



First United Methodist Church

Points to Ponder

On the Fence

Source: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/hippieheretic/2017/06/a-challenge-to-those-on-the-fence-about-lgbtq-affirmation.html>

I get it. You don't hate LGBTQ people. You sincerely do want to love them as best as you can. If possible, you'd even like to fully affirm them. And maybe, if it were left entirely up to you and to your own intuitions, you'd already be affirming them.

But you're a Christian. So you also want to be faithful to God. And you simply don't know whether God approves. The debate surrounding affirmation is really confusing. There are so many arguments on both sides, and you're just not sure where you stand on all of it. I get it.

In a year, I moved from this place of uncertain "support," to a place of full affirmation. But the thing is, at the moment when I first made the switch to fully affirm my LGBTQ friends, I still wasn't 100% certain about it. I still had lingering doubts. But I realized that I was causing much greater harm by withholding my affirmation than what I risked by becoming affirming.

Worst-case scenario, if I was wrong and if LGBTQ relationships actually were sinful, then I was at least certain about God's grace. Surely, God would pardon those who sincerely believed that their actions were pleasing to him. Surely, God would understand how hard it was for them—understand that they didn't choose this—and respond to them in grace and love. God would clear up all the confusion one day, and I'd just trust him to sort it out with them then.

However, real people are being hurt right here and now as a direct consequence of our withheld affirmation. Parents are disowning their children. Hate crimes and even murders are being committed against the LGBTQ community. People are leaving the faith because churches will not welcome them. And many are taking their own lives because they just don't know what else to do. They need hope. They need support. They need love. And they need affirmation.

How could I continue harming the very people I was supposed to be loving? I couldn't. I had to make the decision and affirm them.

But once I gave my full affirmation, those doubts just started to disappear. Arguments against affirmation, once so compelling, simply didn't make sense any more.

There is no longer the slightest doubt in my mind that God is pleased with loving LGBTQ relationships. And I don't think I could have ever achieved this level of assurance through intellect alone. I had to live out affirmation before I could truly be sure of it at the deepest level.