



Sexual Orientation and Human Rights in American Religious Discourse

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Sexual orientation is a topic of intense debate within America's religious traditions. These discussions have had a significant impact on the formation of public policy, as speakers who locate themselves squarely within religious traditions have articulated positions on both sides in recent arguments concerning gays in the military, civil rights protections for gays and lesbians, gay marriage, parenting and foster parenting, and benefits for partners of gay and lesbian employees of major corporations and institutions.

This volume, which stems from a 1995 conference at Brown University, aims to promote both academic and public understanding of the different positions that exist on sexual orientation and its public policy dimensions within four major American religious traditions. Writers from within the Jewish community, the Roman Catholic church, Mainline Protestant churches, and African-American churches explore the history and tradition of their communities on same-sex orientation, discuss the moral stance they advocate, and consider the legal and public policy implications of that stance. For each of these traditions, two opposing views are represented, and a respondent frames the issue in a larger context. The book concludes with essays by Michael McConnell and Andrew Koppelman exploring how our society might find a *modus vivendi* in a state position of neutrality on the moral status of homosexuality.

This book will appeal to a broad range of readers interested in these crucial issues, and in the role the religious communities play in these debates, while helping to foster the climate for a more reasoned and civil dialogue.

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