

AN EDUCATIONAL BOOKLET WRITTEN BY TRUTH WINS OUT & LAMBDA LEGAL.

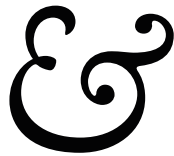
“Pray away the gay”



**EX-GAY
& THE LAW**

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN DAMAGED
OR HURT BY SO-CALLED “EX-GAY” PROGRAMS, IT IS
ESSENTIAL THAT YOU READ THIS BOOK.

THE "EX-GAY & THE LAW" EDUCATION
BOOKLET HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY
TRUTH WINS OUT AND LAMBDA LEGAL.





**WRITTEN BY: WAYNE BESEN,
DIRECTOR OF TRUTH WINS OUT**

In 1998, a coalition of anti-LGBT organizations launched a national campaign to persuade Americans that people could “pray away the gay.” They called this effort the “Normandy Landing in the cultural wars.” The idea was to convince Americans that homosexuality was a casual choice that could be changed, knowing that people who held such beliefs were more likely to vote against LGBT equality.

More than a decade has passed since the campaign was launched and the results have been disastrous. John Paulk, the campaign’s poster boy who was on the cover of Newsweek, was photographed in a gay bar. Disgraced mega-church pastor Ted Haggard claimed he had become straight after only a few weeks of therapy – but shortly after revealed that he had not succeeded.

These high-profile spokespeople are the tip of the iceberg. Sadly, thousands of individuals have tried “ex-gay” programs and many survivors say that that the experience was traumatizing and psychologically harmful.

John Paulk was the chairman of Exodus International and founded Focus on the Family’s Love Won Out conference. On Sept. 19, 2000 he was photographed in a Washington, DC gay bar.

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01

WHAT ARE?

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SO CALLED “EX-GAY” PROGRAMS:

So-called “ex-gay” ministries promote the belief that homosexuality is sinful and that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people can be made heterosexual through prayer and therapy. These organizations blame homosexuality on molestation or bad parenting, even though their outdated views are not backed by credible science.

Exodus International is the primary faith-based “ex-gay” program and serves as an umbrella organization for more than 200 ministries worldwide. Based in Orlando, Florida, Exodus’ annual budget is one million dollars and the group has a staff of fifteen employees. The group spends more than \$250,000 each year on its Exodus Youth program, which focuses on “changing” teenagers from gay to straight.

Additionally, Exodus promotes “spiritual warfare,” believing that, in many cases, homosexuality is demonic. Exodus’ President Alan Chambers wrote in a 2005 newsletter, “One of the many evils this world has to offer is the sin of homosexuality. Satan, the enemy, is using people to further his agenda to destroy the Kingdom of God and as many souls as he can.”

At its annual conference in 2008, Exodus’ keynote speaker was author Andy Comiskey, who proclaimed from the stage: “Wickedness is a reality, and those with same-sex attraction that succumb to the spirit of the age, can become agents of that wickedness...When you claim healing for the homosexual, you have declared war. And people, it is only going to get worse; it is only going to get worse in the changing cultural climate in which we live. Ours is not a benign healing path, it is a call to battle.”

Clearly, Exodus is not about “loving” LGBT people, as they claim, but demeaning them. The group also actively lobbies to ensure that discrimination against LGBT people remains legal at the local, state and national levels.

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WHAT ARE?

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B}**SO CALLED “EX-GAY” THERAPY:**

The National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) is a trade association of disgruntled anti-gay counselors who are upset because all mainstream mental health associations have rejected “ex-gay” therapy as a fringe and potentially dangerous practice.

Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, NARTH’s co-founder, proclaims his group is a secular organization but often sounds like a sectarian group.

“We, as citizens, need to articulate God’s intent for human sexuality,” Dr. Nicolosi, said on CNN’s 360 Degrees with Anderson Cooper, April 14, 2007. At a Focus on the Family conference on Feb. 10, 2007 in Phoenix, the “secular” therapist told the audience, “When we live our God-given integrity and our human dignity, there is no space for sex with a guy.”

In Dr. Nicolosi’s first book, “Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality,” he wrote that, “I do not believe that any man can ever be truly at peace in living out a homosexual orientation.” NARTH also has bizarre theories, such as encouraging male clients to drink Gatorade and call their friends “dude,” because this will supposedly make them more masculine. NARTH also espouses the idea that, “Non-homosexual men who experience defeat and failure may also experience homosexual fantasies or dreams.”

NARTH is dangerous because it portrays itself as a secular group that believes in the scientific method, when in reality it manipulates legitimate research as a cynical ploy to portray LGBT people as mentally ill – an idea not supported by reputable science-based organizations. Most disturbing, NARTH takes clients as young as three years old.

Michael Johnston was the founder of “National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day.” In 2003, he resigned after admitting he had a “moral fall” with men he met on the Internet.

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WHAT ARE?

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SO CALLED “EX-GAY” RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS:

Some of the most damaging “ex-gay” programs are residential facilities that resemble cults. These programs demand that participants surrender all gay friends, as well as put distance between themselves and relatives who are gay friendly. They dictate what type of clothes one wears, what music he or she can listen to and what social activities are acceptable. A few of the questionable methods include:

- ✘ Repossessing a client’s underwear because it is deemed too gay
- ✘ Confessing ones most intimate sexual thoughts and fantasies in group therapy
- ✘ Timing clients in the bathroom to ensure they are not behaving “inappropriately”

Some of these residential programs are part of Exodus International, while others are unaffiliated boot camps where teens are bullied into conforming. The most notorious Exodus residential program is Love In Action. In 1997, its Director, John Smid, told *The Memphis Flyer* how he changed from gay to straight.

“I’m looking at that wall and suddenly I say it’s blue,” Smid said, pointing to a yellow wall. “Someone else comes along and says, ‘No, it’s gold.’ But I want to believe that wall is blue. Then God comes along and He says, ‘You’re right, John, [that yellow wall] is blue.’ That’s the help I need. God can help me make that [yellow] wall blue.”

In 1979, two of Exodus International’s co-founders, Gary Cooper and Michael Bussee, fell in love. They divorced their wives and held a commitment ceremony.

02

WHAT'S WRONG?

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**WITH SO CALLED “EX-GAY” PROGRAMS,
ACCORDING TO THE EXPERTS:**

The American Psychiatric Association in its position statement on Psychiatric Treatment and Sexual Orientation states: The potential risks of “reparative therapy” are great, including depression, anxiety and self destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self hatred already experienced by the patient. Many patients who have undergone “reparative therapy” relate that they were inaccurately told that homosexuals are lonely, unhappy individuals who never achieve acceptance or satisfaction. The possibility that the person might achieve happiness and satisfying interpersonal relationships as a gay man or lesbian is not presented, nor are alternative approaches to dealing with the effects of societal stigmatization discussed.

The American Psychological Association in its Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, which is also endorsed by the National Association of School Psychologists, states: That the American Psychological Association opposes portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation and supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation, and mental health, and appropriate interventions in order to counteract bias that is based in ignorance or unfounded beliefs about sexual orientation.

At the American Psychological Association’s annual meeting, August 10, 2006, the organization released the following statement: “For over three decades the consensus of the mental health community has been that homosexuality is not an illness and therefore not in need of a cure. The APA’s concern about the positions espoused by NARTH and so-called conversion therapy is that they are not supported by the science. There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that sexual orientation can be changed. Our further concern is that the

In 1973, John Evans co-founded Love In Action. He left after his best friend, Jack McIntyre, committed suicide in despair over not being able to “change.”

positions espoused by NARTH and Focus on the Family create an environment in which prejudice and discrimination can flourish.

The American Medical Association in its policy statement on Health Care Needs of Gay Men and Lesbians in the United States reads: most of the emotional disturbance experienced by gay men and lesbians around their sexual identity is not based on physiological causes but rather is due more to a sense of alienation in an unaccepting environment. For this reason, aversion therapy (a behavioral or medical intervention which pairs unwanted behavior, in this case, homosexual behavior, with unpleasant sensations or aversive consequences) is no longer recommended for gay men and lesbians. Through psychotherapy, gay men and lesbians can become comfortable with their sexual orientation and understand the societal response to it.

In July 2000, the AMA specifically addressed reparative therapy stating: (we) oppose any psychiatric treatment, such as “reparative” or “conversion” therapy which is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the a priori assumption that the patient should change his/her homosexual orientation.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in its policy statement on Homosexuality and Adolescence states: Confusion about sexual orientation is not unusual during adolescence. Counseling may be helpful for young people who are uncertain about their sexual orientation or for those who are uncertain about how to express their sexuality and might profit from an attempt at clarification through a counseling or psychotherapeutic initiative. Therapy directed specifically at changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving changes in orientation.

As these statements make clear, professional health organizations do not support efforts to change a person’s sexual orientation through “reparative therapy” and have raised serious concerns about its potential harm.

02

WHAT'S WRONG?

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WITH SO CALLED “EX-GAY” PROGRAMS— IT DOESN'T WORK:

If you choose to try such programs, it would be wise to ask your ministry leader or therapist up front what they actually mean when they promise “change, “liberation,” “freedom” or that you can be “ex-gay.” These misleading terms usually mean that a client can work towards changing sexual behavior - but not sexual orientation or how a person feels inside. Even after years of trying to “change” and spending copious amounts of money, leading “ex-gay” activists say they are still attracted to the same gender.

Exodus President Alan Chambers told the Los Angeles Times on June 18, 2007 that, “By no means would we ever say change can be sudden or complete” and that sexual orientation “isn't a light switch that you can switch on and off.”

Exodus author Joe Dallas told the Los Angeles Times on April 5, 1990 that, “No one has ever left therapy saying, ‘Wow, I have absolutely no homosexual thoughts.’”

Exodus activist, Alan Medinger told the Wall Street Journal on April 21, 1993 that, “If an attractive man and an attractive woman enter a room, it is the man I will look at first.”

What so-called “ex-gay” ministries advertise, “Freedom From Homosexuality Through Jesus Christ,” is not what clients often report receiving. Many clients say that after “ex-gay” therapy they feel more depressed, anxious or that they were sold false hope.

In 1979, Colin Cook founded Homosexuals Anonymous (HA) and appeared on the Phil Donahue show. In 1986 he stepped down after giving nude massages to clients.

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WHAT TO DO?

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IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS BEEN HARMED BY SO-CALLED “EX-GAY” PROGRAMS (*information on your legal rights**, from *Lambda Legal*):

Lambda Legal has been working for decades to expand and enforce the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. We know firsthand that pursuing action through the courts can succeed against anti-LGBT discrimination and protect and empower our communities.

Anyone who may have been harmed by any sort of counselor or therapist should contact Lambda Legal or a local lawyer as soon as possible. All states have a “statute of limitations” which limits the length of time for filing a lawsuit. These periods vary greatly, and may have exceptions if the patient is a minor. To best protect your legal rights, it is very important to consult an attorney sooner rather than later.

Whether or not someone can take legal action against an “ex-gay” counselor or facility will depend on factors including the law of the state where you met with the practitioner and the specific facts. There are many reasons “ex-gay” programs or practitioners may be liable for harm. If representatives of an “ex-gay” program make false claims, they may have committed fraud, breach of contract, or violated state laws against unfair business practices. If a practitioner does not adequately describe the potential harms of an “ex-gay” program, he or she may be liable for violating the duty to get consent from a person seeking care. If a practitioner is not qualified to provide therapy for a specific mental health condition and fails to refer

In 2002, therapist Richard Cohen, former president of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX) was permanently expelled from the American Counseling Association.

**This document offers general information only and is not intended to provide legal advice regarding anyone’s specific situation.*

to a qualified doctor or psychologist, he or she may be liable for negligence or violating rules governing professional licenses. If a counselor threatens to “out” you to your community if you decide you do not want to continue therapy, he or she may be liable under state law. If a practitioner tells third parties about details of your life or your same-sex attractions, that could violate your right to privacy. It is impossible to list all of the factors that might be important in evaluating whether or not someone harmed by an “ex-gay” program or practitioner may be able to sue in court or take other legal actions, so it is important to consult an attorney. Minors as well as adults have legal rights, including the right to consult with an attorney.

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN HARMED BY AN “EX-GAY” PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER FORM OF ANTI-LGBT DISCRIMINATION, PLEASE CALL ONE OF LAMBDA LEGAL’S REGIONAL HELP DESK.

TOLL-FREE: 866-542-8336.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 212-809-8585

EMAIL: LEGALHELPDESK@LAMBDALEGAL.ORG

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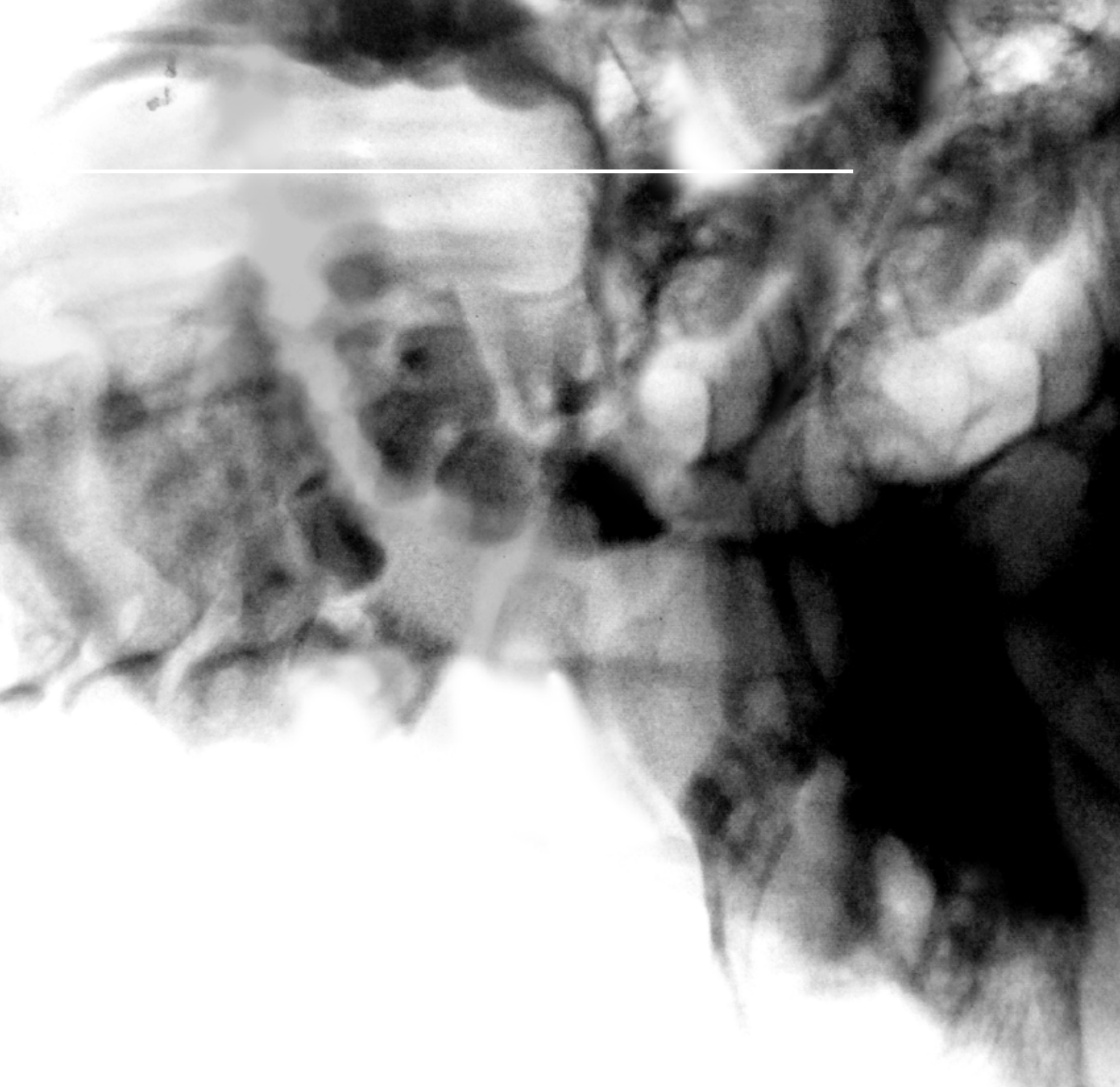
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THIS BOOK WAS DESIGNED BY SEAN LOPANO; A GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND PHOTOGRAPHER
LIVING AND WORKING IN TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK. VISIT: WWW.LOPANO.COM

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