

**BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES: Segment 7**

**Homosexuality, Part 2: A Commentary  
by Ildefonso J. Rubrico**

A pleasant good evening, my esteemed viewers, from your Biblical Perspectives program host in this station, Nene Rubrico!

Before anything else, a few important announcements.

I am happy to inform our viewers that "Biblical Perspectives" is now being aired in *Cebuano*, our beloved native language. We have translated into Cebuano from English the very first segment of our program that Channel 17 broadcast last July 14, 2004, for the listening pleasure of many of our "igsoon" in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Henceforth, we will be airing our program in two formats: English and Cebuano. That is to say, we will discuss a topic first in English, to be followed by a Cebuano translation - all within the same week, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Please watch for further announcements in your favorite channel, Channel 17.

And now, we will continue our interesting discussion on this controversial topic of **homosexuality**.

**Definition of Terms**

Last time we introduced for discussions in this program the highly-controversial topic of homosexuality, and of the traditional versus liberal views taken by people regarding homosexuality. Also, we dealt briefly on some of the contentious side-issues such as: some personalities and organizations being embroiled in homosexual scandals (like New Hampshire State Gov. James McGreevey and the U.S. Episcopal Church), and the

legality of same-sex marriages. We will try to cover more ground for discussions for this and subsequent segments of our program here in "Biblical Perspectives."

Parenthetically, the frequency of these scandals appear to be increasing, as well as the additional involvement of other prominent people. Thus, these reported scandals will probably not be the last that we will hear or read about.

Before we delve deeper into the topic, for a better understanding and appreciation of the ramifications surrounding homosexuality, it will be best to define the terms we will be using throughout in this discussion.

Insofar as it is possible and appropriate, I will be using terms from the dictionary or encyclopedia, or, if not, technical terms. At this point, I will have to beg the indulgence of our viewers if I will be using some terms in this program they may find objectionable or offensive. *It is not our intention to be offensive or use objectionable terms here.* Rather, in a controversial topic like this, our aim is to be very precise and accurate without sounding offensive to our viewers. As much as possible, we will avoid using vulgar language and so-called "street-" or "kanto-boy" manner of speech.

We turn to the encyclopedia Wikipedia.org for the definition of some common terms.<sup>1</sup> See also Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia.<sup>2</sup>

Homosexuality (rarely now, "homophilia") is a *sexual orientation characterized by romantic or sexual desire for members of the same sex.* Persons with this **sexual orientation** are called "homosexual" (noun and adjective). In women, romantic or sexual desire for other women is also called lesbianism ("lesbian," noun and adjective). The term "gay" is used to refer to

homosexuals of either gender, although it is mostly used to refer to males (hence the expression "gays and lesbians" or "gay men and lesbians"). The term homosexuality is also used for *sexual behavior*, rather than attraction, between people of the same sex.

At this point, it is important to distinguish between *sexual orientation*, *sexual attraction*, and *sexual behavior*, especially as regards persons of the same sex. More about these distinctions later.

The Merriam-Webster Collegiate dictionary, 10th edition, defines "homosexual," "gay," and "lesbian" in this manner, and I quote:

*"homosexual (1892), adj. - 1. of, relating to, or characterised by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex; 2. of, relating to, or involving sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex." As a noun (1902) - "a homosexual person and esp. a male."*

*"lesbian (ca. 1890), n. - a female homosexual."*

*"gay (1953), n. - homosexual."*

The word *homosexual* translates literally as **"of the same sex,"** being a hybrid of the Greek prefix homo- meaning "same" (as distinguished from the Latin root homo meaning "human") and the Latin root sex meaning "sex." The term can be used to represent the entire range of same-sex relations and affections, including lesbianism.<sup>3</sup>

Some early writers used the adjective "homosexual" to refer to any single-gender context (for example: an all-girls' school; today we call them "exclusive school for girls"). Nowadays, the term "homosexual" implies a purely *sexual* connotation.

And, contrary to popular opinion, the word "homosexual" was coined, *not* by psychiatrists or scientists, but by someone who was fighting for homosexual rights. It first appeared in two anonymous German pamphlets in 1869. The term "homosexual" was used in the pamphlet alongside the term "normalsexual," (or the opposite of, which is today's term for "heterosexual"). These pamphlets were published as a method of fighting against the criminalization of homosexual sex in the German states. Journalists in the first part of the twentieth century readily adopted the term for use in everyday language while psychiatric and medical circles continued to use the archaic terms "sexual inversion" and "homophilia."

The word *gay*, in addition to meaning "merry", "joyous" or "glad", also means homosexual. It has had a sexual meaning since at least the nineteenth century in Victorian England. Female and male prostitutes were called "gay" because they dressed gaily. Eventually, "gay boys" became used as a term for any male homosexual. In the United States, the term may have arisen from the hobo community - a hobo is a destitute, homeless person, often without a job, and lives off by begging. A young hobo, a "gay cat" or "geycat", often had to befriend an older, more-experienced hobo for education and survival. Such a relationship was implicitly sexual, hence the term "gay cat" came to mean "a young homosexual".<sup>4</sup>

Nowadays, of course, the gays come from all strata of society, but many are also career professionals and moneyed individuals who are able to support what's now called a "gay lifestyle."

A few are famous personalities in show business, politics, media, and academe who are considered, or, admit to as being, homosexuals. There's a website dedicated to this information.<sup>5</sup>

A *lesbian* (with lowercase "l"), on the other hand, is a *homosexual woman*. Lesbians have or prefer to have romantic and sexual relationships with other women. The word "lesbian" originally referred to an inhabitant of the island of Lesbos, in ancient Greece. The term has come to have its current meaning due to the ancient Greek poet *Sappho*, who lived on the island; some of her poems concerned love between women. Whether Sappho was herself a lesbian, in the modern meaning of the term, or simply a poet who described lesbians, is open to question. While she did indeed write poems about love between women, there is some dispute as to just how far to interpret her writings in this fashion. This association with Sappho led to the term "sapphism" being used as another term for lesbianism.

Western people who regard themselves as having a same-gender sexual orientation tend to prefer the terms *gay* and *lesbian*; the latter term, *lesbian* (noun or adjective) *refers specifically to women* while the term *gay* can apply to both men and women, but it is often used only for males. Hence the expressions *gays* and *lesbians*. Other terms include "same-gender-loving", and "same-sex-oriented." Also less frequently, the terms "queer," "homo," and "fag" or "faggot," and "dyke" are used in a positive sense among gay men and lesbians. However these terms may be considered *derogatory* when used by non-gays.

Various local names for our home-grown homosexuals, as taken from the dictionary, are: "bakla," "bayot," "bading," "agi," "babayote," "tomboy," "lakiyen," "binababae," "binabai," "binalalaki," "binalaki," "lakin-on," etc.). These labels are characteristically lumped together to constitute what is euphemistically known as "the third sex." As to whether the terms are derogatory or not in the local parlance, I have no idea. Members of this group frequently use the terms "bayot" (for male) and "tomboy" (for the female) to describe themselves and each other.

Homosexuals sometimes form themselves into formal organizations. In the University of the Philippines, Diliman, there is an association of homosexuals (mostly students of the Fine Arts college, I think) who call themselves "The UP Babaylan." They even maintain a website at: <http://asia.geocities.com/tfpmanila/babaylan/>. This is how they describe themselves:

*"Founded in August 1992, UP Babaylan is sui generis - in a class of its own - in the history of the University. Its membership is composed of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students... UP Babaylan is officially recognized by University authorities."*

### **What is LGBT?**

In describing homosexuals, the acronym LGBT is frequently mentioned in written articles about them. LGBT stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered." These are the classifications or categories under the all-embracing term of homosexuals. But there are revealing differences between them.

Previously we described gays and lesbians. What about bisexuals and transgendered?

The internet encyclopedia Wordiq.net offers the following helpful definitions:<sup>6</sup>

*"In human sexuality, a bisexual or bi person is capable of sexual attraction for, sexual activity with, and/or falling in love with people of either or both genders. Bisexuals may choose to have relationships with more than one gender at a time; or to merely prefer one gender to another."*

A bisexual person shows the characteristics of both sexes (synonymous with the terms "androgynous" or "hermaphrodite"), in addition to being sexually active with both men and women.

Who are transgenders? *Transgender* is generally used as a catch-all umbrella term for a variety of individuals, behaviors, and groups centered around the *full or partial reversal of gender roles*. Transgender can include a number of sub-categories, which, among others, include "transsexuals," "cross-dressers," "transvestites," consciously "androgynous people," "drag kings" and "drag queens."

*Transsexual* people are people who desire to have, or have achieved, a different physical sex from what they had at birth. One typical (though oversimplified) explanation is of a "woman trapped in a man's body" or vice versa. Having realized that they are women (or men), they wish to change their bodies to match, usually through a sex-change operation.

A *cross-dresser* is any person who wears the clothing of a gender other than that to which they were assigned at birth, for any reason. Contrary to common belief, most male-bodied cross-dressers prefer female partners.

*Drag* involves wearing highly-exaggerated and outrageous costumes or imitating movie and music stars of the opposite sex. It is a form of *performing art* practiced by drag queens and kings. Drag is often found in a gay or lesbian context.

I will not go into the full clinical or psychological details that differentiate between the various categories of sexually-oriented groups. It is sufficient to recognize, though, for purposes of discussion, that there are important but, subtle, differences between them. Often it is the members of these groups themselves who *insist* on such distinctions.

**Sexual Preference, Sexual Identity, and Sexual Activity**



From a layman's point-of-view, the various names used to describe homosexuality can be very confusing. Activist gays charge that labeling them as "homosexuals" is offensive and discriminates against them. The "politically-correct" terms used to describe gay culture such as "sexual preference" or "sexual orientation" or "gay lifestyle" were coined by gays themselves. How are they used today? Let's cite some examples.

A gay who eschews guns and violence to settle disputes, as depicted by a Hollywood or Joseph Estrada-Fernando Poe, Jr. film, rejects the prevailing "macho" image in favor of non-confrontation. His "finer feelings" supposedly expresses his true "sexual identity."

Another example: The 28th Summer Olympic Games have just been concluded in Athens, Greece, amidst great fanfare and 24-hour TV coverage via satellite hook-up - certainly, a major media event in many Filipino households. So a young man who displays no interest for the Games and instead thumbs the TV remote to a fashion-show program like "Fashion Show TV" featuring the latest women's wear probably reveals more about his real "sexual behavior."

Incidentally, I once had a high-school classmate who drew dozens of hand sketches of women's dress designs in his notebook. My classmate certainly had effeminate manners! Later on, my classmate (whom I had much respect) became a famous doctor, a psychiatrist no less. I was certain then that he had a different "sexual orientation" than mine or from the rest of his heterosexual classmates.

My classmate-doctor never married, up to the day he tragically died at a relatively-young age. We, his classmates on the other hand, went on and got married, had children, then (for some), grandchildren. Our heterosexuality was never in question.

But curiously, while a gay person may freely talk or write about his or her "sexual orientation" or "sexual identity," I notice that not one among the gay community or in their internet websites mentions anything about their "sexual activity!" It would seem like it is a taboo subject, apparently, not for open discussion. The closest I have encountered on the matter being mentioned is the phrase "**same-sex loving relationship.**" Gays love to quote this phrase publicly in defense of their sexual orientation, or, in describing their relationship with their partners.

But what does having a "same-sex loving relationship" mean? Unfortunately, not a single one among the gay or lesbian websites that I surfed spelled this out, hence one can only speculate what it really means. There has been, however, some research made on it by social scientists and psychologists, and we will talk more about it in the next segment.

### **Closing Comments**

To my esteemed viewers, I am hoping that our topic on homosexuality and its more-contentious aspects will encourage all of us to be more-open to discussions to similar, but, controversial social issues that we face.

Next week, we shall begin to talk about the biblical ramifications of homosexuality, and why the Church considers it as against church teachings. We shall also touch on the dangers of AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases prevalent among homosexuals. Finally, what can be done by Christians to help our homosexual brethren.

Once again, valued viewers, this is **Nene Rubrico** reminding you, that:

***"A nation can save itself from perishing if its people have vision." (Proverbs 29:18a)***

Good night and God bless!

---

Copyright©2004 by Ildefonso J. Rubrico

If portions of this work is quoted or used for study purposes,  
please cite source: [www.biblical-perspectives.org](http://www.biblical-perspectives.org)

## References

- <sup>1</sup><http://www.ebroadcast.com.au/lookup/encyclopedia/ho/Homosexuality.html>
- <sup>2</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)
- <sup>3</sup>[http://www.drama.uwaterloo.ca/Gross%20Indecency/homosexuality\\_word.shtml](http://www.drama.uwaterloo.ca/Gross%20Indecency/homosexuality_word.shtml)
- <sup>4</sup>[http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Prevalence\\_of\\_homosexuality](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Prevalence_of_homosexuality)
- <sup>5</sup>[http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Famous\\_gay\\_lesbian\\_or\\_bisexual\\_people](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Famous_gay_lesbian_or_bisexual_people)
- <sup>6</sup><http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Bisexuality>