

GLSEN and Its Influence on Children

By Linda Harvey

In the previous issue of this Bulletin, Linda Harvey described the ongoing work of P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and its recommendation of books which promote obscenity and underage sexual activity to teenagers.

Now, Ms. Harvey takes a look at another gay organization: GLSEN, which—like P-FLAG—promotes obscenity and the occult to children. Remarkably, however, GLSEN remains a respected group which is routinely invited to present its programs in public schools



Linda Harvey

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network—known as GLSEN—is a rapidly growing and well-funded pro-homosexual organization. Using the schools as its primary platform, GLSEN conveys its message of cultural change through a web site, books and curricular material, teacher-training workshops, and in after-school homosexual clubs for students.

There is growing support for this organization's cause, as demonstrated by its newly publicized ties with many educators on the local level, and some very powerful national allies including the National Education Association.

Behind its promotion of "tolerance" and "safety," however, are the sordid realities of what GLSEN actually supports. Just about every type of sexual practice imaginable is "celebrated" and even graphically described in first-person stories by students in GLSEN's recommended literature. GLSEN also supports gender distortion through cross-dressing, even in books recommended for elementary school children.

Criminal, underage sexual contact between adults and minors is a frequent, casual theme in these materials. For listings of these resources, consult the group's web site at www.glsen.org.

Warning: Graphic sexual content follows. The following are just a small sample of the situations, opinions and themes depicted in the books GLSEN recommends as "resources" in its materials and on its web site. However, these selected examples are representative of the whole.

1. GLSEN's recommended literature implies the early sexualization of children can be beneficial. This means that virtually any consensual sexual activity, as well as exposure to graphic sexual images and material, is permissible as part of the process of discovering one's sexuality. Example:

"I released his arms. They glided around my neck, pulling my head down to his. I stretched full length on top of him, our heads touching. Our heavy breathing from the struggle gradually sub-

sided. I felt —"

...and then follows a graphic description (unprintable here) of a homosexual encounter between two *ten-year-old boys* who are playmates, in a childhood recollection by Malcolm Boyd, an Episcopal priest, in *Growing Up Gay/Growing Up Lesbian*, ed. Bennett Singer, New Press, 1994, p.100. This book is recommended by GLSEN for 7-12th grade students.

The president and founder of GLSEN, Kevin Jennings, wrote the foreword for a book for educators called *Queering Elementary Education* (William J. Letts IV and James T. Sears, eds., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.) One chapter is written by a woman who says she and her male partner have raised their daughter "queerly." She then goes on to describe Stephanie's attendance at several gay pride parades by the time she is eight.

Stephanie already has a detailed familiarity with her own female genitalia "because it gives her pleasure when she masturbates." And the mother describes one incident where she and her daughter, while observing a group of twelve-year-olds, decide they are *both attracted to the same girl.* (pp. 71-81)

From another book, in a story describing a boyhood sexual encounter:

"One day, on the bus to shop class, this ugly f—k of a man sat behind me....he managed to get me to follow him to a nearby restroom...[a graphic description of homosexual sex follows]... I spent a good deal of time locked in the stall, trying to clean up.... This incident should have soured me on men, but it only made me more confused and needful... The whole world of restroom sex had opened itself up to me..."

(From *Queer 13: Lesbian and Gay Writers Recall Seventh Grade*, Clifford Chase, ed., Rob Weisbach Books, 1998, pp.43-44. Book recommended by GLSEN for adults, presumably including teachers.)

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Some rather unorthodox advice is also given in the book *Queer Kids: The Challenges and Promise for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth* (Robert E. Owens, Jr., Ph.D., Harrington Park Press, 1998). These tips are for the "special" needs of homosexual youth who are runaways or have been kicked out of their homes, and therefore live in group homes. Teen sexual behavior is implied to be fine in these group homes, as long as it is consensual:

"Agency policies must recognize the sexual behavior of adolescents... Residential facilities should distinguish clearly between normal, healthy and harmful, exploitative sexual behavior regardless of the gender or orientation of the youths involved.... Within Child Protective Services Guidelines, youths should be allowed privacy and dignity regarding sexuality." (pp.157-158)

The above book is recommended for adults on the GLSEN web site.

2. "Coming out" (calling oneself homosexual) and beginning homosexual sex practices at a young age, is a normal and positive experience for youth which should be encouraged by teachers and parents, according to GLSEN:

"Despite my best efforts, someday the artifice of 'normality' had to fall away. It did, early one Sunday afternoon when I was twelve. My cousin was sixteen."

The author then recounts his homosexual activities with his cousin.

(In *Queer 13: Lesbian and Gay Writers Recall Seventh Grade* [cited above], pp.86-87).

"I am a fifteen year-old dyke artist and activist. I've got flaming pink hair and a passion for gender-f—ing in both directions."

(Young girl writing in *Revolutionary Voices: A Multicultural Queer Youth Anthology*, p.28).

Then Kevin Jennings, a former teacher and the current president of GLSEN, describes his interaction with a male student, in *One Teacher in Ten: Gay and Lesbian Educators Tell Their Stories* (Kevin Jennings, ed., Alyson Publications, 1994, p.25.):

"Toward the end of my first year, during the spring of 1988, Brewster appeared in my office...'Brewster has something he needs to talk with you about,' [a student accompanying the boy] intoned ominously....On a hunch, I suddenly asked, 'What's his name?' Brewster's eyes widened briefly, and then out spilled a story about his involvement with an older man he had met in Boston. I listened, sympathized, offered advice. He left my office with a smile on his face...."

3. Bisexuality, "fluid" sexuality and sexual experimentation is encouraged by GLSEN as a right for all students:

"Curtis flops over the side of his bed and looks underneath....he browses his modest library of soft to medium-core pornography....Image upon image, man upon woman...Upon *woman*...Upon *man*...Curtis swims in a sea of bodies..."

There follows a very graphic story of masturbation, fantasy and actual sex in this tale about a teen boy who, after viewing homosexual porn, has homosexual fantasies and believes he's gay. His girlfriend, with whom he has been having sex, convinces him otherwise after he visits her in her bedroom.

She confesses that she likes lesbian pornography, and his arousal results in their sexual encounter.

("The Cure for Curtis" in *Love & Sex: Ten Stories of Truth* [cited above], pp.109-126. Book recommended by GLSEN for students in grades 7-12.)

Another book describes a group-sex encounter between a girl and two homosexual men (p.37) which occurs in the novel *Weetzie Bat*, part of a collection of several books, *Dangerous Angels*, by Francesca Block (Harper Collins Publishers, 1998). The heroine, Weetzie Bat, is trying to get pregnant, and turns to her two gay housemates when her live-in boyfriend doesn't want a child.

A child is conceived by this teen girl and one of the three men. *Dangerous Angels* is recommended by GLSEN for students in grades 7-12:

"Weetzie changed into her lace negligee from Trashy Lingerie and went into Dirk and Duck's room and climbed into bed between Dirk and Duck....And that was how Weetzie and Dirk and Duck made the baby—well, at least that was how it began, and no one could be sure if that was really the night...."

In a lesson plan for students in middle school and up ("Bisexual Basics," manual published by GLSEN for educators entitled, "Tackling Gay Issues in School: A Resource Module" by Leif Mitchell. Co-sponsored by GLSEN, 1999, Planned Parenthood of Connecticut and Leif Mitchell, p.78) we read:

"Each of us should have the freedom to explore our sexual orientation and find our own unique expression of lesbian, bisexual, gay, straight, or any combination of these."

4. In GLSEN material, the "cool" adults—parents, teachers and counselors—are those who encourage students to embrace homosexuality and cross-dressing. These "cool"

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adults also permit adult-level freedoms and let children associate with questionable teens or adults.

For example:

"The first time I said anything, I was fourteen. I told this social worker. I told him I had feelings for women....He was really cool. He ran around giving me all this information and he gave me the number for the gay and lesbian center. He helped me a lot. He opened the door."

(From *Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth—and Their Allies*, p. 35).

"I first met Danny in my seventh year of teaching....I said I was planning to go to Santa Monica Boulevard to watch the [gay] 'parade'...Suddenly Danny said, 'Take me along!'... We made plans and waited for the day.... I took Danny to dinner at a nice, gay café. We made quite an entrance with Danny looking all of fifteen and I looking all of thirty-one...."

(Gay, HIV-positive teacher Gary Dowd writing about his mentoring relationship with one of his "sexually questioning" students in *One Teacher In Ten: Gay and Lesbian Educators Tell Their Stories*, pp. 65-67.)

5. GLSEN resources contain many hostile, one-sided, anti-Christian vignettes and opinions, as well as misleading information about Christianity and the biblical position on homosexuality:

"In fact, the Bible says very little about homosexuality. Amidst the hundreds of thousands of other teachings, responsibilities, laws and prohibitions, there are only a handful of statements that might possibly apply to sex between men—and none that address lesbian sexuality."

(From *Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth-and Their Allies*, p. 279.)

"'God will punish you!' was my mother's favorite saying to me.... I remember going to Sunday school at a very early age—it was a 'must.' Sunday school can be heavy for a child....If you do anything that isn't right, you are terrified you'll be struck by lightning or go to hell...."

(From the recollections of a girl named 'Whitey,' who ran away from home at age thirteen to Greenwich Village, in *Growing Up Gay/Growing Up Lesbian*, pp.44-45)

6. The spirituality that is presented positively in GLSEN resources is not traditional religion, but witchcraft, goddess worship, and the occult:

"The creature came into the light. It had thin, pale, slightly bluish skin....'Who are you?' La felt a slice of fear, remembering her mother's tub of blood. Had her mother seen this creature? Had this been the demon who told her mother to cut herself?"

(From the story "Blue" in *Girl Goddess #9*, Francesca Block, Harper Trophy, 1996, p.17. Recommended by GLSEN for students in grades 7-12).

"...What I really noticed was his aura....'One day you can be like me,' he whispered...'You saw how that girl looked at me? I'm going to have her tonight. I can get any woman I like—or any man, if I was that way inclined....You know why? Because I was born with The Power. Power over things seen and unseen, power over folk and field, power over wind and water....You've got to keep it charged up. You've got to use it, boy! You have to feed The Power!'"

(From *Love & Sex: Ten Stories of Truth*, p.46,48. Recommended by GLSEN for students in grades 7-12)

"Alex...did his astrology bit. He was a believer like a lot of actors: superstitious, fascinated by the occult. "

(From *Hello, I Lied*, by M.E.Kerr, pp. 70-71. Recommended by GLSEN for students in grades 7-12)

Because of its potential for the corruption of minors, it is our opinion that GLSEN staff and volunteers should not be permitted to have any contact with children. Schools and organizations that utilize GLSEN materials, list its web site or other contact points as resources, or allow GLSEN representatives to address students or educators may find themselves ultimately exposed to criminal liability for corruption of minors or for facilitating contacts that lead to child sexual abuse.

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