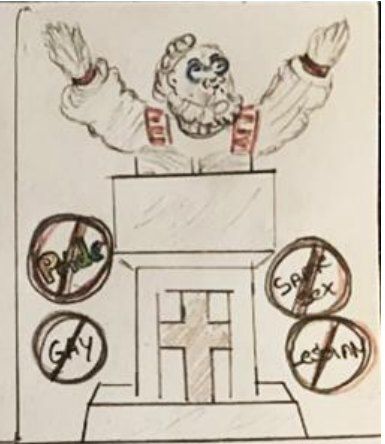




Within the last decades, social and religious oppression of lesbians and gays has increased (Richardson, 1993)



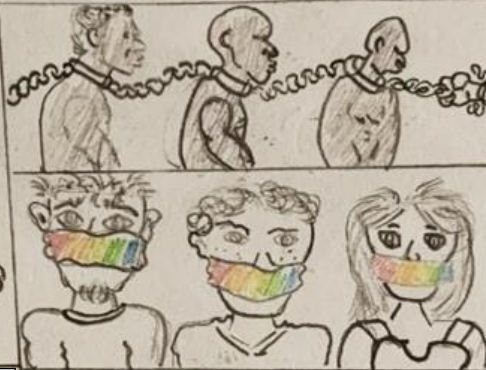
Almost all social and religious denominations have engaged in conversation of homosexuality



However, African Americans have often been absent from the conversation



African Americans are reluctant to speak on homosexuality



At a united Methodist theological seminary forum, African Americans condemned fellow lesbians and gays seminarians as immoral



A professor indicated to the black seminarians that they paralleled white's justification of slavery



"The students fumed and the African bishop who was in attendance joined the black students in a repudiation of the parallel".

Just another example of how seminary discussions on homosexuality usually happen: black students as heterosexuals against white lesbian and gay students.



No one addressed the harassment and oppression of African Americans lesbians and gays in black church

"There has been so much silence and dishonesty about African American heterosexuals as victimizers of lesbians and gays within black churches". (Katchadourian S. H., 1989)



As a gay African American Christian and religious academic, I will assert that African American Lesbians and gays should not be viewed as a problem,

but rather that the problem is African American homophobia and the black church teaching that homosexuality is immoral.

The homophobia that African Americans encounter is more than just discomfort

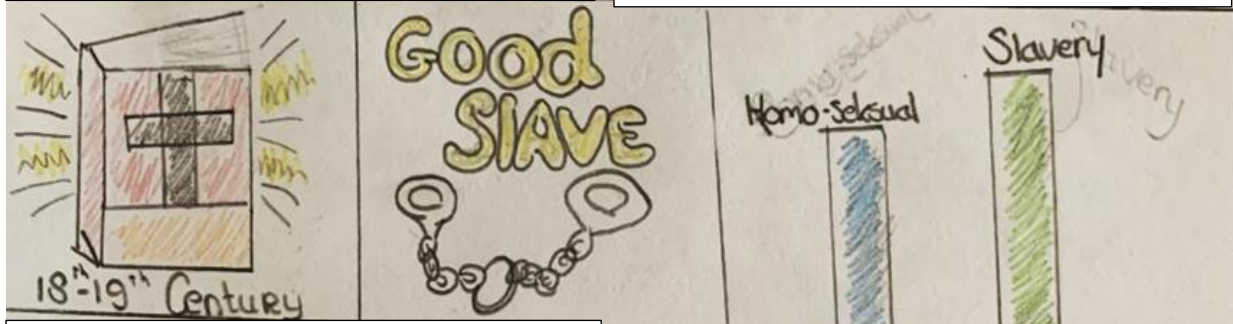
It leads to ridicule and oppression from family, church, and the community.





Present day gays are still oppressed in the black churches. Many heterosexuals will support and make a change the theology of the black church structure and how they define homosexuality"

In the minds that consider their love to be a "lifestyle: they fail to recognize 1. Sexual desire or attraction is not a choice 2. No one choses to be discriminated against 3. If heterosexual relationships were for everyone there would be no same sex relationships.



In seminars they would refer to homosexuality oppression and slavery as one in the same. Which would enrage the blacks

But gays are correct to a point!
 lesbians and gays of all races experience discrimination, ridicule, ostracism, beatings, and killings
 it is imposed that the 18th and 19th century use of biblical text to categorize lesbians and gays can be identified as the same way Europeans categorized the slaves



African American declared that homosexuality was imposed on them by Europeans. (Boykin, 1996)



However, homosexuality already existed in Africa prior to colonialism

In contrast historian Robert Baum stated "Natives regarded homosexuals as Gods" two important acknowledgements 1. its untrue that Europeans accepted and influenced homosexuality and 2. Other non- white cultures viewed homosexuality as moral. (Williams, 1986)



Two primary reason African Americans are negative towards homosexuality

1. Slaves were converted into Christianity and took on the white's point of view against it.
2. The conspiring traits of mainstream media society in targeting homosexuals as the 'despised other', frees them from the deviant label of being sexually immoral and provides a degree of social acceptance.



"The Negro as a member of inferior race, was meant to be slave, his normal and natural condition.." (Quarles, 1987)

Christianity is ironic because many of the conservative European American Christians turned to the scripture to justify slavery.

African Americans were viewed as sexual deviants and uncontrollable predators. Which justified the whites to mistreat, rape and lynch the slaves. (Raboteau)

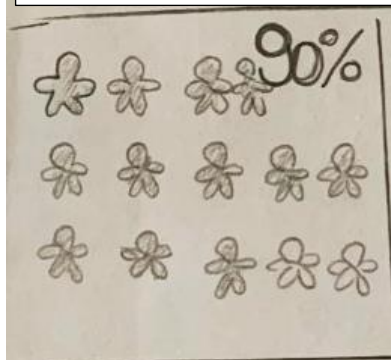


Because the gay community is beneficial for the church music ministry it would be detrimental to exclude them. But still preach about them being abominations. (Cone,

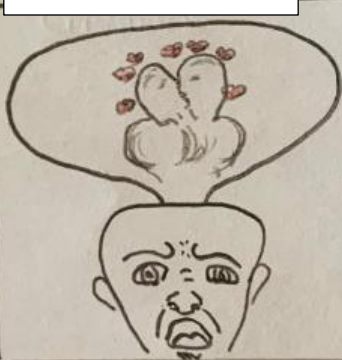
It is important for homophobia to be defined by someone who was victimized

It is important to stand together against the atrocities

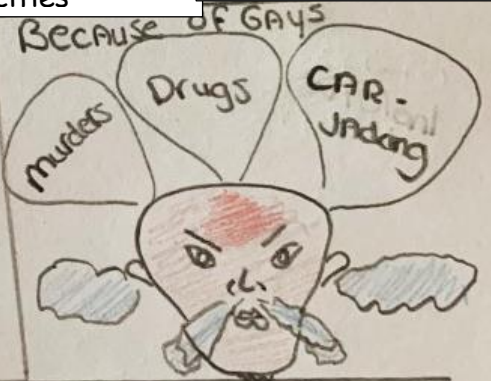
Anti-gay arguments suggest that gays and lesbians are a threat to black families



"A recent study showed that of children who are waiting to be adopted, up to 90 per cent are children of color. In addition, African American lesbians and gays do not in any way pose a threat to black communities or common good." (Woog, 1998)



Another anti-gay argument is that Genesis command 'to be fruitful and multiply'



Anti-homosexual religious and social message presented as concern for the black community, has more to do with the problem of gay sex. (Katchadourian, 1989)

Gays and lesbians should not be used as scapegoats or diversion from the problem.



African American woman ministers too have similar oppressions, when it comes to woman leading the ministry and therefore are reluctant to conspire with the male in gay religious oppression.

Moreover, presenting homosexuality as immoral creates a feeling of unworthiness and low-self-esteem in African American gay and lesbians.

And that we as a community need to come to an understanding and acceptance of all.

Because so many lives are ruined by homophobia, when all gay men and lesbian want to do is simply seek the freedom to establish and maintain their own relationships and families without the harassment of the heterosexual ridicule and restrictions

