

## **EX-GAY**

Ralph Blair 1982

This booklet is based on material which Dr. Blair presented in Atlanta at the 1982 national convention of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies in April and on material he presented in an address in March at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana. Some of it has been published previously in REVIEW and in RECORD, the quarterly publications of Evangelicals Concerned, Inc.

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Before we begin to look at some of the “ex-gay” literature specifically, I think it’s important to see the current debates over homosexuality in the context of the long, long series of controversies resulting in changes in Christian history and heritage. Unless we do this, we won’t see the forest for the trees. Whatever we may believe about the possibility that homosexuals can change, we all know for certain that churches change.

A recent front-page headline in a New York paper: “Bigots Torch Long Island Temple.” We rightly shake our heads and say, “Terrible.” Even Bailey Smith is attending Prayer Breakfasts with Jews these days. But remember, Martin Luther urged that Jewish synagogues be torched and burned to the ground. You have been reading that Bob Jones University has a rule against black and white students dating each other. We rightly shake our heads and say, “Terrible.” But remember, blacks were denied baptism in the 1700s on the basis of what was said to be the Bible’s teaching and the Joneses base their rule on what they say the Bible says. The existence of such denominations as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Southern Baptist Convention is evidence of a former (as well as current) “Christian” view on black people. Contemporary all-white “Christian” academies throughout the south, resulting in de facto segregation, are filled with “Bible-believing” Christians. You’ve been reading about Jack Chick and his anti-Roman Catholic comic books. (He’s put out some awful anti-gay comic books, too.) We rightly shake our heads and say, “Terrible.” But remember, when John F. Kennedy was running for President, Billy Graham and Harold J. Ockenga of the National Association of Evangelicals went all over the country warning of the Popish dangers of a Roman Catholic in the White House. Graham tried to get Eisenhower to come out more strongly for Nixon in order to keep the Pope from setting up shop in Washington. Fewer than 20 years later, Graham was preaching in St. Ann’s Roman Catholic Church in Poland while his host was off in Rome being elected Pope. A year later Graham said that the U.S. should have picked up the tab for the Pope’s American tour, it was so good for us all. An American President, another Southern Baptist, hosted the Pope at the White House and later, following Graham’s lead, visited the Pope inside the Vatican. It’s extremely important that we keep in mind how different things are from the way things *were* even 5 years ago, much more 10, 25, 50, 100, 500, 1000, 2000 years ago. And as John Boswell has shown in his massive history, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, there have been tremendous changes *in many directions* when it comes to the relationship of Christianity and homosexuality. With such perspectives, we’ll now take a look at some of the “ex-gay” literature, comprising, I believe, just a most recent chapter in the recidivistic wrong turnings in church history. Thankfully, many of these most embarrassing chapters become things of the past, but it’s tragic that they do so not before extracting a high cost from those unfortunate enough to have had to live through them before the churches made more Christian revisions.

### **Approaching the “Ex-gay” Literature**

Contrary to the evangelical ballyhoo that “Homosexuals CAN Change,” as *Christianity Today* bannered it across a cover (Feb 6, 1981), there is still no documented empirical verification of any permanent change from homosexual orientation to heterosexual orientation through the “ex-gay” processes. There is, however, plenty of evidence of diagnostic error, reaction formation, dishonest manipulation of terminology, fraud, self-deception, misunderstanding of the claims of others, and more manifestations that counter the claims of “ex-gays” themselves. Where the “ex-gays” claim something modest, overly-eager evangelical supporters exaggerate the claims and thereby set up expectations on the part of churches and troubled homosexuals and their families to look for changes that never were promised in the first place.

It should be noted that even if there *were* evidence of orientation reversal or “cure” of homosexuality (as if it is a disease), that would *not* be proof that the claims of “ex-gay” advocates are true. As evangelical Presbyterian historian John Gerstner has said: “The old pagan Greek shrines of Aesculapius had their discarded crutches, and pagan gods were thanked for the miracles. Mohammedan and other non-Christian religions have their healers and their healings and their explanations determined by their theology. Primitive medicine men and witch doctors are not without their successes and their explanations.” (*The Theology of the Major Sects*, p. 111) (It is perhaps significant that one of the major proponents of the “ex-gay” claims happens to be a Christian who is very much interested in the claims of “folk medicine,” witch doctors, and the like.) Evangelicals are not flocking to Christian Science, for example, just because that cult’s periodicals contain pages of testimonies of how Christian Science has healed all sorts of things including homosexuality. After a Christian publication had been duped by claims about breasts growing back after a mastectomy Harold Lindsell wisely wrote in his editorial in *Christianity Today*. “The miracle business is getting out of hand. The time has come for evangelicals to adopt a cautious attitude toward extravagant

claims and to reject accounts that are unsubstantiated. Common sense and belief in miracles should go hand in hand.” (March 4, 1977, p. 5) Sadly, neither he nor *Christianity Today*, nor other evangelical publications have adopted “a cautious attitude toward extravagant claims” and “unsubstantiated accounts” of the “ex-gay” movement.

### **Analysis of the “Ex-gay” Claims**

When it comes to the “ex-gay” movement, some of the confusion has to do with something as basic as simple diagnostic error. For example, a tract entitled *The Gay Life: A True Story* is actually the story of a post-operative transsexual. Some call effeminacy homosexuality and feminism lesbianism.

Some people are confused about situational homosexuality. In the book, *The Gospel and the Gay*, for instance, there is glowing testimony about a young man who, while never having had any homosexual desires before his incarceration for arson, became involved in some common homosexual acts in prison. True to form, after his release from prison, he no longer engaged in such situational homosexuality and he is erroneously called “cured” by the naive author, the then president of Miami Christian College, supporter of Anita Bryant, and now teaching “practical” courses to future pastors at Dallas Theological Seminary, Kenneth Gangel. In a tract entitled *Out of Gayness - Into Wholeness*, Frank Shears of the “ex-gay” effort called Mathates, reveals that he was never really a homosexual to begin with. As a boy of 7 or 8 he was forced to engage in sex with his mother’s common-law husband and, as a teen-ager, he recalls that “At the mention of the subject, I would become nauseated.” He says that “One time I actually vomited while thinking about it.” His later falling in love with a woman and marrying her is presented as the evidence of his having been “healed” from “gayness” and the proof that others can have this “miracle,” too. Southern Baptist evangelist and anti-gay TV crusader James Robison has been promoting the former “camp” rock ‘n’ roll entertainer Little Richard as a “homosexual” before “his conversion.” (*Life’s Answer*, August 1979, p. 10) However, eight months before Robison’s magazine featured this so-called “ex-gay,” —and well after his Christian conversion—Little Richard was interviewed by *People* magazine. (Jan 8, 1979) His religious beliefs are mentioned but he says that contrary to what many people thought, he was never a homosexual. “As Richard sees it now, his antics were equal parts affectation, impetuosity and drug-induced lunacy. ... His effeminate mincing on stage was part of the act, he says. As one of the first blacks to play white clubs in the South, it was easier to get bookings if the manager thought he was homosexual and not interested in the female customers.” (p. 14) In a radio sermon preached not long before he died, evangelist John R. Rice of *The Sword of the Lord* addressed his topic, “Homosexual Sin, Sodomy.” After bombasting “sex perverts” who “become homosexuals because their sex drive is uncontrolled,” Rice gave an example of the “victory” over “homosexuality” that he said is available in Jesus. He recalled that during a revival meeting in Chicago, a man confessed: “I have already accosted women on the streets. If this goes on, I know what will happen. I will pull some woman into an alley and commit rape and I will have to go to prison.” Rice reported that the man “got saved” and, from this heterosexual story of violence against women, Rice promised to homosexuals in his audience: “Yes, there is deliverance in Jesus.”

What is clinically called *pseudohomosexuality* (fear of homosexuality based on beliefs about one’s masculine inadequacy) is evident in some of the “ex-gay” stories. For example, much of the literature from the “ex-gay” Outpost ministry contains material such as the following. “It happens like this: Johnnie (or Suzie) is leading a wholesome Christian life. They are well aware that the Bible forbids premarital sex and they have adjusted their lives to this. One day Johnnie wakes up and satan whispers, ‘You’re not a man.’ Johnnie is confused. He looks around at the other guys in school and he sees that he is different. He doesn’t smoke or drink. He doesn’t abuse sexual pleasure; he treats the girls with respect. Suddenly Johnnie begins to feel that it’s all true—that he isn’t a real man. ... More than one of our counselees went through that battle and came out believing that lie. They concluded that they weren’t ‘real men’ and that they must be gay.”

## **“Ex-gay” Ministries are Here Today - Gone Tomorrow**

You should know that many “ex-gay” programs you’ve heard about in the past are now defunct. Founders of Liberation in Jesus Christ, Disciples Only, Love in Action, EXIT of Melodyland, and other groups are no longer in the “ex-gay” movement because of their continued homosexuality which they cannot and will not hide anymore. In many of these cases, their organizations have not been taken on by others. In other cases the organizations have fallen into the hands of heterosexuals who were never homosexual to begin with. Many of those who have written their “ex-gay” testimonies in Christian publications, appeared on Christian TV talk shows, distributed cassette tapes of their testimony, and have founded “ex-gay” ministries have disappeared without any continuing contact with Christians but are now living openly as active homosexuals in less than optimally healthy or Christian ways. Disillusioned over the failures experienced, they have simply “dropped out.” Their “ex-gay” claims, however, continue to be published and re-run and distributed by others, many of whom know that they are pushing what is no longer true—as if it ever was true.

A chapter in psychologist Gary Collins’ book, *The Secrets of Our Sexuality*, was written by former “ex-gay” Guy Charles—before he was exposed to be an ex-“ex-gay.” After his conversion to Christ, Charles founded Liberation in Jesus Christ. He was assisted in this by a Charismatic Episcopal church in Virginia. His was one of the very first of the “ex-gay” programs. He claimed in his literature that he was no longer gay, that God had taken away “the lusts, the desires, the fantasies, and the act.” He was promoted throughout the evangelical world through such outlets as *Christianity Today*, *Christian Life*, *National Courier*, and the National Association of Evangelicals which provided him with a booth at the 1976 NAE convention in Washington, D.C. (It was during this same convention of NAE that Evangelicals Concerned was founded.) Collins’ book is one of the longer-lasting repositories for the Charles testimony, though people can still look it up in the bound back issues of the leading evangelical periodicals on the shelves of churches and schools throughout the world. None of his promoters has ever admitted to readers and constituencies that the testimony they heralded is not true. In his chapter in the Collins book Charles ignorantly says that “being homosexual is a choice of the will” and outlines a rather vague plan to “divest ... homosexual desires.” But Charles claimed too much. There were secrets of his own sexuality. Eventually, through the investigation of Logos International and its *National Courier*, prompted by complaints of those who had sought the “ex-gay” experience through Liberation in Jesus Christ, it was discovered that Charles was having homosexual experiences with those who, directed by the *National Courier*, *Christianity Today*, and others, were trying to become “ex-gay.” He was telling these seekers that the homosexual experiences they were having with him were not “homosexual” but “Jonathan and David” relationships. The seekers, many of whom were “seeking” against their own will because they had been sent to Charles by a church or their parents, were quite cooperative in such “Jonathan and David” relationships. The Episcopal church, which housed Liberation in Jesus Christ, kicked Charles out, convinced he was a fraud. Charles has suffered at the hands of homophobic zealots who encouraged him to deny his sexuality and who exploited his “testimony” to suit their ignorance and bigotry. Now he, too, is a victim of that stupidity that masqueraded as miracle and that he himself was sucked into promoting.

I will not take the time here to document what you already know to be the utter failure of the Anita Bryant “ex-gay” program, but I will call your attention to investigation by the *Miami Herald* that uncovered that almost no “ex-gay” counseling took place through the Anita Bryant Ministries prior to its reorganization and demise following her divorce. Again, another agenda was seen to have been operative in the Bryant- Green crusade against gay rights and homosexuality. One former “ex-gay” who has tried to right the wrongs perpetrated by his former testimony is John Evans who was “Ted” in Kent Philpott’s *The Third Sex?* In an EC tract called *What You Should Know About Ted*, Evans, now with Evangelicals Concerned in Marin County, California, writes: “I was one of the original members of a group called Love in Action. ... During the two years I was involved with Love in Action, I became well acquainted with the heart-breaking struggle in my life and the lives of other gay Christians as we prayed and pleaded with God for deliverance from our homosexual nature. I allowed Kent [Philpott] to attempt to cast out of me what he described as ‘the demon of homosexuality.’ Although I was completely open and honest before God, my

homosexual feelings remained. ... While I was working with Love in Action, I helped with the correspondence generated by the readers of *The Third Sex?* ... We all battled with our own homosexual feelings but claimed to be 'ex-gay' by faith and waited for the day it would become a reality. There are some gay Christians still claiming to be 'ex-gay' but these statements are being made by faith as they continue to suppress their homosexual feelings."

Since leaving the "ex-gay" movement, Evans writes: "I have met other born-again Christians who have accepted their homosexuality as I have, as our natural way of life. We have dedicated this to the Lord. ... Instead of trying to reject or suppress this portion of myself, I must present my entire being, including my homosexuality, as a loving sacrifice to God." He reports that "Here in San Rafael we spend most of our efforts reaching out to the 'drop-outs' of the Love in Action ministry." He says that "those who leave [LIA] usually become completely confused and often bitter at both God and the church. They want nothing more to do with any type of organized group." He says that the EC/Marin County ministry is mainly a "rescue" operation: "they need comfort and someone to listen to their confusion." In spite of the fact that those whose testimonies were contained in the book protested to Logos International, the publisher (now bankrupt) refused to accept their revised testimony about their not being "ex-gay" and he went ahead with a paperback edition with these words emblazoned across the cover: "These six stories of how homosexuals were changed through Christ will help save your children."

Robbi Kenney tried to collect testimonies from the "ex-gays" at the second annual Exodus ("ex-gay" network) conference in Oakland in 1977. Kenney is the heterosexual woman who founded the "ex-gay" Outpost ministry after she discovered that her boyfriend was gay. She managed to get the response of only one person at the entire convention. That one turned out to be Ed Hurst, who became her co-worker and whose testimony appeared under two different names until he left Outpost in 1980, "NOT," the notice read, "to get back into counseling" work. He was replaced by a person who claims never to have been homosexual in the first place. (*Outpost News*, Jan 1981, p. 2) It is Hurst's testimony that Kenney mails to all inquirers and it is the one *Christian Life* magazine published in 1978. According to Outpost, it has "gone through many reprints with other magazines and newspapers."

The "ex-gay" program known as King's Ministry has been taken over by the heterosexual relatives of homosexuals. Such is a growing tendency throughout the "ex-gay" network.

As many other "ex-gay" apologists have done, Richard Lovelace has referred to EXIT ministry at Melodyland as the "ex-gay" ministry which is "the most successful" in "bringing persons out of the homosexual life-style." (*Homosexuality and the Church*, p. 140) But its own founders left because of continued homosexuality in their own lives. Recent correspondence (spring, 1982) with Melodyland about EXIT attests that the founders are no longer in the "ex-gay" movement at all. More specifically, they are still homosexual and one who had married a woman as an "ex-gay" has now left her for another man. The much-heralded Pattison material, by the way, is based on the claims of people at EXIT.

With evidence such as what has been presented so far, it is no wonder that even "ex-gay" promoter Sharon Kuhn admitted in *Campus Crusade's Worldwide Challenge* magazine (Sept 1980, p. 40) that "Most ministries to Christian homosexuals soon die out." This she wrote in an article which the editors entitled "Hope for Homosexuals." Greg Reid, the "ex-gay" leader of Eagle Ministries and formerly chairman of the Exodus network wrote a letter to all Exodus affiliates following the Exodus convention in 1980 in which he said: "New, novice ministries were continually recruited while the vast majority of old ministries dropped out due to backsliding." He concludes: "EXODUS has hurt far more people than it ever aided: I must reserve further revelations that overwhelmingly convinced me of the necessity of my withdrawal from EXODUS."

Bruce Williams, a Roman Catholic priest who supports the aims of the "ex-gay" movement has written that "it is essentially undeniable that Love in Action has been subject to scandal and defection." (*American Protestantism and Homosexuality*, p. 210) In Williams' doctoral dissertation on the subject, he quotes Love in Action leader Frank Worthen admitting that ostensible efforts to help homosexuals may really be, for some, "substitute cruising." Greg

Reid has cautioned his fellow “ex-gay” workers to beware of the temptation to extend invitations to other “ex-gays” to stay overnight, only to flirt with the possibility of having sex with each other. He has said that his fellow “ex-gay” workers know very well what he is talking about.

Even heterosexual clergy who support the “ex-gay” movement recognize that, as Orthodox Presbyterian minister Charles McIlhenny says, “Specialty organizations which minister to specific groups [here he was speaking of “ex-gay” programs] arise but in time they cease.” He goes on to say that the church, though, remains to minister. But that was in an issue of his anti-gay *Christian Rights* newsletter *prior to its own demise*.

### **Something Less Than Truth-Telling**

There are many examples of intellectual dishonesty in the literature in support of the “ex-gay” solution. For example, Gangel cites from a spurious secondary source a psychiatrist (Lawrence Hatterer), whom Gangel mistakenly calls a psychologist, in order to bolster his own weak case for “curing” homosexuals. Gangel fails to quote this same psychiatrist on the disappointing outlook for such “cure.” Gangel is ignorant of the fact that Hatterer has written positively about the Homosexual Community Counseling Center (hardly an “ex-gay” effort) and has referred clients to me in the full knowledge that I make no effort to “cure” homosexuals. Hatterer has admitted: “As far as the cure of fixed homosexuality is concerned, it is unrealistic to try to eradicate the homosexual’s desires for members of his own sex.” Gangel also fails to note that Hatterer believes that it is “cruel for a parent and a therapist to attempt to change a person who is strongly identified” as homosexual. Gangel says that the “propensity can be changed by the power of Jesus Christ,” that Lovelace “stops short of the real power of the gospel.” But he offers absolutely no convincing evidence and even refers to a published interview in *Inspiration* magazine without acknowledging that the “ex-gay” quoted, admitted *in that very article*, that he still masturbates thinking of men and his gay “memories of the past and fond wishes.” This “ex-gay” was Jim Kasper, a founder of EXIT at Melodyland and no longer in the “ex-gay” work. Kasper was not invited back for a second round-table discussion and debate and he wrote to me to say so in order to correct the impression given by Roger Elwood, the organizer of the first debate and the editor of *Inspiration*, that Kasper was not able or not willing to appear for the second taping. The second debate, which included Chris Glaser, Troy Perry and me against John MacArthur, Sherwood Wirt and others, was never used after it was recorded because, as Elwood acknowledged to me after the session, the wrong side had won. Thus, he proposed to me a one-on-one debate between Francis Schaeffer and me but it never took place because soon after Schaeffer became seriously ill with cancer and the magazine itself had ceased publication by the time Schaeffer was well enough to resume his public ministry.

Evangelical sociologists Ronald Enroth and Gerald Jamison say that there *are* “clear-cut cases of cure” for homosexuality. (*The Gay Church*, p. 136) What is their proof? It is a tract from David Wilkerson’s magazine. What they quote from it is this line from an “ex-gay” lesbian: “I’ve been set free from lesbianism.” What they *don’t* quote is what else she said. She went on to say: “sometimes my body feels like its on fire” but “NO MATTER WHAT I WAS FEELING,” she proclaimed, “I’ve been set free from lesbiansim.” All Enroth and Jamison quote is “I’ve been set free from lesbianism.”

### **The Still Future Cures of the “Ex-gay” Claims**

Are evangelicals really listening to what “ex-gays” themselves are claiming or are they so intent on hearing just what they want to hear, just what fits their preconceived notions about what it is that they just have to hear that they screen out what is really being said?

Gangel, for example, gives an entire chapter in his book over to the testimony of Greg Reid who left Exodus. Reid writes in his conclusion: “I still have a long way to go ... I believe that the Lord is going to cure me. I claim that promise.” The cure is still in the future. The future tense is used in a featured letter sent out to prospective contributors of the Anita Bryant Ministries. The May-June 1978 issue of the ABM newsletter contains this

testimony of a person labeled “ex-homosexual.” She writes: “I believe God will rid me of this sinful nature; I believe He will give me a trust and an attraction to men, in his own time and in His own will. And while I still have moments of struggle and temptations, and at times it’s hard for me to imagine that these feelings can be changed, I have to remember that He has performed miracles far greater than this.” This from someone called “ex-homosexual” by Anita Bryant Ministries!

Wilkerson had published the testimony of Roger Grindstaff as Roger Dean. In it, a tract called *Gay*, Wilkerson promised that people would find a way out of homosexuality. But here is what Grindstaff wrote in the tract: “I still felt and desired like a homosexual, but God’s word said that I was a new creature and I refused to believe anything else. The battle raged so fiercely and screamed for sexual release, but I would not give it any satisfaction.”

Wilkerson and Teen Challenge used to send all their gay cases up to the live-in facility run by Grindstaff until, of course, the Grindstaff operation fell apart and Grindstaff disappeared. Teen Challenge workers now admit that they don’t know what to do with homosexuals. As one put it to me over a long-distance phone call, “We aren’t equipped to deal with homosexuals. What do you suggest?” He said that he had been calling all over the country and nobody seemed to know what worked.

Contrary to the claim promised in the title of the Presbyterian Charismatic Communion’s *Healing for the Homosexual*, there are sad tales of the hardly-healed, presumably PCC’s best evidence. Typical of the confusion that riddles the booklet: “He has not changed his sexual preference, and we have not altered our belief that his behavior is a sin in God’s eyes ... [but] God has given me the faith to believe that David will be healed—eventually ... by His supernatural power and grace.” Little wonder that the PCC authors urge patience; they warn there will be backsliding as the homosexual fights the homosexuality day by day. This is similar to something that Bob Green of Anita Bryant Ministries said once in Chicago: “I think that the people who minister to ex-homosexuals have to be ready for a lot of disappointment because there’s a lot of backsliding.” (*Gaylife*, Nov 25, 1977)

Two “converted homosexuals” were brought to the Mennonite Church’s Assembly 81 in Bowling Green, Ohio by Mennonite psychiatrist Enos Martin. Their names were Ron and Beth. They do not, however, consider themselves to be “ex-gay.” According to Brethren/Mennonite Council editor Jim Martin, they told him that they view their continued homosexuality as a “thorn in the flesh” and as a “cross to bear.” They spoke of the hypocrisy and lying they had experienced in the “ex-gay” groups and said they knew of nobody who has changed from homosexual orientation to heterosexual orientation.

In a chapter called “Two Testimonies” in the Charles Keysor book from Zondervan, *What You Should Know About Homosexuality*, an anonymous “ex-gay” man writes: “I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was twelve. Shortly after, Satan began to plague me with homosexual fantasies.” An anonymous “ex-gay” woman testifies: “I had committed my life to Christ when I was nine” and went on to become a lesbian. Though one contributor to the book, psychiatrist William Wilson, insists that “Christian faith ... can instantaneously reorient the person,” the “ex-gay” woman says otherwise and so does the “ex-gay” man. They speak only in terms of *non-practice*. Keysor includes only these two “ex-gay” testimonies, amounting to merely contrived celibacy, even though he says that he has been in “the homosexual controversy” since 1973. The book was published in 1979. With no documentation, Wilson adds to the confusion by saying that “One can find in Christian literature numerous instances of reorientation of sexual object choice as a result of conversion” and that “there are thousands of others.” But his own editor could not find one. The two skimpy testimonies for non-reorientation stand as testimony to the lack of reorientation evidence. The sort of wild allusions made by Wilson are made by others, too, who always seem to “know” that somewhere or other there are those who are changing. Just don’t try to pin them down. More honestly, another contributor to the same volume, William McKain, admits: “Repentance and conversion to Jesus Christ does not normally free one from homosexual urges. The homosexual orientation remains and may continue to plague the Christian homosexual person” whom, he says, must therefore “live a celibate life.”

In 1977, Logos International came out with yet another book by Kent Philpott on the “ex-gay” theme. This book was called *The Gay Theology* and featured four more testimonies. Though several times he mentions his previous book, the discredited *The Third Sex?*, there is no hint of the fact that none of the six people whose “cases” were presented in it is still with his Love in Action “ex-gay” ministry. (Since then, even Philpott has left.) In *The Gay Theology*, one of the testimonies is that of Anne. She says that “for the most part,” she is not sexually attracted to women, but that “I’m still emotionally very attracted to women” and “still struggl[ing] like heck relating emotionally to men.” Philpott asks, “Do you think that there will be a possibility of your being married some day?” She answers: “My desires right now do not lie along that line, but I’m certainly open for it.” She adds: “I know that there are so many things that have to be worked out. I believe the Lord will do it in His time” while admitting, “I think that God doesn’t work as fast as He should in my life.” Then there is Veronica. Asked about her lesbian temptations, she acknowledges, “They don’t go away completely.” When tempted she turns “away from any sexual involvement. In the beginning it did happen,” she says, “but it wasn’t deep. It was more of a hugging closeness which gradually develops, but I put a stop to that ... it doesn’t go away. I have to consent in my will daily to stand against homosexuality. I know I must turn away from the stimulus, and deal with it by bringing it out in the open and saying, ‘Okay, this is what’s happening and it just can’t be!’” Still unmarried, Veronica says she is relating very well to the “men who are struggling with the gay life” and adds that she is relating to them “more on a spiritual and emotional level where I couldn’t before because of that thing of the body was a threat to me.” The “ex-gay” men are not trying to sexually seduce her as were the men in her life before becoming “ex-gay.” A third “ex-gay” testimony is that of David. After his “deliverance” from homosexuality, David reports that repeatedly his “sexual drive would swell up and there would be fantasies and masturbation.” Nonetheless, he testifies, “I knew God had delivered me even though I might have thoughts or memories. I was free from it. I believed with all my heart that I was heterosexual.” Pastors advised him to get married to a woman. He married an “ex-lesbian.” Finally, there is Frank’s testimony. He is asked by Philpott: “When you were renewed in the Lord, did you become heterosexual?” Frank replies: “No, I became a new creation in Christ. I still had the temptations that any homosexual has ... I just thought of myself as a new creature in Christ, naturally part of the family of God. I was no longer a homosexual, but I did not consider myself heterosexual.” Asked, “Would you be content if you never married?” Frank answers, “Yes, I am content in the Lord ... I’m not on a search for a woman.” What is not reported is that, according to a former Love in Action associate, Frank continues to live with his male companion of many years and thereby derives much of the benefit of the closeness that homosexuality is all about without necessarily engaging in continued genital activity with this person. Continued genital activity is often decreased or even altogether eliminated in long-term relationships between homosexuals as well as heterosexuals, though this is not a necessary or even healthy phenomenon.

Even though these four testimonies add up to no evidence at all for claiming that “ex-gays” have been changed from homosexuality to heterosexuality, the publisher promoted the book with these words: “Across America, homosexuals are ... denying that they can change. ... In *The Gay Theology*, four homosexuals share their ... coming out into Christ. Their lives are ample proof that homosexuality is neither permanent nor hopeless.” Either the publisher did not bother to read the book or chose simply to lie since what is said in the book is not what the publisher promises troubled potential readers.

Another “ex-gay” testimony is a book by Kevin Linehan, *Such Were Some of You*, published by the Mennonite company, Herald Press, in 1979. After going through various religion “trips,” drugs, an aborted military experience, a serious suicide attempt, and some sordid homosexual activity, Linehan tells of meeting a fellow student named Murl (“*My God, I gasped, he’s beautiful. Are you sure you’re not dreaming?*”) In the midst of “falling in love” with his fantasy of this stranger with “sky-blue eyes, square and masculine jaw, sandy hair and well-proportioned body,” this stranger who would, as all strangers must, become even stranger before becoming more familiar—Linehan concluded: “To deny my homosexuality seemed the height of hypocrisy.” He reasoned, “How could I ever say that I was not gay. Homosexuality was not something you did; it was something you were.” He goes on to tell of how he



rejoiced to know that [Murl] was here, beside me, because 1 this is where he chose to be, because it was comfortable, secure, and where he belonged.”

But then all of this collapsed when he announced to Murl that he wanted to “marry” him. Murl left within two months. He believed himself to be *totally* rejected now, even by his Murl. (When he had expressed earlier his joy in his gay relationship, his mother’s response over the phone was: “Every time I see your face I will vomit” and slammed down the phone.) Linehan took this romantic breakup very badly. He soon believed that he had to escape from what he thought was inevitable heartbreak or sordid lifestyle if he remained a practicing homosexual.

He became a Christian and read what he thought was the Bible’s saying that there were those, in Corinth, who used to be homosexuals and who were so no longer—hence the title of the book.

Although he does not mention homosexuality on more than a few pages in the entire book, he concludes under the sub-heading, “No Longer Gay,” with the typical non-Christian mind-over-matter double-talk of the “ex-gay” advocates. He writes: “Truly, I was no longer a homosexual in God’s eyes. Surely, I had been washed, justified, and sanctified. Beyond dispute, as far as I was concerned, was the fact that I had a new identity as a man in the Lord. All this was certain in spite of what temptations from my lower carnal nature might still remain to plague me and cause me to cry out for grace from Jesus to live conditionally in light of my new position in Him.”

By his own evidence, Linehan remains homosexual. He is denying it, however, and unable to face the facts of his life. If this is what the churches are demanding of sincere Christians in order to be accepted in God’s sight, the churches have abandoned their role of preaching the Gospel of God’s grace. Even non-Christians who do not believe in the doctrine of grace at least value honesty. As is quoted above, Linehan interpreted his homosexuality more honestly *before* becoming a Christian than *after* becoming a Christian, —after homophobic Christians had gotten to him. That yet another otherwise responsible Christian publisher can make this kind of contribution to anti-gay propaganda, underscores once again the utterly desperate state of affairs among those who, in their ignorance and unwillingness to face facts honestly, persist in arguing a basically unsupported and unsupportable case at such expensive consequences for homosexuals.

### **Double-Talk within the “Ex-gay” Movement**

There are contrasts between the public promises of promotional material of the “ex-gay” movement and the confidential admissions of “ex-gay” leaders. Given what I have presented thus far, this is quite understandable.

A Love in Action introductory brochure states that “redemptive power is able to recreate the individual. [We] offer help and support to the homosexual to bring him the victory and the release Christ wants him to have. To the homosexual, we say, there is a better way. Admittedly the way is narrow and few there be that find it, but it leads to life everlasting.” The brochure continues about “Those who have renounced their gay lifestyle” and speaks of “This freedom to share honestly [that] brings about rapid healing and release from guilt.” The question, “What is Love in Action?” is finally answered in this conclusion: “The message we proclaim is this: CHRIST HAS LIFE CHANGING POWER!”

But as even Worthen notes in material not generally available to the public: “Christians want to hear of instant healings.” We might ask, though, what is the difference between “instant healings” which he says do not happen, and “rapid healing” which he says does happen? In the LIA pamphlet, *Zap!*, Worthen writes that “One letter [from an inquirer] read, ‘I hear that you change homosexuals into heterosexuals.’” He was using this quote to illustrate erroneous ideas held by inquirers. Responding to the question, “Do homosexuals become heterosexuals?,” Worthen explains: “For the Christian world, a ‘Yes’ answer is many times all they want to hear. Anything beyond that is just insignificant details. The anti-gay-rights groups have already answered ‘Yes’ for us and will not listen to anything that we have to say. Their ears are closed, for they fear qualifications. Anything that will modify the answer is bad

news and counter-productive to their cause.” This is a roundabout way of saying that homosexuals do not become heterosexuals through the “ex-gay” experience. Worthen’s way of answering the question is exactly what Grindstaff said to me when I asked him if he knew of any homosexuals, including himself, who had become heterosexual through the “ex-gay” process. He became infuriated and said that, “of course not, I don’t know of any.” He went on to explain, as Worthen did, that all the churches want to hear about are fabricated and exaggerated tales of total reversal of sexual orientation and so, that is exactly what he was going to give them.

Worthen says: “At no time has Love in Action stridently proclaimed a new-found cure for homosexuality. We do not proclaim a method or a system, but a Person: Jesus Christ.” Worthen adds though, that “even Jesus does not work against our will.” According to Worthen, *Christianity Today*’s main “ex-gay,” “Our goal is not to ‘change gays to straights,’ ... [but] what we do try to do is help individuals develop Christ-centered lives.” (*Live-in Program*) In view of this, it should be kept in mind that Worthen is the foremost advocate of the new “ex-gay” designation and the main opponent of the idea of the more moderate voices in the “ex-gay” movement that want to speak of “Christian homosexuals” who are “remaining celibate.” According to the LIA doctrinal statement, *Where We Stand*, “We believe that in making a commitment to Christ, He gives us victory over homosexual desires and leads us into a new life and a new walk that is within His will.” In *Zap!*, LIA tries to step back from the idea that they offer a “new found cure” for quick “victory over homosexual desires” but they still promise that such “victory” will come after “a long, painful, suffering process.” In the *LIA Newsletter* (oct 1980, p. 3), Worthen says that “psychic response ... is a difficult and lengthy trial, yet there is a way out for those who lose their own life to receive the new life Christ is freely offering.” But they don’t become heterosexual.

When Bob Green was confronted about the fact that “ex-gays” were not becoming heterosexual he finally agreed by saying: “They’re not homosexual; they’re not heterosexual.” (*Gaylife*, Nov 25, 1977) This admission, though, did not stop him from saying on other occasions that his Anita Bryant Ministries was producing “ex-homosexuals.”

The Seventh-Day Adventist “ex-gay” program by Colin Cook promises to set “a person FREE from his homosexual tendencies” but a closer look shows that what Cook preaches is the claiming of the presumed heterosexuality of Jesus as the homosexual’s own heterosexuality, thus ending “the search for heterosexuality within” the homosexual himself. Cook says that it “is a wistful hope” and unbiblical to look for emerging heterosexuality to replace homosexual desires. (*Ministry*, Sept 1981) Cook, who has married heterosexually, confesses: “It does not embarrass me to say that I still experience [homosexual] temptation.” According to Cook, “change is not the issue.”

Given the fact that homosexuals are not becoming heterosexuals through the “ex-gay” programs and given the fact that heterosexual church leaders who promote the “ex-gay” programs continue to desire that such conversion take place, it is not at all surprising that the level of ambivalence about “ex-gay” terminology and promises and claims remains very high.

The “ex-gay” *Outpost News* (Sept 1981) reports that Outpost “hopes to mail out brochures on its upcoming conference to the midwest mailing list of the APA [American Psychological Association]” because the APA Division 9 Task Force Report on homosexuality stated that “attempts to ‘cure’ gay people are ‘ethically questionable.’” Printed on the cover of the brochure Outpost proposed to mail to the APA members is this banner: “There IS an ex-gay reality!” But Outpost editor Robbi Kenney says in the same issue that in ministering to homosexuals, evangelicals should “Know what you are offering. ... You are NOT offering heterosexuality,” warns Kenney, but “the power to come into celibacy.” She advises: “avoid calling them ex-gays.” To the outside world, e.g. the psychologists, she shouts: “There IS an ex-gay reality” and then turns right around to confide to those on the inside that they should not expect homosexuals to become heterosexuals and that the term “ex-gay” should not even be used.

Bethany Fellowship promotes the book, *Straight is the Way* by Joel and Jane French as proof of “total sexual reorientation!” and lists Outpost as a recommended “ex-gay” referral. However, those in Outpost are honest enough

to give the book a bad review. They write: “Unfortunately it leaves the reader with the impression that deliverance solves the homosexual sin problem in someone’s life. And we’ve got tons of counselees who’ll tell you it just ain’t that way.” A few months later, Kenney wrote: “The ‘ex-gay’ label must be discarded.” (Outpost’s *Realities*, Dec 1979) But two years later she is still saying one thing to the inside crowd and another to the outside.

This ambivalence about giving up the “ex-gay” terminology allowed Kenney to follow up in the August 1980 issue of her *Realities* with an article entitled: “How to Give a Testimony If You Are Ex-Gay.” She urges, however, that the “ex-gay” witness steer clear of concentration on homosexuality, either past or present homosexuality, remembering that “Homosexuality is only a manifestation of something wrong on a deeper level.” She does suggest that the “ex-gay” person “Be honest” and admit to the “pretty heavy temptations currently” experienced in homosexuality, and exposes the double-talk of the “ex-gay” testimony when she says that “others desperately need to know that God can change them so that their identity [notice she uses the term “identity” and not “homosexual experiencing”] is no longer in being homosexual, but in being Christian.” It is important to recognize that this is all that Kenney is promising, even though she can go on, as others do too, to say as she wrote just one month later in her *Realities*: “For those ex-gays who don’t believe it’s possible to change, remember this. As long as they agree that God has called them to abstinence, if they understand that their life is to be ruled by God’s word and not by their emotions and if they continue to surrender daily to Christ, they will experience the change process whether they believe in it or not.”

The same double-talk comes from the “ex-gay” program known as Lifeline. In their newsletter (Sept 15, 1980) Doug Houck says: “we DO NOT tell others we are ‘ex-gay’ but simply recognize that we are sinners saved by grace.” Lifeline goes on to ask, “Does continued homosexual temptation after spiritual rebirth and possibly times of failure, mean that a change has not taken place and the person is still, in fact, homosexual?” Sharon Kuhn of Lifeline states: “The answer is NO!! A Christian experiencing homosexual desires is not a ‘Christian homosexual,’ but a Christian experiencing homosexual temptation.” (*Homosexuality: A Christian Response*, p. 45) She continues: “In fact, often the most intense times of homosexual desire will occur *after* a person commits his or her life to Christ.”

Following the 1979 CAPS conference (Christian Association for Psychological Studies) in Minneapolis, at which Kenney and Hurst made such sweeping claims for the “ex-gay” experience (though those of you who were there will recall that Kenney at one point exploded with the admission: “We are not in the business of turning homosexuals into heterosexuals!”) but, as I was saying, after that meeting, Hurst wrote the following letter, dated May 25, 1979, to my partner, Wayne Swift. Hurst wrote: “I am sorry if my statements led you to believe that my ministry hinges on the development of heterosexual attractions in my own life—it does not. My ministry quite simply is based on the belief that the Bible calls homosexual behavior sinful.” Hurst went on: “Outpost does not view heterosexual adjustment as the cure or as a measure of cure. ... We are well aware that marriage says nothing about a real sexual readjustment.”

In their *Realities* for October 1980, Hurst and Kenney stated that “Change is not some objective thing that can be pinned down” such as “marriage,” or “the development of heterosexual interests,” or the “lack of homosexual desires: or the “ceasing of homosexual behaviors” or “the lack of arousal at homosexual stimuli.” They confess that “one of the nitty-gritty realities of the Christian walk is that some people just aren’t changing.” *Some* people? *All* of the “ex-gays” are, by their own admissions when most honest, *not* changing. They are left, as they state, with the realization that there can be “great progress in some areas of their lives, but the homosexual area remains a real problem for them.” They conclude that we must all live in the “expectancy” of change for which they admit they have no “objective evidence” that can be “pinned down” and no subjective experience of change to heterosexual attractions in their own lives.

But look at what was published in Campus Crusade’s *Worldwide Challenge* just one month before this Outpost admission, September of 1980. It was proclaimed that “80% of those who seek help at Outpost go on to overcome their struggles.” Though Kenney called her own readers’ attention to the publicity of the Campus Crusade article

praising her “ex-gay” ministry, she never indicated that the percentage and claim attributed to her work were in error. Yet, just a few months later, in the March 1981 issue of *Outpost News*, Kenney explains that the reason “we don’t print testimonies of those who have gone through counseling at OUTPOST” is that “the folks we see are just beginning to get a grasp on deeper life in Christ; they’ve not ‘arrived’ yet.” But what about the 80% who allegedly have “overcome their struggles” with homosexuality? She let that stand in the widely-read magazine of Campus Crusade. Then you and others read it there and believed it. And she did not say to her own readers that the 80% figure was wrong. Kenney says in the *News* article that “we’d love to be able to give glowing accounts of those who have come to us for help and left absolutely radically changed, but we’re usually just the first stop. ... These believers aren’t ready yet to publicly proclaim their freedom from homosexuality.” She promises that “you’ll begin hearing about some of these folks in the years to come ... But,” she adds, “you’ll have to listen real close to catch them speaking of homosexuality.” (p. 2) Unfortunately, it’s beginning to be just the other way round. You have to listen very closely to catch the ex-“ex-gays” speaking of Christian faith.

### **Psychological vs. Spiritual Remedies**

There is a very remarkable tendency for evangelicals in the psychological and psychiatric areas to recommend spiritual solutions to Christians troubled by their homosexuality and for evangelicals in the pastoral and theological areas to recommend professional psychiatric solutions to Christians who are troubled by their homosexuality. This is contrary to the more typical response of those in any discipline who tend, if for no other reason than to justify their existence, in the direction of a self-delusional arrogance about the all-sufficiency of their own approach or discipline. This suggests that they all know, in the case of homosexuality, that a solution is surely not available in their own discipline. It is a case of the grass that can be seen to be greener if it’s on the other side of the fence. For example, Don Williams in his *The Bond that Breaks* (p. 125) is a clergyman who advocates professional psychotherapy for homosexual change. Richard Lovelace, the evangelical seminary professor, in his book *Homosexuality and the Church* (p. 129) also recommends professional psychotherapy for homosexual change. In Charles Keysor’s book, *What You Should Know About Homosexuality*, the theologically-trained William McKain admits that “Repentance and conversion to Jesus Christ does not normally free one from homosexual urges. The homosexual orientation remains and may continue to plague the Christian homosexual person” whom, McKain says, must therefore “live a celibate life,” though he says that the “help of a qualified therapist” should be sought. On the other hand, and in this very same book edited by Keysor, psychiatrist William Wilson admits that there is “extraordinary resistance of homosexuality to psychiatric intervention,” so he recommends Christian conversion. This is seen too in the advocacy of psychiatrist E. Mansell Pattison. A few years back, Pattison wrote in the evangelical organ, the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, that he was “happy to report”—in view of what he acknowledged was the “conventional wisdom and available clinical research data” offering dismal outlooks for changing homosexual—that he was now “happy to report” however, “that some exciting and intriguing events have occurred over the past five years.” He went on to say that “Across the country in various places, Christian men and women have achieved successful changes in their homosexual orientations, their lifestyles, and achieved major emotional and spiritual growth” and he recommends the “small cells or groups of ‘ex-gays’ [that] are now offering counseling ... with apparent success.” At the CAPS convention in Atlanta in April, 1982, Pattison was still championing the claims of the “ex-gays” as over against what he described as the very poor results for change obtained in psychotherapy. But Pattison is obviously uncomfortable with too close an identification with “spiritual” solutions. Though the Pattisons wrote of “homosexuals who changed to heterosexuality after religious participation,” as they put it, and though their article was entitled “‘Ex-Gays’: Religiously Mediated Change in Homosexuals” and though it was printed in a “Special Section” called “Modern Religious Experience and Psychiatry” in the journal of the American Psychiatric Association and though he and his wife repeatedly speak of “our subjects’ religious ideology” and go into details of this in terms of Pentecostalism and conclude by saying that the “change has occurred ... within a supernatural framework” they nonetheless say that the change utilized “generic methods of change common to folk therapy” and explain that “these same healing elements are obtained in numerous indigenous healing methods.” Thus, at the Atlanta CAPS meeting in April, 1982, Pattison scoffed at the

idea that his report is about change through some “magical, spiritual manna from heaven” or a “new miraculous cure.” When under attack for the very careless report and exaggerated claims of his study by several evangelical organizations, Pattison retreated to the posturing of an “objective scientist” and flatly stated: “I wouldn’t be surprised if some of those 11 return to homosexual lifestyles.” (He and his wife had said that 11 men had changed from homosexuality to heterosexuality.)

According to evangelical psychiatrist Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, no enthusiast for the integration of homosexual practice in the faith and life of a homosexual Christian, even most homosexuals who come for treatment cannot “be converted to the heterosexual adaptation.” (*Homosexuality: A Symbolic Confusion*, p. 152) Those who can physically function genitally in the so-called heterosexual adaptation show simply that, as Barnhouse herself puts it with reference to heterosexuals who discover in orgies that they can have orgasms with someone of the same sex, “that the physiology of their sexual apparatus is in good working order.” (p. 107) Barnhouse goes on to add, with reference to the evangelical demand for celibacy in homosexuals, that it “is not possible for everyone without crippling them in other ways, and it is unreasonable and cruel to demand it.” She concludes that “Those who cannot change or abstain must make the attempt to express their sexual nature in the most stable, responsible, and loving forms of which they are capable.” (p. 152)

Another evangelical psychiatrist who doubts the efficacy of psychotherapy in reversing the direction of homosexuals’ erotic and romantic attraction to members of the same sex is John White. But he says that such change is not needed anyway. He recognizes that what his more traditional approach demands is the very celibacy that Barnhouse calls “unreasonable and cruel.” As White puts it, you must just “stop. Now.” (*Eros Defiled*, p. 133) He recognizes that psychotherapeutic intervention is not going to work so he says that the answer is to tell the homosexual to exercise will-power and not to go with the continuing desires.

Writing in a letter to *Christianity Today* (Oct 7, 1977) evangelical psychiatrist J. Ernest Runions quotes another Christian psychiatrist, Ernest White, who, after treating 50 homosexuals concluded: “I have met no single case of a man being set free from [homosexual desires] by spiritual measures.”

Observations such as those of Barnhouse, Runions, Pattison, and both Whites concerning the failure of psychotherapy to effect sexual orientation reversal seem to fall on deaf ears when it comes to evangelicals who want to hear that such reversal is possible. Thus, when a Pattison or an Enos Martin, both psychiatrists, comes along and advocates the “ex-gay” remedy, evangelicals are only too glad to jump aboard and shout, “Amen!” They are all too ready to accept outlandish claims without a shred of confirming evidence and they don’t even seem to notice all the contrary evidence. If and when they do notice the failures of the “ex-gay” approach they rationalize about such failures being only the inevitable “rotten apples” or they backtrack on the previous claims and revise the claims to match the evidence. This latter move results in a more complete revision of claims than most of the “ex-gay” champions are willing to admit.

### **False hope based on the Pattison Propaganda**

Ever since the publication of the advocacy of the “ex-gay” movement by Pattison and his wife, the evangelical world and its publications have gone all goo-goo eyed over their claims. *Christianity Today*, *The Reformed Journal*, Rosemead’s *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, the SDA’s *Ministry* and back again to publications of the “ex-gay” movement itself have all been pushing the Pattisons’ report as though, now at last there is the authoritative confirmation that all of them have been waiting for.

As we all know, homosexuality is still a political football within organized psychiatry and so it is not surprising that the American Psychiatric Association’s *scientifically-based* declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in the Third Edition of the APA’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) did not prevent the publication of the Pattisons’ article, “‘Ex-Gays’: Religiously Mediated Change in Homosexuals” in a religion

section of *The American Journal of Psychiatry* (Dec 1980). Here, in the journal of the APA, amid ads for anti-psychotic drugs and antidepressants, is a homespun “Amen!” for the “ex-gay” remedy as the Pattisons announce that 11 homosexuals became heterosexuals in an unnamed “ex-gay” program.

There is no indication in the article that even minimal precautions which are to be expected in scientific research were taken. And why Pattison’s wife is listed as a co-author (she is given no clinical or research identification) remains unexplained.

Splashy promises of psychopharmacological ads must be tempered with contraindications, warnings, precautions, and data on adverse reactions and overdose, albeit in fine print. But the closest the Pattisons come to such is to say that deciding which is best among the treatment options for homosexuals, e.g. folk healing (i.e., the “ex-gay” route), psychoanalysis, behavior therapy, or sex therapy, “is undetermined.” Even to say this shows a very poor knowledge of the professional literature and seems to contradict the very point the Pattisons are trying to make in their triumphant announcement that they are on to something quite significant in the “ex-gay” movement.

There is no mention of the adverse reactions to the` overwhelming failures of the “ex-gay” movement, including fostered guilt, feeling forsaken by God, and ultimate despair as the baby (faith) is tossed out with the dirty bath (the homophobic churches and their niggling Pharisees). This is to say nothing about the fact that most of the “ex-gay” organizations are now defunct. Those that remain are promising far less than the Pattisons say they are promising.

We must ask how the Pattisons explain away the 270 people they admit sought and failed to achieve the “ex-gay” experience from the same Charismatic self-help group (EXIT of Melodyland) which screened out all but 30 alleged “cures” for the Pattisons to interview. It should be kept in mind that these people were *not* Pattison’s patients. We must also wonder about the fact that only 11 of these 30 “ex-gays” consented to be interviewed by the Pattisons. The Pattisons do not tell us why cooperation was not obtained from the presumably grateful remainder of 19. Remember that some 300 persons who were dissatisfied enough with their homosexuality that they went seeking the “ex-gay” experience started with the program. The Pattisons present what they apparently believe is good evidence of the sexual reorientation of 11 of these 300.

It is not possible to get rid entirely of researcher bias but since Pattison tries to cast doubt on the research of Bell, Weinberg, and Hammersmith in his review in *Eternity* (May 1982) by saying that *maybe* the Bell, Weinberg and Hammersmith interviewees were homosexual, we might ask the Pattisons what consideration they gave to the possibility of their own interviewing being biased because they are heterosexual. In fact, over half of Pattison’s review in *Eternity* concerns his faulting what he thinks was the political intent of Bell, Weinberg, and Hammersmith. If such an approach is valid—and if it is it remains to be shown that such political intention significantly damaged research—we might attack the Pattisons’ report on the same grounds.

The Pattisons’ acknowledged limitations in relying on *retrospective* data from men who “changed,” by the way, at a time of life when Bell and Weinberg and other researchers have found that homosexuals tend to marry or at least make their most serious attempt at heterosexual adjustment, are compounded by their naivete in believing that these men “did not attempt to distort their life experience” and in trusting so uncritically the corroboration of the Melodyland administrators who had a very big vested interest in presenting the “ex-gay” solution as *the answer*. As has been reported often, and as we have cited examples above, both former “ex-gays” and those still making the claims say that as part of their testimony they have had to lie and/or withhold information “for the good of the ‘ex-gay’ ministry” and in order to “keep from slipping back into homosexual sin.” We have seen, too, that evangelical supporters of the “ex-gay” programs demanded such exaggeration by their obvious displeasure and total lack of interest in anything but all-or-nothing victories.

The small sample size, especially in view of the hundreds of acknowledged failures, is another methodological deficiency. The Pattisons use percentages in comparing their findings with those of others whose samples were

much larger. This is misleading and, of course, statistically unacceptable. Another serious weakness is their misunderstanding of the research of others. An example of this is their reporting that Bell and Weinberg had a sample size of only 575 when in reality it was almost 3 times that and their stating that, in Bell and Weinberg, “all of the men were white.” In reality, there were hundreds of blacks in the Bell and Weinberg study.

In a seemingly reasonable way, the Pattisons define “ex-gay” as “a basic change in sexual orientation from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality.” I say “seemingly reasonable” *theoretically*, though as we have seen over and over again, this is precisely *not* how the term is defined within the “ex-gay” movement by those who are being most candid. Several “ex-gay” leaders have said to me that this definition of the Pattisons is their fatal flaw. Of course it is. Without it, they have nothing to proclaim as “ex-gay” if the term means anything at all straightforward. Strangely, when Pattison was confronted with this in Atlanta in April (1982) he simply said that he had not used the terms “exclusive homosexuality” and “exclusive heterosexuality.” A reading of the journal article, however, shows irrefutably not only that he used them in the article but he and his wife used them *repeatedly* throughout the various sections of the article, all the way down to and including the conclusion itself.

The Pattisons correctly say that “suppression of behavior or involvement in heterosexual activity does not constitute a ‘cure.’” I agree. But most “ex-gays” at their candid best say that daily suppression of homosexual desires and behavior is exactly what *is* required in the “ex-gay” process. The Pattisons then go on to promise and claim much that their data cannot substantiate—certainly more than “ex-gays” themselves claim—and they even make claims that their data contradict.

There is a statistical discrepancy between text and a table misleadingly labeled “Characteristics of 11 Homosexuals Who Changed to Heterosexuality After Religious Participation.” On the contrary, what their data reveal is that *only 3 of the 11 of the 300 people claim to have no current homosexual dreams, fantasies, or impulses and one of these 3 is listed as being still incidentally homosexual. That reduces the “ex-gays” to 2 men out of the original group of 300 who sought the “ex-gay” experience. Of the other 8 (if that one is still listed with the first 3) “cured” individuals, 3 are said to be suffering “neurotic conflict” over their continued “homosexual impulses even though 2 of these started out as more heterosexual than any of the other 9. Only 6 of the 11 “cured” ones have married and 2 of these married men are included with those suffering “neurotic conflict” over their continued homosexuality which the Pattisons admit is more than incidental homosexuality.*

That only 6 have married is a telling fact since, for these Charismatic Christians, one *may* have heterosexual intercourse (*need* have it!) only within marriage. Indeed, not surprisingly, none of these men is reported to have “fallen” into premarital sexual activity with a woman. The authors rank one man as “exclusively heterosexual” *after* “change,” but he himself admits to continued homosexual fantasies. They say he changed from “exclusive homosexuality” even though he himself considered himself to be bisexual *before* “change.” Of little worth is the Pattisons’ observation that even *after* “change,” everyone of these “ex-gay” men is still effeminate.

In an attempt to bolster their argument, the Pattisons tout here-today-gone-tomorrow testimonies, e.g. ironically (1) an anonymous religious tract, (2) a pseudonymous story of a self-defined “doubtful Christian” who admits to using homosexual fantasy in order to engage in infrequent sex with women “to demonstrate my heterosexual prowess,” (the Pattisons don’t reveal this mechanism of his) and (3) the now invalidated *The Third Sex?* by Kent Philpott.

After hearing my critique of his report at the CAPS meeting in April, 1982, Pattison reacted by attempting to minimize the significance of the continued homosexuality in his “ex-gays.” He exclaimed: “Who doesn’t have homosexual fantasies, especially after a fight with his wife!” This statement, along with his admission that he would *not* “be surprised if some of those 11 return to homosexual lifestyles” left most hearers more confused than ever. In effect, Pattison’s defense confirmed my objections. One of his outspoken supporters rose to offer this explanation for the miserable evidence of change: Some sins are just harder to get out of than others. As to the evangelical

establishment's misusing the Pattison report, Pattison said he was not responsible for whatever "well-meaning" people do with it.

"Well-meaning" people were doing and are still doing plenty with the Pattison report. As has been indicated, *Christianity Today* trumpeted the Pattison material with a banner cover, "Homosexuals CAN Change." (Feb 6, 1981) Tom Minnery wrote the article for *Christianity Today*. He made such empty assertions as this: "The fact is, many people are experiencing deliverance from homosexuality. The evidence is too great to deny it." Misquoting his main "evidence," the careless report by the Pattisons, Minnery claims, *contrary to fact*, that, e.g., 11 men "changed their basic homosexual orientation," "eight of them no longer have homosexual dreams, fantasies, or physical arousal," "All Pattison's subjects were true homosexuals," "Four of Pattison's subjects went from six to zero," "one went from four to zero," etc. *All of these statements are false*. These statements do not reflect even what Pattison and his wife themselves report. At first I thought that Minnery was unable to read a simple table but I discovered later that, according to Minnery's own comment to me, he had based his account of the Pattison material on a different report of the research from Pattison and had not seen the APA journal article with the tables. I received a long-distance phone call from Minnery when my review of his article was published in *Review* (Spring 1981). He was very upset over my having called him a "cub reporter" and refused to move on to the substantive errors in his reporting of the Pattison material. In the article, Minnery had tried to improve the case for the "ex-gay" claims by quoting an anonymous woman who said "she has been tempted many times to return [to lesbian practice] and she did fall once," a pseudonymous man who married and says "I need my wife to know when I'm starting to fall away, and when she sees my eyes cruising some people, she needs to tactfully pull me back in," and the "ex-gay" leader of the now discredited Love in Action program, still living with his old lover and admitting that "most people who attempt [to overcome homosexuality] don't make it," but "repeatedly slip back into it."

By the time *The Reformed Journal* published Robert K. Johnston's repetition of the Pattison material (March 1981), the original Pattison article had been denounced in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* as "harmful," "rosy," "irrelevant," "inappropriate," "misleading," employing "questionable or inaccurate psychiatric concepts" and, even by a Pattison supporter, as using "less than rigorous methodology" and being potentially "alienating or destructive for the patient." Readers of *The Reformed Journal* would not normally be aware of this refutation in a professional psychiatric journal and so Johnston's repetition of the Pattison errors meant that another large segment of the evangelical community was encouraged to jump aboard the "ex-gay" bandwagon.

Johnston swallows the Pattisons' promises with the enthusiasm of one who needs desperately to believe that he has found what he wants to find. Perhaps a man who is a teacher of Bible really should not be expected to know how to appraise a psychiatric report on claims of psychosexual change, but Johnston nonetheless goes right ahead to try to do so and *The Reformed Journal* seems very happy to have him do it, for the journal published yet another of his articles on homosexuality after this one. At any rate, the inevitable result is, sadly, still further confusion in the evangelical and reformed community when it comes to homosexuality and the "ex-gay" promises. Johnston repeatedly asserts that the Pattison interviewees changed "from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality." And why should he not say this? The Pattisons themselves make the same sweeping claims. They do this even though the Pattison data contradict the claim.

As with the reporting by Minnery, Johnston too repeatedly and blatantly contradicts the Pattison material. What Johnston says the Pattisons found and what the Pattisons said they found are two different things. To say this is to leave aside the fact that what the Pattisons said they found and what they did find are also two different things. Bad as the original Pattison material is, though, it seems that the evangelical press just cannot get the material straight.

Here are some of the contradictions between what on the one hand the Pattisons said they found and what on the other hand Johnston says they found. Johnston says that "all declared themselves to be exclusively homosexual" before the "change" but the Pattisons wrote of at least "3 subjects who had considered themselves bisexual before their conversion." Johnston says "the six who were now married had all sought marriage not as an attempt to



overcome their homosexuality” but the Pattisons said that “2 of our subjects married out of motivation to ‘cure’ their homosexuality.” Johnston says that the Pattisons found “eight psychologically and spiritually healthy heterosexuals who had once been confirmed and practicing homosexuals.” However, the Pattisons reported that they found only 2 men who now experienced no homosexual dreams, fantasies, or impulses and that one of these men “at one time considered himself bisexual” and the other man was not one of those who did get heterosexually married. Also, according to the Pattisons, “Homosexual impulses were still source of neurotic conflict” for married “ex-gays.” And Johnston’s confusion continues, for in rebuttal to my earlier reviews, he defends the Pattisons (*The Reformed Journal*, June 1981) by “quoting” them as saying, e.g. that they are dealing with only a “white male subsample” of the Bell and Weinberg study. *Nowhere* in the Pattison article is this phrase to be found, and, on the contrary, the only contrast the Pattisons make between theirs and the study by Bell and Weinberg is with reference to the entire Bell and Weinberg sample.

Both Johnston and the Pattisons do a very tricky thing in the use of the terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual.” So eager are they to see change that they speak of a person’s being “heterosexual” even though there are continued homosexual dreams, fantasies, and impulses and no heterosexual acts but they speak of a person’s “homosexuality” in terms, fundamentally, of overt acts. Again, it must be remembered that such acts were forbidden in the “ex-gay” group. Otherwise, how could the Pattisons refer to men with continued intrapsychic homosexual experience as Kinsey 0’s? They flatly contradict their own acceptance of the definition of a Kinsey 0 as one who has “no psychic erotic arousal to the same sex, and sociosexual contact exclusively with the opposite sex.” That this is their only hope of making a convincing case does not make it right. Evidence of true change must come to grips with the accepted standard expressed by Marmor, Saghir and Robins, and other fine researchers—and a standard the Pattisons claim to hold—e.g.: “Romantic emotional attachments, fantasies, dreams, daydreams and sexual arousal are the primary psychological responses for evaluating the direction and intensity of the sexual propensity of an individual.” That is the way it is put by Saghir and Robins. No evidence is offered that the 11 men made *this* change.

There is nothing straightforward about Johnston’s and the Pattisons’ claim that these men were not pressured to “change” or to “stop” their homosexuality. The whole point of the “ex-gay” program was to get them to become “ex-gay.” People who seek out an “ex-gay” program do not do so because they are completely happy and satisfied with the integration of their homosexuality into their Christian life. They don’t seek out an “ex-gay” program thinking that the “ex-gay” program is going to assist them to live happily in the practice of their homosexuality. All of these men were told from the beginning and right through the program, in any number of ways, that, as the Pattisons admit they were told, “their psychological condition of homosexuality was ... a sign of Christian immaturity,” “homosexual behavior was defined as immoral and they were expected *not* to engage in homosexual practices,” “heterosexuality [was defined] as a necessary component” of a committed Christian life, and as “a result of maturing ... [they were] expected to develop an erotic attraction to a woman.” If this is not pressure, what is? Besides, even on the basis of these statements, what the Pattison report reveals is utter failure.

Johnston’s analogy to Alcoholics Anonymous is either disingenuous or naive for he claims that sexual orientation” is changed. He surely must know, though, that nobody in AA sees self as an “ex-alcoholic” but as an alcoholic who tries to be sober day by day. His reference to the controversial idea that alcoholics may safely drink in moderation (an idea opposed by AA) serves only to expose his desperation for he does not suggest that homosexuals be permitted to practice homosexuality in moderation. He seems unaware that nobody doubts that homosexuals can and do function physically in heterosexual acts or as Barnhouse puts it, their “sexual apparatus is in good working order.” But it is *change in orientation* that is doubted by knowledgeable persons no matter what they think of the morality of homosexual acts. It is change in orientation that Johnston wants to believe in.

Johnston’s bias is revealed rather ironically in one of his arguments. He reports about a psychoanalytic attempt to change homosexuals (he read of it in Pattison) where only 2 out of 9 people changed. He judges this outcome to be “largely ineffective.” Then he takes the Pattisons’ claims which amount to 2 “cures” out of 300 people in the “ex-gay” program, and he has the audacity to present this as success.

In the end he seems somehow to sense something fishy so he suggests the solution of the single life. He thinks that this works for heterosexual singles and so should work for homosexuals too. He seems to fail to see that the not so subtle, yet understandable, aim in singles ministries and magazines is eventual coupling. But he is against homosexual coupling.

In the September 1981 issue of *Ministry* magazine, the editor quotes a statement of mine from *Eternity*, July 1977 in which I said: “There is not one shred of evidence of a *validated* conversion to *heterosexual orientation* through therapy or Christian conversion and prayer.” He says that I am wrong. To prove that I am wrong he cites the Pattison material, while granting that some of those about whom the Pattisons wrote “were not ‘cured.’” He adds that the Pattisons’ argument “is not without corroboration” but the *only* “corroboration” he offers is Johnston’s poor repeating of the Pattisons’ own claims. Another article in the same issue of the magazine is an interview with an “ex-gay,” Colin Cook, previously quoted from the interview as saying that “change is not the issue,” that he still has homosexual desires, and that his solution is to claim the “heterosexuality of Jesus” as one’s own and stop looking for an emerging heterosexuality within, an expectation which he says is a “wistful hope” and “Biblically false.”

The parade of Pattison enthusiasts continues with an article by Enos D. Martin and Ruth Keener Martin in *the Journal of Psychology and Theology* (Spring 1981). As with the case of the Pattisons, though Enos Martin is a psychiatrist, his wife is given no clinical or research identification as a co-author. Does this suggest an admission that the fact that these two men are psychiatrists is given little or no scientific importance when it comes to discussion of homosexuality and the “ex-gay” phenomena? After all, their wives who do not share psychiatric expertise share in the authorship on this topic at a level that would be unheard of if the topic were really one requiring psychiatric experience. At any rate, the two couples do share an enthusiasm for the “ex-gay” movement and the highlight of the Martins’ article is their presentation of the Pattisons’ article.

Repeatedly attacking those who, concerning homosexuality, do not look to the established church as “traditional interpreter of spiritual values”—a strange approach for two Mennonites who trace their own spiritual values back to the bloody sufferings of the early Anabaptists—this couple argues for “conform[ing] to the church’s teaching” and not “distort[ing] traditional biblical values.” Excommunication is suggested for those who do not conform. They seem to forget that while appealing to the teaching of the established church today they themselves are son and daughter of what church historian Martin Marty has called “‘the free spirits,’ the radicals who formed the left wing of the Reformation” and of Menno Simons and his own “seeming departures from historic Christianity.” They evidence no awareness that church tradition on homosexuality, as John Boswell has shown in his *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, has not been only one tradition but has gone in many different directions over the years.

The Martin article, published in the journal of the Rosemead school of Biola, gives an incomplete picture of church history and exegetical literature in terms of variety. The Martins fail even to mention Boswell. They say that there is only a weak argument for a hormonal etiology but fail even to mention, much less to interact with research by DOrner, Rhode, Stahl, Krell, Van der Wiele, Nillius and Wiede, Tsai and Yen, Bidlingmaier, Knorr and Neumann, Brodie, Gartrell, Doering and Rhue, MacCulloch, Feldman and Waddington, Margolese, Ward, Goy and Resko, Parsons, Meyer-Bahlburg, Pillard, Rose and Sherwood, Maccoby and Jacklin, to name some. Nothing is said of Money’s research so the Martins tend to an unreasonable dichotomy between nature and nurture. Even though they do admit, rather disconnectedly, that homosexual orientation is “multiply determined and includes a complex interplay of existing bio-psychosocial factors,” they do not consistently follow through with the implications of this. In fact, though they repeat the “bio-psychosocial” concept later in the article, the “bio” part is mysteriously dropped from “psychosocial origins” in the last summary sentence of their article. The only explanation of this can be their belief that their suggested solution, “church fellowship,” could not do anything to change *biological* contributions. Having dismissed the possibility of a “monogamous, lifelong homosexual relationship” as an “ethical alternative” for those whom they say owe their homosexuality to the “complex interplay of existing bio-psychosocial factors”—here we see how they do not take the implications of their admission seriously — the couple posits that the only

ethical alternatives are enforced celibacy or orientation change “if that is possible.” Curiously, what the Martins present as “clear scriptural precedent” for enforced celibacy of *others* are Paul’s words about the sometimes temporary *gift* of celibacy he himself *freely* accepted for himself while he acknowledged that others were not as he was.

On “potential for change,” the Martins say that “True change means not just a cessation of homosexual behavior alone, but a lasting emotional detachment from homosexual identity with same-sex dreams, fantasies, and impulses largely [?] replaced by heterosexual dreams, fantasies, and impulses.” They then cite the Pattison report as proof that the “ex-gay” approach accomplishes this. They speak of men “who had been exclusively homosexual [who] became exclusively heterosexual as a result of their religious conversion.” But this is *not* what the Pattisons’ data show. It is not even what is claimed by the two “ex-gays” they took to the Mennonite assembly in Bowling Green. (See above) The Martins cite a Charismatic pamphlet as proof of change, taking no note of such typical expression in it as this: “He has not changed his sexual preference ... [but] God has given me the faith to believe that David will be healed—eventually.” They list “ex-gay” organizations but fail to say that the founders of several of them are no longer involved in the “ex-gay” movement, being yet homosexual in both orientation and practice.

As I was finishing this manuscript I received a letter reading in part: “I was heavily influenced by a charismatic prayer group ... and as a result I was thoroughly uncooperative with you [in counseling a few years ago]. I’m writing, first, to tell you that bitter experience has shown me that you’re right in your ministry and your practice. Had I not been so stubborn and self-righteous, I could have spared myself, and others much grief [marriage]. Unfortunately, I had misplaced my faith, and it took the Lord a while to get through to me.” Articles such as the Martins’ and the Pattisons’ insure more such tragic detours.

It should be clear by now that all hope that is put in the empty promises of the “ex-gay” movement is put there in vain. There is still no evidence that homosexuals are becoming former homosexuals or heterosexuals through any approach of the “ex-gay” movement or through any other approach. Although the claims of the “ex-gay” advocates are ever-changing, the desires of the “ex-gay” men and women are never-changing.

### **Options for Christians of Same-sex Orientation**

If it is true that one’s homosexual orientation is not going to change to heterosexual orientation or to an “ex-gay” orientation that is truly ex-gay, what then must gay Christians do about their sexuality? What are the options for response to one’s same-sex orientation that is not going to change?

Basically, there are two responses, even though each of them may take a variety of forms. One basic response to the discovery of homosexual orientation is toward *disintegration* and the other is toward *integration*. The fundamental question is: Do I integrate or disintegrate—physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually? How can I keep body and soul together? Unless I successfully integrate my involuntary sexuality with my voluntary faith I will disintegrate physically, socially, psychologically, and spiritually.

Responsible and realistic integration, then, is the only acceptable response I see. It is the response advocated by other evangelical Christians such as Helmut Thielicke, J. Rinzema, Margaret Evening, Edward Bauman, Phyllis Hart, Val Clear, Rosalind Rinker, Letha Scanzoni, Virginia Mollenkott, Lewis Smedes, Stan Rock, David Myers, Jane Dickie, Harold Ellens, Nancy Hardesty, Douglas J. Miller, Mary F. Clark, Thomas Clark, Howard Rice, and more and more other well-informed Christians. The styles of such a response will vary but all will be motivated by the desire to be realistic and responsible within a Christian world and life view and within an obedient discipleship.

The integrative response assumes the homosexuality as a given and seeks to place it in proper perspective within the whole range of one’s life and refuses to major in homosexuality either through an obsessive denial or an obsessively revolving of everything around it. The integrative response of an evangelical Christian will be to accept the

homosexuality, reach out to other homosexuals with whom one can be honest, and meet one's intimacy needs in a loving and monogamous relationship while getting on with the living of the rest of one's life in all its many facets.

To do this effectively, most of us have to change our minds about what we've been believing erroneously about homosexuality vis a vis Christian faith. I suggest reading John Boswell's book as a starter.

Contrary to the approach of Boswell and the evangelicals I've mentioned, there is the disintegrative response which is still the dominant one and in which body and soul are never put together. There are three styles in this basic disintegrative response. (1) You can try to change to heterosexuality. (2) You can try to abstain from homosexual acts, though the homosexual desires remain and no heterosexual desires emerge. (3) You can go hog wild. Sadly, this is the progression or regression not uncommon among Christians as well as non-Christians. People try to change to heterosexuality through the "ex-gay" route or through some other way. Inevitably they fail. Then they try to abstain from homosexual acts while trying to deny the continuing homosexual desires. Inevitably they fail. The people who are trying to go the "ex-gay" way will be in either of the first two alternatives to disintegration. After all of these failures and the inevitable disillusionment they finally, if they are Christians, throw out their faith and go hog wild. Some of the most outstanding evangelicals in the country are in each of these three stages or styles of disintegration. Historically, too, this is the path taken by the "ex-gay" movement. First the movement called for "deliverance" and when that failed, it called for celibacy. Since, as Barnhouse has said, enforced celibacy is quite unrealistic and even cruel, the only alternative left for those at the end of the line of the "ex-gay" disillusionment is to go hog wild.

### **A Few Final Words on Enforced Celibacy**

By this juncture, there are those who may yet not believe that enforced celibacy is disintegrative, that although the "ex-gay" promises have not been fulfilled, we simply have to demand that Christians who are involuntarily attracted sexually and romantically to some other members of their own sex must refrain from acting on these desires. *How* such Christians are supposed to abstain is usually left to the Christians themselves—isn't that just like those who have what *they* want—but to abstain, they must. What is said about the attempts to abstain from sexual acts, to be celibate, to have no meaningful romantic partner with whom to share life?

Psychiatrist John White, in his IVP Press book, *Eros Defiled*, advocates total abstinence from homosexual activity for those who remain homosexual in desire. He admits that such a prescription will produce "pain" and even "profound depression" in the life of the abstaining Christian. White tries to assure such Christians that he understands their plight. He says that "Straight friends may find it hard to understand that you may deeply love someone of your own sex and that to break up with your lover will wound you." (p. 133) He grants that after the forced break-up the Christian homosexual will experience "lots" of loneliness. Nonetheless, he is out-of-touch enough to pose this unnecessary dilemma: "Would you despise intimacy with the Almighty in insisting on more of human intimacy?" (p. 138) He fails to take seriously the fact that, as we are told in Genesis, God Almighty was the first to acknowledge that a person created in God's image needs intimacy that is other than what is to be had with God.

As Kent Philpott, the preacher who helped to organize the "ex-gay" Love in Action program, knows, we ask "the homosexual to give up all for Christ—give up sex, a secure lifestyle, friends, maybe even his job. This is quite a lot to leave behind." (*The Third Sex?*, p. 185) As we have seen, it *was* too much to expect of those whose testimonies appear in Philpott's book. We might well ask if it isn't too much to expect of anyone.

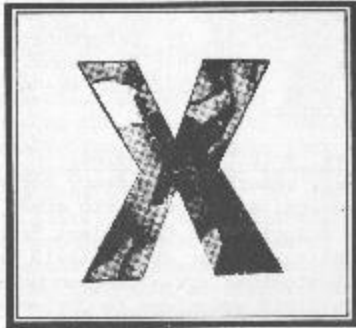
David Field, in his IVP Press book, *The Homosexual Way*, demands celibacy for all homosexuals and admits that this not only sounds harsh, "It *is* harsh." (p. 44) He recognizes that "it is pointless to advise ... 'You will grow out of it [homosexuality] in the end'" and concedes that as "the condition turns out to be permanent," the permanent condition of homosexual orientation means a demand for permanent abstinence. He says that the homosexual is in for "a very cold and gray" life without romantic intimacy, and continues that "However convinced he (or she) may be that the

Holy Spirit will more than fill the empty spaces left by old habits and relationships, human loneliness can be something particularly hard to bear.” Field remembers that “At the dawn of creation ... Eve was created to relieve Adam’s loneliness. But,” he wonders with good reason, “how can a modern Adam’s loneliness be relieved if no Eve satisfies him and if he is denied the intimate relationship with another Adam that his heart craves?” Helmut Thielicke well recognizes that this is a demand for homosexuals to deny the opportunity to “achieve the optimal ethical potential of sexual self-realization” and as such means “a degree of harshness and rigor which one would never think of demanding of” those who are heterosexual. (The *Ethics of Sex*, p. 285) Evidently, it is easy for heterosexual Christians to utterly fail to appreciate how they are turning the “Golden Rule” upside down in their selfish demands that homosexual Christians remain without sexual or romantic intimacy throughout their lives. As somebody once said, the “Golden Rule” usually means that those with the gold get to rule. In the ecclesiastical world of sexual politics that means that the heterosexual establishment gets to lord it over the homosexual minority.

Can there be a legitimate Christian asceticism? Of course there can be. But as church historian Margaret R. Miles reminds us, for example, Antony emerged from 20 years in the desert none the worse for all his austerities but she cites Cassian’s observation that some engage in the *misuse* of ascetic practices, “instigated by the devil himself” and thus, in Cassian’s words, effect nothing but “useless fatigue of body, and worse, a fatigue which would harm the spirit.” (*Fullness of Life*, p. 141) Cassian went on to warn that “Some times [the devil] suggests excessive or impossible” ascetic tasks “and so brings us to a bad end.”

Today, what sort of “bad end” can we understand that to be? It can be a “bad end” indeed. James J. Lynch, scientific director of the Psychophysiological Clinic and Laboratory at the University of Maryland School of Medicine has said: “... isolation and lack of companionship are the greatest unrecognized contributors to premature death in the U.S. today.” Lynch reports that “Those who live alone—single, widowed, divorced—have premature death rates that are anywhere from two to 10 times higher than individuals who live with others.” He says: “There is virtually no disease I know of that does not differentially attack those who live alone and those who have companionship.” (*U.S. News & World Report*, June 30, 1980, p. 47) Bell and Weinberg, in the most wide-ranging sociological study ever done on homosexuals, found some sobering discoveries in this regard. They studied approximately 1,500 persons and reached these conclusions. The “asexuals” were the ones who “described themselves as lonely and (among the men) unhappy; ... they had the highest incidence of suicidal thoughts.” (*Homosexualities*, p. 227) In contrast to the “asexuals,” Bell and Weinberg found that those “who have come to terms with their homosexuality” and were in on-going gay relationships somewhat similar to marriages, i.e. the “close-coupled” were the ones who “had fewer sexual problems ... less regret about their homosexuality ... [were] more sexually active ... less tense ... more exuberant ... more self-accepting and less depressed or lonely. ... the happiest of all.” (p. 132, 135, and 219f)

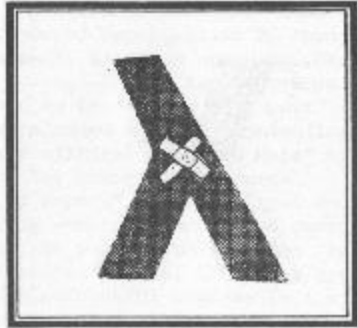
Today, what sort of “bad end” can come to a Christian who does not integrate his homosexuality and his Christian faith? Here is a true story. After hearing David Hubbard, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, speak on “The Joyful Sound” radio program about how homosexuality and bestiality and all were unbiblical and sinful, a young man from the Churches of Christ wrote to “The Joyful Sound” for help. He wrote of his continued inability to meet the demands of permanent celibacy and of his deep loneliness and consequent binges into promiscuity. Back came the reply of “how grateful I am to be able to offer you, on the assurance of God’s own word, that His power and strength have been made available for your need.” A copy of the anti-gay sermon by Hubbard was enclosed. (It was the one I used in my published critique of Hubbard’s sermon.) In the early pre-dawn hours of a lonely Sunday morning, that young man stepped out in front of an on-rushing subway train in New York City and was killed. Both he and Hubbard believed the same thing, but he was homosexual and Hubbard is not.



X-GAY EXPERIENCE #1.

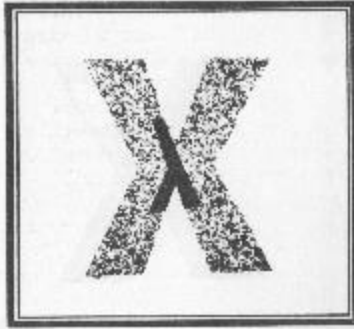
In each of the figures on this and the next two pages, the Greek letter lambda ( $\lambda$ ) is the common contemporary symbol of homosexuality.

The X-GAY EXPERIENCE pictured on this page is of a person's homosexuality getting lost in a large X representing the X-Rated sordidness that some people mistakenly believe represents all alternatives in gay lifestyles.



X-GAY EXPERIENCE #2.

The X-GAY EXPERIENCE pictured on this page is of a person's vain attempt to hide homosexuality behind a hopeless "ex-gay" band-aid.



X-GAY EXPERIENCE #3.

The X-GAY EXPERIENCE pictured on this page is of a person's homosexuality centered in Christ, represented by the chi (X), the first letter in the New Testament spelling of Christ (Χριστός). The Christian gay person brings homosexuality, as he or she brings everything else, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.