

Gay Men's Group To Present Sessions On Transgenderism And Sadoomasochism At Religion Conference

"The embrace of homosexual practice," says a traditionalist religious scholar, "logically and experientially demands" the acceptance of a broad range of sexual aberrations, not just homosexuality

The Gay Men's "Issues In Religion" Group will be presenting workshops at the American Academy of Religion's (AAR) 2004 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas (November 20-23).

The AAR is an umbrella organization of professors of religion, church historians, theologians, and ethicists.

The gay group will be presenting a series of lectures with the theme: "Power and Submission, Pain and Pleasure: The Religious Dynamics of Sadoomasochism," as well as a workshop on transgenderism (including transsexualism and transvestism).

Justice Tanis with the gay Metropolitan Community Church will conduct a lecture titled, "Ecstatic Communion: The Spiritual Dimensions of Leathersexuality."

Thomas V. Peterson, Alfred University will present a session titled, "S/M Rituals in Gay Men's Leather Communities: Initiation, Power Exchange, and Subversion."

Katherine Baker of Vanderbilt University will present a workshop called "The Transvestite Christ: Hedwig and the Angry Inch Perform Queer Theology."

Dr. Robert A. J. Gagnon, associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, notes that

this year's theme is a complement to the session conducted by the gay men's group at last year's AAR conference: "Love is a Many Splendored Thing: Varied Views on Polyamory."

Last year, the group promoted the concept of multiple sex partners as being blessed by God. One author presented a workshop called "Trinitarian Tango: Divine Perichoretic Fecundity in Polyamorous Relations" and noted that Christians traditions fail to apply the Trinitarian concept of three partners to human sexuality.

"Why do people think that bringing male homosexual behavior into the mainstream is going to tame male homosexuality," said Robert Gagnon, "rather than destroy basic societal norms?" Dr. Gagnon is associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

"One wonders what is next for the Gay Men's group at AAR: the promotion of incest, 'pedosexuality,' and bestiality? There is certainly little or nothing in the presenters' theology that would lead away from such ultimate absurdities," he added.

"Like most things, the bizarre stuff that makes its way through the religious academy of scholars eventually filters down to church leaders," said Dr. Gagnon. "It represents the coming wave. Look out. The embrace of homosexual practice logically and experientially demands it."

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