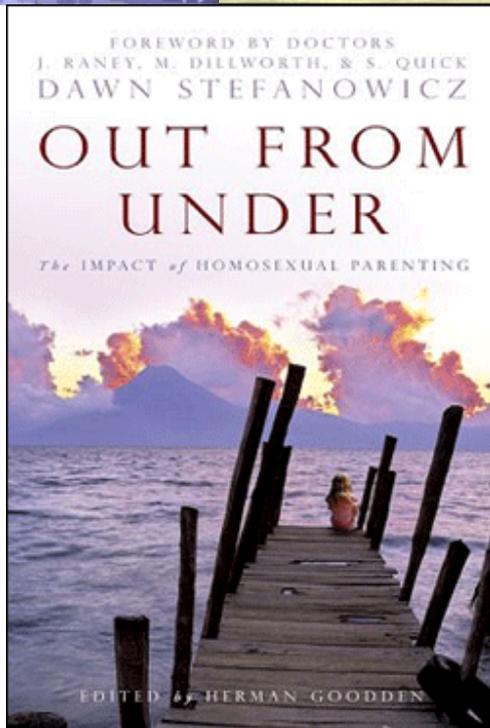


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A sobering look at the 'gay' subculture

Out From Under: The Impact of Homosexual Parenting by Dawn Stefanowicz (Annotation Press, \$14.95, 245 pages)

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It was while I was reading Dawn Stefanowicz's new book that I came upon a review in the *Toronto Sun* by critic Jim Slotek of the recent movie, *For the Bible Tells Me So* that was headlined, "A serious knock at Bible thumpers." One might expect anything coming from today's arts scene to be morally, not to mention artistically, suspect and this film does not disappoint.

Described as "an exploration of the intersection between religion and homosexuality in the U.S. and how the religious right has used its interpretation of the Bible to stigmatize the gay community," this execrable little ditty offers a predictable slam at faithful Christians using the tried-and-true tactic of making the exception into the rule.

But worse yet is Slotek's review, which gives three stars to what he applauds as a "thoughtful look" at "angry judgementalism and that uncomfortable stuff that's often forgotten: grace, redemption, love and acceptance." Opponents of homosexuality, he surmises, "spout from Leviticus Chapter 20, Verse 13 and then punch you in the stomach," as well as "obsess and even kill over a 'sin' that Jesus never mentioned."

Rubbish such as this points out more starkly the value and need for Stefanowicz's book in this era of gross misinformation about the realities of homosexuality. Slotek and his like would have us buy into the caricature of two happy, elderly homosexuals who enjoy gardening together as being the norm, while the big, bad villainous Christians seek to deny them their inalienable rights. Stefanowicz's first-hand account, however, offers us the starkly different reality and proves that it is really Christians who love those with same-sex attraction, by dissuading them from living the kind of unfulfilling, damaging and downright

deadly lifestyle she saw and experienced in close proximity.

Growing up in a Toronto household during the 1960s and 1970s in which her father actively participated in the homosexual sub-culture, Stefanowicz was exposed to many different people in the so-called gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and trans-sexual scenes, as well as their explicit sexual practices.

What emerges is an account that often leaves the reader shaking his head in dismay and disgust, not only at the descriptions of her father's conduct – which, by the way, were significantly toned down – but at the fact that any reasonably intelligent person would willingly thrust himself or herself into the kind of maelstrom of promiscuity, violence, abuse, drug use, suicide and ultimately, death from AIDS that her father did.

Fortunately, by the time of his death in 1991, her father had renounced his homosexual behaviour and become a faithful Christian. But not before much damage had been done, to himself and others. He lived with depression, control issues, anger outbursts, suicidal tendencies and sexual compulsions, recalls Stefanowicz. He and his numerous partners were also exposed to various contagious STDs as they travelled across North America. Those partners, in far too many cases, also lived drastically shortened lives due to suicide and AIDS.

"From a young age, I was exposed to explicit sexual speech, self-indulgent lifestyles, varied GLBT sub-cultures and gay vacation spots," Stefanowicz says in a warning to those who would give the nod to same-sex adoptions. "Sex looked gratuitous to me as a child. I was exposed to all-inclusive manifestations of sexuality including bathhouse sex, cross-dressing, sodomy, pornography, gay nudity, lesbianism, bi-sexuality, minor recruitment, voyeurism and exhibitionism. Sado-masochism was alluded to and aspects demonstrated. Alcohol and drugs were often contributing factors to lower inhibitions in my father's relationships."

Understandably, such an environment contributed to pathology in her life as well. "Over two decades of direct exposure to these stressful experiences caused me insecurity, depression, suicidal thoughts, dread, anxiousness, low self-esteem, sleeplessness and sexuality confusion. My conscience and innocence were seriously damaged. I witnessed that every other family member suffered severely as well."

Fortunately, thanks to a strong faith life and assisted by Christian psychotherapy, Stefanowicz set out on the path of healing, with the result that she has now been married for almost a quarter-century, has two children and is able to put her story down into book form. All who read her work, and Canadian society as a whole, will be the better for it.

Despite the dark content, this book is extremely well written, with the able assistance of editor Herman Goodden, and moves along at a quick pace. Almost as a novel, it is a classic page-turner and leaves the reader eager to find out what happens next. This is likely a direct result of the fact that Stefanowicz's original manuscript was four times the length of the final version.

By the end, while we are happy for Stefanowicz, we are left lamenting the lives that were and are being wasted by unrestrained homosexual behaviour. And we join in Stefanowicz's urging, as expressed on her website (www.dawnstefanowicz.com), that "government and judges need to advance and defend marriage as between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others for the sake of our children."

Quite simply: read this book and get a copy for anyone uninformed about the tragic realities of the homosexual sub-culture.