Building Bridges and **Queer Networks** (see Wikipedia articles on each)

1 **Judaism** (orthodox, conservative and reformed); [www.glbtjews.org](http://www.glbtjews.org)

1.1 The Hebrew Bible (HB) never condemns nor even refers to female same-sex acts.

1.2 Its three references to male-male sex refers only to unprotected anal sex acts that are abusive (Gen 19, Sodom,) and/or idolatrous (Lev 18:22; 20:13).

1.3 The HB uniquely presents a male-imaged God with no female consort who rather prefers and chooses handsome young male leaders (Saul, David; see Ted Jennings 2005:37-66).

1.4 Centuries earlier than the Greeks, the HB recorded memorable stories of loving, same-sex couples (Ruth and Naomi; David and Jonathan; cf. Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes 7:28).

1.5 The HB exhibits great diversity in treating other sexual minorities: see eunuchs, Deut 23:1 → Isaiah 56:3-8; widows in levirate relations, Deut, 25:5-10; Gen 38; Ruth; divorced persons, Deut 24:1-4; Ezra 9-10; Neh 13; polygynous marriages and incestuous marriages, Gen 12-38.

1.6 The ordination of women rabbis (since 1935/72/74/85) encourages hope for other significant changes.

2 **Orthodoxy** (Eastern, Greek, Russian, etc.); [OrthoGays](http://www.Orthogays.com);

2.1 Their only theological basis, the ecumenical creeds* treat only Christological and trinitarian matters: Thus they provide no basis for condemning sexual minorities (see also Apostles’, 2d-4th century).

* Note. Nicene, 325; Constantinopolitan, 381; Ephesus, 431; Chalcedon, 451; Constantinopolitan, 553, Constantinopolitan, 680-81. The “filioque” (“and the Son”) clause, gradually inserted into the Nicene creed in Western use (Catholic and Protestant), eventually resulted (1054) in the separation of Orthodoxy from Roman Catholicism, which cited as Biblical support Jn 16:13-15; 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; Gal 46; Rom 8:9; Phil 1:19.

3 **Roman Catholicism** [www.dignitycanada.org](http://www.dignitycanada.org); [www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)

3.1 Priests and nuns are virtually all unmarried; hence almost all leaders are sexual minorities; Approximately 70% of parish priests are homosexual and in the orders often more.

3.2 Same-sex marriage rituals were performed before heterosexual marriages (John Boswell 1994)

3.3 “Sodomy” was never named or condemned before Peter Damian, a medieval monk (1007-72) invented the term (Mark Jordan 1997).

3.4 Both homophobia and anti-judaism developed only in the late Middle Ages, culminating in the Nazi Holocaust, killing some 6 million Jews and thousands of homosexuals + other groups (Boswell, 1980).

4 **Lutheran** [Google: Lutherans Concerned:](http://www.lutheransconcerned.org)

4.1 Luther’s emphasis on “justification by faith alone” established a barrier against erecting an additional requirement of heterosexual behavior (“works”) for salvation/baptism.

4.2 Luther’s abandonment of his monastic vows and marriage to a nun established a fundamental precedent for questioning and challenging traditional sex teachings and practices.

4.3 Lutheran and Calvinist opposition to Roman Catholic imposition of sexual abstinence on all clergy established a barrier to imposing a celibacy requirements on unmarried, divorced, or widowed adults (such impositions commonly result in increased sexual abuse of minors, etc.)

5 **Baptist/Anabaptist** (1525, Switzerland; [www.rainbowbaptists.org](http://www.rainbowbaptists.org);

5.1 Faith the only prerequisite for baptism/salvation; baptism only by immersion after professing faith.

5.2 Liberation of church from state control and vice-versa (“separation of church and state”)

5.3 Freedom of religion, liberty of conscience for guidance in controversial behavior decisions.

5.4 Thomas Müntzer (c1488/90-1525), Radical Reformer and leader in the Peasants’ War (1524-25): Revindicated in 19th century as forerunner of socialist and communist thinkers, and in late 20th century as pioneer of liberation theologies; like Luther, a priest who married a former nun.

6 **Presbyterian** (Scotland/UK/USA)-Reformed (Europe), John Calvin (French); John Knox (Scot);


7.1 Calvin’s opposition to hierarchical ecclesiology (making bishop = presbyter/elder) encouraged challenges to traditional prejudices (flat-earth cosmology, monarchy, slavery, sexism, divorce).

7.2 Scientific exegesis of biblical texts led to countless challenges to heterosexist interpretations.

7.3 Acceptance of women clergy and divorced pastors undermined opposition to gay ordination.

7.1 By 1526 King Henry VIII (1491-1547) tired of his wife, Catherine of Aragon, felt restricted by the Spanish alliance which she represented and worried about the lack of a male heir. From 1527, his love for Anne Boleyn spurred his quest to have his marriage to Catherine annulled. Henry used his divorce from Catherine as motive for liberating England from obedience to the Pope and the Parliament of 1532-36 established him as Supreme Head of the Church in England: “Anne Boleyn’s enemies convinced Henry of her (almost certainly imaginary) adultery; after her execution (1536), his marriage to Jane Seymour at last provided him with a son, Edward, but she died as a result (1537). Henry nevertheless pursued matrimonial adventures: an embarrassing mismatch with Anne of Cleves (1540) was disentangled so that Henry could marry Catherine Howard, the marriage ending in her undoubted adultery and execution (1542). Only with the Evangelical Catherine Parr (1543 did Henry find contented partnership (Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity, 2010:506-7). The independence of the Church of England from Rome thus resulted from the tortuous life of a king whose multiple divorces and remarriages historically epitomized the experience and struggles of sexual minorities. However, “The original formulation of Anglican principles is to be sought in the reign of Elizabeth I rather than that of Henry VIII or Edward VI, for it was under her that a via media between the opposing factions of Rome and Geneva (later called the ‘Elizabethan Settlement’) became a political necessity and Anglicanism as a doctrinal system took shape” (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church 1997:65).

7.2 The 39 Articles, the principle distinctive theological basis of Anglican and Episcopal churches, contain no reference to sexual minorities.

7.3 In common with the continental reformers the English Reformation abolished the Religious Life with its monks, nuns and friars and the obligatory celibacy rule for the secular clergy. On the other hand the vision of sex and marriage was not very positive as the second reason given in the service for the Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer to explain why God created marriage is “for a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body.”

7.4 King James I (1566-1625), praised in the translators’ preface to the 1611 Bible he sponsored, was notoriously fond of handsome young men, one of whom, George Villiers the Duke of Buckingham, was a particular favorite. Earlier, in Sept 1579, when he was only 13, James had entered into his first recorded male romance, with his French cousin Esmé Stuart, whom the king showered with titles and preferment.

8 Methodist. Affirmation: www.umaffirm.org

8.1 After founder John Wesley’s death (1791) the Methodist renewal movement within Anglicanism separated from its parent body, establishing as its doctrinal basis 25 of the Anglican 39 Articles (omitting articles on predestination and loyalty to the British monarchy), and thus similarly lacks any basis for condemning sexual minorities.

8.2 Wesley discouraged marriage; Methodism has ever excelled in emphasizing solidarity with the poor, the weak and oppressed, and thus increasingly including sexual minorities.

9 Pentecostalism / Charismatic Movement (1901), developing from Methodist/Wesleyan churches


9.1 Experience (Spirit-baptism) rather than exegesis of proof texts as the basic source of theology

9.2 Pentecostal pioneer Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929), was arrested in 1907 in San Antonio, Texas, for sexual misconduct (sodomy) but charges later were dropped for lack of witnesses (google articles).

9.3 Some Pentecostals have now begun to teach that more important than tongues, the Spirit inspires liberating justice in solidarity praxis with the poor and all the oppressed and recognize that sexual minorities are not sick/sinful but historic victims of oppression and violence (MCC founder Troy Perry was originally a clérigo pentecostal with the Church of God of Prophecy; then Assemblies of God).

10 Mormons / Latter-day Saints, USA, 1830 (www.lds.org; www.affirmation.org). Deriving from Joseph Smith (1805-44) and the Book of Mormon: In 1822 the angel Moroni revealed to Smith where God’s words written on gold tablets were to be found and Smith published their translation in 1830, telling how two lost tribes of Israel came to America but only Mormon and his son Moroni survived a conflict. Mormon wrote the text on the tablets and Moroni buried them near Palmyra, NY in 438 AD/CE. The texts also tell of a post-resurrection appearance of Christ in America to establish religious order and truth. “The authenticity of the text has been called into question because of its grammatical errors, its reminiscences of the Authorized Version
[King James Bible], its resemblance to an unpublished novel, etc. but for Mormons its authenticity is not in doubt” (ODWR 1997:655). Smith was arrested in Carthage, Illinois, and killed by a mob. Most Mormons then followed Brigham Young (1801-77) to the Salt Lake area, Utah, where Zion in the wilderness was constructed

10.1 Originally suffered persecution and violence as sexual minorities for practicing polygamy (1843-90).

10.2 Change is possible: polygamy was abandoned (1890) and their ban on black male priesthood (1978).

11 Seventh Day Adventists, USA, 1844/61 (www.sdakinship.org)
11.1 William Miller (1781-1849) and Ellen G. White (d. 1915) concluded that Christians, like Jews, should obey the 4th Commandment and worship God on Saturday; that other denominations feel free even to set aside even one of the 10 Commandments and worship on Sunday indicates the incoherence of appeals to Lev 18:22 and 20:13 as a basis for Christian condemnation of male-male anal sex.

11.2 Gay Adventist scholar James E. Miller (1995) revindicated the interpretation of early church fathers (until John Chrysostom, ca. 400) that Rom 1:26 does not condemn lesbians but refers to women avoiding procreation by heterosexual acts, such as anal sex. Since every other biblical reference to same-sex acts explicitly refer to males, no biblical text may be cited as “condemning homosexuality”; www.OtherSheep.org, Raw Material: Studies in Biblical Sexuality, (2006/10). New Address: www.fundotrasovejas.org.ar (MULTILINGUE)

12.1 Founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910); emphasizes healing through prayer alone.

12.2 Controversy over repeated failed attempts to “heal homosexuals” began in 1967 and continues.

12.3 “Christian Science shares with Eastern religions a belief that ignorance is at the root of human  unease—and thus of disease: ‘All reality is in God and his creation, harmonious and eternal. That which he creates is good and he makes all that is made. Therefore the only reality of sin, sickness or death is the awful fact that unrealties seem real in human, erring belief, until God strips off their disguise….Both sin and sickness are error, and Truth is their remedy’” (Mary Baker Eddy, cited in The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions,” John Bowker, ed. NY/Oxford: Oxford University, 1997:218.

13 Jehovah’s Witnesses, USA, 1881 Founded in the 1870’s in western Pennsylvania by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), emphasizing a literal interpretation of the Bible and the imminent coming of God’s kingdom. JWs reject the Trinitarian theology of the ecumenical creeds: Jesus is not God but the son of God, the first created being. Many predictions about the coming of the end have been made and revised in the history of the group. The battle of Armageddon to inaugurate God’s kingdom was predicted for 1914 but is now interpreted as the establishment of the kingdom.

13.1 Homosexuals and JW’s both imprisoned and killed in Nazi Holocaust (wearing pink/purple triangles) and both share a unique history of discrimination, persecution, and suffering violence.


14 Quakers / the “Religious Society of Friends; Google: Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns.  The Quaker movement arose in Britain in the mid-17th century under the leadership of George Fox (1624-91). They emphasized the immediacy of Christ’s teaching within each person and so held that ordained ministers and consecrated buildings were irrelevant. In their meetings Friends wait silently upon God without pre-arranged order of worship and believe that God may use anyone present, man or woman, to minister. Their refusal to take oaths or enter military service soon resulted in conflict with civil authorities. Their jail experience made them aware of the urgent need for prison reform. In 1682 William Penn founded Pennsylvania as a “Holy Experiment” based on Quaker principles. Over the centuries, many Quakers have been active in social reform, including the abolitionist movement and women's rights.

Towards a Quaker View of Sex (1964) concluded prophetically: “One should no more deplore ‘ homosexuality’ than left-handedness” (p. 26), hence neither a sickness nor a sin, but a normal human variation, which within a few years came to be the scientific consensus (see Chandler Burr → Judges).
15 “Hinduism” (Indian religion/s). “Hindu views of homosexuality and in general LGBT…issues, are diverse and different Hindu groups have distinct views. Homosexuality is regarded as one of the possible expressions of human desire. Although some Hindu dharmic texts contain injunctions against homosexuality, a number of Hindu mythic stories have portrayed homosexual experience as natural and joyful. There are several Hindu temples which have carvings that depict both men and women indulging in homosexual sex. Same-sex relations and gender variance have been represented within Hinduism from Vedic times through to the present day, in rituals, law books, religious or so-called mythical narratives, commentaries, paintings and sculpture. The extent to which these representations embrace or reject homosexuality has been disputed within the religion as well as outside of it” (Wikipedia article “LGBT topics and Hinduism,” 30/5/2013). In 2009, subsequent to the decision of the Delhi High Court to legalize homosexuality in India, the United Kingdom Hindu Council issued a statement that ‘Hinduism does not condemn homosexuality,’

16 Buddhism. “Buddha (Enlightened person)” (Gotema), born, Nepal, India, 6th-5th centuries BCE.

Buddhism “has embraced the entire gamut of attitudes toward sexuality….Buddhism repudiated conventional societal bonds and sensual enjoyment as impediments to the achieve-ments of spiritual goals….True to the ascetic milieu from which it sprang, belief in the spiritual value of renun-ci-ation is central to Buddhist doctrine, and the normative ideal for the Buddhist aspirant is the celibate monk and nun. Desire, especially sexual desire…is along with hatred and ignorance, one of the three main moral ‘poi-sons’ which are to be eliminated by Buddhist practice, and…sexuality…always regarded as posing the most dangerous threat to the world-renunciation…is considered the foundation for all progress toward the final ob-jective of nirvana, spiritual enlightenment” (M.J. Sweet, H&R 75-79). The contrast with the positive emphasis on physical, even sexual pleasure in some Bibli-cal books (Song of Songs; Ecclesiastes 9:7-9; 1 Cor 7:3-5) is notable. On the other hand, certain NT texts commonly are interpreted as exalting sexual absten-tion (see Jesus: Mat 19:12 on eunuchs; Mk 12:25 on angels; Mat 6:16-18 on fasting; Paul on avoiding marriage in 1 Cor 7:7-40). However, Jesus and Paul reco-mend avoiding marriage and procreation, but not necessarily all sexual intimacy (see Jesus and his Beloved Disciple 3x in physical intimacy; the angels in Genesis 6:1-4 procreating with women). Thomas Merton was interested in what each said of the depth of human experience (Zen)

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17 Islam/Muhammad (c 570-632 CE)/. The Qur’an, like the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, contains no reference to homosexuality (since the term and our scientific concept of sexual orientation origi-nated only in Austria in the 19th century AD). In the Qur’an seven texts refer to the biblical story of Sodom (Genesis 19), using the term, the “Sons of Lot” (7:80-84; 11:77-83; 21:74; 22:43; 26:165-75; 27:56-59; 29:27-33). However, no verse in the Qur’an unambiguously condemns homosexuals, and some even suggest they can be tolerated in Muslim communities (see Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflec-tion on Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Muslims, Oxford: One World, 2010). The seven Qur’an texts referring to the “Sons of Lot” (like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13) appear to refer only to male-male anal intercourse when practiced by married heterosexuals who have left their wives (or else the texts assume that all males are by nature originally heterosexual and have married; see Jim Wafer, “Muhammad and Male Homosexual-ity,” Isl-mic Homosexu-ilities, Stephen Murray and Will Roscos, eds.; New York: New York University, citations, 1997: 88-89). Although Muhammad accepted polygamy and eventually had 11 wives and two concubines, the Qur’an and subsequent Hadiths [authoritative traditions] clearly indicate his sexual attraction to males: “In the Qur’an, Paradise is furnished…with immortal youths who serve as cupbearers to the faithful….There is also the hadith…according to which the Prophet said, ‘I have seen my Lord in a form of the greatest beauty, as a youth with abundant hair, seated on the throne of grace, clad in a garment of gold, on his hair a golden crown, on his feet sandals’…. 
There are also a number of *hadith* in which the Prophet warns his followers against gazing at youths precisely because they are so attractive…”’Do not gaze at beardless youths, for they have eyes more tempting than the *hùris* [the female attendants in paradise]…”’ (cited, Jim Wafer 1997:90). Thus As’ad AbuKhalil even argues in a controversial article (1993) that historically there was no homophobia in the Islamic world until it was adopted by the Middle East from the Western power in the age of imperialism (cited by Elyse Semerdjian, “Islam,” *Homosexuality and Religion: An Encyclopedia*; Jeffrey S. Siker, ed. London: Greenwood Press, 2007:132; cf. the similar development in Hinduism in India under British imperialism). However, for a comparison of violence in Judaism (the command to kill the Canaanites), in Christianity (the Crusades) and Jihad in Islam (beginning with Muhammad’s engagement in more than 60 military campaigns), see Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster: Making Sense of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 198-206; cf. Byrne Fone, *Homophobia: A History* (New York: Metropolitan/Henry Holt).

**CONCLUSIONS.** Scholars often assert that religion/s oppose sexual diversity, especially homosexuality. However, the above data from 17 Christian denominations and major world religions indicates, to the contrary:

1. The *Jewish* God (unlike the gods of ancient alternative faiths), commonly was portrayed as having no feminine consort/s but rather as unmarried and with a preference for sexually attractive male kings like Saul and David.

2. *Christian orthodox* faiths (Eastern, Greek, Russian, etc.) acknowledge only the ecumenical creeds of the first six centuries, which contained no teaching against sexual minorities.

3. Similarly, *Catholicism*, which only with Peter Damian (1007-72) began to condemn “Sodomy” (male-male anal sex).

4. With the *Reformation*, *Lutherans and Presbyterians* continued the limited medieval prohibition of “sodomy” but insisted on the freedom of clergy to marry.

5. The *(Ana)Baptist* assemblies emphasized personal faith and avoided legalisms. Thomas Mün(t)zer (ca. 1488/90-1525), like Luther, married a former nun.

6. The *Anglican/Episcopal and Methodist* churches with 39 and 25 Articles of Religion, respectively, provided no basis for condemning sexual diversity (but rather offers famous examples of divorced religious leaders).

7. *Pentecostal* churches emphasized positive spiritual gifts, beginning with a pioneer who was arrested for committing “sodomy”. Openly gay pentecostal clergy Troy Perry founded the *Metropolitan Community Churches*, which for many years was the largest gay/friendly organization in the world.

8. *Mormons/Latterday Saints* originally were persecuted for accepting polygamy (1843-90, an illegal practice reluctantly abandoned in 1890).

9. *Seventh Day Adventists* called upon churches to obey the 4th of the Jewish 10 Commandments and James Miller, gay Adventist scholar, resurrected the early patristic teaching that Romans 1:26 does not prohibit lesbian sex but heterosexual anal sex to avoid procreation (thus leaving the Bible with no condemnation of lesbian sex).

10. In 1964 British *Quakers* concluded profetically: “One should no more deplore ‘homosexuality’ than left-handedness,” which soon became the international consensus among scientists.

11. *Both Jehovah’s Witnesses* and homosexuals (wearing pink triangles) were imprisoned and assassinated in the Nazi Holocaust and both share a unique history of suffering discrimination, persecution and violence.

12. “When applying Buddhist philosophy to the question of homosexuality, western *Buddhists* often emphasize the importance the Buddha placed on tolerance, compassion and seeking answers within one’s self…As a result, western Buddhism is often relatively gay-friendly, especially since the 1990’s….LGBT people…have been ordained as Buddhist monastics and clergy” (Wikipedia). Thomas Merton was interested in what each said of the depth of human experience (Zen).

13. *Islam/Muhammad (c 570-632 CE)*. The Qur’an, like the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, contains no reference to homosexuals/homosexuality….In the Qur’an seven texts refer to the biblical story of Sodom (Gen 19), using the term, the “Sons of Lot” (7:80-84; 11:77-83; 21:74; 22:43; 26:165-75; 27:56-59; 29:27-33). However, no verse in the Qur’an unambiguously condemns homosexuals, and some even suggest they can be tolerated in Muslim communities. The seven Qur’an texts referring to the “Sons of Lot” (married)...refer only to male-male anal intercourse in attempted gang rape of two unwanted visitors who are God’s messengers.

In their origins religions and denominations often are more creative and tolerant but later attract members reflecting the cultural patriarchy and heteronormativity encouraging procreation and common family values.