

Crisis

Growing Up Gay in America

Edited by Mitchell Gold with Mindy Drucker

Greenleaf Book Club Press, 2008

“I’d rather be shot dead than know my son is queer!”

To me, this is the heart of the crisis discussed in Gold’s book. It reflects the verbal abuse of gay young people by those who have a responsibility to love and support them. It also reflects the perverted teachings of many churches – that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) youth are not worthy of respect and love.

The forty short autobiographical sketches that make up the bulk of **Crisis** largely show over and over the oppression experienced during their formative years by these gay men and women. All of them finally overcame their religion-based oppression. Most are now highly respected leaders in their chosen professions. Still, their stories reveal the years of fear and shame they – and so many others like them – experienced in their most formative years.

Many young gays are not so lucky. Many suffer total rejection by their church, schoolmates, and family, and are left to fend for themselves at a vulnerable young age. They suffer both verbal and physical abuse simply because of who they are. Too many are lost, through murder and suicide. Is no one ashamed that their words have cost these young people their lives?

Crisis stresses the need for acceptance and support of all our GLBTQ children. Parents, churches, schools, and politicians must recognize the grave harm they do not only to the GLBTQ youth themselves, but also to their families and friends.

It is Mitchell Gold’s expressed hope that families, church leaders, politicians, and school authorities will read his book. There is a desperate need for all of them to act to eliminate the violence inflicted on the millions of American GLBTQ teens by the very people charged with protecting them.

Reviewed by Dave Parker