 79.

The Four Passages: 1 Corinthians 6

The apostle Paul addresses the topic of homosexuality another time in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (NKJV). In this case, the arguments against a traditional interpretation rest mainly in the definition of terms. The word *homosexuals* in the NKJV is taken from the Greek word *malakoi* and *sodomites* is derived from *arsenokoitai* which is used in 1 Timothy 1:10 as well. The pro-gay argument takes *malakoi* to be a generic reference to lewd acts while *arsenokoitai* references prostitution with neither referring to homosexuality.\(^{59}\)

The word *malakoi* means “soft” like fine clothing or “effeminate” in the sense of a catamite (a boy kept for homosexual purposes).\(^{60}\) It is used for clothing in Luke 7:25 and Matthew 11:8 to signify something that is delicate. It can also refer to a prostitute, transvestite, or just an effeminate man but in a homosexual context it would refer to the passive partner.\(^{61}\) The usage in 1 Corinthians definitely points toward sexual activity and likely refers to homosexuality in the sense of prostitution—sex that is paid for.

The word *arsenokoitai* is a compound word with *arsenos* meaning “strong male” with an emphasis on the gender and *koite* meaning “bed” with a sexual connotation.\(^{62}\)

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\(^{59}\) Ibid.


The Septuagint uses these same words in the translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to designate the prohibition against homosexual behavior. It seems apparent that Paul took these two words and coined a new one that clearly referred to homosexual practice. This is also a point of criticism since other words were readily available, but by doing so, Paul was able to cover the spectrum of homosexual nuances without specifically referring to any specific type. The result for most exegetes then is to interpret the placement of *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* together as a reference to the passive and active partners in a male homosexual relationship. It is Paul’s intention that the Corinthian believers understand that there are certain sins and practices that should be left behind once a person turns their life over to Christ. Paul takes advantage of the specific and strong language used in the Levitical commands to make his point that homosexuality was not to be a part of the life of the believer.

The Silence of Jesus

A favorite argument of pro-gay advocates is to cite the silence of Jesus on the issue of homosexuality as proof that this behavior is acceptable. This line of thinking purports that if Jesus did not explicitly forbid homosexuality then it must be okay. Part of this reasoning stems from the fact that some Christians make homosexuality out to be the unpardonable sin so it does make sense that if this is actually the worst sin of all then Jesus would have taken time to address the issue. Jay Michaelson makes this observation:

Jesus lived at a time when pederasty and other forms of same-sex activity were common. This silence speaks volumes. If homosexuality were an important part of Christ’s message, why is it absent from it? It’s not as if Jesus hesitated to critique his society, after all. If this widespread practice were so abhorrent to him, would he really be silent? Jesus wasn’t tacit about the values that mattered most.

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If regulation of homosexual behavior were one of them, the Gospels would not be silent. On the contrary, the silence indicates supersession.\(^\text{64}\)

There are a host of reasons why this line of thinking does not make sense. First, the assumption that if Jesus did not condemn a behavior makes it okay is short-sighted. Jesus did not say anything about physically abusing one’s spouse or molesting children but no one seems to be making a case for their approval. The fact of the matter is that God gave the whole of Scripture to guide the faith and conduct of people. All Scripture is inspired, not just the words of Jesus. Furthermore, John 21:25 makes it clear that not everything Jesus said and did was recorded: “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” While it would be presumptive to say he did in fact specifically address homosexuality, it also is not outside the realm of possibility. The fact is that the Gospel writers could not record everything so the addressing of sexual sins was likely sufficient since homosexuality would fall under that category.

Certainly a case can be made that Jesus took sexual sin seriously. In fact, Matthew 5:28 indicates that Jesus’ standard went far beyond the Old Testament behavioral regulations. Jesus did not come to abolish the law, he came to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17-18). This does not mean the moral principles found in the Law were nullified but rather that the demands of it were fulfilled through the work of Christ on the cross. The Law could not save but it was a “schoolmaster” to show sinners their need for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

Perhaps the strongest rebuttal to the silence argument comes from Jesus’ reaffirmation of the proper order of creation. Ironically, Scripture reveals that Jesus was involved in the process of creation (Col. 1:15-17) so he is not speaking as a casual

\(^{64}\) Michaelson, *God Vs. Gay?*, 73-74.
outsider but as one who established the natural order of husband and wife. When Jesus was questioned about divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:2-11, he took the people back to Genesis 2 in order to emphasize his original intent and design for men and women. He did not change the text but rather underscores it as the model for appropriate sexuality.

The Categorization of Homosexuality

While the church has not always responded properly to the issue of homosexuality, it would not be fair to characterize all Christians in this way. However, pro-gay groups often cite homosexuality as the one sin churches singularly and unfairly point out. Chad Thompson states: “Many lesbian and gay people need Christians to be hateful and ignorant in order to convince themselves that our message is the result of ignorance, homophobia, or some massive right-wing conspiracy.”65 Others, such as Robert Gagnon, do honestly see a hierarchy of sins in the Bible with homosexuality being worse than others. He writes: “It is my contention that homosexual practice is a more serious violation of Scripture’s sexual norms than even incest, adultery, plural marriage, and divorce.”66 To be fair, Gagnon does concede that sins are equal in the sense that any sin excludes people access to heaven. However, he fails to reconcile passages such as Proverbs 16:5 and 6:16-19 with his view.67 Here God lists several “abominations”—a

65 Chad W. Thompson, Loving Homosexuals as Jesus Would: A Fresh Christian Approach (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004), 35.


67 “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.” Prov. 16:5; “There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet
term often reserved for the most deviant of sexual sins—yet used in this instance to refer to sins many would consider much farther up the list. Not only is *lying* stated as an abomination but it is also said to be one of the six things the Lord hates. Certainly from a societal perspective, some offenses are worse than others. However, the Scriptural record often lumps a wide variety of sins together with the recognition that all sin is equally offensive to a holy God. For example, homosexuality was a punishable crime under the Old Testament Law but so were blasphemy, adultery, idol worship, false prophecy, and not keeping the Sabbath. This is Paul’s point in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: “... neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” The fact of the matter is that homosexuality is just one of many sins listed. The beauty of this passage is that Paul goes on to show how the grace of God has justified those who had taken part in such sins. Even in Romans 1, where a downward progression seems to be apparent, homosexuality still is not listed in isolation from many other sins that also come about as a result of disobedience. It is true that different sins bring different consequences and the effect of sexual sin, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:18, is unique: “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.” Sexual sin has a way of imprinting itself upon an individual in a way that no other sin can. In the human experience, many transgressions will be forgiven or restitution can be granted, however, the effect of sexual sin never goes away.

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that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” Prov. 6:16-19.
Biblically, homosexuality is not only a sin, but it falls into the specific category of sexual sins—all of which are destructive. The difficulty for the church, as it relates to the charge of pro-gay groups, is that these factions view any objections as prejudice and bigotry. The only option, in their mind, is full acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle, which puts the church into a challenging position because that characterization of prejudice, though popular, really is not a fair assessment. Christians are being perceived as intolerant when in reality, the pro-gay groups are the ones who are not open-minded. Christianity, on the other hand, must stand for truth, yet do so in a respectful and loving manner. The church must not avoid dealing with the issue but they also must not single it out as the issue. Just as Scripture directly addresses heterosexual promiscuity outside of marriage, so it contends that homosexual relationships are out of bounds. Consequently, churches must be willing to confront all sexual sin when it becomes known and work towards the establishment of healthy, God-honoring relationships.

The Scientific Record

It may seem that the scientific record is somehow distinct from the biblical record, but as is usually the case, the two are connected. However, it is important to recognize that the Bible does not address every question the subject of homosexuality may present. That said, the Bible is always relevant to every matter and contains principles that come to bear on this topic. Therefore what can be gained from science will be presented along with Scriptures where its principles apply.
The 10% Myth

For many years it was commonly reported that homosexuals represented ten percent of the population. Though this percentage was not based upon an accurate study, the number was repeated enough times where it generally came to be accepted as factual and even found its way into textbooks. Those numbers were then used to justify certain viewpoints. For example, a 1993 journal article advocated additional counseling services based on these statistics: “Given that lesbians and gay men comprise 10 to 15 percent of the general population, today’s psychotherapist cannot afford to be ignorant of the mental health needs specific to these groups.” Pro-gay churches have also misused these numbers to further advance their cause. Episcopal Bishop John Spong used it as a justification for his view: “If the best scientific data... seems to put the figure of gay and lesbian people in the world at about 10% of the population... then you and I need to realize that 10% is such a larger percentage that it could hardly be accidental.” In each case, inflated numbers were used to justify a specific position or action. However, the research these numbers were based upon was found both to be suspect and taken out of context. In fact, the researcher never even made the claim that “ten percent of the population is homosexual.”

The 10% myth came out of a study conducted by Alfred Kinsey in 1948 and published as *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. After recording the sexual histories of

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5,300 American men, Kinsey found that “10 percent of the males are more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55.” This was the quote many people took out of context. Not only did Kinsey not claim that 10% of the population was homosexual but those who ran with this quote also did not include additional pertinent information. For example, Judith Reisman found that 25% of the men Kinsey surveyed were convicted criminals and known sex offenders. Naturally, this segment of the survey would have a much higher homosexuality rate than the general population. Furthermore, only 4% of those who participated in the study actually maintained a homosexual lifestyle over the course of a lifetime. In other words, many of these men would not have necessarily said they had been homosexual for all of their lives, nor were they thinking they would be in the future. Yet pro-gay advocates extrapolated what they wanted from this study and used it to promote a false number of homosexuals in order to convince the world of a wider acceptance than was actually based in fact.

The actual number of homosexuals is difficult to identify, in part because not every gay person is willing to identify themselves, and in part because people do not always distinguish between orientation and behavior. Furthermore, the percentage of homosexuals varies widely between cities, suburbs, and the country. One study found


that 20.8% of males and 17.8% of females experienced same-sex attraction (SSA).\textsuperscript{74} However, the wording of the survey questions was vague enough that it did not end up yielding helpful results in regard to the homosexuality question.\textsuperscript{75} A study based strictly upon a person’s self-identification of their sexual orientation produced a much lower percentage of homosexuals. Out of nearly 5,000 individuals in the United States who responded to the survey, 2\% of men and .9\% of women identified themselves as homosexual. Beyond that, .8\% of men and .5\% of women identified themselves as bisexual.\textsuperscript{76} Both \textit{Newsweek} and \textit{Time} reported on a study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute which surveyed 3,321 American men in their twenties and thirties about their sexuality. Only 2.3\% of respondents indicated any homosexual contact in the last ten years, and only half of those, or just over 1\% said they were exclusively gay in that period.\textsuperscript{77}

According to the Family Research Council, a group of thirty-one of the leading homosexual rights groups filed a brief in the 2003 \textit{Lawrence v. Texas} Supreme Court case. At that time, they admitted that “the most widely accepted study of sexual practices in the United States is the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS).”\textsuperscript{78} However,

\begin{enumerate}
\item Heterosexuals were asked to choose between the following two statements: “I have absolutely never felt any sexual attraction toward someone of my own sex” and “I have felt attracted toward someone of my own sex but never had any sexual contact with anyone.”
\end{enumerate}
the NHSLS found that only 2.8% of the male population and only 1.4% of the female population identified themselves as being gay, lesbian, or bisexual.\footnote{Ibid.}

Figure 2.1. The Male Homosexual Population.

Figure 2.2. The Female Homosexual Population.

Several studies are now showing their age but recent research conducted and reported by the nationally recognized Gallup organization further substantiates the numbers. They posed the following question to 121,290 individuals: “Do you, personally, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?” The result is that 3.4% answered “yes,” 92.2% replied “no,” and 4.4% either did not know or refused to answer. “This is
the largest single study of the distribution of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population in the U.S. on record” so it contributes significantly to a fair estimate. Based upon the number of studies that have been conducted, it would be fair to estimate the homosexual population at roughly 2%-5%. 

The Gay Gene

There is perhaps no greater question in the modern homosexual debate than whether or not homosexuality is genetically inborn. The logical reasoning goes that if homosexuality is indeed an inborn trait, then it must be God’s creation and therefore should be celebrated. Jeffrey Siker writes: “Only a sadistic God would create hundreds of thousands of humans to be inherently homosexual and then deny them the right to sexual intimacy.” Clearly, the discovery of a gay gene would be extremely advantageous to the pro-gay community but the concept is already widely accepted as fact. Lady Gaga, one of the best-selling music artists of all time, penned these words from the anthem “Born this Way” as a statement of principle:

I’m beautiful in my way  
‘Cause God makes no mistakes  
I’m on the right track, baby  
I was born this way. . .

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81 In spite of the research, it is still quite common for authors to use the ten percent statistic. A 2011 book marketed to teens states: “Numerous studies and polls have been done over the years, but the results have varied. Accuracy can depend on what questions are asked, how safe the respondents feel in answering them, whether the people answering the questions are out or being honest, and how one even defines queer. Most researchers these days use the general estimate of 10 percent, but some say that, because of the above issues with the studies, it could be as high as 20 percent.” Kathy Belge and Marke Bieschke, Queer: The Ultimate LGBT Guide for Teens (San Francisco: Zest, 2011), 27.

No matter gay, straight, or bi
Lesbian, transgendered life
I’m on the right track baby\textsuperscript{83}

Scientific findings aside, the assumption made from this argument is that if homosexuality is a result of biology, then there is also no corresponding responsibility for one’s actions. It is then only a small leap to view homosexuality as being no different than being born with a different skin color than someone else. The next logical step is to provide the same civil rights to homosexuals as one would expect to be given to racial minorities or those who suffer with a disability. This logical progression completely hinges on the notion that homosexuality is an inborn trait—a biological result and not a choice. However, the argument itself is flawed. Even if homosexuality could be linked to genetics, that does not automatically mean sexual behavior can be morally justified. People are responsible for their behavior regardless of their genetic construction. If an alcoholic kills a person while driving drunk, they are still held accountable even if they have a family history of alcoholism because behavior is key. Likewise, a killer may be spared the death penalty when insanity is offered as a plea but he is still held accountable for his actions regardless of his mental state. Being predisposed or influenced by some outside factor, biological or otherwise, still does not determine behavior and it certainly does not remove accountability. If that were the case then any sin could be justified on the grounds that God created it—having an affair could be warranted because God created people with sexual desires. The logic of this argument simply does not stand up against scrutiny.

As for the actual science behind the gay gene theory, it too is weak. One such study was conducted by Simon LeVay in 1991 in which case he reported on the

\textsuperscript{83} Lady Gaga, \textit{Born This Way}, Interscope Records B004K4AVAG (CD), 2011.
hypothalamus structure of forty-one men. His findings state that this region of the brain was larger in heterosexual males and females than it was in the homosexual males. Thus he deduced that the structuring “is dimorphic with sexual orientation, at least in men, and suggests that sexual orientation has a biological substrate.”\(^\text{84}\) However, there were numerous issues which brought into question the veracity of this study including the small number of participants and the failure to consider how outside factors, such as medication and behavior, affect the size of the hypothalamus. Ironically, even LeVay offers this disclaimer: “Time and time again I have been described as someone who ‘proved that homosexuality is genetic’ or some such thing. I did not.”\(^\text{85}\)

Another study frequently referenced by gay advocates is a study of twins conducted by Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard. Their analysis compared sets of identical male twins to fraternal twins with at least one in each set being homosexual. The results showed that 52% of the time the identical twins were both found to be homosexual. With the fraternal twins, 22% of the time they were both found to be homosexual. Thus the researchers reasoned that the higher occurrence of homosexuality among identical twins signaled a genetic component. However, if homosexuality had a biological catalyst then it should have had a 100% reproduction rate since identical twins have identical genes.\(^\text{86}\) Furthermore, since all the twins who participated in this study were from the same household, then it is impossible to know what role their specific family, culture, and environment contributed to their sexual development. Bailey went on

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to conduct a subsequent twin study which allowed him to take the criticism of the previous study into consideration, thus removing much of the bias. In this case his findings dropped from 52% in the first study to 20% in the second which led to a non-conclusive hypothesis.

Numerous other studies have been conducted over the years including animal models and chromosome research. However, in spite of the fact that many people believe homosexuality to be genetically inborn, there is no conclusive research available today to support such a claim. William Byne and Bruce Parsons could not be more clear:

Recent studies postulate biologic factors as the primary basis for sexual orientation. However, there is no evidence at present to substantiate a biologic theory, just as there is no compelling evidence to support any singular psychosocial explanation. While all behavior must have an ultimate biologic substrate, the appeal of current biologic explanations for sexual orientation may derive more from dissatisfaction with the present status of psychosocial explanations than from a substantiating body of experimental data. Critical review shows the evidence favoring a biologic theory to be lacking. In an alternative model, temperamental and personality traits interact with the familial and social milieu as the individual's sexuality emerges. Because such traits may be heritable or developmentally influenced by hormones, the model predicts an apparent nonzero heritability for homosexuality without requiring that either genes or hormones directly influence sexual orientation per se.

Though the current scientific research does not conclusively support a gay gene, that does not mean there is not one and Christians should be careful about making blanket assumptions about research that could still prove otherwise. Mark Yarhouse, a professor and Christian Psychologist, makes a legitimate point in this regard: “My reading of the

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87 The information for the preceding summaries came from a number of sources which also report on additional findings and provide further evidence for the stated conclusions. These include the following: Mark Christopher, *Same-sex Marriage: Is it Really the Same?* (Leominster: DayOne, 2009); Joe Dallas, *The Gay Gospel: How Pro-Gay Advocates Misread the Bible* (Eugene: Harvest House, 2007); Jeffrey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); Mark A. Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2010).

research is that it isn’t a question of whether biology plays a role; the question is how biology plays a role?” He goes on to explain: “Biology plays an important role in so much of human experience, so it would be strange to act as though homosexuality was the one area that biology played no role whatsoever.”

The point is that this is still very much a work in progress and Christians should support unbiased scientific endeavors so they can be armed with accurate information. Regardless of outcomes, behavior should still be viewed as a separate component. This is key to working through the debate in a logical and rational manner.

In spite of the fact that there is no conclusive evidence homosexuality is genetically inborn, many homosexuals still would not say it was their choice. As previously noted, behavior is a choice, but the question about whether same-sex orientation (SSO) is a choice still remains. Even if a gay gene is never discovered, it is hard to argue with the observation that some people seem to have a predisposition for homosexuality from birth. Maroon 5’s lead singer Adam Levine says this about his brother: “I can single-handedly dispel any ideas that sexuality is acquired. Trust me, you’re born with it. My brother is gay, and we knew when he was two. We all knew.”

This statement is representative of many homosexuals who are attempting to reconcile the way they feel even before any type of sexual behavior comes into play. Unfortunately

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89 Yarhouse, Homosexuality and the Christian, 70.

culture encourages children to pursue those feelings further, which inevitably leads to sinful behavior.\textsuperscript{91}

A favorite view of Christians has been to point to the breakdown of the family unit as the major influence which leads to homosexuality. Andrew Comiskey, director and founder of Desert Stream Ministries, writes, “In joining with the same-sex erotically, the needy child within seeks in adult form the affirmation and emotional intimacy from the same-sex that was never properly attained in childhood. Gay sex wasn’t really the motivating factor in their homosexual pursuits. Meeting an emotional need as opposed to an erotic one was the true goal.”\textsuperscript{92} There have been studies that suggest this cause as well and Chad Thompson cites a 1994 questionnaire which asked 117 gay men questions about their childhood.\textsuperscript{93} The findings state that:

1. 86% indicated little or no time spent with their fathers during their childhood.
2. 63% said their fathers were not considerate of their needs.
3. 50% believed their fathers did not love them.
4. 45% reported that their fathers belittled or humiliated them.
5. 44% felt their fathers neglected them.
6. 40% said their fathers were disinterested and detached.
7. 39% said they hated their fathers.

Out of the 117 gay men, only 15% described the relationship they had with their father as affectionate or warm. The problem with this type of study is that it really does not

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid. In the same interview, Adam Levine states: “You've just gotta embrace it from the beginning. That's the only way to deal with it as a family.”


\textsuperscript{93} Thompson, \textit{Loving Homosexuals}, 114.
contribute any helpful information. Not only do many homosexuals come from loving, two parent homes, but many heterosexuals come from highly dysfunctional homes yet do not develop homosexual tendencies. While the home can be viewed as a contributing factor, it should not be seen as the singular cause of homosexuality.

More and more the consensus seems to be that there are multiple factors that cause homosexuality. Simon LeVay states: “At this point, the most widely held opinion is that multiple factors play a role.”94 This can include biological, environmental, societal, and familial influences—all of which contribute in some way. What needs to be understood is that while a gay gene cannot be supported, it is difficult to place SSO in the same category as SSB. It appears that in many cases children do not choose their inclination toward homosexuality but as they mature they do choose whether or not to act on those impulses.

The Possibility and Extent of Change

To many Christians the question of change is very straightforward. However, when it comes to the subject of homosexuality, there are several facets that need to be addressed. The first has to do with what specifically needs to be changed and the second has to do with how change can actually take place. From the gay perspective, homosexuality should be embraced, not changed, since it is just a part of a person’s identity. However, the true impetus for change is that homosexuality represents an unnatural response to God’s created order.

What actually needs to be changed is an important question. For most Christians the ideal would be that a homosexual completely change into a heterosexual. However,

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from a scientific perspective this may not be a realistic expectation. Andrew Comiskey states of two friends: “Neither can choose to have homosexual feelings any more than heterosexuals can deny their impulse for the opposite sex.”95 Jack Rogers adds: “When all of the studies and the testimony have been sifted, it is apparent that when people claim that lesbian and gay people can change, they are almost always referring to behavior and not orientation.”96 While the Bible clearly teaches that homosexual behavior is sinful, the moral neutrality of sexual orientation is another matter. Thomas Schmidt makes this distinction: “It is impossible, and probably meaningless, to assign a degree of personal choice to a sexual desire. It is not helpful, therefore, to talk about the sinfulness of an orientation in the same way that we talk about the sinfulness of an action.”97 Schmidt’s point is that orientation must be placed into a different category than behavior because the latter is controllable but the former is not. This discussion about morality and what is or is not a choice can be confusing because of an overlap in terminology. While behavior and orientation can be distinguished easily enough, orientation is in need of further description and explanation. The best way to do this is to add an additional category: same-sex attraction (SSA). Thus the three terms can be viewed as three levels moving from SSA to SSO (same-sex orientation) to SSB (same-sex behavior). SSA can be defined as sexual desire and is the one component of the three that is not a choice. SSO is embracing a gay identity and is a choice as much as SSB would be.

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95 Andrew Comiskey, Pursuing Sexual Wholeness (Lake Mary: Creation House, 1989), 44.
96 Jack Rogers, Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 79.
97 Schmidt, Straight & Narrow?, 164.
Even though people may not be able to control their SSA, that does not make it morally neutral. All three unnaturally go against God’s design and are therefore condemned in Scripture. What Christ said in Matthew 5:48 regarding heterosexual desires is certainly relevant to the homosexual as well: “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” When it comes to God’s recognition of sin in a person’s life, it is not limited to behavior—even the thoughts of a man are able to condemn him. All men, whether homosexual or heterosexual, are spiritually depraved and have a propensity for evil. So a case can certainly be made from Scripture that the universal nature and orientation of mankind is inclined toward sin (Rom. 7:5, 23; 8:7; Gal. 5:17, 19; Eph. 2:3; 4:18-19; Prov. 4:23, 17:20; Titus 1:15; Col. 1:21; Jas. 1:14-15; Mt. 15:19). It is not just immoral acts that condemn a person, it is also the fleshly desires that God forbids. The difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality however, is that heterosexual desires are God-given and meant to be fulfilled within the framework of marriage. Heterosexual desires become sinful when they move outside of God’s established boundaries but homosexual desires are immoral in any context. It is true that different people have different propensities toward different types of sin but it is up to each individual to correct their wrong thinking and consequential behavior. Therefore the three components of homosexuality can be viewed in this way:

Table 2.1. The Three Components of Homosexuality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same-sex Attraction</th>
<th>Same-sex Orientation</th>
<th>Same-sex Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While it may seem unfair to say that SSA is a sin even though it is not by choice, the same principle applies to heterosexuals. A male heterosexual’s attraction to a married woman is also considered sinful. He cannot necessarily control whether or not he is attracted to that particular married woman but he can choose not to feed those sinful desires or to act on those impulses.

When it comes to any sexually based behavior, change is difficult. The advice to “pray the gay away” is almost ludicrous in light of the uphill battle a homosexual is likely to face. Yarhouse comments: “The church can also be an obstacle if it pushes a simplistic expectation of change, by which I mean the expectation of a complete and categorical switch from homosexuality to heterosexuality as though it were the direct result of putting forth enough effort or having sufficient faith.”\(^98\) However, change is possible and Paul makes this point in 1 Corinthians 6:11, not only in regard to other sins but also in reference specifically to homosexuality: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” This is the hope for all who have found themselves trapped in a pattern of sexual sin—that genuine change is possible through the power of Jesus Christ.

Not only does Scripture say that change is possible but experience bears this out as well. Stanton Jones states: “Anyone who says there is no hope for change is either ignorant or a liar. Every secular study of change has shown some success rate, and persons who testify to substantial healings by God are legion.”\(^99\) This is why ministries like Exodus International, Regeneration, and Desert Stream exist—to equip and help people enact genuine change through the power of Christ working through their lives.

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\(^{98}\) Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian*, 171.

one would say it is easy, but it is possible. Joe Dallas’ words are particularly compelling because he recognizes that temptation still exists:

To this day I’m aware that, under the right conditions, I could be sexually aroused by a potential partner of the same sex. If I were to put myself in an environment where men were being overtly sexual with each other—I think I’d be strongly tempted back to my old patterns with men. Nor can I be sure that, at some point, involuntary homosexual feelings couldn’t arise in me again, even without the “right environment.” I’m convinced we could all be pulled back toward whatever sins we’ve abandoned. As always, the question isn’t what we feel or don’t feel, or to what extent our feelings may fluctuate or change. The question is what we do with them.100

Dallas’ story is not unique. Even though 2 Corinthians 5:17 offers substantive change, only the positional part of that transformation is immediate. People still maintain their propensity to sin and decades of sinful behavior are not usually eradicated in an instant. Alan Chambers, the President of Exodus International and a former homosexual, presents three reasonable expectations in his book Leaving Homosexuality.101 First, he says to live a life of obedience which includes the concept of self-denial. This comes out of Christ’s words in Matthew 16:24: “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” Second, Chambers says to expect joy incomparable. This he contends is the result of the previous step. Sin is pleasurable for a season but true joy can only be found in Christ. Third he offers several expectations regarding sexual attraction: diminished SSA, periods of fluctuating SSA, and a lessening of the importance on sexuality overall. Chambers has not only seen how the power of Christ can change the lives of homosexuals but he has experienced it personally.

100 Dallas, The Gay Gospel, 123.

It should also be understood that from a statistical perspective, there has been a level of success in change therapy. This is not without its fair share of controversy and in 2012 the state of California went so far as to ban gay conversion therapy for minors. The governor, Jerry Brown, issued a statement insisting that these therapies “have no basis in science or medicine and they will now be relegated to the dustbin of quackery.”\(^\text{102}\) The difficulty at this point is determining whether such a law came about because of scientific evidence or because of a political agenda. The fact of the matter is that many who advocate for gay rights do not believe there is any justification for attempting to change a person’s orientation. LZ Granderson, who writes a weekly column for CNN.com and was named journalist of the year by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA), agrees that “trying to change children from gay to straight is indeed quackery.”\(^\text{103}\) Furthermore, he quotes the American Psychiatric Association as saying: “The longstanding consensus of the behavioral and social sciences and the health and mental health professions is that homosexuality per se is a normal and positive variation of human sexual orientation.”\(^\text{104}\) In *Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality*, the American Psychological Association (APA) further makes this point:

Both heterosexual behavior and homosexual behavior are normal aspects of human sexuality. Both have been documented in many different cultures and historical eras. Despite the persistence of stereotypes that portray lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as disturbed, several decades of research and clinical experience have led all mainstream medical and mental health organizations in this country to


\(^{104}\) Ibid.
conclude that these orientations represent normal forms of human experience. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual relationships are normal forms of human bonding.\textsuperscript{105} If, indeed, homosexuality is viewed as a \textit{normal variation}, then there is no reason to attempt a change in orientation or behavior. In fact, it could be argued that such an attempt to do so would damage the psyche and identity of homosexuals. This appears to be the followed logic more-so than evidence based upon the scientific record. The APA bolsters this stance by stating, “It seems likely that the promotion of change therapies reinforces stereo-types and contributes to a negative climate for lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons.”\textsuperscript{106} However, their bias is revealed in a publication titled \textit{Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation and Youth}. In it, the APA states:

\begin{quote}
Despite the general consensus of major medical, health, and mental health professions that both heterosexuality and homosexuality are normal expressions of human sexuality, efforts to change sexual orientation through therapy have been adopted by some political and religious organizations and aggressively promoted to the public. However, such efforts have serious potential to harm young people because they present the view that the sexual orientation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth is a mental illness or disorder, and they often frame the inability to change one’s sexual orientation as a personal or moral failure. Because of the aggressive promotion of efforts to change sexual orientation through therapy, a number of medical, health, and mental health professional organizations have issued public statements about the dangers of this approach (see Appendix K for specific statements). The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the National Association of Social Workers, together representing more than 480,000 mental health professionals, have taken the position that homosexuality is not a mental disorder and thus is not something that needs to or can be “cured.”\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

What should be noted then is the fact that these organizations and clinicians view homosexuality as normative and something that has no need to be cured or treated. In their thinking, the harm that occurs is the result of changing something that ought not to be changed. Furthermore, the apparent risks they cite have more to do with societal reactions than with the therapy itself: “The potential risks of reparative therapy are great, including depression, anxiety, and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient.”108 In the end, two main arguments rise to the surface. The first is that no evidence exists for successful change therapy. The second is that more harm than good comes from such practices.

The truth is that scientific research does reinforce the possibility of change. Stanton Jones and Mark Yarhouse conducted a study that was unique in that it attempted to examine both the possibility of sexual orientation change and the possibility of harmful side-effects from such an effort. Their study involved a group of men and women who desired to change their sexual orientation through Exodus International. Jones and Yarhouse started their study with ninety-eight participants and had seventy-seven complete all three phases of the assessment. After utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative measurements, they were able to make the following conclusions:

108 Ibid.
Figure 2.3. The Success Rates for Changing Sexual Orientation.

According to their study, the findings were defined and reported in this way:

Success: Conversion—15% reported “complete (or nearly complete) success or resolution of homosexual orientation issues and substantial conversion to heterosexual attraction. Homosexual attraction is either missing or present only incidentally and in a way that does not seem to bring about distress or undue ‘temptation.’”

Success: Chastity—23% reported “very substantial resolution of homosexual orientation issues; homosexual attraction is either missing or present only incidentally and in a way that does not seem to bring about distress or undue temptation. The person may either report some sort of asexual moderation of sexual drive of all kinds, most typically as decrease in homosexual attraction without parallel increase of heterosexual, or may report a lack of compulsion to act on (or power of) their existing homosexual drive.”

Continuing—29% reported “a substantial, moderate, or little diminution of homosexual attraction, but is clearly not reporting dramatic change of the type with which to be satisfied as an end product of the change process. Nevertheless, the person remains hopeful and firmly committed to the change process, whether through Exodus, therapy, general Christian or religious resources, or even in isolation.”
Nonresponse—15% reported “no significant sexual orientation change. The person has not given up on the change process, however, but is not forcefully or confidently pursuing further change either. He or she may be confused or conflicted about which direction to turn next. The subject may have engaged in homosexual activity, but without embracing a homosexual identity.”

Failure: Confused—4% reported “no significant sexual orientation change and has clearly given up on the change process. However, he or she has not yet clearly reembraced gay identity and is conflicted about his or her direction. If the person reports active sexual partnerships, they are guilt-ridden and/or highly unstable and do not clearly signal a definitive embrace of homosexual identity.”

Failure: Gay Identity—8% reported having “given up on the change process and reembraced gay identity. The person may be actively partnered, between partners, looking for a partner or even may be sexually inactive for now (this last possibility differs from the ‘chaste’ option in that he or she has made a decision to be open to future homosexual relationships).”

The research Jones and Yarhouse conducted has been fully documented in the book titled, *Ex Gays?: A Longitudinal Study of Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation*. The conclusion of that book summarizes their findings:

In conducting this study we found empirical evidence that change of homosexual orientation may be possible through involvement with Exodus ministries, either (1) in the form of an embrace of chastity with a reduction in prominence of homosexual desire, or (2) in the form of a diminishing of homosexual attraction and an increase in heterosexual attraction with resulting satisfactory heterosexual adjustment. These latter individuals regard themselves as having changed their sexual orientation; the former regard themselves as having reestablished their sexual identities to be defined in some way other than by their homosexual attractions.

Further, we found little evidence of harm incurred as a result of the involvement of the participants in the Exodus change process. These findings would appear to contradict the commonly expressed view of the mental health establishment that change of sexual orientation is impossible and that the attempt to change is highly likely to produce harm for those who make such an attempt.¹¹⁰

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¹¹⁰ Ibid., 364-365.
Additional evidence for the possibility of sexual orientation change comes from the testimony of Dr. Nicholas Cummings. His perspective is of particular relevance because he has championed the rights of homosexuals and previously served as the president of the APA. As a medical professional at Kaiser-Permanente, he estimates that during his twenty years as Chief of Mental Health he saw more than 2,000 patients with SSA with his staff seeing another 16,000. Most of those 18,000 patients did not initially express a desire to change their orientation but sought treatment for other reasons including “the transient nature of relationships, disgust or guilt feelings about promiscuity, fear of disease, [or] a wish to have a traditional family.”

According to Cumming’s extensive notes, he was able to estimate a 67% success rate with at least 10,000 patients attaining a happier and more stable homosexual lifestyle. An additional 2,400 patients successfully reoriented from homosexuality to heterosexuality and around 6,000 patients were unsuccessful in their efforts which included “continued promiscuity, unhappiness, perpetually chasing after anonymous sex, drug addiction, etc.”

In the June 2000 issue of Psychological Reports, Joseph Nicolosi, A. Dean Byrd, and Richard Potts present the results of a survey they conducted with 882 homosexuals who were dissatisfied with their orientation. The subjects were made up of 689 men and 193 women who completed surveys that retrospectively documented measurable movement away from homosexuality and toward heterosexuality as a result of some form of therapy. Of the participants, 779 categorized themselves as “more homosexual than heterosexual,” “almost exclusively homosexual,” or “exclusively homosexual” before


112 Ibid.
receiving any type of therapy or engaging in any self-help efforts. However, after receiving therapy or engaging in self-help efforts, only 305 of the participants continued to view themselves in the same way.\textsuperscript{113} Furthermore, “of the 318 who identified themselves as exclusively homosexual before treatment, 56 (17.6 percent) reported that they viewed themselves as exclusively heterosexual following treatment, 53 (16.7 percent) as almost entirely heterosexual, and 35 (11.1 percent) as more heterosexual than homosexual.”\textsuperscript{114}

Another survey worth mentioning was conducted by Point Loma Nazarene University. This research was unique in that it was a follow-up of a previous study which allowed the participants to be tracked over a longer period of time. The examination involved 140 individuals who were attempting to change their homosexual orientation because of religious beliefs and took place approximately one year after the original study. Those 140 individuals (102 males; 38 females) all came from a group of 248 who had participated in the previous research. This follow-up study contained a behavior-based definition of success and addressed the following questions:

1. How many of these individuals are still attempting to change or have changed their sexual orientation?

2. How many of these individuals have been successful in their reorientation efforts during the past year?

3. Do religious commitment, extent of involvement in the homosexual lifestyle, or reorientation therapy predict success?


4. Is feeling-based sexual orientation associated with behavior-based success?115

Of the 140 subjects who agreed to participate in the follow-up sample, 132 reported they were still attempting to change or had changed their sexual orientation, six were unsure whether to continue with reorientation, and two reported they were no longer attempting reorientation. Of all 140 participants, eighty-nine reported success in regard to their behavior over the course of the previous year which worked out to a success rate of 60.8% for males and 71.1% for females. Additionally, of those who were not successful, 88.2% were still attempting to change their orientation.

Clearly there is enough scientific research to at least support the possibility of change. However, it is unfortunate that activists are not interested in seeing how the science might play out. Byrd provides this commentary:

Activists suggest that there is no need to study change from homosexuality, and that even research on this subject will cause harm to self-identified homosexuals. In spite of a political climate where activism often trumps science, and where activist claims go uncritically examined, there is no rational basis for the speculation that studying homosexuality will harm gay-identified individuals. . . . When sociopolitical agendas prevent scientists from studying even controversial topics like homosexuality, no one wins. In fact science can only progress by asking questions and seeking answers. When research is discouraged and scientists are intimidated, we begin down a slippery slope that approximates the censorship of scientific investigation, a very dangerous slope indeed.116

The current political climate does not support therapeutic endeavors and the California law banning this type of therapy for minors only confirms this reality. Both Scripture and science demonstrate the possibility of change. However, it appears those


who intend to help struggling homosexuals with therapy will face an ever-increasing amount of hurdles in order to move people into a biblical and healthy lifestyle.

The Problem of Identity

When a person says he or she is “gay,” there are a number of connotations that go with it. It could mean that a person is attracted to others of the same sex. It could mean that a person is fully embracing the gay culture. It could mean that a person is engaging in homosexual activity. It could be a combination of the three. However, because homosexuals have become so closely identified with homosexual behavior, the label has become synonymous with sexual activity. Consequently, homosexuals often cannot differentiate between what they do and who they are. For them, homosexual behavior actually becomes their identity and this is why a rejection of homosexual behavior is taken so personally. While Christians often attempt to separate the sinner from the sin, the gay community struggles to understand the difference.

Christians usually relate to God by forming beliefs and values first and then allow their identity and behavior to follow. However, the labeling of homosexuals has created the opposite effect for them. They often have formed an identity based on their behavior through which they align their beliefs and values. This means that if Christians wish to have a voice with homosexuals, their approach must change. The issue of identity is so wrapped up within sexuality that it can be very difficult to have an honest conversation with a homosexual without them feeling as if they are being attacked. Therefore Christians must go beyond the behavior to the core person and show them how the love of Christ can transform a person from the inside out.
It is interesting that though Christ had every right to call sinners out, instead Jesus described himself as a friend to sinners; he had compassion for the lost. Yet the modern church has placed homosexuals into a category that makes it extremely difficult for them to find Christ through the ministry of believers. If homosexuality is indeed just as sinful as heterosexual adultery then the church has a responsibility to love them just as they would any other sinner.

There are two major changes Christians can make that could begin to move the exchanges between non-believing homosexuals and believers into meaningful dialogue. The first has to do with language. Homosexuals have long been labeled in all kinds of derogatory ways but behind every label is a real person. Not only should Christians not engage in or endorse in any activity or language that puts down a fellow human being but they should be willing to stand up and defend those who fall prey to such attacks. John Stott writes: “We may disapprove of homosexual practices; we have no liberty to dehumanize those who engage in them.”\(^\text{117}\) Just as racism should not be tolerated, neither should these types of assaults be validated.

A second change has to do with a person’s interest level. Though Jesus did not endorse sin, he did spend time with sinners. He engaged them on their level and created dialogue. Christians need to show genuine love and care for all sinners and this includes the homosexual community. These are real people who need to see what the love of Christ is truly about. Particularly because of how they perceive Christians feel about them, an act of kindness could go a very long way. This means taking the time to get to know them, inviting them into homes, and talking to them over the backyard fence about life. Tim Wilkins states: “It seems that not only do we not expect homosexuals to come to

Christ, we like Jonah, don’t want them to come to Christ.”118 This ought not to be said of Christians. Christ’s church should be known by its love for all people regardless of their sexuality.

**Conclusion**

The Literature Review chapter consisted of two major sections, the Biblical Record and the Scientific Record, so a thorough examination of the issues could be covered. The Biblical Record identified the major passages of Scripture that are traditionally used to support an anti-homosexual position. Opposing arguments were presented and the limits of the text were explored in an effort to discover if alternative interpretations were warranted. In each case the traditional interpretation passed the test of scrutiny though the extent of those positions was in some cases qualified. Next the scientific record was examined to see if modern presuppositions were actually based on fact. It was discovered that in many cases information that is widely accepted by society has been dubbed as inconclusive by the scientific community. While research is ongoing in many areas, the experience of homosexuals has become more of a standard than the actual research bears out. Consequently the truth on such matters has become muddied.

However, in spite of the inconclusive research, the Scripture still provides principles that are applicable to each level of homosexuality—from attraction to behavior. Additionally, it provides hope through the transforming power of the Gospel for those who wish to follow the directives of Scripture and abandon their homosexual lifestyle.

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CHAPTER III
THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of the Methodology chapter is to move the research from theory to application. The previous chapter reviewed textual data from a wide variety of sources in order to determine the position of Scripture and science. However, the second part of research will be much more hands-on and thus experiential. It is important that the information serve a specific purpose and in this case it will be to assist local pastors as they address homosexuality in their local church context. Thus an interview process and survey have been utilized in an effort to discover what positions these pastors hold on the topic. Consequently the resulting data will prove to be extremely focused and beneficial to a very specific subset of ministry leaders.

Selection of Participants

The GARBC is a fellowship of 1,287 churches and 132,000 members located throughout the United States with the highest concentration of churches being found in the Midwest. Individual states then have their own association which is broken down even further by region. In northern Ohio, the regional association is called the Hebron which is made up of twenty-eight churches with fifty-one pastors. The interviews that have taken place have been directed to the pastors and churches within the Hebron Association which should serve as a representative sample of the larger fellowship of
churches. The purpose of this research is to first aid the pastors within the region but then the results and material will be made available for wider distribution.

Data Collection

The nature of the Doctor of Ministry project is one in which both research and ministry application are presented. In this case there are two models the project will touch upon. The first is ministry research which the Doctor of Ministry Program Overview and Guide describes as “a new approach to ministry which has no precedents in their ministry contexts.”[^119] This model tends to be more knowledge based yet still results in some sort of product. The second applicable model is program development which takes the information a step further by implementing and evaluating a program or curriculum based upon the gathered research. It appears that this particular Doctor of Ministry project may be a hybrid between the two models. On the one hand, the success of this project will largely be determined by proper research within a specific field for which many churches have little knowledge. But then interviews with local pastors were conducted in order to establish where those leaders stood on specific issues. Finally, the research and interviews were analyzed in order to create a useful product in the form of seminars and sermons that can be used by pastors as a teaching tool. While the ministry research model does not require implementation, the program development model does. In this case, the final product will be ready for distribution but will not be implemented or evaluated.

The research for this project has been gathered primarily through the exploration of scholarly literature: books, journal articles, theses and dissertations, commentaries, and biblical encyclopedias. Footnotes, citations, and bibliographic material were cross[^119] “Doctor of Ministry Program Overview and Guide 2012-2013” (paper presented at DMIN 8972 module at Tennessee Temple University, Chattanooga, TN, May 21-25, 2012).
referenced and added to the pool of research. This exploration and discovery of material was accomplished in large part through internet databases including ATLA, ProQuest, Ebscohost, WorldCat, and Liberty University’s Digital Commons. Scholarly journals were accessed through the Liberty University library system as well as a variety of online subscriptions such as *Bibliotheca Sacra* from Dallas Theological Seminary and *The Master’s Seminary Journal*. Research was also conducted through the Cleveland Library System and the Lorain County Library System, both of which allow the sharing and transferring of resources along with the ability to perform interlibrary loans. The gathered information that is pertinent to the topic was separated out into each of the project’s chapter divisions. From there each resource was analyzed in an attempt to consider not only the research problem itself but also the reasons and context behind the issues pertaining to homosexuality and the implications thereof. In so doing, this research should produce a thorough comprehension of the subject matter within the confines of the author’s self-imposed limitations.

The second part of the research came out of the survey questions presented during the interviews with pastors. The interviews took place with every pastor in the Hebron association. These interviews took approximately twenty minutes to complete and were conducted separately in situations where a church had multiple staff members. In each instance, pastors were asked to participate in the interview without prior knowledge of the subject matter. That way answers were drawn more from personal experience and previous study rather than from current research, dialogue, and consideration.

Most of the questions were designed to elicit a specific response that could easily be measured. However, they were also open-ended enough where clarification could be
offered. This was also the point of utilizing an interview process over an exclusive questionnaire in that additional pertinent information was able to be gathered as it related to each question. It also allowed the student to take into consideration the body language and tone of each pastor in evaluating the responses.

The interview process was one-on-one with the student taking notes of the pastor’s responses and comments to each question. The interview questions were asked in the same order in each interview and consisted of the following:

1. Is same-sex attraction a sin?
2. Is homosexuality categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins?
3. Are homosexuals born that way?
4. Can homosexuals change?
5. Can someone be both gay and Christian?
6. Has the universal church treated homosexuals fairly?
7. Are you comfortable having homosexuals in your congregation?
8. What percentage of your church members would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?
9. What percentage of culture would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?
10. What would you like to see answered from this study?

Data Processing and Analysis

Pastors who agreed to participate in this study did so with anonymity. Before conducting the interviews, churches were coded by color and pastors were coded by letters in an effort to preserve confidentiality. After conducting the interviews, responses to the questionnaire were organized according to the pastor’s position, age, and
education. This allowed analysis to take place on multiple levels to see if patterns would emerge. For example, if there was consensus, was it related to the pastor’s position or age? Did youth pastors tend to have different views than Senior Pastors? Did older pastors have different views than younger pastors? Or did the study find that views were similar within the association regardless of those factors?

The benefit of the interview analysis is that it allowed the researcher to discover where differing positions existed and it allowed the student to specifically measure where Hebron association pastors stood on these specific issues. This in turn allowed the final product to be tailored in a way that would best meet their needs. Additionally, it was assumed that the needs of pastors in this region were representative of the Ohio Association of Regular Baptist Churches (OARBC) and even further of the larger GARBC.

One other component of the interview process that should be noted was the required completion of a consent form. This was necessary in order to ensure that permission had been granted by interviewees and added an additional element of credibility to the study. Pastors needed to recognize that their answers were being recorded and would be documented, tabulated, and analyzed with subsequent findings being published.

**Trustworthiness**

In order to provide accurate analysis and conclusions, the surveys and procedures were adhered to in a very strict fashion. Furthermore, the collection of the data was immediately logged in order to preserve the record from corruption. The analysis of information states both what was gained and also what was not gained so a proper sense
of the limitations would always be kept in check. This allowed for a clear representation of the data that could be recognized as fair, accurate, and measurable.

**Conclusion**

At the conclusion of this phase of the research project, the researcher had gained enough information so he could thoroughly analyze the positions of area pastors on the topic of homosexuality. As a result, the student was in a much better position to create a tool that would not only interest these ministry leaders but would also prove to be extremely useful in their particular ministry context. The combination of literature research and personal interviews provided the necessary information to help the student construct a final product that will be both relevant and valuable to each pastor.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

Introduction

As with any study of this type, some findings tend to be expected while other findings are only discovered as a result of the process. This was certainly the case with these interviews. The student did not go into this procedure with the thought that unconventional views by association pastors on the topic would be discovered. Rather, the thinking was that pastors would struggle in identifying their positions on the matter because the questions would force them to consider specific answers to questions they had not contemplated before. By putting them on the spot, it forced them to articulate how they felt about a set of very complex issues as presented in the questionnaire. If nothing else, the process alone pushed pastors to think beyond the traditional viewpoints and pressed them to realize the implications of their particular positions. It also served the purpose of forcing them to think about an issue many had not yet had to consider. However, most were quick to agree that they need to be prepared to deal with it because the probability of them having to work through the issues in the near future is more likely than ever before.

The emphasis of this chapter is on the presentation of the collected data. Therefore a summary of the surveys will be reported along with an analysis of each specific question. However, that analysis will be limited in scope so Chapter IV and
Chapter V can be distinct in what they are meant to accomplish. This chapter will view the data in isolation from the broader implications—in other words, in Chapter IV, the data will speak for itself. However, in Chapter V, the data will be analyzed for the purpose of application.

**Summary of Interviews**

Respondent A1 views same-sex attraction as a sin and added that it should be viewed in the same way as a man’s attraction to a woman—meaning the standard is the same for homosexuality as it is for heterosexuality. On question two, A1 indicated that he does not believe homosexuality should be categorized as more corrupt than other sins. For question three, he answered no in response to the question about whether homosexuals are born that way. On question four, the respondent affirmed that homosexuals can indeed change but added that it is a huge battle. For question five, A1 affirmed his belief that someone cannot be both gay and Christian. At the same time, he pointed out that ultimately only God can know the reality of one’s heart and the genuineness of their salvation. In regard to question six, A1 indicated that he does not believe the church as a whole has treated homosexuals fairly. His comments included the opinion that some churches have treated gays more than fairly and even offered open acceptance of them, however, generally speaking, homosexuality is the sin Christians love to hate. It is often viewed as a bigger sin than others and therefore churches have earned their reputation as a result of their judgmental actions. In regard to question seven, the respondent expressed comfortableness in having homosexuals in his congregation provided they are not actively recruiting others for their cause. Then for questions eight
and nine, A1 estimated that roughly 90% of his church members and approximately 49% of the culture likely agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent A2 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin, adding that it is difficult to control what or who a person is attracted to. This he says is based upon personal bias but also pointed out that if that attraction moves to lust then it would become sin at that point. On question two, the interviewee affirmed that he does believe the Bible categorizes homosexuality as more corrupt than other sins. This he defends from the Scripture that says all other sins are outside of a man’s body. In other words, there seems to be more weight placed upon sexual sins than others. On question three, A2 indicated that he does not believe homosexuals are born that way; they are born with a sin nature, but they are not born homosexual. In regard to the ability to change, on question four, the respondent indicated that change is certainly possible and cited both personal examples and organizations such as Exodus International. That said, he also pointed out that the change is most likely to be relegated to behavior and not necessarily their attraction. On question five, A2 affirmed the idea that someone can indeed be both gay and a Christian. This he related to a person’s struggle with alcoholism—that it is a struggle but not something that is automatically condemning. In his opinion, however, there is a difference between the two if a homosexual embraces a gay identity and lifestyle. In that case the genuineness of salvation is brought into question. For question six, the respondent indicated that he does not believe the church has treated homosexuals fairly. Overall he believes homosexuals have been largely misunderstood and an unfair stigma has been created against them. Furthermore, he pointed out that protests by gays are usually against the church for the specific reason that they have received unfair
treatment. For question seven, A2 denoted that he was perfectly comfortable having homosexuals as a part of his congregation because he recognizes their need to hear the truth and to grow just like everyone else. In respect to questions eight and nine, the respondent thought that about 75% of his church members and 25% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent B1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin, however, he does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. This, he said, is because of the described consequences in Scripture for sexuality as a whole. He does believe homosexuals are born that way in the sense that depravity affects every aspect of humanity so predispositions toward different sins make sense. B1 does believe homosexuals can change and he also believes someone can be both gay and Christian. He does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but admitted he does not have any real basis for saying so. He is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation because all are welcome to attend. The respondent believes that 79% of his church members and 30% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent B2 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin because all people face temptations in one form or another. He also does not believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins saying that no sin is greater than another. B2 does believe homosexuals are born that way but clarified his remarks by saying a person can be born with an attraction but that would also be the same as with any other temptation. He also stated that God does not create people that way but rather it is a result of the sin nature. On question four, the respondent indicated that individuals can indeed change but said only to a certain degree. The key is prayer and focus with an
emphasis on having the ability to escape temptation. The interviewee does not believe a person can be both gay and Christian because it is impossible to pursue both at the same time. He does not believe the church has treated homosexuals fairly saying they are generally judged harshly for their lifestyle and often more so than other sins. B2 does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation to the extent that they are not serving in leadership roles, however, they should be loved. For questions eight and nine, the respondent felt that 65% of his church members and 5% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent C1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. Rather it is how a person deals with the attraction that is important. In this sense, attraction is the same as temptation. He does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and cited the example of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, he also pointed out that there are worse sins such as the rejection of Christ. C1 does not believe homosexuals are born that way and he does believe they can change. He does believe someone can be both gay and Christian since being a Christian does not exempt anyone from sinful choices. The interviewee does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly even though the gay community often accuses the church of mistreating them. However, his point was that the church has attempted to do the right thing though it has not always been perfect. He indicated that he is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation but said that would also be true of any sinner. He felt that 90% of his church members and 40% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.
Respondent C2 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin because it would not exist without sin. He also believes homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins since it is referred to as an abomination while other sins are not. At the same time, all sin separates people from God. The respondent does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change and provided the example of someone who did. He also believes someone can be both gay and Christian. He does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but reasoned this comes more from a misunderstanding of who they are rather than pure bigotry. C2 is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation as long as they are not promoting a sinful lifestyle. He felt that 90% of his church members and 30% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent C3 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin but pointed out that it depends upon the definition. He does not think that affinity with men is an issue but sexual attraction would be a sin. He also feels that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because it is a corruption of God’s natural order. At the same time, all sin brings death. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way because it is a choice just like any other sin. He does believe homosexuals can change and does believe someone can be both gay and Christian though a genuine Christian would not stay that way. C3 does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but saw this as a lack of understanding which has resulted in people distancing themselves. This however, was not due to a lack of love as Christians generally usually understand that everyone has equal access to the Gospel. He is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation in order that they hear the Gospel.
He also felt that 90% of his church members and 50% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent E1 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin because homosexual attraction is a deviancy. He also believes that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because Romans 1 puts it in the category of completely aberrant behavior. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe homosexuals can change. He also believes someone can be both gay and Christian because 1 Corinthians 6 says: “and such were some of you.” The respondent does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly saying that sometimes the sin has been treated harshly but it has been just. He is comfortable having homosexuals attend his church and he believes that 90% of his church members and 10% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent F1 does not believe that same-sex attraction is a sin. He sees it the same as younger boys and girls becoming attracted to other boys and girls. He also does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because sin is sin. The respondent does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. He does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian. In response to question six, he indicated that the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly and thought that most Christians look at the sinner, not the sin. Additionally, most Christians are not out ridiculing homosexuals. F1 admitted that he is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation though he did indicate a willingness to work with them. He felt that 90% of his church members and 60% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.
Respondent H1 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin and did not feel the need to offer an explanation. He does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins though he did point out that it was referred to as an abomination. H1 does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. He does believe someone can be both gay and Christian but only if they are struggling against it. A genuine Christian, however, will not be actively pursuing a homosexual lifestyle. The interviewee does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but admitted he had little experience to back that up. He is comfortable having homosexuals as a part of his congregation just like any other sinner is welcome to come and hear the Gospel. H1 believes that 90% of his church members and 70% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent I1 does believe that same-sex attraction is a sin. This he comments relates to what the book of James talks about with thoughts turning into lust. With question two, the respondent also affirmed that he does believe homosexuality is categorically more corrupt than other sins found in the Bible. He included the example of Sodom and Gomorrah as an illustration of sin that deserved a higher level of judgment than other sins and also pointed out that some sins are simply more egregious than others. On the next several questions, I1 was adamant about his answers and did not feel the need to comment because he felt the answers were self-evident. He answered question three, in regard to whether or not homosexuals are born that way, as no; he answered yes to the question about whether or not homosexuals could change, and he answered no to question five about whether or not someone could be both gay and Christian. On question six, the respondent indicated that he does not believe the church has treated homosexuals
fairly adding that Christians can be critical and condemning forgetting that these are lost souls who need to experience the compassion of Jesus. For question seven, he affirmed his comfortableness in having homosexuals as a part of his congregation because they need to encounter the hope that is found in the Word of God. As for percentages, I thought about 75% of his church members and 65% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent J1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin because it is the same as temptation. It becomes sin when it moves into the mental process. He does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins saying that the only worse sin is offending a little one. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. J1 does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian but recognized a baby Christian will need time to grow. He does not feel the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but he also is not comfortable having them as a part of his congregation. He believes churches should be respectful but also maintain a strong message in which case homosexuals are likely to feel uncomfortable. J1 believes that 50% of his church members and 25% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent K1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin and likened it to hetero attraction saying that it is okay as long as it does not go anywhere. This he said would be synonymous with temptation. For question two, K1 indicated that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and used the word “abomination” as an example of a strong term that is used to signify grave consequences. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but that all people are
born with a sin nature and it is more a matter of how those sins are manifested in a person’s life that becomes the issue. The interviewee does believe homosexuals can change and cited 1 Corinthians 6 which makes the point that “such were some of you.” In reference to whether someone can be both gay and Christian, K1 answered no but then said he was answering with respect to behavior. He also clarified his remarks by saying that a person can be a Christian yet have homosexual desires. He does feel the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but added that it has not always been perfect. The respondent does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation and provided an example of a person who had been saved out of that background. He felt that 95% of his church members and 50% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent K2 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin but added that this would be the case only if the person continued to dwell on it. He does not believe homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins and he does not believe homosexuals are born that way. However, he does believe homosexuals can change and he also affirms that someone can indeed be both gay and Christian. Generally speaking, K2 does not think the church has treated homosexuals fairly but does feel comfortable having them in his congregation so long as they are watched carefully and not allowed into membership. According to his best estimate, he feels that roughly 75% of his church members and 10% of culture agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent K3 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin and provided the example of David and Jonathan as having a very close relationship that was not sexual in nature. For question two, he indicated that homosexuality is not categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins for the simple reason that all sin in sin. On question three,
K3 does not feel that homosexuals are born that way but rather that it is a result of life choice. Because homosexuality is a choice, he affirms that change is also possible. For question five, the respondent affirmed that a person can be both gay and Christian but added a homosexual will not be a growing Christian. In regard to fairness, K3 does not think the church has treated homosexuals in the right way simply because they have not had to deal with it very much and also because of the stigmatism that is attached to it. That said, he does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation because all are sinners and all people need Christ. The respondent indicated that probably 75% of his church members and 1% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent K4 does not believe that same-sex attraction is a sin. This he says is because temptation is not a sin but following through with the act is a sin. On question two, he indicated that he does not believe homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins on the basis that all sin is sin. He also does not believe homosexuals are born that way but does believe homosexuals can change. K4 does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian because he is working under the assumption that the word gay is referring to a person who is practicing homosexuality and accepting of that lifestyle. The respondent does not believe homosexuals have been treated fairly but is comfortable having them in his congregation. K4 believes that approximately 25% of his church members and less than 1% of the culture would agree with his views on this topic.

Respondent K5 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin simply because it could be related to an appetite or viewed as a temptation. For question two, the respondent affirmed that homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins and reasoned this position from the perspective of degrees of punishment in hell. He also brought up the
judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah as evidence that some sins deserved destruction. K5
does not believe homosexuals are born that way and cannot imagine that God would
create something that goes against his intended order. Instead he believes environmental
factors are to blame. For question four, the respondent indicated that homosexuals can
indeed change through the power of God. He also believes that someone can be both gay
and Christian saying that even a murderer can be saved. K5 does believe the church has
treated homosexuals fairly and feels that most Christians are loving and should not be
considered homophobic. The respondent does feel uncomfortable and uneasy about
having homosexuals in his congregation especially if they are not compliant. However, in
spite of his un-comfortableness with their presence, he is okay with them attending but
feels that membership is not an option. Finally, K5 thinks that 90% of his church
members and 30% of the culture agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent L1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. This, he said, is
because it is not the first look that is the issue, it is the second. In other words, he believes
sin is tied to the behavior. For question two, the respondent indicated that he does believe
homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins and cited the destruction of Sodom and
Gomorrah as an example. L1 does not believe homosexuals are born that way but rather
that all people are born with a sin nature. However, he does believe homosexuals can
change with the power of the cross or, in the case of a believer, by living a Spirit
controlled life. The respondent does believe someone can be both gay and Christian but
added that they should not be both gay and Christian. L1 does not believe the church has
traditionally treated homosexuals fairly saying that it is the pet sin of the church. The
respondent also indicated that he is not comfortable having homosexuals as a part of his
congregation unless it is something they are actively working on. L1 believes that approximately 90% of his church members and 2% of culture agrees with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent M1 does believe that same-sex attraction is a sin because even the thoughts of one’s heart are enough to condemn him. Also, he pointed out that because homosexuality is not a natural thought, then it is a sin simply by category. For question two, the respondent indicated that he does not believe homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins yet pointed out that Romans chapter one does seem to indicate a downward spiral of progression. M1 does not believe homosexuals are born that way but does believe they can change just like any other sinner can change. He added that there is not a point of no-return even though homosexuals are often treated that way. For question five, the interviewee said he does not believe a person can be both gay and Christian because when someone says they are gay then they are making a choice against nature. M1 does believe the church has treated homosexuals fairly making the point that most churches embrace homosexuality while the ones that do not also do not make it a practice to single homosexuals out. He does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation as attenders but not as members. M1 estimates that 90% of his church members and 40% of culture agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent M2 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. This is based upon the book of James that refers to desire giving birth to sin. In his view, attraction is the same as temptation which is not a sin. For question two, the respondent indicated that he does not believe homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins saying that sin is sin. However, he added that abomination does seem more specific than other sins. M2 does
not believe homosexuals are born that way and made a point that it is not genetic.

However, he also added that all people have different weaknesses and propensities for sin but this should not be viewed as an excuse. The interviewee does believe homosexuals can change and cited 2 Corinthians 5:17. He does not believe a person can be both gay and Christian because if someone identifies themselves as gay then it should be considered a habitual sin which should not be something that is ongoing in the life of a genuine Christian. M2 does believe the church has treated homosexuals fairly though there is room for improvement. However, in many cases, he says it simply comes down to an unpreparedness to deal with the issue but most Christians still desire to love homosexuals. The respondent indicated that he is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation because he does not view it any differently than any other sin. M2 feels that 75% of his church members and 35% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent N1 does not feel that same-sex attraction is a sin because all people are attracted to others. He does feel that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and cited Sodom and Gomorrah as an example. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe homosexuals can change. N1 does believe a person can be both gay and Christian because all are born sinners. However, they should not be free to live with other men or pursue that type of relationship. The respondent does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly and sees the relationships as largely peaceable in nature. He would not feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation and definitely would not want them
around children in particular. N1 believes that 75% of his congregation and 10% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent R1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. He answered very quickly indicating he had given this previous consideration. The basis for his view was that the book of James talks about living out an attraction. He explained that sin comes about in the battle but conceded that sinful attraction would not exist if people were not fallen to begin with. In response to question two, R1 indicated that he does believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. He used Romans chapter one to point out that it is found in a list of sins and framed in behavior as the rejection of what is obvious. At the same time, the respondent suggested that homosexuals are not any more hell-bound than any other sinner. For question three, the interviewee said that homosexuals are not born that way. He felt that no one is born an adulterer or drug addict and neither are homosexuals though they may experience inner turmoil more than others. Instead, all are born sinners with inclinations that show up differently in different people. However, he does believe homosexuals can change particularly since Scripture considers homosexuality to be sin and the regenerative power of the Gospel provides power over sin. On question five R1 said that someone can be both gay and Christian but qualified the statement by saying a timeframe is in order. For example, a person could be saved yet backslidden but ongoing behavior indicates that person may not be saved after all. A saved person should have conviction that homosexuality is a sin and therefore be in an active struggle against it. The respondent does not feel that the church has treated homosexuals fairly but thought it had to do with being afraid of the issue and not knowing how to properly handle it. He did admit that
Christians tend to be more incensed over this particular issue than they are over adultery. For question seven, R1 said he is comfortable in having homosexuals in his congregation. He is not afraid to teach the truth and is also not uncomfortable having straightforward conversation about the topic. He thought that 40% of his church members and 33% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent R2 does not believe that same-sex attraction is a sin and bases this on the concept that temptation is not a sin. He does believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins saying that all sin is condemned but not all sin is equal. He also maintains the view that there are differing levels of eternal punishment and reward. For question three, R2 affirmed that while not all homosexuals are born that way, he believes some are, even if there is not an available comparison to biology. He does believe homosexuals can change just like any other sinner who renews their mind. The respondent does believe a person can be both gay and Christian just like anyone else can be both sinful and Christian. For question six, he said that he does believe the church has treated homosexuals fairly and does not see the need to apologize for the poor actions of a few. As an explanation he said that the church probably has not been prepared to deal with the issue but like any other controversy, it gets there when it needs to. The interviewee does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation to the same extent as any other sinner—it is not an approval and sin will be confronted. R2 thought that 60% of his church members and 30% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent R3 does believe that same-sex attraction is a sin but struggled with the question because he feels attraction is not an action. Still, he explained that desire is a
sin and the holiness of God must be brought to bear. He does not believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and pointed out that a lying tongue is also referred to as an abomination. The respondent does not believe homosexuals are born that way but does think that some are born with a tendency for it. He does believe homosexuals can change saying that the change offered in Scripture is for everyone though a person may never be freed from their temptations. R3 affirmed that someone can be both gay and Christian though qualifying his answer by saying it is not possible for a Christian to live in obedience to Christ and to be gay. However, someone could continue in a homosexual lifestyle until full discipleship took place. Overall, the interviewee does not feel the church has treated homosexuals fairly saying that the church simply does not have much experience with it and probably shows up mostly in the form of a lack of mutual respect. The respondent struggled to answer question seven saying no at first but then changing it to yes in response to being comfortable in having homosexuals in his congregation. To clarify, R3 does not personally feel comfortable and thinks the church would probably handle it in the wrong way, however, he would be comfortable if the homosexual was a true seeker and open to the truth. R3 thought that 60% of his church members and 35% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent S1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin thinking that it is like any other temptation where it is the act that is sin. He does not believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins even though it does stand in a list of corruptible sins and can be viewed as part of a progression. The respondent does believe that homosexuals are born that way in the same way that alcoholics are born with
a tendency toward alcohol. He does believe homosexuals can change though the struggle may remain. S1 also believes that someone can be both gay and Christian though they could not be a practicing homosexual and truly be born again. On question six, the respondent gave examples of both fair and unfair treatment of homosexuals but pointed out that his local experience has demonstrated a hateful and mean-spirited attitude from Christians who target that particular sin. The interviewee does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation just like anyone else. He admitted he would have a level of uneasiness which would work out as loving yet cautious in his approach. S1 feels that only about 5% of his church members and about the same percentage of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent S2 does believe that same-sex attraction is a sin but admitted it depends on how far those thoughts go. At the same time he pointed out that even thoughts are a result of the sin nature. The respondent does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and also does not feel homosexuals are born that way though some may be born with an inclination. S2 does believe homosexuals can change and also affirms that someone can be both gay and Christian. However, if that person is not repentant then it does cast doubt upon their salvation. The interviewee does not feel that the church has treated homosexuals fairly mainly because they have not been prepared to deal with it. He does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation but would limit it to attendance. He does not feel they should be members or able to serve in leadership positions if they are unrepentant. However, he would allow struggling homosexuals who desire to correct their lives to
serve in a leadership role. S2 felt that 70% of his church members and 30% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent T1 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin but he does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. T1 also believes someone can be both gay and Christian. He does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but he is comfortable having them in his congregation as attenders. Finally, he feels that 60% of his church members and 20% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent T2 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin stating that it is okay to have male friends but it is not okay for that to move into a lustful desire. He does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and he does not believe homosexuals are born that way. However, he does believe homosexuals can change and he does believe someone can be both gay and Christian just as a thief or adulterer can still be a Christian. He does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly. T2 indicated he is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation but pointed out that the problem is that they often come with an agenda. Still, they should not be shunned, and those who have forsaken that lifestyle would be free to attend. The respondent feels that 30% of his church members and 15% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent T3 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin because temptation is not considered a sin. He also does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. T3 does not believe homosexuals are born that way
though he pointed out that everyone is born a sinner with temptations. He does believe homosexuals can change but he does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian. This, he said, is because people cannot serve two masters—so a practicing homosexual would be incompatible with genuine Christianity. He does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly though he admitted that confrontation has not always been conducted in a loving way. He is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation but does not think they should fill leadership positions. The respondent believes 95% of his church members and 15% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent U1 does not feel that same-sex attraction is a sin because it would be classified as a temptation. He does believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because all sexual perversion has a greater judgment. He does not believe that homosexuals are born that way because God would not call something sin that was beyond a person’s ability to obtain deliverance—that would not be just. The respondent does feel homosexuals can change and cited examples he has personally observed. For question five, the interviewee affirmed that a person can be both gay and Christian adding that it should not be a perpetual lifestyle. He does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly and did not think any explanation was in order. U1 does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation because the church needs to be the place where they can find deliverance. He also felt that 75% of his church members and 45% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.
Respondent V1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin and cited David and Jonathan’s relationship as an example. He also does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because all sin is sin even though some may have greater punishments. The respondent does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. He does believe someone can be both gay and Christian because all people are sinners. V1 does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly, however, he is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation. The respondent feels that 20% of his church members and 20% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent W1 does not feel that same-sex attraction is a sin because he equates the word attraction with temptation. He also does not believe that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins though he did point out that churches do tend to categorize sins. For question three, W1 clearly indicated that homosexuals are not born that way. He said that there is no scientific proof for this claim and said his rationale is a logical one since homosexuality is characterized in the Bible as a sin. The interviewee does believe that homosexuals can change though the power of God but felt that they cannot change in their own strength. He does not believe a person can be both gay and Christian and he cited 1 John saying that a person who is born of God will not continue on in sin. If someone continues in sin then it is a demonstration that person does not belong to Christ. W1 answered yes to question six about whether or not the church has treated homosexuals fairly but went on to say that it depended upon what group of churches the question was referring to. In the case of liberal churches, he said they are very accepting of the gay lifestyle, however, fundamental churches probably
speak the truth without always balancing it with love. The respondent is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation in so far as their need to hear the Gospel but they would not be welcome into fellowship. W1 felt that 80% of his church members and 30% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent W2 does believe that same-sex attraction is a sin. He also feels that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because it is often mentioned first in the lists of sins. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. W2 does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian but pointed out that they might struggle with wrong thoughts. However, practicing homosexuality would not be compatible with Christianity. He does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but he is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation—particularly those who be actively participating in that sin. He believes that 60% of his church members and 20% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent X1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. He also does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because it is usually found within a list of other sins. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way though he pointed out that everyone is born in sin with the capability of becoming homosexual. X1 does believe homosexuals can change. He also feels that someone can be both gay and Christian but added that a real Christian would want to change particularly because of the strong words in Scripture about who will not be a part of the kingdom of God. The respondent does not feel the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly and stated that the church is sometimes not accepting of the person.
He is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation but not accepted into membership. The interviewee believes that 80% of his church members and 25% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent Y1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin but added that when it moves to lust then it becomes one. He does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because sexual sins have different consequences in the Scripture. He also said that some sins are worse than others and gave the example of a thief. A person who steals $1 is still a thief but is in a different category than one who steals $1 billion. In the same way, homosexuality is a sin just like any other sin yet it is a perversion of sexual expression so it is worse than other sexual sins. On question three, the respondent affirmed that homosexuals are born that way in the sense that all people are born sinners with certain inclinations. He believes people are born with a proclivity toward all sin and not specific ones. At the same time, he pointed out that everyone is without excuse. The interviewee does believe homosexuals can change in that a practicing homosexual can stop sinning though they may not be able to change their DNA. He does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian and used 1 John 5 to point out that habitual, planned, participatory sin should be stopped. He went on to explain that a person may fall into sin but they should not wallow in it. Y1 does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly in the sense that prejudice is not acceptable. In spite of the stigma that does exist, he perceives the issue to be more along the lines of being ill-equipped to deal with the issue over an unloving attitude. He does feel perfectly comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation. The respondent feels
that 80% of his church members and 51% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent Y2 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. He also does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. No explanations were offered for his views. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way because all people are born sinners with predispositions to certain sins. The respondent does believe homosexuals can change and he does believe someone can be both gay and Christian. However, he added that if a Christian is struggling with sin then he can expect to be disciplined and corrected by God. The interviewee does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but he is comfortable having them in his congregation as long as they are wrestling against the sin. Y2 believes that 70% of his congregation and 25% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent Y3 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin explaining that “noticing” would not be wrong while lust and action would be sin. He does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins and used the death penalty status in the Old Testament as an example. He does believe homosexuals are born that way in the sense that people are born depraved with a proclivity to do evil. The respondent does believe homosexuals can change at least as it relates to behavior. He added that the thought process could change over time though homosexuality is not likely to be completely eradicated. He does believe someone can be both gay and Christian when gay is defined as attraction. However, a lifestyle of acting on it would not be compatible with Christianity. Y3 does not believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly stating that the church generally has not treated sinners well and
homosexuals would be on the extreme end of that. He is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation as long as their behavior is appropriate. He would not be open to accepting gays into membership. Y3 feels that 80% of his church members and 5% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent Z1 does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin. He does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because it is a sin against the body which suggests a separate category for sexual sins. Z1 does believe homosexuals are born that way because he cannot explain why some people have these attractions from a very young age. He does, however, believe homosexuals can change though the desires may never go away. He also believes someone can be both gay and Christian so long as it is limited to a struggle and not a defiant act of disobedience. The respondent does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals unfairly and he is comfortable having them in his congregation. The interviewee believes 80% of his church members and 10% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent Z2 does believe same-sex attraction is a sin and he also feels that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because of its sexual classification as a sin against the body. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe homosexuals can change. Z2 does not believe someone can be both gay and Christian if they maintain that lifestyle. He does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly but he is not comfortable having them in his congregation though he would not deny them entrance. The respondent feels that 75% of his church members and 50% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.
Respondent AA1 went back and forth on question one but eventually said that he does not believe same-sex attraction is a sin even though it would be considered unnatural. He does not believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because only one sin kept Adam from life. AA1 does not believe homosexuals are born that way and he does believe they can change. He does believe a person can be both gay and Christian because everyone has a sin nature. The respondent also struggled to answer question six because he admittedly has no experience in dealing with the issue but he eventually stated that yes, the church probably has not always treated homosexuals fairly. He is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation but still would want them to come to hear the Gospel. AA1 believes that 90% of his church members and 60% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent BB1 does believe that same-sex attraction is a sin though he pointed out that it depends upon the definition. In this case, he was thinking of lust, however, temptation would not be a sin. He also felt that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because Scripture seems to have more dire circumstances for idolatry and sexual immorality. BB1 does not believe homosexuals are born that way, in the genetic sense, however, all people are born with a sin nature and thus have a greater pull toward some sins than others. He does believe homosexuals can change citing the renewed mind of 2 Corinthians 5:17 and other phrasing that says “such were some of you.” The respondent does believe someone can be both gay and Christian though they would be far from God at that point. On question six, BB1 felt that the church has treated homosexuals fairly saying that there is a balance of preaching truth
and a demonstration of love. He also indicated that he would be comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation as long as they were seeking Christ and not recruiting, disruptive, pushing an agenda, or looking for fight. Overall the respondent thought 85% of his church members and 20% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent BB2 does not feel that same-sex attraction is a sin because it is only an attraction and not an action. However, he added it could lead to sin. He does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins because it is placed in terms of an abomination. Though all sin and fall short of God’s standard, sexual sins seem to be more corrupt in their impact upon relationships. BB2 does not believe homosexuals are born that way but added it should not be ruled out. He believes the source of homosexuality is tied more to environmental factors than to genetics. On question four, the respondent indicated that he does believe homosexuals can change—at least at the behavioral level. A person may still war against their inclinations but they should not view themselves as hopelessly trapped. The interviewee does believe a person can be both gay and Christian because it is just like any other sin. He does not feel that the universal church has historically treated homosexuals fairly because conservatives tend to classify that sin as unpardonable. BB2 is not comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation simply because being around sin is uncomfortable. However, he added that doing ministry puts you around sinners so even though it may be uncomfortable, that should not keep a person from fulfilling their responsibility. The interviewee thought that 70% of his church members and 15% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.
Respondent CC1 does not feel that same-sex attraction is a sin because no temptation in and of itself is a sin. However, ongoing mental activity would cause movement toward sin. CC1 does feel that homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. On the one hand, all sin is sin and keeps people from God, however, homosexuality is classified as an abomination. With regard to question three, the interviewee indicated that he does not feel homosexuals are born that way though everyone is born with certain propensities toward differing sins. The respondent does feel homosexuals can change and cited “and such were some of you” from the New Testament. He also feels that someone can be both gay and Christian in the same way that any other person can engage in sinful behavior and still maintain their salvation. However, a homosexual, or any sinner for that matter, cannot be active in their sin and still be in fellowship with God. CC1 does not feel the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly saying that many Christians continue to have a gay bashing kind of attitude. On the other hand, there is a large segment of people who would fall under the umbrella of the universal church who go too far the other direction in their condoning of homosexuals. He does feel comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation to the extent that they are there to seek Christ and to grow in their faith. However, those who wish to damage the church would not be welcome nor would homosexuals be accepted into membership. The respondent felt that 60% of his church members and 30% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent CC2 does not feel that same-sex attraction is a sin but he does believe homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. He does not believe homosexuals are born that way but he does believe they can change. CC2 does
not believe someone can be both gay and Christian because the Bible says they will not inherit the kingdom of God. He does believe the universal church has treated homosexuals fairly and he is comfortable having them in his congregation. The respondent believes 95% of his church members and 38% of the culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

Respondent DD1 does feel that same same-sex attraction is a sin saying that even the desire is a sinful one and used “gave them over to desires” as the basis for his thinking. The next four questions the interviewee answered firmly without hesitation and without explanation. He does not feel that homosexuality is more corrupt than any other sin and does not feel that homosexuals are born that way. He does feel that homosexuals can change and that someone can be both gay and Christian. On question six DD1 indicated that the church has treated homosexuals fairly and cited his own positive local church experience of going through it. He also said that he is comfortable having homosexuals in his congregation. The respondent feels that 90% of his church members and 20% of culture would agree with his views on homosexuality.

**Characteristics of the Participants**

The interviews were conducted as anticipated with the majority taking place in person. A small number needed to be performed via telephone due to scheduling conflicts but the answers were clear enough so the sample was not compromised. Overall, the percentage of represented churches was extremely encouraging with only two declining to be involved in the project. Even in these two cases, the reasoning was quite valid as both were in the middle of pastoral leadership transitions. There was only one other
church which was not included because the pastor could not be reached though multiple contact attempts had been made.

Figure 4.1. The Percentage of Churches Represented in the Study.

Aside from the high number of churches that chose to participate, several other characteristics emerged that are presented here because they provide added information in regard to the types of churches that were represented. As the OARBC and GARBC evaluate this specific sample, this information should help them to determine if the Hebron Association is truly representative of their larger constituency.
Figure 4.2. The Represented Leadership Positions in the Study.

Figure 4.3. The Represented Single and Multi-Staff Churches in the Study.
Figure 4.4. The Represented Ages of Pastors in the Study.

Figure 4.5. The Represented Formal Educational Levels of Pastors in the Study.
Analysis of the Research Questions

The research questions were purposely created with terms that lend themselves to multiple meanings. This was not done to mislead pastors, but rather to present the reality of what counselors must deal with in regard to this issue. The intention was to present a situation where the pastor would be asked to respond to questions with limited information as if a homosexual walked into their office in real time and asked for the pastor’s perspective. For the first seven questions, pastors were required to respond specifically with a “yes” or a “no.” However, they could then offer a clarification which was often necessary because the question itself could mean different things to different people. In this way, accurate measuring could take place not only with regard to the specific answer but also within the explanation which often dramatically changed the percentages.

Question 1: Is same-sex attraction a sin?

This first question ended up being one of the most difficult for pastors to answer. This was not necessarily intentional but it immediately allowed pastors to recognize the complexity of the issue. In many cases, the question was met initially with silence as pastors wrestled with exactly how they would respond. Ultimately, when forced to choose, most decided that SSA, in their mind, should not be considered a sin. However, only a relatively few thought that their answer needed no further clarification. In fact, the vast majority (80%), chose to explain why they provided the answer they did and in the process helped to define the phrase itself. The majority viewed SSA as synonymous with temptation and though many admitted that there is a fine line between attraction and lust, those who defined SSA this way were comfortable making that distinction. Still, in this
line of thinking others created a wider gap between attraction and sin by associating only
sexual behavior to sin. In other words, wrong thinking was acceptable but wrong doing
was not. What is clear, however, is that those who defended SSA as a temptation do not
view temptation as sin.

A smaller percentage of respondents (22%) felt that SSA should be defined more
closely as desire. Most of these pastors were the same ones who indicated that they did
feel SSA is a sin. This is because in their minds, the whole of a person is corrupt,
including their thoughts, desires, and attractions. One pastor pointed out that SSA would
not even exist but for the sin nature. Therefore the logical conclusion is that even the
attraction itself is wrong which in turn may lead to sinful behavior.

Finally, another group of respondents (16%) did not automatically associate a
sexual or sinful component to the question. For them, they viewed SSA as neutral in
nature and pointed to the positive and healthy relationships that men should have with
other men and women should have with other women. This was defended from Scripture
and argued from the standpoint of solid friendships where sexuality is not a
consideration.
Figure 4.6. Is Same-Sex Attraction a Sin?

Figure 4.7. The Definition of Same-Sex Attraction.
Question 2: Is homosexuality categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins?

Question two was fairly straight-forward so there was little confusion over terminology in this case. The difficulty here is that many pastors may feel that homosexuality is more corrupt than other sins but the question is whether or not the Bible presents it as such. As indicated in the chart below, pastors were nearly evenly split on how they responded to this question. The interesting thing is that many pastors saw it both ways on this one. For example, a common response was that all sin is sin while at the same time admitting that the Bible does seem to place all sexual sins, with homosexuality being one of them, into a separate category as a sin against the body.

Another common response (18%) was to bring up the fact that the Bible labels homosexuality as an abomination. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah often entered the conversation at this point as an example of how God feels about this particular sin. However, only one pastor pointed out that Proverbs 12:22 also ascribes a lying tongue with the same terminology.

The reality is that all the pastors surveyed agreed that homosexuality is a sin. To this end there was no disagreement. Furthermore, there was a consensus that every sin results in a broken relationship with God and puts man into a position where he is guilty and in need of being saved from that sin. Where there was disagreement was with whether or not homosexuality is more heinous than other sins and if a separate consequence is reserved for those who practice it.
Figure 4.8. Is Homosexuality Categorized in the Bible as More Corrupt Than Other Sins?

Figure 4.9. The Categorical Classifications for Homosexuality.
Question 3: Are homosexuals born that way?

This was such an important question to ask because the current cultural landscape assumes that there is a genetic or biological component to homosexuality. Many Christians, on the other hand, relegate the cause of homosexuality to choice. So it was important to gain the perspective of pastors on this particular issue. In this case, the strong majority of those interviewed (84%) indicated that they do not believe homosexuals are born that way. Generally speaking, the consensus was that homosexuality is a sin that is tied to one’s sin nature. The argument that came up over and over again was that every person comes into the world with proclivities or predispositions to certain sins. If there is a tie to DNA—this is it—that people may have built-in inclinations or tendencies toward certain sins. Even as adults, most people would admit that they are susceptible to certain sins while other people might not struggle with those same sins at all. However, people all face the same difficulty with regard to how they respond to those inner inclinations. Hence each person is responsible for their actions, which is why most of the pastors would identify the root cause of homosexuality as tied to a person’s sin nature. Interestingly, only 5% of those surveyed put it in terms of choice even though that word is still extremely relevant to this line of thinking. However, choice appears to be a secondary point in the forward progression. For example, it seems that pastors strongly feel that homosexuality comes about because of the sin nature in a person but also that it only becomes sinful when a person chooses to act upon those impulses.

A few pastors were honest enough to admit that they needed to exercise caution in answering the question because they had experienced things they could not simply
explain away. In one instance, a pastor described a situation where a boy had obvious feminine qualities from a very young age. Therefore he was careful to answer in a way that included the possibility of other factors that research has not yet confirmed.

The other thing to point out with this particular question is that a high percentage of pastors offered no point of explanation or clarification with their answer. In other words, the question was asked and they answered “yes” or “no” and then moved right on to the subsequent question. It seems that the minds of most pastors on this point were already made up. There may be good reasons for that which can be discussed in the next chapter. However, the high percentage of pastors who did not feel the need to explain their answer in any way is worth noting.

Figure 4.10. Are Homosexuals Born That Way?
Question 4: Can homosexuals change?

Out of all the questions presented, this one gained the highest percentage of like-minded answers. Not one respondent opposed this question and the vast majority of pastors affirmed that homosexuals can indeed change. In most cases, this question was not just answered but answered with a resounding “absolutely!” It was evident in light of some of the previous questions that pastors were not viewing homosexuals as lost causes. Instead, they view the power of the Word of God as being greater than the pull of sexual temptation. If there was one question that got these pastors excited, this was it because they genuinely believe in the power of the cross.

No less than five pastors brought up 1 Corinthians 6:11 which states “and such were some of you” in direct reference to homosexuality. This verse was then used as the basis for arguing that change is indeed possible though many pastors acknowledged that
the temptation might not ever fully go away. Other pastors provided personal examples of the change they had observed in the lives of homosexuals they had interacted with—one of whom is now married and serving in ministry.

![Graph: Can Homosexuals Change?](image)

**Figure 4.12. Can Homosexuals Change?**

Question 5: Can someone be both gay and Christian?

This was another question that often led to a moment of contemplation before pastors ventured a response. A percentage of pastors (23%) simply could not reconcile Christianity with a practicing homosexual. For them, the two were so incompatible that it just did not seem possible that a true homosexual could also be a genuine Christian. For many, however, it was not just the behavior itself, but what the behavior symbolized that became the defining issue. Several pastors expressed that practicing homosexuality was in and of itself and act of defiance—a choice to disobey God and dishonor the body.
Thus, they came to the conclusion that a practicing homosexual has no desire to follow after Christ and therefore could not be a genuine Christian.

Other pastors were not so firm in their stance because they recognized the growth process in a believer’s life. So 27% of the pastors did not create as clear of a dividing line, however, their answers were still qualified. In this case, they argued that it was entirely possible for a genuine Christian to be homosexual but only in the sense that they were in the process of changing. In other words, it could be perfectly reasonable to expect a new believer who is a homosexual to change over the course of time as he or she comes to understand that homosexuality is sin. Even then the change process could take a while but what would be evident is a desire to change on the part of the new believer.

The largest segment of pastors (34%) took the position that a genuine believer could struggle with homosexuality just like a genuine believer might struggle with any other sin. That struggle does not remove a person’s salvation any more than any other struggle with sin would. These pastors attempted to show consistency in how they view homosexuality as they would other sins and since every person struggles with some sin or another, it made for a logical argument. Several biblical characters were offered up as examples such as King David who was both an adulterer and a murderer yet was still called a man after God’s own heart. Their point was that salvation and eternal security are core doctrines that are not dependent upon works. That does not mean the argument from the book of James (faith without works is dead) is not relevant, however, the assumption in this case is that the sin is not ongoing. If it were, then that might cause the question of one’s salvation to be questioned. On the other hand, every believer still struggles with
sin. Just because that sin happens to be homosexuality does not disqualify those people from Christianity.

Figure 4.13. Can Someone Be Both Gay and Christian?
Question 6: Has the universal church treated homosexuals fairly?

Question six was evenly divided among the respondents. However, what is not evident from these numbers is the high percentage of pastors who said they really had no basis for their answer. Overall, those who provided an explanation were optimistic about the church’s position yet they admitted they had little to no experience in dealing with homosexuality in their local church context. In other words, they made an assumption about how they thought the church would respond to this issue based more upon how the church has traditionally dealt with other sin issues.

There were two words/phrases the pastors struggled with in regard to this question. The first was *universal church*. How a pastor defined that particular term made a dramatic difference in how he answered. Therefore the interviewer consistently included the following definition: *These individuals may be classified as liberals or...*
conservatives and may be a part of any number of denominations or religions. However, this term refers to the true church which is made up of born-again believers. The result then is that pastors tended to be much more positive in their view than they originally intended after first hearing the question. Many pastors still qualified their answer by stating that the church has never been perfect. However, by and large, they felt the church was trying to do the right thing.

The other term pastors struggled with was fair. The reason for the difficulty with this particular word is that fairness is often a matter of perspective and these pastors recognized that not only is the Gospel an offense but so is the confrontation of sin. Therefore the word itself was problematic as they considered the implications of the question. Even though only 6% of the pastors specifically expressed the idea of being firm yet just, this thread was evident through many other responses as well. Pastors were attempting to convey their willingness to speak the truth boldly yet at the same time desired to demonstrate love to homosexuals in the same way they would to any other sinner.

A segment of the respondents (34%) did admit that from their perspective churches did tend to treat this particular sin more harshly than other sins. The way some churches have responded to the homosexual community was described by some pastors as the pet sin, the unpardonable sin, the sin Christians love to hate, special hatred for, prejudiced, ridiculing, unaccepting, mean-spirited, targeting of that sin, and not willing to show mutual respect. Many of the pastors who responded in this way spoke of their own experiences, which means they were not simply theorizing. They recognized and took responsibility for being a part of the problem. For several men, this question was sobering
and saddening because from their perspective the church had not shown the same kind of love to homosexuals that they had to other people and therefore were guilty of the very thing they are often accused of by the media.

Figure 4.15. Has the Universal Church Treated Homosexuals Fairly?
Figure 4.16. The Overall Perception of Fairness.

Question 7: Are you comfortable having homosexuals in your congregation?

By a wide margin (73%), the majority of those interviewed answered that they are comfortable having homosexuals in their congregations. Though many felt the need to qualify their answer, the question itself did not seem difficult. In fact, most of those who answered negatively were simply being honest with the word *comfortable*. However, being uncomfortable did not stop pastors from allowing homosexuals to attend their church. In reality, only a very small fraction (4%) really did not want homosexuals around their church at all. The vast majority wanted homosexuals to at least attend so they could be exposed to the Gospel and only stipulated that membership was not an option.

For most pastors, attendance to services by homosexuals was completely acceptable. Several pastors told of their bad experiences where a homosexual had
attempted to promote their lifestyle or actively recruit which is why some qualifiers were added in some cases as a preventative measure. The point is that these pastors also felt it necessary to protect the body. So though they were open to attendance, they still approached it with a sense of caution.

A small portion (5%) of pastors stipulated that a homosexual should not hold a leadership position. This could imply that they would allow for membership but it seems they were answering more from the perspective of pastoral leadership. In other words, they were not necessarily viewing this as forward steps: attendance / membership / leadership. Rather, they were expressing the point that a homosexual should not be allowed to hold the position of pastor.

![Figure 4.17. Are You Comfortable Having Homosexuals in Your Congregation?](image)

*Figure 4.17. Are You Comfortable Having Homosexuals in Your Congregation?*
Figure 4.18. Extent of Church Involvement.

Question 8: What percentage of your church members would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?

Both questions eight and nine do not require much description because the data speaks for itself. Where these questions become important is with regard to the implications that will be covered in the next chapter. Not surprisingly, most pastors felt that the majority of their church members were in full agreement with them on this issue. It should be noted that the scope was limited to church members and did not include attenders. However, it should also be noted that agree meant full agreement and was so stated in the interviews. Therefore the numbers presented should be a good representation of where pastors perceive their church members to be with this issue.

The other thing that should be mentioned is that this really is a rough estimate and in many cases could be characterized as an educated guess. Most pastors do not know with certainty exactly where every member is on this issue but many were also honest
enough to say their estimate may very well be too high. Others seemed quite confident that the majority of their church members would hold the very same view as them.

Figure 4.19. What Percentage of Your Church Members Would You Say Agree With Your Views on Homosexuality?

Question 9: What percentage of culture would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?

Question nine was identical to the previous one except it asked about cultural agreement rather than church member agreement. By *culture*, the interviewer was referring to the general population of America and offered this clarification in the interviews. The interesting observation that can be made from these percentages is that the results of this question are almost identical as the previous question except that the numbers are reversed. In other words, pastors felt very strongly that the majority of their church members had the same line of thinking with them on this issue but thought the opposite was true for most of society. The recent presidential election definitely played a
role in how pastors answered as this was brought up quite often. Interestingly enough, this meant some pastors answered along party lines and offered up the election results\textsuperscript{120} as their percentage estimates. Others simply used the election results as a gauge for how things had changed which influenced them to offer a lower percentage than they would have before the election.

![What Percentage of Culture Would You Say Agree With Your Views on Homosexuality?](image)

**Figure 4.20. What Percentage of Culture Would You Say Agree With Your Views on Homosexuality?**

Question 10: What would you like to see answered from this study?

This particular question was peculiar because it did not really pertain to a pastor’s view on the issue. Rather, this question was offered so the project resources could be created for the express purpose of meeting the needs of Hebron pastors. A wide variety of

\textsuperscript{120} Incumbent President Barack Obama beat his opponent Mitt Romney in the 2012 election. President Obama received 50.6% of the vote, Romney, 47.8%, and all others 1.6%. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/election-map-2012/president/ (accessed February 15, 2013).
answers were offered but in most cases they could be grouped into similar categories. The largest number of pastors (28%) were looking for a specific process through which they could walk a homosexual. Another segment (18%) of pastors were very interested in the ministry aspect. They desire to minister to homosexuals but struggle with knowing how to strike the right balance between speaking the truth and showing love. A smaller portion (7%) were also interested in ministering to homosexuals but specifically wanted to know how to reach them for Christ. Other answers varied and included the desire to see both biblical and scientific research on the issue as well as resources from which they could draw. Finally, there was a strong interest (though only indicated as 13% within this specific question) in knowing how their answers compared to other Hebron pastors who also completed the interview process.

![The Help Pastors Are Seeking](image)

**Figure 4.21. The Help Pastors Are Seeking.**
Conclusion

This chapter presented the raw data from the interviews. It began with a summary of those interviews and then systematically moved through each of the ten questions. For most questions, two charts were needed. The first clearly measured the “yes” or “no” answers. The second chart categorized the explanations that were offered which helped to further refine the specific views of the pastors who were interviewed. Personal observations were also relevant and served to clarify the answers so the best possible representation was achieved. Though analysis was necessary at times for the sake of interpretation, this chapter did not attempt to draw conclusions. There are implications to each and every question that was posed during the interview process but those will be addressed in the subsequent chapter.
CHAPTER V
THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Introduction

This particular section is significant because it takes the information from the previous chapters and provides analysis from an application standpoint. In other words, where does the research lead and what implications should be considered as a result of the collected data? Categorically speaking, this project can be evenly divided into two parts: the literature review and the pastoral interviews. This section will bring those two major sections together in a variety of ways. First, the interview responses will be compared to the literature review. Second, the implications of the pastoral responses will be considered. The point here is that the data should lead the researcher to certain conclusions so those findings will be evaluated with that in mind. Then, based, upon those first two steps, specific recommendations will be made that should carry weight because they will be based not only upon the literary research but also the interview responses. Finally, the chapter will wrap up with an honest assessment of what could not be accomplished through these two research methods. It should not be a surprise that the research process would uncover tangential issues where further study is warranted.

Participant Responses in Comparison to the Literature Review

Several of the interview questions had been previously studied in the literature review so a comparison to the pastoral answers provides some useful information to this
study and will allow the sermon and seminar resources to be designed in a way that clearly addresses these differences. As previously demonstrated in Chapter IV, several of these questions contained a mix of meaning which makes the comparison to the literature review all that much more relevant. Even if a term or phrase contained variant meanings, pastors are really looking for how they can successfully minister to people. Therefore they were very interested, not only in the range of meanings, but more importantly, in how to navigate through the disparities so meaningful dialogue can take place.

The first question that had been addressed in the literature review is whether or not SSA a sin. Clearly pastors struggled with answering this particular question because most of the time they only have to deal with the outward manifestation of sin—the actions or behaviors of people. However, Scripture paints the picture that even the thoughts of a man are evil (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Mt. 15:19). As stated in the literature review, even Jesus went so far in Matthew 5:28 to condemn not just actions but thoughts as well. The difficulty, of course, for a church, is that it is impossible to know the thoughts of a person so it makes perfect sense that actions would become the determining factor in most conversations. However, that does not negate the sinfulness of one’s heart. In this case, the author of this paper has taken a minority position in his approach to SSA. Not only do most of the pastors disagree with his position but so do many of the Christian psychologists who have studied this specific delineation. None-the-less, it seems a case can be made that all three levels (SSA, SSO, and SSB) are sin. The following chart was used to illustrate:
Table 5.1. The Three Components of Homosexuality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Same-sex Attraction</th>
<th>Same-sex Orientation</th>
<th>Same-sex Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the pastors were pressed, it is reasonable to conclude that they would agree with the words of Jesus. Therefore the issue comes down to the definition of SSA. For many of them, the term was synonymous with temptation and it can certainly be argued from Scripture that temptation is not a sin. However, if the term can be defined as desire then many would likely view it as synonymous with lust and would conclude SSA is indeed a sin. Where the lines are drawn is obviously extremely difficult but as one pastor put it, “SSA would not even exist if it were not for sin.”

According to the literature review, attraction is not a morally neutral concept. In heterosexuality, there is a context in which it is morally upright but in homosexuality, there is never a context in which is it morally acceptable. It is the position of this author that even the attraction is a sin even as the hetero attraction to a married woman would be sin.

The second question that should be compared to the literature review is whether or not homosexuality is categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins. Answers from the pastors were split evenly on this question so the literature review becomes really important on this point. A full 60% of those who provided an explanation for their answer felt that homosexuality was in a different category than other sins or that it was considered an abomination and therefore was in a different category. However, the literature review points out that homosexuality is most often listed among other sins. In

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121 Respondent C2 as a clarification to question one.
other words, it is not isolated as the sin. Second, even though homosexuality was punishable by death under the Old Testament Law, so were other sins such as blasphemy, adultery, and idol worship. So it really is difficult to single this one sin out as worse than all others. Even in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, many Christians traditionally consider God’s judgment of this city to be related exclusively to homosexuality. However, the literature review demonstrated that homosexuality was only one sin of many. Another relevant argument comes from Proverbs 16:5 and 6:16-19 where several other sins are labeled an abomination. This demonstrates that the term is not reserved for the most detestable sins as even a lying tongue is mentioned in this passage. Where a case can be made is in the larger context of sexual sins. This too was articulated in the literature review as sins against the body do seem to be placed into a separate category. Similarly, an argument can be made that certain sins carry weightier consequences but what is agreed upon is that all sin excludes people access to heaven.

The third question that should be compared to the literature review has to do with whether or not homosexuals are born that way. A large number (84%) of the respondents responded that no, they do not believe people are born homosexual. Most pastors were not answering from the side of evidence but rather from the presupposition that people choose to enter into a lifestyle of sin. In this case, the science is largely on their side in the sense that there is no real evidence at this point that provides a link to genetics. However, that does not mean that one does not exist so pastors need to be careful about being dogmatic on this point. The literature review demonstrated that pinning the cause of homosexuality to any one factor at this point is presumptuous at best. That said, even if genetics do indeed play a part, this does not remove personal responsibility which is
where choice enters the equation. This is where there is a consensus between the pastors and the literature review. Homosexuality should not be viewed as identical to race. A person has absolutely no say over whether they are born as a Caucasian, African America, Latino, or Asian. A person also may not have any say over whether they are born with certain inclinations toward specific sins. However, a person absolutely has a choice over what they will do with those inclinations. This is where the science and the media part ways. Still, the current scientific research supports this point.

The final question that relates to the literature review is the one that addresses the possibility for change. Pastors unanimously agreed (100%) that homosexuals can change and many respondents said so with enthusiasm. No fewer than five pastors also pointed out the 1 Corinthians 6:11 passage as Scriptural support for their viewpoint. The literature review also supports this position but does so both from a scientific platform and the experiences of ex-gays. Pastors should be confident that what they believe in this regard is not only possible but probable for anyone who is struggling with homosexuality and looking for a way out.

Conclusions

There are a number of reasonable conclusions that can be made from the assembly and analysis of the gathered data. The fact of the matter is that there are implications for each of the questions that were presented to the pastors. These were not asked just for the sake of being informative but because each church ministry is directly impacted by the viewpoints of their pastors and attenders. If pastors truly desire to make a difference in their communities then they must consider how their thinking influences their responses and ultimately how those responses impact how they interact with the
homosexual community. Certainly some questions will remain unanswered and there should be honesty about the limits of this study. For example, the fact that pastors struggled to answer many of these questions could mean several things. It could mean that the questions were bad ones or it could mean that pastors were largely unprepared to answer these types of questions. On the other hand, it could also be instructive in regard to the complexity of the issue. The point is that any number of things can be learned from this process and this paper cannot hope to recognize or understand them all but that does not mean observations will not be helpful. In fact, they are likely to provide a context for moving forward that will serve pastors as they seek to remove the obstacles that get in the way of true ministry.

As indicated in the differing definitions for SSA, it cannot be assumed that everyone is thinking in a similar way when they hear this phrase. Yet, that in and of itself, makes a point. Pastors are coming at this issue with a different mindset from each other and most likely from other people as well. However, this terminology is becoming quite common so pastors need to gain an understanding of what they mean and then learn how to communicate in a way that translates the same meaning to their audience. What needs to be instructive from question one is the importance of the terminology and the meaning behind it. Though there may be disagreement about what the phrase means and where the specific lines need to be drawn, pastors need to know where they stand on the issue. The interviews ended up giving the impression that there is confusion on this point. Pastors appear to be unsure about their position which was evidenced by their inability to articulate it. This is no doubt due to the fact that they simply have not had to think it
through before but if they truly desire to have a voice with homosexuals then they really need to find a clear understanding of SSA.

Question two was significant because homosexuality is often treated as if it is the worst sin of all. However, if it is one sin of many, then how pastors talk about it will change. Christians tend to be really good at treating their own indiscretions with a very different level of guilt than the faults of others. But what if pastors brought the same sense of indignation against a lying tongue or gluttony as they did against homosexuality? Certainly there is a place to point out the consequences of sexual sins, however, churches have created inappropriate categories for sin that actually keeps some people out instead of allowing them to have equal access to the Gospel.

With regard to question three, what needs to be instructive here is that pastors do not allow their presuppositions to mislead them. Most pastors have approached the born that way issue in the opposite manner than they would advocate for most other positions. Instead of looking at the evidence and allowing it, along with Scripture, to lead them to a conclusion, many have started with a conclusion and worked backwards. This does not automatically mean their conclusion is wrong but the process itself can be brought into question, thus muddying the results. For some reason, pastors seem to be afraid of a genetic, hereditary gene argument with some even going so far as to challenge the science before even realizing the results. However, in this case, science has not yet found a gay gene, but even if it does, that should not cause pastors to feel challenged. The discovery of a gay gene still fits within a logical argument for choosing to sin. Honestly, that discovery would feed the notion that homosexuality is the same as being born into a
certain race or of a certain gender but it still is not a solid argument so pastors need not fear the question.

Question four, about the ability for homosexuals to change, was met with unanimity and enthusiasm. However, there is an underlying question that is probably more important—at least in the overall scope of practical ministry to homosexuals. From a visionary standpoint, it is great that pastors present the possibility of change. However, when it comes to working with a homosexual through the change process, pastors need to have thought about the extent of change that is possible. The fact of the matter is most Christians would like to see homosexuals become heterosexual even to the point of their attractions. However, that scenario in most cases is not likely to happen. Most ex-gays admit that they still struggle even after years of doing the right thing in regard to their actions and behavior. So pastors must be honest with themselves, with those they counsel, and with those to whom they minister on this point. Just like drugs and alcohol, some are saved from their vices at the point of salvation while for many others it is a life-long struggle in their attempt to deny self and live for Christ.

Question five, about someone being both gay and Christian is significant because more and more Christians are coming out and seeking to find compatibility between homosexuality and their faith. MCC is just one example that should bring to light the scope of what is taking place in this regard. This one church has 222 member congregations in thirty-seven countries so this is not just a small following that is only relevant to a subset of the nation. This is a global presence that advocates the unification of homosexuality and faith. Many pastors who were interviewed indicated that they have had no experience to date with homosexuality in their church. However, the numbers
alone indicate that this is bound to change in the near future. It is very likely that unless a church intends to completely insulate itself from the world, they will have to deal with the issue of homosexuality. Many pastors would not balk at that point but what they might be surprised to find is that the people they end up dealing with are not the defiant, haters of God that they expected. Rather, these may be ordinary looking people who desire to follow Christ but also happen to be homosexual. What pastors will discover is that it is far easier to deal with someone who does not want anything to do with God than with the person who feels faith and homosexuality are completely compatible.

One of the most shocking responses from pastors was about whether or not the church has treated homosexuals fairly. This question came about because it is common for the media to paint the church as consisting of a bunch of homophobic, judgmental zealots. As well, many homosexuals point to their own personal encounters as evidence of this experience. So to have a large number of pastors struggle with this question was troubling. In some cases, this was due to a wrestling with the terminology but in many cases it was because they simply did not have any experience on which to base their answer. As big of an issue as homosexuality is, this is actually quite disturbing because it means that pastors and churches are actually out of touch with the culture. Some might view that as a good thing but the reality is that if the church is ever going to reach the culture then they need to be in touch with it. In John’s Gospel, Jesus succinctly states that believers should be in the world but not of it (Jn. 17:13-18). The church has been accused at times of being out of touch and the responses to this question seem to confirm that reality at least when it comes to this particular issue. Hopefully this project will help pastors see the importance of engaging their people on this topic.
Question seven about being comfortable with homosexuals in your congregation has several implications worth mentioning. First, the word *comfortable* was specifically utilized because older generations tend to be more uncomfortable with homosexuality as a whole. So it was assumed that younger pastors would be more comfortable around gays than older pastors. However, this did not seem to be the case—at least on paper. On this point, the age of the pastor did not seem to have any relevance to their level of comfort in talking with and engaging with homosexuals. What is interesting is the number of respondents who answered “yes” on question six yet answered “no” to question seven. About half (47%) indicated that the universal church has treated homosexuals unfairly, yet 27% of them said they were not comfortable having homosexuals in their congregation. It would seem that pastors who felt homosexuals had been treated unfairly by the church would conversely be the ones who would have a positive view of having them in their own congregations. The numbers did not translate in this fashion, however, which could be due to non-specific terminology in question seven—meaning clarity about whether those homosexuals were practicing, repentant, or struggling may have changed the percentage outcomes. On the other hand, it could also lead one to believe that there is indeed a difference between perception and practice.

Question eight asked about the percentage of church members whom a pastor felt would agree with their views on homosexuality. The pure numbers say that roughly three out of ten church members (not simply attenders) are out of sync with their pastor’s position on this issue. Considering the complexity of this topic, that may not seem like a big deal but is there any other sin where a pastor would feel comfortable with these numbers? The other point that must be made is that it is human nature to think that people
would agree with us which means these numbers are likely inflated. One pastor was
honest enough to say that he thought his numbers were higher until their church went
through a sexual incident that required church discipline. It was then that he discovered
people were not as tied to their beliefs as he had thought and they were certainly not as
tied to his position as he had thought. Part of the problem is that this question could
include people on both sides of the spectrum. Pastors will likely have some church
members who would be fully accepting of homosexuals and they will likely have some
church members who would be very condemning. As well, there are likely parents in the
congregation with gay children who might tend to be soft on the gay issue. Thus pastors
will have people who would fall to both extremes of their view—not just those who
would have a more liberal view. However, the instructive part of this question is that
pastors likely have a much higher percentage of people in their church membership who
are of a different thinking with this issue than they are. If attenders were added to the
equation, then the numbers would be even higher.

Question nine was very similar to the previous one except that it asked pastors
about their perception of culture. It is interesting that the results to this question were
almost identical to question eight except that the numbers are reversed. The troubling
thing here is that the church often mirrors the world in statistics though at times they are
just a few years behind. For example, the divorce rate among Christians is statistically the
same as those who would not consider themselves Christians. So the high discrepancy
between the numbers in questions eight and nine should be brought into question. There
is the possibility that pastors are simply out of touch and do not realize that
homosexuality has likely already infiltrated their church. It is also possible that their
particular church is somewhat insulated against the world. A third possibility is that the church is just behind the times on this particular issue. However, if that is the case then it should also alert pastors to what they will be facing in the near future. Whatever the reason, pastors should not fool themselves into thinking that this is an issue that does not affect their church.

**Recommendations**

The implications as presented in the previous section already convey a lot in regard to what could be recommended to pastors. However, there are a few overarching themes that seem to become evident as a result of the interviews. First, it seems apparent that pastors need to do a better job of teaching their congregations about the subject and how to respond properly. It simply is unacceptable for pastors to be out of touch with this issue. Hopefully the numbers of church members who are not in sync with them will be a wake-up call of sorts in this respect. Pastors need to teach on the topic but not exclusively from a condemning standpoint. Yes, it should be presented as sin, but pastors need to teach about it from a depth of research—both biblical and scientific. Many pastors during their interview expressed an interest in obtaining resources that would aid them so hopefully this project will serve them in this capacity. However, it is extremely important that pastors begin to engage their people in honest dialogue and allow for authentic interaction and discussion to take place. This will not only serve to unify the body but ensure their unity when difficulties arise.

Another recommendation for pastors is that they do not make the issue more complex than it already is. Certainly there are unique complexities that need to be addressed but sometimes pastors lose sight of the real issue because they place
homosexuality into some other category. The temptation might be to draw up a list of do’s and don’ts with the hope that the person will simply conform to a set of standards making pastors feel in turn like the problem has been solved. However, the goal in any counseling situation is not to simply curb behavior but to transform thinking. Since this is the case, pastors need to approach homosexuality in the same way they would other sexual sins. For example, if a married man was flirting with a woman at work, they would likely counsel that man to distance himself from that relationship. The same could be said for a homosexual relationship regardless of whether it is sexual in nature or not. Homosexuals need to deny themselves and struggle against their fleshly desires in the same way heterosexuals do. Pastors can end up creating a more complex situation than is warranted when they attempt to counsel homosexuals in a different way than they would anyone else who is struggling with a sexual sin.

Limitations

One of the obvious limitations of this project that was discovered through the interview process was the difficulty in providing a step-by-step counseling approach. Especially because of what took place in the researcher’s church, pastors were very interested in how that process was managed. Part of that interest was simply because they wanted to know how it worked out, but part of that interest was because they were looking for an approach that could be transferrable into their church environment. However, what the pastors were looking for is not advised because each situation will be different. Certainly broad principles will apply which is why this project includes several teaching resources. However, it is not a good idea to take New Community Baptist Church’s experience and present it as a template.
Recommendations for Further Research

A project cannot cover everything no matter how comprehensive it seeks to be. After careful research and analysis, there are several related matters that could become research projects in and of themselves. What that means is that while this paper did address these issues to some degree, the included research really did not do them justice.

The first topic has to do with a person’s identity. It is apparent that the issue of homosexuality is tied up very closely to identity which is why offense is often taken so personally. When it comes to homosexuality, it is extremely difficult to have disagreement and honest dialogue without someone being offended and this is because the issue is not relegated only to behavior but to a person’s core identity. Homosexuals feel as if their very being is being attacked and so it is very easy for them to become defensive if someone disagrees with their behavior. The subject of identity, then, and perhaps even more importantly, the impact of defining one’s identity as it relates to Christ, is a very important topic to pursue within the counseling process.

Second, the question of whether or not attraction should be synonymous with temptation also deserves some attention. The literature review addressed this question but because so many pastors linked the two during their interviews, it seems like this particular issue warrants some further investigation. Clearly, Scripture says the desires of a person’s heart are sinful but it also makes a distinction between temptation and sin. It seems that temptation is usually tied to behavior and actions more than the thought process but it is something that deserves additional consideration and thought.

Third, this project dealt in large part with what biblically could fall under the category of unhealthy relationships. However, one of the best ways pastors can
proactively approach the issue is to teach what a healthy relationship actually looks like. This tactic certainly would not completely eradicate the issues but teaching on biblical, healthy relationships would move the discussion from a defensive posture to an offensive one. In light of the high rate of those growing up in broken homes, it seems that clear definition and biblical teaching in this area is warranted.

**Conclusion**

Chapter V was integral to this project because it took the information from all previous chapters and sought to draw relevant conclusions. The comparison to the literature review proved to be fruitful particularly because several of the interview questions drew mixed responses. Therefore, this chapter was able to reconcile the differing views and bring a mutual understanding to the terminology and phrasing of relevant points. Second, the implications of the pastoral responses were analyzed for the purpose of considering how theoretical viewpoints play out in real ministry. In many cases, it was discovered that pastors had no experience with which to base their answers and thus are unprepared to handle the homosexuality issue. In other cases, pastors did have some knowledge and experience and simply need to understand the overall repercussions of their viewpoints so their ministry potential can be maximized.

Finally, the chapter concluded with some recommendations that were based upon the pastoral interviews. Undoubtedly, pastors are looking for help. Their hearts are in the right place and they desire to reach homosexuals but their lack of experience leaves them vulnerable. The recommendations, along with the resources within the project itself, are meant to serve pastors so they are able to have the means to prepare their congregations for effective ministry.
PROJECT CONCLUSION

There were several stated goals for this project. Some were personal, and honestly, the true impetuous for this research began there. This research was initially started because the author of this paper, a pastor, recognized exactly how unprepared he was to tackle this issue when it was presented to him within his own church. Therefore, the two major lines of research began with the biblical record and the scientific record. The presumption going into the study was that the exegesis of relevant biblical passages would confirm the traditional teaching against homosexuality. This was certainly the case, but beyond that, the author wanted to discover if the opposing scholarship contained intellectual arguments or if they simply sought to reinterpret Scripture. This process proved to be extremely fruitful and the clear teaching of Scripture on this subject was confirmed without prejudice.

With regard to the current scientific findings, this research also proved to be fruitful but in a surprising way. With all that is constantly communicated via the media, it was expected that the common assumptions reported routinely by the media would be grounded in fact. However, the large number of clinical studies that are frequently used to support widespread belief are unusually suspect. It was a complete surprise to find that in spite of the lack of documented support, theories have been repeated over and over enough to the point where they have become accepted as factual by the general population of America. Though the Bible is certainly capable of standing alone, it was
encouraging to find that the current scientific research does not at all stand in opposition to the biblical text. Instead, the two work together to form a strong argument against the practice of homosexuality.

The other goals for this project related to assisting other pastors. The assumption was made that pastors were likely not fully prepared to respond to this issue and the interviews certainly bore this out. Therefore the paper was specifically designed so pastors would understand the range of issues surrounding homosexuality and also to equip them with helpful resources. This was accomplished by providing accurate and relevant research so they would be armed on an intellectual and cognitive level. However, the author’s intent was not only to raise awareness and provide information, but also that they would feel differently as a result of this study. It does seem that by simply going through the interview process, this goal was accomplished. It was amazing to see how the body language of pastors would change from the beginning when they were asked to be involved in an interview without knowing the topic ahead of time, to the end when many would continue to chat about where their church was at and how they needed to work through the issue further. Often this was somewhat emotional as they realized the church’s shortcomings with respect to homosexuals and how they had been missing out on an opportunity to love all people without qualification.

A third goal for this project was to give pastors the ability to not just think or feel but also do something with this material. Their awareness of the need has been realized and their desire to make a difference has been stated. However, they needed something tangible that they could take with them and use in their individual ministries. Therefore, a number of resources have been provided along with specific sermon manuscripts and
seminar session outlines so pastors can be empowered to maximize their effectiveness both in teaching their congregations and also in reaching the homosexual population for Christ. The findings of this report are also scheduled to be formally presented to the Hebron Association pastors at one of their monthly meetings in the fall of 2013. At that time, a compilation of the appendix resources from this project will be assembled into a resource packet and distributed to the pastors in attendance.

Like it or not, the issue of homosexuality is not going away. In fact, the spread of misinformation and media bias are only likely to exacerbate the problem. Furthermore, pastors must not think that this is only a secular problem that has no impact upon the church. Rather, pastors must prepare themselves for what is coming. However, this need not be a defensive posture or something they need to fear. The Word of God has been and continues to be the basis for truth and contains within its pages the power for life change.

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9b-11
APPENDICES
Appendix A

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Title of Research Study: When Homosexuality Comes to Church

Project Director: Daryl A. Neipp
149 Vineyard Road, Avon Lake, OH 44012
(440) 930-8867

Purpose of the Research: To discover if there is a variance of beliefs on the topic of homosexuality within the Hebron association as representative of the OARBC and GARBC.

Procedures for this Research: Both scholarly research and the collection of data through interviews will be analyzed and reported.

Potential Risks of Discomfort: Because the topic of homosexuality is a sensitive one, it is possible that you could become the target of pro-gay advocacy groups. However, neither your name, nor your church name will appear anywhere within the published product.

Potential Benefits to You and Others: The research from this project will help pastors become better informed of the issues as they pertain to homosexuality and thus understand how to approach this segment of the population.

Protection of Confidentiality: Neither your personal name nor your church name will be mentioned anywhere within the project study or publication.

Signatures:
If you agree to participate in this research project, please read the following statement:

I have been fully informed of the above described project with its possible benefits and risks and I have given permission of participation in this study. Please sign below.

_________________________________________    _________________________     ____________
Signature of Participant                  Name of Participant (Print)          Date

_________________________________________    _________________________     ____________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent     Name of Person Obtaining Consent (Print)  Date
Appendix B

Questionnaire

The questionnaire will be privately conducted through a one-on-one interview process and will be composed of the following questions:

1. Is same-sex attraction a sin?
2. Is homosexuality categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins?
3. Are homosexuals born that way?
4. Can homosexuals change?
5. Can someone be both gay and Christian?
6. Has the universal church treated homosexuals fairly?
7. Are you comfortable having homosexuals in your congregation?
8. What percentage of your church members would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?
9. What percentage of culture would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?
10. What would you like to see answered from this study?
Pastor XXXXX,

As a part of my doctoral project, I am working my way through each of the pastors in the Hebron Association asking them to take part in a brief interview (about 15 minutes depending on how much you talk!). The topic cannot be disclosed ahead of time but I will ask for your theological position in regard to a specific controversial topic. I know that doesn’t give you a lot to go on but the integrity of the project requires me not to reveal too much ahead of time. What I can tell you is that your involvement in this project will directly benefit pastors in the Hebron Association, the OARBC, and the GARBC. That said, could I set up a convenient time to interview you?

Also, since you have more than one pastor on staff at your church, could you set up a time that would include your associates? I will need to interview each pastor separately but if they could be staggered so I could complete them all in one trip—that would be ideal.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Daryl Neipp
New Community Baptist Church
Avon, OH
Appendix D

Interview Guide

The point of setting up an interview guide is so there is a sense of consistency that runs through each forum. Ideally, each pastor will be contacted and asked if they would be willing to meet with the student for a short interview. Pastors will be informed that they will be asked to answer ten questions for the purpose of collecting data as it relates to a Doctor of Ministry project. The content of those questions along with the subject matter should not be disclosed and it can be explained to pastors that this will help keep the study accurate and consistent.

Once that pastor has agreed to meet, an appropriate time will be scheduled to conduct the interview. If the church has multiple staff members, interviews will be attempted on the same day, but at separate times so each interview can remain one-on-one. During each interview, the questions will be asked one at a time and the pastor will be asked to respond. Most questions allow for a “yes” or “no” answer so pastors will be asked to answer in that fashion so a clear, measurable response can be recorded. However, pastors will also be given the opportunity to briefly clarify their viewpoint and those variations will also be recorded by the student. The student will take detailed notes throughout the interview process recording the pastor’s responses, clarifications, and body language.

At the conclusion of the interview, the student will ask the pastor to read and sign the consent form. He will also ask the pastor not to disclose the content or topic of the interview to any other pastor until all interviews have been completed. Finally, the student will thank the pastor and remind him of the potential benefits of this study.
Appendix E

Interview Template

Name: _______________________________  Code Letter: ________

Church Name: _______________________________  Code Color: ________

Position: _______________________________

Age: ________

Highest Level of Formal Education: _______________________________

Study Questions:

1. Is same-sex attraction a sin?   Yes / No

2. Is homosexuality categorized in the Bible as more corrupt than other sins?   Yes / No

3. Are homosexuals born that way?   Yes / No

4. Can homosexuals change?   Yes / No

5. Can someone be both gay and Christian?   Yes / No
6. Has the church treated homosexuals fairly?  Yes / No

7. Are you comfortable having homosexuals in your congregation?  Yes / No

8. What percentage of church members would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?

9. What percentage of culture would you say agree with your views on homosexuality?

10. What would you like to see answered from this study?

Additional Comments:
Appendix F

Quotes Made by Celebrities on the Topic of Homosexuality

Brad Pitt: “Because no one has the right to deny another their life, even though they disagree with it, because everyone has the right to live the life they so desire if it doesn't harm another and because discrimination has no place in America. . .”


Clint Eastwood: “These people who are making a big deal out of gay marriage? We’re making a big deal out of things we shouldn’t be making a deal out of. Just give everybody the chance to have the life they want.”


Drew Barrymore: “I am who I am because of the people who influenced me growing up, and many of them were gay. No one has any right to tell anyone what makes a family.”


Kate Winslet: “I like the diversity that my children are exposed to every day. I love the way their brains work. Joe (her seven year old son) turns to me the other day and says ‘One day I will have a girlfriend or a boyfriend, darling. Which would you prefer?’ And I said ‘My Love, that would be entirely up to you, and it doesn't make any difference to me.’ But that he knows! It's a real privilege. Talk about the best education.”


Julianne Moore: “I think it's a very basic human rights issue. Everybody has the right to marry the person they love and be represented as a couple and family. . . It's something that people will look back on in years to come and say, ‘I can't believe it took so long for us to recognize this.’ It’ll be like segregation and giving women the right to vote.”

Miley Cyrus: In August 2011, Cyrus tattooed a small “equals” sign on her middle finger, in support of same-sex marriage. She later told *Glamour* that the idea of not being able to marry the person “you love more than anything in the world” makes her “feel sick to her stomach.”


Sean Penn: “I think that it is a good time for those who voted for the ban against gay marriage to sit and reflect and anticipate their great shame and the shame in their grandchildren’s eyes if they continue that way of support. We’ve got to have equal rights for everyone.”


Natalie Portman: “I’m not convinced about marriage. Divorce is so easy, and that [sic] fact that gay people are not allowed to marry takes much of the meaning out of it. Committing yourself to one person is sacred.”


Lady Gaga: “I very much want to inject gay culture into the mainstream. It’s not an underground tool for me. It’s my whole life.”


Hillary Clinton: “Gay soldiers need to shoot straight, not be straight.”


George Clooney: “At some point in our lifetime, gay marriage won't be an issue, and everyone who stood against this civil right will look as outdated as George Wallace standing on the school steps keeping James Hood from entering the University of Alabama because he was black.”

Judith Sheindlin (Judge Judy): “We’ve got a lot of trouble in this country. . . in the world. Why the state should be interested in proscribing the word marriage from people who love each other, who are responsible tax-paying, productive people who have created a family (sometimes two people, sometimes two people and children). Why the state would have an interest in proscribing that kind of conduct, I don't understand. . . Religious people can feel whatever they want to feel, but it wasn’t so many decades ago that people of different races couldn’t marry in this country. And President Obama is going to have an opportunity relatively soon to put his [approval] on whether gay couples that work for the federal government are entitled to health insurance. He should be particularly sensitive to that, because there was a time when members of his race couldn’t marry members of another race.”


Wanda Sykes: “How can you stop people from loving each other? How can you get upset about love? And I’m sick of this stuff about, ‘Oh, well, you made that choice. That's your choice.’ Gay is not a choice. Being gay is not -- that's like telling me I chose to be a woman. I chose to be black. So are we saying that being gay is a choice, that people are straight because they chose not to be gay?”


Elton John: “I think Jesus was a compassionate, super-intelligent gay man who understood human problems. On the cross, he forgave the people who crucified him. Jesus wanted us to be loving and forgiving. I don't know what makes people so cruel. Try being a gay woman in the Middle East -- you're as good as dead.”


Will Smith: “If anybody can find someone to love them and to help them through this difficult thing that we call life, I support that in any shape or form.”


Jay-Z: “I've always thought it as something that was still, um, holding the country back. What people do in their own homes is their business and you can choose to love whoever you love. That’s their business. [It] is no different than discriminating against blacks. It’s discrimination plain and simple.”
Jennifer Lopez: “When it comes to gay marriage, I just believe in love. I believe that when two people find each other and love each other, they should be able to spend their lives together.”


Natalie Maines (The Dixie Chicks): “Politicians against gay marriage now, are the future villains of our American History books.”

https://twitter.com/1NatalieMaines/status/82514810012581890 (accessed January 7, 2013)

Adam Lambert: “Love overcomes hate. Love has no color. Love has no orientation. All is love.”


Ellen Degeneres: “It’s time we love people for who they are and let them love who they want.”


Britney Spears: “Love is love! People should be able to do whatever makes them happy!”


Sarah Silverman: “I cannot imagine wanting to get married right now, at this time in America, and I can’t get my head around anyone [doing so] – If you’re for equal rights, why would you get married right now? It’s like going to a country club that doesn’t allow blacks or Jews. There’s no difference. Why would I want to join that club?”

Appendix G

Pro-Gay Religious Organizations

Whosoever
www.whosoever.org
Whosoever is an online magazine about what it means to be gay and Christian.

Gay Church
www.gaychurch.org
The Gay Church site provides a directory of gay-affirming Christian churches.

The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association
www.galva108.org
The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association promotes the inclusivity of Hindu teachings.

The World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews: Keshet Ga’avah
www.glbtjews.org
GLBT Jews seeks to connect gay, Jewish organizations around the world.

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer Concerns
http://flgbtqc.quaker.org
Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer Concerns provide a site that connects gay Quakers.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship
www.sdakinship.net
Seventh-day Adventist Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of Adventist gays.

Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons
www.affirmation.org
Affirmation is a site that helps gay people reconcile with their spirituality within the context of the Mormon background.

American Baptists Concerned
www.rainbowbaptists.org/ambaptists.htm
American Baptists Concerned seeks to provide a voice for gay American Baptists.

Affirmation: United Methodist
www.umaffirm.org
Affirmation is a group that challenges the United Methodist Church to be inclusive.
Emergence International: Christian Scientist
www.emergence-international.org
Emergence International is a world-wide community that provides spiritual and educational support for gays.

Common Bond: Former Jehovah Witnesses
www.gayxjw.org
Common Bond is a support network for gays who are Jehovah Witnesses.

Evangelicals Concerned
www.ecwr.org
Evangelicals Concerned is a nationwide ministry that encourages and affirms gay Christians in their faith.

United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns
www.ucccoalition.org
The UCC Coalition is a group that provides support and sanctuary for gays.
Appendix H

Gay Organizations

About.com: Gay Teens
www.gayteens.about.com

About.com: Lesbian Life
www.lesbianlife.about.com

About.com: Gay Life
www.gaylife.about.com

Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center in San Francisco
www.lyric.org
The Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center exists to build community and inspire positive social change in the gay community.

Queer Attitude: Gay Teen and Global Gay Youth Community
www.queerattitude.com
Queer Attitude is an online community for young people who are looking to engage in dialogue with their peers about issues related, but not limited, to sexuality.

The Gay Youth Corner
www.thegyc.com
The Gay Youth Corner provides gay youth and teens with a chat room.

PlanetOut
www.planetout.com
PlanetOut provides gay news with links to top gay websites.

Trans Youth
www.transyouth.com
Trans Youth provides education, training and support to help create a gender sensitive and inclusive environment for all children and teens.

Advocates for Youth
www.advocatesforyouth.org
Advocates for Youth champion efforts that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

The Trevor Project
www.thetrevorproject.org
The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.
The GLBT National Help Center
www.glnh.org
THE GLBT National Help Center seeks to meet the needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community and those questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
www.glsen.org
GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes in creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
www.pflag.org
PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

Center Link
www.lgbtcenters.org
Center Link exists to support the development of strong, sustainable LGBT community centers and to build a unified center movement.

Children of Lesbians and Gays
www.colage.org
Children of Lesbians and Gays is a national movement of children, youth, and adults with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) parent/s. They build community and work toward social justice through youth empowerment, leadership development, education, and advocacy.

The Commercial Closet
www.commercialcloset.org
The Commercial Closet is an organization dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

Family Equality Council
www.familyequality.org
The Family Equality Council seeks to connect, support, and represent parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in this country and the children they are raising.

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
www.glad.org
GLAD is New England’s leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity and expression.

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)  
www.glaad.org  
GLAAD amplifies the voice of the LGBT community by empowering real people to share their stories, holding the media accountable for the words and images they present, and helping grassroots organizations communicate effectively. By ensuring that the stories of LGBT people are heard through the media, GLAAD promotes understanding, increases acceptance, and advances equality.

Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund  
www.victoryfund.org  
The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund exists to change the face and voice of America’s politics and achieve equality for LGBT Americans by increasing the number of openly LGBT officials at all levels of government.

Hetrick-Martin Institute  
www.hmi.org  
Hetrick-Martin believes all young people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, deserve a safe and supportive environment in which to achieve their full potential. Therefore, they have created this environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth between the ages of 12 and 24 and their families.

Human Rights Campaign  
www.hrc.org  
The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality.

Lambda Legal  
www.lambdalegal.org  
Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)  
www.ncavp.org  
NCAVP empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing and education, and support survivors through counseling and advocacy.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)  
www.thetaskforce.org  
The mission of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is to build the grassroots power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. They do this by
training activists, equipping state and local organizations with the skills needed to organize broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation, and building the organizational capacity of the movement.

National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA)
www.nlgja.org
NLGJA is an organization of journalists, media professionals, educators and students working from within the news industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of LGBT issues.

National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)
www.nyacyouth.org
NYAC contains a blog with advice for gays.

Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE)
www.sageusa.org
SAGE is the country's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older adults.

Service Members Legal Defense Network (SLDN)
www.sldn.org
SLDN exists to strengthen military culture by securing equal opportunity, equal protection and equal benefits, without threat of harassment or discrimination, for LGBT service members and veterans.

Straight Spouse Network
www.ssnetwk.org
The Straight Spouse Network is an international organization that provides personal, confidential support and information to heterosexual spouses/partners, current or former, of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender mates and mixed-orientation couples for constructively resolving coming-out problems.
Appendix I

Christian Organizations

Cross Ministry
www.crossministry.org
Cross Ministry is an equipping ministry for communicating and ministering to homosexuals. They train people what to do and what not to do, what to say and what not to say when talking with homosexuals from a Christian perspective.

Exodus
www.exodusinternational.org
www.lovewonout.com
Exodus International is dedicated to equipping the global church with resources that will help offer a truthful, compassionate approach to dealing with the topic of homosexuality. It is the largest world-wide ministry to those struggling with same-sex attraction seeking to live a life that reflects the Christian faith and has more than 260 autonomous and diverse member agencies across North America that help men and women seeking freedom from unwanted same-sex attraction as well as family members & friends affected by this issue.

Dr. Throckmorton
www.drthrockmorton.com
Dr. Throckmorton is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Fellow for Psychology and Public Policy at Grove City, PA College. This website contains a number of scholarly articles on homosexuality.

Inqueery
www.inqueery.com
The goal of Inqueery is to facilitate the development of solutions to the problems faced by lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, and ex-gay students on high school and college campuses, all while maintaining that the possibility of change must be presented for those who desire this path.

Focus on the Family
www.family.org
Focus on the Family is a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive. They provide help and resources for couples to build healthy marriages that reflect God’s design, and for parents to raise their children according to morals and values grounded in biblical principles.

International Healing Foundation
www.gaytostraight.org
The International Healing Foundation exists to promote healthy individuals and relationships, while assisting in the healing of families, communities, and places of
worship. They specifically provide help for those who are struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions.

National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH)
www.narth.com
NARTH is a professional, scientific organization that offers hope to those who struggle with unwanted homosexuality. As an organization, they disseminate educational information, conduct and collect scientific research, promote effective therapeutic treatment, and provide referrals to those who seek assistance.

Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays
www.p-fox.org
PFOX supports an inclusive environment for the ex-gay community, and works to eliminate negative perceptions and discrimination against former homosexuals.

Alliance for Marriage
www.afmus.org
The Alliance for Marriage is dedicated to promoting marriage and addressing the epidemic of fatherless families in the United States.

Institute for Marriage and Public Policy
www.marriagedebate.com
This is an organization dedicated to high quality research and public education on ways that law and public policy can strengthen marriage as a social institution.

Regeneration Ministries
www.regenministries.org
Regeneration Ministries partners with churches to help those who struggle with lust, pornography, adultery, homosexuality, and other sexual temptations.

Desert Stream
www.desertstream.org
Desert Stream equips the body of Christ to minister healing to the sexually and relationally broken through healing groups and leadership training for the local church.

One by One
www.oneby1.org
One by One is a denominational ministry that exists to educate and equip churches to minister to those who desire freedom from unwanted same-sex attraction, sexual addiction, and the effects of sexual abuse. They serve as a referral agency for individuals and families.

Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity (ISSI)
www.sexualidentityinstitute.org
The mission of ISSI is to further the understanding of sexual identity, its development and synthesis, and to be a resource to students in training and those in the community who are stakeholders in these discussions.

Sexual Identity Therapy Framework  
www.sitframework.com  
Sexual Identity Therapy seeks to aid people in conflict over sexual identity to integrate and live out a valued sexual identity. This page is dedicated to an examination and advancement of the framework for such therapy. The framework is authored by Warren Throckmorton and Mark Yarhouse.

Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality (PATH)  
www.pathinfo.org  
PATH helps people with unwanted same-sex attractions realize their personal goals for change—whether by developing their innate heterosexual potential or by embracing a lifestyle as a single, non-sexually active man or woman.

Redeemed Lives Ministries  
www.redeemedlives.org  
Redeemed Lives Ministries provides courses, conferences, and resource material about the issue of homosexuality from a biblical perspective.

Homosexuals Anonymous  
www.ha-fs.org  
Homosexuals Anonymous is an international organization dedicated to serving the recovery needs of men and women who struggle with unwanted same sex attraction.
Appendix J

The Gay Agenda

It is hard to argue with the fact that public opinion towards homosexuals has changed dramatically over the years. The reason for this acceptance can be tied to a strategy formulated by homosexual activists Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen. Their six points aimed at changing American’s perceptions towards homosexuals were published in a 1987 article titled “The Overhauling of Straight America” and a 1989 book titled After the Ball.

1. Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and often as possible. Almost all behavior begins to look normal if you are exposed to enough of it at close quarters and among your acquaintances.

2. Portray gays as victims, not aggressive challengers. “A media campaign that casts gays as society’s victims and encourages straights to be their protectors must make it easier for those who respond to assert that and explain their new perspectives.”

3. Give homosexual protectors a “just” cause.


5. Make the victimizers look bad. “We intend to make the antigay look so nasty that average Americans will want to disassociate themselves from such types.”

6. Solicit funds so propaganda can skillfully be used to portray homosexuals in a positive light.
Appendix K

Health Professionals Against Change Therapy

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises youth that counseling may be helpful for you if you feel confused about your sexual identity. Avoid any treatments that claim to be able to change a person’s sexual orientation, or treatment ideas that see homosexuality as a sickness.

The American Counseling Association adopted a resolution in 1998 stating that it opposes portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation; and supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation, mental health, and appropriate interventions in order to counteract bias that is based on ignorance or unfounded beliefs about same-gender sexual orientation. Further, in April 1999, the ACA Governing Council adopted a position opposing the promotion of “reparative therapy” as a “cure” for individuals who are homosexual.

In addition, ACA’s Code of Ethics states:
Counselors use techniques/procedures/modalities that are grounded in theory and/or have an empirical or scientific foundation. Counselors who do not must define the techniques/procedures as “unproven” or “developing” and explain the potential risks and ethical considerations of using such techniques/procedures and take steps to protect clients from possible harm.

The American Psychiatric Association, in its 2000 position statement on “reparative” therapy, states: Psychotherapeutic modalities to convert or “repair” homosexuality are based on developmental theories whose scientific validity is questionable. Furthermore, anecdotal reports of “cures” are counterbalanced by anecdotal claims of psychological harm. In the last four decades, “reparative” therapists have not produced any rigorous scientific research to substantiate their claims of cure. Until there is such research available, [the American Psychiatric Association] recommends that ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals’ sexual orientation, keeping in mind the medical dictum to first, do no harm. The potential risks of reparative therapy are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient. Many patients who have undergone reparative therapy relate that they were inaccurately told that homosexuals are lonely, unhappy individuals who never achieve acceptance or satisfaction. The possibility that the person might achieve happiness and satisfying interpersonal relationships as a gay man or lesbian is not presented, nor are alternative approaches to dealing with the effects of societal stigmatization discussed. Therefore, the American Psychiatric Association opposes any

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psychiatric treatment, such as reparative or conversion therapy which is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the a priori assumption that the patient should change his/her sexual homosexual orientation.

The **American Psychological Association**, in its 1997 Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, which is also endorsed by the National Association of School Psychologists, states: That the American Psychological Association opposes portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation and supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation and mental health and appropriate interventions in order to counteract bias that is based in ignorance or unfounded beliefs about sexual orientation.

The **American School Counselor Association**, in its position statement on professional school counselors and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning youth, states: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning (LGBTQ) youth often begin to experience self-identification during their pre-adolescent or adolescent years, as do heterosexual youth. These developmental processes are essential cognitive, emotional and social activities, and although they may have an impact on student development and achievement, they are not a sign of illness, mental disorder or emotional problems nor do they necessarily signify sexual activity. . . . It is not the role of the professional school counselor to attempt to change a student’s sexual orientation/gender identity but instead to provide support to LGBTQ students to promote student achievement and personal well-being. . . . Recognizing that sexual orientation is not an illness and does not require treatment, professional school counselors may provide individual student planning or responsive services to LGBTQ students to promote self-acceptance, deal with social acceptance, understand issues related to “coming out,” including issues that families may face when a student goes through this process, and identify appropriate community resources.

The **National Association of Social Workers**, in its policy statement on lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues, states that it endorses policies in both the public and private sectors that ensure nondiscrimination; that are sensitive to the health and mental health needs of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; and that promote an understanding of lesbian, gay, and bisexual cultures. Social stigmatization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people is widespread and is a primary motivating factor in leading some people to seek sexual orientation changes. Sexual orientation conversion therapies assume that homosexual orientation is both pathological and freely chosen. No data demonstrate that reparative or conversion therapies are effective, and in fact they may be harmful. NASW believes social workers have the responsibility to clients to explain the prevailing knowledge concerning sexual orientation and the lack of data reporting positive outcomes with reparative therapy. NASW discourages social workers from providing treatments designed to change sexual orientation or from referring practitioners or programs that claim to do so. NASW reaffirms its stance against reparative therapies and treatments designed to change sexual orientation or to refer practitioners or programs that claim to do so.
Appendix L

Official Church Positions on Homosexuality

ANGLICAN

The mind of the Church has been expressed formally on two occasions. First, on 11 November 1987, the General Synod passed by 403 votes to 8 the following motion at the end of the debate initiated by the Revd Tony Higton:

‘That this Synod affirms that the biblical and traditional teaching on chastity and fidelity in personal relationships in a response to, and expression of, God's love for each one of us, and in particular affirms:

1. that sexual intercourse is an act of total commitment which belongs properly within a permanent married relationship;
2. that fornication and adultery are sins against this ideal, and are to be met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion;
3. that homosexual genital acts also fall short of this ideal, and are likewise to be met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion;
4. that all Christians are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality, including sexual morality; and that holiness of life is particularly required of Christian leaders.’

Secondly, in December 1991, the House of Bishops published a statement Issues in Human Sexuality (CHP 1991). This endorsed the traditional Christian belief that the teaching of the Bible is that heterosexual marriage is the proper context for sexual activity between two people. It went on to declare that what it called ‘homophile’ orientation and activity could not be endorsed by the Church as:

‘... a parallel and alternative form of human sexuality as complete within the terms of the created order as the heterosexual. The convergence of Scripture, Tradition and reasoned reflection on experience, even including the newly sympathetic and perceptive thinking of our own day, makes it impossible for the Church to come with integrity to any other conclusion. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are not equally congruous with the observed order of creation or with the insights of revelation as the Church engages with these in the light of her pastoral ministry.’

It also argued that the conscientious decision of those who enter into such relationships must be respected, and that the Church must ‘not reject those who sincerely believe it is God's call to them’.

Nevertheless, because of the ‘distinctive nature of their calling, status and consecration’, the clergy ‘cannot claim the liberty to enter into sexually active homophile relationships’ (Some Issues 1.3.19-20).
In July 1997 General Synod passed a private member’s motion moved by the Archdeacon of Wandsworth to:

1. commend for discussion in dioceses the House of Bishops’ report *Issues in Human Sexuality* and acknowledge it is not the last word on the subject;
2. in particular, urge deanery synods, clergy chapters and congregations to find time for prayerful study and reflection on the issues addressed by the report.

The 1987 Synod motion and *Issues in Human Sexuality* are the two authoritative Church of England statements on the issue of homosexuality.


The American form of Anglicanism is known as the Episcopal Church which consecrated the first openly gay bishop to the episcopate.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Increasing political and religious advocacy for homosexuality has prompted us to restate our position on this critical issue. We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Since the Bible does speak on the subject of homosexuality, it is imperative that the Church correctly understands and articulates the truth on this important contemporary issue.

This reaffirmation of truth has become all the more urgent because writers sympathetic to the homosexual community have advanced revisionist interpretations of relevant biblical texts that are based upon biased exegesis and mistranslation. In effect, they seek to set aside almost 2,000 years of Christian biblical interpretation and ethical teachings. We believe these efforts are reflective of the conditions described in 2 Timothy 4:3, “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”

It should be noted at the outset that there is absolutely no affirmation of homosexual activity found anywhere in Scripture. Rather, the consistent sexual ideal in the Bible is chastity for those outside a monogamous heterosexual marriage and fidelity for those inside such a marriage. There is also abundant evidence that homosexual behavior, along with illicit heterosexual behavior, is immoral and comes under the judgment of God.

We believe, in the light of biblical revelation, that the growing cultural acceptance of homosexual identity and behavior, male and female, is symptomatic of a broader spiritual disorder that threatens the family, the government, and the church. This paper is a brief exposition of salient biblical teachings on this subject.

I. Homosexual Behavior Is Sin.

Historically, homosexuality often has been defined as an emotional (psychological) or organic (physiological) problem. In recent years, some have lobbied mental health organizations to have homosexuality removed from the list of classified diagnostic pathologies, and many have come to see it as nothing more than a morally neutral personal preference or a naturally occurring aspect of human biological diversity. In making moral judgments, we must remember scriptural warnings against depending on our own reasoning or even personal experience to discern truth (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

A. Homosexual behavior is sin because it is disobedient to scriptural teachings.

When God called Israel to be His people in a distinctive sense, He miraculously delivered them from Egyptian bondage. But God did more. He entered into a covenant relationship with them and provided the Law, predicated on love for God and neighbor, by which they could order their lives as a holy people. That law included specific prohibitions of
homosexual practice, such as that of Leviticus 18:22: “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.” Lest the previous injunction be misunderstood, Leviticus 20:13 provides a restatement, “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable.” “Detestable,” used in both verses, is a strong word that indicates divine displeasure with sin.

The Christian church has historically understood that although the ceremonial provisions of the Old Testament law were no longer in effect after the atoning death of Christ, the New Testament interpretation and restatement of its moral law was. On the subject of homosexuality, both the Old and New Testaments speak with one voice. The moral prohibitions against homosexual behavior in the Old Testament are pointedly repeated in the New Testament.

To those who witnessed on a daily basis the sexual license of imperial Rome, Paul depicted the results that followed in the lives of those who rejected God and “worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. . . . Because of this God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion” (Romans 1:25–27). Paul is referring to both male homosexuality and lesbianism.

In Paul’s day, the city of Corinth was especially notorious for sexual immorality. It was not only a crossroads of commerce, but of all kinds of vice. Because the church was being established in this city, it was important that new Christians come to understand God’s moral order. The record is explicit. Paul wrote, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?” Then he continued, “Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders . . . will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10). In this case, Paul is understood to identify male homosexuals in both active and passive homosexual behavioral roles.

Paul wrote, “Law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals . . . ” (1 Timothy 1:9, 10, NASB).

An unbiased study of these passages makes it clear that Scripture consistently identifies homosexual behavior as sin. Not only do the Scriptures condemn more flagrant examples of homosexual violence and promiscuity, they also provide no support for the popular modern idea that loving and committed homosexual relationships between two long-term partners are morally acceptable. Homosexual activities of every kind are contrary to the moral commandments God has given us.

B. Homosexual behavior is sin because it is contrary to God’s created order for the family and human relationships.
The first chapter of the Bible says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). After God had created the male, He indicated it was not good for him to live alone (Genesis 2:18). So God created a companion for him (Genesis 2:18). It should be noted that the male’s aloneness was not to be remedied by the creation of another male but by the creation of a female. God created two sexes, not just one, and each for the other.

When God brought the woman to Adam, he said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” Scripture then states, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:23, 24).

In creating humankind God established the order of sexuality by which the race was to develop. Psychologically, the relationship is sound. Physically, the relationship is natural. Sociologically, it establishes the foundation for the family. The biblical order for human sexual expression is that of an intimate physical relationship to be shared exclusively within a lifelong marriage covenant—a heterosexual and monogamous relationship.

When people choose to engage in homosexual behavior, they depart from the God-given nature of sexuality. Their unnatural sexual behavior is a sin against God, who established the order of sexuality (Romans 1:27). And the social unit they seek to establish is contrary to the divine instruction for the man to leave father and mother and be “united to his wife” (Genesis 2:24).

In Jesus’ discussion with the Pharisees, He reiterated the order of sexuality that God established in the beginning: “Haven’t you read. . .that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?” (Matthew 19:4, 5). He pointed out that the only alternative to heterosexual marriage is celibacy for the kingdom of heaven’s sake (Matthew 19:10–12).

C. Homosexual behavior is sin that comes under divine judgment.

The name of the ancient city of Sodom has become a synonym for homosexual behavior. While other evils existed in this community, sodomy was prominent. The homosexuals of Sodom were so depraved that they threatened homosexual rape of Lot’s guests. “Bring them [“the men who came to you”] out to us so that we can have sex with them,” Lot was told (Genesis 19:5). The biblical record indicates that the mob became violent and tried to break down the door of Lot’s house. Only divine intervention spared Lot and his household from their evil intentions, and God subsequently destroyed both Sodom and the neighboring city of Gomorrah (Genesis 19:4–11, 24, 25).

God’s punishment of these cities was of such severity that it is used as an illustration of divine judgment by both Peter (2 Peter 2:6) and Jude (7). Jude’s commentary is particularly apt, “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave
themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”

The Book of Judges (19:1–30) records an incident in the ancient Benjamite city of Gibeah that has many similarities to the sin of Sodom. Certain “wicked men of the city” (19:22) sought to force a visiting Levite male into homosexual acts with them. Denied their insistent requests, the attackers finally settled for vicious sexual abuse and gang-rape of the Levite’s concubine that resulted in her death (19:25–30). The other tribes of Israel found the crime so repugnant that when the tribe of Benjamin refused to surrender the offenders, they eventually went to war—decimating the Benjamites (20:1-48).

These are particularly notorious examples of homosexual expression that undoubtedly most homosexual persons today would repudiate. It should be understood that while expressing abhorrence at such rapacious perversion, the biblical writers do not imply that heterosexuals are not capable of sexual atrocities nor that every homosexual is as depraved as the residents of those ancient cities. Nor should modern Christians draw those implications. It is important to note, however, that wherever homosexuality occurs in the biblical record it is an occasion of scandal and judgment. Homosexuality is never viewed in a positive light.

The biblical writers make it clear that practicing homosexuals, along with sexually immoral heterosexuals and all other unrepentant sinners, will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). Paul also described homosexual conduct as one evidence of God’s judgment for humankind’s corporate rebellion against Him (Romans 1:26, 27). Jesus himself was explicit that at the end of the age “the Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:40–42).

II. Homosexual Behavior Is Sin For Which Reconciliation Is Possible.

While Scripture makes it clear homosexual behavior is sin and comes under the judgment of God, it also indicates that those who are guilty of homosexual behavior or any other sin can be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17–21).

In the church at Corinth were former homosexuals who had been delivered from the power of sin by the grace of God. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul listed homosexuals along with immoral heterosexuals as those who cannot inherit the kingdom of God. His grammar implies continuing sexually immoral activity until their conversion. Verse 11 follows with a powerful contrast, “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” They had been homosexuals in orientation and behavior, but now through the power of God’s Spirit their lives were radically transformed.

Scripture makes clear that the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ is unlimited for those who accept it. There is no stain of sin so dark that it cannot be cleansed. John
the Baptist announced, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

The apostle Paul wrote, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The apostle John wrote, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, people, regardless of the nature of their sin, can be made new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). God’s plan of salvation is the same for all. The homosexual who wants to be delivered from the penalty and power of sin must come to God in the same way all sinners must come to God, in the same way all who are now His children have come for deliverance from their sins.

The act of turning to God for salvation includes both repentance and faith. Jesus is both Savior and Lord. He is the one who forgives our sin as we believe in Him and repent. Repentance represents a change of mind in which there is a turning from sin in both attitude and behavior.

Jesus is also the One whose lordship we affirm in holy living. “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

Like the Philippian jailer who asked what he had to do to be saved, those desiring salvation must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30,31)—believe that He can save from the power as well as the penalty of sin. Obedient faith, like repentance, is a condition of salvation.

BAPTIST

American Baptist
A biblical people who submit to the teaching of Scripture that God’s design for sexual intimacy places it within the context of marriage between one man and one woman, and acknowledge that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Biblical teaching.


In spite of the official position of the American Baptist Churches, the organization does allow inclusive churches to join. For example, the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, is a part of the American Baptist Churches.

We Welcome and Affirm People. When W&A Baptists say that we welcome and affirm persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) in our churches, we are welcoming people. We welcome our LGBT sisters and brothers in our pews, we advocate for them when they are victims of discrimination or violence, and we include them in positions of church leadership. We are not, however, welcoming and affirming a particular “lifestyle.” This bears explanation.

In order to understand one another, we must understand one another’s language. There are several terms which are frequently used and often misunderstood in the current debate over homosexuality and the church. Following are some of the terms and concepts discussed by Welcoming & Affirming Baptists about which many people are unclear.

Sexual Orientation: First, there is a distinction between sexual orientation and sexual behavior. W&A Baptists do not affirm all homosexual sexual behavior any more than we would affirm all heterosexual sexual behavior. We do, however, believe that homosexual sexuality when it is lived out in the context of a mutually responsible, monogamous, exclusive, committed relationship can be life-giving, blessed by God, and is not by its very nature outside of the realm of a faithful Christian life. Most W&A Baptists believe that God has created humankind with a variety of sexual orientations and that each individual has the potential to act responsibly within their given sexual orientation. Most of us believe that a person does not have a choice in one’s sexual orientation; we feel that it is not a preference but rather something with which one is born—as intrinsic as eye color or left-handedness. Scientific evidence reinforces this understanding that sexual orientation is most likely biologically determined.

Bisexual: A person who is “bisexual” is someone who feels physical attraction to members of either sex (while a homosexual is attracted to persons of the same sex and a heterosexual to members of the opposite sex). Since a bisexual woman could be attracted to both men and women, she might choose to be in relationship with another woman, or she might choose to be in relationship with a man.

There has been much confusion about the affirmation of bisexual persons by the AWAB.
Some have argued that an affirmation of a bisexual would indicate a belief that it is perfectly OK for someone to act sexually with more than one partner (i.e. with a male and also with a female during the same time period). Thus they conclude that W&A Baptists must therefore be advocating promiscuity. This is incorrect. We do not affirm irresponsible sexual behavior. We do affirm the person. While we believe that some individuals are attracted to both men and women, we would have the same expectations for a bisexual individual as we would for a heterosexual individual—an expectation to act sexually within a mutually responsible, monogamous, exclusive, committed relationship, for example.

Transgender: For many people there is much mystery around the subject of transgender. “Transgender” is an umbrella term for various issues around gender identity. Transgender can be described as being born physically one sex but where the brain is wired emotionally and physiologically to be the opposite gender. Transgender can also be described as being trapped in the body of the wrong gender. There are various other categories that are sometimes grouped under the term transgender.

“Transsexuals” are transgender persons who undergo steps through hormone treatment or surgery to modify the physical characteristics and/or sex assignment they were born with. This can be one of the most difficult steps for someone who knows a transgender person. (For example, to go from having a son to a daughter can be a traumatic experience for parents.) Gender reassignment is not taken lightly by the individual who feels called to correct what some regard to be a physical mistake of birth. A transgender person who takes transsexual steps sees the process as making his/herself whole. A transsexual person may be either homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual. (For example, a person who is born with male genitals but believes herself to be female in gender, has surgery to become female, and enters into a relationship with a male is exhibiting heterosexual sexual behavior, as is her sexual partner.)

“Cross-dressers” are persons who enjoy dressing in clothing usually worn by the opposite sex (the term "transvestite" is also sometimes used). Just like the rest of the population, cross-dressers may be either heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual in sexual orientation. (For example, a male cross-dresser who enjoys wearing women’s clothing and only has sexual relations with his wife is probably heterosexual; indeed the vast majority of male cross-dressers are heterosexual.)

“Intersex” persons are grouped into the transgender category. Intersex persons are born with a physical abnormality that results in individuals who are born with additional chromosomes and/or have genitals of both sexes. In the past children have routinely been medically assigned a physical sex at birth or shortly thereafter. The current trend is to wait until an intersex child exhibits tendencies toward one gender or the other before such a reassignment decision is made.

As you can see, transgender is a very complicated subject and one around which there is much to study and learn. Some congregations that have moved through the process of becoming welcoming and affirming have additional hurdles [sic] to cross with regard to
understanding transgender persons. However, we expect that transgender persons would be welcomed and affirmed in W&A congregations.

Lifestyle. This is a term which is often used by those outside the gay community to describe lesbian and gay sexuality, but one which we feel has little meaning in that context. There is no such thing as a “homosexual lifestyle” any more than there is a “heterosexual lifestyle.” I am a lesbian pastor living in a monogamous relationship with my life-partner. My lifestyle involves such activities as serving my church, cleaning the house (occasionally, anyway), taking the cats to the vet, and making choices about how I treat others, spend my income, and care for the environment. If you are a married heterosexual, your lifestyle probably has much more in common with my lifestyle than it does with the lifestyle of some other heterosexuals (a wealthy executive, a single mom raising her children on welfare in the inner city, a drug addict, or the pope, to name a few examples.)

Ethical Standards. When W&A Baptists consider biblical sexual ethics, we have the same standards for those who are attracted to the same sex that we do for those who are attracted to the opposite sex. We do not require celibacy as a condition of faithfulness. We do not require those who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual to become “straight” if they choose to enter a sexual relationship*, but we do encourage them to be ethical in that relationship. Although we might not be able to reach consensus among our members on some of the specifics of ethical sexual behavior, most would expect sexual expression to be lived out in the context of a committed, monogamous relationship. I think we would all agree among W&A congregations that we do not have a double standard of sexual ethics that holds one set of expectations for heterosexual members and another set of expectations for our lgbt members.

Our W&A congregations affirm persons of different sexual orientations and gender identities and encourage the responsible sexual behavior of all of our members. Where we might differ with those who disagree with us is that we believe that God created humankind with a variety of sexualities and that it is possible to engage in responsible sexual behavior with a person of the same sex. We do not make negative assumptions about one’s sexual ethics when we learn that an individual is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

Since spouses, partners, relationships, and significant life events of lgbt members are not always recognized and celebrated, they can feel like second-class citizens in most churches. Therefore, W&A congregations seek to recognize, nurture, and celebrate the God-given sexuality and the committed relationships of the lgbt members of our families of faith. We accept them as children of God and reach out to them with the redeeming and reconciling love of Jesus Christ. We further encourage our congregations and our denomination to participate in dialogue on issues of gender and sexuality and to develop and encourage a responsible sexual ethic for persons who are heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. We believe that God meets us all wherever we are, regardless of our sexual or gender identity, and calls us each to live out our life in accordance with the teachings and example of Christ.
Same-Sex Marriage: We recognize that churches and individuals hold many positions regarding same-sex marriage, but AWAB fully believes same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. The societal debate going on in the United States is about civil marriage, which is a contract between two people. The civil contract of marriage conveys legal rights related to property ownership, hospital visitation and survivorship; among others. The legal debate about marriage has no legal enforcement on churches, synagogues or mosques. But we believe that bodies of faith should celebrate the commitment of same-couples in marriage, just as they do heterosexual couples.

http://wabaptists.org/who_we_are/beliefs.htm (accessed January 10, 2013)

GARBC

WHEREAS the Scriptures clearly denounce in both the Old and New Testaments homosexual practice as that which defiles and corrupts both the individual and his environment; and

WHEREAS the Apostle Paul describes homosexual practice as a mark of a degenerating society and of man's hostility toward God (Rom. 1:24–28); and

WHEREAS there are increasing pressures in some church groups to ordain homosexuals and allowing them to pastor their churches; and

WHEREAS efforts are underway to place the issue of homosexuality in various equal rights bills in such a way that homosexuality would be listed alongside religion, national origin, and gender in order to preclude discrimination in employment and housing;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting in annual session in Lakeland, Florida, June 26–30, 1978, oppose the sin of homosexual activity in all its forms and that we encourage the churches to stand forthrightly against this evil not only in the leadership, but also in the membership of our congregations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage our churches to have compassion on the practicing homosexuals as ones who need the saving and delivering power of Christ, recognizing that the problem is one of the heart and that repentance from sin and belief and trust in Jesus Christ result in salvation and herein lies the power to overcome any and every sin.

Southern Baptist Convention

WHEREAS, The erosion of moral sanity continues to be a major problem of modern society; and

WHEREAS, Homosexuality has become the chosen lifestyle of many in this moral decline; and

WHEREAS, The Bible is very clear in its teaching that homosexuality is a manifestation of a depraved nature; and

WHEREAS, This deviant behavior has wrought havoc in the lives of millions; and

WHEREAS, Homosexuals are justified and even glorified in our secular media; and

WHEREAS, Homosexual activity is the primary cause of the introduction and spread of AIDS in the United States which has not only affected those of the homosexual community, but also many innocent victims.

Therefore be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, deplore homosexuality as a perversion of divine standards and as a violation of nature and natural affections; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm the biblical injunction which declares homosexuals, like all sinners, can receive forgiveness and victory through personal faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11); and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we maintain that while God loves the homosexual and offers salvation, homosexuality is not a normal lifestyle and is an abomination in the eyes of God (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Timothy 1:8-10).


We affirm God's plan for marriage and sexual intimacy – one man, and one woman, for life. Homosexuality is not a “valid alternative lifestyle.” The Bible condemns it as sin. It is not, however, unforgivable sin. The same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals. They, too, may become new creations in Christ.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

People inquire about our position on those who consider themselves so-called gays and lesbians. My response is that we love them as sons and daughters of God. They may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control. Most people have inclinations of one kind or another at various times. If they do not act upon these inclinations, then they can go forward as do all other members of the Church. If they violate the law of chastity and the moral standards of the Church, then they are subject to the discipline of the Church, just as others are.


The Church opposes homosexual behavior, and we reach out with understanding and respect to people with same-gender attraction. The Church teaches that human sexuality has a purpose in Heavenly Father’s plan. In order for us to be happy and to fulfill that purpose, we are commanded to live the law of chastity. Homosexual behavior is contrary to that purpose and violates God’s commandments.

However, if someone is attracted to people of the same gender and does not act on those feelings, he or she has not sinned. The Church’s standard for morality is the same for everyone, no matter which gender one feels attracted to. Neither the Lord nor His Church can condone any behavior that violates His laws. Again, we condemn the immoral behavior, not the person.

Within the last decades, this church has begun to understand and experience in new ways the need of same-gender-oriented individuals to seek relationships of lifelong companionship and commitment as well as public accountability and legal support for those commitments. At the same time, public debates and deliberations have continued regarding understandings of human sexuality in medicine, social science, and corresponding public policy about same-gender relationships.

We in the ELCA recognize that many of our sisters and brothers in same-gender relationships sincerely desire the support of other Christians for living faithfully in all aspects of their lives, including their sexual fidelity. In response, we have drawn deeply on our Lutheran theological heritage and Scripture. This has led, however, to differing and conscience-bound understandings about the place of such relationships within the Christian community. We have come to various conclusions concerning how to regard lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, including whether and how to recognize publicly their lifelong commitments.

While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues. It opposes all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on sexual orientation. It supports legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services. It has called upon congregations and members to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.

The ELCA recognizes that it has a pastoral responsibility to all children of God. This includes a pastoral responsibility to those who are same-gender in their orientation and to those who are seeking counsel about their sexual self-understanding. All are encouraged to avail themselves of the means of grace and pastoral care.

This church also acknowledges that consensus does not exist concerning how to regard same-gender committed relationships, even after many years of thoughtful, respectful, and faithful study and conversation. We do not have agreement on whether this church should honor these relationships and uplift, shelter, and protect them or on precisely how it is appropriate to do so.

In response, this church draws on the foundational Lutheran understanding that the baptized are called to discern God's love in service to the neighbor. In our Christian freedom, we therefore seek responsible actions that serve others and do so with humility and deep respect for the conscience-bound beliefs of others. We understand that, in this discernment about ethics and church practice, faithful people can and will come to different conclusions about the meaning of Scripture and about what constitutes responsible action. We further believe that this church, on the basis of “the bound conscience,” will include these different understandings and practices within its life as it
seeks to live out its mission and ministry in the world.

This church recognizes that, with conviction and integrity:

- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that same-gender sexual behavior is sinful, contrary to biblical teaching and their understanding of natural law. They believe same-gender sexual behavior carries the grave danger of unrepentant sin. They therefore conclude that the neighbor and the community are best served by calling people in same-gender sexual relationships to repentance for that behavior and to a celibate lifestyle. Such decisions are intended to be accompanied by pastoral response and community support.

- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that homosexuality and even lifelong, monogamous, homosexual relationships reflect a broken world in which some relationships do not pattern themselves after the creation God intended. While they acknowledge that such relationships may be lived out with mutuality and care, they do not believe that the neighbor or community are best served by publicly recognizing such relationships as traditional marriage.

- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that the scriptural witness does not address the context of sexual orientation and committed relationships that we experience today. They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when same-gender relationships are lived out with lifelong and monogamous commitments that are held to the same rigorous standards, sexual ethics, and status as heterosexual marriage. They surround such couples and their lifelong commitments with prayer to live in ways that glorify God, find strength for the challenges that will be faced, and serve others. They believe same-gender couples should avail themselves of social and legal support for themselves, their children, and other dependents and seek the highest legal accountability available for their relationships.

Although at this time this church lacks consensus on this matter, it encourages all people to live out their faith in the local and global community of the baptized with profound respect for the conscience-bound belief of the neighbor. This church calls for mutual respect in relationships and for guidance that seeks the good of each individual and of the community. Regarding our life together as we live with disagreement, the people in this
church will continue to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and mutual respect.


The ELCA voted in 2009 to allow non-celibate homosexuals to become ordained ministers:


**Lutheran Church Missouri Synod**

The Lord teaches us through His Word that homosexuality is a sinful distortion of His desire that one man and one woman live together in marriage as husband and wife. God categorically prohibits homosexuality. Our church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has declared that homosexual behavior is “intrinsically sinful.” Why does our church take this position? We read in God’s Word the following statements about homosexuality: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. … Do not defile yourselves by any of these things” (Lev.18:22, 24). “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination…” (Lev.20:13). “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error”(Rom.1:26–27). “Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts …shall inherit the kingdom of God”(1 Cor.6:9–10). “…The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, …immoral persons, sodomites… and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine”(1 Tim.1:9–10). Through His Word, God teaches us very clearly that homosexuality is a sin. A person who persists in homosexual behavior stands under the condemnation of God’s Word. This is true for anyone who persists in sin without repentance. While this may be an unpopular message, it is the truth taught to us by God in His Word.

PRESBYTERIAN

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

For all conditions of men and women, the renewing grace and changing power of Jesus Christ are freely offered. To those enslaved in the bonds of any sinful practice or thought pattern, Jesus Christ can bring freedom and release.

Today, many seem to be caught in the web of homosexual practices and thought-patterns. In Christian love we declare that God's Word clearly forbids homosexual practice as a sin against God. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ we affirm our obligation to show Christian love and concern for homosexuals, and call them to repentance, cleansing, and deliverance in the saving power of Jesus Christ.


Evangelical Presbyterian Church

One of the issues currently troubling the people of God is the increasing acceptance of homosexual behavior. We of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church believe there is a need to state clearly our understanding of the biblical teaching about homosexual practice. It is also our desire to set forth our position regarding the appropriate response of Christians and the church to this critical issue. As will be developed below, the conviction of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is that 1) homosexuality is a sin; and 2) God forgives repentant sinners.

The Bible: Our Moral Authority

The question of what is moral has become a confused issue in our society. Even some Christian churches and their leaders are granting moral legitimacy to homosexuality. The prevailing ethic in the minds of many has become a “genetically-based morality.” In recent years, various scientific studies have been put forth which claim to prove that homosexuality is a matter of orientation at birth rather than moral choice. If this is the case, it is argued that homosexuality cannot be immoral in that it is part of one’s genetic makeup.

The EPC finds such moral logic to be significantly flawed. First of all, the studies cited to “prove” genetic orientation are tenuous at best. We dispute the premise which would base morality on scientific study. As important as the debate regarding homosexuality is, it is but a single battlefield upon which a much larger question is being contested: How are we to determine what is right and wrong? While we affirm scientific study, we assert that it is an illegitimate form of moral reasoning to suggest that one can reason from what “is” to what “ought to be.” History has proved that science makes for poor ethics. Human frailty being what it is, it is all too easy to reinterpret scientific findings in such a way as to justify our moral (or immoral) desires.
The EPC asserts that God’s law alone as revealed in the holy Scriptures is to be our basis for morality. We reject attempts to base morality on scientific study. The Bible teaches that since the fall of man, mankind has been born with a sinful nature. The Bible teaches that greed, lust, envy strife, etc., are characteristic of fallen man, and in that sense are our orientation from birth. But while they may be our natural orientation, they are still sin. Simply put, the Old and New Testaments consistently condemn homosexual practice and repeatedly affirm that God forgives the repentant sinner.

The Bible: What It Teaches
We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the infallible Word of God, the final authority on all issues to which it speaks. Therefore sexual attitudes and behaviors are to be judged in the light of the Bible, rather than the Bible being reinterpreted, modified or overturned by current cultural trends in thought and behavior.

Men and Women in the Image of God
Today we see the folly of modern man attempting to deal with human sexuality without a true understanding of who he is. The result is often a confused and fragmented view of the nature of man and woman. Historically, Reformed theologians have accurately reflected the biblical position that man’s nature is not self-enclosed, but must be understood in terms of his relationship to God. Man as created in the image of God is affirmed in Genesis 1:27 which states, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them.”

An understanding of biblical sexuality begins with the opening chapters of Genesis, which introduce the prototype family, Adam and Eve, God’s perfect design for marriage and sexual expression. How beautifully simple and yet profoundly revealing is Adam’s own description of Eve when God brought her into Adam’s presence: “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man.’” (Genesis 2:23)

God’s commentary follows, spelling out the sanctity and intimacy of marriage, and the bonding of male and female in physical oneness: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) This statement is reaffirmed by Jesus (Matthew 19:5) and by Paul (Ephesians 5:31).

Here we find the very foundation of human sexuality and discover the distinctives that give man and woman their God-ordained sexual identities. In the benediction that follows, we have not only God’s provisions for the complementary relationship of male and female, but also His plan for the propagation of the human race: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it…”’ (Genesis 1:28) When God saw that Adam was alone and needed something beyond all the wonders of the beautiful animal creation, He observed, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Genesis 2:18) The result was woman, not another male companion, a woman with her likeness to man but with all her beautiful distinctiveness.
Therefore, homosexual practice is a distortion of the image of God as it is still reflected in fallen man, and a perversion of the sexual relationship as God intended it to be.

**Homosexual Behavior in the Old Testament**

The Old Testament views homosexual behavior as a serious sin along with other perversions of human sexuality. For example, Leviticus 20:13 states: “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.” Genesis 19:4-18 recounts the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities given over to homosexual lust and murderous hostility.

In recent years, an attempt has been made to minimize the charges that homosexuality was the cause of God’s judgment on those cities. Some commentators contend that the word yadah rendered “know” in Genesis 19:5 and 8, is used more frequently to mean “to be aware of.” This view states that here we have a group of citizens who in a brash manner tried to “get acquainted with” Lot’s guests. Such an interpretation is absurd in the face of Lot’s pleas to the mob, begging them, “Don’t do this wicked thing” (Genesis 19:7) and his efforts to protect his angelic guests by offering instead his virgin daughters, “who have never slept with a man…” to do with as they pleased (Genesis 19:8). To confuse such activity with a desire to be “hospitable” is inexcusable.

**Homosexual Behavior in the New Testament**

Jesus did not refer directly to homosexuality. However, our Lord made clear that He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. He not only fulfilled it, He strengthened it. For example, it was not enough to refrain from the act of adultery. Jesus declared that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27,28). He authoritatively interpreted the Mosaic Law, rather than dismissed it, as some exegetes contend. Thus Jesus affirmed the continuing validity of the Old Testament moral law, including prohibitions against homosexual behavior.

The Pauline epistles include specific statements which speak directly to the issue: Romans 1:26ff, I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:10. The Roman’s passage is the most detailed. Paul begins with the phrase, “Because of this…” which refers back to the previous verses 24 and 25. These verses trace immorality and self-destructive behavior, which is described as having exchanged God’s truth for falsehood (shades of Satan in the Garden) and having turned to idolatry which is the worshiping and serving of the creature rather than the Creator.

“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” (Romans 1:26, 27)

Some Bible interpreters have sought to bypass the clear meaning of Paul’s words. Some
contend that for those engaged in homosexual practice, such practice can be considered “natural” and therefore pleasing to God. Using the same rationale, heterosexual persons could say, “It’s ‘natural’ for me to be promiscuous; therefore, I feel that in God’s eyes, promiscuity is approved for me.” God rejects this kind of rationalization. Romans 1:26 points back to the relations God established at the dawn of human history, that of husband and wife being one flesh.

In I Corinthians 6, Paul warns, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (I Corinthians 6:9-11)

Redemption from Homosexual Behavior
The spiritual impact of homosexual practice is no different from any other sin. All sin is judged by Almighty God. However, as from all sin, redemption from homosexuality is mercifully offered in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. The word of hope that the church presents is that through the death and resurrection of Christ, God offers to sinners both the forgiveness of sin and the power to live a life pleasing to Him (Romans 8:1-4).

The attitude of Jesus is that of one who consistently loved and embraced the sinner without condoning the sin. John 8 recounts our Lord’s gentle response to the woman caught in the act of adultery. He affirmed her value as a person without approving her behavior. In mercy He forgave her and at the same moment told her, “Go and sin no more.” Mercy is no less available to the one engaged in homosexual practice.

Summary of the Biblical Teaching
The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexual behavior, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment. However, God’s grace offers love, forgiveness, hope and a new life. The necessary response to this offer is a true repentance, including turning from homosexual behavior, and commitment to a faithful obedience to the Lord according to His Word.

CONCLUSION
In light of the biblical witness, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church concludes:

1. The Bible clearly states that homosexual behavior is a sin.
2. God forgives repentant sinners. As Christians who are ourselves sinners redeemed by the grace of God, we must reach out to those persons who are struggling with homosexuality, offering them the word of hope that is the Gospel to the end that they may experience true wholeness through the freeing, renewing grace of God in Jesus Christ. “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

(See Appendix: “Guidelines for Christian Ministry to Homosexuals.”)
3. Unrepentant homosexual behavior is incompatible with the confession of Jesus as Lord, which is required of members of the EPC.
4. Unrepentant homosexual behavior is incompatible with the ordination vows for the offices of Deacon, Ruling Elder and Teaching Elder.


**Presbyterian Church USA**

Approved ordination of homosexual clergy:


Homosexual persons who sincerely make a profession of their faith and obedience should not be excluded from membership.

While compassion, patience, and loving support should be shown to all those who struggle with same-sex desires, the General Synod reaffirms our official position that homosexual behavior is a sin according to the Holy Scriptures, therefore any person, congregation, or assembly which advocates homosexual behavior or provides leadership for a service of same-sex marriage or a similar celebration has committed a disciplinable offense; and further,

that the General Synod Council shall oversee the creation of an eight member committee made up of representatives appointed by each of the regional synods to pray and work together to present a way forward for our denomination given the disagreement in our body relative to homosexuality. The purpose of the committee is not to revisit our stated position, but shall operate with the understanding expressed earlier in this recommendation and issue a report with practical recommendations to the General Synod of 2013.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. 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.

http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/p3s2c2a6.htm#2357 (accessed January 10, 2013)
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that every human being is valuable in the sight of God, and we seek to minister to all men and women in the spirit of Jesus. We also believe that by God's grace and through the encouragement of the community of faith, an individual may live in harmony with the principles of God's Word.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman. This was the design established by God at creation. The Scriptures declare: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24, NIV). Throughout Scripture this heterosexual pattern is affirmed. The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden (Lev. 20:7-21; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Jesus Christ reaffirmed the divine creation intent: “Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?” So they are no longer two, but one” (Matt. 19:4-6, NIV). For these reasons Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships.

Seventh-day Adventists endeavor to follow the instruction and example of Jesus. He affirmed the dignity of all human beings and reached out compassionately to persons and families suffering the consequences of sin. He offered caring ministry and words of solace to struggling people, while differentiating His love for sinners from His clear teaching about sinful practices.

WHEREAS the Bible affirms and celebrates human expressions of love and partnership, calling us to live out fully that gift of God in responsible, faithful, committed relationships that recognize and respect the image of God in all people; and

WHEREAS the life and example of Jesus of Nazareth provides a model of radically inclusive love and abundant welcome for all; and

WHEREAS we proclaim ourselves to be listening to the voice of a Still Speaking God at that [sic] at all times in human history there is always yet more light and truth to break forth from God’s holy word; and

WHEREAS many UCC pastors and congregations have held commitment services for gay and lesbian couples for some time, consistent with the call to loving, long-term committed relationships and to nurture family life; and

WHEREAS recognition of marriage carries with it significant access to institutional support, rights and benefits; and

WHEREAS children of families headed by same-gender couples should receive all legal rights and protections; and

WHEREAS legislation to ban recognition of same-gender marriages further undermine the civil liberties of gay and lesbian couples and contributes to a climate of misunderstanding and polarization, increasing hostility against gays and lesbians; and

WHEREAS a Constitutional Amendment has been introduced to this Congress to limit marriage to “only the union of a man and a woman”; and

WHEREAS equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender is an issue deserving of serious, faithful discussion by people of faith, taking into consideration the long, complex history of marriage and family life, layered as it is with cultural practices, economic realities, political dynamics, religious history and biblical interpretation; and

WHEREAS the Tenth General Synod pronounced that all person are entitled to full civil liberties and equal protection under the law without discrimination related to sexual preference; and

WHEREAS the Eleventh General Synod urged that States should legislatively recognize that traditional marriage is not the only stable living unit entitled to legal protection; and

WHEREAS the Nineteenth General Synod called on the church for greater leadership to end discrimination against gays and lesbians; and
WHEREAS the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ in April, 2004 called the church to action and dialogue on marriage;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender and declares that the government should not interfere with couples regardless of gender who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities and commitment of legally recognized marriage; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms equal access to the basic rights, institutional protections and quality of life conferred by the recognition of marriage; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fifth General Synod calls for an end to rhetoric that fuels hostility, misunderstanding, fear and hatred expressed toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Officers of the United Church of Christ are called upon to communicate this resolution to local, state and national legislators, urging them to support equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender.

In recognition that these resolutions may not reflect the views or current understanding of all bodies, and acknowledging the pain and struggle their passage will engender within the gathered church, the General Synod encourages the following:

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fifth General Synod calls upon all settings of the United Church of Christ to engage in serious, respectful, and prayerful discussion of the covenantal relationship of marriage and equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender, using the “God is still speaking, about Marriage” study and discussion guide produced by Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ (available online at UCC.org); and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fifth General Synod calls upon congregations, after prayerful biblical, theological, and historical study, to consider adopting Wedding Policies that do not discriminate against couples based on gender; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fifth General Synod urges the congregations and individuals of the United Church of Christ to prayerfully consider and support local, state and national legislation to grant equal marriage rights to couples regardless of gender, and to work against legislation, including constitutional amendments, which denies civil marriage rights to couples based on gender.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children.

All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self.

The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Appendix M

Sermon Resource Kit
Sermon 1 Outline

I. Introduction

II. Perspectives
   A. Gay Presuppositions
   B. Historic Christian Presuppositions

III. Myths
   A. 10% of the Population is Gay
   B. There is a Gay Gene
   C. Change is Not Possible

IV. The Christian Response
Sermon 1: Perspectives & Myths

I. Introduction

There’s no question that a topic like this draws interest from both sides of the debate and that’s okay. In fact, the reason why it is so important to have a discussion like this is not only to discover what God has to say on the topic, but also because there has been so little in the way of meaningful dialogue. Honestly, some Christians, though perhaps well intentioned, have offered only harsh judgment—and really—has anyone ever tried to have an honest conversation with someone about something when that person has already condemned them? How does that make a person feel? How productive does that conversation end up being? To complicate things, the issue of identity is so wrapped up within sexuality that it can be very difficult to have an honest conversation with a homosexual without them feeling as if they are being attacked. This is different than almost any other issue. If someone robs a bank and a person disagrees with their decision, no one takes them to task on it. However, if a person tells a gay person that they disagree with their behavior then it is often taken as an offense. A Christian that says they love the person but not the sin often is not constructive in these kinds of scenarios. For that reason, as each sermon unfolds, it will be critically important that each ends with some consideration toward a response.

II. Perspectives

To begin, it should be understood that people usually approach the issue of homosexuality from one of two very different presuppositions. Dictionary.com defines the term as “to suppose or assume beforehand; take for granted in advance.” When it comes to any hot-button issue, it is important to recognize that both sides come to the table with a set of presuppositions which leads them through a rational train of thought resulting in a point of view. Often arguments and debates are focused solely upon the opposing perspectives and they work their way backwards through the finer points without ever fully disclosing the initial presupposition from which each side is working. Though the media has a tendency to report only the most scandalous representations of each side, the fact of the matter is there is rationale behind each position. Just as one position makes perfectly logical sense to some, the opposing position makes perfectly, logical sense to others. For example, from the gay perspective, homosexuality is an alternative sexual orientation. It has nothing to do with morals; it is just different than how society has traditionally defined the norm. Their presuppositions could be outlined in this fashion:

A. Gay Presuppositions

1. Being gay is not a choice. Homosexuality is an inborn phenomenon.

2. Since homosexuality is inborn then it must be tied to identity. Consequently, homosexuality is not about what a person does, it actually defines who they are.
3. Since homosexuality is inborn either through genetics or the creation of God, then it should be viewed as normal and natural.

4. Since homosexuality is inborn and not the result of choice, then it should be protected like other minorities are protected.

Christians who hold to a traditional interpretation of Scripture also have presuppositions they bring to the debate. Their view contends that homosexuality is an immoral sexual act condemned by God and their flow of rationale is outlined this way:

**B. Historic Christian Presuppositions**

1. Though there may be many influences, being gay is an individual choice.

2. Since homosexuality is a choice it is not so much about identity but more about behavior.

3. The choice of homosexuality is not natural and goes directly against God’s intended design and order. Thus it should not simply be categorized as an alternative lifestyle but rather be seen as an act of rebellion.

4. Since homosexuality is a choice, it should not become a civil rights issue but should remain a moral one.

Meaningful dialogue is only possible when mutual understanding can be reached. It will not always produce agreement but it should bring a level of understanding. Take a look again at the list that is opposite of your current view. Read through the points again with an eye toward understanding the other person’s perspective. Hopefully this will produce a little less frustration because an understanding is gained in how a person logically moves from Point A to Point B.

**III. Myths**

There is likely a desire here today to get right into what the Bible has to say but an important foundation must first be established. Husbands and wives understand how difficult it is to have a productive conversation after they have had an argument if the issue remains unresolved. So today some of the junk needs to get pushed out of the way so when Bibles are opened up, right attitudes and right perspectives are in place so God can be heard. With that in mind, the first issue that needs to be addressed is in regard to some popular myths. Many will be familiar with every single one of these myths and for some, agreement will be found simply because they don’t know otherwise. What may be surprising to discover, however, is that science does not always coincide with popular belief.
A. Myth 1: 10% of the Population is Gay

How many have heard that 10% of the population is gay? Well, guess what? This is a myth! Even though this percentage was not based upon an accurate study, it is widely accepted as fact and has even made its way into textbooks. The ten percent myth came out of a study conducted by Alfred Kinsey in 1948 and published as Sexual Behavior in the Human Male. After recording the sexual histories of 5,300 American men, Kinsey found that “10 percent of the males are more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55.”\(^1\) This was the quote many people took out of context. Not only did Kinsey not claim that ten percent of the population was homosexual but those who ran with this quote also did not include additional pertinent information. For example, Judith Reisman found that twenty-five percent of the men Kinsey surveyed were convicted criminals and known sex offenders.\(^2\) Naturally, this segment of the survey would have a much higher homosexuality rate than the general population. Furthermore, only four percent of those who participated in the study actually maintained a homosexual lifestyle over the course of a lifetime.\(^3\) In other words, many of these men would not have necessarily said they had been homosexual for all of their lives, nor were they thinking they would be in the future. Yet pro-gay advocates extrapolated what they wanted from this study and used it to promote a false number of homosexuals in order to convince the world of a wider acceptance than was actually based in fact.

So what is accurate? The actual number of homosexuals is difficult to identify, in part because not every gay person is willing to identify themselves, and in part because people do not always distinguish between orientation and behavior. Furthermore, the percentage of homosexuals varies widely between cities, suburbs, and the country. Both Newsweek and Time reported on a study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute which surveyed 3,321 American men in their twenties and thirties about their sexuality. Only 2.3% of respondents indicated any homosexual contact in the last ten years, and only half of those, or just over 1% said they were exclusively gay in that period.\(^4\) According to the Family Research Council, a group of thirty-one of the leading homosexual rights groups filed a brief in the 2003 Lawrence v. Texas Supreme Court case. At that time, they admitted that “the most widely accepted study of sexual practices in the United States is the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS).”\(^5\) However, the NHSLS found that only 2.8% of the male population and only 1.4% of the female population identified


\(^3\) Kinsey, Sexual Behavior, 650-651.


themselves as being gay, lesbian, or bisexual.⁶ Several studies are now showing their age but recent research conducted and reported by the nationally recognized Gallup organization further substantiates the numbers. They posed the following question to 121,290 individuals: “Do you, personally, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?” The result is that 3.4% answered “yes,” 92.2% replied “no,” and 4.4% either did not know or refused to answer. “This is the largest single study of the distribution of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population in the U.S. on record” so it contributes significantly to a fair estimate.⁷ Based upon the number of studies that have been conducted, it would be fair to estimate the homosexual population at roughly 2%-5%.⁸

B. Myth 2: There is a Gay Gene

A second very common myth is that there is a gay gene—meaning that homosexuality is the result of biology—that it is genetically inborn. As has already been mentioned, this is often the jumping off point for the logical reasoning that if a person is born a homosexual then there is no corresponding responsibility for one’s actions. However, the argument itself is flawed. Even if homosexuality could be linked to genetics, that does not automatically mean sexual behavior can be morally justified. People are responsible for their behavior regardless of their genetic construction. If an alcoholic kills a person while driving drunk, they are still held accountable even if they have a family history of alcoholism because behavior is key. Likewise, a killer may be spared the death penalty when insanity is offered as a plea but he is still held accountable for his actions regardless of his mental state. Being predisposed or influenced by some outside factor, biological or otherwise, still does not determine behavior and it certainly does not remove accountability. If that were the case then any sin could be justified on the grounds that God created it—having an affair could be warranted because God created people with sexual desires. The logic of this argument simply does not stand up against scrutiny.

As for the actual science behind the gay gene theory, it too is weak. One such study was conducted by Simon LeVay in 1991 in which case he reported on the hypothalamus structure of forty-one men. His findings state that this region of the brain was larger in heterosexual males and females than it was in the homosexual males. Thus he deduced that the structuring “is dimorphic with sexual orientation, at least in men, and suggests

⁶ Ibid.


⁸ In spite of the research, it is still quite common for authors to use the ten percent statistic. A 2011 book marketed to teens states: “Numerous studies and polls have been done over the years, but the results have varied. Accuracy can depend on what questions are asked, how safe the respondents feel in answering them, whether the people answering the questions are out or being honest, and how one even defines queer. Most researchers these days use the general estimate of 10 percent, but some say that, because of the above issues with the studies, it could be as high as 20 percent.” Kathy Belge and Marke Bieschke, Queer: The Ultimate LGBT Guide for Teens (San Francisco: Zest, 2011), 27.
that sexual orientation has a biological substrate.”9 However, there were numerous issues which brought into question the veracity of this study including the small number of participants and the failure to consider how outside factors, such as medication and behavior, affect the size of the hypothalamus. Ironically, even LeVay offers this disclaimer: “Time and time again I have been described as someone who ‘proved that homosexuality is genetic’ or some such thing. I did not.”10 Numerous other studies11 have been conducted over the years including animal models, the study of twins, and chromosome research. However, in spite of the fact that many people believe homosexuality to be genetically inborn, there is no conclusive research available today to support such a claim.

Even though the current scientific research does not conclusively support a gay gene, that does not mean there is not one and Christians should be careful about making blanket assumptions about research that could still prove otherwise. Mark Yarhouse, a professor and Christian Psychologist, makes a legitimate point in this regard: “My reading of the research is that it isn’t a question of whether biology plays a role; the question is how biology plays a role?” He goes on to explain: “Biology plays an important role in so much of human experience, so it would be strange to act as though homosexuality was the one area that biology played no role whatsoever.”12 The point is that this is still very much a work in progress and Christians should support unbiased scientific endeavors so they can be armed with accurate information. Regardless of outcomes, behavior should still be viewed as a separate component. This is key to working through the debate in a logical and rational manner.

There is something else to consider with this point: In spite of the fact that there is no conclusive evidence homosexuality is genetically inborn, many homosexuals still would not say it was their choice. As previously noted, behavior is a choice but the question about whether same-sex orientation (SSO) is a choice still remains. Even if a gay gene is never discovered, it is hard to argue with the observation that some people seem to have a predisposition for homosexuality from birth. Maroon 5’s lead singer Adam Levine says this about his brother: “I can single-handedly dispel any ideas that sexuality is acquired. Trust me, you’re born with it. My brother is gay, and we knew when he was two. We all

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11 The information for the preceding summaries came from a number of sources which also report on additional findings and provide further evidence for the stated conclusions. These include the following: Mark Christopher, Same-sex Marriage: Is it Really the Same? (Leominster: DayOne, 2009); Joe Dallas, The Gay Gospel: How Pro-Gay Advocates Misread the Bible (Eugene: Harvest House, 2007); Jeffrey Satinover, Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); Mark A. Yarhouse, Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2010).

12 Yarhouse, Homosexuality and the Christian, 70.
knew.”

This statement is representative of many homosexuals who are attempting to reconcile the way they feel even before any type of sexual behavior comes into play. Unfortunately culture encourages children to pursue those feelings further, which inevitably leads to sinful behavior.

A favorite view of Christians has been to point to the breakdown of the family unit as the major influence which leads to homosexuality. Andrew Comiskey, director and founder of Desert Stream Ministries, writes, “In joining with the same-sex erotically, the needy child within seeks in adult form the affirmation and emotional intimacy from the same-sex that was never properly attained in childhood. Gay sex wasn’t really the motivating factor in their homosexual pursuits. Meeting an emotional need as opposed to an erotic one was the true goal.” And while the breakdown of the family certainly could be a contributing factor, this argument is not consistent because many homosexuals do in fact come from loving, two parent homes, and many heterosexuals come from highly dysfunctional homes yet do not develop homosexual tendencies.

More and more the consensus seems to be that there are multiple factors that cause homosexuality. Simon LeVay states: “At this point, the most widely held opinion is that multiple factors play a role.” This can include biological, environmental, societal, and familial influences—all of which contribute in some way. What needs to be understood is that while a gay gene cannot be supported, it does appear that in many cases children do not choose their inclination toward homosexuality but as they mature they do choose whether or not to act on those impulses.

C. Myth 3: Change is Not Possible

To many Christians the question of change is very straightforward. However, when it comes to the subject of homosexuality, there are several facets that need to be addressed. The first has to do with what specifically needs to be changed and the second has to do with how change can actually take place. From the gay perspective, homosexuality should be embraced, not changed, since it is just a part of a person’s identity. However, the true impetus for change is that homosexuality represents an unnatural response to God’s created order.

What actually needs to be changed is an important question. For most Christians the ideal would be that a homosexual completely change into a heterosexual. However, from a

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14 Ibid. In the same interview, Adam Levine states: “You’ve just gotta embrace it from the beginning. That’s the only way to deal with it as a family.”


scientific perspective this may not be a realistic expectation. Andrew Comiskey states of two friends: “Neither can choose to have homosexual feelings any more than heterosexuals can deny their impulse for the opposite sex.”\textsuperscript{17} Jack Rogers adds: “When all of the studies and the testimony have been sifted, it is apparent that when people claim that lesbian and gay people can change, they are almost always referring to behavior and not orientation.”\textsuperscript{18} While the Bible clearly teaches that homosexual behavior is sinful, the moral neutrality of sexual orientation is another matter. Thomas Schmidt makes this distinction: “It is impossible, and probably meaningless, to assign a degree of personal choice to a sexual desire. It is not helpful, therefore, to talk about the sinfulness of an orientation in the same way that we talk about the sinfulness of an action.”\textsuperscript{19} Schmidt’s point is that orientation must be placed into a different category than behavior because the latter is controllable but the former is not. This discussion about morality and what is or is not a choice can be confusing because of an overlap in terminology. While behavior and orientation can be distinguished easily enough, orientation is in need of further description and explanation. The best way to do this is to add an additional category: same-sex attraction (SSA). Thus the three terms can be viewed as three levels moving from SSA to SSO (same-sex orientation) to SSB (same-sex behavior). SSA can be defined as sexual desire and is the one component of the three that is not a choice. SSO is embracing a gay identity and is a choice as much as SSB would be.

Even though people may not be able to control their SSA, that does not make it morally neutral. All three unnaturally go against God’s design and are therefore condemned in Scripture. What Christ said in Matthew 5:48 regarding heterosexual desires is certainly relevant to the homosexual as well: “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” When it comes to God’s recognition of sin in a person’s life, it is not limited to behavior—even the thoughts of a man are able to condemn him. All men, whether homosexual or heterosexual, are spiritually depraved and have a propensity for evil. So a case can certainly be made from Scripture that the universal nature and orientation of mankind is inclined toward sin (Rom. 7:5, 23; 8:7; Gal. 5:17, 19; Eph. 2:3; 4:18-19; Prov. 4:23, 17:20; Titus 1:15; Col. 1:21; James 1:14-15; Mt. 15:19). It is not just immoral acts that condemn a person, it is also the fleshly desires that God forbids. The difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality however, is that heterosexual desires are God-given and meant to be fulfilled within the framework of marriage. Heterosexual desires become sinful when they move outside of God’s established boundaries but homosexual desires are immoral in any context. It is true that different people have different propensities toward different types of sin but it is up to each individual to correct their wrong thinking and consequential behavior. Therefore the three components of homosexuality can be viewed in this way:

\textsuperscript{17} Andrew Comiskey, \textit{Pursuing Sexual Wholeness} (Lake Mary: Creation House, 1989), 44.

\textsuperscript{18} Jack Rogers, \textit{Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church} (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 79.

\textsuperscript{19} Thomas E. Schmidt, \textit{Straight & Narrow?: Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate} (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 164.
While it may seem unfair to say that SSA is a sin even though it is not by choice, the same principle applies to heterosexuals. A male heterosexual’s attraction to a married woman is also considered sinful. He cannot necessarily control whether or not he is attracted to that particular married woman but he can choose not to feed those sinful desires or to act on those impulses.

When it comes to any sexually based behavior, change is difficult. The advice to “pray the gay away” is almost ludicrous in light of the uphill battle a homosexual is likely to face. Yarhouse comments: “The church can also be an obstacle if it pushes a simplistic expectation of change, by which I mean the expectation of a complete and categorical switch from homosexuality to heterosexuality as though it were the direct result of putting forth enough effort or having sufficient faith.” However, change is possible and Paul makes this point in 1 Corinthians 6:11, not only in regard to other sins but also in reference specifically to homosexuality: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” This is the hope for all who have found themselves trapped in a pattern of sexual sin—that genuine change is possible through the power of Jesus Christ.

There is not enough time today to work through the numerous studies that demonstrate the possibility and extent of change, but it is important to point out that God offers this hope. Culture says change isn’t possible and shouldn’t be expected. This is a myth. Scripture says change is possible and legions of people support this by their own life experience.

IV. The Christian Response

A lot has been covered today but it is important to take a moment to discuss some proper responses. Why do Christians often find themselves uncomfortable with the idea of engaging in conversation with someone who calls themselves gay? It shouldn’t any more than a conversation with a neighbor or co-worker who is also engaging in some type of sexual sin. Obviously homosexuality is not the unpardonable sin or Paul would not have said, “And such were some of you.” Believers need to make sure they are not coming across with an “us vs. them” kind of attitude. Homosexuals are not the enemy—they are real people, who God loves. Will believers see them through God’s eyes? Will believers extend love—genuine love—to them?

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Homosexuality

Part 1: Perspectives & Myths

Introduction

- A Complicated Conversation
  - The failure of Christians
  - The problem of loving the person but not the sin
Perspectives

Gay Presuppositions
- Being gay is not a choice
- Since homosexuality is inborn then it must be tied to identity
- Since homosexuality is inborn either through genetics or the creation of God, then it should be viewed as normal and natural
- Since homosexuality is inborn and not the result of choice, then it should be protected like other minorities

Perspectives

Historic Christian Presuppositions
- Being gay is an individual choice
- Since homosexuality is a choice it is not so much about identity but more about behavior
- The choice of homosexuality is not natural and goes directly against God’s intended design and order
- Since homosexuality is a choice, it should not become a civil rights issue but should remain a moral one
Perspectives

Gay Presuppositions
- Being gay is not a choice
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- The choice of homosexuality is not natural and goes directly against God’s intended design and order
- Since homosexuality is a choice, it should not become a civil rights issue but should remain a moral one

Myths

Myth #1: 10% of the Population is Gay
- Alfred Kinsey
- *Newsweek* and *Time*: 2.3%
- NHSLS: 2.8% male & 1.4% female
- Gallup: 3.4%
Myths

Myth #2: There Is a Gay Gene
  o The relationship to behavior
    o Simon LeVay: “I have been described as someone who proved that homosexuality is genetic or some such thing, I did not.”
    o Mark Yarhouse: “Biology plays an important role in so much of human experience, so it would be strange to act as though homosexuality was the one area that biology played no role whatsoever.”
    o While behavior may be a choice, attraction and orientation may not be.
    o Andrew Comiskey: “In joining with the same-sex erotically, the needy child within seeks in adult form the affirmation and emotional intimacy from the same-sex that was never properly attained in childhood. Gay sex wasn’t really the motivating factor in their homosexual pursuits. Meeting an emotional need as opposed to an erotic one was the true goal.”

Myth #3: Change is Not Possible
  o What needs to be changed?
    • Changing into a heterosexual is not realistic
    • Homosexuals cannot choose their attractions any more than heterosexuals can
    • Attraction and desire are not morally neutral
  o How can change take place?
    • 1 Corinthians 6:11
The Christian Response

Does it Make You Uncomfortable to Engage in Conversation with Someone Who Calls Themselves Gay?

- Don’t have an “us vs. them” kind of attitude
- Homosexuals are not the enemy
- See them through God’s eyes
- Extend genuine love
Sermon 2 Outline

I. Introduction

II. The Old Testament Record

A. Genesis

1. Background Summary

2. The Inhospitality View

3. The Author’s Intent Behind Yada

4. Related Passages (Ez. 16: 48–49, 2 Pt. 2:6–7, Jude 7)

B. Leviticus

1. The Explicitness of the Passage

2. Analysis of Alternative Viewpoints

3. The Difference Between Moral Law and Ceremonial Law

III. The Christian Response
Sermon 2: The Old Testament Record

I. Introduction

Though homosexuality is mentioned in several places throughout Scripture, there are two main Old Testament passages people refer to and one of those is the most common reference. Probably most everyone here already knows what passage is being referred to—the account of Sodom & Gomorrah. It should be pointed out, however, that the creation account in Genesis is also relevant to the discussion. Even though Genesis does not address homosexuality, it does establish heterosexuality as normative. Ironically, both Jesus and the Apostle Paul make the same point by quoting Genesis.

II. The Old Testament Record

A. Genesis

1. Background Summary

Without question, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is the most cited passage in regard to homosexuality. Traditionally the belief has been held that God destroyed these cities because of the prevalence of homosexuality—God’s judgment upon evil. However, two main objections are commonly cited as reasoning to form an alternative conclusion. The first is that the sin of homosexuality is never specifically identified in the text. The second is that the interpretation of a key word can radically change the connotations derived from the context.

The context of the story begins in Genesis 13 with the parting of ways between Abram and Lot.¹

The land could not support the flocks of both so Lot chooses to move east toward the Jordan Valley. Then in verse 13, the author inserts a short comment before moving on with the narrative: “Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.” This is an important verse in the overall context, because pro-gay revisionists have attempted to say that Genesis 19 has nothing to do with wickedness. While it is true that no sin is specifically identified, this verse clearly establishes the moral climate of the city.

In Genesis 18, Abram is visited by two angels and the Lord at which time it is revealed to him that judgment will be brought against the cities: “Then the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know’” (Gen. 18:20-21). This action prompts Abram to plead for the saving of these cities if as few as ten righteous men can be found. For the second time, the utter wickedness of the cities is presented. Again, no specific sin is identified but apparently things are so bad that not even a handful of righteous men can be recognized.

¹ Genesis 11:27 establishes Lot as Abram’s nephew.
The story continues in Genesis 19 with the two angels coming into the city of Sodom to visit Lot. He apparently recognizes them as angels because he bows down to them and refers to them as lords. Regardless, Lot offers them housing with the hope that they will be on their way early the next morning. However, they counter by saying they will just stay in the town square. This prompts Lot to strongly urge them to stay with him which leads the reader to the conclusion that he was concerned for their safety. The angels comply and follow Lot to his house.

Verse four reveals that the angels are still not out of harm’s way: “Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter” (NASB). It has previously been established that the entire city is wicked. Additionally, it is apparent Lot was concerned for the safety of his visitors. Now a large group of men that is representative of the entire city, “young and old” and “from every quarter,” surrounds the house. So the language up to this point clearly confirms an evil intent on the part of the city’s men.

2. The Inhospitality View

All of this leads to verse five which provides the crux of the argument: “And they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.’” “That we may know them” is the phrase in question. The NASB translates this as “have relations with them;” the New International Version (NIV) states “so that we can have sex with them;” the New King James (NKJV) conveys, “that we may know them carnally.” However, a popular interpretation of this phrase by pro-gay advocates is “to get acquainted with” in the sense of hospitality. This may seem counterintuitive when the context has been established but it is the most accepted interpretation in pro-gay theology. This stems from the fact that homosexuality has not been explicitly identified and because of the variant interpretations of the word “know.”

The inhospitality view was created by Derrick Sherwin Bailey and published in 1975 under the title *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*. Though other authors have expanded on the interpretation over the years, Bailey remains the primary source for this analysis. His contention is that “since *yada* commonly means ‘get acquainted with’, the demand ‘to know’ the visitors whom Lot entertained may well have implied some serious breach of the rules of hospitality.” This is based on the fact that *yada* is used 943 times in the Old Testament yet only twelve times to denote sexual activity. However, there are several problems with Bailey’s argument, the first of which is apparent in the immediate context. Lot’s initial response is found in verses 6 and 7: “Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, ‘I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.’” Because Lot identifies the actions on the part of the men as wicked, it makes no sense to think they just wanted to get acquainted with the visitors. This is the

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3 Ibid., 2.
same word used in Genesis 13:13 so it follows logically that what is taking place in Genesis 19 is the full expression of that wickedness.⁴

3. The Author’s Intent Behind Yada

Lot’s second response is to offer his virgin daughters to the crowd as a bribe. Though it is difficult to understand why Lot would do such a thing, the wording still provides clues to the author’s intent behind yada.⁵ Verse eight states: “Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” The same Hebrew word, yada, is used here as it was previously in verse five. Clearly verse eight has sexual connotations in mind which implies the previous usage should be similarly interpreted unless something in the text distinctly suggests otherwise. P. Michael Ukleja observes: “In narrative literature of this sort it would be very unlikely to use one verb with two different meanings so close together unless the author made the difference quite obvious.” In this case, “the context does not lend itself to any other credible interpretation.”⁶

It is true that yada can mean “get acquainted with” and it is true that in comparison to all of the Old Testament, it is only used in the sexual sense a few times. However, that does not mean a sexual sense is not warranted in the Genesis 19 context as has already been demonstrated. Beyond that though, it should be stated that the sexual connotation of the word is fairly normative in Genesis. Ukleja points out that of the twelve times yada occurs in Genesis, ten of those mean “to have intercourse with.”⁷ So it is not as if the Genesis 19 passage is setting a precedent. Just as Adam “knew” Eve in Genesis 4:1, so the context in Genesis 19 makes it apparent that sexual relations were what the author had in mind at the time of its writing.

4. Related Passages (Ez. 16: 48-49, 2 Pt. 2:6-7, Jude 7)

Pro-gay advocates also cite additional passages that refer back to Sodom and Gomorrah as evidence that the stated sin was something other than homosexuality. Daniel Helminiak states: “The prophet Ezekiel (16:48-49) states the case baldly [sic]: “This was

⁴ James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, The Same Sex Controversy (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 34.

⁵ James White suggests that Lot knew his offer would not be accepted: “Lot knew these men. He knew their lifestyle, their activities. Seemingly a sort of truce existed between him and the homosexual inhabitants of Sodom: they did not seek to involve him in their activities, and he did not speak out against them. It is possible that Lot is simply buying time, knowing that, in fact, the offer will not be accepted, for these men simply do not have any desire for women. He may feel his daughters are perfectly safe, for those standing before him had shown a firm and unwavering desire for sexual fulfillment with men, not with women.” Ibid., 35.


⁷ Ibid., 262.
the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.’ The sin of the Sodomites was that they refused to take in the needy travelers.”

However, the very next verse qualifies the sin further: “They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.” 2 Peter 2:6-7 provides further clarification of what this entailed: “If by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked.” Jude 7 also provides a relevant reference to the cities: “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.” When all of this information is put together, the final conclusion becomes clear. While it can be said that homosexuality was not the only sin, it is not fair to relegate the interpretation of this passage to inhospitality. Both Peter and Jude place the sin in terms of sexual immorality that is perverted and unnatural. It is therefore logical to conclude that homosexuality was one of the sins that caused God’s judgment to pour out upon these cities.

B. Leviticus

1. The Explicitness of the Passage

While homosexual sin was not explicitly identified in Genesis 19, God’s command against it in the book of Leviticus is crystal clear. Leviticus 18:22 states: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” This concept is expanded further in Leviticus 20:13: “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.” These words are so clear that it is hard to argue with what the text actually says so the debate usually falls more on the side of relevance. First, pro-gay advocates argue that there was no way the original writers could have possibly understood the modern homosexuality phenomenon. Next, they reason that the teachings of Leviticus do not apply to people today.

2. Analysis of Alternative Viewpoints

It is quite common for pro-gay writers today to simply dismiss the Leviticus passages outright as irrelevant on the grounds the writers back then simply had no context for understanding homosexuality as it is presented in the modern era. Mona West, an MCC pastor, writes:

The word “homosexuality” is a modern term and did not exist during biblical times. Biblical writers had no concept of sexual orientation or sexual development as we understand those today. Therefore, passages that reference same-sex sexual activity should not been [sic] seen as comprehensive statement concerning

homosexuality, but instead should be viewed in the context of what the ancient world that produced the Bible understood about sexual activity.\(^9\)

Certainly, a case can be made that people living in the ancient Near East (ANE) did not fully understand the complexities of homosexuality. However, the same could be said for those who are alive today. The fact of the matter is, homosexuality was a known practice in the ANE. Alex Montoya contends that “the very existence of these prohibitions in Leviticus argues for the existence of these sexual vices in the pagan world which God expressly calls ‘abominations.’”\(^10\) Donald Wold, who has served as a professor of Near Eastern studies, dedicates two chapters in his book *Out of Order* to the homosexual practices of the ANE. He concludes: “A survey of ancient Near Eastern sources regarding homosexuality reveals that the practice existed widely. . .”\(^11\) Additionally, Ukleja points out: “Moses was not trying to establish an exhaustive code on the subject of sexuality; rather he was dealing with certain gross offenses of the seventh commandment that were common in the nations surrounding Israel at the time.”\(^12\) When it comes to the sin of the Canaanites, a description of “wicked” is certainly fitting:\(^13\) Deuteronomy 12:29-31 provides this description:

When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, “How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.” You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

I Kings 14:24 also reflects a similar tone and message: “And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.” Finally, Leviticus 18:6-23 shows that the practices of the Canaanites included every form of incest, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality.\(^14\)

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\(^10\) Alex D. Montoya, “Homosexuality and the Church,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 159.


\(^12\) Ukleja, “Homosexuality and the Old Testament,” 264.

\(^13\) Other references include: Lev. 18:24-25, 20:22-24, Deut. 9:5, 18:9-14, 1 Kgs. 21:26, 2 Kgs. 16:3, 21:2, Heb. 11:31.

\(^14\) Leviticus 18-19 contains a comprehensive list of sins which the Israelites were not to commit. However, according to Lev. 18:27 and 20:23, this was also a list of the sins of the Canaanites.
When deeper research is conducted, it is discovered that even the relationships within the Canaanite pantheon can be appropriately described as highly sexual in nature. Baal is presented as having sex with his mother Asherah, his sister Anat, and his daughter Pidray. In each case, these incestuous relationships are not cast in a negative light. As a religion of fertility, the Canaanite gods were involved with all kinds of deviant sexual behavior including temple sex, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality. For example, Inanna, a god known as the Queen of Heaven, “became the patron of eroticism and sensuality, of conjugal love as well as adultery, of brides and prostitutes, transvestites and pederasts.”

It really should not be surprising that such aberrant sexual behavior would be found among the Canaanite people since the gods they worshiped practiced such deviancy themselves. It is for this reason the holy code in Leviticus came to be. Though homosexuality was but one of the stated evil practices, it is lumped into the larger pool of deviant behavior. The religion of the Canaanite people is described by Scripture in several ways. It is said to be evil (Judg. 2:11, 10:6, 1 Kgs. 22:52-53) and an abomination (Deut. 7:25-26, 20:18). Exodus 34:15 and Judges 2:17 go so far as to speak of their acts in terms of “whoring.” Then Deuteronomy 12:31 includes the words “for even” as an indicator of just how serious those abominations had become—even to the point of sacrificing children. This is the context within which the verses of Leviticus are found. While it is quite possible that those living in the ANE had no understanding regarding modern questions such as whether or not homosexuality is genetically inborn, they certainly understood the sexual act.

3. The Difference Between Moral Law and Ceremonial Law

The second argument against taking the Levitical commands literally is that they are not valid today. There are some grounds to this perspective for the simple reason that many Christians no longer feel bound to the laws found in the Old Testament. It does seem inconsistent that Christians would condemn homosexuality based on the holiness code yet choose not to abide by the dietary restrictions and commands to stone adulterers and children who curse their parents. However, much of this tension can be resolved with a proper understanding of the Law.

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18 Much of the information in this section was drawn and summarized from previous research conducted by the author of this paper. Daryl A. Neipp, “The Dilemma of Genocide in the Old Testament,” ThM Thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.
First it should be pointed out that the moral implication of the Law did not apply only to Israel. This can be ascertained by the judgment that befell Sodom and Gomorrah as well as the Canaanite inhabitants of the Promised Land. Furthermore, verses 27-30 of Leviticus 18 reads:

(for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.

The directives of these verses are aimed at the Israelites but applicable to all as indicated by the first verse that refers to the people before them who took part in the abominations. If God’s commands were only meant for the Israelites then he would not have punished the other nations for their immoral behavior.

Dietary laws, on the other hand, were exclusively Jewish. These included restrictions on eating shellfish and pork but were repealed in New Testament Scripture. Additionally, other nations were not judged for failing to abide by these regulations since they only served the purpose of distinguishing Israel from other nations. This is true of other parts of the Law as well, such as the role of the high priest, since it was done away with the perfect priesthood of Jesus Christ. In reality, there are two parts to the Law: a ceremonial aspect and a moral aspect. Greg Bahnsen distinguishes the two by saying “moral law defines justice while ceremonial law guides redemptive restoration.” In other words, ceremonial law was meant to incorporate symbols and practices for the purpose of pointing the people toward Christ and his redemptive work on the cross. Thus the ceremonial restrictions were repealed with his death and the unification of the church with the Gentiles. However, the moral aspect of the Law has remained in effect and is often reiterated in the New Testament. The immoral practices contained in the Old Testament are just as immoral in the New Testament. Ukleja provides this clarification:

When the statement is made that the Law has ended, this does not mean that God no longer has any laws or codes for His people. This does not mean that there are no moral precepts to be followed. The New Testament speaks of the “law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2), the “law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), and the “royal law” (James 2:8). This “law” includes numerous commands, both positive and negative, which form a distinct code of ethics for today. As a unit the New Testament code is new, but not all the commands in the New Testament are new. There is overlap, deletion, and addition. Some of the commands in the Mosaic code have been reincorporated into the New Testament code.

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God has dealt with people differently over the course of time but his character has never changed. Thus it makes logical sense that while the ceremonial laws would change, the moral emphasis would remain. Furthermore, when it specifically comes to homosexuality, condemnation of this act clearly has not been repealed because it is repeated in the New Testament.

III. The Christian Response

This is pretty intense material which is in part why this series is limited to three weeks. Though it is only possible to live at this depth for so long it is important to work through the biblical text because more and more people are attempting to subvert the clear teaching of Scripture. That said, before the day is done, it is important to come up to the surface for a moment and consider a response. Fair or not, most people view Christians as judgmental and homophobic. Some of that is deserved criticism and some of it is due to misunderstanding. Regardless, if Christians desire to reach people for Christ then some managing of these misperceptions in in order. One thing believers can do is to drop the labels. No one person likes to be known only for their sin because they recognize that is not really who they are. In the same way, believers need to look beyond the sin of others to see the person. Homosexuals should never put them down or have jokes made about them. They should be prayed for and believers should take an interest in their lives just as they would any other person who needs the love of Christ.
Homosexuality

Part 2: The Old Testament Record

Introduction

- Two main passages
- The creation account establishes heterosexuality as normative
- Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul affirm the creation account
Genesis

Background Summary
- Genesis 13: Establishes the moral climate
- Genesis 18: Not even a handful of righteous men can be found
- Genesis 19: Language confirms evil intent

The Inhospitality View
- “Get acquainted with”
- Derrick Sherwin Bailey
- Lot identifies the actions as wicked
- The same word for wicked is here as was used in Genesis 13:13

The Author’s Intent Behind Yada
- Same word used in both vs. 5 and 8
- Vs. 8 clearly has sexual connotations
- Context warrants a sexual interpretation

Related Passages
- Ezekiel 16:48-49
- 2 Peter 2:6-7
- Jude 7
Leviticus

- The Explicitness of the Passage
  - Leviticus 18:22
  - Leviticus 20:13

- Analysis of Alternative Viewpoints
  - Dismiss as irrelevant
  - Dismiss as no longer valid today
    - The difference between moral law and ceremonial law

The Christian Response

- Most People View Christians as Judgmental and Homophobic
  - Drop the labels
  - Look beyond the sin of others to see the person
  - Don't put them down or make jokes about them
  - Pray for them
  - Take an interest in their lives
Sermon 3 Outline

I. Introduction

II. The New Testament Record
   A. Romans
      1. The Meaning of Unnatural
      2. The Sin of Idolatry
      3. The Condemnation of Homosexual Acts by Heterosexuals
   B. 1 Corinthians
      1. Definition of Malakoi
      2. Definition of Arsenokoitai
   C. The Silence of Jesus

III. The Christian Response
Sermon 3: The New Testament Record

I. Introduction

When it comes to the issue of homosexuality, the Bible takes a unified position in both Testaments. What is condemned in the Old Testament is also denounced in the New Testament as morally deplorable. The apostle Paul brings up the topic in several different places with the implications appearing to be quite clear. However, pro-gay advocates have countered the traditional interpretations with their own definitions and perspectives. Three main arguments will be considered as they relate to Romans 1:18-32.

II. The New Testament Record

A. Romans

1. The Meaning of Unnatural

The first argument centers on the meaning of “unnatural” in verse 26. The broader context is combined with verse 27 and reads: “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error” (NASB). Daniel Helminiak contends that the word does not contain moral or ethical connotations since the same word in Romans 11:24 refers to God. Therefore he concludes that this behavior may be unusual or peculiar but not a statement on morality. However, this makes no sense when the full weight of the passage is considered. The entire context points toward rampant unrighteousness. The verses before Romans 1:26-27 use the following words and phrases to describe what is taking place: “ungodliness,” “unrighteousness,” “did not honor him as God,” “[did not] give thanks to him,” “became futile in their thinking,” “their foolish hearts were darkened,” “they became fools,” “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man,” “lusts of their hearts,” “impurity,” “dishonoring of their bodies,” “exchanged the truth about God for a lie,” “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,” “dishonorable passions.” Then after Romans 1:26-27, the list continues: “debased mind,” “unrighteousness,” “evil,” “covetousness,” “malice,” “envy,” “murder,” “strife,” “deceit,” “maliciousness,” “gossips,” “slanderers,” “haters of God,” “insolent,” “haughty,” “boastful,” “inventors of evil,” “disobedient to parents,” “foolish,” “faithless,” “heartless,” “ruthless.” In light of the overwhelming contextual evidence, it seems ludicrous to think that Paul would have used the word “unnatural” to mean something that did not have moral and ethical connotations.

On a related note, some pro-gay advocates suggest “unnatural” only refers to what is unnatural to the person. In other words, if homosexuality is natural to a person then they

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should fully pursue that orientation because it is natural to them. Also, it would be unnatural for a homosexual to pursue heterosexuality because that would go against their created order. The problem with this line of thinking is that God has already established what is normative in regard to sexuality and it pertains to all mankind and is not up for consideration on an individual basis. God previously established the normal pattern of male and female becoming one flesh in Genesis and it was reaffirmed by Christ in the New Testament. To say that there is such a thing as natural homosexuality is to subvert the created order and the meaning of the Romans passage.

2. The Sin of Idolatry

Another angle pro-gay advocates take is to say that the real issue in the passage is idolatry. Szanzoni and Mollenkott state: “The passage in Romans quoted earlier says nothing about homosexual love. The emphasis is entirely on sexual activity in the context of lust and idolatry.” It is true that sins in this chapter are placed in the context of idolatry. However, that does not mean the other sins are not actually sins, it just means they have a relationship to the sin of idolatry. Even outside of idolatry though, each sin listed is still a sin. It is not appropriate to single out homosexuality and say that it is not a sin outside of the context of idolatry when Scripture makes it clear that any form of homosexuality under any circumstance is a perversion of the natural created order. Even the text itself seems to point back toward the created order as its subtext. Robert Gagnon refers to this as an intertextual echo and provides several examples:

Romans 1:23 echoes Genesis 1:26:

Let us make a human according to our image and . . . likeness; and let them rule over the . . . birds . . . and the cattle . . . and the reptiles. (Gen. 1:26, italics added)

And they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of the image of a mortal human and of birds and of four-footed animals and of reptiles. (Rom. 1:23, italics added)

Romans 1:26-27 echoes Genesis 1:27:

And God made the human; according to the image of God he made him; male and female he made them. (Gen. 1:27, italics added)

Even their females exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise also the males, having left behind the natural use of the female, were inflamed with their yearning for one another, males with males. . . (Rom. 1:26-27, italics added)³

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³ Dan O. Via and Robert A. J. Gagnon, Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 77-78.
The point of these echoes is that idolatry and homosexuality are not mutually exclusive. Both play a role in subverting the natural created order. This conclusion is a result from the previous verses (Rom. 1:19-20) that refer to natural revelation: “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” Before homosexuality is even mentioned, the assumption is made by Paul that certain conclusions can be deduced through God’s natural revelation of himself. Gagnon further clarifies this point: “The sin of idolatry is coupled with the sin of same-sex intercourse because Paul considered both to be absurd denials of natural revelation. The evidence from nature—male-female compatibility in anatomy, physiology (e.g., procreative potential), and various interpersonal traits—provides convincing clues regarding God’s will for sexual expression.”

The normal created order is the foundation for establishing what is natural and what should be considered a perversion of that. There is no reason to think that this passage of Scripture creates an exception for differing forms of homosexuality.

3. The Condemnation of Homosexual Acts by Heterosexuals

The final argument pro-gay advocates often use against a traditional interpretation of this passage was introduced by John Boswell. His contention is that the passage is referring to homosexual acts that are committed by heterosexual persons. Again this is closely related to previous arguments regarding the use of the word “unnatural.” However, Boswell approaches it from a slightly different angle. While a previous argument insisted the word referred to a perversion of homosexual love, Boswell goes a step further by saying Paul’s condemnation is against homosexual acts committed by heterosexual persons. In both cases, the previous rebuttal still applies. Boswell attempts to move the argument into the debate over choice. In his view a real homosexual will do what is natural to him because he or she was born that way. However this is forcing something into the text that simply is not there. Paul makes a clear statement about homosexuality and it is not appropriate to insert additional meaning in order to make a case. Paul never clarified his remarks to fit only a certain group of people. His point is clear throughout the chapter that the desire to twist and exchange God’s intended created order and design is representative of ungodliness.

B. 1 Corinthians

The apostle Paul addresses the topic of homosexuality another time in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will...

Ibid., 79.

inherit the kingdom of God” (NKJV). In this case, the arguments against a traditional interpretation rest mainly in the definition of terms. The word *homosexuals* in the NKJV is taken from the Greek word *malakoi* and *sodomites* is derived from *arsenokoitai* which is used in 1 Timothy 1:10 as well. The pro-gay argument takes *malakoi* to be a generic reference to lewd acts while *arsenokoitai* references prostitution with neither referring to homosexuality.⁶

1. Definition of *Malakoi*

The word *malakoi* means “soft” like fine clothing or “effeminate” in the sense of a catamite (a boy kept for homosexual purposes).⁷ It is used for clothing in Luke 7:25 and Matthew 11:8 to signify something that is delicate. It can also refer to a prostitute, transvestite, or just an effeminate man but in a homosexual context it would refer to the passive partner.⁸ The usage in 1 Corinthians definitely points toward sexual activity and likely refers to homosexuality in the sense of prostitution—sex that is paid for.

2. Definition of *Arsenokoitai*

The word *arsenokoitai* is a compound word with *arsenos* meaning “strong male” with an emphasis on the gender and *koite* meaning “bed” with a sexual connotation.⁹ The Septuagint uses these same words in the translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to designate the prohibition against homosexual behavior. It seems apparent that Paul took these two words and coined a new one that clearly referred to homosexual practice. This is also a point of criticism since other words were readily available, but by doing so, Paul was able to cover the spectrum of homosexual nuances without specifically referring to any specific type. The result for most exegetes then is to interpret the placement of *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* together as a reference to the passive and active partners in a male homosexual relationship.¹⁰ It is Paul’s intention that the Corinthian believers understand that there are certain sins and practices that should be left behind once a person turns their life over to Christ. Paul takes advantage of the specific and strong language used in the Levitical commands to make his point that homosexuality was not to be a part of the life of the believer.

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⁶ Ibid.


C. The Silence of Jesus

A favorite argument of pro-gay advocates is to cite the silence of Jesus on the issue of homosexuality as proof that this behavior is acceptable. This line of thinking purports that if Jesus did not explicitly forbid homosexuality then it must be okay. Part of this reasoning stems from the fact that modern Christians make homosexuality out to be the unpardonable sin so it does make sense that if this is actually the worst sin of all then Jesus would have taken time to address the issue. Jay Michaelson makes this observation:

Jesus lived at a time when pederasty and other forms of same-sex activity were common. This silence speaks volumes. If homosexuality were an important part of Christ’s message, why is it absent from it? It’s not as if Jesus hesitated to critique his society, after all. If this widespread practice were so abhorrent to him, would he really be silent? Jesus wasn’t tacit about the values that mattered most. If regulation of homosexual behavior were one of them, the Gospels would not be silent. On the contrary, the silence indicates supersession.\(^{11}\)

There are a host of reasons why this line of thinking does not make sense. First, the assumption that if Jesus did not condemn a behavior makes it okay is short-sighted. Jesus did not say anything about physically abusing one’s spouse or molesting children but no one seems to be making a case for their approval. The fact of the matter is that God gave the whole of Scripture to guide the faith and conduct of people. All Scripture is inspired, not just the words of Jesus. Furthermore, John 21:25 makes it clear that not everything Jesus said and did was recorded: “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” While it would be presumptive to say he did in fact specifically address homosexuality, it also is not outside the realm of possibility. The fact is that the Gospel writers could not record everything so the addressing of sexual sins was likely sufficient since homosexuality would fall under that category.

Certainly a case can be made that Jesus took sexual sin seriously. In fact, Matthew 5:28 indicates that Jesus’ standard went far beyond the Old Testament behavioral regulations. Jesus did not come to abolish the law, he came to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17-18). This does not mean the moral principles found in the Law were nullified but rather that the demands of it were fulfilled through the work of Christ on the cross. The Law could not save but it was a “schoolmaster” to show sinners their need for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

Perhaps the strongest rebuttal to the silence argument comes from Jesus’ reaffirmation of the proper order of creation. Ironically, Scripture reveals that Jesus was involved in the process of creation (Col. 1:15-17) so he is not speaking as a casual outsider but as one who established the natural order of husband and wife. When Jesus was questioned about divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:2-11, he took the people back to Genesis 2 in order to emphasize his original intent and design for men and women. He did not change the text but rather underscores it as the model for appropriate sexuality.

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III. The Christian Response

As has been the tradition for the past three weeks, a moment needs to be given in regard to a response. It goes without saying that people should be loved the way Jesus loved people regardless of their sin. But specifically: What does love look like in this context? What if believers invited someone who would call themselves a homosexual into their home? Would Christians consider barbequing with them? Have believers taken a genuine interest in them? Has this congregation worked at building a relationship? Maybe instead of praying for them, this church should pray about what God needs to do in our hearts. What about volunteering at a clinic that attends to those inflicted with AIDS? What will this church do to love homosexuals the way God loves them?
Introduction

- A unified position
- What is condemned in the Old Testament is also denounced in the New Testament as morally deplorable
The Meaning of *Unnatural*
- Romans 1:26-27
- Daniel Helminiak: “The word does not contain moral or ethical connotations.”
- Entire context points toward rampant unrighteousness
- Pro-gay advocates: *Unnatural* only refers to what is unnatural to the person

The Sin of Idolatry
- Pro-gay advocates: emphasis is on sexual activity in the context of idolatry
- Homosexuality is not appropriate in any context
- Idolatry and homosexuality are not mutually exclusive

The Condemnation of Homosexual Acts by Heterosexuals
- John Boswell: Paul’s condemnation is against homosexual acts committed by heterosexuals
- Paul’s remarks were never meant to fit only certain groups of people
1 Corinthians

Definition of Malakoi
- Homosexuals
- “Soft” or “effeminate”
- The passive partner in a homosexual context
- Homosexuality in the sense of prostitution

Definition of Arsenokoitai
- Sodomites
- “strong male”
- The active partner in a homosexual context

The Silence of Jesus

Jesus did not forbid it so it must be okay
- Jesus did not address every single sin
- Homosexuality falls under the category of sexual sin
  - Jesus took a strong stance against sexual sin
  - Jesus emphasized the original intent and design of creation
The Christian Response

What Does Love Look Like in This Context?

- Invite into your home
- BBQ
- Take a genuine interest
- Work at building a relationship
- Pray about your own attitude
- Volunteer at an AIDS clinic
Appendix N

Seminar Resource Kit

Key Thought: The Genesis account establishes God’s original intent which was heterosexual in nature.

Lesson Opener / Activity: Agree/Disagree
Present each statement separately. For each statement, people must commit to either agreeing or disagreeing. All must participate! Allow one or two people to explain why they chose to agree or disagree with the statement before moving on to the next one.
Statement 1: Christians hate homosexuals.
Statement 2: People are justified in referring to Christians as homophobes.
Statement 3: The church has treated homosexuals fairly.

Teaching: (see Resource 1)

Principle 1: Proper Interpretation of Scripture is Key
The Approach of Gay Theology
Proper Interpretation of Scripture

Principle 2: Description of the created order (Gen. 1:27-28, 2:18, 2:23-24)
Came Before the Fall
God Affirms His Creation is Good

Principle 3: Affirmation by Jesus (quotes Genesis in Mt. 19:4-6)

Principle 4: Affirmation by Paul (quotes Genesis in 1 Cor. 6:16)

Small Group Breakout:
Divide the class up evenly into groups of 4-6 people and give instructions for the following assignment:
Create a group skit based upon a contemporary issue. Describe and act out what conclusion culture generally reaches because of their experiential approach to truth.

Large Group Closing:
As time allows, present the group skits with participants clapping after each. Award candy bars to the group with the best presentation.

Final Large Group Question:
What are some ways Christians might go about changing the cultural perception that believers hate homosexuals?
Lesson Two: The Old Testament Record (Genesis 19 & Leviticus 18)

**Key Thought:** The Old Testament record on homosexuality provides strong evidence that homosexuality is indeed considered sinful behavior and should not be relegated as outdated or irrelevant teaching.

**Lesson Opener / Activity:** Perspective
Divide the class up evenly into groups of 4-6 people. Give each group the same familiar object (a ruler, Styrofoam cup, box, etc.). Instruct participants to brainstorm a list of ways the common object can be used. The team with the longest list of workable uses at the end of five minutes is the winner. After a winner is determined, make the point that while everyone is looking at the same object, each group viewed it from a different perspective much like different eyewitnesses view an automobile accident. This can also be illustrated by hearing a word with multiple meanings (trunk: car trunk, tree trunk, trunk of a person, elephant trunk). Is this what is happening in our Old Testament passages? Is it okay that we see one sin while others see something completely different? To complicate your thinking, do you realize the Old Testament Sodom & Gomorrah passage never specifies an exact sin?

**Teaching:** (see Sermon 2)

**Passage 1: Genesis 19**
- Background Summary
- The Inhospitality View
- The Author’s Intent Behind *Yada*
- Related Passages (Ez. 16: 48-49, 2 Pt. 2:6-7, Jude 7)
- Conclusion

**Passage 2: Leviticus 18**
- The Explicitness of the Passage
- Analysis of Alternative Viewpoints
- The Difference Between Moral Law and Ceremonial Law
- Conclusion

**Small Group Discussion: Case Study**
Divide the class up evenly into groups of 4-6 people and hand out one of the following case studies to each group (not every group should have the same one but they can be used more than once):

A friend approaches you and says they heard the Old Testament account of Sodom & Gomorrah was really about inhospitality. According to the principles in Genesis 19, how could you make the case that homosexuality is indeed a sin of the people?

A friend approaches you and says the Old Testament teaching in Leviticus regarding homosexuality is no longer relevant or applicable to us today. How would you go about making a case for the veracity of this passage?
Final Large Group Questions:
Have you ever heard the phrase, “It isn’t just what you say it is how you say it?” That is particularly true with the issue of homosexuality. What are some ways we can engage in honest conversation without it coming across as an attack?
Lesson Three: The New Testament Record (Romans 1 & 1 Corinthians 6)

Key Thought: The Bible is unified. What is condemned in the Old Testament is reaffirmed in the New Testament as valid and applicable.

Lesson Opener / Activity: Balloon Unscramble
Divide the class up evenly into groups of 4-6 people. Ahead of time, print the words LACE, PONY, and DICE on three separate small pieces of paper. Put all three into a balloon. Inflate, and tie the balloon. Repeat this enough times so each group will receive one balloon. Instruct the groups that when you say, Go!” they are to pop the balloons, pull out the pieces of paper and unscramble them. Let them know that the three words together form one word. The trick is that the letters are also scrambled. The first team to come up with ENCYCLOPEDIA is the winner. After a winner is determined, make the point that even though many people attempt to scramble the record of Scripture, when the pieces are properly assembled, the message becomes crystal clear.

Teaching: (see Sermon 3)

Passage 1: Romans 1
The Meaning of Unnatural
The Sin of Idolatry
The Condemnation of Homosexual Acts by Heterosexuals

Passage 2: 1 Corinthians 6
Definition of Malakoi
Definition of Arsenokoitai
Conclusion

Small Group Discussion: Case Study
Divide the class up evenly into groups of 4-6 people and hand out the following assignment to each group for discussion:

With your provided container of play-dough, create a unique animal that does not actually exist. Come up with a name and then create an argument for why your animal should be accepted as a natural creation.

Final Large Group Question:
What issues could arise in conversations simply because of the use of the terminology “natural” and “unnatural?”

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1 The idea for this was adapted from: Lorraine L. Ukens, *Working Together: 55 Team Games* (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 1997), 10-12.
Lesson Four: Scientific Considerations

Key Thought: The media and culture routinely communicate and advocate myths that are not backed up by scientific research.

Lesson Opener / Activity: Agree/Disagree
Present each statement separately. For each statement, people must commit to either agreeing or disagreeing. All must participate! Allow one or two people to explain why they chose to agree or disagree with the statement before moving on to the next one.
Statement 1: 10% of the population is gay.
Statement 2: Homosexuals are born that way.
Statement 3: Homosexuals cannot change who they are.

Teaching: (see Sermon 1)

Myth 1: 10% of the Population is Gay
Myth 2: The Gay Gene
Myth 3: Change is Not Possible

Small Group Discussion: Case Study
Divide the class up evenly into groups of 4-6 people and hand out the following assignment to each group for discussion:

Christians have responded to the issue of homosexuality in a variety of ways. Some, such as Westboro Baptist, publicly condemn them; others view AIDS and terrorism attacks as God’s punishment for tolerance; others advocate a boycott of companies that support homosexual endeavors. Ultimately, what should be the Christian’s biblical response to homosexuals?

Final Large Group Questions:
What role does the Church have in countering common cultural misperceptions in regard to this topic? Is Science compatible with the Bible and how do you form a proper approach when the two seem to disagree?
Resource 1: The Foundation of Genesis

Interpretation of Scripture

It seems everyone has an opinion on the moral positioning of homosexuality. Author Eric Marcus clearly states, “No, homosexuality is not a sin, and it is not immoral.”² Matt Slick, on the other hand, contends that it is “clearly condemned in the Bible.”³ As with any other issue, there must be an objective standard by which opinions and viewpoints may be judged. Otherwise there really is no way to determine where the truth actually lies. Those who choose to argue for their perspective outside of the Bible only have science as a support base. However, much of the research in that field is still inconclusive. Another group of people have attempted to figure out how Scripture can be reinterpreted in order to support the pro-gay view. Neither of these approaches, though, is particularly helpful to the person who is honestly seeking to discover what God says on the topic. However, the burden of proof rests on those who are challenging the veracity of Scripture. If there are reasons to overturn the traditional understanding and interpretation of relevant passages on the topic then the supporting evidence for doing so must be extraordinarily solid.

Just as there are presuppositions for how people form their opinions on homosexual matters, the same could be said for the alternative viewpoint. Many gay Christian leaders do affirm the Bible as their authority, however they would also equally hold to other sources of authority. Troy Perry, founder of the largest gay church in America, states: “Scientific information, social changes, and personal experience are the


greatest forces for change in the way we interpret the Bible.”

In other words, from his perspective, social change and personal experiences also serve as determinatives for truth. Patrick Cheng, also a minister in the MCC, admits that pro-homosexuality theology draws upon Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. However, even then Scripture is still not interpreted literally: “Queer theology draws upon scripture. . . in creative ways.

Although scripture traditionally has been used as a means of oppressing LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender] people, queer biblical scholars in recent years have not only countered these antiqueer readings with alternative readings, but they have also ‘taken back’ or ‘reclaimed’ the Bible by interpreting it positively and constructively from their own perspectives.”

It seems apparent that while these authors affirm the authority of Scripture, their definition of authority is quite different than a normal, literal approach would embody. Not only is the Bible placed on equal footing with other perceived sources of truth but then the actual words and understanding of the text must be changed in order to accommodate a gay theology. This is the opposite of how Scripture should be approached. The Bible should not be interpreted in light of a person’s actions. A person’s actions should be interpreted in light of what the Scripture says.

A proper approach to Scripture is critical for understanding what God intended to communicate to people. Therefore matters pertaining to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture are extremely relevant to this discussion. According to Scripture, every individual word of the text is inspired and not just the concept (Ex. 24:4; Isa. 30:8; 2 Sam. 23:2). Each word is inspired equally (2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 15:4; Jn. 10:35), Scripture is entirely free from all errors in their original writings (Jn. 17:17; Ps. 119:46; Mt. 5:18; 2

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4 Troy Perry, *Don’t Be Afraid Anymore* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990), 339.

Tim. 3:16), and God’s Word is the final standard for everything people should believe and do since it gains its authority from God himself (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). These views stand in contrast to many in the Christian gay community who seek to lower the authority of Scripture. For example, in an official MCC document, Rev. Mona West states: “While the Bible is an important witness to the relationship between God and humanity, it is not the ultimate revelation of God. . . while the Bible may be at the center of matters of faith, it must also be in ‘conversation’ with tradition, experience, and reason.”

This approach is problematic, however, in that it removes any measured standard of truth. Our premise begins with the idea that God gave human beings the Bible with the intention that it be understood. Furthermore, it is without error, authoritative, and applicable today. This stance on the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture then lends itself to a literal method of interpretation. This is the method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether it is used in writing, speaking, or thinking. It has also been known as the grammatical-historical method in order to emphasize the fact that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations. The literal method of interpretation can contain figures of speech and parables but the context is always key. Literal interpretation seeks to discover the original usage of words as it was intended for its initial audience of readers.

 improper Method of Interpretation: Experience defines truth

 proper Method of Interpretation: Scripture defines truth

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The Foundation of Genesis

It is interesting that most pro-gay authors do not even bother with the creation account. This may be in part because of the widespread acceptance of the evolutionary theory which consequently causes the creation narrative to be viewed as myth. However, for those who hold to a literal interpretation of Genesis, the first two chapters provide compelling evidence that the created order was normative and established a model that was meant to be replicated. Still, the normative model is exactly what pro-gay advocates must address if they expect to refute the creation account. Jay Michaelson makes an attempt by saying that the norm in the Bible “was not heterosexual monogamy but polygamy, not to mention prostitution, arranged marriage, and marriage to young children.” His contention is that Adam and Eve were not normative in the Bible so that cannot be the standard. However, if that were the case then polygamy, prostitution, arranged marriage, marriage to young children, and of course homosexuality must be viewed as valid. This is not Michaelson’s point though. He is trying to make an argument against heterosexuality as the norm with one set of criteria while not allowing the rationale to play out in the other direction. That aside, Scripture never endorses his proposed list of alternatives while it does clearly endorse heterosexual monogamy. As is often the case, proponents of pro-gay theology attempt to look beyond the clear teaching of Scripture to see what is not said and then they make an assumption based on what is not present. For example, Daniel Helminiak says of the creation account that an endorsement of heterosexuality does not imply a condemnation of homosexuality.7 First

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it should be noted that by making this point he is at least putting heterosexuality on the table as a possibility for Genesis endorsement. Second, if heterosexuality is stated as the created order, then it is able to stand alone as a statement of truth. It is not necessary at that point for God to add a full list of deviant approaches. If nothing else, the fact that God only mentions one model makes a statement in and of itself.

The verses in question come from Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18, and 2:23-24. These passages contain descriptions of the created order and it should be understood that all of this came before the Fall. In other words, before sin had entered the world, the ideal is presented with God saying everything was good. As further evidence, Jesus directly quotes from Genesis in order to make a point about divorce. Though he was referencing marriage and not homosexuality, his point was in regard to the created order: “He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate’” (Mt. 19:4-6 ESV⁹). Paul uses a portion of the same verse to address the sanctity of the body in 1 Corinthians 6:16. Again, it was used in reference to something other than homosexuality but he specifically pointed to the created order as the ideal in order to support his argument.

The Genesis account establishes God’s original intent which was heterosexual in nature. It is true that the narrative does not provide specific commands about alternative sexuality but it does provide a basis upon which other Scriptures expand. Thomas

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⁹ The ESV (English Standard Version) is used for all represented verses and passages unless otherwise cited.
Schmidt states: “It is fair to say that the human author of Genesis was not consciously prohibiting same-sex relations when he wrote the creation account, but it is appropriate for us to explore the relevance of biblical commands about marriage and to evaluate modern homosexuality in light of Genesis.”\textsuperscript{10} Genesis reveals the identity and functions of two different human sexes who were made for one another. It provides the model for both sexuality and the family unit which is affirmed by both Jesus and Paul.

**The Silence of Jesus**

A favorite argument of pro-gay advocates is to cite the silence of Jesus on the issue of homosexuality as proof that this behavior is acceptable. This line of thinking purports that if Jesus did not explicitly forbid homosexuality then it must be okay. Part of this reasoning stems from the fact that modern Christians make homosexuality out to be the unpardonable sin so it does make sense that if this is actually the worst sin of all then Jesus would have taken time to address the issue. Jay Michaelson makes this observation:

> Jesus lived at a time when pederasty and other forms of same-sex activity were common. This silence speaks volumes. If homosexuality were an important part of Christ’s message, why is it absent from it? It’s not as if Jesus hesitated to critique his society, after all. If this widespread practice were so abhorrent to him, would he really be silent? Jesus wasn’t tacit about the values that mattered most. If regulation of homosexual behavior were one of them, the Gospels would not be silent. On the contrary, the silence indicates supersession.\textsuperscript{11}

There are a host of reasons why this line of thinking does not make sense. First, the assumption that if Jesus did not condemn a behavior makes it okay is short-sighted. Jesus did not say anything about physically abusing one’s spouse or molesting children but no one seems to be making a case for their approval. The fact of the matter is that

\textsuperscript{10} Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?: Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 41.

\textsuperscript{11} Michaelson, *God Vs. Gay?*, 73-74.
God gave the whole of Scripture to guide the faith and conduct of people. All Scripture is inspired, not just the words of Jesus. Furthermore, John 21:25 makes it clear that not everything Jesus said and did was recorded: “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” While it would be presumptive to say he did in fact specifically address homosexuality, it also is not outside the realm of possibility. The fact is that the Gospel writers could not record everything so the addressing of sexual sins was likely sufficient since homosexuality would fall under that category.

Certainly a case can be made that Jesus took sexual sin seriously. In fact, Matthew 5:28 indicates that Jesus’ standard went far beyond the Old Testament behavioral regulations. Jesus did not come to abolish the law, he came to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17-18). This does not mean the moral principles found in the Law were nullified but rather that the demands of it were fulfilled through the work of Christ on the cross. The Law could not save but it was a “schoolmaster” to show sinners their need for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

Perhaps the strongest rebuttal to the silence argument comes from Jesus’ reaffirmation of the proper order of creation. Ironically, Scripture reveals that Jesus was involved in the process of creation (Col. 1:15-17) so he is not speaking as a casual outsider but as one who established the natural order of husband and wife. When Jesus was questioned about divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:2-11, he took the people back to Genesis 2 in order to emphasize his original intent and design for men and women. He did not change the text but rather underscores it as the model for appropriate sexuality.
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