

## Researchers Study Sources of Male Anti-Homosexual Attitudes

*Christian Beliefs, Social Conformity, Authoritarian Attitudes Implicated as Harmful*

By Frank York

A psychologist at Northern Illinois University who has analyzed the source of anti-homosexual attitudes in heterosexual males, recently published his findings in *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* (July, 2004; Vol. 5; No. 2, 121-131).

Wayne Wilkinson conducted research to test R.W. Connell's 1995 paper suggesting that "hegemonic masculinity" (heterosexual male dominance in the culture) plays a role in heterosexual males' negative attitudes toward homosexuality.

Wilkinson designed a series of questionnaires for 159 undergraduate men at a Midwestern public university.

His purpose was to measure the Gender Belief System (GBS) and Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) as a source of anti-homosexual attitudes in these heterosexual males.

He notes that Gender Belief System is typically learned through the socialization process in which that males come to believe that certain behaviors are masculine and others are feminine. In addition, he observes that researchers have analyzed Right Wing Authoritarianism as a factor in anti-homosexual attitudes, with religious fundamentalism and Christian Orthodoxy as being closely associated with right-wing beliefs.

### **"Authoritarian" Individuals Demand Social Conformity**

Right Wing Authoritarianism, says Wilkinson, is characterized by a demand that individuals submit to authorities and social norms, and involves hostility toward groups that refuse to conform to societal norms.

In studying the source of anti-homosexual attitudes in his undergraduate volunteers, he tested each with a Right Wing scale, which included 30 items. Students were asked to respond to such statements as "Some of the worst people in the world nowadays are those who do not respect our flag, our leaders, and the normal way things are supposed to be done."

In addition, he tested their attitudes by using a Christian

Orthodoxy Scale, a Gender Role Conflict Scale, and a Morality Beliefs Scale.

### **Principled Objections to Homosexual Acts are Labeled as "Anti-Gay"**

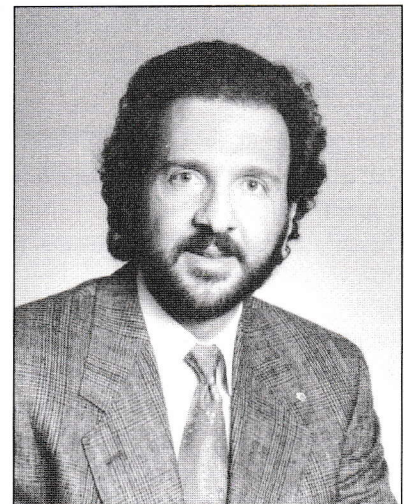
According to Wilkinson, "As would be expected, all the masculinity variables, Right Wing Attitudes, and Christian Orthodoxy were positively correlated with the antigay attitudes scale. Overall, RWA was moderately correlated with the masculinity variables, whereas orthodoxy was uncorrelated to the masculinity variables."

He observed, too, that previous research has shown that negative attitudes toward homosexuality are associated with lower educational levels.

### **But Ignorance and Prejudice Do Not Explain Aversion to Homosexual Acts, Says Nicolosi**

NARTH President Dr. Joseph Nicolosi notes of this study: "The researcher's implication that 'anti-gay attitudes' are based on ignorance and prejudice does not explain this phenomenon. Other writers have proposed—plausibly, I think—that there is a 'natural homophobia' inherent in men. This aversion helps to protect men from engaging in sexual practices that are threatening to their masculine strength and dignity, and that de-stabilize the social order while also eroding masculine friendship and healthy mutuality."

Dr. Nicolosi continued: "And from an evolutionary perspective, an aversion to homosexual behavior helps prevent men from channeling their erotic energy into unproductive, anatomically inappropriate, non-procreative sex."



*Dr. Joseph Nicolosi*