



*Presbyterians are
talking about...
sexuality*



The Presbyterian
Church in Canada



Presbyterians are talking about... sexuality



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The following are available on the PCC website <http://presbyterian.ca/sexuality>

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(Lists the documents found at <http://presbyterian.ca/sexuality>)

Study Guides, Books and Websites





How to Use These Resources: Some Suggestions

For the individual

- Browse the material listed.
- Read, download, and print what interests you for reflection and learning.
- Take time to
 - read scripture passages.
 - recall relevant past personal experiences and conversations
 - remember people for whom this subject is part of their day-to-day lives.
- Record (e.g., in a journal) your thoughts, feelings and questions; use prose, poetry and/or images.
- Pray for understanding. (See prayers in the “Opening” and “Closing” sections of “Initial Group Gathering.”)
- Consider whom you might talk to about this subject: a family member, friend, colleague, church member, church leader, Canadian Ministries staff.
- Read “Covenanting.”
- Take steps to talk to others about this subject.

For people wanting to form a discussion group

- Consider who in your community might want to meet to talk about this subject.
- Contact some of them, including people who might lead a gathering, to confirm that there is sufficient interest.
- Set up a group gathering time and place.
- Invite people to attend and/or post a notice of the meeting in your community.
- Invite someone to lead (i.e., facilitate) the first gathering.
- Review “Initial Group Gathering.”

Note: Contact Canadian Ministries (canadianministries@presbyterian.ca; 1-800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111 ext. 217) if you would like to discuss ways to use material posted on the PCC website <http://presbyterian.ca/talking-about> or if you would like a copy of selected documents.



Initial Group Gathering: Suggestions

Select the components that are best suited for your context.

You will need: a worship area with candle, matches and Bible; paper and pens; the Book of Praise (optional); cut-out magazine flower pictures if you choose to do “Garden metaphor” in section four; a copy of “Covenanting,” “Documents List,” “Study guides, books, and websites,” “Background”; access to the documents on the PCC webpage <http://presbyterian.ca/talking-about> (optional).

1. **Introductions** Share refreshments (if provided); introduce one another.
2. **Opening** Begin with prayer. See suggestions below.

Prayer for the Spirit among us

Dear God,
We light this candle (light candle),
creating new flame
reminding us of your presence
always with us, always creating.
Open our minds and hearts now
to your Spirit moving among us. Amen.

Prayer for God’s guidance

Loving God,
We ask you to be with us in this gathering.
Be present in our thoughts and words.
Help us listen and be slow to speak.
Help us feel and be quick to show compassion.
Help us remember the people whose lives and relationships
are most affected by this subject.
Guide our time together so that in learning from each other,
we come to know you better. Amen.

Prayer for God’s presence

Gracious and loving God,
Be present with us during this meeting.
Guide our thoughts to reflect your loving presence in this world.
Create within us open minds and hearts, that we will not fear differences of opinion.
Help us embrace our differences knowing that through our conversations
we can grow in our understanding of your will for us.
Help us to listen to each other, to share our thoughts in loving, honest ways,
and to be with each other in peace.
Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

(Adapted from *Seeking to be Faithful Together*, PCUSA, 1992)

Litany of belonging

Light a candle to remind you of God's presence and love. Invite five people to be the voices. Then read together the litany.

Voice One: What does it mean to be a child of God?

All: That I belong to God, who loves me.

Voice Two: "So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost." Matt. 18:14

Voice Three: "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Matt 19:14

Voice Four: "You belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God." 1 Cor. 3:23

Voice Five: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:28

Voice One: What does it mean to be a child of God?

All: That I belong to God, who loves me. Amen.

—Voice One and All are from *Belonging to God: A First Catechism*, PCUSA, 1998

3. Covenanting

- Read the document "Covenanting."
- Invite comments, reactions and concerns.
- Choose or develop a group covenant. Display it in the meeting space.

4. Beginning the conversation

Choose one or more of the following activities, with sensitivity to the comfort level and relationships within the group.

i) Personal experiences

Invite everyone (respecting the right to pass) to take turns sharing personal experiences related to this subject. In speaking they might respond to one or more of these questions:

- 1 When and how did this subject first impact your life?
- 2 What has happened since then?
- 3 How does it impact you now?

ii) Garden metaphor

Preparation: From magazines and calendars cut out pictures of garden flowers—many more pictures than there will be group members. On the back of half of them print lightly in pencil one of these words: gay, lesbian, bisexual, homosexual, transgender; on the back of the other half print lightly the word "heterosexual."

Spread out and mix around the flower pictures on the floor or a table. Invite everyone to choose a picture and take turns showing it, possibly commenting on their choice, and then placing it on the worship centre. Ask everyone to listen and reflect silently as the leader says:

- Look at the variety of flowers in our “garden”!
- Think about the pictures that remain on the table/floor, that are not part of our “garden.”
- Remember the diversity of flowers in the world that goes far beyond those in the pictures in this room.
- Remember the vastness of God’s Creation.

Turn over and read aloud the words on the back of each picture. Ask everyone to reflect silently as the leader says:

These words have different meanings for different people. Think about their meaning for you – for some people most of them are words only; for other people some of these words relate to friends, family or themselves.

God’s Creation includes all people: some are similar and some are different from us; some we know, some we will never meet; some have characteristics that attract us and some don’t. They are still all part of God’s Creation.

Invite comments and discussion.

iii) Continuums of differences

- Think of some issues in your church or neighbourhood that are controversial and divide people. For example, some might prefer “Communion by intinction” while others prefer “Communion distributed in the pews”; or some want “worship with traditional hymns” while others prefer “worship with contemporary hymns.” In your neighbourhood there might be discussion about land use, pesticides, crime, or health facilities.
- Choose issues that might show some range in opinion in the group.
- Designate one side of the room one extreme position on the issues and the opposite side of the room the other extreme position.
- Invite group members to line up along the imaginary line between the two sides according to how they feel about the issue. Always respect a person’s request to observe rather than participate.
- Afterwards, comment on the fact that we all belong to this group/church and yet we hold different views on these subjects. Despite our differences we can be, we are, a community.
- Ask “How have we learned to be together despite our differences?” List the responses (e.g., avoid the topic, restraint, sense of humour, speaking respectfully, apology for upsetting someone).
- One by one read out the following three polarized points related to homosexuality, inviting group members to line up somewhere on the imaginary line for each of these points. (Note: Some people may not wish to do.)

Homosexuality is a behaviour. It is what one does.

Homosexuality is an orientation. It is part of one's being.



Homosexual behaviour is intrinsically sinful, disordered, unnatural. It is an offense to God. God intends everyone to be heterosexual.

Heterosexuality, bisexuality, and abnormal and homosexuality are three normal, natural variations of sexual orientation, found throughout all societies, cultures, and eras.



Individuals choose their sexual orientation at or after puberty.

A person's eventual sexual orientation is determined for them before school age.



Note: The wording of these points is taken from the list of views provided on the Religious Tolerance website: http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_chur1.htm

Whether or not group members are able to physically and publicly position themselves, invite them to reflect silently on their position and these questions:

- How did you come to this position?
- How long have you held this position?

Invite comments.

What are some ways of speaking, some strategies for group discussion, that might help this group talk about this subject despite the different views.

5. Background review

Go through the "Background" document together or break into three groups with each focusing on one of the three sections: Laws, Statistics, Language. Then discuss in the whole group:

- What is new to group members in this document?
- What questions, concerns does this information raise? What follow-up would help?
- List any additional information that group members want with respect to the situation in Canada, or specifically in your community. Consider who and how will this information be gathered?

(Note: Canadian Ministries can be contacted for assistance gathering additional information 1-800-619-7301, canadianministries@presbyterian.ca)

6. Review resources and discuss ideas for group

Look at the list of resources provided by PCC. (See <http://presbyterian.ca/sexuality> or "Documents List.") Ask: "How do we want to proceed?" Try to reach consensus.

Choices might include:

- Review PCC documents – each member could select one to review and to present at a group meeting.

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- Review partner/sister church documents – each member could select one to review and to present at a group meeting.

Note:

1. There could be more than one person reviewing a document; not all documents need to be reviewed.
 2. Group members are welcome to recommend and review a document not listed, but they are encouraged to do so only if they are able to make it available to everyone. Canadian Ministries can be contacted for assistance.
- Select a study resource (one listed or one known to a group member), and then plan who will obtain copies for group members and by what date.
 - Select a book (one listed or one known to a group member), and then plan who will obtain copies for group members and by what date.
 - Take time to reflect on the next step. Set a date when the leader may follow up with group members.
 - Are there other suggestions on how to proceed?

If the group wants to meet again, ask how do you want the group led?

- By one person: Clergy? Lay person? (Suggest names.)
- By rotating leadership? (Suggest strategy and who would lead next meeting.)

If the group wants another meeting set up

- Confirm the focus of the meeting
- Confirm the resources needed and who will obtain them.
- Have a volunteer ensure there is a leader for the next meeting.
- Have volunteers ensure the space is available and booked; refreshments are organized (optional); group members are informed, and community announcements are made (optional).

If the group is uncertain about another meeting

- Do you need time to reflect on this? If so, indicate when a follow up contact could be made. (Decide on how many weeks or months, or a specific date.)

7. Feedback

The leader might begin by thanking everyone and giving a brief summary statement of the conversations, particularly mentioning what went well. This will help the group transition from “content” to “feedback” about the experience.

Ask everyone to reflect on the group experience. Take turns, with everyone who wishes giving feedback; for example, consider these guide questions:

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- What was helpful? What made it easy to participate?
 - What was not helpful? What made the gathering challenging?
 - What was disappointing?
 - How could the group experience be improved?
 - What did you learn?
 - What surprised you?
 - What are your hopes for further learning about this subject?

8. Closing

Sing: Choose a hymn from The Book of Praise to sing together or have someone play.

Some possibilities are:

- #307 “God of the sparrow, God of the whale”
- #310 “Bring many names”
- #322 “Sing praise to God mountaintops”
- #475 “I am the church! You are the church!” (vs 1-3)

Pray: Close with prayer. See suggestions below.

Litany of differences

One: Loving God, you give birth to all human life, as complex and varied as the natural creation. But how hard it is to embrace all the images of you that surround us!

All: Help us accept one another as brothers and sisters made in the image of God.

One: So often we avoid people who are different – who have different physical appearance and ability, personality and age, intellectual ability and education, culture and spirituality, different in the way they speak, think, and love. We wonder if these different images are really part of your creation?

All: Help us accept one another as brothers and sisters made in the image of God.

One: So often we seek communities of our own making, with people of our own choosing, people who reflect familiar, comfortable images of you. We limit our experiences of you.

All: Help us accept one another as brothers and sisters made in the image of God.

One: Help us see beyond ourselves, to become part of the lives of people who are different, allowing them to experience your presence in us; and allowing ourselves to experience your presence in them.

All: Help us accept one another as brothers and sisters made in the image of God. Amen.

Prayer for healing and humility

Give each person a slip of paper and pen. Invite them to write down the name of a person (or people) they have been thinking about and want to pray for. Fold the paper and place it on the worship table (i.e., on a plate or in an offering basket). Invite everyone to pray, with one person reading this prayer:

Loving God of peace and reconciliation, we have named people we have been thinking about; you know their needs and our concerns. We pray for them now, that you will be with them, to comfort them and guide them. (*Pause for silent prayer.*)

Today we have also thought about matters that challenge our church. We pray for healing of people—healing of the spurned, the offended, the too-certain, the confused, the wounded; healing of the unfeeling, the hard-to-understand, the hard-of-understanding.

We pray for humility—humility to accept your love for us and for those with different viewpoints and different sexual orientations; humility that allows us to love you and love our neighbor; to love freely following the teachings of Jesus.

We pray that with healing and humility we may live and love your way, being the church of Jesus Christ, empowered by your Spirit. Amen.

Prayer that the Spirit leads us

Dear God, we change this flame to smoke (*snuff out flame of burning candle*), reminding us that your Spirit moves within us and around us.

As we ponder today's conversation,
may we go out of this place led by your Spirit,
to do your will in the world. Amen.



Covenanting

Three components of our faith provide a foundation for people in our congregations when they engage in difficult conversations: our hope, our call and the gospel of peace.

Our Hope

As Christians we have been given in the Bible our hope for a renewed world, where all Creation will live in relationships of peace, justice and reconciliation.

Isaiah 65:17a, 19, 20a–25a

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth... I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime... They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD – and their descendants as well. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Matthew 5:1–10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 4:17b–21

Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Revelation 21:1a, 3-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; ...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; 4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

Our Call

We are called into relationship with God and with one another, within our faith community and out into the world.

We acknowledge that, though sometimes unknown or forgotten by us, our faith community includes people, and their families, who are different from us with respect to many characteristics; these include physical traits, gender, age, ability, culture, tradition, life experiences, ethnicity, race, language, and sexual orientation.

We affirm that the good news is about being in relationship with others, as modeled and taught by Jesus, so that we come to know, express, and live out God's love for all.

The Gospel of Peace

(From "Theology of Peace-making," International Affairs Committee Report, 1992)

- Peace-makers, God's children (Matt. 5:9), cannot rest content with mere co-existence, a balance of power armistice or even a charter of rights and freedoms that exalts personal or group independence.
- Christ's peace is a social peace that builds, not private or corporate domains in control of their own destinies, but communities where consensus in the Spirit rather than majority rule is the governing principle (Matt. 18:19, 20), where those who seem to be of least importance may well be the most important (Matt. 18:1-4), and where the true Messiah is not ashamed to wash tired, dirty feet (Jn. 13:12-17).
- Only as every member of the community is loved and respected and free to exercise his/her gifts in the social organism can God's shalom be served (Eph. 4:1-16).
- The depth and power of Christ's peace-making ministry has its source in the love that brought Christ to his cross and calls all would-be peace-makers to cross-bearing (Mk. 8:34; 10:42-45), the love that reveals Christ's reconciling purpose for the entire creation, making peace by the blood of that cross (Col. 1:20).

As people seek to hear and answer God's call to peace-making, some gospel guidelines and discussion questions include:

* The ways of peace are rooted in good will and the desire to serve, to build communities created and ruled by love.

Are there neighbours we know, or can search out, who are being abused by little Caesars and need our understanding and support, as perhaps we need theirs? Is it possible that we ourselves sometimes act like little Caesars?

* Peace-makers give priority, not to competitiveness, but to co-operation and mutuality. They live by interdependence and govern themselves by consensus.

How can we re-learn the obvious gospel truth that we are one family and one body in Christ?

* True peace, and Christians must insist on this, comes only when justice is tempered by mercy, and forgiveness and reconciliation are offered and accepted.

Where do we need to seek forgiveness and offer restitution? To abused children, women, Aboriginal peoples, prisoners, refugees or to that one person we don't want to think about? Can we move towards restorative justice?

* The people who live for peace seek only the right to develop and share the gifts the Creator has given them, to find enrichment in the abundant life Jesus Christ came to offer us.

How can we discern the undeveloped gifts of neighbours near and far who want to contribute to the rich variety and shalom of all creatures great and small in God's world?

The Covenant

Choose one of the following for your group's guidelines or have the group develop its own. Post the chosen Covenant in a visible place for every gathering, and refer to it when necessary.

The Talking Circle (From "The Talking or Sharing Circle" in *We Are One in the Spirit Liturgical Resources*, PCC, 2010, p. 9)

- 1 Gather in a circle, where all participants are equally important and can see each other.
- 2 One person speaks at a time, holding when they speak a talking stick or stone or another object designated by your group.
- 3 Others listen to the speaker.
- 4 No one interrupts; when people want to say more, they must wait their turn.
- 5 Everyone has the right not to speak; that is, the right to pass.
- 6 Everyone takes turn until no one has anything more to say.
- 7 Everything spoken is confidential within the group.

Talking circles are considered to be sacred, confidential, and safe. In Aboriginal communities, anything said in the talking circle is not repeated outside the circle.

Group Principles for Conversations (Compiled from examples of group norms for the Human Sexuality Focus Group Facilitator Gathering, May 2-4, 2008, Anglican Church of Canada)

- We will respect each other's faith journey.
- We will always assume that gays or lesbians (or representatives of other sexual minorities) are present.
- We will respect the right of people to "name" themselves and their experiences.
- We will use words and body language which respect the dignity of others.
- We will speak in the first person, using "I" statements, speaking from our own experience and avoiding generalizations.

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- We will give each other time to speak and to be heard without interruption.
 - We will ask inviting questions.
 - We will respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of others' statements.
 - We are free to share our own learning, but not what others have said.

Faithful Actions for Interpersonal Relationships

We build on our hope by responding to the call and living out the gospel of peace and reconciliation in all we say and do in our interpersonal relationships.

Use this list (or generate your own) of faithful actions you might take when engaged in difficult conversations in any community.

- Welcome and include each person equally.
- Listen attentively, without interruption, without defensiveness.
- Share personal feelings.
- Ask questions respectfully.
- Pray for God's guidance.
- Apologize.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Forgive.
- Recognize, and articulate aloud, similarities among us.
- Value, and articulate aloud, one another's strengths.
- Choose words with consideration for others' feelings.
- Show patience.
- Praise someone for something specific they said or did to benefit you or the group.
- Thank someone for teaching you something important.
- _____
- _____
- _____



Background: Changes in Society

The issue of sexuality polarizes people in our church. It has for decades. In contrast, the issue is no longer a polarizing element in our society and some changes have occurred.

1. Laws

In 1969, the Government of Canada proposed legislation to remove from the Criminal Code homosexual acts between consenting adults in private. At that time The Presbyterian Church in Canada's 95th General Assembly agreed to communicate approval of this proposal.

Since then other anti-discrimination laws have been proposed and passed to protect people of the LGBT community with respect to employment, provision of goods and services, hate speech, housing, and much more. Today the Canadian Charter of Rights protects people in the LGBT community as it does all Canadians; this was clearly established in 1995. Since 1992 people serving in the Canadian Forces are protected by legislation, free from harassment and discrimination. However, the right to equality based on sexual orientation may be limited by the freedom of religion, and vice versa.

Along with these legal changes, the shift in Canadian public opinion has been dramatic. Between 1997 and 2004, Canadian public opinion shifted from minority-support to majority-support for same-sex marriages. This shift is studied in "Affect change: The increased influence of attitudinal factors on Canadians' support for legal same-sex marriage" by Mark Lehman (2006) at <http://www.samesexmarriage.ca/docs/Lehman2.pdf>

2. Statistics

Over the years, the gay community has asserted that the rate of non-heterosexual sexual orientation in society is under-reported and the social conservatives have argued that it is over-reported. Since 1948 it has been commonly stated that 10% of all men are gay. This figure was determined at that time by American biologist Alfred Kinsey. Two recent studies show how difficult it is to agree on this.

In 2012 the National Post newspaper commissioned a Forum Research poll which found that 5% of Canadians identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT); a third of LGBT people said they were in a same-sex marriage; and 75% of those polled said they knew someone who is LGBT.

In 2013 a study from the National Bureau of Economic Research in the United States found that about 20 percent of the population is attracted to their own gender. The authors suggest these results can be explained by their "veiled" methodology which ensures privacy and anonymity. (To read more see <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/what-percent-of-the-population-is-gay-more-than-you-think-5012467/#P3bZsUZAQpArQMww.99>)

3. Language

Increasingly in the last decade the term “LGBT” has come into use to speak about people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender; it is considered an inclusive term and without the derogatory connotations of some other terms. Here are some definitions:

Sexual orientation: The dominant sexual attraction of an individual, generally classified as heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. It is considered to be an individual’s place in a spectrum ranging from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality. All people have a place in this spectrum.

Heterosexual: A person whose primary sexual attraction is to persons of the opposite sex.

Homosexual: A person whose primary attraction is to persons of the same sex.

Bisexual: A person who is sexually attracted to both men and women.

Lesbian/gay: These are the terms used in current common speech to describe female and male homosexual people. (Ed. Note: In 2014, “gay” is sometimes used in a derogatory way.)

(Source for the above: *Listening...Understanding Human Sexuality*, PCC, 2003)

Transgender: A person whose gender identity is different from his or her biological sex.

(Source for the above: “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Glossary”, CAMH, 2012)

Recently “LGBT” has come into usage to include the “two-spirited” people in aboriginal tradition.

Two-spirited: a person who has both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and is used by some First Nations people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity.

(Source for the above: CAMH <http://lgbtqhealth.ca/community/two-spirit.php>)

Other terms that are sometimes heard today are “queer” and “questioning”:

Queer: Some transsexual and transgendered people identify as queers; others do not. For some it is a derogatory term.

Questioning: A person who is questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation.

(Source for the above: “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Glossary,” CAMH, 2012)



Scripture References

Listed below are the passages that are frequently cited in discussions about

Homosexual behaviour

Old Testament

Genesis 19:1-29
Judges 19:22-29; 20:1-7
Deuteronomy 23:17-18
Leviticus 18:22
Leviticus 20:13

New Testament

1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10
1 Timothy 1: 8-10
Romans 1: 18-32

God's blessing of male-female relationships exclusively

Old Testament

Genesis 1: 26-31
Genesis 2: 18-25

New Testament

Matthew 19: 4-6
Ephesians 5: 21-33

Reassurance of God's love and grace for all

New Testament

Romans 3: 22-23
Galatians 3: 28-29
Ephesians 2: 8-10

For assistance in exploring these passages, see the resources listed in

Document List

Many of the documents discuss scripture references including the above passages. The documents can be found at <http://presbyterian.ca/sexuality>

Study Guides, Books and Websites

These resources assist individuals and groups in exploring scripture on this subject.



Document List

(All documents listed here can be found at <http://presbyterian.ca/sexuality>)

Statements and documents on human sexuality by the PCC

Church Doctrine Report on Human Sexuality. Acts and Proceedings, 1994, pages 251–274

Statement on Human Sexuality: A Study for Congregations, Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods (The Church Speaks Series), 1998

Report of the Special Committee on Sexual Orientation. Acts and Proceedings, 2000, pages 482–492.

Report of the Special Committee on Sexual Orientation. Acts and Proceedings, 2003, pages 526–547.

Listening... Understanding Human Sexuality: A four part study program for congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Prepared by the General Assembly Special Committee on Sexual Orientation, 2003.

Human Sexuality, *Social Action Handbook*, pages 32–34. A summary of what the church has said on this subject since 1969. Updated annually. Includes excerpts from reports to General Assembly.

Homosexuality, *Social Action Handbook*, pages 35–42. A summary of what the church has said on this subject since 1964.

Statements and documents on human sexuality from PCC's partner and sister churches in Canada, U.S. and beyond

The Anglican Church of Canada

Discernment on Sexuality, General Synod 2010
Human Sexuality: A statement by the Anglican Bishops of Canada, 1997

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

ELIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality, 2011
The Bishops' Statement on Homosexuality, 1997

The United Church of Canada

GLBTT National Consultations, 2012
Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality Policy, 1988

Mennonite Church Canada

A Report on Our Understanding of the Church's Position Regarding Same-Sex Issues, 2003
Resolution on the Issue of Homosexuality, 1998
Resolution on Human Sexuality, 1986

The Presbyterian Church (USA)

Homosexuality, 2012
The Church and Homosexuality, 1978

The Christian Reformed Church in North America

Homosexuality Position Statement, 2013
Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members, 1999

World Council of Churches

Churches' Response to Human Sexuality, 2006

Church of Scotland

Theological Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry, 2013

The Church of Ireland

Synod Motion Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief, 2012
Human Sexuality: A Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of the Church of Ireland, 2003



Study Guides, Books and Websites

This list of resources has been compiled in consultation with Presbyterian ministers with deep concern and commitment to our denomination, who are well informed and represent the broad range of views on this issue. If you wish to recommend additional resources or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at canadianministries@presbyterian.ca or 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 Ext. 271.

Study guides

(alphabetical order by author's last name)

Study Guide for Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church (Book by Jack Rogers—see “Books” on next page) by Freda Gardner and David Maxwell. Free download from <http://drjackrogers.typepad.com/StudyGuide.pdf>

Authors: Freda Gardner, a former Moderator of PC (USA), is professor of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary; David Maxwell, formerly Coordinator of Global Education and International Leadership Development for the Worldwide Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council of the PC(USA), is now an editor with the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

The Bible and Homosexuality by Susan R. Garrett and Martha Bettis-Gee. The Thoughtful Christian, 2011. Download for US \$12.00 from <http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/Products/TC0439/the-bible-and-homosexuality.aspx>

Authors: Susan R. Garrett is Professor of New Testament at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. She has previously taught at Emory and Yale Universities. Martha Bettis-Gee is Associate for Child Advocacy in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Homosexuality: United Methodists at the Crossroads by David Otto, The Thoughtful Christian, 2014. Download for US \$7.50 from <http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/Products/TC0576/homosexuality.aspx>

Author: David Otto is Professor of Religious Studies at Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Homosexuality: Seeking the Guidance of the Church. The Reformed Church in America (RCA), 2005 (Revised). Download for Cdn \$11.09 from <http://www.faithaliveresources.org/Products/701025/homosexuality.aspx>

Books

(alphabetical order by author's last name; retail prices may vary)

The Uncomfortable Church: Can Gays Be Reconciled to the Body of Christ? by Dr. Lawrence Brice. Deep River Books, 2012. Paperback, Cdn \$12.77.

Author: Dr. Brice is a veteran pastor, television host, and author. He is also a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships by James V. Brownson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013. Paperback, Cdn \$20.05.

Author: James V. Brownson is professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan.

Changing Our Mind: A Call from America's Leading Evangelical Ethics Scholar for Full Acceptance of LGBT Christians in the Church by David P. Gushee. David Crumm Media, 2014. Paperback, Cdn \$20.00.

Author: David Gushee is distinguished university professor of Christian Ethics at Mercer University and a contributing editor of *Sojourners*.

Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate by Justin Lee. Jericho Books, 2012. Paperback, Cdn \$13.00.

Author: Justin Lee, raised in a Southern Baptist home and a gay man, is founder and executive director of the Gay Christian Network.

Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church by Jack Rogers. Westminster John Knox, 2009 (Revised). Paperback, Cdn \$15.00

Note: This book includes a “guide for group study or personal reflection.”

Author: Jack Rogers is Professor Emeritus of Theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary in California. He was moderator of the 213th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Generous Spaciousness—Responding to the Gay Christians in the Church by Wendy VanderWal-Gritter. Brazos Press, 2014. Paperback. Cdn \$14.00.

Author: Wendy VanderWal-Gritter completed her M.Div. at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto in 1999 and is a candidate for her D.Min. from Knox College, Toronto School of Theology. She has served as the Executive Director of New Direction since 2002. (See website below.)

God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships by Matthew Vines. Convergent Books, 2014. Hardback, Cdn \$20.00.

Author: Matthew Vines is an advocate for the acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people within Christian communities and the founder and president of The Reformation Project.

Website

New Direction <http://www.newdirection.ca/>

Description: The website of New Direction is a Canadian Christian ministry led by Wendy Gritter (author of *Generous Spaciousness—Responding to the Gay Christians in the Church* above). New Direction's mission statement says, “Nurturing safe and spacious places for sexual minority persons to explore and grow in faith in Jesus Christ.” The website lists numerous resources.