



Module Outline for Course Participants

Sexuality and Christianity

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This module was created by Terry Laidler and Bill O'Loughlin, and adapted by the Advancing Sexuality Studies short course team at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

Abstract

The purpose of this module is to identify key themes that inform Christian thought, belief and practice about sexuality. This module provides participants with the opportunity to critique the application of these elements and to consider other factors that influence the way in which Christian churches are engaging with contemporary issues that centre upon sexuality. The module also offers the opportunity for considering ways to engage positively with Christian communities on contemporary sexuality issues.

Module aims:

- To provide an account of Christian approaches to sexuality, through examination of four key themes
- To examine a range of Christian responses to contemporary sexuality issues
- To encourage students to challenge taken-for-granted interpretations of sexuality within Christianity

Participants will:

- Be able to identify four key historical and philosophical themes that underpin Christian understandings of sexuality
- Develop a critical understanding of the application of Christian beliefs and practices on sexuality in the contemporary world
- Consider strategies for engaging positively with Christian communities on issues of sexuality

Required pre-reading

The Introduction and Chapter One of *Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Guide to the Debate*. London, Church House Publishing, in Resources folder. Also available at: <http://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk/archives/000325.html>

2nd Anglican Encounter in the South (1997) *The Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality*. Global South Anglican. In Resources folder. Also available at:

http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the_kuala_lumpur_statement_on_human_sexuality_2nd_encounter_in_the_south_10/

Optional pre-reading

Spong, J.S. (2004) *Homophobia—No Compromise Possible*. In Resources folder.

Also available at:

http://www.johnshelbyspong.com/bishopspogon_homosexuality.aspx

Overview

Session 1. Christian approaches to sexuality: four key themes

This session begins with a group exercise encouraging the participants to identify their preconceptions and understandings of Christian approaches to sexuality. The exercise is followed by a lecture that introduces four key themes informing Christian approaches to sexuality and places them in historical, textual and conceptual perspective.

Session 2. The key themes in action

Using the themes identified in Session 1 as a basis, this session explores Christian approaches to major contemporary sexuality issues.

Session 3. Scope to engage?

This session provides participants with the opportunity to share and learn from their own experiences of engagement with Christianity.

Conclusion

The conclusion provides the opportunity for participants to reflect upon that which they have learned from the module and a brief summary of the points covered.

Further reading

(includes lecture bibliography)

- Akinola, Archbishop P.J. (2009) *Position of the Church of Nigeria on a Bill for an Act to prohibit marriage between persons of the same gender*. Available at:
<http://thinkinganglicans.org.uk/uploads/CoNposition.pdf> (Viewed March 23, 2010.)
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http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20081222_curia-romana_it.html (Viewed March 23, 2010.)
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- Chadwick, H. (1967; revised 1993) *The Penguin History of the Church, Vol 1: The Early Church*. Harmondsworth, Penguin
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- Johnson, W. S. (2007) *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law, and Politics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Kaoma, K. (2009) *Globalizing the Culture Wars: US Conservatives, African Churches and Homophobia*. Somerville, MA, Political Research Associates.
- Neill, S (1964; revised 1990) *The Penguin History of the Church, Vol 6: A History of Christian Missions*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

- Palmer, T. and Haffner, Rev. D.W. (2007) *A Time To Seek: Study Guide On Sexual And Gender Diversity*. Westport, CT, Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing.
- Robinson G.J. (2008) *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*. Melbourne, John Garratt Publishing.
- Rogers, J. (2009) *Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*. Louiseville, Westminster Knox Press.
- Smith, D.J. (2004) Youth, sin and sex in Nigeria: Christianity and HIV/AIDS-related beliefs and behaviour among rural-urban migrants, in *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 6(5), 425-437.
- Southern, R.W. (1990) *The Penguin History of the Church, Vol 2: Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Spong, J.S. (2004) *Homophobia—No Compromise Possible*. Available at: http://www.johnshelbyspong.com/bishopspogon_homosexuality.aspx (Viewed March 23, 2010.)
- Ssempe, Pastor M. (2007) *Sermon: HIV/AIDS; What Can The Church Do About It?* Calvary Church, Lancaster, PA. Available at: <http://calvarychurch.org/219861.ihtml> (Viewed March 23, 2010.)
- Stuart, E. (1999) Sexuality: the view from the font (the body and the Ecclesial self), in *Theology and Sexuality*, 6(11), 9-20.
- Vidler, A.R. (1961; revised 1990) *The Penguin History of the Church, Vol 5: The Church in an Age of Revolution*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Williams, Archbishop R. (1994) Is there a Christian sexual ethic? In *Open to Judgement: Sermons and Addresses*. Darton, Longman and Todd, 161-7.

Relevant websites

Friends of Unity on the Web (<http://fou.uniting.com.au/texts.html>)

Gay Christian 101 (www.GayChristian101.com)

Religious Institute: Faithful Voices on Sexuality and Religion

(<http://www.religiousinstitute.org/>)

Whosoever: an online magazine for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender *Christians*

(<http://whosoever.org/index.shtml>)