



Calculated Compassion:

How the Ex-Gay Movement Serves
the Right's Attack on Democracy

October 1998

A report from Political Research Associates,
the Policy Institute of the National Gay and
Lesbian Task Force, and Equal Partners in Faith

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Written by Surina Khan

October 1998

Published by Political Research Associates,
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Report designed by Debbie Hird and printed by Massachusetts Teachers Association.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PRA, NGLTF, and EPF gratefully acknowledge the support of the funders who helped make possible the research, writing, and distribution of this report. 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 clearinghouse and resource center on the political Right for concerned 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.

PREFACE

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 gay, lesbian, 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 report examines 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 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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 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 authoritarian 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 divisive political 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.

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by Surina Khan

“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.”¹

–Robert Knight, Family Research Council

“This [the national ex-gay ad campaign] is the Normandy landing in the larger cultural wars.”¹

–Robert Knight, Family Research Council,
Detroit Free Press, July 17, 1998

Overview

On July 13, 1998, a full-page advertisement promoting the “ex-gay” movement ran in *The New York Times*.² Featuring Anne Paulk — billed as a wife, mother, and a former lesbian, and pictured wearing a sparkling solitaire diamond engagement ring with a wedding band — the ad claimed that homosexuals can become heterosexual by accepting Jesus Christ and repenting their sins. *The New York Times* ad was followed by similar ads, in *USA Today* featuring professional football player Reggie White, and in *The Washington Post* featuring a group of ex-gay leaders.³ The \$206,000 ad campaign sparked a media firestorm which resulted in the largest public exposure that the ex-gay movement has ever received.⁴

The ads were purchased by a well-coordinated and well-financed coalition of fifteen Christian Right and ex-gay organizations, including the Family Research Council, the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America, Kerusso Ministries, and the American Family Association. They represent a re-framing by the Christian Right of its long-standing condemnation of homosexuality and opposition to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights. By elevating the ex-gay movement, the Christian Right has shifted its message to a model of preaching personal salvation for homosexuals.⁵ “Calling homosexual behavior sin is not anti-gay, it's pro-life,” reads one ad. “Thousands of homosexuals can celebrate a new life because someone cared enough to share with them the truth of God's healing love,” reads another. But behind this mask of compassion, the anti-gay and authoritarian agenda of the Right remains unchanged. This report locates the ex-gay movement in the context in which it

By re-framing its attack on homosexuality in kinder, gentler terms, the Christian Right is putting forth a softer face that cloaks a hard line agenda, which includes rolling back lesbian and gay civil rights, enforcing criminal laws against gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people, and promoting a broader theocratic agenda based on a literal interpretation of Biblical Scripture.

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belongs: as part of the Right's larger social change movement, which promotes an agenda of sweeping social, political, cultural, and economic changes.

The ex-gay movement is an international network that claims gay men and lesbians can be "converted" to heterosexuality through "submission to Jesus Christ" or through secular "reparative therapy." During the past two decades, the ex-gay movement has operated as part of, but separate from, the Christian Right. For years, ex-gay leaders had difficulty convincing churches and Christian Right organizations to support ex-gay ministries, since ex-gay leaders still carried the stigma of homosexuality. The Right's position of outright condemnation of homosexuality kept it from comfortably embracing anyone who had been gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender.

Programs of psychotherapy that attempt to "cure" homosexuals, known as "conversion therapy" or "reparative therapy," date back several decades, but only in the last few years has the Christian Right fully accepted the ex-gay movement and subsequently catapulted "gay conversion" onto the screen of national public debate.⁶ It did so when outright condemnation began to fail as a political message, creating the need for a new and more effective way to reach people. Christian Right organizations had not realized the political opportunities that a partnership with the ex-gay movement would bring, especially the political benefit of borrowing the notion of reparative therapy from the secular Right, which has long been a proponent of conversion therapy for homosexuals.

Reparative therapy has been widely repudiated by the American Psychological Association and other mainstream mental health organizations. However, Christian Right leaders are undeterred in their zeal to use the ex-gay movement for political gain. This report details the political agenda that a partnership between the Christian Right and the ex-gay movement promotes. It also refutes the claim by the Christian Right that its views on homosexuality reflect those of most Christians and Americans of other faiths.

The report reviews extensive evidence that:

- By re-framing its attack on homosexuality in kinder, gentler terms, the Christian Right is putting forth a softer face that cloaks a hard line agenda, which includes rolling back lesbian and gay civil rights, enforcing criminal laws against gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people, and promoting a broader theocratic agenda based on a literal interpretation of Biblical Scripture. Each aspect of this right-wing political agenda represents a grave threat to democracy and diversity in the US.
- The ex-gay movement lends political cover to the Right's hostile political campaign against gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people. In fact, using the ex-gay movement is just the latest strategy in the Right's

decades-long attack on the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community, and the ex-gay movement must be analyzed in this historical context. If homosexuality is a “choice” that can be overcome, then, it is argued, a “gay lifestyle” is voluntary and therefore does not deserve protection under the Constitution.

- In asserting that homosexuality is a sin that can be overcome, the Christian Right is at odds with many mainstream communities of faith which advocate equal rights for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people and also affirm their full religious equality.

A complex movement with many sectors, the Right has a multitude of infrastructure organizations, including publishing houses, legal organizations, mass-based organizations, think tanks, and funding organizations that consistently provide the basic resources needed for the movement to survive and prosper.⁷ These infrastructure organizations are able to respond quickly to political opportunities, such as the emergence of the ex-gay movement. Collectively, infrastructure organizations on the Right have formed an effective communications network and a structure of support for the movement.⁸

In furtherance of its agenda, the Christian Right seeks to impose universal standards of conduct based on its narrow interpretation of Biblical scripture — which would denote the only legitimate and acceptable form of behavior for all citizens.⁹ The Christian Right is attempting to pressure the Republican Party to enact this agenda through legislation, state regulations, and through media campaigns which represent a crusade for “coercive purity.”¹⁰ If the Christian Right has its way, the result will be a form of Christian nationalism that would tear down the walls separating church and state. This vision is authoritarian, anti-democratic, and inconsistent with the American tradition of pluralism, tolerance, and respect for difference. The ex-gay movement subscribes to and serves the Right’s broader vision.

If the Christian Right has its way, the result will be a form of Christian nationalism that would tear down the walls separating church and state. This vision is authoritarian, anti-democratic, and inconsistent with the American tradition of pluralism, tolerance, and respect for difference.

Methodology

The findings in this report are based on an extensive analysis of ex-gay and Christian Right organizations. Research was conducted from 1995 to 1998; the author reviewed primary and secondary source materials, attended two ex-gay conferences (Exodus International's annual conference in 1995 and the Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays annual conference in 1998), and interviewed selected ex-gay leaders, Christian Right leaders, and former ex-gay individuals.

Primary source material was collected from a number of ex-gay and Christian Right organizations by requesting to be put on mailing lists, subscribing to publications, ordering materials, and monitoring web sites. Ex-gay groups studied in-depth include Exodus International, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (P-FOX), Homosexuals Anonymous, Courage, the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), Regeneration Books, Kerusso Ministries, and Love in Action. Christian Right organizations studied include Concerned Women for America, The Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, Coral Ridge Ministries, American Family Association, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, Christian Coalition, and the Center for Reclaiming America.

In addition, the author reviewed literature analyzing the Christian Right's historic and strategic attack on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender civil rights, beginning with Anita Bryant's opposition to gay rights in 1976 in Dade County, Florida and including right-wing attacks on lesbian and gay "special rights" in the 1980s and 1990s.

In an attempt to track the financial support for ex-gay organizations, several requests for information were filed. Form 4506-A (requesting IRS exemption applications), Form 990, Form 990-EZ and Form 990-PF were filed by the DataCenter on behalf of Political Research Associates. Information was requested on P-FOX, NARTH, Exodus, and Kerusso Ministries. The DataCenter was also contracted by PRA to conduct a complete literature search of mainstream media converge of ex-gay movement organizations. The facts contained in this literature guided us in determining the strong political ties between the Christian Right and the ex-gay movement and the broader theocratic agenda this partnership seeks to impose.

What is the Ex-Gay Movement?

The ex-gay movement is an international network that claims gay men and lesbians can be “converted” to heterosexuality through submission to Jesus Christ, or through secular “reparative therapy.” Although the ex-gay movement is firmly rooted in the predominantly Protestant Christian Right, right-wing Catholic ministries and secular organizations make important contributions to the movement and share its vision. Movement leaders assert that a gay man or lesbian can leave the gay life and become a “whole person again”— the person who existed before homosexual feelings appeared.

Ex-gay leaders hold positions that are ideologically consistent with the contemporary Christian Right. They uphold heterosexuality as God’s creative intent for humanity, and consequently view homosexual expression as contrary to God’s will.¹¹ The ex-gay movement’s philosophy is based implicitly on a hierarchical structure in which God is a heterosexual male, and heterosexual men, created in the image of this God, are superior to women.

The most prominent organization in the movement is the Seattle-based Exodus International, an ex-gay referral network of ministries founded in 1976 that now claims more than 100 ministries in the US, Canada, and 20 other countries.¹² Exodus states its primary purpose is “to proclaim that freedom from homosexuality is possible through the power of Jesus Christ.” Exodus cites homosexual tendencies as one of the many social disorders in a world that has fallen from God’s grace. Choosing to act on these tendencies through homosexual behavior, taking on a homosexual identity, and becoming involved in a homosexual “lifestyle” are considered destructive and sinful, because these actions distort God’s intent for the individual.¹³ Exodus attracted media attention in 1978 when two of its founders, Gary Cooper and Michael Busee, left the ministry after falling in love with each other. Together they went on the talk show circuit in the early 1990s to tell their story. Busee and Cooper repeatedly called ex-gay ministries a fraud that promote homophobia and self-hatred. They told stories of people who went through the Exodus program and had emotional breakdowns or committed suicide. After interacting with hundreds of people, Busee and Cooper said they hadn’t met one person who successfully changed their sexual orientation from gay to straight.¹⁴

Exodus International is only one of many ex-gay organizations. Others include Homosexuals Anonymous, a Christian fellowship that follows a 14-step process based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model; Transforming Congregations, a movement of churches founded by the Rev. Robert Kuyper of Trinity United Methodist Church in Bakersfield, CA; Regeneration Books, an Exodus International ministry dedicated to providing “the best Christian books dealing with the healing of the homosexual;” The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), founded in 1993 by Charles Socarides, MD, a Fellow of the American Psychological

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The premise that homosexuality is caused by early-childhood experiences is a common theme that runs through the ex-gay movement and is used by both the secular and religious arms of the movement.

Association, and Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D., author of *Reparative Therapy for Male Homosexuals: A New Clinical Approach* (NARTH was founded to counter the American Psychological Association's removal of homosexuality from its roster of mental disorders); Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (P-FOX), a "Christ-centered" organization founded in 1995 to counter Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); Courage, a Catholic ex-gay ministry that provides "spiritual support for men and women striving to live chaste lives in accordance with the Catholic Church's pastoral teaching on homosexuality;" and the St. Augustine Sexual Healing Bookstore, the first ex-gay Christian bookstore which opened in February 1998 in Washington, DC and has more than 100 titles on how homosexuals can have "sexual healing" and change to heterosexuality.

The ex-gay movement is characterized by a few recurring themes. Leaders of the ex-gay movement claim that people are not born homosexual because homosexuality is a mistake, and God, in whose image all people are created, does not make mistakes. They argue that homosexuality usually stems from not having the "correct" relationship and bonding with the same-sex parent. Authors and ex-gay leaders Bob Davies and Lori Rentzel, in their book, *Coming Out of Homosexuality: New Freedom for Men and Women*, write: "While a breakdown in the bond with the mother deeply affects both male and female babies, sexual identity seems to be more noticeably shaped by disrupting bonding with the same-sex parent: little girls lacking an intimate attachment to Mom, boys feeling detached and alienated from Dad."¹⁵

Another recurrent theme is that childhood sexual abuse and molestation causes homosexuality. Ex-gay leaders believe that, especially for girls, sexual abuse can be a significant factor in their future identification as lesbians. "While the family dynamics, temperament, and peer pressure strongly shape a person's sexual identity, the single factor that most powerfully propels a girl toward a lesbian identity is sexual abuse: incest, rape or molestation," write Davies and Rentzel. At the second annual P-FOX (Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays) conference in March 1998 one "ex-lesbian," Cyndi Dollof, said she has come to believe that because she was separated from her mother for the first three days of her life in the hospital, she missed that important bonding and this contributed to her being in the "lesbian lifestyle."¹⁶ Dollof's story serves as an example of how broadly "correct bonding" with same sex parents can be interpreted. The premise that homosexuality is caused by early-childhood experiences is a common theme that runs through the ex-gay movement and is used by both the secular and religious arms of the movement.

Reparative Therapy: Idealized Heterosexuality

Reparative therapy has deep roots in the history of psychology. Prior to the American Psychological Association's 1973 decision to remove homosexuality from its roster of mental disorders, homosexuality was regarded as a mental illness and therapy for homosexuals included not only psychotherapy but also aversion therapy and shock therapy, both of which were practiced with regularity.¹⁷

Over the past four decades, several psychologists and psychiatrists have contributed to the notion that homosexuality is caused by childhood circumstances and can be unlearned. In 1962, Irving Bieber's book, *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytical Study of Male Homosexuals*—a work that was instantly hailed within the psychiatric profession and is still cited today by ex-gay leaders—begins with the assumption that homosexuality is pathological. Bieber, like his colleagues Joseph Nicolosi, Charles Socarides (whose son is gay) and Jeffrey Satinover, insists that homosexuality in men is a result of a particular family configuration—dominant mothers and distant fathers.

The lead organization advocating secular reparative therapy is the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH). NARTH was founded in 1992 by Charles Socarides, Benjamin Kaufman, and Joseph Nicolosi in preparation for the 20th anniversary of the 1973 decision by the American Psychological Association to remove homosexuality from its Diagnostic Manual, the official APA manual that lists all mental and emotional disorders.¹⁸ NARTH's statement of policy idealizes heterosexuality as the norm and the organization clearly values social conformity above the needs of the individual:

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. Yet today children from kindergarten through college are being taught in school that homosexuality is nothing but a normal, healthy option. It is our policy as psychoanalytically-informed individuals to dispel the misinformation that surrounds the subject of homosexuality. Our task is to discuss issues misrepresented by social-activist groups who have portrayed sexual deviancy as a normal way of life. We seek to further the research and treatment of this disorder, while protecting the patient's right to treatment.

NARTH's presence in the psychotherapy profession is small but significant. NARTH members are licensed psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and medical professionals who, by virtue of their credentials, have some influence within certain psychotherapy and medical institutions. In addition, these credentials give their ideas the appearance of legitimacy when marketed to the public. Last year, Charles Socarides, Benjamin Kaufman, Joseph Nicolosi, Jeffrey Satinover, and Richard Fitzgibbons co-authored an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* advocating reparative therapy for gay men:

In response to the aggressive marketing of reparative and conversion therapy to both the public and the psychotherapy profession, the American Psychological Association, in August 1997, reiterated its long-standing official position that homosexuality and bisexuality are not mental disorders and therefore do not require treatment.

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Advocates of secular reparative therapy for gay men and lesbians play an important role within the ex-gay movement and the homophobic agenda of the Christian Right, blurring the lines between clinical and political issues.

*Suppose that a young man, seeking help for a psychological condition that was associated with serious health risks and made him desperately unhappy were to be told by the professional he consulted that no treatment is available, that his condition is permanent and genetically based, and that he must learn to live with it? How would this man and his family feel when they discovered years later that numerous therapeutic approaches have been available for his specific problem for more than 60 years? What would be his reaction when informed that, although none of these approaches guaranteed results and most required a long period of treatment, a patient who was willing to follow a proven treatment regime had a good chance of being free from the condition?*²⁰

In response to the aggressive marketing of reparative and conversion therapy to both the public and the psychotherapy profession, the American Psychological Association, in August 1997, reiterated its long-standing official position that homosexuality and bisexuality are not mental disorders and therefore do not require treatment:

*Lesbians and gay people are the targets of considerable prejudice, discrimination, and even violence in our society. This is true in families, schools, churches, friendship networks, workplaces—all institutions in our society. All people, particularly young people, legitimately fear this prejudice, discrimination, and violence. For some the fear appears to be so powerfully internalized as shame and guilt that they wish to alter themselves to avoid it. Furthermore, there are powerful coercive forces operating in some institutions. While we respect the choice of some individuals to remain celibate due to their religious beliefs, it is important to recognize that celibacy is a behavior choice not a reformation of a person's sexual orientation. For example, in certain religious organizations homosexual people who are members of those organizations feel it necessary to change sexual behavior in order to retain their membership.*²¹

The assessment of the American Psychological Association is echoed by other major medical and psychiatric institutions including the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Medical Association.²² However, leaders within NARTH continue to promote reparative therapy despite its repudiation by virtually the entire mental health establishment. In his book, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, Jeffrey Satinover advocates medication for homosexuals. “Although research on the use of medications to change homosexuality would be quite difficult to accomplish in the current environment, there are nonetheless some indications that such an approach might help.”²³

Although NARTH has conducted a study analyzing its success rate with reparative therapy, it is difficult to give an accurate rate of success since it is unethical to contact

clients once they have terminated therapy.²⁴ However, as Dr. Joseph Nicolosi notes, reparative therapists cite a 33% success rate. Nicolosi states that one third of patients experience no change, one third experience some change, and one third are cured. But by “cure” he doesn’t mean that people don’t experience homosexual feelings, but rather “the intensity of the attractions and the frequency of the attractions diminish to the point of being insignificant. The treatment goal is to teach these people how to identify the things that are going on in their lives that set them up for homosexual attractions.”²⁵ In other words, reparative therapists attempt to teach gay men and lesbians to repress their sexual identity, yet have a dismal failure rate of 67% in trying to reach this goal, even by their own questionable standards.

Advocates of secular reparative therapy for gay men and lesbians play an important role within the ex-gay movement and the homophobic agenda of the Christian Right, blurring the lines between clinical and political issues. In his *Journal of Homosexuality* article “I’m Your Handyman: A History of Reparative Therapies,” Jack Drescher, MD notes, “The evolution of one branch of psychoanalytic theory into an antihomosexual political movement illustrates the permeability of boundaries between clinical issues and political ones. In their open support of antigay legislation, reparative therapists have moved from the traditional psychoanalytic center and have been embraced by conservative religious and political forces opposed to homosexuality.”²⁶

...reparative therapists attempt to teach gay men and lesbians to repress their sexual identity, yet have a dismal failure rate of 67% in trying to reach this goal, even by their own questionable standards.

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

The organizations that collaborated to place ads promoting the ex-gay movement in national newspapers in July 1998 are the architects of a profound assault on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights.

The contemporary gay rights movement was born in the 1950s and erupted into national view on June 27, 1969, when police made a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. For the first time, patrons rebelled in protest and that night is now commemorated as the beginning of the US movement for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender liberation. Stonewall, as it has come to be known, was followed by a severe backlash, organized by Christian Right leaders in the 1970s and succeeded by a coordinated effort by several right-wing organizations in the '80s and '90s.²⁷

The organizations that collaborated to place ads promoting the ex-gay movement in national newspapers in July 1998 are the architects of a profound assault on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights. They are part of a large, coordinated, and well-funded movement that has been active for the last two decades, promoting a “family values” agenda that emphasizes traditional gender roles and the submission of wives and children to the father as head of the family. In the late '70s and '80s several right-wing leaders began to understand the appeal of anti-homosexual propaganda as a means to organize and mobilize conservative Christian constituents, recruit new followers, and raise money. Several anti-homosexual campaigns conducted during this period, including Anita Bryant's anti-gay campaign and the Briggs Initiative in California, used language that demonized and scapegoated lesbians and gay men. In 1989, Traditional Values Coalition president Rev. Louis Sheldon wrote: “Going to a behavior-based status, as opposed to a true ‘discrete and insular’ minority opens up minority status to all behavior-based groups like smokers, bikers, adulterers, pedophiles, thieves, prostitutes, basketball players, outdoorsmen, etc. ‘Gay rights’ activists have parasited the civil rights movement thereby causing society to accept the behavior of same-sex sodomy on equal standing with those born to a certain race or color.”²⁸

In the 1990s the Christian Right has continued its attack on lesbians and gay men, often slandering them by painting the “gay lifestyle” as unhealthy and obsessed with sex. Throughout the 1990s, the Right used ballot measures at the state level and legislation at the federal level in an attempt to deny civil rights legal protections to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people, and to repeal existing laws granting those protections. In the early part of the decade, right-wing leaders vilified gay men and lesbians through their publications as well as through vehicles such as *The Gay Agenda*, a twenty minute video featuring sensational scenes from pride marches and interviews with homophobic doctors. *The Gay Agenda* was followed by *Gay Rights, Special Rights*, produced by the Traditional Values Coalition in conjunction with Jeremiah Films, an organization that specializes in producing videos promoting Christian ortho-

doxy, conspiracy theories, and apocalyptic warnings. *Gay Rights, Special Rights* had one explicit goal: to convince conservative people of color that gay men and lesbians were trying to co-opt the civil rights movement in order to secure “special rights.”²⁹

For years the Christian Right has used homophobic rhetoric to raise money and recruit followers.³⁰ “We are at war in America today... We don’t want our children taught that the sin of homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle ‘choice,’” wrote Beverly LaHaye, former president and current chairman of Concerned Women for America in a 1992 fundraising appeal. “Young boys and girls must not be taught that for a man to love another man is as normal as the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage.” By picking on a group of people for whom the general public often shows little sympathy, organizers of the Christian Right found a profitable target, a symbol for the so-called liberal attack on the traditional family.³¹

Currently, prominent Christian Right organizations continue to be in the forefront of opposition to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights. Now the Christian Right has forged a formidable alliance with the ex-gay movement and its leaders, and, in conjunction with the ex-gay movement, has reinvigorated its old message of “no special rights” for homosexuals, casting these rights as the illegitimate demand of an undeserving group.

Christian Right organizations are increasingly using the ex-gay movement in their anti-gay campaigns, lending credibility and legitimacy as well as organizational and financial support to ex-gay organizations and leaders.³² There are several examples of ex-gay leaders and Christian Right leaders working together, often within each other’s organizations:

- Recently, Focus on the Family hired ex-gay leader John Paulk, a former drag queen and current chairman of the board of Exodus International, to serve as its legislative and cultural affairs analyst.³³
- Focus on the Family’s sister organization in Washington, DC, the Family Research Council (FRC), has provided organizational and financial support to Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (P-FOX) and Transformation Ex-Gay Ministries in Washington, DC. In October 1996 FRC sponsored a press conference to launch P-FOX.³⁴
- Robert Knight, Cultural Director for FRC, sits on the board of P-FOX.
- 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, a Cincinnati-based coalition of approximately twenty organizations working to oppose same-sex marriage legislation.³⁵

Now the Christian Right has forged a formidable alliance with the ex-gay movement and its leaders, and, in conjunction with the ex-gay movement, has reinvigorated its old message of “no special rights” for homosexuals, casting these rights as the illegitimate demand of an undeserving group.

Support from high-profile Christian Right leaders has been an invaluable tool in bringing the ex-gay movement to prominence.

- Tony Marco, a key architect of Colorado’s anti-gay Amendment 2,³⁶ and author of an influential 1992 paper titled “Special Class Protections for Gays: A Question of Behavior and Consequences,” is also a co-author of John Paulk’s 1998 book, *Not Afraid to Change: The Remarkable Story of How One Man Overcame Homosexuality*.³⁷

In addition, Exodus and other ex-gay organizations get referrals from, and maintain close links with, many major Christian Right organizations, including the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, Promise Keepers, Rev. Pat Robertson’s 700 Club, Campus Crusade for Christ, Rev. D. James Kennedy’s Center for Reclaiming America, Concerned Women for America, the American Family Association, Minirth-Meier Clinics, and Coral Ridge Ministries.³⁸

Support from high-profile Christian Right leaders has been an invaluable tool in bringing the ex-gay movement to prominence. Donald Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, summarized the importance of a partnership with the ex-gay movement in a press release: “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.”³⁹

In *Not By Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right*, author Sara Diamond gives an example of how the Christian Right frames the issue of (ex)gayness, by recounting a 1994 Focus on the Family cover story on ex-gay Christians. In the story, one of the testimonies was by a woman named Jamie Breedlove, who had first “fallen into” homosexuality after the tragic death of her boyfriend, whom she had hoped to marry. After his death, the grief-stricken Jaime had an affair with her female Bible College roommate. While she remained a Christian, Jaime went from one lesbian relationship to another. Her parents were crushed and their devastation led Jaime to struggle with the question of whether she would be kept out of heaven because of her sin. She then met her future husband, who knew she was a lesbian but still wanted to date her. Jaime married Ben and gave up her lesbian lifestyle. Together they started His Heart North, a Colorado ministry for homosexuals seeking change.⁴¹

“Left unexamined,” writes Diamond, “are questions of what ‘lifestyle’ Jaime might have chosen had she not been stigmatized by her own parents and by a religious dogma that would keep her from entering heaven. Might she have avoided years’ worth of painful guilt, started another kind of family, and still, also become a helpful counselor?”⁴² By tapping into people’s fears and insecurities, the Christian Right is

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advancing a rigid definition of personal and family identity, claiming that the only path to personal happiness is a heterosexual identity.

The broader goal of the Christian Right is to impose its narrow worldview which mandates a rigid set of values for men and women. Many Christian Right leaders advocate Christian nationalism, an ideology that seeks to use government laws and regulations to impose fundamentalist Christian values on the entire nation.⁴³ Rev. D. James Kennedy, president of the Center for Reclaiming America, envisions the US as a Christian nation. “I am sure that only a Christian-controlled country is going to be able to stand up to the impending threat and avert the approaching disaster that our nation is facing.”⁴⁴

By tapping into people's fears and insecurities, the Christian Right is advancing a rigid definition of personal and family identity, claiming that the only path to personal happiness is a heterosexual identity.

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Selective Christianity

Through their well-publicized proclamations on the subject, the leaders of the ex-gay ministries and their Christian Right partners have tried to create the impression that their abhorrence of homosexuality and their opposition to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights on religious grounds is widely shared by other Americans of faith. This, in fact, is not the case.

Just as the ex-gay movement's methodology and data are rejected by professional organizations of psychologists and psychiatrists, some of its key theological premises are rejected in mainstream religious communities. When the ex-gay movement operated outside the political arena, many religious leaders—strong believers in religious freedom for all—took a neutral stance. However, its recent marriage to the anti-gay political agenda of the Right brings it into sharp conflict with many religious leaders who publicly support equality under American law for people of all sexual orientations.

As mentioned, Christian ex-gay ministries have as their first premise that heterosexuality is God's creative intent for humanity. That premise is being widely debated among theologians today, and seriously challenged by a number of Biblical scholars and religious leaders. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said: "We make [homosexuals] doubt that they are the children of God, and this must be nearly the ultimate blasphemy."⁴⁵

In 1997 the US Catholic Bishops wrote a public letter on the issue of homosexuality in which they state, "God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps us to define the unique persons we are. One component of our sexual identity is sexual orientation...God does not love someone any less simply because he or she is homosexual."⁴⁶

In testimony before the US Congress, the Rev. Dr. Herbert Valentine, Moderator of the 203rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, (USA, observed) notes that homosexuality is not a prominent Biblical concern. "If you sat down to read what the Bible had to say about homosexuality, you would find it short reading... You have to really hunt for relevant passages. They are not mentioned in the ten Commandments ...there is not a single statement in any of the four Gospels. Homosexuality is not a big Biblical issue. If Jesus had an opinion in this matter, he didn't express it."⁴⁷

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has also weighed in on the subject of homosexuality: "In accordance with the teaching of Reform Judaism that all human beings are created 'Betsalem elohim' (in the divine image), Reform Judaism...stands in the vanguard of support for the full recognition of equality for lesbians and gays in society."⁴⁸

Clearly, the premise that heterosexuality is God's creative intent for humanity is controversial within the religious community. Even more controversial is the second

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premise of ex-gay ministries: that when a person has a correct relationship with God, that person will have a heterosexual orientation. This premise is marginal among prominent theologians, many ministers, and lay people, as well as within denominational bodies, just as it is marginal within the professional psychological and psychiatric communities.

In their 1997 letter, the US Catholic Bishops noted that there seemed to be no single cause of a homosexual orientation and that, in fact, experts commonly believe that multiple factors are involved. “Generally, homosexual orientation is experienced as a given, not as something freely chosen. By itself, therefore, a homosexual orientation cannot be considered sinful, for morality presumes the freedom to choose.”⁴⁹

The linkage of ex-gay ministries with right-wing political groups leads to a third premise: that because sexual orientation can be changed, no civil rights should be accorded to those homosexual or bisexual people who do not become heterosexual. This premise is widely rejected by a majority of Christian and Jewish theologians, ministers, rabbis, and lay people, as well as denominational and interfaith bodies.

Mainstream religious leaders overwhelmingly support legislation affirming the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. One simple example indicates how severely out of step the political and religious Right is within the mainstream faith community regarding gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights: numerous churches and religious organizations from the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee to the National Council of Churches, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church have endorsed the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation.⁵⁰

Opinion polls show that this opposition to discrimination on the part of mainstream religious leaders is shared by their congregations. A “Faith and Fairness” poll conducted by the Human Rights Campaign, a national lesbian and gay organization, found that: “By a margin of 3 to 1, Christians believe that Americans should be protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace. Evangelicals support protecting gays and lesbians from workplace discrimination by an impressive margin of nearly two to one...Most people of faith understand that sincere religious disagreements over the issue of sexual orientation are not grounds for discrimination, and that these deeply felt divisions ought to be checked at the workplace door—just as other religious differences already are. The following polling results help illustrate that religious Americans realize that they do not have to choose between faith and fairness—and that, in fact, faith demands fairness of us all.”

To conduct its survey, HRC asked the question, “In general, do you think gays and lesbians should be protected from discrimination in the workplace?”⁵¹

Through their well-publicized proclamations on the subject, the leaders of the ex-gay ministries and their Christian Right partners have tried to create the impression that their abhorrence of homosexuality and homosexual rights on religious grounds is widely shared by other Americans of faith. This, in fact, is not the case.

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Support for equality for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people is widespread within communities of faith. Intolerance also is widespread, but the commitment among the vast majority of people of faith to compassion and acceptance is exactly why political groups that use demonizing rhetoric, such as the Family Research Council, have needed to unite with softer, more pastorally-focused ex-gay ministries.

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	ALL CHRISTIANS	PROTESTANTS	CATHOLICS
YES	70%	65%	78%
NO	23%	26%	16%

Support for equality for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people is widespread within communities of faith. Intolerance also is widespread, but the commitment among the vast majority of people of faith to compassion and acceptance is exactly why political groups that use demonizing rhetoric, such as the Family Research Council, have needed to unite with softer, more pastorally-focused ex-gay ministries. They are looking for a way to push forward their political agenda without looking exclusive or non-compassionate.⁵²

Legal Implications

The ex-gay movement poses a significant new threat to efforts to secure civil rights legal protections for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people. Potentially, it is the most damaging manifestation of an ongoing backlash against this community.

This backlash has been spawned by heightened media visibility of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people; increased coverage of same-sex marriage; the progress toward passage of the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act; and the growing number of city and county ordinances outlawing anti-gay discrimination.⁵³

The Christian Right has mobilized against these gains with a renewed legal assault on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights. Its Congressional supporters won passage of the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, which forbids states from granting legal recognition to same-sex marriages approved in another state. The Defense of Marriage Act is an attempt to nullify the impact of a ruling in Hawaii, where a Circuit Court judge ruled that same-sex marriage partners are constitutionally entitled to the same legal recognition and rights accorded to heterosexual married partners. The state has filed an appeal to the Hawaii Supreme Court.

The ex-gay movement offers a vehicle for publicly questioning the very sexual and social identity of homosexuals and, by extension, undermining their claim to civil rights legal protections. After all, the argument goes, if lesbian and gay people need not be homosexuals, because with God's help or through reparative therapy they can "heal" themselves, then civil rights for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people are not needed.

This is a repackaging of the Right's "no special rights" theme, an idea that casts civil rights as limited to people of color. 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. The "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 a par with immutable characteristics such as skin color.⁵⁴

The ex-gay movement puts a veneer of Christian caring and compassion on the "no special rights" rationale, excising it of its former drumbeat stridency. The potential appeal to conservative Christian voters of this strategic combination of reasoned "fact"—"gays" don't need to be that way, it's just a "lifestyle choice"—and hopeful solution—"all they need to do is to embrace the power of Christ"—has already been demonstrated. In February 1998, the Christian Right and the ex-gay movement were prominent in a successful referendum campaign by "family values" forces to rescind Maine's anti-discrimination law. It was the first time an existing state law protecting lesbians and gay men from discrimination had been reversed.

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The long-term goal of the Christian Right in using the ex-gay movement to convince people that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people can become heterosexual is to create a restrictive legal environment in which equal rights are only accorded to heterosexual men and women.

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In a press release from the Family Research Council heralding the victory, FRC president Gary Bauer paid tribute to organizations involved in the campaign, including P-FOX (Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays).⁵⁵ The Christian Right strategically used the ex-gay movement to promote its anti-gay agenda in Maine. One television commercial featured several men who said they were “former homosexuals who had been saved by Christ.”⁵⁶ Anthony Falzarano of P-FOX led a “Truth Tour,” in which he and other ex-gays held themselves up as living, breathing examples of gays who claim to have changed. Their message clearly challenged gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights by asking the question: if people can leave homosexuality, why should they be protected legally? If they choose to be gay, they must accept the consequences. Given the outcome of the Maine vote, it seems likely that the Christian Right will attempt to utilize the ex-gay movement and its message to challenge gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights laws in other states, exactly the kind of political maneuvering that the Christian Right and the ex-gay movement are teaming up to accomplish.

Meanwhile, at the federal level, the Christian Right has a new tool, the logic of the ex-gay movement, to persuade the right wing of the Republican Party that gay men and lesbians do not need legal protections because their homosexuality is a lifestyle choice, not an immutable trait. Propelled by the Christian Right’s Congressional allies, in July 1998, the House of Representatives voted to deny federal funds to municipalities that require city contractors to provide domestic partnership benefits to same-sex couples. This bill targeted San Francisco, which has such a law, and serves as a warning to other cities considering similar legislation.⁵⁷

Although the GOP was unsuccessful in its attempt to repeal President Clinton’s executive order banning discrimination in federal employment, in August 1998 the House of Representatives voted to ban same-sex couples from adopting children in the District of Columbia. Several other homophobic measures around the country are still pending: in Hawaii a referendum authorizing the legislature to ban same-sex marriage is the first major ballot test of that issue, although twenty-nine state legislatures have already passed bans on such marriages; another homophobic marriage referendum is on the ballot in Alaska; and in Fayetteville, Arkansas and Fort Collins, Colorado citizens will be voting on the repeal of their laws protecting gay men and lesbians from discrimination.⁵⁸

The long-term goal of the Christian Right in using the ex-gay movement to convince people that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people can become heterosexual is to create a restrictive legal environment in which equal rights are only accorded to heterosexual men and women. Attacking rights in the legal arena is an important outgrowth of the partnership between the Christian Right and the ex-gay movement and, if unchallenged, could have serious ramifications for the civil rights of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people in the US.

Media Visibility

The 1998 ex-gay newspaper ad campaign was the brainchild of Janet Folger, national director of the Center for Reclaiming America, an advocacy group started by Rev. D. James Kennedy. Kennedy is the founder of Coral Ridge Ministries, a multimedia evangelical organization. Before joining the Center for Reclaiming America, Folger was a lobbyist for the Ohio Right to Life Society and was the major force behind Ohio's becoming the first state to ban late-term abortions. She rallied state legislators by referring to the procedure as "brain suction abortion" and displaying gory posters.

Folger came up with the idea to place national ads promoting the ex-gay movement after public comments by Senator Trent Lott likened homosexuality to kleptomania and alcoholism, and football star Reggie White called homosexuality a sin. In a conference call to conservative strategists on June 24, Folger proposed taking out full-page newspaper ads that would showcase "former homosexuals" who "overcame" their sexual orientation through prayer and with the help of ex-gay ministries.⁵⁹ Folger raised \$400,000 and placed the ads in national newspapers including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Los Angeles Times*.

The national ad campaign generated an impressive wave of media coverage for the ex-gay movement. For the most part, the media has been generous to the movement, covering it as a human interest story and neglecting to unmask the political and legal implications of the ex-gay movement's partnership with the Christian Right.

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.

Media coverage of the ex-gay movement has included national network television, as well as articles about the ex-gay ad campaign in *Newsweek*, *Time Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *USA Today*, and *The Washington Post*, among other publications. With this kind of extensive media coverage, the ex-gay movement is successfully raising its public profile, furthering its chances of convincing people that gays need not "be that way," while it reinforces the work of Christian leaders and activists who oppose civil rights for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people.

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.

This visibility, enhanced by the organizational and financial support of Christian Right organizations like the Family Research Council, furthers the goals of the Christian Right and strengthens the ex-gay movement. And in the process, thousands of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people who are struggling with coming out and struggling with reconciling their religious beliefs with their sexuality, are being exploited for political gain.

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In addition, the ex-gay ad campaign is currently being used as a fundraising tool by certain Christian Right organizations. “CWA is making Headlines & America is Waking Up!” asserts a Concerned Women for America fundraising appeal sent out in August 1998. The appeal features pictures of the ads and gives a chronology of when and where the ads were placed. “With your financial support, Concerned Women for America constantly monitors the progress of the radical homosexual movement. CEO Jim Woodall and President Carmen Pate meet monthly with representatives from various pro-family groups. Together, this coalition has been dedicated to stopping the tide of homosexual activism which is seeping into the nation’s mindset, threatening to undermine the traditional family.”⁶⁰

Colorado for Family Values mailed a similar fundraising appeal, enclosing a copy of the ex-gay advertisement placed in *The New York Times*. “In the days of Amendment 2, we saw intense, hard-hitting, unwanted attacks on people of stature like (Coach) Bill McCartney and (Senator) Bill Armstrong. Today we are seeing the same intensity of smears and attacks on people of stature such as All Pro Reggie White, Senator Trent Lott, and recording artists like the Winans sisters,” notes the letter. “The threat today is even more serious than it was in 1992. We face a very intense campaign to force homosexuality onto our cities, states, and nation.”⁶¹

Prior to the ad campaign, the visibility of the ex-gay movement, and with it the force of the political backlash, were quietly growing within mainstream news media, on the Internet, and in society at large. CBS’s *60 Minutes* aired a segment about ex-gay ministries in March 1998. Exodus International, the leading ex-gay organization, had also received mention in other national media, including *The Washington Post*, National Public Radio, *Hard Copy*, the *Jerry Springer Show*, and the *Sally Jesse Raphael Show*. Exodus had also been featured in several Christian publications, including *New Man* magazine, *Christian Single*, *Charisma* and *Christian Life*, *Gospel Today*, *Focus on the Family Magazine*, and *Today’s Christian Woman*. In 1996 Exodus claimed it received 600 requests for information each month. In August 1998, *Exodus Update* noted that the recent media interest is the largest media exposure it has received in its 23-year history.⁶²

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The Race Divide

Homosexuality has, for years, posed a threat to the dominant culture which perceived it as differing significantly from the threat posed by demands for racial and gender equality.⁶³ The elevation of the ex-gay movement to mainstream consciousness has reinforced the Christian Right's message that anyone can be a homosexual or engage in homosexual behavior, but people cannot pick the color of their skin—therefore it would be wrong to extend civil rights legal protections to homosexuals. The tactic of using racially charged arguments to create hostility toward homosexuals within communities of color often leaves gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people of color more isolated within their own communities. Since the early '90s, with the release of *Gay Rights, Special Rights*, a video aimed at conservative communities of color, the Christian Right has used the “no special rights” theme to imply that gay rights would diminish the value of legitimate protections against racism.

The ex-gay movement has borrowed this organizing tactic. On July 15, an ad featuring African American professional football player Reggie White appeared in the sports section of *USA Today*. With the headlines, “In Defense of Free Speech” and “Toward an open debate on homosexuality,” the ad cleverly utilizes anti-censorship language coupled with an image that resonates for millions of people. In the ad, White is quoted as saying, “I’ve been called homophobic. I’ve been called stupid. I’ve been called unintelligent, and I’ve been called a nigger by so-called gay activists.” In an attempt to defend its homophobic attacks in the name of free speech, the ad continues, “Just because we disagree doesn’t make us homophobic.”

The Reggie White ad prompted a response from the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum (NBLGLF). “Reggie White’s quote saying he has been called a ‘nigger’ by gay activists seems a despicable attempt to obscure the homophobia in this ad campaign by playing the ultimate race card,” noted NBLGLF chair, Willa J. Taylor. “Why is the religious right—which is predominantly white—using black stars and spokespersons to spew its antigay rhetoric in the press? This is just the Right’s latest outrageous attempt to split the black community along gay and straight lines.”⁶⁵

Exploitative placement of people of color on the front lines of this debate continues. On August 10, 1998 the Family Research Council issued a press release alerting the media that it would hold a press conference bringing together conservative religious leaders from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds to discuss what the Bible and the Koran say about homosexuality.⁶⁶ This is one of the more public expansions of FRC’s coalition to embrace people of Islamic faith, in an effort to present the misleading impression that individual leaders of any faith speak for the entire faith.⁶⁷ By utilizing people of color to advance its homophobic agenda, the Christian Right attempts to suggest that “homosexual activists” are trying to rob people of color of their civil rights protections, implying that there is only a limited amount of civil rights.

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Ex-Ex-Gays: The Makeover Myth

Clearly, going “straight” is not so easy. Apostates of the ex-gay movement, so-called “ex-ex gays,” are coming forward to call the ex-gay movement a dangerous fraud. John-David Schramm, a gay playwright, spent several years in ex-gay ministries and is now highly critical of the movement. Schramm maintains that the few people who have been able to sustain an “ex-gay” lifestyle are people who are in leadership positions in ex-gay ministries.⁶⁸

In the late 80’s, Schramm’s sister, a born-again Christian, sent him literature about Exodus. Schramm had been open about his sexual orientation to his immediate family, but he was closeted in other parts of his life. Tired of living 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. Schramm describes an environment in which Christian counselors told him he must immerse himself in a full-time regimen of Christian activities—Bible study, church services, praise and worship—to push the “sin” out of his life. When he had sex with another man, the ministry demanded he ask God’s forgiveness. Had he done so, says Schramm, he could have remained in Love in Action, but he realized that his homosexuality was not a sin. And he now insists that homosexuality is not something that can be changed. “They try to teach you how to manage your behavior. But it’s not a behavior that needs to be changed,” says Schramm. “I don’t believe that ex-gay organizations support God’s plan and vision for us.”⁶⁹

Schramm and other former ex-gays paint a disturbing picture of ex-gay groups as filled with paranoia, and controlling their members through indoctrination and fear. Many of these stories have been compiled 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.’”⁷⁰

Upchurch desperately wanted to be a heterosexual 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 became critical of 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.”⁷¹

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. On the surface, ex-gay leaders claim they can “convert” people to heterosexuality. But a

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review of ex-gay literature reveals that by “conversion,” ex-gay leaders do not mean that same-sex attractions will not occur, only that they should not be acted on. Perhaps it is best stated in their own words. In his book *Desires in Conflict: Answering the Struggle for Sexual Identity*, author and ex-gay leader Joe Dallas plainly states, “So let me emphasize from the outset that I don’t pretend to know a universal ‘cure’ for homosexuality. Nobody does.”⁷²

On the surface, ex-gay leaders claim they can “convert” people to heterosexuality. But a review of ex-gay literature reveals that by “conversion,” ex-gay leaders do not mean that same-sex attractions will not occur, only that they should not be acted on.

Working through the ex-gay movement, the Christian Right has tapped into the fear that many people have of homosexuality in order to further its theocratic agenda.

Conclusion

Tolerance and pluralism are bedrock principles of American society. The ex-gay movement and the Christian Right are attacking these principles and furthering a rigid moral agenda which offers Christian dogma and heterosexuality as the only acceptable norm. While Americans generally support equal treatment for gay and lesbian people, gay men and lesbians still remain among the most disliked groups of people in the nation.⁷³ Working through the ex-gay movement, the Christian Right has tapped into the fear that many people have of homosexuality in order to further its theocratic agenda.

The ex-gay movement is in many ways a typically American phenomenon. Schramm and Upchurch tried for years to become straight so that they would fit into society. Many people, no matter what their differences may be—skin color, language, body size, and sexual orientation—are encouraged to change in ways that promote success, to “be all that you can be.” It’s hardly a surprise, then, to see the ex-gay movement growing in popularity. If you’re a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person, mask your identity, or better yet, change it completely if you can.

American culture promotes certain acceptable images of men and women. A dominant heterosexual culture mandates that people strive to get married to a member of the opposite sex, buy a house, have kids. Those who stray from these models of prescribed normalcy inevitably begin to see themselves as “other,” and begin the difficult journey of trying to conform to society’s definitions of what is acceptable and what isn’t. And some people will go to great lengths to mask their differences in order to fit in.

At the center of the ex-gay movement is a long-standing struggle between sexual identity and religious identity. Many lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgender people struggle to reconcile their sexual identity with their religious faith. The ex-gay movement has tapped into this insecurity and is exploiting it for political purposes.

Hundreds of people turn to ex-gay ministries in an honest search for truth and meaning in relation to their sexual identity and their faith in Christianity, and this sincerity must be recognized in responding to the ex-gay movement and its followers. However, ex-gay movement leaders recruit men and women based on one set of messages, and then reveal a very different one once they are organized into ex-gay ministries. The goal is not exclusively to convert homosexuals to heterosexuality but to recruit people into the Christian Right in order to promote a broader theocratic agenda. Challenging the leadership of the ex-gay movement must include an understanding of this broader agenda in order to defend equal rights for all people, regardless of sexual orientation.

The partnership between the ex-gay movement and the Christian Right represents a serious threat not only to lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgender people, but to democracy

and diversity in the US. By appealing to people's fear of homosexuality, the Christian Right is manipulating political forces within the Republican party, as well as the media and the general public, in promoting a false image of homosexual conversion that is at odds with mainstream psychological, psychiatric, and religious institutions. By exploiting the pressures many people feel to conform to the dominant culture, the ex-gay movement is taking advantage of, and flourishing in, this restrictive environment.

By appealing to people's fear of homosexuality, the Christian Right is manipulating political forces within the Republican party, as well as the media and the general public, in promoting a false image of homosexual conversion that is at odds with mainstream psychological, psychiatric, and religious institutions.

Calculated Compassion

Endnotes

¹ Knight, Robert, at workshop, “The Homosexualizing of America,” at the 2nd annual Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays Conference, 6-8 March 1998, McLean, VA.

² The term “ex-gay” implies that homosexuals have changed their orientation to heterosexuality. However, this is not the case. Leaders of the ex-gay movement coined the term “ex-gay” as a quick way to speak of Christians who may be struggling with their sexual orientation. But the term proved problematic and even leaders of the ex-gay movement have attempted to move away from it because it doesn’t accurately describe people involved in the movement. “...ex-gay. Someone fresh out of a gay lifestyle wasn’t exactly gay anymore, but they weren’t exactly straight yet...” noted ex-gay leader Brad Sargeant in a 1994 issue of the *Exodus Standard*. See Brad Sargeant, “Word Usage in Ministry to (Ex-Gays) Overcomers,” *Exodus Standard*, 11 No. 3, (1994), 7. The term ex-gay will be used throughout this report (without quotations) despite its disingenuous nature.

³ A series of ads were placed in the national media beginning with an ad in *The New York Times* on 13 July 1998 followed by an ad on 14 July 1998 in *The Washington Post* and one in *USA Today* on 15 July 1998. The ad campaign continued with placements in *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. The ads were sponsored and paid for by fifteen right-wing organizations: Alliance for Traditional Marriage-Hawaii, American Family Association, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, Center for Reclaiming America, Christian Family Network, Christian Coalition, Citizens for Community Values, Colorado for Family Values, Concerned Women for America, Coral Ridge Ministries, Family First, Family Research Council, Liberty Counsel, National Legal Foundation and Kerusso Ministries.

⁴ See “Ex-Gay Ads Spark Media Firestorm: Millions hear about Exodus through Time, Newsweek, ‘Good Morning America’ and a host of other media,” *Exodus North America Update* (August 1998).

⁵ When discussing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights from the perspective of that community, the more inclusive term lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender is used. However, a review of Christian Right and ex-gay literature shows that the Right does not make specific references to bisexual and transgender people. Thus, when gay rights is defined by the Right, their less inclusive terms, gay rights and/or lesbians and gay men are applied.

⁶ The term “reparative therapy” is a phrase recently coined by Joseph Nicolosi. See Joseph Nicolosi *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991). See also Charles W. Socarides, M.D. *Homosexuality: A Freedom Too Far* (Phoenix, AZ: Adam Margrave Books, 1995) and Jack Drescher, “I’m Your Handyman: A History of Reparative Therapies,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 36 (1) (1998).

⁷ Chip Berlet, “Following the Threads,” in *New Right, New Racism: Race and Reaction in the United States and Britain* ed. Amy Elizabeth Ansell (New York: NYU Press, 1997).

⁸ For an introduction to various contemporary academic views on how social movements interact with politics, see: Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClung Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and John Lofland, *Social Movement Organizations: Guide to Research on Insurgent Realities*, (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1996). For a discussion of the role of religion in shaping social movement strategies, see Christian Smith, “Correcting a Curious Neglect, or Bringing Religions Back In,” in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social-Movement Activism* ed. Christian Smith (New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁹ For a detailed discussion of the Christian Right’s theocratic agenda see Frederick Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1997).

¹⁰ Sociologist Lee Quinby has written about the term coercive purity. See Quinby, “Coercive Purity” in *The Year 2000: Essays on the End* eds. Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1997). See also, Richard K. Fenn, “Rituals of Purification: Renewing Time” in *The End of Time: Religion, Ritual, and the Forging of the Soul* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1997).

¹¹ Exodus Policy Statement on Homosexuality, Exodus International Fact Sheet, undated.

¹² Exodus claims ministries in Brazil, Peru, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, The Netherlands, England, Ireland, France, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, Philippines, and South Africa. Exodus website <http://exodus.base.org>, 20 May 1998.

¹³ Exodus Fact Sheet, *supra* note 11.

¹⁴ See Surina Khan, “Homosexual Healing,” *Boston Magazine*, July 1998. For historical information on Exodus International see One Nation Under God, a video that explores the lives of Michael Busee and Gary Cooper,

the two men who co-founded Exodus International and left the anti-gay ministry after falling in love with each other.

- ¹⁵ See Bob Davies and Lori Rentzel, *Coming Out of Homosexuality: New Freedom For Men and Women* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).
- ¹⁶ Dollof, Cyndi, presentation entitled, “Q&A with Cyndi,” at the 2nd annual P-Fox conference, 6-8 March 1998.
- ¹⁷ See Martin Duberman, *Cures: A Gay Man’s Odyssey* (New York, NY: Plume, 1991). See also Mel White, *Stranger At the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America* (New York, NY: Plume, 1994).
- ¹⁸ NARTH brochure, “Taking a Stand: For Those Seeking Freedom from Homosexuality,” undated. See also “Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality,” American Psychological Association, undated.
- ¹⁹ Statement of Policy, NARTH, <http://www.narth.com/statement.html>, 6 May 1997.
- ²⁰ Charles Socarides, Benjamin Kaufman, Joseph Nicolosi, Jeffrey Satinover and Richard Fitzgibbons, “Don’t Forsake Homosexuals Who Want Help,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 January 1997. See also Jeffrey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996).
- ²¹ “Resolution on Treatments to Alter Sexual Orientation: Questions & Answers,” American Psychological Association, 14 August 1997, 2. See also, “Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality,” American Psychological Association. “Much objective scientific research over the past 35 years shows us that homosexual orientation, in and of itself, is not associated with emotional or social problems. Homosexuality was thought to be a mental illness in the past because mental health professionals and society had biased information about homosexuality since most studies only involved lesbians and gay men in therapy. When researchers examined data about gay people who were not in therapy, the idea that homosexuality was a mental illness was found to be untrue.” It is important to note that the American Psychiatric Association includes diagnostic categories for Gender Identity Disorder and Transvestic Fetishism in the fourth edition of the DSM (1994).
- ²² See Kim I. Mills, “Mission Impossible: Why Reparative Therapy and Ex-Gay Ministries Fail,” Human Rights Campaign, August 1998.
- ²³ Jeffrey Satinover, MD, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, 189. See also Joseph Nicolosi, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach*.
- ²⁴ Ex-gay therapists and counselors have been unable to conduct longitudinal studies of clients’ sexuality for ethical reasons. It is impossible to conduct this kind of study because it is unethical for therapists to contact clients once they have terminated therapy. Dr. Uriel Meshoulam, member, Scientific Advisory Committee, NARTH, in interview with author. See “New Survey: Gays Can Change,” *Exodus International Update*, July 1997. The article notes: “The study was conducted over two years among nearly 860 individuals struggling to overcome homosexuality and more than 200 psychologists and therapists who treat them. Before treatment, 68 percent of respondents perceived themselves as exclusively or almost entirely homosexual, with another 22 percent stating that they were more homosexual than heterosexual. After treatment, only 13 percent perceived themselves as exclusively or almost entirely homosexual, while 33 percent described themselves as either exclusively or almost entirely heterosexual.”
- ²⁵ Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D., telephone interview with author, 13 May 1998.
- ²⁶ Jack Drescher, MD, “I’m Your Handyman.”
- ²⁷ For a historical analysis of the Right’s attack on lesbians and gay men see Jean Hardisty, “Constructing Homophobia: Colorado’s Right-Wing Attack on Homosexuals,” in *Eyes Right!: Challenging the Right-Wing Backlash* ed. Chip Berlet (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1995). The following books published by the right are useful primary source materials: Tim LaHaye, *The Unhappy Gays* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1978); Enrique Rueda, *The Homosexual Network* (Old Greenwich, CT: The Devin Adair Company, 1982); Michael Schwartz and Enrique Rueda, *Gays Aids and You* (Old Greenwich, CT: The Devin Adair Company, 1987).
- ²⁸ Louis Sheldon, “Are Gay Rights Right?” *Traditional Values Report*, July 1989.
- ²⁹ For more on Jeremiah Films: <http://www.publiceye.org/conspire/clinton/networks-04.htm>. Jeremiah Films made the homophobic video *Gay Rights, Special Rights*, which claims gays and lesbians are degrading the civil rights movement. This video features Senator Trent Lott as the major on-camera figure. Republican Party stalwarts Ed Meese (former attorney general) and William Bennett (former secretary of education) appear along with notorious conspiracists such as David Noebel of Summit Ministries. Noebel has written an entire high school curricu-

lum that claims to expose the secular humanist conspiracy. According to a spokesperson for Jeremiah Films, it made the video and distributes it, but the opening sequence announces the video is from Citizens United for the Preservation of Civil Rights, and the closing sequence refers viewers to the Traditional Values Coalition, while critics claim the video was actually made for and distributed free to Congress by the Springs of Life Ministries, a close ally of the TVC. See: “Traditional Values Coalition,” People for the American Way, URL: <<http://www.pfaw.org/gyrgts6.htm>>; Frederick Clarkson, “More Bigotry on the Ballot,” *Freedom Writer*, Institute for First Amendment Studies, URL: <<http://www.berkshire.net/~ifas/fw/940002/bigotry.html>>; Deb Price, “As Dole’s Likely Successor in Senate, Lott is a Real Worry for Gay Americans,” *The Detroit News*, 22 March 1996, URL: <<http://detnews.com/menu/stories/40909.htm>>; David Deitcher, “The Gay Agenda,” *Art in America*, Issues and Commentary, April 1994, pp. 27-35; additional information from Renée DeLapp, Western States Center.

³⁰ See Chip Berlet, “Who Is Mediating the Storm? Right-Wing Alternative Information Networks,” and Ioannis Mookas, “Faultlines: Homophobic Innovation in Gay Rights/Special Rights,” in *Culture Media, and the Religious Right* eds. Linda Kintz & Julia Lesage (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

³¹ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1998 — forthcoming.)

³² FRC Cultural Director Robert Knight, interview with author, 14 May 1998: “FRC for the last five years has been openly and enthusiastically aiding the ex-gay movement. Initially here in Washington, DC, through Anthony Falzarano’s group, Transformation Ex-Gay Ministries, we’ve given grants to them and publishing assistance and we have helped publicize their availability. I will do my best to speak out on their behalf. We will provide financial aid. We are doing publications and videos to show the importance of ex-gay ministry. And we are going to make a major effort in the schools to turn back the homosexual propaganda that students are getting and show them that that’s only one side of the story.”

³³ See John Paulk with Tony Marco, *Not Afraid to Change: The Remarkable Story of How One Man Overcame Homosexuality* (Mukilteo, WA: WinePress Publishing, 1998).

³⁴ See FRC press release, “‘Once Gay, Always Gay’ Not True, Love Offers Real Hope, Knight Says,” 10 October 1996. See also, “Anti-Gay Support Group,” *The Public Eye*, Fall/Winter 1996.

³⁵ Carl Wieser, “Gay Marriage on Front Line of America’s Culture War,” *Asheville Citizen Times*, Asheville, NC 31 March 1996. Also, Michael Johnston was featured on the Christian Broadcasting Network’s “NewsWatch Today” on 15 May, 1996 where he said, “This is the brass ring of the homosexual movement. If they get same-sex marriage, they will get adoptions, they will get forced sex-education in the schools...because you can’t call a homosexual couple a marriage and then deny them children.”

³⁶ Amendment 2 was a 1992 Colorado ballot initiative that sought to amend the Colorado constitution in order to legally forbid the state, its municipalities, school districts, or agencies from guaranteeing non-discrimination to those with “homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation.” The Amendment passed in November 1992, but was subsequently overturned by the US Supreme Court.

³⁷ Marco was a founder and former Director of Communications for Colorado for Family Values. See Tony Marco, “Special Class Protections for Gays: A Question of Behavior and Consequences,” 1992; and Tony Marco, “Special Gay Rights Legislation,” 1991. Both reports were obtained by the legal team litigating to block Amendment 2 in Colorado. On file at Political Research Associates. See also, John Paulk with Tony Marco, *Not Afraid to Change*.

³⁸ See *Challenging the Ex-Gay Movement: An Information Packet*, (published by Political Research Associates, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Equal Partners in Faith: October 1998).

³⁹ American Family Association press release, “‘National ‘Coming out of Homosexuality Day’ Helps Homosexuals Leave Lifestyle,” undated, included in National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day press packet, October 1997.

⁴⁰ Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, 165.

⁴¹ In *Not By Politics Alone*, Diamond cites “‘Once Gay Always Gay,’” *Focus on the Family* (March 1994), 2-3.

⁴² Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, 165.

⁴³ “Survey Reveals Strong Christian Nationalism,” *Freedom Writer Magazine*, September 1996.

⁴⁴ See Skipp Porteous, “Reclaiming America for Christ,” *Freedom Writer Magazine*, March/April 1997.

- ⁴⁵ See “Overview of Religious Attitudes Toward Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People,” prepared by The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and collected from The Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, <http://www.religioustolerance.org>.
- ⁴⁶ Letter from US Catholic Bishops, 1997.
- ⁴⁷ “Overview of Religious Attitudes Toward Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People.”
- ⁴⁸ Statement from Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Religious Action Center.
- ⁴⁹ Letter from the US Catholic Bishops, 1997.
- ⁵⁰ The full list of churches and religious organizations that endorsed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act includes: The American Ethical Union, American Friends Service Committee, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Church of the Brethren, Church Women United, Dignity/USA, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Hadassah, WZOA, The Interfaith Alliance, Jewish Women International (formerly B’nai B’rith Women), Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs — Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, National Council of Churches, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, National Council of Jewish Women, National Council of La Raza, North Georgia United Methodists, Presbyterian Church USA, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Religious Action Center, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ (Office for Church and Society), United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society, Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, Young Women’s Christian Association. Compiled by Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, 1996.
- ⁵¹ See “Faith and Fairness: People of Faith Support Protecting Americans from Job Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation,” a poll by the Human Rights Campaign on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, 1996. Results came from a national survey of 1,007 voters conducted 5-8 November 1996 for the Human Rights Campaign by the polling firm of Greenberg Research Inc. The poll’s margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percent. See also “Americans Strongly Support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and Equal Job Opportunities for Gay and Lesbian People”, a poll conducted for the Human Rights Campaign by the Tarrance Group and Lake Sosin Snell & Associates, 14 April 1997. Results came from a national survey of 1,000 voters conducted 8-10 April, 1997. The poll’s margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percent.
- ⁵² See Anna Marie Smith, “Why Did Armezy Apologize? Hegemony, Homophobia, and the Religious Right,” in *New Right, New Racism: Race and Reaction in the United States and Britain* ed. Amy Elizabeth Ansell (New York, NY: NYU Press, 1997). See also John Whitehead, “Point of View,” in *Action: A Publication of the Rutherford Institute*, August 1996. In this issue Rutherford Institute president John Whitehead writes: “This is not to say that Christians and other religious people must condone the homosexual lifestyle or any other lifestyle they disagree with. But religious people should be reaching out to these individuals with compassion based on the example of Jesus Christ.”
- ⁵³ Kenneth D. Wald, James W. Button, Barbara A. Rienzo, “All Politics Is Local: Analyzing Local Gay Rights Legislation,” The Policy Institute, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 1997.
- ⁵⁴ Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*.
- ⁵⁵ Family Research Council press release, “Homosexual Rights’ Law Overturned in Maine,” 10 February 1998.
- ⁵⁶ Carey Goldberg, “Maine Voters Repeal a Law on Gay Rights,” *The New York Times*, 12 February 1998.
- ⁵⁷ Riggs Amendment, Appropriations Bill HR 4194, passed on 29 July 1998, 214 to 212.
- ⁵⁸ See Doug Ireland, “The Right Plays the Gay Card,” *The Nation*, 7/14 September 1998. For a broader international perspective see Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race & Sexuality* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- ⁵⁹ See Laurie Goodstein, “Woman Behind Anti-Gay Ads Sees Christians as Victims,” *The New York Times*, 13 August 1998.
- ⁶⁰ CWA fundraising appeal, 20 August 1998.
- ⁶¹ Colorado for Family Values fundraising appeal, 24 July 1998.
- ⁶² See Surina Khan, “Inside Exodus: A Report from the Anti-Gay Ministry’s 21st National Conference,” *Gay Community News*, Fall 1996. See also, “Ex-Gays Spark Media Firestorm,” *Exodus North America Update*, August 1998.

- ⁶³ For a discussion of the threat of homosexuality to the dominant culture, see Michael Bronski, *The Pleasure Principle: Sex, Backlash, and the Struggle for Gay Freedom*, (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998). See also, Urvasi Vaid, *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay & Lesbian Liberation* (New York, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1995).
- ⁶⁴ See *USA Today* 15 July 1998.
- ⁶⁵ National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum press release, "Black Lesbian and Gay Forum Expresses Outrage Over Anti-Gay Ad Campaign," 15 July 1998.
- ⁶⁶ FRC press release, "Religion and Homosexuality: Clergy Warn Against Cultural Acceptance of Homosexuality," 10 August 1998.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* The release noted that speakers would include Imam Yusef Saleem, Director of Education at Clara Muhammad School in Washington, DC; Bishop Harold Ray at Redemptive Life Fellowship in West Palm Beach, FL; Victor Stanley of Calvary Baptist Church in Woodbridge, VA; Rev. Robert McFarland of Excel Ministries in Washington, DC; Rev. Thomas Morrow of the Catholic Archdiocese in Washington, DC; and former lesbian activist and FRC policy analyst Yvette Cantu.
- ⁶⁸ John-David Schramm, telephone interview with author, 17 May 1998.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ See the Ex.Ex website, <http://members.aol.com/exexgay/>
- ⁷¹ See Kyle Young, "The Ex-Files: A Former Follower Sheds the Light on Ex-Gay Ministries," *OutSmart Magazine*, January 1997.
- ⁷² Joe Dallas, *Desires in Conflict: Answering the Struggle for Sexual Identity*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991), 10.
- ⁷³ See Alan Yang, "From Wrongs to Rights: Public Opinion on Gay and Lesbian Americans Moves Towards Equality," The Policy Institute, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 1998. See also Alan Wolfe, *One National After All: What Middle Class Americans Really Think About God/Country/Family/Racism/Welfare/Immigration/Homosexuality/Work/The Right/The Left and Each Other* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 1998).