

The Book Corner

God and Gays

Gays Under Grace: A Gay Christian's Response to the Moral Majority by Maury Johnston. Winston Derek Publishers, Nashville. \$15.95.

To call Gays Under Grace powerful would only underestimate the influence this book has on its reader and the potential change it could bring about in the Christian Church's perception of homosexuality. It is not another weak defense of the gay community but a serious theological study, based entirely on the Bible from Sodom and Gomorrah through Paul's Epistles.

Johnston does not pick and choose his scriptural passages from those which fit his arguments; instead, he brings out every single verse used by Jerry Falwell and the rest of the Radical Religious Right to condemn homosexuals. He puts these verses into their proper social, historical, and scriptural contexts -- something the Moral Majority often fails to do.

Gays Under Grace begins by laying out the arguments put forth by Anita Bryant and Oral Roberts. Johnston discusses some of the more popular contributions to what he refers to as the "Homophobic Book Binge." Among the more ridiculous is a passage from Tim Lattaye's The Unhappy Gay where Lattaye argues that the AntiChrist will be gay based on Daniel 11:37. (Only the King James Version even allows the possibility of this argument: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women...." The "desire of women" actually refers to the god Adonis-Tammuz, whose cult consisted of women.)

Gays Under Grace meticulously explains the scriptures, concluding that it is not homosexuality that is condemned but perversion (unnatural sexual practices). The homosexual is not perverted but in reality inverted. He would be perverted if he tried to go straight, something which for him/her is unnatural. A person's sexual orientation is a gift from God to be used as it is given.

But gays get criticized in Gays Under Grace, too. Johnston believes that gay churches, namely the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, is afraid to tell its members that not all sex is permitted by God. Johnston criticizes promiscuity and "open relationships" as immoral and uses scripture to back it up. He may not make too many friends among some people in today's gay social scene, but as a gay Christian myself, I could not help but feel that he was right. Just because I'm gay doesn't give me the right to ignore what God says in the Bible. I feel it is my responsibility as a gay Christian to bring the gospel to the rest of the gay community. If gay Christians don't do it, who will? Certainly not the Radical Right.

-Jim Duley

Activists Join GRNL Board

Two gay activists, Deborah Johnson of Los Angeles and Gil Gerald of Washington, DC, have joined the Board of Directors of the Gay Rights National Lobby. The two will begin their work with the Lobby this month.

Deborah Johnson currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Gay/Lesbian Community Service Center in Los Angeles, as well as on the Board of Project Justice, a gay/lesbian coalition working for justice for minority gays/lesbians. In June 1984, Ms. Johnson and her lover, Zandra Rolon, won a discrimination suit against Papa Choux, a Los Angeles restaurant.

Gil Gerald, Executive Director of the National Coalition of Black Gays, served as whip for Jesse Jackson's District of Columbia delegation at the 1984 Democratic Convention in San Francisco. Mr. Gerald, an architect, is also a former board member of the Human Rights Campaign Fund and former president of the DC Coalition of Black Gay Men and Women.

Integrity Forms in Durham

Integrity, a national organization providing a ministry by and for gays and lesbians, has formed a chapter in Durham. Integrity is an affiliate of the Episcopal Church and offers support to gays and lesbians, as well as to their families and friends. It embraces persons of all sexual orientations and religious beliefs.

No regular time has yet been set for meetings. For more information on the group, call Stephen in Durham at 477-0654.

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