

# Primary Bibliography on Gay/Lesbian Bisexual Issues

Prepared for the Unit for Lesbian and Gay Concerns  
of the Presbytery of New York City  
October 1, 1993

This bibliography is organized to provide curriculum planners with good, short, powerful summary articles and excerpts valuable for use in classes and workshops for local congregations as well as larger bodies. It is categorized under important and frequently asked questions in curricular settings.

## *1. What does the Bible say about homosexuality?*

Biddle, Lindsey Louise. "Hospitable Interpretations of Sodom and Gomorrah," More Light Update. November 1992

Part of Biddle's *Biblical Self-Defense Course*, this article provides a concise and systematic examination of Genesis 19 (the story of the demise of Sodom and Gomorrah), a text which has traditionally been used to delegitimize homosexuality on a biblical basis. She traces the development of exegesis historically and shows how homophobia came to wrongly claim this text for its purposes.

[ed. note, May, 1998: the complete *Biblical Self-Defense Course* is available via the Internet at [www.MLCN.org](http://www.MLCN.org) thanks to Lindsey Biddle's generosity in providing the electronic text.]

Carey, John J. et al. Keeping Body and Soul Together: Sexuality, Spirituality, and Social Justice. (Louisville, KY. Offices of General Assembly, 1991), lines 3863-4012 DMS #OGA-91-001)

A thorough treatment of each of the biblical texts used to justify homophobia within the context of looking at the whole message of the Bible and providing alternate interpretations for each text

Comes, Peter J. "Homophobic? Re-Read Your Bible," The New York Times. August 17, 1992

An editorial written for the New York Times by the chaplain of Harvard University, this text provides not only an exegesis of each of the traditional problematic texts, but also a theological framework for interpreting the Bible as well as a contextualization in the contemporary situation in terms of the misinterpretation of the Bible by fundamentalism to justify violence.

Johnson E. Elizabeth. "Biblical and Historical Perspectives on Human Sexuality," Church and Society. November/December 1989 (DMS #258-89-606)

A conventional and systematic treatment of the ways in which the Bible and tradition can faithfully and creatively inform discussion on the ethics and theology of human sexuality. Written in the wake of the call by the 201st General Assembly to study human sexuality.

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Olson, Mark "Untangling the Web: A Look at What Scripture Does and Does Not Say About Homosexual Behavior," The Other Side April 1984,24-29

A thorough exegesis of the problematic Biblical texts. This article is very clear on the paucity of reference to homosexuality in the Bible and tries to inform our interpretation through experience.

UPCUSA Task Force to Study Homosexuality, 1978. The Church and Homosexuality, 19-25 (DMS #OGA-88-042)

A systematic treatment of the problematic Biblical texts within the context of exploring traditional Reformed theologies of Biblical interpretation as well as a contemporary reading.

Wink, Walter. "Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality" Christian Century 96(1979): 1082-1086

An explanation of the problematic Biblical texts by a prominent Scripture scholar and educator.

Wood, Deborah Swift. The Bible and Homosexuality. Handout.

An excellent, concise treatment in the context of some excellent theology and contextualization in terms of other debates which have been resolved in favor of experience rather than a strict interpretation of Biblical texts, i.e. women's ordination.

### ***2. Have any other issues been as divisive as this one in the history of our denomination? How have they been resolved in relation to problematic biblical texts?***

Barnes, Albert. Scriptural Views of Slavery. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1857, 1969, 340-375

A fascinating treatment and examination of the Scriptural bases for justifying slavery, far more numerous and clear than those prohibiting homosexual activity, and how these texts are subjected to the examination of experience and the witness of the whole of Scripture to determine that God's justice requires the immediate abolition of slavery.

Price, Deb. "Biblical Verse: Is it a Reason or an Excuse?" San Francisco Examiner August 24, 1993

An interrelation of the biblical bases for the justification of patriarchy and slavery as compared to homophobia

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### *3. How is homophobia related to racism and sexism?*

Journey of the Heart. Video, 58 minutes. Available from: Leonardo's Children, 26 Newport Bridge Road, Warwick, NY 10990 (914)-986-6888

An excellent video aired on national television treating the related problems of racism and sexism in contemporary churches and the voices that are arising to challenge the church to wholeness, among them, Delores Williams and Janie Spahr.

Henley, Nancy M. and Pincus, Fred. "Interrelationship of Sexist, Racist, and Antihomosexual Attitudes." Psychological Reports Vol. 42, 1978

A psychological interrelation of subjects' attitudes and how sexism, racism, and homophobia correlate and are more likely to occur simultaneously in the same person informed by a particular underlying set of values.

Lorde, Audre. "I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities." A Burst of Light Ithaca, NY: Firebrand, 1988

An impassioned witness by one of the most extraordinary Black women writers, poets, and organizers of the twentieth century on the need for Black women particularly to recognize their unity in order to struggle for justice and the fulfillment of a loving society regardless of the homophobia that threatens to divide their energies.

### *4. How do/can we read the Bible as Presbyterians?*

Bauckham, Richard. "Chapter 10: The Political Christ: A Concluding Reflection" The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically. Philadelphia: W/JKP, 1989

The advancement of a particular perspective towards interpreting Scripture in the witness of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ which, though not reducible to a political event, has profound effects on political reality as Jesus identifies with and witnesses for the victims and oppressed in society

McKim, Donald K. "Biblical Interpretation in Presbyterian Statements on Sexuality," Church and Society November/December 1989 (DMS #258-89-606)

A treatment of the biblical hermeneutics which have informed previous Presbyterian statements on human sexuality.

UPCUSA Task Force to Study Homosexuality, 1978. The Church and Homosexuality 25-38 (DMS #OGA-88-042)

An exploration of the ways in which the way we approach Scripture informs the way we read it and the conclusions we draw from it. Also, an exposition of the traditional and continually changing Reformed approach to Scripture.

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### *5. How do we talk about these controversial issues as a church?*

How Should Congregations Talk About Tough Issues. (Curriculum) Louisville: Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 1988 (DMS #919-88-709)

A curriculum on conflict resolution in the local church that encourages techniques for a true dialogue of speaking and listening dearly and with compassion and conviction in the midst of controversy.

Snyder, T. Richard. "Chapter 3: A Different Approach to Unity" Divided We Fall: Moving From Suspicion to Solidarity. Louisville: W/JKP, 1992

An excellent framework and treatment of conflict in the larger church which emphasizes the need for a unity based not on uniformity but on solidarity and empathy.

### *6. How can we think and talk faithfully about sexuality?*

Carey, John J. et al'. "Part I: Putting Sex in Perspective: A Framework for Understanding Sexuality." Keeping Body and Soul Together: Sexuality, Spirituality and Social Justice. (Louisville, KY: Offices of General Assembly, 1991). (DMS #OGA-91-001)

Asystematic exposition of an excellent theological framework for discussing and examining sexuality in the light of Christian witness.

### *7. What causes homosexuality?*

Bariange, Marcia. "Is Homosexuality Biological?". Science 253 August 30, 1991, 956-957

A scientific treatment of the many possibilities of the causes of homosexuality. It concludes with considering that homosexuality may be more innate than had been previously imagined.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Why Is My Child Gay?: Eleven Scientists Respond.

An exploration of the causes of homosexuality particularly addressed towards parents and friends of gay men and lesbians. Available for a \$1 donation from: Federation of PFLAG, Inc., P.O. Box 27605, Washington, DC 20038.

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Scanzoni, Letha Dawson "Can Homosexuals Change?" The Other Side. January 1984, 12-15

An examination of the theories on the cause of homosexual orientation from a Christian, historical perspective. Calls for Christians to acknowledge the deep-rooted nature of homosexual orientation as sin.

### ***8. How do gay and lesbian people relate to family values?"***

Barron, Erwin. "Biblical Family Values: An Alternative View." Open Hands. (8)4 Spring 1993,10

An exploration of familial relations and family values" in the Biblical text. An excellent deconstruction of the idea that the ideal American nuclear family is called for or even represented in Scripture.

Fishburn, Janet. "Chapter 4: A Biblical Critique of Family Idolatry." Confronting the Idolatry of Family: A New Vision for the Household of God. Nashville: Abingdon, 1991

A thorough and nuance condemnation from a Biblical perspective of the prevailing idea of the ideal Christian family.

Griffin, John E. "Traditional Family Values." Open Hands (8)4 Spring 1993, 8-9

An examination of the concept of traditional family values which has come to inform so much of contemporary Christian and political debate on the rights of gay and lesbian folk, as well as others, in our society.

### ***9. What are gay and lesbian people like? What does it mean to be gay?***

Maybe We're Talking About a Different God — The Church and Homosexuality. Video, 29 minutes. Available from: Leonard's Children, 26 Newport Bridge Road, Warwick, NY 10990 (914)-986-6888

An exploration of the ministry and experiences of the Rev. Jane Spahr, an openly lesbian Presbyterian minister whose call to a Rochester church was set aside at the national level.

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Carroll, William. "God as Unloving' Father" The Christian Century. March 6, 1991 pp. 255-256

The testimony of a gay Christian minister who came out after 23 years of marriage and his declaration and exploration of the story of the prodigal son and the loving father God who called him out and welcomed him into freedom.

McNaught, Brian. 'Dear Anita — Late Night Thoughts of an Irish Catholic Homosexual.'" On Being Gay. Stonewall Publications, 1988.

A concise and impassioned letter from Mr. McNaught to Anita Bryant during her campaign in South Florida in the mid-70's against gay and lesbian civil rights in which he offers a very personal and coherent self-disclosure of his life and loves and entreats her to try to understand as the Christian that she claims to be.

Miller, Neil. In Search of Gay America. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989.

A truly neat book in which we find descriptions of the lives of gay and lesbian people throughout the country, from Cambridge, MA to Wolverton, MN and Johnson City, TN. Provides a real picture of the diversity of gay and lesbian people throughout our nation.

PFLAG. Can We Understand?: A Guide for Parents prepared by New York city Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

A pamphlet addressing many of the first questions parents have when a child comes out to them. Available for a \$1 donation from: Federation of PFLAG, Inc., P.O. Box 27605, Washington, DC 20038.

### ***10. How can we as Christians learn about and respond to violence against gay men and lesbians?***

Comstock, Gary David. Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

A systematic treatment of anti-gay/lesbian violence in the United States after World War II including a historical overview, empirical data on victims and perpetrators, understanding anti-gay/lesbian violence, and a biblical perspective on anti-gay/lesbian violence.

Harry, Joseph. "Conceptualizing Anti-Gay Violence" Hate Crimes, Berrill and Herrick, ed. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1992.

A chapter in a detailed book on anti-gay/lesbian violence exploring the motivations and situation of anti-gay violence and the values and presuppositions which engender them.

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Phillips, Jennifer M. "Gay Lives and Common Morality," Christianity and Crisis June 18, 1990. pp. 191-194

A reflection by an Episcopal priest on the urgent need for the church to definitively address the physical, emotional, and psychological violence which is perpetrated in society against gay men and lesbians with a word of rebuke for the evils that threaten to destroy them and a word of healing and affirmation for the victims.

### ***11. Is homophobia a sin?***

Siegel, P. "Homophobia: Types, Origins, Remedies." Christianity and Crisis. 39:17 (1979) 280-284

A thorough treatment of the social dynamics of homophobia and a cogent Christian response.

UPCUSA Task Force to Study Homosexuality, 1978. The Church and Homosexuality, 39-45 (DMS #OGA-88-042)

The round and thorough condemnation of homophobia in the very document that bars gay men and lesbians from ministry. Its contradictions notwithstanding, this document's authority in its "definitive guidance" to excise the evil of homophobia from society should be taken seriously.

### ***12. What's been our history of dealing with the issue of gay/lesbian ordination as Presbyterian church?***

Maybe We're Talking About a Different God — The Church and Homosexuality. Video, 29 minutes. Available from: Leonardo's Children, 26 Newport Bridge Road, Warwick, NY 10990 (914)-986-6888

See citation above.

Brown, Robert McAfee. "Jane Spahr and the Presbyterians" Christianity and Crisis. January 4, 1993 pp. 422-423

A critique of the events surrounding the Permanent Judicial Committee's action to set aside the call of the Rev. Jane A. Spahr from a prominent Presbyterian pastor, teacher, and theologian.

Gittings, Jim. "A Bonfire in Baltimore." Christianity and Crisis. May 27, 1991 pp. 172-177

A thorough description and treatment of the events which transpired surrounding the Human Sexuality Report at the 203rd General Assembly in Baltimore in 1991.

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UPCUSA Task Force to Study Homosexuality, 1978 The Church and Homosexuality  
(DMS #OGA-88-042)

One of the formative documents of the present situation

Wood, Deborah Swift. "Polity Reflections" Handout

A concise explanation of the New Brunswick overture and the issue of gay/ lesbian ordination.

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Editor's note (added May, 1998)

Jim Tiefenthal transferred this document from paper to electronic format in May, 1998, at Rochester, NY. Caryl Qualich proofread the text. Although loving care was taken to preserve the original text, MLCN cannot guarantee accuracy.