



Queer Clergy: A History of Gay and Lesbian Ministry in American Protestantism

R W Holmen

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Contrary to the popular image of Christian churches as gay-bashing homophobes--an image fostered by self-appointed spokesmen and microphone-grabbing evangelicals--progressive Protestant denominations ordain gays and lesbians and celebrate LGBT weddings, but it hasn't always been so. In the last decade, the principal ecumenical denominations--the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, and earlier the United Church of Christ--have adopted inclusive policies that have reversed long-standing exclusions that barred gays and lesbians from the pulpit and restricted clergy and congregations from celebrating covenant services of blessing and now marriage ceremonies. Though the Methodists lag behind, prophetic voices rally the faithful and countless clergy are openly defying the Book of Discipline and facing ecclesiastical charges.

I have been thinking a lot these days of our lesbian, gay, and bisexual sisters and brothers and supporters who have gone before us to bring us to this time and place. I wish that I knew more of their names. I wish I knew more of their stories. (Susan Kraemer in *More Light Update*)

Straight ally and author, Obie Holmen, names the names and tells the stories. *Queer Clergy: A History of Gay and Lesbian Ministry in American Protestantism* contains separate sections for five denominations (Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ) but each section is woven into an overarching narrative reflecting the common paths and parallel journeys.

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