



BY
Amy Matheny

We Too Believe

Recently, I discovered a powerful voice for GLBT people of faith on a Web site whosoever.org. The online magazine just celebrated its eight-year anniversary as a positive voice for GLBT Christians using scripture to back up their preaching of inclusion. It is an entirely refreshing and empowering well of spiritual dialog. Candace Chellew-Hodge encourages us that the mission of whosoever.org is "whosoever" believes MUST speak.

Candace Chellew-Hodge, editor of whosoever.org

With all of the religious hatred being directed at gays and lesbians these days, you'd think God had a special rage against our community and a special place in hell reserved just for us. This is simply not true. There are six passages in the Bible that debatably deal with same-sex activity, but same-sex love and affection are never condemned. As for Jesus, he never spoke one word on the

subject. Instead, instructing us to love God, to love ourselves and to love our neighbor just as we love ourselves. Not one word about homosexuality.

In fact, it was Jesus who made the sweeping statement in John 3:16 that "whosoever" believes is a child of the living God. There are no other qualifications. It's an invitation to anyone who would claim their place in God's realm. Jesus is clear—all are welcome, without exception.

This is made abundantly clear in the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:1-42. Samaritans were the queers of Jesus' day, hated by the religious majority. But Jesus treats her no differently than anyone else, offering her "living water" in the form of entry into God's realm. In verse 24 he tells her that "God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth." This is important for gay and lesbian believers who can only truly worship in spirit and in truth when we reconcile our sexuality and our spirituality and embrace ourselves as "Whosoever."

Not everyone wants us to do that. Just as Jesus' disciples were horrified that he was talking with this hated Samaritan woman, so are some of Jesus' followers today horrified that Jesus might be speaking words of salvation to hated people like us. They insist that there is more than just "whosoever believes," even if Jesus never said so. They insist we must, at the very least, give up our sexual orientation for God to love and accept us. It's simply not true. "Whosoever" means everyone,

even the gay and lesbian believers.

It is also instructive to note what the Samaritan woman did after talking with Jesus. Despite her rejection by "righteous" society, she goes to town and tells everyone she meets about Jesus. The Bible only tells about the people who believed the woman and came back to see Jesus. But you can bet there were some who told her that she had no right to talk about Jesus, because he certainly would not welcome anyone such as her into God's realm. She was not deterred, doing instead what Paul instructs us to do in 2 Corinthians 4:13: "we too believe, and so we speak."

This is our manifesto as Whosoever. We speak because we believe. We speak even if others don't believe us, or call our faith false. We speak because we are God's beloved gay and lesbian children. We speak because our encounter with the living God has given us a message and a voice.

Candace Chellew-Hodge is a recovering Southern Baptist and founder/editor of [For questions or comments, please email \[editor@windycitymediagroup.com\]\(mailto:editor@windycitymediagroup.com\)**](http://Whosoever: An Online Magazine for GLBT Christians (whosoever.org). She is assistant pastor of MCC Columbia in Columbia, SC, and holds a master's in theological studies from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.</p>
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