



queer & christian  
without contradiction

## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

In 2006, the Student Christian Movement of Canada launched a four-year national campaign to support and empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth in and out of the churches.

We invite all students to join the campaign, which offers resources, Bible studies, national gatherings and other creative materials to get our message out:

**“Queer & Christian  
Without Contradiction!”**

**scmcanada.org/queer**

Links † Downloads † Stickers † Community  
Interactive forums † Support † Bible studies

## STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT OF CANADA



Since 1921, the SCM has brought together students passionate about justice, community & spirituality, from across and beyond the churches.

We engage the prophetic teachings of the revolutionary Jesus of Nazareth. As an ecumenical (inter-denominational) movement, we include people of many beliefs seeking to explore and challenge the Christian tradition and our culture.

**www.scmcanada.org**



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**YOUR LOCAL CONTACT:**

**stop**  
**HOMOPHOBIA**  
*in the churches!*



ICON: ROBERT LENTZ O.F.M. (Used with permission)

**Queer & Christian  
Without Contradiction**



STUDENT CHRISTIAN  
MOVEMENT OF CANADA



“Homophobia affects me a great deal... Just because we go to a Catholic school does not mean that we can keep this hidden in a closet. Remember God loves you for your true self.”

- Catholic high school student

**Homophobia**—the fear and hatred of ‘queer’ people (a term reclaimed by les/bi/gay and trans-identified communities)—takes many forms. The most pernicious form has been, and continues to be, of a religious nature.

Whether you are queer and questioning your place in the church, or just want to know what the Bible says about same-sex relationships, we hope this pamphlet will dispel the myth that Christianity is inherently against homosexuality.

As queer-friendly Christians, we proclaim God’s love and acceptance of all people, and oppose homophobia and all forms of oppression as sin. We hope also to provide a community of hope, encouragement and blessing for all God’s children.

“There are no seats in the pews for me, my beautiful partner, or others like us. Not as we are.... How hard will we fight to resurrect what is left of the good in the church?”

- Caitlin Neufeld, *Geez* magazine

## THE BIBLE

*Loose the chains of injustice ...  
Set the oppressed free* - Isaiah 58:6

The Hebrew Bible and New Testament are central to the Jewish and Christian religious traditions respectively.

But the Bible is far from being simply a book of ‘right’ moral conduct; to many, it is a source of wisdom, inspiration, guidance, liberation, revelation and hope in the face of hopelessness.

The Bible is, in fact, a library of books written at different times and contexts, and as such have always been—and will continue to be—interpreted in various ways. Interpretation is the soul of the Biblical tradition; it is its inner life.

Unfortunately, the Bible has been misused and abused by some who claim to have the ‘one’ definitive interpretation. During the time of slavery in the American South, for instance, the letters of St Paul were used to justify slavery. Other passages have been wrongly used to justify anti-Semitism, sexism, the Crusades, white supremacy, the pillaging of the earth, and homophobia.

However, the Bible’s prophetic tradition, out of which Jesus’ ministry stems, is full of liberating messages that can radically challenge religious corruption and the ideological distortion of our sacred texts used to demonize others. It rests upon the two central experiences in Jewish and Christian traditions: the Jews’ Exodus from slavery, and the power of Christ’s Resurrection.

When the Bible becomes a tool of persecution, its prophetic voice is lost. An authentic reading of the Bible is one with the life-giving potential to transform people and society.

### Doesn’t the Bible condemn homosexuality?

Many biblical scholars now agree that the handful of passages used to discriminate against queer people have been misused, taken out of context, or even mistranslated. Often, scriptural references to homosexual acts are actually about sins of excess, infidelity or cruelty, and have nothing to do with sexual orientation or consensual love-making.

### THESE BIBLE PASSAGES ARE OFTEN USED TO CONDEMN HOMOSEXUALITY:

GENESIS 18 : 16 - 19

**Sodom & Gomorrah** > The word ‘sodomy’ derives from this passage, in which a local mob wanted to rape two male foreign visitors to Sodom. Lot refuses to violate the ancient law of hospitality to strangers, offering his daughters to be raped instead.

The sin in this story is not homosexuality at all, but inhospitable and abusive behaviour (rape) towards strangers.

LEVITICUS 18 : 22 & 20 : 3

**Abomination** > Man lying with man is described as “abomination” or “detestable.” But the Hebrew word (*toevah*) refers to something ritually unclean, such as sex during menstruation, and is not an intrinsic evil like theft or rape. The same text also bans wearing clothes of blended textiles, and served as a marker of culture.

ROMANS 1 : 26 - 27

**Shameful lusts** > St Paul here refers to same-sex acts in relation to idolatry, as he tries to distinguish the early Christian church from the Roman Empire, which demanded worship. ‘Unnatural acts’ are the result of conforming to the dominant culture and status quo.

## AFFIRMATION IN THE SCRIPTURES

*Love is strong as Death ... The flash of it is a flash of fire,  
A flame of Yahweh himself. Love no torrent can quench.*

- Song of Solomon 8:6-7

**Our scriptures are, at core, about relationships—with God, and with others. The depth of our desire for those we love reflects our yearning for the Mystery that is God. While the Bible is sometimes used as a weapon to oppress, it contains stories which continue to inspire Jewish and Christian gay, lesbian,**

**bisexual and trans-identified people as they struggle against exclusion and seek spiritual wholeness.**

**Ruth & Naomi (Ruth 1-2) and David & Jonathan (1Sam 18-20, 2Sam 1:26) are examples of biblical same-sex relationships which, though not explicitly sexual, are beautiful symbols of passionate attachment be-**

**tween people of the same gender. The sacred values of covenantal intimacy and mutuality are present in ways echoing biblical depictions of man-woman commitment. For instance, Naomi “clings” to Ruth (Ruth 1:14), the same word used in Genesis 2:24 to describe the bond between husband and wife.**

## FURTHER READING

- **Kelly Brown Douglas**, *Sexuality & the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective* (2002).
- **Robert Goss**, *Queering Christ: Beyond Jesus Acted Up* (2002).
- **Carter Heyward**, *Touching our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God* (1989).
- **Daniel Helminiak**, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* (2000).
- **John McNeill SJ**, *The Church & the Homosexual* (4th ed. 1993).
- **Virginia Ramsey Mollencott**, *Sensuous Spirituality: Out of Fundamentalism* (1992).
- **Justin Edward Tanis**, *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry and Communities of Faith* (2003).
- more at [scmcanada.org/queer](http://scmcanada.org/queer).

## FAITH COMMUNITIES

- **AXIOS** : Orthodox
- **AFFIRM UNITED** : United Church
- **BRETHREN MENNONITE COUNCIL** for LGBT interests
- **DIGNITY** : Roman Catholic
- **INTEGRITY** : Anglican
- **LUTHERANS CONCERNED**
- **METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH** : Evangelical-Protestant
- **RAINBOW BAPTISTS**