

As You Like It

No religious argument against homosexuality stands up to critical analysis.

Every standard religious argument is a fiction of unthinking conviction.

**The "argument" is just personal preference.
Choice sustains the position, not grounded reason.
Religion becomes a cover for prejudice.**

The Bible does NOT Condemn Homosexuality as Such

Recent research has exposed long-standing mistranslation and faulty interpretation of biblical passages said to treat homosexuality. For example, Ezekiel 16:48-49 defines outright the sin of Sodom in Genesis 19: pride, hatred, abuse, hard-heartedness; sex is not mentioned. The parallel story of a heterosexual rape in Judges 19 makes clear that the ancient Israelites cared about respect for, not the gender of, a sex partner. The "lying with a male as with a women" in Leviticus 18:22 refers solely to male-male penetrative sex, not to same-sex acts in general, whether gay or lesbian, and reflects a taboo regarding ritual purity, not the nature of sex. The "unnatural" of Romans 1:26 should be translated "atypical" and has no ethical implication in Paul's usage. The supposed condemnations of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1: 10 rest on one obscure Greek word that nobody really knows how to translate. Understood on its own terms, the Bible is neutral on homosexuality per se. See D. A. Helminiak's *What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality*.

Christianity has NOT Always Opposed Homosexuality

Until about 1200, except for a period around the fall of the Roman Empire, Christian Europe was generally accepting of homosexuality. In 7th Century Spain, a series of six national church councils refused to support the Visigoth ruler's legislation against homosexual acts. By the high middle ages, a gay subculture thrived, and a standard body of gay literature was studied in the church-run universities. See J. Boswell's *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*.

In Church Practice, Procreation is NOT Essential to Sex

Stoic philosophy held that conception of offspring is the only ethically acceptable reason for having sex. Especially through Saint Augustine, early Christianity incorporated this notion, and some churches invoke it to condemn homosexual acts. Yet many of these same churches allow the use of contraceptives, and they allow marriage and sex between known sterile couples or between couples beyond child-bearing age. Even the Catholic Church has recently emphasized

the emotional bonding and loving sharing that are central to sexual intimacy. Evidently, the churches do not really believe that the core purpose of sexual sharing is procreation.

The Argument of "Complementarity" is NOT Coherent

Supposedly, complementarity of the sexes is a God-ordained requirement for sexual relationships. But "masculinity" and "femininity" are stereotypes. Personality traits in real people are mixed and cover the map. Any two people, heterosexual or homosexual, could easily qualify as complementary on some psychological characteristics or other. Therefore, the complementarity in question must refer to biological "plumbing," and appeal to it is just a roundabout way of insisting that only a male and a female may share sex. Thus, the real argument comes down to this: homosexual sex is wrong because it is not heterosexual; homosexual couples may not share sex because only sex between a man and a woman is allowed. The argument explains nothing; it is circular; it begs the question. Or else, pushed further, complementarity claims that the only permissible sexual act is penile-vaginal intercourse -but no reason is given for this claim, which few believe, in any case, and which leads right back to the duplicitous argument about procreation.

Homosexuality is NOT a Sickness

Religions claim that homosexuality is an aberration from the order of God's creation. However, the bulk of mounting scientific evidence-zoological, medical, psychological, sociological, anthropological-shows that homosexuality is a natural variation. Not only widespread in many animal species, among humans homosexuality is biologically based, fixed by early childhood, and present in virtually every known culture. There is no credible evidence that sexual orientation is chosen or that it can--Or should-be changed. The American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, and the American Surgeon General have all criticized claims of changed sexual orientation as misleading and dangerous, and the "falls from grace" of numerous leaders of the "ex -gay" movement confirm this judgment. Unless simply being homosexual is itself to be deemed pathological, current science can detect nothing "sick" in homosexuality and finds it a natural part of the world that God created.

Homosexual People are NOT Irreligious

Many condemn homosexuals as Godless and sinful. But Native Americans revered gay and lesbian people as doubly blessed, "two-spirited." Contemporary homosexual Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus recognize their self-acceptance as the work of God's grace. They report that, since "coming out," they are happier, healthier, more productive, more loving, more peaceful, more joyful, closer to other people-and closer to God. According to Jesus' own criterion, "By their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:16), religious lesbians and gays must be among the true prophets of our day. In contrast, focusing on only the worst element in the homosexual--Or heterosexual-community is an unfair way of assessing the matter.