



## **Dr. Heather Rachelle White Receives LGBT Religious History Award**

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Religious Archives Network (LGBT-RAN) honors Dr. Heather Rachelle White as the 2007-08 recipient of its LGBT Religious History Award. Dr. White's paper, "From Sin to Sickness: Pastoral Counseling and the Sex Variant, 1946-1963," was selected by the review jury to receive this award.

Dr. White is currently an adjunct instructor in the Religion Department at Vassar College. The paper is a chapter from her dissertation, *Homosexuality, Gay Communities, and American Churches: A History of a Changing Religious Ethic, 1947-1977*, which she successfully defended in August, 2007, at Princeton University. White was a history major as an undergrad at Eastern University in Pennsylvania. She went on to Princeton Theological Seminary, enrolling in the M.Div. program, anticipating work in church ministry. In the process of earning that degree, she redirected her interests to research and teaching.

Her grad school research interests began at the intersection of history, religion and sexuality in colonial America. After consulting with other LGBT historians and being encouraged to address these issues in a more modern setting, she turned her attention to homosexuality and Protestantism in the post-World War II U.S. She began her research with the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, founded in San Francisco in 1964-65. Through this research she learned about the George W. Henry Foundation in New York and other pastoral counselors who were proposing—in the 1950s—that non-judgmental regard rather than moral condemnation was more helpful for their homosexual clients. White indicates that this was the most fascinating part of her research—uncovering the significant work that was done to integrate the social sciences with a religious understanding of and moral approach to homosexuality long before Stonewall (1969) brought these issues into more public consciousness.

Dr. White's dissertation is currently under review by publishers with the tentative title, *Mainline Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights*. Her ongoing research interests include a more in-depth look at early Christian conversations about the morality of homosexuality in relationship to scientific research on sexuality. She is also interested in the linkages between media technology and organizing in queer religious communities, including the emergence of queer religious communities on the Internet.

Dr. White will receive the LGBT Religious History Award and its cash prize at a dinner on Saturday evening, May 31<sup>st</sup>, in Philadelphia. More details will be available on the [www.lgbtran.org](http://www.lgbtran.org) web site.

Submissions for next year's LGBT Religious History Award must be postmarked or received electronically by October 17, 2008. Complete information on submission guidelines for the

award can be found at: [www.lgbtran.org/historyaward.aspx](http://www.lgbtran.org/historyaward.aspx).

The LGBT Religious Archives Network, a project of Chicago Theological Seminary, is a ground-breaking venture to preserve the history of LGBT religious movements. It has two primary purposes: a) to assist LGBT religious groups and leaders in preserving their records in appropriate repositories; and b) providing an electronic information clearinghouse on LGBT religious collections and other historical source materials on its web site: [www.lgbtran.org](http://www.lgbtran.org). Its LGBT Religious History Award, initiated in 2005, is the only award given to outstanding research and writing in this field. White is the third recipient of the award.

January 25, 2008