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**A THEOLOGICAL ETHICAL
ASSESSMENT OF HOMOSEXUALITY
IN THE EAST AFRICAN CONTEXT:**

**A SEVENTH - DAY ADVENTIST
PERSPECTIVE**

BY

Pastor Matwetwe K.N. Nyarenchi.

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This research has been done with the earnest desire to help my Seventh Day Adventist Church administrators, pastors, my fellow believers and Christians of all faiths in East Africa to better understand the role of East African culture in evaluating homosexuality and what the Scriptures teach about homosexuality. At a time when humanistic ideologies are promoting Homosexuality, it is an imperative for Christians to resist these pressures by upholding the Scriptural principles which God has revealed for the well being of our homes, churches, and



the community. It is my fervent hope and desire that this dissertation will inspire such a commitment through a fuller understanding and acceptance of the Biblical teachings on homosexuality.

Matwetwe K.N.N

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SUMMARY

In the world in which we are living today many people, especially Christians, wonder why people should talk about homosexuality. For many past years, the Christian Church, especially in East Africa, considered herself more or less immune from many of the challenges, experienced by the rest of the world, particularly the Western world. However, as the church now continues to grow in numbers and expand its territories, these problems start to appear in the church also all over East Africa.

Increasingly the consciousness of the society is being raised concerning social-ethical issues such as women's rights, battered children, single parent families, teenage pregnancy, wife beating and of course homosexuality. As a result such issues are widely discussed within the church and outside, sometimes causing a rift within the church.

Such has been the case with homosexuality. Recently at a Seventh-day Adventist Church camp meeting in East Africa, a debate in a Bible study on the ethics of homosexuality as perceived by the Seventh-day Adventist Church paved the way for divisions in the church, which has left church members in four categories (groups) namely: culturalist, rejectionist, reinterpretationist and the reaffirmationist. Unfortunately the debate closed without a definite conclusion as to what should be the normative basis for the theological ethical evaluation of homosexuality by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Africa. The issue was whether the Bible, culture or both the Bible and culture should be the

normative basis and also as to what theological ethical guidance does the Bible provide for the ethical evaluation of homosexuality in the present-day context.

The dissertation surveys definitions and causes of sexuality, and traces some of the background from the pre-modern to the postmodern era reflecting on the definitions and causes of homosexuality, and it also traces some of the historical background regarding homosexual practices and views on homosexuality. It also discusses and assesses the Cultural beliefs on homosexuality in East Africa.

The study also looks at the Biblical texts that refer to or are thought to refer to homosexuality and “examines” the claims made in much of the “gays” literature with reference to these texts. Other texts used by over-zealous Christians bent on finding condemnation of homosexuality through Scripture.

During the East African pre modern era, sexuality, including homosexuality was not publicly discussed. The whole subject was encircled by a halo of secrecy and hedged around by innumerable East African taboos. When this silence is combined with the absence of written documentation on the cultures and histories of many parts of East Africa, the difficulties of accessing traditional understanding of homosexuality and sexuality become immense. One can conclude that it will be a serious mistake for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Africa to make East African culture normative in the ethical evaluation of homosexuality since: (i) Oral East African tradition does not really provide any moral view on homosexuality. To read into the silence on homosexuality the moral condemnation of homosexuality is not acceptable. (ii) Homosexual

practices, in a ritualized form, are not foreign to East African culture. (iii) The strong condemnation of homosexuality in East Africa is often politically and ideologically inspired.

This dissertation advocates the need for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Africa to use the Bible alone, Old and New Testament, being the written word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, as the infallible revelation of God's will. The Bible is the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and trustworthy record of God's acts in history and therefore is central in any formulation concerning homosexuality, whether theological or ethical evaluation and therefore should be used as the only normative basis for the ethical evaluation of homosexuality.



KEY TERMS

1. Homosexuality
2. Christian Ethics
3. Bible
4. East African Culture
5. Seventh-day Adventist Church
6. Old Testament
7. New Testament
8. Tradition
9. Theology
10. Greek Culture