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Sacred Worth Study
History
7/11/2021

History of Interpretation

In short, the history of same-sex relationships is.... Confusing. To be clear, for most of history, a majority of Christians viewed male-male relationships as sinful and ignored female-female relationships.

In the early church, they lived in a world where the default orientation was bisexual. Which is complicated by the fact that they did not really have a concept of sexual orientation. Instead, sex was viewed as an act of dominance, where the active, penetrating partner assumed the more powerful role, and there was no stigma regardless of who they had sex with, but a man who took the passive role was stigmatized since it was considered being of lower status, such as a woman or slave. So everything I'm going to say is anachronistic.

Much of Judeo-Christian animus against same-sex relationships is rooted in the idea that it did not make babies. Examples include Tertullian and John Chrysostom.

On the other hand, there was a practice called adelphopoiesis, which was a form of same sex marriage practiced from the early church till the 14th century in the west and 20th century in the east.

Through the middle ages, same-sex relationships were tolerated. There were some penal codes in the 14th century, but priests were not banned from same-sex relationships. Again, much of this has to do with whether sex produces babies or not, this is where a lot of the natural versus unnatural language actually comes from.

It is only in the 1940s when the word Homosexuality enters the Bible that we gain thelobber texts against same-sex relations. Beforehand, were the words like prostitute and fornication. It is only in recent times that we see the subject switch from, "its undesired because it does not make babies" to "it is a sin because God says so" Of course, it is much more complicated than that since affirmation, ignoring it, and condemnation have existed in the church from the beginning. Mostly it was not a big deal.

History of Membership Guidelines

The membership guidelines were formed by the merger of GC and MC in the 2000s. As I understand it, these membership guidelines were created as a prerequisite for the Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

What the membership guidelines state is that LGBTQ people cannot be members of a church and pastors cannot do same-sex marriages. However, it is important to state that these guidelines are not rules, Congregations chose who they accept as members and the area conferences chose who they ordain and what pastors can do. With forbearance, MCUSA is letting each conference decide its own membership guidelines and the PSMC has also passed forbearance for any congregation that decides to be open and affirming. It is up to congregations to make up their minds, however, we have been strapped with the default statement that same-sex relationships are a sin. Still, it may be more accurate to call this a political/cultural distinction since this only became an issue when MC and GC merged.

Here is what they state:

History of the church
Joleene.