



Challenging the Ex-Gay Movement

An Information Packet

December 1998

Co-published by:

Political Research Associates

The Policy Institute, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

Equal Partners in Faith

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Report designed by Debbie Hird and printed by Massachusetts Teachers Association.

 Printed on recycled paper 

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Political Research Associates (PRA), The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and Equal Partners in Faith (EPF) gratefully acknowledge the support of the funders who helped make possible the research for this packet as well as its writing, production, and distribution. They include: the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation; the Columbia Foundation; the Deer Creek Foundation; the Gill Foundation; the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation; the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Division of the American Missionary Association; and several individual donors.

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Founded in 1981, Political Research Associates (PRA) is an independent nonprofit research center. PRA monitors and analyzes anti-democratic, authoritarian, and racist movements and trends, conducts research, and publishes educational materials. It serves as a national information clearing-house and resource center on the political Right for concerned individuals and organizations, activists, policy makers, journalists, educators, students, and the public at large.

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The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) is a leading progressive civil rights organization that, since its inception in 1973, has been in the forefront of every major initiative for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. NGLTF's Policy Institute is a think tank dedicated to the development of public policy, research, and strategies that advance lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality.

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Equal Partners in Faith (EPF) is a multi-racial, multi-faith national network of religious leaders and people of faith committed to equality and diversity. EPF helps people of faith understand and challenge the ways Religious Right leaders manipulate religion to promote an exclusive and divisive political agenda. EPF focuses currently on why and how these leaders build support for Promise Keepers, how they organize in communities of color, and how they campaign against the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. On these and related issues, EPF provides a national voice for concerned people of faith and supports local organizing, public education, and media outreach efforts by faith-based groups.

INTRODUCTION

The growing prominence of the ex-gay movement is the result of a strategic shift within the Christian Right: the new packaging of an old message. The claim that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people can be “cured” has more to do with the Right’s political objectives and its bitter opposition to equal rights than with genuine caring. This information packet provides useful information about how the Christian Right has adopted the ex-gay movement in response to increasing pressure to soften its homophobic rhetoric.

While a vast array of religious denominations and a growing majority of the public is increasingly supportive of equality and fair treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, the ex-gay movement is gaining media attention and increasing legitimacy by promoting a discredited therapeutic practice known as “reparative therapy” and by claiming to act in the name of religion. Reparative therapy has been repudiated by prominent psychological and psychiatric organizations. The religious principles promoted by the ex-gay movement are part of a fundamentalist Christian agenda that has caused concern and opposition from within virtually all mainstream communities of faith.

Our three organizations have come together to raise critical questions about the motivations, claims, and objectives of the ex-gay movement. We believe the public needs to see the truth behind the mask of compassion. The new softer face of the Christian Right merely hides the old, vicious homophobia. The ex-gay movement, like the Christian Right of which it is a part, is intolerant of anyone who does not conform to its ideals of family, marriage, moral values, and sexual orientation. It exploits and misuses the language of faith, presenting a face of Christian caring while simultaneously condemning gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people outright, and denying them their full humanity and equal rights.

In this packet, we have gathered information about “reparative therapy” as well as information about the fundamentalist Christian ministries that offer conversion through Christ. You may notice that the spokespeople for the movement are nearly always the same few “ex-gay” activists. It is a time-tested tactic of the Right to use exaggeration and distortion to make reality conform to its doctrines.

Challenging the Ex-Gay Movement is a complement to a second resource we are offering on the ex-gay movement: a report by Surina Khan titled *Calculated Compassion: How the Ex-Gay Movement Serves the Right’s Attack on Democracy*. In the report, Surina presents her analysis of the ex-gay movement’s role within the Right, and her assessment of the importance of this movement to the future of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights. The report is available through Political Research Associates.

In attacking gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, the ex-gay movement, like its parent, the Christian Right, promotes an agenda for all Americans that is profoundly anti-democratic and exclusionary. We stand in opposition.

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Co-Chair
Steering Committee
Equal Partners in Faith

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The Political Role of the Ex-Gay Movement

The following is an executive summary of Calculated Compassion: How the Ex-Gay Movement Serves the Right's Attack on Democracy, an in-depth report detailing the political, legal and religious implications of the ex-gay movement. It is available for \$6 (including shipping and handling) from Political Research Associates.

The ex-gay movement gained national media attention in July 1998 when full-page ads promoting the movement appeared in major newspapers across the country. Millions of people were exposed to the ex-gay claim that homosexuals can heal themselves of their “lifestyle choice” through a Christian fundamentalist religious conversion or through “reparative therapy.” These ideas are refuted by the medical community and mainstream religious organizations.

The widespread media coverage garnered by the ad campaign focused on the “human interest” issue: can lesbians and gay men “convert” to heterosexuality? But there is another side to this story—told for the first time in this report.

Calculated Compassion is a comprehensive examination of the political character and role of the ex-gay movement. And it paints a disturbing picture. While publicly portraying itself as a haven for “hope and healing for homosexuals,” the ex-gay movement serves as camouflage for a retooled and reinvigorated assault by the Christian Right on the legal protections against discrimination for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. Furthermore, the ex-gay movement is an integral part of a broader right-wing movement that poses a grave threat to democracy and diversity in the US.

Based on three years of research, the report shows conclusively that:

- **The ex-gay movement provides political cover for a significant new phase in the Christian Right's long-running anti-gay campaign.** For more than two decades, a coalition of “family values” organizations have used anti-homosexual propaganda to organize and mobilize conservative Christian constituents, recruit new followers, and raise money. But vitriol is no longer working the way it was, because of increasing public distaste for demonizing rhetoric, growing public tolerance of homosexuality, and an increase in the number of state, county, and city ordinances outlawing anti-gay discrimination. The Christian Right has seized the political opportunity offered by the ex-gay movement to repackage its anti-gay campaign in kinder, gentler terms. Instead of simply denouncing homosexuals as morally and socially corrupt, the Christian Right has now shifted to a strategy of emphasizing personal salvation for homosexuals—through the ex-gay movement. Behind this mask of compassion, however, the goal, remains the same: to roll back legal protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and enforce criminal laws against them. The evidence suggests that the Christian Right is pursuing this goal with renewed vigor.
- **The ex-gay movement is a potent tool for undermining the rationale for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights.** Ex-gay leaders and their Christian Right partners claim that homosexuals need not be “that way” since theirs is a voluntary lifestyle choice that can be abandoned

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through religious conversion or therapy. By this reasoning, legal protections for homosexuals are not necessary. This latest refinement of the Christian Right's "no special rights" argument has already been "field-tested" with ominous success. The ex-gay message was employed extensively in a referendum campaign that overturned Maine's gay rights law—the first time an existing state law of this kind had been reversed. Anti-discrimination laws in other states will undoubtedly now be targeted.

- **Most mainstream religious leaders and religious organizations in the US do not share the views of the ex-gay movement and the Christian Right about homosexuality.** Ex-gay and Christian Right leaders have routinely sought to identify their opposition to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights with broader religious beliefs and traditions. But their perspectives on the issue do not correspond with the position of mainstream communities of faith, including the Roman Catholic Church, the National Council of Churches, the United Methodist Church, the American Jewish Congress and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Furthermore, by asserting that homosexuality is a sin that can be overcome, the Christian Right is at odds with many mainstream faith-based communities which not only advocate equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, but also affirm their full religious equality.
- **The ex-gay movement is part of a broader social and political movement that is intolerant and anti-democratic.** The ex-gay movement is an integral part of the Christian Right which promotes Christian nationalism, an ideology that seeks to use government laws and regulations to impose fundamentalist Christian values on the entire nation. If the Christian Right has its way, the constitutional walls separating church and state would be eliminated. The ex-gay movement is also located within the political Right's larger social change movement, which is pursuing an anti-democratic and authoritarian agenda of sweeping social, political, cultural and economic changes.

Tolerance and pluralism are bedrock principles of American society. Yet, as this report shows, the ex-gay movement and the Christian Right are attacking these principles and furthering a rigid moral agenda which offers fundamentalist Christian dogma and heterosexuality as the only acceptable norms. Challenging the leadership of the ex-gay movement is essential if equal rights for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, are to be defended. To be effective, such a challenge must take into account the broader theocratic agenda of the Christian Right which the ex-gay movement is being used to promote.

Challenging the Ex-Gay Movement: What You Can Do

The ex-gay movement is an international network of Christian and secular organizations that claims lesbians and gay men can be “converted” to heterosexuality.

Hundreds of men and women turn to ex-gay ministries in an honest search for truth and meaning in relation to their sexual identity and their faith in Christianity. But what is the agenda of the ex-gay movement? What does its leadership really intend?

Political Research Associates (PRA), the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and Equal Partners in Faith (EPF) teamed up to share information with the activist and faith-based communities because we feel that the ex-gay movement’s carefully crafted public image does not sincerely convey the goals and objectives of its leadership. We believe that the ex-gay movement draws men and women based on one set of messages, then reveals a very different one once they are organized into ex-gay ministries and reparative therapy programs.

We must voice our concerns. The debate about homosexuality currently being showcased in the media has centered around *nature vs. nurture*. While some gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender activists say homosexuality is not a choice, activists of the Christian Right say it’s a result of negative childhood experiences. But both sides miss the point that sexual identity—whether it be homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or heterosexual—is a human right. Under a human rights paradigm, all people have the right to control their bodies and everyone has the right to name their own sexual identity, whether it is chosen or not.

PLEASE JOIN US IN THIS EFFORT

- ✓ Pass the material in this packet on to your colleagues.
- ✓ In cities and towns with ex-gay ministries, hold an informational meeting with activists.
- ✓ Write or meet with the editorial board of your local newspapers and urge them to start covering ex-gay ministries and organizations as a political movement.
- ✓ Arrange an educational forum for clergy and/or activists in your area.

GROUND RULES

1. Don’t demonize people who are involved with the ex-gay movement.
2. Focus on the ex-gay movement’s leadership, not its followers.
3. Be respectful of people’s religious beliefs.
4. Don’t merely answer reporters’ questions; point to the actual agenda of the ex-gay movement’s leadership.
5. Don’t oversimplify the ex-gay movement. Simple anti-Right slogans do not help people understand why the Right sounds convincing but is wrong.
6. Be thoughtful in how you depict the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community. Don’t perpetuate stereotypes of glbt people as white and middle class. Try to reflect the different realities—ethnicities, religions, and class experiences—of all glbt people.
7. Don’t get caught up in the *nature v. nurture* debate. The defense, “we can’t help it, we’re born this way,” misses an important point—we all have the right to love whomever we choose. The truth is, human sexuality is far more rich and multifaceted than we are taught to believe.
8. And finally, stay cool, limit your use of sarcasm, and address the issues, not just the actors.

Challenging the Ex-Gay Movement: Talking Points

THE EX-GAY MOVEMENT AND RELIGION

Ex-gay movement leaders and their Christian Right partners try to create the impression that their abhorrence of homosexuality and their opposition to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights on religious grounds are widely shared by other Americans of faith. However, most mainstream religious leaders and religious organizations are on record for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Many mainstream religious leaders and prominent theologians do not subscribe to the key theological premises of the ex-gay movement—that heterosexuality is God’s creative intent for humanity, and that a person needs to be heterosexual to have a correct relationship with God.

THE EX-GAY MOVEMENT AND RACE

The ex-gay movement receives its primary support from Christian Right organizations such as the Family Research Council and the Christian Coalition. These groups are the architects of profound shifts in public policy and public attitudes about our national responsibility to poor people and people of color.

Ex-gay and Christian Right leaders claim that gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people are out to get “more” rights than those guaranteed to everyone, and that somehow these rights would come at the expense of the civil rights of people of color. This “special rights” theme relies on the argument that sexual orientation is not a basis for discrimination and that gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people simply want to win legitimacy for their “deviant” behavior by putting it on par with immutable characteristics such as skin color.

THE EX-GAY MOVEMENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The ex-gay movement poses a significant new threat to efforts to secure civil rights for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people. By using the ex-gay movement to convince people that lesbian, gay and bisexual people can become heterosexual, the Christian Right aims to foster the development of a restrictive legal environment in which only heterosexuals have legal rights.

The appeal to conservative Christian voters of the ex-gay message—that homosexuality is a “lifestyle choice” so lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender civil rights are unnecessary—was demonstrated in a February, 1998 referendum vote that overturned Maine’s anti-discrimination law. It was the first state law of its kind to be rescinded, and other such state laws are now likely targets of the ex-gay strategy.

THE EX-GAY MOVEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY

The secular wing of the ex-gay movement asserts that gay men and lesbians can be converted to homosexuality through “reparative therapy,” though this premise has been repeatedly negated by reputable organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Pediatric Association.

Ex-gay movement leaders claim that homosexuals can convert to heterosexuality, but by conversion they don’t mean that people won’t experience homosexual feelings—the treatment goal is to teach gay men and lesbians to repress their homosexual identity.

Public Speaking Tips About Homophobia for People of Faith

FROM EQUAL PARTNERS IN FAITH

DON'T respond defensively to homophobic scriptural citations by engaging in a “boxing match” style of dialogue about them.

Example: “God made Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve!”

Inappropriate response: “That’s ridiculous! The creation story is a myth to explain human creation—scientific research shows that the first human was a woman in Africa!”

DO use humor and keep a light touch.

Example: “God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve!”

Appropriate response: “Are you saying that heterosexuals are responsible for the fall of humankind then? I’ll try not to be bitter.” Or, “Gay people don’t have to act on their sexual desires. God can heal them.” “But as I read Scripture, ‘just say no’ didn’t even work in the Garden of Eden!”

DON'T fight with provocative loud-mouths. You risk alienating your audience.

Example: “Gay people should be killed!”

Inappropriate response: “It’s people like you who should be put in jail! You’re a danger to democratic society!”

DO appeal to the moderate observers.

Example: “Gay people should be killed!”

Appropriate response: “I know that the majority of Americans are as frightened by your words as I am. Every poll shows that we support fair, non-violent treatment for all people.”

DON'T let someone else frame the debate or set the parameters of the discussion.

Example: “Our founding fathers intended this to be a Christian nation, and the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality.”

Inappropriate response: “This is not a Christian nation and never has been. Why Thomas Jefferson explicitly said....”

SECTION 4**DO speak positively and stay on track.**

Example: “Our founding fathers intended this to be a Christian nation, and the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality.”

Appropriate response: “The people who founded our great nation bequeathed us with a Constitution and Bill of Rights which clearly promote freedom of religion. Those documents provide the basis for our covenant for living together in peace. That’s why we’re concerned that our community is being divided by anti-gay violence and fear.”

DON’T demonize or insult anyone.

Example: “I just don’t think gay people should have special rights.”

Inappropriate response: “Only a bigot or a homophobe would say that!”

DO differentiate leaders from followers and use language of reconciliation and compassion.

Example: “I just don’t think gay people should have special rights.”

Appropriate response: “I am concerned that Americans, who strongly oppose discrimination, are being misled about exactly what this initiative means. Equality is not a special right.”

DON’T allow homophobes to monopolize religious language.

Example: “God’s word is good enough for me: to be gay is an abomination.”

Inappropriate response: “Regardless of what you read in the Bible, this is not a Christian country and the Bible should not govern our laws.”

DO claim moral high ground; cite Scripture and use your own religious language.

Example: “God’s word is good enough for me: to be gay is an abomination.”

Appropriate response: “Jesus never mentions homosexuality at all, but he does say to love your neighbor as you love yourself, and that’s how I try to live.” Or, “The God that I know is a God of love, who does not see any person as an abomination.”

DON’T allow the debate to be framed as religious people vs. secular gays.

Example: “Religious people are concerned that militant gays will destroy our families.”

Inappropriate response: “We’re here we’re queer, get used to it!”

DO speak openly about your own faith as it informs your commitment to glbt issues.

Example: “Religious people are concerned that militant gays will destroy our families.”

Appropriate response: “In my congregation, we’re concerned about the high incidence of gay bashing in our town. We feel that we must best embody God’s radical commitment to love by teaching our youth that violence and intolerance are neither moral nor acceptable.”

DON’T get sidetracked into discussions of whether people “choose” to be homosexual or what percentage of the population is gay.

Example: “Homosexuals could choose to change if they wanted to.”

Inappropriate response: “You’re either born gay or you’re not! Why, studies show that!”

DO stay focused on your own talking points.

Example: “Homosexuals could choose to change if they wanted to.”

Appropriate response: “Americans deserve equal treatment under the law. People could choose to change religions or marital status, but that would not make discrimination against them acceptable. While we still don’t know much about the cause of sexual orientation, Americans do know that anti-gay discrimination is wrong.”

DON’T globalize the issue or use frightening rhetoric.

Example: “This is the first step towards death camps! First they came for the communists, and I did not speak up because I was not a communist, etc.,” You may believe it, but to the average person you sound like a nut.

DO speak specifically about how homophobia affects your community in tangible, measurable ways.

Example: “What would this initiative mean? It would mean that I could be legally fired from my job because I am gay and I would have no channels for correcting that injustice!”

DON’T try to terrorize people into voting on your side.

Example: “We are in pre-Nazi Germany, and you have the chance to vote against Adolph Hitler!”

DO lift up a vision of unity.

Example: “In hard times like these, we all need each other. Candidates like X divide us from one another and waste our precious resources.”

Mobilizing Religious Leadership For Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Rights

FROM EQUAL PARTNERS IN FAITH

Identify your strongest allies in the religious community:

- If you have a gay newspaper, consider any congregation that advertises your ally.
- Also consider your ally any congregation that hosts Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) meetings, new Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) groups, and gay or lesbian cultural events.
- The Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, Reform and Reconstructionist Jews, and Quakers are especially gay-supportive.
- Leaders of gay-centered congregations such as Unity temple or MCC will know who else is friendly in your area.
- Many mainstream Protestant churches are designated as “More Light,” “Reconciling,” and other flags that indicate they are concerned about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues.
- Most religious groups have gay-focused caucuses—a number of which are listed in the resources section of this packet. For further information call the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force at (202) 332-6483 or Equal Partners in Faith at (202) 296-4672 x 14.

Ask these allies to help you find more allies. Also:

- The Interfaith Alliance supports gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender civil rights, as do their local chapters. National office: (202) 639-6370 or tia@tialliance.org.
- Your local P-FLAG chapter will likely have religious leaders in its membership. National office: (202) 638-4200 or info@pflag.org
- Councils of Churches vary tremendously from state to state, as do local interfaith groups which have organized around AIDS or other justice issues. Ask around to find personal contacts who know about such groups in your area.

Strategize with these allies and with other activists:

- Ask your strongest ally to host an evening or weekend workshop or panel discussion which features clergy allies. Such a gathering could be the beginning of organizing an ongoing group, or it could simply be a one-time event.
- If you have very few identified allies, you may prefer to conduct quiet conversations with a few people to gather names of people who would take stands on less controversial issues: church opposition to hate crimes, affirmation of employment non-discrimination, etc.

- Always begin with your surest ally so that when asked “Who else has signed on?” you only have to say, “You’re the first!” one time.
- It is extremely important to develop a multi-racial religious presence. Look for opportunities to build alliances and do coalition work on issues (i.e. responding to AIDS) of common concern to all racial and ethnic communities.

With people of faith who are unsure, consider:

- The American Friends Service Committee in Ann Arbor, Michigan has developed written resources and a workshop on non-violent dialogue about sexual orientation. Call (734) 761-8283.
- Whenever possible, match activists with clergy they approach, e.g. Jewish activists talk with rabbis; African American activists of faith talk with Black clergy; Presbyterians talk with Presbyterian clergy, etc. P-FLAG members are good messengers. Share how your concerns impact people’s faith and the broader community.
- “Creating a Beloved Community” is a project of Woman Vision Education Program. The organization specializes in religion, gender and sexuality education, and developed the video “All God’s Children,” a video about Black churches and gay and lesbian rights. Contact them at (888) 999-0490 or WomanVsn@aol.com.
- Virtually every mainline Protestant denomination has officially condemned anti-gay discrimination. Share such statements with members of that faith. A compilation of statements is available from Equal Partners in Faith or the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
- Train “messengers” in listening skills. The American Friends Service Committee in Atlanta, Georgia has developed materials about how to reach out to clergy and other people of faith. Call (404) 586-0460.

Provide visible role models of gay supportive religious leaders:

- Offer media training to help allies know how to speak out effectively. Speak with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation to help coordinate training of religious leaders, and also to help you develop a media strategy. Call (202) 884-7346.
- Whenever anti-gay sentiments are characterized as “religious,” immediately respond with letters and phone calls to the editor, reporter, or network.
- Produce cable access programs and invite clergy to speak! That’s what clergy do best!

The Sky’s the Limit!

- Promote forums and worship services in every willing congregation. Mail out materials introducing yourselves, featuring rave reviews by others who have heard you speak, etc.
- Coordinate “hate-free Sunday” or other mechanisms to garner community support for your concerns.

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- Consider visual statements. Unitarian Universalist congregations all over Oregon wrapped themselves in huge red ribbons and declared themselves “hate-free zones” during anti-gay ballot initiatives in 1992 and 1994. The visual effect was stunning.
- Heterosexual allies in congregations can be leaders in voter registration, leafleting, etc.
- Make sure local media are alerted about all of your activities. Cultivate personal relationships with religion reporters.
- Don't be afraid of religious language! Be out and proud as a person of faith! “God calls people of faith to heal a broken world” has a different effect than “We oppose bigotry.” Both are valid messages, but will reach different people.

Media Relations Tips

This section presents tips on developing and executing an effective strategy for attaining non-paid media coverage to complement your efforts in challenging the ex-gay movement.

- **Make communications part of your overall work plan.** The first step is not to write a press release or develop a press list, but to integrate media work into your overall work and strategies.
- **Find ways to sell your story to a wide variety of journalists.** In addition to reporters who cover lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender issues, try to find other reporters who might cover this issue: Congressional reporters, legal reporters, and religion reporters, for example.
- **Find ways to sell your story to a wide variety of media.** There is usually a wide variety of media in every town. There may only be one newspaper, but that paper has many sections, reporters and editors. There may be only three TV stations with news departments, but those departments often put on many news and public affairs shows. Also, consider local weekly papers, local radio shows, church bulletins, employee newsletters at local companies, city magazines, student newspapers, and alternative publications such as the local lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender publications or ethnic and racially diverse publications.
- **Study the media.** Note the name of the reporter who wrote the article on an issue relevant to the ex-gay movement or the columnist who wrote about the ex-gay ads. Listen to a variety of radio stations and talk shows. Think about why a certain story was done. What made it newsworthy? Could a similar news story be done about the ex-gay ministry in your town? Talk about reporters and media with your colleagues. Notice which topics are being covered and think about ways to relate your work and issues to those topics.
- **Know deadlines.** All news media operate on deadlines. Your news won't get out if you miss deadlines.
- **Follow-up.** Celebrate the coverage you got and then go right back to calling those who hadn't done anything. You can also call to praise the reporters who did cover your story. Write letters-to-the-editor about the story to add or emphasize certain points. Then call a local columnist and your contact on the editorial board to urge them to write editorials or columns based on the news story.
- **Be persistent.** If a reporter or editor seemed to express genuine interest in the topic but didn't write a story or editorial, keep calling. Being persistent is the way to make media a powerful tool that works for you—it helps in developing relationships with reporters and editors.
- **Call, call, call.** If you want to get into your major newspaper and TV news shows, simply sending out a press release is an environmental waste. Call a day or two before your press conference, event, or release date asking if they've received your release inviting them personally to come and ask if they have any questions.
- **Stay in touch.** Call even when you don't have a specific story, just keep in contact. Personal contacts are crucial in media work. Call reporters to give them a little feedback about an article they

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wrote, to suggest a story idea, to ask for a little advice (perhaps about whom to contact on the editorial board or whether they know someone at another paper who might be interested in the ex-gay movement.) Invite them to a public meeting, or send them background material (e.g. a copy of *Calculated Compassion: How the Ex-Gay Movement Serves the Right's Attack on Democracy*)

Many reporters, especially for small newspapers, may see a lot of press releases but few reports and articles that provide some depth.

■ **Become a trusted source.** As with any decent relationship, it's got to be a two-way street. Which is why it's so important to understand journalists and their needs. When you call, always ask first if they are on deadline, and if so, ask when to call back. When you talk to them about a story you would like them to do, also ask what they are working on and offer to send them some background information if you have it. Or offer to give them the names of a couple of people or groups that might be good to interview.

■ **Become a credible source.** A reporter needs to think of you and your organization as reliable and credible—never fake an answer or stretch the truth. Reporters understand that most sources have a perspective about a topic, but if they learn you are giving them misleading or grossly incomplete information, your role as a source is history.

■ **Repeat, repeat, repeat.** If a reporter agrees to do a story about the ex-gay movement in your town, keep repeating the key points you want to see in that story.

■ **Don't talk in paragraphs.** On radio and TV, time is the big factor; in newspapers its space. This means you must be brief and to the point.

■ **Plain talk for plain people.** Persuadable people come from all walks of life. Many people don't understand partisan or culturally-based rhetoric. Plain talk is always best.

■ **"No Comment" is the worst comment.** It implies you're hiding something. Instead, use those times when you cannot comment any further as opportunities to restate your most important points.

■ **Talk to the reporter.** You look goofy if you look directly into the camera.

The Press Kit

■ Press Release including who, what, where, when, and why, (the five W's), background on the issue, and pithy quotes.

■ Fact sheets including legal, political impact.

■ Fact sheet on your organization and its purpose/programs.

■ Background sheet on your opposition with documentation.

■ Contact names and numbers of your spokespeople.

■ Press clips from previous newspaper stories, editorials.

- Statements of support from other organizations and/or leaders.
- Mail or hand deliver the press kits to reporters, producers, editors, assignment desks, wire service managers, “daybooks” (media calendars) for local Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), and other media sources.
- *Media Advisory*: If you are doing a press conference or visibility event (e.g., demonstration, candle-light vigil), send a media advisory out at least one week beforehand to invite reporters. This short advisory should inform reporters and assignment editors of the time, place, and purpose of the event (the five W’s).

The Press Conference

- Schedule your press conference for 10 or 11am. Schedule press conferences for early or mid-week (Tuesday/Wednesday). Avoid Monday, Friday or the weekend.
- The room should be large enough to accommodate reporters, microphones and TV cameras, as well as speakers’ table. Set up speakers’ table at front with rows of chairs for reporters. Leave space in back for cameras.

The Speakers Panel

- Remember diversity. Feature speakers that represent the diversity of your group and the community honestly.
- Pick articulate, “telegenic,” media-savvy spokespeople best qualified to speak on the issue.
- Include non-gay authorities from other communities (religious, civil rights, academic, and parents).
- To enhance human interest include a former ex-gay who can speak about going through ex-gay ministries or reparative therapy.
- Ask reporters to hold questions for the end.
- The opening speaker should present news and key messages.
- Identify speakers; include list (“bio sheet”) of speakers and their titles in the press kit.
- Keep statements very brief—five to ten minutes maximum. Give lots of pithy, quotable “sound-bites.” Deliver your key messages over and over.
- Decorate the press conference room with your banner behind the speaker’s table, or a “podium logo” in front of the lectern. Use visual aids such as charts, maps, videoclips, etc., but don’t let them dominate the press conference.

SECTION 6**Additional Media Resources**

The following resources provide further information about how to do media work, including: how to write a press release, op-ed, letter-to-the-editor, how to influence editorials, and how to stage a successful press event.

- ✓ **A Guide to Media for Community Change and Other Non-Profits**, 1997, written and edited by Timothy Saasta and published by the Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington DC 20007, (202) 342-0567.
- ✓ **Making the News, A Guide for NonProfits and Activists**, 1998, by Jason Salzman, published by Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, CO 80301, (800) 386-5656.
- ✓ **Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing**, 1991, by Charlotte Ryan, South End Press, (800) 253-3605.
- ✓ **Media How-To Guidebook**, published by Media Alliance, updated 1998, 814 Mission Street, #205, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 546-6334, www.media-alliance.org/voices.
- ✓ **Fight the Right Action Kit**, 1993, published by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2320 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 332-6483.

Quotes From Ex-Gay Movement Leaders and Supporters

• • •

“Exodus upholds heterosexuality as God’s creative intent for humanity, and subsequently views homosexual expression as outside of God’s will. Exodus cites homosexual tendencies as one of many disorders that beset fallen humanity. Choosing to resolve these tendencies through homosexual behavior, taking on a homosexual identity, and involvement in a homosexual lifestyle is considered destructive, as it distorts God’s intent for the individual and is thus sinful.”

—*From the Exodus International Policy Statement on Homosexuality.*

• • •

“So let me emphasize from the outset that I don’t pretend to know a universal ‘cure’ for homosexuality. Nobody does.”

—*Joe Dallas in Desires in Conflict: Answering the Struggle for Sexual Identity, p. 10.*

• • •

“Homosexuality distorts the natural bond of friendship that would naturally unite persons of the same sex. It works against society’s essential male/female design and family unit.”

—*From the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) Statement of Policy.*

• • •

“Perhaps, like me, you’ve pushed aside a large rock only to discover that underneath the quiet exterior the ground was teeming with ants. By uncovering the rock, you unwittingly disturbed the activity of ‘another world.’ And I can assure you ants do not like to be disturbed! In a spiritual sense, this is what Exodus does. And since Satan likes to do his work under the cover of darkness, without being detected, he reacts when we expose his strategies.”

—*Bob Davies, Exodus International Executive Director in a direct mail appeal, September 1996.*

• • •

“Now, perhaps you’re wondering what abortion and homosexuality have to do with each other. The answer is quite simple; they both have to do with Satan’s attempt to destroy and prevent human life. Abortion accomplishes both the destruction and prevention of life. Homosexuality by nature, prevents human life and brings destruction through a myriad of diseases like AIDS.”

—*Bob Davies, Exodus International Executive Director in a direct mail appeal, September 1996.*

• • •

• • •

“The gay political lobbyist organizations are inundating America with gay propaganda and are destroying the Judeo-Christian fiber of America. P-FOX is here to begin the arduous task of pushing back the untruths of the gay lobbyists with the freedom from homosexuality that the gospel of Jesus Christ promises.”

—*Anthony Falzarano, National Director of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (P-FOX) in a P-FOX brochure.*

• • •

“This [the national ex-gay ad campaign] is the Normandy landing in the larger cultural wars.”

—*Robert Knight, Cultural Director for the Family Research Council in the Detroit Free Press, July 17, 1998.*

• • •

“I will encourage anybody I can to get out of what I think is a destructive lifestyle. I don't believe a healthy society can endorse, subsidize, or encourage it. I am sorry if this disappoints you, but on this, I am immovable.”

—*Gary Bauer, President of the Family Research Council at Harvard University, April 13, 1998.*

• • •

The Two Faces of the Ex-Gay Movement and its Christian Right Supporters

Leaders of the Christian Right speak with two different voices about lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people. When they speak as religious leaders, sometimes they demonize them; other times they claim to offer them love and compassion. When they talk of politics, at times they claim the ex-gay movement is without a public agenda; other times they are unabashedly direct about their political goals of rolling back civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. A few examples:

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

“The ads have a meaningful purpose, but it’s far from being a political one.”

—*Kristin Hansen, Family Research Council spokeswoman, FRC Press Release, October 8, 1998.*

• • •

“I see the ex-gay movement rising as an answer to the calamity that has hit our nation. The ex-gay movement is a way out of this plague that has hit our families. It’s time to let faith take over.”

—*Robert Knight, Cultural Director for the Family Research Council speaking at his workshop (The Homosexualizing of America) at the 2nd annual P-FOX conference, March, 1998.*

PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF EX-GAYS (P-FOX)

“Pray God’s will for your child and trust the Lord.”

—*Anthony Falzarano, national director of P-FOX, in Transformation Press, May 1998*

• • •

“Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays, or P-FOX, is here to begin the arduous task of pushing back the gay agenda.”

—*Anthony Falzarano, national director of P-FOX, in a letter to the editor of The Free Lance-Star, Fredricksburg, VA, April 24, 1998.*

CHRISTIAN COALITION

“If you truly love someone, you’ll tell them the truth. And the truth that God loves them could just be the truth that sets them free.”

—*Ex-gay advertisement in The New York Times, July 13, 1998, supported in part by the Christian Coalition.*

• • •

“Will you help me work to STOP homosexuals from becoming a legally recognized and federally protected minority in America?”

—*Christian Coalition president Don Hodel, Christian Coalition fundraising appeal, September 1997.*

AMERICAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION

“We’re standing for the truth that homosexuals can change.”

—*Ex-gay advertisement in The Washington Post, July 14, 1998 supported in part by the American Family Association.*

• • •

“The homosexual rights movement in America is bringing us to a very significant crossroads. Indifference or neutrality toward the homosexual rights movement will result in society’s destruction by allowing civil order to be redefined and by plummeting ourselves, our children and grandchildren into an age of godlessness. A national ‘Coming Out of Homosexuality Day’ provides us a means whereby to dispel the lies of the homosexual rights crowd who say they are born that way and cannot change.”

—*American Family Association President Rev. Donald E. Wildmon in a press release supporting the 1997 national “Coming Out of Homosexuality Day,” held every year on October 11 to counter National Coming Out Day.*

CORAL RIDGE MINISTRIES

“Toward hope and healing for homosexuals.”

—*Ex-gay advertisement in The New York Times, July 13, 1998 supported in part by Coral Ridge Ministries.*

• • •

“...We have had laws against adultery, homosexuality, pornography, and sexual abuse because people have always believed that these are immoral, degrading, and cheapen the value of life.”

—*D. James Kennedy, Character and Destiny: A Nation in Search of its Soul, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), p. 99.*

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA

“We are in favor of a free and open debate on homosexuality. Just because we disagree doesn’t make us homophobic.”

—*CWA fundraising appeal, August 20, 1998.*

• • •

“Radical homosexuals in America today DO NOT want to be simply left alone. Instead they have a hidden agenda to legally force you and every other American to accept their depraved ‘lifestyle.’ ...Parents across America have told me that they fear homosexuals want to own their kids’ minds, bodies and souls.”

—*Beverly LaHaye, Chairman of Concerned Women for America in a 1991 fundraising appeal.*

The Ex-Gay Movement and the Christian Right: A Shared Agenda

Although claiming to be dedicated to non-political “healing,” ex-gay organizations are strongly supported by political activists connected with the hard right wing of the Republican Party and the Christian Right.

Dr. James Dobson, founder and President of Focus on the Family (FOF), promotes ex-gay movement organizations on his radio program, and FOF publishes articles promoting the ex-gay movement in its publications.

Gary Bauer, Executive Director of the Family Research Council (FRC), has given financial and organizational support to ex-gay organizations and publicizes the ex-gay movement in literature and videos produced by the FRC. Bauer was a featured keynote speaker at the 2nd annual P-FOX conference in March, 1998.

Robert Knight, Cultural Director for the FRC, sits on the board of P-FOX and Transformation Ex-Gay Ministries. Knight was also a featured speaker at the 2nd annual P-FOX conference.

Rev. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, has featured ex-gay movement leaders on his television show, *The 700 Club*, and uses Exodus International and other ex-gay organizations as referrals.

Rev. Donald Wildmon, President of the American Family Association (AFA), has said that “the homosexuals rights movement will result in society’s destruction by allowing civil order to be redefined” and claims that homosexuals can change.

Beverly LaHaye, Chairman (sic) of Concerned Women for America (CWA), promotes ex-gay organizations in CWA publications.

Bill McCartney, founder and President of Promise Keepers (PK), the mass-based Christian men’s movement, features Exodus International at PK conferences. McCartney was a major proponent of Colorado’s Amendment 2, a proposed amendment to the Colorado State Constitution that would deny legal recourse to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals when they suffer discrimination in employment and housing. The Amendment was later declared unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court. McCartney has publicly referred to homosexuals as “an abomination.”

Joseph Nicolosi, founder and President of NARTH (National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality), was called as an expert state witness, defending Colorado’s Amendment 2.

Peter LaBarbera, editor of the *Lambda Report*, published by Americans for Truth about Homosexuality, “a non-partisan group opposed to the organized homosexual lobby,” promotes ex-gay movement organizations regularly in the *Lambda Report* and has spoken at ex-gay conferences.

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Bill Bright, who leads the Campus Crusade for Christ, launched an ad campaign on college campuses across the country in 1995 that focused on ex-gays.

D. James Kennedy's Center for Reclaiming America features ex-gay organizations at its annual conference and was the major organizing force behind the ex-gay ad campaign.

Michael Johnston, President of Kerusso Ministries, which sponsors the annual "National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day," is also on the steering committee for the National Campaign to Protect Marriage.

John Paulk, President of the Board of Directors of Exodus International, is a legislative and cultural affairs analyst with Focus on the Family where he specializes in homosexual issues. Paulk and his department at FOF have launched "Homosexuality & Youth" seminars across the country.

The Theology of Christian Ex-Gay Ministries

THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EX-GAY MINISTRIES IS FUNDAMENTALIST

- It relies on a method of Biblical interpretation in which some verses are arbitrarily selected for literal interpretation while others are ignored or explained away.
- It ignores issues of historical and cultural context when interpreting Scripture.
- It makes absolute its own interpretation of Scripture, identifying its opinions with the mind of God.

THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EX-GAY MINISTRIES IS EXCLUSIVIST

- Only “true” Christians are recipients of God’s revelation and grace; everyone else is bound for hell.
- Only fundamentalist and evangelical Christians are “true” Christians.
- People who call themselves Christian but disagree politically are not “true” Christians.
- Only heterosexuals are acceptable in the eyes of God; homosexuals are considered an “abomination”.

THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EX-GAY MINISTRIES IS SEXIST

- The ex-gay movement’s theology is based on a hierarchical structure in which God is a heterosexual male, and heterosexual men, created in the image of God, are superior to women. By establishing this superiority, ex-gay movement leaders deny the spiritual equality of men and women.
- Various ex-gay movement organizations firmly establish men as the head of the household and relegate women to a role of submission. A key part of the “conversion” process for gay men and lesbians is to orient them to this hierarchical family structure.
- The theology of Christian ex-gay ministries only recognizes families that are male-led heterosexual families. All other families are viewed as deficient.

CHRISTIAN EX-GAY MINISTRIES ALSO...

- Establish relationships of “accountability” outside of and over those established within existing communities of faith.
- Mandate that members of ex-gay ministries be accountable and responsible to other members within the ministry for their everyday actions.

Fact Sheets

The following information on ex-gay movement organizations was compiled from information generated by the organizations themselves. Additional financial information was collected from the Internal Revenue Service.

EXODUS INTERNATIONAL

Description

A Christ-centered international referral network of ex-gay ministries that proclaims that “freedom from homosexuality is possible through the power of Jesus Christ.”

Organization

Founded in 1976

Executive Director, Bob Davies

North American Board of Directors: Mary Heathman, Chair; John Paulk, Vice-chair; Bud Searcy, Secretary/Treasurer; Jeff Johnston; Bob Davies; Bob Ragan; and Anita Worthen.

Headquartered in Seattle, Washington

Funding

1996 total revenue: \$401,745

Private donations from individuals, grants from Christian foundations, fees from its national training conference, voluntary donations from Exodus agencies, sale of resource materials, and annual \$100 fees from member ministries.

Member Ministries

Exodus International North America: more than 95 member ministries in 35 states; 3 member ministries in Canada in 3 different provinces.

Exodus South Pacific (founded in 1987): 7 ministries in Australia; 4 ministries in New Zealand; 1 ministry in the Philippines; 1 ministry in Japan; 1 ministry in Singapore.

Exodus International Europe (founded in 1982): 10 ministries in 7 different countries.

Exodus International Latin America (founded in 1994): about a dozen ministries are forming the newest coalition of Exodus' international outreach.

Conferences

Exodus holds an annual national conference.

Exodus sponsors shorter regional retreats each year, primarily for members' leadership staff.

Resource Materials

Exodus publishes a variety of materials on ex-gay ministry, including articles, testimonies, manuals for *Starting a Ministry*, *Telephone Support*, and *Correspondence Support*; resource lists (annotated bibliographies of articles, audiotapes, books, testimonies, and videotapes on various subjects), and a selection of conference audiotapes.

Exodus publishes *The Exodus Standard*, a 16-page quarterly newsletter that features teaching, opinion, resources, news and media outreach stories; and *The Exodus Update*, a 4-page monthly publication featuring news, testimonies, and media reports, primarily from North American member ministries.

Sources: *Exodus International website: <http://exodus.base.org>; Form 990, 1996, Internal Revenue Service*

HOMOSEXUALS ANONYMOUS (HA)

Description

A Christian fellowship based on the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step model. HA believes “that homosexual activity is not in harmony with the will of God and that the universal creation norm is heterosexuality.”

Organization

Founded in 1980

Headquartered in Reading, PA

Board of Directors, 1997: Paul Kurtz, Chairman; Dr. David J. Watkins, Vice Chairman; John R. Janney, Secretary and Coordinator; Lois Shultz, Treasurer; Nancy Berry; Alex Cameron; Howard Donnell; Rev. Randall Grossman; Dr. Rod Hooper; Ivan Lantz; Rev. Pamela Johnson; and Rev. Linford Weber.

Funding

1997 total revenue: \$71,926

1996 total revenue: \$60, 573

HA Chapters

46 chapters in the US, 1 chapter in Canada, 3 chapters in Australia.

Conferences

HA holds an annual conference in addition to other meetings and training seminars.

HA holds recovery seminars, “a road map of the journey of the healing of homosexuality.”

HA holds a training seminar designed to prepare people “to take an active role in helping others find freedom from homosexuality through the Christ-centered ministry of HA fellowship.”

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Holds a Family and Friends Seminar for the “parent, brother or sister, spouse, friend, pastor or counselor who wants to learn how they can help.”

Sources: Homosexuals Anonymous website: <http://members.aol.com/Hawebpage>; Form 990-EZ, 1996, Internal Revenue Service

PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF EX-GAYS (P-FOX)**Description**

A Christ-centered network of “parents, friends and families of loved ones struggling with homosexuality. In order to restore families to wholeness, we support, educate and offer hope for recovery through sound biblical counsel. We also provide strategies on how to actively love the struggler and still disagree with his lifestyle choice.”

Organization

Founded in 1996

Executive Director, Anthony Falzarano

Headquartered in Washington, DC

Funding

Receives funding through individual donations, foundation grants and chapter membership fees of \$100 per year.

In 1998 P-FOX received a \$75,000 matching grant from the Family Research Council.

Chapters

P-FOX has chapters in more than 23 US cities.

Conferences

Holds an annual training conference.

Resource Materials

Extensive manual on starting a new chapter.

Referrals to Exodus International network of ex-gay ministries.

Speaker's Bureau.

Website with testimonials and press releases (www.pfox.org).

Affiliated with St. Augustine's Sexual Healing Bookstore, the first ex-gay bookstore in the US. St. Augustine's opened in February, 1998, is located in Washington, DC, and carries more than 100 titles.

Source: P-FOX website: www.pfox.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE RESEARCH AND THERAPY OF HOMOSEXUALITY (NARTH)

Description

A secular organization that promotes “reparative therapy” and psychological “treatment” of homosexuality. NARTH was founded in response to the American Psychiatric Association’s statement proclaiming that homosexuality is not a mental disorder.

Organization

Founded in 1992

Headquartered in Encino, CA

Executive Director, Joseph Nicolosi, PhD.

NARTH officers: President, Charles W. Socarides, M.D.; Vice President, Benjamin Kaufman, M.D.; Secretary/Treasurer, Joseph Nicolosi, PhD.; Assistant Vice President, C. Downing Tate, M.D.; Assistant Treasurer, Harold Voth, M.D.; Assistant Secretary, Elaine Siegal, PhD.

Funding

Individual donations, membership fees, and some foundation grants.

1996 total revenue: \$62,466

Members

Claims 800 members across the US, divided into three categories:

Members include psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, certified social workers, and those who have completed master’s degree-level training in sexuality or marriage and family life programs.

Associate Members include educators, public health officials, religious leaders, social scientists and historians as well as writers in the field of sexuality and family health.

Friends of NARTH include all other individuals.

Conferences

Holds an annual conference.

Resource Materials

Publishes a variety of materials including the *NARTH Bulletin*, published three times a year; *School Sex-Education Guidelines*, a 16-page report; *Biological Research on Homosexuality*, a 4-page leaflet; *The Collected Papers*, a compilation from the 1994, 1995, 1996 NARTH conferences; *Understanding Homosexuality*, a 122-page spiral bound booklet written by NARTH members; and a website (www.narth.com).

Sources: NARTH website: www.narth.com; Form 990-EZ, 1996, Internal Revenue Service

Affirming Organizations with Resources

■ BiNetUSA

P.O. Box 7327, Langley Park, MD 20787

Website: www.binetusa.org

Collects and distributes information regarding bisexuality in order to facilitate the development of bisexual community and visibility. Works for the liberation of bisexuals and all oppressed peoples as well as for the eradication of all forms of oppression inside and outside the Bisexual community.

■ Bisexual Resource Center

P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140, (617) 424-9595

E-mail: brc@biresource.org, Website: www.biresource.org

Researches and educates the general public and other interested organizations about bisexuality; provides a public forum through technical assistance, seminars, conferences, informational programs and publications for the discussion of bisexuality; and provides a support network for individual members of the general public and interested organizations to discuss and obtain information about bisexuality.

■ COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere)

3543 18th Street, #17, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 861-5437

E-mail: colage@colage.org, Website: www.colage.org

Support and advocacy organization for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents. Interested in creating a community for kids with gay parents around the globe as well as dismantling legal and social barriers confronting COLAGE members, from harassment in schools, to custody battles, to AIDS in the family. Created and run by youth with gay parents.

■ Ex.ExGay

Website: members.aol.com/exexgay/index.html

An online resource about the ex-gay movement. Includes information and links to ex-gay movement organizations including Exodus International, Desert Stream Ministries and Homosexuals Anonymous. Also includes personal stories of former ex-gays who have come forward to denounce the ex-gay movement as a dangerous fraud.

■ Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

W. 27th Street, Suite 804, New York, NY 10001, (212) 727-0135

E-mail: glsen@glsen.org, Website: www.glsen.org

Activist organization dedicated to the safety and well-being of every school community, regardless of sexual orientation. GLSEN works to end homophobia in public schools through changes in policy and thinking. Publishes quarterly newsletter, *Blackboard*.

■ GenderPAC

733 15th St., NW, 7th Flr, Washington, DC 20005, Website: www.Gpac.org

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, or GenderPAC, is a not-for-profit organization, composed of individuals and groups, dedicated to a broad-based, inclusive national movement for “gender, affectional, and racial equality.”

■ Human Rights Campaign

1101 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 628-4160 fax: (202) 347-5323

E-mail: hrc@hrc.org, Website: www.hrc.org

National conservative-leaning gay and lesbian political organization. HRC’s PAC makes financial contributions to Republican, Democratic and independent candidates for federal office. Resources on the ex-gay movement include a report, *Mission Impossible: Why Reparative Therapy and Ex-Gay Ministries Fail*.

■ Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies

P.O. Box 2603, Amherst, MA 01004, (413) 577-0145 fax: (413) 545-2921

Uses scholarly research, analysis and education to inform public policy debates and to combat homophobia in order to promote an equal and integrated society for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Research topics include “Reparative Therapy and Public Policy.”

■ National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum

1612 K Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 483-6786 fax: (202) 433-4970

Website: www.nblglf.org

The only national organization dedicated to African-American gays and lesbians. Established in 1988, the Forum works to empower black lesbians and gays by developing their leadership skills, increasing their visibility, and building bridges between various communities.

■ National Center for Lesbian Rights

870 Market Street, Suite 570, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 392-6257

A lesbian, feminist, multicultural, legal resource center that works to change discriminatory laws and create new laws benefiting lesbians in the areas of civil rights, employment, housing, immigration, partner benefits, child custody, donor insemination, adoption, foster parenting, lesbian health, and youth rights.

■ National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

2320 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 332-6483 fax: (202) 332 0207

TTY: (202) 332-6219

E-mail: [nglhf@nglhf.org](mailto:ngltf@nglhf.org), Website: www.nglhf.org

A progressive national gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organization. Along with advocacy at the national level, the Task Force supports state and local activists through its field program. The

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Task Force publishes a number of organizing resources for activists and holds Creating Change, an national annual conference for glbt activists.

■ National Youth Advocacy Coalition

1711 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 206, Washington, DC, 20009,
(202) 319-7596 fax: (202) 319-7365
E-mail: nyac@nyacyouth.org

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) is the only national organization that focuses solely on improving the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth through advocacy education and information. NYAC advocates with and for glbt youth through the collaboration of a broad spectrum of community-based and national organizations. Through this partnership, NYAC seeks to end discrimination against glbt youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well-being.

■ PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

1011 14th Street, NW, Suite 1030, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 638-4200
E-mail: info@pflag.org, Website: www.pflag.org

Promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and secure civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of diversity.

■ Political Research Associates

120 Beacon Street, Suite 202, Somerville, MA 02143, (617) 661-9313 fax: (617) 661-0059
E-mail: publiceye@igc.apc.org, Website: www.publiceye.org

Research center that monitors anti-democratic and authoritarian movements and trends. Maintains a library of primary and secondary materials on the entire scope of the US political Right. Publishes a quarterly, *The Public Eye*. Provides informational support to progressive activists.

■ Project Tocsin

6515 Capital Circle, Sacramento, CA 95828, (916) 381-3115

Progressive organization that tracks the political activities of the Religious Right. Publishes a variety of materials on Christian dominionism and reconstructionism, as well as a chart explaining linkages between different individuals and organizations that are part of the Religious Right in California. Also tracks funding of right-wing political candidates.

■ Triangle Foundation

19641 W. Seven Mile Road, Detroit, MI 48219-2721, (313) 537-3323
E-mail: trijeffm@aol.com, Website: www.tri.org

Seeks to promote equality and secure freedom from violence, intimidation and discrimination for gays and lesbians throughout Michigan. Has researched NARTH, Joseph Nicolosi and reparative therapy. Has other national resources on the ex-gay movement.

Faith-Based Resources

■ Al-Fatiha (GLBT Muslims and their friends)

Contact: Faisal Alam, Director

P.O. Box 300, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123, (617) 685-4175

E-mail: gaymuslims@yahoo.com

An international organization dedicated to the empowerment of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) Muslims, including those questioning their sexual orientation/gender identity, and their friends.

Our goal is to support GLBT Muslims through their internal and external struggles by sharing individual and institutional resources.

■ American Friends Service Committee

Contact: Jane R. Motz, Associate Director

1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 241-7123 fax: (215) 241-7119

E-mail: jmotz@afsc.org

The AFSC is a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Its program work on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues and rights includes pioneering work with lgbt and questioning youth, helping to empower them and end their isolation. In programs with religious groups at the community level, we seek to help them to understand and support lgbt people among their members and in their communities. AFSC's publication *Bridges of Respect* broke new ground in addressing issues of lesbian and gay youth and led to creation of the Bridges Project, now part of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition in Washington, DC.

■ Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns

Contact: Jim Sauder, Executive Director

P.O. Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406-0300, (612) 722-6906, fax: (612) 343-2061

E-mail: BMCouncil@aol.com, Website: www.webcom.com/bmc/

The Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC) was founded in October 1976 to provide support for Brethren and Mennonite gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, and their parents, spouses, relatives, and friends; to foster dialogue between gay and non-gay people in the churches; and to provide accurate information about homosexuality from the social sciences, biblical studies, and theology. BMC's Supportive Congregations Network encourages Brethren and Mennonite congregations to publicly declare their welcome to lesbian, gay and bisexual members. Publishes *Dialogue* and *Supportive Congregations Network Newsletter*. Both publications appear three times a year and are free.

■ The Center for Progressive Christianity (TCPC)

Contact: James R. Adams, President

99 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 441-0928 fax: (617) 441-6201

E-mail: jadams@tcpc.org, Website: www.tcpc.org

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TCPC is a nonprofit corporation that encourages the presentation of the Christian message to those who have found organized religion to be ineffectual, irrelevant, or repressive. TCPC supports congregations that embrace the search for meaning—rather than a particular brand of certainty. Through conferences, a newsletter, a website (www.tpc.org) and correspondence, TCPC is building a network of people who have an interest in recovering our Christian symbols and in redefining what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Publishes four *President's Reports* each year.

■ Center for New Community

Contact: Rev. David Ostendorf

6429 W. North Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302, (708) 848-0319 fax: (708) 848-0327

E-mail: dlo@newcomm.org

A faith-based rural-urban initiative with a mission to revitalize congregations and communities for genuine social, economic and political democracy. The Center's "Building Democracy" initiative is aimed at countering racism, bigotry and religious extremism, and is carried out through a variety of education, training and organizing initiatives.

■ Dignity

Contact: Charles L. Cox, Executive Director

1500 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 11, Washington DC 20005, (202) 861-0017, (800) 877-8797

E-mail: dignity@aol.com, Website: www.dignityusa.org

The nation's largest and oldest organization for Catholic lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender persons and their family and friends. Dignity has more than 80 chapters across the US.

■ Equal Partners in Faith

Contacts: Rev. Meg Riley, Steering Committee Co-Chair; Laura Montgomery Rutt, National Organizer
2026 P Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 296-4672

E-mail: epf1998@aol.com, Website: www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/4497/EqualPartners.html

A multi-racial, multi-faith national network of religious leaders and people of faith committed to equality and diversity. EPF helps people of faith understand and challenge the ways Religious Right leaders manipulate religion to promote an exclusive and divisive political agenda. EPF focuses currently on why and how these leaders build support for Promise Keepers, how they organize in communities of color, and how they campaign against the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. On these and related issues, EPF provides a national voice for concerned people of faith and supports local organizing, public education, and media outreach efforts by faith-based groups.

■ The Evangelical Anglican Church in America

Contact: Rt. Rev. Craig Bettendorf, Presiding Bishop

2401 Artesia Blvd., Suite 106-213, Redondo Beach, CA 90278, (310) 798-0104 fax: (973) 746-3147

E-mail: eacaobis1@aol.com

A Christian community of believers within the Anglican tradition with a principal ministry in, of, by, and for the lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gay community. Publishes *Kaleidoscope*, a quarterly newsletter.

■ Evangelicals Concerned

Contact: Dr. Ralph Blair, President

311 East 72nd Street, New York, NY 10021, (212) 517-3171, E-mail: ecincnyc@aol.com

An organization of evangelical Christians working to improve the understanding of homosexuality among evangelicals and to help evangelical gay men and lesbians integrate their faith and sexuality. Publishes two quarterlies, *Record* and *Review*.

■ Gay-Muslims Listserv

An internet, email-based, discussion group for GLBT Muslims and their friends. The purpose is to bring together GLBT Muslims in a forum where they can communicate issues of common concern, share individual experiences, and also gain resources to reconcile their sexuality/gender identity with the religion of Islam. To subscribe send an email to gaymuslims@yahoo.com

■ Integrity

Contact: Rev. Michael Hopkins, President

P.O. Box 5255, New York, NY 10185-5255, fax: (800) 238-1592

Integrity is an organization for and of lesbians and gay Episcopalians and their friends. Integrity's mission is to be the witness of the lesbian and gay community in the Episcopal Church and of the Episcopal church in the lesbian and gay community. We engage in a ministry of worship, education, advocacy, fellowship and service. Publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Voice of Integrity*.

■ Interfaith Alliance

Contact: Greg Lebel, Director of Public Policies

1012 14th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 639-6370 fax: (202) 639-6375

Website: www.tialliance.org

As a non-partisan organization, The Interfaith Alliance offers Americans a mainstream, faith-based agenda committed to the positive role of religion as a healing and constructive force in public life. Resources include the Interfaith Internet Community Action Network of over 5,000 e-mail activists, and a quartetly newsletter, *The Light*.

■ Interfaith Working Group

Contact: Chris Purdom, Co-coordinator

P.O. Box 11706, Philadelphia, PA 19101, (215) 235-3050

E-mail: iwg@libertynet.org, Website: www.libertynet.org/~iwg/

Informs the public of the diversity of religious opinions on social issues. Supported by religious organizations, congregations and clergy who support gay rights, reproductive freedom, and the separation of church and state.

■ Interweave: Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Concerns

Contact: Susan Gore, Co-Chair

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167 Milk Street, #406, Boston, MA 02109, (214) 348-4673

E-mail: interweave-B@uua.org, Website: <http://qrd.tcp.com/qrd/www/orgs/uua/uu-interweave.html>

Interweave is a membership organization affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is dedicated to the spiritual, political, and social well-being of Unitarian Universalists who are confronting oppression as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender persons, and their heterosexual allies; and facilitates celebration of like cultures and lives of its members. Publishes *Interweave World*, a quarterly newsletter.

■ Lutherans Concerned/North America

Contact: Bob Gibeling, Program Executive

2466 Sharon Dale Drive, Atlanta, GA 30305, (404) 266-4615, fax: (404) 266-9615

Website: www.lcna.org

Lutherans Concerned/North America is a 24-year-old independent ministry organization affirming God's love to people of all sexual orientations. Its vision is to promote justice by creating an inclusive Lutheran church and to help Christian people reconcile their spirituality and sexuality in an uplifting way. Lutherans Concerned has chapters across the US and Canada and sponsors the Reconciling in Christ program for welcoming Lutheran congregations. Publishes *Concord*, a quarterly newsletter.

■ More Light Presbyterians

(formerly Presbyterians for Lesbian & Gay Concerns and More Light Churches Network)

Contacts: Donna Michelle Riley, Communications Secretary; James D. Anderson, Editor,

More Light Update

P.O. Box 38, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0038, (732) 249-1016, fax: (732) 932-6916

E-mail: jda@mariner.rutgers.edu or DMRiley@princeton.edu, Website: www.mlp.org

Following the risen Christ, and seeking to make the Church a true community of hospitality, the mission of More Light Presbyterians, Inc., (MLP) is to work for the full participation of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Program includes chapters, conferences, education, advocacy, and support of polity/constitutional equity and justice through ecclesiastical judicial cases. Publishes a bimonthly newsletter, *More Light Update*. Sponsors E-mail Discussion List.

■ New Ways Ministry

Contact: Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director

4012 29th Street, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712, (301) 277-5674 fax: (301) 864-6948

E-mail: newways@juno.com

New Ways Ministry provides a gay-positive ministry of advocacy and justice for lesbian and gay Catholics and reconciliation within the larger Christian and civil communities. Through research, publication, and education about homosexuality, it fosters dialogue, identifies and combats personal and structural homophobia, works for changes in attitudes, and promotes the acceptance of gay and lesbian people as full and equal members of church and society. Publishes *Bondings*, a quarterly newsletter and *Womanjourney Weavings*, a quarterly newsletter by, for, and about lesbian nuns.

■ Reconciling Congregation Program (RCP)

Contact: Mark Bowman, Executive Director

3801 N. Keeler Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641, (773) 736-5526 fax: (773) 736-5475

Website: www.rcp.org

A national network of United Methodist churches, ministries, and individuals that welcome the full participation of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. The program provides a variety of resources to support ministries with lesbian, gay and bisexual persons and their families. The RCP is part of a much broader ecumenical “welcoming church” movement which includes over 800 churches in Baptist, Brethren/Mennonite, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ and United Methodist traditions. Publishes *Open Hands*, a quarterly magazine exploring ministries with sexual minorities and *Katalyst*, a bimonthly newsletter sent free to all Reconciling United Methodists.

■ Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Contact: Rabbi Marc Israel, Director of Congregational Relations

2027 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 387-2800 fax: (202) 667-9070

E-mail: rac@uahc.org

The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the American Jewish community and serving as its advocate in the nation’s capital. It is the Washington office of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) representing 1.5 million Reform Jews and 1,800 Reform Rabbis in more than 875 congregations throughout North America. Publishes *Chai Impact Action Alerts* and *Kulanu: A Program for Congregations Implementing Gay & Lesbian Inclusion*.

■ Seventh Day Adventist Kinship International

P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607, (949) 248-1299

E-mail: SDAKinship@aol.com

Support group for lesbians and gays of a Seventh Day Adventist background. Friends and supporters are also welcome. Publishes *The Connection*, a newsletter 7 times a year.

■ Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Contact: Barb Greve

Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian & Transgender Concerns

25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 742-2100 ext. 470 fax: (617) 742-0321

E-mail: obgltc@uua.org Website: www.uua.org

Works to foster acceptance, inclusion, understanding, and equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons—both within the UUA and in society at large. Resources include educational, ceremonial, and program materials; consultation; workshop leadership; advocacy; information and referral; and conflict resolution. In response to the aggressive homophobic campaigns of the Religious Right, OBGLTC also works actively with congregations in cities or states that are targeted for homophobic legislation. Serves individuals, congregations, the UU Association, and society by providing referrals, resources, and consultations to those requiring support.

SECTION 13**■ United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Division of the American Missionary Association**

Office for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Concerns

Contact: Rev. Bill Johnson

700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115, (216) 736-3262 fax: (216) 736-3263

Provides consultation with individuals and churches, pastoral care referrals and crisis intervention; Open and Affirming video resources and other glbt-related educational materials; UCC social policy regarding glbt concerns; oversees all-church dialogue on equal marital rights for same gender couples; coordinates UCC justice advocacy network on Equal Rights for Gays and Lesbians.

■ United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns

Contact: Rev. Mitzi N. Eilts, national coordinator

800 Village Walk, #230, Guilford, CT 06437, (800) 653-0799, (203) 789-6355 fax: (203) 789-6356

E-mail: mnecoalition@snet.net, Website: www.coalition.simplenet.com

The coalition provides support and sanctuary for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their family and friends. Advocates for the full inclusion in church and society of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Brings Christ's affirming message of love and justice for all people. Includes coordination of the Open and Affirming Program (ONA) and Youth/Young Adult Program. Publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Waves*.

■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

8704 Santa Monica Blvd., 2nd Floor, West Hollywood, CA 90069 (310) 360-8640 fax: (310) 360-8680

E-mail: info@ufmcc.org Website: www.ufmcc.com

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is a worldwide fellowship of Christian congregations serving all people, with a special outreach to the world's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. UFMCC has 300 congregations in 16 countries. Many printed, audio-visual and on-line resources available.

■ World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Jewish Organizations

P.O. Box 23379, Washington, DC 20026-3379, E-mail: info@wcgljo.org

Website: www.wcgljo.org/wcgljo

The World Congress is made up of 65 GLB synagogues, student groups, and other organizations in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Western Europe, Hungary, Israel, and Australia. It works to combat homophobia and sexism in the Jewish community, and anti-Semitism at large.

Selected References on the Ex-Gay Movement

Secondary Sources (about the ex-gay movement)

ARTICLES

Chris Bull, "Peddling the Cure," *The Advocate*, November 24, 1998. Bull examines the Christian Right's efforts to roll back lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights protections through its use of the ex-gay movement. This issue of *The Advocate* also contains other articles about the ex-gay movement.

Margaret Carlson, "Praying Away the Gay," *Time* magazine, July 27, 1998, Vol. 152 No. 4. A critical look at the national ad campaign waged by ex-gay and Christian Right organizations. Carlson questions whether leaders in ex-gay organizations who claim to be ex-gay were ever really gay.

Justin Chin, "Saved: Our Reporter Survives the Ex-Gay Ministries," *The Progressive*, December, 1995. Chin goes undercover and gives a critical perspective on Exodus International.

Jack Drescher, MD, "I'm Your Handyman: A History of Reparative Therapies," *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol. 36 (1) 1998. Drescher, a Supervisor of Psychotherapy, Faculty Member and Consulting Psychiatrist at the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Institute offers a critical perspective of "reparative therapy" by providing an historical analysis.

Surina Khan, "Homosexual Healing," *Boston Magazine*, July, 1998. An overview of the ex-gay movement and its ties to the Christian Right. Includes responses from ex-ex gays.

Surina Khan, "Inside Exodus: A Report from the Anti-Gay Ministry's 21st National Conference," *Gay Community News*, Fall 1996. Looks specifically at Exodus International as a recruitment arm of the Christian Right.

Kim I. Mills, "Mission Impossible: Why Reparative Therapy and Ex-Gay Ministries Fail," Human Rights Campaign, August, 1998. A general informational report issued by HRC to counter the Christian Right ex-gay ad campaign.

Bruce Mirken, "Swallowed Up By the Closet: The Strange World of the 'Ex-Gay' Movement," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, May 28, 1997. Mirken examines the growth of the ex-gay movement.

Frank Rich, "Lott's Lesbian Ally," *The New York Times*, July 22, 1998. Rich critiques the 1998 national ad campaign waged by ex-gay and Christian Right organizations and points out that the misinformation being promoted by the Right is an effort to divide Americans for political advantage.

Rev. Meg Riley, "A Kinder, Gentler Homophobia? The Right's War on Gays Continues," *Conscience: A Newsletter of Catholic Prochoice Opinion*, Autumn 1998. Riley gives a chronology of the Right's recent attacks on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights. She calls people of faith to speak out and affirm the dignity inherent in all people, regardless of sexual orientation.

Harriet Schwartz, "The Ex-Files," *The Advocate*, June 10, 1997. Schwartz explores the growth of P-FOX.

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Kyle Young, "The Ex-Files: A Former Follower Sheds Some Light on Ex-Gay Ministries," *OutSmart Magazine*, January, 1997. Young looks specifically at former ex-gays who say that ex-gay ministries are a dangerous fraud.

BOOKS

Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right*, (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1998). Includes an excellent chapter on the Christian Right's anti-gay agenda and its use of ex-gay ministries to promote a theocratic agenda.

Martin Duberman, *Cures: A Gay Man's Odyssey*, (New York, NY: Dutton, 1991). A memoir chronicling twenty years of Duberman's many attempted "cures" of his homosexuality.

Daniel Helminiak, Ph.D., *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality: Recent Findings by Top Scholars Offer a Radical New View*, (San Francisco, CA: Alamo Square Press, 1994). Helminiak explains the findings of scholars that show those who perceive Bible passages as condemning homosexuality are being misled by faulty translation and poor interpretation.

John J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993, fourth edition). McNeill uses the Church's own teachings to refute its views on homosexuality.

Rev. Sylvia Pennington, *Ex-Gays? There Are None! What it Means to be a New Creature in Christ*, (Hawthorne, CA: Lambda Christian Fellowship, 1989). This anthology explores the ex-gay movement from the critical perspective of clergy and people involved with ex-gay ministries.

Mel White, *Stranger at the Gate: To be Gay and Christian in America*, (New York, NY: Plume, 1994). White, a former speech writer for Oliver North and former ghostwriter for Jerry Falwell, details 25 years of being counseled, exorcised, electric-shocked and nearly driven to suicide because his church said that homosexuality was wrong.

VIDEOS

"One Nation Under God." This video explores the lives of Gary Cooper and Michael Busee, the two men who co-founded Exodus International and then left the ex-gay ministry after falling in love with each other. Also provides a good historical context for the ex-gay movement. Features interviews with gay and lesbian historians including Martin Duberman and Joan Nestle. Available at many local gay and lesbian bookstores.

Primary Sources (by the ex-gay movement)

ARTICLES

Tom Bethell, "A Conference on Gayness," *The American Spectator*, August, 1997. This article praises ex-gay movement leaders and reports on the American Public Philosophy Institute's three-day conference on homosexuality held at Georgetown University in 1997.

J. Lee Grady, "Dirty Little Secrets," *New Man* magazine, October, 1997. Argues that men who were sexually abused as children turn to homosexuality but can "heal" themselves and return to heterosexuality.

Valerie G. Lowe, "Homosexuality and the Black Church: Let's Stop Hiding From the Pain," *Charisma*, October, 1998. Lowe writes about the ex-gay movement's outreach into African American churches.

Elizabeth Moberly, "Homosexuality and Truth," *First Things*, March, 1997. Moberly, a longtime leader in the ex-gay movement, reviews seven books authored by her colleagues and offers her analysis of why gay men and lesbians should seek out heterosexuality.

Cal Thomas, "Psychologists Ignore Help for Gays," *The Conservative Chronicle*, August 27, 1997. Anti-gay syndicated columnist Cal Thomas rails against the American Psychological Association resolution critical of "reparative therapy."

Amy Tracy, "A Relentless Pursuit," *Focus on the Family Magazine*, March, 1998. Tracy, a former out lesbian, feminist and press secretary for the National Organization for Women, details her conversion to heterosexuality through submission to Christ.

BOOKS

Andrew Comiskey, *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness: How Jesus Heals the Homosexual*, (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1989). Comiskey, a founder of Desert Stream Ministry which originated the Living Waters Sexual Redemption in Christ Program, offers a Biblical perspective for "overcoming" homosexuality.

Joe Dallas, *A Strong Delusion: Confronting the "Gay Christian" Movement*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996). A former member of Metropolitan Community Church, Dallas articulates rebuttals to gay affirming theology.

Bob Davies & Lori Rentzel, *Coming Out of Homosexuality: New Freedom for Men & Women*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Co-authored by Exodus International Executive Director Bob Davies, this book is written for people questioning their sexual identity in an effort to persuade them that they can "convert" to heterosexuality.

David Kyle Foster, *Sexual Healing: God's Plan for the Sanctification of Broken Lives*, (Hermitage, TN: Mastering Life Ministries, 1997). A Biblical self-help book for overcoming homosexuality, complete with study guides and exercises on how to avoid masturbation and pornography.

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Michael Mazzalongo (Ed.), *Gay Rights or Wrongs: A Christian Guide to Homosexual Issues and Ministry*, (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 1995). An anthology including psychologists, ministers, and academics writing about “how to deal with homosexuality.”

Joseph Nicolosi, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997). Nicolosi, one of the founders of the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, argues that gay men can undergo psychological therapy to change their sexual orientation.

John Paulk with Tony Marco, *Not Afraid to Change: The Remarkable Story of How One Man Overcame Homosexuality*, (Mukilteo, WA: Winepress Publishing, 1998). John Paulk’s story. Paulk, a former drag queen, is a homosexuality and gender analyst at Focus on the Family and is on the Board of Directors of Exodus International.

Charles W. Socarides, M.D. *Homosexuality: A Freedom Too Far* (Phoenix, AZ: Adam Margrave Books, 1995). In question and answer style, Socarides opines on why “homosexuality is not a normal variation.”

Jeffrey Satinover, M.D., *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996). Satinover looks at psychological and medical “treatment” for homosexuals to change their sexual orientation.

John F. Harvey, OSFS, *The Truth About Homosexuality: The Cry of the Faithful*, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996). Harvey is a founder of the Catholic ex-gay ministry, Courage. In this book he attempts to counter justification for a gay spirituality through a Catholic response to homosexuality.

Source Materials

Secondary Source Materials

(Materials written about the ex-gay movement)



A Kinder, Gentler Homophobia?

By MEG A. RILEY

The Right's War on Gays Continues

The political and religious right in the United States, facing possible low-voter turnout in this fall's elections, has revived one of its best vote-getters and money-makers: homophobia. While attacks on abortion continue, antigay fervor is clearly now on the front burner. Witness some of the events of the past eight months:

March 19: Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-TX) and Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-TX) met with two leaders of the religious and political right, James Dobson of Focus on the Family (FOF), and Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council. According to the *Washington Post*, DeLay criticized Bauer for running "counter-productive" antiabortion ads in a district known to support legal abortion during a special election for the California House of Representatives. On April 3, Dobson circulated a letter to supporters of FOF, saying it was time for the Republican Party to "fish or cut bait," and added that if the party continued to ignore "the most important issues"—abortion, school prayer, sexuality education in schools, and homosexuality—he would be "determined to deliver on the

promises to campaign against them if nothing changes."

May 8: Rep. DeLay hosted a Republican Party meeting with religious conservatives Dobson, Bauer, and Phyllis Schlafly of the Eagle Forum. According to a May 5 article by Ron Fournier of the *Associated Press*, this meeting was called because "activists [were] increasingly accusing legislative leaders of exploiting their support at election time and quickly abandoning their principles afterward. Republican leaders ... [feared] adopting the entire agenda of social conservatives would drive swing voters away from the party."

May 28: President Clinton issued an Executive Order on federal job protection for lesbians and gay men by adding sexual orientation to the federal government's nondiscrimination policy. Randy Tate, president of the Christian Coalition, responded in a press release that Americans "are saddened and shocked that the president they elected is, in kindly fashion, mocking and rejecting their values ... imposing special rights based on sexual preference."

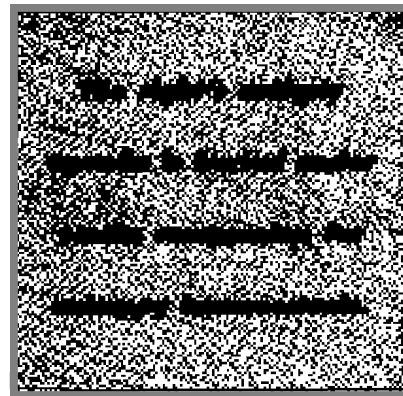
The Rev. Meg A. Riley directs the Unitarian Universalist Association's Washington, DC Office for Social Justice. She is cofounder and national cochair of the network of progressive religious leaders, Equal Partners in Faith.

June 7: The *Washington Times* reported that some senators, including Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS), "have refused to allow a vote on the nomination [of James C. Hornum as ambassador to Luxembourg], saying Mr. Hornum's advocacy of homosexual causes makes him an inappropriate representative of the United States."

June 15: Sen. Lott appeared on the *Armstrong Williams Show*, stating he believes homosexuality is a sin and gays should be assisted in getting help for it "just like alcohol... or sex addiction... or kleptomania."

July 13: The first full-page "ex-gay" ad appeared in the *New York Times*. The ad, sponsored by fifteen right-wing organizations, including the Family Research Council, the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, and Concerned Women for America, showed "former homosexuals" who "overcame" their sexual orientation through prayer and the help of ex-gay ministries. Similar ads appeared in the *Washington Post*, *LISA Today*, the *Washington Times*, the *Miami Herald*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. All the ads shared the basic premise that homosexuality brings misery for those men and women "afflicted" with it. By "getting right" with God, homosexuals can be converted to heterosexuality, which is God's will for all people, and loving Christians must work to "convert" homosexuals to heterosexuality. Quoted in the July 17 *Detroit Free Press*, Robert Knight, Cultural Studies Director for the Family Research Council, said, "This is the Normandy landing in the larger cultural wars."

July 29: An amendment proposed by Rep. Frank Riggs (R-CA) that would withhold federal housing funds from San Francisco because of the city's domestic-partner benefits ordinance passed in the House by a vote of 214 to 212. That same day, an amendment proposed by Rep. Van Hilleary (R-TN) that would cut \$21 million from Housing Opportunities for People



with AIDS passed in the House by a vote of 231 to 200.

August 8: An amendment proposed by Rep. Joe Hefley (R-CO) that would have nullified the President's Executive Order on federal job protection for gays and lesbians failed to pass in the House by a vote of 176 to 252.

September 16-19: The Christian Coalition held its annual Road to Victory conference in Washington DC. "This is a convergence of Christian and political leaders that we see as a launching pad of our efforts to turn out the vote in November," said their spokesperson, Anne Owens.

It is clear that, rather than being random examples of the homophobia that has always been present in American religion and politics, these events are part of a concerted campaign on the right. But why homophobia, and why now? Clearly, the homophobia of many people on the religious and political right is based on what they see as religious conviction. But there are also pragmatic reasons for this wave of fervent antigay activity.

In the past, antigay rhetoric has been the ultimate vote-getter for the religious right. Homosexuality, conservative leaders are eager to tell anyone who will listen, is explicitly forbidden by Scripture, and, therefore, government protection of the human rights of gays and lesbians is

a blatant indicator that we do not live in a biblically governed country. Condemning abortion, while an effective emotional and rhetorical device, doesn't have the same allegedly biblically sanctioned righteousness.

Groups on the right are looking to make converts to their cause with the new, kinder, gentler homophobia of the ex-gay ads. Just as the right has framed abortion as harmful to women, it now frames gay rights as harmful to God-loving gays. The right's political agenda for gays—no legal protection for their civil rights; enforced criminalization of private, consensual, sexual behavior; prohibiting them from adopting children—is buried under *ersatz* compassion for unhappy homosexuals.

Finally, my most cynical self observes that it all comes down to money. Homophobia is the best fundraiser the right wing has ever had. Whether it's Beverly LaHaye's appeal for thousands of dollars for bodyguards to protect her from murderous lesbians, or Pat Robertson's declaration that militant homosexuals are responsible for America's recent floods and draughts, homophobia has always brought in the bucks for the religious right.

As we approach the year 2000, we can expect rhetoric around God's vision for His [sic] people to escalate. Homophobia will be central to this escalation, and gays and lesbians, as well as feminists, doctors who perform abortions, and many others, will be vilified as indicative of the "end times." We who are progressive people of faith must seize this fragile and volatile time to speak out with our own interpretations of the Kingdom of God as we know it and understand it. We must use Scripture and other sacred works to promote healing, real compassion for each other, and respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. We've got our work cut out for us, but luckily we've got each other, we've got our faith, and we've got our sense of humor! ©

Trends

Homosexual Healing

JOE DALLAS INSISTS THAT he has transformed himself from a practicing homosexual to a heterosexual through complete submission in Jesus Christ. As the director of Genesis Counseling, a biblical counseling practice in southern California, Dallas is a key leader of the growing "ex-gay" movement—an international network that claims gay men and lesbians can be "converted."

Traveling the world extolling the virtues of ex-gay ministries, Dallas will arrive in Worcester on July 31 to address the 10th annual Courage Conference at Assumption College. Courage, an international Catholic ministry, has one main goal: to deliver people from homosexuality.

In addition to its chapter in Boston, Courage has four chapters in Massachusetts. The basic premise of the ex-gay movement is that people are not born homosexuals because all people are made in the image of God, and God does not make mistakes. The movement claims that homosexuality is environmental and usually stems from not having the "correct" relationship and bonding with the same-sex parent.

Dallas, a former president of Exodus International, the largest and most prominent ex-gay organization in the country, will do his part to spread the message by giving a speech titled "Where Do We Go from Here? The Prophetic Role Courage Plays in Church and Society."

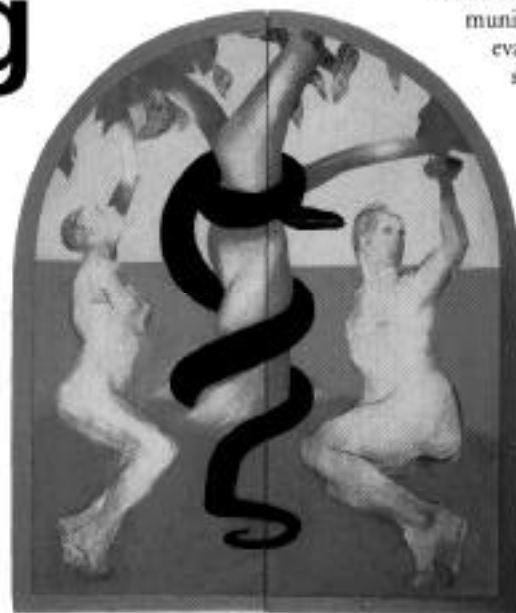
A compelling speaker, Dallas advocates what he calls "reparative therapy," asserting that a gay or a lesbian can leave the gay life and become a "whole person again"—the person who existed before homosexual feelings appeared. In his book, *A Strong Delusion: Confronting the "Gay Christian" Movement*, Dallas writes about how in the late '70s he struggled with his own homosexuality. An associate pastor of a church at the time, he was defrocked from his ministry after he had a relationship with the

owner of a gay bar. Missing the fellowship of his Christian friends, Dallas eventually found solace in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), a Pentecostal evangelical gay church, where his sexuality and his faith could live together peacefully.

But Dallas could not reconcile his homosexuality with his religion. "Now I wanted it back: the peace I used to have, the confidence that I was truly living as God intended. Not just the assurance that He loved me; I'd had that all along and it was not enough. I needed, more than ever, to know that I was right before Him—right in my beliefs and right in my lifestyle."

In 1984, Dallas left MCC. Since then he has devoted himself to spreading the word that others, like him, can begin to deliver themselves from the "sin" of homosexuality through complete submission in Jesus Christ. "I have been reminded that if someone as deluded as I was can be brought out of homosexuality, then surely anyone can," he writes.

Of course, not everyone who went into the ex-gay movement agrees, and now apostates of the ex-gay movement—ex-ex-gays—are coming forward to call the ex-gay movement a dangerous fraud. "The few people who have been able to sustain an 'ex-gay' lifestyle are the people who are involved in the ministries," says John-David Schramm, a gay playwright and member of Boston's



Ex-gay Christians claim they can convert homosexuals to heterosexuality. But some ex-ex-gays are coming forward now, saying the movement is a dangerous fraud.

By SURINA KHAN



Surina Khan is an associate analyst at Political Research Associates, a Somerville-based think tank and research center that studies the U.S. political right.

Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Speaker's Bureau. Schramm spent several years in ex-gay ministries and is now highly critical of the movement.

"Leaders of ex-gay ministries perpetuate the message that there is something wrong with being gay," says Schramm. After years of attending ex-gay support groups as well as taking part in a live-in ministry program where he was constantly monitored, Schramm says he came to understand that being gay was not a sin. "I began to realize that God was not going to demand me to change."

Schramm and other former ex-gays paint a disturbing picture of groups filled with paranoia and controlled through indoctrination and fear. Many of these stories have been assembled on a website, called Ex.Ex, operated by former ex-gay Doug Upchurch, who assails the movement's "emotionally damaging and unsuccessful process of 'sexual reorientation.'"

Upchurch desperately wanted to be straight and, to that end, tried everything from exorcism and fasting to ex-gay ministries. In his home state of Texas, he became involved with the Christian Coalition for Reconciliation, an affiliate of Exodus International. Finally, after 12 years of trying to change, Upchurch, in 1993, embraced his sexual identity and turned against the ex-gay movement. "They teach that it's all dependent on the individual—how much you pray, read the Bible, go to counseling. It's all directed at you actively trying to change the way God made you, and when that doesn't happen, it leaves you depressed and vulnerable. There were several times I strongly contemplated suicide," he said in an interview with *OutSmart* magazine.

Like Upchurch, Schramm spent years trying to change his sexual orientation. In the late '80s, his sister, a born-again Christian, sent him literature about Exodus International. Schramm had been open about his sexual orientation to his immediate family, but he was closeted in other parts of his life. Tired of this dual existence, Schramm started attending an Exodus support group.

Three years later, he joined Love in Action, a live-in ministry where he stayed for six months. When he had sex with another man, the ministry demanded that he ask God's forgiveness. Had he done so, says Schramm, he could have remained in Love in Action. [Continued on page 27]

Both Upchurch and Schramm insist that homosexuality cannot be changed. And even ex-gay leaders admit they can't guarantee a complete change in homosexual desires. Peter Lines, the northeast representative for Exodus International, says that even though he has not acted on his desires in 10 years, he is still attracted to men. "Every now and then I still see a man who makes me turn my head," he says. "It will always be a certain type of man, and what that tells me is that there are still issues that I haven't resolved."

But former ex-gays say that what people like Lines really need is to get in touch with their homosexuality. "At best you can repress it," declares Schramm. "But it's not a behavior that needs to be changed."

At the same time, however, the Christian Right has begun to embrace the ex-gay movement. "I see the ex-gay movement rising as an answer to the calamity that has hit our nation," says Robert H. Knight, cultural director of the Washington, D.C.-based Family Research Council (FRC). Knight, who sits on the board of two ex-gay organizations, says the FRC has been supporting the ex-gay movement for five years through grants, publishing assistance, and publicity. "I try never to finish a debate with a gay activist without pointing out that there is this alternative," he says.

Ex-gay-movement organizations are also supported by such explicitly antigay national Christian Right organizations as Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America, Pat Robertson's 700 Club, and the Christian Coalition. Their strategy is to persuade straight people that lesbians and gays can "heal" themselves. If that's the case, lesbians and gay men have no legitimate claims to protection against discrimination. If they choose to be gay, they must accept the consequences.

Although the ex-gay movement is firmly rooted in the Christian Right, Catholic ministries and secular organizations are also part of the movement. Leading the way is the Seattle-based Christian organization Exodus International, an ex-gay network of 87 ministries in the United States, Canada, and 20 other countries. Massachusetts has two Exodus affiliate ministries: Transformation Ministries, in Boston, and Hope Ministries, in Springfield.

Exodus says its goal is "to proclaim that freedom from homosexuality is possible through the power of Jesus Christ." It is blatantly antigay: "Exodus cites homosexual tendencies as one of many disorders that beset fallen humanity. Choosing to resolve these [Continued on page 28]

tendencies through homosexual behavior, taking on a homosexual identity, and becoming involved in a homosexual lifestyle are considered destructive, because they distort God's intent for the individual and is thus sinful."

For all that, the organization attracted media attention in 1978 when two of its founders, Gary Cooper and Michael Bussee, left the antigay ministry after falling in love with each other. Together they went on the talk-show circuit in the early 1990s to proclaim that antigay ministries are frauds that promote homophobia and self-hatred.

The visibility of the ex-gay movement is growing not only within the Christian Right but also on the Internet, within mainstream news media, and in society at large. FRC is showcasing the movement's ideas in a new video, movement leaders have been appearing on TV and radio shows, and CBS's *60 Minutes* aired a segment about ex-gays this past March. Exodus has received mention in other national media including the *Washington Post*, National Public Radio, *Hard Copy*, the *Jerry Springer Show*, and the *Sally Jessy Raphael Show*.

While many ex-gay ministries market directly to the lesbian and gay community, the primary focus of their outreach is to Christian communities: Christians are encouraged to direct homosexuals to ex-gay ministries. Exodus International claims between 500 and 600 new requests for information each month. And newer ex-gay organizations are growing rapidly.

Naturally enough, those challenging the movement find this news disturbing. "The ex-gay movement cloaks itself in a mantle of faith-based compassion, yet it is linked to the broader Christian Right, which perpetuates intolerance and hostility toward lesbians and gay men," says Sue Hyde, a Cambridge-based staffer for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Both Hyde and Schramm feel that the ex-gay-movement leadership has a hidden agenda, and it must be exposed. "I don't believe that ex-gay organizations support God's plan and vision for us," says Schramm. He and Hyde assert that the ex-gay movement is exploiting the internalized homophobia, self-hatred, and insecurity experienced by some gays and lesbians. "Oppression exacts a great price," says Hyde. "Wouldn't we think it odd if a person of African descent with dark skin underwent a course of physical and psychological therapy to become not recognizable as a black person rather than joining with other people from that oppressed group to transform society?" ■

SAVED

Our reporter survives the ex-gay ministries

BY JUSTIN CHIN

They have names like "Love in Action," "Where Grace Abounds," "Worthy Creations," "Restoration Inc.," "Freedom at Last," and "Free!" These gung-ho, New Age names are, in fact, part of a web of Christian ministries attempting to lead gays and lesbians out of "the life."

They, and many others with equally winsome names, are under the wing of Exodus International, which calls itself "a worldwide coalition of Christian ministries dedicated to helping men and women who struggle with homosexuality to find change from their broken sexual orientation and sinful sexual behaviors through the transforming power of Jesus Christ."

Based in San Rafael, California, Exodus International governs more than 250 drop-in groups and three live-in residential programs in San Rafael, Memphis, and Wichita. Exodus International also makes good on its name: it has live-in programs in Manila and London as well as counseling programs in Australia, Canada, and Singapore.

Exodus also runs a mail-order service that sells books, pamphlets, audio tapes, and videos that deal with a full buffet of subjects, from AIDS, teenage crushes, promiscuity, sexual abuse, transvestitism, cross-dressing, pedophilia, how to respond to gay Christians, and what it's like to be married to a gay or an "ex-gay."

I set out to see what Exodus is all about. A very cheery woman answered the phone when I called, and she readily gave me the information I asked for. In the Bay Area, there are four places that can help, she told me: New Hope Ministries/Church of the Open Door in San Rafael; Transformed Image in San Jose; New Ministries in San Leandro; and Melvin Wong, a psychologist who practices in San Francisco and Fremont. She gave me their phone numbers and the name of the person to contact.

Justin Chin is a freelance writer in San Francisco. This article was supported, in part, by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

"Good luck with your journey," she said before I hung up.

When I first contact the Church of the Open Door, Don tells me about the program and how it is run. Every year, people from all over the United States and abroad apply to be accepted into the one-year program that begins every New Year's Eve. The program accepts about ten people each year, after their applications and three reference letters have been scrutinized by the ministry for things like "spiritual maturity" and commitment to the program. The program costs \$600 a month, and the participants live in an apartment house with a roommate for the year. The participants go to work in the morning but are expected to have their nights and weekends free for meetings, Bible studies, and socials.

I tell him that I can't simply apply for the program, as I need to work and go to college and I have bills to pay. "Many people put college and careers on hold for a year because this is so necessary," he counters. Once in the program, the participants are taught to be "better stewards of time," Don continues. For the first three months, each participant is not allowed to be alone, or go anywhere alone outside of work.

Many of the participants work for the church or are employed in menial office work by a company. On my first meeting, a man tells me how a former program member has just joined the staff of the insurance company he works at. "That makes ten of us working for them, or who have worked for them," he says. "They're great. There's so many of us there, and they understand when we need time off."

Every Sunday, the entire house goes to the Church of the Open Door together.

Every year, the members of the house are introduced to the church, which is attended by many former gays and former program residents. Members of the church receive little bookmarks with the program participants' short biographies so that the church member can pray for them through the year. This year, the house's participants have come from the Philippines, Sweden, and from around America.

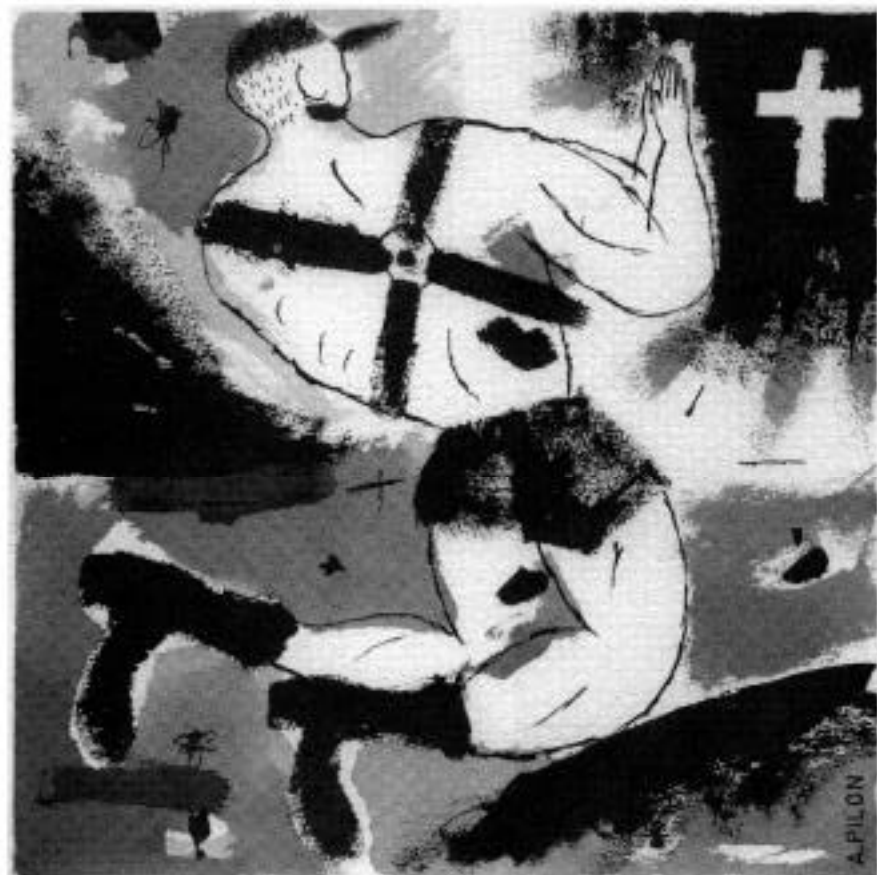
The live-in program is terribly competitive and the push to enroll people begins early on. I'm constantly told that my best bet for curing my homosexuality is to enroll in the live-in program, and that it takes *real commitment* to be in it. The inference is that if I skip out on the live-in, I'm simply not taking my program seriously enough and I'm doomed to a life of homosexual vices and the "deep devastation" (including suicide, alcoholism, and AIDS, according to the literature) that befalls those who are involved in homosexuality.

But since I'm not going to try for the live-in program, there is the drop-in support group, Don says. And the support group is "a good thing because whatever you've gone through, everyone there has heard it before." So, on a muggy Friday night, six of us are sitting in New Hope's rec room bonding in our struggle with "the life."

This is my second meeting at New Hope, but my first with Frank Worthen, who is often called the "Father of Ex-Gay Ministries." He is the author of *Stepping Out of Homosexuality*, which New Hope Ministries uses like a Bible, or at least a twelve-step handbook.

Worthen is head honcho of New Hope Ministries, a part of the Church of the Open Door. He founded Love in Action in 1973 and ran it until 1991, when he left to go to Manila to start a mission. But he's back with New Hope and runs a live-in program at a mid-sized duplex apartment complex in the quaint and leafy suburb of San Rafael.

"The problem we have is with people of the same sex and not of the opposite sex,"



ALAIN PILON

says Frank Worthen. "We need to affirm our masculine selves and we need same-sex affirmation that is nonsexual," Frank Worthen pronounces and the gathered members nod their heads like trained seals.

If anyone is to be accused of stereotypically, or even archetypically, gay behavior, it would be this group gathered on this Friday night in a pastel sofa-laden rec room that sports an unused bar and, in a bit of forced butchness, a weight-training station. We have the limp-wristed queen, the mustachioed clone, the chubby guy, the drama queen with goatee, the army dude, and the flight attendant.

With their mentor away, the meeting was low-key, and the other participants and I took turns reading aloud from Worthen's book. The men offered encouragements.

"God is patient and always there when you need him."

"I was weeding when I asked God to help me, and in my prayer I pulled out a chunk of weeds, roots and all, and I realized that that was the way I had to do it."

"I would buy *Teen Bear* and drool over David Cassidy."

"Ah [strange lip-smacking noise], Vincent Van Patten."

They all discussed how Worthen's writing had so succinctly applied to their lives and just how great he and his wife are.

When Worthen returns to the roost, the group is sharing stories with Vern, a first-timer. They are telling him how they sinned and suffered as homosexuals, and how the live-in program saved their lives.

Worthen is using the group's testimonies to explain how we fall into homosexuality and what can be done about it. It seems that there is an identity transfer that happens from father to son, mother to daughter, that is missing in a homosexual, so homosexuality is a search to replace that identity, Worthen explains.

"Homosexual sex is not about sex but about the need for love and acceptance by someone of the same sex," he says. "The best thing we can do is to reaffirm our identities with our biological parent of the same sex, but as men, we can give each other this affirmation. We need to have relationships with straight men and to be accepted by them."

Worthen very strongly advocates the live-in program, which he says has a success rate of 50 percent. Much of the meeting involves extolling the virtues of the live-in program to Vern, though it isn't that hard a sell. Vern is happy as a bug simply to have found a group who readily understands his struggles and can match his horror stories pound for pound.

"Why don't you show Vern the apartment?" Worthen instructs Jim, and off the two trot to look at the space.

On a muggy Friday night, six of us are sitting in New Hope's rec room bonding in our struggle with 'the life.'

All roads point to the live-in. The meetings consist of a number of former and current program members who spend a good part of their time sharing how much the live-in helps them. And the literature reinforces the pitch, with testimonies of folks who have overcome homosexuality in large part because of the live-in program.

My favorite personal testimony is from John Paulk, who used to be a drag queen named Candi, but one night on the dance floor of a disco, John/Candi looked to the mirrored ball and had a little tête-à-tête with God, saying, "I know you can help me. Some day, I'll come back to you." John is now married to Anne, thanks to the residential program he attended in 1988.

The drop-in group boasts a success rate of 25 percent.

"What you need to do is to go to church as much as possible, go to fellowships and youth groups and Bible studies, surround yourself with Christians," Worthen advises a drop-in participant. "But you really need the live-in."

Being a church groupie was what Worthen himself did to "cure" his own homosexuality, he says, since there weren't any live-ins or support groups back then. "Free of gayness" for some twenty years, Worthen said that when he first started his journey, there weren't ex-gay support groups, so he told church members of his struggles, asking them to pray for him. At the same time, he went to church social groups and prayer meetings at every opportunity.

"If the church was open, I was there," he says. Soon, he found he "didn't have the urge" anymore, and when he did, he was reluctant to act on it for fear that the shame would show on his face. "I didn't think prayer would work. I thought that this one would be too big for God," Worthen chuckles.

Many participants in the live-in program find the constant scrutiny, the lack of privacy, and the psychological toll hard to take. Ask Sean Greystone. In 1994, he moved from

Montana and checked into the San Rafael facility. Five months later, he left the program.

Coming from a conservative Christian background, Greystone felt that he couldn't be gay and Christian at the same time. He believed his only option was to change his sexual orientation. "They hold out that apple to you, that 'we can help you change,' but they can't," Greystone says. "And you don't find that out until you go through a pretty miserable experience."

"The abuses that I started to witness, the extreme manipulation and control from day one, were getting more and more ridiculous," Greystone says. "A person is expected to give up all his rights, and do everything the leadership says without question. There is some severe psychological abuse that happens there."

Out of the sixteen people in Greystone's year, only four went on to the program's second year. The program is advertised as a one-year commitment, but "once you get there, it's a two-year thing. In the middle of the first year, they will start pushing you to stay for the second year, and if you don't, they tell you that you're leaving God and you're bound to fail," Greystone says.

Now, at the age of thirty-two, Greystone lives in San Francisco and is "at peace with himself," independently studying and researching his spiritual life. He no longer takes it for granted that "the church is right."

But why shouldn't a person who is profoundly unhappy with being gay want to change? Greystone points to the source of the unhappiness. "The people I met in the program weren't unhappy because they were gay; they were unhappy because the church said they couldn't be gay," he says. "The programs say they can make you straight, that there is freedom and there is hope, but the only thing they change is your behavior. You're gay going in, you're gay while you're there, and you're gay when you leave. You're gay even though you don't act on it. Nothing changes except that you have more guilt and more of a burden that you have failed."

Melvin Wong is a bespectacled fortyish man with graying hair. Soft-spoken, he apologizes for the state of his office. He is in the midst of moving, and the small, elegantly decorated one-room office in the San Francisco financial district is temporary. When I first spoke to Wong on the telephone, he said he will probably be Exodus's official referral in San Francisco. He informs me that he has lectured on homosexual treatment issues in Taiwan, that he's on the psychology faculty of the University of San Francisco (a Jesuit college), and that he works with something called the National Association on Therapy and Homosexuality.

He tells me that about 20 percent of his work deals with "gender issues" and that his success rate of helping gays become straight is "about 90 percent, depending on how much the client puts into it." A typical span of therapy usually lasts two to three years. And what does being cured mean? Wong compares it to a recovering alcoholic who sees a glass of wine: "There is a feeling, but no urge to drink it."

Originally from Hong Kong, Wong is bilingual and many of his clients are Asians; he is proud to offer a cross-cultural perspective in his counseling. Unlike most of Exodus's referrals, Wong has never identified as gay. He is married and has a young daughter.

"Family dysfunction leads to homosexuality," Wong declares. "A traditional family is important to gender-identity formation. It is how a girl knows how to be a girl and how a boy knows how to be a boy."

It is my first session with Dr. Wong. "When one is confronted with homosexual feelings, there are two routes: affirmation (of those feelings) and true guilt," he tells me. He admits that he leans more towards the "nonaffirmation" route. In his professional opinion, Wong will ultimately advise that the homosexual lifestyle is not healthy. It leads to diseases and is psychologically damaging, he says. Five years ago, Wong testified to that effect in front of the San Francisco School Board opposing Project 10, a drop-in counseling program for gay and lesbian high-schoolers.

Every homosexual has his own set of major circumstances, Wong says. In my case, the dynamics of the Asian family don't help either, with the "absent, aloof" father and the "overbearing, hysterical, over-protective" mother.

Wong's questions are strange, if not unsettling: "Were you teased for any difference? Did anyone laugh at you because you were different? Did your brother ever beat you up?" He tells me that assimilation and immigration can be trauma enough to cause dysfunctions in the family even if the tensions are not patently obvious. He ends the session by telling me that he has a "strong hunch" that "a big trauma" occurred when I was between three and six years old. Wong renders explicit his hint of childhood sexual abuse by telling me that for many gay men, there was usually an episode of sexual molestation, sexual playfulness, or sexual stimulation that is against the child's will or without the child's knowledge often somewhere between the ages of six and ten. Eighty percent of lesbians have been raped at some point, he adds.

Wong's notions of homosexuality linger with me long after I leave his office. His suspicion that I was surreptitiously fondled is unnerving. It makes me think of phony repressed-memory cases. And his sympathetic tone disturbs me in a way that outright confrontation would not.

"I have a deep empathy for people who have to leave the gay lifestyle," Wong says, and takes a deep breath and sighs. "I often find myself apologizing on behalf of the nonaccepting evangelical churches who are unaccepting of gays. It really isn't their choice to be gay."

Fresh from a liver transplant five months ago, Ron Sharp runs Overcomers. "We are called 'Overcomers' because we can overcome temptation with God's help. These struggles are put there for us to overcome."

The group takes its name from the second Book of Revelations where the apostle John writes to the seven churches in Asia. Each letter ends with an admonition that "he who shall overcome" will be promised lots of benefits in the hereafter.

Overcomers is a relatively new group to the ex-gay milieu. They are not on the referral list of Exodus; nor were they listed as an organization that has applied to be one. I was referred to them by a friend of Ron Sharp, who runs an Exodus-approved support group in San Leandro. This is a fringe group of a fringe group.

Overcomers is unique in that it is the only group that meets in the belly of the beast. Held every Thursday in a member's apartment in San Francisco's Sunset district, Overcomers is more a Bible study than anything else. There are no tawdry tales of temptations failed or fulfilled, no inspiring tear-jerking testimonials, only the stern reading of the Bible, where each verse is read and discussed in its context of finding guidance in "overcoming the life." There is no need for warm, fuzzy, psychobabble or self-help books; the Bible is all they need.

In attendance today are Pete, who's brought his guitar so that we can sing some praises; Steve, a pastor's kid; and Al, in whose house we're meeting. Al's young daughter runs around the apartment. "Bible study is boring," she declares, before her dad chucks her in her room. Two other members, a man and a woman, are not here today. The group is starting the New Testament gospels afresh, having just finished a portion of Romans.

"Part of true faith is overcoming," Sharp tells the group, and we nod in agreement. "What we have here is a battle; it is a test. The question is, are we going to stand to the end." Overcomers is decidedly more charismatic in its nature than New Hope. The issue of homosexuality, and the word "gay," is rarely used in the meeting even though that is the main reason why we are gathered. Most references to homosexuality are coded.

"There is a politically correct line that says that you cannot get out of 'the life,'" Sharp says, but "the main issue is guilt; how you will be when you stand before the Lord. It is not whether you can be free but whether you want to be free."



ALAIN PILON

I was close to a wreck when my boyfriend picked me up after what I vowed would be my last meeting.

Exodus International recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary and the ex-gay movement is growing fast. There are large regional and national conferences, and ex-gays appear on many TV talk shows and radio call-in programs.

Still, ex-gays and their ministries find themselves in a strange limbo. Not all churches accept them or want to be associated with them.

"If you walk into a Christian function and say, 'I'm a recovering homosexual,' they would clear the room," says Anthony Falzarano, leader of Transformation Ex-Gay ministries in Washington, D.C.

Some ex-gays have simply exchanged one closet for another. Whom to tell that one is ex-gay and how to tell them is a pressing issue within the movement, and a lot of paper and time are spent advising how to "come out" as a recovering homosexual.

There is grave concern in the movement that being ex-gay is fast becoming a sub-culture in itself.

Ex-gays are sexually celibate but homosexuality is still central to them: everything in their lives revolves around homosexuality and avoiding it. Listening to Exodus conference junkies and ex-program members speak, it is easy to see how this sub-culture is maintained.

Ultimately, the difference between gays and ex-gays is like the difference between

cheese and cheddar. The ex-gays try to drown their homosexuality in Bible verses, marriage, family, and their own new sub-cultural niche, but their homosexuality remains.

Even the leaders of the movement have some doubts as to the validity of their claims to "curing" homosexuality. Bob Davies and Lori Rentzal, in their book, *Coming Out of Homosexuality*, a classic in the ex-gay milieu, say that a change in sexual orientation is not the goal; the goal, rather, is to have an intimate relationship with Christ and to be transformed by him. It's disturbing to realize that these groups know that the best they can do is suppress a person's sexual orientation, and yet they hold out an entire industry catered to "curing" homosexuality.

When I first started going to these groups, I thought it would be a hoot to see what kinds of de-luded wackos these people were. But as the weeks went by, all I saw were very unhappy people whose lives have been ruined by their perceptions of what "the gay life" is, perceptions that have been distorted by the decidedly homophobic rhetoric of the ex-gay ministries.

I had determined that I had gone to enough meetings when a strange cocktail of anger and sadness started to get the better of me. I was close to a wreck when my

boyfriend picked me up after what I vowed would be my last meeting.

Being gay is not easy, given societal objections and long-held prejudices. Heck, being straight or Christian is probably not easy, either. But what was really deplorable was how these support groups exploit a person's failed relationships and dysfunctional family history as fodder for their spiritual and psychological bigotry.

There are certainly plenty of heterosexuals who lead unfulfilling lives, with sad relationships and equally horrid family histories, but no one blames their misery on their sexual orientation. But if you're gay, your sexual orientation is suspect. And if you don't exhibit suitable trauma, the "ex-gay" ministries and their psychologist allies are at the ready to suggest some, to goad the person into a state where anything and everything is laden with sexual sinisterness.

One parting shot: it is not a secret that the founders of Exodus International, Gary Cooper and Michael Bussee, have disassociated themselves from the group. The two men fell in love and left the organization, though the organization still chugs along merrily, getting progressively larger each year.

Of the organization they founded, Cooper and Bussee now say, "Exodus is homophobia with a happy face." ■

The ex files

I'm in recovery. I'm a recovering homophobe," Raul Gonzalez says. He made his transformation this spring at a national conference for parents of homosexual children. But this "success" story isn't owed to the support group most associated with parents of gay children—Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Gonzalez's recovery began in Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays, an organization emerging on the national scene. And while both groups deal with parents of gay children and share similar acronyms—PFLAG and PFOX—their agendas differ greatly.

Gonzalez, founder of the Austin, Tex., chapter of PFOX, says he supports his gay son, but what he's really advocating is his son's conversion to heterosexuality. "[Homosexuals] can live their life the way they choose—that's their choice," he says. "[PFOX] is for strugglers who want to change.

If you don't want to change, that's your choice. The Lord judges—I try to be genuinely loving and compassionate. Whether you're gay or straight, an adulterer or a fornicator, sexual sin is sexual sin." Therein lies the logic of PFOX: Love the sinner, refute the sin. Unlike PFLAG, which encourages parents to accept their children's homosexuality, PFOX rejects "the homosexual lifestyle."

In Gonzalez's case, his son has turned from "sin." Although still attracted to men, Jaime Gonzalez, who attended PFOX's national conference with his

father, is now celibate. "I choose to live my life according to my faith, so I no longer believe that God created me to be [gay]," the younger Gonzalez says.

While not all PFOX members have succeeded in changing their children, they can perhaps find inspiration in national founder and executive director Anthony A. Falzarano, an "ex-gay" who regards himself as living proof that homosexuals can change. Falzarano says he started PFOX in response to a need he witnessed while starting an ex-gay group, Transformation Christian Ministries, eight years ago in Washington, D.C. He points to astounding growth for the three-year-old PFOX, which boasts 15 chapters nationwide and eight now in development.



Falzarano expects PFOX to continue its growth, citing the group's high-profile news coverage—PFOX will be featured in an upcoming segment of CBS's 60 Minutes and has been on both Fox news and The 700 Club, a nationally syndicated religious news show—and an aggressive expansion plan. In addition, Falzarano anticipates a \$100,000 grant from a Christian philanthropic organization, money he plans to use to expand the group to 60 chapters and to add more staff by next March's national conference. "We see PFOX being as large as the Exodus [ex-gay] movement, to be the Al-Anon of ex-gay networks," he says.

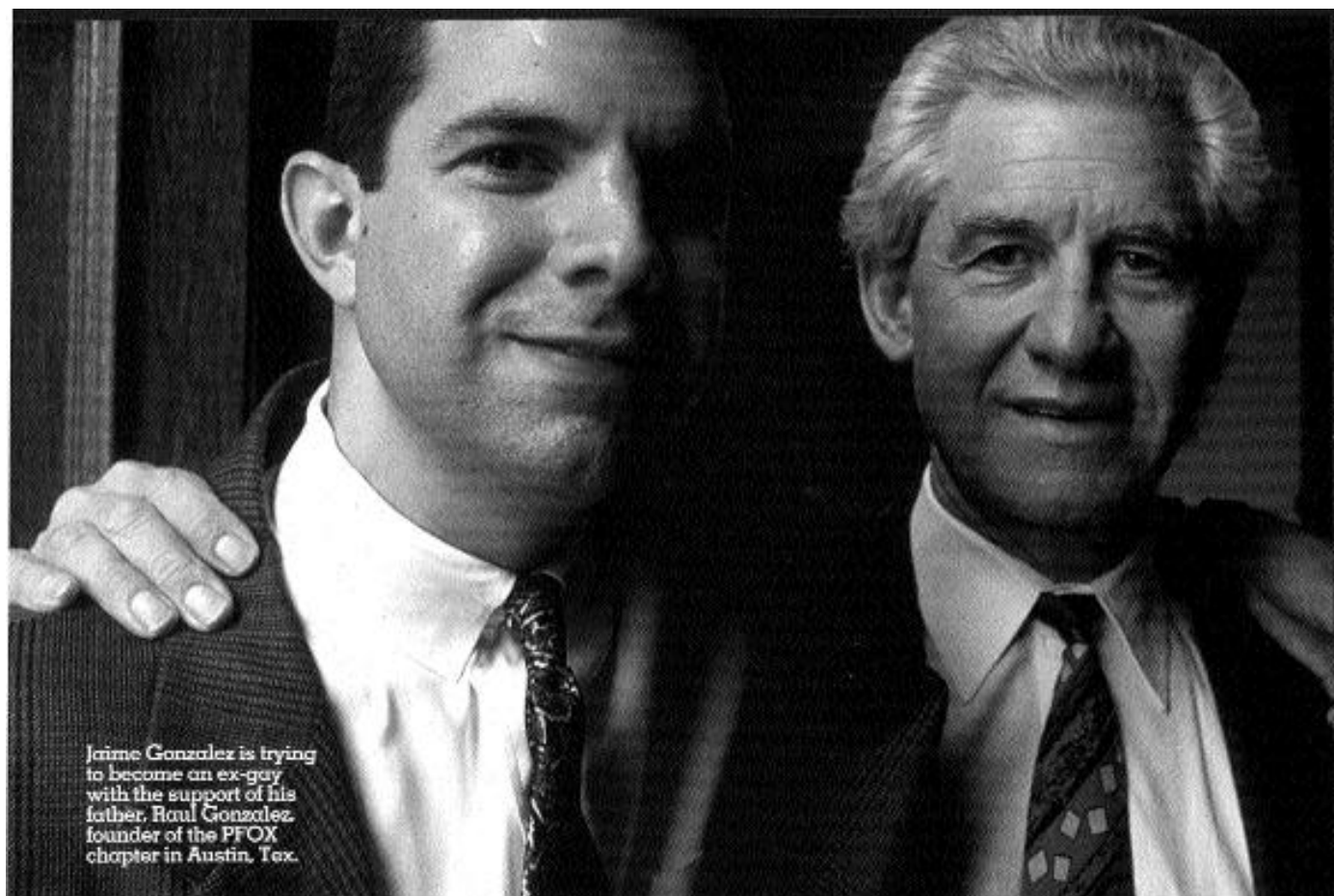
This quick growth, however, is unsettling to some, particularly to Maggie Heineman, a member of PFLAG's Phila-

delphia chapter. Wanting to learn more about the group, Heineman attended PFOX's national conference and was disturbed by Falzarano's methods of helping parents deal with their gay children. "Love dominated the room," she wrote in a PFLAG newsletter. "Love of family and of Jesus. But hate was there too... I heard the hate through the voice of the executive director. As he spoke of Satan and 'evil organizations'—PFLAG [and other groups that support gay men and lesbians]—he preached that parents should pray for their gay children to fall to the depths of despair as he did... because it is only then that they will call upon God for deliverance. Would PFOX parents act to hasten their child's fall?"

Sharing Heineman's concerns is former ex-gay Doug Upchurch, operator of a Web site for "ex-ex-gays." Upchurch, who is also active in PFLAG, sees PFOX's philosophy as detrimental to the parents and their children. "The whole premise of the ex-gay theology is that it's the parents' fault that the child is gay or lesbian, that something happened in the parental relationship to cause it," he says. Upchurch adds that the group is trying to twist not only the children's thinking but the parents' as well.

Yet it is Falzarano's own transformation to being an ex-gay that gives him a strong basis for his conviction, one that hopeful parents often cling to. Falzarano says he was "in the lifestyle" as a gay man from age 17 to 26. After spending two years in "reparative therapy" with Exodus, he has now been married to a woman for 13 years—a union that has produced two children. "The way I re-

A support group for the families of gays wants parents to love their children—in the hopes of setting them straight **By Harriet Schwartz**



Jaime Gonzalez is trying to become an ex-gay with the support of his father, Raul Gonzalez, founder of the PFOX chapter in Austin, Tex.

covered is, I dealt with my sexual abuse as a child," Falzarano says. "I was molested as a child. And I dealt with my father, who was an absentee father, and with my mother, who was a dominant, Italian-Jewish mother—she really did a trip on me as a child. When I dealt with all those anger issues and got rid of the

can help people along through issues that we've dealt with," she says. PFOX, she claims, has also helped her communicate with her son. "It gives us more of an opportunity to dialogue with him," she says. "If anything, I would say one of the things we focus on at the meetings isn't so much about changing our

about homosexuality. "This is not something that has to be hidden, so they're going to take a bottle of sleeping pills or put a gun to their head," she says, adding that gay students need to know there is some hope that they can change. However, while Rosenthal thinks that a parental support group such as PFOX

"I choose to live my life according to my faith, so I no longer believe that God created me to be [gay]."

porn that was in my house..."

David Villaggio, 25, son of the Atlanta PFOX chapter's coleader, thinks the group is giving his mother false hope. "It wouldn't make any difference how they treated me when I was growing up—I'd still be gay," he says. "My parents call and apologize for how they treated me in the past and say they wish things could've been different—especially if that means I would not be gay anymore."

But Villaggio's mother, Suzanne Villaggio, says she finds comfort in PFOX—where she estimates she has peer-counseled more than 75 families. "It's a place where we can share our feelings with one another, where we

kids but about where we can change as parents. It's given me a different attitude—that I don't know everything." She points out that while the group rejects the gay "lifestyle," it advocates the acceptance of homosexuals. She believes that PFOX will help the church address homosexuality as openly as abortion and other once-taboo issues.

PFOX is also trying to start dialogue about homosexuality in the classroom. Jean Rosenthal, head of PFOX's New York City chapter and a physical-education teacher, has already consulted a school board member about taking PFOX's message to campuses. She thinks her group can dispel some fears

could do some good in the schools, she says PFLAG should be kept out because of its endorsement of homosexuality.

Yet while PFOX members may not support PFLAG's approach to gay children, pro-gay parents are hesitant to condemn PFOX. National PFLAG president Nancy McDonald says her organization will not respond to PFOX in any formal way but instead will maintain its own course with regard to gay men and lesbians. "The thing we need to recognize is that people are acting out of honesty and care for their loved ones," she says. "I hope they eventually will come to understand that sexuality is something you can't change." ■

KEVIN WINTER/EVERETT COLLECTION FOR THE ADVOCATE

Swallowed up by the closet

The strange world of the "ex-gay" movement.

By Bruce Mirken

THE POSTER is colorful and dramatic. In the background is a stunning photo of a tremendous waterfall; in front of it stand dozens of smiling men and women, their arms raised in exultant triumph. The headline across the top asks, "Can homosexuals change?" Emblazoned across the falls in huge, translucent letters is the answer: "Yes!" Below is the name of the group that claims it can make this miraculous change possible, Exodus International.

Exodus is a nationwide network of "ex-gay" ministries that work to help gays and lesbians become heterosexual. "Freedom from homosexuality is possible through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord," the group's literature says. Such repentance begins "the process whereby the sin's power is broken, and the individual is freed to know and experience true identity as discovered in Christ and His Church. That process entails the freedom to grow into heterosexuality."

This is a substantial movement. One Web site lists the names and addresses of 156 ex-gay groups around the United States, including local Exodus affiliates and chapters of Homosexuals Anonymous (HA), which use a 12-step model to help gays overcome their "addiction" to homosexuality. The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, a group of psychiatrists and others who, in defiance of established professional organizations, support "reparative therapy" for gays, boasts over 300 members. Televangelists like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell regularly tout such groups and therapists, interviewing people who claim to have successfully "left the gay lifestyle." The religious right argues that instead of protecting the civil rights of gays and lesbians, society should encourage them to "reject their unnatural

desires," as American Family Association vice president Tim Wildmon, son of Rev. Donald Wildmon, put it last year.

'Like I fell into a pit'

But survivors of these organizations are coming forward in growing numbers to call the ex-gay movement a dangerous fraud. They paint a disturbing picture of groups filled with paranoia and controlled through indoctrination and fear, often employing techniques eerily reminiscent of those used by Jim Jones's People's Temple. Many of these stories, along with a wealth of background information, have been assembled on a Web site operated by former ex-gay Doug Upchurch, located at <http://members.aol.com/exexgay>.

Christian singer Jallen Rix tells one of those stories in an article posted on the site. Rix, who grew up in a family of "very staunch fundamentalists," writes that he can remember feeling same-sex attractions as early as age six or seven, though he didn't quite understand what they meant. But by the time he was a senior in high school, he understood, "and I began to get petrified." In the mid-'80s, while attending Westmount College, a Christian school in Santa Barbara, he went in search of help to an ex-gay support group called Desert Stream.

The group met weekly, and new members were quickly instructed on

the supposed causes of their sexual orientation. "One of their big theories is kind of a rehash of psychological thought from about 35 years ago, that if the mother is too dominant and the father too passive, you're going to gender-identify with the mother and be attracted to men," Rix told me in an interview. The notion seemed plausible to Rix since it somewhat paralleled his own family experience.

But he also saw holes in the theory. For one thing, why wasn't his brother, who grew up in the same environment, gay as well? And what of the many members whose backgrounds didn't match the theory at all? According to Rix, group leaders insisted the answer was to try harder to understand what had gone wrong in their childhoods, leading to "session after session where people were digging the dirt trying to figure out what was wrong with their upbringing.... It can be like emotional abuse."

More disturbing was the way the leaders reacted to doubts or questions, Rix says: "Common-sense questions about inconsistencies brought shocked and defensive responses. 'Of course' their theories and practices were in line with God's will. How could we question it? ... Strong peer pressure obligated us to conform outwardly even though inwardly we felt shameful about our healthy, normal questions and doubts."

Even more problematic is what Rix sees as Desert Stream's insistence that members cut off all contact with friends who held different opinions or sources of information that might conflict with the group's teachings. "The message was 'Don't spend time with people who disagree with you, don't go to movies, and certainly don't read anything that's pro-gay,'" Rix remembers. When we contacted the organiza-



GARDNER ILLUSTRATION BY YUSEF JANKO

tion for comment on these charges, Desert Stream's David Alvarez told us that only two people in the group were allowed to comment to the media, and that both were out of the country.

While Rix charges Desert Stream with relying on psychological pressure, he says residential programs such as Love in Action (formerly based in San Rafael, Calif.; now in Memphis, Tenn.) rigidly structure their members' lives and limit their outside contacts. John Smid, executive director of Love in Action, admits that the 13- to 17-month program limits contacts: "We're a residential program in which we have a lot of structure. They're not allowed to associate socially with known active homosexual people."

Rix has volunteered with Evangelicals Concerned, a group of gay Christians comfortable with their sexuality, to assist people recovering from ex-gay experiences. In an article that appears on the ex-ex-gay Web site, he describes the stories he heard from people who had been in live-in groups as "astounding.... Every action is under scrutiny. Watching TV or a movie must first be approved by the leadership.... The program arranges temp-like jobs so

that even at work participants are monitored. Once, when a person was making secret arrangements to leave the group, he could only meet with us on his lunch break—that was the only time all day he was alone."

And ultimately, Rix says, no one really changed. "There were people who could follow the behavior and the structure, but when you sit 'em down [and talk to them, you learn] they're still gay, they still have these feelings," he says. But the pressure to suppress their sexual feelings turned Desert Stream members into what he calls "emotional zombies. If you're going to shut down what attracts you and is something inside you, you end up shutting down everything else—happiness, sadness, everything."

Rix ended up "riddled with fear and guilt. It was like I fell into a pit. That's when people start to feel suicidal, because you tried so hard and it's not working." Rix left the group and has since reconciled his sexuality and his faith. He says he is far happier now than when he was trying to stifle his gayness.

But suicidal feelings are not uncommon among members of ex-gay groups, survivors say. Kurt Jacobowitz-Cain, who became a Homosexuals Anonymous leader in

Tulsa, Okla., and Phoenix, lost several friends who were HA members to suicide. The problem, he explains, is that members of these groups end up living double lives—and are emotionally shredded by the conflicts that inevitably result. Many maintained a heterosexual facade, sometimes even getting married, but were unable to change their feelings, much as they wanted to. Throughout his HA experience, Jacobowitz-Cain recalls, "my fantasy life was all about men."

Despite their fervent desire to change, the HA members he knew couldn't suppress their sexual urges entirely, and many resorted to furtive encounters in parks or adult bookstores. One friend who killed himself, Jacobowitz-Cain says, "couldn't deal with the fact: 'I'm gay, I'm Christian, I'm married, and I'd rather be dead than face this dissonance in my life.'" Though such feelings were common, he says, the suicides were "usually not talked about" in the group.

Even more destructively, Rix and Jacobowitz-Cain say, the groups foster dependency by cutting members off from their previous support networks, which they condemn as dangerous and sinful influences. When the attempt to shed one's gayness fails, members have nowhere to turn

for support. And those who do muster the courage to leave generally find themselves ostracized by remaining members.

What science says

Can a person's sexual orientation really be changed by therapy, support groups, or live-in programs? A few mavericks in psychiatry and psychology say it can. Several of them, including Dr. Charles Socarides (whose gay son is President Clinton's liaison to the gay and lesbian community), wrote an op-ed column published in the *Wall Street Journal* Jan. 9 echoing Desert Stream's theories, arguing that "the emotive desire [by a man] for another man is primarily a symptom of the failure to develop a strong masculine identity.... It has been our clinical experience that as these men become more comfortable and confident with their manhood, same-sex attractions decrease significantly."

But Socarides represents a distinct minority within his profession. According to the American Psychiatric Association, "There is no published scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of 'reparative therapy' as a treatment to change one's sexual orientation. It is not described in the

scientific literature.... There are a few reports in the literature of efforts to use psychotherapeutic and counseling techniques to treat persons troubled by their homosexuality who desire to become heterosexual; however, results have not been conclusive, nor have they been replicated. There is no evidence that any treatment can change a homosexual person's deep-seated sexual feelings for others of the same sex."

Clinical psychologist Dr. Ariel Shidlo of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City and colleague Dr. Michael Schroeder have begun interviewing gays and lesbians who have sought some sort of conversion therapy or counseling in an effort to examine the long-term impact of such treatment. At present they have interviewed 85 individuals out of a projected 200. That small number, and the fact that the interviewees—recruited largely through the Internet and the gay press—may not constitute a representative sample, make any conclusions "very tentative, very preliminary" at this point, Shidlo cautions.

Still, Shidlo has noted some intriguing patterns. "There are people who report some initial relief, of finally talking about something they've never talked about," he reports. "We've not found anyone who's changed, but we've certainly found some people who are feeling pretty good."

But even those who have come to Shidlo and Schroeder claiming to be ex-gay success stories have proven upon closer questioning to still have feelings of attraction for the same sex. "We have received some responses from people who say, 'You're not going to want to hear this, but this really worked for me.' What comes out is that they're still struggling to stay married or stay celibate and are continuing to experience great desires, that they continue to experience homosexual feelings."

And for some this can lead to problems. "Eventually, when they see they haven't changed they frequently blame themselves that they haven't tried hard enough," Shidlo says, echoing Rix. "That self-blame I think is very harmful for some people," and some emerge from the experience "really scared."

Ironically, though, Shidlo's interviews have turned up situations in which ex-gay groups or therapy have proven helpful in ways their advocates never intended. "There seems to be a subgroup for whom it isn't harmful because it helped them come out," he says. "They put all their heart and soul into it, and it helped them realize they couldn't change." ■

Toward a new national discussion of sexual orientation.



If you really love someone, you'll tell them the truth.

The Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, and the American Family Association (partial list) used this slogan in recently published anti-gay ads claiming to have cured homosexuals of their behavior. The ensuing debates on morality, genetics or unlearning behavior all miss an important point — we have the right to love whomever we choose. The truth is, human sexuality is far richer and more multifaceted than we're taught to believe. The truth is that neither science, nor politics, nor religion can yet define the genesis of sexual orientation. Most likely each of us is a complex mix of nature and nurture.

The truth is, many people are bisexual.

Bisexual people have the capacity for emotional, romantic, loving and/or physical attraction to more than one gender. Some of these so-called ex-gays are undoubtedly bisexual. Bisexuals can choose to be open to the full range of possibilities, but our bisexuality is the potential, not the requirement, for involvement with more than one gender. Some bisexual people choose to be in committed monogamous relationships; some choose other forms of relationships and commitments. Heterosexual and homosexual people also make these choices.

Bisexuals come from all cultures, all religious and spiritual beliefs, all sizes and abilities, all social strata and walks of life. Some of us are just like you. Some of us are nothing like you. But we are bound together by one important factor: we believe in the freedom to love whom we choose.

The truth is, love is about honor and respect for yourself and others.

The truth is, these "ex-gay" ads sow hatred and intolerance. These organizations are seeking to define sexuality, gender, and family solely in their own image. It is an offense to the human spirit for any group to impose their beliefs as the one true way and to tell people to reject and hate themselves and each other because they do not fit a certain mold. That is not love.

Love, between people who care for each other regardless of the genders involved, is an important family value that strengthens our society and enriches all our lives. Love is an essential part of life and a celebration of the human spirit. The truth is that the families we create, in whatever form, are precious and entitled to respect and to equal protection under the law.

The truth is, love makes a family.

As human beings we are born with the right and ability to love, to change and to choose as we grow. We must all have the option to choose to get married or not. We must all have the right to have and to raise children or not. All our relationships and families must be equally valued. We must have the right to walk down the street holding hands without the threat of violence. We must have the right to live, to work and love without fear of discrimination of any sort. We must have the right to make our own moral and ethical decisions based on our own personal integrity.

**THE TRUTH IS, ALL OF US —
BISEXUAL, LESBIAN, GAY, TRANSGENDER, HETEROSEXUAL —
DESERVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE WHOM WE CHOOSE.**

To the public interest, this message has been sponsored by the following organizations (partial list), representing the views of millions of Americans.

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Speak Out! Speak Up!

Using this ad at a local level

Anything That Moves hereby grants permission to any bisexual or bi-supportive organization to reproduce this advertisement for purposes of reproduction and dissemination. *ATM* hereby further grants permission for such groups to place this advertisement in other publications. We do not require any monetary compensation for this; but we do request that any organization so using this advertisement mail a copy of the publication containing the ad to us (*Anything That Moves*, 2261 Market Street, #496, San Francisco, CA 94114-1600).

“We have every right
to be in the world
exactly as we are —
remember we are fierce,
remember we are strong,
remember we are
courageous, and must be
outrageously ourselves.”
- Lani Ka'ahumanu

1. Target your audience and determine which publications you wish to use to get their attention. Major metropolitan daily newspapers are often too expensive for smaller groups to afford; remember that weekly papers, community papers, shopping circulars, and alternative papers are often equally effective in spreading the word. Additionally, you can use the less expensive ads to raise money toward placement in a larger publication by increasing public awareness of the issue. Also, if your organization is a non-profit or sponsored non-profit project, see whether the publication has any discounts for non-profits; many do.
2. Contact the publication's advertising or business department (this information is almost always printed in the publication's staff box or masthead, which generally appears near the front of the editorial section in newspapers and near or on the table of contents in magazines). Find out what the publication's rates are for a full-page ad (for 11 1/2"x17" publications, use the included poster; for magazines and other 8 1/2"x11" publications, use the ad on p. 33). Also find out what the publication's deadlines are — sometimes newspapers will offer less-expensive rates to advertisers who are willing to have their ad appear sometime during a 10-day window, rather than on a specific day.
3. Find out if the publication is going to have any upcoming special focuses or editorial specials on queer rights, hate crimes or the ex-gay controversy. Some papers have a special rate for special relevant sections; at the very least, you can ensure that your ad is most timely.
4. Finally, find out if there are any special specifications you need to worry about. Some publications require that ads be submitted in a specific form, and charge extra for ads they have to reformat. If the publication prefers to receive an electronic version of the ad, you can download an encapsulated postscript (EPS) graphic from the *Anything That Moves* Web site (www.anythingthatmoves.com). Confirm all specifications in writing, to ensure that your ad will appear exactly as you want, when you want, and how you want.
5. Ask other lesbigay and trans groups to help pay or fundraise for the cost of placing the ad — after all, if more than 10 national queer organizations happily signed on to support the ad in the first place, support at the local level should be just as forthcoming.
6. Become an activist at the local level. Send this ad to your local publication's political or lifestyle editors with a letter describing the issues and asking them to cover it as a story. Remember to include contact information for your group, and make sure you're well-versed on the subject before doing this — if you need background material, contact BiNet USA (www.binetusa.org or 202-986-7186).

Source Materials

Primary Source Materials

(Materials generated by the ex-gay movement)



EXODUS INTERNATIONAL

September 1998

Dear Friend of Exodus:

Unprecedented. This is the best word to describe the worldwide media exposure Exodus has received during the past two months. Full-page ads promoting hope for gays who want to change have appeared in some of the largest newspapers in the country, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. These ads were sponsored by 15 national Christian organizations. We did not pay one penny toward their production but, as a result, millions of people have heard about Exodus, and we are thrilled.

Although the August *Update* gave an overview of this publicity, there is something far bigger that's happened as a result, which I will share with you in a moment...

First, I must be honest with you up front. Our bank accounts are empty! Why, you may wonder, do we find ourselves in this predicament? Doesn't the widespread public exposure translate to an increase in financial help for Exodus? The answer is NO.

It is our hope that, in the long run, the media exposure will translate to an increase of giving to all Exodus ministries. But this will take time. Let me briefly explain our situation.

The hugely successful advertising campaign was both good news and bad news for us. The requests for information packets have increased dramatically. Since the campaign began in mid-July, we have received over 3,900 phone calls on our toll-free line. The result? Our staff has spent hundreds of hours trying to keep up with the deluge. It has cost thousands of extra dollars (our last phone bill alone was \$1,800).

I am not one to panic. Especially since I firmly believe we have been right in the heart of God's will. Nevertheless, we are in a jam. That's why we really need your help right now. As I recap the unforeseen effects of the advertising, you can draw your own conclusions about the significance of this effort. And, it is my deepest hope that you will get behind us like never before!

Are Ex-Gays for Real?

The residual effects of the media campaign are numerous. Exodus has been contacted by local and national TV and radio shows—dozens of them. Exodus leaders have appeared on "Good Morning America," "ABC Evening News," "60 Minutes," and a host of other programs. Stories have

appeared in the leading newsmagazines: *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*. We have also had coverage in the national Christian media, such as *Christianity Today* and *Charisma*. The subsequent media feeding frenzy has kept us up late at night and found us rising early to do live radio interviews in other time zones. I believe, however, that this brief season of unprecedented activity has been well worth the inconvenience.

Most important, I believe the gay community has suffered an enormous blow to its massive public relations strategies. To most Americans, the very concept of “ex-gay” is confusing—something manufactured by the religious right. In *Time* magazine, Margaret Carlson typified this response at the end of her cynical “Praying Away the Gay” article: “Maybe the lame walk and homosexuals become heterosexuals, but I doubt it.”¹ This post-modern mindset leaves no room for the miraculous. Miracles? “No way!” Change? “Impossible!” But Carlson wasn’t alone in her diatribe against homosexuals.

Winnie Stachelberg, the political director of the Human Rights Campaign, called the ads “an unprecedented wave of anti gay attack” and warned “the strategy is going to backfire.”² But it didn’t backfire. To the contrary, it caught the gay community completely off guard. Here’s why...

First, the gay community has rested on its enormous public relations successes of recent years. Millions of people have swallowed the “born gay” rhetoric. In fact, the few who question the so-called “gay gene theory” are dismissed as uninformed, bigoted, or homophobic. Homosexual lobbyists and spokespersons have been so successful in foisting this misguided notion on the public that many now accept inborn homosexuality as common truth.

Since the nationwide Exodus ads, these gay assumptions have come under increasing secular media scrutiny. The Carlson & Stachelberg comments notwithstanding, the gay community’s press relations machinery has been put to the ultimate test, fumbling miserably in an attempt to respond to the ads.

To most journalists, the “discovery” of thousands of ex-gays is like finding a lost tribe in the Amazon! “Are you for real?” seemed to be the question on many minds. Dumbfounded and confused, journalists and their readers were faced with the inevitable question, “Are ex-gays for real?”

The questions from incredulous journalists at our conference demonstrated their sense of bewilderment. One mystified TV reporter asked former gay activist Joe Dallas, “Do you really prefer sex with a woman now?”

The end result of all this publicity—good and bad—has been to raise questions. Many people thought they had a handle on the “gay issue.” Now, they’re not so sure. “Is it possible,” they now wonder, “that we have been duped by the gay community?” That, of course, is the underlying, though unspoken question. And that is precisely the reason the gay community came unhinged by a simple picture of people who have been set free by the power of Jesus Christ.

The advertising sent gay public relations strategists scurrying to devise a quick rebuttal to the ex-gay ads. One political analyst charged that we felt “marginalized unfairly.” The interpretation: “We are frustrated and disgruntled.” But the best the gay community had to offer could not reverse the damage done by the Exodus ads.

One pro-gay media release boldly declared, “I am here to say these ‘ex-gay’ ministries don’t work.” Never mind that the Exodus ad showed scores of people set free—a glaring reminder that change is always possible through Jesus Christ.

Another tactic played out in editorials across the country: “I was raised in a devoutly Christian home...that same Christian upbringing almost killed me.”³ The interpretation: “Christians can’t be trusted...Christians are bigots....Christians have no compassion.” But none of the arguments—if they can be called that—ever dealt with the fundamental question that the ads raised, “Can homosexuals change?” And no matter how hard the gay community denies it, the photo of ex-gays will be emblazoned on the memories of the American public.

The Convenience of Denial

After Jesus healed a man born blind, the Pharisees tried to discredit the transforming miracle. The man who was healed was battered by questions from these religious leaders. Finally, the man replied, “Whether he (Jesus) is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was born blind but now I see!”⁴

A changed life is the greatest proof of the reality of the Cross. That a handful of people drift back into an immoral lifestyle does not negate the truth of change in thousands of others. Perhaps more disconcerting, a life changed by Jesus Christ will inevitably judge those who refuse His lordship in their own lives. This is precisely why Stephen was stoned to death during the opening days of the early church.

The book of Acts tells us the people who were listening to Stephen were “furious...they covered their ears and yelled at the top of their voices.”⁵ What had Stephen done to deserve the death penalty? Nothing. He simply told the truth. And denial—like covering our ears or closing our minds to the obvious—is a mechanism people often employ when they don’t want to come face to face with truth issues. So they adjust their beliefs to their behavior rather than the other way around.

Today, we live in a society that loves darkness more than light. And the apostle Paul tells us, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers...”⁶ It was no mistake that the theme for this year’s conference was “Standing Firm in the Truth.” As recent national events suggest, truth is under attack. From the highest office in the land to school rooms, board rooms, and in families.

Trust in authority—any authority—is under assault. As former Supreme Court nominee, Richard Bork, noted, “As behavior worsens, the community adjusts its standards so that conduct once thought reprehensible is no longer deemed so.”⁷ How else can we explain our society’s nonchalance for sexual impropriety in the White House?

The notion of absolute values is open to debate in our society. The “new absolutes” have replaced

God's commandments. Today we're told not to judge, to be tolerant, open minded and accepting of almost any behavior. This is not God's way. He says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness."⁸

As we stand for truth, the pendulum of intolerance will swing toward those of us who believe in a just and loving Creator. But God will not adjust His standards of righteousness to fit our lifestyle. Rather, we must fit our lifestyle to fit His reasonable expectations.

The effects of the Exodus advertising may not seem big to you. But they are huge to me. They represent a benchmark. They represent so much of what we have been working toward since the earliest days of this ministry. But frankly, we have never had the funds to accomplish what a handful of ads did.

These ads were not about politics—though some have said they were politically motivated. Politically motivated or not, thousands—perhaps millions—now realize that help is available through Exodus International. That is a victory in itself!

But these victories will be short-lived if we do not have the funds to continue pressing forward. We really need your help. Today, we have \$23,000 in bills waiting to be paid—and insufficient funds to pay them all. Our expenses have sky-rocketed during the past few months. Even if I could, I wouldn't go back and change a thing. I would do it again. But this does not change the reality of our immediate urgency.

If you believe in our joint struggle for truth, please respond today! Perhaps you can give \$50, \$100, \$500 or more. Whatever you can give will continue to make a life-giving difference.

Yours in Christ,



Bob Davies
Executive Director

P.S. Please return the enclosed response card along with your gift this week. If you haven't already received a copy of the Exodus ads, we'd love to send you copies. Also, Exodus was featured recently in a *Newsweek* cover story! We have copies here if you'd like to receive one. Please indicate your request on the enclosed response card.

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A SPECIAL 20TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

September 1996

"The ex-gay movement is dangerous."

Dear Friend of Exodus:

I'm glad to see comments like the one quoted above. It's from a lesbian who attended part of our Exodus conference in Boston in June. If the work we are doing did not make an impact on the gay community, I'd wonder if we were doing the right things. But we are. And comments like this woman's reinforce the life-saving message to which Exodus is committed.

Perhaps you're struggling in some area of your life or ministry. Do you feel frustrated? Take courage! God shows Himself strong through our weaknesses, disappointments, and frustration. And these attacks are often signs that your life and mine are infringing on our spiritual enemy's territory.

There are two distinct spiritual battlegrounds in North America today: abortion and homosexuality. And there's a similarity between the two. Let me take a moment to explain why I believe these are so important to our adversary and what I think his strategy is--which is proving to be exceptionally successful.

Perhaps, like me, you've pushed aside a large rock only to discover that underneath the quiet exterior the ground was teeming with ants. By uncovering the rock, you unwittingly disturbed the activity of "another world." And I can assure you, ants do not like to be disturbed! In a spiritual sense, this is what Exodus does. And since Satan likes to do his work under the cover of darkness, without being detected, he reacts when we expose his strategies.

Now, perhaps you're wondering what abortion and homosexuality have to do with each other. The answer is quite simple; they both have to do with Satan's attempt to destroy and prevent human life. Abortion accomplishes both the destruction and prevention of life. Homosexuality, by nature, prevents human life and brings destruction through a myriad of diseases like AIDS.

THE PIED PIPER OF DESTRUCTION

Of all His wonderful creation, it is only of mankind that God says, "And it was very good." The very thing that God takes the greatest delight in, is the thing that Satan wants to destroy.

The way Satan entices us to accept something that's morally wrong is to desensitize us to it. This long-term approach is often fueled by human greed, inappropriate desire and a willingness to compromise. Nowhere is this strategy more evident than in homosexual churches that pander to those whose lives and consciences remain entrapped by the Prince of this world.

Thousands of gays and lesbians are accepting the lie that their homosexuality is compatible with Christianity. And nothing can be further from the truth of God's Word. One gay pastor says, "I just cried my eyes out because I could be open as a gay person and stand before God." But God says, "Though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I shall not listen to them." (Ezekiel 8:18)

As "homosexual Christians" seek acceptance and legitimacy, their effort will, in the short run, be largely successful. However, as King David discovered after his sin with Bathsheba, God has not designed us to live comfortably in sin. David wrote, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear." (Psalm 66:18) The only viable relief for psychological or spiritual distress brought on by sin is found in obedience to our Creator's design. While it may be possible to find short-term solace in a god of one's own making, it becomes apparent that this god is no more powerful than those served by pagans of the past.

The glorious message of Exodus is that change is possible. As former homosexual Frank Worthen says, "When God does a work, He doesn't go just halfway." This change, like any lasting change, is done from the inside out. And the truth of this transformation is witnessed in the hearts and lives of countless men and women who comprise the Exodus movement. As the battle rages in our culture, there is no other issue that so infuriates the gay and lesbian community than to hear former homosexuals and lesbians talk about the redemptive power of Christ.

The gay community has lobbied tirelessly to make homosexual behavior appear reasonable, acceptable, normal and inevitable. It is not. And no matter how many millions of dollars are poured into lobbying for acceptability, the end result will be the same--death and destruction, hopelessness and despair.

UPHILL ALL THE WAY

In 1976, when Exodus was just getting under way, we could never have guessed the opposition we would face. Even more disappointing has been opposition from an unexpected source: the Church itself. Frank Worthen says "It will take the Church about 100 years to understand what we're doing. I think we've made some inroads. But the gay community has made a lot more progress in the last 20 years." This is a sad commentary.

Why has the Church been so reluctant to embrace Exodus? I can't say for sure. But I do know homosexuals are still the Church's modern-day lepers. We want to see gays changed but we don't want them to get too close. Did the lepers of Jesus' day need His healing touch any less than the merchants, farmers or housewives? Do homosexuals need Jesus any less than anyone else in our society? The answer, of course, is a resounding NO! God says He does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. That includes men and women involved in homosexual activities.

Exodus needs individuals, families, businesses and pastors who will say, "I am willing to invest in showing Christ's love to lepers." We desperately need people who won't be ashamed, disgusted or embarrassed by this kind of ministry. The time for the Church to get behind Exodus and the local ministry affiliates is NOW. We are in the trenches, on the front lines of the battle for the hearts and souls of men and women. And to be honest with you, our supply line is meager. But it should not be so.

The need for Exodus services and information has grown steadily in the past year. Although this need is critical, the finances to keep pace are just not there. That's why we need your help. We cannot continue to do battle on the front lines without an adequate supply line. It's that simple.

Let me give you just one example of why your help is so important. An elder from a church in the Midwest gave our address to the sister of a young man dying from AIDS. She writes, "You sent a lot of literature and information. I read and studied it all and reread some on the plane to see my brother. Your information was one tool God used to prepare me to minister to my brother. I was

with him for a week and during that time God allowed me to pray with him for his salvation. Two days after I left he died."

As I said earlier, Satan comes to rob, steal and destroy. But God brings life and hope. The legacy of Exodus is a legacy of providing hope to the hopeless. And when we extend that hope, we do so because others make it possible. We need the help of countless other Christians who believe, as we do, that homosexuals are just as worthy of Christ's love as anyone else.

In this twentieth anniversary year I'm asking you to get behind Exodus as you've never done before. Our expenses are running at an all-time high--and for good reason. Our materials are getting out there in record numbers! (In the past six weeks alone, we have sent out over 1200 information packets, at a cost of about \$3.50 each.)

In the coming months, Exodus will be responding to thousands more requests for help--just like the letter written by the sister who wished to reach her brother for Christ before he died. From a financial standpoint, we are running about as lean as we possibly can. We have no reserves or special accounts. We have no big payroll or endowment. We rely on people like you to help provide the catalyst to keep us going. If you can help this week with a gift of \$100 or \$25 or even \$1,000, I can assure you that whatever you can do will make a difference. And I can assure you that Exodus will continue to be "dangerous" to the work of Satan and his co-horts!

Thanks for caring.

Yours in Christ,



Bob Davies
Executive Director

P.S. If you can help with a gift of \$25.00 or more, we'll send you a copy of the one-hour videotape, "Gay Rights: Private Lives & Public Policy," produced by Coral Ridge Ministries and featuring several Exodus leaders. Please use the enclosed response card to indicate your interest. (Offer expires December 31, 1996.)



EXODUS INTERNATIONAL

September 1997

Dear Friends of Exodus:

Ex-gay ministries are in the crosshairs of gay and lesbian groups nationwide. Why? Because ex-gay ministry is an offense to the gay community! A life changed by the power of the Holy Spirit aggravates those who refuse change in their own lives.

Stephen, Christianity's first martyr, said, "You always resist the Holy Spirit!" His words of truth were an offense. As Stephen spoke God's truth, his listeners "covered their ears and yelled at the top of their voices" (Acts 7:57). Sound familiar? In the prophet Isaiah's day, the people said, "Speak to us pleasant words, prophesy delusions" (Isaiah 30:9). God said, "They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abomination" (Isaiah 66:3).

One issue of *Newsweek* magazine carried a picture of two lesbians astride a Harley Davidson motorcycle during New York's lesbian and gay pride rally. They were proudly displaying badges which read "Support Vaginal Pride." Yes, we live in a time when morality—not just homosexuality—has an "in your face" element about it.

Those of us working in ex-gay ministry know the animosity is really a cover-up for the deep hurt and scars. This mentality is best exemplified by, "If you don't like the way I live, that's just tough!"

The rampant individualism of the '60s liberated gays and lesbians from their closets but left their souls empty. Like a drug addict groping for a fix, coming out was supposed to be a panacea for the anguish of rejection, guilt and remorse. It wasn't. Behind the veneer is a soul waiting to be set free. And, as thousands of us have discovered, this freedom is spiritual, not sexual.

Make no mistake about it, we are in a war for the truth! And wars always have casualties. The church must wake up to the reality that we have an adversary and it is not the gay or lesbian community. "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). His purpose is destruction. His aim is to thwart and exploit the good things God has done. No wonder the previous verse starts with the words, "Be self-controlled and alert" and concludes with the admonition to "resist him."

Jesus dealt with people who failed sexually. His goal is always forgiveness and restoration. God doesn't care if you've been mired in adultery, fornication, or homosexuality. He wants to restore you. He is far less interested in why you've become trapped than He is in providing lasting freedom. This war isn't about "us versus them." This is about the good things Satan wants to steal from God. And the only things he *really* cares about are eternal beings like you and me.

(cont'd)

Exodus will always be at the forefront of the war. We will suffer casualties, but like any war the casualties must not dissuade us from our objective: to see men and women set free. And, like any war, victory comes at a cost—especially for those on the front lines. As the great German martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”

This struggle is tough. And we cannot expect it to get any easier. To the contrary, to the extent that your life and mine are truly making a difference, we can expect opposition—spiritually and otherwise. Discouragement, frustration, financial hardships, temptation or relationship struggles may be evidence that we are hitting our targets.

The church has been on the defensive in this battle for too long. You can help us change this ineffective strategy.

As you already know, we have been working hard to get our professional promotional video completed by the end of the year. The progress is slow but steady. I must admit that, at times, it feels like the odds are stacked against us. Our annual budget is still only a small fraction of what many gay and lesbian political action committees spend. And, among Christian ministries, we are not big.

Fortunately, size is not all that matters. A shepherd boy named David discovered that. But in today's spiritual battle, having the proper equipment can make the difference between success and defeat. And honestly, we have not always had the best tools. While we have done the best with what we have, it has not always been enough.

Now I believe God has put it upon my heart to create an array of new tools that will give us an edge in this all-important battle. You can help us take the offensive.

In the next few months, we will complete the first phase of producing 60 much-needed booklets. They will cover a wide variety of topics, including: roots and causes of homosexuality, public policy, adolescents and homosexuality, countering pro-gay theology, counseling the homosexual or lesbian, church and pastoral resources, evangelism to gays, help for family and friends, HIV/AIDS, and many other titles.

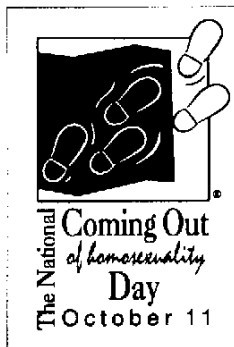
An initial printing of these booklets is going to cost an estimated \$20,000, which will come from our general budget. Can we count on your support this month, which will help us launch this important publication project? Thanks for your ongoing partnership with us, which enables us to continue producing “front line” weapons in the ongoing battle for the Truth!

Sincerely in Christ,



Bob Davies
Executive Director

P.S. We will, of course, include an order form in an upcoming issue of this newsletter when our booklets are ready for distribution. Our goal is to have the first 30 titles in print by December.



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News Release

OCTOBER 6, 1997
 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOMOSEXUALS ENCOURAGED TO 'COME OUT' OF HOMOSEXUALITY DURING THIRD ANNUAL 'NATIONAL COMING OUT OF HOMOSEXUALITY DAY'

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA — Kerusso Ministries today announced the third annual *National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day (NCOHD)* on October 11. The annual event is a direct counter to the pro-homosexual message of organizations like the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Human Rights Campaign and P-FLAG.

Michael Johnston, national chair of the event and a former homosexual with AIDS said Monday, "The message from homosexual lobby groups is one of anger and despair. They consistently blame everyone else for their misery and offer no hope to the adult or young person struggling with homosexual desires. All they can say is 'give up and give in.' The *NCOHD* project offers a different message, a message of compassion and hope."

"There are thousands of men, women and young people who have rejected a homosexual identity and gone on to live healthy normal lives," Johnston said. He readily acknowledges that the walk out of homosexuality can be a difficult one. "These individuals desperately need to know that they are not alone and that many are willing to guide and encourage them." Johnston walked away from homosexuality in 1988 after living for eleven years as an active homosexual.

Johnston said, "It is unfortunate that homosexual lobby groups continue to deny and even work to suppress the truth about so many who have walked away from homosexuality. It is cruel and anything but compassionate. They have convinced many, including many in the media, to believe a lie. This week we will take the truth to the streets to help the hurting. We will do it one community at a time, one heart at a time; that they may know the truth and the truth will set them free."

Events surrounding the October 11 observance of the *National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day* will span the country from coast to coast and include a national press event to be announced on Wednesday. Activities will include educational and ministerial outreach in local communities, churches and on college campuses. Radio specials highlighting the stories of former homosexuals are scheduled for over seven hundred radio stations across the country as well as television broadcasts in some markets.



**Statement by Robert H. Knight
Third Annual National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day
Harvard University, October 10, 1997**

Family Research Council is proud to support National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day, which celebrates a simple but profound truth: nobody has to be gay.

We are often told that the way to exhibit compassion is to accept the idea that people are born gay, can't change, and have no reason to attempt change.

We are told that being gay is just like being black or white, Asian or Hispanic, or left-handed.

We are told that so-called genetic studies 'prove' that homosexuality is immutable.

We are told that it wouldn't make any difference to a child whether he has a mom and dad in the home or two moms or two dads.

We are told that masculinity and femininity are merely cultural constructs and that sexual identity is somehow irrelevant to people's well being.

But all the sham studies, propaganda from homosexual activists and media distortions cannot hide the truth. Men and women are different. Their bodies and minds were designed to complement each other. Homosexual behavior is a misuse of sexuality that has tragic consequences for individuals, families and communities.

When men and women channel their lives -- and sexual desires -- into the God-given state of marriage, they not only maximize their sexual potential but they also create the foundational unit of civilization.

Harvard's own Pitirim Sorokin, founder of the university's sociology department, warned us 56 years ago in his landmark book *The Crisis of Our Age* that America was becoming a sensate culture. As support for marriage and family declines, he wrote, a new ethos would arise based on sating of appetites rather than pursuit of virtue. This "sensate culture," he concluded, would wreak social havoc. Can anyone honestly say that the breakdown of sexual morality has led to happier, more stable families, less crime, fewer diseases, higher regard for human life, or more productive, fulfilled citizens?

The sexual revolution, of which homosexual activism is a key part, has laid waste to countless lives, destroyed families, and shattered hope for people who have been cast adrift into a deadly carnival of excess. It's time to reaffirm the permanent things of marriage and family and sexual sanity. It's time to throw people a life preserver instead of a life destroyer, which the homosexual subculture surely is.

Many people have left homosexuality behind. Many have come out of the so-called gay lifestyle and into a healthier way of life that is far more likely to lead to happiness. It is not compassionate to deny people a way out of a behavior that is immoral and documentably dangerous. It's time for the Harvard community and the nation to examine the research, to search the soul, and to choose life, hope, and healing instead of hopelessness, physical risk and spiritual degradation. It's time to value people's lives and their eternal souls over the dictates of political correctness.

Given the overwhelming medical evidence that homosexuality is neither healthy nor likely to lead to a happy, fulfilled life -- in fact, it can and all too often has cut young lives short -- the most compassionate response would be to offer people struggling with homosexuality a way out. Unfortunately, organizations like the American Psychological Association, the National Education Association, and the American Library Association have been cajoled by homosexual activists, who have worked to suppress the good news of hope and healing that we are celebrating today. Likewise, the blessing of same-sex unions under church auspices sends the destructive message that the church no longer rests on God's law as expressed through nature and written in the Bible, but on the ever-trendy pronouncements of New Age clerics whose sense of obligation seems to run first to human desires then to divine design.

Family Research Council salutes National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day and challenges the Harvard University community as a whole to reassess homosexuality, to look at the impact it is having on homosexuals themselves, on sexually vulnerable children, and on a nation reeling from sexual excess of all types.

As the so-called gay rights movement advances, other citizens are losing the freedom to disagree with it. All over America, ordinary people are being harassed, silenced, and even fired from their jobs simply for not acceding to the latest homosexual demand under the guise of "diversity." Gay activists' hijacking of the moral capital of the civil rights movement is undercutting the central message of that movement.

In the name of civil rights, the Boy Scouts of America have been under vicious legal attack. Parents are being told, incredibly, that, in this free land of ours, they should not be permitted to entrust their children to a group that shares their most deeply held values. The Scouts have spent an estimated \$7 million in legal fees to protect their constitutional right to retain their moral code in the face of this intolerant siege by pro-homosexual lawyers.

On college campuses, homosexual activists routinely intimidate and silence anyone who disagrees with their agenda. In corporations and in government, employees are being subjected to “diversity” training that flies in the face of their religious beliefs and First Amendment rights. For anyone who wants to learn more about this disturbing trend, please see Family Research Council’s report *The Other Side of Tolerance*.

In sum, homosexual activists are trying to create a world in which all dissent on the issue will be criminalized. Despite their efforts, they will never succeed in silencing those with another message -- that of hope and healing.

Everyone at Harvard, and around the world, has the right to know that homosexuality is preventable and treatable.

There is hope and healing -- including sexual healing -- in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It’s a message that some of the world hates, but which has given life to hundreds of millions of sinners worldwide -- including me and the other speakers -- over the past 2,000 years.

It is a message that is as available to homosexuals as it is to any other sinner. It is a message that should be resounding through Harvard Yard -- and inside Harvard’s Memorial Church. Indeed, it is a universal message that speaks with special urgency in our time and on this day.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 10, 1997
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FRC LAUDS NATIONAL COMING OUT OF HOMOSEXUALITY DAY

**Knight Urges Harvard Community to "Examine the Research,
Search the Soul, and Choose Life, Hope and Healing"**

BOSTON, MA— "The sexual revolution, of which homosexual activism is a key part, has lain waste to countless lives, destroyed families and shattered hope for people who have been cast adrift into a deadly carnival of excess," FRC Director of Cultural Studies Bob Knight said Friday. "It's time to reaffirm the permanent things of marriage and family and sexual sanity. It's time to throw people a life preserver instead of a life taker, which the homosexual subculture surely is."

Knight made his comments at the third annual "National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day," held this year at Harvard University. Leaders from organizations across the country made the trip to Cambridge to show support for the ex-gay movement. Speakers included Michael Johnston, a former homosexual who is living with AIDS and Rev. Jarrett Ellis, great-grandson of Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. and chairman of King for America.

"Many people have left homosexuality behind," Knight said. "Many have come out of the so-called gay lifestyle and into a healthier way of life that is far more likely to lead to happiness. It is not compassionate to deny people a way out of a behavior that is immoral and dangerous. It's time for the Harvard community to examine the research, to search the soul, and to choose life, hope and healing instead of hopelessness, physical risk and spiritual degradation. It's time to value people's lives and their eternal souls over the dictates of political correctness."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST INTERVIEWS, CALL
FRC'S PRESS OFFICE.**

-END-

PRESS RELEASE

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601/844-5036

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL 'COMING OUT OF HOMOSEXUALITY DAY' HELPS HOMOSEXUALS LEAVE LIFESTYLE

TUPELO, MS — October 6, 1997 — The national '*Coming Out of Homosexuality Day*' project encourages men, women, and young people to reject homosexual desires and embrace their natural heterosexual desires and identity. The national '*Coming Out of Homosexuality Day*' is observed on October 11 to counter the pro-homosexual '*Coming Out Day*.' The same day was chosen to call attention to the contradictions between the philosophy of homosexual activists and the values held by most Americans.

American Family Association (AFA) will serve as one of the national sponsors of this year's event. "The homosexual rights movement in America is bringing us to a very significant crossroads. Indifference or neutrality toward the homosexual rights movement will result in society's destruction by allowing civil order to be redefined and by plummeting ourselves, our children and grandchildren into an age of godlessness. A national '*Coming Out of Homosexuality Day*' provides us a means whereby to dispel the lies of the homosexual rights crowd who say they are born that way and cannot change," according to AFA President Donald E. Wildmon.

The national event was started in 1995 by Michael Johnston, founder of Kerusso Ministries and chair of the project. Johnston was involved in homosexuality for 11 years and understands how important it is for an opposing view to be communicated at the local level. "Every time our young people hear about a 'gay' pride event or 'coming out' celebration, they become less sensitive to the perversity of homosexuality and more likely to experiment with it. One thing we have learned from homosexual activists is that a very small group or even an individual with a simple public display can change a mind and have a huge impact on someone's life," Johnston said.

The local events during the week leading up to and including that day are designed to spotlight ministry and public education efforts by individuals, local and national organizations, students on high school and college campuses, businesses and churches. AFA believes that more must be done to communicate the truth about homosexuality and to provide a message of hope for those struggling with homosexual desires.

