

## **NARTH: National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality**

<http://www.narth.com/docs/pflag1.html>

### **Recommended Reading for Teenagers? A Closer Look at P-FLAG**

*This supposedly mainstream organization is not what appearances suggest.*

*The following article was published by NARTH in 1998. There is now a newer, updated article (published in December 2002) that appears on our web site, in the "Parenting and Family Issues" section. Please see that article as well for a followup to this one. It describes PFLAG's latest, revised reading list.*

The well-known and respected national organization "Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays" (P-FLAG) serves as a support group for parents seeking guidance for their homosexual children. P-FLAG is recommended as a resource group by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice in its upcoming manual, "Preventing Youth Hate Crime." Many schools, community agencies, and even nationally syndicated newspaper columnists refer families to it. P-FLAG has affiliates in all 50 states, with about 70,000 families among its membership.

A look at some of P-FLAG's literature and recommended books, however, reveals an approach to child guidance which is consistently both *sexually and socially radical*. First-person stories aimed at teens tell in pornographic detail of the delight of a young girl's sexual seduction by her lesbian teacher; of gay relationships between teenage boys and much older men; and of the precise how-to's of masturbation. Teenagers are specifically encouraged to *use only their feelings* as a guide to sexual behavior; to be their own judge of what is right and wrong; and to "have fun" experimenting. If a sexual behavior feels good, the logic says, it will tell them "who they are." Teenagers are encouraged to see religious traditionalists as mean-spirited and hypocritical, while at the same time, to see gay consciousness as "sacred." *Were similar books recommended by parenting groups for "straight" teenagers, they would be considered violations of community standards of decency.*

Some of the recommended books are relatively "tame" on the surface, justifying teenaged homosexual experimentation with the usual "This is me. This is who I am." Others go much further--glorifying sex with animals, witchcraft, feminist goddess worship, worship of sexual pleasure as a form of religion, promiscuity with hundreds of partners, bisexual orgies, and voyeurism.

Ironically, one of their booklets, "Beyond the Bible: Parents, Families and Friends Talk about Religion and Homosexuality," has a section entitled, "Caution: Hate Groups." Listed organizations include Promise Keepers, Focus on the Family, Concerned Women of America, and Family Research Council.

That pamphlet recommends that religious seekers read *Gay Soul: Finding the Heart of Gay Spirit and Nature*, a book which labels gay sex "sacred." In it, first-person stories are told of gay men delightfully flouting their vow of celibacy in seminaries; of a man reporting that he had a peak orgasmic experience during sex with God; and of sadomasochic torture being enjoyed by a psychotherapist as a mystical experience. Another writer in the anthology labeled as "sacred" the experience of incest between fathers and brothers. (*Gay Soul* was reviewed in the April 1997 *Bulletin*.)

But the most damaging P-FLAG pamphlet is "Be Yourself: Questions and Answers for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth," which includes a recommended reading list specifically aimed at teenage readers.

From the pamphlet's recommended book *Young, Gay and Proud!* by Don Romesburg, ed., AlyCat Books, 1995--one of the "tamer" publications:

*In the chapter, "Getting Started":*

"There are all sorts of stupid rules, like that...guys shouldn't wear dresses. Girls aren't supposed to shave their heads. People might say that certain kinds of sex are dirty...we all know about all these 'rules'...Many of them are more than just foolish--they can be destructive...No one has the right to make anyone else feel bad about their sexuality or their sexual choices..."

"There is *no* right or wrong way boys or girls should act, and sex by itself never hurt anyone. The only rules we need are simple: *do what feels right to you*, and take care not to hurt anyone else. That way, maybe we can all be comfortable with being the best thing of all--ourselves."

*From the chapter for teenage boys, "Doing It: Gay Men":*

"Learning how to give and receive love through sex is an important part of loving ourselves and becoming more comfortable with our sexuality. It also shows the straight world that we're not going to live according to their narrow-minded myths about men, women, and sex...Most of all, just have a good time. Sex should be fun..."

*From the chapter for teenage girls, "Doing It: Lesbians":*

"In lesbian loving, there are no rules, and we don't want any...Being a lesbian means exploring." (The author proceeds to suggest that her teenage reader masturbate, graphically describing how best to do so, and suggesting techniques for mutual masturbation with a girlfriend.)

"*No one can tell you what is right for you, but you...Sex with someone you choose, at a time and place of your choosing, can be exciting and fun...you're the only one that can know what you're ready for, and when.*"

From the recommended book for teenagers, *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out* (L. Hutchins and L. Kaahumanu, Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991):

Chapters include, "I Am Who I Am: A Married Bisexual Teacher," "My Life as a Lesbian-Identified Fag Hag," "Growing Up With a Bisexual Dad," "Proud Father of a Bisexual Son," and "Love that Kink." (Some of the following excerpts are almost too pornographic to print, but their shock value is important for reader understanding):

*(From the chapter, "My Life as a Lesbian-Identified Bisexual Fag Hag"):* "I got some measure of vicarious, voyeuristic thrills in watching the guys cruise...But come 2 a.m. they went off in two's, or whatever, and went home. Somehow I was once again not being allowed to play. So I turned dyke...In the privacy of my own heart I knew that what I really wanted was to be wild and free, happily nonmonogamous, or even kinky (if I felt like it), like the faggots seemed to do with such ease...I was delighted to find that...a greater tolerance seems to exist [in the bisexual community] for things like open relationships, multi-person relationships, cross-dressing, group sex, kinkiness, and even for a mixed-up, lesbian-identified fag hag who was finding that she was *not* mixed up at all, but the people who were laying trips on her *were*..."

"Isn't it about time to reconquer the realm of sex for ourselves? Isn't it time for this woman to ask, 'What do I want? What turns ME on?'...Isn't it time to drop ALL labels of sick, or sinful, or politically incorrect?...Oh, honey, you bet yer ass!" (p. 59)

*(From the chapter, written by a once-"straight" married man, "A Gift to Myself"):* "After a few years of marriage, I happened across a classified ad for a rap group at the Bisexual Center in San Francisco. Bisexual? My vocabulary had never included that word...something told me to check it out...after I discovered others who felt loving and erotic feelings for *people* rather than a specific gender, I could never go back. I had my first sexual encounter with a man, ended my marriage, and finally accepted myself for the feelings I now knew were normal."

*(From the chapter, "Coming Out in Spirit and Flesh"):* "I was in love with the man I married, but not with the role I felt pushed into playing...After the wedding, we were no longer seen as two individuals who loved each other, but as people who had functions to fill, chiefly to have children and to 'make a nice home'..."

"...I started drifting back to religion. I did not miss in the slightest the process of scraping my soul for sins to confess, nor the gory stories of tortured saints. However, I missed the atmosphere of magic, where light was transformed by stained glass into dark jewels, and water turned to wine...Before graduate school, I took a course on feminism and theology...what captured my imagination were essays about women who were forming groups and celebrating ...rituals that used images of the goddess, and symbols from nature..."

"The night of the last class I took down a phone number and joined a coven of four women. Many times since then we have stood in a circle, chanting the names of goddesses, feeling our strength, our power to heal each other...I found myself repeating our ritual blessing when making love with a woman, "Bless your lips...bless your breasts"...In Wicca, the goddess becomes a metaphor...She could even be He; there are covens who celebrate the horned God...I draw strength from my religion in which 'all acts of love and pleasure are Her rituals.'" (p. 96)

*(From the chapter, "Overview"):* "Today we hardly know what is natural, or how to heal the body-hating, homophobic, sex-negative culture we have inherited...Our curiosity and desire, the sacred spark, is thwarted at every turn. But the inner light, the inner truth stubbornly persists...We push ourselves through the accrued fear, the shame, the doubt to rediscover and reclaim the curiosity and passion, the sacred spark of life expressed through...gender and genitalia." (p. 91)

*(From the chapter, "Beyond Bisexual"):* "I started out monogamous. I ended up with two lovers. At present I have many lovers. There are four main ones. One is a woman I have deeply adored for three years. Another is a female-to-male transsexual/hermaphrodite--the perfect playmate for bi-sex! Number three is a gay man. Then there is my beautiful lover, the sky...I give her all my love and lust. I have an orgasm--sometimes several. Maybe she has an orgasm too...I [have] had sex with thousands of people of all races, religions, colors, sexual persuasions, tried most every kink and fetish imaginable, worked in pornography and prostitution..."

"...do not judge yourself or others...get rid of any last vestiges of sexual guilt, and feelings that you don't deserve pleasure...abstinence can be dangerous to your health."

*(From the chapter "Sacred Rituals"):* "Warm, wet mouths suddenly become ravenous as each of my lovers' tongues eagerly explore my sexual abundance. As I am being caressed, as my sexuality is being celebrated, my consciousness melts into vague memories of holy sexual union...Tonight, my lovers and I are one in orgiastic celebration...*Why was I taught to love god the father instead?* As I partake in this spiritual, sexual rite, I know that I, a woman, am entitled to express my sexual self in any way that pleases me. Tonight, I got religion, and it was in bed!" (111)

*Throughout these books, the same themes are repeated--the imperative to judge for oneself what is good and what is bad; the idea that gay sex is sacred; that traditional religion is ridiculous, if not evil; sexual pleasure is a birthright of everyone, no matter how young; self-restraint is foolish; and marriage need not be monogamous.*

*Is this how the U.S. Department of Education would guide our teenagers?*

*Because this, in fact, is what they are learning.*

---Linda Nicolosi

*Since NARTH brought this issue to public attention, P-FLAG has revised its pamphlet to delete the "Recommended Reading for Teenagers" section.*

*Updated: 3 September 2008*