

RAINBOW IN THE WORD

edited by

Ellin Sterne Jimmerson

foreword by Viki Matson

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"In the dialogue and debate about the place of LGBTQ persons in Christian churches, too often only the voices of straight, white, usually male, scholars and theologians are heard. *Rainbow in the Word* introduces us to the beautiful voices of LGBTQ persons themselves, people who, against all odds, have kept the faith and who can speak for themselves. No conversation about these courageous and articulate Christians should take place without their own voices being heard. Highly recommended!"

—**BRIAN D. MCLAREN**, author of *The Great Spiritual Migration*

"Life stories can remake today's theology," James Wm. McClendon, Jr. once said, and in this movingly penned, intellectually diverse, and spiritually transformative volume of story-theology, Ellin Jimmerson and her contributors show us how. *Rainbow in the Word* offers earthbound models of Christian desire for transcendent meaning, which is no small accomplishment. This book's wisdom has been forged on life's tough anvil, yet each tale in it will endure, branded by the ability to take theology in some unexpectedly new directions. One amazing read!"

—**DARREN J. N. MIDDLETON**, Texas Christian University

"When so many conversations around LGBTQ people in the church centers around debating our legitimacy, *Rainbow In The Word* reminds us that our sexual identity is not a liability to be defended but an essential contribution to the Church's understanding of Scripture and of God. This unique book invites us into richer hues and brighter colors as we encounter the Creator whose divine image is reflected in us all."

—**JAMIE ARPIN-RICCI**, author of *The Cost of Community*

"An entire reformation was birthed when the Bible was given to the common worshiper. It's amazing what the Spirit will do when she is not withheld from those who need her most. In *Rainbow in the Word*, Ellen Jimmerson invites a dying Church to free itself from the constraints of its long-held homophobia and exposes it to the biblical insights of today's most marginalized voices. New life will emerge on the other side of this."

—**JOHN C. DORHAUER**, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

"God always invites the uninvited, welcomes the unwelcome, includes the excluded, and loves the unloved. Even when we don't. These beautiful stories by LGBTQ Christians will draw you closer to God and God's inviting, welcoming, inclusive love."

—**NATHAN HAMM**, Social Media Theologian

LGBTQ Christians read, love, scrutinize, become absorbed with, and find deep spiritual meaning in the Bible. As these testimonies show, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other queer Christians are inaugurating a fresh, exciting, new era in biblical interpretation. It is they whose rare insights into particular Bible stories and characters, told with poignancy and clarity, reveal a gay-friendly Bible and a gay-friendly God who cherishes and needs them just as they are. It is they who are running to the Bible with a longing for the Holy Spirit that far surpasses that of too many straight Christians. If given free rein, these inventive, challenging, and profoundly engaged evangelists may be the ones we have been waiting for to rescue biblical interpretation from those who too often are not only hurtful but dismal and boring. Thank God for them!

LGBTQ Christians' Biblical Memoirs

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Ellin Sterne Jimmerson holds a PhD in US cultural and intellectual history from the University of Houston and a master's in theological studies from Vanderbilt University. Her specialization is the intersection of Christianity and politics. An ordained Baptist minister and activist, she is most well known for having officiated at the first same-sex wedding in Alabama (2015) and for having written and directed the documentary *The Second Cooler*, narrated by Martin Sheen (2013).

Media, Examination, and Review Copies:
Contact: Toni Erebor
(541) 344-1528, ext 151 or Toni@wipfandstock.com

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