

“But doesn’t the Bible say...?”

The Bible has been used to justify many types of oppression – sexism, racism, nationalism, heterosexism, etc. Sacred texts can be used to inspire great acts of peace and justice (think Martin Luther King, Jr.) and heinous acts of hatred and violence (think Fred Phelps & “God Hates Fags”).

While people often use 7 or so verses to condemn LGBTQ people, they usually forget a few things in the process... Like,

- how similar scriptures—just as “clear” in their *literal* meaning—can be used to justify slavery and the subordination of women;
- and that no one actually reads the Bible *literally*...no one;
- and that Jesus said you could recognize Christians by the fruit that they bear (Matt. 7:16).

So, if your reading of the Bible inspires “fruits” of hatred and violence and oppression...

Well, you’re probably reading it wrong.

Are there churches where I can belong as an LGBTQ person?

Yes! There are many churches all over the country that not only welcome and affirm LGBTQ people, but benefit from the many gifts of LGBTQ lay leaders and ordained ministers, and celebrate queer perspectives on Christian faith.

For a list of welcoming and affirming Baptist congregations, see www.awab.org

For more information on questions about sexual orientation, gender identity and Christian faith, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Resource for Congregations on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* can be purchased at:

<http://www.bpfna.org/rdwt-electronic>

For an affirming church in your area, visit:

Queer & Faithful?

Questions People Ask about LGBTQ People and Christian Faith



"But isn't it unnatural?"

When the old "Bible-says-it's-a-sin" line falters, some have resorted to claiming that LGBTQ people are "pathological" or "disordered" and in need of a "cure." It's an old trick that has been used on women, slaves, people from other cultures, etc. It uses the language of science and psychology to claim that a different way of being in the world is evidence of "sickness" and that we just so happen to have the "cure" to fix you.

But differences of sexual orientation and gender identity are not "sins" from which to repent or "sicknesses" to be cured. They are, instead, important markers of human difference that serve as living witnesses to the wide diversity and deep beauty of God's creation. They are cause for wonder and *celebration* (not *cure*)!



"May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace...And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done."

- A Franciscan Blessing

Many LGBTQ people have worked diligently for peace and justice, resisting the practices of oppression and violence brought against them in church and society. They have lived out exemplarily lives of faith amid churches that told them it could not be done—that they were "sinful" and must repent or "sick" and must be cured.

A growing number of churches have come to places of welcome and affirmation for LGBTQ people, repenting of a Christian history of anti-LGBTQ injustice and violence and embracing queer-and-faithful people as vital witnesses to the beauty of God's creation and prophets of peace and justice from which we *all* can learn a great deal about what it means to be Christian.

While many LGBTQ people justifiably choose never to darken the doors of a church again, many others find their faith an essential part of their identity and seek out a community of faith that will not just tolerate them, but *celebrate their lives*.

So what can you do?

1. **If you're an LGBTQ person** looking for a community of faith that celebrates your life in its entirety, talk with the person who handed you this flyer, consult the website on the back, and connect with one of the growing number of welcoming and affirming congregations near you.
2. **If you're a straight person** desiring to be faithful in the work of justice for LGBTQ people, start conversations in your church using good resources (like the one cited on the back of this flyer) to facilitate healthy dialogue on the intersections of sexual orientation, gender identity and Christian faith.
3. **If you're in a church that is seeking to become welcoming and affirming of LGBTQ people**, consult the website on the back of this flyer for resources and a contact person who can help guide your congregation through the process.

