

## "Our Story Too...Reading the Bible with "New Eyes"

This pamphlet was written by the Rev. Nancy L. Wilson, Pastor of Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL (USA) and Member of MCC Board of Elders.  
Copyright 1992 Nancy L. Wilson.

### Reading the Bible with "New Eyes"

Most modern gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people are either afraid of the Bible or unfamiliar with its content, thinking that the the Bible has only bad news for them. While it is true that the Bible was written in the context of patriarchal, heterosexist cultures, the message and story of God's unconditional love in Christ can also be the "power of salvation" for our GLBT community.

A bold, proactive reading of the Bible offers new life for GLBT individuals, their families, and their friends. Consensus is growing among respected scholars of Scripture that the Bible does not condemn such relationships. Contemporary GLBT Christians have focused on proving that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality. It is time to move beyond defending this position. It is not enough for the Bible simply not to condemn homosexuality. We must be able to say,

"Yes, it is..."Our Story, Too!"

### Opening Doors of Ancient "closets"...

Liberation theology and feminist biblical critique have shown that the Bible, in order to empower all people, must be read with new eyes from the vantage point of oppressed peoples. When we read the Biblical stories through today's experience, they come alive with new relevance. What if we just assume that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people were always in the Bible? Their historical counterparts followed Moses and Miriam in the Exodus, and walked with Jesus by the Sea of Galilee! We are everywhere, and always have been, even when silent and closeted about their sexuality.

It is time to boldly liberate some Biblical gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender characters and stories from ancient "closets". Centuries of silence in Biblical commentaries and reference books must now be broken by a passionate search for Biblical truth about sexuality.

Does the Bible include references, to, or stories about, GLBT people consistent with what historians and anthropologists know about sexuality during Biblical times? The answer is, "Yes!". Some stories are incontrovertible. Others are compellingly gay and lesbian. And, there are other stories curiously suggestive of same-sex relationships. All of these can empower us to joyfully embrace the Bible.

### What difference does it make?

What difference does it make for GLBT people to dare see themselves in the Bible? It helps to know the people of the Bible as they were, not unrealistically assuming they were all heterosexual. In these references to GLBT individuals, there is no condemnation, and no cross-referencing to homophobic interpretations of the story of Sodom or Levitical law. It invites our communities to fearlessly read the Bible, to apply its healing and empowering message to their lives.

For More information, please see:

"Our Story Too...Reading the Bible with 'New Eyes'" - Part 2:

**"The GLBT Family in the Bible...Following the Work of Jesus"**

And

"Our Story Too...Reading the Bible with 'New Eyes'" - Part 3:

**"Same-Sex Relationships in the Bible"**

## Footnotes to "Our Story Too..."

1) Consultation of the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA, on "Biblical Issues and Homosexuality," Unpublished papers, 1987. Six infamous passages in the Bible are used against gays and lesbians-all of which must be taken out of context when directed against them. A thorough, yet concise, commentary on these passages is provided in the pamphlet, *Homosexuality: Not a Sin, Not a Sickness*, by Rev. Donald Eastman, referenced below.

2) This section, "Same-Sex Relationships," is indebted to Tom Horner's *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1978.

3) This section, "Important Questions," is indebted to Judy Grahn's *Another Mother Tongue*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1984.

## Further Reading:

The following sources are recommended for those wishing to more carefully study related issues:

Helminiak, Daniel A. *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*. San Francisco: Alamo Square Press, 2000.

Goss, Robert E and Mona West, ed *Take Back the Word*. Pilgrim Press, 2000

Boswell, John. *Christianity, social tolerance, and homosexuality: gay people in Western Europe from the beginning of the Christian era to the fourteenth century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Countryman, Louis William. *Gifted by Otherness: Gay and Lesbian Christians in the Church*. Morehouse Publishing, 2001.

Heyward, Carter. *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic As Power and the Love of God*. Harpercollins 1989..