



HUMAN SEXUALITY AND THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SPLIT

PROGRESSIVE VIEWS

FIRST – WE ARE ONLINE AND IN-PERSON

- If you wish to ask questions, please do so. Whether online or in-person, you need to be identified when asking a question.
- If you are online, reach me by my cell phone to ask a question via text.



FIRST – GROUND RULES

THESE ARE SENSITIVE TOPICS. SERIOUS PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES BELIEVE STRONGLY IN THEIR POINT OF VIEW. WE WILL BE RESPECTFUL.

WE WILL NOT JUDGE THE MOTIVES OF ANOTHER PERSON

WE WILL NOT INTERRUPT

WE WILL NOT BE RUDE

EVERYBODY HAS THE CHANCE TO SPEAK

REMEMBER THAT THESE PROCEEDINGS WILL BE LIVE-STREAMED. LET'S ACT LIKE CHRIST

YOU WILL HEAR PERSPECTIVES YOU DO NOT LIKE. LISTEN ANYWAY!

WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

- HOW DO METHODISTS ARRIVE AT A CONCLUSION
- SCRIPTURE (PRIMARY)
- REASON
- EXPERIENCE
- TRADITION

A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

- 1) WHY ARE WE EVEN DEBATING THIS?
- 2) HOW CAN ANYONE READ THE BIBLE AND COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HOMOSEXUALITY ISN'T SIN?

LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

- PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE OUT OF A CONVICTION THAT LOVE OF NEIGHBOR MATTERS
- PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH HAS HISTORICALLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE, LEADING TO PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL PAIN
- EXCLUSION OF HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE, WITHOUT A LACK OF FOCUS ON OTHER SINS, LEADS TO THE IMAGE OF THE CHURCH AS HYPOCRITICAL

THE HOMOSEXUAL AS SAMARITAN

- SCANZONI AND MOLLENKOTT ARGUE THAT HOMOSEXUALS ARE MODERN DAY SAMARITANS. THEY ARE PEOPLE MANY BELIEVE CANNOT BE GOOD
- HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE HAVE CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO THE CIVILIZATION, INCLUDING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. MICHAELANGELO IS AN OFTEN CITED EXAMPLE.
- SOME HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE HAVE STATED THEY FIND MORE LOVE OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH THAN WITHIN THE CHURCH. THEY ARGUE FOR MORE COMPASSION AND LOVE WITHIN THE CHURCH

PROGRESSIVE VIEWS OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE, PROGRESSIVES ARGUE THE TERM “HOMOSEXUAL” IS NEVER ACTUALLY USED
- THE ACTUAL BEHAVIOR BEING CONDEMNED IS IN THE CONTEXT OF ADULTERY, PROMISCUITY, VIOLENCE (AS IN SODOM), AND IDOLATROUS WORSHIP. THE ACTUAL SIN OF SODOM IS INHOSPITALITY (MATTHEW 10, LUKE 10, EZEKIEL 16:49)
- LEVITICAL CODES AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY WERE A RESPONSE TO CULTIC PRACTICES AROUND ISRAEL THAT PRACTICED SEXUAL ACTS AS PART OF FERTILITY RELIGION. HOMOSEXUAL ACTS WOULD BE THE ULTIMATE PERVERSION. SUCH ACTS DO NOT RELATE TO LOVING, COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOMOSEXUALS

PROGRESSIVE VIEWS OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- PROGRESSIVES PLACE HOMOSEXUALITY WITHIN THE CEREMONIAL LAW. SEXUAL ACTS BEFORE WORSHIP WAS FORBIDDEN. SEX WITH SEMEN EXPULSION OR WITH A WOMAN IN MENSTRUATION WERE FORBIDDEN.
- ROMANS 1 WAS AN ADMONITION AGAINST LUST. IT WAS NOT AN ADMONITION AGAINST COMMITMENT. IN SOME CHURCHES, COMMITTED HOMOSEXUALS ARE DENIED COMMUNION WHEREAS ADULTEROUS PEOPLE COULD RECEIVE IT AFTER BEING FORGIVEN
- IN ROMAN CONTEXT, MALE PROSTITUTION WAS COMMON. IT WAS BASED ON LUST

WHAT ABOUT SCIENCE?

- PROGRESSIVES OFTEN CITE THE KINSEY INSTITUTE STUDY. 25 -33 PERCENT OF ADULT MALES AND 10 PERCENT OF FEMALES HAVE HAD SEXUAL DESIRES FOR THE SAME SEX. BUT 4-5 PERCENT OF MALES AND 1-2 PERCENT OF FEMALES ARE EXCLUSIVELY HOMOSEXUAL.
- EVELYN HOOKER STUDY: IT CONCLUDED IN WORLD WAR II TIMES THAT HOMOSEXUALITY IN AND OF ITSELF IS NOT A MENTAL ILLNESS (AS ASSUMED IN THAT TIME). HOOKER'S STUDY FOUND THAT HOMOSEXUALITY IS MORE COMMON THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT
- IN 1975 THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION REMOVED HOMOSEXUALITY FROM ITS LIST OF MENTAL DISORDERS

WHAT ABOUT “GAY PRIDE”?

- TO TRADITIONALISTS, “GAY PRIDE” MAY SEEM LIKE A DELIBERATE FLAUNTING OF GOD’S LAW OR AN ATTACK ON CHRISTIANS. BUT FOR GAY PEOPLE, IT IS A WAY OF SAYING “I AM A PERSON LIKE YOU.”
- SOME HAVE CLAIMED THAT GAY PEOPLE TRY TO SEDUCE OTHERS TOWARDS THEIR “LIFESTYLE.” THE KINSEY-BELL STUDY AND GRIFFIN STUDY HAVE FOUND THIS TO NOT BE A COMMON PHENOMENON.
- SCANZONI AND MOLLENKOTT ARGUE FOR THE CHURCH TO ACCEPT THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN HOMOSEXUAL ACTS IN THE CONTEXT OF LOVING A MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIPS AS IT DOES IN HETEROSEXUAL CONTEXTS. METHODIST PROGRESSIVES CALL THIS “FULL INCLUSION”

WHAT IS THE REACTION OF AMERICANS?

- ONE STUDY INDICATED THAT 91 PERCENT OF PEOPLE AGED 16-29 VIEWED THE CHURCH AS “ANTI-HOMOSEXUAL.” 87 PERCENT FOUND US TO BE JUDGMENTAL. 85 PERCENT INDICATED WE ARE HYPOCRITICAL. 75 PERCENT SAID WE WERE TOO INVOLVED IN POLITICS. 72 PERCENT FOUND US TO BE OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY. 70 PERCENT FOUND US TO BE INSENSITIVE TOWARDS OTHERS.
- BUT, WE ALSO HAD THESE: 76 PERCENT SAID WE HAD GOOD VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. 55 PERCENT SAID WE CONSISTENTLY SHOW LOVE TOWARDS OTHERS. 54 PERCENT SAID WE OFFERED HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. ONLY 30 PERCENT SAID THIS FAITH WAS RELEVANT FOR THEIR LIFE.

WHAT IS THE REACTION OF AMERICANS?

- KINNAMON AND LYONS: “IF WE DO NOT WAKE UP TO THESE REALITIES AND RESPOND IN APPROPRIATE, GODLY WAYS, WE RISK BEING INCREASINGLY MARGINALIZED AND LOSING FURTHER CREDIBILITY WITH MILLIONS OF PEOPLE”

WHAT ABOUT MOTIVATIONS?

- Progressives are often accused of being against the Bible or anti-Christian. Some of them are. They are also often thought of as somehow being for moral anarchy. Some may be. But this is not all of them!
- Imagine you believe in God, Jesus, and the church and you believe that a group of people have been wrongfully categorized, excluded, and mistreated for a number of years.
- Imagine you believe that these actions have resulted in great harm towards an entire group of people and that people continue to practice that exclusion.
- What is your proper act of love towards those who believe the traditional view and those who practice homosexuality?