

Stances and Responses

Stance:

A stance is the principled perspective taken by a religious tradition. In other words, it is a tradition's (or individual's) **OPINION** on an issue.



While stances can be negative or positive, simply using these words does not identify a stance. Let's use a supremely simple example.

Jimmy thinks Pizza is the best food ever, he particularly loves the melted cheese. This is Jimmy's stance on pizza and I would write it like this. I would not write *Jimmy has a positive stance on pizza*. It means very little.

A religious example:

In response to the challenge of new communication technology, a religious tradition may take the stance that it provides opportunities for growth, a positive stance.

Protestant Reformation example:

The Catholic Tradition took the stance that Luther's theological ideas regarding salvation were heretical and therefore were so dangerous that they needed to be suppressed.

Can you see this actually identifies the stance. *The Catholic Church took a negative stance towards Luther* does not.

One more example:

Initially, Pope Leo X took the stance that Luther's objections were "a minor issue" (Armenio) and warranted no particular attention, a stance of nonchalance.

This is infinitely better than *Pope Leo took a stance of ignorance* (a word that means 'lacking knowledge').

Response:

Responses (or supportive responses) are *actions* or deliberate *non-actions* designed to put the stance into practice. In other words, this is what a tradition **DOES** about a challenge.



Let's look at some examples:

Jimmy buys pizza three times a week and invites his friends to join him, thus putting into practice his love of pizza.

And a religious example:

In response to an ethical challenge due to social changes, religious traditions may engage in protests or lobbying of government officials in order to negate the change.

Protestant Reformation example:

In response to Luther's ideas, that the Church found heretical, he was excommunicated from the social structure, via the Papal bull exsurge domine (1520).

This focuses on the action.

One more example:

In modern times, The Catholic Church has engaged in active dialogue with Protestants, most notably through Pope Francis' high profile visits with Lutheran ministers and apologies to Pentecostal Christians.