

FAITHBOOK
A GUIDE TO
FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY
FOR LESBIAN, GAY,
BISEXUAL AND TRANS
PEOPLE

faiths
in
action



FAITH BOOK

2011/12 EDITION

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Many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) feel alienated from their faith, with some having experienced rejection by organised religious groups, leading to general spiritual needs being forgotten.

This results in LGBT people often finding it impossible to reconcile their sexuality with their faith, feeling they need to choose one over the other. We wanted to produce a guide on faith and sexuality which would explore various different religions, the common conflicts encountered and ways of reconciling these.

We would like to thank the many people who have helped put this guide together by sharing their thoughts and pay tribute to the LGBT faith groups that continue to offer support and promote understanding, acceptance and tolerance around faith and sexual orientation.

The aim of this resource is to reassure lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people that whatever your personal beliefs there will be others who can support you both within your faith and in your sexual orientation. While this guide aims to be inclusive, it is reasonable to assume that some faith groups may have been overlooked as it is not the purpose of this resource to provide a definitive guide to LGBT faith organisations.

We hope you will find much in this resource to take forward for yourself and others, and should you require further support or information please do let us know.

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INTRODUCTION

Why do some religious people have issues with homosexuality?

Objection to homosexuality is something that unites many faiths. If only we could unite over being inclusive and supportive of our fellow human beings.

We know that some people are quick to condemn lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people without ever making the effort to get to know them.

What can faith groups do to challenge homophobia?

Talk about diverse sexuality, we are all diverse and our sexual orientation is an important part of who we are, but it isn't the only thing that makes us who we are.

Find LGBT people in your community and welcome them into your place of worship. There are so many people who feel rejected by their faith because they have been told they are not welcome.

We need to understand that there are millions of people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual and we were all made that way. Our sexual orientation isn't a choice, it cannot be corrected or changed.

If you believe that anyone has changed their sexual orientation it may only appear to be so because they have been pressured into letting someone else persuade them that they are wrong to feel the way that they naturally do.

What can LGBT groups and individuals do to challenge religious phobias?

Don't be afraid to talk to faith organisations and do not be intimidated.

Your voice should be heard and your opinions are valid.

Often we hear criticisms that gay people are always 'banging the drum' but if we don't stand up for ourselves who will?

Be open, listen, understand we may have differences and we may have to respect each other's differences because we have a right to be different but we are all equal.

Let us be more open when discussing human sexuality and our own inhibitions when discussing them. We don't know why we are made the way we are but perhaps it is so that we can understand each others point of view and respect our differences and even our flaws in the spirit of wanting the best for one another no matter what our sexual orientation.

We hope this resource will prove useful in finding contact with others who can support your needs and comfort in knowing that there are many other people who feel the same way as you do and please remember that you are not alone.

You are never alone.

BAHA'I

Bahá'ís believe that the sexual impulse is a God-given one, and the source of great joy and fulfilment if expressed in the intended way. The appropriate circumstance for this is within marriage. While it is wrong to condemn homosexuals as people, the sexual practice of homosexuality is no more an acceptable activity than is heterosexual activity outside marriage.

SEAN Gay Baha'i in the U.S.

Being an openly gay Baha'i can be quite challenging, I wish I could say I have personally found peace with my being a gay Baha'i, but that would not be one hundred percent honest, instead I have decided to 'make the most' out of a complex situation.

First and foremost everyone Baha'i and non-Baha'i should understand that the Baha'i Faith claims to "embrace all of humanity" and that prejudice towards gays and lesbians is not be tolerated in the Baha'i community, yet there is a law in Baha'i doctrine interpreted as forbidding all homosexual relationships (technically based on same gender sex acts, yet interpreted to cover all homosexual relationships, sexual or otherwise).

Sex in the Baha'i Faith is only allowed in Marriage, and Marriage is only between partners of opposite genders, thus making gay Unions or Marriage non-existent at the present time.



Making the topic of homosexuality in the Baha'i Faith ever more complicated is the progressive Baha'i teaching about the 'Balance of Science and Religion', Baha'is believe both science and religion should work in unison to balance each other out. Sadly whatever scientific advances regarding a genetic origin for homosexuality is ignored by the Baha'i Administration because it would still clash with the Baha'i Law barring homosexual relationships.

So how have I 'made the most' out of this complicated matter? I could have easily 'dropped out' of the Baha'i Faith , but have decided to remain a Baha'i. By remaining an openly gay Baha'i I believe I could do more good in educating fellow Baha'is about the core Baha'i teachings about the 'Oneness of Humanity' and the 'Elimination of all Prejudices' (homophobia being a form of prejudice).

The internet has opened a portal for instant communication and sharing with other Baha'is that was not present before, and I take advantage of any opportunity I can to share about what it truly means to be a gay Baha'i.

I have faith that the 'newest' of the world religions will truly open their hearts to gay couples, the journey for such an endeavour will not come easily, but ultimately justice will prevail.



BUDDHISM

Buddhism has three main branches: Theravada, the oldest form of Buddhism that emphasizes the monastic life; Mahayana Buddhism, a later form that includes Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren, and other sects; and Vajrayana, a unique form that arose in India and Tibet and is led by the Dalai Lama.

Buddhist monks are expected to live lives of celibacy. Lay Buddhists are expected to adhere to Five Precepts, the third of which is a vow “not to engage in sexual misconduct.” Right and wrong behaviour in Buddhism is generally determined by considerations such as the following:

UNIVERSABILITY PRINCIPLE

Would I like it if this were done to me?

CONSEQUENCES

Does the act cause harm to myself and others or does it empower happiness and joy?

UTILITARIAN PRINCIPLE

Will the act help or harm the attainment of goals (ultimately spiritual liberation)?

INTENTION

Is the act motivated by love and understanding?

Most interpreters have taken that homosexuality be evaluated in the same way as heterosexuality, in accordance with the above principles.



Where there is mutual consent, where adultery is not involved and where the sexual act is an expression of love, respect, loyalty and warmth, it would not be breaking the third Precept.

BUDDHA NET



MUNISHA

Buddhist at The Manchester Buddhist Centre

In my Buddhist tradition, the Triratna Buddhist Community, we are extremely gay-friendly and sexual orientation is a non-issue. Buddhism is not a theistic religion so it doesn't include the idea of a creator God who's watching and giving instructions. So no Buddhist can ever say 'God says being LGB&T is not OK', because in the Buddhist view there isn't anyone in charge. There are clear ethical guidelines about not causing harm and it's up to each person to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

A L DeSILVA

Buddhist Author

In the case of the lay man and woman where there is mutual consent, where adultery is not involved and where the sexual act is an expression of love, respect, loyalty and warmth, it would not be breaking the third Precept. And it is the same when the two people are of the same gender. All the principles we would use to evaluate a heterosexual relationship we would also use to evaluate a homosexual one.

CHRISTIAN

There is no single position that could be called the Christian view of homosexuality. Virtually all Christians confirm the importance of accepting and welcoming homosexuals into their communities and protecting their civil rights.



But with regard to homosexual orientation and behaviour from a religious point of view, some Christians condemn homosexual acts as sinful while others regard it as a natural, acceptable alternative.'

Many Christians believe and many churches have taught that a person cannot be a Christian and still have a same sex relationship claiming that God has condemned it in the Bible. In fact only a very small amount of the Bible mentions same sex sexual activity.

The term 'Homosexuality' was not in circulation in biblical times and it can be believed that biblical writers did not understand or have any concept of sexual orientation in the way that we do today. Same sex passages from the bible should therefore not be seen as a comprehensive statement.

HOMOSEXUALITY & THE BIBLE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 19 - The story of Sodom and Gomorrah

The men of Sodom wanted to 'know' the foreigners who came to Lot's house. In essence they want to rape them only to show their social and cultural dominance over them.

Social science research into gender and sexual relationships of ancient Mediterranean times show that sexual acts between men did happen but they did so to show dominance of one group of men or a man over another.

It was not uncommon for men who conquered a foreign army to rape them to show them they were dominant and in charge. In the story it is not simply a condemnation of homosexuality but a story of rape and inhospitality towards strangers.

Sodom's sin is not of homosexuality but sins of pride, failure to help the poor and lack of hospitality to foreigners.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus is recorded to have given many speeches about all sorts of relationships and practices that affect relationships such as divorce. But nothing about homosexuality. Only in the letters of Paul is there a mention of same sex relationships.

These passages should be read in context to the Mediterranean world that understood socially acceptable sexual behaviour to happen only one way: among unequal's with the dominant partner always a male.

SOME CHRISTIAN LGB&T GROUPS

LGCM - Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement

UK based international charity that has been challenging homophobia and transphobia since 1976, within the church and faith based organisations along with working to create an inclusive church. The LGCM is open to all people regardless of their sexual orientation or faith belief.

CHANGING ATTITUDE

International group that began in England in 1995, and consists of a network of LGB&T and heterosexual members of the Church. Welcoming of everyone whose concern is to work toward a change in the church's understanding of sexuality with a goal of reaching a day when the Anglican Church fully accepts, welcomes and offers equality of opportunity to LGB&T people.

INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Created in 2003 following the unease in the Church of England surrounding the resignation of Jeffery John as Bishop of Reading. The group is a network of individuals and organisations from the Church of England and beyond who are united in one aim: "To celebrate and maintain the traditional inclusivity and diversity of the Anglican Communion."

For contact details of the above and others please see Page 43.

BISHOP OF MANCHESTER

The Rt. Revd. Nigel McCulloch



I am very sad about the homophobic attitudes of some people. The exclusion, intolerance, prejudice, hatred and fear that homophobia feeds must be eradicated from our society - as I have strongly and publicly said on many occasions. "It is vital that the Church does as much as possible to keep dialogue going between all God's people. That means everyone - whoever, whatever, wherever we are - including of course the gay community.



ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU



If God, as they say, is homophobic, I wouldn't worship that God.



CATHOLIC

QUEST is a group for people who identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, who say their purpose is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to help increase Christian belief among Homosexual men and women.

QUEST (contact details on page 44)

The group is open to all people regardless of their sexual orientation or religious beliefs, and say that Transgender people should feel especially welcome.

Quest say that they aim to meet their purpose of spreading Jesus Christ's gospel to increase Christian belief among Homosexual men and women by:

- Associating lay men and women who are seeking ways of reconciling the full practice of their Catholic faith with the full expression of their homosexual natures.
- Establishing and extending a dialogue between homosexual Catholics and members of the clergy in a hope to achieve better mutual understanding both of the moral teachings of the Church and of the characteristics of its homosexual members.
- Seeking wider opportunities, in the Catholic press and elsewhere, to promote fuller and more public discussion of the spiritual, moral, psychological and physiological issues involved; and
- Providing a point of contact for any homosexual Catholic in need of reassurance and support

KEIRAN

Convenor of Quest Liverpool

Many Catholic men and women are lesbian or gay and actively involved in their faith community. Just as the Bible was once used to justify slavery, which few if any Christians would now defend, so we believe that in time the oppression of LGB&T people by the church will also be overcome by a deeper sense of social justice. We are more likely to effect this change if we remain and campaign for change within the church than if we join the chorus of disapproval from the outside.

PETER

'Face to Face' Counsellor
& Parish Priest.

The Catholic Church affirms we are all created as equally dignified persons in God, healed from any sin through Jesus' love for each and everyone of us. As LGB&T persons we too are called to loving, faithful companionships. The Catholic Church is famous for teaching that sex is for love and openness to life within marriage. The following is less well known from the Catechism (2358): Gay people... "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."

HINDU

Modern Hindus regard all beings, Gods and Goddesses, as manifestations of one universal Atman (Spirit). There is a Hindu deity and story related to almost every way of life. Every God and Goddess is seen as encompassing male, female, neuter, and all other possibilities.



Throughout ancient Hindu culture erotic sculptures on ancient Hindu temples at Khajuraho and Konarak were present and a whole range of sexual experience; including same sex relationships, were known. When Europeans arrived in India they saw this kind of behaviour unjust.

Modern India still follows Victorian ideals of heterosexual monogamy and disowned indigenous traditions that contravened those ideals. However in the very visible communities of Hijras; for example, transgender males have a semi-sacred status and often engage in sexual relations with men.

'Ancient Hindu law books, categorize ayoni (non-vaginal sex) as impure. But penances prescribed for same-sex acts are light compared to penances for some types of heterosexual misconduct, such as adultery and rape.'

The Kama Sutra, describes sexual intercourse as a pleasurable experience and within it further details men who desire other men as a "third nature," and subdivides them into masculine and feminine types.

It provides a detailed description of oral sex between men, and also refers to long-term unions between men.

GALVA (contact details on page 44)

The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association is an international organisation dedicated to the teachings of Lord Caitanya and the importance of all-inclusiveness within his mission, and the Vedic concept of a natural third gender.

The group says that its purpose is to educate Vaishnavas, Hindus and the public in general about the 'third sex' that's described in Vedic literature.

This has been done to help correct the common misconceptions that people have regarding third gender people such as gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders, the intersexed etc.

Along with this GALVA say that they wish to provide a friendly and positive place where people of the third gender and guests can associate together and advance in spiritual life.

KAMA SUTRA IX

...in all things connected with love, everybody should act according to the custom of his country and his own inclination.

HUMANIST

GAY & LESBIAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION (GALHA) is an organisation based in the UK with members worldwide that was founded in 1979, that promotes Humanism and equality for LGBT people and the non-religious. ([contact details on page 44](#))



GALHA work to help combat prejudice and discrimination towards lesbians and gay men, by promoting Humanism and equality for LGBT people and the non-religious, through things such as regular public meetings with speakers.

GALHA have set out with a specific vision and mission which they hope to achieve.

VISION

A world where everyone accepts lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights as human rights, in an open society free of religious privilege and discrimination, where everyone has the freedom to live their life according to Humanist values if they choose to do so.

MISSION

To promote LGBT rights as human rights, combating religious homophobia in particular; to promote Humanism, particularly to LGBT people, and to enlarge and support the movement committed to these aims.

ADAM KNOWLES

Humanist



I found Humanism a perfect fit for me as a gay man. Growing up Catholic I encountered many regressive ideas as far as my sexuality was concerned. Humanism was a breath of fresh air and much more compatible for someone like me, someone that anchors knowledge in science and seeks out evidence and argument not dogma and tradition. Humanism is a naturalistic worldview that sees homosexuality as normal and healthy, something to celebrate not repress. It draws on great philosophical thinkers like Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre, but at the same time you interpret it for yourself and your own situation. It's freedom with responsibility, good without god. I think it has a lot to offer LGBTIQ people.



INTERFAITH

QUEERSTIANITY

A multi-faith, multi-ethnic youth group that aims to establish recognition and respect for homosexuality within religion, through an ethos of love, peace and positive action. The group wish to bring to account dubious interpretations of scripture that advocate homophobia, sexism and fundamentalism. Queerstianity pushes no agenda, other than to respect the one rule that unites all the world's religions – to treat each other as we wish to be treated.

LIVERPOOL SPECTRUM OF SPIRITUALITY

A forum for LGB&T people of faith, set up to create an inclusive interfaith service for Liverpool's first official LGB&T Pride event in 2010. Developing as a network of LGB&T people of faith and the groups which support them, it is hoped that the co-operation it has created may make other LGB&T interfaith events possible in future.

WARREN HARTLEY

Co-ordinator of Liverpool Spectrum of Spirituality

“ We understand that many LGB&T people are suspicious of or hostile to faith groups because of the judgement and rejection they may have experienced or heard about. Our experience shows it is possible to have a healthy and integrated sexuality, gender identity and spirituality. We aim to showcase communities that welcome LGB&T people by creating safe, positive, inclusive spaces to explore and experience faith. ”

(contact details on page 44)

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

Jehovah's Witnesses condemn sex before marriage, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, and the use of pornography as "serious sins before God." They regard masturbation, anal and oral sex, as unnatural, unclean, and sinful.

W One man's story

I was born and raised in a family that were Jehovah's Witnesses. I knew I was attracted to people of the same sex, but growing up I didn't know any gay people.

At the age of 20 I felt ready to date girls. But I didn't feel comfortable. I thought I was in love, however, I disliked the physical aspect of each relationship. Just the thought of "the first night" with a woman terrified me.

I blamed my upbringing for not liking the physical aspect of a relationship. I caught myself searching for nude pictures of men on the web, that is when I realized I might be gay. I felt disgusted with myself, guilty for having this double life that I couldn't control. I begged Jehovah God in my prayers to help rid me of these homosexual feelings. I refused to have internet in my house. I absorbed myself in studying the bible and missionary work.

After four failed relationships with women and gaining a bad reputation within the congregation I decided to start a new life. I needed some time on my own to meditate.

continued over

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

continued

Serious depression took hold of me and I grew spiritually weak as I was losing my battle against homosexuality. I had given up hope and started to develop suicidal feelings. I stopped going to weekly meetings and I begged Jehovah God to help me get rid of these “disgusting” feelings. But I never received an answer.

One night, I finally gave into temptation and lost my virginity to a man who was also a virgin. I was scared I would regret this moment but to my surprise, everything came into place. I wasn't afraid of being physically close anymore. Finally I was free!

This was the beginning of my self-healing journey. I had to learn to accept and love myself the way I was born. Now I know why Jehovah God didn't answer my prayers. In his own way he was telling me to accept myself the way I was. In a way he did answer my prayer. Homosexuals are part of the diversity of his creation.

I have learnt to respect the diversity that God has created. I have come to one important conclusion in my life regarding homosexuality and religion: no religion nor religious leader who claims to be appointed by God through his Holy Spirit are allowed to judge.”

One thing I am certain of... God wants EVERYBODY to be happy.



JEWISH

In Jewish law, sex is not considered shameful, sinful or obscene. Although sexual desire comes from the yetzer ra (the evil impulse), it is no more evil than hunger or thirst but sexual desire must be controlled and channelled, satisfied at the proper time, place and manner. When sexual desire is satisfied between a husband and wife at the proper time, sex is a mitzvah (good deed).

ORTHODOX JUDAISM

Sexual intercourse between two men is forbidden by the Torah. The Torah prohibition of *Lo tikrevu legalot ervah* ("You shall not come close to another person for the purpose of committing a sexual crime") forbids all other sexual acts which can lead to intercourse.

Homosexual acts between women were forbidden by the rabbis: "Do not follow the ways of Egypt where you once lived, nor of Canaan, where I will be bringing you. Do not follow any of their customs." (Leviticus 18:3). The oral law (Sifra there, 8:8) explains that what is meant is sexual customs and one of those was the marriage of women to each other.

The Talmud follows this view, forbidding lesbianism. Female homosexuality is regarded as less serious than male homosexuality. The Orthodox position generally holds that homosexual attraction is not inherently sinful, though it is regarded as unnatural.

If someone who has had homosexual intercourse does teshuva (repentance), he is seen to be forgiven by God.

JEWISH



REFORM JUDAISM

Reform Judaism rejected the traditional view in all areas relating to the issue of Homosexuality. As such, they do not prohibit ordination of gays and lesbians as rabbis and cantors. They view Levitical laws as sometimes seen to be referring to prostitution rather than condemnation of same-sex intercourse or homosexuality. Reform authorities consider that, in light of what is seen as current scientific evidence about the nature of homosexuality as a biological sexual orientation, a new interpretation of the law is required.

"...if there is anything at all that Reform Jews do, it is to create an inclusive spiritual home for all those who seek the solace of our sanctuaries. And if this Movement does not extend support to all who have been victims of discrimination, including gays and lesbians, then we have no right to call ourselves Reform Jews."

FAW, Soc.Culture.Jewish Newsgroups

GAY AND JEWISH

There is a lot to celebrate about being both Jewish and being LGB&T. A lot of Jewish people don't believe in God, but being Jewish, like being gay or brown or pink, is an accident of birth, and very seldom a choice. Non-orthodox denominations do not have a problem with homosexual relations.

A PERSONAL VIEW BY ED TEEGER, VICE PRESIDENT OF JEWISH GAY AND LESBIAN GROUP, UK

Masorti, Reform and Liberal Judaism welcome lesbian and gay Jews as full members of their communities. There are openly gay or lesbian Rabbis in the Reform and Liberal movements.

Judaism believes that each individual has the free will to decide, and that Rabbis are only teachers to help those who need help to understand or interpret the laws.

Though as children we are taught that God said everything in the Bible, religion and history are more sophisticated than that. Each Jew has to decide which laws are fundamental to one's faith, which laws one is comfortable to break, and which you do not consider as God given at all.

Many biblical statements and those of other religions are now considered to be wrong on issues ranging from the treatment of children, women, and Jews (in the New Testament) to homosexuality and nationalism.

Our view is that as a living religion our attitudes should be judged against current values and justice. The Bible and the Jewish Laws were written in a historical context and have been re-interpreted over 2,500 years to relate to changes in society.

Many of the old laws of Leviticus are no longer applied by even the most orthodox, because the Talmud and Rabbis through the centuries said they no longer apply.

JEWISH

The Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group, was founded in 1972 the longest established Jewish gay group in the world. Membership is open to Jewish men and women who are gay, lesbian or bisexual and is welcoming to many non-Jews and non-gay guests. You do not have to be religious to join the group as it is primarily a social group.

Keshet UK - A national forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans Jews.

Keshet means 'rainbow'. The forum hopes to challenge prejudice, tackle anti-gay bullying and support Jewish LGBT&T people in schools, synagogues and social care.

Keshet Manchester - The group are working to ensure all LGBT&T Jews are included as members of the Jewish community in North West England based on the Jewish values of truth, social justice and loving kindness.

Manchester Liberal Jewish Community -The North West of England's Liberal Jewish Community actively seek to include those who have experienced exclusion and discrimination on account of their gender, sexuality, disability or halakhic status (interfaith marriage, adoption, patrilineal descent, etc) based on the central Jewish values of truth (emet), social justice (tzedek) and loving kindness (chesed).

For contact details of the above and others please see page 44.

MORMON

The Mormon Church is firm on its position condemning homosexuality as sinful behaviour. One of the tenets of Mormon doctrine is the Law of Chastity. It permits sexual relations only between a husband and wife who are legally married. Homosexuality is sometimes unfairly stigmatized but in Mormon doctrine it is not treated any different than adultery, fornication, or any other 'sinful' act.

SUPPORT FOR GAY MORMONS

Affirmation is a fellowship of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, their family and friends who share the common bond of the Mormon experience. Its purpose is to provide a supportive environment for relieving the needless fear, guilt, self-oppression and isolation that Latter Day Saint gays and lesbians can experience .

They believe that a same-gender orientation and same-gender relationships can be consistent with and supported by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Affirmation are an organization of people who believe in the worth of every soul regardless of their sexual or gender orientation.

They reject "the tyranny that would have people believe that who we are - gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender - is evil or wrong".

There is a principle in Mormonism that God gives unto men weaknesses that we might be humble and in our faith and humility God will make our weaknesses become strengths. I struggled for years in an attempt to change my sexual identity but it was only when I recognized that if this was a weakness only God could make it strong that I was able to humble myself and have faith. Since my submission to God I have been able to understand my struggles and see the strength they have given me to reach out and help others despite of the attitude I have received from within my Church.”

Marie Osmond is the highest profile Mormon to come out in support of giving gay and lesbian couples the same rights afforded to heterosexual couples.

She has called her oldest daughter Jessica, who is a lesbian — a ‘magnificent woman’ and stated that she supports her and believes in equal rights for gays and lesbians. “I think it’s sad when we have to separate something from society. Whether it’s, ‘Oh you’re Jewish,’ ‘Oh you’re a Mormon,’ or ‘Oh you’re gay.’ A lot of women out there have gay children. Who cares? I want love. I’m a Christian and Christ loved everybody.”

MUSLIM

In Islam homosexuality is considered a sin and condemned under the story of lots people in the Qur'an (15:73; 26:165) and also in the last address of the Prophet Muhammad. However, attraction of men to beautiful male youths is part of the culture of some Islamic societies and the attraction is not generally condemned in itself.



Shari'a (Islamic law) is most concerned with public behaviour, so there is no strong condemnation of homosexuality if it is not displayed in public.

Same sex intercourse is widely considered a violation of Islamic law however there are different opinions within Islamic scholarship. With regard to lesbian homosexuality, some have argued that since penetration is not involved, female homosexual acts should be less severely punished.

Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali, Maliki are the legal schools or Madhabs that deal with the punishment of infringement of Islamic law. More recently, some groups have rejected this tradition in favour of individual interpretation. Some liberal Muslim movements accept Homosexuality and consider it as natural. They regard verses either redundant in context to modern society or state the Qur'an speaks out against homosexual lust and not homosexual love. However this view is still controversial and is considered to be detached from mainstream Islam.

Indeed in modern society same-sex intercourse carries the death penalty in five officially Muslim nations: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Mauritania, Sudan, and Yemen.



LGBT MUSLIM SUPPORT GROUPS

IMAAAN

A support group for LGB&T Muslim people, their families and friends. The group came about in 1998 because of a need to reconcile Islam with sexuality that seemed to coincide with a generation of gay Muslims who were witnessing the growth of gay culture in England. Which brought them to ask the question why can't you be both gay and Muslim?

AL-FATIHA

Group dedicated to Muslims from all different cultural and ethnic backgrounds who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and questioning or exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, their families, friends and allies.

SAFRA PROJECT

A resource project set up in October 2001 by and for Muslim LBT women working on issues relating to lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender women who identify as Muslim religiously, and/or culturally. The word Safra is related to the words for 'journey' and 'discovery' in many languages such as Arabic, Farsi and Urdu. The Safra Project is not a faith group.

For contact details of the above and others please see page 45.

IN THE WORDS OF MUSLIM GAY MEN...

W W SAL

Over the years I have gained a sense of understanding of my faith. I realised the negative messages that ruled my mind were not from the Qur'an. I realised for me being a Muslim is about my relationship with Allah, treating people with respect, empathy and love. I may not pray five times a day but I still read the Qur'an and pray to Allah, not to change me but to thank him for my life to date.



W W HASH

If my existence was destined to end by getting stoned to death or thrown off a cliff, why was I born? Why does God say to me he loves me 70 times more than my own mother, but has written a life that will only be a means to an end? This for a long time pushed me away from my religion, but I found solace in a mosque. My religion and my family were my identity, for sure God couldn't strip me of my identity and leave me deserted? This started my quest for religious acceptance. If my God accepted me, then no one could have a problem, nor could my family denounce me.



QUAKERS

Michael Bartlet, Parliamentary Liaison Secretary for Quakers in Britain, spoke on the subject of sexuality on BBC Radio 4's Moral Maze where he said: "Quakers marriage is about a loving commitment, the quality and whole hearted commitment of it is far more important than race, gender, sexuality or colour of the skin - Quaker's believe in moral evolution. In the Bible there is slavery which would be seen as a norm in the old testament yet it would be repulsive in modern day society."

QUAKER LESBIAN AND GAY FELLOWSHIP



The QLGF is a group for Quakers of all sexualities and for people who are not Quakers. The group is welcoming and supportive and aims to encourage friendship and support among members, and to aid members experiencing difficulty in accepting themselves or being accepted as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered.

The group is helping to try and change attitudes through publications, meetings and discussion. And cover other issues relevant to them such as bereavement, employment, family life, criminal justice and other pastoral care.

Quakers have been talking about same-sex marriage, not just gay relationships for some 50 years or so.

That is marriage on the same legal, social and spiritual basis as straight people. In 1963 a group of Quakers published *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, which declared that what mattered in a sexual relationship was love and respect, not the sex of the people concerned.

In 1973, the Quaker book, *Homosexuality from the Inside* was probably the first publication from a religious body written by an openly gay person, David Blamires. In the same year, Friends Homosexual Fellowship (now called Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship) was established to provide friendly support and campaign for gay rights.

Quakers have been celebrating same-sex relationships since 1988 and in 2009 Quakers agreed to press the Government to change the law and allow same-sex marriage, not just civil partnerships.

[\(contact details on page 45\)](#)



A gay Quaker



I became a Quaker quite by accident. I learned about them through a peace campaigner that I knew and learned about their role in campaigning for peace and non-violence.

Then, when I met my partner and he told me that he wanted to find a gay-friendly church, I immediately thought of the Quakers and suggested he went along and then after a few weeks, I started going too.

As a gay man, I felt nervous going along to a church with my partner as I was worried how we would be treated but I discovered that being gay was just not an issue for anyone and there were several openly gay members of the Quaker Meeting, as it is called. We were treated with kindness and respect, not the experience that my partner or myself were used to regarding church groups.

I greatly respect the Quaker Testimonies (or values) of upholding equality, peace, truth and simplicity.

Quakers worship in silence, unless someone feels moved to speak to the Meeting. At first I found this difficult as it is so unusual in modern day life to experience stillness and silence. However, after a while, I grew to love the feeling of relaxation and rejuvenation.

Because Quakers have no minister, everyone is equal to take part and contribute to the Meeting. Quakers also have few rigid rules beyond the testimonies, as they believe it is for the individual to go on their own spiritual journey and share their experiences with others.

In this environment, I am treated as an equal, with something to contribute and I am free to be myself and it is a place where I feel very much at home.



SCIENTOLOGY

The teachings of the Church of Scientology are based upon the writings of its late founder, L. Ron Hubbard. The texts of scientology contain references written in the early 1950's when homosexuality was often an illegal activity. It is important to realize that L.R. Hubbard's beliefs matched those of mainstream psychiatry and psychology at the time .



This belief was based on studies of gays and lesbians who were either under the care of mental health therapists or were inmates in prisons. Needless to say, this was not a representative sampling of the homosexual population.

In 1967, perhaps in response to the groundbreaking work of researchers into human sexuality, Hubbard wrote:

"It has never been any part of my plans to regulate or to attempt to regulate the private lives of individuals. Whenever this has occurred, it has not resulted in any improved condition....Therefore all former rules, regulations and policies relating to the sexual activities of Scientologists are cancelled." In October 2009 a spokesperson of the Church of Scientology International said:

"The church supports civil rights for everybody, regardless of sexual orientation, race, colour or creed. We are a minority, too; we understand what it's like to be persecuted, so to the extent that anything prohibits or inhibits on civil rights, we don't agree with it."

(Contact details on page 45)

It is a myth that gay people can not join or be Scientologists. There are many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who are happy and practicing Scientology to better their lives

KEITH RELKIN

A gay Scientologist



It was Scientology that got me off drugs. It was counselling from a Scientology chaplain that helped me deal with coming out as a gay man and how to handle that with my family and friends.

It was a Scientology Communications course that gave me many of the tools to rebuild my personal and family relationships, and also greatly improve my dating life!

But most of all, Scientology has given me the opportunity to handle the effects of the oppression that all gay people grow up with, and to regain self-confidence and self-respect."



SIKH

Sikhism believes in tolerance, equality and acceptance of all people regardless of race, religion, gender or sexuality. The Guru Granth Sahib (holy text for Sikhs) has no mention of Homosexuality; however the ten living gurus were aware of homosexuality at the time that it was compiled, also there were a number of openly gay Hindu and Muslim saints in the 16th & 17th centuries.



If the subject of Homosexuality were to be believed to be a sin it would have been addressed in the text. The text also considers all life and existence to be created by the grace of god and scientific research has concluded that homosexuality is common within nature and amongst animals.

Sexuality is seen to be something which is part of the natural human state. However, excessive sexual activity is referred to within Sikhism as lust or 'Kaam' which is deemed to be one of the five thieves of Sikhism (similar to the seven deadly sins of Christianity)

Although Sikhism is a liberal religion, Punjabi culture is extremely conservative. This can lead to some Sikhs having the same conservative views which stem of course from Punjabi Culture but which the individual may believe to be part of Sikhism.

HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB

The Sikh sacred text, the Guru Granth Sahib, is the highest authority in Sikhism. It is silent on the subject of homosexuality. However, there are parts of the Guru Granth Sahib that have been interpreted to mean that homosexuality is wrong.

There are five vices outlined in the Guru Granth Sahib that are to be avoided by Sikhs. These vices are called the Five Thieves. They are Pride (a'Hankar), Anger (Kr'odh), Greed (Lob'H), Attachment (Mo'H), and Lust (K'haam). Many Sikhs believe that homosexual thoughts and behaviour are just manifestations of lust, and that it is therefore forbidden.

However, other Sikhs believe that Guru Nanak's emphasis on universal equality and brotherhood is fundamentally in support of gay rights. This view is held by Sikhs who have been born/raised in countries that are more tolerant towards homosexuality.

FAMILY LIFE

One of Sikhism's underlying values is family living. Those Sikhs who are supportive of homosexuality believe that there is nothing unnatural about homosexuality. They believe that the concept of family is not restricted to a man and a woman and their biological children, but can come in many other forms including same-sex couples.





SARBAT.NET

(contact details on page 43)

This website is dedicated to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Sikhs where you can view a number of articles discussing topics such as events, marriage and relationships, Sikh philosophy and personal testaments from other LGB&T Sikhs (such as the one below). There is also a discussion forum or you can contact Sarbat directly .

"I was born a lesbian, I never chose my sexuality. I consider myself lucky for coming from an Asian background as being gay is deemed to be special in India. Hermaphrodites attend births and marriages in India in order to bless them, and people consider them holy or lucky. So we're blessed, we're lucky as a group of people, in Asian society anyway.

"Sikhism isn't a dead religion to me that is written in a book. It is about quiet contemplation, listening to shabads, thinking about seva, about not getting carried away about 'my religion being the right religion'. I am a British Sikh Punjabi mid-flight dyke, and my religion is in everything that I do."

WICCA

In many Wiccan traditions, it's common to have an equal number of male and female members. This is because, among other things, it helps create an equal balance of male and female energy. However, there are an increasing number of Pagan groups founded by and geared towards gay members, and may only take initiates of one gender, rather than having a balance of male and female.



Pagans and Wiccans are very accepting of homosexuality. That's due in no small part to the fact that a lot of Pagans and Wiccans figure it's none of their business who someone else loves.

There also tends to be support of the idea that acts of love, pleasure and beauty are sacred.

Some Wiccan and Pagan traditions are strictly for gay members, and most accept and welcome gay, bisexual and transgender seekers side-by-side with their heterosexual peers.

Many Pagan clergy people are willing to perform same-sex handfastings and commitment ceremonies.

WICCA



Maybe one of the reasons for such openness is that many of these cultures are Pantheistic. Like them, the most important aspect of Paganism is Polytheism - Diversity is written in. The Gods make us as we are - and that includes our diversity. The one law we all agree is "And it harmeth none". This is the same for sexual morality as for any other aspect of ethics.

▼▼ **JOHN** Gay Pagan

My name is John, I'm gay and a practising Pagan.

Unlike other religions we don't have set scripture and follow the cycles of the Earth. Paganism is welcoming to gay people as there is no stigma involved. I practise my beliefs in tandem with other Pagans regardless of sexuality. Everyone is equal and the same."



THE CHARGE OF THE GODDESS



All acts of Love and Pleasure are Her rituals.



(Contact details on page 45)

USEFUL CONTACTS

BAHA'I

- **Gay/Lesbian Baha'i story project**
www.gaybahai.net
- **GAHaybahai** LGB&T people of the Baha'i faith. www.gaybahai.yuku.com

BUDDHIST

- **Gay Buddhist Sangha**
www.gaybuddhistsangha.com
- **Gay Buddhist Fellowship**
www.gaybuddhist.org
- **Buddhism in Manchester**
manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk
Tel: 0161 834 9232

CHRISTIAN

- **Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement** www.lgcm.org.uk
Tel: 020 7739 1249
- **Changing Attitude**
www.changingattitude.org.uk
Tel: 01380 724908
- **Inclusive Church**
www.inclusivechurch2.net
Tel: 07762 373 674
- **Manchester Gay Christian Group**
www.manchestergaychristians.org
- **Whosoever** Online magazine for LGBT Christians
whosoever.org/mission.shtml
- **The European Forum of LGB&T Christian Groups**
europeanforumlgbtchristians.eu

- **Unitarians** LGB&T Friendly
www.unitarian.org.uk
- **Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians**
www.eflgc.org.uk
- **Accepting Evangelicals**
www.acceptingevangelicals.org
- **Metropolitan Community Church, Manchester**
www.mccmanchester.co.uk
Tel: 0161 881 6050
- **Communion** Safe sacred space for LGBT people.
www.stchrysostoms.org/LGBTcommunion
- **Somewhere Else** Methodist Church in Liverpool
www.somewhere-else.org.uk
- **Open Table** St Bride's Liverpool
Bridehosts a monthly eucharist for LGB&T people.
www.stbridesliverpool.com
- **St Agnes Church North Reddish**
www.northreddish.org.uk
Tel: 0161 223 0692/077899 15263
- **Chorlton Central Church**
www.chorlton-central.org.uk/
Tel: 0161 881 0958
- **Liberty Church Blackpool**
www.libertychurchblackpool.org.uk
Tel: 079555 97771

• **House of Rainbow Fellowship** For all LGBTI people.

www.houseofrainbow.org

Tel: 020 8558 3485/07507 510357

• **Courage** reconciling Christian and gay identity.

www.courage.org.uk

• **Gay Sacred Space** LGB&T Faith Groups across the North-West

www.gaysacredspace.co.uk

• **Lesbians Exploring Faith Together**

Christian organisation for lesbians and bisexual women.

www.lesbians-exploring-faith-together.blogspot.com

• **Young LGBT Christians**

www.ylhc.org.uk

CATHOLIC

• **Quest** A group for Lesbian & Gay Catholics

www.questgaycatholic.org.uk

• **Affirming Catholicism** Movement for inclusive catholic faith and practice in the Anglican Communion.

www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk

HINDU

• **The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association**

www.galva108.org

HUMANIST

GALHA Gay & Lesbian Humanist Association www.galha.org

Tel: 0844 800 3067

INTERFAITH

• **Interfaith Foundation** Inclusive, embracing the universal truth at the heart of all spiritual traditions.

www.interfaithfoundation.org

Tel: 08444 457 004

• **Queerstianity** Based in Manchester queer-stianity is aimed at young people of any faith, colour, gender, sexual preference etc.

www.queerstianity.tumblr.com

• **Liverpool Spectrum of Spirituality**
liverpoolspectrum@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07780 568 754.

• **A forum for LGB&T people of all beliefs**

www.gayfaith.org

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

• **A Common Bond** Worldwide support network for people who are or were associated with Jehovah's Witnesses and are part of the LGB&T community

www.gayxjw.org

JEWISH

• **Keshet UK** Forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans Jews

www.keshetuk.org

• **The Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group** www.jglg.org.uk

Tel: 07504 924742

• **Support Group for Parents of Jewish Gays and Lesbians**

www.parentsofjewishgaysandlesbians.co.uk

Tel 07806 636089

• **Manchester Liberal Jewish**

Community

www.mljc.org.uk

Tel: 0843 208 4441

- **Keshet Manchester** A group for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex Queer and Questioning Jews
www.keshetmanchester.org.uk

MORMON

- **Affirmation** Organisation for Mormons who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.
www.affirmation.org

MUSLIM

- **Imaan** Muslim LGB&T support group
www.imaan.org.uk
- **Al-Fatiha** Group dedicated to LGBTIQQ Muslims
www.al-fatiha.org
- **Safra Project** For Muslim lesbian, gay and bisexual women
www.safraproject.org

QUAKERS

- **Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship**
www.qlgf.org.uk
- **Quakers in Manchester**
www.manchesterquakers.org.uk
Tel: 0161 834 5797

SCIENTOLOGY

- **Web pages to answer questions about Scientology**
www.liveandgrow.org

SIKH

- **Sarbat.net** Website that provides information and discussion about same-sex relationships in Sikhism.
www.sarabat.net
- **Project Naad** Charitable organisation that distributable content for sharing the wisdom and teachings of Sikh philosophy with humanity.
www.projectnaad.com
- **Sikh LGB Web site**
www.members.aol.com/gendervariant/faith/sikh/

WIKKA

- **Soulrebels** Website for queer pagans to find more detailed information about being in the LGB&T community and being pagan.
www.soulrebels.com
- **Gay Pagans**
www.thewellhead.org.uk/GP/gay1.htm

FURTHER READING

There are many books available on aspects of spirituality, and a great deal of them cover religious views of homosexuality. Those highlighted here are just a small selection.

The Baha'i Faith: A Beginner's Guide (*Moojan Momen*)

Introduction to teachings on the spiritual development of the individual to the belief in the need for world peace.

The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality (*Bernard Faure*)

Examines the way in which homosexual behaviour was both condemned and idealized in medieval Japan.

What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality (*Daniel A. Helminiak*)

Revisionist findings on the Bible's six major passages and few minor

references that seem to denounce homosexuality.

The Queer Bible Commentary (*Edited by Guest, Goss, West & Bohache*)

Brings together several scholars whose interest lies in areas of gender sexual orientation and biblical studies

Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches (*Walter Wink - Editor*)

Protestant and Catholic church leaders address the fundamental moral imperative about homosexuality.

Uncommon Calling (*Chris Glaser*)

Narrative of the struggle to find a place in the church as a gay man.

Coming Out to God: Prayers for Lesbians and Gay Men, Their Families and Friends (*Chris Glaser*)

The struggle and confrontation around life, death, suffering and love.

A Book of Prayer: For Gay and Lesbian Christians (*William George Storey*)

Prayer book steeped in the tradition of Christian hours and sensitive to the lives of lesbians and gay men

Gay by God: How to be Lesbian or Gay and Christian (*Rev. Michael S. Piazza*)

Updates Holy Homosexuals: The Truth about Being Gay or Lesbian and Christian for a new generation .

Queeries: Questions lesbians and gays have for God (*Rev. Michael S. Piazza*) Commonly asked questions by LGBT Christians

In the Eye of the Storm: Swept to the Center by God (*Gene Robinson*)

Robinson, the gay Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire, addresses sexuality and theology.

The Church and The Homosexual (*John J. McNeill*)

Suggests that The Bible does not condemn homosexuality.

Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the 14th Century (*J Boswell*)

Historical attitudes toward homosexuality challenging preconceptions about the Church's past relationship to its gay members.

The Queer God (*Marcella Althaus-Reid*) Seeks to liberate God from the closet of traditional Christian thought and to embrace God's part in lesbian and gay people's lives.

The Hindu Erotic: Exploring Hinduism and Sexuality - published 2012. (*David Smith*) For anyone interested in Indian religion, sexuality, and South Asian culture.

Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition (*Steven Greenberg*)

An Orthodox gay rabbi, embarks on a trek to re-evaluate the biblical prohibition of male-male relations.

Queer Jews (*David Shneer, Caryn Aviv*)

Twenty-one essays challenge readers to wrestle not only with sexual diversity, but also with gender identity

Queer Theory and the Jewish Question (Between Men Between Women: Lesbian and Gay Studies)

(*Daniel Boyarin Daniel Itzkovitz Ann Pellegrini*)

Dealing with the nature of identity and outsider ness.

Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation (*R&R Schow, Marybeth Raynes - Editor*),

Detailing with being a gay Mormon plus a history of the church's policies on homosexuality.

Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims (*Scott Siraj al-Haq Kugle*)

Examining the foundations for prevailing attitudes towards homosexuality in Islam.

Unspeakable Love; Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East (Islam & Homosexuality) (*Brian Whitaker*)

(*Brian Whitaker*)

Insight into the lifestyle of the gay and lesbian community in the Middle East

Gay Travels in the Muslim World (*Michael Luongo*)

Muslim and non-Muslim gay men's stories of travelling in the Middle East .

Two Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men (*Lester B Brown*)

Exploration into the lives of American Indian lesbian women and gay men outlining six gender styles in traditional culture.

Jesus and the Shamanic Tradition of Same-Sex Love (*Will Roscoe*)

Exploration of the history of Western religion as seen through a queer eye .

Bisexuality in the Ancient World (Yale Nota Bene) (*Eva Canterella*)

Comparisons between heterosexuality and homosexuality in ancient times.

Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others (*Ruth Mazo Karras*)

Overview of medieval culture and how it developed sexual identities different from the identities we think of today.

What Do Pagans Believe? (What Do We Believe) (*Graham Harvey*)

Insight into key beliefs including Druidry, Wicca, Heathenry and Goddess Spirituality.

Coming out Spiritually (*Christian de la Huerta*)

Understanding of gay people's spirituality including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Sufism and Taoism.

The Sikh Religion (*Max Arthur MacAuliffe*)

Comprehensive books about the Sikh religion in the English language. Volume one of six.



Queer Spiritual Spaces (*Kath Browne*)

Explores emerging innovative spaces and integrative practices of queer spiritualities.

HAVE YOU SEEN...

FAITH AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE MOVIES

FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO (2007)

Can the love between two people ever be an abomination? Is the chasm separating homosexuals and Christianity too wide to cross? How can the Bible be used to justify hate? These are the questions at the heart of this film.

PRAYERS FOR BOBBY (2010)

Mary Griffith is a devout Christian who raises her children with the conservative teachings of the Presbyterian Church. However, when her son Bobby confides to his older brother he may be gay, life changes for the entire family with an unexpected outcome.

SAVE ME (2007)

A sex and drug addicted young man is forced into a Christian-run ministry in an attempt to cure

him of his "gay affliction", where he is faced with the truth in his heart and spirit.

THROUGH MY EYES (2007)

A look at the role of today's young Christians in the gay debate: what they really think, how they perceive the church, and what they wish other Christians knew.

PRIEST (1994)

Film about a young Roman Catholic priest, torn apart by the conflict between his devout, deeply committed Christian faith and his homosexuality.

THE LARAMIE PROJECT (2001)

Created from over 200 interviews after the trials of two boys accused of the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, who was

beaten close to death, by two men who had sought to cause a homosexual harm.

EYES WIDE OPEN (2009)

Aaron, a respectable butcher in Jerusalem's ultra-orthodox Jewish community, is a married father of four children. One day, he meets a handsome twenty-two year old student, and falls in love with him.

TREMBLING BEFORE GOD (2004)

Examines homosexuality and the Jewish religion through the stories of men and women who have been rejected by their families and their religion because they are gay.

THE MORMON PROPOSITION (2010)

Documentary on The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the denial of rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

JIHAD FOR LOVE (2007)

This first feature documentary to explore the complex global intersections between Islam and homosexuality seeks to reclaim the concept of personal struggle.

CHILDREN OF GOD (2010)

An American student who has enrolled at an art school in the Bahamas has a secret -- he's gay, but hasn't come out of the closet, and doesn't believe it's prudent in the Bahamas, where homophobia is widespread.

REFERENCES

Page 6: The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom, (Statement 1996).

Page 10: religionfacts.com/homosexuality/Christianity

Page 16: galva108.org/hinduism

Page 20: gayxjw.org

Page 27: whatmormonsbelieve.org/homosexuality

Page 36: religioustolerance.org

Page 36: scientologymyths.info

Page 37: thetruthaboutscientology.blogspot.com

Page 37: www.liveandgrow.org

Page 39: religionfacts.com/homosexuality/hinduism

Page 40: paganwiccan.about.com

Page 40: www.thewellhead.org.uk/GP/gay1.htm

SOME INTERESTING LINKS AND RESOURCES

Would Jesus Discriminate? Material on this site makes clear, there are ways to read the Bible, spiritually, intellectually sound ways, that are gay-affirming.
www.wouldjesusdiscriminate.org

Teach Ministries

After the suicide of her daughter , Mary Lou Wallner found herself faced with a spiritual journey to try to accept her daughters homosexuality.
www.teach-ministries.org

Pocket Devotional for LGB&T Christians

A daily short guide for the spiritual mindedness of queer people that embodies the ethos of devotion, culture and the Christian faith.
www.houseofrainbow.org

The LGBT Religious Archives Network

Preserving history and encouraging scholarly study of LGBT religious movements around the world.
www.lgbtran.org

Other Sheep

Dedicated to empowering sexual minorities throughout the world.
www.othersheep.org

Living It Out

Survival guide for lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians and their friends, families and churches.
www.livingitout.com

Reluctant Journey

Story of George Hopper and his wife being led by God from homophobia to Christian love for homosexuals.
www.reluctantjourney.co.uk

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

Providing help and support to lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Contact the LGF on 0845 3 30 30 30 every day between 10am and 10pm
E-mail: info@lgf.org.uk

FURTHER RESEARCH

A Lifestyle Choice? Myths & Facts about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People. *Camden LGBT Forum (2007)*

“You can’t be religious and be LGB&T.”

Research shows that LGB&T people come from every faith, religion and belief — irrespective of the teachings of the major religions about same-sex relationships.

www.camdenlgbtforum.org.uk

Love Thy Neighbour -What people of faith really think about homosexuality. *Stonewall (2008)*

Based on interviews with Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Christian participants from across the North of England - researchers from the University of Leeds found that tension between religion and gay people can be over-emphasised by religious leaders.

www.stonewall.org.uk

Sexual Orientation Explored: A study of identity, attraction, behaviour and attitudes in 2009.

Ellison, Gavin and Gunstone, Briony (2009)

This study was devised to increase knowledge of the nature of sexual orientation, to capture changing public attitudes and to investigate the impact of disadvantage experienced by LGB people.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/



Religion, Youth and Sexuality: Selected Findings from a Multi-faith Exploration. *Yip, A.K.T et al.*

University of Nottingham, (2011)

Highlights that religious young adults’ experiences in connecting their religious faith and sexuality are diverse. From tension and conflict through the deliberate separation of sexuality and religious faith to a stage where religious faith and sexuality exist harmoniously.

www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/

THOUGHTS...

"If GOD did not make homosexuals, there would be none."

Anon

"We struggled against apartheid because we were being blamed and made to suffer for something we could do nothing about. It is the same with homosexuality. The orientation is a given, not a matter of choice. It would be crazy for someone to choose to be gay, given the homophobia that is present."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"One should no more deplore homosexuality than left-handedness."

Towards a Quaker View of Sex, 1964

"The Bible contains six admonishments to homosexuals and 362 admonishments to heterosexuals. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love heterosexuals. It's just that they need more supervision."

Comedian Lynn Lavner

"If someone comes to me and asks whether homosexuality is okay or not, I will ask 'What is your companion's opinion?' If you both agree, then I think I would say 'if two males or two females voluntarily agree to have mutual satisfaction without further implication of harming others, then it is okay'"

Dalai Lama



"I often joke that it would be preferable to everyone if I had a Jewish girlfriend rather than a non-Jewish boyfriend. By this I mean the major concern appears to be raising Jewish children, rather than one's sexual preference. I imagine this is because "marrying out" is obviously a problem, whereas homosexuality is very much hidden. Oh, and when I say hidden, I don't mean behind a lace curtain, I mean under two duvets, three blankets and buried in a mountain of soil, ideally in outer Mongolia."

Suzy - Keshet, Manchester

"Since Islamic legal precedence does not allow same sexes to wed, Muslim societies make it a

legal impossibility within Islam [but] by not allowing same-sex couples to wed, there is a direct attack on the Koran's message that each person has a mate who is their 'comfort and their cloak'."

Gay Imam, Daayiee Abdullah

"If a person doesn't want to sit beside us because we are Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexuals and Intersex people, then we need to know that it is not our fault, God made us Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex people"

Reverend Rowland Jide Macaulay. House of Rainbow Fellowship

We believe in a fair and equal society where all lesbian, gay and bisexual people can achieve their full potential.

This guide is available in large print by calling **0845 3 30 30 30** or email **info@lgf.org.uk**



Published in April 2011 by:

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

Number 5, Richmond Street,
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Registered Charity No. 1070904 Registered Company No. 3476576