

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

Christian Ethical Perspective on Sexual Orientation and Sexual Behavior

Daniel Dei¹¹ Valley View University**Funding:** The author(s) received no specific funding for this work.**Potential competing interests:** The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

Abstract

Sexual expressions in the 21st century have become diverse to the extent that previously stereotyped expressions are gaining popularity within Christian ethical discourses. Most Christian denominations differentiate homosexual orientation from homosexual behaviors. This distinction allows these denominations to denounce homosexual behaviors and tolerate homosexual orientation. The underlining notion is that one is not guilty until they have acted on their sexual orientation. Thus experiencing homosexual orientation alone does not necessarily make one a homosexual. This article examines sexual orientation and sexual behavior as components of sexual expression. The examination links sexual orientation and sexual behavior to sexual identity. The fundamental question of the inquiry is: are sexual orientations and sexual behaviors mutually exclusive as far as sexual expression is concerned? Are Christian denominations justified in denouncing homosexual behaviors but tolerant of homosexual orientations? The article reveals that not all sexual orientations have corresponding sexual behaviors, but sexual orientations influence sexual behaviors and the choice of a sex partner. Individuals determine their sexual identity through their preferred sexual orientation and not through their sexual behaviors or choice of a sex partner. Consequently, it is incorrect to focus on sexual behaviors or the gender of sex partners to respond to issues on sexual identity. Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:28 shows that unhealthy sexual orientation is as toxic as unhealthy sexual behavior. It is, therefore, inconsistent for a Christian community to strictly condemn sexual behaviors in same-sex relations while tolerating homoeroticism.

Keywords: homosexual, sexual behavior, sexual expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation.

Introduction

Sexual expressions determine nearly all issues about the relationship between the genders. It shapes people's identities. Recent emphasis on human rights and freedom has opened the gateway for various sexual expressions outside

mainstream sexual activities—heteronormativity. Consequently, the acceptance of sexual expressions like homosexuality and bisexuality is increasingly becoming a concern in 21st-century society. As it stands now, it appears secular society may readily make provisions that favor the inclusion of various sexual expressions. A study by Andrew R. Flores indicates that the global social acceptance of sexual diversity significantly increased between 1980 and 2020. A total of 175 countries have inclusive policies that positively impact the way society respects the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. Iceland has the highest Global Acceptance Index (GAI) score of 9.78, and Azerbaijan has the lowest Global Acceptance Index (GAI) score of 1.42.^[1]

However, faith communities generally find these demands disturbing. Some are caught between doctrine and practice. While their teachings say one thing, their practices say the other. In some cases, the disparity has divided the front of some Christian denominations. For example, the United Methodist Church, the Southern Baptist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Episcopal Church, and the Presbyterian Church have split over LGBTQIA+ concerns. A survey by the Pew Research Center in 2015 revealed that 62% of Protestant denominations favor LGBTQIA+, 33% were against LGBTQIA+, and 63% saw no tension between their beliefs and the LGBTQIA+ concerns.^[2] The activities of human rights activists are likely to change these statistics in favor of the LGBTQIA+ community. This will mean that the tension between heterosexual activities and previous stereotyped sexual expressions in most mainline Christian denominations will be acute.

In the hope of resolving this tension, some Christian denominations have expressed their opinion on the LGBTQIA+ concerns in official statements. Almost all these statements forbid discrimination against people with homosexual and bisexual attractions, inclination/ or orientation and call for inclusion: “Such persons must be accepted with respect and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.”^[3] The Reformed Christian Church emphatically states that “Persons of same-sex attraction may not be denied community acceptance solely because of their sexual orientation and should be wholeheartedly received by the church and given loving support and encouragement.”^[4] However, most of these denominations see the practice of homosexuality, bisexuality, asexuality, and pansexuality as a contradiction of conventional Christian faith and practice. The United Methodist Church, for instance, states that “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.”^[5] The Roman Catholic Church regards homosexual acts as “intrinsically immoral and contrary to the natural law.”^[6] The Seventh-day Adventist Church denounces same-sex relations: “The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden...Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships.”^[7]

Though these denominational statements give some form of direction in Christian attitudes towards same-sex relationships, their forensic nature makes them insufficient in dealing with the tension between Christian sexual ethics and LGBTQIA+ concerns. Differentiating sexual inclination, orientation, or attraction from sexual act, behavior, or practice is a trend in these official statements.

However, sexuality is both overt and covert. Sexual orientation, inclination, attraction, and sexual acts, behaviors, or practices are acutely connected. In this vein, it becomes incongruent for a moral stance to condemn one but accept the other. For example, the Roman Catholic Church does not regard homosexual inclination as sinful. Instead, it regards it as a disorder: “Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.”^[8] Since sexual desire/attraction is intertwined with sexual acts, the homosexual lifestyle cannot exclude homosexual attraction or orientation. James A. Forbes Jr. is right to describe sexuality as “Sex. Physical. Mental. Spiritual. It is the expression of individual libido as well as individual conscience...”^[9] While sex involves the physical act of expressing libido (sexual desire), it also involves the cognitive aspect (conscience) that determines our inclinations or attractions. Accordingly, regarding homosexual practice as a sin while tolerating homosexual orientation is very confusing, if not misleading.^[10]

Guidance on the interaction between Christianity and the LGBTQIA+ community is needed today as it was several years ago. Ignoring the concerns of the LGBTQIA+ community is morally unacceptable. It is proper to probe these existential concerns before adequately responding to them. However, at the same time, the conventional Christian stance on these concerns cannot be pushed aside either. The apparent divide between Christian sexual ethics and the LGBTQIA+’s desire for religious inclusion needs to be resolved. Christianity cannot be indecisive or maintain its obscure response in the wake of these pressures. If it would sustain its relevance in present-day society, it must clearly express its stance on sexuality as a whole, not in part.

Mark A. Yarhouse’s *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends* is a significant contribution in this regard. Concerned with sexual and religious identities, Yarhouse probes issues bothering on “identity, sanctification, and stewardship”^[11] from the Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Glorification biblical narrative.^[12] He explains that

Genesis affirms that God created two sexes, male and female and that he wanted sexual intimacy to be kept within heterosexual unions...it was a state that God said was good, and therefore Christians should look at the creation story as having important implications for sexuality and sexual behavior. Through God’s design and pronouncements, Christians have understood that he is blessing monogamous, heterosexual unions.^[13]

Nonetheless, Yarhouse appears to target homosexual behaviors rather than homosexual orientation or attraction: “... homosexual behavior is not appropriate for the Christ-follower.”^[14] It might seem that his overall outlook on sexuality involves both sexual attraction and sexual behavior. However, he seems to echo the approach of most Christian denominations that separate sexual orientation from sexual behavior.

Like Yarhouse, this article situates the discussion in the interaction between sexual orientation and sexual behavior and their relations to sexual identity.^[15] As such, matters on causes of sexual orientation and sexual behaviors and factors that sustain them lie outside of the scope of this article. Also, debates about same-sex relationships and the Bible abound

in the available literature, and it is not the interest of this article to add to it.^[16]

The current article deviates from Yarhouse's pattern of inquiry in that it focuses on the components of sexual expression: sexual orientation and sexual behavior. The fundamental question of the inquiry is: are sexual attraction and sexual behaviors mutually exclusive as far as sexual expression is concerned? Are Christian denominations justified in condemning homosexual behaviors but tolerant of homosexual orientations?

The Nature of Sexual Expression

Sexual expression broadly describes how human beings experience and express their sexuality. Sexuality manifests in several ways, including thoughts, desires, fantasies, behaviors, and practices. It has biological, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual nuances. Nevertheless, it can have a general categorization—covert and overt. The covert dimension of sexual expression refers to the orientation or attraction (thoughts, desires, and fantasies) that determines patterns of sexual interests.

Sexual thoughts refer to mental images of interesting sexual behaviors. Sexual fantasy is a paternalized sexual thought that induces sexual arousal.^[17] Common sexual fantasies include reliving an exciting sexual experience, imagining sex with a current partner, imagining sex with a different partner, imagining oral sex, imagining sex in a romantic location, sexual power/irresistibility, and rape.^[18] Sexual desire describes a wish or a drive towards preferred sexual activities. It may or may not lead to sexual behavior.^[19] Lust and libido are terms used synonymously with sexual desire.^[20] Sexual desire is dynamic, and it can be positive or negative.^[21] The American Psychological Association states that “[s]exual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes.”^[22]

People may be attracted to other individuals of the other sex (heterosexuality),^[23] same sex (homosexuality), or both the other sex and same sex (bisexuality).^[24] In recent times, lack of sexual attraction or low sexual desire or interest (asexuality)^[25] has been described as a fourth type of sexual orientation, but scholars are yet to reach a consensus. Alternatively, the terms *androphilia* and *gynephilia* are used to describe sexual attractions. While *androphilia* refers to sexual attraction to masculinity, *gynephilia* refers to sexual attraction towards femininity. Pansexuals or polysexuals (sometimes referred to as queer) may be attracted to masculinity and femininity.^[26]

Sexual preference is sometimes used interchangeably with sexual orientation. However, scholars have subtly distinguished between them. While sexual preferences are voluntary, sexual orientation is not.^[27] John Money introduced the term ‘sexual orientation’ to distinguish sexual preference from sexual attraction. The basis for the differentiation is choice.^[28] Though one's sexual preference may lead to sexual orientation identity, scholars generally agree that sexual orientation is not a product of choice and that it cannot be altered: “sexual orientation is tied to physiological drives and biological systems that are beyond conscious choice.”^[29] Theories about the cause of sexual orientation are based on

hormonal, genetic, and environmental factors. Regardless of the uncertainty, scholars generally favor biological theories over other theories.

Sexual behaviors are commonly expressed through intimate physical contact in various ways, including masturbation/autoeroticism, coital sex, oral sex, anal sex, fingering, and sex by dildo. Though generally regarded as examples of sexual abuse, voyeurism, exhibitionism, pedophilia, sadism, and masochism, by consent, may be uncommon forms of sexual behavior. Virtual sex, despite its nonphysical nature, is considered a form of sexual behavior.^[30] Coital sex refers to penile insertion into the vagina. Oral sex describes the insertion of the penis into the mouth or the simulation of the vagina by the mouth or throat. Anal sex is the insertion of the penis, or a replica, into the anus. Fingering is the insertion of the fingers mainly into the vagina. However, it can also refer to inserting the finger into the anus or mouth. Sex by dildo describes the insertion of a dildo into the vagina, anus, or mouth.

Sexual Orientation Versus Sexual Behavior

Sexual behavior is closely related to sexual orientation. However, the two are not the same. Sexual behavior refers to sexual acts, but sexual orientation describes “fantasies, attachments, and longings.”^[31] Although sexual orientation may determine sexual behavior or might influence the choice of a sex partner, not all sexual orientations are expressed in sexual behaviors.^[32] For example, an individual with homoerotic orientation may express heterosexual behaviors only. The terms concordance or discordance describe how sexual orientation matches or mismatches sexual behavior. Accordingly, an individual with a heterosexual orientation who expresses homosexual behaviors will experience discordance, while an individual with a heterosexual orientation that corresponds with heterosexual behaviors is said to experience concordance. Some sexual orientations may never be expressed through physical contact with another person (alloeroticism). Instead, they may lead to autoerotic behaviors such as masturbation and sexual daydreaming.

A study of 1878 adolescents in Canada showed that 35% of adolescents had same-sex orientations with no corresponding same-sex behaviors.^[33] In a study of 1000 adults in the United States, Zhana Vrangalova and Savin-Williams reported nonexclusive patterns of sexual orientation and sexual behavior. The discordance between sexual orientation identity and sexual behavior implies that some heterosexuals have experienced homoeroticism or same-sex sexual behaviors.^[34] Recent studies on the connection between sexual orientation identity and sexual behavior describe the situation as sexual fluidity. Sexual fluidity describes the situation in which individuals who identify with a specific sexual orientation engage in sexual behaviors other than those that align with their preferred sexual identity label.^[35]

The complexity of sexual orientation is seen in this definition: “a physiological predisposition toward patterns of sexual and romantic thoughts, affiliations, affection, or desires with members of one’s sex, the other sex, both sexes, or neither sex.”^[36] These predispositions have induced self-determined sexual orientation labels in heterosexual, bisexual, gay/lesbian, asexual, and pansexual.^[37] This labeling is termed sexual orientation identity, and it arises from personal

awareness and acceptance of one's sexual orientation. Ritch C. Savin-Williams argues that existing categories for sexual labeling are relative than absolute.^[38]

The multidimensional relationship between sexual orientation and sexual behavior implies that we cannot determine sexual identities from sexual behaviors. It is a flaw to identify one's sexuality by a sex partner. Instead, one's preferred sexual orientation determines their sexual identity.^[39]

Christian Conception of Sexual Orientation and Sexual Behavior

Sexual imaginations appear natural to human beings. Sexual thoughts may unconsciously creep into our minds causing various obtrusive sexual orientations (desires or fantasies). For example, one may daydream about sexual indulgence with their spouse or a non-spouse. Depending on one's interest, sexual imaginations may be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or pansexual.

Sexual thoughts, desires, or fantasies may be healthy or unhealthy. Healthy sexual imaginations are sexual thoughts, desires, or fantasies involving spouses in heterosexual relationships. The sexual images are respectful to the spouse and appropriate within Christian sexual ethics. Unhealthy sexual imaginations describe sexual thoughts, desires, or fantasies that involve sexual images that are disrespectful to one's spouse and unconventional within Christian sexual ethics. For instance, it becomes harmful when one develops an interest in sexual imaginations involving another person other than one's spouse in heterosexual monogamous marital relationships. Not only are homosexual, bisexual, asexual, and pansexual images offensive to Christian heteronormativity, but they are equally unhealthy when they occur in heterosexual relations.^[40]

Nurturing healthy sexual imaginations is permitted within Christian heteronormativity. Proverbs 5:19 enjoins healthy sexual imaginations between two lovers in a heterosexual relationship, "a lovely deer, a graceful doe. May her breasts satisfy you at all times; may you be intoxicated always by her love." The Oriental tradition admired the female mountain goat's (doe or hind) beauty, swiftness, and lustful eyes.^[41] These characters were used to represent affection in several poems about love in heterosexual relations (see Sg. of Sol. 2:9,17; 7:3; 8:14; Ps 18:33). Lovers are urged to wander timelessly and be saturated by the sexual characteristics of their beloved.

In contrast, heterosexual lovers are cautioned against sexual imaginations involving other persons who are 'strange' to heterosexual relations, "Why should you be intoxicated, my son, by another woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?" (Pro 5:20). The verb *ḥə-zā-rāh*, "strange," is from the root *zwr*, which means 'harlot' in its adjectival form (see Pro 2:16; 5:3; 7:5; 22:14; 23:33). Other versions of the Bible render it as immoral or adulteress.^[42] Describing unhealthy sexual imaginations as lustful passion, desires of the flesh, and passion, Christian heteronormativity has no allowance for strange sexual orientations (cf. 1 Thess 4:5; Gal 5:16; Col 3:5). Proverbs 6:25, for instance, strongly enjoins

believers not to entertain strange sexual attractions “Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes.”

James links desires to behavior: “But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death” (Jam 1:14-15). Sexual imaginations, in whatever form, are not morally neutral.^[43] It is dynamic and may influence behavior consciously or unconsciously. Accordingly, Jesus was concerned with sexual orientation as much as sexual behavior, “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:28). The verb *epithymēσαι*, “to lust after,” is from the root *epithumeó*, meaning “to desire, lust after” and it implies the mental disposition of longing for, coveting, or setting your heart upon” an object or a person (cf. Matt 13:17; Lk 15:16).

Interestingly, Jesus uses the literary device of synecdoche to emphasize the critical role of sexual thoughts on the continuum between sexual orientation and sexual behavior. *Kardia*, “heart,” literally means the human heart (organ), but it could also refer to the inner being, will, intention, or mind (cf. Mt 5:8; 6:21; 9:4; 11:29). Consequently, believers must nurture their inner being, thought, intentions, or mind because it is critical to righteous living (Pro 4:23; Mt 12:34). Instead of pursuing every thought, including sexual inclinations, and making it define our identity, believers are to subject their thoughts to Jesus, “and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor 10:5, cf. Phil 4:8).

Basing Christian sexual attitude on sexual behaviors alone ignores the critical role of sexual orientation, and it is tantamount to making a judgment based upon outward appearance. However, the Bible strongly opposes appearance-based conclusions, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment” (1 Sam 16:7; Jn 7:24; see Jn 8:15; 2 Cor 10:7). In this instance, the proper judgment refers to a comprehensive outlook on sexual expressions. Sexual behavior is an outward display of an inner sexual inclination. Confessional Lutherans are right to officially profess that “We cannot limit the sin of homosexuality to deeds but not desires, any more than we can limit heterosexual sin to deeds but not desires. Scripture includes desires and inclinations toward sinful actions in the category of sin (Mt 5:27-28). This is true of both homosexual and heterosexual sin.”^[44]

Though the Bible does not speak to appropriate sexual behaviors, as they are extensively known today, in heterosexual monogamous marital relations, it prohibits some sexual behaviors. Condemned sexual behaviors in the Bible include adultery (sexual relations involving married and unmarried persons as well as between unmarried individuals, Ex 20:14; Acts 15:29; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19); incest (sexual relations involving relatives, Lev 18:6-18; 20:11-22); sexual intercourse involving a woman in her menstrual cycle (Lev 18:19); homosexuality (sexual relations between persons of the same sex, Lev 18:22; 20:13; Deut 23:18; Rom 1:26-28; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10); rape (sexual relations involving a nonconsenting party, Deut 22:25-28) and bestiality (sexual relations involving human beings and animals, Lev 20:15-16).

Scripture describes sexual expressions, especially sexual intercourse, as a celebration of intimacy within heterosexual monogamous marital relations (Gen 2:24-25). Apart from some near-explicit sexual references in the Song of Solomon

(especially chapter 5), the Bible tones down sexual behaviors through euphemistic references. Terms like “knew,” (Gen 4:1; 38:26; Num 31:17-18; Matt 1:25), “uncovering one’s feet” (Ru 3:4), “lay with” (Gen 34:2; Num 31:17-18; 2 Sam 12:24), “go in or went in” (Gen 16:2; 2 Sam 12:24), “approach” (Gen 20:4; Lev 18:14), and “uncovering nakedness” (Lev 18:7), in context, generally refer to both permissible and prohibitory sexual behaviors.

Jude 7 uses the clause “having gone after strange flesh” to describe homosexual behaviors and Romans 1:26-27 uses the terms *physikēn*, “natural,” and *para physin*, “unnatural,” to describe heterosexual and homosexual behaviors respectively, “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged natural relations for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise the men, too, abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing shameful acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.” Homosexual relations are specifically considered a shame (*aschēmosynēn*, v. 27). *Arsenokoitai* refers explicitly to homosexuals, and they are mentioned among other sinners who need redemption (1 Tim 1:10) or who shall be excluded from God’s kingdom (1 Cor 6:9). Apart from a few homoerotic and bestial erotic references, most of these passages refer to sexual behavior within heterosexual relations.^[45] This trajectory forcibly suggests heteronormativity in the Bible.^[46]

Implications and Conclusion

Sexual orientations and sexual behaviors are components of sexual expressions. Although not all sexual orientations have corresponding sexual behaviors, sexual orientations influence sexual behaviors and the choice of a sex partner. Individuals determine their sexual identity through their preferred sexual orientation and not through their sexual behaviors or choice of a sex partner. Consequently, it is incorrect to focus on sexual behaviors or on the gender of sex partners to respond to issues on sexual identity. Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:28 shows that unhealthy sexual orientation is as toxic as unhealthy sexual behavior. It is, therefore, inconsistent for a Christian community to strictly condemn sexual behaviors in same-sex relations while tolerating homoeroticism.^[47]

The reality of homoerotic orientation cannot be denied. Literature and lived experiences suggest that biological and environmental factors influence homoerotic orientation. A discordance between one’s sexual orientation and sexual behavior could lead to rejection and loneliness. Acceptance and inclusion of one’s sexual identity depend on the prevailing culture.^[48] While individuals with same-sex orientation would be accepted in a sexually diverse culture, they will be excluded in a heteronormative culture.

The Christian culture is mainly heteronormative. It firmly renounces non-heterosexual orientation and behaviors. Within the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Glorification biblical narrative, the Christian culture regards homosexual, bisexual, asexual, and pansexual orientations and behaviors as an aspect of life distorted by sin. Like all other sins, non-heterosexual orientation and behaviors are unacceptable in Christian circles. Individuals engaged in sexual distortions, whether

homosexual, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, or unhealthy heterosexual relations, need God's grace. It is inappropriate to stigmatize or condemn them.

Along with other nonsexual sinners, they are to be supported and encouraged to approach Jesus for redemption. Supporting non-heterosexuals is not the same as tolerating homoerotic orientations or contextualizing clear biblical teachings against non-heterosexual relations to allow them to indulge in homoeroticism. Instead, Christian communities are to embrace them and point them to Jesus' self-giving and liberating love, assisting them to conform to biblical heteronormativity.

Footnotes

[1] Andrew R. Flores, *Social Acceptance of LGBTI People in 175 Countries and Locations: 1981 to 2020* (Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, 2021), 33-34.

[2] David Masci & Michael Lipka, "Where Christian Churches, other Religions Stand on Gay Marriage," Pew Research Center, retrieved on December 21, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/21/where-christian-churches-stand-on-gay-marriage/>

[3] "Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: Roman Catholic Church," Human Rights Campaign, retrieved on December 23, 2021, from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/stances-of-faiths-on-lgbt-issues-roman-catholic-church>

[4] "Homosexuality," retrieved on December 23, 2021, from <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/homosexuality>

[5] "Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: The United Methodist Church," Human Rights Campaign, retrieved on December 23, 2021, from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/stances-of-faiths-on-lgbt-issues-united-methodist-church>

[6] "Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: Roman Catholic Church." For the Reformed Christian Church, "explicit homosexual practice...is incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Scripture" ("Homosexuality," retrieved on December 23, 2021, from <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/homosexuality>).

[7] Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Homosexuality," retrieved on January 14, 2022, from <https://www.adventist.org/official-statements/homosexuality/>

[8] "Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: Roman Catholic Church."

[9] James A. Forbes Jr., "More Light from the Spirit on Sexuality," *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches*, ed. Walter Wink (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 2.

[10] The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod believes differentiating homosexual orientation from homosexual acts breeds confusion (John F. Brug, "Doctrinal Brief: Is Homosexuality a Sin?" Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 88, retrieved on January 14, 2022, from <http://wlsessays.net/files/BrugIsHomosexualityASin.pdf>). The distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual behaviors is "a major source of conflict and distress" among Catholicism [Angele Deguara, "The Ambivalent Relationship of LGBT Catholics with the Church," In Ralph W.

Hood & Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, (eds.), *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion: A Diversity of Paradigms*

(Boston, MA: Brill Publishers, 2020), 487-509].

[11] Mark A. Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 2010), 12.

[12] Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*, 19.

[13] Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*, 19.

[14] Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*, 35. He argues that "...as important and meaningful as relationships can be between two people of the same sex, sexual behavior between them is considered one of many things that fall outside of God's revealed will. Yarhouse has a solid biblical stance: "according to the scriptures, sex outside of a heterosexual union falls outside of God's will and intention for us. This is not limited to homosexual sex, but it does include it" (Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*, 22, 25).

[15] Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*, 12.

[16] Genesis 1-2; 19:1-9; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; and 1 Timothy 1:10 are six main scriptural passages commonly featured in the debate on the Bible and same-sex relationships. These passages have been literally or contextually interpreted to support or object to specific stances in the debate [see Robert K. Gnuse, "Seven Gay Texts: Biblical Passages Used to Condemn Homosexuality," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 45, no. 2 (2015), 68-87].

[17] Harold Leitenberg, & Kris Henning, "Sexual Fantasy," *Psychological Bulletin* 117, no. 3 (1995), 469-496. (470)

[18] Christian C. Joyal, Amélie Cossette, & Vanessa Lapierre, "What Exactly is an Unusual Sexual Fantasy?" *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 12, no. 2 (2015), 328-340.

[19] J. Gayle Beck, Alan W. Bozman, & Tina Qualtrough, "The Experience of Sexual Desire: Psychological Correlates in a College Sample," *The Journal of Sex Research* 28, no. 3 (1991), 443-456.

[20] Ilana P. Spector, Michael P. Carey, & Lynne Steinberg, "The sexual Desire inventory: Development, Factor Structure, and Evidence of Reliability," *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 22, no. 3 (1996), 175-90.

[21] Stephen B. Levine, "The Nature of Sexual Desire: A Clinician's Perspective," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 32, no. 3 (2003), 279-285.

[22] "Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality," American Psychological Association, 2020. Retrieved on January 13, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/orientation>

[23] J. Michael Bailey, Paul Vasey, Lisa Diamond, S. Marc Breedlove, Eric Vilain, & Marc Epprecht, "Sexual Orientation, Controversy, and Science," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 17, no. 2 (2016), 45-101.

[24] "Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in APA Documents," American Psychological Association, 2015, 6, retrieved on January 13, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/sexuality-definitions.pdf>.

[25] Marshall Cavendish Corporation, ed., "Asexuality," *Sex and Society* 2 (2009), 82-83. See A. F. Bogaert, "Asexuality: What It Is and Why It Matters," *The Journal of Sex Research* 52, no. 4 (2015), 362-379.

[26] "Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in APA Documents," American Psychological Association, 2015, 6, retrieved on January 13, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/sexuality-definitions.pdf>.

[27] Gloria Kersey-Matusiak, *Delivering Culturally Competent Nursing Care* (New York City, NY: Springer, 2012), 169. See

Gottfried Heuer, *Sexual Revolutions: Psychoanalysis, History and the Father* (Oxfordshire, UK: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 49.

[28] Anke A. Ehrhardt, "John Money, Ph.D.," *The Journal of Sex Research* 44, no. 3 (2007), 223-224.

[29] American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, "Report of the Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation," (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009), 30.

[30] Lizzie Zucker Saltz, "Crafting Romance," Athens Institute for Contemporary Art, 2009, retrieved on January 13, 2022, from <http://xrl.us/AOM100bj>

[31] Laura Reiter, "Sexual Orientation, Sexual Identity, and the Question of Choice," *Clinical Social Work Journal* 17, no. 2 (1989): 138-50.

[32] "Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality," American Psychological Association, 2020, retrieved on January 14, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/orientation>

[33] Karine Igartua, Brett D. Thombs, Giovani Burgos, & Richard Montoro, "Concordance and Discrepancy in Sexual Identity, Attraction, and Behavior Among Adolescents," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 45, no. 6 (2009), 602-608. See Jenna A. Glover, Renee V. Galliher, & Trenton G. Lamere, "Identity Development and Exploration Among Sexual Minority Adolescents: Examination of a Multidimensional Model," *Journal of Homosexuality* 56 (2009) 77-101; Ritch C. Savin-Williams, "Who's Gay? Does it Matter?" *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15 (2006), 40-44.

[34] Zhana Vrangalova, & Ritch C. Savin-Williams, "Mostly Heterosexual and Mostly Gay/Lesbian: Evidence for New Sexual Orientation Identities," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41 (2012), 85-101.

[35] Lisa M. Diamond, *Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love and Desire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2-3, 54.

[36] American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, "Report of the Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation," (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009), 30. See Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens Through the Twenties," *American Psychologist* 55 (2000), 469-480.

[37] Jonathan J. Mohr, "Heterosexual Identity and the Heterosexual Therapist: An Identity Perspective on Sexual Orientation Dynamics in Psychotherapy," *The Counseling Psychologist* 30 (2002), 532-566.

[38] Diana Tourjée, "Straight People Don't Exist, Research Says," Vice Media Group, retrieved on January 5, 2022, from <https://www.vice.com/en/article/ypa7vk/straight-people-dont-exist-new-research-says>

[39] Christina Wither, "Difference Between Sexuality and Sexual Orientation," Difference Between Similar Terms and Objects, retrieved on January 5, 2022, from <http://www.differencebetween.net/language/difference-between-sexuality-and-sexual-orientation/>.

[40] Michelle M. Sauer, "The Unexpected Actuality: "Deviance" and Transgression," In *Gender in Medieval Culture* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 74-78.

[41] Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, & R. K. Harrison, "Deer," *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: New and Enhanced Edition* (Dallas, TX: Thomas-Nelson, 2014), 56.

[42] The New Language Translation, New King James Version, and Amplified Bible interpret בָּזֵה as 'immoral,' and

the English Standard Version, Berean Study Bible, and the New American Standard Bible render it, 'adulteress.' The New International Version renders it "another man's wife."

[43] See Chai R. Feldblum, "Moral Conflicts and Conflicting Liberties," *Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty: Emerging Conflicts*, ed. Douglas Laycock, Anthony R. Picarello, Jr., & Robin Fretwell Willson (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 132,142; Alexander Schuster, "LGBTI Migration in Europe," *Research Handbook on Gender, Sexuality and the Law*, ed. Chris Ashford and Alexander Maine (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2020), 104.

[44]

John F. Brug, "Doctrinal Brief: Is Homosexuality a Sin?" Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 88, retrieved on January 14, 2022, from <http://wlsessays.net/files/BrugIsHomosexualityASin.pdf>

[45] Dora R. Mbuwayesango, "Part III: The Bible and Bodies - Sex and Sexuality in Biblical Narrative," In Danna N. Fewell, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 456-465.

[46] "...sex in heterosexual marriage is affirmed by the Bible for three primary reasons. First, it is a symbol of our relationship with the Lord. This was conveyed in metaphors throughout the Old Testament between God and Israel, and in the New Testament between Christ and the Church. Second, sex in marriage is good because of the unity it creates between one man and one woman. Third, sex in marriage is good because it is the sole means of procreation, even when procreation is not chosen or not possible due to other issues such as infertility" (Yarhouse, 2010, 25).

[47] Tremper Longman III echoes this argument, "Having homosexual desires isn't condemned in the Bible; acting on them is. Having heterosexual desires toward a woman you're not married to isn't condemned; acting on them is" (Tremper Longman III, "A Return to Eden: Redeeming Sexuality," *Westmont Magazine*, retrieved on January 11, 2022, from <https://www.westmont.edu/return-eden-redeeming-sexuality>).

[48] Zeinab Kasemy, El-Sayed D. S. Desouky, & Gaafar Abdel-Rasoul, "Sexual Fantasy, Masturbation and Pornography Among Egyptians," *Sexuality & Culture* 20, no. 3 (2016), 626-638.