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As a third generation United Methodist clergyperson I have often been asked about homosexuality not only as it pertains to the church but also to the secular world, most recently questioning if marriage should be allowed for same sex couples. **I strongly support bill LD1020 and urge you, the judiciary, to sign and support it.** My heart breaks when genuine love between two individuals of any gender is deemed sinful. What does the Bible say? Scriptures have been misinterpreted and misused to fit human agenda, not focusing on God's intent.

Both in Genesis 19:1-29 and in a like account in the book of Judges, males humiliate strangers by attempting a gang rape. This horrific behavior has nothing to do with love between two consenting adults but is indeed sinful heterosexual behavior by men that happened not only in these biblical accounts but also during times of war even to this day.

In Leviticus it says that a man should not lie with a man. In the days this text was written there was no scientific knowledge about the conception of a child. It was believed that semen contained the entire essence of a person. A woman served only as the vessel to carry a child. If semen was used in any way but to procreate, it was viewed as murder. Masturbation was looked on similarly. Taking this argument one step further, if we were to go along with the idea that marriage was only for the purpose of procreation, we should forbid heterosexual women past menopause to marry.

Many people lift the Apostle Paul's words in the book of Romans as reason to condemn homosexuality. Paul believed that everyone was heterosexual. He had no conception of homosexuality; the word did not exist in his day and age. Due to his ignorance of present day scientific facts Paul believed heterosexuals were doing something that was not natural. We have since learned that homosexuality exists as a natural act, not only in the human species but also in other parts of the animal world.

If the Bible is taken word for word as it is written, adultery would be punished by death by stoning as would a woman getting married who is not a virgin. No one to my knowledge has recently been stoned to death for adulterous acts. So many present day Christians have chosen to ignore Biblical commands while condemning their homosexual brothers and sisters based on incorrect Biblical intent.

In a country that prides itself in freedom, how can it deny marriage to two loving, committed individuals regardless of gender? Please vote the way both this country's principles and God would support: insure the right to marry regardless of sexual orientation by supporting bill LD1020. Thank you.

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