Pastoral Care for Same-Sex Attracted Persons

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Questions LGBTQ+ / same-sex attracted persons may have about Christian faith:

* “My sexuality is a part of *who I am*. It feels natural, normal—like I was ‘born this way.’ Doesn’t that mean, if there’s a God, that God *created* me to be gay?”
* “Isn’t it important, for mental health, to be true to who you are? Denying your sexuality—like trying to ‘pray the gay away’—seems dangerous.”
* “Isn’t the Bible talking about something other than loving gay relationships as we know them today? When the Bible condemns ‘homosexuality,’ surely it’s not speaking about committed, loving partnerships.”
* “Jesus was about inclusion and acceptance and love. He even criticized people who wanted to place heavy burdens on people’s shoulders. Jesus’ ethic of love seems to *support* and *encourage*, not reject, gay relationships.”
* “Even if I agreed that the traditional Christian view (i.e., no gay sex) is right, I still don’t think I’d be welcome in church. Why are Christians so focused on marriage and family, to the detriment of single people? Are single people (i.e., those trying to be sexually abstinent, out of obedience to Scriptural commands) really wanted in churches?”

Is there “good news” for gay Christians?

* Scripture and sexuality: “Creation and covenant”
  + New creation *restores* and *remakes*, rather than rejects and replaces, the original creation (Matthew 19:3-6; Ephesians 5:21-33).
* An eschatological realism
  + Living in between the first and second comings of Christ.
  + Romans 8:18-25 and the redemption of the body.
  + “[O]ur speculations on the cause of the abnormality are not what matters and we must be content with ignorance. The disciples were not told why (in terms of efficient cause) the man was born blind (Jn. IX 1-3): only the final cause, that the works of God [should] be made manifest in him. This suggests that in homosexuality, as in every other tribulation, those works can be made manifest: i.e. that every disability conceals a vocation, if only we can find it, [which] will ‘turn the necessity to glorious gain’” (C. S. Lewis, as quoted in *A Severe Mercy*).
* An honored place for celibacy
* “Spiritual friendship”
  + Mark 10:23-31—the gospel gives us a new family, new spiritual siblings. Celibate people, too, may belong to this new family. We can love and be loved.

Recommended resources:

Colón, Christine A. and Bonnie E. Field. 2009. *Singled Out: Why Celibacy Must be Reinvented in Today’s Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos.

Hays, Richard B. 1996. “Homosexuality.” In *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. San Francisco: HarperCollins. Pp. 379-406.

O’Donovan, Oliver. 2008. *Church in Crisis: The Gay Controversy and the Anglican Communion*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Roberts, Christopher C. 2008. *Creation and Covenant: The Significance of Sexual Difference in the Moral Theology of Marriage*. London: Continuum.

Tushnet, Eve. 2014. *Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria.

Yarhouse, Mark A. 2010. *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*. Minneapolis: Bethany House.