

Jesus Loves Me. This I Know, For The Bible Tells Me So . . .

by Mary Pearson

"Jesus loves me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so . . ." unless you are GLBTI or Q, in which case you are told that Jesus loves everyone EXCEPT me. Well it's time to set the record straight - if you'll pardon the expression. Jesus loves ESPECIALLY His GLBTIQ children - for the Bible tells me so!

The Protestant Bible is like a library consisting of 66 books, written by about 40 authors over a period from about 2000 BC to about 70 AD. It is divided into the Old Testament (before Christ) and the New Testament (after Christ). In these 66 books, there are 1,189 chapters containing about 31,273 verses. The final divisions into chapters and verses occurred only about 500 years ago for ease of referencing. They are not part of the original texts.

I believe that the Original Scriptures were God-inspired and contain the truths that God would have us to know. I believe also that subsequent translations must deal with text, where perhaps there is no comparable word for the original, and meanings of words are sometimes lost or changed.

Translations have been written with the best of intentions by God-fearing, uninspired human beings who have done their very best to convey God's message, as they understand it, with their current knowledge of the original languages, customs, traditions and culture of Bible times, AND with their own biases, based on their understanding of what they THINK the Original Scriptures said. None of us have been brought up in a vacuum, and it is impossible not to let our preconceived beliefs influence our understanding. If these translators believed that homosexuality was wrong, then that's how they viewed the scriptures that they were attempting to translate. New research would indicate that their beliefs were indeed wrong.

Since the concept of homosexuality as an orientation was unknown until about a hundred years ago, on that basis alone, we know that the "six clobber verses" used against gays do NOT refer to homosexuality as an orientation. They refer to same-sex acts, which in most cases were perpetrated by heterosexuals, and therefore were "unnatural".

There is no word in biblical Greek or Hebrew (the original languages of the Bible) that is the equivalent to the English word "homosexual". The 1946 Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible was the first translation to use the word "homosexual".

There is no word in biblical Greek or Hebrew for "sodomy". A Sodomite was simply an inhabitant of Sodom, just as a Torontonion is an inhabitant of Toronto. It was not until after the rise of the hierarchy in the institutional Church that the story of Sodom and Gomorrah was inaccurately equated with homosexuality and the word "sodomite" came into use. Any translation using the words "homosexual, "sodomy" or "sodomite" are interpretations and are not faithful representations of the Original Scriptures.

Wherever same-sex acts are mentioned, it is either with regard to ritualistic traditions which were intended to increase the small population of the Hebrews, or it is among the Purity Codes for the Priests, or it is with regard to temple prostitution (idol worship) which was very common among the pagan people who surrounded the Hebrews, or it had to do with rape, power and violence as in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

None of the "six clobber verses" used against gays refer to a loving relationship between two people, however you will find examples of same-sex love in the beautiful and romantic stories of Ruth and Naomi, a passage which very often is used in marriage ceremonies and yet it is between two women.

"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee (Naomi), [or] to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, [if ought] but death part thee and me." Ruth 1:16,17

- and of David and Jonathan

*"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."
I Samuel 18:1(b)*

"Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." II Samuel 1:26(b)

Jesus never mentioned homosexuality. We have been made to feel like it is the worst sin on earth, but Jesus never mentioned it! He talked about adultery and divorce and greed and lots of other things, but He never mentioned homosexuality. Rather neglectful of Him - IF being gay were such an abomination - another word usually linked to homosexuals, which has also been mistranslated. The correct interpretation of the word "abomination" refers to impurity and is usually linked with idolatry, not sexuality.

The Bible has been misused to support slavery, apartheid and segregation, to denounce Jews and other non-Christian people of faith, to support Hitler's Third Reich, to oppose medical science and to condemn inter-racial marriage. It has been used to execute women as witches, to defend the racism of the Ku Klux Klan and to perpetrate intolerance and discrimination of women and sexual minorities. It took the Catholic Church 359 years to admit that they were wrong when they accused Galileo of heresy and condemned him to death unless he recanted that the earth rotates around the sun. Oh yes! The Bible has been misused and misinterpreted often over the years, and it has been misinterpreted regarding the issue of homosexuality.

Jesus' love was INCLUSIVE! His friends were not the Pharisees and Sadducees of the faith who were always trying to catch Him breaking the letter of the law - which He often did. Jesus made it clear that the only law is LOVE.

*On one occasion Jesus was asked: "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"
Matt. 22:36-40*

If what you have been told does not agree with Jesus' Great Commandments, then what you have been told is wrong. God's love is for ALL, especially GLBTIQ's! Jesus was the First to reach out to the rejected of society. Jesus reaches out to us now.

**"It is never legitimate to use the words of Scripture to promote a loveless agenda."
- Right Rev. Dr. Peter Short, Moderator of the United Church of Canada**

"God loved the world so much, that Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, was freely given, that WHOSOEVER believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Jesus' friends were the marginalized of society - the despised tax collectors, the uneducated, the prostitutes and the lepers. Doesn't it just make sense that He would choose we gays for His close friends if He were here today! So smile because God has a plan for your life and "Jesus loves YOU. This I know, for the Bible tells me so!"