

## Some Clarifications about the American Psychological Association's Statement

*Brent Scharman, Ph.D., president of the Utah Psychological Association, spoke to two of the American Psychological Association's leaders while at the State Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., in March of this year. The earlier "rebuttal of reparative therapy" by the American Psychological Association was not intended to prevent the use of reparative therapy per se. Indeed, it is presented here as an acceptable choice. He reports in The Utah Psychologist (Winter 1998, p. 11):*

"Dr. Martin Seligman, this year's APA president, said that he felt the media had misunderstood the intent of the statement. He felt a client had a right to request the type of therapy that he or she wants, and receive it.

"He said his reading of the literature, as stated in his book, *What You Can Change And What You Can't*, was that those who have had fewer homosexual experiences, or who have bisexual feelings, would be most likely to successfully change and those who have had more longterm, ingrained homosexual feelings and activity, would be less likely to change.

"Dr. Ray Fowler, APA Chief Executive Officer, said he had received many telephone calls and letters on this topic. He seemed to feel that people need to re-read the statement, and that individual choice, whatever it is, must be respected. If an individual is comfortable with his or her homo-

sexuality, it is not the role of the therapist to convince the client otherwise. If one's feelings are ego-dystonic and there is a desire to talk about changing, that is an acceptable choice and a psychologist may participate if he or she desires.

"Both authorities made positive comments about client self-determination (i.e., the right of a consumer to determine the goal and content of psychotherapy). Their statements were clear, precise, rational and reasonable. Clients have a right to make choices for their own lives, including the choice about what to request from therapy.

"Therapists, of course, have an obligation to inform clients about their own professional perspectives, and the therapy should be based on understanding all sides of an issue."