

A biblical model for counselling same-gender couples who want to
dissolve their relationship

By

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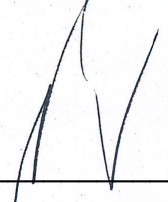
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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any institution for a degree.

Signed:  _____

Date: 08 February 2019

Dedication and acknowledgments

Dedication

To God. Acts 17:28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring' (KJV).

Acknowledgments

1. To my wife Lizette: At the time of writing this dedication we have been together for 32 years, married for 29 of them. In you, I see God's love for me.
2. To my children Willie and Michael: Long may our adventures in life continue.
3. To my family, thank you for your prayer and support.
4. To professor Nicolene Joubert: Your firm and gentle guidance has been invaluable throughout this study. I count myself blessed to have had you as a study leader.
5. To professor Kevin Smith and faculty at the South African Theological Seminary: thank you for this opportunity.
6. To those currently in a same-gender relationship, through this thesis I have come to understand and 'feel' some of your pain, isolation and ridicule in world that can be so extremely hostile toward you. As God loves all persons, so I love you and count you as my neighbour (Mark 12:30-31).

Abstract

It is indisputable that persons in same gender relationships are not immune to the pain of rejection, isolation and ridicule. God loves all persons and they deserve to be treated with respect, love, compassion, empathy and understanding by all believers. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, from a conservative biblical standpoint, same-gender relationships are inconsistent with the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the time-transcendent Word of God. The postmodern epistemological discourse on the knowability of truth rejects the singularity of the same in favour of social constructionism. Social constructionism being inherently inconsistent nonetheless advances unorthodox and/or flawed hermeneutical and idiosyncratic constructs in its defensibility of same-gender relationships. Upon this unstable bedrock, bolstered by psychosocial and historical factors, there has been a significant change in the attitude of society and some churches toward accepting same-gender relationships as biblically normative; a viewpoint which this thesis articulates. With the immutability of God as a fundamental point of departure, a grammatical-historical analysis of key Scriptures confirms traditional relationships and culminates in a biblical model for counselling same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship.

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1.1. Conflict between a conservative biblical viewpoint and engaging in a same-gender relationship

The researcher affirms that homosexual persons are loved by God and should be treated with love of God, with one's love for one's neighbour and with consideration, compassion, empathy and respect by both churches and Christians.

From a conservative biblical viewpoint, a same-sex relationship is viewed as sinful. This viewpoint considers marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman.¹ Following the legalization of same-gender marriage in South Africa (Civil Union Act, Act No. 17 of 2006) same-gender marriage is not unheard of. A good example is the Deo Gloria Family Church led by Apostle Deborah Bell who on their website (2017) openly embrace homosexuality and same-gender Christian relationships.

There is an intrinsic tension between upholding conservative biblical beliefs and the phenomena of same-sex relationships. In describing counselling and the sinfulness of humanity, MacArthur (2005:78) guides the pendulum toward restoration, a view with which the researcher agrees, 'The church must safeguard sound doctrine by recovering the doctrine of human depravity ... God offers freedom from sin and shame through faith in Jesus Christ. If we are willing to acknowledge our sinfulness and seek His grace, He will wonderfully deliver us from sin and all its effects.'

On the website (2017) of the organization Brothers on a Road Less Travelled, one reads about many testimonies of homosexuals turned heterosexual. This highly successful organization undergirds the need for guidance (counselling) in restoring traditional Godly sexuality. In this light, the researcher has chosen to investigate and

¹ For example, Genesis 1:26-28; 2:22-25; Matthew 19:4-5 and I Corinthians 7:1-2.

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articulate a biblically based counselling model that could be used to counsel same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship.

1.2. Problem

1.2.1. Problem Statement

How can same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship be counselled?

1.2.2. Key Questions

- a) What are the phenomenological facts and realities of same-gender Christian relationships?
- b) Why are the identified facts and realities of same-gender Christian relationships problematic to the traditional Christian worldview?
- c) What are the biblical perspectives on the identified facts and realities of traditional and same-gender Christian relationships?
- d) What would the counselling model look like that could be used to assist same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship?

1.2.3. Hypothesis

A pastoral investigation into the biblical view of marriage and the problems relating to same-gender relationships can advance a biblical model for counselling same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship.

1.3. Elucidation

1.3.1. Delimitations

This study although making occasional reference to key occurrences outside the borders of South Africa, will hold the South African conspectus fundamental to its focus.

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This study recognizes Chapter 2 paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996² which protects against unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and marital status.

This study recognizes Chapter 2 paragraph 15.1. of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 which protects the freedom of religion that is the rights to freedom of conscience, thought, belief and opinion.

Although non-discriminatory, this study is discerning (Colossians 1:9³ and 1 Thessalonians 5:21).⁴ Truth is inseparable from the character of God (Erickson 2001:36-37) and His Word, therefore contradiction hereto is untruth. In this sense, judging is the identifying of sin and agreeing with God and His Word (John 7:24).

Same-gender relationships refer to a state of homosexual marriage or committed term relationships wherein persons exist as a couple.

Homosexual and homosexuality are used inclusively for both lesbian and gay persons/couples.

² Note that Act No. 5 of 2005 (Citation of Constitutional Laws Act, 2005) changed the way in which the Constitution is referred to, no longer using 'Act No. 108 of 1996,' but henceforth referring to: 'The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.'

³ Colossians 1:9, "We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives" (CEV). In context, the wisdom and understanding given by the Spirit is interpreted to be discernment, i.e. to determine whatever agrees with or disagrees with His will. The word translated understanding, *sunesis*, refers to the process of using intellect to form knowledge which leads to understanding.

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:21, "Put everything to the test. Accept what is good" (CEV). This Scripture encourages one to test (*dokimazō* - discern, examine or prove) and then follow what agrees with His will.

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1.3.2. Researcher's presupposition

As a conservative Pentecostal believer, the researcher is opposed to any form of homosexuality based on the traditional interpretation of Scripture such as Genesis 1:26-27, 2:21-25 (creation reports), Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 (legal texts), 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Romans 1:26-28 (narrative texts) and 1 Timothy 1:3-11 (instructive text).

The researcher does not suppose that those contemplating or engaged in a same-gender relationship do not have a true relationship with Christ. Instead, he supposes that they stand in a postmodern hermeneutic of same-gender relationships.

1.3.3. Literature Review

The term 'gay rights' seems to be everywhere. It appears to the researcher as if there is a clear and resilient agenda that would guide conservative churches and society to embrace homosexuality as normal and biblically congruent. However, to the conservative Christian, homosexuality and therefore same-gender marriage is sinful (White 1990:530) and by extension, the participants in such are wilfully committing sin.

Adams as far back as 1979, on the basis of sociological theory wrote (1979:100), 'Thus, if enough persons, at a given period, in a particular place declare their homosexual preferences, homosexuality (presumably) must be declared normal.' Niemandt (2007:23) pairs a modern-era humanistic approach with Adam's statement, while Brunson (2010:8) who agrees with both Adams and Niemandt, articulates the postmodern phenomena whereby there is a deviation from a biblical standard of truth toward a social determination thereof. To this end on page three of his article, Brunson makes the critical comment that pastorate is under pressure to maintain relevance to era and that the changes in society need to be discounted into pastorate. In other words, the pressure on pastorate to remain relevant might be interpreted to accept and condone same-sex relationships, rather than hold to scriptural orthodoxy. The researcher read an epitomizing article by Farley (2017-

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01-30) in the magazine: Christian Today, of the Right Reverend Paul Bayes campaigning for gay rights in the Church of England. It is also worth referring to the GALIP foundation's website (2017). GALIP is a non-profit that is 'dedicated to bringing the reconciling message of God's love and reconciliation to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.' There is a tab labelled 'Find a Church' which is expected (normal) and refers to LGNTQI affirming churches.

It is prudent to grasp the controversial nature of same-gender relationships in relation to the counselling objective whereby same-gender persons who want to dissolve their relationship can be counselled. The situation is dichotomous, convoluted and contentious. Two good examples are found by exploring the following two Facebook pages which resolutely uphold opposing viewpoints:

- a) Gay & Lesbian Christians SA.
- b) 1,000,000 Supporting Traditional Marriage.

From a biblical hermeneutical bearing, it is recognized that there are for and against camps of same-gender couple relationships. Gagnon (2005:739) states, 'To say that sexuality is one of the most contested areas of biblical theology is to state the obvious. The chief reason is that societal views have undergone significant shifts.' The researcher reasons that the biblically-based endorsement of same-gender relationships are as a result of continuous sociological and postmodern pressures that act as catalysts to the changing of the orthodox theologies of sexuality, sin, marriage and family. Botha (2005:9) writes, 'In their effort to circumnavigate the negative judgment of the Scriptures, theological revisionists have debased the biblical message on homosexual conduct and deprived the Bible of the intended meanings of the Bible portions speaking on the issue of homosexual conduct.'

Although there are numerous biblical hermeneutical difficulties with same-gender relationships, there is no such legal difficulty. Same-gender marriage is legal in South Africa (Civil Union Act, Act No. 17 of 2006). Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 guards against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4.) and at the same time, ensures

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freedom of religion (paragraph 15.1.). Having said this, it is clear that both hermeneutic differences and Constitutional freedoms can be/are inherently dichotomous, and the corollaries have been/are being tested in both the South African religious and legal systems:

- a) In the Methodist Church. In the online newspaper: Times Live, Sidimba (2015-07-10) reports on the case of Ecclesia de Lange verses the Methodist Church. Further to this report, is the Constitutional Court ruling (2017-07-11) in favour of the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.
- b) In the Dutch Reformed Church. Gaum in a Network 24 article (2015-10-06) reports that at the Dutch Reformed Church's synod meeting of October 2015, the matter was highlighted and, according to the Queer Life News Team (2015) subsequently been put on hold.

The South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms (2017) is a document that discusses religious rights of both persons and institutions. Article 1. effectively allows a person the right of association and to, 'Believe according to their own religious or philosophical beliefs or conviction.' However, Article 9. mandates a religious institution to regulate its own affairs, which includes: structure, procedures, service conditions, appointments and dismissals and membership requirements. As in the case of Ecclesia de Lange versus the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Articles of said Charter can stand in apparent disagreement with one another. Interestingly, this is encouraging in that although persons are free to enter into a same-gender relationship, they are also free to exit the same and the local church is able to facilitate the exit through a process of counselling (Adams 1979:1). Collins (2007:3) writes, 'Counselors work with those who are overwhelmed by the circumstances or changes in their lives, people who have no idea how to cope or what they can do to bring about change.'

A court ruling—albeit foreign—worthy of mention is that of Gary McFarlane, a British Christian Relationship counsellor who according to Rayner of The Telegraph (2009-01-08) was dismissed because he refused to counsel gay couples based on his

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‘devout religious beliefs.’ This ruling serves as an abrupt reminder that although the pastor may not agree with same-gender relationships, he must treat homosexual persons with the love of God, the love for one’s neighbour, consideration, empathy, respect and compassion.

In conclusion, the words of Adams (1979:233) ring true to the researcher, ‘True counselling is done at a level of depth; it is a work of the Spirit that involves change from within. This takes place in the heart of a regenerate human being as he responds favourably to the ministry of the Word cause of his new life tendencies.’ Indeed, instruction is part of the biblical counselling process (Mack 2005:162) which (1) be biblically based, (2) biblically accurate, and (3) biblically appropriate.

1.4. Value of the Study

1.4.1. Theological

Powlison (2005:20) writes that, ‘The entire practise of counselling in the twentieth century became encircled by and permeated with secular versions of how to understand and help people.’ In contrast to this, Street (2005:31) states that the Bible ‘is the operative domain from which the counsellor derives his/her functional and final authority.’ Street continues by explaining that for the Christian counsellor, the Word of God is the only dependable resource of terminology and remedy.

The two quotes above paragraph accentuate the meeting of secular and biblical counselling philosophies. This study appeals to a theocentric, rather than humanistic solution to the issue.

1.4.2. Practical

Ministers of the Gospel and academics stand to benefit from this study in that it will create both a practical guide and academic reference.

Both biblical and secular counsel are inherently engineered to restore regular relational functioning. This study will therefore extend the existing body of knowledge in that it will propose a model to counsel same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship.

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1.5. Research Design

The study is conducted in the field of practical theology through the deployment of literary research. Addressing the research problem necessitates six major steps:

- a) The first step is to provide an introduction and background information to the research problem.
- b) The second step is interpretive and entails a brief literature overview of the topic of marriage. It will explore the traditional and psycho-sociological factors that contributed towards the change in attitude towards same-gender relationships (as a deviation from the traditional biblical view of opposite-gender relationships).
- c) The third step is descriptive. A critical phenomenological evaluation of the current situation relating to same-gender relationships in South Africa. This will include an investigative, systematic and thorough critical evaluation of the current literature.
- d) The fourth step comprises an analysis of key biblical texts relating to marriage and those relating to the challenges of same-gender relationships.
- e) The fifth step is pragmatic and offers a biblical model for counselling same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship.
- f) The sixth and last step forms the conclusion.

1.6. Research Methodology

1.6.1. Methodology

The methodology is based on a modified version of Osmer's model (2008). Osmer's model is written for congregational leaders and in this thesis, it will be modified for a master's level practical theology study as follows:

- a) The interpretive task will precede the descriptive task.

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- b) Descriptive-empirical task: only qualitative research (Osmer 2008:49-50) will be done.
- c) Normative task: exegetical studies and systematic theology will be deliberately incorporated beyond an informative (Osmer 2008:139) level to theological interpretation.
- d) Pragmatic task: the researcher will articulate guidelines to answering Osmer's (2008:4) question, 'how might we respond?' In other words, emphasis will favour task competence (Osmer 2008:176) over transactional and transformative leadership.

1.6.2. Data

This study is based on literary research. The student has access to the following sources:

- a) Handbooks sourced from the University of the Free State and the student's personal (physical and electronic) library.
- b) Journals sourced from EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Sabinet and AOSIS.
- c) Internet, taking due note of their authority, accuracy and objectivity.

Data will be analysed at two levels:

- a) In the descriptive sense. This centres on observation and reporting.
- b) In the interpretative sense. This centres on the why and what with a view to clarification, determination and rejoinder.

1.6.3. Tools

Research will be qualitative which according to O'Neil and Koekemoer (2016:1-2), 'Provides insights that are difficult to produce with quantitative methods ... is pivotal in expanding the horizons of issues ... it informs about subjective life.'

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The following methodologies will be employed in an integrative manner based upon literary research:

- a) Bibliographic research. According to Skyline College (2016), this research considers what others have written in books, journals, websites and various other published media with a view to interpretation and application.
- b) Normative research attempts to describe how matters ought to be (Pentti 2017).
- c) Phenomenological perspectives will add philosophical social value to this thesis, guiding the reader to grasping how the world appears to others (Web Center for Social Research Methods 2016).
- d) Exegetical research, according to Smith (2016:1) is 'an in-depth, inductive examination of a text of scripture ... to discover the meaning and implications of a text of a biblical text (or group of texts).' Smith states that this method can be used to address revelatory difficulties in the text.

1.6.4. Steps

- a) Introduction. This chapter relates to the research proposal and observes and then describes the problem of same-gender relationships in relation to orthodox marriage. This section will also include an abstract, declaration of own work, dedication and acknowledgments.
- b) The Interpretive task: A brief literature review of the topic of marriage as well as an overview of the theological, psycho-sociological and historical factors that contributed towards the change in attitude towards same-gender relationships (as a deviation from the biblical view of opposite-gender relationships).
- c) The Descriptive-empirical task. A critical phenomenological description of the current situation relating to same-gender relationships in South Africa. This will include an investigative, systematic and thorough critical evaluation of the current literature.

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- d) The Normative task. An analysis of key biblical texts relating to marriage and those relating to problems of same-gender relationships.
- e) The Pragmatic task. A biblical model for counselling same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship and lead a life of obedience to God.
- f) Conclusion.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2: A brief overview of traditional and psycho-sociological factors that contributed to a change in attitude towards same-gender relationships

2.1. Introduction

The interpretive task of Osmer (2008:79-128) makes direct reference to spirituality of sagely wisdom, which is a process (p. 82) that links thoughtfulness to theoretical interpretation by means of wise judgment. Thoughtfulness according to Osmer (p. 82) implies consideration and insight. The end point of theoretical interpretation (p. 83) is intrinsically linked to understanding and responding. Wise judgment (p. 84) deduces that recognition, discernment and determination lead to interpretation. Osmer develops the concept of wise judgment (p. 85) when he writes, 'Wise judgment is much broader than the interpretive task of practical theological reflection alone. But it allows us to see the relationship between interpretation, moral character and wise judgment.'

Osmer (2008:85) further states that the moral ends from all theories must be defined theologically. Being a conservative theologian, the researcher will apply wise judgment (2008:85) through a conservative worldview when interpreting the gathered information.

This chapter entails a brief literature overview of the topic of marriage and explores some of the traditional and psycho-sociological⁵ factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude of society and some churches towards the acceptance of same-gender⁶ marriages as a deviation from the orthodox biblical understanding of marriage.

⁵ The factors from these two fields overlap and that the most relevant factors for the central theological argument will be presented.

⁶ Please note that some material referenced refers to gay and homosexual, whereas the researcher favours the term same-gender.

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2.2. Orthodox definition and application of marriage

The researcher will further expand on the biblical view of marriage in chapter four. Having said this, it is necessary at this stage to briefly outline an elementary definition and application of marriage and in so doing create the context for the rest of this chapter.

Marriage as a legal religious, civil and traditional entity is under the auspices of South African legislation. To this end a civil union, according to paragraph one of the Civil Union Act, Act 17 of 2006, 'Means the voluntary union of two persons who are both 18 years of age or older, which is solemnised and registered by way of either marriage or a civil partnership. in accordance with the procedures prescribed in this Act.'

By contrast, the Marriage Act, Act No. 25 of 1961 does not expressly forbid same-gender marriage⁷ but does overarchingly assume that marriage shall be between opposite-genders. Instead of dwelling upon the subjects (gender) for marriage, said Act is more much concerned with solemnization procedures, designations, matters of incest and various technical aspects.

The researcher argues that in relation to marriage, the concepts legal and lawful are at the same time similar and dissimilar. Farlex's The Free Dictionary (2018) describes how 'lawful' refers to the substance of law and 'legal' refers to the form of law. Therefore, in his sense, 'lawful' bears a moral and/or ethical connotation content 'legal' relates to compliance with the form and use of law. 'Legal' and 'lawful' can refer to different sources of authority for marriage. Legal satisfies the requirements of State, whereas lawful refers to satisfying the requirements of State, Scripture or another tradition which may be used in conjunction with legal and vice versa. In this sense, there is a difference between legally married and lawfully married in that the latter naturally lends itself toward religious applications. To this end, it is possible to be married in the 'traditional' scriptural sense, without State sanctioning. Likewise, it is possible to marry according to the requirements of State, but without any religious

⁷ A search within said Act for the terms: sex, homo and gender returned no matches.

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ceremony. However, once a marriage is solemnized Act 25 of 1961 requires the following statement to be made by the solemnizing officer, 'I declare that A.B. and C.D. here present have been lawfully married.' The use of the word lawful is significant within conservative moral substance and ethical permissibility of same-gender marriage. The researcher will explicate later on in this chapter how the concept of lawfulness has been psycho-sociologically extended toward same-gender marriage.

At a less subjective level, the English Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines marriage as, 'The legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship (historically and in some jurisdictions specifically a union between a man and a woman).' In this definition, the researcher highlights, 'historically' and 'between a man and a woman.' Point two of Dictionary.com's (2017) definition of marriage makes for interesting reading, not only because it mirrors the English Oxford Dictionary's (2017) definition, but because it makes specific mention of the expansion of the orthodox definition of marriage, 'This institution expanded to include two partners of the same-gender, as in same-sex marriage; gay marriage.'

It can be gleaned that the current definition of marriage, is much more inclusive and liberal by definition, compared to an orthodox definition of the same.

2.3. Same-gender marriage crosses paths with the ordinances of two major South African denominations

There is an inevitable meeting point in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 between Chapter Two paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. (equality before the law: unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and marital status) and paragraph 15.1. (freedom of religion: right to freedom of conscience, thought, belief and opinion), as these two paragraphs interact with the topic of same-gender relationships and marriage.

About ten years after the Constitution of Republic of South Africa was legislated, same-gender marriage was legislated (Civil Union Act, Act No. 17 of 2006). The adoption of aforesaid Act in subordinate coexistence with paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. of Chapter Two of the Constitution means that at some point in time, the meeting point

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of the ordinances of the church and/or provisions of the Constitution will inevitably be challenged and tested. This is significant in the context of this dissertation since the church is a bearer of doctrine; meaning that the church is an authoritative and persuasive source to the believer as he organizes and then lives out his particular worldview. Given that 2 Timothy 2:16 clearly states that, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,' (KJV)⁸ then the church has to be very careful about what is presented as the truth about marriage.

Two notable instances of same-gender marriage crossing paths with the ordinances of two major South African denominations made recent headlines:

2.3.1. In the Methodist Church

The case of Ecclesia de Lange against the Presiding Bishop of Methodist Church of Southern Africa for the time being and another.

Reverend Ecclesia de Lange was ordained as a Minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in 2006. She announced in 2009 that she would be getting married to her same-gender partner later that month did so. Following her announcement, the church suspended her from the ministry pending the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. The hearing found that she, 'Breached the church's internal policy, practice and usage to recognise only heterosexual marriages, by announcing her intended marriage to a same-gender partner and especially by doing this without consultation with the Superintendent and Bishop of the Church.' This decision was upheld on internal appeal, and reverend de Lange was discontinued from the ministry of the church. De Lange consequently referred matters for arbitration, but while arbitration was still underway, she instituted legal proceedings in the Western Cape High Court. In said Court, Judge Veldhuizen held that her application to Court was 'premature and that she should first submit to

⁸ KJV refers to the King James Bible. Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quoted is from the King James Bible.

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arbitration.’ The Court dismissed De Lange’s application, but granted her leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court of Appeal found that de Lange had failed to lay a factual basis in support of the claim of being unfairly discriminated against. At this stage, the Court did not need to ‘engage with the collision between the rights to freedom of association and religious freedom on the one hand, and the right to equality on the other.’ (Badenhorst 2014).

De Lange then upscaled matters to the Constitutional Court. Essentially, the Constitutional Court (deputy Chief Justice Moseneke) found that:

- There was no reasonable possibility that the Constitutional Court would reverse the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal.
- The Supreme Court of Appeal correctly disavowed de Lange’s unfair discrimination claim.

Badenhorst (2015) mentions that after a journey through three courts, De Lange is back where she started in 2010. Critically, the Supreme Court of Appeal did not want to involve itself in adjudging Church dogma, instead choosing to regard the arbitration that went before as being an appropriate forum. To this end, the Church’s stances on same-gender relationships and marriage could not be found hypocritical or irrational.

2.3.2. In the Dutch Reformed Church

A somewhat different–yet similar–outcome is playing out in one of the largest denominations in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church. Whereas de Lange against the Methodist Church had to do with an individual versus the system⁹ the Dutch Reformed Church matter has to do with changing the system.¹⁰

⁹ Versus the system refers to challenging the prevalent ordinances of the church.

¹⁰ Changing the system refers to a reformulation of the church’s ordinances.

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In the week of 6 October 2015, the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church with a majority of 64% voted in favour of acknowledging same-gender marriages and having professing gay church members serve in the church (Ngubane 2015). This extends to 'allowing homosexual ministers to be ordained' (Areff 2015). Areff goes on to quote the moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, professor Janse van Rensburg who said, 'Many people take those six or seven verses very literally. The Bible refers to homosexuality in the context of more than 2 000 years ago. The question is, are these verses applicable in today's situation?'

The researcher noted among his acquaintances, friends, family and within his circle of influence, strong fundamental resistance to the synodal decision in favour of same-gender marriage and ordination. This is encapsulated by Hitchcock (2015) when she quotes a Dutch Reformed Minister, Reverend Petrus Fouché as saying:

'The base foundation of our church is the word of God, and it clearly says that a union between people of the same sex is sin, that cannot change. Now the decision taken by the general synod undermines the very foundations of our church which is the word of God. It seeks to suggest that the Bible is full of mistakes and we cannot allow that to happen. We do not hate people, we love all people and we cannot reject people, but it cannot be that ministers and reverends, who are supposed to lead people to God, are allowed to practice what the Bible regards as sin.'

Queer Life South Africa¹¹ (2015) reports that the synodal decision 'to allow gay people to marry in the church and for gay ministers to be ordained, without having to be celibate—has been postponed on appeal.' Queer life further writes that some church leaders have changed the minds and are now moving against the proposed changes.

¹¹ Said website has been deliberately used owing to their favour of same-gender relationships and marriage.

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It is clear that within both the Dutch Reformed and Methodist Churches, there is a strong affinity to an orthodox definition and application of marriage. What can also be gleaned from this is that the thin line between civil marriage and religious marriage is being blurred through the desire to live the former out as a matter of normality in the domain of the latter where ordinances presently lean strongly toward conservatism. The progression from conservatism to the current acceptance of same-gender relationships and marriage, as the reader will discover, has gained significant momentum in recent history.

2.4. Traditional factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude of society and some churches towards the acceptance of same-gender relationships

There are many definitions of conservative theology, but for the purpose of this dissertation conservative theology is understood to be the, 'Philosophical statements of doctrines and explanations of these doctrines that come to us from the early Church Fathers and the Medieval doctors.' (Shalkowski 1997:72). To this end, the Westminster Confession's (1646) first statement on marriage (chapter 24) serves as a persistent conservative point of departure, 'Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.' About this particular statement, Waddington (2013) writes, 'As various countries around the world consider the legality and morality of same sex unions, the Confession speaks with refreshing and bracing clarity about marriage.' He continues by mentioning that such matters are linked to permanence and not 'fads and fashions.'

Flowing forth from the above definitions, there are two sharp and opposing basic lenses through which one can deliberate Christian relationships and marriage:

- a) **Orthodoxy.** Here the Word is immutable and transcends time. Society is inconstant. Through this lens, the Word is a timeless straight guiding line against which society consistently references itself and makes continual adjustments, done according orthodox hermeneutics and exegesis.

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This view is confirmed by Körtner (2008:212) when he writes, 'One needs to consider the historical conditionality and narrowness of the traditional Christian sexual morality and doctrines on the institutions of matrimony.' Another expression of orthodoxy comes from an elder of 37 years in the Dutch Reformed Church, Robbie Nel who directed a strong charge toward the Dutch Reformed Synod when he expressed concern that they are using principles that are not biblical to make decisions. (Hitchcock 2015) quotes Nel, 'The decision that has been taken by the synod indicates that the Bible is no longer the focal point for making decisions. There is now no clear right or wrong.'

- b) Liberationism. Both the Word and society are inconstant and matters generally follow the *curvus* of society. In this scenario, the establishment is resisted (Merriam-Webster 2018) by liberals and a social construction and acceptance of values, morals, norms and truth are often undergirded by refreshed theological interpretation. The above summation of the researcher is undergirded by Merriam-Webster's (2018) definition of liberationism, 'The principles of those opposed to a state or established church and especially in England advocating disestablishment.'

This view resonates in Dreyer's¹² comment (2008:505), 'The challenge today is to live with the biblical message of redemption in the presence of God within the context of the faith community, but without blind submission to outdated social constructs.' The moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, Professor Janse van Rensburg (cited in Ngubane 2015), also leant in this direction when he commented on the applicability of 2000 year old Scriptures in the context of today's scene.

Janse van Rensburg (cited in Ngubane 2015) at the same time created space for orthodoxy and liberationism when he said that, 'There would be no disciplinary action

¹² In the course of this script, the researcher refers to Dreyer JS (1998), Dreyer TFJ (2008) and Dreyer Y (2008). Dreyer Y (2008) is the most referred to of the three and therefore all references to Dreyer (2008) are attributed to Dreyer Y (2008), unless otherwise stated.

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against local churches that wanted to remain conservative and not allow same-sex unions.'

The researcher, from the point of orthodoxy argues that from the earliest of biblical times, marriage is a scripturally founded institution, custom and symbol of the sexual union between husband and wife (Perkin 1990:690-692). It is also held that God and His Word are immutable and therefore the only change likely to be encountered is within society (the variable) itself. A biblical portrait of marriage must be understood through prescript (the Word) and precedent (the application of the Word). To this end (Granberg 1990:694) arrives at a singular prescript as to what biblical marriage is, based upon Genesis 2:24, 'Marriage as the deepest corporeal and spiritual unity of man and woman.' In precedent, the first biblical example of a marriage feast (i.e. marriage celebration) dates back to 1921 B.C. with the story of Jacob (Genesis chapter 29).

It is conceded that actual marriage ceremonies and traditions, for example, the introduction of the role of the state and garments are subject to change as society develops and will differ from society to society. However, the essence of marriage as a covenantal opposite-gender relationship between one man and women, blessed by God as set out in Genesis 2:24 is the constant. Erickson's (2001:78) writing resonates with the researcher point of view when he writes, 'As the expression of God's will, the Bible possesses the right to define what we are to believe on religious matters and how we are to conduct ourselves.' Indeed, an orthodox Christian marriage is understood to be a permanent and intimate relationship between two persons of the opposite-gender (Müller 2008:484).

It is important to note that Dreyer (2008:500-501) acknowledges that the reformers Luther and Calvin as well as the Swiss theologian Karl Barth highlight sexual difference as being important when discussing marriage from a theological perspective. She also cites Roberts (2007:111-137) who, 'Perpetuates the idea that marriage is God's will and that God willed it to be heterosexual.' In this sense, the orthodox biblical hermeneutic of marriage is a constant. Müller, following his definition of conservative marriage continues (2008:484-485) by rightly asserting that a

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normative marriage model will face strong opposition in a postmodern culture. He articulates three possible responses to said opposition:

- a) An authoritarian response whereby a strong, rigid and authoritative model is formulated for marriage.
- b) A relative response allows each couple to the right to formulate their own model of marriage.
- c) A value-forming response, which allows on the one hand room to acknowledge that things, people and values are subject to change, and on the other hand, it rises to the challenge of accommodating the progressive unique experiences and circumstances of society, marriage and family.

Leaning toward a postmodern understanding of marriage is Dreyer TFJ (2008:483), who in a thought-provoking abstract (2008:483) articulates the hermeneutical gap between postmodern society and orthodox (traditional) theology:

‘Within Western societies the church is challenged by a new sexual ‘morality.’ Seemingly, the traditional theological answers do not address the challenge sufficiently. The incompetence of the church to change people’s minds leads to a moral crisis. This article is an attempt to create awareness that the church has no choice but to review her traditional stance. This awareness will only surface once we are prepared to acknowledge that our traditional views were influenced by different contexts through the ages. Therefore, it is necessary, in a postmodern context, to theologically reflect afresh within this context.’

In the above abstract, Dreyer TFJ acknowledges that there is a new sexuality that differs from the conservative (orthodox and traditional) understanding of the same and that the church is effectively being challenged by postmodernism to reassess her doctrines, ordinances and stances (see also Brunsdon 2010:1) on sexuality and morality. Brunsdon (2010:2) clarifies the challenge put to theology by postmodernism to reformulate/refresh doctrine, ordinance and stances by writing, ‘*Vir die teologie verteenwoordig hierdie uitdaging van die postmoderne era ’n komplekse opdrag.*

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*Bybelse konsepte soos God, die historiese Jesus, die Heilige Gees, en selfs die waarheid, is abstrakte begrippe en derhalwe kwesbaar wanneer (her)formulering te sprake kom.*¹³ The vulnerability of conservatism in the reformulating process is acknowledged by Brunson and is extended into approaches to practical theology as well, as discussed by Dreyer (1998:14-15). Dreyer articulates the shift in practical theology from a deductive/applied approach (exegetics and dogmatics) to adopting social scientific methods with a view to studying the evident array of religion as it is lived. This shift presents radical implications pertinent to the authority of the Word in counselling scenarios, for example, in the nouthetic and kerygmatic models in that are bibliocentric that place the Word above experience. This shift presents a fundamental departure from orthodoxy.

Dreyer TFJ (2008:487) writes that the church's stance on sexuality and marriage has been primarily influenced by culture, a statement with which Tucker (2013:6) does not disagree. Dreyer TFJ (p. 487) refers to van Eck (2007:82) who remarked that the church's understanding of marriage and related matters differs radically from marriage in the Bible. Dreyer TFJ in the conclusion of his article agrees (p. 494) and states that we must acknowledge that marriage as the institution as we presently know it to be was not instituted by God but is a product of the church's theological reflections over time. In fairness, Dreyer TFJ (p. 494) does ground the fact of opposite-genderism and sexual intimacy as being more than a social construction by referring to the fundamental perspectives offered by biblical and theological traditions. The researcher is convinced that a postmodern society with its strong emphasis on social constructionism will definitely pose an ongoing formidable challenge to orthodox relationships, marriage and sexuality to review all conservative stances (Dreyer TFJ 2008:483).

¹³ Translation: The challenges of a postmodern era represent a complex instruction to theology. Biblical concepts such as God, the historical Jesus, the Holy Spirit and even the truth, are abstract concepts and therefore vulnerable when reformulated. A real danger is that basic principles can be compromised, which will bring the essence of theology into jeopardy.

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Bloesch (1990:1014), who develops his line of thought through referring to Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Niebuhr and Kant, writes that in the nineteenth century already, theologians 'fell under the spell of new world consciousness associated with the enlightenment' and started to reinterpret sin (see also Dreyer 2008:520). In other words, what was traditionally held as sinful may no longer be the case in a postmodern society. Resonating with Bloesch's writing is Dreyer (2008:507-510) who discusses various forms of marriage and correctly concludes that (overall) there is no 'one, normal, natural form of marriage.' She goes on (p. 510-521) to discuss various models of marriage. She concludes by asserting her view that, 'The challenge presents itself again in today's world which has, in a sense evolved too quickly for theologies on sexuality, marriage and family to keep up. In this respect the law has probably done a better job.'

Botha (2005:22-24) develops the above discussion when he writes that, 'The closed character of marriage, being monogamous, faithful, heterosexual and lifelong, is seen by most expositors of homosexual theology as a negative aspect, detrimental to the homosexual union.' Putting homosexuality on par with heterosexuality as a normal variant within sexuality leads to the full acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle in the church (p. 19). He continues (p. 22) by articulating that homosex has been removed by gay theologians from 'sinful conduct' and has been reassigned as 'gifts from God.' To this end, all teachings in the Bible regarding heterosexuality apply to homosexuality. Tukker (2013:1) further develops this line of discussion when she writes, 'The church is currently confronted with a divergence of opinion about sexual relationships and marriage. The reality of our society raises the question of whether the traditional understanding of marriage is still relevant—in terms of helping believers make meaningful and responsible choices.' Making meaningful choices that are scripturally grounded raises the issue of contextual interpretation. Tukker (2013:4) in discussing contextual interpretation of the Bible, writes that a legalistic approach leads to conviction, and that a value/norm-based approach effectually emphasizes personal freedom and responsibility. The researcher postulates that conviction leads to a need for repentance, whilst personal freedom and responsibility undergirds the quest for self-justification.

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Dreyer (2008:505) writes, 'Today, evidence points to a radical shift yet again from the Modern to the Postmodern Era. An obvious interconnection between religion, sexuality and marriage no longer exists. If this is the case sexual difference can no longer be central to a theology of marriage.' In this sense, same-gender marriage leans toward a value and norm-based hermeneutic, which in essence leans strongly toward Müller's (2008:484-485) third possibility mentioned previously in this chapter. In contemplating the entire scenario, Botha (2005:14-15) writes that to the gay theologian, homosexuality and heterosexuality is not a question of sin or morality, but rather a product of God's infinite mind, thus confirming a postmodern value/norm-based approach to marriage. Botha continues by describing that there are several Scriptures,¹⁴ congruent with a postmodern value/norm-based hermeneutic and approach, that are often used by the pro same-gender marriage theologian to substantiate a same-gender marriage viewpoint; to wit:

- a) Genesis 1:31, 'And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.'
- b) Psalm 100:3, 'Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.'
- c) 1 Corinthians 7:24, 'Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.'
- d) 1 Timothy 4:4, 'For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.'
- e) Matthew 19:12, 'For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.'

¹⁴ Some of these Scripture will be revisited during chapter four, the normative task of Osmer.

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Botha (2005:15) advances his argument by expressing how appealing the above Scriptures can be to the homosexual person who is searching for self-justification. Furthermore, he develops the idea (p. 16) that to the gay theologian, perversion and orientation are not the same and one cannot therefore judge orientation through the lens of perversion. He points out that gay theology holds to a foreordination to homosexuality and on this ground, 'a cure is neither desirable nor right.' He (p. 19) writes that, 'It is taught in gay theology that God actually accepts homosexuals in the context of the sexual uniqueness. The message is that gays are under grace, meaning that homosex is a normal expression of sexuality, and they should live out of the fullness of this grace as homosexuals.' Along these lines, Botha highlights (p. 17) that there are seven relationships in Scripture that are interpreted to support scriptural agreement with and therefore the normalization of homosexuality:

- a) Ruth and Naomi: lesbians.
- b) Paul and Timothy: pederast gay.
- c) Cain and Abel: incestuous gay.
- d) The gay centurion of Matthew 8:5-13.
- e) John and Jesus: the one whom Jesus loved.
- f) Jesus and Lazarus.
- g) Mark and Jesus.¹⁵
- h) David and Jonathon: possibly the ultimate expression of a homosexual relationship.

It is noted that each of the above references relies heavily on extrapolation as opposed to a direct biblical statement and/or a sound literal hermeneutic undergirded through historical-grammatical inquiries. Janse van Rensburg (2000:5) pulls the above matters together in relation to the tenets of postmodernism when he explains that there is no

¹⁵ See also the: Secret Gospel according to Mark.

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structure to texts and consequently no firm explication. He continues by explaining that because there is no absolute truth or firm values because of the basis of difference. When the aforesaid is brought together, there is an unattainability of a final analysis of text.

Tukker (2013:7) writes, 'We should attempt to keep what is good about marriage as we know it, and then find reasonable solutions for our complex society to accommodate the wider spectrum of beliefs held by Christians.' She continues further on, on the same page by discussing the need to educate people about their sexual responsibilities, to model healthy marriages. She encourages accepting relationships that might be different from the so called 'norm.' It appears to the researcher that postmodern society in relation to orthodox (traditional) marriage has entered a state of 'anything goes,' hence the church's increasing acceptance of same-gender marriage and differing forms of marriage. Erickson (2001:34) concurs when he writes of a virtual chaos that followed leaving behind traditional values.

In the course of this sub-section, the researcher has explored some of the traditional factors that has contributed toward the deviation from the conservative biblical view of marriage. The next sub-section addresses some of the psycho-social factors that lead to this deviation.

2.5. Psycho-sociological factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude of society and some churches towards the acceptance of same-gender marriages

'Fitting in' presents a conundrum. Lewis (2018) writes that as much as humans are unique beings, they also want to fit in with others. It is true that although the majority of humans observe and keep with some or other set of decided social rules, they also possess certain characteristics that identifies a person as unique from all other persons. McCullough (2017) writes that 'fitting in' extends toward conformity and that almost everything a person does can be linked to this: clothing, speech, food, sport, music and so forth. A human therefore has the coexistent needs of uniqueness and conformity. Lewis (2018) cites Nail, MacDonald and Lev (2000) who identified five motivations behind the psychology of conformity:

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- a) To be correct.
- b) To be socially acceptable.
- c) To accomplish group goals.
- d) To establish and maintain self-concept and social identity.
- e) To align with similar persons.

Within the context of spiritual formation, the researcher suggests a sixth motivation, to be part of a faith community in which acceptance is found and spiritual formation encouraged.

DeWall (2011) maintains that acceptance—and therefore fitting in—is fundamental to being human. In his article, he expands on the concept and consequences of the ‘evil twin’ of acceptance, rejection. It is noted that being excluded is harmful to one’s physical and psychological health, in fact DeWall goes on to describe how exclusion can negatively affect society as well. It is therefore clear that no normal person wants to feel or be ‘left out.’

Lewis (2018) raises the interesting question of ‘What exactly is it we are all trying to fit in to?’ To answer to Lewis’ question is a formidable task; the answer will undoubtedly be challenging to thoroughly articulate. However, the researcher agrees with Lewis (2018) that rejection is a consequence of being ‘left out’ (DeWall 2011) and that it is natural for a person to seek ways to reduce the pain and effects of being left out. DeWall (2011) adds that it is impossible to go through one’s whole life without experiencing rejection at some point. The researcher acknowledges that for many years, same-gender couples and homosexual persons have been ‘left out’ and expresses his heartfelt compassion towards these people experiencing the pain and effects of rejection. It is only comparatively recently that the attitude of society and church have become more *accommodant* toward same-genderism, as validated by the legalization of same-gender marriages by different countries. Donnelly and Scimecca (2017) provide a list of the twenty-six countries where same-gender marriage is legal:

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- a) Netherlands, 2000.
- b) Belgium, 2003.
- c) Canada, 2005.
- d) Spain, 2005.
- e) South Africa, 2006.
- f) Norway, 2008.
- g) Sweden, 2009.
- h) Iceland, 2010.
- i) Portugal, 2010.
- j) Argentina, 2010.
- k) Denmark, 2012.
- l) Uruguay, 2013.
- m) New Zealand, 2013.
- n) France, 2013.
- o) Brazil, 2013.
- p) England and Wales, 2013.
- q) Scotland, 2014.
- r) Luxemburg, 2014.
- s) Finland, 2015.
- t) Ireland, 2015.
- u) Greenland, 2015.
- v) United States of America, 2015.

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- w) Colombia, 2016.
- x) Germany, 2017.
- y) Malta, 2017.
- z) Australia, 2017.

The researcher makes five important deductions from the above list:

- a) The majority of listed countries centre predominantly on the North American continent and Europe/Great Britain.
- b) The orthodox view that marriage is between one man and one woman is advanced in that no country legalized a same-gender union before 2000.
- c) There are 195 countries in the world at the time of writing, of which 26 have legalized same-gender marriage. Therefore 169 (86,7%) of countries have not legalized same-gender marriage.
- d) All legalization of same-gender marriage has happened in the postmodern era.
- e) The shift toward legalization of same-gender marriage is certainly recent, but at the same time, points to how far the socio-cultural shift driven primarily through gay rights activism and progressive case law has taken the acceptance of same-gender marriages.

Postmodernism has already been identified as the influence behind the challenge put to orthodox theology to reformulate doctrines, ordinances and stances as a means to maintain relevance and effectiveness (Brunsdon 2010:2-4). In a similar vein Erickson (2001:32), in defining postmodernism states that postmodernism has succeeded 'modernism in both chronological sequence and in intellectual dominance.' Finding a precise start date for postmodernism is extremely difficult to determine according to Janse van Rensburg (2000:13), but he does concede that postmodernism has been with us for a long time. The researcher theorizes that the enlightenment referred to by Bloesch (1990:1014) as well as sustained social pressure on conservatism were

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indeed catalytic to the rise of postmodernism. Niemandt undergirds this when he describes (2007:24) postmodernism as an era in which everything is questioned and in detail describes the shift from modernism to postmodernism (p. 21-23) over a number of spheres. Brunsdon (2010:8-9) reduces the same onto three primary topographies:

- a) Claims to truth. The postmodernist's point of departure is that no singular truth exists. In context, truth refers to 'a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality.' (Merriam-Webster 2018).
- b) The placement of humanism at the centre of the universe; meaning that the answers and solutions to problems are found within humanity.
- c) Matters of eschatology and the meaning of life. The postmodernist's construct of reality is determined in the present tense through social construction.

All three of the above topographies present the possibility of a radical departure from conservatism, in that the very pillars undergirding the truths and theological traditions of the church are either being shaken or progressively and systematically eroded. As previously mentioned, Müller (2008:484-485) stated that in a postmodern era, a normative marriage model will face strong opposition, and he described three possible responses. The researcher argues that any other response other than Müller's first, opens the door to a postmodernistic interpretation and application of the essence of marriage. The outcome of such has led to a departure from biblical conservatism in favour of an inclusive psycho-social construction. To this end Adams (1979:100), in discussing the concepts of normal and abnormal, grounds the understanding of the same in sociological theory. In this framework, norms are socially constructed. One of the examples that he uses is very relevant to this chapter as well as postmodern thinking, 'If enough persons, at a given period, in a particular place, declare their homosexual preferences, homosexuality (presumably) must be declared normal.' This statement of Adams is later effectually confirmed by Siann (1994:3) and Chrisler and Murray (2016).

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The researcher is of the opinion that a psycho-sociologically driven shift in the theology of marriage also requires a reformulation of the orthodox theologies of sexuality and sin toward a socially constructed, and therefore postmodern acceptable theology. To this end, Niemandt (2007:20-23) makes some thought-provoking comparisons between modernism (solid) and postmodernism (fluid); extracts which the researcher has adapted, added to, and contextualized (in no particular order) to the parameters of this thesis follow here below:

Topic	Modernism	Postmodernism
Objectivity.	<p>Absolute truth can be defined with a sense of finality and conviction and is directly related to reality.</p> <p>People read the text of the Bible because it contains objective truths about God. The goal is to discover into and learn about the nature of God. Not all that comfortable with mystery and miracles.</p>	<p>Truth is collective and contextual within the greater context of reality per social definition thereof.</p> <p>The text reads the person which in turn, leads to new relationships and new connections. Comfortable to admit that many things are not understood, and the mystery of God is emphasized.</p>
<p>In 2019, the sinfulness -or not -of same-gender marriage is determined by a particular society's interpretation of those Scriptures addressing same-gender relationships.</p>		
<p>Critical comments. It is true that absolute truth can be defined. At the same time, it is also true that there is a certain amount of mystery about God in that we only know about God what He has revealed of Himself to us. The modernistic journey of learning is therefore commendable, as is the need for scriptural grounding of specific and general revelation in a postmodern era.</p>		
Individuals.	<p>Humanism, rights and freedom dominate matters. A consumer centred culture is created around the</p>	<p>New communal group values with emphasis on group identity is established. A focus on commitments to others is very important.</p>

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	<p>consumer, who is at the middle of it all.</p> <p>A focus on individual salvation and an individual choice for Christ.</p>	<p>A strong focus on communal expressions of faith.</p>
<p>In 2019, homogenous communities and groups are formed around common social identity constructs.</p>		
<p>Critical comments. Christo-centrism and humanism are a philosophical dichotomy. Either Christ or man can be at the centre of individualism and community, not both. Both Christo-centrism and humanism lend themselves toward diverse hermeneutics, and for this reason the concept of truth, as understood in a non-postmodern sense becomes important.</p>		
<p>Polemics.</p>	<p>Emphasis on the identification of 'what is wrong' followed up by the identification of an acceptable and improved prospects.</p> <p>Works strongly with the differences that exist between believers. Splinter groups and new churches can form.</p> <p>One's own point of view is definitely more important than other's points of view. Ecumenism is secondary.</p>	<p>Emphasis on an inclusiveness and respect for other's points of view. A search for unity despite the many differences.</p> <p>Rather work with what believers have in common. Ecumenism is important.</p>
<p>In 2019, it is 'ok' to be you 'just as you are.' Embrace your sexuality and celebrate it. We are not going to judge you. Nor will we necessarily 'restore you gently' (Galatians 6:1), because what unites us is greater than what divides us; what is right is greater than what is wrong.</p>		
<p>Critical comments. Modernism speaks of a triangulation which leads to restoration, whereas postmodernism speaks of parallelism which becomes a courtyard of accommodation and unity. Postmodernism is correct in working with 'what believers have common,' as long as</p>		

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<p>this commonality is Christ and Christ is elevated above humanism and social constructs toward living a life of obedience to His Word.</p>		
<p>Church.</p>	<p>Great emphasis is on the way things are done and a significant value is placed upon church orders. Congregations are controlled and aligned in terms of universal standards. Principles are more important than relationships.</p>	<p>A greater degree of comfort with chaos. Reduced control is favoured as a means to better cooperation. Greater autonomy is tolerated in terms of congregants and congregations.</p>
<p>In 2019, ordinance and dogma are standing in the path of freedom of expression and orientation. Therefore, ordinance and dogma need to be reformulated into more inclusive and more accommodating forms.</p>		
<p>Critical comments. Both over-control and a lack of control are problematic. A balance is called for, with apostolic doctrine and the fellowship of believers guiding matters. By means of illustration, the researcher quotes Acts 2:42, highlighting the Christo-centeredness at the centre of activity, 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'</p>		
<p>Analytics.</p>	<p>Complex problems are broken down into smaller constructs which are understood through analysis. There is not much room for emotions because it is about understanding.</p> <p>The Bible is understood through smaller groupings of information. A single text can be determinative. There is not much room for an emotional expression of faith, in fact emotion and experience are not necessarily found in a positive light.</p>	<p>Emphasis is placed onto system thinking with a holistic approach to complex problems. Emotional experiences are significant as a lens through which people are regarded.</p> <p>The Bible is understood in a greater context and bonds are sought out. Texts are understood in relationship to the periscope of the whole of Scripture and the Canon. Emphasis is placed on the entire existence of a person,</p>

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		<p>including his or her emotions and experiences.</p> <p>Faith and people are viewed holistically.</p>
<p>In 2019, classic confessions, creeds, catechism are outdated or are social constructs. Exegesis makes way for eisegesis.</p>		
<p>Critical comments. People are emotional beings and both people as well as singular texts should be primarily understood in scriptural context, through proper hermeneutics and exegesis. The researcher favours a literal hermeneutic and historical-grammatical exegetical method in which Scripture as the Word of God, illuminated by the Holy Spirit is capable of speaking for itself.</p>		
<p>Mechanism.</p>	<p>Confidence is congruent with nature and matters mechanical where Newton's laws apply.</p> <p>A programmatic approach is followed, meaning if the correct recipe is followed, then the correct results can be expected. Models of church growth are very popular.</p>	<p>The emphasis falls onto ecosystems and society is regarded as a living organism determined through relationships. Einstein's insights apply.</p> <p>The church too, is a living organism driven by means of relationships. The type of sustenance and context of church as a living organism leads to them flourishing.</p>
<p>In 2019, phrases such as 'it's not a religion, it's a relationship' are common.</p>		
<p>Critical comments. As appealing as 'it's not a religion, it's a relationship' sounds, it demonstrates that not all persons are able to correctly define religion. Religion is extremely desirable when it scripturally reveals and teaches mankind about God's relationship with mankind as well as His redemptive purpose for mankind through Christ—and then instructs mankind to live out what is learnt. It is also noted that overt mechanical programming can result in relational detachment which is undesirable.</p>		

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Table 1: Niemandt's comparison between modernism and postmodernism, added to and further developed by the researcher.

2.5.1. Changing the theology of sin

Following from the previous section, postmodernism subjects the concept of sin to a social construction thereof. Therefore, sin is not easy to discuss or to define in a postmodern society where norms are rooted in socially constructed truths regarding inclusiveness and overall meaning of life and society. Having said this, changes to the theology of sin is seen to be driven by both postmodern society as well as within/by liberal churches.

Counter arguments to a orthodox view of sin have been perfected to the point where there really is nothing left to debate. Ultimately though it is the biblical data that provides the 'best understanding of the nature, source, and consequences of sin' (Erickson 2001:187). It is acknowledged that the definition of sin is wide ranging and highly subjective. From a theological stance, sin is transgressing of the law of God (1 John 3:4¹⁶) and rebellion against God (Deuteronomy 9:7¹⁷; Joshua 1:18¹⁸). According to Reno (2005:748-751), sin has an essence, universality, unnaturalness, determinativeness and transferability to it and is a perversion or disorder of human nature. Erickson (2001:189) says that sin 'is any lack of conformity, active or passive, to the moral law of God. This may be a matter of act, thought, or inner disposition.' Without Christ, mankind is totally depraved, and his

¹⁶ 1 John 3:4, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.'

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 9:7, 'Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.'

¹⁸ Joshua 1:18, 'Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.'

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efforts carry no virtue with God. (MacArthur 2005:64-67).

A typical secular definition of sin is broader than the biblical definition. Merriam-Webster's (2017) second point in defining sin agrees with the preceding paragraph, but their first point creates room outside the Christian faith and lends acknowledgement to a social construct of sin when they write, 'An offense against religious or moral law; an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible and an often-serious shortcoming.' This is undergirded by Catholic Culture (2018) when they write, 'Modern socialization and collectivization have immersed everyone in other people's values and moral actions to an unprecedented degree.'

Although the Bible does not specifically declare the root of sin, it does declare the reality and evilness of sin (Buitendag 2008:1030). Reno (2005:749) comments, 'Like Macbeth's murder of Duncan, the transgression of Adam and Eve sets in motion the chain of events that stretches from Genesis through Revelation. Sin is the singular fact over and against which God acts.'

Buitendag (2008:1031) mentions that many theologians interpret sin to be an estrangement because it disturbs relationships with God, one's fellow man and nature. In this sense, the focus shifts from sin and guilt to shame and anxiety. The researcher notes a definite change in liberal society away from orthodox soteriology toward a postmodern soteriology. Buitendag's comment regarding the shift in focus parallels the shift in homosexuality from sinful conduct to gifts from God (Botha 2005:22).

Within a Christian context, sin is understood not what mankind supposes it to be, but what the Word of God defines it to be, and this is precisely why a reformulation of the biblical teachings on sin is required by a postmodern society.

Genesis chapters 1 to 11 are often used to outline the basic tenets of sin. For these chapters, it is interpreted that sin has (Buitendag 2008:1030-1031) an individual dimension that extends vertically (Genesis 3:1-24) and horizontally (Genesis 4:2-16). There is also a collective dimension that extends vertically (Genesis 11:1-9) and horizontally (Genesis 6:1-4). The researcher therefore argues that changing

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the theology of sin from an orthodox interpretation to suit the ends of postmodernism is insistent on:

- a) Reinterpretation of those portions of Scripture that condemn homosexuality. This can be done in two ways, either by (a) by extrapolation of Scripture or (b) through postmodern hermeneutics and exegesis.
- b) Eisegesis of Scripture.
- c) The normalization of the sin of homosexuality. Normalization as a phenomenon requires adjustment to commonality, without which dependency on scriptural orthodoxy is accentuated.
- d) The universalization of homosexuality among human beings and within the animal kingdom. In this sense, universal refers to available to all in character and application (Oxford Living Dictionary 2017).
- e) The removal of any form of 'unnaturalness' from homosexuality. The removal is presupposed by the notion that of 'natural equals normal and therefore acceptable.'
- f) The removal of some of the determinativeness of sin; i.e. the downplaying of sin's perversion of life, the consequential removal of the need to turn from a life of sin to a life defined by righteousness (Romans 6:6-8) as well as the cessation of the transferability of homosexuality as a sin.

The essence of the researcher's discussion above is undergirded through Erickson's writing on some biblical perspectives on the nature of sin (2001:188-189). Erickson refers to inner inclinations and dispositions toward wrong acts. To this end, Matthew 5:21-22; 27-28 makes it clear that one's motive is equally important as one's actions. The difference between right from wrong; i.e. states of rebelliousness and disobedience (Romans 2:14-15 and Genesis 2:16-17) is notable. Sin also leads to spiritual disability (Romans 1:21, 28-31 and 12:2); a state wherein one's inner condition and character are altered. Erickson concludes with two powerful perspectives on sin, when he refers to an incomplete fulfilment of

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God's standards and a displacement of God; in fact, all of Erickson's writings point toward the divide between God and man because of sin. To this end, Reno (2005:75) comments, 'Unless theological exegesis presumes that sin is unnatural, accounts of salvation will tend to become otherworldly or purely eschatological.'

2.5.2. Changing the theology of sexuality

Corbet (2012) states that sexuality should not be confused with gender, in that gender contributes toward identity. He goes on to claim that sexuality is determined by how one acts and not by preferential desires. There is an obvious intrinsic link between sexuality and gender. The Bible does not expressly address the question of orientation but does generally assume that gender forms a primary factor of sexuality (for example, Genesis 1:27-28; 2:20-25). In this light, changes to the theology of sexuality is essential to the acceptance and normalization of same-gender relationships. Essentially, society has progressed from an uncomplicated conservative understanding and application of Genesis 1:27¹⁹ to a state of legislated same-gender marriage and widespread condoning of same-gender relationships. This is a psycho-social driven postmodern construct as already delineated earlier in this chapter and the extent of the shift is capsulated by Corbet (2012) when he writes, 'They dispute that God created people either male or female. Instead, they claim, God created people male and female and therefore a person 'could be anywhere on that continuum.'

Returning to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, when conventionally flows forth, there is a unity between sex, gender and sexuality. In terms of postmodern society, said harmony is definitely not the case. Sexuality, according to the English Oxford Living Dictionary (2018) includes, 'Capacity for sexual feelings, a person's sexual orientation or preference and sexual activity.' From this definition, it can be surmised that sexuality can but does not have to be linked to sex. At the same time though, sexuality can be separated from sex and can be linked to expressions of

¹⁹ Genesis 1:27: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.'

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gender and gender association. Siann (1994:3) writes that although all are born as either male or female, sexual identification interacts with another identification called gender. She states that 'sex is defined as the biological differences between males and females' and 'gender is the manner in which culture defines and constrains these differences.' The researcher highlights the notion of cultural definition. It is acknowledged (Reachout.com 2017) that the difference between sex and sexuality is complicated, as the above dictionary definition and general discussion suggests. The researcher extends said complexity to include all matters surrounding sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, sexual preference gender identity and gender itself, since matters are open to both cultural and social interpretation and association. Supporting the researcher is Chrisler and Murray (2016) who write that, 'From a social psychological perspective, gender is important because it is one of the variables that signals a person's social status.' In other words, Chrisler and Murray (2016) confirm the direct link between sociology and gender. They furthermore write that changes in society and culture have resulted in the study of sex and gender being a 'vibrant, active research area.' The researcher is certain that there is sufficient material and difference of opinion within the realm of sex, sexuality and gender to produce a number of theses on this topic. Chrisler and Murray (2016) go on to contextualize the research in the psychology of men and women as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender psychology enlarging our understanding of sex and gender. In other words, matters are still exploratory and fluid. Highlighting this is the Google search (<https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=how+many+genders+are+there&sourceid=opera&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>) as to how many genders there are returns many answers, some websites list in excess of 60.

It is true that the past few decades have seen social challenges arise in the field of sexuality and gender which have brought about thoroughly new challenges (Körtner 2008:209). Körtner continues on the next page (p. 210) by writing, 'Like all ethics the theological formation of opinions concerning questions of contemporary sexual ethics ranges within the area of conflict between the biblically tested Word of God as the basis of Christian faith and action, and the present situation of man.' The

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researcher notes a contrast between Körtner's comment on the tested Word and the present situation of man.

There is a truth to sexuality which according to Gagnon (2005:739) is suffering under 'intellectual currents, values, historical-critical analysis, postmodernism, deconstructionism, pluralism, diversity and tolerance.' He writes that the same has called the foundation of biblical sexuality into question. On page 740, he writes that although the homosexual agenda is not the originating cause behind society's sexual dysfunctions, it is in many ways, an 'unfortunate and logical end result.' In this vein, Botha (2005:14) mentions that both the church and society need to decide if sexuality has a right and a wrong? Or is it simply a gift from God? To answer this question is complex, in that Botha's question is perhaps not deep enough:

- Sexuality is a gift from God, indeed God made us male and female (for example, Genesis 1:27; 5:2 and Mark 10:6). This statement can be clouded though in that, whereas gender and sex were historically presumed to be the same,²⁰ of late the former refers to biological differences and the latter to a societal characteristic delineation (Nobelius 2004).
- It is obvious to the researcher that since sexuality is a gift from God, it must be good (1 Timothy 4:4).

The societal characteristic delineation of gender in relation to sex (Nobelius 2004) adequately demonstrates sexuality in relation to postmodernism. The January 2017 issue of National Geographic magazine carries an article titled 'Redefining Gender,' written in consultation with ER Green of the Center for Human Sexuality Studies at Pennsylvania's Widener University. In said article, Jones writes, 'To a degree unimaginable a decade ago, the intensely personal subject of gender identity has entered the public square.' In discussing gender roles, Nobelius makes the point

²⁰ For example, the reader is referred to Genesis 1:27; the Hebrew used for male is זָכָר and for female is נְקֵבָה. Both nouns are derivative from a sexual form.

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that 'sex' (male or female) is the same across cultures, but a 'gender role' can differ across cultures and is subjective.

Jones (2017), in conjunction with Green defines 21 terms related to defining gender. Noticeably, male and female were not on said list. Another important factor to enter into the discussion is that of gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is where 'gender at birth is contrary to the one they identify with' (American Psychiatric Association 2013). The article continues by mentioning that, 'Gender dysphoria is manifested in a variety of ways, including strong desires to be treated as the other gender or to be rid of one's sex characteristics, or a strong conviction that one has feelings and reactions typical of the other gender.' It is clear that 'sexuality' in a postmodern society is an all-encompassing topic, on the one hand it is rooted in the earliest of Scriptures and on the other hand it is addressed in the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Young (2017:3) writes, 'The sexualisation of this society has trickled down to enmesh even the youngest, most vulnerable and susceptible members. Popular media including movies, television programming, magazines, music and the internet are inundated with volumes of erotica and sexual innuendo that would have garnered a X-rating twenty years earlier.'

In terms of sexuality, society has moved beyond a conservative understanding and application to an open-ended scenario, where matters are seemingly without limits.

2.6. Conclusion

In the course of this chapter, the researcher has completed the interpretive task of Osmer (2008). He has applied sagely wisdom by means of a brief literature overview of the topic of marriage and paid particular attention to the orthodox definition and application of marriage as well as some of the psycho-sociological factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude of society and certain churches towards the acceptance of same-gender marriages.

The researcher has demonstrated that changes in the orthodox theology of marriage, sin and sexuality in response to postmodernism and the development thereof have

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resulted in far reaching changes to the orthodox essence and structure of marriage itself.

The next chapter of this dissertation focusses on the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer (2008). It will be a critical phenomenological description of the current situation relating to same-gender relationships in South Africa. This will include an investigative, systematic and critical evaluation of the current literature.

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3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher completed Osmer's interpretive task and concluded that changes in the orthodox theology of marriage, sin and sexuality—in response to postmodernism and the development thereof have resulted in far reaching changes to the orthodox essence and structure of marriage itself.

In this chapter the researcher will conduct Osmer's descriptive empirical task, which is far wider than merely answering the question, 'What is going on?' (2008:33). Osmer couples the quality of attentiveness with the stated key question. He goes on (p. 33-34) to advise exploration of this attentiveness through a spirituality of presence, in fact the entire descriptive empirical task must be grounded in a spirituality of presence. A spirituality of presence means 'opening ourselves to the forming and transforming Spirit of God who remakes us in the image of Christ within his body' (p. 34). The resultant is openness, attentiveness, and prayerfulness. The researcher notes a similarity between Osmer's description of a spirituality of presence and the orthodox doctrine of progressive sanctification. There is an interplay in the relationship between a spirituality of presence and practical theological interpretation that progresses from informal attending through to formal attending. In other words, one progresses from 'active listening and attentiveness in interpersonal communication' (2008:37), through the semi-formal stage that introduces methodology and activity lending structure toward the formal stage which zooms in on situations and contexts through empirical research (p. 38).

Osmer (2008:35) maintains that priestly listening reflects that fellowship in which people listen to one another as a form of mutual support, care and edification. To this end, this chapter 'seeks to understand the actions and practices in which individuals and groups engage in everyday life and the meanings they ascribe to their experience' (p. 49-50). Drawing from the essence of the Web Center for Social Research Methods (2016)' definition of phenomenology, the researcher articulates a 'critical

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phenomenological description' as seeking to understand how the world appears to others and then critically evaluate the gathered information.

To this end, the researcher will set out to answer two key questions he has set for himself:

- a) What is being taught?
- b) What is being practiced?

To answer the above two questions, this chapter will take two snapshots of 'what is going on:'

- a) Firstly, what a leading academic from a prominent university in South Africa has published about same-gender relationships.
- b) Secondly, what is doctrinally upheld and practiced by a large same-gender friendly church.

Lastly, two happenings will be lightly touched upon with a view to widening the horizon of 'what is going on?'

- a) How the term 'intersex' is interpreted in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders indicating the historical approach to 'intersex' to the current point of fluidity.
- b) A brief description of four influential Facebook pages that either favour or disfavour same-gender relationships and marriage.

Thus, this chapter will provide an investigative, systematic and critical phenomenological evaluation of selected literature regarding the above-mentioned two questions that the researcher set for himself.

3.2. A critical evaluation of a publication of a leading South African academic

Yolanda Dreyer, a leading theological academic in South Africa published an article on same-gender relationships titled, 'The "sanctity" of marriage—an archaeology of a socio-religious construct: mythological origins, forms and model.' This article has been

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written by the author in her capacity as lecturer at the Department of Practical Theology of the University of Pretoria. It has been published in 2008 by the accredited journal, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*. In this subsection the article will be evaluated according to different themes as indicated by the headings. The researcher will provide a summative evaluation as the conclusion to this subsection.

One of the main themes in Dreyer's article is the relation between gender and soteriology. It is acknowledged that per the abstract of Dreyer's article (2008:499) that the point she is arguing is that 'the sexual difference between female and male should be regarded as soteriologically indifferent.' A second theme is that the institution as well as forms and modes of marriage and sexuality is the result of social constructs. These themes will now be further explored.

3.2.1. A critique of 'theological essentialism'

Dreyer (2008:499-503) adequately critiques theological essentialism and argues that a same-gender relationship is capable of embodying the values of intimacy, fidelity, unconditional love and care (p. 500). She detaches the act of procreation from marriage and at the same time makes mention of sexual desire historically being managed by means of marriage (p. 500). Dreyer makes mention of Robert's position—which agrees with that of Luther, Calvin and Barth, that sexual difference is important when discussing marriage from a theological perspective and that, according to Roberts (2007:111-183), God willed marriage to be heterosexual. To this end, she comments that, 'Roberts does not seem open to the possibility that God may also have created sexual minorities and that sexual intimacy could therefore also be legitimate outside of a heteronormative context.' (p. 501). Dreyer (with whom the author agrees) then argues that marriage should be de-sacramentalised. The researcher furthermore agrees with Dreyer that soteriologically speaking, it makes no difference if one is male or female.

Dreyer then writes the following critical statement, 'It is my contention that sexuality, though a biological reality of being human, is profoundly influenced by changing social constructs and that the institution of marriage is itself a social construct.' In these matters Dreyer presupposes a dialectical theological model coupled to a

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hermeneutic of suspicion (p. 501).

She contemplates a revelational model of marriage theology which, she asserts, leads to 'heterosexual marriage as an institution will be regarded as unchangeable and ordained by God.' In contrast, a postmodern universalising is upheld as an anti-thesis for essentialism (p. 501-502). Dreyer chooses 'to move the biological sexual difference between man and woman from the centre of the theological discussion on marriage.' This she does per the legitimate postmodern insight 'that social constructs change as paradigm shifts take place.' She moves to the position that is in contrast to protestant theology which contends that matrimony is a God-given heterosexual ordinance. She concludes this subsection (p. 502) with the assertion that the essentialistic interconnectedness between sexuality and marriage is too partisan and stagnant. She describes how a postmodern commentate is more accommodating of plurality, fluidity, vagueness and accepts the counternarratives of the marginalized.

3.2.2. An evaluation of Dreyer's critique of 'theological essentialism'

Dreyer's proposition: 'Dialectical theological model coupled to a hermeneutic of suspicion.' (2008:501).

A dialectical theology is intrinsic to dialogism which 'is based on our ordinary experience of face-to-face conversations, but its expanded perspectives on persons, reciprocity, and responsibility offer a rich context in which to read the Bible' (Felch 2005:173). A dialectical theology is therefore subjective in nature. The contrast to dialectical theology as a source of knowledge is natural theology Erickson (2001:18) who makes mention of tradition, Scripture and experience as sources of theology. Erickson (2001) describes natural theology as an empirical approach to doctrine, which resonates with the approach of researcher. Erickson (2001:46) says the following in relation to natural theology, 'The position proposed by John Calvin appears most reasonable. God has given us an objective, valid rational revelation of himself in nature, history, and human personality. It is there for anyone who wants to observe it.' It would seem that natural theology leans away from same-gender relationships, whilst dialectical theology leans toward the same.

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On this note, Dreyer (p. 500-501) states that 'Luther and Barth regard marriage as part of the order of creation;' meaning that in contrast to Dreyer's position, according to Barth, sexual difference is important to when discussing marriage from a theological perspective.

A hermeneutic of suspicion (Felski 2012) 'is a phrase coined by Paul Ricoeur to capture a common spirit that pervades the writings of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche.' In essence, a hermeneutic of suspicion is non-contiguous with a hermeneutic of faith. The former aims to restore meaning, while the latter aims to decode meaning (Josselson 2004:1).

Dreyer's proposition: 'God may also have created sexual minorities and that sexual intimacy could therefore also be legitimate outside of a heteronormative context' (2008:501).

Dreyer's words 'may' and 'could' are emphasised. Dreyer therefore does not know for certain but raises the possibility—without scriptural undergirding. The creation accounts in Scripture (Genesis 1 and 2) are extremely specific in that no 'may' or 'could' are stated. Said words are at odds with orthodox doctrines of general and specific revelation as studies in, for example Erikson (2001:41-59) and Hammond²¹ (1990:25-27). To this end, Hammond writes (p. 25), 'There is no compromise possible for the Christian, in some matters, between (irrelevant) philosophical speculation and divine revelation.' If one opens oneself to 'may' and 'could,' then at the same time, one must also open oneself to a Canon that is not closed; i.e. a new message from God in contradiction to the created order.

Dreyer's proposition: 'Sexuality, though a biological reality of being human, is

²¹ This work of Hammond is not a recent work, but a highly commended classic work which has sold over 100 000 copies. It was one of the books on systematic theology prescribed to the author when he commenced theology studies through the Assemblies of God. The work originally published in 1936 has most recently been re-published in 1990. A reviewer on 'Goodreads,' Chris Wray had this to say about it in 2012, 'This is a concise introduction to Christian theology from a classically evangelical and reformed perspective and is the best such book that I've read.'

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profoundly influenced by changing social constructs and that the institution of marriage is itself a social construct' (2008:499).

This statement presupposes deconstruction of 'sex' to the point where sex, gender and sexuality may or may not be a singular concept, and where the one is a natural precursor or expression of the other. Rightly mentioned, social constructs are ever-changing. Furthermore, the researcher agrees with Dreyer—in part—when she states that marriage is a social construct. The institution of marriage is referred to by Dreyer in a very broad context, and to this end might have been better contextualized to address 'biblical marriage' or another descriptive that would narrow matters toward a particular heritage of faith. Therefore, it is at this point that the researcher and Dreyer's paths begin to separate. The researcher cannot agree with the extension to biblical marriage the notion of 'marriage being a social construct,' because biblical marriage was instituted by God (Genesis 2:24).

Dreyer's proposition: 'That social constructs change as paradigm shifts take place' (2008:502).

The researcher agrees with the above statement, but with one important qualification, the researcher does not view biblical marriage as a socially constructed institution. However, the researcher does recognise the pressure place upon biblical marriage to adequately respond to the demands of the paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism. In this context, it is not a foregone certainty that biblical marriage and its constructs must change in response to postmodernism; indeed, God and His Word are immutable²² (Berkhof²³ 1949:62-63 and Erickson

²² With due appreciation of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms.

²³ This work of Berkhof is a classic. The most recent reprint is in 2017. The researcher has chosen to use the 1949 reprint owing to its originality and reviews—both of which are valuable in the eyes of a conservative theologian. Amazon.com (<https://www.amazon.com/Systematic-Theology-Louis-Berkhof/dp/B0007F008K> , 2018-05-02) writes of the 1949 reprint: 'Berkhof's loyalty to the well-defined lines of the Reformed Faith, his concise and compact style and his up-to-date treatment have made this work the most important twentieth century compendium of Reformed Theology.'

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2001:96-97). God is not human (for example, Numbers 23:19).

It is acknowledged that ceremonies, garments, liturgy and so forth will change over time, indeed there are numerous ecclesiastic differences, but marriage as a Godly institution per the orthodox essence of its meaning, design and part of the creation order stands over time. The researcher makes mention of Genesis 1:28 and argues from this position that procreation is an act intrinsic to the purposes of marriage, a stance not necessarily shared in the social construction of marriage.

3.2.3. A critique of unchangeability

Dreyer (2008:503) commences this sub-section by discussing tradition and change, and then points out that the Bible contains 'both materials based on tradition and faith assertions.' She correctly points out that social balance is disrupted by changes in tradition and goes on to mention that the traditions surrounding identity, sex, language and ethnicity change so slowly, that they may seem immutable. Following on, it is mentioned that the 'more fixed traditions' may even be seen as part of the order of creation, interpreted by the researcher to mean that they are considered God-given as opposed to socially constructed. Dreyer (2008:503-504) concludes her sub-point by alluding to a patriarchal culture in which marriage was arranged as opposed to having mutual attraction as its basis as a means to protecting the social identity of the group concerned.

The next main section of Dreyer's discussion centres on sexuality and shifting paradigms. She opens the sub-section with (2008:504) a discussion on the interaction between sexual difference and social dynamics, and states that over time, the principles of religion, sexuality and marriage have changed.

The social dynamics of sexuality, marriage and religion are briefly investigated. Dreyer correctly concludes (2008:504) that, 'Present-day Christian faith communities face the consequences of the paradigm shifts that have taken place from biblical times up to the present. The source book of Christianity, the Bible, originated in a premodern world with premodern perspectives on sexuality, religion and marriage.' According to Dreyer, an obvious connection between religion,

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sexuality and marriage no longer exists and therefore, sexual difference can no longer be central to a theology of marriage. She concludes (p. 504), 'The challenge today is to live with the biblical message of redemption in the presence of God within the context of the faith community, but without blind submission to outdated social constructs.'

3.2.4. An evaluation of Dreyer's critique of 'unchangeability'

Dreyer's proposition: The Bible contains 'both material based on tradition and faith assertions' (2008:503).

This may be so, particularly in relation to the transmission of the earliest of texts. However, when unqualified, Dreyer's statement might lean itself to deliberation in terms of the inspiration of Scripture and the dependability of Scripture (Erikson 2001:61-81). To this end, the believer has to depend entirely on the source of Divine revelation and judiciously apply the results of exegeses. Erikson (2001:73) writes: 'The Bible's assertions are fully true when judged in accordance with the purpose for which they are written.' In saying this, Erikson gravitates toward moderate harmonization, a position with which the researcher agrees. Therefore, traditions and faith assertions when included in the Word of God form part of the Canon. In this form, there is an inherent union and harmonization with one another, the whole of the Canon and the teachings of the biblical authors regarding the same.

Dreyer's proposition: 'The traditions surrounding identity, sex, language and ethnicity change so slowly that they may seem immutable' (2008:503).

This is an interesting statement. On the one hand there is the possibility that identity and sex were never intended (designed) to be fluid, and on the other hand (as evidenced in the preceding chapter) there has been an enlightenment and a number of rapid changes in many sciences (Brunsdon 2010:2) that are attributed to postmodernism, where social constructionism is the order of the day. The researcher suggests that it would probably be more prudent to deal with each of 'identity, sex, language and ethnicity' separately, rather than group them together when discussing soteriological differences between male and female.

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The next point is whether Dreyer's statement is valid for all traditions. Regardless of the answer, it is noted that Dreyer concedes that change is indeed very slow (2008:503). The reasons behind the slow change, in relation to a rapidly changing postmodern world (p. 521) is not without speculation because of the apparent contradiction of slow versus rapid. The researcher counters that it is possible that slow change might be because that orthodox biblical marriage is not inherently be open to change (see for example, Westminster Confession's (1646) first statement on marriage in chapter 24), but that orthodox biblical marriage instead is a biblically grounded constancy of Christian society (Barnard, van der Colf & Müller 1988:100), which is presently being challenged by postmodernism (Brunsdon 2010:2-3).

Dreyer's proposition: 'When sexual difference becomes the focus of social dynamics, the consequence is that sexuality, marriage and religion will function in an interconnected way' (2008:504).

The researcher proposes that perhaps sexual difference must be 'a' focus (as opposed to 'the' focus) of social dynamics. Fisher (2016) writes, 'Much of courtship and mating is choreographed by nature. In fact, nature designed men and women to work together. But I cannot pretend that they are alike. They are not.' It is the opinion of the researcher that orthodox biblical sexuality, biblical marriage and the Christian faith must function in an interconnected way.

Dreyer's proposition: 'The source book of Christianity, the Bible, originated in a premodern world with premodern perspectives on sexuality, religion and marriage' (2008:505).

Dreyer is absolutely correct in that technically the Bible originated in a premodern world. However, the researcher is appropriately mindful of the fact the Bible is unlike any other book, record or document. It is the unchanging inspired Word of God and is transcendent over time. Erikson (2001:20-21) writes that biblical teachings were addressed to specific situations and that current cultural situations are appreciably different to biblical times. Erickson then calls believers, with the aforementioned in mind, to 'discover the underlying message behind all its specific forms of expression.' Along the same lines, Manser (2011:9) writes, 'The Bible is the most

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remarkable book in human history. An international bestseller since the printing press was invented, the Bible was written thousands of years ago and yet it is wonderfully relevant in our day and age. It claims to be the very Word of God. What could be more engaging than to hear and understand God speaking to you and me?' McDowell (1999:3-16) wrote that the Bible that it is unique in continuity, circulation, translation, survival, teachings, its influence on literature and in its influence on civilization. Therefore, although the Bible as a book did originate in premodern times, its message transcends time.

Dreyer's proposition: 'The challenge today is to live with the biblical message of redemption in the presence of God within the context of the faith community, but without blind submission to outdated social constructs' (Dreyer 2008:505).

There is a lot going on in the above statement. On the one hand, the orthodox biblical message is linked to outdated social constructs, and on the other hand there is the present context of the faith community. However, two words stand out for the researcher and they are, 'blind submission.' The researcher notes in these two words, leeway for introducing alternatives through a postmodern lens thereby constructing and rejecting fundamental matters as the socially and individually constructed need may so arise.

As mentioned, (McDowell 1999:3-16), the Bible—as Word of God—is not like any other book. It cannot be outdated or superseded or improved upon. It is rich with both vertical²⁴ and horizontal²⁵ relationships truths and will never lose its relevancy, consider the following Scriptures:

- a) Malachi 3:6a, 'For I am the LORD, I change not.'

²⁴ God's relationship with humans.

²⁵ Human relationships with humans.

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- b) James 1:17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'
- c) 1 Peter 1:23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.'

The researcher suggests that as one may reflect over the 'outdatedness' of Scripture, one also reflects over Hebrews 4:12, 'For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

3.2.5. Mythological origins

In this sub-section, Dreyer (2008:505-507) commences with marriage as a biblical metaphor for the relationship between God and the church. She articulates an explanation as to why the account of Adam and Eve became the basis for the theological link between creation and covenant. Dreyer (p. 507) points out the existence of a variety of marital forms in antiquity. Her arguments centre on present-day studies, citing Van Dijk-Hemmes (1989²⁶), Johnson (1992²⁷) and Botha and Dreyer (2007²⁸), which ground said metaphor in the Old Testament. Referring lastly to polygamous unions, fertility cults and Christian monogamy all within the Old Testament, she underscores the 'existence of a variety of marital forms in antiquity.'

²⁶ Van Dijk-Hemmes, F 1989. The imagination of power and the power of imagination. An intertextual analysis of two biblical love songs: The Song of Songs and Hosea 2. *JSOT* 44, 75-88.

²⁷ Johnson, E E 1992. Ephesians, in Newsom, C A & Ringe, S H (eds), *The women's Bible commentary*, 338-342. Louisville, KY: Westminster.

²⁸ Botha, A & Dreyer Y 2007. Demistifikasie van die metafoor "die kerk as bruid". *HTS* 63(3), 1239-1274.

3.2.6. An evaluation of Dreyer's 'mythological origins'

Dreyer is correct that the Old Testament does address a variety of marital forms. However, she relies upon what others (for example, Osiek 2002²⁹) have written on the topic as to providing her own exegesis of applicable Scriptures and then undergirding the same with Osiek (for example). Even so, Dreyer (2008:506-507) concedes that 'an interconnection between sexuality, marriage and religion was prevalent in Israel and early Christianity.' The researcher argues that this is congruent with Genesis 1:27-28 and Genesis 2:22-24. Marriage is a prominent normative biblical metaphor³⁰ for the relationship between God and His people (Leland, Wilhoit and Longman 2010:537). The understanding of said metaphor could according to one's angle of incidence, be broadened to include being a hypocaustasis and is not merely an antiquated metaphor or indeed a product of *hieros gamos*. The researcher's stance is undergirded by chapter XXIV point III. of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Barnard, van der Colf & Müller (1988:105-106) as well as through the grammatical-historical exegesis of Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24, 1 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:25-27.

3.2.7. A variety of marital forms

In this interesting sub-section, Dreyer (2008:507-510) commences by referring to the two main forms of heterosexual marriage: monogamy and polygamy (p. 507). She proceeds to make an important statement (p. 507) that points toward postmodernism challenging monogamy, 'Today literature advocating the view that contemporary monogamous marriage is too restrictive for many and that alternative types of intimate relationships should be discussed more widely and made more socially acceptable, abound.'

²⁹ Osiek, C 2002. The bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33): A problematic wedding. *BTB* 2(1), 29-39.

³⁰ The church in Scripture, is compared to a bride/wife twice: 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:25-27. The bride of Christ is specifically identified in Revelation 21:9-11.

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Dreyer then defines polygamy, polyandry, polygyny and group marriage. She concludes that there is 'no one, normal, natural form of marriage.' (p. 508-510).

3.2.8. An evaluation of Dreyer's 'variety of marital forms'

Dreyer is correct, in a global multi-faith and multi-cultural context, there is 'no one, normal, natural form of marriage.' The question is however is if this holds true for orthodox biblical marriage. Westminster Confession's (1646) first statement on marriage (chapter 24) as undergirded by Waddington (2013) would suggest not.

3.2.9. A variety of marital models

Initially drawing on the work of Witte (1997)³¹, Dreyer (2008:510-521) touches on four perspectives on marriage: naturalist, social, contractual and religious.

- a) The religious perspective is 'seen as a spiritual or sacramental union which is regulated by the creed and practices of the faith community.'
- b) The social perspective 'there are certain social expectations and privileges bound up with marriage, some of which are regulated by law.'
- c) The contractual perspective 'is seen as a voluntary association into which people enter voluntarily and tailor to their own needs.'
- d) The naturalistic perspective 'treats marriage as a created institution, subject to the natural laws of reason, conscience, and the Bible.'

A question put (Dreyer 2008:510) but not directly answered is which of the above four perspectives has the ultimate say over marriage? Dreyer (2008:510-520) then extensively discusses the following five models of marriage in modern Western Christian traditions:

³¹ Witte, J 1997. *From sacrament to contract: Marriage, religion, and law in the Western tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.

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- a) The Roman-Catholic model (p. 510-518), which sees marriage as natural, contractual and sacramental.
- b) The protestant models: (a) the Lutheran model (p. 518) which leans toward a social model, (b) the Calvinist model (p. 519) which leans toward a covenantal model, (c) the Anglican model (p. 519-510) in which marriage is to an extent sacramental, social, covenantal and commonwealth and lastly, (d) the Enlightenment model (p. 520) which placed emphasis on the contractual aspect of marriage.

Returning to the work of Witte (2008:521), Dreyer writes that all models of marriage have been influenced by religious persuasions concerning marriage and sexuality. Dreyer closes this sub-section off (p. 521) with the following critical comment:

‘As the theology and laws of marriage have evolved in changing times, the challenge has always been to find a new balance between order and liberty, orthodoxy and innovation regarding sexual and family norms and habits (Witte 1997:15). The challenge presents itself again in today’s world which has, in a sense evolved too quickly for theologies on sexuality, marriage and family to keep up. In this respect the law has probably done a better job.’

3.2.10. An evaluation of Dreyer’s ‘variety of marital models’

Dreyer’s proposition: ‘Which of the above four perspectives has the “ultimate say” over marriage?’ (2008:510).

The researcher leans strongly toward a naturalistic perspective on biblical marriage. This is the only perspective that elevates God and His Word to the position of ultimate authority.³² To this end, Kšstenberger (2010:chapter 2) in the book ‘God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation’ grounds his point of departure into Genesis 1-3, meaning marriage is the will and design of God. He

³² Sola scriptura.

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forwards the same grounding to the teachings of Christ and Paul. In this sense, agreement is reached with orthodoxy as well as the following two authoritative and influential church conventions:

- a) In the Dutch Reformed Church: In the '*Handboek vir die Erediens*,' Barnard, van der Colf & Müller (1988:100) write: '*Die huwelik is deur God ingestel toe Hy aan die begin gesê het: 'Dit is nie goed dat die mens alleen is nie; Ek sal vir hom iemand maak wat hom kan help, sy gelyke.'*'³³ This statement asserts that God instituted marriage, as a direct creative act. Reese (2006:478-479) agrees and writes that 'male and female' as a partnership is grounded in the creation accounts of Geneses 1 (creation) and Genesis 2 (etiology).
- b) In the Anglican Church: In the 'An Anglican Prayer Book' on page 100, it is written in the introductory section to marriage that 'marriage is a gift of God.'

The researcher leans strongly toward the Calvinist model of marriage, from which there are echoes in the Anglican model. A covenant is a bond between parties and in the sense of orthodox biblical marriage, this bond is lifelong and originates in the wedding vows made firstly unto God and secondly toward each other. To this end, Barnard, van der Colf & Müller (1988:104) write, '*AB en CD, u het begeer dat u huwelik in die Naam van God bevestig moet word.*'³⁴ In the worldview of the researcher, marriage by design and function is not a human-instituted, or socially constructed act or state of being.

Dreyer's proposition: 'As the theology and laws of marriage have evolved in changing times, the challenge has always been to find a new balance between order and liberty, orthodoxy and innovation' (2008:521).

³³ Translation: Marriage was instituted by God when He said at the beginning: 'And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.' (Genesis 2:18).

³⁴ Translation: AB and CD, you have indicated your intention to have this marriage confirmed in the Name of God.

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The researcher is intrigued by the word choice and order of events. 'Theology and laws of marriage' precede the balance between 'order and liberty, orthodoxy and innovation.' Dreyer has already supposed (2008:521) that the changing world has evolved quicker than the 'theologies on sexuality, marriage and family' can keep up with. In the first sense, theology leads to change and in the second sense, theology responds to change. Both conditions cannot coexist as equals. The orthodox doctrine of progressive sanctification undergirds the first condition. The joiner lay in Dreyer's words, 'in changing times.' This inclusion brings about reconciliation between the stated two senses, and at the same time creates space departure from orthodox teachings on marriage.

Dreyer's proposition: 'Today's world which has, in a sense evolved too quickly for theologies on sexuality, marriage and family to keep up' (2008:521).

The above statement presupposes that the burden lay with theology to respond to society. Brunson (2010:2-3) articles that postmodernism presents to theology the complex assignment of reformulating core biblical concepts of God, the historical Jesus, the Holy Spirit and truth. In so doing, the danger is one of compromise which can threaten the essence of orthodox theology itself.

The researcher contends that is not the task of theology to expose herself to any form of necessitated (possibly jeopardous) postmodern change, but to remain true to the immutability of God and His Word. The researcher's belief is undergirded by Berkhof (1949:165) who writes, 'If traditional exegesis conflicts, not merely with scientific theories—which are themselves interpretations—, but with well-established facts, re-thinking and reinterpretation is naturally in order.' Although social constructionism is in essence re-thinking, it is not necessarily factual.

Dreyer's proposition: 'In this respect the law has probably done a better job' (2008:521).

The law referred to here is understood to be a secular law within the parameters of another law, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. By definition (Collins 2018) law is, 'The law is a system of rules that a society or government

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develops in order to deal with crime, business agreements, and social relationships.’ Although the law stands apart from the authority of the timeless Word of God, at the same time the law has a social responsibility which does impact the practice of religion. In this sense, the coexistence of the Civil Union Act, Act No. 17 of 2006 and Marriage Act, Act No. 25 of 1961 makes sense to the researcher.

3.2.11. Paving the way for a non-essentialistic approach

In conclusion, Dreyer (2008:521-522) moves to a description of dual anthropology, and in quoting Coll (1994:70) she writes, ‘Dual-nature anthropology suggests that women and men are of different natures determined by God and that these different natures determine what is appropriate for each sex’ (p. 521). She argues (p. 522) that the emphasis placed on sexual difference in the theology of marriage and sexuality propagates dual anthropology. In a similar vein, she argues that ‘sexual difference is also overemphasized in human interaction.’ The point that she is making (p. 522), in her words is, ‘Different perspectives on sexuality and the existence of a variety of forms and models and marriage arrangements are not taken into account.’ This supposition, in the context of a humane society, leads to the need to be aware that ‘constructs and social patterns are human creations, not God-given structures.’

Dreyer, who is not alone in her liberal interpretation of marriage, closes her article with the following statement (p. 522), ‘Postmodern philosophy and theology create awareness of the harm that is done when human constructs are purported to be God-given and unchanging.’

3.2.12. An evaluation of Dreyer’s ‘Paving the way for a non-essentialistic approach’

Dreyer’s proposition: ‘Dual-nature anthropology suggests that women and men are of different natures determined by God and that these different natures determine what is appropriate for each sex’ (2008:521).

Both men and women are created equal in God’s eyes and both are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). Likewise, both are equally sinners in need of

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Christ and therefore the love of God. Biblically speaking, both male and female are fully equal and fully human (see also Erikson 2001:166). This does not, however imply that they have the same marital roles (see for example, 1 Peter 3:7, 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:22-30). Nor are male and female biologically the same. The researcher suggests rather than 'blind submission' toward a single nature theory which argues that differences between male and female are culturally defined (i.e. not by God), why not acknowledge the created order and celebrate the God-created differences between the sexes?

The researcher believes that it is worth elaborating in future studies on the entirety of the above quotation, but from a literal hermeneutic and historical-grammatical exegetical point of view, working toward today (current). In this manner postmodernism is denied the opportunity to view history through its inherent tainted lens; thereby rather allowing historical theology to speak to postmodernism in its own right.

Dreyer's proposition: 'Different perspectives on sexuality and the existence of a variety of forms and models and marriage arrangements are not taken into account' (2008:522).

This statement is therefore taken by the researcher in a multi-religious and multi-cultural setting. In this setting, Dreyer is correct, 'anything can be' and 'anything can go,' as long as society sanctions it. In a conservative biblical setting however, matters are significantly more confined and defined. It is acknowledged that postmodernism rapidly gaining leverage in society thus leading to a widening gap from orthodox biblical interpretation and application.

Dreyer's proposition: 'Postmodern philosophy and theology create awareness of the harm that is done when human constructs are purported to be God-given and unchanging' (2008:522).

The pivotal word is 'purported.' For this statement to be true, requires a significant reformulation of the orthodox theology of gender relationships and biblical marriage itself. However, when viewed through a conservative lens, the only harm done to

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humans, is by humans themselves. The 1988 marriage formula of the Dutch Reformed Church, the same in the 1989 Anglican book of prayer, the Westminster Confession of faith and many other influential ecclesiastic documents all presuppose orthodoxy in marriage, and as such—in general terms—present a literal, hermeneutically and historical-grammatic exegetically sound concept of what marriage is and between whom marriage should be.

3.2.13. The researcher's concluding thoughts

The researcher's first concluding thought is that Dreyer's validated writings centre on marriage being a socially constructed institution, as opposed to a God instituted/given/ordained institution. In a secular sense she is most likely correct, but not necessarily so within the framework of an orthodox biblical portrait of marriage. For if marriage is God ordained/given/instituted, then it is society that must align with God's design. Said alignment is completely against the grain of a postmodern society and its libertarianistic determination of what constitutes sin.

The second concluding thought is over a 'dialectical theological model coupled to a hermeneutic of suspicion.' The researcher ponders if this particular combination can also, if maltreated, result in the reduction of God Himself to a (social) construction of human reason.

The third concluding thought is the raising of the question, 'If Dreyer's conclusions, suppositions and arguments are correct, then has the traditional church been misleading her congregants for a great number of years, and is the traditional church continuing to do so?'

The fourth concluding thought is on a statement of Erickson regarding the nature of truth (2001:36-37) in relation to postmodern constructionism and rejection of orthodoxy. He describes the postmodern need to abandon 'traditional' truths in favour of social constructionism thus making the point that human knowledge is limited and with postmodernism, truth is reduced to the limitation of human knowledge. Truth is not absolute in a postmodern world, which has far reaching

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consequences to the believer's interaction with God, 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24).

The final concluding thought addresses the article abstract in which the stated aim of the article is, 'The aim of the article is to argue that the sexual difference between female and male should be regarded as soteriologically indifferent.' At face value, the researcher would have liked to read an immediate conjunctural context as part of said sentence because Dreyer's article seems to have at its core, marriage.

This said, the doctrine of soteriology is key in understanding the doctrines of redemption, justification, sanctification, propitiation and atonement. Within the context of Titus 3:5-8,³⁵ Dreyer is correct that 'the sexual difference between female and male should be regarded as soteriologically indifferent.' Therefore, in the context of Dreyer's article, matters for the researcher is reductant to context, specifically, what exactly is understood by 'sexual' as it relates to same-gender relationships and marriage? To this end, in reference to 'sexual' the following observations are made:

- a) In terms of etymology, the Online Etymology Dictionary (2018) states the following:

'1650s,³⁶ "of or pertaining to the fact of being male or female," from Late Latin *sexualis* "relating to sex," from Latin *sexus* (see sex (n.)). Meaning "pertaining to copulation or generation" is from 1766; sexual intercourse attested by 1771; sexual orientation by 1967; sexual harassment by 1975. Sexual

³⁵ Titus 3:5-8, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.'

³⁶ Note that the researcher leans strongly toward the 1650 interpretation.

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revolution attested by 1962. Sexual politics is from 1970.

Related: Sexually.'

- b) Biologically speaking, males are different to females. The researcher is of the opinion that such Godly created—as opposed to socially constructed—differences should be celebrated.
- c) Soteriologically speaking, there is no sexual difference between male and female. Both male and female have sinned, both male and female need Christ (Romans 3:23-24).
- d) With reference to biblical marital roles, there are God-created sexual differences between male and female, which are intrinsically concomitant to the orthodox purposes and functioning of orthodox biblical marriage, for example, the ability to procreate and the ability to naturally conceive and carry an unborn child for nine months.
- e) In terms of single nature theories and dual anthropology, the discussion over sexual differences becomes highly subjective. Theologically (soteriologically) speaking, the researcher has already addressed matters in point above.

3.3. The doctrines and practices of a same-gender friendly church

This sub-section addresses the semi-formal component to Osmer's task of priestly listening (2008:38). Semi-formal attending 'involved the use of specific methods and activities that provide structure and regularity to attending.' (p. 38). A significant emphasis of semi-formal attending lay with the experience of the researcher, and to this end, the researcher will evaluate some of the content of Deo Gloria Family Church's website (Bell 2018). The church's slogan is, 'A church for *all* people.' The italicization of the word 'all' is a feature of their website. This particular church is clearly same-gender relationship and marriage *accommodant*. The church appears to be very dynamic and thriving in all respects. A sincere love for the Lord is evident.

The researcher acknowledges and respects both the church's right to religious

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freedom as well as the church's inherent pro same-gender relational and marriage orientation. In keeping with to the heart of 'priestly listening' (Osmer 2008:35-37) which includes 'listening to one another as a form of mutual support, care and edification' (p. 35), the researcher will deferentially evaluate encountered matters from His conservative hermeneutic of the Christian faith.

3.3.1. 'About us – who we are'

The church was birthed in 1997, 'initially affiliated with Deo Gloria Family Church, Pretoria, by name, before the church in Pretoria closing, but remained an independent church, pioneering an Apostolic Prophetic work in Durban.' Galatians 3:28³⁷ is quoted directly after the aforementioned quotation. The church describes themselves as follows:

'We are an affirming, Apostolic-Prophetic church for all people.

We are a 'future generation church.' We believe that the face of the church in the 21st century is going to change radically to emulate the face of Christ; in a way which does not compromise our faith, but seeks to resist the boundaries so often placed on the church by human limitation, concerning Christ's love.

We want to change the negative connotation that many have come to know, regarding the face and purpose of the global Church and we want to lift high the banner of victory that belongs to the body of Christ, emulating God's love for all people.'

Believing in the fivefold ministry, the church has the following ministries:

- a) Apostolic ministry.
- b) Prophetic ministry.

³⁷ Galatians 3:28, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'

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- c) Ministry of teaching and preaching.
- d) Ministry of evangelism.
- e) Ministry of prayer.
- f) Ministry of praise and worship.
- g) Life group ministry.
- h) Mercy ministry.
- i) DG apostolic network.
- j) Conferences.
- k) Bible school.

3.3.2. An evaluation of Deo Gloria Family Church's 'About us – who we are'

The church has a clear vision, stands upon a broad ministerial footprint and appears to be well integrated into the lives of her congregants. Likewise, the church creates adequate space in which congregants can learn about and live out their faith.

The church in practice and structure is aligned with the New Apostolic Reformation, is which usually commonly associated with the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements (Resane 2015:1-2). However, in the application of Deo Gloria Family Church, it appears to be dissimilar from the classic Pentecostal movement. The New Apostolic Reformation is characterized by dominion theology, together with an emphasis on the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4:11. It is argued by both Resane (2015:4) and Kreitzer (1997:129) with whom the researcher agrees, that the allied fivefold ministry is not a 'theologically legitimate church government' for today's church (see also the researcher's subsequent dialogue on succession and the offices of Apostle and Prophet). The apprehensions of Resane, Kreitzer and the researcher centre on apostolic succession, phenomenology and numerous fractures in the New Apostolic Reformation exegesis of the Ephesians 4 passage, as expatiated upon by Resane (p. 6-10).

3.3.3. An evaluation of the office of 'Apostle'

The researcher experiences discomfort with the current-day office of Apostle. Along these lines, Harrison (1990:72) writes that the modern-day affinity to the title Apostle is an accommodation of language. Undergirding this are the qualifications to apostleship listed here below (Du Toit 2008:58; Lategan 2008:59), which suggest the improbability of modern-day apostles, in the orthodox sense thereof:

- a) An apostle must be an eyewitness of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1 and 15:7-8).
- b) An apostle is designated to the office by Christ (Galatians 1:1; Acts 1:2 and Luke 6:13).
- c) An apostle is verified by miraculous signs (Matthew 10:1; 2 Corinthians 12:2 and Acts 5:12).

Du Toit (2008:58-59) states that the happening of being an eyewitness of Christ creates the condition where said apostle can be regarded as a foundation to the church (Ephesians 2:20 and Revelation 21:14), which was already planted in apostolic times. On these grounds, du Toit argues that the office of an Apostle has long ceased; i.e. there is no apostolic succession because the church is already established. The researcher agrees that said office has ceased, indeed the church (singular) today is a continuation of apostolic foundationary work completed some 2000 years ago. Du Toit's (and the researcher's) stance is undergirded by Lategan (2008:59) who augments matters by writing, '*Na die apostels was daar geen apostoliese suksessie/opvolging nie—'n verskilpunt tussen die Reformasie en die Katolieke Kerk.*'³⁸ The researcher's discomfort with the title of 'Apostle' is fortified when the concept of succession is contemplated. To this end, Higginson (1990:73) writes that the term *diadoché* is not found in the New Testament. Citing 2 Timothy

³⁸ Translation: There is no succession/following after the apostles. This is a point of difference between the Reformation and the Catholic Church.

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2:2³⁹, he finds little evidence for the idea of succession in the New Testament, in fact he specifically states, 'All succession lists were compiled late in the second century.' It is nonetheless noted (van Heerden 2008:61), that in a broader sense, apostolic succession is vested in the church in its wholeness. Lategan (2008:59) makes mention of the root of apostle (*apostolos* or *apostellein*)—meaning sent. He mentions that the term apostolate is also used by the church today in reference to missions. In this sense, Deo Gloria—as a church—is embracing 'The Great Commission' of Matthew 28:19-20. In this light, the researcher can comprehend why the title Apostle is being used in Deo Gloria Family Church, but at the same time wonders if a conventional title such as 'pastor' might not perhaps be more functionally apposite.

3.3.4. An evaluation of the office of 'Prophet'

The title/appointment of 'Prophet' caught the researcher's attention. Van Zyl (2008:902) defines a prophet as follows, '*n Geïnspireerde geroepene van die Here met 'n besondere boodskap van God.*'⁴⁰ Van Zyl continues by stating that the message of a prophet is characterized by the wording 'so says the Lord.' The title 'prophet' stems from the Greek *prophétés*, being a compounded word (Lamorte & Hawthorne 1990:886) from *pro* (before or for) and *phémi* (to speak). A prophet either spoke before (prior to) or spoke in the Name of God. Prophecy in itself (Kruger 2008:903) is historic in nature, done in Godly obedience and has a covenantal connexion, yet has two dimensions, the present and the future. Of the two dimensions, in Old Testament times, pronouncements on matters present had a high priority. Kruger goes on to mention (p. 903) that in New Testament times, matters were similar to the Old Testament. Both speaking for as well as in the Name of God was vital in Apostolic times. After discussing both New and Old Testament prophets, van Zyl (2008:903) concludes that it is important to note that the public

³⁹ 2 Timothy 2:2, 'And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also' (KJV).

⁴⁰ Translation: An inspired person called by God who bears an exceptional message of God.

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character of prophetic work is inseparable from authentic apostolic tradition. The message of prophets during apostolic times was sometimes revelatory (for example, The Book of Revelation) and sometimes predictive (for example, Acts 11:28 and 21:10).

Pao (2005:626-627) in discussing Christ as a prophet makes mention of the fact, 'As with the prophets of old, he is also characterized by the rejection of his people.' The researcher contemplates that if the office of prophet did indeed not cease, would the modern-day prophet be accepted, or rejected? Having said this, the researcher suggests in line with the essence of Harrison (1990:72) that the title of (modern day) 'Prophet' is conceivably an 'accommodation in language' and wonders if the conventional title such as 'pastor' might not perhaps be more functionally pertinent.

3.3.5. Reflections on being a 'future generation church'

The researcher wishes to touch upon the statement: 'A future generation church. the face of the church in the 21st century is going to change radically to emulate the face of Christ; in a way which does not compromise our faith, but seeks to resist the boundaries so often placed on the church by human limitation, concerning Christ's love.'

To the researcher, this statement is at the same time both enheartening and imprecise. There is the strong sense of cordiality ('a future generation church') that could be understood within the context of 'this church' being dissimilar to churches of periods past regarding same-gender relationships and attitudes. There is an inherent tension within the context of said statement where the current generation is also the future generation. There is also vagueness (seeks to resist the boundaries so often placed on the church by human limitation, concerning Christ's love) in that it is not stated what these boundaries are and if they are universally found throughout the church at large.

3.3.6. An evaluation of Deo Gloria Family Church's statement on 'sexual orientation and what the Bible says'

Proposition: Bell (2018) writes that 'there is no word 'homosexual' in the original languages that the Bible was written in.' She adds that the word has been added by means of mistranslations over time. Bell cautions about 'coming to the Bible with preconceived ideas before we even start interpretation.'

The researcher is in full agreement with Apostle Bell (2018) when she writes 'coming to the Bible with preconceived ideas before we even start interpretation.' The researcher readily acknowledges that the word homosexual is not in the original biblical languages. Homosexual, as an English word, etymologically speaking (Online Etymology Dictionary 2008) is a joinder of the Greek 'homos' (same) and the Latin-based 'sexual.' Nonetheless, the act of same-gender (homosexual) relations is unambiguously described in the original biblical languages.⁴¹

The researcher disagrees with Bell's (2017) supposition of mistranslation over time. In the next chapter the researcher conducts grammatical-historical analyses on both key biblical texts relating to marriage and those relating to the problems of same-gender relationships and marriage. The results do not sustain Bell's supposition.

3.3.7. Brief evaluations on some of Deo Gloria Family Church's 'questions and answers'

The researcher will not analyse all of the key proposals made on the website of Deo Gloria Family Church owing the normative task that follows this chapter. However, the researcher will briefly evaluate some pertinent matters here:

- a) Does God love me as a gay or lesbian person?

⁴¹ See for example, Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:8-10.

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Proposition: 'The Bible has never changed, but our interpretation of it changes over time, because the reality is that we live in a changing world. Unfortunately, due to homophobia and mis-interpretation / mistranslation of 6 Biblical texts, many, in ignorance, believe that it is a sin to be gay or lesbian.'

Brief evaluation: The above proposition does not answer the stated question. The correct answer to said question would be: "Yes, very much so."

- b) Wasn't Sodom destroyed because the inhabitants were gay?

Proposition: 'Sodom had already been pre-ordained by God in Genesis 13:13 to be destroyed, so it was not simply because of this single act. ... The story of Sodom does not approach homosexuality or sexual orientation, and certainly is not about God rejecting or wanting to destroy people because of it!'

Brief evaluation: Genesis 13:13⁴² makes historical reference to the men of Sodom and creates context for Genesis 19:4-11.⁴³ The word râ'âh bears a connotation of evil in the natural and moral sense, which is carried forward

⁴² Genesis 13:13, 'But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.'

⁴³ Genesis 19:4-11, '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. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.'

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to Genesis 19:4-11, in which homosexuality is listed among all the other forbidden sexual relationships.

- c) Doesn't Leviticus tell us that homosexuality is an abomination?

Proposition: 'It seems unreasonable for us to hold all humanity to a single residing prohibition concerning males having sex with males in the context of a pagan ritual, which has no relevance to today's acts of intimacy between two consenting adults in a loving, monogamous relationship.'

Brief evaluation: The context of Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13 has to be attended to. The inclusion of same-gender sex is written in the same context of incest, bestiality and child sacrifice; i.e. within the context of all forbidden sexual relations, and not merely pagan rituals. In the whole of the Tetrateuch, the word *tô'êbâ* (abomination) is only used in connection with same-gender intercourse (Botha 2005:124). By Bell stating 'no relevance to today's acts of intimacy between two consenting adults in a loving, monogamous relationship' effectively discount the harmony of the biblical message on same-gender relationships and secondly fashion divergence with the New Testament teachings on the topic of same-gender relationships and opposite-gender relationships.⁴⁴

- d) What about the book of Romans, where it talks about men and women giving up the natural for the unnatural?

Proposition: 'One must take into account the context and full passage of scripture. It is clear from the verses preceeding⁴⁵ this text that these were not lovers of God, but people that didn't glorify God or give God thanks. They also worshiped idols, including images of birds, reptiles and animals

⁴⁴ Refer to the next chapter where the relevant Scriptures are analysed.

⁴⁵ Spelling reproduced from website.

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(Romans 1:21-23). This is a far cry from describing born again believers that are in a loving, committed homosexual relationship!’

Brief evaluation: The researcher agrees with Bell of the above right up to the last sentence. The inclusion homosexuality together by Paul points toward the then general appalling moral trends of the Roman Christians. Barker (1995:1709) comments that, ‘God allowed sin to run its course as an act of judgment.’

- e) What about Paul saying in the New Testament that homosexuals won’t inherit the kingdom of God?

Proposition: ‘If Paul, being a well-learned Greek scholar, wanted to refer to all homosexual acts, he would’ve used more appropriate terms that were available to him at the time of his writing. These later translations applied are not from historical findings but from shifts in sexual ideology. The word ‘homosexual’ simply did not exist in Paul’s time and has only been around since the last century.’

Brief evaluation: The terms used by Paul are clearly descriptive of matters, which in a sense is more appropriate than using a single word which might have been vulnerable to misinterpretation. McDowell (1999:33-68) discusses the existence of more than 24970 New Testament manuscripts, as well as the accuracy and reliability of the earliest manuscripts. McDowell therefore disagrees with Bell (2017) in terms of ‘translations applied are not from historical findings but from shifts in sexual ideology.’

3.3.8. Comments on Deo Gloria Family Church Weddings

It is noted that the Civil Union Act (see <http://www.deogloria.org/weddings/>), as opposed to the marriage Act is featured as a legal basis, although Apostle Bell is licensed to conduct religious marriages (BD21670). De Vos (n.d.) describes in his article for the Daily Maverick, same-gender marriage as ‘separate but unequal.’ This stems from the existence of a separate Act (as opposed to amending the Marriage Act) to accommodate same-gender unions. He mentions that the Civil Union Act

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had to be amended to grant same-sex couples the right to enter into a union called a 'marriage.' He continues that it is perhaps still more difficult for a same-gender couple to get married because of opposition from family, society and friends. In this light, the researcher acknowledges the pain, rejection, isolation and real needs of homosexual persons.

3.4. The inclusion of 'intersex' in the Fifth Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

The inclusion of this subsection represents a blend of semi-formal and formal attendance as part of Osmer's (2008:38) task of priestly listening. Intersex has an interesting history to it insofar as the DSM is concerned. Kraus (2015:1147) states that the clinically, intersex was initially defined as 'physical abnormalities of the sex organs.' On page 1149 she traces the history of intersex in the DSM, where it began in 1980 in DSM-III, classified as a 'gender identity disorder' in 'psychosexual disorders,' which progressed in DSM-IV to the same, but included in 'sexual and gender identity disorders' to finally be a 'gender dysphoria' in DSM-V. Kermode (2012) wrote her article, 'Debate surrounds intersex inclusion in the DSM V' for the website PinkNews, at a time when revisions were underway that would lead to DSM V. Of the shift that reclassified transgenderism from a 'gender identity disorder' to 'gender dysphoria,' she writes:

'This removes the stigma associated with the concept of disorder but means that, because they can still be said to have a recognised condition, they can still access treatment. The way gender dysphoria is defined, however, rests on a binary understanding of biological sex, so it is an awkward fit for intersex people.'

The researcher highlights the phrases 'awkward fit' and 'emphasis on the person.' Stepping back in time, the researcher came across an article of Dreger (2004) that was written for the Intersex Society of North America, which seems to be written as a form of a rebuttal to the 'hostility toward gay marriage.' She writes in the context of 'homosexual marriage caused by "mistaken sex (intersex)".' Reference is also made to using anatomical tissue or genealogy as a gender-sorting mechanism, and then

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further the discussion by raising the disaccord between the same and what people 'see on the outside and feel on the inside.' Reasoning then gravitates toward the 'inaccuracy of sex categories.' Kraus (2015:1161) in the conclusion of her article, refers to medically and non-medically assigned sex. It appears to the researcher therefore, that intersex has evolved from a clinical sex-organ presentation to matters that would include preferences of treatment and association, incongruence between expressed and assigned gender as well as matters of cross-sex medical procedures and treatments (p. 1152). The essence of this discussion on intersex resonates well with the gist of Dreyer's (2008) article in terms of general social constructionism, for example her statement (2008:505) about 'blind submission to outdated social constructs.' To this end, the reclassification of transgenderism from a 'gender identity disorder' to 'gender dysphoria' perceptibly offers sexual choices/preferences, a degree of normalization/rationalization in terms of same-gender relationships and marriage, whilst at the same time creating and allowing access to psychological treatment for the same. In this sense, it feels to the researcher that the back door/get out clause is being left open to persons, thus allowing for personal doubt to surround their chosen preference/orientation.

Homosexuality, as a mental disorder which appeared in DSM in 1968, only dropped out of DSM in 1987 (Burton 2015). There was a period within said 19 years that homosexuality was classed as a 'sexual orientation disturbance.' In other words, there was a period of 19 years during which DSM would have considered a same-gender relationship as not normal.

The evolution of intersex and homosexuality through DSM serves to emphasize the power of socially constructed persuasion, and that 'we' are still on a voyage of learning. Maynard (2015:337) writes that 'DSM V recognizes that there is growing variability in gender expression along a spectrum.' The researcher agrees with Maynard that the use of the word 'dysphoria' instead of the previously used 'disorder' leads to a reduction in stigma. Along another tangent, could it be that DSM has reformulated a core matter as a response to postmodernism?

3.5. Same-gender identity and relationship posts on Facebook

In this section the researcher is introducing the reader to four influential pages on social media about same-gender relationships with a view to widening the horizon of 'what is going on?' It is not within the scope of this thesis to conduct an in-depth analysis of each of said Facebook pages, but together they cover the most prominent views regarding same-gender relationships and marriage.

3.5.1. Gay and Lesbian Christians SA <https://www.facebook.com/GLBTChristiansSA/> (2018)

It is not evident when the page was founded. The page has 5 816 likes. The page does not post memes. Under their 'about' section, the page states, 'Gay & Lesbian Christians SA, is a Page to encourage all LGBT people with positive Christian messages that affirms not condemns.' The page links to Deo Gloria Family Church.

3.5.2. 1,000,000 Supporting Traditional Marriage <https://www.facebook.com/1000000supportingtraditionalmarriage/> (2018)

The page was founded on 28 May 2012. The page has 145 263 likes. Under their 'about' section, the page states, 'We believe that marriage is between a man and woman to the exclusion of any and all other definitions!' Although this page does, via some memes on occasion may seem to present as somewhat sarcastic, the page aligns itself with a traditional biblical stance and is rather informative. The page is known for pointing toward a simplicity in grasping two Godly given sexes and genders, as opposed to the many social constructions of the same.

3.5.3. Warriors for Christ https://www.facebook.com/pg/warriorschurch/about/?ref=page_internal (2018)

The page was founded on 1 January 2011. The page has 13 923 likes (more than 225 000 before Facebook closed the previous page with the same name). Under their 'about' section, the page states, 'A pre-denominational Christian is a Christian

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or disciple of Christ who seeks to base all of his or her beliefs and practices upon the New Testament.’

This page is highlighted by the researcher because of its controversial nature. On the one hand, Facebook has banned this page and actively censors it (see for example, <https://gellerreport.com/2018/01/facebook-warriors-christ.html/> and <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2018/january/his-warriors-for-christ-facebook-page-shutdown-pastor-files-federal-lawsuit-to-stop-legal-status-of-same-sex-marriage>), and on the other hand, the page is very vocal in promulgating traditional Christian and biblical worldviews.

3.5.4. Freedom to Marry <https://www.facebook.com/freedomtomarry.org/> (2018)

It is not evident when the page was founded. The page has 616 581 likes. The page does not post memes. Under their ‘about’ section, the page states, ‘Freedom to Marry is the campaign to win marriage nationwide. Join us today: www.freedomtomarry.org.’

3.5.5. Closing analysis of highlighted social media pages

The four highlighted pages deliver two conflicting messages to a worldwide audience: either same-gender relationships and marriage is normative, or it’s not. The page owners appear to be in full persuasion of their disposition.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher, set out to answer two questions through a critical phenomenological description of the current situation relating to same-gender relationships and marriage in South Africa. The questions are:

- a) What is being taught? This question answered by evaluating a number of propositions within an article published by a leading academic from a prominent South African university.

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- b) What is being practiced? The researcher evaluated what is being doctrinally upheld and practiced by a large same-gender friendly church in South Africa.

The researcher then explored (a) How the term 'intersex' is interpreted by the fifth edition of the DSM indicating the historical approach to 'intersex' to the current point of fluidity and (b), provided a brief description of four influential Facebook pages that either favour or disfavour same-gender relationships and marriage.

In essence the researcher discovered extremely well-articulated points of view as well as theologies dissimilar to his own. He also discovered something of the pain of rejection, isolation and ridicule that same-gender couples are exposed to on a daily basis. *All*⁴⁶ people are loved by God and it 'our' Christian duty to do the same.

In the next chapter, the researcher will conduct Osmer's (2008) third task, the normative task.

⁴⁶ Deliberately italicized to reflect the same per Deo Gloria's website.

Chapter 4: An analysis of key biblical texts relating to marriage and those relating to the challenges of same-gender relationships

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher answered two key questions he set for himself in terms of 'what is going on?' (Osmer's descriptive-empirical task). To recap, the questions were:

- a) What is being taught? This question was answered by evaluating what a leading academic from a prominent university in South Africa has published about same-gender relationships.
- b) What is being practiced? The researcher perused the website of a large same-gender friendly church, that clearly loves the Lord. Following this, he made some brief, yet critical evaluations of the information gathered.

The researcher also broadened the horizon of 'what is going on?' by firstly discovering how the term 'intersex' is interpreted by the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, indicating the historical approach to 'intersex' to the current point of fluidity, and secondly through briefly describing four influential Facebook pages that either favour or disfavour same-gender relationships and marriage.

In this chapter, the researcher will set out to complete the normative task of Osmer (2008), informally known as 'what should be going on?' The normative task, according to Osmer (2008:4, 139) uses 'theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from good practice.' The key to the normative task (linking sympathy and theological and ethical interpretation) is through prophetic discernment (Osmer 2008:132-138). Prophetic discernment not only reminds people of God's gracious actions in the past, but also reminds people to live as God's people, something all believers should be actively striving toward.

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Available space does not allow the researcher to analyse every relevant Scripture, but he will nonetheless focus on Scriptures key to him, using Smith's (2016:8-9) commentary structure. The researcher will introduce passages of Scripture using from the contemporary English thought-for-thought translation: The New International Version.⁴⁷ The King James Version as a classic word-for-word translation, has an inherent ability to accurately articulate meaning and will be used in the analyse as the second reading which will also be the working translation (Smith 2016:9). Strong's (2017) numbers will be used in conjunction with the Blue Letter Bible's (2018) transliterations.

4.2. The authority of the Word

Section IV of Chapter One of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Heading: Of the Holy Scripture) states, 'The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore, it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.'

From this statement, the juxtapose arises:

- a) Scripture is the authoritative Word of God and has authority over mankind and therefore has the right to command belief and action, with the same authority as God's speaking directly to us (Erickson 2001:77-78; Hammond 1990:22 and Potgieter 2008:1017).
- b) Or Scripture, as the contextualized Word of God may include 'outdated social constructs' (Dreyer 2008:505) and incorporate contexts not necessarily applicable to today (Ngubane 2015; quoting Janse van Rensburg).

Point (a) above is the researcher's fundamental point of departure in the doing of a grammatical-historical analysis (see also Smith 2016:1-2). The researcher argues that any other point of departure may culminate in an eisegesis or in the precarious position

⁴⁷ New International Version is abbreviated 'NIV.'

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where mankind indorses him/herself to a point that ultimately usurps the Word. The researcher sides with Smith (2016:2) who rejects *sensus plenior* and maintains that Scripture is perfectly capable of proclaiming itself: what may be presently unclear will become clear within the context of the clear (König 2002:186; Manser 2011:12).

The researcher embraces the orthodox doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. Shaw (n.d.), in his exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith writes: ‘The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.’ In one sentence, Shaw encompasses the orthodox doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture as well as Osmer's theological interpretation, good practice and ethical reflections.

4.3. An analysis of key biblical texts relating to marriage

4.3.1. Genesis 1:27-28

Introduction

Genesis 1:27-28, ‘So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground”’ (NIV). Cross references are: Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6.

Genesis 1:26-28 accounts for the creation of man on the sixth day,⁴⁸ following the creation of other forms of animal life. Fiat creationism is the theological position of

⁴⁸ The researcher is a young Earth creationist and asserts that Genesis is a historical and literal record of what actually happened. For a visual layout of computations, see for example, <http://enlightener.org/TimeTable.htm>; 2018-08-13.

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the researcher and Berkhof⁴⁹ (1949:198) and the implied position of Horton (2006:161) and Erickson (2001:166-167) who do both note and discuss theistic evolution and progressive creationism. Although the latter two positions pose numerous exegetical difficulties⁵⁰ they could nonetheless be extrapolated to account for same-gender attraction.⁵¹ This fundamental passage describing the fiat creation of only two genders, stands in stark opposition to a gender fluid postmodern society Jones (2017). Kšstenberger (2010: chapter 2); Horton (2006:161) and Erickson (2001:166-167) all agree that much about the purpose of being created either a male or a female, is grounded in this passage. It is therefore prudent to trace the origin of the same back into the orders of creation in Genesis.

Context of the book

Genesis reveals how everything began, and what went wrong with it (Manser 2011:130). It was presumptively written by Moses probably between 1446 to 1406 B.C.⁵² (Barker 1995:2)⁵³. Alexander (2005:115) places Genesis into two main divisions:

- a) Chapters 1-11: The creation, human downfall and the great flood.
- b) Chapters 12-50: Stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

⁴⁹ The researcher is deliberately introducing this classic source of Christian doctrine owing to its separation from postmodernism.

⁵⁰ This investigation falls outside the scope of this thesis.

⁵¹ This investigation falls outside the scope of this thesis.

⁵² The researcher prefers the 'B.C.' and 'A.D.' dating system as opposed to the 'B.C.E.' and 'C.E.' system.

⁵³ Kenneth Barker was the general editor of the 10th Anniversary Edition of The NIV Study Bible; this is the very Bible that the researcher used when he started his theology studies and it is used in this thesis with deep sentiment.

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Broadening Alexander's division, Barker (1995:2) states that the ten main sections are introduced with the word account. To this end, Genesis chapters 1-3 is the *quo create est*⁵⁴ of male and female back to which all of Scripture and believers refer. Genesis is a historical narrative (Krejcir 2006) in which one also encounters matters of law and genealogy and is foundational to understanding the rest of the Bible (Barker 1995:2). Barker goes on to mention (p. 2-3) that Genesis is monotheistic and ultimately about relationships. Crucially, Genesis demonstrates that God is sovereign over all that exists.

Analysis of the passage

Genesis 1:27-28, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'

There are no significant differences between the NIV and KJV translations. The genders of male and female are present, as is the Lord's blessings and instruction to increase in numbers.

With the opening of this passage, there is a unity in being with the noun for 'man' (אָדָם 'adam H120) in verse 27, followed by a separation of the created being into two genders. Horton (2006:162) states that the firmest interpretation of being human lay in the perspective of man and woman together. Along these lines, verse 27 is fittingly the first occurrence of poetry in the Old Testament (Barker 1995:7). The researcher notes that verse 26, 27 and 28 are written across the present, past and future tenses. He therefore reasons that God spoke in the present, into the future and is was. The combination and setting of these tenses aptly confirm that Scripture is the time-transcendent and authoritative Word (Erickson 2001:77; Webster 2005:724) of an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent time-transcendent

⁵⁴ Translation: 'I created.'

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God. Verse 28 develops the functional harmony of the created opposite-genders and in so doing points toward biological (reproductive) function as being intrinsic to gender differentiation.

The word 'male' in verse 27 stems from the adjective זָכָר (zakar H2145) which contextually carries with it the significance of 'male-ness,' as a gender, but with the connotation of being noticeably (visibly) so. This stems from the primitive root verb for 'remember' (זָכַר zakar H2142), implying that the male is not only marked as a male and ought to be mindful of the same. By referring to the noun 'female' (נִקְבָּה נֶקֶבָה H5347) points toward a female sexual form with an intrinsic link to the primitive verb נָקַב (naqab H5344) which, in context, means 'to puncture.' The researcher suggests that primitive roots for male and female point to the physical differences between differences in genitalia (Horton 2005:162-163): i.e.: a penis (the puncturer) and a vagina (the punctured).

The stated differences between male and female leads into verse 28 where God instructs the male and female to be fruitful, multiply and replenish. The instruction was to them, meaning that this is to be possible when male and female function as a unit. The root verb for 'fruitful' (פָּרָה parah H6509) is causative. The next root verb used for 'multiply' (רָבָה rabah H7235) adds the connotation of abundance and continuance. The last root verb used for 'replenish' (מָלֵא male' H4390) means to be fill or full. Therefore, the difference between genders as well as their unity is a crucial expression of humanity and toward replenishing the earth and preserving mankind (Perkin 1990:690, Berkhof 1949:204 and Erickson 2001:190).

The above understanding was confirmed by Christ in Matthew 19:4, approximately 4000 years after creation. In a sense, this is a message to a postmodern world that has deconstructed gender and sex into separate entities (Corbet 2012); where one can choose one's gender (Siann 1994:3 and Chrisler & Murray 2016) and surgically alter one's appearance to more closely resemble the chosen gender Kraus (2015:1161).

A literal hermeneutic coupled to a grammatical-historical analysis of Genesis 1:27-28 and Genesis 2:21-24 generate a number of difficulties for same-gender

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relationships. God at the beginning, made humankind male and female. This was done with an inherent unity of sex, sexuality and gender; such could not have reasonably occurred in any other manner.

Conclusion

Male and female were created physically differently with the purpose of being able to work as a unit to make (what to do), make in abundance (how much to do) and fill/full the earth (extent). It is God-created differences that bring forth a Godly purpose; reproduction being one of the core purposes of marriage (Barnard, van der Colf & Müller 1988:105).

Ultimately, every one of us are (naturally) here because one male and one female most probably had intercourse. Even outside the constraints of intercourse, it still requires one sperm (from a male) and one egg (from a female) to 'be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish' (Genesis 1:28). In this passage of Scripture, the instruction of human multiplication is ingrained into the created order.

4.3.2. Genesis 2:21-24

Introduction

Genesis 2:21-24, 'So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh' (NIV). Cross references are: Ephesians 5:31-32, Matthew 19:5 and 1 Corinthians 6:16.

Whereas Genesis 1 reveals the account of creation events chronologically, Genesis 2 clarifies the most important details. The two chapters together form the creation orders to which believers' past, present and future can reference. By referring to this particular passage, the researcher educes how woman was made from man to

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become one with man in a permanent and intimate opposite-gender unit known today as orthodox marriage. This passage may possibly count among Dreyer's (2008:504) 'outdated social constructs.'

Context of the book

The overall context of Genesis has already been dealt with. Genesis 2, in relation to the creation of man and woman sets forth the purpose of humankind being created male and female. This passage wonderfully describes how woman is made from man to be with man; i.e. marriage. Genesis 2:24 is regarded (Barnard, van der Colf & Müller 1988:100 and Reese 2005:478) as the institution of a covenant marriage between a male and a female. The passage describes the of marital unity is described, which is essentially the birthing of a new family unit. This newly created family unit inaugurates the design for a orthodox family unit, and further replication thereof.

Analysis of the passage

Genesis 2:21-24, 'And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh')

The NIV and KJV translations are for purposes of this thesis alike. The key notable event of how female was created from male agree, as is the institution of marriage as a permanent opposite-gender bond. The creation of a new family unit are faithfully recounted by both translations. The pericope of this analysis is verse 24.

Genesis 1:26-27 describes the creation of humans as males and females. Genesis 2:21-24 describes how the woman was made and then brought to the man and correspondingly provides an origin for marriage (Reese 2005:478). Verse 24 is introduced with the preposition/adjective 'therefore' (כֵּן עַלְּ) 'al ken H5921 and H3651)

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meaning, on these grounds, it is rightly so. This is written in the context of Adam's calling woman 'woman' in verse 23. Verse 24 is written in the future tense; pointing toward how things are to be once a man and a woman become one flesh after the Lord brings them together (Barnard, van der Colf & Müller 1988:105). In verse 24, man is referred to as איש ('iysh H376) which is related to the masculine noun אָנוּשׁ ('enowsh H582); the combination used here is interpreted to be: husband (Brown-Driver-Briggs 2017). The feminine noun אִשָּׁה ('ishshah H802) is the feminine form of the masculine noun איש ('iysh H376). אָנוּשׁ ('enowsh H582) is used in emplacement with אִשָּׁה ('ishshah H802) thus denoting unification. The researcher submits that the sequence of events in Genesis 2:21-24 demonstrates that it is natural for the male to take the lead (shall a man leave his father and mother), then pursue his female bride (shall cleave unto his wife) and be fully united with her (one flesh) (Müller 2008:484-485). There is an unmistakable opposite-gender coaction ensuing. The researcher argues that where this opposite-gender coaction is violated through same-gender-ness; i.e. male pursues male or female pursues female, matters start to become unsettled, as written about in Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:8-10.

Moses in verse 23 describes an extent of intimacy beginning a sequence descriptive with the demonstrative pronoun 'she' (זֹאת zo'th H2063). The rest of the sequence is 'taken out of man' (אִישׁ מִן לֶקַח laqach min 'iysh H3947 H4480 H376) i.e. this level of intimacy can only be possible where gender is opposite. This is confirmed this in verse 24 with the adjective and masculine noun 'one flesh' (אֶחָד בָּשָׂר 'echad basar H259 H1320). The Hebrew of verses 23 and 24 is unquestionably gender specific pointing toward the original design of marriage opposite-gender by created design and function wherein the woman becomes one with her man: there is no other blend for orthodox biblical marriage, which Erickson (2001:29) describes as a 'once-for-all-occurrence' as confirmed by Christ in Matthew 19:4-6.

Modern day believers would do well to re-appreciate the implications of orthodox marriage as a covenantal relationship designed by God (McMinn and Campbell 2009:212 and Witte 1998:13) as a gift of God (Anglican Prayer Book 1989:461) to His people.

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Conclusion

The researcher submits that natural and dichotomous (material and immaterial) (Berkhof 1949:198) intimacy: i.e. one flesh (בְּשָׂר אֶחָד 'echad basar) between marital partners can only be fully attained in an opposite-gender marriage. This according to Paul in Ephesians 5:32 is a great mystery where opposite-genders can become one.

The postmodern social constructionism of gender Siann (1994:3) as well as associated changes to the theologies of sexuality, sin and marriage (refer to the researcher's descriptive-empirical task of chapter 2) shifts the situation outside of God's framework and design for being created male and female.

4.3.3. Matthew 19:4-6

Introduction

Matthew 19:4-6, “Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female?” and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate” (NIV). Cross references are: Genesis 1:27; 2:24; 5:2, 1 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 5:31.

This is an important piece of Scripture because Christ is confirming what is written in Genesis 1:27-29. This is a timeline of ±4000 years during which biblical marriage is confirmed by Christ as unchanged. It therefore affirms an unchanging message about orthodox marriage being a permanent covenantal relationship between a man and a woman.

Context of the book

Barker (1995:1433) suggests that Matthew was written in the early part of 50 A.D., although the late 50's A.D. or early 60's A.D. cannot be ruled out as possible dates. Matthew is one of the four Gospels and is written in the style of a historical narrative, although the book also contains prophecy (chapter 24). Matthew was written to

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Jewish Greeks and Christians (Manser 2011:298; Krejcir 2006) and serves as a bridge to connect Christ with what went before (Alexander 2005:549). Barker (p. 1433) adds that although Matthew's Gospel is written to the Jews, it has a universal outlook. Matthew is very concerned with the fulfilment of the Old Testament (starting in chapter 1 verse 1 with a genealogy of Christ) and in this way, credibility and continuity is highlighted in God's overall redemptive plan.

Matthew has a strong theme of teaching (Alexander 2005:549) and has five main discourses:

- a) Chapters 5-7: Discipleship.
- b) Chapter 10: Mission.
- c) Chapter 13: Jesus' parables.
- d) Chapter 18: Disciple's relationships.
- e) Chapters 24-25: The future.

It is true that at the time of recording, Christ was under the Law, but as Christ also said in Matthew 5:17-18, He came to fulfil, not abolish the law. In saying this, Christ is bringing people back to the original purpose of the Law thereby speaking out against the abuses, misapplications and misquotes thereof. As modern-day believers, we are still bound (in and through Christ) to the moral laws, which reveal the nature and decrees of God (Beers 2007:1546-1547; Lindsley 2013:5). Contextually, if same-gender relationships and marriage was forbidden in the Old Testament, it will also be forbidden in the New Testament.

Analysis of the passage

Matthew 19:4-6, 'And he answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.'

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The NIV and KJV translations are for purposes of this thesis alike. The key elements on how the female was created from the male agree, as is the institution of marriage permanent opposite-gender bond and the creation of a new family unit are faithfully recounted by both translations. Both translations make specific mention of beginnings.

Set within the greater context of relationships and in response to a trap being set by the Pharisees, Christ's words here come from His teaching about marriage and divorce. Divorce was a point of disagreement between the rabbis (Alexander 2005:567). Christ is responding to learned people (Pharisees) and calls them back to the created order with the combination of an adverb and female noun: ἀπό ἀρχῆς (apo archē G575 G746), reminding them that God, in the beginning made humankind male and female. By starting His response in this manner, Christ validated the creation orders. In referring to 'male,' Christ used the adjective ἄρρην (arrēn G730) from the verb αἴρω (airō G142), thus lending the context of maleness as well being raised up. For 'female' He used the adjective θήλυς (thēlys G2338) from the verb θηλάζω (thēlazō G2337) which carries with it the connotation of 'giving suckling; a nipple.' Logically, this refers to a female. The words used by Christ are particular in order to convey the notion of an ongoing coaction per Genesis 2:21-24. Even though Christ is referring back to marriage's created design, He indisputably affirms the opposite-gender nature of orthodox marriage and the permanence of 'one flesh.'

The researcher ponders how Christ would answer the postmodern socially constructed advancements on same-gender relationships. Would Christ's answer once again begin with, "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female?"

Conclusion

This passage from Matthew serves not only to affirm the Genesis teachings on marriage, but (Manser 2011:302) is a reminder to the believer that the Word 'is a dynamic reality that changes life.' Christ confirmed that although context and era may change, and even though the Pharisees and rabbis had their own

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interpretations, the original message and purpose of God regarding marriage is transcendent.

4.3.4. Concluding comments on the key biblical text relating to marriage

There are a number of Scriptures that can be added for analyses, however the available space in this thesis does not allow for such. Consequently, the researcher focussed on grounding the theology of opposite-gender relationships and marriage through those Scriptures he considers most relevant.

Although only three texts were analysed, a time period of ± 4000 years is covered (from creation to Matthew) in which the original design, nature and purpose of orthodox marriage is unchanged. Stepping forward another 1646 years in time, one learns that the chapter 24 of the Westminster Confession of Faith agrees with the Genesis texts as well as Christ's teaching of Matthew 19:4-6. Add another 342 years to the mentioned ± 5646 years and one arrives at Barnard, van der Colf & Müller (1988), who also agree with the orthodox viewpoints of marriage. Postmodernism—which is a recent phenomenon—rejects the long standing unambiguous orthodox biblical truths about gender and marriage. The researcher closes this sub-section by referring to McDowell (1999:622) who quotes (Gilson 1993:225), 'We do not have to describe a universe and then ask ourselves what our knowledge is like for such a universe to become possible. We must do the reverse. Given that there is knowledge, we have to inquire how things must be made in order to explain how we know them.'

4.4. An analysis of key biblical texts relating to the challenges of same-gender relationships

4.4.1. Genesis 1:31

Introduction

Genesis 1:31, 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day' (NIV). Cross reference: Psalm 104:24.

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This Scripture, according to Botha (2005:15) is one of five verses commonly used by the homosexual person to qualify 'the belief that the homosexual condition is a gift from God.' The other Scriptures mentioned by Botha are: Psalm 100:3, 1 Corinthians 7:24, 1 Timothy 4:4 and Matthew 19:12. Botha writes that although these verses clearly apply to a same-gender relationship, they would be persuasive to a person in an opposite-gender relationship that is searching for self-justification. It is outside the constraints of this thesis to conduct an analysis of all five Scriptures, but an analysis of this one Scripture should suffice to demonstrate the researcher's point.

Context of the book

The context of Genesis as a book has already been extensively addressed. In this verse, God is at the end of six days of creation reflecting on what He created and declares it all to be very good. Note that God is not specifically referring to the creation of humankind, but to all He has created.

Analysis of the passage

Genesis 1:31, 'And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.'

The passages are for all intent the same, but the researcher wishes to highlight the word 'behold' as used in the King James Version. 'Behold' is derived from a primitive particle הִנֵּה (hen H2005) which is very expressive; this does not come through as clear in the New International Version. The expressiveness implies that God gives high regard (Online Etymology Dictionary 2017) to His creation.

The researcher, in agreement with the pro-same-gender group agrees that God is pleased; everything created was very good (טוֹב מְאֹד me'ôd towb H3966 H2896). By implication, the purpose of male being created different to female is therefore also very good. There is no evidence in this singular verse, or the verses that go before it, to suggest that God created anyone as a homosexual. If anything, within the context of creation orders it is evidenced that heterosexuality is the natural created human state. The logical conclusion about Genesis 1:31 in terms of gender is:

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- a) God made humankind male and female and being opposite-gender, means that they are to complement one another in design and function.
- b) This relationship inherently fruitful to result in multiplication in order to fill/full the earth.

This verse also has a finality to it; the very next day God rested. Barker (1995:8) comments that in this verse, God used for the only time in the creation orders, the adverb ‘very’ (טַיִם me’ôd H3966).

Conclusion

It is inadequate to use Genesis 1:31 to ground the ‘homosexual condition’ as being ‘a gift from God.’ (Botha 2005:15). It would have to presuppose that God created one homosexual, and there is simply no evidence in this passage or indeed all of chapters 1 or 2 of Genesis to substantiate this. Genesis 1:31 is best interpreted in the context of heterosexuality being a normative gift from God for the purposes of God.

4.4.2. Genesis 19:4-11

Introduction

Genesis 19:4-11, ‘Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.” Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.” “Get out of our way,” they replied. “This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young

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and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door' (NIV). Cross references are: Genesis 13:13; 18:20; 19:1, Leviticus 18:22, Judges 19:22, Deuteronomy 23:17; 28:28-29, Exodus 2:14, 2 Kings 6:18 and Acts 13:11.

The book of Genesis has been extensively introduced. Genesis 19:4-11 can be dismissed by as having nothing to say on the topic of homosexuality (Botha 2005:117). Bell (2017) subscribes to the aforementioned and dismisses the account of Sodom by stating that, 'Sodom had already been pre-ordained by God in Genesis 13:13 to be destroyed, so it was not simply because of this single act.' Botha (p. 117) states that some interpret this passage to address only inhospitality and rape. The researcher aims to swing the analytical pendulum back to its original and regular meaning to its original readers and readers today (Smith 2016:10).

Context of the book

Barker (1995:33) reminds the reader that Genesis 19:1-29 recounts the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and that the wickedness of Sodom made it apt for destruction. Homosexuality was a characteristic of the men of Sodom. This can further be counter referenced with Isaiah 3:9, Jeremiah 23:14, Lamentations 4:6, Zephaniah 2:8-9, 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 7. There is also a similar passage to verses 4-9 to be found in Judges 19:22-25.

Analysis of the passage

Genesis 19:4-11, '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. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, this one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with

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thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.'

The NIV is more forthright than the KJV, the NIV says for example in verse 5 that the men wanted sex. For all other intent, the translations are similar.

Two angels were in the house of Lot. After sharing a meal together and before going to bed (verses 1-3), the men (עֲנוֹשִׁים 'enowsh H582) of Sodom surrounded the house and asked for the men (אִישׁ 'iysh H376) to be brought out so that they may 'know' (יָדָע yada` H3045) them. Alexander (2005:135) speaks of homosexual gang rape. Two differing nouns are used to refer to the men in the account: עֲנוֹשִׁים ('enowsh) want homosex with the אִישׁ ('iysh). אִישׁ ('iysh) are 'regular' men, but the עֲנוֹשִׁים ('enowsh) differ; the noun used in context here stems from the primitive root verb אָנַשׁ ('anash H605) which means: wicked and desperate. The different nouns used point toward the depravity of the men of Sodom who are demanding homosex. This is clear from verses six, seven and eight. Lot, in verse seven earnestly asked the men of Sodom, 'do not so wickedly.' Alexander (p. 135) describes the intended gang rape as 'infringement of the most sacred laws of hospitality, not to say humanity.' Botha (2005:117) makes a critical statement when he writes, 'As we saw with the story of Ham's incestuous rape of Noah, the inherently disgraceful and degrading character of homosex plays a definite part in the author's intension to show it as a compounding factor in the whole incident.'

It could be argued that the men of Sodom only wanted to 'know' (יָדָע yada` H3045) the visitors, in the innocent sense, but this is incongruent with Lot's appeal of verse seven; the word used is 'wickedly' (לְרָעָה לְרָעָה wickedly; רָעָה 'al H7489 H408). This is interpreted to be negative, in a physical, social and moral sense. So appalled was Lot, that he was willing to offer his virgin daughters to the men instead. Botha (2005:118) argues that very few scholars would subscribe to a non-sexual interpretation of the verb 'know' (יָדָע yada`). Botha's position is supported by at least

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the translators of the following Bibles: New International Version, Good News Bible, Contemporary English Version, Amplified Bible (AMPC), Christian Standard Bible, New Living Translation, Lexham English Bible and more. The context in which 'know' (יָדָעַ yada`) is used points toward beyond merely knowing and toward homosex.

The researcher ruminates, what if the concept of homosex was excluded from this passage, leaving only the notion of gang rape? The researcher finds this highly improbable in terms of the analysis above, so also supported by Gill (2017) and Barnes (2017). This passage clearly and literally speaks negatively of homosex. The intended act of gang rape is regarded by the researcher as an aggravation of the first 'wickedness.'

Conclusion

The researcher has examined this passage according to a literal hermeneutic and drawn into his reasoning the views and comments of respected theologians. It can only be that this passage clearly and negatively speaks of men demanding homosex with what appeared to be male visitors, something that Lot sees as being so wicked, he was willing to offer his virgin daughters instead.

4.4.3. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

Introduction

Leviticus 18:22, 'Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable' (NIV).

Leviticus 20:13, 'If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads' (NIV). Cross references are: Genesis 19:5 and Romans 1:27.

Owing to the similarity in what is being said, the author has chosen to group these two verses. These verses are obvious in meaning; it would require an extrapolation to attach any contrasting meaning other than homosex.

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A valid question is if indeed, modern day believers are still under the laws of these Levitical passages. In answering this question, the researcher looks toward the consistent biblical disfavour of homosex throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The orthodox biblical message is consistently the same. Secondly, many of the other sexual taboos in these passages are still in effect even outside of the Bible; see for example the restrictions per the Marriage Act, Act 25 of 1961. In the third instance, Beers (2007:1546-1547) and Krejcir (2006) with whom the researcher agrees, maintains that we are still bound to the moral laws, which being direct commands of God reveal the much of the attributes and will of God. Lastly, one has to include (Botha 2005:123) who acknowledges the universal validity of the prohibition of homosex throughout conservative society.

These passages from Leviticus are a proverbial ball and chain around the ankle of same-gender theology in that there is little hope of circumventing the denouement of a grammatical-historical analysis.

Context of the book

Barker (1995:144-45) connects authorship of Leviticus to Moses, also being written about the same time as Genesis: around 1446 to 1406 B.C. (Barker 1995:2). Alexander (2005:180) write that Leviticus as a book of law for the priests with which to guide God's people, is a result of the Sinai covenant. A key theme of Leviticus is holiness (Alexander 2005:180). This is grounded in Leviticus 20:23, 'And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy.' Barker (1995:145) mentions that in 'Leviticus spiritual holiness is symbolized by physical perfection.' With this in mind, the above passages to be analysed are classified (Barker 1995:145) under the section, 'Moral laws covering incest, honesty, thievery, idolatry etc.' or as Alexander (2005:188) put it, 'Sexual taboos.'

Analysis of the passages

Leviticus 18:22, 'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.'

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Leviticus 20:13, '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.'

Between translations there are no significant differences for purposes of this analysis. Between verses, the latter verse imposes what can be described as a self-inflicted death penalty as a consequence of a homosexual deed. This is one of the key differences between chapters 18 and 20, chapter 20:6-21 lists the penalties of breaking the laws of chapters 18 and 19 (Alexander 2005:188-189). Gill (2017) refers to the sin of sodomy and a breach of law. Where laws are broken, there are always consequences.

Working first with 18:22, the Hebrew is unambiguous: not (לֹא lo' H3808) lie (שָׁכַב shakab H7901) with (אֶת 'eth H854) mankind (זָכָר zakar H2145), as with (מִשְׁכָּב mishkab H4904) womankind (אִשָּׁה ishshah H802). Scripture is very specific, 'as with' (מִשְׁכָּב mishkab H4904)—the 'laying with' has a definite sexual connotation; the primitive root verb to said masculine noun is 'lie' (שָׁכַב shakab H7901), which is inclusive of sexual connecting. Leviticus 18:22 could not be any clearer on the topic.

Likewise, 20:13 is equally unambiguous: also lie (שָׁכַב shakab H7901) with (אֶת 'eth H854) mankind (זָכָר zakar H2145) as he lieth (מִשְׁכָּב mishkab H4904) woman (אִשָּׁה ishshah H802) both (שְׁנַיִם shēnayim H8147) have committed (עָשָׂה `asah H6213) abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה tow`ebah H8441). It must be mentioned that the feminine noun used for abomination is from the root verb תָּעַב (ta`ab H8581), which conveys an anathema to God, in both a ritual and an ethical sense.

These two verses do not stand in isolation; Moses is not only writing about homosex as the only sexual act being forbidden; nor is he writing to address pagan rituals, Alexander (2005:180) says, 'Leviticus is the book of laws which springs directly out of God's covenant with his people at Sinai.' Moses' primary focus is not on pagan rituals (Bell 2017), but on upholding a covenant with a God who is holy and expects His people to be holy (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26). The following are also forbidden in the same Levitical passages forbidding homosexuality (verse numbers in brackets).

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In chapter 18, sex is forbidden with⁵⁵: relative (6), mother (7), father's wife (8), sister and half-sister (9), grandchild (10), half-sister (11), aunt (12 & 14), daughter in law (15), sister in law (16) woman and daughter (17), wife's sister (18), menstruating woman (19), neighbour's wife (20), a man (22) and an animal (23).

In chapter 20, sex is forbidden with: neighbour's wife (10), father's wife (11), daughter in law (12), a man (13), a woman and daughter (14), animal (15 & 16), sister or half-sister (18), menstruating woman (18), aunt (19) and sister in law (21).

It is clear that the context in which homosex is included is an anathema to God. The death penalty for homosex may seem harsh, but as Beers (2007:183) writes, in light of the paganism which was making its presence known among a people who are commanded to be holy, justice is harsh—but fair. Leviticus 20:13 states 'their blood will be on their own heads' (NIV). Mercifully though, in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness instead of death.

The researcher finds no orthodox exegetical grounds to treat, consider or view homosex as different to the other forbidden sexual acts in Leviticus. God still requires of His followers a high standard of sexual morality since we worship Him with our lives. He is holy therefore we should strive to be holy.

Conclusion

Bell (2017) writes, 'The story of Sodom does not approach homosexuality or sexual orientation, and certainly is not about God rejecting or wanting to destroy people because of it!' However, the account of Sodom unambiguously speaks out against homosex, and this was one of the practices that lead to God destroying Sodom. The researcher in contemplating the book of Leviticus as well as the holiness of God quotes Krejcir (2006), 'Law is God's Law and is the expression of His sovereign will and character.' Since God is immutable (Erickson 2001:97 and Berkhof 1949:62-63) his will and character will never change. A postmodern society would

⁵⁵ Verse numbers are in brackets.

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do well to embrace the doctrine of immutability with a view to living a life of obedience to the Word.

4.4.4. Romans 1:24-27

Introduction

Romans 1:24-27, 'Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error' (NIV). Cross references are: Leviticus 18:22; 30:13, Acts 14:16, 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Thessalonians 4:5.

Romans 1:24-27 is troublesome for a theology of same-gender relationships. Romans is written upon the basis of the completed work of Christ and so confirms the already analysed passages of Genesis, Leviticus and Matthew. It will also be congruent with the next passage to be analysed, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

For this reason, the researcher contends that this fundamental passage warrants prudent amplification so as to draw together the teachings/instructions of the following eras: The Old Testament, Christ's time on earth and post-ascension.

Context of the book

Paul wrote the epistle of Romans to church at Rome, probably from Corinth during his third missionary journey early in the spring of 57 A.D. (Barker 1995:1705-1707) This church would have been predominantly gentile but there would also have been Jews grouped into a number of home style congregations (Du Toit 2008:938-939). Du Toit furthermore states that without doubt, Romans is the most influential letter ever written, deeply influencing Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Barth.

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Alexander (2005:681) classifies Romans into three main parts:

- a) Chapters 1-11: Paul's gospel, introducing the theme.
- b) Chapters 12-15:13: The Christian life.
- c) Chapter 15:14-16:27: Personal news and greetings.

The specific heading under which Romans 1:24-27 is written is, 'God's wrath against mankind' (NIV).

Analysis of the passage

Romans 1:24-27, 'Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 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 recompense of their error which was meet.'

The NIV and KJV translations are similar.

Barnes (2017), in commenting on verse 24: 'God gave them up,' mentions that the tendency of the Romans was toward the mentioned sins in verses 24 and 25 of the KJV, uncleanness, lust, dishonour, changing the truth of God (lying) and idol worship. In verse 26, Paul says that because of all of this evil, God gave them over to their own vile affections (ἀτιμία πάθος *atimia pathos* G819 G3806). ἀτιμία (*atima*), a feminine noun etymologically related to the adjective ἄτιμος (*atimos* G820) is a negative particle that further contextualizes ἀτιμία (*atima*) to be unmistakably disgraceful/dishonourable. The neuter noun πάθος (*pathos*) speaks of a passion or emotion. The Romans were not leading a God-honouring life. Paul writes in verse 26 that even the women changed (μεταλλάσσω *metallassō* G3337) the natural (φυσικός *phusikos* G5446) toward 'which is against nature' (παρά φύσις *para physis*

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G3844 G5449). Verse 27 is introduced with the wording ‘and likewise also the men.’ In other words, both men and women were going against the natural use of their bodies. Paul expresses that the men left (ἀφίημι *aphiēmi* G863) the natural use of woman (φυσικός ὁ θήλυς *physikos ho thēlys* G5446 G3588 G2338) and burned (ἐκκαίω *ekkaiō* G1572) in their lust (ὄρεξις *orexis* G3715) toward each other. Gill (2017) writes, ‘The very sin of sodomy is here designed.’

The researcher agrees with Botha (2005:154) who asserts that the key words for understanding this passage are ‘use’ and ‘nature.’ The word ‘use’ is translated from the feminine noun χρῆσις (*chrēsis* G5540). χρῆσις in turn stems from the verb χράομαι (*chraomai* G5530) which is the middle voice of the feminine noun χεῖρ (*cheir* G5495). χρῆσις (*chrēsis*) refers specifically to bodily sexual intercourse, specifically the sexual use of a woman. χρῆσις (*chrēsis*) is preceded by the adjective φυσικός (*physikos* G5446), but by implication—what is naturally instinctive (φύσις *physis* G5449). When drawing χρῆσις (*chrēsis*) together with φυσικός (*physikos*) one interprets matters to be ‘natural and instinctive sexual intercourse.’ Paul is therefore unmistakably referring to homosexual as being unnatural and counter instinctive. So depraved was the Roman society, that God punishes sin with sin (Gill 2017). Botha (2005:132) writes about Romans 1:26-27, ‘It is the core Biblical portion to the issue of homosexual conduct on which Christians could base their moral doctrine with regard to homosexuality.’ Romans 1:24-27 is a legitimate and practical prescript for people today (Krejcir 2006).

Conclusion

The apex that Bell seems to miss with her statement, ‘A far cry from describing born again believers that are in a loving, committed homosexual relationship!’ is that conversion does not change the nature and definition of sin; i.e. homosexuality does not become a non-sin based upon one’s conversion to Christianity; instead there is forgiveness and freedom from sin.

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4.4.5. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Introduction

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 'Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God' (NIV).

Cross references are: Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:5 and Revelation 22:15.

The researcher is drawn to this passage through the words 'be not deceived.' In this sense, it is postulated that this is precisely what is going on with postmodern social constructionism of gender and sexuality, as a deviation from the unchanging Word of God.

Context of the book

Paul wrote the epistle of 1 Corinthians in 55 A.D. toward the end of his three year stay in Ephesus. Corinth was an immoral city of about 650,000 people (Barker 1995:1734). Barker writes, regarding the morality of Corinth, 'So widely known did the immorality of Corinth become that the Greek verb 'to Corinthianize' came to mean 'to practice sexual immorality.' The church at Corinth was socially and racially mixed (Alexander 2005:694) and under the influence of Greek philosophy. It is comprehensible that the church at Corinth would have a number of problems that Paul needed to address (Krejcir 2006; Barker 1995:1734-1735).

Alexander (2005:694) classes 1 Corinthians into five sections:

- a) Chapters 1-4: Divisions in the church.
- b) Chapters 5-10: Issues of sexual morality and Christian behaviour.
- c) Chapters 11-14: Order and disorder in the church.
- d) Chapter 15: About resurrection.
- e) Chapter 16: Closing messages and greetings.

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The passage under scrutiny falls under the outline of, 'Moral and ethical disorders in the life of the church' (Barker 1995:1736).

Analysis of the passage

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, '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.'

The NIV does not specifically address the adjective 'effeminate' (μαλακός malakos G3120). To the researcher is a significant exclusion since it arguably connotes with orientation and or appearance and the inclusion in the KJV strengthens Paul's description of the unrighteousness. On the other hand, the NIV is very plainspoken in describing male homosex. In other regards, the two translations are similar.

In verse 9, Paul starts off by stating what the unrighteous (ἄδικος adikos G94) will not inherit, then cautions the Corinthians not to be deceived (πλανάω planaō G4105). πλανάω (planaō) means: not to drift from safety or from the truth. Paul then clarifies who the unrighteous are, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of self, thieves, coveters, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. Paul contrasts the truth with the reprehensible. In the wording 'abusers of themselves with mankind,' one reads the masculine noun, ἀρσενοκοίτης (arsenokoitēs G733). This is a derived word from the adjective ἄρρην (arrēn G730) and the feminine noun κοίτη (koitē G2845) that bears direct reference to a sodomite and the defiling of self. The connotation of male sperm is inseparable from ἀρσενοκοίτης (arsenokoitēs). It appears then that there is a mix of sodomy, abuse, defilement and sperm intermixed in ἀρσενοκοίτης (arsenokoitēs). ἀρσενοκοίτης (arsenokoitēs) is also used in the same context in 1 Timothy 1:10. The neologism, ἀρσενοκοίτης (arsenokoitēs) is only used twice in the New Testament. ἀρσενοκοίτης (arsenokoitēs) must therefore be interpreted to be active homosexuality (Botha 2005:167); 'one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual' (Thayer 2017; Gill 2017). Paul classes homosex in the same league of fornication, idolatry, effeminism, thieving,

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coveting, reviling and extorting. The caution of Paul is not to be misled into believing that they are righteous acts.

The researcher will briefly comment on the adjective 'effeminate' (μαλακός (malakos G3120)). μαλακός (malakos) can be used in the context of soft, fine, a catamite and effeminate. Merriam Webster (2018) states that a catamite is 'a boy kept by a pederast,' put otherwise, a male youth who is in a sexual relationship with a man (Dictionary.com 2018). 'Effeminate' (μαλακός malakos) does point toward the degree of immorality, but when translated to effeminate could refer to a passive homosexual state or as Thayer (2017) states, 'of a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness.' The researcher argues that the inclusion of both ἀρσενικοίτης (arsenokoitēs) and μαλακός (malakos) describes the extent of the immorality in the Corinth society. See also Matthew 15:19, Mark 7:21-22 regarding the heart of mankind. It is possible that a postmodern society is not without correlation to the state of affairs that Paul addressed at Corinth. Therefore, Paul's message still holds true, do not be deceived; do not drift from the safety of the truth.

Conclusion

In the grammatical-historical sense, the inclusion of active and passive homosexuality among the deeds of the unrighteous points toward homosexuality as being unrighteous. 1 Timothy 6:11-12 is a pertinent admonition to the 'deceived' born-again believer, 'But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.'

4.4.6. Concluding comments on the key biblical text relating to the challenges of same-gender marriage

The biblical message on same-gender relationships is clear; Scripture unambiguously censures it.

All theology of homosexuality will always be found wanting on the basis of a literal hermeneutic and grammatical-historical analysis of key Scriptures. This agrees fully

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with Smith (2016:2) who in referring to literal interpretation encourages 'normal rules of communication.' In closing this sub section, the researcher quotes 1 Corinthians 6:11 as a call to repentance, '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.'

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the researcher fully agrees with Bell (2017) that 'one must take into account the context and full passage of Scripture.' For a theology of homosexuality to prevail it must circumvent the analysed Scriptures; it has no choice. This necessitates firstly, the rejection of a literal hermeneutic and grammatical-historical approach to passages and secondly, the adoption of an unequal alternative, for example, an eisegesis.

It hardly seems plausible that the biblical message opposing homosexuality and therefore same-gender relationships, a message that has stood firm for thousands of years has or is about to change in response to the demands of a postmodern social construction of marriage, sexuality and gender. Eisegesis, inadequate exegeses, wanting analyses and postmodern social constructivism may indeed arrive at a differing conclusion to the Word, but the Word speaks for itself on the topic as evidenced in the researcher's analyses. Those who claim the power to define marriage and marital relationships—either through a theology of homosexuality or eisegeses or questionable exegetics—take away from the Word the right to define for itself, the same.

The researcher prays that his normative task will remind God's people to live as God's people according to His Word through Christ, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit will guide persons toward becoming the person God has created him/her to be (Psalm 139 and Ephesians 1:4).

In the next chapter through Osmer's pragmatic task, the researcher will approach a biblical model according for counselling same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship.

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5.1. Introduction

In chapter two, the researcher articulated the orthodox definition and application of marriage and then discussed some traditional and psycho-sociological factors that contributed toward the change in the attitude of society and some churches toward the acceptance of same-gender relationships.

In chapter three, the researcher agreed with Dreyer (2008:499) who in discussing marriage argued that the 'sexual difference between female and male should be regarded as soteriologically indifferent.' Whereas Dreyer (2008:501) followed a hermeneutic of suspicion coupled to a dialectical model and grounded her argument in an archaeology of socio-religious constructs, the researcher followed a literal hermeneutic coupled to a historical-grammatical method and grounded his agreement in Scripture, for example, Titus 3:5-8 and Romans 3:23-24 in that both male and female have sinned, and both genders need the grace of Christ. The key difference is that whereas Dreyer is open to a non-essentialistic approach to marriage, the researcher advocates an orthodox approach to marriage. The researcher also agreed with Bell (2017) who stated, 'coming to the Bible with preconceived ideas before we even start interpretation.' Whereas Bell's results lean toward the biblically acceptance of same-gender relationships, the researcher's results lean toward affirming the orthodox biblical stance on relationships.

In chapter four, the researcher established that God created male and female different to one another in order to fulfil His purposes and that these purposes are well articulated through an orthodox theology of marriage, sin and sexuality. It was evidenced that orthodox purposes stand in antagonism with the postmodern social constructs of marriage, sin and sexuality.

In this chapter, the researcher will draw from Osmer's (2008:176-178) 'task competence' component of his pragmatic task and move toward proposing a biblical model to counsel same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship. In this

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pragmatic task, with a view to answering the fourth key question, the reader will note a slight shift in accent to occasionally include the conventionality of opposite-gender marriage as a point of reference.

Osmer discusses (2008:183) a spirituality of servant leadership as well as the goal of change and mentions some theological reflecting to be done with a view to realizing purposes, and in so doing manage change. The researcher has tabulated and adapted Osmer's theological reflections as a framework through which to work toward the proposed biblical counselling model.

Osmer's theological reflections	Researcher's adaptation of Osmer's theological reflections
Theological reflection on the mission of the organization and how the mission is best carried out in the present context.	Theological reflection on the mission of orthodox biblical marriage and how the mission is best carried out in the present context.
Theological reflection on the role played by leaders in fulfilling the congregation's mission.	Theological reflection on the role played by participants in fulfilling the purpose of orthodox biblical marriage.
Theological reflection on what changes might need to take place for the congregation to fulfil its mission.	Theological reflection on what changes might need to take place for orthodox biblical marriage to fulfil its mission.

Table 2: Theological reflections of Osmer and the researcher's adaptations thereof.

Osmer states (2008:192) that servant leadership, the guide to the pragmatic task, 'is leadership that influences the congregation to change in ways that more fully embody the servanthood of Christ.' In reference to task competence, he writes (p. 193) that it is informed by humility, in other words freedom from pride and arrogance (Merriam-Webster 2018) and to this end the researcher again affirms that homosexual persons are loved by God, should be loved by all believers and treated with respect and compassion by the church.

5.2. The mission of orthodox biblical marriage and how the mission of marriage is best carried out in the present context

5.2.1. The mission of marriage

Manser (2011:808) writes that marriage is, 'The union of a man and woman living together in a permanent relationship. God's relationship with his people and procreation are described in terms of the marriage bond.' Excerpts from Barnard van der Colf & Müller's (1988:100-101) shortened version of the Dutch Reformed Church's marriage formulations is:

'Die huwelik is deur God ingestel ... So het Hy hulle as man en vrou geskep om mekaar as huweliksmats aan te vul en by te staan. ... Die huwelik is 'n gehegte eenheid ... hierdie eenheid is die diep geheim van 'n gelukkige lewe, die grondslag van 'n gesonde gesinslewe ... As die Here aan julle die voorreg gee om kinders te hê, ... Ons is gebore uit die liefdesverbond tussen ons ouers'⁵⁶

The 1989 Anglican prayer book (p. 457) introduces Christian marriage as follows, 'The church of the Province of South Africa affirms that marriage by divine institution is a lifelong and exclusive union and partnership between one man and one woman. (Canon on Holy Matrimony in the Constitution and Canons of the C.P.S.A.).' Flowing from these three quotations which are in a broad unity with one another, the researcher proposes the following mission⁵⁷ of orthodox marriage: A permanent and intimate opposite-gender relationship in which parties experience Godly fellowship, companionship, help, comfort.

⁵⁶ Translation: 'Marriage was instituted by God ... He created them male and female to complement one another as marital partners ... Marriage is very intimate ... this unity is the deep secret of a happy and fulfilling life and the foundation to a healthy family life ... If God blesses you with the privilege of children ... We are born out of a covenant of love between our parents.'

⁵⁷ The website <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mission-statement.html>; 2018-07-11 serves as a definition for a mission statement and at the same time clarifies the difference between vision and mission.

5.2.2. The present context of marriage in South Africa

The present context of marriage is complex, as this thesis has already revealed:

- a) Dreyer (2008) has qualified that there are several marital forms and various marital models.
- b) Bell (2018) articulated same-gender marriage as normative.
- c) In South Africa, a marriage can be formed under three separate Acts, Act 25 of 1961, the Marriage Act (opposite gender marriages), under Act 17 of 2006, the Civil Union Act which (opposite and same-gender marriages) and under Act 120 of 1998, Recognition of Customary marriages Act (customary marriages).
- d) Both the orthodox and postmodern mission of marriage is exercised within the inherent statutory tension between chapter 2 paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. (unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and marital status) and paragraph 15.1. (the right to freedom of conscience, thought, belief and opinion) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

It is therefore evident to the researcher that in South Africa, there is sufficient context and space to for almost every possible permutation of marriage. It follows therefore that in a postmodern society, the present context of marriage is wide open to traditional, individual, group and social interpretation and application.

The question at hand per this subsection is asked within the essence of the thesis, i.e., which present context is a best fit per the researcher's defined mission of marriage?

The grammatical-historical analysis of the previous chapter already and acutely describes a time-transcendent context for orthodox biblical marriage. To recap:

- a) Marriage is instituted by God; husband and wife brought together by God (Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:5, 1 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 5:31-32).

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- b) Marriage is between a male and a female: (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:21-24; Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6).
- c) Marriage is honourable (Hebrews 13:4 and 1 Corinthians 7:38).
- d) Marriage has biblically grounded gender specific roles (Ephesians 5:21-33; 1:4, Colossians 1:22, Genesis 2:24; 3:16, Matthew 19:5, 1 Corinthians 6:15; 11:3; 12:27, John 15:3; 17:17, Hebrews 10:22, 1 Peter 3:1-2; 3:7; 5:5).
- e) Divorce is not desired; marriage is permanent (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:3-9, 1 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 5:31).

In terms of South African legislation, Act 25 of 1961, The Marriage Act creates the greatest opportunity and present context for orthodox biblical marriage per biblical design because the orthodox understanding of the Christian religion is intrinsic to said Act (paragraphs 7, 8, 31, 32, 33 and 34).

5.3. The role played by participants in fulfilling the purpose of orthodox biblical marriage

Same-gender participants are capable of fulfilling their own relational purposes and at face value, said purposes seem analogous to those of an opposite-gender relationship. Gottman et. al. (2003:24) mention that gay and lesbian relationships operate on mostly the same conventions as same-gender relationships. Their report, which uses insider perception, observed interactive behaviour and physiology to arrive at their conclusion supports an earlier normativeness research finding by Kurdek (1992:125-142). Indeed, it is undoubtedly true some participants have happily been in a same-gender relationship for many years, but it is also noted that a lived faith did not form a focal point of Gottman et. al. studies.

Within the context of this subsection that focuses on the roles played by participants in fulfilling the purpose of orthodox biblical marriage, a proverbial 'an elephant in the room' statement would be along the lines of deciding who in a same-gender relationship or marriage is the husband and who is the wife and whether or not such terminology is even appropriate to a same-gender relationship. This question was

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asked by Bergmatov (2017) on Quora.com⁵⁸ (<https://www.quora.com/On-what-basis-do-gay-couples-decide-who-is-the-husband-and-who-the-wife>; 2018-07-27). Some of the answers were as follows:

- a) Berg (2017), 'On any basis they wish, but generally speaking, none. ... "Husband" is a married male, "wife" is a married female. Nothing prevents you having two of one, instead of one of each.'
- b) Mudge (2017), 'Sometimes "husband" and "wife" are chosen as terms of endearment, but usually not. Most gay couples find this belief somewhat silly, especially since they prefer to leave the opposite gender out of their relationship.'
- c) Austin (2017), 'On what basis do we need "husband" and "wife" roles? ... Neither of us assigns the gender-based roles.'
- d) Arora (2017), 'Husband and wife is a constructed term. People in a relationship and committed via a marriage are partners. And if you were talking about preference in bed and gay people have their taste of being dominant and submissive or both at the same time.'
- e) Best (2017), 'I know many gay couples and none of them do this. "Husband" and "wife" are heterosexual concepts, not universal concepts. They have no reason to determine that.'

It appears that Best's (2017) response encompasses all the other responses. Husband and wife are heterosexual concepts. Alford (2016) in his article leans in the same direction as Best. In a contrasting view, Petrow (2014) states that when men are married both are husband, and when women are married both are wives. Comments

⁵⁸ Quora describe themselves as follows: 'Quora is a forum, just like yahoo answers. So basically, Quora is neither credible and neither not credible. Quora is the classroom and the people in it are teachers and students.' In this sense, the researcher deems that Quora provides excellent feedback to the quoted question.

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on Gremore's (2016) article in Queerty⁵⁹ revealed a mixed response.

Notwithstanding the above paragraph, orthodox marriage has clearly defined differences and roles (Ephesians 5:22-33⁶⁰ and 1 Peter 3:1 and 7⁶¹); roles which are not necessarily shared in same-gender relationships. This can make counselling those exiting a same-gender relationship unlike anything else a pastor may have encountered in his pastorate so far. For some clients, termination of the relationship may also plead for significant (i.e. comparatively greater than for heterosexuals) changes in lifestyle and future gender roles. The researcher therefore anticipates—in relation to opposite-gender relationship counselling—that the client presents with heightened stress and anxiety levels as well as an increase in feelings of loneliness, hurt, uncertainty about the future and rejection.

5.4. What changes might need to take place for orthodox biblical marriage to fulfil its mission?

Before discussing the changes or proposing a biblical model, the researcher believes that it is prudent in both activity and line of thought to firstly draw into matters Smith's (2013:107-126) elements of a model and secondly, to touch base with four classic models to pastorate as well as the narrative approach to therapy. In this manner, the proposed biblical model will not stand in isolation from the overarching discipline of biblical counsel or without astute and implicit input from respected scholars in said discipline.

⁵⁹ Queerty is a website that describe themselves as follows: 'Free of an agenda (except that gay one).'

⁶⁰ This section is titled in the King James Bible: 'Wives and Husbands.'

⁶¹ 1 Peter 3:1, 'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'

1 Peter 3:7, 'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.'

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5.4.1. Smith's twelve elements of a model

Smith (2013:107-126) discusses 12 elements that should be included in a model of theological reflection which at the same time inform the way in which orthodox evangelical theology is compassed/proclaimed in a postmodern world.

- a) Canonical: The whole of the Bible is the normative guide and manual to the Christian life. The Bible is the inerrant, inspired and infallible Word of God (Erickson 2001:72, Horton 2006:28-34, Smith 2013:107 and Hammond 1990:31-33) and 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' (2 Timothy 3:16). Although it can be argued that contextually this Scripture refers to the Old Testament, Gill (2017) writes that by the time 2 Timothy was written, so too was the greatest part of the New Testament. The fact is however, all of Scripture is by the Spirit of God.
 - 'Profitable for doctrine' reveals the nature and will of God.
 - 'For reproof' convinces mankind of the truth.
 - 'For correction' is restorative, therapeutic and disciplinary.
 - 'For instruction in righteousness' is discipleship (instructing and training) through the power of the Word.
- b) Christocentric: God is known through Christ. The doing of theology centres on Christ (Smith 2013:110 and Merriam-Webster 2018) and through Him we know God. The fullness of God is found in Christ (Colossians 2:9 and Hebrews 4:15). Erickson (2001:177) encourages believers to 'pattern ourselves after Jesus who is the complete revelation of what the image of God is.' Hammond (1990:112-114) delineates the threefold work of Christ as: prophet, priest and King.
- c) Contextual: Smith (2013:110) states that the Bible was written in a different era and context to today, but he also states that the Word is for us today. According to Smith, the task of theology is to input the Word's timeless truths into today's postmodern society. In his interpretive task, the

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researcher addressed the *curvus* of society versus the immutability of the Word. The researcher argues that the onus is not upon the Word to maintain relevance through a process of change, but for society in response to preaching the Word, to align itself with the time transcendent truths and supremacy of the Word (Hammond 1990:4). It is true (Smith 2013:111) that a measure of preunderstanding is present, but it is arguably truer that truthful contextualization must result in transformative praxis (Smith 2013:112-113). To this end, Erickson (2001:23) speaks of retaining content and doctrine but enhancing understandability.

- d) Ecclesiastical: Smith (2013:114) writes that although theology is done in the church for the church, its effects reach outside the church. Referring back to people in their context, he calls for a church based and centred theology. The researcher agrees in the sense that the church is the people of God who are 'in covenant fellowship with himself by his Spirit and his Word.' (Horton 2006:183); see also Isaiah 59:21.
- e) Exegetical: This element boils down to a faithful and accurate interpretation of Scripture; drawing out the original and intended meaning (Horton 2006:71) as it may be relevant to today's readers (Smith 2016:9). The researcher favours a literal hermeneutic and a grammatical-historical exegetical method, as does Smith (2016:1-2). Erickson (2001:20) cautions against reading present-day meanings into biblical references and pushes hard for meaningful answers to the question, 'what does this really mean?' Erickson (2001:80) correctly concludes that, 'The written Word, correctly interpreted, is the basis of authority.'
- f) Historical: Smith (2013:116) writes, 'Our theological reflection should be informed by church history, historical theology, and the history of interpretation.' Erickson (2001:30) closes his discussion on contemporizing the Christian message in good relation to Smith and remind the reader to draw primary essence from biblical statements.
- g) Logical: Theology is bound to the same rules of logic, as are any of the sciences (Erickson 2001:18 and Smith 2013:116-117). Difficulties therefore

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do not equal incomprehensibility and in this sense, there is complete rationality to the reality of the Christian faith.

- h) Missional: Horton (2006:545) writes that the totality of the assignment that God has given His church to do in the world is missions. This statement agrees with Smith (2013;117-118) who links the mission of the church to the mission of God. The heart of missiology is to preach the Good News (for example, Mark 16:15) trusting its power to change lives.
- i) Practical: Osmer's (2008) four tasks lend a basic structure to practical theology interpretation. In line with the pragmatic task of Osmer, Smith (2013:119) agrees that when a study focuses on a given scenario or practice, it must also offer a strategy to transform the scenario or practice. To this, the researcher adds that it must be understandable and executable within a truthful context.
- j) Scientific: Psychology and sociology lend tremendous insights, and to this end can be informative, even integrational (Smith 2013:119-120), but they must be defined theologically (Osmer 2008:85). Osmer, on page 83 states that theories (per reason) about the truth are not truth itself, but an approximation of truth. Smith agrees (2013:120) writes that 'all truth is God's truth' and in this sense, science is a source of knowledge about God, but science is dependent on human interpretation. The researcher agrees with McDowell (1999:612) who affirms that truth is being revealed to mankind by God—God alone, as Creator is the sole source of absolute truth about everything.
- k) Systematic: Erickson (2001:16) argues that theology draws together a coherent message from all of what the Bible has to say about a specific topic and the results are addressed to people today. Smith (2013:124) sets three criteria for this task: (a) the way other theologians interpret, (b) integration of other sources of knowledge and (c) the ability to apologetically argue one's position.

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- l) Trinitarian: Smith (2013:124-126) correctly claims that theology must be both God focussed and God glorifying. He rightly sees Christ as the climax of God's revelation. Smith continues by saying that theology is Spirit dependent; the Spirit is our teacher and guide into all truth (Erickson 2001:80 and John 16:13).

5.4.2. A brief overview of four influential models of pastorate and one approach to pastorate

Practical theology has four classic models available that have been adapted and used over many years in pastorate (Brunsdon 2010:6). The following brief overview is intended to highlight each's potential influence and suitability (in its entirety or merely components) toward aforesaid biblical model of counsel. In addition to the stated four classic models, the researcher will include narrative therapy⁶² as a fifth (postmodern) approach to pastorate:

- a) The Kerygmatic model. The kerygmatic model was pioneered by Eduard Thurneysen. For Thurneysen, the Word is central (Louw 2004:26), therefore discipline and the sacraments occupy an important place in the pastoral process (Brunsdon 2010:4). It is a reformed model characterized by kerygma; salvation and forgiveness (Louw 2004:25). Brunsdon (2010:4) quotes Thurneysen (1963:201) in capturing the essence of the model: 'pastoral care is and remains proclamation of the Word to the individual and neither can nor should be anything else.' In this sense, the Kerygmatic model is a homiletical event (Louw 2004:26) and does not open itself that much to influence from disciplines outside the field of theology, indeed psychology is seen to be of assistance, but not directly part of the pastoral process. On the other hand, the Kerygmatic model does afford pneumatology a principal and necessary role in relation to the client. Again, quoting Thurneysen (1963:313, 11), Brunsdon (2010:4) writes, 'All pastoral care will lead to the church and pastoral care exists in the church as the

⁶² Narrative therapy functions from a postmodern epistemology (Brunsdon 2010:2) in a postmodern world and for this reason it warrants inclusion in this study, as opposed to summary rejection.

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communication of the Word of God to individuals ... This Word demands to be communicated in various ways (1963:11).’ This resonates with Smith’s (2013:114) ecclesiastical element of a model. The researcher notes that the Kerygmatic model may potentially over-elevate the fall of man in relation to the grace of God.

- b) The Educational model. Brunsdon (2010:5) places Seward Hiltner behind this model of pastorate. The Educational model is known as a client-centred or empirical model to pastorate where phenomenology and experience/observation play a significant role (Louw 2004:27). Hiltner recognises pastorate as a function that seeks healing of all human functions the optimum healing of the person (Louw 2004:22). Brunsdon (2010:5) writes that this model arose shortly after the Kerygmatic model in response to the rise of psychology in the United States of America and pressured the Kerygmatic model to evolve toward psychotherapy. To this end, Brunsdon (2010:5) quotes Hiltner (1958:25), ‘The new knowledge that is coming from psychology, from psychiatry, from anthropology, and from other sources is not easy to assimilate; but its riches are such that no thoughtful person can set them aside.’ Louw (2004:131) and Brunsdon (2010:5) bind the work of Hiltner to some influence from Roger’s client-centred therapy; specifically, the ‘inner frame of reference’ of the client. As an experiential model, the Word is subject to the needs of the client.
- c) The Nouthetic approach. This is the directive and confrontational model (Louw 2004:28) of Jay Adams who opposed experiential models (Brunsdon 2010:5) and called for a return to biblical counselling. He did this via his Nouthetic model which confronts sin as the dominant origin of all problems (Brunsdon 2010:5). Adams (1979:140) does acknowledge that personal sin is not the only cause of problems. In similarity to the Kerygmatic model, the anthropological point of departure (Louw 2004:130) is rooted in Romans 3:23-24, ‘For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.’ The Nouthetic model can be described as anti-psychology, indeed Louw writes (2004:29) that Adams considers psychiatric counselling as invalid in

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a biblical sense 'because those who are assisted by worldly methods cannot grow spiritually.' Adams (1979:9) himself writes that the views of Freud, Rogers and others 'are not supplemental, but outright alternatives.' Louw (2004:30) places the Word as dominant in Adams' model to pastorate.

- d) Bipolar Model. Gerben Heitink tried to resolve the tension between the Word and experiential models of pastorate by means of a bipolar model (Brunsdon 2010:5) through the dynamics of correlation (Louw 2004:31). Heitink (1977:75) defines pastorate as a helping profession, '*Onder pastoraat als hulpverlening verstaan wij, da teen pastor een helpende relatie aangaat met mensen om—in het licht van het evangelie en in verbondenheid met die gemeente van Christus—met hen weg te zoeken in geloofs en levensvragen.*'⁶³ Heitink encompasses both theory and action (Smith 2013:89). Louw (2004:31) develops this theme by writing that Heitink reveals the tension between: 'faith and life, Gospel and context, theology and psychology.' Heitink uses the term 'broadening' (Brunsdon 2010:6) to extend the understanding of pastorate beyond a particular application of the Word.
- e) Narrative therapy. Brunsdon (2010:10) writes that the Michael White and David Epston are the fathers of this approach, with the word narrative pointing toward the story of a person's life. Epston and White (1990:9-10) refer to dominant and alternate stories in our lives. Green (2005:531-533) writes that 'narratives move forward in the service of a central aim, in relation to which all is orientated.' When the central aim is God, His purpose shapes the narratives of Scripture. Scripture in turn, should shape the world of believers. Both Müller (2008:777) and Brunsdon (2010:1) agree that narrative therapy developed from and operates from a postmodern

⁶³ Translation (Louw 2004:31): 'The pastor, in a helping relationship with people, enables them to seek a resolution to life issues and fait problems both in light of the Gospel and in collaboration with the congregation of Christ.'

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epistemology and there are therefore obvious pitfalls (if not checked) to using this approach in pastorate. However, narrative therapy has a number of advantages which can be responsibly explored in pastorate (Brunsdon 2010:11-12): the client is the expert of his/her life, a person's relationship with the problem is the problem, meaning leads to alternate renderings, separation of the person from their problem and co-construction where the pastor is a co-author. It stands to reason that this approach is experientially based but need not exclude or override the Word.

5.5. A proposed biblical model for counselling same gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship

The proposed model is eclectic and dependent on the working of the Holy Spirit as 'allos paraklētos.' The Holy Spirit (John 14:15-26)—being the only one who can change hearts—in counselling will assist, support, convict, relieve, advocate and guide the client toward the truth, repentance and a life of obedience. It is the Holy Spirit that will help the client discern and understand the truth about relationships. The researcher's model has four distinct phases and at the centre of it, is the desire to live a life of obedience to God:

- a) Decide.
- b) Disentangle.
- c) Dissolve.
- d) Discover.

The proposed model assumes that a same-gender couple or a party to a same-gender relationship want to dissolve their/his relationship. Obedience toward the Word and what the Word has to say on the topic of relationships (refer to the researcher's normative task per chapter four) is key to this model. Obedience is defined by Merriam-Webster (2018) as firstly 'obeying' and secondly as a 'sphere of jurisdiction.' Therefore, a life of obedience means to place oneself, in obedience, under the jurisdiction of His Word. Obedience means accepting everything that the Word of God teaches about relationships and then living that truth. The researcher is mindful that

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the believer's instruction is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ (for example, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:45-47, Acts 1:8 and Romans 10:15) and that it is Christ that has overcome (John 16:33) the things of the world. Consequentially, the model is designed to allow the truth to expose and defeat matters.

The model is flexible in that phases can be skipped, repeated, approached in an order different to what is presented here and even run concurrently with one another phase. In support of the researcher, Erickson (2007:73) writes that the course of counsel will differ from person to person and that the pastor needs to make room for this.

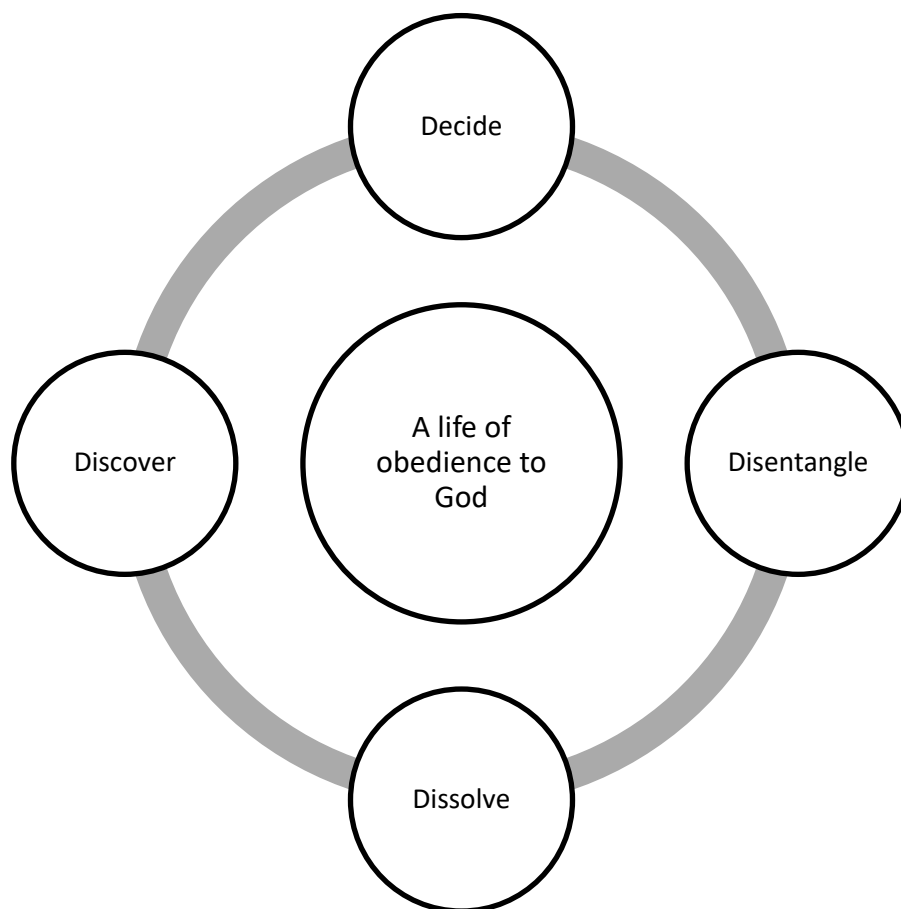


Figure 1: The researcher's proposed model.

5.5.1. Decide

This phase links to the researcher's normative task and is achieved through three legitimate decisions:

- a) Firstly, there is the client's decision to consult with the pastor about the same-gender relationship or marriage.

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This decision is legitimized through a willingness to explore Scripture according to a literal hermeneutic and grammatical-historical analysis.

- b) Secondly there is the decision to elevate the Word above human experience, human justification efforts and social constructionism.

This decision is legitimized through the acceptance and application of orthodox biblical truths to same-gender relationships and marriage.

- c) Finally, the decision to continue with the counselling process.

This decision is legitimized through the desire (and fruit) to live a life of obedience to God.

It is assumed that the decision by one or both parties to approach the pastor for counsel regarding the continuation or possible dissolution of their same-gender relationship is by unrestricted (free) choice. To this end, the pastor has an ethical responsibility (Clinebell 2011:268 and Collins 2007:84-89) to make his/her theological orientation and thus position on the topic of same-gender relationships and marriage known to the client. This is to be communicated to the client in a Christocentric and respectful manner with the mutual appreciation that a counsellor cannot assist every client (Collins 2007:90-92). There is therefore sufficient validation to ethically and professionally refer the client if need be.

Influencing this phase is the Nouthetic model of Adams and the Kerygmatic model of Thurneysen.

- a) Nouthetic because the theologies of marriage, sin and sexuality have to be addressed. Eisegeses, inadequate exegeses, postmodern socially constructed theologies of marriage, sin and sexuality are the dominant problems to be exposed, confronted and confessed; not hidden, accepted or concealed. Although the Nouthetic model opposes, it does not have to be confrontational in the aggressive sense. The pastor must demonstrate the love of God, his love for his neighbour, compassion, empathy and tolerance.

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- b) Kerygmatic because the truth of the Word will be spoken into the relationships and lives of the client(s). Therefore, pneumatology plays a fundamental role in convicting/convincing the clients, which in turn ought to result in repentance and forgiveness. In this way, the Corner Stone is in place upon which a life of obedience can be pursued. The proclamation of the Word is ministering Life (John 10:10b.) into the client's rapport.

The manner in which difficulties are opposed makes all the difference. Adams (1979:169); refers to the counsellor teaching (see for example, 2 Timothy 3:16, Colossians 3:16 and Titus 2:1-15) the client according to the direction of God. Adams (2018) writes that within the word 'nouthetic' there are three elements: concern, confrontation and change. Nouthetic counselling (Adams 2018) is in essence biblical counselling and the correct use of the Bible is crucial. The pastor can hardly subscribe to a nouthetic model if he himself is not willing to live out the values of the Bible toward his client.

Similar to the Nouthetic model, Louw (2004:25) writes that the Kerygmatic model involves proclaiming the Word so that the one may find both redemption and forgiveness. Louw continues on page 129 by writing that the reformed view of the human dominates the kerygmatic model: *simul justus et peccator*. To this end freedom is through Christ's sacrifice and God's mercy. Romans 3:24 declares, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'

Following proclamation of the Word, there ought to come a point where person(s) repent. In New Testament terms, one can speak of 'metamellomai' which stresses the emotional aspect of repentance and carries with it the connotation of regret. Following the use of 'metamellomai' in Matthew 21:29, Barnes (2017) writes that the 'wicked—repented and obeyed.' The second word used in the New Testament for repentance is 'metanoēō' which means to think differently about something. It is used, for example by Peter in Acts 2:38. It is a verb that urges the hearer to reconsider. On the subject of metanoēō, Gill (2017) writes 'to entertain other thoughts.'

The kerygmatic and nouthetic models when working in kinship guides the client by proclamation of the Word followed by the subsequent awareness of the things that

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need to change. This points the client toward salvation/repentance and forgiveness through Christ and subsequently restoration and redemption out of the power of sin. Drawing on the researcher's normative task, the following Scriptures are suggested for (explorational) proclamation within a literal hermeneutic in conjunction with the grammatical-historical analytical method during this phase of the model:

a) Key texts to same-gender relationships:

- Genesis 1:27-28: The fiat creation of humans as male and female.
- Genesis 2:21-24: The creation of woman from man as well as the institution of marriage.
- Matthew 19:4-6: Christ's teaching on marriage.
- Ephesians 5:22-33: About husband and wives.
- Any other Scripture(s) as requested by the client(s).

b) Key texts to challenges with opposite-gender relationships:

- Genesis 9:20-27: Noah and Ham.
- Genesis 19:4-11: Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Leviticus 18:22; 20:13: Homosexuality forbidden within the context of forbidden sexual relationships.
- Judges 19:22-25: The Levite's concubine.
- Romans 1:18-32: God's wrath on unrighteousness.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom.
- 1 Timothy 1:3-11: Warning against false teachers.
- Any other Scripture(s) as requested by the client(s).

Although the pastor can, in Adam's language (1979:169), provide 'biblical teachings' on relationships, marriage, and on matters of living the Christian life, as mentioned—the decision to dissolve a same-gender relationship or marriage is

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solely the client's decision to make. There are three reasons hereto: chapter 2 paragraph 15 of The Constitution of the Republic South Africa, 1996 the work of the Holy Spirit and buying into the counselling process.

5.5.1.1. Chapter 2 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

Paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. of chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa reads as follows:

'3. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

4. No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.'

The pastor has to be at all times intentionally mindful that he/she does not in any way and at any time infringe the client's Constitutional rights.

5.5.1.2. The work of the Holy Spirit

It is not the pastor's task to convict/convince persons engaged in a same-gender relationship or marriage that they are currently engaging in sin. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and will manifest as a realization in the clients. Contemplate John 16:7-13 which is written in the context of the Holy Spirit upholding the mission, credentials and work of Christ:

'Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear

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them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.'

The Holy Spirit is sent as the *paraklētos* (John 14:26) to indwell the believer until the day of redemption. The researcher argues that the Holy Spirit is responsible to convince (convict *elegchō*) the client(s) of any relationship and any other changes that he/they might need to make:

- a) The Holy Spirit Reproves (convicts) the world of sin (John 16:8 and 9). Barker (1995:1625) mentions that sinners often do not see their sin. Manser agrees (2011:133) when he writes that the duplicitous character of sin causes some to believe that they can hide it, but they cannot (see for example, Genesis 3:8-10; 4:8-12; 12:10-20 and 20:1-18). Barnes (2017) refers to rejecting Christ (and by implication His justification of believers) and writes, 'The Spirit will convince men; and hence if we have not yet been brought to see our guilt in rejecting God's tender mercy through his Son, we are yet in the gall of bitterness and under the bond of iniquity.' Thayer (2017) connotes of a wandering from the Law; missing the path of uprightness and honour, which is particularly relevant when one recalls the Old Testament prohibitions of homosexuality and the New Testament confirmation of the same.
- b) The Holy Spirit reproves (convict) the world of righteousness (John 16:8 and 10). The believer's righteousness happened because of Christ's sacrificial death (Romans 1:17; 3:21-22). Only the Holy Spirit can convince one that one's righteousness is not on the basis of one's works, postmodernistic social constructionism, eisegesis and inadequate hermeneutics and exegesis. The light of Godly righteousness will always illuminate one's own insufficient self-justifying efforts, and then point one toward Christ.
- c) The Holy Spirit reproves (convicts) the world of judgment (John 16:8 and 11). Christ was referring to the defeat of Satan, also pointing toward God acting with justice and finality. Thayer (2017) couples judgment to what

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is right and wrong as well. In this regard, the Holy Spirit alone can convince the client with deep conviction about what is right and what is wrong regarding same-gender relationships and marriage.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit the sinner becomes acutely aware how an unambiguous sin dishonours God.

5.5.1.3. Buying into the counselling process

McMinn and Campbell (2009:119) tell the following joke, 'How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but the light bulb has to want to change.' At this point, the client will be responding to the deep-rooted working of the Holy Spirit, as discussed in the above point. As a starting point (McMinn and Campbell 2009:119 and Collins 2007:73) agree that there has to be a rapport between the pastor and client, which can take several sessions to establish. McMinn and Campbell (p. 119-120) write that the rapport adds to the client becoming motivated to change. They base this on the premise that humans are created to desire relationships (Genesis 1:27). Collins (2007:73) highlights the skills of attentive listening, sincere concern and care as key rapport building skills. To this, the researcher adds the practice of prayer with and for the client. Once the inherent motivation to change is affirmed and rapport between the pastor and client established, the client should have bought into the counselling process.

5.5.2. Disentangle

This phase of the model links to the interpretive task of the researcher wherein psycho-social factors were explored that contributed towards the change in attitude of society and some churches in accepting same-gender relationships and marriage.

This phase of the model is influenced through narrative therapy as a non-threatening means to disentangling inadequate/defective theology and thereafter (re)authoring/reconfiguring in its place, an orthodox theology of relationships, marriage, sin and sexuality. In essence, much of this phase may already have been accomplished in the previous phase of the model (decide). Whereas the previous

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phase focused on what Scripture has to say, this phase focuses on what the client has to say with a view to reconfiguring the same according to Scriptural prescript. In this way, the story of the client becomes part of the story of God.

Of the narrative approach, Clinebell (2011:409) writes about the central role that stories play in the approach, but it is the outcome of the approach that draws the researcher closer; Clinebell articulates 'diminishing feelings and behaviours ... more constructive and hopeful outcome.' Green (2005:532) in reference to narrative theology places narratives at the centre of identity formation, in that humans make storied sense of their experienced world. With this in mind, the researcher again cautions the pastor to keep in mind that the narrative approach does inherently operate from a postmodern epistemology (Brunsdon 2010:2) and that he/she must remain acutely aware of this pothole. Green (2005:533) reminds the pastor that the plot of the Bible is theologically determined; its focus is God, not humankind. Green (p. 533) places the people of God on a journey to a known destination achievable only through Christ. This phase of the model, following on from the previous phase aims to further establish opposite-gender-ness as God's normative design (destination) for relationships and marriage.

- a) Deconstruction, because challenges can only survive when they are sustained through certain beliefs, concepts and principles. Deconstruction and externalization are rather interwoven (Carey and Russell 2003) and will be discussed as such. Ackerman (2017) writes that the narrative concept of deconstruction explores problem and helps the client discover what is important and how the problem threatens this. She describes deconstruction as a process of breaking something down into understandable portions.

Deconstruction avoids generalization and brings forth clarification. Morgan (2002:88) and Ackerman (2017) agree that through deconstruction/externalization there is power to encourage or diminish behaviour as well as the influence of behaviour upon the problem. Ackerman (2017) articulates, 'There is a profound difference between the mindset of someone who labels themselves as a "problem" person and

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someone who acknowledges they sometimes engage in problematic behavior.’ Morgan (2002:88) writes that problems are ‘things’ and not part of people—a position with which there are theological difficulties as it relates to inherited, imputed and personal sin. The researcher does acknowledge the therapeutic value of responsible externalizing as opposed to irresponsible distancing, this is something the pastor has to manage. The separation between a person and his/her problem is God’s achievement, consider Psalm 103:12, ‘As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.’ God, His Word and His purposes must remain central to the conversation and counselling goal.

- b) (Re)authoring/reconfiguration because it assists the client to include overlooked facets of themselves that do not fit in with the problem centred narrative (Ackerman 2017). The researcher extends this to include the effects and consequences of sin and flawed theologies. In this way clients can alter existing narratives or create new ones. Brunsdon (2010:12) in discussing co-construction (re-authoring/reconfiguring) refers to a hermeneutic approach owing to the inherent postmodern focus of the narrative approach on people in their contexts. Drake (2015:185), with whom the researcher sides, prefers the term ‘reconfiguring’ for four reasons, or as he describes them, ‘shifts:’

Drake’s (2015:185) reconfiguring ‘shifts’	The researcher’s reconfiguring ‘shifts’
In agency and accountability as author.	In agency from self to the Holy Spirit and in accountability from self to God.
In the role as actor in their stories.	In the role of the story of God.
Organization and purpose of the elements of own stories.	Organization and purpose of Scriptures into own stories.

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Impact of own stories in the life of self and others.	Impact of the story of the Gospel in the life of self and in evangelism.
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Table 3: Adapting Drake's reconfiguration shifts.

The words of 2 Corinthians 5:17 comes to mind, 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' In this phase of the model, the pastor assumes the position of an inquirer looking for contradictions and opportunities for amplification in relation to the dominant story. Some suggested focal areas to facilitate deconstruction and (re)authoring/reconfiguring the theologies of relationships, marriage, sin and sexuality are based on Carey and Russell's (2003:2) elements of a story-line are:

- a) Events.
- b) Sequences.
- c) Times.
- d) Organization.

There are many questions and statements that can be sumptuously put to the client. It is not possible owing to the uniqueness of the client's various contexts to raise a set of generic questions and statements within the confines of this thesis. To this end, the researcher encourages the reader to delve deeper into narrative therapy but does strongly suggest incorporating White's hierarchy on intentional states as a means to 'easing' the client into adequately engaging. Carey and Russell (2003:10) suggest asking questions about the following in keeping with White's hierarchy on intentional states:

- a) Intentions and purposes that shape particulars action(s).
- b) The values and beliefs that sustain and supporting intentions and actions.
- c) The hopes and dreams associated with values and beliefs.
- d) The principles of living represented by the above hopes and dreams.
- e) The commitments that describe what the clients stands for.

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5.5.3. Dissolve

This phase of the model addresses the 'how' of dissolving the same-gender relationship; in which matters are formally terminated and unbundled. Gottman et. al. (2003:24) mention that same-gender relationships operate on mostly the same conventions as opposite-gender relationships and therefore, the pain, anxiety and other powerful emotions that accompany separation must be acknowledged as real and dealt with accordingly, using every available resource. Note that it might be that by this stage, that the couple have already separated.

Influencing this phase is both Heitink's Bipolar model and Hiltner's Educative model:

- a) Heitink in his Bipolar model embraces both theory and action (Smith 2013:89) and uses the term 'broadening' (Brunsdon 2010:6) to extend the understanding of pastorate beyond a particular application of the Word, thus making room for the dynamics of correlation (Louw 2004:31).
- b) The Educative model is beneficial in that appropriately integrating via referrals, the riches and knowledge from other disciplines is necessary (Brunsdon 2010:5) and may prove to be key to optimum healing of the person (Louw 2004:22).

Whereas the Educational and Bipolar models are inherently experiential, the pastor who is grounded in orthodox biblical principles and norms assumes a supportive role as needed, also availing him/herself to revisit phases past and to facilitate the phase subsequent to this one: discover. The researcher emphasizes that the pastor cannot in any way be directive during this phase, and the overall timing of movement is at the client's pace and choice. This phase addresses legal, referral and supportive counselling. These three steps can run concurrently or in any order.

5.5.3.1. Legal matters

In the context of marriage and/or a civil union, this hold the same implications as an opposite-gender divorce proceeding wherein a judicial proclamation is sought in order to discharge the couple from all marriage and/or civil union obligations. Merriam-Webster (2017) defines a divorce as 'the action or an instance of legally

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dissolving a marriage.’ The client will/may have to engage a legal professional of his/her choosing in order to complete this phase. The legal professional may also have to help facilitate the division of properties and belongings.

5.5.3.2. Referrals to psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers

It may be that the relationship has, for example, children and other co-dependents. It may also be that the client is presenting pathologically, or there may be some challenges or difficulties outside of the pastoral gambit. There may also be some areas beyond the pastor’s expertise or where insufficient progress is being made (Collins 2007:91, 755). This shifts the addressing of the same toward a multi-disciplinary approach where the pastor is part of a team. Clinebell (2011:395) acknowledges this and for example, sees the psychiatrist as a medically trained resource for psychotherapy and the social worker as having comprehensive insight into and access to community related resources. Clinebell (2011:402), quoting Mixon (n.d.) emphasizes the need to know the external resources programs, functions and policies as well as being able to interpret said resources through a counselling lens.

Collins (2007:70) highlights the benefit of having a stable and empathic person available to the client as he/she are in need or are experiencing conflict. The pastor would do well to refer to psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers whom he/she knows to be fully committed to biblical counselling (MacArthur 2005:262), preferably one who is a member of the congregation, or within the pastor’s network (Clinebell 2011:102). The decision to accept or decline the referral is the client’s and the client is free to use his/her own source. Referrals should be done professionally and with the client’s consent (buy in), allowing them to make their own appointment (Clinebell 2011:404).

The pastor would do well to acknowledge and endeavour to address the needs of co-dependents as part of the supportive role that he/she is to play during this phase of the model.

5.5.3.3. Supportive counselling

Clinebell (2011:95) states that when the pastor assumes a supportive role, he/she uses methods that stabilize, undergird, nurture and guide persons. Collins concurs when he writes (2007:65) that support can enable people to mobilize their resources with which to address their problem. The overall objective of the supportive role is to enable the client to deal with challenges and actions needed to be taken within their contexts and limitations. Clinebell (2011:95) continues by explaining that supportive counselling is directed toward enabling the client to gather the perspectives and strength needed to effectively use their psychological, spiritual and other resources in order to cope with the separation. Clinebell (2011:99-102) identifies eight methods of supportive caregiving, to which the researcher added the practical applications:

- a) Offer emotional support. Here, the pastor can assist with the processing of grief, losses, loneliness and so forth.
- b) Empathetic listening. Carkhuff (2000:173) in Collins (2007:17) writes that without empathy, there is no basis to helping. Rogers (1980:142) in reference to empathetic listening writes about becoming at home in the world of the client.
- c) Help persons become less identified with their problems. Although a basic goal of deconstruction and externalization to be carefully managed, it is also an outcome of Psalm 103:12⁶⁴.
- d) Aid the ego defences of troubled persons. And ego defence addresses anxiety levels (McLeod 2017) and although the pastor can be of use in this regard, he/she must not hesitate to refer to psychology/psychiatry if deemed necessary.
- e) Encourage change life situations and taking appropriate actions.

⁶⁴ Psalm 103:12, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us' (KJV).

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- f) Help generate reality-based hope. Adams (1979:45) writes that a Christian's hope is based on the promises of God who directs toward Godly ends.
- g) Appropriately using religious resources. This includes the disciplines of, for example, prayer, confession, worship, Christian meditation (Psalm 1:2⁶⁵) etc.
- h) Mobilize networks of support. Looking first in the congregation and the pastor's trusted circle of influence, this includes psychiatrists, social workers, church small groups etc., as may be appropriate.

5.5.4. Discover

The last phase of the model is called 'discover' in reference to the 'new' life of that lay ahead of the client. This phase has two aims:

- a) To establish the client in a community of believers, where he/she can be correctly disciplined and at the same time, help create an environment that is conducive to assisting him/her in living life.
- b) The second aim is the provision of ongoing pastoral care and counselling as it may be needed.

Erickson (2001:279-281) discusses the continuation of the Christian life and of note, is the teaching role of the Holy Spirit. Erickson refers to the discourse of John 14:26 wherein John writes that the Paraklētos would 'bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said' (see also Christ's teaching on marriage per Matthew 19:4-6). Erickson writes (2001:279) that conversion does not signify the completion of the work of the Holy Spirit, it is just the beginning, a statement with which Strauss (2008:440) agrees. The researcher asserts that part of sanctification requires ongoing repentance, a conviction of sorrow, regret and reconsideration; a continual turning away from one's sin and toward God. On page 280, Erickson discusses the

⁶⁵ Psalm 1:2, 'But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night' (KJV).

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sanctification of the believer by the Holy Spirit, referring to the 'continued transformation of the moral and spiritual character so that the life of the believer actually comes to reflect the standing which he or she already has in God's sight.' Hammond (1990:147-148) and Strauss (2008:440) concur with Erickson. Galatians 5:16-17 commands, 'This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

5.5.4.1. The community of believers

Recalling Brunsdon (2010:4) who quotes Thurneysen (1963:313), he writes, 'all pastoral care will lead to the church and pastoral care exists in the church as the communication of the Word of God to individuals.' The researcher mentioned that this resonates with Smith's (2013:114) ecclesiastical element of a model. In this sense, assisting the client to find a conservative 'spiritual home' is an essential part of the researcher's model. Guidance is gleaned from Smith (2014:112) who describes what separates orthodox theology from liberal theology. Conservatives maintain and hold to basic evangelical doctrines vital to the Christian faith. Smith lists the following doctrines:

- a) The virgin birth of Christ.
- b) The deity of Christ.
- c) Christ's substitutionary death on the cross.
- d) Christ's bodily resurrection.
- e) Christ's second coming.
- f) The reality of eternal damnation.
- g) The need for personal conversion.
- h) The authority of the Bible as being equivalent to God speaking; His eternal and written Word.

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- i) The importance of Scriptural preaching.
- j) The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.
- k) The authenticity of biblical miracles.

The researcher highlights points h., i. and j. above within the context of this thesis to specifically include a literal hermeneutic and historical-grammatical analysis.

5.5.4.2. Ongoing pastoral care and counselling

The journey of sanctification is rich opportunities for growth. Cole (2008:720-721) writes that progressive sanctification refers to the client's (believer's) growth toward Christlikeness (see 1 Thessalonians 4, the title in the King James as 'A life pleasing to God'). Cole continues (p. 721) that in the New Testament, 'Jesus is the sanctified one par excellence.' This resonates well with 1 Corinthians 1:2, 'Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.'

Progressive sanctification is a cooperative venture between God and man (Cole 2006:722). On the one hand, Philippians 2:12 encourages the believer to 'work out you own salvation' and the next verse speaks of 'For it is God which worketh in you.' Barnes (2017) comments that effort (verse 12) is required from the believer with God (verse 13) being the reason and motivation behind the effort.

In this sense, the pastor continues with client along the road of pastoral care, therapy and counselling. In the language of the Narrative approach, the pastor is a fellow traveller.

5.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher articulated a biblical model to counsel same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship. The researcher approached the model by adapting Osmer's theological reflections to the topic of the thesis. The researcher's model drew upon:

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- a) Evangelical orthodox theology. In this way the model glorifies God alone (*solus Deo gloria*).
- b) The researcher's interpretive, descriptive-empirical and normative tasks of Osmer. In this way, the model is academically grounded.
- c) Smith's 12 elements of a model. In this way, the model is valid.
- d) Four classic models to pastorate as well as elements of the Narrative approach. In this manner, the eclectic model is grounded in the theory of respected academic and at the same time, the Word is proclaimed into the context of the client.

The researcher's eclectic model does not infringe on the client's constitutional rights—quite the opposite. The model offers a conservative and biblically grounded, respectful and inclusive practical pathway to persons wishing to dissolve their same-gender relationship.

Chapter 6: General conclusion

6.1. Introduction

The problem statement is, 'How can same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship be counselled?' Flowing from this, the researcher set out to answer four key questions:

- a) What are the phenomenological facts and realities of same-gender Christian relationships?
- b) Why are the identified facts and realities of same-gender Christian relationships challenging to the traditional Christian worldview?
- c) What are the biblical perspectives on the identified facts and realities of traditional and same-gender Christian relationships?
- d) What would the counselling model look like that could be used to assist same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship?

6.2. What are the phenomenological facts and realities of same-gender Christian relationships??

This question was answered through Osmer's (2008) model's descriptive-empirical task, commonly referred to as 'what is going on?' In this task the researcher answered two key questions:

- a) What is being taught? This was answered by critically evaluating what a leading academic from a prominent university in South Africa has published about same-gender relationships.
- b) What is being practiced? This was answered by evaluating what is doctrinally upheld and practiced by a large same-gender friendly church.

In addition, the researcher touched upon two happenings with a view to widening the horizon of 'what is going on?'

- a) How the term 'intersex' is interpreted by the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders indicating the historical approach to intersex to the current point of fluidity.
- b) A brief description of four influential Facebook pages that either favour or disfavour same-gender relationships and marriage.

6.2.1. What is being taught?

The researcher evaluated Dreyer's (2008) critiques of theological essentialism, unchangeability, mythical origins, varieties of marital forms, varieties of marital models and her paving the way for a non-essentialistic approach.

It was deduced that said academic's writing supposed marriage to be a socially constructed institution as opposed to a God instituted/given/ordained institution and that social constructionism when connected to a 'dialectical theological model coupled to a hermeneutic of suspicion' could potentially reduce God to product of human reason. In this sense, the concept of absolute truth becomes relative. The researcher ultimately rejected the postmodern view of truth by siding with Erickson (2001:36-37) who argues that truth is absolute and inseparable from God; God is truth.

To the researcher, the essence of Dreyer's (2008) article can be largely reduced to what is exactly understood by 'sexual difference' in reference to her statement, 'the sexual difference between female and male should be regarded as soteriologically indifferent' (Dreyer 2008:499). To this end, the researcher agreed that there is no soteriological difference between sexes, but for a reason different to Dreyer's. The researcher stands upon Scripture: both male and female have sinned and need Christ (Romans 3:23-24). The need for Christ is not limited to sex/gender identities/roles/preferences/associations; it is far greater. Having said this, the postmodern social constructions/theologies of 'sexual differences' are in no stable and position to authoritatively override the authority and orthodox position of Scripture on the matters of relationships, marriage sin, sexuality, gender and the biblical roles/functions/design/intention of such.

6.2.2. What is being practiced?

The researcher explored the website of Deo Gloria Family Church (Bell 2017). This is a same-gender friendly church aligned with the New Apostolic Reformation; a church that clearly loves the Lord. For this church, same-gender relationships are completely normal and scriptural. The researcher articulated his difficulties with a modern-day office of 'Apostle' and 'Prophet,' but agreed that functionally, the churches leaders are shepherding their flock over a commendable and wide footprint. The researcher also expressed his uneasiness with the church's proclamation of being a 'future generation church' (Bell 2017) because it is at the same time appealing and imprecise.

The researcher then evaluated the church's statements on 'sexual orientation and what the Bible says' (Bell 2017). He agreed with Bell who wrote about, 'coming to the Bible with preconceived ideas before we even start interpretation.' The researcher deconstructed Bell's (2017) statement that the word homosexual is not in the original biblical languages by unveiling the etymology of the word and demonstrating that the Bible although not explicitly using the word homosexual, it does from a traditional point of departure, describe the deed of homosex. In this sense, the Bible offers greater accuracy than what a singular English word is capable of.

Working through the church's section on 'questions and answers' (Bell 2017), the researcher found indications of postmodern thought and interpretation. As such, this section of the church's website will be appealing in justifying same-gender relationships and marriage.

Lastly, it was established that the church uses the Civil Union Act to conduct same-gender weddings.

6.2.3. The inclusion of 'intersex' in the Fifth Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

It was established that intersex (Kraus 2015:1147) progressed from a 'gender identity disorder' (DSM-III) to a 'gender dysphoria' (DSM-V). Kermode (2012) wrote that this removes the associated stigma but leaves the door open to having a

recognised and treatable condition. In this way, in keeping with postmodern thought, emphasis falls onto the person and gender fluidity and not the world around them. Similarly, 'homosexuality' first appeared in DSM in 1968 as a mental disorder and only dropped out of the DSM in 1987 (Burton 2015). The researcher agreed with Maynard (2015:337) who wrote that 'there is growing variability in gender expression along a spectrum.'

6.2.4. Same-gender identity and relationship posts on Facebook

Four influential Facebook pages were described that are either pro or against same-gender relationships and marriage. The researcher concluded that these pages deliver a conflicting and highly influential message to a worldwide audience.

6.3. Why are the identified facts and realities of same-gender Christian relationships problematic to the traditional Christian worldview?

This question was answered through conducting Osmer's (2008) interpretive task, commonly referred to as 'why is this going on?' The researcher conducted a literature overview of marriage and explored some of the traditional and psycho-sociological factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude of society and some churches towards the acceptance of same-gender marriages (as a deviation from the biblical view of marriage).

The researcher articulated a traditional definition and application of marriage and evidenced (Farlex 2018, Act 25 of 1961, the English Oxford Dictionary 2017 and Dictionary.com 2017) that marriage was traditionally understood to be between a male and female. It was confirmed that in a postmodern world, the definition of marriage is becoming more inclusive and liberal than the orthodox definition, thus progressively moving away from the traditional biblical definition of the same.

The inevitable meeting point in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 between Chapter Two paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. (equality before the law: unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and marital status) and paragraph 15.1. (freedom of religion: right to freedom of conscience, thought, belief and opinion) was highlighted as these two paragraphs interact with the topic of same-gender relationships. The issue is that the church as a bearer of doctrine is an authoritative

and persuasive source to believers and both the church and her doctrines and ordinances are becoming increasingly exposed to pressure from postmodernism. Factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude of society and some churches towards the acceptance of same-gender marriages were explored and contrasted with liberalism.

The researcher explored some psycho-sociological factors that contributed towards the change in the attitude towards the acceptance of same-gender marriages and articulated how the theologies of sin and sexuality have departed from the traditional and orthodox stances.

6.4. What are the biblical perspectives on the identified facts and realities of traditional and same-gender Christian relationships?

This chapter related to the normative task of Osmer (2008) commonly known as ‘what should be going on?’

The researcher first upheld the authority of the Word and then analysed those Scriptures that to him are the key biblical text relating to opposite-gender relationships: Genesis 1:27-28; 2:21-24 and Matthew 19:4-6. Two facts stood out, firstly that the Bible is in full, regular and comfortable agreement with itself and secondly, the orthodox biblical message, understanding and application of opposite-gender relationships has stood firm from the account of creation up to and into the postmodern era.

Scriptures that are challenging to same-gender relationships were analysed: Genesis 1:31; 19:4-11, Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, Romans 1:24-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. It is clear that Scripture does not speak favourably about same-gender relationships. It was furthermore established that for a theology of homosexuality to prevail, it must reject a literal hermeneutic and grammatical-historical exegetical approach to passages and secondly and adopt an alternative, such as and an eisegesis or hermeneutic of suspicion coupled to a dialectical theological model.

6.5. What would the counselling model look like that could be used to assist same-gender couples who want to dissolve their relationship?

This chapter addressed Osmer's (2008) pragmatic task, commonly referred to, 'how might we respond?' The researcher approached his model through the lens of Osmer's (2008:183) reflections, which he adapted according to the core of the thesis, the mission and present context of traditional marriage, the role played by participants in fulfilling the purpose of traditional marriage and what changes might need to take place for traditional marriage to fulfil its mission.

The researcher saw it fit to ground his model in the last statement above after drawing Smith's (2013:107-126) elements of a model into matters and allowing the classic approaches of Thurneysen (Kerygmatic model), Hiltner (Educative model), Adams (Nouthetic model) and Heitink (Bipolar model) as well as the postmodern Narrative therapy (Epston and White) to influence his model. In this manner, the model is grounded in the theory of respected academics and at the same time, the Word is proclaimed into the context of the client.

The flexible and eclectic model has four phases, (a) decide, (b) disentangle, (c) dissolve and (d) discover with a life of obedience at its core. The model is characterized through the natural and/or deliberate elevation of the Word to a position above experience, even when incorporating elements of inherently experiential models. Each main phase in turn has sub-phases that were well articulated, carefully highlighting the roles of both pastor and client.

A feature of the model is that the needs, emotional and spiritual experiences as well as the future growth of the client are high on the agenda.

6.6. Recommendations for further research

It would be conceivably vigilant within the context of the inherent tension between the rights to religious freedom and sexual orientation to cast the same-gender relationship net wider to include major religions in South Africa. To this end, the following is suggested for further research:

Chapter 6: General conclusion

- a) How do conservative groups within Islam, African Traditional, Judaism and Hindu religions deal with the challenge of same-gender relationships, where such relationships stand in opposition to their religious prescripts?
- b) To what degree are the views and attitudes of conservative Christian, Islam, African Traditional, Judaism and Hindu believers, groups and organizations evolving in favour of same-gender relationships or is it being resisted?

The model developed by the researcher has a specific goal. However, being an eclectic and flexible model, it can be investigated to what degree the model may be useful to other areas of pastorate, for example, where clients are facing major life changes.

Lastly, in further developing Dreyer's (2008:521) statement, 'Dual-nature anthropology suggests that women and men are of different natures determined by God and that these different natures determine what is appropriate for each sex,' The researcher believes that there is value in testing this statement, but from an orthodox point of departure with a view to articulating the fullness and celebrating of being created male and female.

6.7. Challenges in writing this thesis

Challenges in the course of writing the thesis was to remain ever-mindful of the inherent statutory tension between chapter 2 paragraphs 9.3. and 9.4. (unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and marital status) and paragraph 15.1. (the right to freedom of conscience, thought, belief and opinion) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

It was intimidating to critically evaluate a publication of a prominent South African academic whom the researcher greatly respects, particularly because said academic has volumes of excellent, positive and uplifting work to her credit.

It was exceptionally difficult to evaluate the beliefs and practices of a church aligned with the New Apostolic Reformation, because this church clearly loves the Lord with their whole being and is passionate about proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

6.8. Conclusion

It may seem idiosyncratic that although a traditional theology of marriage is opposed to divorce, the model of this thesis facilitates the same. Contextualisation is found in Ezra 9:1-2 which was written in the context of mixed marriages of the Israelites and the priests of that time. They were marriages that should never have been owing to religious (purity) reasons (Venter 2018:12), not because of sexual orientation, skin colour or ethnicity (Deuteronomy 7:3-4 and Malachi 2:11). It is important to appreciate, that these mixed marriages were outside the jurisdiction of God's Word and will.

The pertinent question is, how was the wrong of Ezra 9:1-2 made 'right?' The solution is found in Ezra 10:3, 'Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.' For the Israelites and priests, to have continued in the mixed marriage would have been to continue in a disobedience and therefore a sinful/unlawful relationship. Venter (2018:12) examined this passage of Ezra (and Nehemiah 13:23-31) and concluded synchronically, intertextually and multidimensionally that these marriages that should never have been because they represented a threat to holiness and purity of the closed community. Since these marriages were in any case unlawful (see also the researcher's comments on 'lawful' versus 'legal'), Ezra regarded Shechaniah's proposition of divorce (dissolving these marriages) as necessary.

It is the interpretation of the researcher that within the orthodox understanding of biblical relationships and marriage, with due respect to Chapter 2, paragraph 15.1.⁶⁶ of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and with analogy to Ezra 9:1-2; 10:3, the researcher concludes that same-gender relationships can be dissolved, if the participants in said relationship want to do so.

⁶⁶ Chapter 2, paragraph 15.1. of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 reads: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.'

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