



Putting A Human Face on Homosexuality

PFLAG DETROIT
PO Box 1169 Royal Oak MI 48068
Phone: 248-656-2875

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The subject of homosexuality is one which can create emotional reactions in many of us.

In an effort to create a better understanding of the lived experiences of gay and lesbian persons, and their families **PFLAG/Detroit** offers presentations which can be held at your church or Parish.

Members of PFLAG (a support group for Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) will tell of their experiences as parents of a homosexual child.

A group gays and lesbians describe some of their experiences coming to terms with their sexuality and spirituality.

This program consists of a panel presentation followed by a question and answer period. The panel is composed

of gay and lesbian persons and parents or family members.

The purpose of this meeting

is not to debate religious issues related to this subject.

The purpose of this meeting is to merely to **open** the door to what has often been a forbidden subject, and offer an opportunity for people to better understand the lives of gay and lesbian persons and their families.

Whether or not you think you know any homosexual persons,

Call, email us or write us to take a first step toward a better understanding of this issue and its effects on real people.

Gay and Lesbian in Today's Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States recognized this fact when they published their Pastoral Letter on homosexuality entitled "Always Our Children" (Nov., 1997). That letter was addressed not only to parents of homosexual persons, who were encouraged to love and accept their children, but also to those involved in pastoral care who were directed to welcome homosexual persons as full members of the parish community.

The Bishops urged parents to regard their gay and lesbian children

as "gifted and called for a purpose in God's design."

As early as 1976, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in their pastoral letter "To Live in Christ Jesus" called for inclusion of lesbians and gay men in the Roman Catholic Church. They said "Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have the right to respect, friendship, and justice. They should have an active role in the Church"

ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children

ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers

A Statement of the Bishops Committee on Marriage and Family National Conference of Catholic Bishops

This version of the statement was prepared for the Web from an e-mailed ASCII text file after the link to the document published in the NCCB website ceased to function. Cosmetic formatting details (italics, centering, and so forth) may differ from the original. IHS

Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers is a statement of the NCCB Committee on Marriage and Family. It was prepared in the Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women, and Youth under the supervision of the above committee. Publication was approved by the Administrative Committee on September 10, 1997. The statement is further authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Monsignor Dennis M. Schnurr
General Secretary NCCB/USCC
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Washington, DC

PREFACE

The purpose of this pastoral message is to reach out to parents who are trying to cope with the discovery of homosexuality in a child, who is an adolescent or an adult. It urges families to draw upon the reservoirs of faith, hope, and love as they face uncharted futures. It asks them to recognize that the Church offers enormous spiritual resources to strengthen and support them at this moment in their family's life and in the days to come.

This message draws upon the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the teaching of Pope John Paul II, statements of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and of our own Episcopal Conference. The message is not a treatise on homosexuality. It is not a systematic presentation of the Church's moral teaching. It does not break any new ground theologically. Rather, relying on the Church's teaching as well as on our own pastoral experience, we intend to speak words of faith, hope, and love to parents who need the Church's loving presence at a time which may be one of the most challenging in their lives.

We also want to be helpful to priests and pastoral ministers who often are the first one's parents or their children approach with their struggles and anxieties.

In recent years we have tried to reach out to families in difficult circumstances. Our initiatives took the form of short statements, like this one, which were addressed to people who thought they were beyond the Church's circle of care.

Always Our Children follows in the same tradition as these other pastoral statements.

This message is not intended for advocacy purposes or to serve a particular agenda. It is not to be understood as an endorsement of what some call a "homosexual lifestyle."

Always Our Children is an outstretched hand of the Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family to parents and other family members, offering them a fresh look at the grace present in family life and the unfailing mercy of Christ our Lord.

An even more generous, intelligent and prudent pastoral commitment, modeled on the Good Shepherd, is called for in cases of families which, often independently of their own wishes and through pressures of various other kinds, find themselves faced by situations which are objectively difficult.

Pope John Paul II On the Family, 1981, n. 77

A Critical Moment, A Time of Grace

As you begin to read this message you may feel your life is in turmoil. You and your family might be faced with one of the difficult situations of which our Holy Father speaks:

- You think your adolescent child is experiencing a same-sex attraction and/or you observe attitudes and behaviors that

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you find confusing or upsetting or with which you disagree.

- Your son or daughter has made it known that he or she has a homosexual orientation.
- You experience a tension between loving your child as God's precious creation and not wanting to endorse any behavior you know the Church teaches is wrong.

You need not face this painful time alone, without human assistance or God's grace. The Church can be an instrument of both help and healing. This is why we bishops, as pastors and teachers, write to you.

In this pastoral message, we draw upon the gift of faith as well as the sound teaching and pastoral practice of the Church in order to offer loving support, reliable guidance, and recommendations for ministries suited to your needs and those of your child. Our message speaks of accepting yourself, your beliefs and values, your questions and all you may be struggling with at the moment; accepting and loving your child as a gift of God; and accepting the full truth of God's revelation about the dignity of the human person and the meaning of human sexuality. Within the Catholic moral vision there is no contradiction among these levels of acceptance, for truth and love are not opposed. They are inseparably joined and rooted in one person, Jesus Christ, who reveals God to be ultimate truth and saving love.

We address our message also to the wider church community, and especially to priests and other pastoral ministers, asking that our words be translated into attitudes and actions which follow the way of love, as Christ has taught. It is through the community of his faithful, that Jesus offers you hope, help, and healing so your whole family might continue to grow into the intimate community of life and love which God intends.

Accepting Yourself

Because some of you might be swept up in a tide of emotions, we focus first on feelings. Although the gift of human sexuality can be a great mystery at times, the Church's teaching on homosexuality is clear. However, because the terms of that teaching have now become very personal in regard to your son or daughter, you may feel confused and conflicted.

Possibly you are experiencing many different emotions, all in varying degrees, such as:

RELIEF: Perhaps you had sensed for some time that your son or daughter was different in some way. Now he or she has entrusted something very significant. It may be that other siblings learned of this before you did, and were reluctant to tell you. Regardless, though, a burden has been lifted. Acknowledge the possibility that your child has told you this not to hurt you or create distance, but out of love and trust and with a desire for honesty, intimacy, and closer communication.

ANGER: You may be feeling deceived or manipulated by your son or daughter. You could be angry with your spouse, blaming him or her for "making the child this way" -- especially if there has been a difficult parent-child relationship. You might be angry with yourself for not recognizing indications of homosexuality. You could be feeling disappointment, along with anger, if family members, and sometimes even siblings, are rejecting their homosexual brother or sister. It is just as possible to feel angry if family members or friends seem overly accepting and encouraging of homosexuality. Also -- and not to be discounted -- is a possible anger with God that all this is happening.

MOURNING: You may now feel that your child is not exactly the same individual you once thought you knew. You envision that your son or daughter may never give you grandchildren. These lost expectations as well as the fact that homosexual persons often encounter discrimination and open hostility can cause you great sadness.

FEAR: You may fear for your child's physical safety and general welfare in the face of prejudice against homosexual people. In particular, you may be afraid that others in our community might exclude or treat your child or your family with contempt. The fear of your child contracting HIV/AIDS or another sexually transmitted disease is serious and ever-present. If your child is distraught, you may be concerned about attempted suicide.

GUILT, SHAME, AND LONELINESS: "If only we had...or had not..." are words with which parents can torture themselves at this time. Regrets and disappointments rise up like ghosts from the past. A sense of failure can lead you into a valley of shame which, in turn, can isolate you from your children, your family, and other communities of support.

PARENTAL PROTECTIVENESS AND PRIDE: Homosexual persons often experience discrimination and acts of violence in our society. As a parent, you naturally want to shield your children from harm, regardless of their age. You may still insist my child; nothing can ever change that. You are also a child of God, gifted and called for a purpose in God's design."

There are two important things to keep in mind as you try to sort out your feelings. First, listen to them. They can contain clues leading to a fuller discovery of God's will for you. Second, because some feelings can be confusing or conflicting, it is not necessary to act upon all of them. Acknowledging them may be sufficient, but it may also be necessary to talk about your feelings. Do not expect that all tensions can or will be resolved. The Christian life is a

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journey marked by perseverance and prayer. It is a path leading from where we are to where we know God is calling us.

Accepting Your Child

How can you best express your love -- itself a reflection of God's unconditional love -- for your child? At least two things are necessary.

First, don't break off contact; don't reject your child. A shocking number of homosexual youth end up on the streets because of rejection by their families. This, and other external pressures, can place young people at greater risk of self-destructive behaviors, like substance abuse, and suicide.

Your child may need you and the family now more than ever. He or she is still the same person. This child, who has always been God's gift to you, may now be the cause of another gift: your family becoming more honest, respectful, and supportive. Yes, your love can be tested by this reality, but it can also grow stronger through your struggle to respond lovingly.

The second way to communicate love is to seek appropriate help for your child and for yourself. If your son or daughter is an adolescent, it is possible that he or she may be experimenting with some homosexual behaviors as part of the process of coming to terms with sexual identity. Isolated acts do not make someone homosexual. Adolescence is often accompanied by anxiety or confusion about sexual identity. Sometimes the best approach may be a "wait and see" attitude, while you try to maintain a trusting relationship and provide various kinds of support, information, and encouragement.

In many cases, it may be appropriate and necessary that your child receive professional help, including counseling and spiritual direction. It is important, of course, that he or she receive such guidance willingly. Look for a therapist who has an appreciation of religious values and who understands the complex nature of sexuality. Such a person should be experienced at helping people discern the meaning of early sexual behaviors, sexual attractions, and sexual fantasies in ways that lead to more clarity and self-identity. In the course of this, however, it is essential for you to remain open to the possibility that your son or daughter is struggling to understand and accept a basic homosexual orientation.

The meaning and implications of the term, "homosexual orientation" are not universally agreed upon. Church teaching acknowledges a distinction between a homosexual "tendency" which proves to be "transitory" and "homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics, 1975, n.8).

In light of this possibility, therefore, it seems appropriate to understand sexual orientation (heterosexual or homosexual) as a fundamental dimension of one's personality and to recognize its relative stability in a person. A homosexual orientation produces a stronger emotional and sexual attraction toward individuals of the same sex, rather than toward those of the opposite sex. It does not totally rule out interest in, care for and attraction toward members of the opposite sex. Having a homosexual orientation does not necessarily mean a person will engage in homosexual activity.

There seems to be no single cause of a homosexual orientation. A common opinion of experts is that there are multiple factors -- genetic, hormonal, psychological -- that may give rise to it. Generally, homosexual orientation is experienced as a given, not as something freely chosen. By itself, therefore, a homosexual orientation cannot be considered sinful, for morality presumes the freedom to choose.

Some homosexual persons want to be known publicly as gay or lesbian. These terms often express a person's level of self-awareness and self-acceptance within society. Though you might find the terms offensive because of political or social connotations, it is necessary to be sensitive to how your son or daughter is using them. Language should not be a barrier to building trust and honest communication.

You can help a homosexual person in two general ways. First, encourage him or her to cooperate with God's grace in order to live a chaste life. Second, concentrate on the person, not on the homosexual orientation itself. This implies respecting a person's freedom to choose or refuse therapy directed toward changing a homosexual orientation. Given the present state of medical and psychological knowledge, there is no guarantee that such therapy will succeed.

Thus, there may be no obligation to undertake it, though some may find it helpful.

All in all, it is essential to recall one basic truth. God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps to define the unique persons we are. One component of our sexual identity is sexual orientation. Thus, our total personhood is more encompassing than sexual orientation. Human beings see the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart (cf. I Samuel 16:7).

God does not love someone any less simply because he or she is homosexual. God's love is always and everywhere offered to those who are open to receiving it. St. Paul's words offer great hope:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor

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future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

Accepting God's Plan and the Church's Ministry

For the Christian believer, an acceptance of self and of one's homosexual child must take place within the larger context of accepting divinely revealed truth about the dignity and destiny of human persons. It is the Church's responsibility to believe and teach this truth, presenting it as a comprehensive moral vision and applying this vision in particular situations through its pastoral ministries. We present the main points of that moral teaching here.

Every person has an inherent dignity because he or she is created in God's image. A deep respect for the total person leads the Church to hold and teach that sexuality is a gift of God. Being created a male or a female person is an essential part of the divine plan, for it is their sexuality -- a mysterious blend of spirit and body -- that allows human beings to share in God's own creative love and life. "Everyone...should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2333).

Like all gifts from God, the power and freedom of sexuality can be channeled toward good or evil.

Everyone -- the homosexual and the heterosexual person -- is called to personal maturity and responsibility. With the help of God's grace, everyone is called to practice the virtue of chastity in relationships. Chastity means integrating one's thoughts, feelings, and actions, in the area of human sexuality, in a way that values and respects one's own dignity and that of others. It is "the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression" (Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning*, 1996, n.16).

Christ summons all his followers -- whether they are married or living a single celibate life -- to a higher standard of loving.

This includes not only fidelity, forgiveness, hope, perseverance, and sacrifice, but also chastity which is expressed in modesty and self-control. The chaste life is possible, though not always easy, for it involves a continual effort to turn toward God and away from sin, especially with the strength of the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. Indeed God expects everyone to strive for the perfection of love, but to achieve it gradually through stages of moral growth (cf. John Paul II, *On the Family*, 1981, n. 34). To keep our feet on the path of conversion, God's grace is available to and sufficient for everyone open to receiving it.

To live and love chastely is to understand that "only within marriage does sexual intercourse fully symbolize the Creator's dual design, as an act of covenant love, with the potential of co-creating new human life" (U.S. Catholic Conference, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*, 1991, p. 55). This is a fundamental teaching of our Church about sexuality, rooted in the biblical account of man and woman created in the image of God and made for union with one another (Genesis 2-3).

Two conclusions follow. First, it is God's plan that sexual intercourse occur only within marriage between a man and a woman. Second, every act of intercourse must be open to the possible creation of new human life.

Homosexual intercourse cannot fulfill these two conditions. Therefore, the Church teaches that homogenital behavior is objectively immoral, while making the important distinction between this behavior and a homosexual orientation, which is not immoral in itself.

It is also important to recognize that neither a homosexual orientation, nor a heterosexual one, leads inevitably to sexual activity. One's total personhood is not reducible to sexual orientation or behavior.

Respect for the God-given dignity of all persons means the recognition of human rights and responsibilities.

The teaching of the Church makes it clear that the fundamental human rights of homosexual persons must be defended and that all of us must strive to eliminate any form of injustice, oppression, or violence against them (cf. *The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, n.10).

It is not sufficient only to avoid unjust discrimination. Homosexual persons "must be accepted with vision and sensitivity" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2358). They, as is true of every human being, need to be nourished at many different levels simultaneously.

This includes friendship, which is a way of loving and is essential to healthy human development, as well as one of the richest possible human experiences. Friendship can and does thrive outside of genital sexual involvement.

The Christian community should offer its homosexual sisters and brothers understanding and pastoral care.

More than twenty years ago we bishops stated that "Homosexuals...should have an active role in the Christian community" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life*, 1976, p.19). What does this mean in practice? It means that all homosexual persons have a right to be welcomed into the community, to hear the word of God, and to receive pastoral care. Homosexual persons who are living chaste lives should have opportunities to lead and serve the community. However, the Church has the right to deny public roles of service and leadership to persons, whether homosexual or heterosexual, whose public behavior openly violates its teachings.

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The Church recognizes the importance and urgency of ministering to persons with HIV/AIDS. Though HIV/AIDS is an epidemic affecting the whole human race, not just homosexual persons, it has had a devastating effect upon them and has brought great sorrow to many parents, families and friends.

Without condoning self-destructive behavior or denying personal responsibility, we reject the idea that HIV/AIDS is a direct punishment from God. Furthermore:

Persons with AIDS are not distant, unfamiliar people, the objects of our mingled pity and aversion. We must keep them present to our consciousness as individuals and a community, and embrace them with unconditional love.... Compassion--love--toward persons infected with HIV is the only authentic Gospel response (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Called to Compassion and Responsibility: A Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis*, 1989). Nothing in the Bible or in Catholic teaching can be used to justify prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. We reiterate here what we said in an earlier statement:

We call on all Christians and citizens of good will to confront their own fears about homosexuality and to curb the humor and discrimination that offend homosexual persons. We understand that having a homosexual orientation bough anxiety, pain and issues related to self-acceptance without society bringing additional prejudicial treatment (*Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*, 1991, p.55).

Pastoral Recommendations

With a view toward overcoming the isolation that you or your son or daughter may be experiencing, we offer these recommendations to you as well as to priests and pastoral ministers.

To parents:

1. Accept and love yourselves as parents in order to accept and love your son or daughter. Do not blame yourselves for a homosexual orientation in your child.
2. Do everything possible to continue demonstrating love for your child. However, accepting his or her homosexual orientation does not have to include aproving all related attitudes and behavioral choices. In fact, you may need to challenge certain aspects of a lifestyle which you find objectionable.
3. Urge your son or daughter to stay joined to the Catholic faith community. If they have left the Church, urge them to return and be reconciled to the community, especially in the Sacrament of Penance.
4. Recommend that your son or daughter find a spiritual director/mentor who will offer guidance in prayer and in leading a chaste and virtuous life.
5. Seek help for yourself, perhaps in the form of counseling or spiritual direction, as you strive for understanding, acceptance and inner peace. Also, consider joining a parents' support group or participating in a retreat designed for Catholic parents of homosexual children. Other people have traveled the same road as you, but may have journeyed even further. They can share effective ways of handling delicate family situations such as how to tell family members and friends about your child, how to explain homosexuality to younger children, how to relate to your son or daughter's friends in a Christian way.
6. Reach out in love and service to other parents who may be struggling with a son or daughter's homosexuality. Contact your parish about organizing a parents support group. Your diocesan Family Ministry Office, Catholic Charities, or a special diocesan ministry to gay and lesbian persons may be able to offer assistance.
7. As you take advantage of opportunities for education and support, remember that you can only change yourself; you can only be responsible for your own beliefs and actions, not those of your adult children.
8. Put your faith completely in God who is more powerful, and more forgiving than we are or ever could be.

To church ministers:

1. Be available to parents and families who ask for your pastoral help, spiritual guidance and prayer.
2. Welcome homosexual persons into the faith community. Seek out those on the margins. Avoid stereotyping and condemnations. Strive first to listen. Do not presume that all homosexual persons are sexually active.
3. Learn about homosexuality and church teaching so that your preaching, teaching, and counseling will be informed and effective.
4. Use the words "homosexual", "gay", "lesbian" in honest and accurate ways, especially from the pulpit. In various and subtle ways you can give people "permission" to talk about homosexual issues among themselves and let them know that you're also willing to talk with them.
5. Maintain a list of agencies, community groups, and counselors or other experts to whom you can refer homosexual

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persons or their parents and family members when they ask you for specialized assistance. Recommend agencies that operate in a manner consistent with Catholic teaching.

6. Help to establish or promote existing support groups for parents and family members.
7. Learn about HIV/AIDS so you will be more informed and compassionate in your ministry. Include prayers in the liturgy for those living with HIV/AIDS, their caregivers, those who have died, and their families, companions and friends. A special Mass for healing and anointing of the sick might be connected with World AIDS Awareness Day (December 1) or with a local AIDS awareness program.)

Conclusion

For St. Paul love is the greatest of spiritual gifts. St. John considers love to be the most certain sign of God's presence. Jesus proposes it as the basis of his two great commandments which fulfill all the law and the prophets.

Love, too, is the continuing story of every family's life. Love can be shared, nurtured, rejected, and sometimes lost. To follow Christ's way of love is the challenge before every family today. Your family now has an added opportunity to share love and to accept love. Our church communities are likewise called to an exemplary standard of love and justice. Our homosexual sisters and brothers -- indeed, all people -- are summoned into responsible ways of loving.

To our homosexual brothers and sisters we offer a concluding word. This message has been an outstretched hand to your parents and families inviting them to accept God's grace present in their lives now and to trust in the unfailing mercy of Jesus our Lord. Now we stretch out our hands and invite you to do the same. We are called to become one body, one spirit in Christ. We need one another if we are to "...grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love" (Ephesians, 4:15-16).

Though at times you may feel discouraged, hurt or angry, do not walk away from your families, from the Christian community, from all those who love you. In you God's love is revealed. You are always our children. **"There is no fear in love...perfect love drives out fear" (I John 4:18).**

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Office of Communications National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference 3211
4th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202) 541-3000
October 01, 1997 Copyright © by United States Catholic Conference

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ARCC/VATICAN2 Web-Site Editor: Ingrid H. Shafer, Ph.D.

e-mail address: facshaferi@mercur.usao.edu or ihf@ionet.net

Last updated 15 April 1998

The Bible and Homosexuality C. Ann Shepherd

URL: <http://hcqsa.virtualave.net/bible.html>

The Bible has long been used by society to discriminate against, and persecute gays and lesbians. Careful study, however, reveals that while the Bible does condemn homosexual and heterosexual cult prostitution, it says nothing about loving committed homosexual relationships.

Jesus himself said nothing about homosexuality, which leads many to believe it was not one of his main concerns.

Unfortunately, many passages from the Bible are often taken out of context, or interpreted without consideration for the cultural aspects associated with the time period in which they were written. To emphasize this point, consider the following sentence: "He was such a neat man." In order to understand the writers meaning, you must consider the time period in which it was written. If this sentence were written in the 1900's it would be assumed that the word "neat", was a reference to the man's tidiness. If it were written in 1996, however, the word "neat" could be interpreted to mean both tidy, or the presence of admirable qualities.

Many versions of the Bible exist. Each reflects the limited scientific knowledge, personal beliefs of its translators, and the social beliefs of the time period in which it was translated. Personal biases, and societies prejudices have unavoidably distorted the Bible's many translations. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to find a current word that accurately defines the Hebrew or Greek term in question. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the mistranslation of some of the more ambiguous text contained in the Bible.

The following is a summary of the common passages used to falsely condemn homosexuals

THE STORY OF SODOM - Genesis 19:1-25

Many people carelessly proclaim that God destroyed the city of Sodom because of homosexuality. A careful look however, reveals that this is unlikely.

Two angels were sent to Sodom by God, where Lot, Abraham's nephew, persuades the divine travelers to stay in his home. It is important to note that travelers depended on the kindness of strangers. Ancient hospitality codes required people to offer food, shelter and protection to people who were traveling. Without these codes travel would have been difficult, if not impossible.

After the Angels ate and were preparing for bed, all of the people of Sodom converged on Lots home, demanding that the angels come out so that the towns people might know (rape) them. In an effort to protect his guests, Lot denies the angry mob access to the angels, but offers his two virgin daughters instead. This suggests Lot knew his neighbors to be heterosexual. The townspeople refuse, and charge at Lot in an attempt to gain access to the angels. At this point the angels pull Lot back inside the house, and render the angry crowd blind so they can not find the door. The angels then warn Lot to gather his family and leave the city because it will soon be destroyed.

Much confusion over this passage has to do with the phrase to know them. The Hebrew word yadha (to know) has several different meanings throughout the Bible. In most cases it means to "have thorough knowledge of." In many cases it means "to check the credentials of", and in some cases may mean to "have sex with". In this case, however, it is clear that the townspeople wanted to harm the strangers, and because of ancient hospitality codes, Lot felt compelled to protect his guests. The townspeople

wanted to perform an act of violence by raping the angels, a grave violation of ancient hospitality codes.

Homosexual rape was not uncommon. Kings of conquered tribes were sometimes raped by the invading army as the ultimate symbol of defeat and humiliation. The men in these armies were not homosexual, they were heterosexuals performing an act of violence. Never in any culture has more than a minority of the population been homosexual, and it is unlikely that all of the men in these armies or all the men of Sodom were gay.

Unfortunately, some people have focused on rape as a sexual act, rather than an act of violence, and have missed the point completely.

The reason for Sodom's destruction is made clear in **Ezekiel 16:48-50**. According to Ezekiel, the sins of Sodom were pride, laziness, being inhospitable, neglecting the needs of the poor, greed, and idolatry (the worshipping of idols).

Nothing about homosexuality is mentioned, nor is it mentioned in any other passage of Scripture which refers to the account of Sodom.

AN ABOMINATION - LEVITICUS 18:22 & 20:13

Perhaps the two most widely abused verses used to condemn homosexuality come from Leviticus.

You shall not lie with man as one lies with a women; this is an abomination.

Leviticus 18:22

If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they should surely be put to death.

Leviticus 20:13

First of all, the Holiness Code of Leviticus was written primarily as a ritual manual for Israel's priests. Christians today are not bound by the rules and rituals described in Leviticus. (**Galatians 3:22-25**) If Christians today insist on using this passage to condemn homosexuality, then they are also bound by the other rules and rituals described in Leviticus. Among other things, the Holiness Code of Leviticus prohibits:

- Sexual intercourse during a women's menstrual cycle
- Tattoos
- Wearing certain types of jewelry
- Eating certain kinds of meat
- Wearing clothing made from blended textiles (cotton-polyester blends)
- Cross-breeding livestock
- Sowing a field with mixed seed
- Eating or touching the dead flesh of pigs, rabbits, & some forms of seafood
- Men cutting their hair or shaving their beards

The Holiness Code also endorses polygamy and requires Saturday to be reserved as the Sabbath. Obviously, it is unfair to use these passages to condemn homosexuality, while ignoring the fact that most Christians do not follow the rest of the rules and rituals outlined in the Holiness Code of Leviticus.

It should also be noted that the word abomination was translated from the Hebrew word *toevah* and means something found detestable by God because it is unclean, disloyal, or unjust. The term abomination is generally associated with idolatry and the Canaanite religious practice of cult prostitution. (Ezekiel) Given *toevah*'s strong association with cult prostitution it is unlikely that this passage applies to loving responsible homosexual relationships.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9 & 1 TIMOTHY 1:10

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 6:9 KJV

For Whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

1 Timothy 1:1 KJV

There are two words which appear to have been mistranslated. Malakee (effeminate) which appears in 1 Corinthians, and arsenokeeteh (abusers of themselves with mankind) which appears in both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. The Greek term malakee is used elsewhere in the Bible to mean someone who lacks discipline or one who is morally weak, and never is it used in reference to sexuality or gender. It wasn't until 1946 that malakee was given a sexual connotation when it was translated to mean "sexual perverts" in the Revised Standard Version.

The second term arsenokeeteh literally means "male-active-bed". Unfortunately, arsenokeeteh has been interpreted by some to mean homosexual. The term arsenokeeteh is obscure, as evidenced by the variety of interpretations it has been assigned throughout history (including "people with infamous habits", and "child molesters"). If Paul was addressing male homosexuality why did he choose such an obscure word when there were Greek words that were more commonly used to describe homosexual behavior? Given Paul's concern with temple prostitution, wouldn't it make more sense to assume that "male-active-bed" was a reference to the male cult prostitution that was prevalent in Greco-Roman culture at that time?

AGAINST THE LAWS OF NATURE - ROMANS 1:26

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural (physin) relations for unnatural (para physin) ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural (physin) relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.

Romans 1:26

In the preceding passage the Greek words physin and paraphysin have been translated to mean natural and unnatural respectively. Contrary to popular belief, the word paraphysin does not mean "to go against the laws of nature", but rather implies action which is uncharacteristic for that person. An example of the word paraphysin is used in **Romans 11:24**, where God acts in an uncharacteristic (paraphysin) way to accept the Gentiles. When the scripture is understood correctly, it seems to imply that it would be unnatural for heterosexuals to live as homosexuals, and for homosexuals to live as heterosexuals.



**Love
Makes a Family**

Quick Facts About Homosexuality

Sexual orientation can not be caught or taught.

"Family fears of catching homosexuality, or of being recruited at school or elsewhere are utterly without scientific foundation."

~ Dr. Jack Weinberg, President American Psychiatric Association, October 6, 1977.

Sexual orientation is not a choice.

Sexual orientation is deep-seated and not something one chooses to be or not to be.

~ Dr. Alan P. Bell, senior author of "Sexual Preference", Bell, Weinberg & Hammersmith, Indiana University Press, 1981.

Research suggests that the homosexual orientation is in place very early in the life cycle, possibly even before birth.

~ Taken from the American Psychological Association Statement on Sexual Orientation, July, 1994.

It is believed that there are several factors which determine sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation is likely to be the result of several different factors, including genetic, hormonal, and environmental. None of these factors alone are responsible for determining sexual orientation.

Psychological and social influences alone cannot cause homosexuality.

~Tineke Bodde', "Why is My Child Gay?" Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc., 1988.

"There is evidence that parents have very little influence on the outcome of their children's sexual orientation under normal upbringing conditions."

~June Machover Reinisch, Ph.D. (Response from brochure) "Why is My Child Gay?" Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc., 1988.

Gays & lesbians discover their sexual orientation. They are not recruited or brainwashed into the "gay lifestyle".

Gay and lesbian children are often aware of being different at a very early age. They generally become aware of their sexual orientation during adolescence or early adulthood.

~ R.R. Troiden, "The Formation of Homosexual Identities", *The Journal of Homosexuality*, 17, 43-73.

Homosexuality is not a mental or emotional disorder.

The research on homosexuality is very clear. Homosexuality is neither mental illness nor moral depravity. It is simply the way a minority of our population expresses human love and sexuality. Study after study documents the mental health of gay men and lesbians. Studies of judgment, stability, reliability, and social and vocational adaptiveness all show that gay men and lesbians function every bit as well as heterosexuals.

~ The American Psychiatric Association and The American Psychological Association, July 1994.

Efforts to change sexual orientation are ineffective and can be harmful.

Research findings suggest that efforts to repair homosexuals are nothing more than social prejudice garbed in psychological accouterments.

~ Taken from the *American Psychological Association Statement on Sexual Orientation*, July, 1994.

No scientific evidence exists to support the effectiveness of any therapies that attempt to convert homosexuals to heterosexuals.

~ *John C. Gonsiorek and James D. Weinrich, eds., Homosexuality: Research Implications for Public Policy*, Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1991.

All attempts fail when gay people try to become heterosexual.

~ *D. C. Haldeman, "The Practice and Ethics of Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy", Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, p.221-227, 1994.

"Groups who try to change the sexual orientation of people through so-called conversion therapy are misguided and run the risk of causing a great deal of psychological harm to those they say they are trying to help."

~ *Dr. Raymond Fowler, American Psychological Association Executive Director*

Clinical experience suggests that any person who seeks conversion therapy may be doing so because of social bias that has resulted in internalized homophobia, and that gay men and lesbians who have accepted their sexual orientation positively are better adjusted than those who have not done so.

~ *American Psychiatric Association*

The incidence of homosexuality is constant regardless of new laws or social attitudes.

It [homosexuality] is found in about ten percent of the population, a figure which is surprisingly constant across cultures, irrespective of the different moral values and standards of a particular culture. Contrary to what some imply, the incidence of homosexuality in a population does not appear to change with new moral codes or social mores.

~ Taken from the *American Psychological Association Statement on Sexual Orientation*, July, 1994.

Gay and lesbian youth are at greater risk of committing suicide.

Gay and lesbian youth are two-three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. Gay and lesbian teens account for thirty percent of all completed suicides among adolescents.

~ *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide", Washington D.C., 1989.*

Gay and lesbian people are just as capable of being good parents as are heterosexual parents.

Children who are raised in gay or lesbian homes are no different in any aspects of psychological, social, or sexual development from children in heterosexual families.

~ *C.J. Patterson, "Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents", Child Development*, 63, 1025-1042.

Thirty-five different studies have shown that children of gay and lesbian parents are no more likely to become homosexuals than children of heterosexuals, and are just as well adjusted.

~ *Jane Gross, "New Challenge of Youth: Growing up in Gay Homes", New York Times, February 11, 1991.*

Gay men and lesbian women are rarely involved in child sexual abuse.

In the U.S. ninety percent of all sexual child abuse is committed by heterosexual men. The molesters are almost always family members, close family friends or the mother's boyfriend.

~P.J. Falk "Lesbian Mothers: Psychological Assumptions in Family Law", *American Psychologist*, 44, 941-949, 1989.

~Mary Koss, et al. "No Safe Haven: Male Violence Against Women At Home, At Work, And in the Community", *American Psychological Association*, 1994.

Gay people are not obsessed with sex.

Gay men and lesbian women share the same amount of interest in sexual activity as heterosexual persons, neither more nor less.

~Alan P. Bell and Martin S. Weinberg, for the Institute for Sexual Research, "Homosexuality: A Study in Human Diversity", *Simon and Schuster*, 1978.

There is no single Gay Lifestyle.

The lives of gay men and lesbian women are just as varied as the lives of heterosexuals.

~Linda D. Garnets and Douglas C. Kimmel, "Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Male Experiences", *Columbia University Press*, 1995.

Common Benefits of Marriage

- Insurance benefits through a spouses employer
- Insurance discounts offered to married couples and related persons living in same household
- Government benefits such as Social Security and Medicare
- Veterans/military benefits offered to spouses (education, medical care, housing loans)
- Income tax deductions, credits and exemptions
- Tax relief for natural disaster losses
- Immigration of foreign partners
- Witness and court testimony rights
- Continuation of lease rights (renewal of lease)
- Community property rights
- Inheritance rights
- Payment of wages for deceased partners and workers compensation benefits
- Right to enter into pre-marital agreement
- Automatic rights of survivorship
- Consent to post-mortem examination
- Right to make burial arrangements
- Bereavement leave for partner, child, or partner's close relative
- Family leave to care for partner or child during illness
- Right to make decisions in medical emergencies ("next of kin")
- Visitation rights for partner or child in hospital or other public institutions
- Custodial rights for a seriously injured partner
- Right to file a wrongful death suit
- Tuition discounts/use of facilities
- Company benefits/perks offered to spouses
- Commercial discounts/incentives offered only to married couples or families
- Joint child custody, adoption and foster care rights
- Equitable division of property, child custody, visitation rights and support in the case of divorce
- The right to obtain domestic violence protection orders

Think About It...

1. Even though current research indicates that sexual orientation is fixed and unchangeable, some still insist that homosexuals could change if they wanted to.

- ◆ Could you change your sexual orientation on demand?
- ◆ Would you want to? Why or why not?

2. Many people assume that homosexuality is a choice, and that gay people have made the decision to be gay.

- ◆ If you assume that homosexuality is a matter of choice, do you assume that heterosexuality is a matter of choice also?
- ◆ When did you choose your sexual orientation?

3. Suppose for a minute that sexual orientation is a simple matter of choice (which it does not appear to be):

Does that mean that gays and lesbians are less deserving of civil rights protection?

Before you answer, consider the following:

Religious affiliation is a choice in our country, yet our government provides protection from discrimination on the basis of this personal decision.

4. Currently, our government does not provide gays and lesbians with the benefits of marriage, or protection from discrimination in employment and housing.

- ◆ Should gays and lesbians pay taxes to a government that fails to provide them with basic civil rights protection?
- ◆ Why should gays and lesbians pay into funds that provide special rights and benefits for heterosexuals and their partners, but does little to benefit homosexuals and their loved ones?

5. Would you turn down a life saving organ donation, if the donor was gay or lesbian?

6. Does it seem fair that a heterosexual couple married for one hour has more legal rights and responsibilities toward each other than a same-sex couple that has been together for 25 years?

7. If your child were gay:

- ◆ Would you love him/her any less?
- ◆ Would you want your child to grow up and live in a society that refused to accept him/her, and grant him/her equal rights?

◆ Would you want people to make assumptions about your child based on stereotypes and myths, or would you want people to judge your child based on logic, fact and personal merit?

◆ Would you believe your child was less deserving of basic civil rights, the freedom to spend his/her life with the person they love, and the benefits of legal marriage?

8. If your neighbor or co-worker were gay:

- ◆ How would his/her sexual orientation affect you?
- ◆ Would granting him/her equal rights, infringe upon your rights? How?

9. Currently, gay and lesbian couples are denied the benefits of a legal marriage, while heterosexual couples continue to reap the benefits of a legal union.

- ◆ Who has *special rights* now?
- ◆ Would granting gays and lesbians the right to marry interfere with anyone else's right to marry? How?
- ◆ How would it affect the benefits heterosexual couples currently enjoy?
- ◆ Would granting gays the right to marry affect your marriage? How?

10. A common misconception is that gays and lesbians molest children at a far higher rate than heterosexuals. This myth has long been used to prevent gay men and lesbians from working with children. In truth, most children who are molested, are molested by heterosexual men.

◆ Why don't we use the same logic that has previously, and is still applied to gay men and lesbians, to restrict heterosexual men from teaching, leading scout troops, or working in any field where they may be in close contact with children?

11. If the true intention of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is to protect the sanctity of marriage then...

- ◆ Why not outlaw, or limit the number of divorces one person is allowed to have? The divorce rate in our country hovers around 50%. Divorce poses a real threat to the sanctity of marriage, yet DOMA does not address this issue. Why?
- ◆ Consider the fact that so many of DOMA's supporters have been divorced, many of them more than once? Can they be trusted to understand the sanctity of marriage? Are they really concerned about protecting the sanctity of marriage, or are they more concerned with protecting their heterosexist views?



"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."
John 17:17

A Composition Study-Guide of Pastor Ken Coulter's Ten Years of Research Compiled and Edited

By Rev. Bob Ellis

Download this document at
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/1348/dispell.htm>

Dispelling The Myth Rev Bob Ellis

So many lives have been adversely affected by rampant homophobia. It has been fueled unfortunately by a very vocal misguided few, who seem intent on representing the Gospel of Grace with condemnation. Parents have been separated from their children, brothers from their brothers, wives from husbands...and yet despite the tragedy of these broken relationships, broken hearts and sometimes the loss of life altogether, self-righteous hatred and disgust toward homosexuals continues. Surely the healing of all this brokenness lies not in hatred, but in love.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus did not stop there, but went on to say, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned..."

A myth has grown up around the issue of homosexuality that for centuries has kept God's people in bondage to condemning and being condemned. But the message of grace is clearly *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death."* Those who believe in Jesus have been released from the continuous cycle of sin and its consequence, death. Now, we are free to love one another with the love of Christ, no strings attached. As Paul stated it, now we must *"keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery...."* We have been set free to *"through love serve one another."* Those who have understood this, regardless of which side of the issue they stand on, have taken an important step toward embracing the true meaning of *"GRACE"*, (God's unmerited favor to all); freely receiving it themselves and sharing it with every person along the way. Because of this, God causes them to *"reign in life"* through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

PURPOSE

Why study Christianity and Homosexuality?

Jesus is Lord. As Christians, our behavior is subject to the Holy Word of God and all believers are accountable to the Lord. As his disciples, we demonstrate our love for him through obedience to his commands (John 15:10). We must, therefore, understand what his commands are.

Our Mission: To Set The Captive Free! This task, left to us by the Lord himself, is the heart of our concern. The Scriptures declare that God has set us free from the Law; free to be who God created us to be; free to love him and each other (Galatians 5:1, 13-14), Jesus said that knowledge of the truth would bring freedom (John 8:32). The combination of love and truth brings about changed character enabling the maturation process in people; which is conformity to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:13-15)

Standing By The Truth. We must share the truth with all who will listen. If challenged, we will be ready to give a defense for the truth of the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15)

Our Mission Defined. Before the return of Jesus for his bride, the church must return to its first love (Revelation 19:7). It is a love freely extended to all; as Jesus loved, so we must love one another. Much of the church has forgotten its

primary responsibility to be the light of the world and instead is consumed with bringing discrimination and condemnation. Some have forgotten that no one comes to God the Father except those he invites (John 14:6); all who believe are joined to his family and in all its diversity, this family must learn to love (John 13:34-35).

Reshaping The Image. It is our responsibility to study and understand the truth and model it to the world through his church (2 Timothy 2:15). This modeling will reshape the image of homosexuality from the stereotype that has brought such condemnation to an understanding that God has made all of us and to all of us his grace is extended. Only then will freedom reign. We must seize the moment. It was for such a time as this that God has raised up those who live by the Spirit. The prevalence of the myth has kept misunderstanding in charge for centuries causing pain and suffering not only for gay people, but for their families and friends. We now have the opportunity to break the curse and set many captives free (Esther 4:14). The captives are on both sides of the issue. Knowledge of the truth will loose the bonds and set us all free to love one another just as Christ has commanded us.

Biblical Perspective

The basis of the research contained in this pamphlet and all the conclusions and positions taken herein have at their center the understanding that the Bible is the Word of God and in its original format is without error. It was written by inspired men, appointed and anointed by God for that purpose. It reveals the character of God, the almighty creator of everything that is; who through his only Son, Jesus, redeemed the lost creation from sin that had separated mankind from their creator. He gave them new life through regeneration and renewal (new birth) by the Holy Spirit.

The biblical approach is **inductive** by method. This eliminates a great deal of assumption and traditional teaching. Every attempt not to bring pre-conceived ideas and beliefs which can only prejudice our understanding of the Scriptures has been made. In the belief that through objectively letting the Scriptures speak for themselves through their original languages, we can reach the truth of these issues. The English **translations** are at best “*translations*” where often meanings of

words are sometimes lost or changed because the original text is not clearly understood or there is no comparable word in English to describe the Hebrew or Greek expression. In some translations, traditional points of view are perpetuated with a seeming disregard for the clear text in the original language. With these rules of interpretation, this study attempts to discover what the Bible (God’s Word) is and is not saying about the subject of homosexuality.

The researchers and editors of this study are fundamental interpreters of the Scriptures and conservative in their point of view using the most orthodox references and scholarly commentaries. Primarily, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* and *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* were used for the objective basis of this study. Other scholarly works are referenced and noted throughout the study.

The Bible itself combined with these other writings form the basis of the hope that is within us. Subjectively, we have the witness of the Holy Spirit, who Jesus clearly taught would lead us into all truth. On him we rely heavily and we pray that all who want to come to a knowledge of the truth will lean on the witness of the Spirit himself without whose counsel none of us could know any truth about God.

SPIRIT-CONTROLLED BEHAVIOR

While this document hopes to prove to its readers that beyond a shadow of any doubt, God has made diversity in his creation including homosexual people, no amount of “logical” argument will convince those who have already made up their mind. It is, therefore, the prayer of the editor that each reader prayerfully investigate the contents herein; waiting on the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who will reveal the loving character and nature of the Father to those who seek him with their whole heart.

While in our flesh we are prone to argumentation in convincing those who would disagree with our position (whatever it may be). We affirm, however, that

the truth will never be discovered through argument, but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Conversation about these matters can be helpful to some, but let us discuss the issues in a dialogue subject to the control of the Spirit; a demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

The traditional explanation for the supernatural destruction of the ancient cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19, has been God's displeasure and wrath against the sin of homosexuality. The tradition points to the "men of the city" who surrounded the house where two visitors had come to stay with Lot, Abraham's nephew. These visitors being supposedly men, were actually angels sent by God to guide Lot and his family safely out of the city. By this traditional view, the men surrounding the house had come to have "sexual relations" with the visitors. For this, God poured out fire and brimstone to destroy this repulsive and contemptible sin. Even now, the understood sin of Sodom, handed down to us through this traditional teaching, has taken the name "**sodomy**".

Until recent archeological discoveries were made, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah was viewed by the scientific community with some skepticism. The area of their location was evidently fertile and the people who lived there, enjoyed a prosperity not shared by the surrounding areas which were evidently primarily desert wasteland. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand how the people of the cities of the plain could become greedy isolationists, always suspicious of strangers. The world community of the time would have been small and had been unified until the division of languages at the tower of Babel. Travel between cities was very treacherous and most of the time, hotels were not available. Hospitality extended to sojourners was an established institution in the community of man. But the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, with all their abundance and wealth, were inhospitable toward others less fortunate. There is strong biblical evidence that this is why God destroyed them.

Biblical Evidence

If homosexuality is the clear reason for God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorroah, why doesn't the writer of Genesis state it clearly as such. The prophet Ezekial indicates a clear reason in the sixteenth chapter of his

prophetic word, verses 49-50:

"Now this is the sin of your sister Sodom:

She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen."

This passage says nothing about sexual acts of any kind as the reason for the destruction, but does specifically outline arrogance and a lack of concern for the needs of others as the reason. The passage clearly teaches that inhospitable acts were the key reasons for God's judgment.

Many would say that the "detestable" things mentioned in the passage referred to sexual sins including homosexuality which is an **abomination** to God. Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things that are particularly detestable to God:

"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."

No where here do we see condemnation of sexual sin of any kind, much less homosexuality. This is not to say that homosexual acts were not occurring in Sodom or that they were acceptable to God. The incident outside Lot's house (Genesis 19:1-10) does show that the intentions of those gathered around the house were to have sexual relations with the "angels" supposed to be men. A loving act, however, was not intended, but in this case **rape**. This kind of treatment was not uncommon in ancient civilizations are a demonstrative way of showing power over enemies. By itself, this was not the reason for the destruction of Sodom, since the Lord had already determined to destroy the city prior to the angels' visitation (Genesis 18).

In Jude 7, the writer says that the people had gone after “*strange flesh*”. Some believe that this is referring to homosexuality. The translation “*strange flesh*” is from the Greek words *heteros sarx* (#2087 and #4561) meaning “*different flesh*”. Had the writer wanted to refer to homosexual acts, it would have made more sense to use terms *homos sarx* (#3676 and #4571) meaning “*same flesh*”. The *Old Testament Pseudopigrapha* suggests an alternative rendering of this verse might be that Jude was stating that “*just like the wicked angels, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah left their first grace and gave themselves to idolatrous prostitution and the violent treatment of other people, so they have become an example by suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*”

Jesus commented on the sin of Sodom indirectly (Matthew 10:14-15) when he gave his disciples instructions concerning their proper response to inhospitable acts toward them. He stated that “*if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust of your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.*” Though it is not stated directly, the inference by contrast is clear: Jesus says that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of inhospitable acts.

The traditional interpretation of this story largely stems from the unfortunate translation of the word *enoshe* (#582) in Genesis 19:4. Most versions say “*men*”.

*“Before they had gone to bed, all the men
from every part of the city of Sodom -
both young and old - surrounded the house”*

The Hebrew word *enoshe* is not gender specific but indicates mortals or people. The word *esh* (#376) would have been used to mean “*man*” or *eshal* (#802) to mean “*woman*” if gender specific terminology was meant. This mistranslation gives the impression that just the men of the city had surrounded Lot’s house and the further impression that they were all homosexuals out to have sex with the angels. The word *enoshe* is used in Genesis 17:23 with the word *zechar* (#2145) meaning “*male*” demonstrates this point. The King James Version states it this way:

*“Abraham took Ishmael and...every male
among the men of Abraham’s house...”*

The question arises, what other kind of men are there but males? Abraham was selecting the males from among all the “*people*” on his household for circumcision. The more modern translations corrected Genesis 17:23 to indicate people (or in this case household), but for some reason did not make the same correction in Genesis 19:6.

The intentions of the people surrounding Lot’s house were to **rape** the visitors. Most people regard rape as an act of violence rather than a sexual act. As it would be illogical to condemn all heterosexual sexual acts because some people acted abusively, it is also illogical to bring condemnation to all homosexual acts when only some acted irresponsibly.

Women in the culture of the Old Testament were treated as property; to be used as their owners saw fit. Men, on the other hand, were to be given respect. Sexual violence against a man by another man was an all too common demonstration of dominance over another. Its purpose was to take away the dignity of the subdued; to humiliate the man through forced anal intercourse. This was carried out by men who were not necessarily homosexuals themselves. Compare with Judges 19.

Prostitutes were a common part of the religious fertility rituals in ancient times and no doubt were prevalent in Sodom and Gomorrah. A word used by many today to condemn homosexuals is the word **Sodomite**. Many use this term as a reference to those who lived in Sodom and supposing them to be homosexuals, have used this word synonymously with homosexual as a negative slam. The word, however, does not appear in the story of the destruction of Sodom and is used only four times in the entire Bible. It is the word *kawdashe* (#6945) and refers to male temple cult prostitutes. Usually, as in Deuteronomy 23:17, their counter parts, *kedayshaw* (#6948), the female temple cult prostitutes are also mentioned. These are not homosexuals. They are prostitutes who were active in the worship of the pagan fertility gods and goddesses of ancient Palestine, according to *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible*. The word sodomite originated from the *King James Version*, but only in reference to these temple cult prostitutes. Later versions must have picked up the homosexual connotation from the traditional understanding and interpretation of what the sin of Sodom was, and has since been used to condemn

homosexuality.

These mis-interpretations and the refusal by some biblical scholars to denounce such obvious mistranslations appear to be an attempt to keep homosexuality under control. When faced with the evidence, many have turned a deaf ear and not given serious consideration to the possibility that the traditional interpretation may in fact be in error. This tradition is so strong, those having a different interpretation are often ostracized for their non-conformity. Standing for the truth on this issue could mean professional suicide for clerics looking for recognition and acceptance; and those in the spotlight already, are fearful of losing face and will not speak out either.

Is there no one who will stand up for the truth no matter what it appears to be? One thing is for sure, the truth will be the truth no matter how anyone might try to cover it up.

THE LAW OF MOSES

The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch (literally 5 tools). They are traditionally attributed to Moses' authorship and contain the Law (Torah). The Law contains more than six hundred regulations governing everyday living for the Children of Israel. They cover everything from instructions on how to wear clothes and prepare ceremonial foods to laws concerning the observance of holy days and punishments requirements for certain crimes. The Law was specifically given to the Israelites and never intended to be the law for the Gentiles. In that sense, none of us have ever been under the Law and there is no need for us to be under it now.

The Apostle Paul observed that the ones who have *fallen away from grace* (Galatians 5:4) are the ones who have put themselves under the Law. This was sect known as the Judaizers and not those without the Law. The Law was given to show the righteousness of God could not be obtained by legalistically keeping rules. It gave the people knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20) and demonstrated the impossibility of anyone being able to measure up and be accepted by God on the basis of keeping it.

The major source of condemnation today against homosexuality and other social moral issues, has come from those who have fully grasped the significance of the law of Grace as opposed to the Law of Moses and

their belief that homosexuality is a violation of God's Law. Nearly every argument against homosexuality has at its root the Law of Moses. They mistakenly believe that *sodomy* is forbidden by the Law. This is not true. The word *sodomy* is a modern word, coined under the mistaken belief that Sodom was destroyed because of rampant homosexuality. The word *sodomy* does not appear in any of the main translations (KJV, RSV, NASB, or NIV). It has taken on new meaning in this century referring to any sexual act other than copulation between a man and a woman who are married to each other. It varies from state to state in its legal definition. This variance illustrates one of the prime difficulties in understanding the Scripture in its original language. To understand and explain what the writer has written, one must understand the words the writer used as the writer understood them. Word meanings change over time and the unlearned can come away from passages with a total misunderstanding of the writer's meaning.

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are the traditional condemnation passages against homosexual acts and appear in our modern translations to be clear cut prohibitions. Some have said these passages would justify capital punishment of homosexuals. Would these people also bring the same judgment against adulterers (Leviticus 20:10)? Following suite, they would also have to prescribe the death penalty for their stubborn and rebellious sons (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). One thing is clear from Paul's teaching: anyone who puts themselves under any one point of the Law obligates themselves to keep the whole Law (Galatians 5:3) or they are worthy of death.

In truth, it is uncertain what Leviticus 18:22 is saying. The literal transliteration reads:

*"You must not sleep the sleep of a woman
with a man; it is ritually impure."*

Many scholars believe this saying represents an **id-
iom** that has lost its meaning over time due to cultural traditions of the time long since forgotten. John Boswell makes a case in *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* that this prohibition cannot be a blanket condemnation of homosexuality, because the writer uses the Hebrew word *toevah* *#844) referring to the act as being "detestable" or an "abomination". The Hebrews used special words to

condemn specific wicked or abominable misdeeds. If this passage had been referring to sexual misconduct, the writer would have used the *zimmah* (#2154) instead of *toevah*.

The land was full of idolatry. The Palestinian god of the sun, *Baal* and his consort, the fertility goddess *Ash-toreth*, were commonly worshipped in the area and *toevah* appears throughout the Law to denounce these idolatrous practices. But *zimmah* is used wherever immoral acts such as prostitution or rape are the subject. Whatever detestable acts here are being prohibited have something to do with idolatry.

In the New Testament, we find that Jesus said nothing we can identify clearly about homosexuality. Homosexual relationships in the Greco-Roman world were common place at the time of Jesus. Had these relationships been so very detestable to God, certainly Jesus would have commented on them. Surely Paul would have commented on them. Some believe he did and in our next section we will consider Paul's writings.

ROMANS 1:18-32

Of all the passages of Scripture in the Bible used to condemn homosexuality, the most frequently used is this one here in Romans. Some of the words used here have been distorted, but for the most part, the translations we have today appear to be faithful to the Greek and accurate renderings of the text. The passage is clearly speaking of homosexual acts. This may at first appear to be an admission that homosexuality is not acceptable to God, but in the context, the passage makes no such blanket condemnation. Street walkers are commonly seen in cities across America and Europe, soliciting their bodies for money. There is no blanket condemnation of heterosexuality as the result of the misbehavior of the few. In the same way, homosexuality in general cannot be condemned on the basis of its abuse by a few.

In the context of this passage, Paul is exposing the practice of the pagan rites of fertility, common in Rome and throughout the known world of the time. Paul's concern (rather than a warning against homosexuals) was for the Roman Christian's involvement in these fertility rites. In Corinth, where evidently a man was sleeping with his father's wife and all knew of it (1 Corinthians 5:1), but did nothing about it, Paul took authority, exposing him and requiring his expulsion.

He must have had a similar concern that the Roman Gentile believers, who had formerly been actively involved in the temple cult fertility rites, might continue to do so. Rather than a blanket condemnation of homosexuality, this passage is a slam against the hypocritical Christians who were themselves continuing to participate in the temple cult orgies. The participants were not predominantly homosexuals, but heterosexuals participating in homosexual acts.

The people Paul is describing, who are involved in this temple cult worship, have some very distinct characteristics. First, they have rejected the knowledge of God (verse 20). Second, they do not glorify God or acknowledge his provision for them and their hearts and minds have become "*darkened*" (verse 21). Third, they have exchanged the glory of God for **idolatry** (verses 22-23). Fourth, they degrade one another through **promiscuous** sexual acts (verse 24). Fifth, they have believed lies, serving created things and not the Creator (verse 25). Sixth, they have exchanged their own "*natural*" sexuality for the "*unnatural*" (verses 26-27). Seventh, they have depraved minds that promote unbridled lawlessness (verses 28-32). These are very specific characteristics and while there may be many who fit these descriptions today, this does not describe the modern mainstream homosexual community and for sure does not even come close in describing those gay men and women who are believers, serving the Lord. The problem here is that many church-goers cannot see the difference between what Paul is describing here and committed loving relationships. There is a big difference.

In verse 26 and 27, translated to our English word "*natural*" is the Greek word *phusikos* (#5446) which means **intrinsic**; that which is born or inherent. It does not describe something that is necessarily universally true, but intrinsic for the individual. What is intrinsic for one person is not necessarily intrinsic for the next person. For example, one person may be intrinsically tall (as height runs in his/her family) while another person may be intrinsically short. Both are intrinsically influenced, but not in the same way. Both are "*natural*" in their appearance but with opposite results. Those in this passage, involved in the fertility rites, were giving themselves over to do those things that were not natural (intrinsic) to themselves. Even the English word "nature" means

that which is inborn or inherent to the individual. The assumption here which causes so much confusion is the belief that Paul was saying that “natural” refers to the heterosexual persuasion; that all humans are naturally heterosexual from birth. This assumption, based on the evidence of experience does not hold true.

Surveys on the incidence of a homosexual orientation in identical twins was done years ago at Johns-Hopkins University. In all cases where one of the twins was homosexual, the other twin was also. More recently, in the July 26, 1993 issue of *Time Magazine*, the *Science Editor* describes recent findings that lean toward a genetic explanation for homosexuality. “*This new work and the studies of the twins are two lines of evidence pointing in the same direction. But the DNA evidence is much stronger than the twins study*”, according to Simon LeVay whose research on the human brain differences is widely accepted. Science is progressively confirming what many gay men and women have known all along, they were created that way.

When (and if) science finishes its work and proves genetic rationale for the incidence of homosexuality, this will not end discrimination. Much like racial prejudice, people will need to redefine their understanding of homosexuality to end the revulsion and hatred our culture has generated toward the gay community. As Christians, we must end this war against a segment of humanity, proclaiming God’s love and acceptance rather than his rejection of anyone. Gay Christians must set an example of integrity as a demonstration of the redemptive work of God in the gay community. This example is for Christians and non-Christians, gays and straights; to be a light in the darkness of prejudice and hate.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

The English translations have taken a great deal of liberty in this particular passage; translating three different words very carelessly. Some versions have taken two of the Greek words used here and combined them into the one word “homosexual”. This passage has become one of the more quoted clobber passages used against homosexuals. An attempt to perpetuate a view that the Apostle Paul could not have possibly had concerning gay people has been forced into the meaning of these words. Assumption comes greatly into play in translating when little is known about the exact meanings of words. Meanings of words used in the biblical text are largely understood as the result of the word’s usage in other places. Using biblical and non-biblical sources as a reference point, ancient languages can be best understood through the repeated use of any given word in authentic period documents. In others words, the more a term is used, the better we can understand its meaning.

Fornication

The *King James Version* has assigned the “*fornicator*” as the meaning for the Greek word *pornos* (#4205) used in this passage. The word **fornication** in the year 1611 meant “*voluntary sexual intercourse between a man and an unmarried woman.*” The word *pornos*, however literally means “*male prostitute*”. Together with its counterpart *porne* (#4204) which refers to female prostitutes (**harlots**), both are derived from the root word *porneia* (#4202) meaning “*harlotry*”. The more modern translations have used an even more indistinct term “*sexual immorality*” (*New International Version*) which has a much broader connotation and is way beyond the original meaning of the text. In his much used reference manual, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, J. H. Thayer admits that a much broader term “*must be adopted in these passages*”...because we have learned “*how leniently converts from among the heathen regarded this vice and indulged in it*”. In other words, he says, ‘we must modify our translation of the Word of God so that we can ensure a general condemnation of sexual acts outside of marriage regardless of what the text actually says. God did not put it just right, so we must, therefore, correct him.’

Effeminate

The second word *malakoi* (#3120) is found in the New Testament only three times (Matthew 11:8, Luke 7:25, and 1 Corinthians 6:9). It has a double meaning in the Greek much like words in English. An example is the word *light*. Its usage in a sentence determines its meaning whether it is referring to heaviness or a source of illumination. In much the same way, *malakoi* literally means first “softness” as it applies to the feel of fine fabric. Secondly, the word is used to describe a character flaw, and in this case it means “weak willed” or “easily beguiled”. Our modern slang expression “softy” used to describe someone who is soft hearted, kind and easy to get along with seems closer to the meaning, except that it has a positive connotation. But *malakoi* has something to do with a moral weakness in context. It is perhaps that inability of some to maintain moral integrity and be self-controlled because of the ineptitude of their convictions and the lusts of their heart. The word better fits the pattern we see in our modern culture to those who are **addicts**. Addictions to various drugs, alcohol or sex is a common problem in our culture and translating this word to addicts would not only make more sense in the context, but would be in keeping with the meaning of the word. The Latin *Vulgate* translated *malakoi* to the word “*mollis*” which has exactly the same meaning, but the word “*mollis*” became a slang expression that referred to men who wore silky refined clothing. This meaning undoubtedly explains why the *King James Version* used the “**effeminate**”. In one translation, *malakoi* became “**Catamite**” which was a young boy slave used sexually by his master. Another translation uses the word “*lechouris*” (**lecherous**) and another “**voluptuous**” and still another “**sissies**”. The multiple ways we see this word being translated is a testimony to the confusion of the translators and biblical scholars and evidence of an attempt to prejudice scripture against homosexuals.

Abusers of Themselves With Mankind

The third word, *arsenokoitai* (#733) is used only twice in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10). Its meaning is at best questionable. If it refers to homosexuals, the question arises why Paul would have used such an obscure and questionable term when he could have used other much clearer terms to

describe what he meant. The Greek culture was filled with homoerotic words used to describe various homosexual relationships, but instead he used a word that does not appear anywhere in Greek homoerotic literature. Transliterated, the word *arsenokoitai* means “man-active-bed”. It could mean a male prostitute who takes the active role sexually. Modern day male prostitutes are differentiated by their trade, either for women, “**gigolos**” or for men, “**hustlers**”. Similarly, the Greeks also may have identified prostitutes by their trade. If Paul had wanted to condemn a group more inclined to be exclusively homosexual, he might have chosen the term *arenokoitai* (“man-passive-bed”) which would indicate a male prostitute who takes the passive role sexually.

The *King James Version* avoids a direct translation of this word with the phrase “*abusers of themselves with mankind*”, but it is interesting to note that even though the word homosexual did not exist at the time and wasn’t even coined until the late 19th century, a word existed in 1611 which if used by the King James translators would have left no question as to what they were talking about. This word is “**invert**”, which meant homosexual, but they did not use it. More in keeping with the context in both this passage and in 1 Timothy 1:10, a suggested better translation might be “*rapist*” since it has something to do with someone who takes the active role in the sex act.

The following chart demonstrates how ridiculous and far fetched some of the translations have gone with this passage. For instance, translating to “*child molester*” is completely ridiculous and “*those with infamous habits*” seems extremely vague. Some kind of male **pervert** is unquestionably referred to.

TRANSLATION	YEAR	RENDERED AS:	
Koine Greek	56	malakoi	arsenokoitai
Latin Vulgate	405	mollis	masculorum concubitores
Wyclif	1508	lecchouris	synne of Sodom
Tyndale	1525	weaklings	abusers of themselves
Reims-Douai	1609	effeminate	liars with mankind
King James Authorized Version	1611	effeminate	abusers of themselves
The Revised	1881	effeminate	abusers of themselves
American Standard	1901	effeminate	abusers of themselves
Revised Standard	1946	sexual pervers	
Jerusalem Bible	1955	effeminate	people with infamous
Interlinear Greek-English	1958	voluptuous persons	Sodomites
The Amplified	1958	those who participate in homosexuality	
New American Standard	1963	effeminate	homosexuals
Today's English	1966	homosexual pervers	
Jerusalem Bible	1968	sissies	child molesters
Jerusalem Bible	1968	Catamites	Sodomites
The Living	1971	homosexuals	
New International	1978	male prostitutes	homosexual offenders

These obvious mis-translations do not exonerate the prevalent homosexual promiscuous lifestyle, for clearly Paul's condemnation is against unbridled promiscuity in any form, homosexual or heterosexual. It is, therefore, the responsibility of gay Christians to redefine "gay-ness" as it relates to Spirit controlled Christian living; operating as new creatures before Jesus Christ who is Lord; setting an example to all unbelievers as a demonstration to everyone that they truly are the children of God.

"Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

Romans 8:14

WHO ARE THE EUNUCHS?

Some have taken Jesus' statements in Matthew 19:9-12 about divorce and remarriage as an indication that he condemned homosexuality by omission, confirming that heterosexuality is the only "normal" relationship possible. On closer examination, it would seem that just the opposite is true. Jesus is talking about **eunuchs** and defines them as those who are unable (or unfit) to function in marriage for one of three reasons:

- They were born that way and so are intrinsically eunuchs.
- They were made to be eunuchs by other men
- They made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven.

In our culture, the word eunuch is commonly understood to be a reference to castrated males. The Hebrew word *saris* (#5631) often translated to the English word eunuch, is used to refer to men, who sometimes for political reasons in some eastern cultures, were castrated to insure no threat through procreation. But this condition was not synonymous with eunuchry in general. Eunuchs were often trusted officials with great responsibility and political power. The Old Testament often uses the word **chamberlains**, *court officials* or *officers* when translating the word *saris* and can easily be missed when reading the English versions. This same meaning belongs to the Greek word *eunukos* (#2135). Eunuchs were often in charge of harems; responsible for the protection and care of the wives of the king because they posed no threat sexually. They were overseers of the beauty treatments for the women

to make them presentable to the king (Esther 2:3, 12-13). The Ethiopian Eunuch was the treasure keeper (Acts 8:27) for Queen Candace. Often Eunuchs were recognized for their spiritual sensitivity and wisdom and were chosen to advise the king. Daniel and the Hebrew children were eunuchs in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Isaiah prophesied that Hezekiah's children would become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (2 Kings 20:16-18). This was fulfilled when Daniel and the three Hebrew children (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) who were described as "*beautiful men*" (Daniel 1:4), were presented as eunuchs to King Nebuchadnezzar's court. The chief of the king's eunuchs, Ashpenaz, gave "*tender love*" (Daniel 1:9) to Daniel. The Hebrew word used here is *cheched* (#2617), meaning *affectionate love*. The modern translations have watered this down significantly. *Cheched* is used 250 times in the Old Testament and translated 174 times to "*love*", but for some reason when referring to Ashpenaz's relationship to Daniel, the *New International Version* says "*favor and sympathy*".

It is important to note and clarify that eunuchs and homosexuals are not synonymous terms. However, in Matthew 19:11, Jesus indicates that whoever the eunuchs are, they are that way because of the gift of God given to them. J. H. Thayer identifies them as being "*(b) naturally incapacitated for marriage or begetting children.*" Sterility can certainly incapacitate a man from begetting children, but what can incapacitate one from **marriage**? Tom Horner in his book *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality In Biblical Times* indicates from his research that wherever eunuchs were present, there is the presence of overt homosexual activity, or at least a very strong possibility of it. James Tinny, the late founder of Faith Temple in Washington, D.C. taught that eunuchs who served as royal chamberlains must of necessity be emotionally or psychologically homosexual or they would not be trustworthy. A heterosexual man, even though he may be physically **emasculated**, would still have a heterosexual drive to caress and kiss.

Because of their incapacitation toward marriage for whatever reason, the Jews regarded eunuchs as *cut-off* from their heritage since children were seen as the only way of extending yourself passed this life. Isaiah 53:1-8 is the passage the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading when Philip joined him by direction of

the Holy Spirit to explain how he (the Messiah) could be *cut-off* with no descendants (verse 8). Jesus, therefore, was also a eunuch.

Eunuchs, however, who choose what pleases God and keep his covenant, have a promise from God, that he will give them a "*name better than sons and daughters... an everlasting name that will not be cut-off*" (Isaiah 56:4-5). This promise is for us who are set apart for God's service as eunuchs ministering to the bride of Christ, his church. In this function, we are working toward readying the bride for the return of the bridegroom in order to present her spotless and without blemish, purified to love without hypocrisy.

WHO MAY BE SAVED?

The clear message to the gay community from the modern Church has been one of rejection. Gay people, like many other minorities or small eccentric groups, have been labeled as unacceptable to the kingdom of God. In the same way that the Jews considered Gentiles as unclean, gays have been treated as filthy; rubbish to be thrown out. Some have rejected this blanket statement and have attempted to reach out; understanding that Jesus' mission was not one of condemnation, but salvation. However, one Christian leader writes, "*homosexuals are dogs.*" This terminology, he believes, is a slang expression used in scripture to refer to homosexuals. In his point of view, "hate" and "prejudice" are justified. Terms like "family values" are used in such a way so that gays are presented as though they do not have any redeeming value. This presents the view that rejection is the only proper response to homosexuals. But, nowhere in scripture can anyone justify hate as a proper response to homosexuals or anyone. All people are the creation of God. Instead, James says to treat all alike without discrimination (James 2:1-4).

The early Church, beginning from Jewish roots, had an **ethnocentric** view of who they were to God and at first did not recognize any non-Jews as part of God's family. This **bigotry** was clearly broken by an incident that occurred in Acts 10. This lengthy story tells how Cornelius, a Roman centurion and devout Gentile man, received the message of the gospel from Peter and subsequently the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After witnessing the event, Peter declared to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem when they questioned him about

his actions in going to the "*uncircumcised*", "*who was I that I could stand in God's way?*" (acts 11:17). And later, Peter reiterated the conclusions drawn from the incident (Acts 15:8) that it is God who "*knows the heart*" and shows who he has chosen by giving them the Holy Spirit. This same message is still true today, that it is God who chooses and shows his choice by the giving of his Holy Spirit.

Paul's later clarification of the law of grace clearly says that God's free gift of grace (unmerited favor) is extended to all who by faith receive it (Romans 5:2). "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that WHOEVER believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16) "*Everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.*" (Joel 2:32) Paul teaches "*there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*" (Romans 10:12-13) "*All the Father gives me will come to me, and WHOEVER comes to me I will never drive away.*" (John 6:37) A person who is seeking God cannot even do so unless God draw him. So it is by God's invitation that anyone comes to him. "*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.*" (John 6:44)

These important passages paint a picture of no matter what the Church's sins are, God's love is extended to *WHOEVER* will respond to his free gift of grace. Jesus did not come to bring condemnation to anyone, but so that the world through him might be saved (John 3:17). Therefore, those who do not extend the free gift of God's unmerited favor to everyone as it was extended to them, are not abiding in the clear teaching of the New Testament. The witness of the Holy Spirit is all anyone needs (Romans 8:16) to come to the inward security of knowing who they really are: a child of God.

GLOSSARY

PART 1 ENGLISH DEFINITIONS

- Abomination** Detestable. Differing Hebraic terms used in the Old Testament for this one English word describe specific areas of actions considered particularly detestable to God. Each Hebrew word used is unique, describing a specific behavior with varying degrees of abhorrence.
- Addict** One who surrenders his/her will over to a behavior or substance habitually and becomes psychologically dependent on that behavior or substance.
- Adultery** A violation of the covenant of marriage through sexual intercourse of one of the marriage partners with a third party.
- Bigotry** Closed minded; intolerant and opinionated.
- Catamite** A boy slave kept by a pederast.
- Chamberlain** An attendant on a sovereign or lord in his bedchamber
- Conservative** Traditionally accepted methods of doctrinal interpretation.
- Deductive (Reasoning)** A logical philosophical approach to reasoning beginning with universal truth to determine individual truth; from the general to the particulars; starting with the whole and reasoning to the part.
- Effeminate** Having feminine qualities of softness or weakness. A person of over-refined mannerisms.
- Emasculate** To deprive a man of virile or procreative power; to castrate
- Ethnocentric** Regarding one's own group to be superior to others
- Fornication** Voluntary sexual intercourse between an unmarried woman and a man.
- Fundamentalism** The belief system emphasizing the literal inerrancy of the Scriptures.
- Gigolo** A male prostitute who caters to women.
- Greek (Language)** Language of the Hellenes; dominant language of the world at the time of Christ due to the influence of Greek culture after the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Greek dialect "Koine" was the common language used in writing the New Testament.
- Harlot** A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.
- Hebrew (Language)** The primary Semitic language used in writing the Old Testament. It was the ancient language of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Aramaic was also used in writing the Old Testament being a Hebraic derived dialect.
- Homophobic** Having an irrational fear of homosexuality.
- Hustler** A male prostitute who caters to men
- Idiom** A language or expression peculiar to a particular people or region.
- Idolatry** The worship of a physical object as a god or an immoderate attachment or devotion to something other than God.
- Immorality** Acts contrary to established standards of good behavior.
- Inductive (Reasoning)** A logical philosophical approach to reasoning by determining universal truth beginning with individual truth; from the particulars to the general; starting with part and reasoning to the whole.
- Infamous** Bad reputation or disgraceful.
- Intrinsic** Belonging to the basic constitutional nature of something.
- Invert** A homosexual. This word was coined prior to 1611, before the King James Version was published.
- Isolationist** One who keeps to themselves by abstaining from political entanglements

Judaizers The early Christian Church being predominantly Jewish struggled over the issue of non-Jewish converts. At first it was thought that before becoming a Christian, one must first become a Jew, receiving circumcision. However, Peter was shown that God had accepted the Gentiles as they were and later Paul expounded on the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. The Jerusalem council upheld his teaching. Some continued to insist that the Law of Moses must be observed to the letter and became known as the party of the circumcision or Judaizers.

Lecherous (Lecchouris) Given over to an inordinate indulgence of sexual activity.

Molester One who makes annoying sexual advances, sometimes having injurious effect

Orthodox The conventional point of view as established by conservative doctrinal interpretation

Pederast An older man who keeps young boys as his sexual slave. This practice was common in the ancient world. Practitioners were not necessarily homosexuals.

Pervert One given over to some form of extreme sexual abnormality.

Prejudice A preconceived judgment or opinion based on insufficient knowledge or partial inconclusive evidence. An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual or group because of their adjudged inferior characteristics.

Promiscuous Having multiple sexual partners without any commitments between them.

Prostitute A person who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.

Rape Violent acts of a sexual nature performed by the force of an individual over another without their consent.

Sissy An effeminate man or boy often thought of as a coward.

Sodomite A male temple-cult prostitute. (This word has no relationship to homosexuality except by those who have mistakenly interpreted Genesis 18-19 as a story of male homosexual rape.)

Sodomy Sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex; or sexual acts defined by cultural norms to be outside accepted moral practices.

Translation A rendering from one language to another using cultural and textual word meanings.

Voluptuous Full of delight and pleasure to the senses producing sexual arousal.

Vulgate Latin version of the Bible authorized by the Roman Catholic Church in 405 AD.

Whoever Anyone.

Whore A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.

Whoremonger A man who fornicates with whores.

PART 2 HEBREW DEFINITIONS

Ashtoreth (Asherah) Canaanite mother-goddess of fertility, consort to Baal, god of the sun, but associated in the Old Testament with idolatrous worship using asherah poles which were wooden images of the goddess.

Baal Canaanite god of the sun.

Checed Lovingkindness (Strong's #2617) Used extensively in the Old Testament expressing a physical showing of affection through caressing or love-making.

Enoshe Mankind. (Strong's #582) Refers to the human race, people, mortals in general.

Esh Man (Strong's #376) A male person.

Eshal Woman (Strong's #802) A female person.

Kawdashe Male temple-prostitute (Strong's #6945) A male devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry.

Keydashaw Female temple-prostitute (Strong's #6948) A female devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry.

Saris Chamberlain (Strong's #5631) A eunuch trusted to guard the private possessions of a king or lord for whom they are employed. They are sometimes castrated to ensure the fidelity of their trust.

Toevah Detestable or abominable (Strong's #8441) Something disgusting or abhorrent to God because of some kind of idolatrous involvement.

Torah (Tora) The first five books of the Old Testament commonly known as the "pentateuch" (the five tools) often referred to as "the Law."

Yadah To know (Strong's #3045) Knowing someone by way of recognition. Can mean anything from mere greeting to having sexual relations with someone.

Zechar Male (Strong's #2145) Refers to the male gender, either animal or human.

Zimnah Detestable or abominable (Strong's #2154) Literally meaning "a bad plan." Often used in the books of the Law to specifically characterize detestable acts that were sexually immoral.

PART 3 GREEK DEFINITIONS

Arenokoitai A male prostitute who takes the passive role during the sex act. Transliterated it means "man-passive-bed."

Arsenokoitai A male prostitute (Strong's #733) who takes the active role in the sex act. Transliterated it means "man-active-bed."

Eunukos Chamberlain or bed-keeper (Strong's #2135) A trusted guardian in the service of a monarch incapacitated for marriage on the basis of intrinsic qualities, or by choice, or by emasculation. They were often powerful political officials or court officers.

Heteros Different (Strong's #2087) Not the same.

Homos Same (Strong's 3676) Similar to identical.

Koine The common dialect of Greek used during the time of Jesus in the near eastern and Mediterranean lands. It was made common throughout the known world due to the conquests of Alexander the Great.

Malakoi Soft to the touch; Weak-willed (Strong's #3120) The feel of a fine fabric. When referring to the character of people it means moral weakness or unrestrained. The Latin rendering mollis has the exact same meaning. The Latin word became a slang expression at the time of Clement of Alexandria to describe certain male prostitutes who dressed themselves in finery, cropped their hair and sometimes castrated them-selves to maintain a youthful appearance and high voice. This meaning probably best explains why this term is often translated to "effeminate" in many English versions of the Bible.

Phusikos Instinctive (Strong's #5446) Referring to that which one is naturally inclined to do instinctively or one's inherited physical appearance.

Porne Female prostitute (Strong's #4204) A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.

Porneia Harlotry (Strong's #4202) Promiscuous sexual acts with prostitutes.

Porneuo To act the harlot (Strong's #4203) To engage in promiscuous sexual activity with a harlot.

Pornos Male prostitute (Strong's #4205) A man who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.

Sarx Carnal (Strong's #4561) Specifically referring to flesh or skin, but in spiritual terms that which is in opposition to the spiritual; natural.

Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: **support**, to cope with an adverse society; **education**, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and **advocacy**, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diver-

The Problem of Silence.

In America today, there are millions of parents with gay daughters and sons who are victims of social, political and economic oppression. Gay people in many communities are still obstructed by prejudice in their pursuit of happiness and in striving to live their lives with openness and dignity. But homosexuals are not the only victims of this oppression; it also touches their friends and families. We as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays feel that the time is right to join together and appeal to the public conscience in order to achieve equal opportunities for our daughters and sons. We challenge society's status quo attitudes. We have a commitment to actively help our gay daughters and sons by working for the same basic human rights, liberties and opportunities for them that are enjoyed by others. As proud parents of gay people, new windows of understanding have been opened to us which have enriched our lives. We want to bring this understanding to the community.

STATEMENT OF POSITION

We who are parents and friends of lesbians and gay persons have learned that they come from families, from all corners of the earth, from every culture, religious and ethnic group.

Their homosexual orientation is neither chosen nor something they are taught to be and it is not "Just a stage they go through."

There is no pattern to the kinds of families they come from dominant or submissive mothers, weak or strong fathers, single parent homes or "model" families. A gay son or daughter may be an only child, the youngest, middle or oldest child, with siblings who are not gay.

We who are parents have learned to be free from any burden of guilt for our children's sexual orientation and we recognize their expression of love as natural for them and moral.

We view rejection of a gay child by his/her family as a tragedy. We share this stance with you because we are members of close-knit families who are pro-family in every sense and who affirm "traditional values." We respect the truth; recognize the reality of individual differences; honor the right of each person to be who he/she authentically is. We love and affirm our children with pride and are committed to their entitlement to full civil and human rights.

ABOUT OUR CHILDREN

Gay people are everywhere.

Lesbians and gays come from families from all corners of the earth, from every culture, religion, ethnic group and in every occupation.

Gay people are naturally homosexual.

Both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have recognized that homosexuality is not a mental or emotional disorder. Gay men and women share the same amount of interest in sexual activity as heterosexual persons, neither more nor less. Lifestyles of gay persons cannot be lumped into one category any more than heterosexual lifestyles. Gay persons establish stable, long lasting relationships, work for a living, shop, watch TV, vote and pay taxes.

Homosexuality is not chosen, like selecting clothes or a line of work. No one knows how human sexual orientation is determined. In discussions covering nearly a decade with hundreds of families with gay children, we have found that:

The gay child is most often aware of his/her sexual orientation at a very early age.

None of the gay children were influenced or taught to be gay by any person.

In homes where gay children try to become heterosexual, all attempts fail. Being gay is not just a stage youngsters go through.

Family fears of "catching" homosexuality, or of being "recruited" at school or elsewhere are unreasonable and "utterly without scientific foundation". (Statement of J. Weinstein, M.D. President, American Psychiatric Association, 10/6/78).

Gay People are part of the family. One out of every four families has a gay member. Each gay son or lesbian daughter has parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, cousins, aunts and uncles, and nieces and nephews whom they love and care for. Rejection of a gay/lesbian person by his/her family is a tragedy for each person in the immediate and extended family unit.





All our meetings continues to be open to everyone regardless of membership status and are CONFIDENTIAL

**Our meetings are held at the
Lutheran Church of The Master
3333 Coolidge Troy 48084.**

North of Big Beaver, directly Kiddy Corner for Nordstrom Parking Structure and behind Kmart Headquarters.
We meet from **2 PM to 5 PM EVERY 2nd Sunday of the Month, No exceptions.**

Family Values

PFLAG represents thousands of families throughout the United States and eleven other countries. One of our primary objectives is to maintain families in loving relationships. We challenge any concept of traditional family values that excludes our gay, lesbian and bisexual loved ones.

Homosexual and bisexual persons are important and vital members of society. They function in leadership roles at every level of public life, and as responsible and caring individuals in their privates lives. They are your doctor, nurse, teacher, minister, lawyer, sales clerk, union leader, chief executive officer, auto mechanic, political representative, star athlete and office colleague. They are your, and our, children, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts and cherished friends.

With all of our children, heterosexual and homosexual alike, we share values that include personal integrity and responsibility, adherence to the work ethic and to religious values, compassion for those in need, and commitment to healthy and mutually-respectful family relationships.

Gay, lesbians and bisexual persons are beloved and cherished members of millions of families. They create their own families, and instill in their own children the same values of integrity, work, responsibility, religion and compassion. We love, respect and support our gay, lesbian and bisexual children. We denounce and will strongly resist any effort to label them as less than the responsible citizens and caring family members we know them to be.

Adopted by the Board of Directors September 7, 1992

Membership Application (Tax Deductible - ID# 38-2826660) (Please Print) Name _____ Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip Code _____ Email _____ Telephone Numbers _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> Change of Address <input type="checkbox"/> Contact me for Volunteer Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Do NOT send my Name/Address to Pflag National Make Checks Payable to PFLAG/Detroit and Mail to: Pflag Detroit PO Box 1169 Royal Oak MI 48068-1169	Check One	Membership Type	Amount
		Individual	\$ 25.00
		Household	\$ 35.00
		Newsletter Subscription Only	\$ 20.00
		Supporting	\$ 50.00
		Contributing	\$ 100.00
		Lifetime	\$ 1000.00
		Donation of Support	