

Religion

A Call to Faith

When Jesus told his disciples that to follow him meant taking up a cross, he wasn't kidding, believe me.

As a Christian lesbian, I get it from all sides. There are those Christians who believe that we are Satan's children or worse. Then there are the so-called "ex-gays" who believe that to be a good Christian is to be straight. Most mainstream churches are still at odds as to whether gays and lesbians should be accepted into their denominations, especially as ministers, despite gay and lesbian causes affiliated with many of them.

My fellow gays and lesbians tend to be antagonistic toward religion (which, unfortunately, is at times justified). Given these circumstances, how could gay or lesbian Christians experience their faith in an affirmative setting? How could they experience it in a way that is meaningful in their lives?

Those very questions are dealt with in a new book by Chris Glaser called *Come*

Home. This is Glaser's second book, his first being *Uncommon Calling*, which was about his unsuccessful pursuit of the ministry in the Presbyterian Church.

Unlike some books on the subject of homosexuality and the Church, *Come Home* does not dwell primarily on the gay and lesbian "clobber" passages in the Bible. Only one short chapter is devoted to the interpretation of Scripture in general, and not necessarily the "clobber" sections. Instead, Glaser's emphasis is on bringing those gays and lesbians who were at some point turned off to religion back into the fold. *Come Home* is an affirmation of our worth as Christians.

Glaser divides the book into what he calls "five spiritual moments:" accepting God, receiving "our spiritual inheritance," discerning God's call once we receive this inheritance, witnessing to both the church and the gay and lesbian community at large, and offering our "unique vision" to the Church. With each movement, Glaser illustrates how one can almost integrate step by step both spirituality and sexuality. He uses examples pulled both from the Scripture and from his own and others' experiences and does so in a style that is neither stuffy nor overly scholarly.

In *Come Home*, we get to meet a Jesus who is not this fierce judge and card-carrying

Republican that some would have us believe. Instead, he is a kind, loving friend who invites us all into his family unconditionally. This is a Jesus who talks to us about our own experiences, as shown in a passage where Glaser depicts Jesus talking to a lesbian about "loving eternally." The lesbian asks "who is my neighbor?" and Jesus answers her with the parable of the Good Samaritan, only this time it is about a man with AIDS being helped by Jerry Falwell.

We also meet gays and lesbians struggling with their faith, and those finding a supportive church community: the minister who, when diagnosed with AIDS, travels the country to teach churches how best to serve PWA's; the lesbian minister afraid to come out to her congregation; the man who, upon overhearing Glaser talking to another man about his work in the Presbyterian Church, asks about this church Glaser is speaking of.

These stories and many others help make our own personal struggles of faith a less lonely experience. Knowing how others like Chris Glaser were able to fully affirm themselves as both gay and Christian without fear or apology is inspiring.

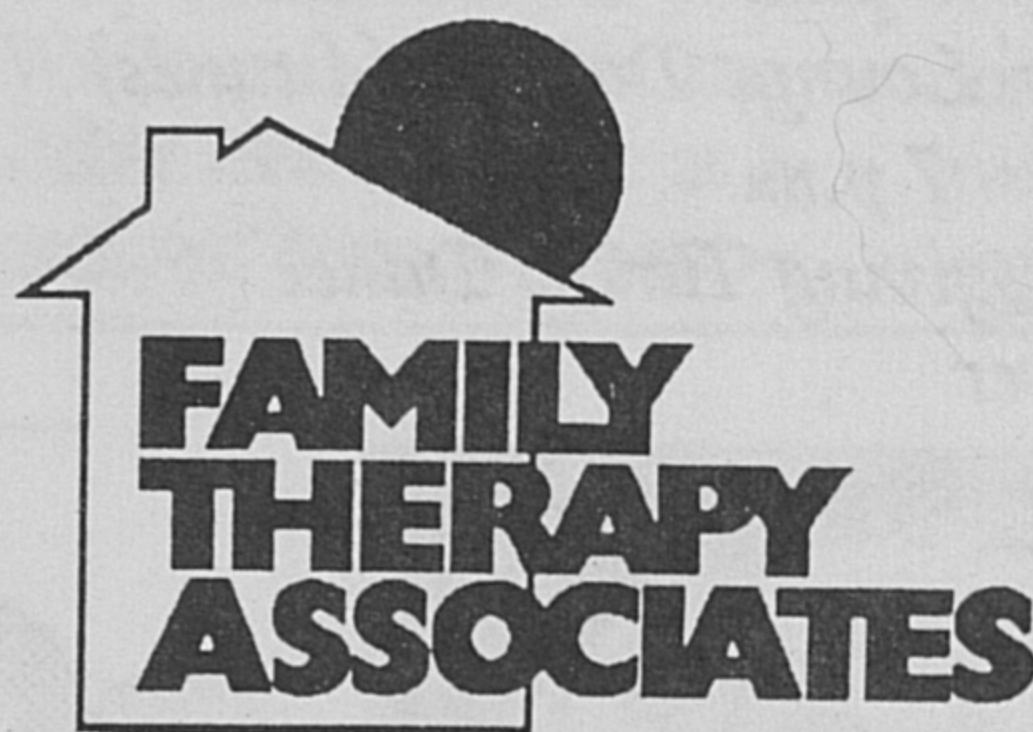
Come Home is simply that: a call to those of us out there who would be gay and Christian that it is safe to go back to the faith that once condemned us; it is ours for the taking.

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*Dedicated to Serving
the Needs of the
Lesbian and Gay
Community*

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