

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

**The African American Church Response to Homosexuality
and the Reasons There Is No Response**

A Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Rawlings School of Divinity
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

“The African American Church Response to Homosexuality”

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Although the Bible records over eight passages which directly condemns homosexuality, many African-American churches are silent on this controversial issue. The purpose of this thesis is to present information that suggests that the African-American church compromises on this Biblical principle, by embracing homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, both outside and within the church. The church leadership has chosen to either overlook or accept this lifestyle. Based on statistical surveys and interviews, this project will offer practical and Biblical solutions and advice to all churches and ethnic groups, assisting them in dealing with the issue of homosexuality and gay marriage. The focus would also minister to those individuals and families of those who are “enslaved” by this non-Biblical lifestyle.

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Abbreviations

DMIN

Doctor of Ministry

AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

Chapter 1

Introduction

My older brother was gay. He was 14 years older than me. We were not really close, but he was still my brother and I loved him. He was not flamboyant and did not look like the stereotypical gay man. In fact, whatever interactions he had, he had them in a different city, away from where we lived. Still, everyone suspected he was gay. He attended our local church. Yet, no one addressed it openly and he died young of AIDS. My only consolation was that he accepted Christ, as his personal Savior, before he died. I often wondered if his life would had been different, if our church discussed it and/or offered counseling when he was younger.

The issue of homosexuality seems to be a very difficult subject for the church to discuss. This subject is here to stay. The question is: How should the Christian community deal with this issue? Growing up as a young teenager in church, I remember there were so many issues that the church dealt with and had a solution for. Dealing with issues, sins and shortcomings of people is the business of the Church. The church is like a hospital. A hospital is a place where people can get help. It is also a place that has the answer for people who have “sick” or rather “sin” conditions. The church is the hospital for the world and is in the business of dealing with problems in the lives of its members and non-members.

My Christian experience and journey date as far back as I can remember. It was in the church, where my Christian faith began. There was a high level of accountability expected of each person in the church. Each person, especially leaders, and those who held a position at the church, were held accountable for how they lived each day in the community. In those days leaders understood that their life should reflect the character and life of the Lord, Jesus, Himself.

When a member committed a sin, they knew that not only were they accountable to God, but they were also accountable to their fellow brother and sister in the faith. But I must confess we did the same thing as we do now. We categorized and labeled sins that seem minute to us and those sins that are great and noticeable. The apostle John reminds us in the 1 John 5:17, “All unrighteous is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.” No matter the sin, all sin is sin committed in front of a Holy God. Each of us who has been in the household of faith for some length of time and were brought up in an environment where the word of God was a regular part of discussion, should be able to deal with any issue whether the issue is personal or collective as a church membership.

Looking back in my experience, many of the saints that have gone on before me to be with the Lord, were my role models. They exemplified a faith and dependence on the God of their salvation. Their faith and witness still “speaks” in the deep crevices of my heart. When my journey gets tough and the way becomes somewhat dim, at this point in my experience, I pause and think about their race that they ran and life of faith they lived. I become encouraged and I am able to continue on to the end of my journey.

The church has been directed and given eternal instructions by its founder, the Lord, Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of Matthew 16:18, Jesus said to Peter and rest of the disciples, after it had been revealed to Peter who he was: “Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” Clearly, it is seen here in the text that Jesus is the founder and builder of the Church. He gave his Church instructions after He had risen from the dead. He appeared to them with all authority and power, “as the head of the new creation,” Jesus issued to

them the Great Commission, containing, “standing orders” for all believers during the present phrase of the kingdom, the time between the rejection of the King and his second Advent.”¹

Because every believer in the body of Christ is commanded to obey the Word of God and to the love the Lord with all their heart, mind and strength and their neighbor as thyself, it is the responsibility of the Church to follow the commands of its founder and leader, Jesus Christ at all costs, even if it costs them their very lives.

In his book, **Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion**, Richard F. Lovelace says, “But the examination of this issue may not only be necessary for the church; it may be advantageous. Costly and unsettling as it is, this study may produce as many incidental benefits as the space program. Like the indulgence issue in the time of Luther, the problem of homosexuality touches the nerve of many crucial spiritual and theological questions.”²

The author is suggesting that the visible Church of the living God is being forced to face up to implications of theological shifts of which the church has adjusted to during this century. The Church must answer questions pertaining to what they believe regarding this issue. He further states, “The Homosexual issue is a problem which God has set before the church, the solution of which must involve a thorough-going tune-up of theology, spirituality, ministry, and mission.”³

The author is compelling the Church as the Bible compels the Church, to deal with issues. Issues translate into conflicts and how the church deals with and resolve conflict is what the world is watching. With that said of the issue of homosexuality, it is a conflict that the

¹ MacDonald, William, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 1312.

² Lovelace, Richard F., *Homosexuality And the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1978), 11.

³ Lovelace, 13.

Church has not dealt with because there are some in many churches who are embracing, practicing and are involved in this sinful lifestyle. There are perhaps many reasons as to why churches do not deal with this issue, but three reasons will be discussed in this Introduction:

A. Flawed Church Leadership Produces Unhealthy Churches:

In their book, **Preventing Ministry Failure**, Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman offer many deficiencies that many ministers and clergy have and as a result of not dealing with those issues, they affect themselves and the churches that they lead. The authors state that, “A variety of problems can lead to removal from ministry, some caused by the minister, some caused by dysfunctional organization and some caused by both.”⁴

Most ministers have become skilled at helping others in a variety of ways. But in many cases, the pastor is not putting into action what he has recommended for others. It starts with the minister’s devotion to God and then taking care of himself and his family and then the ministry which he has been given to him by God.⁵ Pastors must always remember, as the authors state in the book, “It’s God’ ministry, not ours!”⁶

The authors present seven foundational stones for effective long-term ministry. A minister’s unique calling into Christian ministry is really an identifying factor as to how he will relate to others in ministry. Given these foundations, ministers will not fail and will be able to lead healthy churches who will in turn will be able to deal with handle issues such as the issue of discussion in this introduction.

⁴ Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2007), 10

⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

⁶ Wilson and Hoffmann, 19.

Foundational Stone 1: Intimacy

Many people including ministers misunderstand the real definition of “intimacy.” God never intended for His creation to be isolated beings. He intended His creation to exist within the context of the community. The authors state, “God is a relational being and human were created in God’s image. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that we are also designed as relational beings.”⁷ All of the Lord’s creation, including ministers, have a need to be intimate with one another. In the book of Genesis 2:18, it says, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.” Many ministers fail in leadership because they have become miserable because their intimacy with their Lord and Savior is gone and has grown cold.

Intimacy with God is not a set of behaviors: “Bible study, prayer, worship attendance, fasting, evangelism and so on.”⁸ These things are a part of the relationship and are a means to which the intimate relationship with the Lord can be experienced. In the Gospel of St. Matthew 22:37-39, the verses say, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and Great Commandment. The second is like unto it: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The Lord Jesus Christ really summed up man’s obligation to God. Man’s total obligation is to love his God with the totality of his being.⁹ Whenever a minister or any believer neglects intimacy with God, spouse and others, the consequences are monumental.

⁷ Ibid, 35.

⁸ Wilson and Hoffman, 41.

⁹ MacDonald, 1288.

Foundational Stone 2: Calling

All believers, especially ministers, should understand their call into ministry. A person's calling should be tested to determine if the call is authentic. The authors quote, Thomas Ogden from his book, **Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry**, "Classical pastoral wisdom has thought it to be testable, and dangerous if unexamined."¹⁰ There must be a personal invitation from the sovereign God for anyone to serve as a minister. The minister should know beyond any shadow of doubt that they have been called by the Lord.¹¹ The one who is called by God should be able to distinguish between the two types of calls, "The Call to Faith and The Call to Minister." The *Call of Faith* is a response from every believer when they experienced salvation and being accepted into the Kingdom of God. This call was initiated by God, Himself. The *Call to Minister* and this duty is bestowed upon all believers to minister to others in the local fellowship to build up the body of Christ.¹² Apart from these two calls, there is a *Call to Ministry*. God has appointed certain people in the church to be set apart for specific vocation ministries.

God not only calls, but He equips the individuals for ministry. God will, in many cases, use others in the faith community to help others confirm their ministry in the body of Christ.¹³ The minister should understand some characteristics about the *Call to Ministry*. It's not about him, pursuing his own agenda, but it is the fulfillment of the Great Commission of Christ. Also, God's call is like no other call and we should humbly and completely depend upon God and Him only. The Call of God is mysterious, because it includes a confidence like no other. The calling of God is also unique to the situation we find ourselves in life when the Lord calls us into

¹⁰ Wilson and Hoffman, 44.

¹¹ Ibid, 66.

¹² Wilson and Hoffman, 69.

¹³ Ibid, 70-73.

service. Finally, the Call of God is a lifetime appointment. Even though God may move us into other types of Christian service, he will use it for his glory.¹⁴

Foundational Stone 3: Stress Management

No matter what the occupation, no one is exempt from stress. In fact, stress is needed to continue to deal with difficulty. The Lord knew that His creation would need a mechanism to handle life's struggles, especially after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. "Too little stress and we lack sufficient motivation to accomplish our calling; too much stress and we likely feel overwhelmed, leading to decreased effectiveness. That is why we need good stress-management skills. It is the lack of skills for managing stress that ultimately causes fatigue and burnout."¹⁵ But stress if utilized wisely it will produce energy for the minister to accomplish goals consistent for which he was called for by the Lord. "When we're led by the Spirit, we will rarely experience a difference between our perceived stress and stress-management skills. For certain, there are times we will labor under more stress than we can legitimately handle in our own strength. However, the Holy Spirit offers us strength and wisdom to make up for what is lacking in our time of need, empowering us to act accordingly by faith."¹⁶

Foundational Stone 4: Boundaries

In ministry, ministers should learn how to use boundaries. "A boundary places a limit on something for a particular purpose."¹⁷ The authors discuss four different boundaries in the text:

¹⁴ Wilson and Hoffman, 74-75.

¹⁵ Ibid, 100-101.

¹⁶ Wilson and Hoffmann, 103-104.

¹⁷ Ibid, 139.

First, personal boundaries. These are boundaries which help a minister to prioritize relationships and be able to focus on things which are consistent with our call from God.¹⁸ These include being able to say “yes” and “no,” and using your time wisely. Accepting ideas from others as well as being able to disagree in a spirit of peace. Ministers should have Biblical boundaries, not only to listen to the Word of God, but live by the Word of God. They should also be able to recognize that choices have consequences, because the Lord expects us to accept responsibility.¹⁹

Secondly, “Real-World” boundaries should be in a ministry setting. This boundary allows for the minister to allow others within the ministry to take personal responsibility for the decisions they make, because others within the church have to grow and learn, also. Learning to prioritize ministerial duties from day-to-day and learning to accept reasonable expectations in ministry, we should be able to look at the “bigger picture” of ministry. We should place boundaries on our ministry time and take vacation when scheduled. It is important to leave work at the ministry and not take it home.²⁰

Third, Real-World Boundaries with Intimate Relationships are vital. The authors state that in many cases, ministers create unnecessary problems, because they did not have boundaries in place. Ministers should respect their spouse and children and maintain an intimate relationship with both. But with others, the minister should have established boundaries.²¹

Fourth, “Real-World Boundaries” with ourselves and with God are key. All ministers should learn to use their time wisely by prioritizing self-management. The authors define self-management as, “the practice of developing internal boundaries that enable us to say no to

¹⁸ Wilson and Hoffmann, 140.

¹⁹ Wilson and Hoffman, 141-146.

²⁰ Ibid, 147-156.

²¹ Wilson and Hoffman, 157-164.

unimportant things because we are choosing to say yes to things consistent with what matters most in our life.”²² Ministers must also establish boundaries concerning money by maintaining a monthly budget and teaching our family and church membership about God’s view of money. Finally, they should maintain strong boundaries around our inner lives so that we can maintain intimacy with God.²³

Foundational Stone 5: Re-Creation

The minister, to be at his best, spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally must engage in *Re-Creation* which is a necessary and God intended part of the human experience that re-energizes the minister to fulfill his calling. *Re-Creation* is a part of the Lord’s creative activity in the world. He rested on the seventh day from all of the work of creating what he had made. Rest was a divinely ordained function given to man by his Creator. The authors mention three Rs of *Re-creation: Rest, Recess, Renewal*.²⁴

Foundational Stone 6: People Skills

God has made each person. There are no two people completely alike. As the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:10, the text says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Each person that God made is unique in his or her own way. A born-again believer is a masterpiece of God.²⁵ Although all of us have similarities, we all differ with different personalities. In ministry different personalities will be encountered throughout ministry. “This simple insight into God’s design of people can transform our ability to get along with and minister to those God has placed

²² Ibid, 164.

²³ Wilson and Hoffman, 165-169.

²⁴ Ibid, 170-179.

²⁵ MacDonald, 1919.

within our sphere of influence.”²⁶ The authors offer a personality test that they recommend each minister take to access their personality strengths and styles, which contributes to diversity in the body of Christ as we interact with others.²⁷ Additional “people skills” that the minister develops are hearing and listening skills. “There’s is a big difference between truly listening and merely hearing. Hearing is a function of the ear; listening is a function of the soul.”²⁸ Ministers must forever learn to get along with others, especially those who will be difficult. They will encounter many in their ministry who will be difficult. “Difficult people” will often serve as God’s sandpaper to smooth out the rough edges of our own personality!”²⁹

Foundational Stone 7: Leadership Skills

A minister’s leadership skill determines his altitude. Because many have displayed poor leadership skills, they have led unhealthy churches and been forced from ministry positions. One main leadership skill that the authors discuss is “Transformative Leadership.” “Transformative Leadership” in ministry is being able to change their style of influence based on the life moment of the ministry organization. *Transformative leadership* is a necessary component of what it takes to succeed in tenured ministry. Organizations sometimes outgrow leaders because the leaders fail to transform and are unable to work out of more than one style of leadership.”³⁰

While ministers may differ in personality and approach leadership differently, there are some skills which should be displayed by all ministers, such as integrity and this should be lived out throughout their life. It is important to also recognize that each ministry setting is different and will have different results. They must be willing to change because ministry does change

²⁶ Wilson and Hoffmann, 191.

²⁷ Ibid, 192-199.

²⁸ Wilson and Hoffmann, 199.

²⁹ Ibid, 201.

³⁰ Wilson and Hoffmann, 221.

and does not remain the same. Ministers should encourage their followers to follow their example as they follow Christ. An effective leader should always want to grow from the inside out and the seven foundational stones which the authors presented in the text, will identify the areas in which the ministers life will need growth and improvement so that the minister might begin the crucial work immediately.³¹

B. Unhealthy Churches with No Purpose:

When leadership is flawed in a church, that particular church will be an unhealthy church without any purpose. There are many churches that are stuck in tradition and as a result they continue to perpetuate the past. Any change whatsoever is considered negative. In many cases these churches never step out on faith because of fear. Although many of these churches have been established in the community for a long time, they are in a state of stagnation.³² Many churches are driven by the personality of the pastor. What the church does on a monthly basis, depends on what the leader wants. “One obvious problem with a personality-driven church is that its agenda is determined more by the background, needs, and insecurities of the leader than by God’s will or the needs of the people.”³³ If they have a high turnover of leaders, in many cases, a key lay leader is the driving force of the church and makes all of the decisions. When a church operates in this way, not only does the church not have any purpose, but is an unhealthy church.³⁴

Churches that focus only on finances and their yearly budget only, have no purpose. Although the Word of God emphasizes good stewardship and giving, finances in church, should not be the controlling factor within the church. The Lord Jesus did not establish His church to

³¹ Wilson and Hoffman, 221-250.

³² Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 77.

³³ Warren, 78.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 78.

make a profit, but to make disciples in all nations and to build His kingdom in the hearts of men and women.³⁵

churches that focus on programs only, are not purpose-driven churches because their focus is to only have their members serve on a program committee and carry the program out. Many in the church do not even realize that the programs they have in their church do not work; nor are there any disciples being made as a result of the program.

There are many churches whose primary focus is their church building. A lot of the officers' efforts are not put into the body and fixing the body but rather making the outside and the inside of the building look good. Funds which could be used for ministry, are used for maintaining and fixing the building. The community in which the building is housed is never challenged by sharing Jesus or nothing is done by the church in the community.

There are churches that are driven by church events and so much activity, but nothing is being done to win others to Christ or bring others into the church. It is clear many churches are busy, but do not have a clear purpose and many have allowed meetings to replace ministry. Finally, many churches are driven by seekers. Their entire ministry is based on what do the people want and how can we give them what they want. "The church should be seeker-sensitive, but it must not be seeker driven. We must adapt communication style to our culture without adopting the sinful elements of it or abdicating to it."³⁶

C. Churches which are Purpose Driven Can Address Issues:

If any church is to address any issue especially the issue of homosexuality, that church must be driven by a purpose and not by other forces that society or political issues have

³⁵ Warren, 78.

³⁶ Warren, 79-80.

determined what the church should be doing.³⁷ Each church should recognize the purpose for being in the community by asking the question, “Why do we exist?” Until any church answers this question, no matter what their ethnicity is or their denomination, they will continue to exist and have no foundation and will not be motivated to ministry to the community in which the church is planted.³⁸ These churches need to recapture the clear vision of God so that they might know His will for their church. “Absolutely nothing will revitalize a discouraged church faster than rediscovering its purpose.”³⁹ “Churches are started for many different reasons. Sometimes those reasons are inadequate: competition, denominational pride, the need for recognition by a leader, or some other unworthy motivation. Unless the driving force behind a church is Biblical, the health and growth of the church will never be what God intended. Strong churches are not built on programs, personalities, or gimmicks. They are built on the eternal purposes of God.”⁴⁰ “A purpose driven church is committed to fulfilling all five tasks that Christ ordained for his church to accomplish.”⁴¹

Purpose #1: Love the Lord with all your heart.

The act of worship describes this first purpose because if a church loves the Lord, they will worship him. This is the way to express our love for God through the act of worship.⁴² Matthew 4:10 in the “c” clause of the text says, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” The Lord Jesus quotes from the book of Deuteronomy 6:13, to worship God, Jesus was saying, “Man is to worship with the spiritual drive and ability of his soul to seek

³⁷ Ibid, 80.

³⁸ Warren, 81.

³⁹ Ibid, 81.

⁴⁰ Warren, 82-83.

⁴¹ Ibid, 103.

⁴² Warren, 103.

the most intimate communion and fellowship with the Lord. Worship God with the spiritual core of one's being, trusting and resting in God's acceptance and love and care."⁴³

Purpose #2 Love your neighbor as yourself.

The one main reason the church exists, is to minister to people. Churches must demonstrate ministry by loving and being concerned about the community in which the is established. "The church is to minister to all kinds of needs: spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical."⁴⁴ In Ephesians 4:12, the apostle Paul says to the church at Ephesus, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." It is the responsibility of every church to train and equip new disciples so that they can go out and train others to do ministry.

Purpose # 3: Go and make disciples.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave the church its marching orders when He commissioned His followers, which extends beyond all generations of believers, to go and make disciples all over the world. "As long as there is one person in the world who does not know Christ, the church has a mandate to keep growing. Growth is not optional; it is commanded by Jesus. The church should seek church growth not for its own benefit, but because God wants people to be saved."⁴⁵ Any church which is not doing that is in violation of Jesus' instructions. The Lord Jesus was instructing the church how to go and evangelize the world.⁴⁶

⁴³ Leadership Ministries Worldwide, The Preachers Outline & Sermon Bible, (Chattanooga, TN: Alpha Omega Ministries, 1996), 85.

⁴⁴ Warren, 105.

⁴⁵ Warren, 104.

⁴⁶ Alpha & Omega Ministries, 298.

Purpose # 4: Baptize them.

“In the Greek text of the Great Commission there are three present participle verbs: going, baptizing, and teaching. Each of these is a part of the command to “make disciples.” Going, baptizing, and teaching are the essential elements of the disciple making process.”⁴⁷ When a person is baptized that person is identified with the body of Christ and becomes a member of his body. “As Christians we are not just called to belong, not just to believe.”⁴⁸ In baptism the individual symbolizes a new life with Christ and into the fellowship of the family of God.⁴⁹

Purpose #5: Teaching them to obey.

In discipleship when a person has joined the church and confessed that they have a relationship with Christ, they are then taught and educated to obey God’s word. “The church exists to edify, or educate, God’s people. Discipleship is the process of helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions. This process begins when a person is born again and continues throughout the rest of his life.”⁵⁰

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this research is to determine what should be the response of the African American churches to Homosexuality. Also, the question should be asked: Why do churches of other ethnicities’ and faiths not address the issue? It is the churches response to expose sin and be able to handle conflict and issues. All churches face this major issue and society is waiting to hear what the church’s response concerning this issue. Many denominations have decided to ordain homosexual clergy and perform same-sex marriages. The

⁴⁷ Warren, 105.

⁴⁸ Warren, 105.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 105.

⁵⁰ Warren, 106.

issue of homosexuality has caused a wave of immorality not only in America, but all over the world:

Increased promiscuity

Destruction of marriage and family

Erosion of morals in school and in public media

Promotion of homosexuality on an unprecedented scale

As a result of the aforementioned effects, there is a universal acceptance of homosexuality as a normal and natural lifestyle and this is a result the sexual revolution which has taken place in the world. “Moral decay permeates every aspect of society from the White House to the “school house.” Consider what former Vice-President Al Gore had to say about homosexuality: “I think gay men and women ought to have the same rights as heterosexual men and women to make contracts, to have hospital visiting rights, to join together in marriage.....I don’t understand why it is considered by some people to be a threat to heterosexual marriage.”⁵¹

This issue is facing every church that has been established in the name of Jesus Christ and who believe what the Bible teaches. Many churches have become powerless and speechless because of its inactivity on this issue.⁵² The church, if it is a church of Christ, should heed the words of the scripture. This research thesis research paper will in fact discuss the Biblical response that should be given by all churches and also lists reasons as to why the researcher believes churches do not respond to the issue of homosexuality. This research thesis will also include statistical surveys and interviews with pastors of various ethnic groups. Practical and Biblical advice will also be presented to assist churches in how to deal with this issue of homosexuality from the Word of God.

⁵¹ Montoya, Alex D., The Church’s Response to Homosexuality, Master’s Seminary Journal 19, no. 2 (September 1, 2008), 233-234

⁵² Ibid, 234.

Statement of Limitations

The thesis will not address additional reasons as to why churches do not address the issue of homosexuality. The researcher will list four main reasons he believes why churches do not respond to the aforementioned issue, but many issues that are sins and shortcomings among those who are in the body of Christ.

The Theoretical Basis for the Project

The thesis will present clearly the text in the Bible that teaches and condemns Homosexuality as sinful, unnatural, and brand it, a perversion. God has not left any room or reason in his Word for the practice of Homosexuality. The apostle Paul made it clear in his letter to the church at Corinth that those who practice Homosexuality, will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Statement of Methodology

The researcher chose this topic because as I stated in my Introduction, this issue was very personal to me because I had a family member who was very much involved in a homosexual lifestyle. As a result of being involved in the type of life, it ultimately caused his death at the young age of 38 years of age. It was determined that my family member sought help from the local church and clergy. He did not get any guidance or direction from the church nor the church leadership. The church did not want to discuss or deal with the issue of homosexuality.

Chapter One is my Introduction of the thesis and it is very lengthy and the reason for that is because it was necessary to analyze the three reasons that I believe African American churches and other faith groups do not respond to the issue of homosexuality. I discuss the following topics in the Introduction:

A. Flawed leadership produces unhealthy churches

B. Foundational stones

C. Unhealthy churches have no purpose

In Chapter Two, I will discuss how we got here, the homosexual agenda and now that we are here, where do we go from here and what should the church and other faith groups do now with this issue.

Chapter Three includes and examines the findings of the research the surveys I received from interviews from both black and white pastors on the issue along with statistical information.

Chapter Four is my summary and solutions which summarize what I have discussed throughout the entire thesis. I discuss solutions to and how the church and other faith groups should respond to the issue of homosexuality.

Chapter Five is the conclusion of the thesis and I would hope and pray that this research would provide helpful tools and techniques that would help church leaders and churches respond to this issue of homosexuality with the love of Jesus to those who are trapped in this sinful lifestyle. I will also discuss leadership and the importance of leadership and what leaders can do to impact their communities where their churches are located.

Review of Literature

Books

The Believers Bible Commentary, written by William MacDonald is a thorough, yet easy to read Bible Commentary that turns complicated theology into practical understanding of the Biblical text to everyday people.

Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion, written by Richard Lovelace. In this text, the author discusses the crisis and conflicts which occur as a result of the

issue of homosexuality and ways in which the church should be compassionate and loving toward the gay community.

Preventing Ministry Failure, written by Michal Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman, is a text which covers a wide range of issues in which most pastors face on a daily basis. The book provides insightful and practical suggestions for avoiding ministry failure to all pastors. The authors share with the readers of the text, how to be an effective and long-term pastor in this ever-changing world we live in. The author also recommended suggestions for the minister's self-care and accountability to one another and how to set boundaries in your ministry and your life. Every pastor and minister of the gospel should have a copy of this text in their library and read it and read it until it becomes a part of their memory.

The Purpose Driven Church is a text by Dr. Rick Warren that deals with church growth but also church health. Dr. Warren presents principles and concepts on how to grow the church without compromising the churches message and mission. These principles and concepts have been proven to work as his church is the fastest growing church in America. Every pastor, lay person and seminary should have a copy of this text and should be a required reading for each student.

Preaching Outline & Sermon Bible is a commentary prepared by Alpha and Omega Ministries for God's people to use in their preparation for preaching and teaching. Every preacher and teacher of the Word of God should have a copy of this entire commentary set, from Genesis to Revelation, to be used in their preparation in preaching God's word.

Leaders on Leadership, written by George Barna, is a book on leadership put together by a diverse group of leaders who have stood the test of time and who have lived lives of integrity. They share their perspectives on leadership and they share the insights they have

gained from their long time in ministry, pastorage and other Christian services. Every pastor and layperson should read this text and should be a required reading for all seminary and Bible college students.

Scripture & Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today written by Marion L. Soards is a text in which the author shares with the reader of the text what the Bible says and teaches about homosexuality and he also shares with the reader how the church should deal with this issue.

Is God anti-gay? This text was written by Sam Allberry in which he answers the many questions about homosexuality, the Bible and same-sex attraction. This short, easy to read text offers many positive and liberating ways to move forward.

The Homosexual Agenda, written by Alan Sears & Craig Osten is a text which exposes the strategy of the homosexual movement and its rising activism. These authors provide a well-documented proof that America and in fact the entire world is becoming more tolerant of homosexual behavior.

Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for every Believer, is a text written by J. Oswald Sanders discussing in the text how to develop leaders by presenting key principles of leadership in both temporal and spiritual realms.

Homosexuality a Biblical View, is a book written by Greg Bahnsen which discusses the church's response to homosexuals and he also discusses the hope that the church has available for those involved in a homosexual lifestyle.

Journal Articles

The Church's Response to Homosexuality, is an article written by Professor Alex D. Montoya, associate professor of pastoral ministries at the Masters seminary. In this article, Dr. Montoya discusses the beginning of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. The entirety of the article explains the Biblical mandates found in the New Testament which demand the response of the church. Four responses are presented by the author. Any church would do well to read this article so that the church will know how to deal with this issue from a Biblical perspective.

Is Homosexuality a Sin? What Sin Do We Discern? This article was written by Dr. Judith Hoch Wray who is a Biblical scholar, teacher, homiletician, writer and editor, who holds a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies. She is also a Lesbian. The author asks two questions throughout the article and attempts to justify the answering of both questions with scriptures and with other statements from those of the gay community.

Tragedy, Tradition, and Opportunity in the Homosexuality Debate is an article that was written in the **Christianity Today**, November 2014, edition by Ronald J. Sider. In the article, the author states that the evangelical community has been hostile towards the gay community and many are homophobic who tolerate gay bashers. He also discusses the consistency with which the Bible presents scripture against homosexuality. He closes the article by arguing that the church needs to have a new approach if the church is going to minister to the gay community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Church's Response to Homosexuality: Biblical Models for the 21st Century is an article written by William M. Tillman Jr. The author discusses what should be the church's response to homosexuality in the 21st century.

Love at its Best: The Church's response to Homosexuality an article written by Ken Huggins discusses what the church response should be to homosexuality.

Guilty of sin: African American Denominational and their exclusion of SGL sisters and brothers written by Darnell Moore, is an article which discusses how the gay community is excluded and ignored in many black churches.

Their own received them not: African American Lesbians and Gays in black churches is an article written by Horace Griffin in which he discusses at length that the issue of homosexuality is rarely discussed in the black church and other issues are discussed in the way African American people treat gay people.

Scriptures

Genesis Chapter 1:26, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth.” In this text the entire trinity is at work in the creation of mankind the crown work of God and God placed the man whom he created as the representative of the earth to subdue it and keep it.⁵³

Genesis 2:18, “And the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.” It was God’s idea for Adam to have a wife and she was taken from his side as he was in a deep sleep, “Woman was taken not from Adam’s head to dominate him, nor from his feet to be trodden down, but from under his arm to be protected, and from near his heart to be loved.”⁵⁴

Genesis 2:24, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” It was God who first instituted marriage a divine

⁵³ William MacDonald, 33.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 34-35.

institution between a man and a woman. “It was established for man’s good and cannot be violated with impunity.”⁵⁵

Genesis 19:4, “But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them.” The men of Sodom wanted to have sex with the men who were in the home of Lot they surrounded the home in an effort to do so but Lot offered his daughters instead of which they did not want his daughters.⁵⁶

Leviticus 18:22, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” This text teaches that sodomy and or homosexuality is wrong and forbidden by the Lord.⁵⁷

Leviticus 20:13, “If man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” The text teaches that both of them who participated in the sin should be put to death.⁵⁸

Deuteronomy 6:13, “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.” This text teaches that the Lord God required for the children of Israel to give him absolute commitment to him and to no other and they were to do this willingly without force.⁵⁹

Ezekiel 16:49-50, “Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me:

⁵⁵ William MacDonald, 35.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 56.

⁵⁷ William MacDonald, 155.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 157.

⁵⁹ Allen, Ron, House Wayne H., & Radmacher, Earl, Compact Bible Commentary: (Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN: 2004), 111.

therefore I took them away as I saw good.” In the text Ezekiel names the sins that Sodom and Samaria were guilty of as well as Jerusalem.⁶⁰

Matthew 4:10, “Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” This was the third time that Jesus had resisted the Devil and reminded the Devil yet again that worship is only for the Lord and him only should we worship.⁶¹

Matthew 16:18, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Jesus was telling Peter that he would build his church on the rock and not a stone. The church would be built on Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone.⁶²

Matthew 22:37-39, “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” In this text the Lord Jesus really summarizes all human race obligation to him to give him first place in all of our lives. “Love God with the totality of his being. The heart speaks of and the strength of the physical nature.”⁶³

Matthew 28:19-20, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the emotional nature, the soul of the volitional nature, the mind of the intellectual nature, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of

⁶⁰Allen, Ron, House Wayne H., & Radmacher Earl, Compact Bible Commentary: (Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN: 2004), 566.

⁶¹ William MacDonald, 1214.

⁶² Ibid, 1266

⁶³ William MacDonald, 1288.

the world. Amen.” The Great Commission are the commands of Jesus to the church its standing orders, they are three commands not suggestions.⁶⁴

Mark 7:20-23, “And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” “It is not things that defile a man but the heart that defiles the man Jesus teaches in the text.”⁶⁵

John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” The Lord gives this promise to every believer that when each believer knows the truth they are free from their sins, sin has no control over the believer anymore because every believer walks in the light and is being led by the Holy Spirit of God.⁶⁶

Romans 1:19, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.” The text teaches that God has not left anyone in the dark he has revealed himself to all mankind without any excuse.⁶⁷

Romans 1:26-27, “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.” This text teaches that because men and women continued in sin God gave them up to live as they desired to with each other. Verse twenty-seven the text teaches that men

⁶⁴ William MacDonald, 1312.

⁶⁵ Alpha & Omega Ministries, Inc., 128.

⁶⁶ William MacDonald, 1517.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 1678.

turned away from marriage and burned with lust for another man and practiced homosexuality and because they did this lifestyle caused disease, guilt and personality issues in their lives.⁶⁸

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” In the text Paul reminds the church at Corinth and all believers that the unrighteous will not go to heaven and will have no part of the kingdom at all. People who practice the sins that Paul mentions in the text are not Christians. Paul is not suggesting that the Corinthian church is practicing these sins but he is warning them that some of them practiced these sins before they were saved washed in the blood of the lamb. They were justified in the name of Jesus the Christ and by the spirit of God.⁶⁹

Galatians 2:10, “Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” James and Cephas wanted Paul to remember the poor and they found out Paul already had the same mindset to do the same in remembering the poor.⁷⁰

Galatians 4:12, “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.” Paul was stating to the Gentile Galatians that he was like them not under the law any longer and that he had no personal injury as a result of their treatment of him.⁷¹

Galatians 5:1, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” This verse describes the believer’s practice he

⁶⁸ William MacDonald, 1679.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1762-1763.

⁷⁰ William MacDonald, 1879.

⁷¹ Ibid, 1888.

should live as a free man, “AS C.H. Mackintosh says, The law demands strength from one who has none, and curses him if he cannot display it. The gospel gives strength to one who has none, and blesses him in the exhibition of it.”⁷²

I Timothy 1:10, “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” These described here are those who are in violation of the seventh commandment eight and nine and they are going contrary to sound doctrine.⁷³

I John 5:17, All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” The text suggests all sin is unrighteous in the sight of a Holy God and is a violation of the sanctity of the Christian community.⁷⁴

⁷² William MacDonald, 1890.

⁷³ Allen, House & Radmacher, 870.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 929.

Chapter 2

How did we get here and how did we let this happen?

The author chose this research because he strongly believes that leadership determines what people will do and how they react in many circumstances. The basis of my thesis suggests that leadership has not and is not responding to certain issues which plague our churches and it seems to affect all denominations, not just one in particular, I further argue that there are many reasons as to why churches do not respond to the issue of homosexuality and other sins that are committed by members of the church.

George Barna in his book, **Leaders on Leadership** says, “The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership.”⁷⁵ Barna further states in the book that he realizes that most Americans do not live on a theological level. For many of us, to become holy, righteous and committed to a life of living for Jesus Christ and obeying him, we need leaders who will point us to the cross in an effort to guide us away from sinful, selfish, misguided mortals. “If leaders were not necessary, God would not have included leadership among the spiritual gifts; the Bible would not provide so many incredible principles of leadership; and the Holy Spirit would not have inspired the authors of the Bible to incorporate so many examples of strong leadership”⁷⁶

Professor Alex D. Montoya in his article on the church’s response to homosexuality states that “Fueled by the attitude of free sex, abortion on demand, the acceptance of pornography, and the coming out of homosexuality into the public square, the sexual revolution

⁷⁵ Barna, Georgia, *Leaders on Leadership*(Regal Books Publishers, 1997), 18

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 18.

of the 1960s unleashed a tsunami that threatens the moral basis of American life. All of these have brought a tidal wave of immorality which is hitting America and the world, leaving unimaginable destructive effects which has caused universal acceptance of homosexuality as a normal and natural lifestyle is one result of this sexual revolution. Make no mistake about it the church faces a major issue on how to respond to homosexuality in our society and in the church.”⁷⁷

Ronald J. Sider presented an interesting article in the *Christianity*, November 2014, edition entitled, “Tragedy, Tradition, and opportunity in the Homosexuality Debate.” He writes, “Already 60 percent of all Americans now live in states where gay marriage is legal. In those states, and perhaps soon in the entire country, the public policy issue is largely settled at least for a generation or two. But the change in public policy need not and should not settle the issue for the church. Instead all of us are being compelled to examine our beliefs and practices.”⁷⁸

Sider further explains that as Christians, we need to approach our fellow church members and or neighbors who are dealing with same-sex attraction and orientation. The author is very critical of evangelical Christians in the article. But it is crystal clear that this failure is at all of our doorsteps, because many denominations and churches are silent on this issue. The author further suggests that many in evangelical circles are hostile to gays and because of this fact, they are also at fault to this ever-growing issue in the church. Instead of the community of believers showing the love of Christ to those in the gay community, the author states that perhaps many in the church have become homophobic.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Montoya, 234.

⁷⁸ Sider, Ronald J., www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/november, 1.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 1

In this same article the author states, “Dan Via, a proponent of same-sex practice, argues that a homosexual orientation is the “unifying center of consciousness” for a gay person, and that God’s promise of “abundant life” must include “the specific actualization of whatever bodily-sexual orientation one has been given by creation.”⁸⁰ Even though the author wrote this statement in the article this is his belief on the matter as he states that this belief would definitely have astonished Jesus and Paul who both were unmarried celibates who praise those who were the same in their lives. Sider further suggests that this argument by Via, “It is profoundly unbiblical to argue that one’s sexual orientation is the defining aspect of one’s identity (the “unifying center of consciousness” as Via insists).

For Christians, our relationship to God and the new community of Christ’s church provide our fundamental identity, not our sexual orientation. That is the claim that our identity as men and women with particular sexual orientations is irrelevant or unimportant for who we are. But that sexual orientation dare never be as important to us as our commitment to Christ and his call to live according to kingdom ethics.”⁸¹

The author further explains in the article that there must be a different approach by the Christian community instead of repeating Biblical truth. Those who are involved in gay lifestyles need the Christian community to love them and listen to them in ways that we have not done in the past. Furthermore, the Christian community should establish activities related to gay people and we should condemn any type of verbal and or physical abuse to the gay community.⁸²

⁸⁰ Sider, 4.

⁸¹ Ibid, 4.

⁸² Sider, 4.

Biblical scholar, teacher, homiletician, writer and editor, Rev. Dr. Judith Hoch Wray asks the question in her article, “Is Homosexuality a Sin? What Sin Do We Discern?” Her text was an oral presentation done at the Park Avenue Christian Church of New York, New York. Dr. Wray began her presentation by being personal and stating that she first was a Christian scholar who had come out of the closet as a Christian lesbian.⁸³ She further states that she has been called by the Lord Jesus to first of all to be a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, who discovered that she is a lesbian. “But by the grace of God, I have been open and out about my love of women, and am now in a committed ten-year relationship with a wonderful African American woman, while seeking meaningful employment in the church with a PH.D in New Testament and a passion for preaching the gospel of God’s love in Christ Jesus.”⁸⁴

The author asks two questions in the article, “Is homosexuality a sin?” and “does the Bible call homosexuality a sin?” She answers “no” to both of the questions. Her thesis throughout the article supports her answer to both of these questions. She lists essential definitions in the article. For example, she suggests that, “Homosexuality is part of one’s sexual identity; being attracted toward the same sex in one’s emotional, spiritual, and sexual desires.”⁸⁵ The author informs the reader of the text that she would avoid using the word, “homosexuality,” for many reasons. One, in particular, she states that society does not understand sexuality in general, especially when it comes to homosexuality. She further states in the article that the LGBT community and those in relationship with it, involve the same ethical decision making as heterosexual relationships have and she suggests there is no difference between the two.⁸⁶ In the article it is the author’s opinion through her study and

⁸³ Wray, Judith Hock. *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, 35 no 3 Fall 2000, P 169.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 170.

⁸⁵ Wray, 170.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 170.

understanding of the scriptures that according to the Hebrew and Greek testaments and in various languages one can find that homosexuality is a sin, but in the original text available to the church does not support the previous aforementioned translation.⁸⁷ The author now quotes various perspectives on sin by different scholars. She quotes scholar Dr. James H. Evans Jr. who says, “The experience of racism is central to the experience of sin and to the development of a doctrine of redemption that addresses the issue of sin.”⁸⁸

Dr. Wray quotes the white western scholar, Daniel L. Magliore and quotes from his book, **Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity**, says this about sin: “Sin is fundamentally opposition to grace, saying no to the invitation to be human in grateful service to God and in fellowship with our fellow creatures.”⁸⁹ The author quotes Hispanic scholar and preacher, Justo Gonzalez’s *Manana: A Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*, “Gonzalez names what he considers a more insidious form of sin, especially among women and oppressed minorities. Gonzalez asserts that sin is submitting to oppression and domination. Sin is dehumanization.”⁹⁰

Her final quote is from feminist scholar Dorothee Solle. In her book, **Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology**, “defines sin as separation from God and notes that this separation from God means different things in different traditions: disobedience to God’s will, a blinding of understanding, pride, arrogance, hubris; covetousness, unjust social structures; a lack of love or the failure to love; alienation from oneself, from the neighbor, from nature, from the human family.”⁹¹ The author now asks the question again in the article, “What is sin?” and

⁸⁷ Wray, 170.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 171.

⁸⁹ Wray, 171.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 171.

⁹¹ Wray, 171.

defines sin by one word from each of the four quotes from each scholar. Then asks the question again: “What does the Bible say about what is sin?” The author argues that how one defines the word depends on how each person looks at the text and through what lenses each one reads the text.⁹² For instance, the Bible was used to support slavery and racism, domination and oppression of women. Now the author discusses in the article her understanding of the Bible the Lord Jesus rarely refers to sin in the New Testament. The author suggests in the article, that there are two references of scripture in the Old and New Testaments that refer to lesbian and gay relationships, the story of the love between David and Johnathan and St. Luke 7:1-10, the story of Jesus’ healing of the centurion’s slave. The author argues that both of these passages of scripture support gay, lesbian and homosexual lifestyles.⁹³

As the author approaches a close in the article, she shares more personal experience with the reader about when she at a young age she knew the Lord had laid his hand on her. She professed Christ at the age of nine and at age 11, she knew that God had called her into full-time ministry. She suggests that the Lord allows her not to have an interest in young men as a way of rewarding her faithfulness and leading her out of a life of temptation. She states later on she found herself in love with a woman her age, who was the daughter of her prayer partner.⁹⁴ As a result of this behavior she was put out of her church and although excommunicated by her church, she says that she never wavered from her call to ministry. Afterwards she even attempted to call on the Lord for help and this was some years later to help her to “go straight.”⁹⁵ The author further states that she functioned in a heterosexual relationship for twelve years while fighting lesbian tendencies with tears and prayers, until finally the spirit of

⁹² Wray, 171.

⁹³ Ibid, 172.

⁹⁴ Wray, 173-174.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 174.

the Lord led her to read in the book of Galatians 5:1, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”⁹⁶

The author quoted from the Book of Galatians, Chapter Five, the first verse and then picked one or two of the verses further down in the chapter in an attempt to justify her living and being involved in a lesbian lifestyle. She further states that, Heterosexism, the system of privileges, exclusions, and enforced silences that continues the oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons based on assumptions that only heterosexuality is valid and acceptable, heterosexism is sin.⁹⁷

It is very disturbing what the author says in concluding the article: no one should demand, especially in the church, that any Christian brother and sister deny their calling and or deny their God-given sexuality. None of the aforementioned should ever have to lie about their sexuality in order to serve in their church faithfully and if they are required to, it is a sin and others are caused to sin because they are required as such by others. Her final statement to the readers of the article is her prayer is that all of us in the church should live together in Jesus’ word. She quotes Jesus’ words from the Gospel of St. John 8:32, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”⁹⁸

What Do We Do Now?

In response to this article, I would like to utilize some other texts in an attempt to answer the article by letting the Bible speak. In his book, **Scripture & Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today**, Dr. Marion L. Soards argues that three passages of scriptures should be taken in consideration with regard to homosexuality: Romans 1:26-27; 1

⁹⁶ Wray, 174.

⁹⁷ Wray, 174.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 174-175.

Corinthians 6:9; I Timothy 1:10.⁹⁹ The author suggests that since the passage in the book of Romans is distinctively weighty in nature, the 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy text will be examined and then the book of Romans passage looked at in that order. In Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, Chapter 6, verses 9-11, the apostle chastises the church because of their spiritual arrogance. This arrogance led to their failure in correcting and addressing immorality and church disputes within their congregation. Paul outlines their previous sins of unrighteousness and now since they have been justified by Christ, he describes those who are in the world and not in God's kingdom and begins to describe for the reader of the text, those who would not inherit the kingdom of God such as, "Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers."¹⁰⁰

The apostle Paul is by no means implying that those in the Corinthian church are committing these sins, but these sins characterized them before they were saved. Those in the Corinthian church had been washed in the precious blood of Jesus and were freed from their past sins and impurities and they were being sanctified every day by the spirit of God to set apart from the world to Lord. These Corinthian Christians had been justified made right on the basis of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.¹⁰¹ The apostle Paul is really saying in the text that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is not for any of us, especially believers, to trample over and live in sin.¹⁰²

The book of 1 Timothy is considered part of the pastoral epistles of the apostle Paul written to his sons in the ministry. Paul's sons in the ministry Timothy and Titus were sent to

⁹⁹ Soards, Marion L., *Scripture & Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today*: (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky: 1995), 18.

¹⁰⁰ Soards, 18.

¹⁰¹ MacDonald, William, *Believers Bible Commentary*: (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1995), 1763.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 1763.

churches on short missions to instruct believers and to warn those believers of their churches coming in contact with false teachers who would attempt to infiltrate the body of Christ and cause dissention within the ranks of the church.¹⁰³ The apostle only mentioned homosexuality in the text of 1 Timothy 1:9. Dr. Soards says, “discusses the value of the law at least the legal portions of the Jewish scriptures for the lawless and disobedient.”¹⁰⁴ Then in verse 10, the Apostle Paul lists those who are lawless and disobedient. “The author is busy arguing against a concrete problem in the life of the church, not homosexuality itself, and simply mentions homosexual activity along with other unacceptable activities in an effort to illustrate the central point of the argument.”¹⁰⁵

The case is different when one reads the text in his epistle to the church at Rome in the book of Romans 1:26-27. The apostle has already in the epistle stated what his major theme of the book would be in Chapter One of the book. The apostle says he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. The apostle is clear in the text those who are righteous will live by faith although all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. “Paul’s chief concern is to declare that God’s righteousness means the salvation of all humankind as God works to create saving faith in an otherwise sinful humanity.”¹⁰⁶

How the apostle does this, is by discussing the human condition and that of a life of sinfulness without God there would be no hope for all humanity. Paul further states that the Jews and the Gentiles had ignored God and trusted idols and in doing so had sinned against their God. In discussing their idolatry against their God, he refers to the sin of homosexuality as

¹⁰³ McDonald, 2069.

¹⁰⁴ Soards, 19

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 19-20.

¹⁰⁶ Soards, 20.

one of the symptoms of their problem. The author quotes Richard Hays from his book **Sojourners**, “Paul singles out homosexual intercourse for special attention because he regards it as providing a particularly graphic image of the way in which human fallenness distorts God’s created order. God the creator made man and woman for each other, to cleave together, to be fruitful and multiply. When human beings engage in homosexual activity, they enact an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual reality: the rejection of the creator’s design. They embody the spiritual condition of those who have exchanged the truth about God for a lie.”¹⁰⁷

It is clear from the text that the apostle understood the relationship of human being with God and that homosexual acts were outside the boundaries of what God intended for humanity.¹⁰⁸ The author further states in the book, “Homosexual activity is not consistent with the will of God; it is not merely a sin but evidence of sin, and there is no way to read the Bible as condoning homosexual acts.”¹⁰⁹ The author further states that God’s will for humanity is clear: “The gospel does not come as a mere affirmation of who we are and what we do; rather it tells us that God is the God of the ungodly, who saves us in and from our unrighteousness.”¹¹⁰ The believer is liberated from the bondage of sin and called into a new life of righteousness freed from the power of sin that we might obey God’s will for our lives.

Finally, the author states that, by avoiding or denying the Biblical Word regarding homosexuality, the church does not do the difficult ministry of reconciliation to which God and Jesus Christ has commissioned us. Yet, in Jesus Christ, God beckons us beyond the present

¹⁰⁷ Soards, 21

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 23.

¹⁰⁹ Soards, 24.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 26.

patterns of our human practices, forgives our failures, and promises us wholeness in Jesus Christ in God's new creation that is coming and will come."¹¹¹

In his book, **Is God anti-gay?: and other questions about Homosexuality, the Bible and Same-Sex Attraction**, the author Sam Allberry writes that he began to understand his sexuality during the same time he began to understand Jesus Christ. Although he had girlfriends during this time period, he did not feel the same kind of bond as he felt one or two of his close male friends. He states that as the long summer began and he was not busy the truth began to bite him and form in his mind: I think I'm gay.¹¹² The author further states that he did not want to feel this way but wanted to be like everyone else and be involved with what other were involved into. He also wanted to have feelings for girls like all of his friends, but instead, he desired a relationship with the same gender as himself. While employed at a coffee shop he got to know some Christians of his own age. He became friends and they invited him to their church youth group and while there with the group, he heard the message of Jesus and states that the message was quite different to what he imagined. The message he heard was about Jesus announcing his public ministry talking about the kingdom of God has come near and the response that Jesus wants is one of repentance.

Repentance means, "a turning around and to change our course of living and believe the Gospel regarding his death and resurrection." When this is done, we can and will be made right with God. He further states that when the Lord Jesus came on the scene, his message was not one separate message.¹¹³ The author states that God's message is for gay people and is the message for everyone to repent and believe the Gospel. This is the message that the author

¹¹¹ Soards, 26.

¹¹² Allberry, Sam, *Is God anti-gay? And other questions about homosexuality the Bible and same-sex attraction*: (The Good Book Company, UK, 2013), 7-8.

¹¹³ Allberry, 9.

states he heard loud and clear at his friends' church and he says that he has tried to live by this message and through it, he lives with homosexuality. He found that Biblical Christianity serves as a wonderful resource of comfort and joy in his life.

The reader of the text would be led to believe that the author is attempting to prove to the audience at large that he is not gay but has a same-sex attraction to those of the same sex. The author states this is the way he describes himself. He avoids using the term "gay" because most people that use the term are lesbian or bisexual and they normally are gay and also have same sex attraction to others of the same sex.¹¹⁴ He prefers to be thought of as a person who has homosexual feelings and same-sex attraction as opposed to someone who says that they are gay.

It is almost as if the author is attempting to convince himself that he is not gay, especially when he states that he does not use the word "gay," but "same sex attraction" that he has for other men. Then he says, "But describing myself like this, it is a way for me to recognize that the kind of sexual attraction I experience is not fundamental to my identity. They are part of what I feel but are not who I am in a fundamental sense. I am far more than my sexuality."¹¹⁵ The author states that since he has been open and honest about his experiences in homosexuality, he has been approached by many Christians who have said to him that it must be hard trying to obey the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now at this point in the text, the author answers his own question in the title of the book, "Is God anti-gay? No."¹¹⁶

He now confesses in the text that even though all of us have sinned and we all come short of the Glory of God, he still loves us, because God is bigger and better than us and is able

¹¹⁴ Allberry, 10.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 10-11.

¹¹⁶ Allberry, 12.

to handle all of the things that we struggle with in our daily lives and every one of us can take our burdens to the Lord and leave them there for the Lord has the power to clean us up and make us whole and unite us in the body of Christ. The author states that because he like many have same sex attraction for others naturally, it raises a lot of questions about his faith and his own experiences of homosexuality. It does not mean he cannot speak for others on this issue.

In fact, the author states that he has met others like himself, men and women, both young and old; some in the faith and others who have become hostile to the Christian faith many of these people have shared with him in strict confidence and many of them publicly and proudly identify themselves as gay. Many of the individuals who shared with their stories, have had stories very similar to his experience and in other cases, their stories have been different. Finally, the author states his thesis of the text is not try and speak for others but attempt to answer questions and base each answer on what the Bible has to say about each question.

The text is composed of five chapters that will be discussed to conclude this chapter in the thesis.¹¹⁷ The first question that the author discusses in Chapter One is “Getting started: the Bible, marriage and sex.”¹¹⁸ In this chapter, the author explains that many people have a false idea of sex and that the Bible somehow disapproves of sex, but the book of Genesis dispels this idea. The creator of the universe is the one who created human beings both male and female and commanded both to populate the earth. This idea of sex comes from the creator of the universe and is a way for human beings to reproduce, not just functionally, but in an act of pleasure between male and female and is a sign of the goodness of almighty God. The book of Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2, explains to the reader, the two purposes for sex.¹¹⁹ In chapter one of

¹¹⁷ Allberry, 13.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 15.

¹¹⁹ Allberry, 15.

the book of Genesis, the reader of the text discovers that the creator of the universe God himself created the physical world and all life in the world. But in Chapter Two, man and woman are created by an act of the Trinity. In Chapter One of Genesis, the creator of the universe God and the entire Trinity has created Man in His image and likeness and has given mankind dominion over all the earth and its inhabitants and also man is to increase in number fill the earth and subdue it. But in Genesis Chapter 2, the reader of the text notices a difference in the both the male and female. The Trinity created Adam first but the Lord says it is not good for Adam to be by himself because he would not be able to fulfill his total purpose of what God has designed for him to do upon the earth by himself.

The first woman is created by God, Himself and she comes from Adam and Adam says, “she is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.” The woman that God made for Adam would now, “share his nature, his vocation, and his very life.”¹²⁰ In verse 24 of chapter two the text says, “Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh.”¹²¹ God’s purpose of sex between the two is to express and deepen the unity between the man and his wife. The text further suggest to the reader that this is the pattern that the Lord has set for all human kind this union between Adam and Eve the foundation for every human marriage then and until the end of time. It is clear in the text that it is God, Himself who joins couples together in holy matrimony.¹²²

God ordained the act of sex, but it must be done between husband and wife and if done any other way outside of marriage it is evil. Let’s be honest, we live in a world that casual

¹²⁰ Allberry, 16.

¹²¹ Peterson, Eugene H., *The Message//Remix The Bible in contemporary language*:(Colorado Springs, CO.), NavPress: 2003), 23.

¹²² Allberry, 17.

sexual encounters occur every day and each occurrence is made to look harmless and fun. God's idea of sex is designed to knit two people together. God's son Jesus the Christ reinforces God's idea of sex when he characterizes sex outside of marriage as evil.¹²³

The Gospel of Mark 7:20-23 explains, "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." "The term we translate as "sexual immorality" is the Greek word *Porneia*, is an umbrella term for all sexual activity outside of marriage. Such behavior Jesus describes as evil and defiling."¹²⁴ In our scripture references, our Lord reinforces the importance of marriage and that He created male and female and we are not just human beings, but men and women with gender that none of us created but this is how God made each of us.¹²⁵

Our Lord shows the reader of the text that because of the sexual differences that each of us has, we should be married. Eve came from out of the man, from his body and both of them becoming one flesh is a reunion before this Adam was one flesh, but now both of them become one flesh because of the union by way of marriage. The author concludes Chapter One with truths that all of us should know of the purposes for marriage that are in the Bible. *First:* "Human marriage is meant to reflect something of God's nature."¹²⁶ Just like God the father, son and Holy Ghost are one and in Genesis 2:24, this text describes the unity of the man and the woman in marriage the two become one. "Marriage is a wonderful God-given way for

¹²³ Ibid, 18.

¹²⁴ Allberry, 18-19.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 19.

¹²⁶ Allberry, 20.

humanity to reflect the unity and diversity that is seen in the trinity.”¹²⁷ Male and females produce a oneness that comes from both of them being united and this is not found in gay sex. Two men and two women can never become one flesh. Neither of them will never become one the way God and the Trinity are one. Finally, the joining of male and female lead to one flesh experience.¹²⁸ *Second:* “This one-flesh union is designed to be the way in which Adam and Eve fulfill God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”¹²⁹ From this union between the man and his wife’s new life is brought into the world children front the result of their obedience to the Lord and because of marriage between a man and his wife procreation is the result.¹³⁰ *Three:* “Human marriage is not just meant to reflect something of God’s nature. It is also meant to reflect the grace that, in Christ, God shows to his people.”¹³¹ Ephesians 5:31-32 says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

The apostle Paul is teaching in this text that the marriage between a man and a woman is similar to the relationship Jesus has with his Church. It is a union between two entities, Christ and the church. Because Jesus’ body is the Church, he can draw those who are in His body, the Church, to himself, pledge himself to them and unite them unto himself. “Human marriage is a reflection of this supreme, heavenly marriage between Christ and his people. It is the one reason why Christians are resistant to allow marriage to be defined in such a way as to

¹²⁷ Ibid, 20-21

¹²⁸ Allberry, 21.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 22.

¹³⁰ Allberry, 22.

¹³¹ Allberry, 22-23.

include gay couples. A man and man, or a woman and a woman, cannot reflect the union of Christ and Christ or church and church.”¹³²

The author closes this chapter by teaching the reader of the book that really it is the Bible that teaches that sex and marriage both are the foundation in which the Christian community should think about this whole issue of sexuality today. The Book of Genesis reinforces and was taught by our Lord in his earthly ministry. This thing we call sex is a good gift given by God exclusively for marriage and must be between a man and a woman for that marriage to fulfill and carry out the purpose for which God instituted it to be.¹³³

The author ends Chapter One with the question before beginning Chapter Two and asks, “Where does homosexuality fit into all of this?” In Chapter Two, he discusses the Bible and homosexuality. Although there are only a handful of passages in the Bible which discuss this issue of homosexuality, the issue as the author suggests, does not come up often and or at least we, as a Christian community, do not discuss the issue or deal with it as we should. However, the Bible does have important things to say about this issue. We must, as leaders in the church, deal with it and not act as though it does not matter. Because in many congregations, many of those who are members, are a part of the LGBT community and many clergy members.¹³⁴ But the Christian community at large who wants to explain the Christian faith to those in the LGBT community, first of all, need to know that the passages in the Bible about homosexuality is the whole message of the Gospel.

The wider message of the Gospel of what God has done through his son, Jesus Christ, and the need for any and every one to repent of their sins and believe in faith that Jesus died for their

¹³² Ibid, 22-23.

¹³³ Allberry, 23.

¹³⁴ Allberry, 25-26.

sins is probably the first thing that any Christian should relay to the gay community. There are two passages which the author discusses from the Old Testament that directly mention homosexuality. First in the book of Genesis 19:4-5, ESV “But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.” In the text the reader of it determines that the outcry of God has reached its zenith regarding the sins of Sodom. Two angels are sent from Heaven and appear as men and they lodge at the house of Lot. Obviously from all indications the outcry from the Lord on Sodom is justified because the angels told Lot that judgment will come to the city. According to *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, the name “Sodom” has become synonymous with homosexuality as a sin and sodomy, but sexual sins was not the only cause of the downfall of the Sodom. In the book of Ezekiel 16:49-50, the sin of Sodom is described by the Lord himself as “pride, fullness of food and abundance of idleness.”¹³⁵

The men of Sodom were ready to commit homosexual rape against the angels who were in the house of Lot, but in an attempt save his guests, Lot offered his daughters to the men of Sodom. But the angels struck those men of Sodom with blindness.¹³⁶ The angels warned Lot that judgment would come to Sodom. The outcry against Sodom from the throne of God was justified. In the New Testament book of Jude, an important insight of scripture has been put into the Bible for the reader of the text to read. Verse 7 of the text says, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities around them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” This text in the Book of Jude is clear that the ungodliness of the people was sexual

¹³⁵ MacDonald, 56.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 57.

immorality. These people were being punished for sexual sins and other sins of which they committed and their destruction serves as a warning to all of us the Lord takes sexual sins very seriously.¹³⁷ In the Book of Leviticus, Chapters 18 and 20, there are two prohibitions against homosexual activity. Leviticus 18:22 states, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” Leviticus 20:13 says, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” It is clear from these two passage of scriptures that sodomy and homosexuality was and is forbidden as well as sexual intercourse with animals.¹³⁸ The author quotes Romans 1:18-32 which has been discussed earlier in the chapter but two important truths that the author mentioned is worth sharing in this chapter.

A. Homosexuality is unnatural: “The apostle Paul describes both lesbian and homosexual behavior as unnatural. The nature that Paul says homosexual behavior contradicts is God’s purpose for us, revealed in creation and reiterated in scripture. This shows why those with same sex attraction to say, but God made me this way! Paul’s point in the book of Romans is that our nature is not natural as God intended it. All of us have desires that are warped as a result of our fallen nature. Desires for things God has forbidden are the reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me.”¹³⁹

B. Homosexuality is a sign of God’s Judgment: The apostle Paul in Romans 1:19 writes that the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all

¹³⁷ Allberry, 27-28.

¹³⁸ MacDonald, 155.

¹³⁹ Allberry, 31.

godlessness and wickedness of people. This wrath is a present-day expression of God's anger for all the world to see in his wrath he gives us what we want in our sins. "The presence of all these sinful acts is a reminder that we live in a world experiencing a foretaste of God's anger and provoking its final outpouring on the day of judgment. That homosexuality activity is listed among these acts indicates that it is, in itself, testimony to the warped nature of sinful humanity."¹⁴⁰ Paul is not so much talking in societal terms but rather but describing what has happen to the entire culture as a whole.¹⁴¹ The author further states in the chapter that the sin of homosexuality is a serious sin and those who are active and practice this sin will not enter into the kingdom of God. The sad reality is that many people deny this teaching and try and argue some forms of homosexual behavior is acceptable to God. "But Paul is clear: homosexual conduct leads people to destruction. To teach otherwise as a number of purportedly Christian leaders sadly do is tantamount to sending people to hell."¹⁴²

The authors, Alan Sears & Craig Osten, in the year 2003, wrote the book, **The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today**. In their introduction of the text, they share a number of stories about individuals who were trapped in homosexual and lesbian behavior. The first story they share is about John who never had a stable family. In fact, when he was five years old, his parents divorced and as a result this, begin a revolving door of male figures in the life of John. What John learned from each of these

¹⁴⁰ Allberry, 32-33.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 33-34.

¹⁴²Allberry, 35-36.

men that they were something that he did not want to become in his life as a man. As a teenager at the age of eighteen, John learned that each of his parents had been married three times each and John realized that men were unstable and in many cases, they cause injury to many family members. He spent much of his childhood taking care of his mother and attached himself to her.

As a result of this, John grew up ashamed of being a man and began dressing up as a woman. This disguise was a cover up for John because of the inner hatred he had for himself and how miserable he was on the inside. John wanted someone to love him and he had never known the love that the Lord Jesus provides to all of us no matter what our condition may be. John states during this time, “When I would come home from a bar with a partner I didn’t know, I would break down in tears and feel like a piece of meat. I was just a hollow shell. I was twenty-four but felt like eighty. I tried to take my life and I was tired and worn out and I really did not want to die; I wanted to escape and I wanted someone to tell me that I love you and there is something of value to you.”¹⁴³

The Lord Jesus had a different plan for the life of John, as he would find out soon through the witness of a Christian couple. John managed a print shop and the couple would visit him from time to time and it seemed like a miracle, in many places in the city John would run into the couple and they would show the love of Christ to John every time they would come in contact with him. Through the witness of this couple, John came to know and accept Jesus Christ as his Personal Savior and Lord. Because of the pain of 24 years of his life, John could not go to a organized church service, but the couple would provide a personal church service to him with complete music, sermon and morning offering. In this setting John never experienced

¹⁴³ Sears, Alan & Osten, Craig, *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the principal threat to religious freedom today*, Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 1.

love on this level and he knew that at this point in his life that God loved him with an everlasting love as he read his Bible each day the pain of twenty-four years slowly melted away from his life as he allowed the word of God to become a part of his daily life. Soon John moved to Northern California and joined a church fellowship that ministered to many of those whose lives were trapped in homosexuality. While involved in this healing ministry, John met his future wife, a woman named Anne, who herself was seeking healing from her past life of lesbian behavior. In 1992, John and Anne fell in love and were married.

Years passed and the two of them were blessed to have two sons and their life and witness would be a testimony to the world of the power of Jesus Christ to deliver and heal a broken heart. His name is John Paulk. He and Anne Paulk faced overwhelming obstacles in their lives, but through the power of Jesus Christ, both of them were delivered from homosexuality and lesbianism. They also remained strong in their faith and are living testimonies of what God can do for anyone who wants delivered from this type of life. The authors' state in the text they only personally know a few homosexuals, but there are thousands of people who are like John and Anne Paulk. These are people, who have heard and responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and have been delivered from this evil lifestyle.

On the other hand, there are so many who have not heard and learned of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The authors state that if those who are homosexual activists have their way, the message of redemption of the cross of Jesus Christ will never reach those who are lost. "The effort of homosexual activists to convince Americans to tolerate homosexual behavior' tramples religious freedom and leaves a trail of broken bodies in the dust. Broken bodies, broken souls who without the chance to hear and respond to the gospel will never know that there is a way out of a lifestyle, and its accompanying behaviors, that falls far short of the

joy their creator intended and leads to despair, disease, and early death. Yet despite these dangers, it is a behavior that is being promoted as nothing more than an alternative lifestyle, and any dissent is ridiculed, vilified, and censored.”¹⁴⁴

Through the redeeming love of Jesus Christ John and Anne Paulk were delivered and their lives are one of joy and fulfillment. But there are so many others who have not been delivered from homosexual behavior and come into a saving relationship in Jesus Christ. The authors close this first story in the introduction by emphasizing to the readers of the text and the Christian community at large that when each of witness to others and admonish them to turn from their sins and embrace the love of Christ, this is not hate speech, but an act of love that because of what Jesus Christ did for each of us on the cross of Calvary, we do show love to one another. It is because Christ showed that love to each of us, while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.¹⁴⁵ The authors share another encouraging story of a person who was also delivered from a lifestyle of being a former lesbian. This sister now serves as the Executive Director of CrossOver Ministries, which is a ministry dedicated to helping those who struggle with homosexual behavior.

Her name is Melissa Fryrear and she allowed these authors to share her testimony of how the transforming power of the Gospel changed her life and delivered her from sin. Melissa was the last child her parents adopted in the 1960s. She grew up in an upper-middle class neighborhood in the city of Louisville, Kentucky. Melissa states she grew up attending church, was dedicated as a baby, went to vacation bible school and played in the children’s handbell choir. Although she had practically grown up in church, she admits she did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. She knew that it was right to attend church and remembers hearing stories

¹⁴⁴ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 2-3.

¹⁴⁵ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 3.

about Jesus and the Bible stories, but she states that she never recalls hearing about Salvation. Also, she said she did not realize that she was a sinner in need of a Savior. When she was thirteen, she remembers picking up a Bible that was resting on the pew in front of her and she began to flip through the pages of the Old Testament and the Bible fell open to the book of Leviticus 18:22 and she read what the text said as her eyes fell upon verse 22 which reads: “A man should not lie with another man as one lies with a woman, that is detestable.” She states she continued reading and closed her the Bible, without saying a word to anyone, but in her heart she spoke to God and said no to God and said to herself, “Melissa is detestable.”¹⁴⁶

She further states that she knew something was different about her at the age of thirteen because many people who are gay and lesbian believe that they are born homosexual. Melissa believed this because she remember being drawn to being with a lot of girls and she assumed that because of this I feel this way and because I was born this way and sadly this began to take root in the soul of her heart.¹⁴⁷ She further states as she got older her mind was filled with many questions about her what was wrong with her and why am I not attracted to boys my age and why am I attracted to girls and asked, “What is wrong with me?” As a result of the questions she began to search for the meaning of words like homosexual, lesbian and gay. The seed of this sin sprouted. Melissa was sixteen when she began her first relationship with another women, she says could not resist the temptation to be involved with another women and because of this feeling she embraced this feeling with welcoming arms her lesbian identity.

She left home at eighteen years of age to attend the University of Kentucky, quickly immersing herself into the gay community. She made everything in her world revolve around being gay. She states she had three goals in mind: have a good time, make a lot of money and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 4

find the woman of her dreams. The seed of this lesbian lifestyle flourished in her life. It was now in the 1980s, she began working for an advertising agency in Lexington, which was owned by three men and one of the men was a Christian and his name was Bill. He was a kind, considerate and respectful man who treated me well and was unlike the other owners. Melissa states she was well on her way in reaching her goals, but something was stirring in her heart during this time and it was then that she asked her partner to go to church with her and she agreed to do so.

She had grown up attending a Presbyterian church, so she decided to find the same named church in the city of Versailles and the name of the church was Versailles Presbyterian church. The church was a small church a congregation of older couples. Although her partner and she knew when both of them walked in the church, the church knew that they were both gay, but the church received them with warmth and without any condemnation towards the life they were both living. She had become involved in the ministry. While involved in those ministries, she explains: “ I met a couple in the church who were in their late seventies, L.J. and Doris Crain who took me under their wings and began to witness to me.¹⁴⁸ L.J. taught the adult bible study class and he knew and boss Bill at the advertising agency knew the life I was living because both of them had the gift of discernment and also I looked the part of living as lesbian women.

Neither of these men ever said anything to me about the way I was living, but both of these men met me where I was in my life and accepted me with the grace of God while loving me unconditionally and continuing to pray for me. It was because of this I made the most important decision in my life. ‘One afternoon, sitting alone on the edge of my bed in the

¹⁴⁸ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 5.

stillness of my bedroom, I said quietly in my heart, “Jesus, Jesus please, please come and be the Savior of my life and the Lord of my life.” He did; and a new seed was planted.”¹⁴⁹ I began to read the scriptures that mentioned homosexuality and many months I wrestled and went round and round with the Lord arguing with him and pleading with him, I know what your word says it is wrong and sinful the way I am living but I was born like this and this is all I have ever known. To me I feel normal, but God you said in your word that’s its abomination. Please help me. It was then I realized that the word of God has penetrating power because his word is living and active, sharper than a double-edged sword; it penetrates even the dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow and his word even judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

For the next six to twelve months, the Holy Spirit continued to allow these truths to sink into my spirit until one day I was convicted that the life I was living was a life of sin. In 1992, I repented of my sins and my life became a new creature. The sexual immorality stopped even though we continued to sleep in the same bed and live together, but the grace of God was patient with me. And he began to slowly and patiently unwrap the blessings he had in store for me and eventually we separated completely.”¹⁵⁰

This story of Melissa should remind all of us in the body of Christ that those of us in his body should treat those who are involved in homosexual and lesbian lifestyles should be treated with respect, compassion and sensitivity to do them otherwise be a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the sacrifice Christ made for all of us on the hill called Calvary. Finally, the church should never remain silent on this issue because to remain silent is a threat that the homosexual agenda represents to religious freedom in America and around the world.¹⁵¹ Now

¹⁴⁹Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 7

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 7.

the authors discuss how we got here regarding this issue of homosexuality. “In the year of 1983 over 30 percent of Americans said they knew someone who was homosexual. By 2000, that figure had skyrocketed to 73 percent. In 1985, only 40 percent of those polled said they were comfortable around individuals who practice homosexual behavior. By 2000 that number had risen to 60 percent. Also in 1985, 90 percent of Americans said they would be upset if their son or daughter announced they were not homosexual.”¹⁵² How did the church let this happen as the church looks in disbelief as “almost 2 percent of the population achieved so much success in transforming American culture and restricting religious freedom.”¹⁵³ This threat did not happen overnight. This long-term strategy was implemented and led by homosexual activists who wanted to transform the perception that most Americans view who opposed homosexual behavior. As Gene Edward Veith wrote about the tremendous strides made by the homosexual activist movement: “Homosexuality used to be considered a vice; now even those it makes uncomfortable now must avow as in a Seinfeld episode not that there’s anything wrong with it, while those think there is something wrong with it are considered to have the vice of intolerance.”¹⁵⁴

This shift in homosexual behavior occurred in less than a generation. How did this happen so quickly? The reason the shift happened so quickly is because of two leading homosexual activist strategies that were devised by activists Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen. “The homosexual activists laid out a six-point strategy to radically change America’s perception of homosexual behavior. Their six points were:

1. Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and often as possible.

¹⁵² Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 17.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 17.

¹⁵⁴ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 17.

2. Portray gays as victims, not aggressive challengers.
3. Give homosexual protectors a “just” cause.
4. Make gays look good.
5. Make the victimizers look bad.
6. Solicit funds: the buck stops here (i.e., get corporate America and major foundations to financially support the homosexual cause.)¹⁵⁵

All six of these points will be examined to show how each of these are being played out in present-day American culture.”¹⁵⁶ The *first strategy* the authors discuss is where the activists would talk about being gay and their lifestyle as loud and as often as possible. This strategy that the activists used has been very effective because in this culture we live in one can see newspaper articles and television shows and commercials, which depict so-called ordinary and normal people who practice homosexual behavior. Many are already saying that this type of behavior is just another lifestyle. Also, many people are so tired of hearing about the issue they have become exhausted and then they withdraw. In both cases, the radical homosexual activists win. Many bystanders give up and say give them what they want.¹⁵⁷ The activists also used the media because they knew that the average American watches television for seven hours per day. “Homosexual behavior has not only become commonplace on network television and in movies, but homosexual characters are often portrayed as the most compassionate, funny, normal and human individuals in the show.”¹⁵⁸

The homosexual activists next targeted organized religion. “While public opinion is one primary source of mainstream values, religious authority is the other. When conservative

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 17.

¹⁵⁶ Alan Sears & Craig Osten , 18.

¹⁵⁷ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 18-19.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 20.

churches condemn gays, there are only two things we can do to confound the homophobia of the true believers. First, we can use talk to muddy the moral waters. This means publicizing support for gays by moderate churches, raising theological objections of our own about conservative interpretations of biblical teachings, and exposing hatred and inconsistency.”¹⁵⁹ It is sad to say that many liberal churches are assisting the homosexual activist in their agenda by throwing out the Gospel that the Bible teaches and these churches only exist for a few purposes besides their promoting and accepting homosexual behavior.

The *second strategy* the homosexual activists used was to act as though those in the gay community are victims and not the ones who are aggressive in this fight. They also used tragedies which occurred to individuals in the gay community as opportunities to move the homosexual agenda forward calling anyone who opposes them murderers. It seems that homosexual activists and those who support their cause are willing to go as far and below the belt to demonize people of faith by classifying people of faith with Adolf Hitler, who exterminated 6 million Jews.¹⁶⁰ The *third strategy* used by the homosexual activists were to develop a just cause by piggybacking on legitimate efforts to right past wrongs which have been inflicted on certain people such as African- Americans and they also manipulated statistics on such things as teen suicide, tragedies in the gay community and as a result this caused many evangelical Christians to speak up for the gay community acknowledge there was a need for the gay community to be protected from the hostile society.¹⁶¹ The *fourth strategy* used by the homosexual activists was to try and rewrite history by stating because many people who are famous and actors are homosexual society should be sympathetic in their treatment of

¹⁵⁹ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 20.

¹⁶⁰ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 21-22.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 22.

the gay community. And sadly many Christian communities have played right into the hands of this sympathetic treatment or their community.¹⁶² Next, the *fifth strategy* used by the homosexual activists was to make themselves look good and make victimizers look bad in the public eye. Many churches and communities of faith have fell into this trap by not practicing Christian love in word and deed. Many Christians who speak out against this issue, have unconfessed sin in their own closet.¹⁶³ The *sixth and final strategy* used by the homosexual activists is to attempt to falsely accuse those who oppose this type of lifestyle with having millions of dollars available to promote this lifestyle. They do this so they can solicit funds. The gay community are also backed by millions of dollars they receive each year from various corporations.

The authors discuss in the chapters that follow, how homosexual activists have successfully implemented the six-point strategy with the media, public schools in the medical field, corporate America and in the church. “They have achieved the goals they set out in the late eighties through careful coordination and relentless effort. As a result, the very future of our nation is at risk if the homosexual agenda continues to advance unchecked.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 23.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 23-24.

¹⁶⁴ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 24-26.

CHAPTER 3

Research Findings from Thesis Participants

Examples:

In December 1989, on a Sunday morning in New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral, the late Cardinal John O' Connor was about to begin his sermon when suddenly those from the gay community began shouting from the congregation, "You bigot, O'Connor, you're killing us," yelled one angry man.¹⁶⁵ Others began to join the man, from a militant homosexual group called ACT-UP. They stretched themselves out in the aisles and chained themselves to the pews. Father O'Connor tried to continue the service and start his sermon. This happened as police officers arrested forty-three protesters carrying many of them out on stretchers for those who refused to stand to be arrested. One of the irate protesters made their way to the altar of the church for communion and took one of the wafers and threw it on the ground.¹⁶⁶

In November, 1992, voters in Colorado Springs passed Amendment 2. This would have denied those who practiced homosexuality behavior special legal privileges. Will Perkins was the man who helped get the amendment passed. While sitting in his normal seat at the Village Seven Presbyterian Church just before the pastor was about to read the scripture more

¹⁶⁵ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 117.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 117.

than a dozen radical homosexual activists leaped out of their seats in the middle of the congregation starting throwing condoms into the crowd.¹⁶⁷

“A government minister has launched an outspoken attack on church leaders in a new collection of prayers written for homosexuals. The foreign office minister, Ben Bradshaw accuses Christian leaders of hostility towards homosexuals in a forward to a controversial anthology which includes contributions by Church of England clergy. One prayer in the book is addressed to the wife of my lover, another prays that the next pope shall be young, colored, and gay and one contributor argues that Jesus was a homosexual. Mr. Bradshaw, who is himself gay, said that the new book would provide strength and inspiration for those who want to celebrate their God-given sexuality in the face of continuing rejection and hostility from church leaders.”¹⁶⁸

The author contends this is what happens when we allow churches to choose and affirm homosexual behavior. The Word of God is rewritten, as well as liturgy, and the church itself becomes a house that celebrates sinful behavior. This happened at a church in England, but the liberal church in America is following in the same footsteps.¹⁶⁹

In Northern California some liberal United Methodist ministers held a mass wedding service for same sex couples which was in direct violation of the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*. Bishop Melvin Talbert who supports same sex marriage turned the other way and ignored the church teaching on same sex marriage.¹⁷⁰

A female United Methodist pastor refused to conduct legal marriages between a man and a woman in her church until the United Methodists lifted the ban on same-sex marriages.

¹⁶⁷ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 118.

¹⁶⁸ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 120.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 120.

¹⁷⁰ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 121.

She describes her church as a community of faith church with some 200 members composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds who love to explore together the many ways of understanding God and she states that the membership does this by celebrating the gifts of all of its members regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. She states, “We honor a diversity of theological expression, and us both feminine and masculine images of God. Our creed is a diversity of theological expressions: traditional Christianity, an appreciation of other sacred texts, concern for ecological dimensions of the creation and planet, Liberation theology, Native American spirituality, and a critique of patriarchal religion and hierarchy. Diversity means reflecting both feminine and masculine images of God.”¹⁷¹ This church was honored by the local government for flying the homosexual rainbow flag and because they served as the local venue to discuss homophobia in the faith communities. “The pastor has gone as far as to endorse a ‘transgender antidiscrimination’ bill that was passed by the New York City council and amended the city’s human rights ordinance to include “gender identity or expression” and grant civil rights protections to “transgender “ or variable gender persons.”¹⁷²

Homosexual advocacy groups along with the Episcopal Church U.S.A. sought to repeal Texas’s anti-sodomy law in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case. On behalf of two homosexual men, the church filed a friend of the court brief to the United States Supreme Court. If the high court rules in favor of the brief, making it a constitutional right to same-sex sodomy of the so-called right to privacy this could open up a series of legal challenges to legalize deviant and previously illegal sexual behavior such as pedophilia.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 121.

¹⁷² Ibid, 121.

¹⁷³ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 121-122.

One of the major Methodist universities in Madison, New Jersey, Drew University was chosen as the “most-gay friendly” university in the country.¹⁷⁴

First Presbyterian Church of Orlando, Florida which is the fourth largest church in the Presbyterian Church USA, the pastor was forced to retire from his pulpit by church members and the Central Florida Presbytery under pressure because he was very vocal in his opposition to the ordination of homosexual pastors, same-sex marriage and because he preached a sermon against the city’s sexual orientation anti-discrimination policy. Rev. Jim Henry of the neighboring First Baptist Church said: “We have lost a voice of conviction that spoke eloquently calling us to the high ground of morals and values. We have lost one of the best communicators of the good news of hope in all of the land.”¹⁷⁵

A United Methodist minister, named Richard Zomastny, took voluntary leave in 1999 to undergo a sex-change operation to become Rebecca Steen and was subsequently approved to serve in the pulpit in the Baltimore-Washington United Methodist Conference. Reverend Chip Aldridge of the pro-homosexual group Reconciling Ministries network, defended him and said, “When persons simply say that the Bible views homosexuality as sin, they’re dealing with a specific, narrow interpretation of the Bible. And there are many astute Bible theologians who dispute use of those limited number of Biblical references to interpret how ministry should take place with gay and lesbian people in 2002.”¹⁷⁶ The minister eventually surrendered his ministerial license as one of the United Methodist minister’s suggested that the issue be brought up in the next denominations general conference of 2004. The Reverend Gayle Annisforder said, “It’s time for transsexual clergy.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 122.

¹⁷⁵ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 122.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 122.

¹⁷⁷ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 122.

At its general assembly, the Presbyterian Church of the United States voted to revoke the ban on the ordination of those who engage in homosexual behavior. Fortunately, the vote was overturned because of a hand full of more traditional churches and individuals. “Those sympathetic to the homosexual cause are planning to keep bringing the issue back each year until the other side is worn down and gives in on the issue.”¹⁷⁸

The United Church of Christ have already ordained clergy in its church while the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in August of 2001 voted to study the blessing of same-sex unions and ordaining ministers who are homosexuals.¹⁷⁹ In Philadelphia, an Episcopal priest was denied the right to perform ministry because he stated that his church had become too liberal on issues such as the ordination of women and the in recognizing same-sex marriages.¹⁸⁰

A diocese in the Anglican church in Canada also decided to welcome same-sex unions. Some conservative Anglican churches split from the diocese. Shortly thereafter at a conference of the dissident churches, Archbishop Yong Ping Chung of Southeast Asia stated that the church needed to adhere to biblical teaching with regard to homosexual behavior he stated, “The world is confused and chaotic without the Bible. The value and moral state of life, or lack of it, is forever changing according to what’s seen to be the latest trend or fashion.”¹⁸¹ He further stated that what has happened in the Anglican church is happening in all other denominations. The acceptance and affirmation of this type of behavior is widespread.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 123.

¹⁷⁹ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 123.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 123.

¹⁸¹ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 123.

¹⁸² Ibid, 123.

Dr. Chris Ayers, a liberal Southern Baptist pastor from Wedgewood, North Carolina, preached a sermon titled “Homosexuality Is Not a Sin: The Christian Education of a Baptist Minister.” Several years ago, his church left the Southern Baptist Convention because of its stance on homosexual behavior. Pastor Ayers quoted theologian Walter Wink who stated, “those who condemn homosexual behavior are guilty of pick and choose theology, discarding some Bible verses while hanging on to others.”¹⁸³ The pastor cited the theologian without even discussing what the Bible has to say about the sinfulness of homosexual behavior. The pastor went as far as to say the Lord Jesus himself was guilty of engaging in “pick-and-choose” theology. “It is interesting to note that those who advocate homosexual behavior “pick and choose” which scriptures they choose to abide by and which they choose to ignore.”¹⁸⁴

The Christ Congregational Church in Silver Spring Maryland is a liberal affirming church. One of their longtime members stated in the newsletter that he wished he could attend church as a woman. Although the college teachings are not compatible with homosexual behavior, Boston College which is a Catholic University allowed official recognition to gay-straight student alliance on campus.¹⁸⁵ One homosexual pastor said. “There has been a radical cultural shift in the past ten years. Attitudes towards gays and lesbians have changed in the workplace, schools, and other civic entities. For the church to continue to stall seems archaic and irrelevant.”¹⁸⁶ “Religion is often at the core of why people hate us people often get their views from their religions, so we don’t want the pulpit saying that being gay is wrong.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Alan Sears & Osten, 124.

¹⁸⁴ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 124.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 125.

¹⁸⁶ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 124.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 121.

Cathy Renna, Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation in an article in the March 20, 2000, *Newsweek* magazine stated that “the radical homosexual agenda has permeated the entire church to the point the church only stands for the affirmation of homosexual behavior as the following occurred in the state of Michigan.” The article explained that: “The two women Sylvia Kunst and Linda Meeker met five years earlier in a Detroit church they both stated in meeting each other it felt like a blessing and a curse. For many years both of them denied their sexuality, Linda was married for over 30 years in a heterosexual marriage. Sylvia was “born again” and stated she was cured of being a lesbian.

Both of the women were taught to be with God or be gay. The both stated that when they met, they knew that they loved each other, but also both of them stated they loved the Lord while praying for an answer. Both of the women gave up finding a church that would welcome them until they saw a listing in a gay circular for the Fellowship United Methodist Church, a diverse and welcoming church to the gay and lesbian community. The church was located directly off of the road in a prim upper middle-class neighborhood in the Troy, Michigan, the church looked to be a traditional church. The congregation consisted of mostly older, button-down and married couples with a few widows. The pastor of the church wore a rainbow stole, a symbol of diversity.”¹⁸⁸

“Apartheid is a sin. Racism is a sin. Sexism is a sin. Heterosexism is a sin and how God created us to love is not sinful.”¹⁸⁹ Rev. Susan A. Minasian, Pastor, Disciples United Community Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. “I’ve never felt condemned by God, it’s just the

¹⁸⁸ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 125.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 131.

church that's the problem.”¹⁹⁰ Mark Matson, a homosexual human relations director, Columbus, Ohio

The Price for Taking a Stand

Protesters threw rocks through the windows in the downtown headquarters of Focus on the Family, because of their taking a stand against homosexuality. Pink triangles were plastered on the walls of the building. Also Focus on the Family employees were verbally assaulted in the local restaurants by homosexual activists.¹⁹¹

A veteran on the Madison, Wisconsin fire department, an eighteen-year veteran gave out tracts to department members of the fire department that outlined his Biblical position on homosexual behavior. The fire fighter was suspended without pay and he was ordered to attend diversity training but he refused to attend the training and the fire department fire him.¹⁹²

At the Hamilton Baptist Church of San Francisco invited a well-known pro-family leader to preach at the church. Radical homosexual activists began beating on the doors of the church and screaming in protest by saying, “We want your children! Give us your children!” The church even experience vandalism to its church and the San Francisco Police department stated they could not do anything to stop the homosexual activists. The senior pastor, Dr. David Innes was told: “You have to understand, this is San Francisco.”¹⁹³

In Ferndale, Michigan, the City's Police Chaplain expressed his Biblical position on homosexuality and because of the position he took on the issue, radical homosexual activists attempted to have him fired.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 140.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 145.

¹⁹² Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 145-146.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 147.

¹⁹⁴ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 147.

Bethel Missionary Church Pastor the Rev. Tom Hansen objected to the City of Ferndale hosting the state's largest annual gay pride festival, but Erin James of Mel White's Soulforce group said Pastor Hansen that's his belief that the Bible condemns homosexuality, to that response one resident said, "homosexuality is not a sin and not a sickness, Rev. Hansen's interpretation of the Bible is hurtful and divisive."¹⁹⁵

Survey and Interviews of Pastors

The purpose of this project was to ascertain why the African American Church did not have visible response to the cultural shift, shifting towards acceptance of Homosexuality as the norm and not as a sin. Children watching T.V. and movies, reading books, and seeing ads that depict this sin as an acceptable lifestyle choice. The author also wanted to analyze the stance of other ethnicities to determine if the African American Church lack of response was the exception compared to other churches. Interviews and surveys were conducted in order to gather statistics, feedback and evidence to support this argument. From analyzing this evidence, it will become apparent that although the African American Church has been accepting of those who are engaged in homosexual liaisons. These individuals may sing in the choir, be the musician or even the pastor. Everyone in the congregation knows the person and what is happening, but the sin is overlooked and the congregant continues in their sin.

The surveys and interviews conducted requested that African American Pastors, as well as other pastors, for their response to ten approved survey questions. Their responses were then compiled and reviewed and finally analyzed. Anonymity is a key factor in the collection of honest and open responses. There was an attached letter explaining the criteria of the study. The purpose of the study was not to condemn leadership, but rather to identify areas that can be

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 147

improved for Pastors. The goal is to lead in a way that is based on Biblical foundation at all times, in love, not in condemnation. Once the reasons were identified, then solutions can be shared with Pastors, improving their leadership skills. This, in turn, will improve the African American Church, itself. Pastor will be able to lead their church congregants based on Biblical foundations. The purpose is also to increase the Pastor's effectiveness as a Pastor.

The interviews were conducted orally with those who were comfortable discussing this topic openly. They are still anonymous and neither the Pastor or the church were identified or named. The interviews were conducted with both local African American Pastors, in urban areas as well as Pastors from other geographical areas, that can be considered rural locations. The interviews and surveys were not performed scientifically. They were designed to gather responses and get feedback insight and possible solutions to this dilemma.

The Pastors, who were involved in the interviews, ranged in ages from mid-thirties to seventies. Some were new Pastors and others had been pastoring for 50 years. A few had started their own churches, while others had been installed by voting congregations. A total of 250 surveys were sent out, but fewer than 50 were returned completed. The surveys were sent to Pastors of churches of other ethnicities. The National Baptist Convention was also contacted, but they did not respond to the survey. However, their stance on Homosexuality was available on their website (see appendix.) Twenty-five Pastors were contacted for an oral interview, but fewer than 10 responded and 7 provided detailed information. Twenty-five additional Pastors were contacted that lived in other geographical areas. The response from this group was greater, wherein 15 pastors provided information. Some of the congregations and other congregations were larger.

A sample of those interviews are as follows: (Disclaimer: feedback from others is included as “general” in the summary)

Pastor “A”

1. Would you agree many church leaders do not respond to the sin of homosexuality and other sins in the body of Christ, because many of them replicate the poor leadership of others with poor leadership habits? What is your response to this statement. **In smaller congregations in Rural areas many of the congregants know who is who and this stems from growing up with these people in the same communities , going to school with them and becoming friends with the families. Therefore, what is not acceptable becomes overlooked. This causes problems for the Leader/Pastor because addressing the issue or issues because the threat of voting the pastor out of the church. Therefore, many pastors overlook issues that may cause confusion and move on to other issues in the church. I agree this causes poor leadership and causes churches to suffer because of the spirit of settling.**

2. Would you agree many church leaders suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership values.? What is your response to this statement. **Yes, many Leaders that are younger have their churches filled due to the secular way of worship, leadership, and many biblical principles are overlooked, traditions buried and our senior saints are often overlooked and even pushed to the side. Many pastors stand strong on the Word by teaching and preaching but, they aren’t living what they preach.**

3. Would you agree many church leaders do not communicate with their congregates about their personal sins because many leaders do not communicate well? What is your response to this statement. **I feel that being transparent is an effective tool for preaching and teaching. However, immature saints don’t understand transparency and therefore , they judge the Leader and often this causes confusion amongst the congregation. Many Leaders are afraid to communicate due to a lack of understanding from the congregation.**

4. How should church leadership deal with or address the sin of homosexuality?

A. All sin is unrighteousness: I John 5:17

B. We are all sinners before a Holy God: Romans 3:23, 6:23

This should be taught in Bible study or in a workshop setting possibly by the leader or by a workshop Facilitator who is not bias or not leaning to one side or the other . I John 5:17 and Romans 3:23 ,and 6:23 should be covered. A period of questions and answers should be incorporated in the Teaching.

5. As a leader of your congregation, what has been the steps you have taken to counsel your church congregation on their sins, shortcomings, transgressions when they have shared with the leadership of your church? **I use a biblical and life application approach and me as an example. It is always more personal when you put yourself into the session. The ones being counseled will always appreciate honesty and openness and I have been successful in many cases.**

6. Would you agree with this statement, the problem of homosexuality in the church is a crisis, conflict and should be discussed and dealt with in the spirit of compassion? What is your response to this statement. **That is a problem in many churches but , not the only one. There are many sins that lerk , live ,and last in churches for long periods of time. The crisis is SIN and as long as we have breath in our bodies Sin will be a ongoing problem in the church .Homosexuality existed in biblical times and will most likely be around for a long time.**

7. Would you agree all church leaders are compelled by God through his word to address all sin, especially with those of the household of faith? **Why then is there so many church leaders, who do not address sin, when all God has made the leader the overseer of his church. Leaders often build a relationship with their members and try very hard not to break the Trust of those whom you have gotten close. Therefore, Leaders often overlook, avoid, and stay away from those issues that may cause problems and leak poison in the church.**

8. How have many church leaders become skilled in helping others, but when they themselves are not putting into action, what many of them have recommended to others? Or those they help? **Many Leaders are weekly helping many and they themselves are weak due to the lack of assistance themselves. Leaders are human and often try to be private in their own lives. Then, they are mentally wrecked, weak and wandering in a wilderness of sadness and frustration.**

9. Some statistical information suggests, that many church leaders do not understand their calling to the ministry. What is your response. **I agree that all who are in Leadership in churches are in the wrong places in ministry. Some of these have caused havoc and caused many churches to become stagnant and even closed due to Leaders being in the wrong place at the wrong time.**

10. My final question to you, why do you believe many church leaders avoid the issue of homosexuality and other controversial sins in the church? **Leaders want PEACE in their churches, communities and within themselves. Therefore , they will not entertain the issues that may disrupt the flow of PEACE in the church. Is that the right approach ? That remains to be seen.**

Pastor “B”

1. Would you agree many church leaders do not respond to the sin of homosexuality and other sins in the body of Christ, because many of them replicate the poor leadership of others with poor leadership habits? What is your response to this statement.

I wouldn't totally agree, some leaders are not courageous to speak on such issues because they don't want to offend folk n their congregation, because some of their member are homosexual or have siblings that are that way. Some leaders fear the backlash of losing members as well, especially if those are the individuals that are tithing. So loosing money could be a variable as well. Some leaders are not listening to god and are preaching what they think is they should preach without the guidance of the holy spirit.

2. Would you agree many church leaders suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership values? What is your response to this statement. **I'm sure that's true in many cases, however the church should be the moral consciousness of our society and not stand silent behind our stained-glass windows.**

3. Would you agree many church leaders do not communicate with their congregates about their personal sins because many leaders do not communicate well? What is your response to this statement. **Maybe. I think it has more to do with developing relationships with members and having a sincere love for them, and having a discerning spirit of taking out time to have one on one conversations that may be difficult.**

4. How should church leadership deal with or address the sin of homosexuality?

A. All sin is unrighteousness: I John 5:17

B. We are all sinners before a Holy God: Romans 3:23, 6:23

Deal with it head on, it shouldn't be sugar coated, deal with it as a sin that is causing churches to be divided and is causing division within the body of Christ, because its causing to many schisms in large bodies of the invisible church.

5. As a leader of your congregation, what has been the steps you have taken to counsel your church congregation on their sins, shortcomings, transgressions when they have shared with the leadership

of your church? **Love them and develop generic relationships with them and have one on one counseling**

6. Would you agree with this statement, the problem of homosexuality in the church is a crisis, conflict and should be discussed and dealt with in the spirit of compassion? What is your response to this statement. **Galations chapter 6: 1- 10.**

7. Would you agree all church leaders are compelled by God through his word to address all sin, especially with those of the household of faith? **Why then is there so many church leaders, who do not address sin, when all God has made the leader the overseer of his church. Yes I agree with that first question. There are many reasons and I wouldn't know them all, id suppose that maybe some are not called to the office, some preach a watered down gospel because of a lack of knowledge, and some simply need training.**

8. How have many church leaders become skilled in helping others, but are not putting into action, what many of them have recommended to others? Or those they help? **I suppose we all lean from time to time but just not enough to spend a lifetime there. Some also get side tracked by the enemy as well.**

9. Some statistical information suggest, that many church leaders do not understand their calling to the ministry. What is your response. **I believe that to be very true. Then I think as one experience things in life, their understanding becomes better and they preach accordingly.**

10. My final question to you, why do you believe many church leaders avoid the issue of homosexuality and other controversial sins in the church?

I haven't had that experience. We have been talking about homosexuality off and on for over a year

Pastor “C”

1. Would you agree many church leaders do not respond to the sin of homosexuality and other sins in the body of Christ, because many of them replicate the poor leadership of others with poor leadership habits? What is your response to this statement.

Yes, I totally agree with the above statement; many pastors are afraid to tackle such a social acceptable behavior.

2. Would you agree many church leaders suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership values.? What is your response to this statement.

Many leaders compromise with the world when it comes to Biblical and secular values, and you will find many want deal with the issues of such because they themselves are struggling with sin.

3. Would you agree many church leaders do not communicate with their congregation about their personal sins because many leaders do not communicate well? What is your response to this statement.

Church leaders know how to communicate very well; they find themselves being criticize by opening to their congregation regarding their sins and short comings.

4. How should church leadership deal with or address the sin of homosexuality?

A. All sin is unrighteousness: I John 5:17

B. We are all sinners before a Holy God: Romans 3:23, 6:23 – B would be my answer

5. As a leader of your congregation, what has been the steps you have taken to counsel your church congregation on their sins, shortcomings, transgressions when they have shared with the leadership of your church?

Now, you have confessed your sin/s what will be the action you are willing to take to rectify the matter, or would you prefer remaining in sin and accept the raft of a loving and just God?

6. Would you agree with this statement, the problem of homosexuality in the church is a crisis, conflict and should be discussed and dealt with in the spirit of compassion? What is your response to this statement.

The problem is certainly a crisis situation, but the problem must be dealt with firmness and according to the word of God, but we must always deal with the sinner with love and compassion.

7. Would you agree all church leaders are compelled by God through his word to address all sin, especially with those of the household of faith? Why then is there so many church leaders, who do not address sin, when all God has made the leader the overseer of his church.

The leaders are compelled to address sin, but the pulpits are filled with so many non-called leaders and hireling are dollar focus instead of Divine focus.

8. How have many church leaders become skilled in helping others, but are not putting into action, what many of them have recommended to others? Or those they help?

Well, it is so easy to direct other to righteousness and struggle with holy living for themselves.

9. Some statistical information suggest, that many church leaders do not understand their calling to the ministry. What is your response.

Majority of leaders fall into this matter, the Bible notes that many are called to such a desired calling, but God chose a very few.

10. My final question to you, why do you believe many church leaders avoid the issue of homosexuality and other controversial sins in the church?

Every church is surrounded with homosexuals who shows up every Sunday, and many are in leadership positions from the pulpit, choir to the door keeper.

Pastor "D"

Would you agree many church leaders do not respond to the sin of homosexuality and other sins in the body of Christ, because many of them replicate the poor leadership of others with poor leadership habits? What is your response to this statement.

First and foremost, the core issue is being thoroughly biblical when addressing specific sexual sin or general sin among church members. The church leadership does play the major role to determine the focus of what is emphasized for preaching from the pulpit and the overall Bible teaching received by the individuals church members. Clearly, poor leadership comes from having no

Bible-centered leadership education/training for those who are given the responsibilities to lead the local church. Church leadership must be formally educated in biblical leadership to correctly lead the local church to obey the Bible's teaching. The correct biblical view of church leadership will model the proper form of leadership with the correct focus on Bible teaching regarding specific sexual sins or general sin among church members.

No doubt, poor leadership will reproduce itself in the individual church members. The church members are trusting the leadership to lead them in biblical truth. They have no way to discern whether the leadership is wrong because they have trusted what has been modeled for them by the leadership. Church members accept what has been taught to them as being what the Bible teaches because that is what the leadership has taught them. In general, most church members do not recognize wrong church leadership because they do not know what the Bible does correctly teach concerning church leadership principles. This further illustrates church leadership does not know what biblical leadership principles are without any formal church leadership education. Church leadership must be thoroughly educated in biblical leadership or do not seek to lead the local church. Period.

2. Would you agree many church leaders suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership values.? What is your response to this statement.

Many church leaders do suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership values. This is because they have no formal biblical education for church leadership to determine what is secular vs. sacred. How can church leaders recognize secular from sacred principles of leadership without any formal Bible education (bachelor ed., master's ed., etc.) for leadership? Church leaders must have some formal biblical education to properly lead the local church to fulfill and obey the Bible's teaching. If not, church leaders will not correctly lead their church as God has intended them to do.

3. Would you agree many church leaders do not communicate with their congregates about their personal sins because many leaders do not communicate well? What is your response to this statement.

Yes, many church leaders do not communicate with their congregates about their personal sins not because they do not communicate well, but they do not want to be asked to step down from leadership for their personal sins. For example, any church leader who is addicted to internet pornography or commits extra martial sin is often viewed as disqualified to lead the local church. Also, depending upon the nature of the personal sins, it is improper for a church leader to

communicate such sins because they may be embarrassing to the leader's family. It depends upon what the personal sin is. For example, receiving speeding tickets regularly is one thing; having an extra martial sin is another matter. One sin is viewed as not as harmful as the other. The nature of what the sin is should be consider before trying to share a personal struggle to a congregation. Such sharing maybe more harmful than good, regardless of the intention to be transparent to a church congregation. The share may backfire.

Often, how a church leader will communicate to a congregation is based upon personality type. The personality type of the church leader is usually different from most of the members of a church congregation. The church leader must know and understand how to communicate oneself to these different personality types. This requires some formal education for church leadership.

4. How should church leadership deal with or address the sin of homosexuality?

A. All sin is unrighteousness: I John 5:17

B. We are all sinners before a Holy God: Romans 3:23, 6:23

Church leadership should deal with or address the sin of homosexuality as it would any other sin by preaching and teaching against it (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15-20. Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb 13:4.).

4. As a leader of your congregation, what has been the steps you have taken to counsel your church congregation on their sins, shortcomings, transgressions when they have shared with the leadership of your church?

The Scriptures are clear for how a leader is to handle such sins: First, confront the sin (1 Sam. 15:10-35; 2 Sam. 12:1-13; Matt. 18:15-17; Lk. 22:31-34). Second, confess/repent the sin (Ps. 32:5; 51:1-19; James 5:16,19-20; 1 Jn. 1:8-9). Third, spiritual restoration to service (2 Sam. 12:13; 2 Chron. 33:1-20; Jn. 21:15-22; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:1-2).

5. Would you agree with this statement, the problem of homosexuality in the church is a crisis, conflict and should be discussed and dealt with in the spirit of compassion? What is your response to this statement.

No, I believe the problem of homosexuality is not a crisis or conflict in the local conservative church. This is assuming the church is conservative concerning its view regarding homosexuality. The issues of sexual immorality concerning heterosexual intercourse or cohabiting couples outside of traditional marriage

and the viewing of pornography is more an apparent problem than homosexuality in conservative churches. Those attending a conservative church who struggle with homosexuality are silent concerning their attraction to this sexual sin. They silently suffer with their sin because they fear rejection by the overall congregation because of how it is viewed. Some how homosexual sin is viewed as being a worse than the sin of unmarried heterosexual sin. It should not be viewed this way; all sin is sin regardless of its type.

Any sexual sin should be dealt with in the spirit of compassion regardless of what is it. Homosexual sin is just as bad as viewing pornography or adultery. Each sin should be dealt with the same degree of compassion and mercy (Col. 3:12-14).

6. Would you agree all church leaders are compelled by God through his word to address all sin, especially with those of the household of faith? Why then is there so many church leaders, who do not address sin, when all God has made the leader the overseer of his church.

Yes, I would agree all church leaders are compelled by the Bible to address all sin; especially, the individual sin inside the local church (1 Cor. 5:1-12; Eph. 4:17-32; 5:2-7; Col. 3:1-11; 2 Tim. 4:1-2). I believe many church leaders who do not address sin because they fear what the congregation may think about preaching and teaching about personal sin all the time. Church leaders do not want to be criticized for placing an emphasis on personal holiness. They do not want to be called a hypocrite for not being perfect themselves. Or, it is possible, they are committing the very same sin, themselves (Matt. 23:3-4; Rom. 2:1-4; 18-23).

Also, many church leaders want to be liked by the church membership. Therefore, preaching and teaching about sin within the church membership is not something they will do because of the need to be liked by the church members.

7. How have many church leaders become skilled in helping others, but are not putting into action, what many of them have recommended to others? Or those they help?

(Not answered)

8. Some statistical information suggests, that many church leaders do not understand their calling to the ministry. What is your response.

It does not surprise me this is the case. Again, most church leaders have very little formal education for pastoral leadership. A formal church leadership education would help leaders to understand biblical principles for leadership and clarify their ministry calling to lead the local church. If an individual does not have some form of formal biblical education for pastoral leadership, the individual should not lead the local church at all.

9. My final question to you, why do you believe many church leaders avoid the issue of homosexuality and other controversial sins in the church?

I believe many church leaders avoid the issue of homosexuality and other controversial sins in the church because it becomes a pet-peeve that is harped on all the time. It will drive church members away from the church or individuals away who are looking for a church, if the preaching and teaching is nothing but focused on holy living issues of morality all the time. Many church members and people looking for a church desire preaching and teaching on how to be happy, how to make a good financial living, how to have a problem-free life, etc. As a result, preaching on these topics of homosexuality and sins in the church is avoided by church leadership. Such preaching and teaching on homosexuality and other sins in the church will not fill the pews.

I believe another reason church leadership avoids these issues because they do not want to offend church members' sensibilities about this kind of sexual sin. Church leadership does not want to be viewed as not compassionate for those who are struggling with some type of sexual sin or for being viewed as hyper critical or judgmental of such sins.

Lastly, church leadership may believe no member of the church membership struggles or engages in this kind of sinful behavior of homosexuality. It is easier to think it is not a problem, so do not address it from the pulpit or teach on it in the Sunday School programming.

Statistical Information

The survey results that were returned are compiled here:

FIGURE 3.1

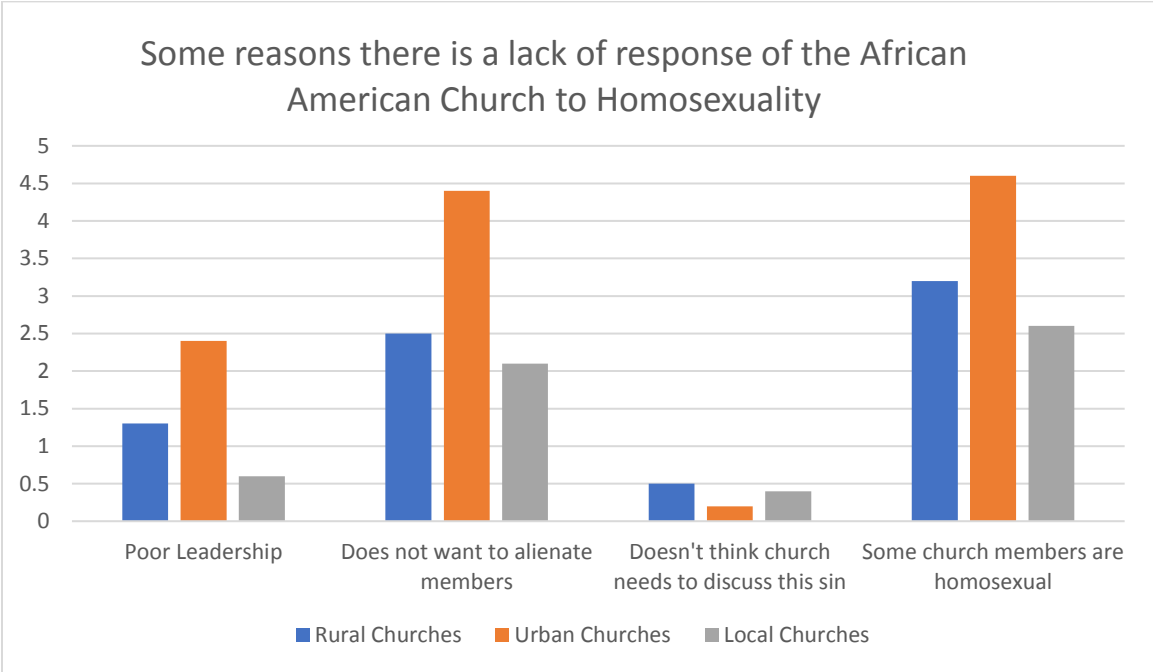
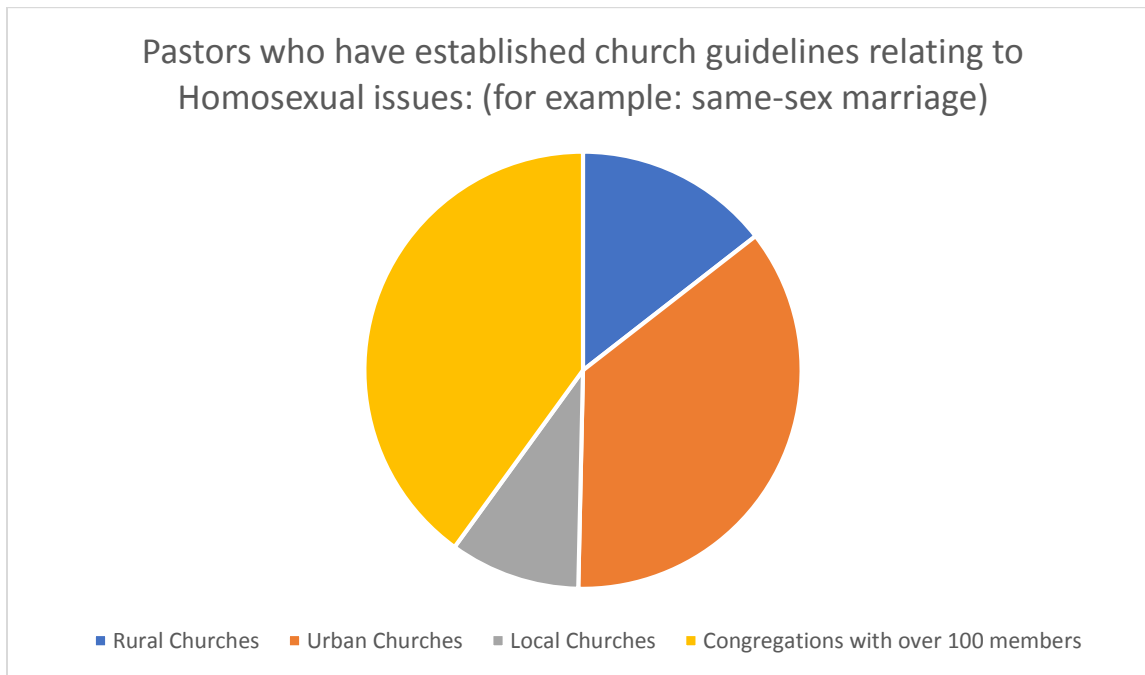


FIGURE 3.2



Summary of Findings

The Pastors who took the time to complete both interviews and the surveys offered additional insight into why the African American Church has had a lack of response to Homosexuality. Often times, it is purposely overlooked, in fear of alienating or “opening a can of worms.” They must explain that although the homosexual congregant is loved, the sin behavior is not accepted. So, what does the Pastor do, if approached to perform a same-sex marriage or a homosexual couple approaches the church about a baby-dedication? Are there church guidelines already in place, probably not.

The study already showed that one, Pastors, really do not want to respond to this issue, especially “on record.” The limited number of responses was an indicator of this premise. Secondly, Pastors may feel that if they don’t preach about it, it won’t happen with in their church. They claim to preach the Gospel. They have been licensed and ordained to preach the Gospel, but some are not preaching the full Gospel. They state that they prepare sermons based on the Bible, yet avoid certain “hot” topics. Pastors are the messengers and the message has not changed.

Chapter 4

Summary and Solutions

The issue of homosexuality, whether we are honest about it or not, is a very “hot” issue and it is not going to disappear. The church is silent and has been silent on this issue long enough. “It has been a war in which the church has either totally capitulated on the issue and embraced homosexual behavior while rejecting biblical teaching or found herself under increasing attack from inside and outside the sanctuary for taking a biblical stand on the issue.”¹⁹⁶ The church is an incredible place and there is no other place like the church. Those who are a part of the church are imperfect and are limited. None of us should focus only on our imperfections, but instead focus on the fact that we serve a perfect God who has unlimited power. The church has not been a place of love and grace for those in the gay community to come to worship. It has been a place where there is rejection by many Christians. The church is not flawless, but the church is remarkable. The apostle Paul in book of Ephesians 3:10-11, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹⁹⁷ The Lord has placed His Church in the world to make a difference. The Church should impact our communities, especially the gay community. How should the church react if a gay couple who stated that they are Christians started attending their church every Sunday? The first thing that the church should do is talk about the issue because homosexuality is not just a political issue, but a personal issue. The Christian church should not say hurtful things to the gay couple.¹⁹⁸ Another thing that the church can do to minister to the

¹⁹⁶ Alan Sears & Craig Osten, 118.

¹⁹⁷ Sam Allberry, 63.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 67.

couple is to remind them that the church is a family and the Christian community are to be family to one another.¹⁹⁹ Another thing that the church can do is provide good pastoral support and the pastoral staff need to be visible to the Christian who is struggling with homosexual issues. They should also know that the church and pastor is ready to support and help them be delivered from this lifestyle. There should be support groups and mentoring and prayer partner schemes in the church to also help.²⁰⁰ Those who are gay should know that the church loves them. “We need to love them more than their gay friends do, and we need to love them more than they love their homosexuality. Only then can we begin to point to the greater love that God has for them.”²⁰¹

The Church’s Response to Homosexuality

Written by Dr. Alex D. Montoya

This article was written by Dr. Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries at the Masters Seminary. The article consists of an introduction in which the author discusses the importance of the faith community’s need to address and respond to homosexuality.²⁰² The introduction includes five outlines that the author discusses and recommends should be the church’s response to the sin of homosexuality. He writes “There is no question that the church faces a major issue on how to respond to homosexuality in our society and in the church. The church must rise to the challenges before it is rendered powerless by its apathy or before it is persecuted to inactivity for its lack of earnestness in stemming the tidal wave of moral corruption.”²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Sam Allberry, 68.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 69.

²⁰¹ Sam Allberry, 75.

²⁰² Montoya, Alex D., *The Church’s Response to Homosexuality*, *Master’s Seminary Journal* 19, no. 2 (September 1, 2008), 233

²⁰³ Montoya, Alex D., 234.

Dr. Montoya describes the behavior of the Corinthian church as written by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians and uses this as his context in describing what he suggests the responses of the church should be regarding the problem of homosexuality.²⁰⁴ The author states that the biblical mandates, as outlined in the book of Ephesians and in I Corinthians 5-6, demand that the faith community should respond in at least four ways:

I. The Church Must Expose Homosexuality as A Sin Against God:

The author discussed the importance of the church exposing homosexuality as a sin. Not only is it a sin but it a sin against the very creative order of almighty God.²⁰⁵ The author provides other New Testament scriptures to validate his statement. Homosexuality is a sin not only against the law of God. It is also against the kingdom of God and finally homosexuality is a sin against God's holiness.²⁰⁶ Because homosexuality is called in the Bible an unrighteous and ungodly act, it is the Christian responsibility and obligation to know and to expose others of the sinfulness of homosexuality.²⁰⁷

II. The Church Must Extend the Grace of God to Homosexuals:

Although homosexuality is one of many sins, it is a sin against God and the Son of God who died on the cross of Calvary for all mankind. All believers in the body of Christ are called upon to extend the grace of the cross and show compassion to all homosexuals and assure each of them the availability of God's forgiveness, peace and hope of eternal life to all who believe.²⁰⁸ The body of Christ must not display or be guilty of the attitude of the Pharisees towards sinners

²⁰⁴ Montoya, 235.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 235.

²⁰⁶ Montoya, 236.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 237.

²⁰⁸ Montoya, 237.

who are not in the body of Christ. Believers in the body Christ must be willing to associate with those who practice homosexuality by having and maintaining the conviction that the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can convert the homosexual.²⁰⁹ The church and the entire body of Christ should also extend Grace to the homosexual by providing personal discipleship training for them by those who have practiced this sin and have been converted to Christ.²¹⁰

III. The Church Must Expel Practicing Homosexuals from the Fellowship:

According to Dr. Montoya, it is obvious in many churches and households of faith that there is a "...tidal wave of sexual immorality which has invaded the church, and the church has done little or nothing to deal with the cancer within."²¹¹ The church should always be willing to deal with immorality within as it is faced with the problem of moral compromise.²¹² Like the apostle Paul, the church should recommend and use the same solution that Paul recommended to exercise church discipline and remove sinful and wicked person from its midst. The author suggests that the church must have the courage to confront sin whether it be in or out of the church and if necessary possess the conviction to practice excommunication within its own membership.²¹³

IV. The Church Must Resist the Assault of The Homosexual Community Upon Society:

The author writes that it is the duty of every Christian believer in the body of Christ to be aware that many in the homosexual community are attempting to change the very fabric of American society. The author states, "The homosexual agenda is an all-out assault on everything we

²⁰⁹ Montoya, 238.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 240.

²¹¹ Montoya, 241.

²¹² Ibid, 241.

²¹³ Montoya, 242-243.

believe in an attack on everything our founding fathers hoped to give us when they fought to establish this great nation.”²¹⁴ He further suggests to the reader of the article that it is the intent of the homosexual community to maintain an organized effort to sell its sinful lifestyle to America. The author lists numerous organizations which support this type of behavior.²¹⁵

The author concludes the article by stating that the church must be vigilant in its efforts to resist any and every political effort to sell the homosexual lifestyle to America. Also, the church must realize that this behavior poses a “physical, social, and moral threat to America, a threat that is quite obvious to the homosexual agenda but for which they take no regard.”²¹⁶ The church must expose the homosexual community of the danger and the harm in which this type of life brings, which is evidenced by the many diseases that are spread by those who engage in homosexuality. Not to mention the emotional and physical harms homosexuality brings on himself or herself.²¹⁷

Dr. Montoya gives a final thought to the reader of the text as he asks, “What should be the response of the church to homosexuality?” The author has presented a fourfold response to the church from a biblical and balanced point of view. No true church who’s members have been born again and washed in the blood of the lamb of God can remain ignorant nor deceived by important issue which he or she faces daily. As the writer of the book of Jude says in Jude 4, “Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Montoya, 244.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 245.

²¹⁶ Montoya, 246.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 247.

²¹⁸ Montoya, 248.

The Church's Response to Homosexuality: Biblical Models for the 21st Century

Written by William M. Tillman Jr.

This article was written by Dr. William M. Tillman Jr., T B Mason Professor of Christian Ethics at Logsdon School of Theology of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. The author begins his article by way of introduction discussing the fact that homosexuality is here to stay and because of this, the question is: How will the church respond? In the article the author presents various models on how churches are and can respond to homosexuality.²¹⁹

I. Some Contemporary Models:

The author states that in the last thirty years the question for the church has been: "How will the church respond to the issue of homosexuality?" Now the author presents the reader with some responses from major denominations in the United States regarding homosexuality. The United Methodist denomination states in its social policies:

"We support the basic right of all persons regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disabilities, or sexual orientation to equal access to housing, education, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection."²²⁰

Since this time the UMC has "articulated the denomination's opposition to same-sex unions and prohibit practicing gays and lesbians from serving as clergy, though gays and lesbians are welcomed to its congregations."²²¹

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA met in June of 2000 and "voted 51 percent to 48 percent to its 173 presbyteries that flatly prohibit same sex union ceremonies in the Presbyterian Church, USA."²²²

²¹⁹ Tillman, William M., Jr., *The Church Response to Homosexuality: Biblical Models for the 21st Century*, *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 2 (March 1, 2001), 243.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, 244.

²²¹ Tillman, 244.

²²² *Ibid*, 244.

The Southern Baptist Convention which is the largest protestant denomination reaffirmed its stand regarding homosexuality at its annual meeting on June 14, 2000 by stating the following:

“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, an unforgivable sin. The same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals. They, to may become new creations in Christ.”²²³

Other responses include the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches which began under the leadership of Troy D. Perry who was formerly a Baptist minister. He began this church because of a failed marriage, losing his ministerial license and becoming disillusioned by the protestant practice of christedom. This organization provides this statement on the issue of homosexuality:

“The organization operates with the goal of “affirming ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered persons and their friends and families and their primary vision statement is to embody the presence of the Divine in the world, as revealed through Jesus Christ, to challenge the conscience of the universal Christian Church, and to celebrate the inherent worth and dignity of each person. This diverse global body will be widely recognized as a prophetic light and driving force for an inclusive Christian spirituality which celebrates the integration of spirituality and human sexuality.”²²⁴

The next denomination which is the “Evangelical Network is an association of gay and lesbian churches which practice a more charismatic style of worship.”²²⁵

The final denomination which the author lists in the article is the “More Light” Presbyterians. This organization, “seeks the full participation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people of faith in the life, ministry, and witness of the Presbyterian Church, USA. The More

²²³ Tillman, 245.

²²⁴ Ibid, 245.

²²⁵ Tillman, 245.

Light Presbyterians envision that a single set of Christian sexual ethics, marked by covenantal fidelity, shall be the standard for all Presbyterians, irrespective of sexual orientation.”²²⁶

Dr. Tillman then presented to the reader a model for reflection and application for the reader to consider their response to homosexuality. Along with ecclesial ethics and homosexuality form a case study for the church. The author presents theologian-ethicist, H. Richard Niebuhr who wrote a book entitled, *Christ and Culture* that has become a modern classic. “A primary facet of the book which draws perennial attention is Niebuhr’s categorization of how Christians, individually and corporately, have historically related to their cultural context.”²²⁷ Niebuhr’s categories are:

“Christ against culture;
Christ above culture;
Christ above culture in synthesis;
Christ above culture in paradox;
Christ the transformer of culture.”²²⁸

Through these categories, individuals can draw certain perspectives such as how Christians can relate to culture.

Also noted are the facets that the author draws from Niebuhr’s categories which include the following from the aforementioned perspectives:

“Comprehensiveness;
Pastoral sensitivity;
Biological and sociological responsibility;
Biblical rootedness;
Communicability.”²²⁹

²²⁶ Tillman, 246.

²²⁷ Ibid, 246.

²²⁸ Tillman, 247.

²²⁹ Ibid, 248.

Comprehensiveness:

In this approach, the author suggests that a comprehensive Christian approach for any social issue must include a guideline for how one deals with people, especially those who are confrontational. Because the Gospel is comprehensible in nature, Christians should be able to relate to people globally because of the Great Commission.²³⁰

Biological and Sociological Responsibility:

Because both proponents of each position find their studies to support their positions, the two parts in which the author uses should be used to discuss questions regarding homosexuality.²³¹

Biblical Rootedness:

Dr. Tillman suggests that in many cases those who discuss the issue of homosexuality, find themselves in a heated debate. The author states that it is hoped that the Bible would be applied rightly. He sums it up by stating, "...Being biblically rooted means more than using the Bible as a prop, because many Christians reach their perspective on homosexuality by a limited reading and application of scripture."²³² By making this statement the author recommends that those in the body of Christ should work toward deeper Bible study to understand what the Bible is really teaching.²³³

²³⁰ Tillman, 248-249.

²³¹ Ibid, 249.

²³² Tillman, 251.

²³³ Ibid, 252.

Pastoral Sensitivity:

In describing this category, the author suggests that when dealing with the issue of homosexuality, pastoral sensitivity should be displayed with caring, supportiveness, concern, and encouragement. Because, “homosexuality brings into focus how the church deals with alienation, crises, opposition, political process, the arenas needing care, supportiveness, concern, encouragement and so forth.”²³⁴

Communicable:

Finally, Dr. Tillman writes that the message of the Gospel should be communicated with values of “redemptiveness” and not values of hate and anger to the homosexual community.²³⁵ He concludes the article by restating that his intent was to shed “much needed” light on the church’s response to homosexuality and how each individual Christian will deal with the issue.²³⁶

Love at its Best:

The Church’s Response to Homosexuality

Ken Huggins, PH.D.

This article was written by Dr. Ken Huggins, who is the pastor of Elkins Lake Church, writes that the discussion of sexual matters should take place often and not restricted. The Christian church should not ignore that it exists because ignoring the issue does not make the issue go away. “It is the position of this writer that while, in the name of a compassionate God, the homosexual condition cannot be dismissed, neither, in the name of that same God, can

²³⁴ Tillman, 254.

²³⁵ Ibid, 255.

²³⁶ Tillman, 256.

homosexual expression be affirmed.”²³⁷ The number one reason that this type of lifestyle is unacceptable is because of the scripture teach that it is wrong.²³⁸ Dr. Huggins further states that the first thing the church must do in response to homosexuality is to express compassion to those who are involved in the lifestyle but the church must maintain fidelity to the biblical ideal. The homosexual community should see and know that the church loves them but if they continue in that type of lifestyle, they can never become a leader in the church and church will never affirm a practicing homosexual for a leadership position. The second thing the church should do for those who say they are homosexual is to declare to them there is hope and they can be delivered from this sin and they can learn another way of relating, but the church must repeatedly affirm and uphold its biblical ideal of marriage.²³⁹ The author states, “The church must offers such intensity of fellowship to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ, whether homosexual or alcoholic or adulterous or anorexic or neurotic the church cannot place a boundary around the love of God. Within the church, the homosexual must be free to admit the condition and the struggle and still be accepted. To deny acceptance and support is to foster self-hatred.”²⁴⁰

Because many individuals in the gay community already suffer from low self-esteem, if they are rejected by the faith community, this will only magnify the problem. There will be some in the gay community who will persist in their sexual expression, which the church cannot and will not condone. In this case, some brother or sister believer should stay in constant contact with those persons and continue to help them understand that they are valued and loved by the faith community and they want what best for them in God’s order of things.²⁴¹ The next two articles in

²³⁷ Huggins, Ken. Love at its best: The Church’s response to Homosexuality. *Journal of Family Ministry*, V.2, N.2, P. 1-9, 1988, 1.

²³⁸ Huggins, Ken, 2.

²³⁹ Huggins, 5.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

²⁴¹ Huggins, Ken 7.

this chapter show similar responses from the African-American churches in their exclusion of gay brothers and sisters who have come out of the closet in their churches and confess to their congregations that they are gay. The other article discusses how some African-American churches do not receive those who are gay in the their churches at all.

Guilty of Sin: African-American Denominational Churches and their Exclusion of SGL Sisters and Brothers written by Darnell L. Moore

The article was written by Darnell L. Moore who is a writer and activist and is currently a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University.²⁴² The author begins his article by discussing an abstract concerning his main argument in the article: How same-gender loving brothers and sisters are excluded and ignored in many African-American denominational churches.²⁴³

The author begins by stating that many black churches regard “same-gender loving” individuals as persons who are sinners and on their way to hell.²⁴⁴ He further argues that this idea from the black church originated from Saint Augustine from his book, **The City of God** and although Augustine’s quote does not reference homosexuality, the author suggests many in the black church use his quote out of the book that *SGL* persons should be loved, but their lifestyle should be abhorred.²⁴⁵ The author further argues that, the church as well as African-American theologians “need constructive ways of conceptualizing the doctrine of sin such that *SGL* identities can be deconstructed as sinful and reconstructed as virtuous, and thereby help to end the oppression experienced by *SGL* women and men with the African-American

²⁴² WWW.Huffingtonpost.com

²⁴³ Moore, Darnell L., *Guilty of Sin: African-American denominational Churches and their exclusion of SGL sisters and brothers*. *Black Theology* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2008), 83.

²⁴⁴ Moore, Darnell L., 83.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 84.

denominational churches.”²⁴⁶ Moore further explains his argument in that he sets forth the context which informs his own theological perspective and what influenced him producing this project: Black theology, Womanist and Feminist theologies, liberation theology, and queer theology.²⁴⁷

He further states and confesses that he is “a SGL Christian who can harmonize with White lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Christians around the issue of homophobia and heteronormativity; however, I find that my “Blackness” is often discounted by the White male hegemony that ostensibly dominates queer studies and theology.”²⁴⁸

In the next section of the article the author now turns to Womanist/Feminist theological voices who would argue that their traditional understanding of Western understanding of original sin in the Garden of Eden has been shaped by an “Androcentric historical interpretation of the text.” “This view maintains that the first humans, through pride, rejected dependence on God for dependence on themselves, and as a result, the created nature of mind over body was corrupted, resulting in lust: a disordered love that taints the intellect, the will, and the body.”²⁴⁹

The author argues that because of a biased reading of the text in the book of Genesis, women are seen, erroneously, and as representing sin or the perpetrators of sin by writing that“...This damaging and androcentric understanding of sin and evil plagues women and men of all backgrounds.”²⁵⁰ Moore suggests that because women are looked at in this way, they are more vulnerable and prone to lust than men and as a result of this kind of thinking, women are perceived as seductress who lure men into sin. The author quotes, Kelly Brown Douglas, the

²⁴⁶ Moore, Darnell 84.

²⁴⁷ Moore, Darnell, 85.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 85.

²⁴⁹ Moore, Darnell, 85-86.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 86.

author of **Sexuality and the Black Church**. In the book, Dr. Douglas explains that this type of thinking came from, Augustine, Christian thinkers which produced *Platonized Christianity*.²⁵¹ The author now discusses SGL identities and partnerships. He writes, "...men are falsely viewed as maintaining higher moral agency and as representing the embodiment of sin/evil, the gender play of SGL individuals, as we traverse the continuum, may be necessary in order to short circuit the continued privileging of maleness and masculinity."²⁵² Both *SGL* men and women, who have to fight against "classism" also fight against homophobia. He further states in his opinion that many black churches have closed their church doors to *SGL* brothers and sisters and thereby making many of them become spiritually homeless. He further argues that those churches who continue to exclude those brothers and sisters who are *SGL* are in fact guilty of sin. Moore concludes the article by stating this fact and proposing a series of questions that African-American churches should answer and the way they answer them will in fact shape the black church now and in the future.²⁵³

Their Own Received Them Not: African American Lesbians and Gays in Black Churches written by Horace L. Griffin

The article is written by Dr. Horace L. Griffin, who teaches theology and is Director of Field Education at the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church. As an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church, USA, Dr. Griffin also serves as an Associate of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Glen Rock, N.J.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Moore, Darnell, 87.

²⁵² Moore, Darnell, 92.

²⁵³ Ibid 93-95.

²⁵⁴ The Bilerico Project: The largest LGBTQ group blog with dozens of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and genderqueer contributors.),

Most of the context of this article was based on author's book which is the same title as the article. The author states that most institutions, be they social or religious, have discussed the issue of homosexuality. Many in and out of the church still struggle with their acceptance of the gay community and their rights. Dr. Griffin also writes in the beginning of the article that in most African-American communities, this issue is rarely discussed.²⁵⁵

The author mentions a summer edition of *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* and a United Methodist Theological seminary forum where African American seminarians spoke, condemned the homosexual lifestyle to support his claim.²⁵⁶ He next discusses that when these types of events occur, no one ever addresses the harassment and oppression that the gay community face and many in the African-American community who are heterosexual are victimizers of that community.²⁵⁷

The author now presents the intent of the paper when he states, "In the paper and as a gay African American Christian and academic, I will assert that African American lesbians and gays should not be viewed as a problem, but rather that the problem is African American homophobia and the black church teaching that homosexuality is immoral. The homophobia that will be addressed in the article is not just mere discomfort of being around lesbians and or gays but the negative reaction to lesbians and gays and their love relationships."²⁵⁸ It is the author's argument that lesbians, gays and bisexuals must challenge the present black church homophobia. The homosexual community has no one to turn to in the midst of "pain,

²⁵⁵ Griffin, Horace L., *Their own receive not: African American lesbians and gays in Black Churches*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Pr, 2006), 88.

²⁵⁶ Griffin, Horace, 88-89.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 89.

²⁵⁸ Griffin, Horace, 89.

loneliness, ostracism and ridicule about their homosexual lifestyle and this is where they experience homophobia.”²⁵⁹

Dr. Griffin validates his claims by writing that many African-American heterosexuals think that many people in the homosexual community chose their lifestyle which has led to self-inflicted suffering and is well deserved because of their own doing. He also argues that whether the person is heterosexual or homosexual, that person has not chosen a sexual desire or attraction. Secondly, given the treatment that lesbians, gay and bisexual receive, they have nothing to gain by choosing this type of lifestyle. According to the author, even if it is by choice, and if the choice does not infringe upon others rights, each person has the right to make their own choices, especially if the choice does not harm anyone else.²⁶⁰

The author quotes the African American sociologist, Robert Staples who, “asserts that African American homosexual practices have existed for centuries. In *Black Masculinity*, he argues that given the pattern of sex divisions in African cultures, homosexual expression was probably quiet common.”²⁶¹ The author now states that he believes there are two reasons that he believes account for African Americans negative view of homosexuality: (1) “slaves were mainly converted to Christianity by conservative white Christians who were sex negative and opposed to homosexuality; (2) African Americans have recognized that conspiring with mainstream society in targeting homosexuals as the ‘despised other’, frees them from the deviant label of being sexually immoral and provides a degree of social acceptance.”²⁶²

Dr. Griffin argues that in the last thirty years, African American ministers have been openly critical and hostile and condemned homosexuality especially the civil rights of lesbian

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 90.

²⁶⁰ Griffin, Horace 91.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 92.

²⁶² Griffin, Horace, 93.

and gay persons. In countless sermons by these ministers, homophobia has “played itself out” in their sermons which they preached. These ministers also stated that the lifestyle of homosexuality is immoral to the black families whether it takes place in college, seminary and in political arenas.²⁶³

The author contends that although many heterosexuals in the black church state that they tolerate gays in most black churches, gays and lesbians are not even treated equally as others. They are denied ordination but are allowed to stay within the institutional structure of the church if they “play by the rules in place” about homosexuality. The author further states that this is hypocritical of the black church especially since the black church has been a “place of liberation, and a change agent against injustice and oppression.” If true justice is actually practiced in the black church and adherence to the Bible as black liberation theology calls for justice and equal rights to all members within the community regardless to their gender and sexual differences.²⁶⁴

The author concludes the article by asking a series of questions to the heterosexual community in the black church. He also states that if in fact lesbian, gays and bisexual behavior is dangerous to the black community and some suggests, where is the data that supports all of the crimes which affect the black community, the author contends that the lesbian and gay community being a threat to the black family is without merit.²⁶⁵ Dr. Griffin further states that the issue of homosexuality should be addressed in the black church especially if true liberation theology is to take place because “homosexuality is part of the human sexuality, just as African Americans are part of the human race. Thus, there will always be African American lesbians,

²⁶³ Ibid, 95.

²⁶⁴ Griffin, Horace, 96.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 97-98.

gays and bisexuals within and outside the church communities.”²⁶⁶ The most important question is to the heterosexual community is: What will be their response to their relatives and colleagues and fellow Christians who confess to being lesbian and gay?²⁶⁷

The Response of the Church: Hope for the Homosexuals

In his book, **Homosexuality: a Biblical view**, Dr. Greg Bahnsen states that he believes the scripture to be “the inspired and infallible word of God” and is understood by one using the proper principles of interpretation. It is the Christian community which looks to the revealed word of God as an expression of his will for all of our lives. With that said, the author concludes, “on the basis of an examination of the creation account, the Sodom story, the law of God, and Romans 1, that homosexuality is unquestionably a sin in the sight of God. This censure cannot be evaded by drawing a distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual acts, nor by searching for some cause for the homosexual condition.”²⁶⁸

The author further explains that the scriptures set forth hope for men and women who are engaged in homosexual behavior they can be transformed by the grace of God.²⁶⁹ Many in the gay community maintain that they have learned to live with their homosexual feelings without having a bad conscience, because they state that being homosexual is “natural.” Also they attest that their love for each other can express the love of God and because of this they should be accepted into the church of God and ordained into ministry and they feel called by God. “Homosexual religious groups maintain that when it comes to church membership and ordination, their sexual orientation is God given and need no more be changed than the color of

²⁶⁶ Griffin, 99-100.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 100.

²⁶⁸ Bahnsen, Greg L., *Homosexuality a biblical view*:(Covenant Media Press, TX: 2011), 71.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 71.

a person's skin."²⁷⁰ The author contends that the apostle Paul "clearly and authoritatively" states that this behavior, on the part of the homosexuals, places them outside the Kingdom of God, as written in, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 which has already been discussed earlier.

The Apostle Paul was very specific in that he repeats sins, especially the sins of sexual immorality are amplified as he describes them such as fornication, adultery and homosexuality. These shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. "And Paul's condemnation holds true even if a homosexual feels good about his homosexuality and has no sense of guilt. Hell will be populated with people who persuade themselves of their innocence for the moment. There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. But each church that has been established in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, must refuse to admit those whom God has excluded. The church must not accept those in the gay community who are unrepentant.²⁷¹ If any true church is concerned about the soul of those in the gay community and those who are involved in a life of sin the church should never abandon or ignore the standards laid out in the infallible word of God.²⁷²

The author further states that the church's two fold responsibility toward those who are living and are involved in a homosexual lifestyle is this: "(1) to proclaim God's just judgment on homosexual perversion, excluding the impenitent from the congregation; and (2) to announce the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, so that as repentant believers homosexuals may become fellow-members in the body of Christ. To this may be added a third obligation, to support and encourage them in a transformed lifestyle. The church must not only require a change of direction, but extend aid to the former homosexual in his Christian growth

²⁷⁰ Bahnsen, Greg, 72.

²⁷¹ Bahnsen, Greg, 72-73.

²⁷² Ibid, 74.

and in resisting temptation.”²⁷³ The church must realize that the sinful lifestyle of homosexuality will not disappear immediately, but will take time and those who are in this type of lifestyle will also require a lot of pastoral counseling. In conclusion the response of the church to the homosexual community should be what the apostle Paul said to the church at Rome in Romans 12:1-2, the church must urge each person who is involved in this type of lifestyle by the mercies of God present themselves as a living sacrifice to God and be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they may prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Bahnsen, Greg, 80.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 81-82.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Leaders on Leadership

It is said that the church is losing its influence fast. And the reason that the church is losing and has lost its influence in the world is because of poor leadership. “Nothing is more important than leadership. Now, the theologically minded will immediately attack this statement and say that the most important thing is “holiness” or “righteousness: or “commitment to Christ” or “radical obedience to God.”²⁷⁵ These are the words of the George Barna from his book, **Leaders on Leadership**. Barna further states that on a theological level this is a true statement but to be honest most Americans and most people do not even think about or talk on a theological level. For those of us who have become “holy, righteous, committed to the cause of Christ and obedient to the Gospel,” a leader has taught us and facilitated teachings to change the qualities in us such as sinful things, selfishness and misguided mortals. It is the Lord who has given us leaders the charge to guide His people to mature spiritually. If leaders were not necessary, the Lord would not have sent them and He would not continue to commission leaders to carry out His will. Leaders are necessary for us to progress in spiritual depth and Christian formation. It was God who included leadership among

²⁷⁵ Barna, George, 18.

the spiritual gifts and the Bible provides the readers of it, so many incredible principles of leadership. There are so many examples of strong leadership in the Bible.²⁷⁶

The Lord Jesus never taught that any one of us could not pursue high achievement but did teach against unworthy motivation. “All Christians are called to develop God-given talents, to make the most their lives, and to develop to the fullest their God-given gifts and capabilities. But Jesus taught that ambition that centers on the self is wrong.”²⁷⁷ Jesus had to give His “ambitious” disciples a lesson on what is true greatness and He did that by announcing to them a new standard of greatness when he said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles, lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you, instead, whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”²⁷⁸ Greatness and true leadership is to be found by all of us giving of ourselves to service to others. “The real spiritual leader is focused on the service he and she can render to God and other people, not on the residuals and perks of high office or holy title. We must aim to put more into life than we take out.”²⁷⁹ There is such a need in our churches for strong leaders and this requires strength and faith that is above and beyond the average. “If the world is to hear the church’s voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial. Authoritative, because people desire reliable leaders who know where they are going and are confident of getting there. Spiritual, because without a strong relationship to God, even the most attractive and competent person cannot lead people to God. Sacrificial, because this trait follows the model of Jesus, who gave himself for the whole world and who calls us to follow in His steps.”²⁸⁰ God,

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 18.

²⁷⁷ Sanders, Oswald J., *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence For Every Believer*:(Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2007), 13.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, 13.

²⁷⁹ J. Oswald Sanders, 14.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 18.

Himself chooses and makes spiritual leaders, God applies the leadership gift and then the spirit of God works through the leader.²⁸¹

Churches must be led by Spiritual Leaders

“The church is painfully in need of leaders, lamented the English Methodist preacher William Sangster, “I wait to hear a voice and no voice comes. I would rather listen than speak but there is no clarion voice to listen to.”²⁸² If ever the world needs to hear the churches’ voice, it is now. The only way the world will hear the voice of the church, is through leaders. A church can only grow when the church is guided by strong, spiritual leaders, who have within them the supernatural radiating touch of the Holy Spirit coming from their service. Without spiritual leadership the church will sink into confusion and stagnation. “Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchy assemblies. God alone makes them. One does not become a spiritual leader by merely filling an office, taking course work in the subject, or resolving in one’s own will to do this task. A person must qualify to be a spiritual leader.”²⁸³

Spiritual leaders who hold influence over others and fail to lead them toward spiritual maturity, will find those individuals will be spiritually immature, as so many are in the 21st century church. Leaders and followers must travel together because no one is an island unto themselves and spiritual leaders must never take lightly the call God places on their lives to lead others to spiritual maturity.²⁸⁴ The Lord Jesus taught that every person in His Kingdom could be great because everyone in the Kingdom could serve. “Christ taught that the Kingdom of God was a community where each member served the others. He defined His ultimate

²⁸¹ J. Oswald Sanders, 18-19.

²⁸² J. Oswald Sanders, 18.

²⁸³ Ibid, 18-19.

²⁸⁴ J. Oswald Sanders, 20.

purpose using that term: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Our loving service should spread also to the needy world around us. But in most churches, a few people carry the load.”²⁸⁵ A spiritual leader must be able to motivate people to do that which is right in the sight of a Holy God. “Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead.”²⁸⁶

Mel Lawrenz, in his book, **Spiritual Influence: The Hidden Power Behind Leadership** writes that “Influence means persuading people, or selling them, or getting them to march to a certain drumbeat. But it is so much more than that.”²⁸⁷ The results of leadership can be apparent on the inside and the outside of the church. Results that others can see visibly, have lasting effects on the participants. “Leaders who want to effect enduring change will take the time to understand the power and subtleties of influence. They are not content just to see things happen; they want to see people, organizations, movements, and even culture itself shaped in ways that last for a lifetime. Today leadership is so much more than the building of organizations. Leadership includes influencers in education, culture, the arts, community life, and much more.”²⁸⁸

Spiritual leaders have been blessed with the greatest privilege of being a leader. This is especially true within the church, because so many people are looking for guidance. There are so many leaders, but very few of them have spiritual substance. The only influence that will endure comes from God, who has the transforming power and people must be guided to Him, if

²⁸⁵ J. Oswald Sanders, 21-22.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 27.

²⁸⁷ Lawrenz, Mel, *Spiritual Influence: The Hidden Power Behind Leadership*: (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI., 2012), 27.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 27.

they are to change the way they live and act in their daily lives.²⁸⁹ The author asks the question in the text: Why should leaders have spiritual influence? When leaders lead effectively, miraculous things can happen in and out of the church. Unfortunately, when leaders fail to lead people, entire communities suffer and are damaged. People and communities are looking for guidance and they need good spiritual influence. All spiritual leaders understand that God is where they get their influence and they are only instruments in the hand of God. “We stand in a kind of nexus where God’s power meets human need. Nexus is a wonderful word meaning a place where entities are bound together. It often means the binding of unequal parties. The greatest Christian leaders have all lived out this conviction: They knew that they were not the real influencers. God is the leader, we are subleaders, and the dividing line between us is not just one step of rank. On one side of the line is Creator; on the other, created. As human being we hold a noble place in the rank of created things, but our best days occur when we realize that we get to have a small part in the healing of the world that the Creator has determined he will do. Amazing”²⁹⁰

If any leader is to display spiritual leadership and influence to others, they must keep in the forefront of their thinking that God is the true influence for eternity and leaders must always talk about God and not refer to themselves yet many default to themselves. It is in God’s Word where we are pointed in the direction of influence and leadership. Because of influence, leaders have a lot of power over those who follow them. “Influence is a significant word, packed with rich meaning. The Latin influential means something that flows in and causes changes, usually a force that is imperceptible or hidden.”²⁹¹ The author suggests that influence is a mindset and

²⁸⁹Lawrenz, Mel, 27-28.

²⁹⁰Ibid, 28.

²⁹¹ Lawrenz, Mel, 28.

he further states that influence is really a spiritual matter at the core of human nature. Influence is also a form of leadership. “Spiritual influence and leadership take place at the level of the human spirit, and they are prompted by the spirit of God, who works to reform the human spirit, bringing people back to the shape designed in the first place. This happens by the inflow and the influence of the Holy Spirit. And this happens through a thousand hidden, imperceptible steps.”²⁹² Let’s be honest every leader is not healthy and yet many of them have influence over many people. Leadership should never be self-directed, because it is never about the leader. Every leader has been given the opportunity and a calling to seek wisdom from above and pass on their gifts of wisdom to others and this begins the power of spiritual influence. “Spiritual influence matters because it touches the essence of what it means to be human and focuses on the issues that matter most in life.”²⁹³

Spiritual Influence is about People:

The church would be an easy place if leaders did not have to work with people, but that is not the reality. Dealing with people is complicated. As leaders, we lead people into making important life changing decisions in their lives that have eternal consequences. “In spiritual leadership, the goal is helping people to be restored to that dignity called the image of God—far more difficult to measure, but also far more important than anything else. Spiritual leadership is thus an extension of discipleship. Influencing people toward the restoration of the image of God leads to groups that have more spiritual character and organizations that have something like souls, not just objectives.”²⁹⁴

²⁹² Lawrenz, Mel, 29-30.

²⁹³ Ibid, 31.

²⁹⁴ Lawrenz, Mel, 31.

Spiritual Influence is about Life:

When leadership engages people, in many ways, the leader affects the person within their relationships, families, sins, addictions, jobs and many other important things that people encounter in their lives. People look to their leader for guidance and how to survive in the storms of life and they want to know that they can believe and trust in what advice the leader has given them. They, then, can look back across the years in their lives remember those who have guided them to live under God's transforming influence. All leaders are role models and although we are far from perfect, whatever message we teach people, we must live that message we are teaching them. Spiritual influence is about life. "People watch how a leader deals with criticism, works through crises, handles personal shortcomings, rises to an opportunity, or descends to help someone hidden."²⁹⁵

Spiritual Influence is about Priorities:

As leaders, we need deep spiritual insight to help people see the good from the bad and to choose between the good, better and the best in their lives. We must also help them to have good spending habits and make good lifestyle decisions because all of these are spiritual matters. The Word of God has much to say about all of these issues.²⁹⁶

Spiritual Influence is about Values:

Spiritual leaders help to influence people to value what God values. Each of us should value one another, because we all were created in the image of God. We should also value the world in which God created for mankind to dress and keep until He returns. "If our leadership

²⁹⁵ Lawrenz, Mel, 31-32.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 32.

is not based on values and does not impart values, the goals will be vacuous and the effects will be short-lived. Values-based leadership, on the other hand, passes on to people an entire perspective of life.”²⁹⁷

Spiritual Influence is about Time:

Most people need help in managing their time. If the spiritual leader is to help people manage their time, the leader should take his own time management very seriously. They should be able to apply the same principles in their own lives. They will be helped and in turn they will help others who they are leading.²⁹⁸

Spiritual Influence is about Character:

A leader’s spiritual influence on others is really all about character. The kind of person we are when no one is looking or in the dark. It is the examination of our inner and outer lives when no one else sees us. “Our word character comes from a Greek word which goes back to the word for stamp that leaves an imprint, like the dies used to make coins. Character is the very shape of one’s inner life (thoughts, motives, values, desires), which is revealed in the shape of one’s outer life (actions, behaviors, speech, relationships).”²⁹⁹ As leaders, we impact others by stamping our character on others for the good or the bad as we leave our mark on everyone. What kind of mark will we leave on others?³⁰⁰

Leaders have the greatest privilege in the world by preaching and leading a church. For us to be given the privilege of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ and making plain

²⁹⁷ Lawrenz, Mel, 32-33.

²⁹⁸ Lawrenz, Mel, 33.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 33-34.

³⁰⁰ Lawrenz, Mel, 34.

the Word of God that was hidden until the coming of God's son to the world in the form of Jesus Christ, there is no greater privilege.³⁰¹ There are many people in and out of the church who do not understand the life of a pastor and as a result do not appreciate or understand the pastoral work which it involves. The pastor has been given the authority by God himself to shepherd and care for the Christ's people, his lamb and sheep. Pastors are really spiritual leaders who are responsible for, "feeding of the flock, the proclaiming of the whole will of God, the presenting of every believer perfect in Christ, the preparing of God's people for works of service and equipping them to be fishers of men."³⁰²

The authors of the text suggest that spiritual leaders who serve as pastors, must always keep the objectives of pastoral care ever before them because what is important is not how many visits a pastor makes to his congregation, but rather the quality of the message. "Quality is more important than quantity. In pursuit of these goals, our concern is to see our people progress in the faith so that their joy in the Lord Jesus Christ overflows. The Lord Jesus, Himself must be as central to our pastoral work as to our preaching. The mark of a spiritually healthy people is that they rejoice in Jesus Christ, and our task is to nurture and deepen that joy."³⁰³

Spiritual leaders of Christ's flock have been given the authority by the Lord, Himself to lead the flock. This charge has been entrusted to every spiritual leader who has been called by God to teach his people. No church will progress or advance the cause of Christ beyond the spiritual progress of its leader. For example, no matter the sport, every team has a captain and

³⁰¹Derek Prime & Alistair Begg, *On Being A Pastor: Understanding Our Calling and Work*: (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL., 2004), 148.

³⁰² Derek Prime & Alistair Begg, 150-151.

³⁰³ Ibid, 151.

although each team member is important there must be a captain to stay the course so that the team does not lose direction and discipline. This is the same with God's church. The church needs spiritual leadership. While Jesus was here on earth for three years, He was the leader of the disciples and when He returned to Heaven, the apostle Peter became the leader of the church. Paul in his letter to his son Titus in the ministry made it plain things in the church would not be in order without a leader. "Most unsolved problems in church life can be traced back to defective leadership."³⁰⁴

What Happens to a Church and a People Who No Longer Center Life on the Bible?

In his book, **Reviving The Black Church: A Call To Reclaim A Sacred Institution**, by Thabiti Anyabwile says, "Four significant problems arise when the Bible's influence on the congregation begins to wane."³⁰⁵ First, the congregations have lost their ability to fear and reverence the Lord. May be this is one of the reasons that churches cannot address the issue of homosexuality or other issues. In the book of Ecclesiastes 12:13, the last clause of the text says, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Leaders need to influence their congregation to fear the Lord and keep His commandments and if the church does not do this, it runs the risk as many churches have done to no longer fearing the Lord. Second, when any church no longer has the Bible at the center of their faith, it has lost its ability to discern the will of the Lord. God's word is a lamp unto our feet and the light for our path. Without his word, we would be lost and many church leaders have lost their way and cannot direct the church into truth because they have lost their way. "When the Bible which reveals for us the things that God desires us to know, loses its central place in the local church,

³⁰⁴ Derek Prime & Alistair Begg, 217-218.

³⁰⁵ Anyabwile, Thabiti, *Reviving The Black Church: A Call To Reclaim A Sacred Institution*: (B & H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN., 2015), 27.

we also lose the ability to truly make disciples that obey the Lord.”³⁰⁶ Third, when any church fails to be Bible-based in its teachings, that church runs the risk of losing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.³⁰⁷ When any church rejects the Bible, that church is really rejecting Jesus Christ. “If Jesus Christ tied His authority so closely to the Bible’s authority, then the logical conclusion is that to reject the authority of Scripture is to reject Christ.”³⁰⁸ Churches will never be able to address homosexuality or any issue according to the Bible, until that church allows the scriptures to direct their paths. Finally, any church that has built its foundation on anything other than the Word of God, that church will be an unhealthy church and will die. That church will lose its very life, Jesus said in the gospel of St. Matthew 4:4, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.³⁰⁹

Dr. Anyabwile quotes Johnathan Leeman’s analogy of what a church looks like when that church is Bible-based: Leeman says, “God’s Word gives life to a church like electricity gives power to a city. He further illustrates a Bible-centered church: Electricity leaves the power plant and buzzes through power lines. Then it makes its way into street lights, grocery store freezers, office computers, and rows and rows of neighborhood homes. Lamps glow and refrigerators hum. In the same way, I’m contending that God’s Word buzzes and hums through people and the local church, giving light to their eyes and hope to their hearts.”³¹⁰ If the African American church is going to address the issue of homosexuality and other issues of sins and shortcomings, the church must allow the Word of God to become central to its life and activity. “The Word must course through every aspect of faith and practice, giving energy and life to

³⁰⁶ Anyabwile, 27-28.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 28.

³⁰⁸ Evans, Tony *The Transforming Word: Discovering the Power and Provision of the Bible:* (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL., 2004), 57.

³⁰⁹ Anyabwile, 28.

³¹⁰ Thabiti Anyabwile, 29.

everything it touches. Revival in black churches depends on a deep and wide ministry of the Word. Most black churches and most churches in general tend to limit the ministry of the Word to that portion of its worship service dedicated to the sermon.”³¹¹

The Failure of the Church

As a nation we have religious activity all around us. Many of us attend church services every Sunday and throughout the week. We have numerous Christian radio stations and television programs that run twenty-four hours each day. In most major cities, we have Christian bookstores where we can purchase religious and Biblical literature on any spiritual topic. We also have many seminaries and Bible colleges both in the United States and overseas; yet our society has become increasingly “decadent.” We have so much Christian activity, but, we, the church has very little impact on our society. The only answer to this issue is to recognize that the church of the people of God, has failed to do what God called the church to be.³¹² Further, Dr. Evans lists for the reader of his text some reasons as to how the church has failed:

We Have Not Allowed Jesus to Build His Church

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.” The Lord wants His church to be a powerful influence in the world so that the church can be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, one that reduces the effects of sin in our communities. Many churches, as we know, have been stopped by Satan. In many communities in which we live, people have built their own churches and have put the Lord’s name on the church. “A church built by man’s agenda rather than God’s is satisfied with

³¹¹ Ibid, 29.

³¹² Evans, Tony, *America’s Only Hope*: (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL., 1990), 37.

altar calls but lacks the discipline to make disciples. It's a place where homosexuals can sing in the choir. It's a place where adulterers can serve as leaders, yet have no accountability to the church nor receive discipline from the church. It's a place where preachers tell nice little anecdotes but do very little exposition of God's Word. It's a place where people are not exposed to scripture or held accountable to obey it. Such is not what God wants His church to be."³¹³ With this said, the Lord is very displeased with his church. In many instances, we have built our own churches. Christ demands that the church clean itself up or He will clean them Himself according to the book of Revelation, Chapters, Two and Three. One way the Lord disciplines his church is by removing the church's spiritual empowerment. Many churches do not have power and they are powerless and therefore make no impact in the communities in which they are located. Many churches have a lot going on, but have little or no impact in the community. Because many churches have focused on their own agenda and not the agenda of the Lord, their light has gone out and their community and our world is deteriorating. It is a tragedy within our churches because the church has failed God and failed to obey the Great Commission.

The Lord Jesus said that His church is the light of the world that sits on a hill that cannot be hid. The world is in darkness and the weight of sin has worn the world down to a lowly state. "The world doesn't understand that all problems ultimately have a spiritual cause and, therefore, can only be solved by spiritual people with spiritual solutions."³¹⁴ The only way that the world will know and see how to deal with its problems, is that the church must have its light shining so that the world will be able to follow the light out of darkness. But our lights are

³¹³ Evans, Tony, 38.

³¹⁴Ibid, 38-39.

not shining and in fact the church seems to want to follow the world and looks to the world for direction. As the church goes so does the culture in which the church is housed. Until the church decides to be God's church rather than a group of people who look like religious people our world is hopeless.³¹⁵

We Have Forgotten What We Are Supposed to Be

There are many churches all over this country who have forgotten what they are supposed to be doing. Many of them have defined themselves by the building that they are in. The purpose of the church is to be used by the Lord Jesus Christ to accomplish His will in the earth, to bring mankind back him to salvation. The members who are the body of Christ have been called to "infiltrate" the culture with the righteousness of God. There is an absence of living examples of Biblical Christianity in our culture and society. There was a time in the world that the church influenced the climate of our society. Our churches had an impact on how we treated one another, but now that has changed. "The moral code no longer exists. The church has turned aside from God's agenda and set the world free to do what it naturally does when it is estranged from God and that is sin and the result of the world's actions is lawlessness."³¹⁶ There are so many churches who have no idea on how to fix the problems in the world. The Christian community is to model Christ in every aspect of life and save the culture from the destruction that sin offers.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Evans, Tony, 39.

³¹⁶ Evans, Tony, 39-40.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 40.

We Have Forgotten Who Created Our Agenda

Many churches have forgotten that there is a difference between the sacred and the secular. The church's agenda starts with God and will end with God. "The church has failed to understand this truth today. God isn't about to join anyone's side. He has come to carry out His program according to His methods. The church does not follow the world order. The church is the means by which God and God alone accomplishes its goals. Therefore, the church sets the agenda, not the world. "If the world wants solutions, it ought to follow us; we ought not to follow it."³¹⁸

The church is looking to the world for the answer and solutions to the world's problems. "The black church often depends on the Democratic party and its quest for social justice. The white church often depends on the Republican party in its quest for morality. Neither church fully realizes that no political party fully functions according to God's agenda. Therefore, neither party can rightfully demand the church's allegiance."³¹⁹ As the church, we must always remember where the real battle, lies. And because we do not understand where the battle lies, we fight against each other. We must always keep in mind that we fight not against flesh and blood, our fight is a spiritual fight and the fight will have to be fought by those who are spiritual. The Lord will not bless our agenda. He sets his own agenda for the church and His agenda is the only agenda that the church should follow.

"Instead of setting the agenda for society, the church has been crippled by society. Instead of leading the parade, the church is not even marching in it. Instead of presenting a divine alternative in society, the church is being run by society. The church is no longer the church in

³¹⁸ Evans, Tony, 41.

³¹⁹ Ibid, 41-42.

the world; rather, the world is in the church.”³²⁰ The issues that our society and the church face are primarily spiritual and moral in nature and as spiritual leaders, we must analyze the spiritual strategies that are being used to bring about the destruction of the society in which we all live. The church must understand at all cost the strategy and battle plan of the enemy.³²¹

We Have Joined Forces with The World

It would seem like the 21st Century Church would be like the 1st Century Church soon after Jesus ascended back to Heaven. His disciples were in tune with God’s agenda. They understood the purpose of the church and they were able to turn the world upside down. In our day, the world has turned and is turning the church upside down. “The church suffers from spiritual AIDS, which has greatly diminished its effectiveness. The church is having so much intercourse with the world that it has become sick. With such and affliction, the church has lost its spiritual strength; it has lost its ability to ward off the evil forces that would conquer it and has also lost its ability to protect society from the devastating consequences of the viruses and bacteria of sin.”³²²

The church has lost her ability to recognize the authority of scripture. Many in the church, especially spiritual leaders who lead many churches, accept what they wish to and reject that which they view as old-fashioned or irrelevant. Many view what God calls sin as a mistake or “everybody is doing it now” and that’s the world in we live in now. The church is not acting like a “peculiar people” who are committed to God’s agenda but rather as a lukewarm community of believers. Many churches accept the Ten Commandments as “ten

³²⁰ Evans, Tony, 42.

³²¹ Ibid, 29.

³²² Evans, Tony, 42-43.

suggestions.” The church has lost her very identity as the people of God, because it has become mixed up with the world’s agenda, standards, norms and methodologies.

Where does the African American Church go from here?

This author is submitting a written proposal to the State Conventions and the National Baptist Convention, detailing the findings from the studies and interviews conducted for this thesis. The National Baptist Convention has provided position statements regarding its stance, but ultimately leaves the response up to the local church. The proposal would include a request for a workshop that could be presented at the annual convention. The focus of the workshop would be information and resources, to include: books, guidelines, scenarios and findings. It would center on becoming a more effective spiritual leader, in response to the change in cultural norms regarding Homosexuality. Other workshops would be available, upon request, for those who want more detailed guidance. The goal would be to provide Pastors with enough information to respond confidently and Biblically, being the leader that God called them to be.

APPENDIX A

Rocked by gay clergy issues, closures and mergers, the United Methodist Church is “in turmoil”
article by Ivy De Jesus

Article was removed to comply with copyright, but can be viewed at:

<https://www.pennlive.com/news/2019/05/rocked-by-gay-clergy-issues-closures-and-mergers-the-united-methodist-church-is-in-turmoil.html>

APPENDIX B

Black churches conflicted about Obama's stance on gays, article by Dennis Cauchon

Article was removed to comply with copyright, but can be viewed at:

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-05/black-churches-conflicted-obamas-gay-marriage-decision>

APPENDIX C

A Statement on the Same-sex Marriage Issue, Voting and Christian Responsibility written by Julius R. Scruggs, President, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc

Article was removed to comply with copyright, but can be viewed at:
www.nationalbaptistconvention.com

APPENDIX D

Policy Statement and Guidelines to Chaplains Regarding Same-Gender Couples

by the Office of the Ecclesiastical Endorser, Dr. Charles F. Thomas, Sr.

Office of the Ecclesiastical Endorser, Home Mission Board, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

Article was removed to comply with copyright, but can be viewed at:
www.nationalbaptistconvention.com

APPENDIX E

Resolution on Homosexuality

Article was removed to comply with copyright, but can be viewed at: www.sbc.net

Southern Baptist Convention Resolution on Homosexuality, 1988

APPENDIX F

The influence of pastors' ideologies of homosexuality on HIV prevention in the Black Church,
Journal Article by Katherine Quinn

Article was removed to comply with copyright, but can be viewed at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4958513/>

APPENDIX G
POWERPOINT OF PROJECT

THESIS DEFENSE

The African American Church's lack of response to Homosexuality

Robert Jackson Jr

Doctor of Ministry, Liberty University

Overview

- Abstract
- Does the Church need to respond? Does it matter?
- It is all about Pastoral Leadership
- Research
- Survey and Interview results
- Conclusion

ABSTRACT

“The African American Church response to Homosexuality”

Robert Jackson Jr.

Mentor: Dr. Donald Hicks

Although the Bible records over eight passages which directly condemns homosexuality, many African-American churches are silent on this controversial issue. The purpose of this thesis is to present information that suggests that the African-American church compromises on this Biblical principle, by embracing homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, both outside and within the church. The church leadership has chosen to either overlook or accept this lifestyle. Based on statistical surveys and interviews, this project will offer practical and Biblical solutions and advice to all churches and ethnic groups, assisting them in dealing with the issue of homosexuality and gay marriage. The focus would also minister to those individuals and families of those who are “enslaved” by this non-Biblical lifestyle.

Introduction

- Statement of Problem
- Statement of Limitations
 - Theoretical Basis
- Statement of Methodology

How did we get here?

- Allowing the church to follow culture
- Poor Pastoral leadership
- Apathy
- Fear of creating turmoil with the congregation
- Overlooking sin

Biblical Scripture

- Matthew 4:10
- Matthew 16:18
- Matthew 22:37-39
- Matthew 28:19-20
- Mark 7:20-23
- John 8:32
- Romans 1:19
- Romans 1:26-27

Biblical Scripture Continued:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- Galatians 2:10
- Galatians 4:12
- Galatians 5:1
- I Timothy 1:10
- I John 5:17

Research

- Survey from Pastors
- Interviews of Pastors
- Lack of response, is a response.
- Common insights and feedback from Pastors

Conclusion: Pastors are Leaders

- Leaders on Leadership
- Leaders must be led Spiritual Leaders
- What do Spiritual Leaders do?
- What can the African American Church do now?

APPENDIX H

Questions for Thesis Participants:

1. Would you agree many church leaders do not respond to the sin of homosexuality and other sins in the body of Christ, because many of them replicate the poor leadership of others with poor leadership habits? What is your response to this statement.
2. Would you agree many church leaders suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership values.? What is your response to this statement.
3. Would you agree many church leaders do not communicate with their congregates about their personal sins because many leaders do not communicate well? What is your response to this statement.
4. How should church leadership deal with or address the sin of homosexuality?
 - A. All sin is unrighteousness: I John 5:17
 - B. We are all sinners before a Holy God: Romans 3:23, 6:23
5. As a leader of your congregation, what has been the steps you have taken to counsel your church congregation on their sins, shortcomings, transgressions when they have shared with the leadership of your church?
6. Would you agree with this statement, the problem of homosexuality in the church is a crisis, conflict and should be discussed and dealt with in the spirit of compassion? What is your response to this statement?
7. Would you agree all church leaders are compelled by God through his word to address all sin, especially with those of the household of faith? Why then is there so many church leaders, who do not address sin, when all God has made the leader the overseer of his church.
8. How have many church leaders become skilled in helping others, but are not putting into action, what many of them have recommended to others? Or those they help?
9. Some statistical information suggests, that many church leaders do not understand their calling to the ministry. What is your response.

10. My final question to you, why do you believe many church leaders avoid the issue of homosexuality and other controversial sins in the church?

APPENDIX I

SURVEY COVER LETTER

I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in a thesis study I am conducting on the African American Church and other church ethnic groups on their response to homosexuality in the church and the reasons there is no response. I have listed ten questions for your church leader or organization representative to answer and I am asking for each leader and or representative to be as thorough as possible on each question. I am currently a Doctor of Ministry student at Rawlings School of Divinity of Liberty University. I am in the process of completing my thesis. I am certain the results of this research and completion of the thesis will assist many churches and religious organizations in addressing this issue of homosexuality.

I am assuring each participant will be given a pseudonym and the responses from each question will be kept confidential. Any information you provide will be described in such a way that protects your church name and or religious organization. The results of this thesis will be provided to the Rawlings School of Divinity and Liberty University, but again the participant information will be kept confidential so that no professor or administrator will be able to match responses to participants or students.

Thank you for your time you have invested into this process already. I am looking forward to this study and the many benefits for the body of Christ as a result of this study. In the end, I pray that this study will help church leaders and religious organizations better address the issue of homosexuality.

Thank you and may God richly bless you and your organization.

Robert Jackson Jr., MDIV, MAR

Doctor of Ministry Candidate

Rawlings School of Divinity of Liberty University

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 27, 2015

Robert Jackson, Jr.
IRB Exemption 2111.052715: The African-American Church's Response to the Practice of Homosexuality

Dear Robert,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
- (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,



Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

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