

# The Bible Says (A Controversial Subject)

by Lilja B. Stefansson

*Implorant la tolérance, l'auteure confronte les attitudes homophobiques de certaines personnes en s'appuyant sur des passages bibliques qui condamnent le mauvais traitement des homosexuels et des lesbiennes.*

There was young woman who had wrestled with her self-identity for some time. She was in love with a woman. Finally she decided she must tell her mother about her feelings. The mother, who was a devout Catholic, was shocked. I guess for her the only solution was to send her daughter to the priest for confession. The daughter had anticipated this and went readily, hoping for understanding. She told the priest that she was a lesbian. The priest tore out of the confessional, flung open the other door and dragged the poor frightened girl out. Shouting words of condemnation at her, he physically threw her out of the church and told her never to come back.

Exalted priest, have you never heard?—"You shall love your neighbour as yourself," [Matthew 22:39].

Then there is the Salvation Army. An Officer in good standing who had worked there many years came to the realization that she was a lesbian. She had been a wife and mother but always felt that "something" we really need—a mutual, loving relationship—was missing. She discovered that it was her sexual preference that was the real problem. She left the Salvation Army as she knew she would no longer be accepted there. However, when a Salvation Army friend of long-standing came to town, she phoned her, hoping for a friendly chat. Her friend said, "I can not associate with you any more."

Upstanding Salvation Army Officer, have you not heard?—"Truly I say to you, as you do to the least of my brethren, you do it to me," [Matthew 25:40]. Would you treat Jesus this way?

The next case I'm truly ashamed of, for I was brought up in the Lutheran faith, though I have long since left it. The Lutheran church defrocked a loving brother who was a good and caring minister. They have refused ordination to a young man who had declared his sexuality because he felt that he must be honest about himself. Other homosexual clergy have quietly left the church, rather than face the wrath of the church should their sexual orientation come to light.

Upstanding Christian Church, have you not heard?—"This is what I command you, love one another," [John 15:17]. There is no qualification given. Also, it has been written many times, "God is love."

The United Church is often accused of opening this particular

can of worms, or told the church should stay out of the bedroom because it has forced other churches to look at the issue of homosexuality. Yes, and to our shame, some ministers have been forced to leave certain churches because of their sexual preference. Still, the United Church has continued to struggle with this controversial topic. At the Conference level, it has been decided that homosexuality is not a barrier to ordination. It is a continuing struggle as many local congregations oppose this view. After all, what on earth does sexual preference have to do with a person's worth in a position of trust if they are called to this profession and are capable of the various duties involved? Homosexuals are too much aware of the difficulties involved in their life style to want to "convert" the general public. This seems to be one of society's fears.

If suddenly all the homosexuals were removed from the caring professions—nursing, teaching, social work etc., or indeed, from the arts or any other area of work, there would be a far greater gap than the average person could believe.

If a person is respected and is doing worthwhile work, is there any sense in removing them from that position, if it comes to light or they tell the truth about their sexual preference? It happens!

We all know that the wonderful heterosexual families we hear so much about are often not really so great. Abuse of wife and children exists in even the so-called "best" families. I'm not condemning heterosexuality, but rather pointing out that it is not always perfect. Lucky indeed are those who have a mutually-loving relationship in the heterosexual world. Their relationships can be publicly honoured and celebrated. But for those who can only function in a homosexual relationship, society is not willing to allow such celebrations.

As for me and my house—I have lived with a woman for seventeen years. We are both mothers and grandmothers and I am a great-grandmother. Our families are well-acquainted with each other. They mix and intermingle quite well. We both consider this varied group to be our family. Make of that what you will. If you feel judgmental remember—"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone," [John 8:7]. But also remember—"God is love and whoever lives in love, also lives in union with God," [1 John 4:16].

Blessed be!

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