

Speakers urge equal rights for homosexuals in the church

BY ANDREW PRESTON
Staff writer

Reverends Janie Spahr and James Graves spoke in the 900 Room on their personal experiences as homosexuals in organized religion. Both speakers are ordained ministers in the Presbyterian church, but neither are currently allowed to serve in a congregation.

Rev. Spahr grew up in a very religious family and absorbed the Presbyterian atmosphere in her hometown. Even as a child she knew that she wanted to be a minister.

In fact, Spahr told the audience that before she could read she "misinterpreted the 'pedestrian crossing' signs for presbyterian crossing."

At that time, homosexuality was seen as evil and wrong. Spahr described the prevailing attitude "as a phase that people grow out of."

Spahr did not realize her sexual orientation for many years although she felt frustrated in her relationships with males. She became involved in many organizations in college, but as she explains, "I looked happy on the outside, but I was empty on the inside."

Spahr finally recognized the source of her discontent, but not before the failure of a loving but unhappy marriage and the birth of

two sons. The adjustment was not easy, but eventually she became proud to be who she was. "It took a long time to go from saying 'Oh my God' to 'Thank you, God,'" Spahr said.

"The church was not as excited about my sexuality as I was," she says. Although she was offered a position as a minister in Rochester, the national Presbyterian Court blocked her accepting it.

Spahr explained that "it was hard because I knew what I wanted to do and I was taught to tell the truth, but I was not accepted by the church."

She adds, "I don't want special rights — just my baptismal rights."

Currently, Rev. Spahr works as a "lesbian evangelist" and is the founder of the organization entitled That All May Freely Serve. Spahr speaks in many different areas of the country, hoping that people will begin to understand the trials of homosexuals.

Rev. James Graves grew up in a similar religious background and also knew that his calling was to be a minister. He had trouble finding a church after he admitted his sexual orientation.

Although a church did finally hire him, he was asked to resign by members of the congregation after only three weeks. Graves left the church after five weeks, not be-

cause he was forced to, but because "I felt like the church was on shaky ground."

Soon after leaving this church, Graves gave up his ordination and began working for the theater. Graves then taught at North Dakota University, where he became involved in religion once again, this time as a member of an Episcopal Church.

However, after his partner died of AIDS, the church told him that they had no place for him. In 1991, Graves joined a church in Rochester.

Graves admits that "if I were not openly gay, I could probably be re-ordained — but not now. Every once in a while I see a job for a church minister that would be a wonderful experience."

During the question and answer period, one person asked about biblical or theological roots for the conflict between homosexuals and the church.

Rev. Spahr said that the problem is the interpretation of the Bible and explains that people must "know the context in which the Bible passages were written."

For example, Spahr points out that the Bible appears to condone slavery, which is clearly immoral.

Spahr said that the church is sinning against homosexuals by acting so unjustly, and that "we are daring to love the church through its violence and its ignorance."



Reverend Janie Spahr speaks animatedly.

Brandon Clarke

Seniors vote for financial aid

BY BRAD D. CHASE
Staff Writer

The Class of 1996's Senior Class Gift will be a one-time, four-year expendable, need-based scholarship to help subsidize financial aid for one incoming freshman. Seniors voted to hold off on the much-discussed new entrance sign.

Sarah Brewer, Co-chair of the Student Class Gift Committee, offered an explanation for the vote: "A lot of students can't come to Davidson because of the financial aspect, and we felt that our gift should offer an opportunity for educational advancement rather than a physical improvement on the campus."

Associate Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Kathleen Stevenson-McNeely was also pleased with the decision to offer a scholarship, commenting that the scholarship will "enable Davidson to continue socio-economic diversity on campus."

Dave Thompson, Co-chair of

the Student Class Gift Committee, added, "The majority of the committee felt that the general student body would be behind a scholarship. We were pleased with the voting results."

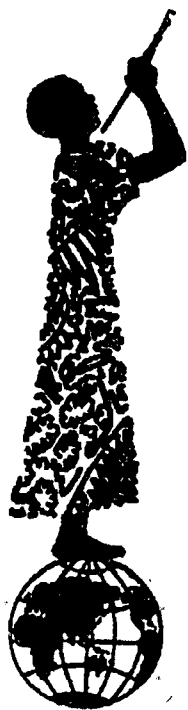
The scholarship will be paid out over a four year period and will be worked into one incoming freshman's need-based financial aid package.

The amount of the scholarship will depend on the pledges given by current seniors. The committee is currently working on raising money and naming the scholarship.

Presently, there will be only one scholarship, but both Brewer and Stevenson-McNeely are optimistic that future classes may take the initiative and continue with the scholarship funding.

The fund raising kick-off party for the senior class will be held at Clarence Fosters in Charlotte on November 2. Food, drinks, and a lottery for prizes — including Hornets tickets — will be offered.

The World Through Women's Eyes



Global Women's Awareness Week

Davidson College
Oct. 30 - Nov. 4, 1995

Program

Monday, October 30, 8:30 p.m. Union Outpost
Wednesday, November 1, 7 p.m. Visual Arts Center
Thursday, November 2, 12-1 p.m. 900 Room

Thursday, November 2, 7:30 p.m. 900 Room

Poetry From Around the World
Faces of Women (film from the Ivory Coast)
"Feminism Around the World" Panel discussion with international women and men about feminism and its role in their cultures (Part of CROP LUNCH)
"Beyond Beijing" Three accounts of the recent women's conference in China (Reception at 7 p.m. in the 900 Room)

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