

RELIGION

Table 6. Same-Gender Relationships in the Church: Seven Theological Viewpoints

<i>Non-affirming Viewpoints</i>			
	<i>Creation</i>	<i>Reconciliation</i>	<i>Redemption</i>
<i>Prohibition</i>	Same-gender desire and behavior = <i>perversion</i>	Repent of <i>gay identity</i> ; the church prohibits gay desire and behavior.	Return to true heterosexual nature
<i>Toleration</i>	Same-gender sexual orientation = a <i>tragic burden</i>	Repent of <i>gay choices</i> ; welcoming of persons, non-affirming of deeds	Stoic acceptance of one's tragic fate through abstinence
<i>Accommodation</i>	Same-gender desire = tragic burden, but open to traces of grace	Focus: <i>gay and lesbian relationships</i> . While these are disobedient in form, they may be obedient in substance, if monogamous.	Exclusive, same-sex partnerships are better than promiscuity — i.e., they are the lesser of the evils.

Welcoming and Affirming Viewpoints

	<i>Creation</i>	<i>Reconciliation</i>	<i>Redemption</i>
<i>Legitimation</i>	Same-gender desire = like all other sinful conditions	Focus: <i>ordination</i> . Repent of singling out gay sins and ignoring other sins.	Create a just world in which differences no longer make a difference.
<i>Celebration</i>	<i>Essentialist</i> : being gay is a fact of "natural" life.	Gays and lesbians need to be reconciled to the goodness of their sexual orientation.	Live into one's sexual orientation as God's good gift.
<i>Liberation</i>	<i>Social construction</i> : a fact of nurtured life	Challenge binary gender categories (male-female).	Affirm complexity of gender choices.

Welcoming, Affirming, and Ordering Viewpoint

	<i>Creation</i>	<i>Reconciliation</i>	<i>Redemption</i>
<i>Consecration</i>	Sexual orientation not to be condemned, but also ambiguous and needing to be rightly ordered	Sin does not reside in orientation or behavior <i>per se</i> but in whether one's life is rightly ordered. Our relationships are a means of grace.	One's sexuality is to be consecrated through an exclusive, committed covenant, blessed by the church. Humans, not sexuality, are the objects of our celebration.

A TIME TO EMBRACE

*Same-Gender Relationships
in Religion, Law, and Politics*

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