



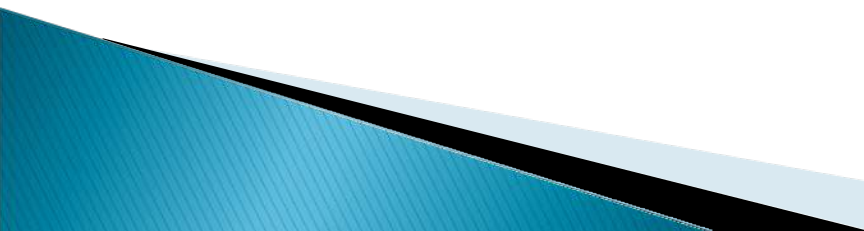
A presentation by the Citizens Constitutional Forum CEO Reverend Akuila Yabaki

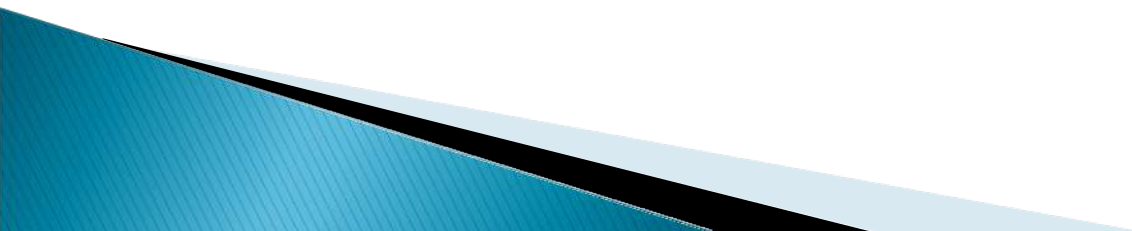


- ▶ We are living at a time when a new consciousness is arising in which there is growing recognition that for homosexual people their only 'sin' seems to be that they were born with a sexual orientation different from that of the majority. Yet we know their orientation to be perfectly normal. It is like minority positions within the human family; left-handedness, red hair.

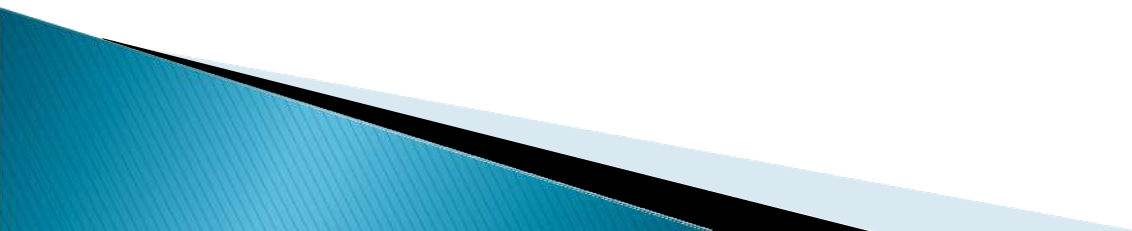
- ▶ If same sex couples are to be given the same standard of acceptance as opposite sex couples then the integrity of their relationships have to be safeguarded by commitment, continuity, permanence , exclusivity and faithfulness ; these are values normally expected of heterosexual partners.

- ▶ The Bible specifically forbids a man or woman who is married to have sexual relationships or intercourse with someone other than the marriage partner. It is seen as a moral offence among Christians and specifically forbidden in the Seventh Commandment (Ex. 20: 14). This means that if partners in a same sex couple who leave their longstanding partners to live with another must be guilty of faithlessness.

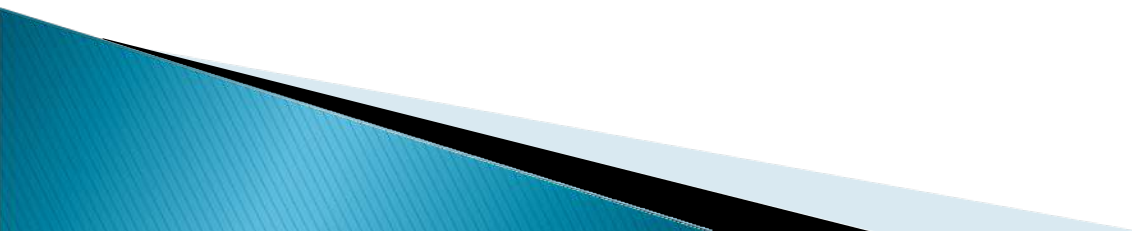
- ▶ The Bible and Homosexuality
 - ▶ Biblical Passages dealing with homosexuality refer to certain types of homosexual acts.
 - ▶ Genesis 19: The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah frequently has been attributed to homosexual.
 - ▶ The story has been used to show God's negativity toward homosexual persons. The story that portrays all men of Sodom eager to gang rape two heavenly visitors.
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- ▶ Of course gang rape is wrong whether its style is homosexual or heterosexual. Of course the plot to commit incest is wrong. But what does that have to do with the hopes and aspirations of two women or two men in the 21st century who love each other, and who want to live for and with each other in a partnership of intimacy and faithfulness and with blessing of God ?
 - ▶ To the extent that the Sodom story focuses on homosexual acts, its judgment is upon the homosexual rape of divine messengers, and its larger judgment appears to be against social injustice and inhospitality to strangers (see Ezekiel 16 : 49– 50).
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- ▶ **Four theological–ethical positions regarding homosexual orientation represent the current Christian Understanding.**
 - ▶ **First is rejecting–punitive position.**

Homosexuality is unconditionally rejected as not Christianity legitimate either as orientation or in genital expressions. Further there is a punitive attitude towards lesbians and gay men. And certain biblical passages are usually applied by cultural stereotypes of gay and lesbian people.
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- ▶ **Second Position is rejecting and non-punitive.**
- ▶ Homosexual acts are condemned as unnatural acts and violation of God's creative intent. Argument takes two forms:
 - ▶ Since procreative possibility is essential to legitimate sexual intercourse homosexual intercourse is a sin against nature.
 - ▶ Man created in the image of God ,Imago Dei , is essentially male and female. Karl Barth says that since one comes to "fellow humanity" only in relation to a person of the opposite sex, to seek one's humanity in a same sex relationship is self-worship, perversion, and idolatry.

- ▶ While this second position uncompromisingly rejects all homosexual acts as evil two qualifications must be made. First , homosexual orientation is not always morally condemned. Second, this position seeks to be non punitive towards the homosexual person who, in the light of God's mercy, is to be treated compassionately as one in need of the church's ministry.
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- ▶ **The third Position is that of qualified acceptance.**

This stance agrees with the previous one in affirming God's heterosexual intent in creation. However, constitutional homosexuality is now understood as largely given, fixed in early childhood, and frequently not always able to change in adults. If homosexual persons can change their orientation, they are morally obligated to do so. But those who cannot change their orientation _ should practice abstinence.

- ▶ The fourth position that of full acceptance of homosexual orientation, with homosexual acts themselves to be fully evaluated by the same standards used for heterosexual acts. This represents a shift in Christian ethics which elevated the *unitive purpose* of marriage and sexuality to the primary position and dethroned the centrality of procreative purpose. Those who hold such position contend that same-sex relationships can fully express God's central purpose for sexuality, the unitive.

- ▶ Thus, affirming homosexual as well as heterosexual orientation, this position holds that all sexual acts ought to be evaluated by their relational qualities. Human fulfillment, faithfulness, mutuality, and genuine intimacy and communion can be sought and found in both sexual acts.
 - ▶ The central questions that appear to distinguish the above positions are these: the meaning of sexuality, the interpretation of scripture, the use of empirical data, and the criteria for evaluation of moral action.
 - ▶ These four positions reflect the wide spectrum of current understanding. Of those churches that have taken public positions the majority embrace the rejecting–nonpunitive stance, with a few expressing qualified acceptance, –and a small minority committed to full acceptance.
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- ▶ In addition to the general theological–ethical question concerning homosexual orientation and expression, a number of moral issues now face the churches. A major issue is the support of civil rights and social justice for gay men and lesbians , an issue on which most church bodies now publicly agree. More divisive though are those which directly affect internal church life,
- ▶ These include the acceptance of gay men and lesbians into full church participation, the provision of enlightened pastoral care, the ordination of publicly affirmed lesbians and gay men, the liturgical blessing of gay or lesbian unions, and the support of legal rights for gay or lesbian unions in the same way there’s support for hetero–sexual marriages.

- ▶ But perhaps the most difficult and far-reaching challenge of all, however, is that of dealing with the moral and spiritual dynamics of homophobia, the irrational and compulsive fear of homosexuality, as it is expressed both personally and socially.