

Downey—that “increased psychopathology among homosexual people is a consequence of lifestyle differences associated with sexual orientation...such behavioral risk factors associated with male homosexuality such as receptive anal sex and promiscuity.”

Cavalier Rejection of Reparative Therapy

Friedman and Downey’s cavalier rejection of reparative therapy, and of Dr. Joseph Nicolosi in particular, resembles more of a political attack than a careful analysis. They accuse Dr. Nicolosi of being psychoanalytically uninformed and failing to maintain therapeutic neutrality. Ironically, Friedman and Downey themselves are not neutral at all about reparative therapy!

Even activist Andrew Sullivan provides a more balanced assessment of the reparative model. Referring to reparative therapy, Sullivan concludes,

“As an elaborate and total theory, it certainly cannot be dismissed as an improvised rationalization of bigotry, because its nuances are too refined and its observations too acute.” (*Love Undetectable*, P. 120)

Although Friedman and Downey allude to the relationship

between politics and reparative therapy, they fail to acknowledge the narrow politicism that governs their own views about it.

Science and Morality

The value of Friedman and Downey’s book lies in the authors’ assessment—for the most part accurate—of what science has to say about homosexuality. But their preoccupation with condemning homophobia and heterosexism colors their views in the second part of the book.

The authors fail to recognize two important points—first, that science is actually quite supportive of the treatment of homosexuality; and second, that their condemnation of “heterosexism” (which is the belief that heterosexuality is the norm, with homosexually an abnormal variant) is not a scientifically neutral conclusion.

As gay-activist researcher Simon LeVay points out (2000, p. 12):

“[S]cience itself cannot render judgments about human worth or about what constitutes normality or disease. These are value judgments that individuals must make for themselves, while possibly taking scientific findings into account.” ■

Diverse Coalition Forms To Support People Seeking ‘Non-Gay’ Alternatives To Unwanted Homosexuality

by Roy Waller

A diverse group of eleven non-profit organizations that serve people conflicted over unwanted homosexual attractions has formed a non-profit coalition called PATH (Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality) and established a joint web site at www.pathinfo.org.

The new coalition includes secular, therapeutic and research organizations in the U.S. and Germany as well as African-American, Catholic, Jewish, Latter-Day Saint and Protestant ministries.

PATH was formed to promote greater public understanding and acceptance of men, women and youth who experience same-sex attractions but prefer to pursue “non-gay” alternatives that are congruent with their values, beliefs and life goals. The coalition will also support greater access to information and resources for those who seek change.

PATH’s 11 initial member organizations have collectively worked with thousands of men, women and youth who have either transitioned out of a homosexual lifestyle and identity, or resolved their same-sex attractions without ever fully embracing homosexuality.

“It’s an utterly false stereotype to assume that anyone with homosexual feelings just wants to be accepted and affirmed as gay,” said Arthur Goldberg, president of PATH (and co-founder of JONAH, an educational, support and referral organization for Jews). “Many do not. They don’t object to others choosing to live a homosexual life, but it’s not what they want for their own lives. Those who voluntarily choose an alternative path deserve equal respect and support.”

Richard Cohen, a member of the PATH organizing committee who is a therapist and himself a former homosexual, said, “I know from my own personal experience, and the experience of literally hundreds of men and women I have worked with, that change is real. Many of them have developed heterosexual desires, married and had children of their own. Many have saved their existing marriages and families. Some have embraced a ‘sexually sober’ lifestyle as a single man or woman. Whatever their personal circumstances and goals, they have learned from personal experience that change is possible.”

In a statement of beliefs, PATH’s Website indicates that its members support: personal choice on how to deal with

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same-sex attractions; the individual's right to be informed about alternatives to living a homosexual life; and the individual's right to decide whether to seek counseling or therapy, what kind of counseling to seek, and to determine the desired direction of their own therapy program.

It also states that those who choose to pursue alternatives to homosexuality, "deserve tolerance and acceptance. Their choices should not subject them to discrimination, ridicule, marginalization, or make them the target of hate speech or accusations of homophobia. Demands for tolerance by one group can never justify intolerance or ridicule of another."

The 11 groups forming the coalition are:

- Courage, a worldwide Catholic ministry based in New York City;
- Evergreen International, a Utah-based educational and resource organization serving members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;
- Exodus International, a Florida-based umbrella coalition of 175 Protestant Christian ministries in 17 countries;
- The German Institute for Youth and Society, a think tank and research organization that focuses on social developments affecting the family;
- The International Healing Foundation, an educational and therapeutic organization based in Maryland;
- JONAH, or Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality, an international educational and informational organization based in New Jersey;
- NARTH;
- OneByOne, a Presbyterian ministry based in New York;
- PFOX, or Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays, a support and informational organization based in Virginia;
- People Can Change, a support, informational and training organization based in Virginia; and
- Powerful Change Ministry Group, a fellowship of Christian African-American-led ministries, based in Atlanta. ■

Attention, Canadian Members of NARTH

Work is underway to explore the need, value, role, and future directions of a "community of interest" for Canadians involved with NARTH.

Currently, this work involves NARTH Members, but is being expanded to include Canadians in the Associate Member and Friends of NARTH category.

If you would like more information on this initiative, please send an e-mail to narthenorth@cogeco.ca.