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Concerned Moravians stand on solid ground

by
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Guest columnist

The Aug. 14 front-page story, *Support for same-sex marriage, social justice issues creates rift among Moravians* was of great interest, but a large part of the story about social justice and white nationalism was a huge distraction. The reason why 127 Concerned Moravians met at Bethabara Church in June was to discuss their opposition to the ordination of homosexuals and lesbians as well as same-sex marriage in their respective churches because they believe it's against Biblical teaching.

All Christians struggle with sin. As the Bible teaches, "all" come short of the glory of God. It is through Christ that we have victory over sin, homosexuals included. Jesus' mercy, love and promise of eternal life extend to everyone who repents of their sins and follows him.

The Moravians and are one of the last Protestant denominations to resolve this fiery issue. However, they are also one of the oldest, founded in 1457. In April 2018, more than 230 delegates attended the Southern Province Synod where they debated and passed more than 20 resolutions to guide them until 2022 when they will meet in Winston Salem. At the conference, the governing council affirmed the ancient Moravian understanding of the essentials of their faith: "God creates, God redeems, and God makes us holy; and we respond in Faith, Love and Hope." Noteworthy, the governing body discussed several resolutions that sought "to allow differing opinions on controversial subjects to exist within the 'Moravian Unity.'"

In particular, Resolution 14 affirmed the role of pastors and church boards in determining within the congregation "who is or is not admitted into membership or leadership, who may or may not participate in rites (confirmation, marriage) and sacraments (baptism, communion) and the purposes for which church buildings (properties) be used." The Synod affirmed the "freedom of conscience of pastors to decide whether or not to administer a rite or sacrament in any particular situation." Passage of Resolution 14 "allows congregations and pastors to determine whether or not they will perform legal same-sex marriages in their churches."

Moravian Joyce Carter, who was one of the 13 LGBTQ protesters at the Bethabara June meeting, was quoted as saying, "Jesus never said a word about homosexuality; adding, he did talk an awful lot about loving our neighbors and caring for marginalized people."

Sorry, we are not free to pick and choose which Bible verses to follow. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

The Bible has much to say regarding sexual relations. Its emphasis upon the loving union of male and female beginning with Adam and Eve is an integral part of God's creation ordinance and establishes the context against which the censure of homosexual practice is found: Genesis

1:27-28 “God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female...” Then God blessed them, saying “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;” Read Genesis 2:18-24. Both Jesus and Apostle Paul endorsed God’s creation order in Mark 10:6-9; Matthew 19:4-5; and Ephesians 5:31.

Old Testament prohibition of homosexual practices can be found in Leviticus 18:22, “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.” Read Leviticus 20:13.

Sin is non-discriminatory: 1Corinthians 6:9-10, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” See also 1Titus 1:9-11 and Romans 1:26-27, “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature...”

Sexual disorder is evidence of rejecting God, and the ensuing punishment can be severe as told in Jude 7: “Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,” Read Genesis 19:1-28 for full account.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

The Moravian Church's emblem is the Lamb of God with the flag of victory, surrounded by the Latin inscription "Vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur" ('Our Lamb has conquered; let us follow Him'). God has given us free will to follow His way or man’s way.

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