Assignment #3 – Instructor Assigned Essay or Project

The Challenge of Homosexuality in Heterogenous American Culture and Politics

PHI 815-22: History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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**Instructor Assigned Essay or Project**

**Assignment #3 – Essay**

1. Write a 5-page essay that analyzes the following items:

a. Introduction of the Present Issue: Begin with a contemporary social issue that

has a (probably unappreciated) history of positive Judeo-Christian response to it.

b. Body Sections:

i. Biblical Worldview Perspective: Locate the issue in the progress of Biblical revelation and explain the foundations of a Judeo-Christian perspective. What is a biblical/theological position on this issue based on sound biblical interpretation?

ii. History of the Issue: Trace the development of the selected issue alongside the history of Christianity's social impact on it. Summarize the historical trend at different points in history with an eye to identifying significant causes of the social problem, identifiable processes at work, and enduring patterns that emerged. How did the problem/issue originate and develop? What were the causes of the social problem? What identifiable sociological or theological processes were at work? What enduring patterns emerged that recur?

iii. Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration: Present a specific example (e.g. key leader(s) or movement(s) of socially and intellectually active Christians) of religion and society integration. If known, discuss how God raised up the leader or movement.

iv. Applicable Principles: Distill the timeless principles of truth or leadership derived from the historical examples above. (Develop these based on the Body Sections #1-#3). Pose possible contemporary applications for the integration of religion and society in your field of influence.

c. Conclusion: End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis. Discuss what impact this research had on your sense of calling to change your world.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

**The Challenge of Homosexuality in Heterogenous American Culture and Politics**

**Introduction**

Over the past several decades, the American Public and politicians have grappled with how to deal with the issue of homosexuality in what amounts to a heterogenous culture of values, politics, and religion. From mainly a concern of religious values, families and religions have dealt with homosexuality from the perspective of ‘sin’ or ‘immorality’, while social institutions and government or policymakers have taken diverse approaches to homosexuality in ways that maintain the three prominent features of American political culture: equality, individual freedom (liberty) and due process for all (justice) (Volkomer, 2012). The United States Supreme Court has taken a legal-constitutional perspective embedded in the 14th Amendment’s due process and equal protection clauses, as well as the national government’s constitutional duty to secure the rights and freedom of all Americans. We have approached the issue of homosexuality in this predominantly heterogenous culture of values, politics, and religion as if it is a new issue or challenge on the public policy agenda. However, societies across the globe have long grappled with homosexuality and Judeo-Christian perspectives have prevailed on the disposition of attitudes regarding homosexuality across human societies over the past several centuries. It is important to understand how this issue has been addressed via Judeo-Christian perspectives over the past to better understand the value of religious consideration as it bears on resolution of this issue. Surprisingly, there has been a history of a positive Judeo-Christian response to the issue of homosexuality as a public policy issue in the past. That is, homosexuality was not treated with the focus or importance it is today and was mainly a private issue of individuals. The emergence of the church in political and social leadership and state roles in the Medieval Age in Europe changed this.

**Biblical Worldview Perspective**

Christianity has no doubt changed the world as a result of a strong worldview that is backed by intense conviction constituting faith (Schmidt, 2004). A worldview refers to a particular philosophy of life or way of conceiving life and the world. According to Alessiato (2022), “The word “worldview” comes from German philosophy and literally means an all‐inclusive “vision of the world” (p. 397). Worldview is derived from the German word “*Weltanschauung*” (Alessiato, 2022), and some consider the word to be inherently filled with spiritual overtones (Guess, 2020). Biblical Worldview is therefore a biblical view or Christian view of the world according to the Bible as the written and revealed words of God by which Christians and their institutions should abide. In the context of a biblical worldview, homosexuality is seen as a sin and as a moral failing of humankind (Hays, 2025). While Alessiato (2022) contends that the word ‘worldview’ has more generic cultural and geographic usage today, its use to describe religious view or perspective of the world has surged significantly in the United States over the past few decades as Christian institutions seek to better insert themselves into politics and public policy.

Prager (1993) notes that of all the challenges and issues we tackle today, none seems to bring the emotions and complexity that the issue of homosexuality brings to public debate with some arguing for biology and others arguing for choice and sin. However, among the diverse factors influencing attitudes and understanding regarding homosexuality, Cameron and Ross (1981) contend that “a Judeo-Christian bias is one of the more powerful wellsprings of discrimination against homosexuality” (p. 40). The Judeo-Christian perspective on this matter has re-emerged very powerfully once more and will certainly create even more debates on this issue.

According to Ligonier Ministries (2025), “Scripture teaches what is often called “progressive revelation.” Simply put, this means that God revealed Himself to His people over many centuries, periodically giving new information that built on but did not contradict or deny what came before” (para. 3). In the in the progress of Biblical revelation, homosexuality is seen as a continuing moral failing and a sin that separates man from God. Despite this, science and mundane views on the matter still prevail both in general life and legal and policy hemispheres. For example, through research and biological arguments, many assert that those who are homosexuals are born as such, while American legal jurisprudence and practice disavow religious consideration with key focus on the Constitution’s demand for equal protection (Fourteenth Amendment) and First Amendments rights and doctrine of “Separation of Church and State” and the Establishment Clause which prohibits the Congress from establishing a state religion or making religious laws (Epstein & Walker, 2020; Rossum & Tarr, 2003).

The biblical/theological position on the issue of homosexuality based on sound biblical interpretation is that homosexuality is a sin and an immoral behavior contrary to God’s natural and divine law and is itself the result of humankind’s sinful nature and desire for things unholy and unrighteous (DeYoung, 2015). Given this stance, homosexuality is regarded as an aberration.

**History of the Issue**

The history of Christianity’s social impact on how we have come to view homosexuality is quite extensive, and at the same time, questionable and complicated. Questionable because the Bible itself hardly mentions homosexuality, and that is why Boswell (2015) contends that “Not only does there appear to have been no general prejudice against gay people among early Christians; there does not seem to have been any reason for Christianity to adopt a hostile attitude toward homosexual behavior” (Hays, 2025, para. 2). DeYoung (2015) partially concurs with Boswell (2015) on this matter, by stating, among the “1,189 chapters in the Bible and the more than 30,000 verses, you’ll find only a dozen or so passages that deal explicitly with homosexuality” (para. 4). However, DeYoung (2015) does not agree that this amounts to delegitimizing what the Bible says about homosexuality since “The reason the Bible says comparatively little about homosexuality is because it was a comparatively uncontroversial sin among ancient Jews and Christians” (DeYoung, 2015, para. 6). At the same time, DeYoung (2015) notes that Boswell’s argument does tell us that homosexual behavior was not a major issue for early Christian writers, especially the writers of the New Testament. As to why these writers did not focus and become preoccupied with the issue, one can only speculate. Nevertheless, Hays (2025) agrees with Boswell that homosexuality even as a taboo seem to have existed in early Christian communities which set aside many other Jewish scruples such as dietary laws and the practice of circumcision. This would imply that homosexuality was not seen as an unsalvageable human moral issue or sin and hence, the positive response of early Christians was either to ignore or remain silent on this issue across many aspects of Judeo-Christian society. While this was the case during the period of the New Testament writings, and even early Middle Ages in Europe, this changed toward the end of this period as religious authorities and became more aggressive from a perspective of religious moral views and imposition of biblical and theological rules on life with homosexuality gaining more attention, especially during the High Middle Ages where reform movements led to development of specific laws towards homosexuality (Stopforth, 2024; Cheng, 2017; Lacopo, 2016). Important in the changing and increasingly harsh perspective on homosexuality were the development of new laws, municipal governments, and state. The Catholic Church was the major source of authority before this development and shaped views on sin and morality, which included sexual deviance and homosexuality as inclusive. It is this perspective that has seeped into modern views, which are predominantly biblical, whether in mainstream Christian religious sects or within Islam and other religious groups and have come to influence and inform the views of individuals, politicians and governments across the globe.

**Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration**

The issue of homosexuality was mainly addressed in early Judeo-Christian society by Mosaic Law via Leviticus and in Paul’s most important letter (Romans) as a form of rebellion (DeYoung, 2015). Moreover, the issue emerged in several stories and places of the Bible during the Old and New Testament. For example, in *1 Corinthians* and *1 Timothy* and is often cited as what led to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and hence the derogatory use of “Sodomy” and “Sodomites” to describe homosexuality and homosexuals throughout our modern history. What has made the issue of homosexuality so central in public policy and social debates is Judeo-Christian Biblical Worldview where the Bible has provided enough basis and language for characterizing and deeming homosexuality as a vice and behavior contrary to God’s design. For example, DeYoung (2015) argues,

It cannot be overstated how seriously the Bible treats the sin of sexual immorality. Sexual sin is never considered adiaphora, a matter of indifference, an agree-to-disagree issue like food laws or holy days (Rom. 14:1–15:7). To the contrary, sexual immorality is precisely the sort of sin that characterizes those who will not enter the kingdom of heaven. There are at least eight vice lists in the New Testament (Mark 7:21–22; Rom. 1:24–31; 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Col. 3:5–9; 1 Tim. 1:9–10; Rev. 21:8), and sexual immorality is included in every one of these (para. 10).

It is these same verses cited above that represent the foundations of anti-homosexual views by diverse Christian denominations and groups that deem homosexuality a sin and an immoral act contrary to their understanding of progressive revelation of God and his plan for humankind (Ligonier Ministries, 2025).

In modern times, key Christian leaders have focused their theologies on condemning homosexuality. For example, the late Jerry Falwell, Sr., who founded Liberty University spent much of his worldview on anti-homosexual evangelism. There are also groups such as the Family Research Council (FRC) that act as a leading institution on condemning homosexuality through a Christian worldview and biblical principles.

**Applicable Principles**

The Separation of Church and State in the United States is a strong political principle that keeps much of religion at bay from state and national influence, even though the State of Utah cannot claim this like the 49 states because of the strong and powerful influence of the Mormon religion and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Both society and religion share certain expectations. While society via the sovereign state must ensure equality, liberty, and due process of law or justice for everyone, it sometimes codifies moral behaviors or actions that are not contrary to biblical principles or theological religious values. For example, the Bible’s Ten Commandments tell us that we should not steal, and the State has also prohibited stealing through laws. Religion and society integration takes place where moral religious prohibitions are equivalent to criminal laws and the need for public order, but differs when it comes to individuals’ right to religious freedom.

**Conclusion**

While we are seeing increasingly tougher stances and harsher views from Judeo-Christian institutions and groups on the issue of homosexuality, this was not always the case as early Judeo-Christian societies seem to have had less focus on homosexuality when we examine the early Christian writings and literature. In fact, the Bible itself does not mention homosexuality in any extensive or over-compelling manner when compared to the harsh views and rhetoric seen by today’s Judeo-Christians, whether as individuals, communities or institutions. Whatever the case, knowledge of Judeo-Christian perspectives on homosexuality over the past centuries will lead to better understanding of the value of religious consideration as it bears on resolution of this issue. Moreover, it can help us to recognize how the issue has developed alongside the rise and fall of religious faith in American society and elsewhere.

The Judeo-Christian Church was a powerful catalyst for change in society and still remains so today (Akanbi & Beyers, 2017). In researching how Judeo-Christian perspectives and focus on homosexuality have changed and developed over the centuries, this has increased my awareness that religious faith and human history and biblical worldview are highly connected. It gives credence to the relevance of context when it comes to understanding certain practices and values across society. This research reaffirms my calling as a researcher and educator who seeks clarity and impart knowledge and understanding to others.

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