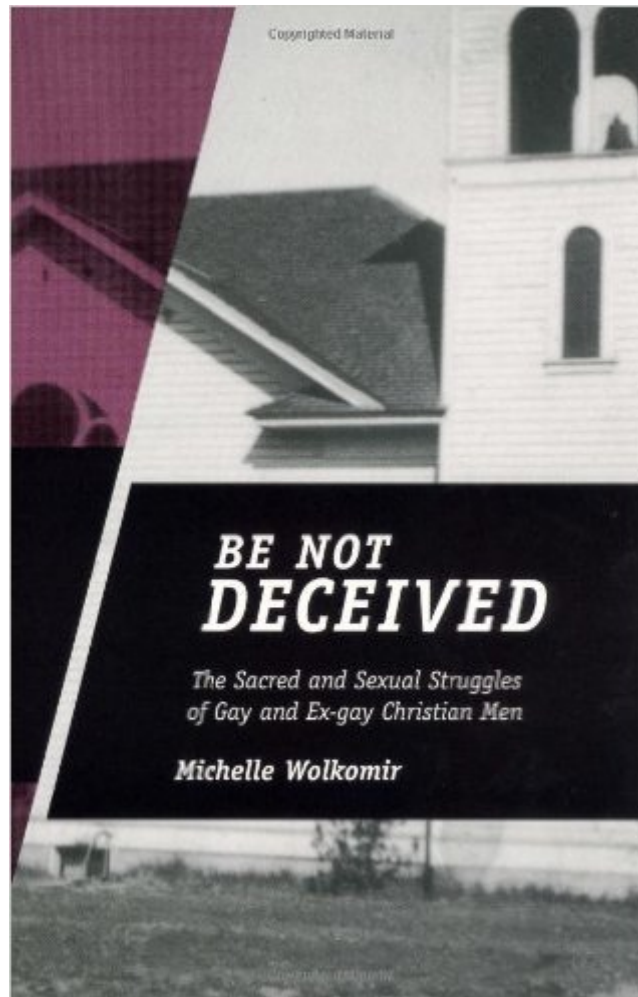


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Be Not Deceived: The Sacred And Sexual Struggles Of Gay And Ex-Gay Christian Men



Synopsis

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this book the author, Michelle Wolkmir, an assistant professor of sociology at Centenary College (Shreveport, Louisiana) conducted her own fieldwork by studying two competing ministries that offer solutions for Christians who experience homosexuality. One is the proclaimed ex-gay ministry, Exodus International, and the other is the growing Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC). The specific individual affiliates studied were Expell and Accept, respectively. The latter believes that God made people gay to suit divine purposes, while the former teaches that homosexuality is a sin, a symptom of psychological disorder, and a wayward lifestyle which can be overcome by the power of God. Wolkmir found, by way of attending the two group's Bible studies and ministry meetings, that they had different ideas about homosexuality, while both were "strikingly" similar in terms of prayer and worship. Both had gratitude to God and asked God for grace in their lives. Some differences in specific prayers were that the Exodus group prayed for healing of their own homosexuality, while MCC prayed for the wounds inflicted on gay people by people who mistreated them. MCC believes there is no biblical basis for condemnation of homosexuality, that the discrimination and stigmas against homosexuality is really a result of what they consider the Church's heterosexism. Interestingly, the author accuses MCC of "revising theology [so] that [it] defends homosexuality" (p. 194). Wolkomir's attempt in the study was to

unbiasly explore how people with basic religious beliefs, who have the same problem, arrive at opposing solutions. Her narratives are frank and interestingly telling. She uses much verbatim and less of a political angle than Erzen's book (Straight to Jesus).

Ms. Wolkomir's work is fairly objective, and as she did honestly TRY to be objective, that may be seen as politely detached, and with a bit of clinical language, she did manage to get her main points across. The culture wars anchor the question of legitimacy from both extreme ends, and therefore muddy the waters a bit, making the task at least twice as difficult, if not also twice as AGGRAVATING to anyone at the extreme ends, therefore charging the issue with plenty of passion, and - at least from THIS man's perspective - points of contention. Most of the time I sense in me an automatic spirit of contention, as if I am EXPECTING an argument, or at least a spirited debate. Ms. Wolkomir's work at least diffuses some of that, and looks at the issues of the roles faith in God have in gay men, and ex-gay men, with an objective viewpoint I would not be able to even so much as "conjure up," as I am too close to the issues, as well. With this work, the author takes two steps back and compares apples to oranges. Mind you, the two are both closely related, therefore an objective mindset/perspective is difficult to achieve. While Ms. Wolkomir manages to pull that off, with some style and grace for both sides, there are other perspectives to ponder, although I give the author some grace, myself, as there are no other points given credence in American Christendom, or at least none that I am aware of. Thus, men - such as myself- who have same-gender attraction issues, yet feel we have little or even NOTHING in common with the gay community, or are plainly sick-to-death of the gay community, keep distance between ourselves and the "common" gay man (see also "Androphilia: Rejecting the Gay Identity, Embracing Masculinity," by Jack Malabranche, now known as Jack Donovan).

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