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The Rainbow Sunset

How can a church involve the LGBT group of people?

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Abbreviations and Definitions

CCH	Contemporary Church History
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

Bible Usually used by Christians as a witness to the grace of God and as a guide in our way of living as we engage ourselves to be a disciple of Christ. Bible contains Biblical texts that give us inspiration and authority.

Christian The person who received the Sacrament of Christian Baptism or a person who believes in Christianity.

Church A building used for public Christian worship. For Christians, it is commonly called a house of prayer.

Discrimination The unjust prejudicial treatment of different categories of people especially on the ground of race, age, sex.

Equality The state of being equal especially in status, rights or opportunities.

Faith Refers to a strong belief in the doctrines of a religion based on spiritual conviction. It means trusting completely.

Homophobia The attitude of personal hostility towards homosexual persons is a mixture of irrational fear, hatred and even revulsion.

Homosexuality The quality or characteristic of being sexually attracted solely to people of one's sex.

Human Rights A right that is believed to belong to every person.

Labelling Theory Is the theory on how the self-identity and behavior of individuals may be determined or influence by the terms used to described or classify them.

Sexual Identity Refers to how a person thinks of oneself in terms of to whom one is romantically and sexually attracted. It also refers to sexual orientation.

Queer Is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual.

Abstract

This Thesis contributes to understanding the setting of the LGBT in the Christian community and the role of the church of involving LGBT. Looking into the development concerning the church hospitality towards LGBT, Biblical basis, sexuality, human rights and the relationship towards each other. To value respect among these individuals, I suggest applying the gender equality or right-based approach, in playing the most significant role of the church most especially in dealing with conflicts, situations, and gender equality.

The use of theoretical and hermeneutical methods carried out an effective way of knowing the situation and learning the progress of acceptance and respect for this group of people. The queer theory emphasizes good communication in such a way that it shows consideration and better understanding. The acknowledgment of human rights specifically the gay rights and the laws concerning homosexual that contribute the church to be a responsible church leader that strengthen the communication of the church and LGBT with openness, love, acceptance, and respect.

The role of the church in LGBT's life affects the whole being including their relationship to God and to find themselves acceptable in spite of their gender preference. Looking into the life and experiences of LGBT in Norway that is far beyond in my Filipino Roman Catholic context. It is important to know that human rights application and interpretation is necessary and more than that to apply it in a certain context by considering the culture and Biblical consideration. Base on this research, the author argues that the relationship between the church and the LGBT valued respect, love, equality and proper Christian ethics.

My findings show that the church can involve LGBT people by standing in faith with self-acceptance of sexuality and though repentance, LGBT rec-connect their life to the church and value their relationship to God. However, my conclusion in this research is in line with the position of my Catholic background that by avoiding homosexual practices and observing Christian moral ethics it leads the LGBT to be accepted in the church.

KEYWORDS: (LGBT, human rights, discrimination, sexual identity, equality, church, Norway).

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In the context of the LGBT world, some issues need attention especially the church's most controversial issue of sexuality. Reality is that LGBT individuals are born into religious families and community where their faith is inextricably connected to this individual and their cultural identity.¹ The way of life and the moral practice base in their manifestation of being that sometimes lead them to live the kind of life through the perspective of others. Which hinder them to express their real personality and gender identity. To avoid the conflict between religious faith, sexuality, religious identity and to emphasize the value of anti-discrimination on sexual orientation. Everyone must know to respect, be widely observant and considerate in a broader context as we live in the globalized and highly modernized world. In this research, I found many ways the church can involve LGBT groups of people by considering the background, society, church leaders and members. By welcoming LGBT and accept their whole being, accepting with consideration, accepting with restriction, and accepting with a certain level of respect and limitations.

In this thesis, I would like to point out my stand regarding the issue of LGBT in the church. Very important nowadays as part of the inclusive church practice of good Christian behavior by accepting our LGBT brothers and sisters in union with one love and one body of Christ. My claim is that the church is established to promote unity, respect, acceptance, love, and care to enhance the faith of the Christian community to grow and worship God. Our identity, sexual orientation, and gender preference are not based on other people's way of life but our personal choice to live a happy and comfortable lifestyle. This is considered as our right, our human rights in fact that as long as we are not hurting anyone we have the right to choose the path that we prefer. Homosexuality plays a significant role as part of natural human variation. The main research question of this thesis: How can a church involve the LGBT (namely lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) group of people? Dealing with the issues of LGBT rights

¹ Bronwayn Fielder and Douglas Ezzy, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christians, Authentic Selves*

in the trends presented in various cases in the church and the different approaches towards this group of people in the context that is acceptable particularly in the aspect of morality. In this thesis, there are different perspectives and arguments to be presented that are interesting, for instance, the different views of the church. Those who accept this group of people in the church and those who are not in favor with, but still respect their rights and being.

In today's time, the issues of the LGBT group of people become a major center stage that catches my interest. In doing this, I will give focus with four research questions that deal with both theological as well as more practical questions, the views of the Bible as well as the question of church hospitality as it may stand in tension to the theological restrictions given in some parts of the Bible. Firstly, what kind of positions may LGBT people have? Are LGBT people disqualified because of their gender preference? Secondly, In Christian context what does, it says in same-sex marriage? Thirdly, Is there any specific Biblical text that tells us about homosexuality is a sin? How can we deal with it? Lastly, How can a church deal this as a sign of hospitality and inclusiveness while it creates tension in theological restrictions found in the bible?

It is important to deal with this question to have a clear presentation of every point of view and to understand the meaning of gender equality. Upon dealing with these issues in the church it can open up to have a better understanding and greater respect for LGBT's and be accepted not just in church but also in our society. In my perspective, it is necessary to discuss these issues and it is worthwhile studying with, to have a much wider knowledge and a better way of accepting, as they exist in my world every day. By the use of hermeneutical text-based study, it can give me more sources to deal with the current issues of LGBT in the church.

The objectives of this thesis are the following:

Firstly, to have a thorough knowledge on how can a church involve the LGBT people in a way that it doesn't contradict the theological and Biblical perspective of the church and of having a good Christian character in the broader concept of being open-minded, Secondly, A good knowledge of how a church can be able to accept the gender preference of this individual by the use of literature review, research study and do some practical observation and hearing the testimony of this individual. Thirdly, through the hermeneutical text-based the method, by gathering information, and though my research questions, I will use it as my tools

to analyze the issues and to have a better result or understanding of this fragile topic. Fourthly, to critically read, evaluate my sources for more productive and to show a clear picture of scholarly literature.

Fifthly, to analyze the real situation of the LGBT in the church and to know the Norwegian Lutheran Church understanding regarding the recent situation of LGBT in the church especially in same-sex marriage. Sixthly, to discuss independently the common questions in theological related as well as an ethical way of understanding especially in the issues of same-sex marriage in the church. Regarding their consideration and restriction at the same time. Seventhly, to evaluate and discover the true essence of Christianity by being hospitable, without discriminating these people. Eighthly, to conclude these issues to the best of my ability, in the scope of my research and to recommend this topic for further study, to create openness and community-friendly with equality, as we are all created equally. This thesis will not cover all the issues of LGBT in the church yet restrict to talk about the most basic questions stated in my topic with four research questions.

The theme of this thesis is to have a better consideration and understanding between the church and LGBT group of people as part of our Christian family, to have a good and harmonious relationship. By the use of this thesis, my future reader may enable to use it as a tool to learn how to accept and be considerate of this group of people most especially in the church. That conservative Christians, for instance, can be enlightening to have an open heart to understand the situation of this group of people and at the same time, the LGBT will be able to learn something through this, to observe the proper values, good behavior and act like good Christian individual. To avoid discrimination, to value acceptance and respect to each other. Especially when it comes to the issue of same-sex marriage that I discuss in chapter five based in the Norwegian Lutheran Church. "Marriage is a unique union between a man and a woman"(Burik 2014). Many Christian believe that marriage is between the two opposite sex that makes this topic a bit sensitive in some Christian denominations. In the theoretical dimension of the church and its arguments with the legal recognition of the same-sex union, that is not acceptable in some conservative churches.

1.2. Content

This thesis is theoretical and hermeneutical research on how can church involve the LGBT group of people. As I had observed many LGBT individuals that are raised in Christian families hide their real identity and sometimes it becomes problematic that they go out from the church and openly express themselves yet struggle to be accepted by their respected Christian family. The aim is that one way to another as the church and the LGBT community will be able to find a better way of understanding and consideration toward each other. As this can affect the faith and commitment of the Christian community as well as in the sexual identity of LGBT.

This thesis intends for better understanding, the importance of self -acceptance in views of LGBT and respect the views of conservative Christian that limit the participation of LGBT in the church. Putting into consideration the views and opinions express both. Wherein the church and the LGBT community are expected to value the importance of respect.

In this thesis, I will put into consideration the recent trend of the church regarding LGBT individuals, especially the concept of openness. The experience they had and the development of expressing themselves in the Christian community. This explores through different texts, interviews, and observation in different Christian services and experience most of all the importance of faith and sexuality.

1.3. Personal Motivation

I am raised and grow up with a traditional Filipino Roman Catholic family. The conservative way of traditions and beliefs was on practiced. It was introduced to us that being lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are being different among others. I was used to be a “Flores de Mayo” catechist. It is a festival held in the Philippines in May that lasts for the whole month, a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I was teaching the kids ages from about 4 years old to 15 years old and it was a memorable time for me because I found out that the most talented and intelligent kids during my time were the lesbians and gays. I find them special in a way that they are gifted and happiest children that were always been participative and active. But with all this impression I had, on the contrary, some conservative church members oftentimes

judge, misunderstand and discriminate LGBT people. Because of their gender identity, they experience those offensive words and it left markings in me. As I came to Norway, seeing the LGBT individual in the church made me amazed at how it is being recognized most especially in the Norwegian Lutheran Church, where I had my first church visit. I've seen that it was extremely different. Even more than same-sex marriage and freedom of expression are given importance. Witnessing this openness and happy worship lead people to enjoy the service and I find it being respected. As I went through church visitations like my home church, the Catholic church in Oslo, Pentecostal churches, Norwegian Lutheran church, Methodist, etc. Most of them observe the conservative way of dealing with LGBT. It made me decide to write my topic.

I choose this topic out of my curiosity to have a good understanding of the proper act of the church involving LGBT without contradicting any laws and Biblical writings. My question then, isn't it possible? As I observe in a most Christian denomination that this issue is so crucial, sensitive and non-acceptable. On the other hand, we know that in some churches this issue had been legalized and accepted. I would like to study and learn more to explore my ability to the scope that is valid and acceptable to God. Because I know for myself that I have known a little about this topic. So, I wanted to learn more and know more about how can church involve LGBT group of people and I am eager to learn. With this thesis, I wish to encourage LGBTs who struggle with their faith and sexuality. I wish that by the use of this thesis, it bridge the gap between LGBT and the church to have a much better picture of acceptance and respect in both ways. As we live in most develop society I hope that the best alternative for the church and LGBT community be implemented. I hope to see how it is presented by the use of my materials.

1.4. Research Question and Sub Questions

The main research question for this thesis will be;

How can a church involve the LGBT namely the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender group of people?

To answer this question, I had formulated four sub-questions that will make it easier to come up with a certain answer that will give us a precise answer and make it simpler. My way of gathering information to LGBT individuals and also representative of the church as well as by the use of different texts will lead me to answer my questions directly. Sub-questions are the following:

1. *What kind of positions may LGBT people have? Are LGBT people disqualified because of their gender preference?*
2. *In Christian context what does it says in same-sex marriage?*
3. *Is there any specific biblical text that tells us about homosexuality is a sin? How can we deal with it?*
4. *How can a church deal this as a sign of hospitality and inclusiveness while it creates tension in theological restrictions found in the bible?*

1.5. Outline of the Thesis

In this chapter, I introduce the context that this thesis is base on the church setting towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender how they can be included. A brief introduction, followed by my motivation, research questions and followed by an outline of this thesis.

In chapter two I have covered the general background of the Christian community for having strict rules regarding homosexuality. Including the life and experiences of this group of people. Chapter three introduces the perspectives used in this research specifically the world beyond the closet, LGBT's rights and their relationship to the church. In chapter four I presented the research method used in this research.

Chapter five introduces same-sex marriage in the context of the Norwegian Lutheran church. I had a privilege to look at different articles, books and personally had spoken to some church members. That let me realized how they properly examined and discussed to come up in legalization considering the rights of LGBT. Those synod meetings and debate that made it legalized. Followed by chapter six I presented the findings dealing with faith and sexuality, the moral ethics and truth claims of the church. In chapter seven I discuss my findings inline

with my research question and sub-questions. Followed in chapter eight, the conclusion and my argument with this research. Lastly, in chapter nine the bibliography, containing the list of materials I use in this study.

Chapter Two

THE RAINBOW LIFESTYLE

2.1. Overview

This chapter introduces the concept of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individual, exploring sexuality and gender equality in the church. I would like to have an overview of the situation of LGBT in the church basing it in the historical experiences of the LGBT group many years past and relate it in today's context. Also here, I come up with the different views from those people who had accepted this group of people in the church and their position. Including some personalities contribute their views and stand to promote inclusiveness in the church. The first part, quoted from the concept of Jones and Yarhouse, author of the book *Homosexuality: the use of scientific research in the church's moral debate*. The claim that homosexuality is unchangeable.

An examination of Christian struggles dealing with the issue of human sexuality indicates the emergence of some clear trends over the last forty years that should be taken seriously. This is by going into the direction that they are heading, where people interact from there and then to here and now that emerged by many passing years. LGBT group of people plays a significant role in our society because they are in a huge number all over the world. In every culture, same-sex attraction and relationship. Some had been accepted but in some others, it has been prohibited. The bottom line is that, no matter what this group of people needs respect and love. How they live in daily life, the congregation attitude that should be based on good Christian behavior and bear proper character towards the LGBT, along with the practices of LGBT Christians to be well balanced and vice versa.

The traditional theoretical understanding of religion, beliefs and its theology is highly needed to understand more clearly in the aspects of religious practices dealing with faith and compassion regarding LGBT Christians. Religious practices, gender identity, religious worldview, relational experience alongside with their beliefs. Traditional Christian causes

persecution of the church by having non-negotiable beliefs towards LGBT. The objective study of proper behavior in recent times must be well observed to become aware of the proper social characteristic in the church.

To begin a meaningful discussion of LGBT rights, it is important to be aware of individuality in church and society. An LGBT individual becomes legitimate in their way of life that holds an essential understanding of their identity. Which produces a belief system in gender equality and normative status in society. However, the conservative Christians put borders in these claims that create a strong influence and build a certain gap as part of a deeply embedded aspect of their identity. The impression and assumption about reality through the dominant norms and values given by society and social positions must be properly evaluated and well-considered. To understand more precisely the situation of the LGBT group, the church effort to discern the meaning of following Jesus Christ in every aspect of life and consider every individual in church and society plays a very significant role.

In many churches today, LGBT people are already part of the Christian faith community and being so honest to testify how hurtful it is to experience discrimination because of their sexuality. The importance of proper consideration and handling this issue carefully is highly appreciated to be responsible enough to think carefully about the issue of faith in obedience to Christ. Because the church is one entity that is Christ-centered and the aim for right conduct and to serve Christians equally, as the universal church, Christ welcomes everyone.

The term homosexuality by Jones and Yarhouse indicates that it is not a condition a person can or should change, it is an identity to embrace. This debate of change affects the church, their claim that science had relevant thoughts to the moral debate. The author quoted the research done by Chandler Burr having his claim that homosexuality is immutable. He stated that scientific research found out that it cannot change having the same claim in the booklet *promoting church dialog on gays and lesbians* by Thorson Smith, it turns out that with motivation then it might, but otherwise it cannot. This shows that homosexuality is unchangeable. Then the question can be what kind of change does this group of people need to be morally acceptable in the church? Often, the person is been judge with their gender preference and engagement in sexual behavior that is called same-sex attraction and their

religious worldviews. This includes the mainstream of acceptance for them to find their identity and belongingness in the church.

Moral debate: “if the behavioral sciences can show that sexual orientation is, in fact, immutable or that change is at least tremendously difficult for the majority, then the traditionalist position appears untenable.² In this claim, we can say that there is no chance for a person to change in his or her homosexual orientation. In this claim the conservative Christians can always have their counterclaim, stating that this can be subjected to change by God’s work of healing. That they believe this can be changed through lifestyle, views, and ways in life, mindset and person of attraction change of perspective that some Christian community called it healed. The question that is commonly used is that, if a change occurs it is by natural means or psychotherapy?

2.2. Background: Behind the Scene

In several decades, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people struggled so much to be accepted in the church. Unlike in recent times that church opens up the doors for the LGBT community to be part of the different ministry, but not the moral legit for any same-sex acts or any romantic relationship. This is part of the historical claim of the church and Christian institutions indeed become so much problematic. In the late 20th Century this kind of thinking had been twisted and turned a bit, the changed occurred in some cases it is possible that conservative Christian had discriminatory policies or thinking about LGBT. Like sexual discrimination can be a serious problem. A challenge is one way to another to know that it is important to be aware of the protective rights of LGBT to avoid discrimination based on religious conviction.

According to David P. Gushee, LGBT find traditional Christian treatment and a problem for their faith and relationship. In his book *changing our mind*, he stated that many are leaving the church or at least evangelicalism. He said that 70% of American’s most non-churched generation was the millennial (Public Religion Research). The religious group is alienating

² Stanton L. Jones and Mark Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church Moral Debate*, (IVP Academic, September 20, 2009), 120.

young people by being too judgmental about gays and lesbian issues. His teaching marks a significant role as an evangelical leader for having a good moral and equality that finds himself as a decisively changed person on several aspects of this issue. His mind changed due to a transformative encounter with LGBT Christians that connect the thread between this group of people and the church that enables them to feel freely welcome in the Christian world.

In this certain instance, the church leader took his initiative to open up his sense of open-mindedness to the LGBT minority lead this group of people a conscious acknowledgment of beliefs, strengthened them, gain trust and courage, also reproduce the most productive and effective Christian character that transform their state of being. Because in this area of consciousness, it is very important to create a positive emotional orientation to the self that can be the most useful tool in different angles of human interaction especially the church practices of belief, self-understanding and the relationship towards others. Knowing how to balance and connect to other people by understanding and acceptance for who they are and act as a good Christian example for them to be able to cultivate their faith and submissive self to God and the church.

Moreover, the result of emotionally attracting, pre-judged in the church destroys oneself in that person's position and relation especially in the concept that is closely related to the relationship to God and the church. Without knowing the personal perspective of the person, with his or her motives in coming to church, no one has the right to conclude by just looking to them. Instead of opening that heart and mind, the church opens the door to them to find their inner peace and personal identity through us and be able to cultivate and let their faith grow through the church. All this can just be resolved through the power of respect and restricting or putting certain boundaries for the common good.

2.3. LGBT Root Crops: Digging into the Historical Experience of LGBT

In 1972, the first gay minister was ordained by the united church of Christ, mark the religious acceptance of gay men and women of faith. Where the family supports the roles of the gay rights movement. This theory is based on the scholarly Dr. William Loader, who gave

us multiple resources to have a better understanding and good attitude toward sexuality in ancient contexts with his high regard of the Scripture. “The debate about homosexuality, the Bible, and the church is currently an inner-Christian discussion, even if some may think there is only one true Christian view”.³This is the most controversial topic most especially the life of LGBT’s, the conflict of what the Bible says about them and their actual situation in the church.

In many years passed, most of the LGBT individual was not coming out openly. In some countries, LGBT was considered as a sin and some of them had been persecuted, suffered violence from their own home, bullied in society and worst case they committed suicide caused by depression and anxiety. Unlike recently that LGBT is accepted openly in some community. Some are active church members, influential artist, respected leaders, famous professionals, well-loved and accepted children by their parents, the proud member of society and in some countries like in my home country Philippines they become the ambassador of goodwill.

For instance actress, Ellen DeGeneres who came out on national television on April 1997 as to show up gay celebrity power and media visibility, inspires people and challenges LGBT people to live a good and happy life without compromising her gender preference. They live most likely more comfortable and respected life than what our brothers and sisters were suffering from before. Now we can openly see masses of LGBT organizations, clans, and activities that well supported by the secular world. For instance, the rainbow gay pride celebration worldwide, gay pageant in some cities, activities for a cost (the LGBT fundraising program that supports some organization and charity) and a lot more programs that this group of people initiated to promote equality and unity.

This event at the same time allows them to gain self-purposeful lifestyle, not necessarily to encourage people to become gay but a proper way of self-acceptance and develop creativeness in themselves to live a good way of life in spite of their gender preference. Other LGBT people become bad because of being prejudged and sometimes does something wrong in their lives because no one accepts them and guides them to be a good version of

³ William Loader, et al. *Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible and the Church*, (Zondervan Academic, November 29, 2016), 11.

themselves. As a church, a follower of Christ we have to welcome them with love and compassion, so they can live a well-guided lifestyle and in a healthy and worthy life. Therefore it makes sense to approach the issues from within a context where religion and faith do play a role, in particular within the Christian tradition.⁴ To interpret the concept of normality, the families of a homosexual person can acknowledge and be truly accept what you've seen since then you discover that they are different from their normal self. And recognizing their natural sexual orientation so they can be properly guided to live life with direction.

For example, the testimony of a mother that I had interacted within the church that discovers her child at an early age that he was a bit soft to move and being feminine at an early age. The mother initial reaction as a member of the Christian church was nagging her son, being disappointed and tried to change him to become a real man. The tendency was her son become depressed and run away from the church because he thought that he brought his mother into shame. His life becomes miserable and being away from the church he didn't feel the love and acceptance of God and his family. His mother, on the other hand, felt confused with the traditional Bible-believing context were to stand her faith and lost his son. The value of being a good Christian and be a good mother was at stake. In this example, we can see the moral values that we need to hold on too. The importance of learning the right perspective and putting God's word into practice and the misperception of belief. It has, however, enabled many to accept their homosexuality without feeling guilty about it, to hold together their understanding of themselves never to express their sexuality, at least not in the form of those activities which are condemned.⁵ The necessity to find a new way of responding and addressing the situation and to maintain the well being of understanding without compromising the belief stripping from the emotional aspect of interpersonal relationships.

In interpreting the Bible and to use it as proper guidelines of faith always consider the context and to whom it was addressed. The mistake of most Christians is the interpretation and application. There are some restrictions and proper ways of dealing with it, here we usually got wrong. Know to interpret it in the most proper way as possible to avoid confusion and

⁴ Ibid., 17.

⁵ Ibid., 19.

misconduct. The book of Leviticus, for instance, prohibits the acts, which Jews read as equally applicable to homosexual acts and Paul see the action and attitude, homosexual passion as sin.⁶ This was seen as generated by sin, the action the person possesses must be appropriate by God's perspective not by other people. Paul did not embrace the notion that some are homosexual but instead explain himself that same-sex attraction as the result of the state of the mind distorted by sin. Because if the person had his or her conviction of faith, then it is far impossible to improve oneself and life, align with God's will. The standard of life must be based on your happiness and highly respected individuals. Based on Biblical principles alongside with the proper awareness of faith and willingness to be submissive.

2.4. The Core: Inside-Out

In most cases, when Christians saw a member of LGBT in the church, the most initial reaction was this person belongs to a Christian family, having raised in the tradition that goes in Sunday church service as part of Christian routine and obligation to fulfill. The mere fact is that some of these brothers and sisters especially those who are struggling with their gender identity go to church to find their lost self and try to discover their state of belongingness. Some that doubted their self and was afraid to reveal their real self because of their fear to be pre-judged by other people especially those in the church. As many people are scared of, because of their lack of self-confidence and weakened their self-esteem to reveal their real identity.

The church taught so many good values of acceptance, openness, faith, love, and care. But sometimes it is not easy to do it if we think about things that had been contradicted in the Holy Book. Like the issues of LGBT, in other words, the Christian believer had its interpretation of what was written in the Bible as a general basis of our Christian faith. With all due respect, Christians hold the position of considering LGBT as part of God's creation of humanity and that is important, to deal with them with equality and with good church moral stance.

⁶ Ibid., 42.

In this part, I would like to base in the theory of Rev. Dr. Dennis W. Wiley, pastor of the Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ in Washington, DC. Very distinguish theologian, who influence people in his positive thoughts in welcoming LGBT in the church that he called “LGBT equality within the church”. He has numerous civic and denominational commitments forefront gender or sexual orientation. His church openly welcomes lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender. Including in their Gospel choir and members of his church ministries. They involve LGBT singers to worship at church along with they are supporting those gays that are contracted with AIDS/HIV. The aim is to live free of homophobia. This faith-based initiative that he started change the lives of LGBT individual, wherein the persecution of the church and the condemnation by the language from the pulpit has been prohibited and let the LGBT members feel the idea of human rights inside the church that let them draw courage to fight for their right and ability to attain greater sense of democracy.

His theory and work toward LGBT equality within the church and all children matter that talk about the legal and social inequalities that hurt LGBT families. In his interview in the center for American progress, he emphasized on increasing the importance of LGBT rights especially in the context of the African-American community, to remind of the family and the church to allow our brothers and sisters to affirm who they are and support them. He was influenced by Martin Luther King in his theology in the matter of putting a strong emphasis on racism, materialism, and militarism as oppression and made him think about the freedom of oppression, that it has to do with the discrimination against LGBT.

He believes that homosexuality is part of the human experience. Religion is the strongest hindrance to embracing full equality in dealing with LGBT in the church. Considering the church as a central institution and the Bible as the center of the church. Having his wife to be the co-pastor in the church, it made him have a strong support force in his theory and for having the same thoughts, it made them easy to implement. They closely determine that they have an inclusive church and parented by LGBT people and let them live authentically. Through this advocacy in the church, I can say that it is God who inspired this new variety of understanding and consideration most especially to this group of the minority in church and society. The idea of having a good heart reconciled the church and the LGBT in reality, that this group of people found genuine friends and family in the church. Wherein it awakened

them from their painful experience, open up to the equality of today's standard and avoid the unjust discrimination of human beings with all the complexity.

2.5. Conclusion

Many years back, the LGBT community struggled with their rights, position, and recognition in church and society. This scope of treating LGBT or homosexual individuals had changed in the 20th century and much openly having brighter recognition and importance today. This chapter explores the theory of Jones and Yarhouse in the concept of homosexuality in scientific research and has been defined as unchangeable behavior and has been supported by some authors like Balch. Throughout the millennial time, traditional Christians have their perception and restriction towards LGBT. In the contemporary church, most Christians accept and welcome LGBT like the church of Dr. Dennis Wiley that engage this group of people in their different ministries.

Movement recognition of LGBT leaders and organizers struggled a lot to bring out different concerns regarding identity issues, homosexuality, same-sex love, and relationship. That in some countries had been accepted and prohibited in some others within the consideration of their culture, tradition, and belief. Like Israel that homosexuality is prohibited based in the Bible. LGBT people must be treated with respect because it is our thought that makes us separate from others. This kind of attitude derived from our traditional Christian behavior especially in dealing with LGBT. Be aware of the fact that the role of believers is capable of surmounting boundaries in discerning this group of people's feelings and to reflect on our variety of thoughts, the good Christian values.

Learning from the church not to ask for healing for being gay but to praise him to let people understand the power of Christ's love on the cross for everyone, the greatest love of God. Because sometimes the fight of faith tears apart from oneself and must not forget that God always fulfills His promises. Therefore Christians must be loving and non-judgmental in dealing with LGBT people and with an open heart welcoming them to the Christian community of faith. Christian positive reflection on this matter, the right way to express sexuality, to live life and embrace positive views of life, to have an appropriate pattern of life,

to serve God and at the same time express the exact feeling. In rendering services to God through His church and be a disciple of Christ. To read adequately and to understand those passages in the Bible that deal about homosexuality those that prohibit any acts of same-sex genital intimacy.

The way gay Christian can live their lives without breaking any God's law. To response towards our changing lifestyle and culture to identify in the context of the Bible, to be the witness of truth and re-examine the truth claim of the church and analyze the situation of LGBT in one time to be precise in putting limitations and be proper upon observing this group of people's action without compromising our Christian faith. The following chapter is about the theoretical perspectives applicable to this research.

Chapter Three

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will present theories that I will use in this topic including in my discussion and findings that focus on how can a church involve the LGBT group of people. To begin with, is the theory of Epistemology of the Closet by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. The queer theory that focuses on the argument that homo-heterosexual differences in the modern sexual definition that is vitally disjoined for two reasons: That homosexuality is thought to be part of a minority group and how homosexuality is gendered to be either masculine or feminine pointing out that sexuality depends on the gender of the romantic partner one make. She assumed that the gender of the person attracted to make the important elements of sexuality. Wherein the sexual variation according to Sedgwick gives room to analyze the way gender identity is shaped and thought about.

Her emphasis on making a distinction between gender and sexuality is well clarified in her book *Epistemology of the Closet*. That in this theory I will explore more to be able to understand further. In addition to this, I wish to include Michael Haas *International Human Rights 2014, A Comprehensive Introduction*. In which he discussed the comprehensive introduction to international human rights that increasingly give a wider understanding of our respected rights specifically on new dimensions and challenges of LGBT rights. Also, I will use the book *Homosexuality and the church* by Richard F. Lovelace focusing on the view of Evangelical where he elaborated five biblical texts that tell about homosexuality. Followed in this chapter that I will present the Labeling theory developed by Howard S. Becker focusing on how the self-identity and behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the a

term used to describe or classify them. Labeling theory holds that deviance is not inherent in an act instead focuses on the tendency of majorities to negatively label minorities.⁷

I will begin by presenting the Queer theory of Epistemology of the Closet where Eve Sedgwick concerns are the universalizing model and its conceptual refinements that stand behind one epistemology. To follow, Michael Haas International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction in emerging human rights, the rights of LGBT. Lastly, the Theory by Howard S. Becker Labeling theory that is still currently influential especially when it corresponds to LGBT or homosexuality. For instance, the male doing a feminine act is easily labeled as gay.

3.2. To Imagine the World Beyond the Epistemology of the Closet

I hereby present the queer theory from the book Epistemology of the Closet by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick an activist American Academic Scholar in the field of critical gender theory and queer studies. Distinguish Professor of English at City University of New York Graduate Center. It is widely considered as a founding text in queer theory that deals with the transparently empirical fact about an individual. Because knowing the individual identity and true language of sexuality is the most important subject in this thesis. A powerful feature of 20th century understanding of sexuality that shows Epistemological problems from the structure of knowledge and secrecy that organized in the homosexual closet and under the regime of that closet, the problem raised by sexual orientation. Equally, however, the internal perspective of the gay movements shows women and men increasingly, though far from uncontestedly and far from equally, working together on mutually anti-homophobic agendas.⁸

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's groundbreaking published book Epistemology of the closet in 1990 mark a significant role in the field of queer theory that reflects an interest in the issues of queer performativity. In this section, I will present her theoretical framework on the queer theory, dealing a critical analysis in the perspective of modern gay and anti-homophobic

⁷ Wikipedia Description of *Labeling*.

⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents of the University of California, 1990), 38.

theory.⁹What made up human sexuality that the answer derived from the queer theory specified in this book for our better understanding. As she describes as the central thesis of this book.

During the late 19th century, the Epistemology of the closet sexual orientation was an important definer of gender identity. Sedgwick's purpose is to show the 19th century Genesis of homo-heterosexual identity carried on the 20th-century western culture that barely influences us up to these days. In her argument that homo-heterosexual definition has been a presiding master term of the past century, primary importance for modern Western identity and social organization as doing more traditionally visible cruxes of gender arguing that chronic modern crisis of homo-heterosexual definition has affected our culture.¹⁰ It makes a new assertiveness in gay-identified and anti-homophobic theory.

Sedgwick points out opposing view that homosexual behavior can be seen as the ultimate depiction of male bonding by demonstrating binaries that she believes that this opposition cannot exist without another such as heterosexual/homosexual or male/female, etc., for instance, the crisis of sexual definition whose terms, both minoritizing and universalizing, were crystallizing so rapidly by 1891 provides structure of Billy Budd.¹¹The most famous concept of queer theory in the closet is the idea of coming out from the closet. Like, those with homosexual identity traits to conceal these traits from the general public either partially or fully. This shows the existence of homosexuality, the recognition of gender identity that plays a significant role in her research based on tradition. Sedgwick's most concern in Epistemology is the universalizing model and conceptual refinement that stand behind one epistemology. The desires of the person to find their identity can be defined as homo and heterosexual.

The book's strongest motivation is about affirmative gay and the 20th -century understanding of the definition of homo/heterosexual and anti-homophobic. A binarized identity that is full of implications. And she presented two contradictions. First, the important issues of minoritizing view as referred to as the homosexual minority and the universalizing view that

⁹ Ibid., 01.

¹⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹¹. Ibid., 92.

refers to the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities. Second, same-sex choice and the matter of similarity transitivity between genders as the reflecting impulse of separatism within each gender.¹² Upon introducing these issues it widens our understanding of policing gender and disciplinary borders. That can personally have a transformative effect creating across the culture.

Sedgwick's purpose in writing this book is to make the strongest possible introductory case for a hypothesis about the centrality of a nominally marginal, conceptually intractable set of definitional issues to the important knowledge and understanding of 20th-century Western culture as a whole.¹³ One must bear performative aspects of reader relations. That underlines the book concerning the closet definition of being revealing oneself such as a homo/heterosexual individual. The performative effects of the self-contradictory discursive field of force created by their overlap will be my subject. The impactions of homo/heterosexual definition took place in the setting, an urgent homophobic pressure to devalue one systematic form of choice.

Groups and individuals that are part of these, symbolizes the epistemology of the closet that has given an overarching consistency to gay culture and identity throughout this century is not to deny that crucial possibilities around and outside the closet that subject to change for gay people.¹⁴ Comparable to the life experiences of LGBT Christians that might be painful and rewarding in some sense where their experiences made them transformed into a more meaningful life. That is most denomination nowadays they are treated well and being hospitable. Being able to express their feelings, having transformed belief, to express and understand the authenticity of the true self, indicates the moral mandates in living as balanced lifestyle and gain the right to claim the true sexuality.

¹². Ibid., 01- 02.

¹³. Ibid., 02.

¹⁴. Ibid., 68.

3.3. Human Rights and the LGBT's Rights

In this section I will introduce the emerging important aspects of international human rights, focusing on the rights of LGBT, the moral claims of the newest dimensions in the field of human rights and challenges. The Nobel Peace Prize nominee and the author of more than 40 books on government and politics, primarily focus on human rights Michael Haas is known for his balance in the basic concepts and advanced analysis in dealing with the important issues and different fields of human rights. In his book *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction* 2014, chapter 14 of his book deals with the new dimensions and challenges that primarily tackle the LGBT rights which I will be focusing on.

In the 20th century, the first important civil rights struggle is the scope of gay right according to Sandra Day O'Connor. Where sexual activity with the same-sex has taken place for millennia.¹⁵ Many influential people use a young man in an exchange of sexual favors. Homosexual was used and abused by the person in power and authority in exchange for same-sex sexual activity. The debatable belief that such prohibitions apply to contemporary gays and lesbians has been a major source of persecution of sexual minorities. Haas cited Jeanne D'Arc leading the battle among the French army against the English, because of her manly appearance. Many speculations that she was a man and others viewed her as a woman. But in the end, she was condemned to death. Transgendered sometimes consider as non-sexual roles in society.¹⁶ In 1533, Henry VIII implemented the Buggery Law, a death penalty for same-sex intercourse.¹⁷ These lead many countries in North America adopted the same law. Also, this refers to the Sodomy Law. The right to have a same-sex relationship was not part of the early development of the concept of human rights. However, Karoly-Maria Kertbeny (1824-1882) coined the term homosexual.¹⁸ This opens up the subject of LGBT and becomes visible.

According to Haas the term gay indicate in the socio-sexual sense means that the person having the same-sex enjoy their companionship. As Sedgwick presented Wilde in her book in the concept of the modern crisis of individual identity in the intersections of sexual definition.

¹⁵ Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 2nd Edition, 2014), 462.

¹⁶Ibid., 462

¹⁷Ibid., 462

¹⁸ Ibid., 463.

Sedgwick represented Wilde as a figure because he seems the very embodiment of a new turn-of-the-century of homosexual identity, a modernist anti-sentimentality, and a late Victorian sentimentality.¹⁹ Haas relates by writing Oscar Wilde, the Picture of Dorian Gray, a novel that condemned for its homoerotic theme. In becoming lovers with Douglas and for having a same-sex relationship, he was convicted.²⁰ Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) set up a foundation in Berlin promoting a good understanding of the human sexual condition and to discriminate sexual practices.²¹ This leads to gay rights activism in Berlin and followed by the Chicago society of human rights the earliest gay rights organization in the United States. The development of recognizing certain rights developed through this act.

Haas relates the displacement of the LGBT rights to the executive order 10450 barring gay men and lesbians from all federal jobs in 1953 by President Dwight Eisenhower where many private, corporations and government agencies observed. The information was spread and intended to make sure that there are no LGBT employees. It comes to be something that the LGBT group of people deserves and equal rights as human rights. Their right to be respected and be equally valued in church and society. They seek for the right like for instance to have privacy in their private life and relationship with consideration of their sexual activity without any tension of prosecution. All these discriminations that the LGBT experience lead them to value and fight for the right as a human being. The most common concerns of gays are protected from violence and freedom from discrimination, common issues of minorities and women.

For LGBT, as they suffered unfriendly laws which varies uniformly in certain society or country they are looking for the proper treatment that suits with their sexual orientation. Like for instance, gender equality in Europe. That most LGBT individual that had a chance to work here wanted to extend their visa to stay because of the comfort and acceptance of people compare to other countries. The freedom to practice homosexual acts and live in communities with gays and lesbians for instance in Argentina, Australia, Europe, and the United States has

¹⁹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents of the University of California, 1990), 132.

²⁰Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 2nd Edition, 2014), 463.

²¹Ibid., 464.

attracted people from other parts of the world to work and live.²² LGBT friendly community oftentimes attracted gays and lesbians to stay and enjoy their living.

Haas clearly emphasized that in the year 1954, Reading University Vice-Chancellor Sir John Wolfenden (1906-1985) chairperson in the investigation of British homosexuality law, after many prosecutions. He reported in 1957 to reject homosexuality as an illness and decriminalized. Soon after, Illinois did the same. In 1967 Britain and 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed it from the list of diseases.²³ Significantly, Reverend Troy Perry, published in 1968 an advertisement asking gay Christians to meet. After that, he founded the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) where 172 denomination churches in 37 countries worldwide with Holy Union among gays and lesbian partners.²⁴ Through various acknowledgements of LGBT rights, International Lesbian and Gays Association founded in Brussels this shows that the LGBT rights movement went internationally. Many nongovernmental gays associations had developed. The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission was an asylum project in New York in the 1990s. In the present time, it broadened concerns to a full range of gender-related issues and function worldwide.²⁵

Human Rights Watch began reporting on issues involving gays and lesbians in 1996 passing non-discrimination law among this group of people. Europe provides masses of LGBT rights, sexual orientation, and gender equality. As the EU establish the European Institute for Gender Equality to implement the policies.²⁶ With Haas specification of this human rights and LGBT rights enable us to understand the series of happenings before these laws and rights had attained.

²² Ibid., 466.

²³ Ibid., 464- 465.

²⁴ Ibid., 465.

²⁵ Ibid., 466.

²⁶ Ibid., 467.

3.4. Homosexuality and the Church

In this section, I will introduce Richard F. Lovelace book of Homosexuality and the Church crisis conflict and compassion in an Evangelical perspective with five biblical texts concerning homosexuality.

Dr. Richard F. Lovelace's is trained in Spiritual Theology, a historical theologian of Christian experience, specializing in the history and theology of religious awakening in the church. Having a heterosexual orientation and sympathized with the situation of homosexual that had a strong faith in God. He has been converted from being atheist to Christianity and supported his faith in the art of homosexual believers. Having increasing concern the church to mobilize its ministers and laity behind a balanced, constructive, biblical program of social reform in culture. He defended the credibility of his denomination before a large number of ministerial candidates who have been preparing to strengthen its work. Lovelace book homosexuality and the church is a scholarly comprehensive book that deals with the issue from Evangelicals, he presents the position of historical Christian from Aquinas and Augustine through Luther and Calvin right up to Barth and Theilicke. Passages from Scripture are discussing which focus on today's Christian as the morality of sex. The structure and sequence of his book emerge from the questions of the church in evaluating the homosexual issue and include the summary of his approach to homosexuality in the form of the catechism that helps promote intelligent dialogue in the issue of denominational context.

In the introductory part of his book, he points out the most famous issue of many larges Christian denominational church about the ordination of sexually active homosexuals that bother the Biblical awareness and theological integrity of the church. Considering the reformation process of the church concerning challenges and the learning process in current teachings. Lovelace explains that it is not the mistake of the church to accept homosexuals but rather the church need to examine the latest thread to widen its understanding to value fair evaluation of this individual. Lovelace uses the same as the issue of indulgences in Martin Luther's time, to homosexuality problem that touches the nerves of many crucial spiritual and

theological questions.²⁷ Wherein it threatened the church and society with constant communication and verification of the issues. According to Lovelace the approval of active homosexual is the logical outcome of trends in the church's theology, Biblical understanding and sexual mores that developed over time.²⁸ Lovelace presented two failures of the church to the homosexual approach. First, it neglected the creation of a constructive mission among the gay subculture. Because they are afraid to be criticized or be a scandal. Second, major failure probably responsible for much of this neglect is homophobia. The inability of the church to have concern for homosexual in disapproving of active homosexual lifestyle can lead them to fail in understanding and appreciate the Gospel.²⁹ Most often homosexual believers struggle the principle of religious answer especially in their condition to the church.

Lovelace evaluated Biblical evidence for and against the legitimacy of some forms of homosexual practice.³⁰ This signifies sufficiency to establish a unified Biblical outlook on homosexuality. He illustrated five biblical texts to teach about the contrary act of homosexuals to the will of God. Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26,27, 1Corinthians 6:9,10, 1 Timothy 1:8-10. These texts explicitly describe homosexual behavior as sinful four other biblical passages convey the same judgment by implication.³¹ Genesis 19:4-9, Judges 19: 22-26, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Jude 3:23. By creating the subculture the social setting of homosexuals become marginalized that the social perspective becomes a possible risk. More of this I will use and elaborate further in my discussion. As I will go through, I will also expand this in the issues of LGBT dealing with my research questions to use these theoretical frameworks in my discussion and findings.

²⁷ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, and Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979).

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²⁸ Ibid., 11.

²⁹ Ibid., 65- 67.

³⁰ Ibid., 87.

³¹ Ibid., 98.

3.5. The Labeling Theory to LGBT

American Sociologist Howard Saul Becker made a major contribution to the sociology of deviance, art, and music. Has been a President of the American Sociological Association in 1960. A graduate of the University of Chicago School of Sociology with Erving Goffman that I will also refer to in this theory “Labeling Theory”. Becker’s book, *Outsiders* provide the foundations for labeling theory. This book was first published in 1963 and copyright renewed in 1991. In this section, I will present Becker’s theoretical framework on labeling theory and the study of deviance. He defines deviance that is not the traits of a bad individual rather as the result of others defining that person as a bad. I put this theory into consideration because labeling on an individual and social group in terms of LGBT are considered as an important subject in this thesis.

Becker describes the process of how the deviant role adopts by an individual in his study that made his work became a manifesto of labeling theory. Labeling theory concerns to special roles in society. A social role for instance that is composed of sets of expectations that is necessary to take function in society. Like deviance that does not mean as morally wrong rather a behavior that is condemned by the society that affects its relationship in society as well. Possession of deviant trait may have a generalized symbolic value so that people automatically assume that it bears possesses other undesirable traits alleged associated with it.³² In labeling theory, a person can be the label from how others look at his or her personality and behavior. A person is oftentimes aware that they can be easily judged by others. This judgment requires evaluation depending on their role and authority that can affect the image of the person being judged.

Becker provides his research on social groups deviance by making rules whose infraction creates deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. Deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions of an offender. The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied, deviant behavior is behavior that people so label. Becker emphasizes the significance of social rules define situations and the kind of behavior

³²Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, (New York: Free Press, 1991), 31.

appropriate to them, specifying some actions as right and forbidding others as wrong.³³ He believes that the person who breaks the A rule that was made purposely in a social group is considered as an outsider. That this outsider label of that person it doesn't mean that he or she is wrong just might have his or her different point of view. Howard S. Becker and Erving Goffman used the lives of the gay-identified person in their theories of labeling and interactionism. The application of labeling theory in homosexuality the justification of deviant behavior and to act appropriately line with the role of the church to involve LGBT. Becker and Goffman saw the functioning role of LGBT as well as some restrictions. Goffman believes what is a good adjustment for the individual can be better for society. In this theory, he uses the term homosexual to refer to anyone that is engaged in overt sexual practices with a member of his sex. The person that participates in a special community of understanding and reference wherein members of one's sex are defined as the most desirable sexual object.

In labeling theory, there are three topics of discussion to be reconsidered; the conception of deviance as a collective action, the demystification of deviance and the moral dilemmas of deviance theory. Where Becker intended his point in applying to sociological research analysis and reaffirming the faith that the deviance field is another kind of human activity to be studied and understand.³⁴ The purpose of presenting the theoretical framework of Labeling theory is that this theory I will use in my findings and discussion. I will highlight this in presenting the church involving LGBT people. Following to this chapter is the method used in this thesis.

³³ Ibid., 01.

³⁴ Ibid., 170.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the method use in this research. Considering the previous research in 4.1, followed by the method I used in this study in 4.2, research sources in 4.3 and the research scope and limitation in 4.4.

4.2. Previous Research

There had been more research about LGBT and the church including the issues of gender identity, sexuality, same-sex marriage and religious life of LGBT. Many famous personnel that influences this thesis like Judith Butler as she wrote the book in tittle Gender Trouble (1990) studied the understanding of sex and gender. In this book, she argued that gender like sexuality that is acted out and portrays as reality. Like Butler, Eve Sedgwick in her book Epistemology of the closet (1990) pointing out that the definition of sexuality depends on the gender of the romantic partner, she makes the assumption that the gender one has and the gender of the person one is attracted to make up the most important element of sexuality. They both introduced the Queer Theory conducted a study that focused on religious faith and LGBT. Mostly, Queer theories are used in issues about homosexuality and the church.

In the study of Christianity and LGBT, some scholars like Bronwyn Fielder and Douglas Ezzy contributed such research and studies dealing with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians. A postdoctoral researcher at the University of Tasmania, Australia Bronwyn Fielder focus on the production of inequalities in society and ways in which these inequalities can be addressed. Douglas Ezzy professor of Sociology at the University of Tasmania, Australia published eight books like Reinventing Church (2016). Fielder and Ezzy wrote the book Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christians: Queer Christians, Authentic Selves

(2017). The qualitative researcher with LGBT Christians in the Australian Metropolitan Community Church, (MCC). Illustrated theoretical analysis, contextualizing the discussion in contemporary theories of religion and same-sex attraction. Showing the life, experience, and struggle of LGBT Christians in the community to make the authentic self with the essential understanding of religion, gender and sexuality (Fielder and Ezzy, 2017).

Dr. William Loader the foremost scholar on sexuality in ancient Judaism and Christianity, who wrote five scholarly volumes on the topic like *Making Sense of Sex: Attitude towards Sexuality in Early Jewish and Christian Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), *The New Testament on Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) etc. affirming view of same-sex relations and advice to take the Bible seriously that it restricts all forms of same-sex relations. He argues that the faithful application of the Bible to contemporary ethics can be considered to other fields related to gender and sexuality.

PhD. in Marquette University, leader of a theological study of sex, gender and sexuality Dr. Megan DeFranza in her book *Sex Difference in Christian Theology* shows the challenges of interpreting the Bible for contemporary theology and ethics made her consider the non-affirming view of homosexuality. She believes that Biblical passages are not focused on on same-sex union. The study conducted by PhD. in Durham University a Biblical scholar and theologian that wrote an essay and books Dr. Wesley Hill was an identified gay Christian. Argue from the non-affirming view of same-sex relation using prohibition in passages such as Leviticus 18:22, 20:23, Romans 1:16-26, Corinthians 6:9, 1Timothy1: 9-10 setting conversation with the theology of marriage, sex, and procreation that illustrated Augustine as his previous dialogue partner.³⁵

Lastly, PhD. of King's College London, a high acclaim author, and a pro-life theologian Stephen Holmes. His essay focuses on a theology of sex and marriage that argues the prohibition passages Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27, et.al are important. He emphasis that sex and marriage are oriented toward procreation and the same-sex couple cannot procreate. He follows Augustine in defining marriage as the foundation for subsequent Christian theological reflection on homosexuality. In spite of his non-affirming position, he is open to

³⁵ William Loader, et al., *Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible and the Church*, (Zondervan Academic, 2016), 13- 14.

some pastoral accommodation for gay and lesbian couple in the church.³⁶ The book published by an evangelical Christian publisher, *Two views on homosexuality, the Bible, and the church* (2016) give attention to Christian A tradition that brought the Bible to a conversation with historical and systematic theology. Wherein the Biblical scholars and theologians tackle the issues of sexuality and gender in two views. Such as in affirming view William Loader and Megan K. DeFranza. On the traditional view, Wesley Hill and Stephen R. Holmes create a constructive dialogue and respect toward one another and pointed arguments for their position without demeaning the other. Give importance on the high view of the Scripture, commitment to the Gospel, the church and the love for people that discuss faith and sexuality. The contributors show a high view of Scripture and love for people concern in this topic believing God as the author of the Bible.

4.3. Method Use

This thesis represent hermeneutical approach (textbase interpretation) of different perspectives found in the Bible, books and church articles on how a church involves the LGBT group of people dealing with four research questions that deals with both theological as well as more practical questions, the view of the Bible as well as the question of church hospitality as it may stand in tension to the apparently theological restrictions given in some part of the Bible. Hermeneutics takes the position that nothing can be interpreted free of some perspective, the most priority is to capture the perspective and elucidate the context of the people being studied. The researcher's perspective must be explicit when interpreting.³⁷

For better understanding with this different approach to these issues of LGBT in the church, the textbase study will explore in this thesis. This thesis is purposely made to execute an open way of understanding and organize changes accordingly for what is just and valid. To have a proper strategic approach for the common good that this thesis will serve as an information system and a bridging factor to consider both parties (church and LGBT) to introduce change or improvement when it comes to respecting and proper way of consideration system. The

³⁶ Ibid., 14.

³⁷ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, (Sage Publications: 3rd Edition, 2002).

success and appealing factors of this thesis are by being useful for further studies and as a tool to be used by LGBT to exercise a good acceptance and balanced lifestyle in the Christian world. This thesis uses the textbase hermeneutical research method, in this field of study I will look into different books, church articles and personal testimonies of LGBT people and the church for more practical point of views so that information and data are more accurate and trustworthy align and to get answers to my research questions. The theoretical framework of this research is base on Biblical sources, the queer and labeling theories also human rights-based. The church articles to be evaluated to have the authentic information that I may enable to relate, apply and to highlight on how this information can take support into the recent issues that I am dealing with. The practical questions indeed are very helpful to limit my discussion on my field of studies to acquire the deeper vision and that can take effect in my broader understanding of my topic.

I choose this topic out of my curiosity to have a good understanding. As I observe in some denominations that these issues are so crucial, sensitive and non-acceptable. On the other hand in other churches, some of these issues had been legalized and accepted. I would like to study and learn more to explore my ability to the scope that is valid and acceptable to humankind and by the will of God. Because I know for myself that I have known a little about this topic. Christians, as we are, have different experiences in our congregation. Our emotional and relational experience varies with the inclusive practice of our church. Wherein in most cases LGBT individuals experience prohibition and pre-judged by people especially in church. In the context of Christian hostility towards LGBT as committed Christians thus they negotiate their gender identity to the extent that without compromising their religious faith.

4.4. Research Materials

This is theoretical research using hermeneutical approach. I believe that this is an effective method of collecting information applicable to my research, addressing the church and the LGBT. To give meaning and provide useful means to access data-gathering to obtain answers to my research questions. With the use of this approach, it can take a position that nothing can be interpreted free of some perspective, the most priority is to capture the perspective and

elucidate the context of being studied. As a researcher, the perspective must be explicit when giving meaning.³⁸

I will mainly focus on two theories in this thesis, the queer and labeling theory. The queer theory is used to determine the nature of LGBT and relevant concepts applicable to my research question and sub-questions. This queer theory is adherence to the use of Sedgwick's book *Epistemology of the Closet*, which meets the central aims and focus of this research. This served as an orientational approach focused on sexual orientation, to social constructionist insights and added a poststructuralist critique to the unified autonomous self like the LGBT orientation. As a deconstructive enterprise taking part, the view of self defines by something in their core, such as in sexual desire, race, gender or class.³⁹ Beckers book *Outsider: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* is used as my primary source in using labeling theory to be supported by Erving Goffman books like *Stigma and The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* that are used as my secondary sources. This theory is applicable in both the church and the LGBT in many situations including character projections.

Michael Haas book *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction, second edition*, focusing on chapter fourteen that provides detailed descriptions of various rights and laws intended to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. The use of human rights law and LGBT rights lead us to respond to the call to gender equality. Some Biblical passages are used for truthful responses that can be a reliable source of this thesis. Jones and Yarhouse book *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate*, Lovelace book *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, Robertson book *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, and the *Holy Bible (NRSV)*, are also used as primary sources. These are potentially being used to answer questions to strengthen my findings and understanding. I use secondary sources to deal with these issues to expand furthest especially in using some church articles, books, and related documents as consider as useful materials in this research. My practical observations, attending LGBT activities such as gay pride, attending church services in different Christian

³⁸ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, (Sage Publication, 2002 Third Edition), 125.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

denominations, and direct interaction with LGBT's and the church are used as supporting evidence to maintain accuracy in this research. These are the tools I used to gather more additional information to support the theories I used in this thesis. Primary and secondary sources in this thesis listed in chapter nine.

4.5. Research Scope and Limitation

My research scope will be on theological, practical questions, the view of the Bible, and the hospitality of the church. Considering the theological restrictions of the Bible and the consideration of LGBTs right. I will limit my topic to the research questions. I aim to understand the situation of LGBT and the church to verify the good moral that strictly has a Biblical basis, the validity that comes from God. I choose the queer theory to consider the relevance of sexuality and faith. By using the labeling theory, the main concern is to identify the socio-cultural relation and identity. This I believe can build balance and fair treatment upon dealing with these issues. Accessible materials are used in this research that most appropriate for. There are inherent limitations to strictly focus on my topic because the issues of LGBT in the church is a huge and sensitive topic.

The effectiveness of the method used in this research supported in the texts and situations in which it is ethically justified in church and society. My research questions recognize learnings that replicate a firmer claim of understanding. Wherein the framework of learning can serve as a bridge to accomplish better research that provides an approachable way of understanding.

Chapter Five

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

5.1. Introduction

In the following chapter, I will give focus on same-sex marriage. Giving insights from the Norwegian Lutheran Church and to give traces from the experiences in the global context; human rights as gay rights and their significance based on the universal law. Wherein the struggle of LGBT rights needs a gradual change of acceptance in church and society. To remove the fence and barriers between the traditional Christian believers and give support for gender equality rights. In the United Declaration of Human Rights that gives more significance on gender equality and respect to the LGBT community. To examine how LGBT couple enjoys the same-sex rights in the context of Norwegian Lutheran Church, its development and accepted with the responsibility to take care. This is in the second part of this chapter that enables LGBT in Norway to rejoice with full citizen rights in the church and had legally recognized. In 1977 the church of Norway accepted homosexual orientation but not sexual practice. Yet they were free from the law of gender discrimination.⁴⁰ This becomes a difficult uphold to public opinion and became an argument in church and society. LGBT are restricted and having certain boundaries and limitations in exercising their rights.

By the growth of faith third part of this chapter, is about the process of same-sex marriage in the church. The responsibility to take care of Synod members. The liberal Synod members were victorious with the result of the legalization of the same-sex union. Given consideration to the equality of rights. The conservative side stand for their views and arguments bringing up God's design of marriage. Yet failed their purpose but still accepted the outcome. In line with the understanding of Scripture and usage to the issue of homosexuality. The debates of

⁴⁰ Jens Rydstrom, "Don't forget that Matrimony is a holy act, even when it is a civil ceremony" changes in sexual norms and the conceptualization of gay families in Scandinavia since the 1990s, (Link to publication Rydstrom, J. 2011. Presented at American Historical Association's, 125 annual meeting Boston, Massachusetts, United States, 2011), 03.

Church Synod members on same-sex marriage in the church. The Commission was divided into two groups. One group that is in favor of the homosexuality living-together and the opposition that believes and respects that homosexuals can attend the church gathering but contradict the point of having a union in the church such as living-together. The fourth part of this chapter is about the understanding and the use of Scripture to the issues of homosexuality in Norway and the last part is my chapter summary.

5. 2. Echoed from Experience

In international human rights discourse, the state development of sexual rights was traced in the 1990s. In this year two of the most important book was written, entitled *Sexual Orientation: A human right and sexual orientation*.⁴¹ The book was written by Robert Wintemute, *Sexual Orientation: A human right- an easy on international human rights law*.⁴² The sexual orientation and human rights that the United States Constitution, the European convention and Canadian charter in 1994 Amnesty International published a report in sexual orientation “*Breaking the Silence: Human Rights Violation based on Sexual Orientation*”.⁴³ This Amnesty had a campaign for gay rights that are human rights, entail the concept of sexuality and rights. The understanding of sexuality deals with different cultures and societies. The way of understanding and consideration might different between one another but the main emphasis and focus are in the universal right.

It suggests, to be examined depending on the cultural context and the right claim associated with it. In 2011 resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council in human rights sexual orientation and gender identity.⁴⁴ Human Rights Council Resolution- Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity which adopted on September 26, 2014, and the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity adopted on June 30, 2016.

⁴¹ Erik Heinze, *Sexual Orientation: A Human Rights and Sexual Orientation* (Springer Netherlands, 1995).

⁴² Robert Wintemute, *Sexual Orientation: Human Rights: An Easy in International Human Rights Law*, (Routledge1995).

⁴³ Amnesty International 1994: *Breaking the Silence: Human rights violations based on sexual orientation*.

⁴⁴ U.N.G.A. Human Rights Council, *Human Rights Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* June 15, 2011 United Nation Doc. A/HRC/17/L9/Rev. 1.

A message by Navi Pillay, United Nations high commissioner for human rights; issued the statement honoring the international day against homophobia. “Homophobia: Punish violence and hatred, not love”.⁴⁵ Talk about the situation of LGBT people all over the world in all ages facing discrimination in many places such as at home, work, in school and in many situations. Such as the national law many countries are against LGBT people having a same-sex partner and consider it as a criminal offense to the point that they suffer major circumstances. In some cases, they were been killed for being in a relationship with the same-sex. Pillay acknowledges LGBT right to life. Granting LGBT a special right for freedom and discrimination to make the whole world as possible a safe place for LGBT people and for everyone to let the universal human rights implemented to give respect to LGBT sexual orientation and sexual identity. She suggested to recognized LGBT community and challenged the homophobic attitude to love and understand. The need for taking action through proper education and adequate recognition of equal rights for all must be highly needed.

These human rights adopted in the context of orientation and gender identity with the provision of not discriminating within the given rights. The universal rights endowed with right and dignity. “Amnesty International expended the mandate of Gay rights”.⁴⁶ With the consistent drive of Amnesty International, the organization’s work was expanded. The gay rights in Amnesty International- the USA in 1994 marked the publication of the first gay right report.⁴⁷ Followed by the UK in 1997 and the action on gay right in Amsterdam in 1998. Employing a liberal identity model of human rights and gay rights that open the door to queer and change in the life of the LGBT in their works and lives. Like for instance the transgender that admit their transsexual identity “revealing the performative structure of gender”.⁴⁸ The view of Judith Butler’s American feminist was been influential where she said that gender is performative, it needs to be done again and again to take effect. She argued that there is

⁴⁵ Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-_kzl-_mrg&feature=youtu.be.

⁴⁶ Amnesty International: 1999, *The louder We Will Sing: Campaigning for Lesbian and Gay Human Rights* Pages32- 33.

⁴⁷ Amnesty International note 28.

⁴⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (UK: Routledge 1990), 128-141.

nothing natural in the meanings that we attribute to masculinity or femininity.⁴⁹ Thus transsexual differs from dragging it, by creating a personal choice (man or woman) than imitating. Further notes that sexual identity in general sense grows out with modernity that strengthened and interrogates identity. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects the right to liberty and security. Protect individual freedom from unreasonable detention as opposed to protecting personal freedom.⁵⁰ These include freedom in sexual liberty, to consider the discrimination and prohibition of the same-sex relationship of LGBT individuals. Thus it requires strong justification and legal recognition to have equal treatment in their relationship with their respected partners. The rights to be recognized as a couple in the context of same-sex partnership subordinate same-sex liberty and develop same-sex rights that enable the marriage to be normalized.

In Norway, around the year 2009 same-sex civil marriage and adoption existed and had been open to gays and LGBT individuals. The church in the said year authorized the ordination of homosexuals. In 2014, the proposal for this union was rejected. In passing years, some members of Synod voted in favor of same-sex marriage but the church needs to adopt special liturgy before they can officially get married in the church. The Survey showed in 2015, 73% of Norway's population were registered as members of the church. Norway's Evangelical Lutheran Church adopted the new liturgy that allows the member of LGBT couple to marry in church. In the year 2016, it was the year of recognition eighty-eight, out of one hundred and fifteen voted in favor of this same-sex union and recognition. Which cause other Christian denomination an alarming situation and do still contradict this idea. More of these issues will be elaborated further in the following chapter.

5.3. Responsibility to Take Care

In this part, I would like to clarify that I am not in favor of the legalization of same-sex marriage in the church. For me, base don my belief and background but I don't have any issues with LGBT couples getting married in the church because that is their right to claim. I

⁴⁹ A discussion document from the house of Bishops Group on *Issues in Human Sexuality: Some issues in human sexuality A Guide to a debate*, 2003, 179.

⁵⁰ UDHR- *Human Rights are the Right to Liberty, Privacy, and Equality*.

have so much respect for this group of people and the church that made the decision. To see the debate process and the views of both sides (in favor with and the opposition) here I claim as the purpose of my thesis the value of respect between these two sides and remain as one church. By putting restrictions between boundaries the church can be well functioned and all work for the common good.

In Norway, the struggle of LGBT couples to have legal recognition in the church was a series of a roller coaster ride. The Lutheran World Federation dealing the relationship of church commitment to unity and the church commitment to human rights. Challenges came especially when human rights in opposition to Biblical values. The church interpretation plays a significant role and this area needs consideration.⁵¹ Working in church inclusiveness and unity, the challenges give an impact in working with human rights. The value of unity in the context of the church, take a life-stance that our moral value is appropriate in certainty. The Norwegian Lutheran Church took part in working this out with the diversity of the church as a source of the said values and that know how to balance with the concern of human rights.

The self-understanding of the Lutheran Communion draws on the proposed guidelines and processes for respectful dialogue, a source received by the Lutheran World Federation Council in 2007.⁵² This open conversation between Lutheran World Federation members and the church regarding the issue of same-sex marriage in the communion of churches that made each part the value of good conversation. The general synod in 2007 discuss the issue of same-sex partnership and made provision in the church and come up with the result of 2015 church election, wherein the majority of general synod member voted in favor with the liturgy of same-sex marriage. Bishops conference posed an additional liturgy for a same-sex couple, in addition to current marriage liturgy. The final decision in 2016 the General Synod announced that some members disagreed with the proposal but does not lead the church to divide arguing that the current liturgy retains and the priest have their freedom to initiate or not the same-sex couple union. The same year, the decision was made legal in the Norwegian Church. The goal is to unite the church even that they disagreeing in some aspect. They stood

⁵¹ WCC Faith and Order-Document, *Moral Discerning in the church*, (WCC2014).

⁵² The Lutheran World Federation: *Marriage, Family, and Human Sexuality. Proposed Guidelines and Processes for Respectful Dialogue*, (Available in <https://www.lutheranworld.org/family-marriage-and-sexuality>).

in their theological views and defend on it at the same time they put respect in between them which reflects the message of Christ call to unity.

5.4. The growth of faith: Understanding and use of Scripture to the Issue of Homosexuality in Norway

Odd Bondevik, the Bishop of Møre raised a public statement about the Understanding and Use of Scripture to the Issue of Homosexuality as the Doctrinal Commission of the Church of Norway concern with Evangelical Lutheran teaching.

After the German invasion, the church of Norway is more equipped for new challenges⁵³. Bishop Berggrav's issues with the state show the church and the state to settle its ethical issues. The relationship of the church and its people lead the church to have a new interpretation especially in the struggle of the church and the importance of respect and a good communication method in dealing with the situation. To encounter the love of God and inspiration for many the state must follow God's law and order in society and value respect in dealing with the different conflicts. The church of Norway saw the doctrine of the two realms had paralyzed the Lutheran Church in Germany to national socialist ideology and politics⁵⁴. Bishop Berggrav once said this is the independence of the church against the totalitarian state where it is under the rule of God. That the state must observe God's law and order.

The doctrine of two realms become a guide and support for civil resistance.⁵⁵. Stated on page 289 to 290 as follows:

1. Division functions between the Spiritual and worldly realm provided a theological foothold to limit the power of the Nazi state.

⁵³ *Understanding of Scripture and Use of Scripture with Particular Reference to the Issue of Homosexuality: Statement by the Doctrinal Commission of the Church of Norway on a matter raised by the Bishop of Møre, Church of Norway National Council, (Published in January 2006), 288.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 289.

2. The worldly realm is obliged to subordinate itself to God's order and commands led to the position that the Nazi state's ideology and political practice are subject to Christian ethical evaluation. The church has authority.
3. The doctrine of the two realms functions that the church makes God's law concrete that shapes society's life and the church speak human rights in a political conflict situation.
4. The doctrine of two realms is used to maintain the autonomy and independence of the church to the state for example in dealing with faith and ethics. To church as a community of faith.⁵⁶

Two foci Norway Church Resistance

1. The church fight for social justice and human rights.
2. The church fight for freedom and independence from the Nazi totalitarian state⁵⁷.
Norwegians church members fight for their political freedom base in the Norwegian Constitution and human rights.

Statement raised by Bishop of Møre, Odd Bondevik understanding and use of Scripture concerning the issue of homosexual. Where the commissions provide statement conserving Evangelical Lutheran teaching. On August 20, 2002, Bondevik requested doctrinal clarification of the issue of homosexuality by the doctrinal commission of the church of Norway to provide doctrinal clarification. For the opposition, side claims the authority of the Scripture as the main basis of their view.⁵⁸ On the meeting, October 2, 2002, Doctrinal Commission discussed the request from Bishop of Møre. The Commissions considering the issue of understanding the Scripture as a reference to the issue of homosexuality including the process and use of interpretation the Scripture by considering the ethical perspective of living-together in line with the view of current church situation.

⁵⁶ Cf. Torleiv Austad, *The doctrine of God's Twofold Governance in the Norwegian Church Struggle from 1940 to 1945: Fifteen Thesis in Ulrich Duchrow(ed.), Lutheran Churches- Salt or Mirror of Society? (Case studies on the Theology and Practice of the Two Kingdoms Doctrine, Geneva 1977), 84- 94.*

⁵⁷ *Understanding of Scripture and Use of Scripture with Particular Reference to the Issue of Homosexuality: Statement by the Doctrinal Commission of the Church of Norway on a matter raised by the Bishop of More, Church of Norway National Council, (Published in January 2006), 292.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

The Commissions listen to homosexual experiences and consider the context of Biblical text used. An open church group of homosexuals explained to the Commission the situation of Christian homosexuals the rejection and condemnation they experience in church. On the contrary, the Commission concern that all people deserve to feel embrace with God's love. It is important to note that the Commission as recorded in §15 that the Commission does not recommend administrative follow up of doctrinal matter.⁵⁹ This doctrinal statement contains views and reflection subject for public discussion/debate.

The Commission outline some perspective in a cultural social situation in some issues like living together to Christian ethics. Pointing out that marriage today is a choice between partners. "Hafstad, a Commission member gives his positive view on the development of cohabitation, marriage, and divorce and emphasizes the individualism of today's society.⁶⁰ Thus the Commission view in gender theory to how the gender and sexuality in their respective cultural patterns of the understanding trace from traditional history of individuality interpretation of biological facts. The Commission concluded that marriage under its reciprocal consent and the public contract between two partners, an appropriate framework of love and sexual living-together.

Riksaasen Dahl, Gullaksen, Hafstad, Kjøllass, Krogseth, Lappegard, Larsen, Laupsa, Karlsen Seim and Wagle were Commission members positively view current civil legislation. On the other hand, Austad, Bergem, Bondevik, Baasland, G. Hagesæther, O.D. Hagesæther, Kvarme, Sandvik, Skjævesland and Ådna were the Commission members believe that living-together involving homosexual acts contradict the framework for sexual living-together following the Scripture the idea that church holds on to, for sexual living-together.⁶¹ Some Commission members saw the importance of having a union between man and woman as an order of creation. Whereas, a same-sex couple can have legal partnership registration because this Commission members believe that marriage is a sacred union between man and woman. Commission members Kjølaas, Lappegard, and Karlsen Seim define marriage, registered

⁵⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

partnership and marriage like cohabitation having a ground of gender-neutral marriage law according to Hafstad.⁶²

Scripture is always subject to interpretation. The Commissions make sure that the Biblical texts can be clearly understood for whom it was written the contextual examination of the text and to properly relate in our time to the church interpretation. There are three principles that the Commissions put into consideration found on page seven.

1. The distinction between center and periphery.
2. The relationship between the Old and New Testaments.
3. The clarity of the Scripture.

Where human beings reach an ethical insight through reason and nature with experience and understanding the basic living conditions. The Scripture serves the highest norm for church life and doctrine focusing on the value of human dignity and respect.

In Leviticus 18: 22, 20: 13, 1 Corinthians 6, 9- 11, 1 Timothy 1, 9-10 and Romans 1, 26-27. These texts were examined by the Commission dealing with homosexual acts.⁶³ They use this in their arguments to present the interpretation of the Biblical texts. Karlsen Seim, Ådna and Baasland presented the same account of homosexuality in Greco-Roman time where homosexual practices and relationship in Greek culture was accepted and supported that makes it similar in any same-sex relationship today.⁶⁴

The Commission found a Biblical perspective to consider Biblical interpretation dealing with these passages concerning homosexual acts. They supported it and had given emphasize using the Gospel of Christ. Riksaasen Dahl, Gullaksen, Hafstad, Kjølås, Krogseth, Lappégard, Larsen, Laupsa, Karlsen Seim and Wagle, pointing Jesus as the center of the Scripture and role model of the church that welcome's everyone. The message of loving the neighbor and respecting one another at the same time this concept of love to all people includes homosexuals.

⁶² Ibid., 6.

⁶³ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 8.

Another statement given by these members was the order of creation couldn't be the basis of this argument because everyone is created in God's image.⁶⁵ The ethical requirement applies to everyone. Marriage does not limit in the present time and it differs from the cultural context when the Scripture was written. The possibility of living-together with mutual commitment among homosexual is far beyond the Biblical text concerning homosexuality. Christians have already moved past Augustine's assessment of pro-creation as the justification of marriage, and for good reasons, procreation is never presented in the Bible as an essential component of marriage.⁶⁶ The commission members on this side further note that everyone is a call to live their sexuality responsibly. Arguing that homosexual might show love faithfully and responsible relationship where the social ethics of living-together that the church proved it with credibility.

Austad, Bergem, Bondevik, Baasland, G. Hagesæther, O.D. Hagesæther, Kvarme, Sandvik, Skjævesland and Ådna were the Commission member that does not found that the church has Biblical grounds for recognizing homosexual.⁶⁷ They use Genesis 1-2 the creation story to enlighten and have a better understanding. They also emphasized in males and females having a union and arguing that Biblical texts reject homosexuals to live together.⁶⁸ As Jesus and Paul in most of their teachings gave importance in creation and marriage.

The Commission agreed that changes in cultural and social situations affect the ethical norms of Scripture and consider some relevant issues that most likely relevant to homosexual living-together and the Commission noted their awareness that the Biblical passages contradict homosexual acts. The opposition side of homosexual living-together strongly emphasized that this is contradicting the Scripture in line with the importance of family (man, woman, and children). On the other hand, those Commission that is supporting homosexual living-together put into a higher extent of pursuing principles to have a better understanding of the Scripture passages intended to a homosexual that give importance in the present situation of the church.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁶ Megan K. DeFranza et al., *Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible and the Church*, (Zondervan Academic November 29, 2016), 204.

⁶⁷; *Understanding of Scripture and Use of Scripture with Particular Reference to the Issue of Homosexuality: Statement by the Doctrinal Commission of the Church of Norway on a matter raised by the Bishop of MoreChurch of Norway National Council*; Published in January 2006: page 10

⁶⁸ Ibid., 10.

The Commission members believe that the Scripture is a testimony of God's revelation as the church teaches and they took the Biblical passages concerning homosexual as written with a history behind and might need new revision or consideration for better understanding. The disagreement revolves around the understanding of creation, marriage, reference to the person of Jesus and His teachings, the relationship between Jesus and Paul and the ideas of people's lives.⁶⁹ It gave importance to the texts addressing homosexual acts to understand in a contemporary context concerning Biblical passages.

Ådna stated that the statement of those Commission members supporting homosexual living-together emphasis Scripture as a witness to revelation. The Commission members that contradict the issue of living-together indicate the necessity of the authority of the Scripture in ethical question.⁷⁰ They believe that these issues also concern the order of the liturgy. The Commission valued the Scripture as the testimony of God's revelation in Jesus as the highest authority of church doctrine, life, and proclamation. Wherein during the debate, both parties discussed the church interpretation of these texts. But they had different views of interpretation as they emphasized church unity, they had decided that they don't need to agree with each other's ideas but to respect each view.

5.5. Summary

Many same-sex couples grow their faith in the church by this acknowledgment that they are accepted to be part of Christian liturgy. The same-sex partnership equally diverse a minority but a significant one for whom the natural sexual orientation is towards people of their same-sex. The more people share experience, the more it became widely accepted.⁷¹ Norwegian Lutheran Church Synod members that are in favor of the legalization of same-sex marriage increasingly believe in their faith in gay marriage. Seeing themselves to do what is right for LGBT citizens. This orientation, cause a lifestyle change arguably, public opinion about the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁷¹ Megan K. DeFranza et a., Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible and the Church, (Zondervan Academic November 29, 2016), 18.

issue of same-sex union in the Norwegian Church. LGBT orientation and activity always accompanied by the question of morality and sexuality.

Rydstrom, J.2011 highlights the idea of how the chairman of Danish Lesbian and Gay Association Else Slange, convince the Danish state church to allow lesbian and gay marriage in the church.⁷² In her article, Slange appeal to the church to allow the same-sex union in the Danish State Church, generally also referring to Scandinavia to have a full marital right and gender equality law. However, allowing this to use correspondingly to be legal the state and in the church. This regulation gives an equal right to the LGBT couple. Over the years, these issues gained many negative comments in the church and took a lot of reactions and refusal before it was legalized. In Norway, religious arguments become authentic because of the oppositions based on Biblical studies.

Debates, articles in newspapers, media and television, between different religious groups goes national and reach to global level against gay or same-sex marriage in the church. Nowadays, the Christian democratic parties in Norway still oppose same-sex marriage that becomes a contested situation in the church, even though it is legally accepted still LGBT remains a minority in the church and the controversies still make a huge noise in the Christian community.

⁷² Jens Rydstrom, “Don’t forget that matrimony is a holy act, even when it is a civil ceremony” changes in sexual norms and the conceptualization of gay families in Scandinavia since the 1990s, (Link Publication 2011).

Chapter Six

FINDINGS

6.1. Introduction

The research question for this thesis asks about the stand of an inclusive church in dealing with LGBT:

How can a church involve the LGBT group of people?

In this chapter, I will present the findings from the research conducted through hermeneutical study, personal observation in churches of Norway and interviewing personalities like church leaders and LGBT individuals. I am seeking an understanding of the importance of religious faith and sexual identity. The study sought to find out the response of the church and also to know the situation of LGBT inside the congregation.

This chapter presents the different interaction and interpretation in line with the light of my research question and sub-questions and related literature specifically on the role of faith handling the conflict. I will present the findings from the research conducted on my topic as I am eager to understand how attending the church to deal with LGBT. In the process of my research and hearing testimonies from LGBT people. I consider them as an important material in this research with information from church members and church leaders as I consider them as informative to my research.

This is consist of two main parts firstly, the faith and sexual identity, and secondly, the ethics of LGBT rights and Biblical perspective of the church as the basis of a true claim. Under each of these part are topics that are related. The first part talks about faith and sexuality focusing on the experience of LGBT in the church concerning their religious faith and their standpoint as identified as LGBT. The last part of this chapter is the intriguing ethical understanding of LGBT rights, Biblical views and the role of the church as a Christian home. I choose this to

have a better understanding of how a church can deal with LGBT individual of being a Christian and homosexual.

I will present this by giving views, experiences, stories, and testimonies from my field of studies coming from different kinds literatures and personal observation. I will use some important quotes that are related to this issue for better understanding. To illustrate further and to be able to understand the experiences of my subject which are the LGBT and the church. In presenting my findings, I would like to use theories that can describe the situation, experiences and the stand of this group of people involved.

6.2. Faith and Sexual Identity

In this part, I will consider the experience of the church and the LGBT Christians. How this individual can defend their faith and Spiritual commitment in the church while they have an issue on sexual identity. What are the contributions of both parties to prioritize the good moral values and to be able to avoid conflict?

6.2.1. Faith: A crusading Judgment

Faith refers to the strong belief in the doctrine of a religious-based on Spiritual conviction. It can also simply mean complete trust. While sexual identity is how a person thinks of oneself in terms of to whom one is morally sexually attracted. It simply means sexual attraction.

In the life of LGBT Christians, the question of faith and sexual identity always go together. Especially when it comes to how they practice their Christian faith. As Richard F. Lovelace explained the new approach of homosexuality in chapter two of his book. He stated on how the wrong traditional concept of homosexuality; wherein homosexuals are welcome in the church as long as they had repented and sexually inactive but on the contrary, those who are actively practicing they are called sinners and this is considered as illness. Proponents of the integrity of homosexual orientation claim that a person didn't choose to be homosexual but are born to homosexual orientations that affirm the genetic disposition for homosexuality as part of God's creation. Other claims that all of us homosexuals and heterosexuals should be of

whom we are is a matter of personal choice. Whereas the opposition of homosexual activists claim that heterosexual emphasized faithfulness in marriage. Ignoring the validation of non-essentialist has the tendency to agree or contradict that homosexual orientation is determined by birth.⁷³ This view of orientation is inconsistent that individuals have the option to exercise the freedom to act or not in such orientation. Balch insisted that many churches allow an inactive homosexual to be ordained as they are qualified and the active homosexual is not allowed to be ordained. Christian faith does not pronounce our moral base on our orientation at birth.

Here I will present two contradictory beliefs regarding homosexual orientation. The first one is inborn and another one that is acquired. The reassessment of human sexuality on the basis of new theological reflection of the church tradition wherein the sexual orientation is not inborn but learn to nurture into being that the whole thrust of Scripture make responsible to shape your own sexual responses in the pattern where God expresses His plan. Clinton R. Jones in his book *homosexuality and Counseling* 1974 said that homosexuality is normal and homosexual acts are not immoral. He cites an example where Jesus does not condemn people yet accept and welcome everyone. This view also had the same points as Brandan J. Robertson in his book *The Gospel of Inclusion* 2019.⁷⁴ For me, it gives more importance in developing years of LGBT and the church and in modern Christianity. As Robertson centers in the inclusion of sexual and gender minorities to the full life of the church. Where he has a compelling assessment of the Biblical text, cultural context and modern social movements that the thrust of the Christian Gospel invites the church towards the creation of the world.

This leads the church to expand its understanding of God's love and LGBT to understand and affirm submissively. In fact, the theological and Biblical justification is needed to consider this in our culture and society the necessity to present denominational views in order to discover the values of Christ. The contradicting view when it comes to homosexual behavior issues. According to J. Isamu Yamamoto in his book *The Crisis of Homosexuality* 1990. The

⁷³ David L. Balch, *Homosexuality, Science and the Plain Sense of Scripture*, (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co., April 2000), 270.

⁷⁴ Brandan J. Robertson, *The Gospel of Inclusion "A Christian Case for LGBT± Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publisher 2019).

liberal church believes that homosexual behavior and orientation is unchangeable.⁷⁵ This belief, leads the church to accept LGBT in the church with who they are. As a result of this belief the gay rights movement and those who had advocacy on gay liberation develop programs on homosexuals and reshape their understanding of religion and morality. The question is that can change is possible for homosexual? Psychology study documented some change. Responsible Christian ministries aim to release strugglers from the bandage of their homosexual pattern.⁷⁶ He indicated that this might subject to change in due time.

The most basic problem and struggle of LGBT individuals is the acceptance of the church with their gender preference. Base on my interview of these individuals that they were in the process of finding the right church for themselves. That accepts them and allowed to attend church service and practice of faith. Sedgwick argued that it needs a lot of energy and demarcation in the issues of the nineteenth century like Europe and the United States was rampantly expanded the relation of homosexuality goes wider that become problematic for gender, sexuality, and economic structures.⁷⁷ She cited an example of gender discrimination. The eighth-grade teacher Acanfora of Maryland lost her job by the board of education because he is gay. The issue of his sexuality, he appealed to the court regarding his disqualification as a gay teacher but the Supreme Court denied and disagreed with his appeal. Being a gay disqualified him to be a teacher and denied his employment.⁷⁸

The present task of the church is to seek for righteousness from faith in God, not in history or dogma. Like Paul did in his time. To reinterpret them a base in our day that is applicable to important theological principles related to God's faithfulness and love. Giving into consideration the truth that God reveals from different sources like theology, sociology, natural science, philosophy, history, and art.⁷⁹ Like for instance the Old Testament texts that they were written in a specific time period for a certain group of people that means these texts might be applicable or not in our present time. These are denominational studies that focus on homosexual behavior, for instance, The Council on Theology and of the Southern

⁷⁵ Isamu J. Yamamoto, *The Crisis of Homosexuality: How the Church can Promote Hope and Healing for Gays and Lesbians*, (Wheaton, IL Victor Books, 1st Edition 1990), 166.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁷⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents University of California, 1990), 71.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

⁷⁹ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1978), 58.

Presbyterian Church before what so-called Committee on Church and Society. They set new interpretation of the Biblical texts and new theological arguments defending some forms of homosexual behavior against conservative counter-arguments. It concludes that due to conflict the disagreement between Christian and the experience of homosexuals had been affected. They found out that the theological problem of conservative Christians caused homosexuals were not sexually reoriented because of disapproval of the ministry by receiving themselves as active homosexuals.⁸⁰

On pages 58-59 Lovelace points out the view of sin and repentance. In 1978 the Advisory Council on Church and Society of the United Presbyterian Church presented the report with three documents. A majority report in favor of the ordination of self-affirmed sexually active homosexuals that is qualified and minority report contradicts this position. The background research starts with extensive and useful dealing with the current scientific view of homosexuality including the diversity of theology and subject evaluation in a certain community and analyzes the Biblical text concerning homosexuality. The conservative interpretations include the early chapter of Genesis and other texts dealing with sexuality. The argument goes with the specification from the author and developed four alternative tracks of opinion on homosexuality. Firstly, all homosexual behavior is sinful, base on Biblical and confessional data. Secondly, employing lines of argument congenial to Mary Evangelicals and other theological conservatives. Thirdly and Fourthly, argue that homosexual behavior may be virtues develop the case by theological approaches.⁸¹ The church develops a logical alternate position such as the one who holds homosexual behavior that is sinful and the one that allows for the validity of some homosexual acts.

This serves as a fascinating tool for theological self-analysis to let the church members understand the root of their own thinking and the opposition to respect contradicting views. The stand of majority reports, arguing the recommendation of the ordination of self-affirmed active homosexual. They give a summary with a scientific understanding of homosexuality and present some biblical and theological analysis that is subject to reformation as the Holy

⁸⁰ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1978), 58.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

Spirit brings new light to the church.⁸² As slavery, women, divorce was considered into the process with reference to 1Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:1-11. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 and Romans 1:26-27 putting into consideration the texts reflect the culture and the time or inspired revelation about the sexual expression that displeases God. The relationship with Christians are not the relationship that conforms the order of creation but the relationship of the person that encourages self-giving love and faith.⁸³ By self-giving love, it can lead us to accept the person in the church and ordain them considering ordination with personal conviction.

The multi-influential theory appears plausible initially when it comes to moral acts and having a relationship with or attraction towards the person of the same-sex. Most of the LGBT individuals that I randomly talked believe in God and had church commitments but because of constant judgment and their experiences in church life, they stopped practicing or attending church service. With all these testimonies, I assume that LGBT's have many question marks in their self. They go to church or engage in ministries for affirmation that they are acceptable by God and other Christians. There is a central core of truth and call of righteousness that believers are compelled by faith to cheer the church members.⁸⁴ This core commitment signifies the acceptance of Christ. The true love that all human beings should experience from the church. As the church according to John Calvin have the responsibility to regulate faith and life within the boundaries of Spiritual health in the Bible as church-key of discipline.⁸⁵ This discipline deals with the order of the church and its members. Expression of faith varies on how open the person, the comfort and constant engagement to live a good Christian life without turning back.

Like for example the testimony of James, 28 years old, a member of Norwegian Lutheran Church. He talked about his personal commitment as Christian gay and at the same time living-together with Mark. The same-sex couple was living-in together for more than seven years. For him, his faith is the most priority and comes to the point of his life that he decided to commit himself to church sacrificing his personal relationship with Mark. The life-

⁸² Ibid., 60.

⁸³ Ibid., 62.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 117-118.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 118.

changing decision he made. He said living-together with Mark was enjoyable yet he was not totally happy something missing in his life and testifies that he had the feeling of constantly sinning. James admitted that at the beginning that was the biggest and hardest decision he made. But in the long run, it makes him discover the sense of belongingness and contentment that being in the church gives him comfort and security. He believes that faith and identity cannot go together and to be in church, he expresses his faith in God finding peace and happiness. The saving the doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so discipline focuses on the ligament which connects the members together and keeps them in the proper place.⁸⁶ James told me that the concept of self-acceptance to allow God to help and change him. It makes him feel better and doesn't need to pretend like anyone else. James' process of accepting himself was a huge struggle especially in participating in active homosexual practices.

The struggle of identity and faith is the heartbreaking point of LGBT individuals. James shows his confidence and dedication to serve God as he found his Spiritual answer and ignore his self-desire with same-sex commitment. The testimony of James relates to the concept of Sedgwick with the modern discourse: "A higher valuation on the transformative and label play of desire, a higher valuation on the transformative gay identity and gay community".⁸⁷ Wherein individuals grow in their identity and valued themselves. Because of this LGBT, individuals learn to live a meaningful life without any boundaries in church and society. The inclusive church must open and welcome towards LGBT group of people and to everyone in general. James's case he made a big step to reconcile with God and value his faith. By reflecting himself with all the homosexual acts he did in the past, enable him to reflect and accept his mistakes and live a righteously. This is James' case, others has their own experiences too. It doesn't mean to follow his will is other LGBT's desire too, maybe but everyone have their own battle.

In the next part of this chapter, I will present the importance of the church in LGBT's life.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 118.

⁸⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents University of California, 1990), 86.

6.2.2. The Importance of the Church in LGBT's Life

To know that there are communities of believers that are willing to interact with and some of them got you because of having the same situation and faith. In this community where you are welcome, accepted, encourage and love. The foundation of the church is God's love and embrace identity and religious beliefs. The church that serves as a home, not just a building of Christian worship yet referring to the people having the same faith. The church must have a correct balance between unity and diversity, faith and practice that are essential as it is always responsible to preserve a core of essential witness concerning faith and practices.⁸⁸

As I observed in my church visitation during the process of my research, churches serve as home and corrected shelter of LGBT people such as Roman Catholic, Latter Day Saint Church, Methodist, Pentecostal, Baptist, Evangelical, and other Protestant churches. Being part of one of this church that acknowledges belongingness and is recognized as Christian. As Lovelace, stated his argument that the church must unite its clergy, laity and administrative leaders behind clearly Biblical goals of evangelism and social demonstration of the Gospel. His conviction is related to the point of the church that laity in the major demonstration will unite in support of prophetic initiatives that are motivated by Biblical principles not by the intellectual community.⁸⁹ Many misconception and misinterpretation is caused by lack of knowledge and attempt to have your own version of interpreting Biblical passages. The real problem of the church is quoting and applying Biblical text and apply it to people's lives in our time. Like for instance the interpretation regarding the texts intended to homosexuals. Often times grabbing Biblical passages and conclude that is a sin without properly examining the text and for whom it was written. I believe that the present situation of the church today is more open and critical for Bible interpretation. Considering again the case of James in the first part of this chapter. Living-together with the same-sex and decided to leave the relationship to uplift his Spiritual life was a very contradictory decision he made for others. But because of his faith and personal relationship with God, it made him certain that this step

⁸⁸ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press 1979), 119.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

of coming back to church and his gay life secure by God's love and care with people in the church.

During my interview, he told me that the church gives him a more comfortable and peaceful lifestyle. As the church accepted him as gay, he feels welcome like God welcome him. This leads him to express himself with so much confidence that even he recognizes himself as gay but more importantly a Christian at the same time. That even sometimes he is questioning himself of being gay but otherwise, he found his real identity more than being gay but the son of God. He admitted that in time that he avoided church and live together with Mark, he still has faith in God yet prevent himself to come to church because he was afraid to be judged. He explained how incomplete and seems to be something missing during the time he lives life outside the church with an incredible feeling of guilt and un-right. Connecting his life in the church, James added that it leads him to discover and embrace his sexual identity. And given the time to share his life experience, faith, thoughts and being true to himself become an inspiration to others. As Howard S. Becker in his book entitled *Outsiders* about labeling theory applicable to James' life. Outsiders consider itself and consider by others as different, the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things which happen to himself.⁹⁰

His willingness to give up his commitment with his same-sex partner leads him to reflect on God's word. Made him realize the reality of life that the church is the house of God, a community that can rely upon that help him to correct himself and brought him closer to God. This supported Lovelace's hope in ministry and mission among homosexuals. The conflicts of homosexual and the church will be resolved without losing homosexual Christians in the church. Considering repentance as the approach towards homosexual and the church can be healthier than both can be the important witness of the world.⁹¹ He specifies that LGBT Christian are required to have the courage to confess openly and obey the Bible. He also hopes to inquire the church to honor, accept, and nurture un-active homosexuals and ordain in church ministry to be the witness of the world, to free the church from homophobia and concerning the power of the Gospel to meet the Christian standards. In line with the life of

⁹⁰ Howard S. Becker, *Outsider: Studies in the Sociology and Deviance*, (Free Press, 1991), 99.

⁹¹ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press 1979), 125.

LGBT, the church serve as a place to reflect and accept their identity. It is important that as a member of the church, they receive support in their life journey.

The involvement of the church to the LGBT life has a good impact on cultivating their faith and maintaining a good relationship in the church. Because the church can take part by being open and loving towards LGBT. The value of God's love is unconditional. From this, the Christian community can work openly including heterosexuals where they can live in Spiritual wholeness. Through this way of the church, including LGBT can lead both parties to have a good balance setting.

6.3. The Ethics of LGBT Rights and Church Basis of True Claims

While observing the LGBT in the church seeing them in events and church services, the presentation of moral principles and behavior of LGBT and its connection to their rights is very important to consider. In this part I will focus on this topic and consideration on the ethics of LGBT rights and the Biblical perspective of the church as the basis of the true claim.

While looking to different LGBT individuals in our community I found out that problems are justifying lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. The discrimination among them is very common. Wherein I believe that anti-discrimination law can be an appropriate and effective means to promote respect and eliminate discrimination among LGBT people and the concept of equality and fairness can be implemented and available. In Christian evaluation of human rights issues, the traditional doctrine of sin has played a major role.⁹² Sin is considered as an important concept in theology that instead of focusing the love of God as Christian, we oftentimes look at the sin that accompanied human, like in the life of LGBT or homosexual people that most of the time accuse as sinners. Thus the concept of sin and providence asks the reality of human rights abuse.

⁹² George Newlands, *Christ and Human Rights: The Transformative Engagement, Theology, and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective Series*, (Routledge, 1st Edition, September 29, 2017), 70.

Biblical texts are used effectively to oppose modern human rights. By reading the Bible it strengthens to live with prevailing cultural assumptions.⁹³ This challenge the life of LGBT and through their doubts and experiences lead them to compose among themselves the most acceptable way of expressing themselves. The texts itself deal with a particular culture and interpretation that should be done literally. The wrong concept is the mixing up of ideas and central to human rights issues, is the Christian belief that this Biblical text is inspired word of God and it contradicts human behavior such as homosexuality that gives so much difficulty in negotiating the text for all the prohibitions to live a good Christian. This issue becomes more colorful even up to this day that requires dialogue and advocacy to make it more understandable. This topic I will expand further in this chapter.

6.3.1. The Moral Discourse of LGBT Rights

In creating the a sense of belongingness prioritizing human identity and creating the values and ideas of an authentic self. It is important to highly reflect in the surrounding world, competing visions of modernity and community. The position of LGBT individual, morality, and ethics provides a powerful lens that views the potential and integrity of oneself. Like for instance the issue of LGBT that highlight the dilemmas and conflict of the church. The church is confronted with the task to navigate and deal with the issues of LGBT especially when it comes to the religious practices and promulgate the inclusive behavior of Christian faith.

The church plays a major role of influencing and defining the ways in respecting in terms of faith and sexuality. Where the socially conservative nature of the church is highly influential in shaping the ways of treating a member of the LGBT community. Because it constitutes various considerable doctrine that emphasizes the importance of people and behavior based on the image and likeness of God. The church punitive attitude to the LGBT community and the campaign to intensify the anti-gay laws has focused on the religious faith campaign for the danger of LGBT. As often the church is characterized as deeply conservative and devoted to traditional religious practices. Where its attitude was traditionally been unsympathetic to LGBT's and their sexual expression. The queer theory challenges the idea that gender is part

⁹³ Ibid., 68-69.

of the essential self of LGBT studies. Dealing with the extreme examination of the socially constructed nature of sexual identity and actions. Usually, the analytical framework of queer theory focuses on intersex, sexuality and gender identity. There are certain distortions necessarily built into the relation of gay or lesbian and anti-homophobic theory to a large project of conceiving a theory of sexuality as a whole.⁹⁴

Michael Haas, in *human sexualities*, explore his highly polarize argument with disciplinary sources. There is no international treaty o LGBT's neven in European Human Rights Day December 10, 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said that LGBT people are entitled to the same rights as everyone that they are born free and equal.⁹⁵ Legal analyses of human rights laws reveal that is adopted by different countries under their power of implementation, application and giving importance in existent laws with political rights and constitutional basis. Considering a specific culture, traditions, and beliefs. With the impact on local conceptualizations and enactment of the legal system dealing with the social-political government. Their respect for the rights and laws varies upon the implementation through which a good deal of humanitarian rights is express.

For example in shaping local attitudes towards LGBT or homosexuality. A certain culture that does not accept homosexuality. Where the culture opposition plays a large part in the government position of intolerance toward LGBT people. The government will consider passing a law to free LGBT people in the said country. To protect LGBT people and this is by adopting it from United Nation Rights. Focusing on human rights violations on sexual orientation and sexual identity concerning the act of violence and support human rights defender by working on the issue of gender identity.⁹⁶The EU established the European Institute for Gender Equality at Vilnius, Lithuania in 2007 to collect information to make policy recommendations. Europe leads the world among countries that provide varieties of rights to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders.⁹⁷ This shows the openness and freedom among LGBT people in Europe. The liberal situation in dealing with LGBT in most places in Europe lead homosexual immigrant to stay and attracted with the environment.

⁹⁴ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents University of California, 1990), 34.

⁹⁵ Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Routledge, 2014), 476.

⁹⁶ *United Nation of Human Rights Council adopted a resolution addressing the act of violence and discrimination against LGBT sexual orientation and gender identity: The Council of Global Equality.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 467.

LGBT rights and equality in recent time especially in Europe enlighten and modernize. Before his modernization and changes of sexual modernity, there are still a lot of current events in the church. That flow sin in different path wherein many conservative Christians prohibits the same-sex act which challenges the life of LGBT. In the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam article 13, the EU is empowered to combat discrimination in sexual orientation.⁹⁸ *The European Charter of Fundamental rights article 21* prohibits discrimination on sexual orientation as well.⁹⁹ This article protects the members of the state that also mention by Michael Haas, stated European Committees have fully merged in European Act the preamble in promoting democracy and fundamental rights.¹⁰⁰

There are some other protections that members of LGBT experience in Europe like protective legislation such as the legalization of same-sex marriage and registered partnership. This is an equal right in progress towards equality of LGBT. Though in some other sects they ignore the implementation of LGBT rights and prohibit them to explore their skills in such field other than today. I am confident to talk about the struggles of gender and Christianity. Because as I had observed that LGBT Christian experience this kind of problem in the church that seeks help and guidance together with their doubts of being a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and religious preference.

In the book of Lovelace, he said that Gay Christians often maintain that personal prayer yet has not changed their condition. Hence with a community of believers in the church, they asked them or requested prayer as their support group for mutual care and intercession.¹⁰¹ In communicating LGBT people in the church one told me that he believes it and its necessary to grow in the Christian community even sometimes they experience discrimination. Because in

⁹⁸ Article 13 Proposals from the European Commission for combating discrimination. Article 13 “Without prejudice to the other provisions of this treaty, and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the community, the Council acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation”.

⁹⁹ Article 21 of Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibit any discriminations based on sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age and sexual orientation. (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/554168/EPRS_IDA%282015%29554168EN.pdf).

¹⁰⁰ Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction*. (Routledge, 2014), 384.

¹⁰¹ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press 1979), 140.

his level the importance of seeking help from others seems to be the same thing in seeking God to receive Spiritual relationship and answer for what he asked for.

In connection with the moral discourse of LGBT rights to the main question, how can a church involve the LGBT group of people? The growing LGBT interest in human rights discourse continues to keep moving in the truth claim based in religious mainstream. The fair analysis in morality among homosexual and in the transnational religious network the dissemination of progressive values among LGBT and equality that reflect and give a huge impact on the life, and experiences of LGBT Christians. In arguing the understanding of moral certainties it is necessary to consider the causes, struggles, and challenges that shape the meaning of Christian social relationships.

The communicative action of LGBTs in church and society finds its way to have a connection in the Christian community. The transition to modern society through the emergence of LGBT relational skill and strong desire to be part of Christian group with their strategic action and reason to get involve and in finding significant contributions for their Christian submissive personality in the church. For me, this is the easiest way of the Christian community or the church to involve LGBT people. As LGBT take their means to have access to the church. The inclusive churches merge their capacity for communicating and showcase their social skills. This represents the progressive practice, awareness and transformational shift in creating a new self of LGBT's brothers and sisters.

Increasingly, the church itself becomes a forum in which LGBT private self comes to church, ready themselves to compel the authority of the church to legitimate and aligned their faith together by God's law. The paradigm shift, in this case, represent oneness, establish and develop systematic religious practice and introduce good relationship among each member. By having a relationship-base church, it reorients the values of Christ-like behavior that welcome everyone. In this mega system of democracy can be a central feature of religious faith and human rights can create openness towards the autonomous expression of faith and solidarity.

Traditionally, religious faith was considered as sacred. In recent time it is called the modern religion where myth, ritual, symbol, etc. was taken for granted. Millennials believe in the sacred authority of God where the action and communication-oriented to mutual

understanding. To the extent that the church can involve LGBT people through its function in society, the substantial consensus is the major task of producing a certain language of communication that is understandable to everyone. The language of expression bring rationally motivated agreement in the church and LGBT Christians that bring the mutual contribution and transformational changes in the life of the church and also with LGBT through the inclusive and welcoming traits of the church. It provides an open door for LGBT to engage themselves in the Christian community and avoid their homosexual acts.

In modernity, it became differentiated in culture, religion, and personality. Where culture production includes the interpretation and transmission of cultural traditions from generation to generation. Religions involve different kinds of practices and beliefs that affect human thinking and personality includes moral, personal identity and experiences that sometimes this creates complexity in many ways in individual life stories. It is observed that mutual understanding and communicative skills can serve as a renewal of coordinating action and social integration to have a good formation of personal identity. This pattern of relationships and action are normalized, regularize and ritualize by the role of the church. Wherein in every situation the community of faith validity of claims, communicative reasoning and action strengthened and stabilize in the modern way of life.

In attending more closely on church activities focusing in the renewal of Spiritual faith in a highly restricted version existed within the influence of nurturing church, unions, neighborhood, and ministry. Wherein this ordinary LGBT individual in everyday life, live more often in church lifestyle practicing their faith and having a relationship with God. United in cooperation with the collaborative success of the church and LGBT Christian in the greatest attention and energy of faith.

6.3.2. Equal Protection

In our present time, the landscape of LGBT people in terms of equality had changed. With the past decade of an ongoing struggle for LGBT rights, today the focus is in attaining such rights as gender equality, employment rights, right to privacy, equality in marriage, etc. true equality that remains elusive for LGBT people that must include good moral treatment, recognizes

respect and extensive support. To develop change regarding such issues that causes and affecting LGBT's life. In working within the framework of traditional equality doctrine it is important to consider the issue of attainment of true equality for LGBT aligns with equal protection. Haas discusses LGBT protection and addresses the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Like for instance the adoption of Jogjakarta Principles that consist of the following: Nondiscrimination, including sexual reassignment, right to personal security, economic, social and cultural rights, freedom of association and expression, rights of family life, rights of accountability and redress. Forming UN treaty-based committees based on Jogjakarta Principles like CAT, CEDAW, CRC, CECSR, HRC. That dominates all forms of discrimination.¹⁰² Another example is the Anti-homosexual Bill of Uganda wherein the LGBT in Uganda has equal opportunity. Also in Turkey human rights that ban discrimination against LGBT individuals and to protect them against harassment and violence.¹⁰³ This challenges the life of LGBT and at the same time the doctrine of the church. That powerfully expand and willingly consider its respected right and influence in terms of discrimination with equal protection to doctrine.

I believe that there are strong possibilities of securing rights for LGBT people. These meaningful rights that protect LGBT from discrimination and promote the LGBT community protection withholding social recognition in a Christian society that revolves around its sexual orientation, attitude towards sexuality, sexual behavior and a new understanding of equality and universal rights. In the book "*Some Issue in Human Sexuality 2003*" pointed out the emergence of the social movement of sexuality for gays and lesbians equality considering homosexuals person with dignity and legal rights equal to all others.¹⁰⁴ In the year 1970 to 80's gay pride and gay liberation movement were developed and they formulated civil rights for LGBT as public discourse. Simple right that engages in sexual conduct and the claim that LGBT put forward and have their right to live justly. These initiatives prevent LGBT individuals from discrimination based on their sexual identity.

¹⁰² Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Routledge, 2014), 467.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 469.

¹⁰⁴ *A Discussion Document from the House of Bishops Group on Issues in Human Sexuality: Some Issues in Human Sexuality, A guide to the Debate 2003*, 171.

The rights that we talk about amplifies a strong transforming bullet that is based upon competing for self-claim concerning LGBT values, morality and identity that can redistribute social change among Christians and resolve the issues that block the good ambiance of the church. As a defender of the Christian values, ideas, and promote equality leading to the productive and inclusive church. In the next part of this chapter, I will present some Biblical passages consisting of LGBT issues.

6.3.3. Some Biblical Passages

When we talk about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, homosexuality or same-sex marriage, most of the time it turns to what the Bible says about it. Talking the book of Leviticus, the Genesis story of Sodom and Gomorrah and the book of Romans, most probably pointing to LGBT. On the other side, some can say that it is “not” referring to Biblical verses that include every human being and most of all the statement of Jesus Christ Himself welcoming everyone and without mentioning homosexuality. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God (Romans 15:7 RSV). This verse emphasizes the nature of Christ reflected Christians.

In prohibition of homosexual behavior in the Bible along with other behavior that is forbidden in the Bible and against the Will of God are as follows; In Genesis 19 the homosexual conduct of Sodom that the account describes the men of the city attempt to have sex with two Angelic men visitors in the city. The issue of social oppression and injustice involving the homosexual act. In Jude 7 in the New Testament, Jude made some clarification on the issues of sexual immorality and ungodliness in Sodom and Gomorrah story that pursues unnatural desire that is punishable. He highlights the sexual desires that relate to the visitors in the city were Angelic sin in his letter. The homosexual nature and their desires like Sodom and Gomorrah and its surrounding cities that indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, the violent expression of their being highlighted in the New Testament. This passage relates to the book of Jude especially like sexual desires and the fact that the visitors to the city were Angelic.

This passage also related to the texts in Judges 19:22-26 (RSV): As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, base fellows, visit the house round about, beating on the door, and they said to the old man, the master of the house, “Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him”. And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brethren, do not act so wickedly; seeing that this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing. Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do with them what seems good to you, but against this man do not do so vile a thing.” But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them, and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning and as morning appeared, the woman came and fell at the door of the man’s house where her master was, till it was light”.

Lot’s offer his daughters as sexual surrogates shows clearly that Sodom men not just want the Angelic visitors socially. This indicates truth in the rest of Sodom Scripture connected to a number of other sins; Isaiah 1:9,10 and 3:9 connect with blatant indulgence in all kinds of iniquity; Jeremiah 23:14 with lying and adultery and Ezekiel 16:49 with pride, surfeit of food and prosperity combined neglecting the poor. These texts show the same spectrum of iniquity that Romans 1 describes that sexual sin is part of a large pattern of corruption in the pagan world.¹⁰⁵ According to Lovelace, Sodom was destroyed because of depravity, pride, sensuality, and injustice not merely of homosexuality. It is known that homosexual practice according to Hebrew reader is one aspect of depravity been highlighted here because of Genesis 19 action known as an attempt of homosexual rape and violation of hospitality law of stranger.¹⁰⁶ In Leviticus as the use of force means aggravation of a practice condemned as sinful by God.

The passage makes a point that the male population of Sodom desires to have homosexual relations with the Angels, and it reveals the sensate culture that the search for pleasure and absence of sexual standards have universalized, Freud called polymorphous perversion.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 100.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

This passage shows that homosexual practice was part of this pattern of sin that made God judge Sodom. Sexual impurity emulates the Sodomites in Jude 7 that explain the legendary cohabitation of men with Angels and the sin Sodomites was committed to the attempt of homosexual rape of what they thought as men. The broader context of Biblical teaching on human sexuality this survey of text especially related to homosexuality has shown that there is no warranty in the Scripture for any form of homosexual behavior to be considered a legitimate expression of the will of God.¹⁰⁸ These passages can be related to our modern Christian approach of homosexuality. Putting this text in the framework of broader Bible teaching on human sexuality then it is easy to relate to the Biblical sexual ethic.

A Civil right is defined by sexual orientation that includes a sexual and romantic attractions, identity or behavior that is influenced in the area of our culture including the church. Like the LGBT character being portrayed by Christians. Where many churches and Christians proclaim the Biblical sexual ethics, offer love, encourage and support LGBTs to walk alongside those individuals that struggling with homosexuality. That Christian must step-up and present a vision of God's positive and life-affirming Christian behavior towards everyone. God placed a longing for Himself within each of us. Thus most of the LGBT individuals that I had encountered and talked about their experiences as gay Christians said that they experienced pain, abandonment, rejection, unmet needs, family wounds and discrimination that are considered as a significant factor of their lives as homosexuals. These experiences and feelings they use as a tool to seek God in a way some of them relate to the sufferings of Christ. Christians as properly equipped to respond with grace and truth.

The attempt of re-interpreting various Biblical verses that condemn same-sex sexual behavior in light of the overarching vision of marriage in Christian Scripture, the texts prohibiting same-sex sexual coupling gain a theological coherence.¹⁰⁹ In the Bible same-sex sexual intercourse was prohibited "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is an abomination".¹¹⁰ And "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 102.

¹⁰⁹ William Loader, et al., *Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible and the Church*, (Zondervan Academic, 2016), 131.

¹¹⁰ Leviticus 18: 22 RSV.

committed an abomination, they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them.”¹¹¹ The penalty of violation speaks in broad terms where they were in the priestly and covenantal setting. Concerning about order and purity for God’s holiness and concern to Israel’s identity being favored by God. These passages mentioned envision as the specific practice of cultic or sacred prostitution that also prohibit same-sex relationship. These texts echoed in Genesis creation story where the regulation of sexual conduct to adhere to the norms rooted in cultural features.

Apostle Paul once said, humanity as a whole afflicted with a common plight.¹¹² It became important for discerning what Paul means by nature is that he charges human being with having abandoned natural sexual intercourse for unnatural.¹¹³ Chapter four of Lovelace’s book, *Homosexuality, and the Church; crisis, conflict, compassion*, shows a different evaluation of Biblical evidence for and against some forms of homosexual practices. Different texts in the Bible on homosexual behavior to establish a Biblical outlook on homosexuality in the context of the Scripture and its teaching on human sexuality. Going back to the text in Leviticus 18:22 (RSV) “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is abomination and Leviticus 20:13 (RSV) “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 ”. According to Lovelace, this text condemns the male homosexual genital act.¹¹⁴ Some of this is used as a significance for Christian today. Firstly, as they are taken away in the system of cultic taboos in Early Jewish culture that in human origin concerning human practice. Secondly, it is relevant to all homosexual behavior that is challenged by speculation about the meaning in the context of Jewish life. Thirdly, they have no real significance for Christians because God released the Early Church from the necessity to keep the Leviticus Laws.

The objection overlooks the divine inspiration that the church always recognized the Leviticus Legislation. The author of the Hebrews considers ritual and religious cults of Israel as a divine revelation of images that show the work of Christ and the life of Christians. On the other hand, modern scholars believe that Leviticus materials show patterns after legal and religious

¹¹¹ Ibid., 20:13.

¹¹² William Loader, et al., *Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible, and the Church*, (Zondervan Academic, 2016), 134.

¹¹³ Ibid., 135.

¹¹⁴ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 87.

system in the ancient Near East. It is constantly patterned to the insight and moral significance of Christian values and social legislation. The moral and Spiritual importance necessary to Christian faith. Lovelace argued in giving significance to these texts by restricting in the historical context. He said that in Leviticus 18 and 20 there's no exact indication with the prohibition of homosexual acts. Homosexuality is in the immediate context of adultery, bestiality and child sacrifice. He added that in the present time, a modern leader may act on this list can be considered wrong in Canaanites and Egyptian context and can be right today.¹¹⁵

6.3.4. The Role of the Church as LGBT Christian Home

Finding the community of faith and having an assurance that the LGBT group of people like others feel not to be alone. LGBT in this study express themselves their identity as active Christians and becomes more meaningful for having beside them people that have the same situation and faith. As it is written and as LGBT believe that this passage inspires them "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" Hebrew 10:24-25 (RSV). Where they shared their experiences and express their self with affirmation and encouragement. This makes this community helpful by knowing to embrace their sexuality and faith.

LGBT in this research found shelter in the church where they feel comfortable to exercise their faith and be realistic. Jeomarie having experience pain in his sexuality, he said that when he was younger he always prayed and beg to God for healing. Because he believed that being gay was some kind of sickness. He feels so much love at home, he was accepted and cared as gay. He thought that being gay is not acceptable in Christianity and he wanted to have a good connection and relationship to his home church. As a teenager at that time, he was hesitant to come to church because when people look at him he felt a curse. Until one day, he was acknowledged by another person in the church and invited him for counseling. At that time,

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 89.

he knows that he is gay but tried to ignore his feeling. Because he thought that it is not acceptable by God.

During his next visit, he attended the church service and it has happened that the topic of the pastor was about homosexuality. And quote: I don't think they meant to be gay and hateful, indeed they are part of God's creation. Therefore God knows that this kind of person exists. Yet God accepts and loves everyone and saying the unconditional love of God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" John 3:16 (RSV). Joemarie said that his heart at that time tightened and he wanted to shout, he doesn't understand what he felt. He thought that the healing that he asked from God happened. He felt accepted and grateful for being understood by the pastor himself and the congregation. He cried for joy and thank his friend. The actual meaning of inclusive church, shown him and a state of belongingness.

In this scenario in the Church, the labeling theory by Howard S. Becker in his book *Outsiders* is applicable. Joemarie as an "Outsider" of the church found his home in the congregation. Being a newcomer and having a sexual identity crisis at that time. He found acceptance and had allowed living his faith with his sexuality. We need a model that takes into account the fact that patterns of behavior develop in an orderly sequence.¹¹⁶ Dealing with the sequence of steps in changing personal behavior and perspectives to understand the situation. Every step is important and it needs and explanation to proceed to the next step until the sequence reached its goal. Like in the case of Joemarie that he was hesitant to attend church service and a friend invited for counseling and after they attended the church meeting there he realized the importance of faith and sexuality.

The kind of explanation of how the person comes to be in a situation where the church is important to him, another kind of explanation of why given the fact of its sexual identity and faith, he is willing to submit himself to Christ. Another explanation is also needed as he exercised his Christian faith. It includes the proper way of observing church etiquette, non-participation of any kind of homosexual acts, observing proper clothing, and more others depending on the congregation they belong to. Each explanation constitutes a necessary cause

¹¹⁶ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology and Deviance*, (Free Press, 1991), 22.

of the behavior, wherein the outcome of Jeomarie's standpoint of his faith and self-acceptance as gay plays a significant part in his resulting behavior. Supposing one of his steps of the formation of a habitual pattern of observing Christian behavior.¹¹⁷ Then it depends on his willingness to do so because as an outsider of the church he had the freedom to choose either to continue himself or to distance. The outsider can react under his willingness to submit in the church as his home for Christian life.

Often Christians like Joemarie consider the church as his home of worship and way of exercising his faith, comfort, worthiness, and love, also to grow and cultivate his faith and the home to find comfort with the second family (Christian family). The church is composed of faith community and he believes that for being homosexual is a God-given gift to him. Because he enabled to seek his true identity, self-acceptance, worth and right church. Some church is not that open to accept LGBT and still have some strict rules, some are adjusting that only a minority had become completely inclusive. Unlike society that is gradually become more affirming and inclusive to LGBT rights most especially nowadays.

The church viewed LGBT, sexual orientation as morally accepted but strictly condemn homosexual acts. By using Biblical passages, debate arisen whether or not it is condemning or asking the important question for the application of these passages in the present time. Some churches labeling LGBT acts as sinful most especially homosexual relationships. LGBT affirming churches regard homosexuality as a natural occurrence. Like for instance, the church of Norway that celebrate gay marriage and accept the same-sex union, as well as openly have gay clergy. Focusing on the inclusion of Christian identified LGBT as the church tried to reach out and include them in church ministries and programs.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

6.4. Summary of Findings

In this chapter, I have presented the findings, observation, and assessment from the data collected from different texts, LGBT and the church.

The first part focuses on LGBT Christian faith and their sexual identity. How does this group of individuals practice their faith along with the issue of sexuality? I had emphasized the two contradictory beliefs about homosexual orientation. The inborn homosexual trait and the acquired one that remains controversial in the Christian world. Where Yamamoto believes that inborn is unchangeable. This research covered Biblical texts concerning LGBT. The issue of faith and sexuality challenges the life of LGBT Christian. As followed I presented James experienced in having a romantic relationship with Mark. Where he prefers to leave his romantic partner to live faithfully and practice his religion solemnly.

I also include the importance of the church in LGBT's life involving the community of believers that found a church as their home. Being love and secured the community that shows unconditional love. I had presented the ethics of LGBT rights and church basis of true claims that is the Bible. I included the moral discourse of LGBT's right, the life experiences of LGBT in terms of equality and change. Towards the end of this chapter, I indicated some Biblical passages and some views of Christian principles and purposes. I show the role of the church as LGBT Christian home. Having an assurance to an LGBT not to live alone rather be properly guided.

In the following chapter is my discussion, I will focus on some important questions related to the main issue such as how can a church involve the LGBT group of people? Examination of my research sub-questions and giving my position on how a church can involve LGBT people. Using labeling and queer theories concerning religious identity and sexuality.

Chapter Seven

DISCUSSION

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the main aspect that connects with the previous chapter of my findings. Giving focus on my main research question:

How can a church involve lesbian, gay, bisexuals, and a transgender group of people?

In the previous chapter I give an example of James living a religious gay life by sacrificing his romantic relationship. Considering his faith and gender identity as a gay Christian. The struggle he met within the church and outside his relationship shows one face of adequate religious setting in our Christian community even today. On the other hand, we can also see other churches that have a growing amount of acceptance in terms of their religious practices and sexual identity.

This chapter aims to discuss important topics such as how can a church involve LGBT groups of people and consider some issues related to this. To be followed with four sub-questions examinations and the last part is my position on how a church can involve LGBT people.

7.2. How Can a Church Involve LGBT People

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are commonly struggling to reconcile their faith and sexuality. As I wrote in Chapter 6 the experience of the church and LGBT Christians in defending their faith while considering their sexual identity and moral values. Based on the pieces of literature, the church and LGBT people in this study, faith, and Spiritual commitment come out as an issue in dealing with sexual identity.

In this section, I will discuss the way the church can involve LGBT people. In section 7.1.1, I will emphasize the church as Welcoming but not Affirming LGBT people in the congregation. In addition to this 7.1.2, I will focus on LGBT not going to church to go away. I will use the queer and labeling theories and utilize Haas, Becker, Sedgwick, and Robertson to illustrate the topic and its importance in this thesis.

7.2.1. Welcoming but Not Affirming

In the following section, I will discuss the conservative approach of Bible interpretation of LGBT people in the church. Wherein they are welcome to be part of the church service but not to hold any ministry, which means cannot be affirmed. The concept of welcoming but not affirming sometimes lead LGBT Christians for being inactive in the church and lead the church to be defined as not inclusive. The question then is how do the church can include LGBT Christians? Because some LGBT Christian in non-affirming church decides to leave the church thinking of their sexuality.

I wish to begin this part with the discussion on welcoming but not affirming LGBT in the church. All due respect to the stand of the conservative church that is against the homosexual act and everything that points in the direction of religious orders that is undertaken in principle within the emergence measure and role of the church doctrine. Wherein any forms of disobedience is prohibited under the jurisdiction of church law and one of them is the homosexual act. The less inhuman according to this conservative church such attitude is wrong that shown symptomatically artificial when can emerge for example in homosexual practices that refuse to admit the validity of the divine command. They believe that LGBT follows the corrupt emotional and physical desire towards the same-sex attraction where God's command opposes to this course.

This lead the church to educate and inform LGBT to be aware of God's command and forgiving grace that warning against the decisive word of Christians that prohibit entry the whole way of LGBT's life. Yet find the wonderful personal life upon obeying God's divine command and recognize across the attractive beginning of God's genuine love. That can build the relationship among Christians. Being not affirming strengthen the faith of LGBT Christian

because it challenges them to change and let decide for themselves which road they want to take in and certainly attain freedom of expression. They also can release themselves to have a relationship with God and brought recollection and understanding.

In the queer perspective where it has the potential to undermine the foundation of the structure of identity vary in the question of sexuality that is attached to the category of how individual sexuality is shaped. Reflect when presenting the difficulties and experience of LGBT in accepting their self as identified as gay Christian resulting to leave the church. In the book *Epistemology of the Closet* by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, she argued that homosexuality is thought to be a minority group. The modern view of lesbian and gay men as a distinctive minority population is of course importantly anachronistic to early writing and modern writing. The important ways in the implicit analysis offer to the mechanisms of homophobia and same-sex desire.¹¹⁸ This becomes revealing and openly implemented in cultural context either oral or written. The essence of minoritizing LGBT is visible on how they are treated and welcome in the Christian community they are attached to.

LGBT aim to be accepted and achieve recognition involving and considering their sexual preference. To be recognized by the church including their faith and the important concept of being an inclusive community of believers. The life and experiences of LGBT in expressing their faith due to discrimination, sexual identity crisis and lack of acceptance lead them to quit attending church. The affirmation from the Christian community towards LGBT affects them in expressing themselves. With these experiences, LGBT Christian search for the right church where they are valued, accepted and that they are allowed to express themselves without the guilt of shaming in their gender identity. That is referring to the general Christian society and in line with their belief that definitely an important factor to influence the moral accent of LGBT Christians. Without any hesitation or doubt to express and be active in the church. Because as we can observe, that there are active LGBT's and still responded faithfully in God and sincere to be in their Christian identity.

¹¹⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents of the University of California 1990), 51.

The topic of full inclusion of sexual and gender minorities (LGBT) in the life of the Christian community. Where it gained the LGBT rights movement in the 1960s and culminated on June 26, 2015, in the legalization of same-sex marriage in the Supreme Court of the United States. A big part of Christianity struggled to keep the rapid changes in social, cultural and legal aspects and doctrinal beliefs in modernity. Considering social acceptance of the spectrum of queer sexuality and gender identity.¹¹⁹ The outcome of this was the church response as either to step down and declare not be open on reconsidering their belief and focus on traditional teaching of the Gospel. Or revision the Biblical teachings on LGBT and reinterpret the Gospel meaning and apply it in a new era (present time) to understand the meaning. My research shows that LGBT struggled in so many ways to be accepted in the church and also the church adjusted in so many ways to become inclusive and accept LGBT people because of its Biblical basis.

The confrontation among religious tradition and contemporary attitudes when it comes to LGBT creates conflict within the church and society. Dealing the Biblical law and life always condemn LGBT's practice. As I tacked in my finding of Genesis 19 that this passage the Angels were sent by God to see the sinful city of Sodom and Lot with him being hospitable he welcomes them to his house. Then the townsmen heard about it and they came to Lot's house and attempt for homosexual abuse. Here it showed a negative attitude and the practice of homosexual activity. These varieties of historical causes create such a persistent feeling of revulsion towards LGBT people and widespread, dishonorable and unnatural. In the concept of putting a label to this minority (LGBT) according to Erving Goffman's study that the homosexual often considered as socially abnormal and in danger of being considered less than human. That people can react by rejecting and embarrassing them, the most concern is individual deviance, not the whole personality.

In Goffman's book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, (1968) a study of the situation, the stigmatized person can shore up his or her precarious personal and social identity. The common conceptual confusion is the term category that is abstract and can be

¹¹⁹ Brandan J. Robertson, *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT± Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 01.

applied to any aggregate. In this case the person with a particular stigma.¹²⁰ Stigma category is part of the group that has a collective action and most of the time can be defined as one. Like for example the scenario of LGBT Christian attending church service. It is easy for people to judge them as sinner/homosexual practitioners. Strictly often, in this case, the embracing pattern of mutual interaction is observed. In different churches, although they have differences in their approach to sexuality, they still regarded the LGBT act as a violation of God's will and a perversion of nature.

The new emphasis on the cultivation of LGBT values in the modern period underscores the goal that they should observe proper religious protocol. The normal channel of respect and good values in religious approach as well as law-abiding citizens that bond rational response in both church and society. The feeling to be considered as morally right in the perspective of the conservative church is express for not having a same-sex attraction and live out with homosexuality. Morally right in God and also for society. Recalling my encounter to this LGBT individual in the church, where they displaced their moral from the church expectations not following their own will, identity and chance in their sexual attraction in demand by the expectations of the church and society to be righteous. At the same time opposing their real self and actions. In this aspect, the church can involve LGBT Christians by letting them understand fully what is morally right and just. Being Christian and gay is not a torturing matter among them yet to educate them on how to act righteously and accordingly accepted by church and society. To reconcile them to God, express their faith and put it into practice without the feeling of guilt and hesitation.

All these rejections to LGBT were intensified in Christianity because of some factors. Some LGBT Christians they had been exposed to publicly expressing themselves the presence of homosexual practices in their environment outside the church. By the power of the church command, it turned LGBT individuals than to change the lifestyle that made them unhappy with the sexual component of human nature in general. The legitimacy of sexual contact must be conceded because of its purpose that it should be essentially for procreation. Which is lacking in homosexual activity. This makes the church conclude that homosexuality is a

¹²⁰ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, (Penguin Pelican January 1, 1968), 35.

violation of God's will and the pervasion of nature. In labeling theory, the concept of being an outsider of the church and to enter in the new environment (the Christian world) took them to adjust and fit themselves. We can study the way people learn through social interaction to interpret their own physical experience. By studying homosexual encounters we can learn how people coordinate their activities through tacit communication.¹²¹

One could relate that aspect concerning LGBT that has been driven underground they are forced to deny their desires and to pretend to interest and feelings not their own. One example is the life of James that I had given in the previous chapter where he needs to stand the church desire for him to be a good gay Christian than to choose to leave with the man of his life for many years. The decision he made, he thinks can make him acceptable by God and his church. The attitude toward LGBTs is commonly based on religious tradition and secular law and even having a moral based for discrimination and hostility toward LGBT in church and society. There are many adjustments in both ways, the church towards LGBT and LGBT fitting themselves in the Christian community. That in some point it works and on others still struggling for acceptance and respect.

At the beginning of my chapter, I named names that are influential in present time wearing the LGBT title that I admire with for being a public figure in their faith, love of family and member of the Christian community. This means that there has been a change in public attitude towards the LGBT. In Norwegian Lutheran Church for example where same-sex relationships and the same-sex union is acknowledging. It shows the weakening of traditional religion by the influence on the subject of Biblical teaching. That made the LGBT lost some of the horror conjured by an earlier generation. This I can say as the LGBT new drive and exciting experience although it might lead them also in a new pattern of sexual conduct. That I hope will not happen, still on the limit to practice equally legitimate lifestyle such as a variant pattern to the dominant heterosexuality of our culture.

In participating in church meetings and religious services, the LGBT have the right to participate and express their rights and belief. The focus of God's love for humanity including

¹²¹ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, (Free Press, 1991), 172.

LGBT people regardless of their sexual identity is the focus of the church. The outlook on human sexuality, in particular, expressed above is contested by the current opinion that moves away from traditional Christian sexual morality, like the United Church of Christ Report and the Report of the Committee of the Catholic Theological Society.¹²² It points out the notion that Biblical sexual ethics requires the containment of sexual expression within marriage. Varying the patterns of sexual behavior in line with the Bible and model of Spirituality. For me as a member of the church, I am not against the LGBT members of my congregation rather I am restricted with the homosexual act and same-sex marriage in the church. My understanding of God's love, the concept of God's love begins with respect and the value of God's law that is universal and I value more. The rapid changed from being traditional based Christian practices to the present time that a bit loosen or liberated in some ways. Where LGBT had been accepted in some Christian churches. It shows advantages and disadvantage in both parties (the church and LGBT's). On the other hand, modern society taught us that in terms of sexual identity it is important to be accepted in the religious community and society.

Based on the presentation of my subject in this study, the church involves LGBT by expressing and showing to them God's love. This God's love for LGBT includes the welcoming atmosphere in attending church meetings. Their identity as LGBT Christian inside and outside the church must be morally aligned to meet the expectations and norms of society and church. Morally responsible and can stand still righteous even in criticism and judgment. The label of being an insider and outsider include how LGBT behave and act inside and outside the church. Because the performance and self-maintaining purpose of being true in oneself are not just of who they are inside the Church also the behavior of LGBT in society. I can argue that to be morally good it needs to be consistent to maintain the credibility and the image of being true to themselves is more important.

¹²² Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion* (Lamp Press,1979), 106.

To define the scope of gay rights, which is identified as the first important civil rights struggle of the twenty-first century.¹²³ Based on the experiences and the testimonies of LGBT individuals that I had encountered while doing my research, I can say that more than the struggle is the battle that is worth fighting for. There were so many gay pride parades and negotiations but in some aspect, until these days there are still many cases that they are prohibited with and not allow doing because of their gender identity. In some, they are holding a major and riskier role just to fight for rights in church and society. If we recall the example I cited in the previous chapter, one had been kicked out of the job because of being gay. He even fights in court yet failed to get justice. Because of his gender preference and it was under the school regulation that they are not allowing any LGBT individual to work as a teacher in their school. Another example was the person that had been ignored by his own family because of being gay. Because of their position in the church and he grew from the religious family, an active church member and known as a family honoring church. This showed us the different field such as in society or workplace, in the church and family. They had a crucial experience of not being accepted because of their gender identity.

For Becker, labeling theory is neither a theory with all the achievements and obligations that goes with the title nor focused so exclusively on the act of labeling as some have thought. It is a way of looking at a general area of human activity, a perspective whose value appears in an increased understanding of things formerly obscure.¹²⁴ This theory also refers to the interactionist theory of deviance. In this aspect, sociologists argued the study of society without looking its nature closely. That needs to be a focus on to formulate and achieve consideration by looking into the different sides of the individuality of the people and not to be defined as a whole. Because of this social injustice that the above mention example experienced. However based on my research I argue that the injustice that this people experience can be prevented if as a church, a community and a family be properly guided to have a state of complete acceptance to LGBT Christian.

Richard F. Lovelace said that in society homosexual practice and perversion is always one indication of general corruption or defect in its homosexual life. It decays the moral standard

¹²³ Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 2nd Edition, 2014), 462.

¹²⁴ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, (Free press 1991), 172.

and abandons moral responsibility in the field of heterosexual relationship.¹²⁵ LGBT face this and their religious beliefs. Some LGBT Christian become denial of same-sex attraction and hide their sexual identity and be less involved in the church. Yet forget that the problem of the church is not being gay or their sexual identity, yet the homosexual practices that create conflict. This way they believe that they can reconcile the judgment of the church and society in LGBT's life. By separating their faith and sexual desire (attraction) that can make a new room for repentance, the free influence of the past, and change their faith in God by rebuilding a relationship that is acceptable by the Christian community.

The greatest struggle is on how LGBT be involved in the church in line with their sexuality and faith. Homosexual behavior is not condemned in Scripture as an item of cultural taboos. There are evident reasons why homosexual practice is Biblically wrong.¹²⁶ The findings from the fieldwork conducted by Lovelace have similar findings in my research. I argue based on my study that the church had no hatred or not condemning LGBT people. They are welcome to attend church service, masses, meetings, worship service, and church activities but against the homosexual practice. The development of religious and sexual identity needs to improve and be open for acceptance among gay Christians to grow in faith and change their life perspective.

To understand the goal of the church, nowhere revealed more unmistakably through its doctrine and the misunderstanding that the church doesn't accept LGBT people is wrong. It is important to be clear that they are not questioning the personal sexual identity. The church has restrictions on the actions, behavior and homosexual activities LGBT does. To handle the challenges the early LGBT experienced in religious communities, the time that it was more conservative (clothing, behavior, and lifestyle) it was harder to enter the religious community. Unlike the present time where LGBT's most likely are more open in themselves and can practice their faith. It distinguished figures of the past and present situation of LGBT Christians that are more expressive of themselves. That shows hostility when it comes to the conservative church towards LGBT Christian.

¹²⁵ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 36.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

By being involved in the church, activating religious faith into practice and identified as LGBT Christian is a big opportunity given by the church to its gay members to understand the restrictions and the actions accepted in the Christian world. Also in life and teaching of the church, it expands their welcoming traits by accepting LGBT although it can lead them for too much risk to be criticized by others. Yet being accepted in the Christian community it enlightens the life of LGBT. I have illustrated how the church welcome the LGBT but not affirming for any forms of homosexual acts that og with my point of view in terms of homosexuality. Being LGBT and a bearer of Christian faith it is important to give them a chance to practice and being true to themselves and their sexual identity.

7.2.2. LGBT not Going to Church to Go Away

According to Becker, the act of labeling, as carried out by moral entrepreneurs, while important, cannot possibly be conceived as the sole explanation of what alleged deviants do.¹²⁷ The importance of this approach is to focus on labeling places the person involve in the circumstance that makes it hard for doing the normal routine and lead him to do abnormal action. My research shows that LGBT's not going to church to go away with their faith. They said that their faith was never been gone when they stay away from the church. There experienced had been judged as sinners and curse due to their gender identity. They remain faithful and stand with their faith quietly while still having the desire to go to church and be accepted one day by the Christian community.

James had been aided in developing self-confusion between his sexual identity and religious faith. He labeled himself as an outsider of the church when he was happily living-in with Mark and tried to find himself the way he wanted to. As I had talked with him, he said that he didn't go to church for many years not because that was he wanted but to avoid people that criticizing him and his life. His argument goes with what Becker tried to emphasize here, doing abnormal things (which is to avoid church because he was not happy the way people critic his life). He was scared of the judgment of people inside the church. As he avoids being in the Christian community and living his life outside the congregational life doesn't mean to

¹²⁷ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, (Free Press, 1991), 170- 171.

go away because he still has faith and prayed to God. The issues of discomfort, lack of self-confident to stand his faith and the struggle to integrate his sexual identity and his religious faith was the main reason.

The attitude of the church is important and the moral indignation towards LGBT requires an essential explanation to have proper communication or dialogue. So that any conflict and misunderstanding can be prevented and the moral posture of Christianity will remain intact. To have control of the harmful sexual behavior among LGBT people and draw a line of limitations for doing and don't accept in gay Christian lifestyle inside the church. Throughout chapter 6 we can see the faith, Spiritual commitment, moral conduct and sexual identity in connection to church and LGBT that is acceptable in society. This field of Christian life signifies the important behavior and standardization of the Holy Church. Maintaining a high-quality standard of the church toward the homosexual act and homosexuality, stood behind the venerable doctrine especially in dealing with the moral right. It is important to have a mutual understanding between church and LGBT in this context including each character as the term of a faithful relationship. The church requirement of being morally good, lead LGBT's to stay away from the church, sometimes as a sign of respect and finding their self. Because in some cases like James, it made him realized the importance of personal relationships to God and leave his long-time partner. Enable to reconnect and reaffirm to identified as Christian.

In his book *Stigma*, Erving Goffman's study of the situation in which a stigmatized person can shore his precarious social and personal identity. This book is also in line with the labeling theory I used in this study. In theory, a deviant community comes to perform for society the same functions perform by the in-group deviant of his group.¹²⁸ The problem of this is the large area where he belongs, a deviant community is drawn is not a clear system of itself, an entity and function in a small group. In the situation of the Christian community like for instance in the Lutheran Church, the way LGBT members for example act accordingly or against the church law. Affect the description society can give to the whole congregation. Considering as we all know that many members of Lutheran Church are against the

¹²⁸ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, (Penguin Pelican January 01, 1968), 172.

legalization of same-sex marriage and it became a huge controversy. Goffman conducted a study in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. The performance of an individual may show the effort to give the appearance that his activity maintains and embodies certain standards.¹²⁹ This includes a moral requirement that ends in them like rules regarding sexual propriety and rules regarding respect of sacred places. In his conclusion, Goffman argues that in an individual's life there is always a performer and the audience. This can be related to the church that the performer be labeled as the LGBT and the church as the audience. Looking into the lives of LGBT while they live their life in the Christian world. The working consensus tends to be contradicted by the attitude towards the audience that the performer expresses and carefully controlled communication out of character conveyed by the performers while the audience is present.¹³⁰

Goffman believes that it is apparent that in-group deviants, social deviants, minority members, and lower-class people are all likely on occasion to find themselves functioning as a stigmatized individual and involve in deeply responses. He argued that stigmatized persons have enough of their situation in life in common to warrant classifying all persons together for purpose of analysis.¹³¹ I understand as the basis of assumptions in human nature that this area needs to apply a certain perspective for the development of its purpose coherent to an analytical perspective. This understanding, that you have to know yourself and know the purpose and functions intended to you. It echoes the life and experience of LGBT Christians I had encountered wherein they are so much aware of responding especially the difficulty of reconciling their faith while cannot find peace in themselves and leaving their homosexual practice and go on with their religious faith.

There had been a certain practice of pederasty that the Christian church repudiated as an opposition to the social and natural order. The same as what I have observed in this research. The reason for this is not mainly from the traditional belief of the church. Rather the culture and society that LGBT people adopted their environment that sometimes people misunderstood the role of the church and find the church as LGBT critics. Because it always

¹²⁹ Irving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, (the USA by Anchor Books 1959), 110.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 231.

¹³¹ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, (Penguin Pelican January 01, 1968), 174.

contradicts the action, validate the faith of LGBT people and look upon their life. Legitimizing various forms of proper Christian conduct embracing their faith and religious doctrine. These are some of the factors that lead them to go away or feel a distance from the church in correcting their lifestyle and ways of expressing themselves. To relate to Becker's labeling theory. He shows that deviance as the infraction of some agreed-upon rule that leads to asking who break the rules. To search for the factors in their personalities and life situation that accountable for infractions. Those who break the rule constitute a homogeneous category because they committed the same deviant act.¹³² He discussed that social group creates deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying the rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. This signifies that deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.

It shows that when the church put a boundary to the issues of homosexual act some LGBT Christian distance themselves to church participation. Not to go away instead of one way to show respect to one another (the church and their sexual identity), some of them try to go away from the church learn more about their religious conviction and examine their sexual identity, some others find the congregation that is more open and accepting their sexual preference. What I illustrated in my findings is that the inclusive behavior of the church restricts in the homosexual act not merely as identified as LGBT individuals. Self-understanding of LGBT to discern and be suspicious of church judgment even though they believe that divine grace and divine calling is intended to everyone as God promise in divine Scripture. As a church, we need to re-examine that willingly submissive self to serve God.

In different Christian communities such as Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, Mormons, etc. there are several characteristics in common. In church teachings, the issue of sexual identity and being an inclusive church matter. Most of these churches discriminate LGBT's in the church due to any homosexual practices that are not morally acceptable and against the church doctrine. The Norwegian Church and some others today, openly accept same-sex marriage in the church it leads LGBT to gain the confidence to openly involve in church participation and be able to express themselves in line with their faith and sexual identity. By this, I can argue that as part of the community, I am not against

¹³² Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, (Free Press, 1991), 07- 08.

with any LGBT Christians that coming to church as long as they respect their role as a member of the church and observe proper etiquette inside the church. To consider there strong affirmation and commitment in their religious engagement.

LGBT's leave the church not to go away yet remained their relationship with God. Like heterosexual that believe and worship the same God. As Richard Lovelace said, that his orientation is heterosexual yet deeply sympathetic to the situation of homosexual that genuinely believes in God and in Christ.¹³³ This view of Lovelace supported my argument where he supports non-practicing homosexual Christians and by faith agreed in line with the homosexual believers. Putting his concern that the church is maybe able to mobilize its minister and laity behind a balanced, constructed Biblical program of social reform in our culture.¹³⁴ He shows the purpose and credibility be determine by Church faith. The personal growth of LGBT's faith cannot be measured by attending church service. In fact on how deeper their personal foundation of faith, personal relationship to God and self-consciousness of studying the effect of their religious life.

Studying the effect of going away from the church and the way they keep a distance from their congregation is not running away from their religious duties. Their own way of showing pride and self-respect to stand for their belief in the perversity claiming it as there identified nature. Based on this study I had proven that they are afraid of rejection, discrimination, judgment and try to hide their gender identity. Wherein they are searching for affirmation without hurting their feelings. To be aware of the radical rejection of LGBT and their surrounding in religious and society's culture inflict them an unspeakable burden. The behavior pattern of LGBT in society consists of their inner conflict, for instance, debilitating fear, pride, hang-ups and even to consider the scars inflicted on them by the society that includes pressure to their sexual orientation.

Society's expectation towards LGBT is to live accordingly so as the Christian community. Where LGBT Christians are expected to affirm their sexuality and their faith, to avoid any form of the homosexual act to be acknowledged as an equal member of the Christian community, in line with this to express themselves as LGBT Christian in a manner of God's

¹³³ Richard F. Lovelace; *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 13.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

teaching of love. LGBT often times get pressure and threats of the cruel world because of their gender identity hinder them to live freely or to express their self and feelings. Where life had been accompanied by the conflict that creates burdens to LGBT's life. The factor that creates the greatest tension in the church in terms of acceptance and welcoming LGBT from the desire to be faithful to Scripture. Where the traditional or conservative church believes that welcoming LGBT people in the church is somehow means to abandoned their belief in accordance with the Bible. Even though they clearly understand the universal love of God.

Based on what I had studied in this research, LGBT Christians not going to church to go away, yet to seek the right church that accepts LGBT's gender preference. The cause of going away is being confronted regarding their sexual identity, misjudgment, the church taught God's design for sexuality, LGBT is losing their rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion, discrimination, and self-interest. The question then how can the church involve LGBT people that go away from church? I argue that the most effective way maybe is to assist LGBT individuals to know the situation and step forward to guide them and let them understand the most essential role as Christians. According to Brandan J. Robertson (2019) the teaching of the church about non-inclusion, this Biblical standard has been disregarded. Because of non-inclusive religious teachings and practices source to a high rate of depression and suicide in sexual and gender minorities.¹³⁵ He cited Dr. Louis Hoffman in 2008 on his research determining the harmful caused by the religious teachings in LGBT's life. He concluded that it gave impact to the Spiritual, religious and psychological health of LGBT.¹³⁶ This leads LGBT to social outcasts, a higher rate of depression and the suicidal act of LGBT.

The pursuing character of the church is necessary to avoid harmful incidents and expressions towards LGBT. To let them know that they are not alone and they are capable of the same rights as a heterosexual individual. Letting them feel that the church will take part in his or her journey. In valuing LGBT Christians in the church it is important to consider the influence of mature and good moral character Christian. As they need the pastoral support and guidance to interact with love, courage and to speak the truth. To help LGBT Christian managed the unwanted same-sex attraction in line with its Biblical manner. As the church, it is needed to

¹³⁵ Brandan J. Robertson, *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stocks Publishers, 2019), 06.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 06.

step into the gap to minister love, grace and truth having social power that can influence others in the church setting.

The LGBT setting in terms of not going to church to go away is similar to what Becker says on the labeling theory being an outsider. Where this minority group (LGBT) always consider as an outsider of the church marks their identity. One tries to fit his own line of action into the action of others, adjusting his own developing action to what he sees and expects others to do.¹³⁷ One must adjust and try to fit himself into the Christian community that he is in and try to adjust in order to find his belongingness. Being an outsider cause a lot of confusion in the case of LGBT in the church. They need to have a strong personality to accept the ideas of their fellow Christians. Because sometimes they are weak enough to face the challenges inside the congregation that's why they go away. Having less social power in the dominant culture and labeling their self as an outsider. Addressing LGBT in an honest and loving way may give people the courage and hope they need to come forward to seek help and support.

How can LGBT Christian then can stay in the church and practice their faith? What motivation should they do in order to convince themselves not to go away? First, for LGBT gathering in the church the importance to know and well define your own beliefs. It is necessary because churches sometimes don't always publish their belief on LGBT issues. This is similar to what Lovelace says if leaders within the church cannot agree on the meaning of the biblical witness concerning homosexual acts, should the church allow and endorse a diversity of opinion on this subject? He said that large denominations are theologically pluralistic and there are many leaders who are not convinced that all homosexual behavior is in itself wrong.¹³⁸ Many churches believe in the central core of truth and call to a righteousness that the whole body of believers compelled by their faith to commend the world and the church membership. Without this core of commitment, the church yields up it's calling to herald the Gospel and call the nation to repentance.¹³⁹ Looking at this statement it is important for the church to have a strong point of knowing what is morally right and wrong because how can s Spiritual leaders themselves be a good example if they don't have credibility in some aspects.

¹³⁷ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, (Free Press, 1991), 173.

¹³⁸ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 117.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 117-118.

The common ground of sharing both sides including to share righteousness and harmonizing LGBT Christian and their Christian faith. To have a happy stay in their local Christian community in the church setting that value of belongingness can be achieved. Second, to know what you are looking for at your local church. There are churches that respect LGBT Christian yet don't agree or in favor with the same-sex marriage for example. Even though they love and support LGBT coming to church. Knowing the do's and don't' is a very important matter to protect yourself towards discrimination and any forms of gender inequality. The treatment concerning religious and sexual identity issues in the church. Whatever drives you to join a certain congregation it is necessary to tell and be open about your beliefs and your gender preference. By contacting the minister of the church, you can get an honest answer so you can have a safe space to evaluate your state of belongingness to meet unconditional respect. This will can lead to being with the Christian community that has the same views as you.

Lastly, it is important to remember that not all church members will be supportive. In every congregation, there are always be questioning of your personality. Knowing this in advance will motivate you as an LGBT person to have a good reason not to exclude yourself from the church. Instead of struggling to comprehend some of you're awkward feeling because of your sexuality. Pushing yourself to embrace that not everyone accepts LGBT in the church and bear that positive attitude to make you feel better. Use that strong faith that God accepted you and lead you to a practice a Christian lifestyle. To quit church doesn't make sense to fear of what people will say, because practicing your faith is not all about the people around you but your commitment to God. Be honest and confident with your faith and reflect God's word towards LGBT people. In my own opinion, it is important to stand with your faith and belief limiting with the unpleasant thing to do, to focus on righteousness.

Similarly, Robertson talked about the inclusion of LGBT people in the church. Where the non-affirming church spending time to fight the threat of LGBT Christians who seek to be part of the church and give efforts to keep LGBT out.¹⁴⁰ In this, he stated his encounter of many LGBT people that discover Jesus as the key for Spiritual liberation at the table of grace.

¹⁴⁰ Brandan J. Robertson, *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 83.

LGBT proclaim and believe the inclusion of the Gospel. He cited Dr. Aaron Bianco a Catholic theologian and former pastoral associate of St. John the Evangelist Church in San Diego. Serving the church as a gay and faithful follower of Christ. His experience of being protested in his service in the Catholic Church because of his gender preference and judged not by his faith and being an excellent preacher. Even though he was trusted by many for being a good priest and believe in God's calling for him, he was forced to resign. Suffering so much persecution because of his identity. Still, he continued to teach and inspire LGBT Christian outside the church and proclaiming the Gospel.¹⁴¹ This showed a strong desire to execute his faith and lead people to salvation. His personality as gay and Christian was not accepted by the non-affirming church members, yet he stood to his faith and remain to his calling in spite of his challenges. Why not then accept the person that leads the Christian community? Where he performs his task to be a good leader of the church. The gender equality in this scenario and the discrimination of LGBT in the church are visible. I will discuss this further in the following topic.

I have here discussed the importance of acceptance and self-motivation among LGBT people to be part of the Christian community. The importance of the church to LGBT's life and the reasons for going away from the church, not to distance themselves to God but to have some space of respect. Getting some insights from this literature and sharing experiences in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individual enable us to understand the sense of belongingness and respect. By discussing how the church involved LGBT people in the Christian community and service brings a major role in developing and strengthening LGBT Spiritual life. Following the discussion of LGBT people involved in the church and LGBT Christian life in the context of being gay and their religious issues. The most common reason for questioning LGBT's faith and sexual identity that it cannot be acceptable by some Christians.

7.3. Getting to Know: Examination of Research Sub Questions

In the following part of this chapter, I will discuss the four research sub-questions. That deals with the church and the LGBT Christians. The boundary of respect the precautions of its rules

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 83-84.

and the ability to execute acceptance in spite of different opinions and views with the following issues. Base in different works literature and the Biblical texts that are my basis for this discussion and of course through the testimonies of LGBT people that I had an encounter with. I will demonstrate this by using Becker's and Goffman labeling theory, some Biblical texts that serve as the proof of evidence in dealing this issues, Haas Book regarding homosexuality (natural law) and the queer theory by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick also Brandon J. Robertson book *The Gospel of Inclusion* that is relevant to this discussion. In section 7. 2. 1. I will discuss what kind of positions may LGBT people have? In section 7. 2. 2. I will talk about the Christian context what does it says in same-sex marriage? Followed in section 7. 2. 3 I will emphasize the Biblical texts that tell us about homosexuality is a sin and how can we deal with it. In section, 7. 2. 4. I will discuss, how the church deals this as a sign of hospitality and inclusiveness while it creates tension in theological restriction found in the Bible.

7.3.1. What kind of positions may LGBT people have? Are LGBT people disqualified because of their gender preference?

The church always insists that there is a central core of truth and a call to the righteousness that the whole body of believers is compelled by faith to commend to the world and the church's members.¹⁴² It is necessary to implement and to carry out church doctrine. Commonly in the Christian church that does not condone homosexual practice and consider this act and LGBT's lifestyle as sinful and unacceptable. It is the majority of Christian churches that believe that homosexual activity a sin. Even though as I observed in society and some liberal church that there is a growing acceptance among LGBT Christians nowadays. The idea of being lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender is not wrong and should not be discriminated against this issue can be aired openly in church. It can be regarded and treated with worth and dignity. Where I wish to assure LGBT Christians in holding firmly to the Bible as the authoritative standard of faith and the universal love of Christ must put into consideration. To be consistent in observing adequate behavior and views to consider homosexual practice and same-sex attraction as not appropriate to the teachings of the church.

¹⁴² Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 118.

A kind of difficult task to sort out which items of faith and practices are essential and which are inessential.¹⁴³ As a person, it is always responsible to preserve essential witness dealing with faith and moral practices. If we recall Lovelace asked; should the church allow some churches and judicatories to ordain active homosexuals, as their conscience leads them, and others of differing convictions to forbid ordination? Or the church must enforce a ban on ordination?¹⁴⁴ In this, he showed Paul's two contracting principles in church discipline. Using Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 urging the church to tolerate opinions diversity and warning two waves of abuse such as judging other believers and causing the believer to stumble by flaunting one's freedom of conscience. It requires active homosexual believers in their sinful practice to remain silent about it. Out of respect for the conscience to the majority of the church who are weak in faith. Also using 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Corinthians 7, dealing the case of incestuous adultery in a local church. Paul directed the church to discipline the offender for his own sake and of the Gospel.¹⁴⁵ The New Testament church has a conviction on sexual morality.

This is part of what influences society and norms. Lovelace uses Ezekiel 33: 7-9. Showing that the majority of large denomination leaders and members believe that homosexual practice is a sin. Justified in treating active homosexuality to be challenged and disciplined in the church.¹⁴⁶ He added that the failure to discipline can cause inconsistent can be dangerous to the Spiritual life of a homosexual person and the whole church. According to Lovelace, the desire of active homosexual to be ordained is for them to obtain religious rights and achieve honesty. They are violating the law of love due to the public display of behavior that offended the conscience of the church.¹⁴⁷ This we can relate to what Calvin said that the discipline must be implemented to avoid church damage. The church according to Lovelace must challenge homosexuals to search their conscience, repent sin and avoid homosexual practices.

What if the Church allows the ordination of active homosexuals, should the leaders or members withdraw from that church? It is not necessary to withdraw from church yet the practice of the church must be corrected. Wherein separation from the church is not the

¹⁴³ Ibid., 119.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 119.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 120.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 120-121.

solution to this problem. As Luther and his teachings were ejected from the church and subsequent reformers could not reenter without compromising their faith.¹⁴⁸ The desire to leave the church is not an option here instead to reconsider and communicate them by truth to move towards repentance. But of course, if they insist to practice themselves publicly while they wanted to lead the church then take order to be in the denomination that endorses their way of life. To eliminate controversy in the church, we remain to seek and build the kingdom of God. To maintain the congregation standard, social demonstration of the Gospel and to abandoned false religion.

Lovelace argued that the easiest way for the church is to have unity among congregation leaders and members. Wherein the church has a prophetic role to call its members to repentance that includes social justice turning any forms of sin and abandon false teachings. All of this should be accompanied by faith in God. He believes that Biblical principles should be the motivation of the laity of the church to unite and support prophetic initiatives.¹⁴⁹ He suggested that gay religionist should think carefully before they destroy the mainline church social witness. This may cause more constructively to be advocated in other denominational contexts.¹⁵⁰ In having a better approach upon dealing with homosexuality, gay person and the church to be a significant witness of the world. It needs professing gay Christian to openly obey the Bible. Requiring church to honor and accept non-practicing homosexual and ordain to be a leader.

These indicate that leaders in the church are in the position as the living witness dealing with the power of the Gospel. To possess a good ability to reach out to people of the church and as a living demonstration of the Gospel's meaning and power to correct its gay members. So this means that how could you make a correction and be a good leader of the church if the leader itself is considered as practicing gay Christian? This must be chaotic to the life and ministry of the church. In ministering the church it is important to profess and call gay leaders and members to repentance. Just like what Paul did, where he called people to repentance in Corinth and to lead people to Christ. This we can relate in 2 Timothy 2:25 "correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the

¹⁴⁸Ibid; 122.

¹⁴⁹Ibid; 124.

¹⁵⁰Ibid; 125.

truth“ (NRSV). In some churches, it works and makes LGBT well treated. It can be an effective ministry of the church because gay leaders experienced this kind of orientation, so it's easy to act as a good example and to show people the changes of the leader's own life. To show what the Bible says about homosexuality and consider its own life-changing experience in avoiding an active sexual practice that is not allowed in the church. To handle homosexual drive with responsibility, concerning once faith and commitment focusing on positive virtues.

Apostle's Paul counsels not to let immorality or any impurity for it is disgraceful to speak of the thing which is done. "Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of this thing the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be associated with them. For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord, you are light. Live as children of light for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly.¹⁵¹ This context is to encourage us to enlighten into moral judgment relating to the person involve especially in sexual sin. To stand firm to Christian love and to firmly express against impurity. To value the Spiritual theology wherein the resources of grace for Christians through Christ that is entitled to claim by faith.

Lovelace said that proponents of active homosexual life-style within the church often to prove that they cannot change or restrain their orientation by citing the failure of nonreligious psychotherapy and pray for it but nothing had changed.¹⁵² Although some of them show awareness of Spiritual power to change. Lovelace concluded that the Spiritual renewal was rooted in union with Christ through faith. From His atoning works and it is necessary to remember God's holiness and awareness of sin. The teaching of the Scripture and the unbroken teaching of the Christian church on the morality of same-sex acts need a radical revision of the church understanding of the Bible, sexuality issues and the meaning of what is morally right in the context of the church standards. Like for instance the teaching of the

¹⁵¹ Ephesians 5: 3- 12 NRSV.

¹⁵² Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 130.

church about God's design for sexuality and marriage that is consists of husband and wife as life long commitment and so on. These teachings of the church were challenged by Christian teaching about homosexuality like same-sex marriage and the ordination of gay-identified clergy. In my observation nowadays the traditional conservative church seem declines in membership and attendance and has battled over theological and cultural issues. For instance when it comes to their views on same-sex marriage and church acceptance of gay parishioners that struggle with this issue. And those who openly accept LGBT Christians that offer clear loving teaching about God's design for sexuality. They have a voice in the church and create hope and guarantee inclusiveness by giving shelter to the LGBT Christians.

Christian leaders need to address the issue of grace, truth, forgiveness, and healing towards LGBT. Including sexual orientation and gender identity to non-discrimination policies and also to include programs and dialogue to educate LGBT the basic rules and laws of the church. Because sometimes LGBT's are losing their rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion and live in the stands that oppose more to live life in the church. Therefore Christian teaching on sexuality, relationship, and Christian faith is needed to have guidance and support to a good interaction with courage, love, and self-acceptance. Surely this can profoundly affect LGBT individuals and their relationship to God. To be able to understand and obey the Scripture can influence them to find help and manage unwanted same-sex attraction from a Biblical basis to find healing and freedom from any forms of a homosexual act or unhealthy relationship.

As I had encountered James and I discuss in the previous chapter. Where his home church was not accepting an active gay person or practice homosexual. As a person having a same-sex partner, he needs to choose whether to live together with his long life partner or to live a Christian life. That had fought his sin in silence and too afraid to be judged by the Christian community and confuse his life about his desire to stay with his partner. Yet he had decided to live a Christian lifestyle and focus on his belief and be a good gay Christian. It has made it easier for him to live without confusion but settled himself by his assurance of God's love and acceptance. It is necessary to know by James's experience of reaching out and receiving help from the Christian community. He enables him to overcome his same-sex attraction. Even though he acknowledged himself as gay by nature yet avoid the homosexual act that prohibited in his church. By the support group he got from his home church he overcomes his

fear, and distrust and the church gave him direction by stepping into the gap in his life and administer grace, freedom and truth. That leads him to live a peaceful and content life in Christ.

In 2003, Sandra Day O'Connor said to the US Supreme Court Justice that the burning issue and first important civil rights struggle in the twenty-first century was the effort to define gay rights.¹⁵³ LGBT is considered the marginalized and being dominated in this context. They need to meet church expectations, a kind of approval to be accepted into the Christian circle. Gays and lesbians have challenged various unfriendly laws, although political authorities have not responded uniformly.¹⁵⁴ It signifies that LGBTs do not just experience discrimination and gender equality inside the church but also from society. This has a similar sitting in the church where LGBT give their lives to follow Christ and rediscovering Jesus as the key to their Spiritual liberation and stepping into the rightful place at the table of grace.¹⁵⁵ But because of gender discrimination and sexual identity issues towards LGBT in the church. This becomes problematic gay leaders need to leave the church and they automatically disqualified to handle church ministry because of their gender preference. Some others for their desire to serve the church they tried to hide their real self into a certain limit.

Robertson cited Dr. Aaron Bianco, a Catholic theologian and former pastoral associate at St. John the Evangelist Church in San Diego, CA. dedicated his life as a faithful believer. Serving as an openly gay, married pastoral associate in San Diego.¹⁵⁶ Where non-affirming Christian protested and embarrass him by posting his photos on social media and in their community. He experienced physical assault after his church service and vandalism in the conference room destroying his image. He was forced to resign. He believes in his calling to lead the church and continue to extend his services to the Christian community especially to the LGBT community and keep believing that heterosexual or homosexual created through the image and likeness of God.¹⁵⁷ His desire to be a good gay Christian caused him to suffer persecution.

¹⁵³ Michael Haas, *International Human Rights: A comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 2014), 462.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 464.

¹⁵⁵ Brandan J. Robertson, *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 83.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

Even to the best effort of non-affirming church, he continued to preach the Gospel to those who are willing to accept and listen to the word of God.

Hence, Robertson added one member of his church Rev. Gary Matson. A prominent Baptist pastor in Colorado, who was removed from his church because of being gay.¹⁵⁸ He married a woman to cover up his identity and struggle for healing from his sexuality to live to his calling to serve the church. He even underwent therapy and tried to be faithful. He cannot deny himself that he is gay no matter he tried to change yet continue to serve as pastor, mentor, and people coming to him to seek for prayer and advice. Even he was declare disqualified he choose to walk with Christ, live to his calling to preach the Gospel and stay unshakable. In this case, the inclusive church supposed to be the mission was to bring people of God to salvation turns into pushing out LGBT leaders outside the church. The majority of the church of Jesus Christ continues to fight with remarkable zeal to declare LGBT Christian unworthy of following Christ and serving the church simply because of disagreeing on sexual ethics.¹⁵⁹ He stands on his belief that there is no question that any movement of people desiring to follow Christ and be part of faith fellowship.¹⁶⁰

Robertson theology centered on allowing the subversive Gospel of Christ to emerge.¹⁶¹ Hoping that the non-affirming church will be considerate and open their eyes to see the truth because we are in a new era that everything is transformable. The hope that church and society as a whole will consider gender equality, racial and economic justice also a strong desire for acceptance to have a balance mainstream in society. These examples we have are related to Becker's labeling theory he says that social groups make rules to enforce that social rules define situations and kind of behavior appropriate to them.¹⁶² This indicates some actions in favor of following the rules label as right and wrong to those who didn't follow and consider as an outsider. The person was labeled as an outsider for having a different view by not accepting the rules or the one who breaks the rule may feel judged as an outsider. This can be seen in the cases of James, Aaron and Rev. Gary. Wherein they are identified as an outsider for not fitting into the position of being a gay Christian. For the case of James that he

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 84.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 85.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 85.

¹⁶² Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 01.

needs to get out of his homosexual act and commit himself to live a Christian lifestyle. For Aaron and Rev. Gary, where they were considered as an outsider in the congregation because of their gender preference.

In this part I have discussed the kind of positions may LGBT people have because of their sexuality. The experiences of LGBT Christian leaders wherein for being open and honest about their sexuality lead them to disqualify in having a position in the church. In the life of this individual that tried to serve in the Christian community yet their sexuality disgrace them. But of course, there are some churches out there that fully accept LGBT leaders and members and successfully growing.

7.3.2. In Christian Context what does it says in same-sex marriage?

LGBT in this study often experiences conflicting desires to live according to authentic sexuality, to express authentic gender and to remain true in a religious worldview. The questioning of their faith leads to a reflexive negotiation of faith.¹⁶³ One of these desires is same-sex marriage in the church. In many countries, it is now possible to marry same-sex partners like in Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, and the USA. It is accepted in the state and the church. Coming from my conservative country and growing up in the community that LGBT was considered as a minority group, not accepted and opened lead me out of my curiosity to observed LGBT people in the church here in Norway and I was amazed how Norwegian society treated them equally in many ways. For the past three years, I had been witnessing and attending gay pride in Oslo, and last June 2018 I had the privilege to talk to some gay couples that had been married in the Church.

The notion of LGBT being represented in the community is not a new phenomenon. I was asking several couples the reason for getting married in the church while they can have their marriage legalized from the state. Firstly, marriage in the church bring them rewards to tie the knot and make this privilege accessible to them and allowing them to have the same rights as heterosexuals is a big thing for them. Secondly, having a union in the church let them feel

¹⁶³ Bronwyn Fielder & Douglas Ezzy, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christians: Queer Christians, Authentic Selves*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 63.

accepted by Christ and give them an assurance that their marriage will be blessed and they can stay longer together. They feel that it is more solemn and sacred. Thirdly, considering their faith to God, as LGBT Christian it is important for them to be married in a church because it is fulfillment in self-validation as Christians. It gives them the security that the relationship will stay together because of their marriage vows in front of the altar. There are no reasons to let them separate because they are sealed with church blessings by the power vested to the priest. Lastly, it is clear for them that having a union in the church can make them a healthy and blissful relationship. It can make them a better couple the privilege is fair and legitimate.

In addition to this right to marry in church, Christian in general, the important to assimilate our society in the relationship norms by properly or critically understand the bond of marriage and its authenticity to recognize the responsibilities attached to it. Not just the individual desires of security, benefits, and affordability this world can offer but the state of righteousness not just by human's eyes rather to the care of God's law on marriage. People can say that fighting human rights is the justice that we deserve shows equality. Well, this can be in many forms. Everyone who wants to marry should be able to. In my point of view, protecting LGBT and same-sex relationship in the private sphere involving the proper examination and propagation of legit LGBT relationship is highly respected. I respect their right to have a union. On the other hand, I am not into a same-sex marriage in the church because for me the importance of marriage is validated from the Holy Scripture. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living that moves upon the earth."¹⁶⁴ It is God who designed the marriage attached to the reproduction of humanity.

What creates a difference in this, I am not against the same-sex relationship and even I have a lot of friends having civil marriage and I respected them, I attended a civil union and seeing them being happily married over the years. When it comes to my faith, I obey the divine law most especially the life and teachings of the church. The issue of Christian faith when it

¹⁶⁴ Genesis 1: 27-28NRSV.

comes to same-sex marriage and same-sex relationship is very crucial where conservative and the liberal church uses the Bible to justify their position. Taking Biblical verses sometimes out of its original context and use it as a tool to prove their argument. The use of this statement goes into the Biblical interpretation that brings its meaning. It shows the view of the Scripture express among professing Christians. These patterns elevate their judgment and accept the word itself without proper examination. Biblical scholars and theologians usually verify Biblical accounts and reinterpret textual concerns to see the actual lens of interpretation guide to a correct understanding of the meaning and the importance of Biblical teaching. The problem of picking Biblical verses, choosing and interpret them on personal preferences is the authenticity, its either true or not. Rather what Christians affirm to prove the clear teaching of the Bible.

This mirrors the queer theory presented by Sedgwick in showing binarisms. In her discussion of structuring binarisms as it functions within a specific cultural context follow a process cognate to the one described there.¹⁶⁵ Such as homosexual or heterosexual, male or female, good or bad, etc., a binarize identity of implications. The critical analysis of modern homo\heterosexual definition assuming the appropriate place for critical analysis begins from the decentered perspective of modern gay and antihomophobic theory. Because according to Sedgwick structuring of same-sex bonds can't, in any historical situation mark by inequality and contest between genders, fail to be a site of intensive regulation that intersects virtually every issue of power and gender.¹⁶⁶ Concerning the context of same-sex marriage, it is similarly in relating to the beliefs of homosexual to heterosexual marriage that mostly being compared and the issue of gender equality become controversial. The liberal and conservative churches have different views and beliefs that cause separation and discrimination in the church. When it comes to these binarisms Paul is commonly cited as having similar thoughts. Where he commonly addresses in his letters, an example to the Corinth where he specifies in addressing "Jews\Gentiles, male\female, believers\non believers, etc. same as Jesus himself.

¹⁶⁵Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents of the University of California, 1990), 92.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

If we recall, the same-sex marriage in the Norwegian Church that made LGBT members rejoiced after its legalization (see chapter 5). The Norwegian Lutheran Church is composed of the liberal and conservative members having equal rights and decide on their own beliefs. The view of the church in the same-sex marriage in connection to my main question of how the church can involve LGBT group of people? It depends on the leaders or the priest, and member worldview. Wherein they consider boundaries, respect and understanding. For instance, it was clearly stated that if the parish priest not in favor to conduct same-sex marriage, they can hire another priest to conduct the ceremony. The freedom of belief and provide a different scope of relevance. I believe that homosexual behavior in terms of same-sex marriage in the church is wrong in God's sight. God's standards for human sexual conduct both in church and society that all behavior affront to God and the Bible.

In this section, I discussed the Christian context on same-sex marriage and that happened to have its different views between the traditional conservative church and the liberal church. The moral law represents God's moral character that Christians should possess. This is the most common teaching of the church that we fail to meet especially in our words and conduct. On the other hand, LGBT individuals always wanted to have the same rights to heterosexual especially when it comes to same-sex marriage in the church.

7.3.3. Are there any Specific Biblical Texts that tells Us About Homosexuality is a Sin? How can we deal with it?

The authority and the command of the Scripture play a significant role in Christian life. Which tells us to claim our sexual orientation to accept how God had created us. By explicitly rejecting the premises of the Scriptural statement condemning homosexuality, a symptom of our corruption and disobedience to God's creation. In this section, I will discuss some Biblical references that deal with the issue of homosexuality and as a Christian, in general, how can we deal with this?

Six primary Bible verses that deal with homosexual practices. In this, I will discuss firstly, Genesis 19 The story of Sodom and Gomorrah on how the men of Sodom wanted to have sex with the two Angels and because they didn't repent with their immorality, God destroys the

city. Secondly, Leviticus 18 referring to homosexual practices as an abomination. Thirdly, Leviticus 20, God forbade the law of morality. Fourthly, Romans 1, when Apostle Paul says men abandon natural relationship to unnatural relationship. Fifthly, 1 Corinthians 6, this verse refers to those who participate in a homosexual practice that they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Lastly, 1 Timothy 1:8-11 talks about homosexual practices as not appropriate to Godly Christian behavior.

Base on the authority of the Scripture, we need to take the Bible seriously to evaluate the issues of sexual orientation and sexual identity. Because the Bible itself is very consistent in describing God yet more complex, contrasting views and stories about human sexuality. In Paul's letter to the Galatians where Paul says in Christ there is neither Jews nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free and there's neither male nor female. This shows the erasing boundaries and distinctions that we put among ourselves. What does it mean when he said; there's no male or female? People nowadays are interested in what the Bible says where there is no male or female. An example of this is in the marriage thing, where the Bible says many complex texts and stories about this many years ago. In today's time looking in our society that we made so much progress in our generation. One of them is our understanding of homosexuality. If we look at the medical community for the past many years for instance that described homosexuality as disorder and as we see after those years of evaluating and studying about it. Now it is rewritten in the manual describing that it is not illness or a disorder anymore. This shows a different range of sexuality.

This means in recent time people have so much understanding of sexuality. Some problem that creates conflict in discussing this matter is that some still base their argument, understanding, and interpretation in valuing morality to old Scripture. Wherein they look into religious traditions and based their understanding into it. We need to understand the belief and values of the people. But for the belief that leads to discriminate people especially in dealing with gender equality and sexual identity. It is important to look at the Bible again by reading the whole context and try not to be biased but properly interpret to understand the values of how to value people and avoid discrimination like what Christ did during his time. One of the examples that showed us nondiscrimination in the Bible was when Apostle Philip was traveling, he meets the Ethiopian Eunuch (someone from Africa with dark skin) it is very obvious that he was an outsider because of the way he looks. Philip was talking to him and

while they do that, he saw water and suddenly asked Philip to baptize him to become a recognized member of society. Philip did without an interrogation of his sexual practice and he welcomed him. The importance of having good moral principles that this story shows us to encounter the voice that value inclusion and acceptance of someone that in today's context has some parallels with the LGBT community.

When we talk about homosexuality and the Biblical basis, the most famous text is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19: 4-13. It becomes famous because of anti-sodomy laws that exist in some places even today. This concept of sodomy that derived from the Bible story. Sodomy is a word that usually throws around a lot without necessarily understanding sometimes what it really means. This can be interpreted as the idea of referring to gay sex or any sexual act that is not procreative. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah was that once upon a time there were two men traveling trying to find a place to stay in the city. They were about to give up and supposedly spent the night in the town square. There was a man named Lot who took pity on them and offer to stay at his house that night. Suddenly there were town's men who came to Lot's house to bring his guest out saying they might know them. The term "know them" can be mean let us know them intimately, violently or sexually. Then the story continued where Lot begged not to act wickedly and he turned to offer his two virgin daughters to the mob in exchange. Then the story ends when God gets angry about the whole situation and destroy the whole city for their sins. Lot's offer of his two daughters as sexual surrogates shows that men of Sodom did not simply want to be acquainted with the Angelic visitors socially.¹⁶⁷ The question we can ask is what exactly the sin of Sodom?

In the book of Ezekiel 16: 49-50 where it talks about what Sodom did was wrong. "This was the guilt of your sister Sodom; she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid to poor and needy. They were haughty and did abominable things before me, therefore I removed them when I saw it".¹⁶⁸ Sister here is used as a metaphor the cities are all in a location (their sister cities) they refer to the population as daughters. Talking about the city and its population. This verse seems to talk about the minority group, saying that this minority should be shunned and be punished. Talking the

¹⁶⁷ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 100.

¹⁶⁸ Ezekiel 16 : 49-50 NRSV.

people who need us the most, the most vulnerable people among us are people we need to talk about. We need to put the literal context when we read Biblical passages to know the audience and the time period to know the real meaning of the texts. So when we read the Bible in our context especially in the issue of LGBT people. It is important to consider what we are doing. The importance of reading the Biblical context as a whole enables us to know the voices in interpreting it correctly. The story of Sodom we see Lot a man who stands against an entire city. Discriminated against by people because of being outsiders. Lot's stood against them for their discrimination, violence and possibly violated these two men sexually. We can learn it from today by believing that gay does not sin. It is the homosexual act that can make it unclean.

In this passage we can apply Becker's labeling theory in the most common view of deviance identifies it as revealing the presence of disease.¹⁶⁹ He was referring to anything that is discomfort and unhealthy. According to Becker homosexuality is illness because heterosexual is normal and in this case, homosexuality is a deviant because most people are heterosexual. The one considers deviant who had not abode the law. In Genesis 19 the application of this theory was two Angels were labeled as an outsider, a stranger of their community that caught the interest of town's men for sexual desire. Wherein homosexual practice was part of the pattern of sin brought down the judgment of God upon Sodom. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah for me is not consensual, monogamous homosexual practice. This story cannot be used to prove that homosexual behavior yet might be a story of gang rape and lack of hospitality. Because as I refer to Ezekiel 16: 49-50 we can see the answer why God judge Sodom because of their pride lead them selfish and inhospitable.

Leviticus 18: 22 and 20: 13 these texts condemn male homosexual genital acts. Lovelace argues the significance of these texts for today's believers. Firstly, they were dismissed as cultic taboos in early Jewish culture purely human origin and does not express God's mind with respect to homosexual practice. Secondly, their relevance to all homosexual behavior was challenged about their meaning in Jewish life context. Lastly, it was asserted that they have no real relevance for Christians because God clearly released the early church from the

¹⁶⁹ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 04.

the necessity to keep the Levitical law.¹⁷⁰ Leviticus 18: 22 “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination“. Leviticus 20: 13 “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination“. ¹⁷¹ Robertson concluded that these two verses are a condemnation of any forms of same-sex relationships.¹⁷² In many ancient cultures surrounding Jewish people, same-sex practices were common, at the time even celebrated in relation to either worship of pagan deities or an act of aggression and dominance over conquered people. In Deuteronomy, there were key moral codes for Jewish people and there was no condemnation for a same-sex sexual relationship.¹⁷³

On the other hand, Lovelace has the following arguments. Firstly, in the component of divine inspiration which the church recognized in the Levitical legislation. Modern scholars recognize Levitical material resembles and was patterned after other legal and religious systems in the ancient Near East an insight and moral significance to Christian values in social legislation. God used material suitable to culture and give moral and spiritual significance relevant to Christians.¹⁷⁴ Secondly, the significance of these texts by restricting the meaning to one historical context is ingenious also forced and speculative.¹⁷⁵ The practices if we read the whole chapter includes homosexuality and these practices in Leviticus confirm the corruption in their context. Thirdly, the argument against the relevance of these passages argues that Christians are free from the law. In fact, this continues to have an ethical significance to Christians including the 10 commandments for social legislation.¹⁷⁶ These laws even adopted in the New Testament especially in dealing with sexual morality such as adultery and homosexual practices.

Why do we need to follow Old Testament law? Because like Peter, Paul and Jesus himself repeated Leviticus laws that I believe it is still applicable to us Christians today and this includes the law of homosexual behavior that was repeated in the New Testament. Similarly to what Lovelace argued that the reformation principle of interpreting an individual passage of

¹⁷⁰ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 88.

¹⁷¹ Leviticus 18: 22 & 20: 13.

¹⁷² Brandon J. Robertson, *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 15.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁷⁴ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion*, (Lamp Press, 1979), 88.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

Scripture required the reader to recognize the same Spirit who ultimately controlled the writing of a given passage, behind the intention of the author can inspire other texts of the Scripture. His principle the reformers called the analogy of Scripture, the rest of the Bible confirms and reiterates the Levitical prohibition of homosexual practice.¹⁷⁷ In the New Testament Jesus himself said; do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.¹⁷⁸ This is God's ethical desire to humanity that Christian must put into consideration.

Romans 1: 24-27 in this passage Paul condemns sexual relationships with the same gender. They were "inflamed with lust for one another" it speaks of a consensual sexual relationship. "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and conceived in their own person the due penalty for their error."¹⁷⁹ Relationship that was consider sinful, the context of this passage Paul calling the attention of the church of Rome pointing for its judgmental attitude towards pagans.

Paul condemns the pagan culture of the Greco-Roman world that begins with idolatry and move towards sacred sexual rituals that do not produce offspring.¹⁸⁰ Robertson argues that means women were engaging in sexual activity that is not procreative. Modern Christians interpret this passage as condemnation to homosexuality and neglect the sexual ethics that Paul was trying to emphasize. Where Christian believe sex for procreation and disvalued the semen that is a sacred substance and wasting it constitutes a mortal sin. In the application of labeling theory in this passage where homosexuality is considered as deviant. In this text, Paul uses the term heterosexual as natural and homosexual as unnatural. This is in accordance with D. Sherwin Bailey's distinction between inversion and perversion because of the contrasting

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.,90-91.

¹⁷⁸ Matthew 5: 17NRSV.

¹⁷⁹ Romans 1: 24- 27 NRSV.

¹⁸⁰ Brandan J. Robertson: *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 122.

heterosexual orientation.¹⁸¹ It also argued that being natural for an exclusive homosexual to express their orientation in homosexual acts. Paul language in sexual inversion at the head list of moral departure from God's will. The response that Lovelace presented was that Romans 1:26-27 admitting that Paul agreed on the Levitical texts and Hebrew culture that all homosexual practice was a departure from the will of God.¹⁸²

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 this passage shows homosexuality as serious and sinful. It is not a lifestyle to be celebrated indeed a sin to be forgiven because it is not inescapable. "Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy drunkards, revilers, robbers, none of this will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God."¹⁸³ Lovelace argues that these texts teach us clearly that those who live in course of homosexual practice without repentance and reorienting or control their homosexual orientations have never yielded to the Lordship of Christ and not part of his kingdom.¹⁸⁴

John Boswell of Yale, interpretation of this passage that the literature of the early church does not employ to document its rejection of homosexuality. The two words refer to homosexuals in the text *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* meaning those who are self-indulgent and homosexual prostitutes.¹⁸⁵ Boswell's view *malakoi* means those who give themselves to passive homosexual acts allowing them to be misused homosexually. Robertson argues that the Greek words Paul used *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* (male prostitutes and sodomites) Paul created these terms after looking to Greek translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Leviticus 18:22 *meta arsenos ou koimethese koiten gynaikos*, Leviticus 20: 13 *hos an koimethe meta arsenos koiten gynaikos*) meaning man bed. This refers to form of ritual rape or temple prostitution.¹⁸⁶ *Arsenokoitein* is referring to a committed sexual relationship between two partners with the same-sex. He described *malakoi* weak or feminine. To understand in Greco-Roman culture

¹⁸¹ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion* (Lamp Press, 1979), 91.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁸³ 1Corinthians 6: 9- 11 NRSV.

¹⁸⁴ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion* (Lamp Press, 1979), 96.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁸⁶ Brandan J. Robertson: *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 26-27.

any man who allowed himself to be with another man making himself malakos and becoming like a woman, a passive partner in a sexual relationship.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 in this passage Paul condemns homosexual activity not the same-sex attraction. “Now we know that the law is good if one uses it legitimately. This means understanding that the law is laid down, not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the goodness and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father and mother, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liar, perjurers and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching, that conforms to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me¹⁸⁷.” In some Bible translation verse 10 says those who practice homosexuality.

Lovelace argues homosexual refers to arsenokoitai where this text attracts Judaistic legalism that admits and defends the guiding and restraining function of the moral law.¹⁸⁸ The background of this text explicitly describes homosexual behavior as sinful. There are four other Biblical passages having the same judgment according to Lovelace Genesis 19: 4-9, Judges 19: 22-26, 2 Peter 2: 1-22 and Judges 3: 23.¹⁸⁹ These passages highlight the components of the sin of Sodom and everything speaks against it. The Bible teaches human sexuality to the texts related to homosexuality give a clear illustration that there is no warranty in the Scripture for any form of homosexual behavior to be considered as the legitimate expression to the will of God.¹⁹⁰ Like the text we examined that give importance to the modern Christianity approach to homosexuality. That was a strong relation to sexual ethics.

The impression that I left with after reading and analyzing these texts and we can definitely deal these passages by being obedient to the Scripture and follow God’s law. The thought that the Bible teachings are consistently clear that God forbids homosexual activity and the Bible is the ultimate authority and hope for Christians. From the passages concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, Christians must oftentimes show hospitality to everyone regardless of where they are coming from. To be prepared to interact with the messenger. Like in this text Lot’s guest turned out to be God’s Angelic messenger. Paul considered a homosexual act as sinful by

¹⁸⁷ 1 Timothy 1: 8-11 NRSV.

¹⁸⁸ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church: Crisis, Conflict, Compassion* (Lamp Press, 1979), 97.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 97-101.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 102.

nature. Homosexual practice is against nature, which means against God's purpose and intention for sexual behavior. It also means that unclean practice wherein Paul indicated human sexuality is a disorder due to disobedience. With our choice to act our orientation and fulfill God's plan for our sexuality and natural desire, it is important to reorient our desire and seek the transforming power of Christ in our life.

This is something occurred from this research, being morally correct while embracing Christian identity in relevance to the life of LGBT people and its involvement in the church. To see the beauty of the Gospel, wherein every sin can be forgiven and it doesn't need to define who you are as long as you live an authentic life in Christ. To homosexuals, your sin issues maybe your life-long struggle but it doesn't need to be your identity. Because Christ died for our sins and forgiven us, as Romans 8: 1 "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus".¹⁹¹ There are evidence and reasons why homosexual practice is to consider as Biblically wrong and as Christians we are aware too. Indeed homosexual expression can cause danger to the formation of sexual identity including the integrity of the Christian identity and stability of the society.

In this section, I have discussed six Biblical passages concerning homosexuality. It shows God's intention to LGBT to shape sexual identity so that those who are biologically masculine reach full psychological masculinity and channel their sexual responses toward women. These Biblical texts clearly illustrated that homosexual acts are prohibited.

7.3.4. How can a Church Deal this as a Sign of Hospitality and Inclusiveness While it Creates Tension in Theological Restrictions Found in the Bible?

There is a remarkable shift in church culture in dealing with LGBT people, it is to foster love, to know how to recognize and breakdown the walls between LGBT and the church, to build a relationship and make a bridge to stay connected with each member of the Christian community regardless the gender preference. In the case of LGBT member this can be by means of calling LGBT people to repentance and have a better approach and good teaching

¹⁹¹ Romans 8: 1 NRSV.

about the prohibition of homosexual practice, and to live an authentic Christian life. By avoiding discrimination, gender inequality, value respect and acceptance, the church may enable to have a good welcoming habit towards LGBT people and be inclusive. To be responsible enough in regulating and practicing each faith and enable to considerate LGBT's life within the boundaries of Spiritual health through the saving doctrine of Christ to create discipline. For LGBTs who don't feel loved, this is a very important insight to remember, to show God's love. Through the church by showing them love, acceptance, and good treatment of who they are. To let them know the message of love from the Old Testament and to the New Testament. In many circumstances, God shows how He loves Israel and its people (see Hosea chapter 11) and in the New Testament Jesus accepts everyone and welcome everyone except for any forms of disobedience and betrayal. The good understanding of LGBT and the church can build a good Christian community and possibly by having an open and constructive dialogue. This can be resulted to have a correct balance in exercising each faith and create unity.

The most common tendencies people get discriminated, judged, untrusted because of who they are. The reason that sometimes they consider themselves as an outsider of the church because even how they tried to be honest to themselves something holds them to avoid the feeling of rejection. In Becker's labeling theory he said; one tries to fit his line of action into the action of others, just as each of them likewise adjusts his developing actions to what he sees and expects others to do.¹⁹² In my research, I can comprehend why sometimes LGBT's life becomes challenging in the church especially in embracing sexuality. Because one might judge them without knowing their faith, true commitment and willingness to live a Christian life. Instead of accepting, there are speculations of doubt and barriers in between. To have a reminder of queer theory by Sedgwick she argues the modern homosexual panic represents a temporary imprisoning obstacle to philosophy and culture and the latent energy that can hurtle them far beyond their present place.¹⁹³ Representing LGBT Christians who experienced both negative and positive reactions towards their sexual identity. Another an important aspect that

¹⁹² Brandan J. Robertson: *The Gospel of Inclusion: A Christian Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Church*, (An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 173.

¹⁹³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (The Regents of the University of California, 1990), 139.

Christians must know, the rights and limitations in the context of their denominational commitment (see chapter 6.1.2).

Following what some of the literature and Biblical reference and my interpretation, the church can involve LGBT Christians by remembering the Gospel of Christ to treat with inclusion in the kingdom of God. To let the powerful wind of God's Spirit to blow away that blind us and give us clear sight to declare each one as beloved and welcome them in church. What separates the church and the LGBT community are the different values and moral beliefs that contradict the Scripture. In fact by unity and put the level of respect, by honoring the Scripture this differences can be work out together. Considering some Biblical text in this research that leads LGBT's to leave their old life and choose to live in faith. Example the life of James that reconciled to God. It leads to show his Christian community the submissive self he has and by changing his lifestyle he assures to himself that even he is gay he is accepted by God. The state of belongingness he gained also involves self-acceptance that God prohibits the homosexual practice.

For James abandoning his monogamous gay relationship by liberating and allowing his desire to live life in Christ. Made him realized that his identity as gay is not grounded on what other people define it. Yet the sole identity must be based in Christ, the giver of unconditional love. The identity marks of being a child of God. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.¹⁹⁴ This is what James was holding for when he doubts and struggle with his sexuality he finds reason in the Christian world to be accepted. He realized that he doesn't even transform and pretend as a straight man because this is what he designed to be. Realizing that even heterosexual suffer from sin. The struggle must be to be Holy and to live in purity as Christ wanted to be. For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming creature that moves on the earth. For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall be holy, for I am Holy.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴. Jeremiah 29: 11NRSV.

¹⁹⁵. Leviticus 11: 44- 45.

In this study, even though we can see in many churches that openly accept the LGBT community like the Lutheran church and more others. There are some conservative churches like the Roman Catholic Church, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Mormons, etc. that remain as conservative and consider as traditional faith condemning homosexuals, that set their church doctrines and define the historic Christian beliefs. To find healing and reconciliation on sexual orientation, it is necessary to remember as LGBT people that God calls you deeper into this unique identity that reflects God's divinity. Being identified as a gay Christian is such beautiful creativity. Even though what the entire culture and society say, it is important to accept the truth and know this identity thoroughly.

In this section, I have discussed how a church can deal with LGBT people in a way that they can be included in church without compromising the teachings of the Bible. The struggle of LGBT to be included in the inclusive church deals with their gender identity and Christian standards. Wherein some gay prohibit to come in the church because of their consciousness of being not accepted. Reality shows that to guarantee authentic acceptance is through Jesus Christ himself, not the people around. To avoid condemnation it is important to observe proper Christian values that to be obedience to the Scripture.

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION

There are many different perspectives about the church and LGBT, to be a gay Christian and having an issue of sexual identity doesn't give an assurance to be accepted in the church. In this thesis, I had tried to understand the involvement of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender in the Christian community. In this research, I use a hermeneutical approach of studying literature and Biblical texts and a part of a qualitative study where I observe church services in different Christian denominations and undergone personal interaction with the gay people from the church and attended the gay pride parade last June 2018. These tools I use to collect information in answering the research question and sub-questions:

How can a church involve the LGBT's namely the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender group of people?

1. What kind of position may LGBT people have? Are LGBT people disqualified because of their gender preference?
2. In Christian context what does it says in same-sex-marriage?
3. Is there any specific Biblical text that tells us about homosexuality is a sin? How can we deal with it?
4. How can a church deal this as a sign of hospitality and inclusiveness while it creates tension in theological restrictions found in the Bible?

My findings illustrate the importance of the Sacred Scripture and the difficulties of LGBT people in dealing with their sexual identity and being part of the Christian community. At the beginning of this study, I picture it out to be chaotic and complicated. I am considering how the conservative church tried to change LGBT members of the church to become straight and follow the rules of the church and live with the standards people want them to be. Hence, LGBT in this study shape their understanding to reconcile God by Christ and His precious gift, the Holy Spirit that enables the church and LGBT Christians to communicate and

navigate its function, purpose, and identity. The Spirit of God speaks and reveals the truth, the only language we need to communicate and understand the right teachings. Another appropriate response of the church in involving LGBT's in this area is to have an authentic humility to speak up the gentle truth and give compassionate love in equal volume. By extending love and showing the love of Christ. Because oftentimes the way we build a relationship to the people can lead them to have a relationship to Christ and to restore their wholeness.

This study shows the Biblical teaching on human sexuality as a central, pervasive and consistent body of doctrine through the ethics of the Scripture. This is known to LGBT Christian that I had an encounter with, and lead them to avoid coming to church because of confusion of where to stand for either to their Christian faith or to live in homosexual life. After weighing what is important for their life like James he ended up to reconcile his faith and live an active Christian lifestyle avoiding the homosexual act. After all, he has sought a better understanding of his issue he took responsibility to remain celibate and become a good Christian. The responsibility aligned with being faithful to the moral apprehensions of the Christian Gospel. Choosing the distinction of doing what is good and allowing integrity and submissive self to the church which draws the line to what we called morally right.

In summing up, I argue that this study has shown the ways that the church can involve LGBT Christians in the religious community. There are so many ways yet my study comes up this way. It is important to remember that the church is not the enemy of LGBT people because everyone has the same right, either heterosexual or homosexual. My stand is that as a member of the Christian church, I am not against any LGBT individual and highly respected them but I am not in favor of same-sex marriage in the church and the homosexual practice. Because this is against the divine law and there is no evidence indicating that the Bible recognizes a valid loving and committed LGBT relationship. There is no written proof in the Bible indicating the LGBT relationship being acceptable in God's eyes. Living out the sexuality according to what the Bible demand begins with self-acceptance and self-love. The sexual attraction to the same-sex needs to bond appropriately with another person in the right roadmap to living that is important to observe. To be guided into the key freedom and to live a proper, well respected Christian behavior.

The rainbow sunset means finding the right church is an important factor in LGBT's life, such as an understandable inclusive church that enables to give proper Spiritual guidance to the LGBT members without contradicting the teachings of Christ. This research shows that even though they stay away from church for self-denial, ignoring their faith and avoiding judgment regarding sexuality, LGBT Christians oftentimes find an emptiness in their hearts and look back to the community that has the same faith as them. Even though they are stable or living a comfortable life in society. The church remains their home of faith that fulfill the missing part of them, that judgment and discrimination turn to be a contractive criticism to align their life in Christ, the source of true identity and the giver of unconditional love towards them and for all.

Church in the framework of this research function as a nurturing mother of LGBT Christians, who trained, take good care and give proper guidance and a nutritious foundation of faith so that they can grow stronger and firmly. To stand in any storm that no one can slay them because they know the truth and accept who they are. LGBT in this study experience Spiritual crisis, self-doubt and ignore their faith but in the end, as they feel their life meaningless without God, they reconcile and accept their identity as gay and Christian and chooses to live a celibate Christian lifestyle. It is important to be in a Christian community that you saw faithful people and to be with people having the same struggle as you and see the reformation and transformation from yourself how awesome God accepts and forgives people who repented and go back to Him. The church as a sunset, the resting place.

I argue that the Christian community must act as a vessel of LGBT people that fully accept their gender identity and strengthen their faith to live an authentic Christian lifestyle by observing and obeying Jesus' teachings. For master students that are interested in this topic, I firmly recommend for further study and write about this. For better harmonious relationship among Christians to value the importance of respect.

Chapter Nine

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