

POSITION STATEMENT



HOMOSEXUALITY

CMDA affirms that all human beings are created in the image of, and beloved by, God. All human beings are our neighbors and are to be loved by us as we love ourselves. As such, every human being possesses intrinsic dignity and is worthy of equal respect and concern from healthcare professionals.

CMDA affirms the biblical teaching that the appropriate context for sexual relations is within marriage, defined as a consensual, exclusive and lifelong commitment between one man and one woman. This teaching exists for the benefit of individuals, of families, and of all society. This teaching is about more than just what one does with one's own body because sexuality has moral and spiritual dimensions in addition to the physical dimensions.

CMDA also recognizes that many individuals struggle with or accept same-sex attraction and that there are voices in our culture that celebrate this and seek to make it conventional and to force participation in educational programs promoting it. Thus, Christian healthcare professionals find themselves in the position where some sexual choices and behaviors that have broad social approval are contrary to an orthodox Christian worldview. Christianity teaches human equality, not behavioral equality.

CMDA affirms the obligation of Christian healthcare professionals caring for patients who identify as gay or lesbian to do so with sensitivity and compassion, even when we cannot validate their choices. CMDA views homosexuality within the following frameworks:

A. Biblical

1. All people are loved by God (John 3:16-17).
2. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt 22:39).
3. God, in his holiness and wisdom, is the creator of the world and the definer of moral reality. Christians are called to obey God and his commandments. When we engage in any sexual sin, we are failing to love God with our whole heart and soul and mind and strength. When we condone another person's embrace of sexual sin, we are not truly loving our neighbor (1 Cor 6:18-20).
4. Everyone struggles with moral failure and falls short of God's standards (Rom 12) and, therefore, needs the forgiveness that God provides through Christ alone (John 3:36; Rom 3:22-24; Col 1:15-21; 1 Tim 2:5-6).
5. The moral authority of the Bible in matters of sexuality rests in God, who inspired and reliably guided its human authors (Josh 1:8; Matt 5:18, 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:21). The moral teachings of the Scriptures are trustworthy (Psa 119:86; John 17:17b), beneficial (Deu 30:19; Psa 119:105, 133; Luke 11:28), and true for all times (Psa 119:89; Isa 40:8; Heb 13:8).

6. We live in a fallen world (Gen 3), and we are all fallen creatures with a sinful nature (Rom 3:9-12). The fall is expressed in nature and in humanity in many ways, including sexuality. Same-sex attraction is but one example of our fallenness, as are marital breakdown and fornication (Rom 1:24-32; Eph 5:3).
7. To experience temptation alone is not to sin. Jesus was tempted yet did not sin (Matt 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13). We are commanded to pray for relief from and to flee temptation (Matt 6:13, 1 Cor 6:18, 1 Thess 4:3, James 1:13-15). Scripture clearly teaches that yielding to the temptation to engage in homosexual behavior, or even to indulge in homosexual fantasy, is sinful (Matt 5:28).
8. A lifestyle that is directed by sexual desires or personal sexual fulfillment misses the divinely ordained purpose of sex, which is for procreation, mutual marital enjoyment, and for facilitating unity in the lifelong commitment of marriage between one man and one woman. This unity fosters a secure and nurturing environment for children, reflects the unity that exists between Christ and the church (Exod 20:1-18; Lev 20:10-21; Rom 1; Eph 5:23-33), and is the human image of God (Gen. 1:26-28).
9. The Scriptures promise God's blessing on lifelong heterosexual union in marriage, and they prescribe chastity in all other circumstances.
10. The Scriptures consistently forbid the practice of homosexuality, calling it sin (Lev 18:22, 20:13; 1 Kings 14:24; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9; Jude 1:7). Same-sex attraction cannot be consummated within God's design for human sexuality and procreation (Gen 2:24; Mark 10:6-8; Eph 5:1-17). The Scriptures affirm, however, the value of same-sex friendships that are not erotic in nature.
11. It is possible by God's grace for those with same-sex attraction to live a chaste life (Psa 51:10, 119:9-10; Rom 6:11-14, 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:18, 10:13; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thes 4:3-5, 5:23-24; Gal 2:20, 5:16, 22-25; Col 3:5).
12. Homosexual behavior is not a victimless activity even among consenting adults. Modeling homosexual behavior to young children contributes to normalizing same-sex attraction, that may also entice them to imitate that behavior, and is a grievous sin (Mark 9:42).

B. Social

1. God has designed us for, and with a desire for, intimacy. Most everyone has a sex drive and is responsible for managing it. This is true regardless of one's type of sexual attractions or desires. Intimacy is distorted by sin. Ultimate intimacy is to be found in a relationship with God.
2. In our current culture, which is saturated with sexual references, there is a prevailing view that personal fulfillment is to be found through abolishing traditional sexual boundaries and following desires and passions that cross those boundaries. One outcome of this trend is a view that same-sex relationships should be regarded as equivalent to opposite-sex relationships.¹ In our current culture there is also a view that to embrace diversity means to enforce acceptance and affirmation of same-sex relationships, while suppressing other viewpoints.²
3. CMDA believes that, in contrast to the current culture, living out one's biological sexuality (as standardly defined by X and Y chromosomes and observed in genital anatomy) within God's design will result in a healthy and fulfilled life. CMDA

- recognizes that this traditionally affirmed view has become counter-cultural; however, CMDA affirms that God's design transcends culture.
4. CMDA recognizes that the causes of same-sex attraction are multifactorial and may include biological, developmental, psychosocial, environmental, and cultural factors that are not of the individual's choosing.³ However, deciding on a same-sex lifestyle and pursuing same-sex fantasies and encounters are voluntary and therefore involve moral responsibility.
 5. CMDA recognizes that, for individuals who struggle with same-sex attraction, choosing not to act on their same-sex erotic desires may be difficult. Similarly, many individuals who are sexually attracted to the opposite sex also struggle with erotic desires that are contrary to the teachings of Scripture.
 6. Endorsement of same-sex marriage harms the stability of society, the raising of children, the institution of marriage,⁴ the revelation of Christ's relationship to His Church, and the revelation of God through those who bear His image. If the only criterion for marriage were love, mutual consent, or commitment, then there would be no logical grounds to prohibit polygamy, polyamory, incestuous unions, adultery, or pedophilia.⁵⁻¹⁰
 7. Adoption into homosexual environments puts children at risk.^{10,11} Children need both primary male and female attachments in their social development and the modeling of a male-female relationship. Children should not be exposed to the promiscuity that the gay culture often promotes (nor to heterosexual promiscuity). Children raised by same-sex couples are at increased risk of later engaging in homosexual activity.^{12,13,14}

C. Medical

1. Among individuals who engage in homosexual acts, there is an increased incidence of drug¹⁵ or alcohol¹⁶ dependence, compulsive sexual behavior,¹⁷ anxiety,¹⁸ depression,¹⁹ and suicide.²⁰ These are harmful to the health of same-sex patients^{21,22} and are associated with increased medical costs to society.²³
2. Some sexual acts, common to, but not unique among, homosexuals, are physically harmful because they disregard normal human anatomy and function. These acts are associated with increased risks of tissue injuries, anal cancers, HPV-induced head and neck cancers, and transmission of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, parasitic infections, and bacterial infections due to exposure to, or ingestion of, fecal material.²⁴
3. Data demonstrate that life expectancy is significantly shortened in male homosexuals compared to their heterosexual peers.^{25,26}
4. Individuals who act on their same-sex attractions can change their behavior even when desire persists. There is valid evidence that many individuals who chose to abstain from homosexual acts have been able to continue to abstain.²⁷⁻³² Such change often will be difficult, and individuals seeking assistance to change their behavior need an empathetic, loving, and mutually consenting approach.

CMDA Recommendations for the Christian Community

1. A person struggling with same-sex attraction should evoke neither scorn nor enmity, but rather a Christian's loving concern, compassion, help, and understanding.

Christians must respond to the complex issues surrounding same-sex attraction with grace, civility, and love.

2. Christians should welcome inclusion of gay- and lesbian-identified individuals into friendship and community, affirming them as equal with all other human beings before God, yet without condoning sexual choices and behaviors that are contrary to Scriptural teaching.
3. The Christian community, beginning with the Christian family, must resist labeling and rejecting individuals who do not fit the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. At the same time, parents should guide their young children and adolescents in appropriate gender identity development. For children and adolescents who are experiencing gender identity confusion, the Christian community should provide appropriate role models and, if needed, counseling.
4. The Christian community, in its biblical calling to be salt and light to the world, has a key role to help society understand that traditional marriage is good and is a part of the natural order. CMDA believes that redefining marriage, so as to include same-sex relationships, for the aforementioned reasons, would have detrimental spiritual, emotional, cultural, and medical repercussions. Even if the legal definition of marriage within a society changes, the Christian's definition remains the same see A. Biblical, point #8 above).
5. The Christian community must condemn hatred and violence directed against homosexuals. Love for the person does not equate with support of the decision to engage in a gay or lesbian lifestyle.
6. The Christian community must encourage and strongly support those who wish to abandon homosexual behavior.
7. Chastity should be encouraged for those with same-sex attraction and for those not in a marriage between a man and a woman.
8. The Christian community should strenuously oppose pornography, which is a source of temptation to sexual sin of all types, including homosexual behavior (See CMDA Statement on Pornography).
9. The Christian community should oppose the adoption of children into homosexual households.
10. Sexual education for children should be determined by their parents. Curricula that promote or normalize sexual behaviors outside of God's design should be avoided.
11. The Christian community is one body with Christ as the head. As such, Christians should support those who suffer for upholding biblical values and truth regarding sexuality.
12. The Christian community is to be a refuge of love for all who are broken, including the sexually broken. We should not affirm their sin, or condemn them, but should shepherd them to Jesus, who alone can forgive, heal, restore, and redirect them to a godly, honorable, and virtuous way of life. God provides the remedy for all moral failure through faith in Jesus Christ and the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit.

CMDA Recommendations for Christian Healthcare Professionals

1. CMDA advocates competent and compassionate medical care of patients who identify as gay or lesbian. Such care requires our love, an open and trusting dialogue, and acceptance of the person without agreeing with the person's sexual ideology. When

- responding to a patient's psychological distress over sexual matters, Christian healthcare professionals should make a genuine effort to understand and respond to the patient's perspective.
2. CMDA believes that the appropriate medical response to patients who identify as gay or lesbian should be to affirm their value as human beings and their longing for meaning and worth in life, even when their lifestyle choices or sexual behaviors cannot be condoned.
 3. A patient's wishes regarding hospital visitation rights and surrogate medical decision-making by a committed same-sex partner should be respected.

CMDA Recommendations Regarding Nondiscrimination

1. Christian healthcare professionals, in particular, must care for their gay- and lesbian-identified patients in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner, consistent with the love Jesus has commanded us to show all people.
2. Christian healthcare professionals who hold to a biblical view of human sexuality and marriage should be tolerated in a diverse society and permitted to express their views in civil discourse free from exclusion, oppression, or discrimination. Healthcare professionals who hold the position that homosexual behaviors are harmful and inconsistent with the will of God should not be stigmatized or accused of being bigoted, phobic, unprofessional, or discriminatory because of this sincerely held belief. The label "homophobic" implies a prejudice against and overwhelming fear of homosexual persons; such prejudice does not apply to the vast majority of healthcare professionals, including Christian healthcare professionals. CMDA rejects the homophobic label as inaccurate and a prejudicial attempt to disparage individuals without a willingness to engage in respectful discussion or to seek mutual understanding. Healthcare professionals are not afraid of individuals practicing homosexual acts, but rather are concerned about the physical, psychological, and spiritual health risks inherent in homosexual behavior. Bigotry in any form from any party is unacceptable.
3. Healthcare professionals should not be prevented from providing support and counseling to patients or to parents of children who request assistance with healing from homosexual attraction and/or abstaining from homosexual behavior (change-allowing therapy).

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Approved by the House of Representatives

Passed with 45 approvals, 1 opposed, 1 abstention

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