

In My Father's Church



a film by Charissa King



A WOMEN MAKE MOVIES RELEASE

Women Make Movies • 462 Broadway, 5th Floor • New York, NY 10013
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Synopsis

Charissa is a lesbian who wants a church wedding, but it doesn't seem to help that her dad is the pastor of the town's United Methodist Church. While he has been quietly supportive of his daughter's lesbian relationship, Charissa's father knows he would put his career at risk if he chose to officiate at her marriage ceremony. In 1999, the Methodist church took a firm stand by suspending a pastor for officiating a same sex union—and the clashes between clergy and gay couples have been making headlines ever since. Compelling and honest, IN MY FATHER'S CHURCH is a poignant exploration of the intersection of homosexuality and religion, from the perspective of someone who has much at stake.

Though disappointed by her father's resistance to marry her, Charissa and her bride-to-be Kelly continue to make their wedding plans—finding support in surprising places, and eventually are married by Charissa's uncle. This emotionally charged story of one woman's attempt to reconcile her love, faith and family brings to life the deep conflicts that gay marriage has caused in many churches—and for many individuals trying to maintain their faith while preserving their own identities.

Festivals

For the most updated list, please visit www.wmm.com.

San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival

Austin Gay & Lesbian International Film Festival

Modesto Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival

Long Island Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

Immaginaria International Women's Film Festival

Spokane Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

Credits

2004 · 49 minutes · Color

Director/Producer/Camera/Editor

Charissa King

Additional Cinematography

Laurel Greenberg, Alla Kovgan, Beth Collins

Music

John Howard

Consulting Editor

David Simpson

Women Make Movies Publicity Contact:

Cindy Kridle, Marketing and Communications Manager

Women Make Movies, 462 Broadway Suite 500, New York, NY 10013

ckridle@wmm.com



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Crew Biographies

Charissa King (Producer, Director, Camera, Editor) is interested in making personal documentaries. She has produced educational and experimental films and videos. In the fall of 2000, King became a member of the Filmmakers Collaborative based in Waltham, MA. King is now attending The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she joins the Film, Video, and New Media department in pursuit of a MFA. IN MY FATHER'S CHURCH is King's first documentary film.

David Simpson/Consulting Editor

Simpson has spent more than two decades creating award-winning films and television. Simpson has co-edited the recent Kartemquin Films documentary, THE NEW AMERICANS, and directed, co-produced and edited REFRIGERATOR MOTHERS, about a generation of mothers of autistic children who were told by the medical establishment that their "emotional frigidity" had caused their children's autism. The film aired on PBS' POV series, and won top honors at the Florida, Indianapolis, and Sedona film festivals. His experimental narrative film, DANTE'S DREAM, garnered five 1st-Place festival awards. Simpson co-produced and edited Kartemquin Films' 5 GIRLS, a documentary about teenage girls that aired on POV.

Laurel Greenberg/Additional photography

Greenberg's most recent film is TROUBLE FROM PARADISE, a look into the controversy over Election 2000 in Florida and the award-winning documentary 94 YEARS AND 1 NURSING HOME LATER (1999), an intimate view into the difficulties of elder hood. Greenberg also served as the principal cinematographer for MY FATHER THE GENIUS (2002), winner of Best Documentary at Slamdance. Greenberg also directed and produced NO VOTE, NO VOICE (1992), a short film that aired on national PBS and SOMETHING MISSING (1990.)

Director's Statement

I became inspired to make this film when I heard that the United Methodist church was suspending a pastor for officiating a same-sex union in 1999. As I further investigated the controversy, I realized that homophobia in the greater church ran wide and deep, causing internal divisions. All of a sudden, I felt alienated from the church I grew up in simply because I was a lesbian. Quiet and warm, my father, a United Methodist pastor, seemed supportive of my relationship with my partner Kelly, but he was never very vocal. As I planned my wedding, it seemed clear that I needed to know where my father stood. While other pastors defied church rulings, "married" gays, and suffered penalties, my dad remained silent.

My film incorporates the personal essay approach while drawing on my background in painting and photography. Conversations with family members are intimate and revealing. My mother reflects on her initial grief upon finding out that her daughter was a lesbian, and Kelly's mother, a self-proclaimed liberal, recognizes homophobia more vividly than she had before Kelly came out. My father and I awkwardly dance around the question I agonize over asking him: will he marry Kelly and me? This film probes the intersections of homosexuality with religion from the perspective of a person who has something at stake. As the film unfolds, I reveal my deep connection to my father and my investment in the outcome of the debate over homosexuality in the church.



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