

Gender and Sexuality

Preamble

The issue of gender dysphoria affects society and every social institution, including the Church, marriage, education, government, etc. Since the 19th century, the sexual liberalising movement has begun to expand. The goal was initially limited to the feminist agenda, where campaigns were to fight for women's rights and status in society. Eventually, the social movement diversified to articulate the acceptance of other sexual or social identities, such as LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual/Aromantic, etc).

Although Malaysia criminalises same-sex sexual relations, some local entities have attempted to advocate for fair treatment or legalising genders other than male and female. There are also concerns within Christian communities about whether Malaysian churches will adopt the current trend of redefining gender and the view of marriage.

This paper will first state the position held by the Assemblies of God Malaysia fellowship. The subsequent segments of the article will provide additional discussions to help local pastors address this issue in their congregations.

Definitions

This paper will use the following terminologies with these stated definitions.

Homosexual/Gay	Refers to someone identifying as having a sexual orientation towards members of the same sex.
Gender	Refers to the condition of being physically male and female.
Intersex	Refers to a person with a body with a discrepancy between the male genitals and the female genitals.
Same-Sex Attraction (SSA)	Refers to sexual attraction towards members of the same sex.
Same-Sex Behaviour (SSB)	Refers to sexual activity towards members of the same sex.

AG Malaysia Position

1. God made humans in His image. God made them male and female.
2. Males and females are sexually different but have equal personal dignity.
3. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman.
4. Sin is the root cause of all anomalies in the human condition.
5. Other forms of union are sinful and prohibited, including sodomy, polygamy, and polyamory.
6. Sexual acts outside of marriage are prohibited and viewed as sinful.
7. Same-sex behaviour is a sin, even for monogamous same-sex relationships.
8. God does not give same-sex desires. They are consequences of the fall. Same-sex attractions are to be resisted, just as any form of lustful attraction is to be resisted.
9. Salvation is available for those who practised same-sex behaviour or any other type of sin if they repent and believe in Jesus.
10. Some people are physically born with sexual biological irregularities (intersex). They are still made in the image of God and deserve equal personal dignity.
11. People who are intersex may not be able to choose their sex. People who struggle with same-sex attraction may not integrate their sexual preference with their biological sex. They will ultimately find their sexuality restored in the resurrected bodies.
12. People who struggle with gender dysphoria should not be discriminated against. They should be cared for and loved like everyone else, towards wholeness in Jesus Christ.
13. There is hope and freedom in Christ from the bondage of sinful sexual desires to live in holiness and wholeness.

Biblical Response to Common Questions

1. Question: Some homosexual advocates argue that the creation account (Genesis 1-2) does not speak about gender. Gender is a social construct that society imposes on individuals. It is not bound to the sexual organs at birth. Moreover, some are born with both male and female sexual organs. Why do Christians want to restrict binary genders of male and female? Why limit the marriage covenant to a union of male and female?

Genesis 1:27 says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (ESV). The image of male and female is connected with the image of God.

In Genesis 2, the detailed process is given where God made Adam first and then Eve, a suitable helper for him. “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’” (Genesis 2:18, ESV).

Adam and Eve's union becomes the marriage model for all humans: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, ESV).

Jesus cites Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 as the normative pattern for marriage (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-8).

Subsequent Bible passages prohibit any sexual intercourse outside of the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. These include:

- Adultery – having sex with an opposite sex other than your spouse (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:18; Romans 13:9; James 2:11)
- Fornication – having sex between unmarried people (Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:13-21, 28-29; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Corinthians 11:2; 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3)
- Prostitution – occupational sexual activity (1 Corinthians 6:15-18)
- Incest – sexual relations between family members or close relations (Leviticus 20:11-21; Deuteronomy 22:30; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2)
- Bestiality – sexual intercourse between human and animal (Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16)
- Homosexuality – same-gender sexual relations (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

The Bible consistently portrays that humanity consists of binary genders (male and female) and that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Including other genders in Genesis 1-2 is anachronistic and eisegesis.

2. Question: The rejection of same-sex relationships causes harm to the LGBTQ community. Isn't such rejection similar to the exclusion of the Gentiles by the Jews in the past?

The inclusion of the Gentiles by the early church is undoubtedly an important lesson for believers to keep in mind. The Jewish Christians in the early Church struggled to welcome the Gentiles into their faith community. In Acts 11, Peter defended his ministry to the Gentiles (Cornelius' household) at a meeting in Jerusalem with the Jewish believers. In Acts 15, the church met at Jerusalem to debate whether Gentiles should abide by the Law of Moses. The church is reminded that believers are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus (Acts 15:11).

Yet, the Gentile believers are expected to observe four things:

- (1) Abstain from things defiled by idols
- (2) Abstain from sexual immorality
- (3) Abstain from what has been strangled
- (4) Abstain from blood

These regulations would enable Gentile believers to participate in fellowship with Jewish believers. At the same time, Gentiles are expected to uphold the fundamental moral values that set them apart from other people.

Being included in the Church does not mean they can do anything they want. The Apostle Paul addresses the issue of immorality in Gentile-populated churches (such as the church in Rome and Corinth). Gentiles are expected to live a lifestyle that reflects God's will for the creation. As such, the Church welcomes people who struggle with same-sex attractions and walks with them on the path of holiness. Yet, at the same time, the Church continues to proclaim that God's will for sex is reserved for married heterosexual couples.

3. Question: The Bible is outdated. The Jews and Christians in the first century had little to no awareness of sexual orientation. Modern science reveals the complexity of the human body, which supports the redefinition of gender. Why do we still insist on a biblical definition of gender in our modern world?

The Bible is God's authoritative, living word that stands forever. "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12-13, ESV). God's word is never outdated, "but the word of the Lord remains forever" (1 Peter 1:25 alluding to Isaiah 40:8). Therefore, biblical truths and principles are in the timeless present and will last throughout the ages.

All kinds of sexual orientations and sexual sins have already existed since the fall of man after creation which defies God's original design of gender and sexuality (Genesis). The Jews and Christians in the first century were taught God's command and word, which include the genders and sexuality of man and woman as designed by

God, the creator of humankind. Sexual attractions which are against God's commands are temptations, and the act of immoral sexual behaviours are sins. The Bible teaches us to flee from sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18-20) instead of seeking justifications for indulgence.

The complexity of the human body, as modern science reveals, includes all kinds of abnormalities and biological deformities. Sexual orientation or inclination and attraction that is uncontrollable exists due to the fallen nature of humankind and the imperfect world we live in. Childhood upbringing, traumas, and sexual experiences are key factors in same-sex attraction and other unusual orientations. Modern scientific discovery does not justify that these orientations are natural. Human scientific redefinition of gender based on sexual disorders does not supersede God's biblical definition of gender (Genesis 1-2).

4. Question: Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for their pride, inhospitality, and failure to care for the poor. The event in Genesis 19:5 was an issue of gang rape, not a loving homosexual relationship. Why is this narrative still being used to refute homosexuality?

Although the incident in Genesis 19 was a case of an attempt at gang rape, the scene was described with the background of an utterly immoral culture in the city. In Genesis 19:4-5, it is said that every man in the city, both young and old, demanded the two male visitors come out so that they might "know them". Lot immediately offered them his two daughters, implying he understood "knowing them" as having sexual intercourse. The men in the city would have been practising same-sex behaviours commonly and habitually. Otherwise, it is hard to imagine every man would demand sexual intercourse with two visitors who were entirely foreign to them.

The judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah was not due to the event in Genesis 19:5 alone. Before that, the Lord told Abraham that "the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave" (Gen 18:20, ESV). Eventually, the Lord promised that He would not destroy the city if there were ten righteous people. Yet, Abraham could not find even ten righteous people.

Indeed, the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah was not just on homosexual sin alone. They were arrogant, selfish, and oppressed the poor and marginalised (Ezekiel 16:49-50). They were examples of those who committed adultery and practised evil (Isaiah 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14). However, these sins did not exclude the sin of homosexual intercourse. Sodom was accused of doing an "abomination" (*to'evah*) before God (Ezekiel 16:50). The same word for "abomination" is used to describe the prohibited act where a male to "lie with a male as with a woman" (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, ESV).

In the New Testament, 2 Peter 2:7-10 reveals that Lot was "greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked" (v7, ESV). Jude 7 clarifies that Sodom and Gomorrah "indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal life" (ESV). Therefore, the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah was related to their rampant same-sex behaviours.

5. Question: The prohibitions in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 concern only the nation of Israel. It is no longer applicable to believers in the New Testament. So why is the church enforcing these archaic laws?

The Mosaic covenant is no longer binding for the believers in the new covenant (Galatians 3:24-25; Romans 7:1-25; Hebrews 8:13). Believers are under the law of Christ, which is to love God and our neighbours (Matthew 22:37-39; 1 John 4:21).

However, the laws in the Old Testament are still relevant. Jesus affirmed that He came to fulfil the Laws (Matthew 5:17) and referred to them (e.g., Matthew 5:27-28; 15:3-6; Luke 10:25-28). The Apostle Paul also referred to the Law of Moses in his exhortation to encourage believers to live the new life (1 Corinthians 9:8-9, 19-23; 14:21; 2 Corinthians 8:15; 13:1; Galatians 5:14; 6:2; 5:22-23).

The laws, such as the prohibition of idolatry, murder, and adultery, remain valid today as they express God's eternal values. Concerning sexual laws, not every law is applicable. For example, the requirement of levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-6) and allowance for polygamy (Deuteronomy 21:15-17) are no longer applicable. Therefore, the question is whether the particular law reflects a long-term universal moral value.

These are the reasons why the prohibition of same-sex intercourse should be taken as God's demand of morality for all people at all times:

- (1) Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 occur in the same context with several other prohibitions that are permanently immoral, such as adultery, incest, and bestiality.
 - (2) The prohibition is reaffirmed in the New Testament (Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, 1 Timothy 1).
 - (3) The prohibitions in Leviticus 18 and 20 are part of a consistent expectation of sexual ethics throughout the entire Bible.
 - (4) The prohibitions in Leviticus 18 and 20 appeal to the natural order of the creation. The prohibition restricts any anomaly against the original design of sex, the one-flesh union between a man and a woman (cf. Genesis 1-2).
 - (5) God's judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah reflects the same moral standard before Mosaic laws were even introduced.
6. Question: Jesus was silent on the issue of gender. Why does the Church insist on discriminating against homosexuals?

In Matthew and Mark's Gospels, Jesus spoke on marriage between man and woman, which is heterosexual. Jesus quoted from Genesis (1:27; 2:24) that in the beginning, God created male and female to be united, and they shall become one flesh and shall not separate (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9). Jesus affirmed how God-designed marriage should be, reinforcing the covenantal union between males and females as the only acceptable human sexuality. Jesus did not mention homosexuality but taught with authority and clarity about the heterosexual relationships God had ordained; there is no other version.

Jesus' silence on the issue of gender does not mean the homosexual practice is allowed. Jesus clearly prohibits sexual impurity and immorality (Matthew 15:19-20; Mark 7:20-23). The Jewish tradition condemns homosexual conduct. Both the Old and New Testaments forbid homosexuality because it is a sin in the sight of God (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; Jude 7), and Jesus' teaching will never contradict God's commandments and Scripture. The Church that upholds righteousness and holiness before God does not discriminate against people who struggle with same-sex attractions but abhors sinful desires and sexual sins.

7. Question: Homosexual advocates argue that the Apostle Paul did not condemn homosexual orientation in Romans. He was only addressing the problem of idolatry and unrestrained lust. Has the church misunderstood Romans 1:26-27?

In Romans 1:18-32, Paul addresses the problem of humanity "by their unrighteousness suppress the truth" (v18, ESV), and therefore they face the wrath of God. Humans choose to glorify the creation rather than the Creator. Hence, God gives them up over the desires of their hearts. Paul then provides a list of sins, which include same-sex behaviours.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27, ESV)

Here, Paul makes a parallel case. Humans have exchanged the glory of the immortal Creator for an image resembling a creature. Humans have exchanged the truth of God for a lie to serve the creation rather than the Creator. In the same way, humans have exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.

Natural sexual relations refer to heterosexual relationships; they are God-given honourable relationships. In contrast, unnatural sexual relationships refer to same-sex behaviour; they contradict God's purpose and are considered dishonourable.

The immediate context of Romans 1 is straightforward. Paul's argument is based on what is natural and unnatural. Paul did not specify dishonourable passions to only those dissatisfied with natural sex and indulged in unnatural sex to satisfy themselves. Paul is stating a contradiction against God's will for sexual relationships in general. In other words, homosexual relationships are categorically sinful.

Neither was Paul suggesting that one's sexual orientation determines natural and unnatural relationships. It is stated clearly that unnatural relationships are "contrary to nature", not "contrary to *their* nature". Paul clearly says that "men committing shameless acts with men" is wrong. Such sexual relationships contradict the nature of sex as given by God. Paul's statement is consistent with the biblical view of sex, which is the heterosexual relationship.

8. Question: Homosexual advocates argue that the Apostle Paul was not condemning same-sex behaviour in general (1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10). He condemned the exploitation of young men by older men in society. Has the Church missed Paul's point?

The Apostle Paul also mentions homosexual conduct as part of the list of sins in these two passages:

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor men who practice homosexuality (oute malakoi, oute arsenokoitai)*,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9–10, ESV)

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,¹⁰ the sexually immoral, *men who practice homosexuality (arsenokoitais)*, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. (1 Timothy 1:8–11, ESV)

Two Greek words, *malakos* and *arsenokoitēs*, become the point of contention. The first word, *malakos*, conveys the meaning of being “soft”. It was commonly used in Greco-Roman writings to refer to the passive partner in a same-sex relationship. The second word, *arsenokoitēs*, refers to a man who has intercourse with men.

Homosexual advocates argue that *malakos* should refer to a person lacking self-control and weak. It is not referring to same-sex relationships. As for *arsenokoitēs*, it is argued that the word was usually used in the context of sexual or economic exploitation. As such, homosexual advocates postulate that Paul's vice list refers only to those older men who exploit younger men. Paul was not considering same-sex behaviour in general. However, such an argument fails to consider the Old Testament as the source of Paul's word usage.

Paul's usage of *arsenokoitēs* is probably derived from LXX Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

²² And with a *male (arsēn)* you will not lie in *sexual intercourse (koitē)* as with a woman; indeed, it is an abomination. (Leviticus 18:22, LES)

¹³ And whoever lies with a *male (arsēn)* in *sexual intercourse (koitē)* as with a woman, *they* have both committed an abomination; let them be executed; they are guilty. (Leviticus 20:13, LES)

The term *arsenokoitēs* is a cognate noun from the two words *arsenos koitēn*. Since Paul discusses the law in 1 Timothy 1:8-11, Leviticus would likely be the background for *arsenokoitēs*. Pairing *arsenokoitēs* with *malakos* would refer to the active and passive roles in homosexual relationships. As such, Paul was classifying homosexual relationships in general as sinful.

Moreover, Paul could use the term *paiderastēs* if he had intended to refer only to exploitive sex. However, this term does not appear in the New Testament. Paul's concern was not on exploitive sex but the larger issue of unnatural sex that contradicts God's will.

9. Question: Apostle Paul encourages those with sexual needs to get married. Can't that be applied to those with the same-sex desire to marry a gay partner? Requiring all gays to maintain celibate deprives them of God's gift of sex. Is it even wrong for a person to develop same-sex desires?

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul addresses the issue of sexual desire in the context of avoiding sexual immorality. Paul clearly states that sex is beneficial to those who are married. Marriage, in Paul's view, is limited to heterosexual union.

⁸ To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. ⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Corinthians 7:8-9, ESV)

Paul does not provide any suggestion or hint that a person with same-sex desire should get married. On the contrary, Paul promotes the benefit of being unmarried to devote oneself to serving God (1 Corinthians 7:25-35).

Marrying a same-sex partner would not solve the issue for a person with same-sex attractions. It further perpetuates sexual immorality as the homosexual union does not honour God's will for marriage. Deriving from Paul's advice, a person with same-sex desires should learn to master the desire of his body and live a life devoted to God.

The Bible consistently directs humans to flee from immoral sexual desires (Exodus 20:14, 17, Matthew 5:28). At the same time, the Scripture acknowledges that believers will face temptations by their own desires (James 1:14). It is a temptation for having sexual desires toward any person who is not your married spouse. Yet, the person is not culpable for the temptation if the person resists and flees from it.

Believers are expected to "remain steadfast" to pass the tests and receive the crown of life (James 1:12). Therefore, believers should not entertain any sinful impulse (including all forms of prohibited sexual relationships) and flee from them.

Pastoral Responses

1. What should you do when a person comes to you and acknowledges that he/she has same-sex attractions?

We should not immediately take a judgmental approach against the person. All humans are equally sinful, and we need God's grace and mercy. We welcome the person as one whom God loves and seeks to redeem (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9). We can show respect and compassion to the person but not condone the acts and conducts against the Bible's teaching. It is crucial to differentiate "same-sex attractions" from "same-sex behaviours". A person may be tempted by same-sex attractions, but the person is not guilty if it is not pursued. We should affirm the identity of the person to be a child of God and journey with the person to pursue a life of holiness in Jesus Christ. Where possible, connect the person to a support group.

2. What should the pastor do with a church member who continues in same-sex behaviours?

We should make clear that salvation is based on faith in Jesus Christ but that those who believe in Him should also strive to live a life of holiness. It is noted that a person's sexual orientation or same-sex attraction is usually not a choice. Such attraction is not morally culpable. But, if the person acts upon the attraction in lust or further sexual activity, the person is morally guilty. Thus, the person should be guided back to the journey of holiness, repent from sinful actions, and seek to overcome temptations through the power of the Holy Spirit. Rather than keep condemning, we should continually provide a safe space for honest confession and healing. Being patient for the journey of holiness is a long-term process.

These are some general action steps that the pastor can consider in helping the church member.

1. Meet with the person to discuss the matters privately. Identify the key issues and provide teaching and guidance.
2. Provide prayer and counselling support. Send the person for professional counselling.
3. Assign an accountability partner to walk alongside the individual, providing spiritual support and guidance.
4. Temporary suspension from leadership and ministry roles.
5. Develop a restoration plan outlining steps to regaining ministry roles based on spiritual progress and lifestyle changes.
6. If the person refuses to repent, a disciplinary committee will be formed, and formal disciplinary actions will be taken as outlined in the church's constitution.

3. Should we pray to deliver the “spirit of homosexuality”?

Any disorder of the creation is the result of the Fall, where sin corrupts the beautiful nature of God’s creation. Although demonic influence may affect the negative aspects of humans (such as sickness and harmful behaviour), not all negative aspects are directly caused by evil spirits. In Scripture, homosexual activities are condemned as immoral activities wilfully committed by people. There is a spiritual dimension to the problem of sin and the individual's responsibility to conform to a holy lifestyle. Therefore, the main goal of prayer should be to help overcome temptation and live in holy sexuality. On top of prayer, community support is also critical in the journey of redemption.

4. My church is afraid of people with same-sex attractions. The parents are concerned that their children will imitate their lifestyle. My congregation sees them as bad influences. How do we help our congregation to be more welcoming?

We should educate our congregation on gender issues so that they will be able to respond to those who are struggling with wisdom, discernment, and the love of God. Teach our congregation to stop labelling people who struggle with same-sex attraction. We should also prepare our children and youth to cultivate holiness, spiritual discipline, and awareness of these issues so they will not be confused with their gender identity. Clear boundaries with proper understanding would help to safeguard the children and cultivate healthy relationships in the faith community.

5. Can people of same-sex attraction serve in church ministry and leadership?

People with same-sex attraction are eligible to serve in church ministry and leadership. We should encourage them to grow spiritually and offer their lives as a living sacrifice unto the Lord in spiritual worship (Romans 12:1-2). Encourage them to actively serve in church ministries in the area of their gifting. Should they grow in spiritual maturity and consistently live in godliness, they can also be eligible to serve in leadership roles. Having good team support and accountability in the ministry would be good. However, if they are weak and succumb to their fleshly desires (same-sex behaviour), they should stop serving until they have gone through discipline and healing before being restored to the ministry.

6. Pastor, can I befriend a homosexual person? Should we encourage our young people to fellowship with homosexuals?

It is not a problem to have homosexuals in our circles of friends, and our young people will have such friends whether we encourage them or not. Our starting position must be one of empathy and love. We should remember the mercy God showed us and extend the same mercy and grace to all others. The genuine care we offer may help them open up to God working in their lives. While we emphasise grace and acceptance, we must also be careful not to condone a sinful lifestyle.

7. How do we provide pastoral care to those who have gone through sex change surgery?

Pastoral care and guidance, in conjunction with professional support from mental and medical health professionals and counsellors, can support individuals to realign with their original gender as intended by God. This process may involve counselling, psychotherapy, and, if the individual chooses, corrective surgery to align with God's original design. After returning to their original gender, individuals may still pursue marriage. In cases where reorientation is not feasible, choosing a life of celibacy may be the best option, enabling them to live a fulfilling Christian life as a child of God. Through repentance and seeking God's forgiveness for past decisions, individuals can receive God's grace and embrace a new life in Christ, becoming cherished children of God. The church should offer ongoing pastoral support, including counselling, prayer, and community assistance, to help individuals navigate their journey and build a rewarding life.

8. How do we care for the intersex (born with both male and female sexual organs)? Can they choose a gender and get married?

When a person is born with both male and female sexual organs (biological ambiguity in a person's genitalia or gonads, or more rarely still, their chromosomes), medical science indicates that there is often a predominant gender in their biological makeup. Based on their predominant gender, and with the support of medical advice, counselling or psychological guidance, and spiritual direction, the individual may choose to undergo corrective surgery to align their physical body with their identified gender. This allows them to pursue a healthy and fulfilling life, including the possibility of marriage in the future.

9. Is there any support group I can refer to?

If the persons wish to seek help, refer them to a professional Christian counsellor for gender issues, such as the PLUC (Pursuing Liberty Under Christ) ministry.

Missional Responses

1. How do we share the gospel with a person who is practising homosexuality?

We need to share the gospel with the person, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We explain that salvation by Jesus' blood is God's gift of grace and redemption received by faith in Christ (Romans 3:23-25). We should not overly focus on the sin of homosexuality in the conversation. The gospel should be centred on Jesus Christ and His redemptive works.

2. How do we disciple a believer who struggles with same-sex attractions?

We can invite the believer to join regular Bible Classes (foundation) to know God and the word and grow spiritually (Philippians 3:8-11; 1 John 2:3, 5:20; 2 Peter 3:18). A suitable mentor can be assigned to disciple the believer in godly living. Also, engage the person in service unto the Lord and God's mission through a life of testimony and witness empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). It will be helpful for the person to find a support group as accountability partners in the struggle in overcoming same-sex attractions.

3. What is the goal for people who struggle with same-sex attraction in their spiritual journey?

The goal of our Christian life is to be like Jesus Christ, living by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Those with same-sex attraction should pursue a life of holiness, just as any other believers. Marriage is not the goal, as not everyone, including the heterosexual believer, is expected to get married. Neither a complete change of sexual orientation is the goal as some will continue to struggle with same-sex attraction for life. In the journey of discipleship, we should not overly focus on same-sex attraction without considering other weaknesses.

4. How should we set up a support system for people who struggle with same-sex attraction?

Churches can consider setting up small support groups for believers to journey together. PLUC offers training and support to establish such groups in local churches. However, for more complex issues, it is best to refer them to a professional Christian counsellor or PLUC directly.

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