

Family Circle **Auckland Community Church**



Lent 2010

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Safe Congregation

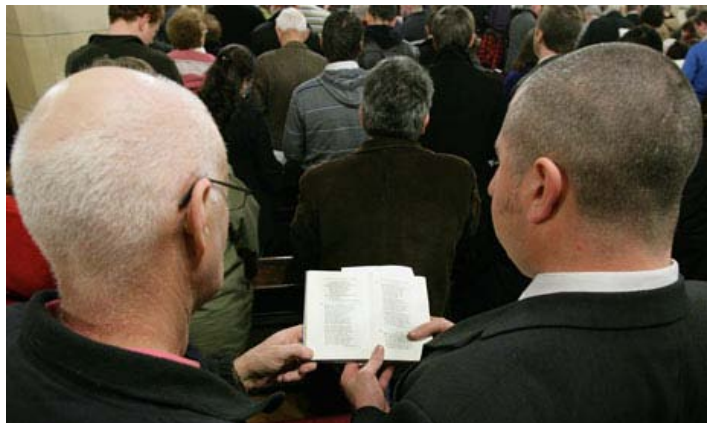
My very first time at Auckland Community Church was a big step for me. Firstly, it was my first "gay" event where I knew that for the first time in my life, people would make the correct assumption about my sexuality. Also, for the first time in my life, I was admitting I was different. I didn't really know what to expect, I was very nervous but excited. Part of me wondered if I'd be required to check my pants at the door. Part of me wondered if that would be a bad or a good thing.

My experience was a good one. I felt welcomed, included, and non-threatened. Cathy spoke to me a little and it was through this that I met Peter, who helped solve many problems in my mind. The reason I come back to ACC just about every week is not because I want to repeat that experience for myself, but because I want to ensure that other GLBT or questioning people are able to have the same experience I did.

This is unfortunately not everyone's experience, though. Many people we get in church are in a very vulnerable place in their lives, at the same time we have many people coming to church because they want to be able to socialise with other GLBT people in a non-bar/sex/cruising environment. Sometimes, those two goals can be at odds. A kiss, a touch or even a careless word can cause real damage to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Board members were reminded of this recently when a new member of the church decided not to come back after he had felt someone was taking an undue interest in him. We don't know the details but it's a vivid reminder that many people who come to us are looking for healing, acceptance and (above all) safety. It is up to all of us, as members of this community, to ensure this is the case.

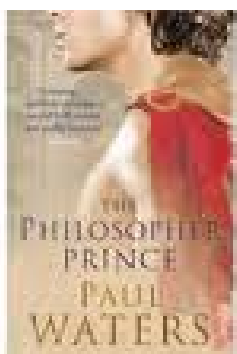
This is why we have the safe congregation policy, which protects all of our members against harassment. Be mindful that harassment is often unintentional and can start off quite innocently. Remember that a vulnerable, sensitive questioning person may take a friendly touch or even a compliment in the wrong way. If you feel anyone may have been exposed to harassment at church, please contact *Sue* (8280953) or *Mike* (3760889)



Gay congregation at All Souls, London

- Stephen Witherden

Book Reviews : *Cast not the day* & *Living it Out*



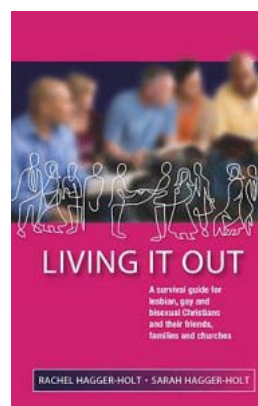
Latest title

Anyone who has enjoyed Mary Renault's historical novels of the ancient world will enjoy the novels of Paul Waters. 'Of Merchants and Heroes' was published in 2008 and is set at the end of the third century BC in Italy and Greece when Rome's long war with Carthage is drawing to a close and when new dangers are arising from King Philip of Macedon. At its heart is a love story, Roman boy (Marcus) falls for Greek boy (Menexenos). Paul Waters' second novel, 'Cast not the Day' was published last year and is set in Roman Britain during the 4th century AD. The Christians are very the much the villains in this story, as in Gore Vidal's famous novel 'Julian' about the apostate emperor. Once again there's a gay love story (Drusis and Marcellus this time). A sequel to *Cast not the Day* is being published next month.

Living it Out: a survival guide for lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians and their friends, families and churches, by Rachel Hagger-Holt & Sarah Hagger-Holt, Canterbury Press, 2009

An extract from the review: *It is a practical book and gentle in its approach to people, giving recognition that time and space are often needed for people to process what is happening for them rather than a quick-fix, just believe this and do that kind of approach.*

<http://www.spiritedexchanges.org.uk>



Cambodia Tooth Angel Project (CTAP)

This was one of the charities we gave money to at the end of 2009.

Callum Durward and Reth moved to Cambodia in 2007 and Callum began working with a number of dental agencies (see *Family Circle* July 2007).



Since then he has become involved with the CTAP. They aim to bring desperately needed basic dental and medical treatment to the most vulnerable and destitute Cambodian men, women and children. ... There is no "free" public service available in Cambodia, as even at the hospitals and health centres people need to pay for treatment.

Read more about them online at:

http://www.cambodiantoothangel.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23&Itemid=21

and other sites

http://www.aut.ac.nz/staff/insideaut/2006_may/dental_difference.htm

- The AUT / Phnom Penh University agreement.

https://dspace.gla.ac.uk/bitstream/1905/790/3/Kane_Padayachee.pdf

- A report of volunteers doing a dental elective.