

Macho-man image, prejudice creates 'homophobia'

Much like sexism or racism, homophobia is a socially determined prejudice, but unlike the other two, it directly affects everyone, not just those it is aimed towards. An irrational fear or intolerance of homosexuality as perceived in others or in oneself is what characterizes this common prejudice.

Traditional expectations of gender roles and particular interpretations of biblical passages are largely responsible for society's homophobia. Men, on the whole, are more

homophobic than women because gay men threaten the value others place on the traditional male.

The traditionalists believe a "real man" only loves women and does not express affection or tenderness towards other men. Homosexuals, by violating this idea of the male role, are not seen as real men; therefore, many feel justified in their derogatory comments or in holding a general prejudice towards gays.

Those who have an impulse to experiment with a gay lifestyle often

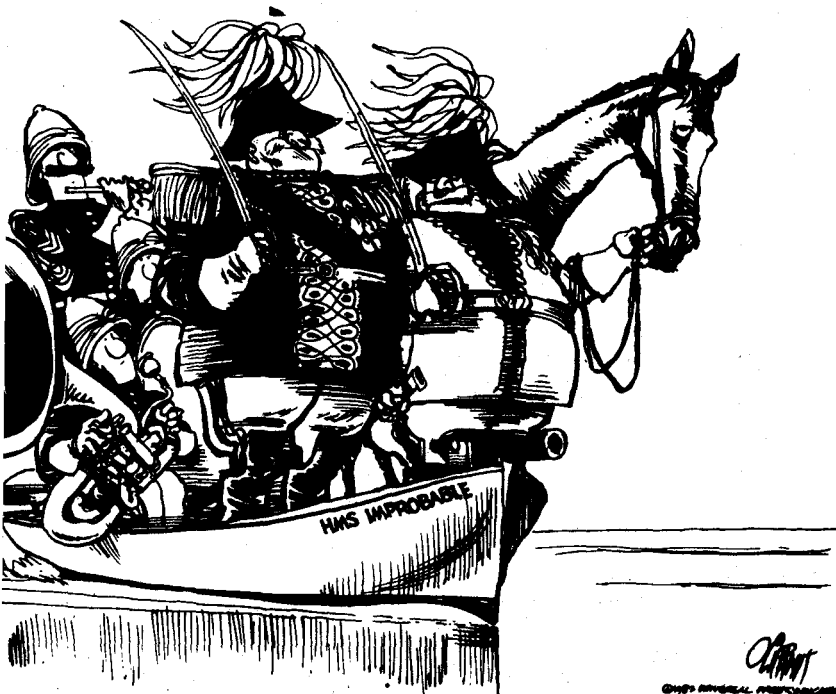
have the worst cases of homophobia. To prove to themselves and others that they are real men (not gay), they constantly deride those who deviate from their "macho-man" ideal.

In this society, too often to be different is to be bad. Fear of being labeled a homosexual has been described by many researchers as the most powerful force by imprisoning men in the traditional male role and depriving them of the rewarding experience of being close to one another.

Despite the National Council of Churches' (among other religious groups) claim that the violation of gay civil rights is immoral, some still justify their intolerance of gays on the Word of God. These folks fail to mention, though, that the selective passages — upon which they base "their" interpretation of God's Word — come from a work which has been translated and retranslated so many times that its words (taken out of context), can and have been used to justify almost anything.

Ephesians 5, which states, "Slaves be obedient to your earthly masters," for example, was used to justify slavery. Reliance upon selective passages out of context cannot render a sound interpretation of God's Word. Several highly respected biblical scholars conclude that the Bible does not imply any moral injunctions of homosexuality.

What many believe to be immutable moral law is often a reflection of society's prejudice in the popular biblical interpretations.



FALKLANDS, LET'S HEAR THE SHIP'S BAND PLAY SOMETHING SINGING FROM GILBERT AND SULLIVAN.