CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (CSUC)

Department of Theology

LEVITICUS 18:22 AND 20:13 IN HOMOSEXUALITY DEBATE AMONG GHANAIAN CHRISTIANS: AN ANALYSIS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS WITH ADMINISTRATION

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DECLARATION

I, Boachie, Richard Yaw do hereby declare that this thesis/dissertation/project report is the result of my own original research, except for sections for which references have been duly made, and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has been presented to this University College or any other institution for the award of a degree.

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DEDICATION

I affectionately dedicate this research work to:

1. The Lord JESUS CHRIST, whose love, mercy, sustaining grace and great insight has given me strength through the HOLY SPIRIT to make this work a reality.
2. The lady of my heart, Mrs. Sussana Boachie, for being my prayer intercessor and prudent counselor in life and ministry and to our children, Dorothy, Sammy, Michael, Adelaide and Emmanuel.
3. All the members of the Church of Pentecost, Dompoase – Kumasi for their prayer support and dedication to God's work.

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ABSTRACT

There are conflicting views among the church in Africa especially Ghana on homosexuality. There are those who think homosexuality is condemned, there are those who think otherwise. The two passages on same-sex relations found in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 have been perhaps the most classic biblical text used to argue against homosexuality by African Christians. The issue raised a lot of questions for the church especially the question of biblical interpretation and authority.

This study entails a critical comparison of the views of various theologians and church leaders on Christian participation on homosexual practice. Some common liberal interpretation is that the text says nothing about consensual same-sex activity today. It only condemns same-sex religious prostitution in pagan temples. The most common conservative Christian interpretation is that the verse condemns homosexual behaviour of all types including consensual sex between two adults and monogamous sexual activity within a committed relationship.

In this study the researcher examines Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 with the hope that it will assist the African Christians to re-construct his or her perspective on the subject, homosexuality. The study involves the exegesis and analysis of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 looking at the background and the Holiness Code. The Old Testament law comprised of those guidelines and statutes given by God. The law can be sorted into three main categories – Moral Laws, Civil Laws and Ceremonial Laws. Some Christians believe all the Old Testament laws are still relevant to all aspects of society. Most Christian theologians however agree that Christians are not required to fulfill the Civil and Ceremonial Laws. Many however believe the Moral Laws are still active. On the

basis of this homosexuality as Moral Law is believe to be in force for Christians. In both of these verses Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 we find homosexual behaviour described as **toèbah** in Hebrew usually rendered detestable thing, loathsome thing, abomination.

The researcher finds out that the bible condemns homosexual behaviour alongside with many sins including hatred, pride, adultery and self- righteousness. The church must therefore not abandon the Biblical position.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This study is about the current debate on homosexuality in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 on Christian morality and its implication for Christian faith. Homosexuality is one of the most critical issues facing the contemporary church in Africa. This Old Testament passage has become a problematic text for Christian views on homosexuality in Ghana because many Ghanaian Christians believe that its meaning directly apply to Christians.

Some Christians and ministers of the gospel think the Bible does not condemn homosexual practices and therefore indulge in homosexuality. As gay and lesbians demand not just civil rights but to be recognized by the society as persons who practice an acceptable "alternative lifestyle" there are even openly sexual clergy who demand that their denominations affirm them as ministers of God and give congregations into their care. However, there are other Christians who condemn this practice as abomination and sin before the Lord. This condemnation has resulted in identity crises with regard to participation in homosexual practice.

The Old Testament Law comprises of guidelines and statutes given by God. The Laws can be sorted into three main categories – Moral Laws, Civil Laws and Ceremonial Laws. The Moral Laws, such as rules against adultery and theft, define the behaviour and actions God requires. The Civil law, like restrictions against wearing two materials into fabrics or breeding mules, was designed to set apart God's chosen people from the environment around them. The Civil Laws were given specifically to Israel to ensure their culture stood out from that of their pagan neighbours. The Ceremonial Laws

including all the regulations on sacrifices explained what the Israelites needed to do to maintain their spiritual relationship with God. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection fulfilled the ceremonial laws – His sacrifice replaced all the sacrifices given in the Old Testament.

Thus, some believe all the Old Testament Laws are still relevant to all aspects of society. Most Christian theologians however, agree that Christians are not required to fulfill the Civil and Ceremonial Laws. Many however, believe the Moral Laws are still active. On the basis of this, homosexuality as Moral Law is believe to be in force for Christians.

a. Homosexual debate in Africa

Homosexuality has moved from being a taboo topic to center stage. This is instigated by a number of events. One precipitating factor was the election in 2003 of an openly gay Bishop, Hene Robinson, by the Episcopal Church in the United States of America; and the Church of England also proposed a gay canon, Jeffrey John, as Bishop of Reading.[1] This action created a crisis with many African Anglican Church leaders threatening to break away from the Anglican Communion. At a meeting of Anglican Leaders in Zanzibar in 2007, the Rev. Peter Akinola and six other conservative archbishops refused to take communion with Katherine Jefferts Schori, the leader of the American Episcopalians.[2]

The thirteenth world conference of Anglican Bishops held in Lambeth, in 1998 according to Hoad, discussed the ordination of non-celibate homosexual clergy and the appropriateness or other wise of Anglican clergy presiding over same-sex unions. The

[1] J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *"*Homosexuality and Ritual filth: Christianity and Media Association on alternative sexual lifestyle in contemporary Africa", *Journal of African Christian Thought,* vol. 16, No. 2. (December, 2013), 54.

[2] Samuel W. Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics,* (Grand Rapids, Michigan : Hippo Books, 2008), 305.

vote that carried was that homosexual activity was incompatible with scripture. The conference also voted against the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions. The conference however, made room for listening to the experiences of homosexuals and referred to them as full members of the body of Christ.[3] This mitigation started to agitate the minds of mainly non-western evangelical Anglican Bishops, leading to the fraying of the communion.

Neville Hoad summarized the position of the African Anglican Bishops as follows:

> Nevertheless, with the exception of a few south African bishops, African bishops were almost unanimously in favour of the fairly strict restrictions on any church endorsement of homosexuality and insisted on a literalist biblical understanding of sexual morality with support of European and North American conservatives, they push through several amendments and strengthened language condemning homosexual activity and pressed for abstinence as the only acceptable alternative to marriage. Furthermore, language expressing an allegiance to the idea of homosexuality as definitionally alien or un-African was not uncommon[4]

Another incident that sparked the debate was a declaration in 2011 by British Prime Minister David Cameron, that his country was going to withdraw aid to African countries that discriminate against homosexuality.

Some African leaders have articulated their strong feelings against homosexuality. Daniel Arab Moi, the former president of Kenya is reported as saying "Kenya has no room or time for homosexuals, and lesbians. Homosexuality is against African norms and traditions and even in religion it is considered a great sin. Homosexuality is a scourge which runs counter to Christian teachings and traditions". Similarly, the president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe has said, "I find it extremely outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organisations, like those of homosexuals who offend both against the law of nature and the morals of religious belief

[3] Neville Hoad, 'Neoliberalism Homosexuality, Africa. The Anglican Church: The world conference of Anglican Bishops at Lambeth July 18 – August 9, 1998' in Brad Weiss (ed.), *Producing African Pictures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004), 58

[4] Neville Hoad, *Africa and the Anglican Church*, 60.

espoused by our society should have any advocates in our midst or even elsewhere in the world".[5] Mugabe referred to the Gay and Lesbians association of Zimbabwe as the association of Sodonists and sexual perverts. Gambia president, Yahya Jammeh, has warned that any gay and lesbian found in his country 'will regret' being born. He describe homosexuality as anti-God, anti-human and anti-civilization and allowing Homosexuality means allowing satanic rights"[6]

"Widely distributed popular negative views of homosexual behaviour are said to have been 'critical in mobilizing opinion against any constructive discussion of homosexuality in Africa"[7]

Ghana's president at the time, the professor of Law, John E. A. Mills, a conservative evangelical Christian also condemned Cameron's statement, suggesting that Ghana was a sovereign nation that would not be stamped into amending its constitution to suit western sexual liberalism.[8]

It is clear that African Culture frowns on homosexuality. As Cardinal Turkson wrote in the national Catholic Register in relation to homosexuality, "the intensity of the reaction is probably commensurate with tradition"[9] Africans by large majority are not comfortable with open homosexuality.

In Uganda, an Anglican Bishop, Wilson Mutebi, is quoted as having noted that throughout Eastern Africa, the Bible is the foundation for faith. As African Christians,

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[5] Jeremy Seabrook, *Gays and Lesbianism: Homosexuality and progress*, cited 14th April 2007. www.gayconspiracy.co.uk/page52html.

[6] Yahya Jamel, homosexuality is anti-God, anti- Human and anti-Civilization. Accessed on 25th July, 2013. www.ghanareporters.com/gambianpresident-warns-homosexuals.

[7] Gunda Masiwa Ragies, "Jesus Christ homosexuality and masculinity in African Christianity: Reading Luke 10:1-12, Exchange: *Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2013); 22.

[8] J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth*, 54.

[9] Peter Turkson, *The stigma surrounding homosexuality in Africa*: Accessed on 3rd February, 2013. www.huffington.com

they were aware of what science and philosophy have said about homosexuality. For them, however the final truth resides in scripture. Bishop Michael Lugor of the Sudan concurred: "we know the gospel and we proclaim it". Elsewhere in Uganda, Bishop Eustace kamanyire is noted to have said that 'pastoral care towards homosexuals should emphasis repentance.[10]

Pentecostal Bishop, Joshua Banda, of Zambia is also cited as saying that homosexuality is not original to Zambia. He takes the position that the legal ban on same-sex practices in his country must not be amended because Zambia is a Christian nation.[11]

South African Nobel peace prize winner and famous Archbishop, Desmond Tutu equated homophobia with racism. Speaking to encourage gay rights in Africa, Tutu said, "I am as passionate about the campaign as I ever was about apartheid" adding provocatively that "I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven… I mean I would much rather go to other places (Hell). I would not worship a God who is homophobic and that is how deeply I fear about this"[12].

South Africa is one of the few nations on the continent of Africa where the rights of homosexuals are guaranteed by the constitution.

According to Monica Mbaru, a gay right activist in South Africa, the plight of gays has worsened since the west started to push homosexual rights in Africa. She said that "it has never been harder for gays and lesbians on the continent. Homophobia is on the rise". As

[10]Neville Hoad, *Africa and the Anglican Church'* 61.
[11]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth*, 57
[12]Desmond Tutu, *Encouraging gay rights in Africa*: Accessed on 29th July, 2013. www.ibtimes.com/new-frontirer. pope francis-desmond-tutu-speak favourably-gays-lesbians-1363439

Africans and citizens of the world, we can and must respect the rights of all people, including gays while defending our culture and our sovereignty.[13]

The public debate on homosexuality, especially in the West Africa has been dominated by what Richard B. Hayes describes as "insistently ideological voices".[14] According to Barry, "The trend in secular western societies is to emphasis the importance and power of individual traits. Fullness of life in that context means the liberty to express ones individuality. If their particular personal idiosyncrasies are considered to be genetic a person may be applauded for building on them and be excused from moral blame"[15]

With that understanding, as Hayes, explains, gay rights activist treat this matters as human rights issues and demand that the church recognizes the rights of people in such relationships. On the other hand, there is generally an unqualified condemnation of homosexuals by evangelical Christians. Homosexuality is now a global issue. The result of the different positions is that since the 1990s, it has divided the church very sharply[16].

These two general positions, according to Asamoah Gyadu are also present in Africa where, in addition, homosexuality is dismissed as a distortion of African Cultural values on sex and morality. Asamoah Gyadu posits:

> In spite of their widespread condemnation by African evangelicals, as resulting from western liberation and a product of globalization and media influence, same-sex relationships have not been unknown in African societies. Those know by their societies to have that orientation have historically been stigmatized, called names and have been culturally excluded as engaging in abominable and abhorrent behaviour. The result is that although there have always been informal discussion on the matter, the hostile manner in which it has been considered meant that same-sex relationships became secretive.[17]

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[13]Arthur Kenney, *Forcing Africans to embrace homosexuality*. Accessed on 30th July 2013. www. ghanareporter.com/commentary-forcing-africa-to embrace-homosexuality.

[14] Richard B. Hayes, *Homosexuality*, in his, *the Moral Version of the New Testament: A contemporary introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1997), 380.

[15] R. J. Barry, *'Genes and responsibility'* in John Stott (ed.), Free to be different: varieties of Human behavior (Basingstoke, Hants, UK: Marshalls, 1984), 34.

[16]. Hayes, 'Homosexuality', 380

[17]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth,* 53.

Commenting on the stance of Catholic Church and homosexuality, in the Daily Graphic, April 4, 2014 Winfred Charles Lwanga Jr. said,

> "The source of the Church has always been and will be to promote the dignity of human life. Homosexuals are human beings with natural rights to life. Hence nobody has the right to deprive them of it because of their unfortunate sexual orientation. The act of homosexuality and lesbianism is a moral and social act which should be condemned. However those who are inclined to this sexual orientation are not necessarily evil in themselves. This attempt to rid our society of this social and moral evil should be a corrective in formative measure and not primitive when we seek to punish them because they are gays or lesbians, they have the right to fight back because naturally they have a right to life. Their dignity must be respected. This is not to say that the later church encourages this way of life. The church is only advocating that we help our unfortunate brothers and sisters who are in dire need of our help"

On the same paper Daily Graphic April 4, the archbishop of Canterbury is reported to have said that

> "the Church of England accepting gay marriage could be 'Catastrophic' for Christians in other parts of the world. The most Rev. Justin Welby told London Broadcasting Cooperation (LBC) that hundreds of Christians in Africa have been killed by people who associated Christianity with homosexuality. He warned the same could happen if the Church of England backed gay unions. According to the archbishop, the church did not support same sex marriage which was made legal in England and the Wales. Archbishop Welby acknowledged that homophobic behaviour causes "enormous suffering". He added, the impact of that on Christians in countries far from here like South Sudan, like Pakistan, Nigeria and other places would be absolutely catastrophic , and we have to love them as much as the people who are here"[18].

b. Homosexual debate in Ghana

In Ghana, some denominations like "The Church of Pentecost has in her constitution that homosexuality / lesbianism and other sexual practices are not permitted in the church, as these are not biblically acceptable practices"[19]. The Global Evangelical Church, "Condemned attempts by individuals and groups to promote homosexuality in the name of human rights as the culture is inimical to the moral and spiritual health of

[18]Justin Welby, *Gay Marriage could be catastrophic to Christians*. Accessed on April 4, 2014, 5, 42. www.dailygraphic.com.gh.
[19]The Church of Pentecost, *Constitution*, (Accra: Pentecost Press,2005), 95

Ghanaians"[20]. Asante, Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church, Ghana says there can be no justification for human beings practicing homosexuality. Martey, Moderator of the Presbyterian church of Ghana, has described homosexuality as satanic. He says that gay practice is "Satan's deadly agenda" with which Ghana could be destroyed, therefore, Ghana must not tolerate the "satanic practice" in any form or nuance and therefore urged all Ghanaian leaders to "wake up" against it[21]. According to Martey, homosexuality is unbiblical, unAfrican, abnormal and filthy.[22] Martey has condemned the USA branch of the Presby Church for accepting same-sex marriages. Presbyterian Church (USA) approved the ordination of gay pastors, elders and deacons in 2011 which led to many conservative congregations leaving the denomination. Describing the decision as "demonic" the moderator vow the Ghana branch will not accept the act because it is totally "deviation from Bible principles". "They are developing a strategy to sidetrack the church. We condemn what they have done", he posits.[23]

According to Asamoah Gyadu, "most 'abnormal' behavior, including the negative emotion of excessive anger and alternative sexual lifestyles is considered at best sinful and at worst the result of curses or demonic afflictions, from which people need deliverance and cleansing through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.[24]Wole Soyinka and Kofi Awoonor have been cited among a number who link homosexuality to aspects of colonialism and describe it as 'a disgusting and filthy practice'[25]

[20]The Global Evangelical Church, *Daily Graphic, 8th August, 2010, 20*
[21]Emmanuel Martey, *Homosexuality is satanic* Accessed on 30th June, 2013. www. edition.radioxyzonline.com/pages/news/1829/13024.stm
[22]Emmanuel Martey, *Homos are filthy*, Daily Graphic (21 June, 2011: front page)
[23]Emmanuel Martey, *Same-sex marriage, Presby Ghana, US wing part ways*: Accessed on 25th March, 2015. www.news.peacefmonline.com/pages/religion/236765.php.
[24]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth*, 52.
[25]Samita Zacharia Wanakacha, *Same-gender unions: A critical Analyses* (Nairobi: Uzima, 2004), 29.

Homosexuality is considered a sexual aberration and an abomination against God. One Ghanaian Evangelical, Divine Kumah wrote of homosexuals in his Christian newspaper, watchman:

> Morally they are as dangerous to my children as any other predator, and I must be concerned. More so gay people and their associates try to make us all believe the hellish lie that homosexual behaviour is normal. As a Christian I am against homosexuality. I believe it is wrong and I certainly believe that it is abnormal, because the bible says so. But I also love all people without Christ and I am concerned about their eternal destinies, gay people included[26]

From the conservative evangelical perspective, those involve in gay/lesbian relations are seen as sinners and in extreme cases same-sex orientations are considered demonic.[27] Conservative evangelicals generally dismiss the categorization of same-sex relationships in terms of human rights, as found in the Sean Gill edited volume[28].

According to Asamoah Gyadu,

> the understanding is that homosexuality is a form of spiritual bondage through which the powers of evil seek to destroy victims and that people can be freed from such situation through the invocation of the power of the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit… This means that for conservative Evangelicals there is a monolithic understanding of homosexuals as a sexual perversion of the spiritual kind, from which 'victims' need to be freed by special deliverance prayer and the appropriate responds tend to be describe as homophobic by those advocate the homosexual lifestyle as an issue of social justice or human rights.[29]

Bishop Anyani Boadum, the founder and leader of the Jesus Generation Charismatic church, Ghana, Archbishop Akrofi, of the primate of the Anglican Church of West Africa, the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches all made a statement that homosexuality was "unbiblical, un-African and Sinful.[30]

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[26] Divine Kumah, *Homosexual agenda: Defending immorality?* Watchman, issue 06 (2010)
[27]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth,*, 53.
[28] Gill Sean (ed.), *The lesbian/gay Christian movement,: Campaigning for Justice, Truth and Love* (London & New York: Casselle, 1998).
[29]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth*, 53.
[30]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth*,56.

Through the president of the Catholic Bishops' conference in Ghana, the most Rev. Dr. Joseph Bonsu, the Catholic Church in Ghana also published its position in the Daily Graphic newspaper on 12th February, 2013. According to the article, the position of the Catholic Church on homosexuality is based primarily on the Bible and so begins to look at the matter from a biblical perspective. The catholic reading of the Old Testament sees homosexuality as a 'perversion', with critical texts coming from Gen. 19:1-28, Lev. 18:22, Lev. 20:13, and this is confirmed in the New testament, especially Romans 1:26-27.

Based on its overall understanding of scripture the Catholic Church concluded that the practice of the homosexuality goes against the grain of biblical teaching. The first point is that based on the logic of creation, in which the male and female sexes complement each other, homosexuality cannot be endorsed. To choose someone of the same-sex for one's sexual activity, the church concludes, is to annul the rich symbolism, meaning and goals of God's sexual design. Homosexuality is not a complementary union, able to transmit life, and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the gospel says is the essence of Christian living[31].

The Catholic Church is careful not to condemn people simply because they have homosexual tendencies, or are in actual relationships. It recognizes homosexuals as human beings created in the image of God, just like heterosexuals and therefore points out that they enjoy the fundamental human rights that all people enjoy. However it does reject the popular assumption of psychologists that the sexual orientation of homosexuals is 'totally compulsive', by which those with those tendencies cannot be held responsible

[31]Catholic Church, *Homosexuality is not complimentary union, able to transmit life.* Daily Graphic, (Tuesday, 12 |February, 2013), 10

for their actions. Having taking such a stand of absolute rejection of homosexuality, the Catholic Church takes a similar position in relation to candidates, for the priesthood. The position of the church is that those who practice homosexuality or exhibit deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called gay culture should not be allowed to become priests.[32]

According to Pratt, managing editor of the insight newspaper in Ghana, a section of the Anglican Church has even come out openly to say there is nothing in the Bible indicating that homosexuality and lesbianism is a sin.[33]

Oye Lither, a lawyer and human rights activities of Catholic persuasion, minister for Gender, Children and social protection in Ghana, in confronting the issue said homosexuality is not a crime, as many believed, but a sexual orientation like heterosexuality to which people are at liberty to make a preference. She said that unnatural carnal knowledge, which was a crime under the criminal code, could not be necessarily considered as homosexuality because even heterosexuals could have unnatural carnal knowledge. Oye Lithur said that although Ghana's constitution did not explicitly mention sexual orientation, it made it clear that, no Ghanaian shall be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status"[34].

1.2 Statement of Problem

There are conflicting views among the church in Africa especially Ghana on homosexuality. There are those who think homosexuality is condemned, there are those who think otherwise. The two passages on same-sex relations found in Leviticus 18:22

[32]J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Homosexuality and Ritual filth*,56.
[33]Kwesi Pratt, *Catholics and Anglicans support sodomy* , Insight, 6th June, 2011,
[34]Oye Lithur, *Homosexuality is not a crime.* Daily Graphic, 18th June, 2010

and 20:13 have been perhaps the most classic biblical text used to argue against homosexuality by African Christians.

The issue raises a lot of questions for the church especially the question of biblical interpretation and authority. If the church claims that the Bible has authority in all its matter (or some matters) but disagree on what a specific text says, where does the 'authority' of the Bible stands? Again if homosexuality is problematic in the church, will it not bring divisions in the church?

1.3 Research Questions

The main research questions for this study are:

i. What message did, Moses and for that matter God intends to communicate to his readers in Leviticus account on homosexuality?

ii. How has the interpretation of Leviticus inform the understanding of homosexuality among Christians today?

1.4 Aims/ Objectives of the Study

This study entails a critical comparison of the views of various theologians and church Leaders on Christian participation in homosexual practices. It will assess the points of divergence that lie beneath the different positions of various theologians and church Leaders on the question of whether or not and in what forms the participation of Christians in homosexual practices in the Ghanaian context may be regarded as compatible with the Christian faith. Firstly, this call for similarities and differences between their views. "Their views are, as may be expected influenced by a whole range of theological and cultural assumptions and presuppositions. The first task is to identify the underlying issues where there remains a difference of opinion between these

authors".[35] Second, to what extent is Christian participation in homosexual practices compatible with the Christian faith as found in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13?

The interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13a is by no means easy. In what follow I shall set forth the biblical interpretation to see if the traditional understanding of the biblical teachings on this subject has been in error.

The purposes of this study are as follows:

a. To ascertain Leviticus view on homosexuality and to expatiate on the biblical and theological views on homosexuality
b. To establish the message Leviticus intends to communicate to its readers to understand in order to enhance the teaching and learning of the subject.
c. To contribute to the debate on homosexuality
d. To explore the major theological themes from the analyses for further understanding of homosexuality
e. To examine the relevance of the interpretation of Leviticus account on homosexuality among Christians.

1.5 **Scope and Focus of the Study**

This study focuses on the exegesis and analyses of scripture on the Levitical account on homosexuality as found in chapter 18:22 and chapter 20:13a. This study is limited to the literary analysis of homosexuality in Leviticus.

[35]Robert OwusuAgyarko, *Studies in ethics and theology, Idolatry or Inculturation, Christian participation in Akan Libation Rituals* (Wellington: Shumani print world, 2014),12

1.6 Research Methodology

The literary critical method was used for this research. According to Randolph Tate, it is an explication of a text that attempts to understand the intention and accomplishment of the author by analyzing the compositional structure element of the text.[36]

1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection

In this study the researcher used exegetical and analytical methods to examine Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 and suggest how it can be applied today.

1.6.2 Secondary sources

Secondary sources were used. This includes Bibles, Concordances, Bible Commentaries on the book of Leviticus, Published theological literature, Journal articles and internet sources on the topic.

1.7 Literature Review

The topic of homosexuality is important because it affects the lives of human beings who experience or contend with same sex attraction. No one knows what cause homosexuality. Homosexual behaviours have existed for thousands of years.(Genesis 19, Leviticus 18: 22) and are found in most societies, although Ford and Beach found that homosexuality is rare or absent in 29 out of 79 cultured surveyed.[37] Whitehead and Whitehead, indicate the prevalence of homosexuality has varied considerably in different cultures, in some it has been unknown, in others it has been obligatory for all males. Their findings indicate that, "anthropologists have found huge variations in heterosexual

[36] Randolph Tate, *Interpreting the Bible: Hand book for Terms and Methods,* (Peabody: Hendrickson publishers, Inc. 2006), 199

[37] C.S. Ford, & F.A Beach. *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour* (London: Eyre and Spotisnwoode, 1952)

practice from culture to culture and sudden changes in sexual practices and orientation, even over a single generation[38]

The current perception of homosexuality had its roots in the nineteenth century. It is then that people began to consider certain sexual behaviors to be the identifying characteristics of those who practiced them.[39] "Some attribute homosexuality to life style choice while others believe it is inmate generic in origin" [40]Also individuals rely heavily on ideology, religion and life experience to form beliefs.[41]

A clinical psychologist, Edward Glover, in his book, the problem of homosexuality raised the issue of causation. According to him, three main factors lead to the development of the homosexual disposition. Firstly, constitutional or innate factors, secondly, factors of development during early childhood and at the age of puberty and thirdly, factors during development which give rise to sexual arousal, together with encouragement toward homosexual enactment.[42]

A memorandum of evidence prepared by the special committee of the British medical Association council made distinctions between what it termed 'essential' homosexuality (which was believed to be a generic origin) and 'acquired' homosexuality, which

[38] N. Whitehead & B. Whitehead. *My Genes Make me Do it* (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1999). 116
[39] R.Hubbard .& E.Wald, *Exploding the Gene myth*.. (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1997) 94
[40]D. P Haider-Markel,& M .Joslyn, *Beliefs about the origins of homosexuality and support for gay rights*: *An empirical test of attribution theory*. American Association of Public Opinion Research. Vol. 72 (2) Oxford University Press, 2008), 292
[41]D. P Haider-Markel,& M.Joslyn. *Beliefs about the origins of homosexuality and support for gay rights*: *An empirical test of attribution theory*, 298
[42] Edward Glover, *the problem of Homosexuality* (Rockvilee, MD: Institute for the study and treatment of Delinquency, 1954),6.

appeared as a continuation of adolescent homosexual activity encouraged by 'seduction' imitation, segregation of sexes during adolescence, defective homes and what have you.[43] Socarides, the overt Homosexual, maintains there is nothing innate, or generic in homosexuality, but it is rather a "learned, acquired behaviour"[44]. He further buttresses this through the male / female distinctions which exists in us from birth and have arisen as part of the evolutionary development of man". This natural and institutionally maintained heterosexuality, Socarides argued is only diverted by significant tensions and fears.[45]

John Money, a contemporary authority on psychosexual development attributes homosexuality to "the influence of sex hormones on the development of sexual pathway in the brain"[46] he likened this to being left-handed, ambidextrous, or right-handed, stating: "the cause (of handedness) is not fully explainable, though these does not appear to be an innate plus a learned component. The same applies to homosexuality, bisexuality and heterosexuality.[47]

Obviously, not all authorities agree with this theory, although most researchers find no hormonal association specific to homosexuality,[48] Money's theory has gained a degree of popularity, and appears in several books which offer a pro-Christian perspective.[49]

[43]Council of the British Medical Association, *Homosexuality and prostitution* (London: BMA, 1955), 49.
[44]C.W. Socarides, *The overt Homosexual* (NY: Grune and Stratton, 1968), 133
[45]C.W. Socarides, *The overt Homosexual*, 138.
[46] John Money, *Statements on Antidiscrimination Regarding sexual orientation*, Siecus report 6 (Sept. 1977), 3.
[47] John Money, *Statements on Antidiscrimination Regarding sexual orientation*, siecus report 6, 3.
[48] John Money, et al., *"combined Antiandrogenic and counseling program for treatmentof 46, XY and 47, XYY sex offenders"*, in E.J. Sachar ed., Hormones Behaviour and Psychopathology (NY: Raven Press, 1976), 82.
[49] Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, *gay debate in the church,* , 12-16.

The researcher noted that the question of causation – genetic, acquired, hormonal etc, is important because as these various theories unfold, they are parallel by a diverging opinion within the church as to the acceptability of homosexuality. This lack of consensus among psychiatrics professions has been reflected similarly among churchmen.

Liberals rely on a biological attribution which eliminates choices as the cause for homosexuality and thus avoids casting blame on gays for their distinctive sexual orientation. Conservatives prefer the environmental attribution which implies a degree of control involved in sexual orientation perceiving responsibility for the behaviour naturally evokes questions about the morality of homosexuality.[50]

In fact, it appears there are at least three main streams of thought concerning the question of homosexuality. There are (1) those who, with varying degrees of acceptance of modern psychological findings, nevertheless maintain the traditional interpretation of Scripture and affirm that homosexuality is contrary to the will of God. In the second category (2) are those who have tried to develop a position of mediation, recognizing the fallen condition of homosexuality, but believing that its largely irreversible nature requires Christian morality to allow for some homosexual behaviour within limits. In the last category (3) are those of the self-described "Christian homophile" movement who would affirm not only the permissibility but the "creative joy" of homosexuality. Believing the Bible has been misinterpreted, they assert that its moral teaching on sexuality was not meant to address the invert, and thus has no relevance[51].

[50]D. P Haider-Markel,& M.Joslyn. *Beliefs about the origins of homosexuality and support for gay rights*: *An empirical test of attribution theory*, 307

[51] Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, *Gay debate in the church*, Cornerstone Vol. 12, No. 65 (1983), 12-16

1.7.1 The Old Testament and homosexuality: the current debate

Homosexuality is a subject of debate in the church today because some church members and even pastors who understand themselves as homosexuals and seek fulfillment of their sexual needs in same-sex relationships have insisted that their identity and practice as gay men and lesbians is consonant with the Bible. [52] According to Gagnon, such debates are currently in progress, predominantly in North America and Europe concerning ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals. [53]

a. Old Testament narratives and Homosexuality

Some theologians have suggested that Old Testament narratives are so conditioned by Jewish culture that its position against homosexuality can no longer be considered normative for us today. For this reason, Brennan Breed sets aside the views on sexuality in Genesis 1-3 and indicates his preference for the idea that sexuality is a social construct. Even though in dealing with the Old Testament, he mentions the law as having been giving by God, it is not clear what that means in terms of what value may be placed on that fact. In fact it appears that for him Old Testament sexual ethics are nothing more than ancient Israel's sexual ethics. There is no indication of why ancient Israelite sexual ethics should then be relevant to 'our sexual ethics.[54]

To these proponents, scriptural references to homosexual acts do not suffice to determine God's will for homosexuals today. They are 'culturally conditioned'. Advocates of such

[52] Phyllis A. Bird, *The Bible in Christian Ethical Deliberation Concerning Homosexuality: Old Testament Contributions, in Homosexuality, science, and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 143.
[53]Robert A.J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice, key issues, in Homosexuality and the Bible: Two views* (Fortress: Mineapolis, 2003), 40.
[54]B.Y. Quarshie, "Bringing the case before the Lord: An African Responds to a North American perspective on the Bible and Human sexuality",*Journal of African Christian thought, Human sexuality in Global perspective*; vol.16, no 2, (December, 2013), 28

view argue that because bible passages on homosexuality only deal with specific historical situations, they are 'culturally conditioned' and no longer relevant for Christian sexual ethics today. Key people involved include D.S. Bailey, John Boswell, John R. W. Stott.[55]

In response to them Stanton said,

> Undergirding these new reformulations of biblical teaching on homosexuality is liberalism's unscriptural view of biblical inspiration, interpretation, and authority. One writer has correctly noted: "There are only two ways one can neutralize the biblical witness against homosexual behavior: by gross misinterpretation or by moving away from a high view of Scripture[56].

Lovelace also argue that, "many of the homosexuals' biblical arguments are "strained, speculative and implausible, the product of wishful thinking and special pleading." [57]

According to Quarshie, this throws into great relief the issue of what value to place on the Bible and what authority to grant to it. If Old Testament sexual ethics are nothing more than an ancient Israelites social construction, then to him, there is no reason why as an African and for that matter, Brennan Breed as a North American, should engage in them. Every cultural context can decide for itself what is acceptable in its sight and the matter is settled. This does not mean, that anything and everything is permitted. On the contrary, we must take our ethical and theological responsibilities very seriously when it comes to sexuality[58]

b. Sodom Narrative as Legendary rather than Historical

D.S. Bailey contends that the Sodom narrative is legendary rather than historical and therefore the relevance of the text is nil.

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[55] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality.*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980),
[56]Stanton L. Jones, The Loving Opposition. *Christianity Today*, July 19, 1993, 13.
[57] Richard Lovelace, *The Church and Homosexuality* (Old Tappan, NJ: Flemming H. Revell, 1978), 113.
[58]B.Y. Quarshie, *"Bringing the case before the Lord: An African Responds to a North American perspective on the Bible and Human sexuality",* 28

Traditional interpretation has understood the phrases "that we may know them" and "act so wickedly" as referring to homosexual violation. However, Sherwin Bailey contends that, reference to homosexual sin in this account is highly tenuous. Rather, he argues that, the Hebrew word *yadha*, which means "to have coitus with," denotes, with much greater frequency simply "to know" and may only mean "to get acquainted with." Bailey then suggests the men of Sodom simply wanted to "get acquainted with" Lot's visitors, perhaps committing a breach of local cultural rules regarding hospitality.[59]

According to Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, this interpretation is open to severe criticism on a number of points. First, it is only with extreme difficulty one may comprehend the "sin of Sodom" solely in terms of hospitality. The Scripture states that, the men of Sodom were "wicked and great sinners before the Lord" (Gen. 13:13). Deuteronomy 32:33 interprets their influence in the land as "the poison of serpents." Indeed, "Sodom" became a byword for lewdness and abominations, ranging from oppressing the poor to pride and idolatry (Ezek. 16:46-58).

Second, Bailey seems to decide the meaning of *yadha*, "to know," primarily on the basis of statistical occurrence.[60]As one writer points out, "of the 943 times *yadha* occurs in the Old Testament, 17 refer to sexual intercourse, and 28 to 'get acquainted with'."[61]

Indeed, the word has a variety of usage, meaning at different times: find out, perceive, discriminate, consider, be wise, be skillful, and so on. Obviously, context is the deciding factor in determining the meaning of a given word. Bailey himself apparently agrees, for

[59] Sherwin D. Bailey, *Homosexuality and the western Christian tradition* (London: Longmans, Green, 1955), 155
[60] Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, *Gay debate in the church*, 12-16
[61] Atkinson, referring to Bailey's quotation of the Brown, Driver and Briggs, Hebrew Lexicon, (p.2), 81.

he notes that *yadha* can only refer to sexual intercourse in Gen. 19:8.[62] Yet just three verses earlier, he claims *yadha* bears an entirely different meaning. That he has disregarded context to support a pet theory. Keil and Delitzsch states, in reference to Gen.

19:5:"While Lot was entertaining his guests with the greatest hospitality, the people of Sodom gathered round his house … and demanded, with the basest violation of the sacred rite of hospitality and the most shameless proclamation of their sin … that the strangers be brought out, that they might know them. [*Yadha*] is applied, as in Judges 19:22, to the carnal sin of *paederastia*, a crime very prevalent among Canaanites."[63]

Larry Bishop and Eric Pement in reply to this passages said, even if this passages were legendary rather than historical (an idea with no basis), they are nonetheless part of acceptable scripture, and thus the moral judgment which it provides, regardless of its literary form, is less valid.[64]

c. Invert and Pervert Ethics

The importance of D.S. Bailey's book *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition,* first published in 1955 in the current debate is not slight, it being often referred to as the "beginning of the church's attempts to come to terms with the facts of contemporary homosexual experience"[65]

In this work Bailey seeks to examine biblical attitudes toward homosexuality. He designates "true" homosexual orientation as "inversion" while deviation by heterosexual

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[62] Bailey, *Homosexuality and the western Christian tradition*, 155
[63]C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament,* Vol. 1 (1869; rpt.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 232-33
[64] Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, *Gay debate in the church*), 12-16
[65]David Blamires, *Towards a Theology of Gay Liberation (*Great Britain: SCM Press, 1977), 9

is labeled "perversion" He argues that no foundation exists for the traditional belief that Genesis 19 and Judges 19 refer to homosexual sin, that the Levitical prohibitions of homosexuality are irrelevant to contemporary culture, and that New Testament authors were unaware of the distinction between inversion and perversion. Thus Bailey concludes that the New Testament offers decisive biblical authority for reproving only the conduct of "perverts," and does not speak to the expressions of love between genuine "inverts." As important as Bailey's book may be, it would be an oversimplification to describe the division in Christian opinion in terms of those who accept or reject his conclusion

D.S. Bailey seems to agree with the prohibitive nature of these passages, he nevertheless counters that these verses "give no guidance in dealing with the manifold and complex problems of sexual inversion"[66]. Thus, he feels that any reference to Old Testament concerning homosexuality should be abandoned as irrelevant.

D.S. Bailey thinks that prohibitions against homosexuality in the Old Testament simply reflect the attitudes of the people of Canaan and Egypt. However, he thinks there is very little available information about these nations attitude, most likely because homosexual practice was not as common among them as often thought. Most likely the Egyptians regarded homosexual practices with a degree of contempt but such practices were not common among them.

In his book, D. S. Bailey concluded that the common notion that ecclesiastical prejudice and fanaticism has been mainly responsible for the harsh attitude of the law and public opinion towards the male Homosexual offenders is erroneous.

[66] Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Traditions*, 157

As for Western Christian tradition he saw it to be incorrect in presenting the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as a divine judgment upon homosexual practices and that among the defects of that position were the failure to distinguish inversion from perversion and the failure to recognize the emotional and psychological elements that lay behind the tradition. He concluded that the tradition can no longer be regarded as an adequate guide to the theologian, the legislator, the sociologist and the magistrate[67]

Bailey's work opened up a discussion which was given significant momentum by the publication in 1967 of the Anglican theologian Norman Pittenger's, *Time for consent*[68]Pittenger argued for the approval of any sexual relationship which sprang from love whether homosexual or heterosexual.

According to Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, this consideration however, is, unrealistic, simply for the fact that if the moral and ethical considerations found within the previous discussion of "abomination" cannot be found to be "relevant" where then can "relevance" be found?. Bailey has transmuted moral issues into dispensable customs.[69]

d. **Conclusion**

One's cultural context underscores the marks of one's self-identity and that involves values and the sense of right and wrong. These then features in our interpretation of the Bible and in our theologizing. In that regard, it is similar to what happens in Western society, where Western societal values also inform interpretation and theologizing. All theologizing is thus indeed contextual. As has been noted, however, every form of

[67]Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian tradition*,157
[68] Norman Pittenger, *Time for consent: A Christian approach to homosexuality* (London: SCM Press, 1967)
[69] Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, *Gay debate in the Church*, , 12-16

theologizing, though contextual, must still address the basic issues of being consistent with the cause of Christ and God's supreme revelation of himself in Christ.

Looking at moral values, one is tempted to agree with voluntarism, that knowledge of right and wrong is inherent in every human being and that moral values come from God and are put into human hearts and minds by God. While we may say that these rules are contextual and cultural, we also know that in our societies the acts listed in the Old Testament on homosexuality are not acceptable.

From the review of these relevant literatures, it is obvious that much scholarly work has not been done on the subject from the exegetical point of view. Most of the literatures reviewed do not have a detailed analysis of the phrases, sentences, words and syntactic arrangements of the Levitical account. This work concentrates on the textual analysis of the passage to arrive at the intent meaning of the author which also makes the Levitical understanding standout clearly.

1.8 Significance of the Study

It is my hope that this exegetical work will add up to the on-going academic study on the ethical subject, homosexuality. Most researches on this work focus on the causes, historical and theological perspectives. This exegetical study will provide some additional information for further research work on the subject. It will also be relevant to the Christian community since it gives deeper understanding of the subject in Leviticus whether the homosexuality is condemned by God or not.

1.9 Organisation of Chapters

The work is structured into five chapters with chapter one focusing on general introduction to the research. This covers the background of the study, giving an overview

of the topic, statement of the problem, research questions, aims or objectives of the study, scope and focus of the study, as well as the research methods, Literature review, Significance of the study, Organisation of chapters and definition of terms.

Chapter two is Exegesis of the text. It deals with the structure of the textual analysis of the text. The textual analysis deals with the words, phrases and sentences within the periscope. It also look at how the compositional structure of the text forms in helping to arrive at the intended aiming of the author in the structure. Chapter three is Implications of the text on Christian faith. Chapter four deals with Old Testament and homosexuality: the views of Liberals and Conservatives and chapter five provides a summary of the work, conclusions and make recommendations.

1.10 Definitions of Terms

In order to enhance clarity of presentation and to reduce and eliminate any possibility of ambiguity in these essays, certain key terms which are used extensively are defined hereunder.

1.10.1 Sexuality

Sexuality is defined as things people do, think and feel that are related to their sexual desires. It is also defined as one's ability to experience sexual feelings which are described as pleasurable feelings connected to one's genitals

1.10.2 Homosexuals

According to Juad Marmor, as quoted by John Jefferson David, a homosexual is understood as one who in adult life is motivated by a "definite preferential erotic attraction to members of the same sex and who usually (but not necessarily) engages in overt sexual relations with them". This definition acknowledges that some individuals eg. Prison inmates, may engage in sporadic homosexual acts though not on the basis of a persistent homosexual orientation. Homosexuality is a very ancient phenomenon, being

evidenced in prehistoric art, as well as in the pictographs and hieroglyphs of ancient culture.

Judith A. Boss also defines homosexual as a person whose sexual attraction is exclusively or almost exclusively towards members of his or her own gender. Although the term gender is sometimes used to refer to socialized masculinity and feminity, it denotes biological male and female.

From the on-going discussion, a homosexual can be defined as being sexually attracted towards or of relating to performing sexual acts with a person of the same sex for the purpose of sexual gratification and avoidance of procreation

1.10.3 Bisexuality

Is an identity category describing one's capacity for relating intimately / romantically with others.

1.10.4 Heterosexual

Those who have sexual relations only with someone of the opposite sex or other sex.

1.10.5 Gay

Is a term used to indicate a positive and supportive evaluation of same sex relations

1.10.6 Homophobia

Is defined as the fear of, aversion to or dislike of homosexual people, authorities and lifestyle

1.10.7 Sexual Orientation

An attempt to classify people based on their sexual feelings and attraction: to what gender one is attracted – to one, the other or both

CHAPTER TWO

EXEGESIS OF LEVITICUS 18:22 AND 20:13.

2.1 Introduction

The growing interest within the secular realm have provoked major church studies bringing into question those scriptures traditionally held as prohibiting homosexuality.[70]

This chapter examines various interpretations of the text by scholars from both Christian and Jewish background. Section 3.1 is Introduction, 3.2 describes the background of the text. Section 3.3 and 3.4 discuss conservative and liberal interpretations respectively. 3.5 sum-up the discussions.

2.2 Background of Leviticus

Leviticus was a handbook for the Priests and Levites outlining their duties in worship and a guideline for holy living by the Hebrews, who were the original audience. Leviticus receives its name from the Septuagint (the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament) and means 'relating to the Levites'. Its Hebrew title *'Wayyigra'* is the first word in the Hebrew text of the book and means "And he, that is, the Lord) called". Although Leviticus does not deal only with the special duties of the Levites, it is so named because it concerns mainly the service of worship at the tabernacle which was conducted by the priests who were the sons of Aaron, assisted by many from the tribe of Levi.[71]

After Israel's dramatic exit from Egypt the nation was camped at the foot of Mount Sinai for two years, to listen to God (Exodus 19 to Numbers 10). It was a time of resting,

[70]Larry Bishop and Eric Pement, *Gay Debate in the church*,12
[71] Kenneth L. Barker, John H. Stek, Walter W. Wessel & Ronald Youngblood. *New International Version, study Bible*, (fully revised). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 146.

teaching, building and meeting with him, face to face. Redemption in Exodus is the foundation for cleansing, worship and service in Leviticus. The overwhelming message of Leviticus is the holiness of God – "You must be holy because I, the Lord your God am holy", (Lev. 19:2). But how can unholy people approach a holy God? First, sin must be dealt with. Thus the opening chapters of Leviticus give detailed instructions for offering, sacrifices which were the active symbols of repentance and obedience. Whether bulls, grains, goats or sheep, the sacrifice offering had to be perfect, with no defects or bruises. This was the pictures of the ultimate sacrifice to come – Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God[72]

In Leviticus, sacrifices, priests and the sacred Day of Atonement opened the way for the Israelites to come to God. God's people were also to worship him with their lives. Thus, in Leviticus we read of purity laws (chapter 11- 15) and rules for daily living, concerning family responsibilities, sexual conduct, relationships, worldliness (chapter 18-20) and vows (chapter 27). These instructions involved one's holy walk with God and the pattern of spiritual living still apply today. Worship, therefore has a horizontal aspect that is, God is honoured by our lives as we relate to others. The final aspect of Leviticus is celebration. The book gives instructions for the festivals. These were special, regular and corporate occasions for remembering what God had done, giving thanks to him and rededicating lives to his service. (Chapter 23).[73]Leviticus explains how the Israelites are to be the Lord's holy people and are to worship him in a holy manner especially sexual purity.

[72]Ronald A. Beers, Philip W. Comfort, Mark R. Norton, Robert K. Brown, Virginia Muir, Del Lankford & Leanne Roberts. *Life Application Study Bible, New Living Translation* (2nd edition). (Carol Steam, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2007), 158.
[73] Ronald A. Beers, et.al, *Life Application Study Bible,* 158.

2.3. Some common Liberal Christian and Jewish Interpretations:

According to some Liberal Christians, some English translations of the Bible, such as the Living Bible (LB) and the New Living Translation (NLT) use the term 'homosexuality' to condemn both gay and lesbian sexual relationships. However, this is a mistranslation. They contend that the text refers only to male-male sexual behavior.

They argue that the passage does not refer to gay sex generally, but only to a specific form of homosexual prostitution in Pagan temples. Much of Leviticus deals with the *Holiness Code* which outlined ways in which the ancient Hebrews were to be set apart to God. Some fertility worship practices found in early Pagan cultures were specifically prohibited; ritual same-sex behavior in Pagan temples was one such practice.[74]

The status of women in ancient Hebrew culture was very much lower than that of a man and barely above that of children and slaves. When a man engaged in sexual intercourse with a woman, he always took a dominant position, as a penetrator; the woman would take a submissive posture. When two men engage in sexual intercourse, one of the men, in effect, takes the role of a woman. When a man takes on the low status of a woman, the act makes both ritually impure.

Liberals would regard "*abomination*," "*enormous sin*", etc. as particularly poor translations of the original Hebrew word which really means "*ritually unclean*" within an ancient Israelite era. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures "*to'ebah*" into Greek as "*bdelygma*," which meant ritual impurity. If the writer(s) of Leviticus had wished to refer to a moral violation, a sin, he would have used the Hebrew word

[74]Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Free to be gay: *A brief look at the Bible and Homosexuality",* Accessed on 19th April, 2009. http://www.ualberta.ca/

"zimah." This verse says nothing about consensual same-sex activity today. It only condemns same-sex religious prostitution in Pagan temples.

To buttress this position, National Gay Pentecostal Alliance (NGPA) has claim to have produced a word-for-word translation of the original Hebrew to English, with minimal punctuation added, they rendered quotation as: *"And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman; it is an abomination.*[75]That is, *"...* rather than forbidding male homosexuality, it simply restricts where it may occur.*"* This may seem a strange prohibition to us today, but was quite consistent with other laws in Leviticus which involve improper mixing of things that should be kept separate. e.g. ancient Hebrews were not allowed to mix two crops in the same field, or make cloth out of two different raw materials, or plow a field with an ox and a donkey yoked together. A woman's bed

was her own. Only her husband was permitted there, and then only under certain circumstances. Any other use of her bed would be a defilement.

Jacob Milgrom suggests that the two passages do not prohibit homosexual behavior generally, but only for ancient Israelites, or to inhabitants of Israel, and who are engaging in anal intercourse, and who are men, not lesbians, and(perhaps) who are of the same kinship connections that would prohibit heterosexual relations.[76]

Arthur Waskow**,** a writer and rabbi, points out that: "*The whole structure of sexuality in Torah assumes a dominant, male and a subordinate woman.*"[77] In a male homosexual act of anal intercourse, one partner may be viewed as taking a passive role - the role normally

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[75]National Gay Pentecostal Alliance. *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman; it is an abomination.* Accessed on 19th April, 2009.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/christianandGay/
[76]Jacob Milgrom, *"Leviticus 17-22", (Anchor Bible*: Doubleday, 2000)
[77] Rabbi Arthur Waskow, "*Homosexuality and Torah Thought*. Accessed on 19th April, 2009
http://shamash3.shamash.org/

played by a woman. Thus anal intercourse between two gay men would be as improper in Biblical times as a workplace situation in those days during which a woman supervised a man. Also, because women were considered to play such an inferior role in society, sex between two lesbians are not condemned in the Old Testament. All women were of low status and thus neither would be seen as adopting a dominant or a subservient role during sexual encounters. This interpretation would obviously make the verse refer only to the tribal culture of the time, and not to today's western culture.

Waskow cites two alternative meanings to the passage:

> *First, Do not lie with a man as if it were the same thing as lying with a woman*." That is, when two gay males have a sexual encounter, they should continuously be aware that it is different from a male-female coupling. It might be interpreted to mean: "*Set up a parallel set of institutions for dealing with this kind of sexual relationship, different from those that apply to sexual relationships between a man and a woman.*

Second, "*Do not sleep with a man as it were with a woman*" That is, if two males engage in a sexual act, neither should pretend that the passive partner is like a woman. They should be fully aware of their sexual orientation and maleness. i.e. they should come out of the "closet" and recognize their gayness.[78]

He concludes that if this passage condemns some forms of homosexual behavior, it may refer only to the ancient Israelites, not to us today.

Traditional Jewish and Christian belief is that God dictated the Torah to Moses. Thus every word was included for a specific reason. If God wished to ban all gay homosexual acts then it could be argued that the passage would have read "*You shall not lie with a male*." The addition of the phrase "*as with a woman*" must have been included for a specific reason. Perhaps it was added to give the passage one of the above meanings.

Another Jewish writer, Rabbi Gershon Caudill, is: "*not convinced that the biblical*

[78]Rabbi Arthur Waskow, *Homosexuality and Torah Thought*

passages (here in Leviticus 18: 22 and also in Leviticus 20: 13) refer to homosexual activity that is within a monogamous, stable, and loving relationship." He suggests that the passages refer to sexual promiscuity, not to homosexual activity within a committed relationship:[79]

He notes that Leviticus 18:22 is located in a section of Leviticus that deals with incest and bestiality.

It is not usual for a gay man to have sex with another man as if he the latter were a woman. If he were to do so, then he would be pretending that he was with a woman and not with another man. Thus, he would not be in a homosexual relationship at all. The passage actually refers to a heterosexual male who is forcing himself to fantasize that he is having sex with a woman in order to be able to complete the act. In modern terms, this would be considered as a male heterosexual violating his own sexual orientation -- his own basic nature.

Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, though is a conservative Christian denomination(with a special outreach to gays and lesbians) supports the idea that the text rather deals with ritual uncleanness of homosexual sexual behavior than condemnation of homosexuality. Their contention is that "The seriousness of this idolatry in Hebrew eyes was compounded by the belief that 'to lie with a man as with a woman' violated the dignity of the male sex. Women were [considered] property but men were the direct image of God. To treat a man the way a woman was treated was to reduce him to property and, thereby, to violate the image of God. The issue was idolatrous activity which

[79]Reb Gershon Caudill, *A Heterosexual Jewish Rebbe's View on the (Supposedly) Homosexual Texts in the Hebrew Bible.* Accessed 19th April, 2009 http://www.affirmation.org/

failed to acknowledge God's creation."[80]

2.4 **Conservative Christian Interpretation**

The most common conservative Christian Interpretation is that this verse condemns homosexual behavior of all types including consensual sex between two adults and monogamous sexual activity within a committed relationship. Its meaning is clear and unambiguous. This verse is often quoted in Evangelical churches and on religious radio and TV programs. "*Abomination*" is defined in Webster's New World dictionary as *"nasty and disgusting; vile, loathsome."* It is a strong word indeed! Mark Howerter writes: "The *American Heritage Dictionary* says this is what abominate means: 'To detest thoroughly; abhor.' A thesaurus uses: hate, despise, loathe, detest and execrate as synonyms for abominate. Lest we should ever forget how God feels about homosexuality, i.e., sodomy, the whole story of Lot in Sodomas found in Genesis chapters 18-19[81]

In Leviticus18:22 and 20:13, we find homosexuality prescribed in both apodictic and casuistic law. Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, that is detestable" (Lev. 18:22) is an example of apodictic or absolute law. "Apodictic law (embodied) laws promulgated in unconditional, categorical directives such as commands and prohibitions. Casuistic or case law on the other hand deals with the consequences of certain infractions (if…, then…). If a man lies with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death, their blood will be upon their own

[80]Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan community churches. Accessed on 19th April, 2009 http://www.ualberta.ca/

[81] Mark E. Howerter, "*The Homosexual lifestyle is not normal"* 19th April, 2009 thttp://www.otherside.net/

heads" (Lev. 20:13)"[82]. However, the text has generated two main interpretations, namely Liberals and Conservatives.

The section of Leviticus 17-26 in which these two laws are found is commonly called Holiness code.

a) The Holiness code

One major statement in the Old Testament about homosexuality is found in the Holiness code which includes Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The code contains God's demand for ordering the life of his covenant people, Israel. The code has its goal the setting apart of Israel from the immoral and idolatrous practices of her neighbours so that she might be acceptable to worship the true and living God.In this code are what appear to be two definite and direct prohibitions against homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22, stands amidst legislation against all impermissible and unnatural sexual relations. Leviticus 20:13 restate Leviticus 18:22 and adds the death penalty for the practice.

In Leviticus 18 and 20 we find the direct of prohibitions of homosexuality. "You shall not lie with a male **(zakhar)** as with a woman; it is an abomination**," (toè bah)** (18:22).According to Gerig,

> in 90% of old testament usage zakhar (sometimes **zekhar**) was applied to a man or male animal dedicated to a deity with some sexual formation. Also 81% of Old Testament usage-in law, history and prophesy (excluding wisdom literature),**toè bah** was applied to something offensive because it was related to idolatry. Therefore this law connects to the homosexual ban in the Law of Moses that prohibits Israel from joining the male and female prostitutes attached to ancient near eastern sanctuaries.[83]

[82]William W. Klein, L. Craig Blomberg, and Robert I. Hubbard, I*ntroduction to Biblical Interpretation*, (revised), (Amazon: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004),342

[83] Bruce L. Gerig, *The Levitical Ban; more clues in the case. Homosexuality & the bible.* (retrieve 2003 epistle.us/hbarticles/leviticus5:html)

In both of these verses we find homosexual behaviour described as **toè bah** in Hebrews usually rendered detestable thing, loathsome thing, abomination- detestable.[84]

Within the traditional conservative horizon of reading, Leviticus 18:22 urges that to "lie with a man as with woman" is abomination (Hebrew - **toè bah**) which is categorize alongside Bestiality (having sex and relation with animal, 18:23) with child-sacrifice (18:21) and various forms of 'perversion' and 'defilement'. Martin Noth, comments that verses 19-23 gives a general veto on all non-permissible and especially unnatural sex relationship.[85]

The magisterial and detailed commentary by Karl Elliger of Tubingen heads the material of 18:1-30 'sexual intercourse'.[86] Hence the argument runs, there can be no suggestion that 18:22 addresses the present debate only as a 'proof-text' torn from a different context.Elliger, points out that the Hebrew translated, 'abomination' demonstrates its nature as 'the unthinkable horror' by equally denoting what it is to blaspheme the nature of God, as absolutely forbidden without reference to some socio-ethical view point.[87]

Furthermore, it will be argued that in Leviticus 20:13, homosexual practice 'with a male as with a woman' is an abomination (**toè bah**), to be punished by death for both parties.[88]

i) Purity

Thiselton, posits;

> From the other side of the debate, however, it is frequently urged that the Levitical Holiness code (Leviticus 17-26) is concerned with purity laws designed to mark off Israel's distinctiveness as over against her Canaanites

[84]Edward W.Goodrick& John R.kohlenberger111. *The NIV exhaustive concordance* . (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan publishing house,1999), 1507.
[85] Martin Noth, *Leviticus: A Commentary* .(Eng 1.,Scm, 1965),138
[86] K. Elliger, *Leviticus*, (Tubingen: Mohr, 1966), 229
[87] K. Elliger, *Leviticus*, 232
[88] Brown –Driver-Briggs, The new Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Lafayette: Associated Publishers, 1980), 1072-3

> neighbours. Canaanite practices are 'abomination', and so whatever coincide with them from homosexual practices to child-sacrifice comes within this category. Thus 'death' becomes the penalty for consulting deported spirits (Lev. 20:6-8), for children who 'curse' that is, habitually dishonor their parents (Lev. 20:9, Exo. 21:17), for child-sacrifice and involvement of the cult of Molech (Lev. 20:2-5), death by stoning, and for adultery as well as homosexual acts and incest or sexual relationships with animals (Lev. 20:10-16). The concern of the Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26), it is argued, is to protect ritual purity not morality and it conceives of purity in terms of unmixed types and token of identity.[89]

According to Furnish, to be 'pure' is to be an unblemished specimen (token) of one's kind (type) unmixed with any other kind… This is why the holiness code prohibits such things as… wearing a garment that is 'made of two different materials' (Lev. 19:19). But today we do not hesitate to wear mixtures of wool and cotton or of nylon and polyester or whatever. The 'sexual prohibitions', Furnish concludes, have more to do with ritual purity as over against Canaanites and Egyptians identity than with morality or with love for the other.[90]

It hardly needs to be said that all the notions of purity and holiness as set forth in the Levitical code are culturally conditioned.[91]D.N. Fewell and David M. Gunn has argued in detail, in historical and theological terms, that 'man's seed' represent the central theme of Leviticus 18, but probably in the context of patrileneal inheritance of 'the land' which God has promised and given, in contradiction to the people and practices of Canaanites.[92]Milgroom shows in succession of books and articles how 'purity' and ethics

[89] Anthony C. Thiselton, "Can Hermeneutics Ease the Deadlock? Some Biblical Exegesis and hermeneutical models" Timothy Bradshaw (ed), *The way forward? Christian voices on Homosexuality and the church*, (London: Hodder& Stoughton, 1997), 181

[90]Anthony C. Thiselton,*Can Hermeneutics Ease the Deadlock? Some Biblical Exegesis and hermeneutical models*, 181

[91]Choon-Leong Seow, *Textual orientation, in R.I.Brawley (ed), Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture* (Louisville: West minister Knot, 1996), 17-34

[92] D.N. Fewell and D.M.Gunn, *Gender, power and promise*, (Nashville: Abington, 1993), see further M.Noth, Leviticus, 136. And N.H. Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers. London: Nelson, 1967, 126.

are closely interrelated, even if the history of the interpretation of the Holiness Code addresses a succession of differing cultural situation.[93]

ii) Allegiance to God

In his detailed commentary of Leviticus, Gordon Wenham for example does not ignore issues of social context but perceives a trans-contextual theme as running through various context of reading, namely "exclusive allegiance to God"[94]This theme, provides coherency and integrity to Lev. 17-26 and reflects the background of the Decalogue. As Milgroom perceives it, the core concern is "Be holy, as I the Lord am holy". Part of what is entailed in exclusive allegiance to God is that a man will seek a partner among his own people and will respect the ordained boundaries of appropriate sexual relationship[95]

The nature of the relationship with Canaanites, Ugaritic, Mesopotamian and Egyptian practices is not only controversial but against what Bonnington and Fyall call a 'marcionite' view of the Old Testament, expose the distinctiveness of a covenant relationship with God which excludes both marital unfaithfulness (heterosexual adultery) and 'autonomy' (eg. Freedom for childrento dishonor parents, freedom to practice sexual relations with animals, and freedom to choose any pattern of sexual intimacy which is self-chosen rather than ordained by God within the terms of the covenant.[96]

In Old Testament theology W. Eichrodt and in modern Theology Barth, Paanenberg and Jungel, all urge as central theme of a sovereign God who freely in sovereignty chooses to limit his own sovereign freedom through covenant promises for the good of the whole

[93]Anthony C. Thiselton,"*"Can Hermeneutics Ease the Deadlock? Some Biblical Exegesis and hermeneutical models"*, 182
[94] G.J. Wenham, *The book of Leviticus.*(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 246
[95] G.J. Wenham, *The book of Leviticus* , 253
[96] M. Bonnington and B. Fyall, *Homosexuality and the Bible. (*Cambridge*:* Grove Books, 1996),12-13

created order so that security and trust becomes possible, and people know where they stand with God. On the human side, this brings us to 1Corinthians6:9-11 and its relation to 6:12: does a Christian 'have the right to do anything'? (1Cor. 6:12), or are there, as the Holiness Code and Paul enjoin, 'boundaries' which transpose 'freedom' into self- destruction?[97]

iii) Decalogue

In the view of Martin Noth, followed in the New Testament context of interpretation by Brain Rosner, these 'boundaries' point back to the Decalogue.[98] For example, prohibitions against children who 'curse' their parents arise because this violates 'Honour your father and mother' (Exo. 20:12). Many of the sexual boundaries are extensions of the commitment to marital unfaithfulness, 'Thou shall not commit adultery' (Exo. 20:14).

The so-called ethical commandments, however, flow from the first four: exclusive commitment to God as husband, father and source of true humanness finds expression in contented faithfulness to what God has ordained, in contrast to the striving for 'more' (the tenth commandment and 1Corinthians 6:9-11) which distract persons from that exclusive worship of God[99]

Roster declares, the significance of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-12, Deut. 5:6-21)… would be difficult to overstate. Other collections of laws, such as Leviticus 19, Deut. 27:15-26… have been compared to the Decalogue.[100]

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[97]Anthony C. Thiselton.*Can Hermeneutics Ease the Deadlock? Some Biblical Exegesis and hermeneutical models*, 183

[98] Martin Noth, Leviticus, *A Commentary*, 139. Brain S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics* (Leiden, Brill: Baker, 1994), 94-122

[99]Anthony C. Thiselton, *Can Hermeneutics Ease the Deadlock? Some Biblical Exegesis and hermeneutical models*, 183

[100]Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 42

2.5 Conclusion

Some common liberal Christian interpretation is that the text says nothing about consensual same-sex activity today. It only condemns same – sex religious prostitution in pagan temples.

The most common conservative Christian interpretation is that the verse condemns homosexual behaviour of all types including consensual sex between two adults and monogamous sexual activity within a committed relationship

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLICATIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY ON CHRISTIAN FAITH

3.1 Introduction

One of the volatile and important issues facing the church today is the question of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. The church cannot duck this question. Christians who reject the legitimacy of the homosexual lifestyle are routinely denounced as homophobic, intolerant, and even hateful. There is tremendous intimidation concerning these issues. Some churches have even endorsed the homosexual lifestyle and welcome those who practice it to be their ministers.

The question of the legitimacy of the homosexual lifestyle is a question of what God has to say. If there is no God then there is no right or wrong, and it doesn't make any difference what lifestyle you choose.

This chapter will look at some implications of Homosexuality to the Christian faith. 3.1 will be introduction, 3.2 Implication of Homosexuality and 3.3 conclusions.

3.2 Implications of Homosexuality

The Bible forbids homosexual acts. Now this has enormous implications. Some defenders of homosexuality are very anxious to prove that your genes, not your upbringing determines if you're homosexual because then homosexual behaviour is normal and right. But this conclusion doesn't follow at all. Just because you're genetically disposed to some behaviour doesn't mean that the behaviour is right. For example if some researchers suspect there may be a gene which predisposes some people to alcoholism does that mean it's right for someone with such predisposing to go ahead and drink to his heart's content and become an alcoholic? Obviously not. If anything it ought to alert him to abstain from alcohol so as to prevent this from happening.

Now the truth of the matter is that we don't fully understand the roles of heredity and environment in producing homosexuality. But that doesn't really matter. Even if homosexuality were completely genetic, that fact alone still wouldn't make it any different than a birth defect or epilepsy. That doesn't mean it's normal and that we shouldn't correct it.

Schmidt posts: there is a widespread drug use by homosexuals to highten their sexual experiences. Homosexuals in general are three times as likely to be problem drinkers as the general population. Studies show that 47% of male homosexuals have a history of alcoholic abuse and 57% have a history of drug abuse[101]Moreover, according to Schmidt, "there is overwhelming evidence that certain mental disorder occur with much higher frequency on homosexuals". For example 40% of homosexual men have a history of depression that compares to only 3% for men in general. Similarly, 37% of female homosexuals have a history of depression. This leads in turn to heightened suicide rates. Homosexuals are three times as likely to contemplate suicide as the general population.

In fact homosexual men have an attempted suicide rate six times that of heterosexual men and homosexual women attempt suicide twice as often as heterosexual. Women suicide and depression are not the only problem, studies shows that homosexuals are much more likely to be pedophiles than heterosexual men.[102]Whatever the causes of these disorders, the fact remains that anyone contemplating on a homosexual lifestyle should have no illusions about what he is getting into.

Another well-kept secret according to Craig, is how physically dangerous homosexual behaviour is. Our bodies, male and female are designed for sexual intercourse in a way

[101] Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?* (Downer's Gove, Ill: inter-varsity Press, 1995)
[102] Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?*

that two males' bodies are not. As a result of homosexual activity, 80% of which is carried out by men is very distinctive, resulting eventually in such problems as prostrate damage, ulcers, and ruptures and chronic incontinence and diarrhea.[103]

In addition to these physical problems, Craig again noted that, sexually transmitted diseases are rampant among homosexuals. 75% of homosexuals carry one or more sexually transmitted diseases, wholly apart from AIDS. These included all sort of non- viral infections like gonorrhea, syphilis, bacterial infections and parasites. Also common among homosexuals are viral infections like herpes and hepatitis B. (which afflicts 65% of homosexuals men) both of which are incurable, as well as hepatitis A and anal warts which afflicts 40% of homosexual men. Perhaps the most shocking and frightening statistics is that, leaving aside those who die from AIDS, the life expectancy for a homosexual male is about 45 years of age. That compares to a life expectancy of around

70 for men in general. If you include those who die of AIDS, which now infects 30% of homosexual men the life expectancy drops to 39 years of age.[104]

On the basis of generally accepted moral principles homosexual behaviour is wrong. It is horribly self –destructive and injurious to another person. Thus wholly apart from the Bible prohibition, there are sound, sensible reasons to regard homosexual activity as wrong.

3.3 CONCLUSION

To sum-up, first, right and wrong are real because they come from God. So if we want to look at what is right or wrong we should look at what God says. Second, the bible forbids

[103]William Lane Craig, *A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality*, Accessed on 1st June, 2010. www.reasonablefaith.org/a-Christian-perspective-on-homosexuality

[104] Craig, *A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality*, Accessed on 1st June, 2010. www.reasonablefaith.org/a-Christian-perspective-on-homosexuality

consistently and clearly forbids homosexual acts, just as it does all sexual acts outside marriage. Third, the Bible‘s prohibition of such behaviour can’t be explained away as just the reflection of the time and culture at which it was written because it is grounded in God’s divine plan for man – woman marriage. Moreover even apart from the bible, these are generally accepted moral principles which imply that homosexual behaviour is wrong.

CHAPTER FOUR

OLD TESTAMENT AND HOMOSEXUALITY: THE VIEWS OF LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES

4.1 Introduction

This study has been an enquiry into the views of two groups of Theologians namely, Liberals and Conservatives on the debate about whether homosexuality in the Old Testament is compatible with the Christian faith or not.

The chapter will expatiate on these two broad views on the interpretation of the text and the use of scripture in the Leviticus account on homosexuality by scholars. Section 4.1 is introduction, section 4.2 discusses the study findings, comparing and contrasting the views of Liberals and Conservatives, 4.3sum up the discussions and 4.4 findings of the researcher

4.2 The Study Findings

The aim of the study is to find out the position of Liberals and Conservatives on Christianity and Old Testament Homosexuality as influence by their views.

Leviticus 18:22 states "you shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is abomination".

Leviticus 20:13 states "if a man lies with a male as with a woman both of them have committed an abomination, they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them. No rationale is given in either statement that explain why same –sex relations between men is an abomination neither is there a prohibition here against same-sex relations between women.

According to Siker, some have argued that a reason for the prohibitions rest in the immediate context of Lev. 18:21 which prohibit the sacrifice of children to Molech,

perhaps the name of the god worshipped by non-Israelites. Thus Molech Worship could also have associations with same-sex relations between men perhaps cultic same-sex acts.[105]

The rationale is much debated. The session of Leviticus in which these passages are found is known as the Holiness Code (Lev. 18 – 25). The Holiness Code seeks to differentiate the Israelites from the Canaanites as they prepare to enter the holy land God has given to them. Thus the focus of the Holiness Code is the separation of the Israelites practices from all practices of Canaanites. Siker continues that while the Holiness code make sense on its own terms as a collection of prohibitions, the difficulties arises of how to decide which prohibitions still apply across the centuries and the rationale of such prohibitions.

For example, in addition to prohibiting same-sex relations between men, the holiness code also prohibits the crossing of animals, sowing two kinds of seeds in one field, wearing garments of two different fabrics… (Lev. 19:19, 27-28, 21:5). It appears all of these practices were perhaps markers for the previous inhabitants in the land. None of these practices however is interpreted in the modern context as prohibited by God. By extension many argue that there is no clear rationale for condemning consensual same-sex relation between individual on the basis of the passages in Leviticus.[106]

[105]Jeffrey S. Siker, (ed), *Homosexuality and Religion, An Encyclopedia, (London: Greenwood Press, 2000),* 67.
[106]Jeffrey S. Siker, (ed), *Homosexuality and Religion, An Encyclopedia*,67

4.2.1 Old Testament Homosexuality: Comparing and contrasting the views of Liberals and Conservatives

Here the researcher compare and contrast the different views of some liberal and conservative theologians on whether Christians can participate in homosexual practices and in what forms homosexuality may be regarded as compatible with the Christian faith.

a. Liberals View

The Liberals interpretation is that the text does not condemn Homosexuality. According to some Liberal Christians, some English translations of the Bible, such as the Living Bible (LB) and the New Living Translation (NLT) use the term 'homosexuality' to condemn both gay and lesbian sexual relationships. However, this is a mistranslation. They contend that the text refers only to male-male sexual behavior.

They argue that the passage does not refer to gay sex generally, but only to a specific form of homosexual prostitution in Pagan temples. Much of Leviticus deals with the *Holiness Code* which outlined ways in which the ancient Hebrews were to be set apart to God. Some fertility worship practices found in early Pagan cultures were specifically prohibited; ritual same-sex behavior in Pagan temples was one such practice[107]

Traditional Jewish and Christian belief is that God dictated the Torah to Moses. Thus every word was included for a specific reason. If God wished to ban all gay homosexual acts then it could be argued that the passage would have read "*You shall not lie with a male*." The addition of the phrase "*as with a woman*" must have been included for a specific reason. Perhaps it was added to give the passage one of the above meanings.

[107] *Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan community churches* Free to be gay: *A brief look at the Bible and Homosexuality.* Accessed on 19th April, 2009 http://www.ualberta.ca/)

b. Conservatives View

The most common conservative Christian Interpretation is that this verse condemns homosexual behavior of all types including consensual sex between two adults and monogamous sexual activity within a committed relationship. Its meaning is clear and unambiguous. This verse is often quoted in Evangelical churches and on religious radio and TV programs. "*Abomination*" is defined in Webster's New World dictionary as *"nasty and disgusting; vile, loathsome."* It is a strong word indeed!

Within the traditional conservative horizon of reading, Leviticus 18:22 urges that to "lie with a man as with woman" is abomination (Hebrew - ***toè bah***) which is categorize alongside Bestiality (having sex and relation with animal, 18:23) with child-sacrifice (18:21) and various forms of 'perversion' and 'defilement'. Martin Noth, comments that verses 19-23 gives a general veto on all non-permissible and especially unnatural sex relationship[108].

The conservatives believe that the Holiness code contains moral laws and purity laws. Purity laws (ceremonial laws) are not binding but moral laws are binding because, it was specifically given to the Israelites, but the moral laws are binding since it was given to all, including the Egyptians and the Canaanites. Homosexuality is under the moral law category and is an abomination practice by all people including the Egyptians and Canaanites not just the Israelites. Homosexuality is concern with sex which is a moral issue since moral laws are binding, homosexuality is condemned.

[108] Martin Noth, Leviticus: *A Commentary*, 138.

4.3 Sum - Up

The extreme liberal view is that Homosexuality is not condemned by the Bible. Homosexuals are born as homosexuals. God made them and therefore any biblical references that seem to prohibit loving homosexuals practice are archaic and culturally biased. Why would God create a homosexual and then accuse him / her of sinning if they express their love with another homosexual in a monogamous relationship? Homosexuals in loving and faithful relationship are simply demonstrating their love. Those who take any other position are homophobic, bigots and hate mongers.

The extreme conservative view is that the practice of homosexuality is condemned in the Bible. Homosexuals are not born – they are made. Nature does not produce homosexuals – they are produce by dysfunctional relationships and a corrupt world. Homosexuals are deviates and perverts. They are skilled at using politics and the media attempting to move homosexuality into mainstream of society. The truth is that homosexuality is absolutely the worst kind of sin.

4.4 Findings of the Researcher

The researcher agrees with the evangelical conservatives' views but advocate for a balance and Biblical Christ centered view point that doesn't answer all the question or solve every ambiguity, but comes closer to authentic Christianity than the two extreme views of Liberals and conservatives. The balance perspective acknowledges that no one definitely knows whether homosexuals are born or whether they become that way. The jury is still out, with conflicting studies and research, much of which unfortunately seems to be self-serving and subjectively incorrect.

The Bible condemns homosexual practice, along with many other sins, including hatred, pride, and self-righteousness. On the other hand, no human being has the capacity of

declaring some of the Bible to be true and accurate with other portions being myth and opinions. Such "scholarship" attempting to justify homosexual practice is self-serving abuse to the Bible. On the other hand the Bible does not indicate that homosexuality is the worst of all sins, nor does it give such a ranking to any sin. The gospel of Jesus makes it clear that we are all sinners and that we need Jesus Christ. Above all the Bible clearly identifies Christians as those with love, so we should love homosexuals and draw them closer to Jesus.

The New Testament contains prohibitions against homosexuality in three (3) places, Romans 1:26-27; 1Corinthians 6:9-10; 1Timothy 1:9-10.

In Romans 1 :26-27, homosexuality is seen not merely as a violation of Jewish or Christian sectarian code, but as a transgression of the basic moral law of God known in all cultures.

In 1Corinthians 6:9-10, the conclusion supported by both textual evidence and the great majority of commentators is that the passage does refer to homosexuality and that it considers it morally blameworthy activity that can exclude the pertinent practitioner from the kingdom of God.

In 1Timothy 1:9-10, "…the law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for …immoral men and homosexuals" (NASB). The same considerations that applied to 1 Cor. 6:9-10 is relevant here. The list of vices used by Paul in 1Tim. 1:9-10 are all examples of things "contrary to sound doctrine" and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Both the Old and the New Testaments are clear in their teachings that homosexuality is contrary to the moral law of God, which is the character of God, and only the most forced and arbitrary modes of biblical interpretation can conclude otherwise.

Many African Anglican church leaders threatened to break away from the Anglican community when there was an election in 2003 of an openly gay bishop, Hene Robinson, by the Episcopal church of the United States of America and the church of England also proposed a gay canon Jeffery John as bishop of reading.

Recently, Martey, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana has condemned the decision of USA wing of the church to accept same-sex marriage, describing it as demonic and that they have deviated from the biblical principles. He continued that the Presbyterian church of Ghana has severed (Broken) ties with the US branch as they have done with some branches that have taken similar decision in the past[109]

[109]Emmanuel Martey, *Same-sex marriage, Presby Ghana, US wing part ways*

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

It has being very interesting for me to explore such a sensitive issue as Christianity and Old Testament sexuality, particularly attempting to find out and access the position of two groups of theologians who may not like to entangle themselves in the controversy involve in the issue of Christianity and Homosexuality.

This chapter gives conclusions and summary on the examination and analyses of the text, as well as the implication of the text, it will look at the views of people of faith who have gone before us and affirmation from ancient writing and outline the views of the researcher, and give recommendations on the subject of homosexuality. Section 6.1 is introduction, section 6.2 conclusions and summary and 6.3 is recommendations.

5.2 Conclusion and Summary

5.2.1 Views of people of faith who have gone before us

A theological view would not be complete without a look at what other people of faith have said before on the issue. Over the centuries, the traditions of the church have strengthened the view that homosexual behaviour is against the will of God.

In an early theological document known as the Didache, there is a list of acts considered immoral. In this list homosexuality is mentioned, together with acts such as fornication and adultery. Great theologians and men of faith, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian, all saw homosexual behaviour as unnatural. For Thomas Aguinas, it was

against God's intention for human behaviour.[110]

5.2.2 Affirmation from Ancient writing

In addition to the biblical references noted affirmation is drawn from the fact that several ancient writing before or near the times of the New Testament viewed homosexuality conduct as wrong and used language very similarly to the language of Paul in Romans, 1Corinthians and 1Timothy.[111]

The Greek philosopher, Plato (c 429-347) wrote "when male unites with females for procreation, the pleasure experienced is held to be due to nature, but contrary to nature when male mates with males or females with females, and … those… guilty in such enormities were impelled by their slavery to pleasure.[112]

The Jewish philosopher, Philo (c. 30 BC – 45AD), while commenting on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, condemned homosexual behaviour by arguing that "much graver than the above is another evil which has rampant its way into the cities, namely pederasty.[113]The Greek term *paiderasteuo*used here refers to sexual activity between men and adolescent boys. According to Philo, this is a pleasure that is 'contrary, to nature, the same word Paul used in Romans 1:26 and is worthy of death penalty.[114] Philo further speaks of homosexual conduct in general in his work, 'On Abraham', where he says that the homosexual conduct in Sodom and Gomorrah was corrupting the whole of mankind, so

[110] Ernest Afriyie, "Theological and Pastoral perspectives on sexuality", *Journal on African Christian Thought*, Vol. 16 No. 2 December, 2013,41
[111] Andrew David Omona, "Pastoral Perspectives on the church and same-sex relationships: An African Responds", *Journal of African Christian Thought, Human Sexuality in Global Perspective*, vol. 16, No. 2 (2013), 49
[112] Andrew David Omona, *Pastoral Perspectives on the church and same-sex relationships: An African Responds*, 49
[113]Wayne Grudem, Politics *According to the Bible*. *A comprehensive Resources for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 218
[114]Wayne Grudem, Politics *According to the Bible*. *A comprehensive Resources for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture***,** 218

that God, in raining fire from heaven and destroying the city, 'abominated and extinguished this unnatural and forbidden intercourse.[115]

As another example from the Greco-Roman word of the New Testament era, the Jewish historian, Josephus (30-c-100AD) wrote that the people of Elis and Thebes, in their homosexual conduct practiced an "unnatural vice" and in that context, he referred to the practice of Sodom" (homosexual conduct) as "the monstrous and unnatural pleasure in which they indulged.[116]

The Greek historian, plutarch (c-50-c.120AD) described homosexual conduct between men as 'contrary to nature' and indecent'[117] Hence as Grudem argues; these quotations show that when the New testament writers condemned sexual conduct, they were using the same terminology that was commonly used in other Greek literature to condemn all kinds of homosexual conduct as something contrary to nature and morally wrong. The word of the New Testament do not allow these prohibitions to be limited as homosexual advocates claim, to some narrowly defined particularly type of homosexual conduct.[118]

5.2.3 Summary of the views of the researcher

The researcher agrees with the evangelical conservatives views but advocate for a balance and Biblical Christ centered view point that doesn't answer all the question or solve every ambiguity, but comes closer to authentic Christianity than the two extreme views of Liberals and conservatives. The balance perspective acknowledges that no one

[115]Wayne Grudem, Politics *According to the Bible*. *A comprehensive Resources for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture* , 218
[116]Wayne Grudem, Politics *According to the Bible*. *A comprehensive Resources for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture* , 218
[117]Wayne Grudem, Politics *According to the Bible*. *A comprehensive Resources for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture* , 218
[118]Wayne Grudem, Politics *According to the Bible*. *A comprehensive Resources for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture,* 219

definitely knows whether homosexuals are born or whether they become that way. The jury is still out, with conflicting studies and research, much of which unfortunately seems to be self-serving and subjectively skewed.

The bible condemns homosexual practice, along with many other sins, included hatred, pride, and self-righteousness. On the other hand, no human being has the capacity of declaring some of the Bible to be true and accurate with other portions being myth and opinions. Such "scholarship" attempting to justify homosexual practice is self-serving abuse to the bible. On the other hand the Bible does not indicate that homosexuality is the worst of all sins, nor does it give such a ranking to any sin. The gospel of Jesus makes it clear that we are all sinners and that we need Jesus Christ. Above all the Bible clearly identifies Christians as those with love, so we should love homosexuals and draw them closer to Jesus.

5.3 Recommendations

Given what scripture has to say about homosexuality, how should the church and individual Christians respond to homosexuals and to the homosexual agenda? The researcher recommends the following:

First, the researcher agrees with Kunhiyop that, the church must not abandon the biblical position. "Christians must accept that the scripture is the final authority in matters of faith and practice and provide the guidelines and qualifications for membership in Christ's churc. The Bible must be our yardstick for measuring what is right and wrong"[119]

This means that the church cannot accept same-sex marriage. The church cannot compromise the fundamental biblical teachings; homosexuality is contrary to the divine

[119]Samuel Kunhiyop, W. *African Christian Ethics*, 308.

will for human sexuality. To compromise at this point abdicates the fundamental responsibility of the church.

Second, we must love the homosexually oriented unconditionally. God loves all of us in our sins and so does he love homosexuals. Committing homosexual act is a sin and God loves a sinner. Paul makes this clear in Romans 5:8, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us".God's heart breaks for homosexuals and if we love God our hearts must break for them too. Why judge them when we also still have sinful acts clinging to us? We must love them and allow the grace of God to flow through us to them, just as the grace of God is flowing through others to us.

Third, we must also remember that homosexuality is not only heinous sin in the world. Besides homosexuality, Paul's lists of sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 include sexual immorality, adultery, greed, drunkenness, slander, and fraud. These sins are equally wicked and evil. Yet those who have committed these sins have been accepted into our churches if they turn to Christ and turn away from their evil practices. We should do no less for homosexuals. The church must be willing to extend warm acceptance to those who have changed their ways.[120]

Fourth, there should be meaningful personal support for the homosexual who seeks to overcome such an orientation. As John Batteau has observed, homosexuals "must not be left with a stern word of condemnation from a distant and repulsed body of people called the church; instead they must be faced with a church, with Christians, with a God who reaches out to bless even through condemnation"[121]

[120] Samuel W. Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*.308
[121] John M. Batteau, *"Sexual Differences: A Cultural Convention?* Christian today, 8th July 1977, 10.

In the light of John Batteau observation, the researcher realize that the homosexually oriented needs a church, that is a place of love, care, grace and redemption and not one that ridicules and condemn them. While the church must not condemn homosexuals, it must not also condone the behaviour. Homosexuals need a place where they may participate in the grace of hospitality and formation. Without a community where they receive love and care, homosexuals may not be able to lead a celebrate life.

Fifth, the researcher noted that the homosexual through God's mercy and grace can, if repented, become a mighty man of God. Homosexuals should therefore not be condemned because they can be transformed and God can use them for His own purpose. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation". (2 Cor. 5:17). Saul of Tarsus, even though a persecutor of the church and a blasphemer (1Tim. 1:13), received mercy from God and was transformed into a great minister and Apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Such transformation and subsequent usefulness in the ministry of Christ are possible for the homosexual, as they are for person caught up in other types of sin. This hope is part of the "good news" that the gospel brings to man.[122]

Sixth, the church should not see them as 'filthy' people but as sinners who need repentance as all others do. We should draw closer to them and explain the word of God to them.

Seventh, we should pray for the Homosexual. The researcher believes that God can deliver these people through prayer. We should not abandon them, but strongly pray for them. The church should pray for our relatives, loved ones and church members who

[122] John Jefferson D avis, Issues facing the church today, *Evangelical Ethics*, (3rd ed.),(Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2004), 133.

indulge in these deviant sexual practices. (Mark 9:29 says, this kind can come out only through prayer).

Eighth, the case against homosexuality should not produce an unnatural, unwarranted fear and overreaction based on emotions and generates kind of hysteria against homosexuals. It should be based not on emotions but on scripture and facts and sound reasoning. Homosexuals should be made aware that their behavior is not morally and socially acceptable.

Ninth, The proper role of the Christian church is not to support the confused notion of civil rights in this area, but rather to hold forth the clear teachings of biblical revelation, whose wisdom has been confirmed by history, and to offer the homosexuals, the hope and promise of new life through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit

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