

AFFINITY

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Have you moved? Are You moving soon? Call (303) 771-7169 or e-mail: AlaninDen@aol.com

What is marriage anyway?

by Richard D. Mohr

Many more people are talking about marriage than seem to know what it means.

The Republican presidential candidates kicked off this year's primary season with a nationally televised anti-gay marriage rally in Des Moines, Iowa. Before an audience of three-thousand, one candidate after the other strode to the podium to sign a pledge to save marriage from gay rights. President Clinton used the rally as occasion to reaffirm his own opposition to gay marriage.

Legislatures in twenty-three states are currently at various stages in advancing bills, that if passed would bar the recognition of out-of-state same-sex marriages. This legislative ground-swell comes in response to a 1993, decision of Hawaii's Supreme Court which broadly hinted that it will eventually legalize gay marriages in the Aloha State.

Both the Iowa candidate's so-called "Marriage Protection Resolution" and these anti-gay marriage bills follow the traditional legal definition of marriage, which holds that marriage is "the union of one man and one woman as husband and wife."

But this definition (as the Hawaii Court noted) is vacuous and circular. It defines marriage in terms of husband and wife, but husbands and wives are simply opposite-sex people who are joined in marriage. No explanation is given of what constitutes the union that is marriage, and so no explanation is given for why a marriage's partners must be of different sexes.

Sometimes judges and legislators have tried to give marriage a functional definition by claiming that its defining purpose is childbearing and rearing. But any definition that tethers marriage to procreation is at once too narrow and too wide. On the one hand, we let people over sixty marry, though their unions will be childless. And on the other, we deny legal marital status to certain extremely fertile unions—polygamous ones. The Hawaii Court also noted this definitional failing, but then punted. It offered no definition of marriage of its own.

If you ask people on the street what marriage is, they just get tongue-tied. And our litigious and political leaders too have not been very forthcoming on what they think marriage is. They treat the issue of gay marriage simply as one as equal access: if the government is handing out widgets or thingamajigs to heterosexuals, then we had better get some too—or so it goes.

See MARRIAGE on page 3

LETTERS TO OUR READERS

Book of Mormon at BGL Community Center Library

Friends and Family:

I have had a call from a lesbian who found the Book of Mormon I placed in the library of the Bi/Gay/Lesbian Community Center in our city.

She just happened to do volunteer duty there last night and found the book and my phone number inside the cover with my note that said something like: "There are no homophobic words in this book..."

She had joined the church after searching for spirituality and asking God to send her the truth, missionaries called at her home the next day, that was a few years ago, she eventually joined and later became inactive, this month she came back and has been dealing with her secret over the years and now wants to talk with others.

I had almost given up trying to have local gay Mormon things, but we may try again, at least a small rap group to talk about our spiritual needs and help others realize they are not alone. She had not known about us being in any organized form as gay Mormons. It was a relief to her to find someone to talk with.

She had dealt with her acceptance of her sexuality pretty well and with other problems and now wants to be more in touch with her Mormonism.

After we talked, she randomly opened her D&C, and it fell open to the section about organizing ourselves and preparing every needful thing. She feels we need to do something here, so I suggested a simple get together and supportive group.

So, I guess there are more of us out there than we realize.

—Albany, NY.

Out at Work

Just wanted to share a positive experience that's happened to me this week. Probably not a big deal to many of you, but it's been quite a milestone for me. Just started a new job and decided to be out to everyone at work. Silly, but I was very nervous about this. I told my boss and several other people. EVERYONE has been very accepting and supportive. Whoda predicted this in Orem, UT?

In spite of the bad press about UT lately, there are pockets of sanity here, and many good people. I get tired of hearing only about the negative. Much better to be out and happy than closed and paranoid.

—Steve

Editor's Note:

Just a reminder that Election for Affirmation's National Director position is approaching. Candidates must formally declare their candidacy in writing to the editor of *Affinity* no later than 1 September, limiting to a maximum of 250 words. Letters will be printed in the October's issue and will be available at this year's National Conference. (See page 7).

Send Candidacy letter via: fax (714) 597-9256, AffinityEd@aol.com or mail to: Editor of *Affinity* P.O. Box 46022 Los Angeles, CA 90046

We must be counted!!!

The United States Constitution begins *we the people*. There are perhaps no three words that better state the concept of a nation by the people and for the people.

As lesbian, gay, bi, and HIV+ men and women, *we are the people too*, and we will be counted. We have undertaken one of the most ambitious and important efforts ever undertaken by a lesbian, gay, and bisexual organization—a census of lesbian and gay North America.

We need your help to make sure that our effort succeeds. To participate, simply call 1-800-429-8642. It takes less than ten minutes to complete the phone survey. The free call may be made 24 hours a day, and you may remain anonymous.

GAYCENSUS '96
1-800-Gay-Voice!
Be Counted. Call Now. It's Free!

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends of Affirmation,

It is a pleasure to ask you for money. There, I wrote it and you are probably not believing me. But it's true, every word of it! It's a pleasure because of the incredible power each and every dollar we are going to raise will be for the good; to improve the lives of our gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered Mormon community as well as our families and friends!

The cause to which I am asking you to generously contribute is the new "Friends of Affirmation Campaign." The "Friends of Affirmation Campaign" is an effort to develop an on-going flow of funds to finance two very important projects: Public Relations and Scholarships.

Scholarships

In a letter which will soon be sent to each of you, you will see that for every dollar contributed (either through a one time donation or credit card deducted monthly installment), approximately 15% will go to fund scholarships to conferences such as the Affirmation's National Conference, as well as Sunstone, Family Fellowship, etc.

Public Relations

A full 80% will go directly to fund Public Relation's outreach efforts such as Affirmation's newly activated Web page (thank you Henry and Rick) and strategically placed ads and other promotions such as the terrific Salt Lake Tribune ad which recently ran during Conference weekend in the Salt Lake Tribune (thank you Jason and Duane, as well as all those dang attractive Affirmates who posed for the picture). Other PR efforts include paying for our monthly ads in periodicals, such as the Advocate and Lesbian News, etc. There is no end to the wonderful uses we will put to this money (one idea I liked, thanks again Henry, was a prominent Bill Board (outside of Salt Lake during the Salt Lake Winter Olympics). The only limitation to what we can do is how much we can raise! Being gay there is obviously no limitations on our imaginations!

Not more than 5% will go to cover unavoidable overhead such as credit card fees (currently 3%), dues and other expenses such as stamps, etc. While it is true that Affirmation has other financial needs; these will be met through other means.

The money raised through the "Friends of Affirmation Campaign" will be devoted to reaching those who need us!!!

Watch for your letter and then donate as generously as you possibly can. No donation is too small (nor too large)! The important thing is that we all work together. And just in case you can't wait to get your letter and would like to get started immediately, please contact me through the Affirmation Post Office Box or by e-mail to smackay@dhvx20.csudh.edu.

—Love Scott

MARRIAGE from page 1

Surprisingly little public discourse has gone into figuring out what marriage is and why government should have a role in it.

What then is marriage after all? To put it somewhat poetically, marriage is intimacy given substance in the medium of everyday life, the day-to-day. Marriage is the fused intersection of love's sanctity and necessity's demand.

We do not count as marriages Great Loves, like Antony and Cleopatra, or Catherine and Heathcliff, whose loves burn gloriously, but too intensely ever to be manifest in a medium of breakfasts and tire-changes. Neither do we count roommates, even "domestic partners," as married if all that they do is share the common necessities of life (food, housing, and the like). Marriage requires the presence and blending of both necessity and intimacy.

Now, life's necessities are a mixed fortune: they are frequently drag, dross, and cussedness, yet they can constitute opportunity, abidingness, and the prospect of nurture. They are the field across which, the medium through which, and the ground from which, the intimacies which we consider martial flourish, blossom, and come to fruition.

This required blending of intimacy and the everyday explains much of the legal content of marriage—including its various privacy rights, like the spousal immunity against compelled testimony, and a vast array of protections against the occasions when necessity is cussed rather than opportune, especially when life is marked by changed circumstances—crisis, illness, and destruction.

Currently society and its discriminatory impulse make gay coupling very difficult. Still, even against oppressive odds, gays have shown an amazing tendency to nest.

See MARRIAGE on page 4

SPIRITUALITY

In my living room is an unusual image of Jesus Christ. This framed picture shows a contemporary sculpture, made by the Swedish artist Torsten Renquist in 1971. It is titled *ORDET*, which means "The Word." The following is a description of the sculpture:

"A wooden Jesus is partially framed in a wooden rectangle. He has one arm stretched out horizontally through the frame into darkness, the hand pierced by a long vertical nail. This impaled, projecting hand is the outerness of it, the drama of it, and the pain. Within the frame is the innerness of it, the true heart of the dramatist which is both in the pain and beyond it. The face of Jesus is stern as death but alive and at peace. He is contemplating the palm of the other hand as though reading in it the play within the play, the destiny of destiny itself."

I was reminded of this image when a friend of mine shared an experience he had. This friend is married with two children, very active in Church, and very closeted:

"Last night [my wife] and I were invited to attend a couples' FHE. [My wife] was sick, so I took [my son] and went with out her. Somehow the subject came up about Robert Reed (Mike Brady of *The Brady Bunch*, TV series) and his death from AIDS-related complex. As the conversation continued, there was laughter over his death, calling him a "gay-bob." With each laugh I became more and more nauseous. It made me totally sick.

"I searched my soul at that very minute to find something "Church approved" to make them stop—to get these "good LDS folks" to reconsider their ignorance and blatant bigotry. But my eyes could do nothing except look downward. I could only get in touch with my own feelings at this point. I was unsure how to be courageous and yet to appear to be "one of them."

"I told myself that all the people who I have loved and now are dead because of this horrible, unrelenting disease deserve my respect and my reaction. So, knowing no other course of action to take, I left this gathering to be with [my wife]..."

"I asked [my wife] if these people would even tell ethnic jokes and other anti-Semitic rhetoric. She concurred and said she is sure of it. I agreed. I mean, if gays or other victims of AIDS deserve to be bashed, how about those persons of color?"

"Do I accept this behavior? NO!!! My heart aches each time I hear and see it. It is as if they are putting a dagger in my heart and trying to dig my heart out. The pain is immense."

"So James, I don't know what to do. I know the answer will come. I will try to find other friends who are more sensitive to this issue..."

What a terrible price to be in the closet. To have the social approval of others at the cost of one's personal integrity. Outer peace and inner pain, or inner peace and outer pain. That is an individual choice we all eventually have to make.

I have seen friends leave me, and other friends persecuted and discriminated against for being lesbian and gay. I have seen too many of my friends taken away from me by AIDS related illnesses. But, I have experienced a deeper sense of love, joy, happiness, peace, and calm within myself that I never experienced while in the closet. Yes, there will always be inner battles to face, but they are much easier battles because I am no longer lying to myself and pretending to be what I am not to others.

—James Kent

MARRIAGE from page 3

The portraits of gay and lesbian committed relationships that emerge from ethnographic studies, like Kath Weston's *Families We Choose* (1991), suggest that in the ways gay and lesbian couples arrange their lives, they fulfill the definition of marriage in an exemplary manner. Both the development of intimacy through choice and the proper valuing of love are interwoven in the day-to-day activities of gay couples. Choice improves intimacy. It makes sacrifices meaningful. It gives life its proper weight.

Those lesbian and gay couples who have survived the odds, show that the structure of more usual couplings is not a matter of destiny, but of personal responsibility. The so-called basic unit of society turns out not to be a unique atom, but can adopt different parts and be adapted to different needs. Given, then, the nature of marriage and the nature of gay relations, it is time for the law to let them merge.

Richard D. Mohr is the author of *A More Perfect Union: Why Straight Americans Must Stand Up for Gay Rights* (Beacon Press).

(reprinted with permission from *Diversity*, April 1996)

FAMILY ISSUES

First Time Attending Affirmation

I wanted to share an experience I had tonight which I hope will serve as encouragement for anyone out there who has not yet attended Affirmation or contacted a chapter.

Tim, the SF Chapter director, was kind enough to invite me to a potluck/BBQ at his house in the city tonight. I was excited and very nervous as I have never attended an Affirmation activity—yet really wanted to. I drove across the bridge, found the neighborhood without much trouble, even parked up the hill and then just sat there in the car thinking "I can't do this! What am I doing here?" (Tim...I never told you this.) I must have sat there for 15 minutes. After a while, I drove away intending to go home. As I was leaving a most powerful, tangible feeling came over me that I was making a huge mistake. I felt a sinking feeling. I knew I had to go back. So, I went back. I drove by and the fear came to me again "I can't do this—I just can't face it." I drove away and was nearly at the freeway on-ramp when I was overcome by the feeling that I was making a big mistake by not going. So, I went back and parked again. I felt a good, warm feeling about going this time—but I was so afraid that I repeated the whole process! (I'm not REALLY certifiable, people it was just a big step.)

Finally, I parked, got out, decided—"Oh, what the hell" and went. After the director welcomed me, I felt very uncomfortable for a good half hour. No one knew me and I knew no one there. Some, I think, wondered who in the devil I was. Gradually, though, the ice started to break and I met, one by one, some really nice people. People who had been through experiences similar to mine. People who REALLY understand what it means to be Mormon and gay. By the end of the evening I was having a good time, I'd made new friends and even after everyone had left, I stayed and talked with the Tim. He was very sweet and I felt really good after our talk.

I think, even after all the progress I've made, I'm somewhat ashamed to admit that I have still been operating under the deep-seated assumption (or at least the fear) that being gay really is bad, that what I've done is truly evil, that I'm a slut going

straight (no, make that "directly") to hell, that Affirmation is wrong, that we're all deluding ourselves, etc., etc.

I'll admit it now because my experience tonight, in feeling so strongly that I should participate, let me know just how wrong my fears were. I think many of you can understand why I'd feel that way, considering how we were raised and the garbage we've been fed all our lives on this topic. I guess I had more baggage to unload than I wanted to admit.

I can tell you all with certainty that Satan didn't want me to go tonight. The jerk tried very hard to push me further back into the closet. He's got to be the ultimate homophobe. I can also say without a doubt that Heavenly Father, who loves us and who created us the way we are, very much wanted me to join in and participate. It is just that clear to me.

As I was translating the new web page into Portuguese before general conference, I worked on the section which details Affirmation's history. I remember coming across the paragraph which claims that, after kneeling in prayer, the Spirit of Revelation truly directed the early organizers of Affirmation. I thought—WOW, that's a pretty big claim—I wish that were true. Now, I know that that it is.

Affirmation was my next to the last hurdle, and Gomofites will be the last big step in finally acknowledging that

I'm a gay Mormon. Tonight I feel very good and more at peace with myself than I have in a long time.

I still don't understand how this will play out in the eternities; how our eternal families (for those who were married) are affected. However, I feel confident that a merciful and loving God who created us this way in the first place understands and will take care of it.

I pray that the rest of you might learn these lessons more easily than I seem to!

It sucks to have to be dragged kicking and screaming into paths that one ought to follow.

—John P.

Mormon leader visits Hawaii

The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported the president of the Mormon Church visited the Mormon temple in Hawaii and told a meeting of 20,000 people that they were enough to stop unwanted social change in Hawaii (i.e. same-gender marriage).

The *Advertiser* also reported that the Mormon president would meet privately with the Roman Catholic bishop of Hawaii, to coordinate opposition to same-gender marriage.

HEALTH

AIDS

Submitted by Richard in Rochester

ATLANTA (Reuter)—The number of AIDS cases diagnosed in the United States since 1981 has passed the half-million mark, with Americans accounting for one in every nine cases worldwide, federal health officials have said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that as of the end of 1995, a total of 501,310 people had been diagnosed as having AIDS. Of those, 62 percent have died.

"Over half a million people with AIDS really should signify to the American public the ongoing seriousness and magnitude of this epidemic," said Dr. Patricia Fleming of the CDC's AIDS surveillance branch.

The CDC said 59,806 AIDS cases have been reported in the United States so far this year.

The World Health Organization estimates that there have been 4.5 million AIDS cases worldwide and that 18 million adults and 1.5 million children are infected with HIV.

The cumulative total of U.S. AIDS cases has doubled in the past three years, partly because health officials expanded the definition of AIDS in 1993 to include people with suppressed immune systems, pulmonary tuberculosis, recurrent pneumonia and invasive cervical cancer.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ESTIMATES THAT THERE HAVE BEEN 4.5 MILLION AIDS CASES WORLDWIDE AND THAT 18 MILLION ADULTS AND 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN ARE INFECTED WITH HIV.

The first 50,000 AIDS cases were reported between 1981 and 1987. By the end of 1992, the total had risen to 250,000.

The CDC said AIDS "continues to affect blacks and Hispanics disproportionately."

The rate of AIDS among blacks is 101 per 100,000 and is 51 per 100,000 among Hispanics. The rate is 17 per 100,000 among whites, 12 per 100,000 among American Indians and Alaskan natives, and 6 per 100,000 among Asians and Pacific Islanders.

The Northeastern United States has the highest AIDS rate in the country, with 48 cases per 100,000 population. In 1994, the rate was 31

per 100,000 in the South, 29 in the West and 13 in the Midwest.

Much of the increase in AIDS cases has been in the South and Midwest, where AIDS is increasingly affecting small towns and rural areas, the CDC said.

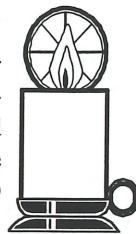
The rate of AIDS has risen 31 percent in the South and 22 percent in the Midwest during the past seven years. It rose 20 percent in the Northeast and 15 percent in the West.

"This is an epidemic that is affecting all regions and all communities in the country," Fleming said. "The message has to be delivered to the regions of the country that have previously not recognized that they have been at risk."

Candlelight Memorial

May 19

The 13th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization will be observed in some 250 cities in around 50 nations, May 19th.



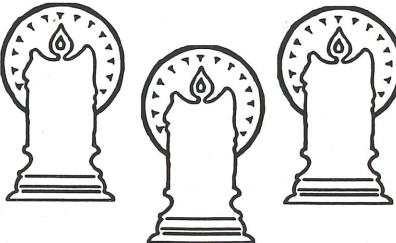
The event, which began in San Francisco in 1983, honors the memory of those who have died, demonstrates support for people living with HIV, and mobilizes community responses.

"Our theme this year is 'AIDS Discrimination Is a Global Epidemic.'"

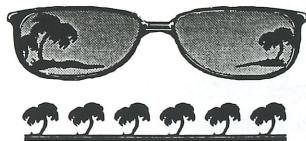


"Around the world, people with HIV and AIDS suffer discrimination caused by fear, ignorance, and misconceptions about the disease. In the U.S., the Congress passed a bill that calls for all HIV-positive service members to be discharged, regardless of their health, and denies them and their families the medical benefits available to those who receive medical discharges for other reasons."

Additional information is available at the WWW site <http://www.hooked.net/users/candle> or by phoning the coordinating organization, San Francisco's Mobilization Against AIDS at (415) 863-4676.

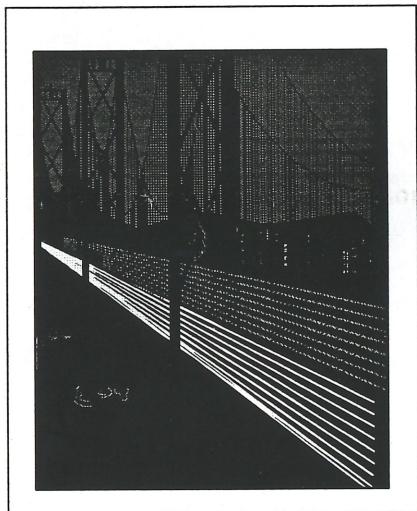


UPCOMING EVENTS



Palm Springs '96
International Conference
October 11 - 13

AFFIRMATION - Gay and Lesbian Mormons
P.O. Box 46022 • Los Angeles • CA • 90046 • USA
(213) 255-7251



National Women's Retreat

June 28 - 30

Come join us for the first national women's retreat for lesbian Mormons and lesbians of Mormon heritage June 28-30 in San Francisco.

The retreat will coincide with San Francisco's Gay Pride weekend so there will be lots to see and do as we share experiences, insights, and fun in the city by the bay!!! This is a unique opportunity to build a community of support with women who share similar experiences and heritage.

So don't miss this experience!!! There is a nominal charge of \$20 for food. For additional information, or to RSVP, please contact Jennifer or Suzie below:

Jennifer Hatch	Suzie Ripperton
P.O. Box 86469	e-mail: Suzrip@aol.com
San Diego, CA 92138	e-mail: Kymera1@aol.com



GAMOFITE Retreats

If you're interested in joining Gamofites, please know that you are welcome to join us. You'll find we offer an opportunity to associate with Gay Mormon Fathers in an environment of unconditional Love and Acceptance. For general information about Gamofites, please contact Scott Mackay at (714) 998-2052 (or Email: smackay@dhvx20.csudh.edu).

May 31 - June 2 in Utah

July 19 - 21 in San Francisco, CA

AFFIRMATION NEWS

We are happy to provide you with informative reading material published by Affirmation.

Prologue: An Examination of the Mormon Attitude toward Homosexuality. 54 pages. COST: \$1.50
An in-depth look at the treatment of gay people by the LDS church, with particular emphasis on the activities at BYU. Somewhat dated, the strong plea it makes for better treatment and understanding of gays and lesbians is still relevant. Excellent for family, friends and church leaders trying to understand the gay and lesbian LDS person.

All About Excommunication: for the Gay and Lesbian Mormon. 17 pages. COST: \$1.00
A brief guide for those facing excommunication or for those who have already faced it and are troubled by it. Tells what it means and what it does not mean. Explains the process, gives suggestions on how to deal with it.

A Discussion Guide for Latter-day Saints in Understanding the Bible and Homosexuality. 6 pages.
A quick look at what the scriptures and the prophets say about homosexuality. COST: \$1.00

Homosexuality & Scripture from a Latter-day Saint Perspective. 40 Pages.
A more in-depth look at what the scriptures and the prophets say about homosexuality, with scholarly discussion from the gay and lesbian LDS viewpoint. Excellent for self-study, family and church leaders. COST: \$1.50

AIDS, Leprosy and Disease: The Christian Response. 13 pages.
A very moving and insightful look at AIDS in relation to other epidemics and diseases that have afflicted the Christian and Mormon communities, explaining how God does not "punish" with disease. COST: \$1.00

Understanding and Helping Those who have Homosexual Problems. Summary and Comparative Review of the 1981 and 1992 Official LDS Church Manuals on Homosexuality. COST: Free (only one per order).

Make Checks payable to: **Affirmation**
Mail to: **P.O. Box 46022**
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Please add \$1.50 per order for postage and handling.

Additional Suggested Reading

- Decisions of the Soul.* Family Fellowship, ed. Salt Lake City, 1995.
- Remembering Brad: On the Loss of a Son to AIDS.* Wayne Schow. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995.
- Virtually Normal, An Argument About Homosexuality.* Andrew Sullivan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
- Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe.* John Boswell. New York: Villard Books, 1995.
- The Science of Desire.* Dean Hamer & Pete Copeland. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- The Other Side of the Closet—The Coming-Out Crisis for Straight Spouses and Families* (revised and expanded). Amity Buxton Pierce, Ph.D. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994.
- Stranger at the Gate* (to be gay & Christian in America). Mel White. Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality.* Daniel A. Helminiak, Ph.D., Alamo Square Press, 1994.
- Out of the Bishop's Closet: A Call to Heal Ourselves, Each Other, and Our World.* Antonio A. Feliz. ALamo Square Press, 1992.
- Peculiar People—Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation.* Ron Schow, Wayne Schow and Marybeth Raynes, eds. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991.
- Being Homosexual. Gay Men and Their Development.* Richard Isay, M.D. New York: Avon Books, 1990.
- Now that You Know.* Betty Fairchild and Nancy Hayward. San Diego: Harcourt brace Jovanovich, 1989.
- As We Are.* Don Clark, Ph.D. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988
- Living in Sin?: A Bishop Rethinks Human Sexuality.* John Shelby Spong. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Male Spirituality.* James B. Nelson. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988.
- Loving Someone Gay* (revised and updated). Don Clark, Ph.D. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 1987.
- The Bible and Homosexuality.* Michael E. England, UFMCC, 1986.

See READING on page 11

CULTURAL HALL

Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans:

A Mormon Example

D. Michael Quinn, University of Illinois Press, (416p) ISBN 0-252-02205-X \$29.95 (Gay and Lesbian Studies/Mormon History)

Review by Duane E. Jennings

What were same-sex relationships like in the heartland of nineteenth century America, hundreds of miles away from New York City and San Francisco?

D. Michael Quinn's book *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans* answers this question: "same sex intimacy was widely accepted." The author compares a wide range of American cultures, social history and twenty years of research in Mormon archives. With the meticulous record keeping of the Mormon Church and its members, a lot of evidence is presented suggesting remarkable tolerance of homoeroticism until the mid-1950s both within the Mormon Church and Utah. Siting evidence from Mildred J. Berryman's earliest community study of Lesbians and Gay Men in America, that took place in Salt Lake City between 1916 - 1938, personal diaries, articles from official Mormon Church publications and other sources, one gets the idea that Salt Lake City was never as straight nor as straitlaced as some would have the world believe.

Particular interest for many may be the coming out of three prominent Mormons in 1919, by way of the official Mormon church publication *Children's Friend*. These prominent leaders included Evan Stevens, director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Louie B. Felt and May Anderson who each served consecutively as general primary presidents, the auxiliary organization for children through age eleven.

Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans is destined to be a landmark book in the process of Lesbians and Gay Men reclaiming their history in the heartland of America. The book should be available the

last of May or first of June in most bookstores, especially those with a Lesbian/Gay section. Of course one can always order it from ones favorite Deseret Bookstore branch, while holding ones lover's hand, bedecked in Gay Pride paraphernalia.

D. Michael Quinn is an independent scholar and free lance writer, is the prize-winning author of books including *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, and *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*. He resigned as a professor of history and director of the graduate program at Brigham Young University in 1988 to continue his studies of Mormon and American history.

Frequently Asked Questions about Affirmation

Q. Do Homosexuals threaten the LDS Church???

A. No. Homosexual people are a tremendous resource of creativity, love, and service that is largely being rejected by the church.

Detail: Many homosexual people are talented, loyal, and sensitive. Other churches that are open to gay and lesbian people find them a tremendous source of strength and loyalty. The LDS church rejects what could be a tremendous resource by slandering from the pulpit as well as with formal excommunication.

Q. Are homosexual people persecuted by the LDS Church?

A. Yes. Homosexual people are demonized, ostracized and even excommunicated.

Detail: The LDS Church, which a few decades ago was persecuted because of its unpopular sexual practice of polygamy, now persecutes lesbian and gay people because of their perceived sexual practices. Elder Boyd K. Packer has condoned violence against gay and lesbian people in discourse and in print. Class instructors as well as speakers from the pulpit continue to dehumanize lesbian and gays just as Mormons were dehumanized years ago. LDS Social Services continues to blame parents and promote negative and erroneous stereotypes. They stigmatize not only homosexual people but extend that stigmatization to their families. However, there are small signs of change at the grass roots level. In a few cases, openly gay people are allowed membership and lower levels of leadership. A few bishops have made concerted efforts to welcome lesbian and gay people. These are the rare exceptions.

POLITICAL

US: New Anti-Violence Toll-Free Hotline

NEW TOLL-FREE HOTLINE TO DOCUMENT, ASSIST WITH ANTI-GAY HATE

Please distribute & post as widely as possible—please add to your resource lists

A new, non-profit, toll-free hotline is now available to assist all victims of anti-gay incidents and provide them with a centralized source of information and documentation. The Gay & Lesbian Victims' Assistance Hotline (800-259-1536) is a 24-hour project of LAMBDA Services Anti-Violence Project (AVP), located in El Paso, TX. The hotline is answered by trained volunteers who provide information and referrals to persons who have experienced terrifying violence or more common anti-gay incidents, such as discrimination, harassment, or vandalism. Callers may remain anonymous and all information is kept strictly confidential.

"We hope that anyone with information to report will call us," said Rob Knight, president of LAMBDA Services. "Anti-gay brutality and discrimination has long been invisible, mainly because it is among the least reported of crimes," said Knight. "Anti-gay rhetoric is so common that it is largely ignored. People are being taught to fear and hate homosexuals—and that fear, unchallenged, often leads to violence. The first step in countering the hate is to report it."

Founded in 1991, LAMBDA Services is an international, all-volunteer, non-profit, LesBiGay organization. LAMBDA Services' Anti-Violence Project (AVP) works to prevent and assist victims of anti-gay hate. LAMBDA is a national tracking member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects.

Your donations are tax deductible.

For information or assistance, call the 24-hour Gay & Lesbian Victims' Assistance Hotline at 800-259-1536 or write to: LAMBDA Services AVP
P.O. Box 31321
El Paso, TX, 79931-0321 USA.
Office: 915-533-6024 or 915-562-GAYS; FAX: 915-534-7778;
Email: AVProject@aol.com

Professor Ed Firmage speaks—"It is bad law, bad politics, bad ethics, bad religion".

(Excerpts from a Radio Interview)

Professor Ed Firmage appeared recently in a radio interview. He, as many of you may know, is a distinguished professor of law at the University of Utah and the grandson of President Hugh B. Brown. He detailed his objections to the action of the Utah Legislature and offered his views of what might likely happen in the forthcoming court battles (though he allowed as to how he had not actually read the legislation—since it had not been shared with us mere mortal citizens).

At the risk of obsessing on this, I taped the interview and I want to share a portion of what he said that I found most moving.

Professor Firmage used a story of when he was away at law school at the University of Chicago and was the only Mormon, except his classmate, Rex Lee and felt very lonely there. He told how important it was to have a safe place to meet with someone "like us". It didn't mean that he could not identify with other people in the law school in other ways, but "in terms of something that was important to me, my Mormonness I felt like I kind of knew someone who understood where I was coming from."

Professor Firmage: "We have a situation in which suicide is right behind auto accidents as the lead cause of death among teenage kids here in the State of Utah and nationwide. One third of those kids are gay when about 3% or 4% of the population is gay. In other words they are suffering enormously from feelings of alienation—from being strange and different and the dominate culture beats the hell out of them in terms of these vicious kind of analysis of what gays or lesbians are. The hate speech that accompanied the earlier effort of the Utah legislature being a prime example . . ."

Moderator: "Ed, how do you feel today about it?"

Professor Firmage: "I think they made a terrible mistake. I think it is bad law. Bad politics. Bad ethics. Bad religion."

Moderator: "When you say bad religion, you're LDS?"

Professor Firmage: "Yes"

Moderator: "Is this against how you feel about being a Mormon?"

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Professor Firmage: "I think as being a Christian or a Jew or a Moslem or a Buddhist for that matter—I think the spirituality behind it is atrocious. I think it is the psychology and religiosity of scapegoating, of projecting your own stuff out and then beating someone up about it. And also ignorance. I think it isn't entirely projection. I think many people are simply ignorant of what I surely would have been twenty years ago on this subject. A subject that is coming to our consciousness more and more as we meet human beings. It is hard to hold to a philosophical presumption when you meet a living human being in front of you and you hear their story and then hear one hundred or three hundred more just like it.

"What you are doing is stereotyping a group of people. And you are stereotyping a group of people who are already very vulnerable and at that age—13, 14, 15—quite fragile. That is the thing that makes me heartsick about it."

Moderator: "But all children at that age are fragile."

Professor Firmage: "I fully agree with that but look at the statistics. I would do anything to support support groups for any teenage kid, because they are all wondering who they are. They are all in that very difficult stage of separating from parents and defining themselves. But when you add that extra complexity of same-sex attraction when the whole culture tells them—most of these kids grow up, after all, in heterosexual families and they are conditioned to think, of course, understandably that they will grow up heterosexual. They find their attraction isn't that. I do not believe for the huge majority that this is learned or that it is any problem with their father or their mother. I've met too many hundreds of their fathers and their mothers now. Over the past month I have simply met these

people. I've met them in their homes. I met with 40 or 50 of them just beyond Bountiful on Saturday. And to hear each of them stand and tell their story of when their young child came out and the many examples of parents, happily not among those I met, who abandoned their children in face of that knowledge and then these wonderful parents who stood by their children under extreme pressure from the church and their general society to do otherwise. I found them heroic, deeply touching to my heart, and utterly changing of my mind."

Moderator: "Ed, . . . what's going to happen now?"

Professor Firmage: "It's going to be challenged in the federal court. And you will have two lines of cases colliding to my knowledge for the first time on this particular issue, given the age of the kids. If this were the university, it would be slam dunk and there would be no question that this is absolutely unconstitutional. I hope and think that this would be found so too.

At the time that the federal act was passed (1984) examples were cited by senators and others that absolutely prohibited any kind of content discrimination such as gay clubs or whatever else as long as it wasn't disruptive of the school process. Now that would eliminate gangs, clear hate groups—that would disrupt the educational process.

The Federal Act and the Supreme Court Case Law undergirding the act, prevents any activity at a school that would disrupt the main functioning of a school which is to educate our children. I

grant right off the top that any extra-curricular club must abide that. They must not be disruptive of the educational process. But I think putting your arms around kids and telling them that they are as much in the image of God as anyone else on this earth is not disruptive but is frankly doing exactly what the schools and we as parents should do." ▼

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