

## Homosexuality and the Bible

Greetings.

I wrote this essay, if that is what it is, as a set of collected notes in order to put a lot of content in a small, manageable space so I could use it when I needed it quickly. I have used it as notes for discussions with Unitarian Universalists, as well. I am not a scholar, but I hope I have not abused my degree in Philosophy (with a strong minor in Religious Studies).

Before I read and studied the Bible, I would find myself in conversation with people who appeared to know the Bible and who would tell me how wrong I was on an issue. In my own biblical illiteracy I had allowed others to use the Bible as a bludgeon. I could not respond at all, thus limiting any opportunity to accomplish change, let alone to have meaningful conversations. Since studying the Bible, I am able to point out items that the other may have forgotten or had decided was irrelevant to the discussion but which I might find highly relevant.

But I was surprised to learn that the Bible is an exceptionally interesting book. Rather than start my Bible studies "from the beginning," I chose topics and theology books on those topics to follow through the Bible. And I bought a Bible with strong pages specifically in order to mark in it. I have found some wonderful verses, beautiful verses; and I have found verses that should put the Bible in the list of Banned Books that some parents object to their kids reading at school (certainly worse than *Huckleberry Finn*). The Bible is a magnificent resource for starting discussions on moral issues and ethics. And as someone once said of Kant: agree or disagree, you can't argue without it.

The theological and philosophical arguments regarding the church's position on homosexuality are clearly articulated and there are many more such arguments in McNeill's book *Homosexuality and the Church*. That book is written in absolutely clear language, and in a gentle tone by a man formerly a Father in the Catholic Church who counseled homosexuals and saw the pain they felt at being abandoned by the Catholic Church. Other books in the bibliography (in case you wish to become more biblically literate) are interesting, or confirm much of what McNeill says, or add more difficult philosophical perspectives.

Use and challenge the essay freely for your own knowledge, for discussion groups, as the beginning of biblical literacy. Write me and show me how I have misunderstood something. Show me verses I am unaware of. I'm sure I don't have all the answers, but I have spent a lot of time on the questions.

One last request: Please do not use the essay to make money. It's not intended for that.

Warmly,  
Martha Osgood  
1997, 2003 and 2006  
541-84-1180 and maroz@comcast.net

## HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE BIBLE

No supreme value can be less than human. ~Karen Armstrong

God created Adam and Eve,  
not Adam and Steve,  
not Amy and Eve.....or did He?

What does the Bible say about Homosexuality? What are the contexts in which it is said? By whom and why were these statements said? For what purpose? Is homosexuality a moral issue? Is it a set of actions or an orientation? And if one or the other, does the Bible speak to that issue? To what extent is condemnation of homosexuality truly founded in Scripture?

In relation to the above questions, and knowing that there is not enough time to discuss all the points and supporting evidence that I have researched from the Bible and the books listed in the bibliography, I will list some conclusions here and let your interest dictate the issues we will explore.

1 - In discussing the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, all the writers of the OT and the NT understood that rather than homosexuality, it is "inhospitality" that was being punished. In the lists of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, there is no mention of homosexuality, but there is very specific discussion of the other sins of the people of these cities.

2 - The dignity of the male was destroyed by homosexuality by making a man into a woman, that is, into a passive sexual recipient. The Bible takes great pains to emphasize the absolute dignity of the male. On a side note, the ancient Greeks, with their love of boys, never allowed sexual penetration of the older by the younger for the same reason.

3 - Every text in the OT dealing with homosexuality also refers to additional issues such as idolatry, sacred prostitution (worship), promiscuity, violent rape, seduction of children and violation of guests' rights. As a result we can never be sure to what extent the condemnation is of homosexual activities as such or only of homosexual activities under these circumstances.

4 - The word 'abomination' at its root means 'idolator' or 'worshiper of false gods'. An idolator can be someone who

- worships different gods than you do
- worships a part (instead of the whole)
- worships a created thing instead of the creator.

To do abominable things means to worship other gods than Yahweh or do the acts which other peoples do when they worship other gods than Yahweh. Thus, homosexual practices are not in themselves condemned, but are forbidden as part of an idolatrous fertility rite.

5 - While Jesus says nothing at all about homosexuality, he blesses eunuchs. Some have suggested that his comments about 'self-made' and 'nature-made' eunuchs also refer to homosexuals. Isaiah foretells that the new covenant will specifically include the eunuch as among those 'gathered to God besides those already gathered'. The eunuch may be so physically, naturally, or by choice as acknowledged by Jesus. Thus the New Covenant includes those who were formerly excluded for sexual reasons.

6 - Rather than condemning homosexuality or homosexual behavior, the NT suggests that anything that denies the presence of God in another person insults God. Paul does not consider homosexuality AS HOMOSEXUALITY, but discusses several examples of how a man's 'relationship with God affects all his other relationships.' Thus, many verses can be discussing, in this context, an aspect of idolatry. Making a person (male or female) into a sex object, heterosexual or otherwise, dehumanizes both parties, and therefore insults God. McNeill emphasizes that while a person 'is not idolatrous because he or she is a homosexual, he or she may be involved in homosexual activities because he or she is idolatrous.' The former is not condemned; the latter is.

7 - A serious question can be raised as to whether what is understood today as the true homosexual and his or her activity is ever the object of moral condemnation at all in the scriptures. 'Scripture can be understood as explicitly condemning homosexual activity only if it can be interpreted as condemning the activity of the true homosexual'. There can be no moral condemnation of that over which one has no control, thus psychological orientation would have been of no interest to the writers of the Bible: they were discussing actions, which are subject to self-control and therefore to moral judgment. In light of this, the writers of the Bible can only have had in mind what we today would call perverts; ie the indulgence in homosexual activity for whatever reason on the part of those who are by nature heterosexual or vice versa.

## **Sodom and Gomorrah**

We have been taught that the story of Sodom and Gomorrah refers to homosexuality but we must ask to what extent this notion is supported in Scripture. Let's go to the source.

Genesis 19: ...before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them."

The Oriental law of hospitality required that once a man had eaten at another's table, he was guaranteed protection by the host. Lot took the principle of hospitality (which could mean life or death to a traveler) very seriously, possibly above his love for his two daughters, although some have said that his offering of these two virgins was only symbolic, meant to shock the mob into its senses, and not meant as a true sacrifice in exchange for the strangers for whom he provides hospitality. The folklore of the time emphasized hospitality by telling stories of strangers who were not given hospitality, the story of Philemon and Baucis by Ovid being the most famous.

The Bible sometimes has couplets, or stories in different books which are very similar to each other. Perhaps Genesis 19's couplet at Judges 19 can provide more information to understand the Sodom and Gomorrah story of Genesis.

Judges 19 "In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. And his concubine became angry with him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there some four months. Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple of asses.....

As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, base fellows, beset the house round about, beating on the door; and they said to the old man, the master of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him." And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren, do not act so wickedly; seeing that this man has come into my

house, do not do this vile thing. Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do with them what seems good to you; but against this man do not do so vile a thing."

Judges 20:4-6 explains clearly that the intended crime of the Benjaminites in the second of the couplets was rape and murder rather than homosexuality: "Me they intended to kill, and my consort they so ravished that she died." The absolute dignity of the male and the absolute sacredness of the guest - hospitality - were the issues underlying the overt message.

The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah as a whole failed to meet certain standards, among which homosexuality is not mentioned in any of the lists given by the Bible. Consider what God despises, and what He wants/likes. In these lists there is no mention of homosexuality, but there is specific discussion of other acts/sins which are said to be precisely those of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Isaiah 1:9-17 "If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. ...Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Isaiah 3:9-15 Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have done shall be done to him. My people--children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.

Jeremiah 23:14 But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah."

Nowhere in the OT is homosexuality identified as the sin meriting utter destruction of whole cities, and as we move to the NT all references to Sodom and Gomorrah refer to inhospitality as the crime.

Matthew 10:14, "And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."

Luke 10:10 "But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town."

Of the books that did not quite make it into the canon, the Book of Wisdom 19:13-14, specifically identifies the sin as one of inhospitality. "...whereas the men of Sodom received not the strangers when they came among them; the Egyptians made slaves of the guests who were their benefactors."

Ecclesiasticus 16:8 also says specifically the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was pride: "He did not spare the people among whom Lot was living whom he detested for their pride." As McNeill points out, it would be sadly ironic that it is now the homosexual that is refused hospitality due to a misinterpretation of the very message demanding it.

Looking beyond the issue of what the writers of the books of the Bible saw to be the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is not unambiguously clear that sexual knowledge is meant by the word "to know" (yadha). This verb may imply sexual knowledge, but of the 943 times the word is used in the Hebrew Bible, as referenced to #3045 in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, only 12 times is sexual knowledge clearly meant. In Exodus 14:14, the word applies to a man's relationship to God Himself, and in Genesis 3:5, 22 it applies to what God knows. Yet even if we grant that the knowledge referred to is sexual knowledge, other important words are ambiguous in the Bible. The usual word for homosexual behavior and bestiality is 'shakhabk'. Why the writers chose not to use these words in the Genesis and Judges couplets

must be considered, and the first implication raised is that they did not mean to refer to homosexuality or bestiality in the telling of the story.

Sodomy was commonly used in Biblical times as an expression of 'domination, contempt and scorn.' (p58, McNeill) In Genesis 9:18-27, Ham probably did not merely look at his father's nakedness, but actually did something to his father. In the Egyptian epic *The Contending of Horus and Seth*, Seth commits an act of sodomy on Horus while he slept then used that act to claim domination and kingship. (McNeill, p.59) The dignity of the male was destroyed by making a man into a woman, a passive sexual recipient, yet at the same time the active party to the same act of rape achieves the status of dominator. Again, this is not a condemnation of homosexuality itself, but a cultural symbol assumed by a specific society in its own time.

Not only are these examples muddied by other issues, every text in the Hebrew Bible potentially dealing with homosexuality also includes 'aggravating circumstances such as idolatry, sacred prostitution, promiscuity, violent rape, seduction of children and violation of guests' rights.' (McNeill, 60) As a result we can never be sure to what extent the condemnation is of homosexual activities as such or only of homosexual activities under these circumstances.

## **Abomination**

The word 'abomination' at its root means 'idolator' or 'worshiper of false gods'. An idolator can be someone who worships different gods than you do, or a part instead of the whole, or a created thing instead of the creator. The word abomination is used hundreds of times in the Bible, yet may not include the meaning "homosexuality" in any of them. The fertility cults of the cultures nearest the Hebrews worshiped cyclic fertility gods with accompanying sexual rituals, including sacred prostitution. The word 'abomination' may include the worship of sex, or the use of sex in worship, but this would not be limited to homosexuality, nor would it relate to the activities of homosexuals in themselves, since most temple prostitutes had sex with the opposite gender and simple male/female intercourse was not forbidden as an abomination.

Thus, again, homosexual practices are not in themselves condemned, but are forbidden the Jews as part of the taboos that set them apart from other peoples of the land.

Ezekiel 16:49 "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it."

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 "There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow; for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God. "You shall not lend upon interest to your brother, interest on money, interest on victuals, interest on anything that is lent for interest.

Deut 23:1 ... no one who has his testicles crushed or his penis cut off shall marry into the Lord's community. The eunuch shall not enter the temple. (See also 2 Samuel 5:8)

The list of abominations includes eating rabbit, pork, camel, eagle, falcon, sea gull, bat, clam, oyster, lobster, abalone, crab, rare meat, etc. The maimed and crippled are excluded from full participation in the life of the temple. The New Covenant, the New Testament, changes things. While Jesus says absolutely nothing about homosexuality, he blesses eunuchs. Some have suggested that his comments about 'self-made' and 'nature-made' eunuchs refer to homosexuals.

Matthew 19:12 "For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth (homosexuals?), and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (priests?). He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."

The baptism of the eunuch indicates the eunuch is no longer to be considered a sexual outcast.

Acts 8:27-39 And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless some one guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this: "As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth." And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, pray, does the prophet say this, about himself or about some one else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news of Jesus. And as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

Isaiah 56:2-8 foretells that the new covenant will specifically include the eunuch as among those 'gathered to God besides those already gathered'. The eunuch may be so physically, naturally or by choice as acknowledged by Jesus in Matthew 19:12.

Isaiah 56:3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off." And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, every one who keeps the Sabbath, and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant-- these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered."

Likewise, some of what was forbidden as abominations by these laws include: rabbit, pork, clams, eel, caviar, oysters, crab, and other non-finned, non-scaled seafood - all were an abomination to the Jews in the sense that other nations did them, but not the Jews. One can hardly help but question why Gentiles are allowed today to eat such foods as are forbidden in the Holiness Code, yet must condemn homosexuality. And furthermore, if homosexuality is "against nature", why are other non-natural things not also condemned?

Is being a Jew or Gentile natural? Gal 2:15.

Is grafting fruit trees onto wild roots natural? Romans 11:24

Is cutting the hair natural, or is not cutting hair natural? 1 Corinthians 11:14

Is circumcision natural? 1 John 7:22 ;

Did Jesus not zap a fig tree in several gospels for not bearing fruit out of season? Is not the expectation of a tree bearing fruit out of season unnatural? Matthew 21:19-22, Mark 12:12 -22.

It would appear that "against nature" has a different meaning altogether than that which is applied today for homosexuals.

## Self-indulgence (hedonism)

Paul, in the New Testament, appears to be saying that homosexuals are denied the kingdom of God in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 6:9 “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts (effeminate(s), abusers of themselves with mankind/men, catamites, sodomites, homosexuals, in other translations), nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God... Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." ...Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body...”

But with so many translated words to use for the one original Greek word, what exactly does the original word mean? How was it used in other sources of the times? According to John J. McNeill, S.J. (who quotes John Boswell), “Cultural differences appear to exercise considerable influence over the translation of biblical passages dealing with sexual morality.” The French, Spanish, and English translations can vary widely...and indicate very little understanding of the precise meaning of Paul’s terms.” (P.51) There was no word in classical, biblical nor patristic Greek with the same meaning as the word Homosexual. The word “malakos” in Luke 7:25 and Matthew 11:8 translates to ‘loose, undisciplined,’ possibly ‘masturbator,’ and sometimes ‘general immorality’, but never as homosexual.

Paul refers to ‘koiysi’ in the plural, implying excessive sexual behavior (Romans 13:13) which the Vulgate renders as ‘male concubines’ rather than ‘licentiousness’ as in the RSV.

There were words available to Paul referring to generalized homosexual activity, yet Paul chose another word instead which occurs in two writings outside the Bible. In one the word ‘arsenokoisai’ names “an obsessive corruptor of boys”, and the other probably means anal intercourse, though including heterosexuals. As a consequence, we do can be reasonably certain that Paul was not speaking of homosexuality as we define it today.

Rather than condemning homosexuality or homosexual behavior, the New Testament suggests that anything that denies the presence of God in another person insults God.

Romans 1:26-27 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.”

It is interesting that relatively innocuous gossips and the foolish are lumped together with homosexuals. (And even more interesting that the very next verse begins a new chapter: “Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.”)

1 Timothy 1:8-10 “Now, we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.”

The Bible writers imply that the definition of ‘sound doctrine’ is common knowledge. If we today are to understand what Paul meant, we have to research. Is slavery ‘sound doctrine? It was for Paul in his

times. Is never remarrying after divorce 'sound doctrine'? How about not eating pork or clams? It would appear that there have been some changes in what is defined as 'sound doctrine' since Paul's day; the answers are not black and white for us today, even if we could be assured that Paul was discussing homosexuality at all.

### **The Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26)**

This is where the strongest and clearest condemnation of homosexual actions seems to be addressed. But is the really what is being said? Israel must be holy as God is holy - and the way to do that is to not imitate the practices of other peoples.

Some acts which are overtly described as abominations (idolatrous acts) in the Holiness Code of Leviticus are punishable by death, others are not. (Exodus 21:22 that causing a miscarriage - ie, an abortion - is not punishable by death.) Some forms of incest and adultery are punishable by death, others are not. To 'defile oneself' means many things including to have sex with your wife or to handle a dead body or to have an emission in the night or to touch someone who a skin disease, etc. And an abomination is an act which other peoples to but which is taboo for you. Let's look at some of these verses.

Leviticus 18:22 "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. And you shall not lie with any beast and defile yourself with it, neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it: it is perversion. "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves; and the land became defiled, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you - for all of these abominations the men of the land did, who were before you, so that the land became defiled; lest the land vomit you out, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For whoever shall do any of these abominations, the persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practiced before you, and never to defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 20:13 If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them.

A serious question can be raised as to whether what is understood today as the true homosexual and his or her activity is ever the object of moral condemnation in the scriptures. The Bible writers of course were unaware of the psychological condition of homosexuality; the Bible was concerned with actions only. So when 37% of all men in the USA, according to Kinsey, have had some homosexual experience but have gone on to become well-adjusted heterosexuals, and when there are well-known contingent, consensual, occasional and situational reasons why homosexual actions are practiced by heterosexuals (prison, out at sea, young boys experimenting, curiosity, hedonism, early trauma) who then return to heterosexual practices when the situation changes, one must recognize that homosexual actions and the homosexual must be distinguished. Christopher Isherwood said it so clearly: "You know you are homosexual when you fall in love with another man." Orientation is morally neutral and of no interest to the writers of the Bible who were discussing actions, which are subject to moral judgment. (There can be no moral condemnation of that over which one has no control).

Therefore we must distinguish between the invert/true homosexual and the pervert. Scripture can be understood as explicitly condemning homosexual activity only if it can be interpreted as condemning the activity of the true invert. The writers of the Bible can only have had in mind what we today would call perverts; ie the indulgence in homosexual activity on the part of those who are by nature het.

Notice too in the Holiness Code that God forbids the blind, the lame, the man with crushed testicles, the man with skin diseases, and the children whose parents were not perfect to make offerings to the Lord by fire in the temple. Leviticus 21:16-24, See also David's hatred of the lame in 2 Samuel 5:8.

## **DAVID and JONATHAN**

Read their whole story through carefully as if you were reading it for the very first time. It is interesting on its own merits. I Samuel 16-20, and II Samuel 1:19-27.

David was very handsome. 1 Samuel 16:2

King Saul had some mental disease that came and went. 16:14

David kills Goliath 17:48 (but 2 Samuel 21:19...)

Jonathan, Saul's son, meets David - love at first sight 18:1-3

Saul's jealousy and mental impairments make him see David as an enemy. 18:12,29, and 19:1,9  
Saul is disturbed by the relationship between David and Jonathan: "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman: do I now know that you have chosen David the son of Jesse to your own shame?"

Jonathan protects David, each swears his love for the other, they kiss and weep. 1 Samuel 20

Jonathan dies and David mourns. David declares he loved Jonathan "with a love surpassing the love of women." 2 Samuel 1:26

## **The Bible Is Not Followed As It Is Written**

Prostitution was supposed to be a natural and necessary safeguard of the virginity of the unmarried and the property rights of husbands. In the OT a man could visit a prostitute, could have more than one wife, and many concubines. A woman could not be a prostitute though without being kicked out of the family home. Only in the NT does this change, and both men and women are forbidden to use prostitutes.

Incest - In the older sections of the OT, a brother and a sister could marry and have even higher status than unrelated people who marry, but the definition of incest was slightly different: a man could not have relations with the daughter of his mother, but he could with the daughter of his father.

Rape - even rape of Jewish women by Jews was allowed in the OT (Judges 19-21) ...and rape is not discussed in the NT at all except indirectly.

Veils for Women - even the New Testament requires women to keep silent in church and to wear veils. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 11:1-16.

Usury - the Bible demands the death penalty for lending money at interest. Ezekiel 18:5-18, Deuteronomy 23:19-20.

Adultery - The punishment is death by stoning for both the man and the woman in the OT (Deuteronomy 22:22)- but note: adultery is defined by the marital status of the woman: a married man who has intercourse with an unmarried woman is not an adulterer, in the OT. A bride who is found not to be a virgin is stoned

9

to death (Deut 22:13-21) but male virginity at marriage is never mentioned. Any man can have sexual relations with any “unowned” woman. (See the New World Translation for constant use of the word “owner” for “husband”.) The key here is that a woman is a man’s property and sex with that woman without her owner’s permission is a violation of the rights of her owner. The dignity of the male is to be upheld at all costs.

Celibacy in the OT is clearly abnormal. According to Rabbi El’azar: “Any Jew who has no wife is no man.” The human male apart from the female is not considered a full human being. Jewish tradition requires a man to be married to be a Rabbi. This reasoning depends upon ‘identifying the biblical concept of a person with sexual orientation and find in that orientation the divine image of man... It was important in the OT that every man and woman in Israel receive this life and pass it on in marriage.’ (McNeill, 62-3)

But the NT says that the new people of God are no longer bound by blood relationship, that membership in the new relationship with God is no longer a question of human descent. This love could be expressed in a love which passes marital love in value and therefore in fertility. Furthermore, the focus has changed from the OT ‘survival of the people, of one’s own survival in and through one’s children...to the NT emphasis on resurrection, which carried with it belief in personal immortality and the freedom from the necessity of marrying and bearing children in order to survive beyond the grave.’ (ibid, p.63) \*\*\*\* Many psychologists point out that one of the most profound roots of homophobia is the connection, unconscious for the most part, between homosexuality, barrenness and death.

Eunuchs - Read Acts 8:26-39 for the baptism of the eunuch who is no longer to be considered outcast, then compare with the foreshadowing in Isaiah 56:2-8 where it was foretold that the new covenant would include those who were formerly sexual outcasts. The eunuch, according to Jesus (Matthew 19:12) can be so from birth (homosexuals?), can be made so by men, or can be made so by personal choice (homosexuals?).

Sanctioned killing of one’s own child - Stubborn and rebellious sons may be stoned to death at the city gates by his parents and the elders. Deuteronomy 21:18.

Interest on a loan is forbidden when loaning money to a fellow tribesman, yet Jews may loan money at interest to non-Jews and may sell food that Jews would not eat to that same foreigner. Deuteronomy 23:2 “To a foreigner you may lend upon interest, but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest; that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are entering to take possession of it... But if you refrain from vowing, it shall be no sin in you... No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge; for he would be taking a life in pledge.”

A honeymoon is to last one year: Deut 23:23 "When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, to be happy with his wife whom he has taken." (Yet have you ever heard of Christians advocating a year-long honeymoon of complete leisure for newlyweds?)

Jubilee Year - have you even heard of a Jubilee Year? Where all debts are forgiven and everyone starts over again...see Leviticus 25:50.

Ordeal - Women are forced to endure an ordeal, the only ordeal in the Bible, where in they are forced to drink a potion of the dirt of the temple floor even when their husbands are admittedly jealous without provocation. Numbers 5:11-31, especially verse 14.

Legal Vows - Women are forbidden to make vows or contracts without approval of male relatives. Numbers 30:1-16

Slavery, sexual slaves and concubines are supported in OT, and slavery is supported in NT.

II Samuel 5:13, "And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David."

Numbers 31:17-20 "Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves."

Ecclesiastes 2:7ff "I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house; I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces; I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, man's delight."

Ephesians 6:5 "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ;"

Colossians 3:22 "Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord."

Polygamy is accepted, and even endorsed as levirate marriage, in the OT

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

"And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his brother who is dead, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.'"

(Note here: the brother is not allowed to use this woman for his own sexual pleasure since she is still technically owned by his dead brother; only if he accepts the responsibilities of ownership do actual ownership benefits transfer to him. And there are specific ways set out for him to refuse the duty to raise a child for his dead brother.)

"Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him: and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him that had his sandal pulled off.'"

#### Contraception / Masturbation

The following passage has been claimed by Judi Browne of Concerned Women of America and many others to prohibit sex for pleasure, contraception, homosexuality, masturbation.

However, in reading the passage it is obvious that the major sin was Onan's greed - he wanted the whole inheritance to go to his own sons while he kept the public status of faithful brother by pretending to be doing his duty to his dead brother -

Genesis 38:7-11 "But Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. And what he did\* was displeasing in the sight of the LORD, and he slew him (Onan) also. Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah, my son, grows up"--for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house."

For more on the custom of levirate marriage, see the Book of Ruth. This 8th book of the Bible illustrates Ruth's manipulations which aim to get Boas, a distant relation, to marry her as his levirate duty.

God and David hate physical defects - God forbids anyone with a deformity or illness from entering the temple or participating in the priesthood. Leviticus 21 and 2 Samuel 5:8.

Divorce -

Deuteronomy 24:1 "...her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance..."

Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24 against divorce... but he did not claim it to exclude polygamy... Could a man become one flesh with more than one woman through the act of intercourse...?(Why could a man not become one flesh with another man through the same act?) Although Jesus forbids divorce in every case in one passage, Matthew's version has added "except in the case of adultery"...

Mark 10:11-12 Jesus said to them: Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. (No exceptions)

Luke 16:18 repeats above, no exceptions.

Matthew 5:32 But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on grounds of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

In fact, the only reason given to marry in the NT was to avoid the sin of lust...and it is better not to marry at all if you can help it...

1 Corinthians 7:25 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. I say this by way of concession, not of command...

1 Corinthians 7:8-9 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

Matthew 22:23-33 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." (If marriage and gender do not matter in heaven, why do we worry so much about gender and homosexuality on earth? )

Yet none of these laws is followed today. Furthermore, in the NT, if neither marriage, the body nor gender is something one gets to heaven with, why does marriage matter at all? And ultimately, the question cries out: On what objective and universal basis do we decide which verses to obey and which to ignore? Can any one line be drawn separating symbolism from what must be taken literally? And if we cannot, how can we expect members of a culture to agree on one interpretation.

## Further discussion points

The Oregon Citizens' Alliance says that they as Christians love the homosexual but hate the sexual acts homosexuals do. The OCA minimizes the numbers of homosexuals from 10% down to 1-2% of the population, then informs us that 93% of that one percent of the population report anal sexual relations compared to only 36% of heterosexuals reporting anal sex. But when we really look at the OCA numbers, we see that of 100 men, at most two are gay and probably perform anal sex. But of the 98 heterosexuals, 35 perform anal sex - with women who were never included in the population to start with. So we have 70 men and women out of the original 100 men doing some sex act Lon Mabon disapproves of, compared to 2-4 gay men doing it. It would seem to me that with so many more heterosexual men and women doing that sex act, if the OCA truly loves the homosexual and hates the act, then they would focus their attention on the acts of the heterosexuals. Yet even with these tiny numbers of gay men, the OCA seeks to discriminate against gays in all areas of life.

Augustine and Aquinas both claimed that women are for childbearing while, for comfort in isolation, a man is a better helpmeet to a man.

Plato - Symposium suggests that women are for breeding sons (if you read the Republic carefully, you will see that the highest status women only have time for being pregnant - nothing else), that as a man matures, he learns to love boys, whose bodies show a man what the form of true beauty might be, thus elevating a man's (especially a philosopher's) thoughts to the other ultimate Forms as well.

Aristotle states that women are deformed men, incapable of virtue or true friendship...intense and exclusive friendships between men is natural and best. Women of any class are for childbearing only.

The Catholic Church has gone through torturous nuances of what sex is allowed. It allows sex which can minimally pretend to be for procreation in its simplest manner. Contraception is forbidden because it implies pleasure seeking is the motivation for the sex act, while procreation is the only allowable motivation. See Genesis 38 (the coitus interruptus or seed-spilling as a sin in the Bible...).

See Philo in *\_On the Individual Laws\_* 3,36, and 3,37-42 where he openly claims that the reason homosexuality is condemned is because of the sterility of their sexual acts...and 'without the expectation of fruit, why toil?'

To use contraception, to masturbate, to have any sex which prevents or does not allow for impregnation is/was considered murder, a principle which was part of Catholic canon law until 1917. And in fact, there are numerous instances of how anal intercourse and oral intercourse were punished more severely in the Middle Ages than premeditated murder or abortion. Catholic doctrine to this day forbids any artificial insemination which varies from the "missionary position".

Aquinas - deviation from the 'monastic position' (our 'missionary position') is an unnatural vice..."worse than sex with one's mother." (and Homosexuality?)

If love is the theme...what does it mean, exactly??

Matthew:22:34-40,

Mark 12:28-34,

Luke 10:25-28,

Romans 13:8-10

I John 4:7-12.

So, Is homosexuality biologically inherited? Is it an illness which can be cured? Is it a sin? Is it a choice? Is it natural? None of this matters. What does matter is that we are dealing with real people here. The questions must be changed from "What is permitted" to "What does it mean to love my homosexual neighbor?" And for the Christian, the question must move from "What constitutes breach of divine law in the sexual realm" to "What constitutes obedience to the God revealed in the cosmic lover, Jesus Christ?"

Because the "black problem" is really a problem of white racism, blacks cannot be wholly responsible for solving all racial tensions...consider this in relation to homophobia, and consider whether you could really wear the T-shirt that I have that says "I'm One Too" or the lapel pin that says "Honorary Lesbian" - and if not, why not.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness, "he is puffed up with conceit, he knows nothing; he has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain." (i.e., philosophers?)

I Timothy 4:1-5. “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. [Yet the homosexual is to be celibate? Or the homosexual is to take a spouse of the opposite gender?]

Romans 14:14 states (out of context) that nothing is unclean unless a person thinks it is. And Luke 12:57 - “why do you not judge for yourself?”

Besides, what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

## **Some Bibliography**

*The Church and the Homosexual*, John McNeill, S.J. Sheed Andrews and McMeel, Inc., 1976. Excellent Source on this topic. Well reasoned, with the Pope’s imprimatur.

*The Sins of Scripture*, Bishop John Shelby Spong

*The History of Sexuality*, Michael Foucault, Volumes One and Three, at least. Random House, 1986. Interesting discussion of how sexuality was talked about in different eras.

*Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, Bishop John Shelby Spong, Harper Collins, 1991. Liberalism will kill the spirit of the Bible.

*Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*, Uta Ranke-Heinemann, Doubleday, 1990. Scathing. By one of the highest ranking women in the Catholic Church.

*Our Right to Choose*, Beverly Wildung Harrison, Beacon Press, 1970. For discussions of how the Church views sex.

*Feminism and Philosophy*, edited by Mary Vetterling-Braggin, et al. A collection of excellent essays, including the details of how the Church can get wrapped up in logic and end up contradicting itself on the topic of abortion - can provoke similar lines of thought on other topics...

*The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, Barbara Walker, Harper and Row, 1983. Excellent for shocking one into independent thinking. Do not accept specifics without verifying them for yourself, though.

*Homosexuality and the Bible*  
Martha Osgood  
2845 University Street, Eugene, OR 97403  
541-484-1180

## ISSUES TO DEVELOP MORE FULLY

Could the traditional interpretation of the Bible be wrong on this issue?

A. It has been said that the prohibition against homosexuality was necessary for increasing the population because the tribes were always needing to be larger in order to protect themselves better. Those conditions are not in force now...and in fact the population is exploding... and since these changes are noted/accepted, perhaps other changes are allowable. Furthermore, where the OT focuses on submerging the individual to the nation or tribe, the NT focuses on the individual's commitment. These are major issues to be considered, as are the facts that Jesus never said anything about homosexuals and Paul only spoke of the issue in the context of idolatry and abuse (I Tim 5:23, 1 Corinthians 6:10)

B- There would appear to be a lack of confidence in the attractions of heterosexuality...otherwise why the strength of the opposition to homosexuality?

C- Would pretending to act 'het' solve all a person's problems? What about his wife? What about her husband?

D- Taking verses out of context or too literally is not appreciated, and Jesus himself shows what he thinks of taking everything he himself said literally: He rebukes his disciples for exactly that in

Luke 9:53ff "but the people (of that town) would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven (recalling Sodom and Gomorrah) and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village."

And none would seriously think that Jesus meant, literally, in Luke 14:26 that one should truly hate one's mother and father. "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." There are many other examples of this, as well.

E- Some say the fear and hatred of homosexuals is connected to the same fear and hatred of women. A homosexual is seen as willingly giving up the benefits and status of being a 'real' man - a fearful thing to other men who can't accept that some men might not like the rigid masculine definitions imposed upon the world, who can define themselves only by contrast with what they are not.

F- Others say that to be a 'real man' in this world takes continuous practice. One is always being tested, daily faced with distinguishing oneself from the effeminate and the feminine. Thus those who willingly toss in the towel on this eternal struggle act as signposts of the superficiality and intrinsic valuelessness of the code of masculinity....and perhaps of the ultimate fear of the valuelessness of masculinity itself - as if the biological focus where only one man is needed for procreation - all other reasons for the male's existence being seen as superfluous - is the whole of masculinity and must be struggled against generation after generation to increase the value of the male of the species...

G- There is a difference between moral maturity and moral childishness...one is followed blindly... Acts 10-11 - Peter must learn not to follow the old laws blindly when God is telling him something different - that he as a Jew must invite Gentiles into his home and even eat with them.

---More issues for discussion and to develop more fully---

1- Jesus is claimed to love one disciple best - the writer: John 13:23, 19:26 20:2 21:20 yet the Gnostic Gospels show that Jesus often kissed Mary on the lips and irritated the other disciples by doing so. They complained bitterly that he loved her the best...See Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, and the books themselves in James Robinson's translation.

2- The purpose of the verses is to define behaviors which would help set the Jewish nation aside from the rabble of all other nations. Some of what was forbidden by these laws include: rabbit, pork, clams, eel, caviar, oysters, crab, and other non-finned, non-scaled seafood - all were an abomination to the Jews in the sense that other nations did them, but not the Jews. Why then do we say it is OK to eat such seafoods as are listed in the Holiness Code, yet condemn homosexuality?

3- It has been said that the prohibition against homosexuality was necessary for increasing the population because the tribes were always needing to be larger in order to protect themselves better. Those conditions are not in force now...and in fact the population is exploding... and since these changes are noted/accepted, perhaps other changes are allowable: Slaves 1 Corinthians 11:10, 14:34 and I Colossians 3:22.

4- Jesus never once mentions homosexuality, and Paul refers to it only in the context of idolatry and abuse (I Tim 5:23, 1 Corinthians 6:10)

5- Some would say it is against nature to be homosexual. I always wonder where the homosexuals keep coming from if God did not make them so. It seems that through out the ages they have been vilified and killed and banished yet they keep appearing. By choice? I don't think so - more by nature. Besides, is circumcision natural? Is cutting the hair natural? Is wearing clothes natural? Did Jesus not zap a fig tree in several gospels for not bearing fruit out of season? see 1 Corinthians 11:14, Gal 2:15, Romans 11:24 and 1:26.

6- Natural? Nature does not forbid individual same sex acts - there are studies of lesbian seagulls, sheep, lizards, and gay bulls in Montana in the last 10 years and virgin births among salamanders, chickens and turkeys. Farmers routinely cull bulls who show no interest in cows at mating time. Kinsey studied human sexual response and determined a 6 point scale/continuum wherein all sexual responses from absolutely heterosexual to mostly heterosexual to bisexual to mostly homosexual to absolutely homosexual are all normal and natural for human beings. Acting against nature, biblically, would also refer to gays trying to be heterosexual, since God made gays gay and lesbians lesbian. Other examples of 'against nature' are not condemned in the Bible anyway; see:

1 John 7:22 "Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man upon the Sabbath;

Romans 11:24 For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted, back into their own olive tree;

7- While Jesus says absolutely nothing about homosexuality, he blesses eunuchs. Some have suggested that his comments about 'self-made' and 'nature-made' eunuchs refer to homosexuals.

Matthew 19:12 "For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth (homosexuals?), and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (priests?). He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."

8- The Holiness Code. Leviticus 17 through 26 is the Holiness Code. Read the context of the Holiness Code, and the notes beneath the text in the RSV Bible. (Different editions may have different notes, too)

9- Taking verses out of context or too literally is not appreciated, and Jesus himself shows what he thinks of taking everything he himself said literally: He rebukes his disciples for exactly that in Luke 9:53ff “but the people (of that town) would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven (recalling Sodom and Gomorrah) and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.”

And none would seriously think that Jesus meant, literally, in Luke 14:26 that one should truly hate one's mother and father. "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” There are many other examples of this, as well.

10- Is homosexuality biologically inherited? Is it an illness which can be cured? Is it a sin? Is it a choice? Is it natural? None of this matters. What matters is that we are dealing with real people here. The questions must be changed from “What is permitted” to What does it mean to love my homosexual neighbor?” And from “What constitutes breach of divine law in the sexual realm” to What constitutes obedience to the God revealed in the cosmic lover, Jesus Christ?”

11- Sodomy was commonly used in Biblical times as an expression of ‘domination, contempt and scorn.’(p58, McNeill) Genesis 9:18-27. Ham did not merely look at his father’s nakedness (looking would not bring divine wrath), but actually did something to him. Also, in the Egyptian epic *The Contending of Horus and Seth*, Seth commits an act of sodomy on Horus while he slept then used that act to claim domination and kingship.(McNeill, p.59) Similar stories. The dignity of a man was destroyed by making a man into a woman, that is, a passive sexual recipient. The Holiness Code itself condemns only male homosexuality, yet death is the penalty for either male or female sex with an animal. NOTE: every text in the OT dealing with Homosexuality ALSO refers to ‘aggravating circumstances such as idolatry, sacred prostitution, promiscuity, violent rape, seduction of children and violation of guests’ rights.’ (p.60) As a result we can never be sure to what extent the condemnation is of homosexual activities as such or only of homosexual activities under these circumstances.

12- Faggots. Homosexuals were used to fuel the fires of those witches who were burned at the stake in medieval and reformation Europe. Yet why does no one today openly advocate that homosexuals are to be killed? Perhaps because deep down they know it to be very, very wrong.

13- Some say the fear and hatred of homosexuals is connected to the same fear and hatred of women. A homosexual is seen as willingly giving up the benefits and status of being a ‘real’ man - a fearful thing to other men who can’t accept that some men might not like the rigid masculine definitions imposed upon the world, and who can only define themselves only by contrast with what they are not.

14- Others say that to be a ‘real man’ in this world takes continuous practice. One is always being tested, daily faced with distinguishing oneself from the effeminate and the feminine. While women, who can bleed without being wounded and can conceive without orgasm, are clearly successful, a man must continually strive for success, no success lasting longer than the test itself, every failure threatening to define the whole man forever. Thus those who willingly toss in the towel on this eternal struggle act as signposts of the superficiality and intrinsic valuelessness of the code of masculinity....and perhaps of the ultimate fear of the valuelessness of masculinity itself - as if the biological focus where only one man is needed for procreation - all others are superfluous - is the whole of masculinity and must be struggled against generation after generation to prove the value of the male of the species...

15- There is a difference between moral maturity and moral childishness...one follows blindly... Acts 10-11 - Peter must learn not to follow the old laws blindly when God is telling him something different - it that he, a Jew, must invite Gentiles into his home and even eat with them!

16- There would appear to be a lack of confidence in the attractions of heterosexuality...otherwise why the vehemence of the opposition to homosexuality?

- 17- Would pretending to be 'het' solve all a person's problems? What happens to honesty?
- 18- Because the "black problem" is really a problem of white racism, blacks cannot be expected to solve racial tensions on their own...consider this in relation to homophobia.
- 19- If sex causes two people to become one flesh (married, in the eyes of God), why does it not cause two homosexual people to become one flesh?
- 20- Galatians 5:19-21 - what do homosexuals have in common with quarrelers and gossips?
- 21- To quote the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council dealing with the interpretation of sacred Scripture: "Since God speaks in sacred Scripture through men in a human fashion, the interpreter of sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words." (No.12)
- 22- "The pervert is not the genuine homosexual, rather he is the heterosexual who engages in homosexual practices, or the homosexual who engages in heterosexual practices." p.42, McNeill.
- 23- "The real moral problem of homosexuality has to do with judging the moral value of sexual activity between genuine homosexuals who seek to express their love for one another in a sexual gesture." *ibid*, p42
- 24- The more ancient, second creation story indicates that "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Thus mutual love and fulfillment is equally a biblical norm for human sexuality, not just the procreation portion as in the first but younger creation story, commanding "Be fruitful and multiply."
- 25- Jesus was hardly a role model for heterosexual family life. Mark 3:19-35.
- 26- Paul contradicts himself, if in fact there is only one person who authored the NT books attributed to Paul. At 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 he forbids women to teach men, yet at \_\_\_\_\_ he writes a letter of introduction for two women traveling to spread the Good News.
- 27- And again: Upon what objective basis do we decide which verses to obey, and how do we objectively understand what is meant literally and what is meant figuratively?

*Homosexuality and the Bible*

Martha Osgood  
2845 University Street  
Eugene, OR 97403  
maroz@comcast.net  
541-484-1180