

THE SALVATION ARMY RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED

ABOUT INTERVIEW ON JOY FM, MELBOURNE

Question: Do Salvation Army full members believe, as per the Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine, that practising homosexuals should be put to death? Why, or why not?

Salvation Army members do not believe, and would never endorse, a view that homosexual activity should result in any form of physical punishment. *The Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine* does not state that practising homosexuals should be put to death and, in fact, urges all Salvationists to act with acceptance, love and respect to all people.

The Salvation Army teaches that every person is of infinite value, and each life a gift from God to be cherished, nurtured and preserved.

Question: Why include in your handbook the Romans text from The Bible, which indicates that God insists that homosexuals deserve to die?

This is a misunderstanding of the text referred to. The Scripture in question, viewed in its broader context, is not referring to physical death, nor is it specifically targeted at homosexual behaviour. The author is arguing that no human being is without sin, all sin leads to spiritual death (separation from God), and all people therefore need a Saviour.

Question: Isn't this inherently anti-Christian, to believe people should be put to death?

The Salvation Army acknowledges that the response in the interview has led to a serious misunderstanding of our teaching and that clarification should have been given during the interview.

The Salvation Army believes in the sanctity of all human life and believes it would be inconsistent with Christian teaching to call for anyone to be put to death. We consider every person to be of infinite value, and each life a gift from God to be cherished, nurtured and preserved.

Question: Do you feel you owe an apology or explanation to all those gay and Lesbian volunteers and people your organisation supports?

The Salvation Army sincerely apologises to all members of the GLBT community and to all our clients, employees, volunteers and those who are part of our faith communities for the offence caused by this miscommunication.

Conclusion

The Salvation Army encompasses a diverse community with a wide range of opinions on human sexuality and other subjects.

The leadership of The Salvation Army continues to reflect on Christian and Biblical tradition, and especially on the themes of justice and mercy, to further deepen the understandings of our own members and build a more healthy relationship with the GLBT community.

We pledge to continue to offer services to all Australians and to treat each person with dignity, respect and non-discrimination.

Major Bruce Harmer

(Communications and Public Relations Secretary – Australia Eastern Territory)