

## NARTH Scientific Advisory Board Member Presents At APA Convention

*In defining "homophobia," the mantle of science is utilized to favor one side on a philosophical issue, says NARTH's Dr. Christopher Rosik.*

### Research On Measurements Of "Homophobia" And "Homo-Negativity"

By Christopher Rosik, Ph.D.

My poster session during the American Psychological Association conference highlighted the recent research I have published (Rosik 2007a, 2007b) that examines the construct of homophobia and homo-negativity from a more critical perspective.

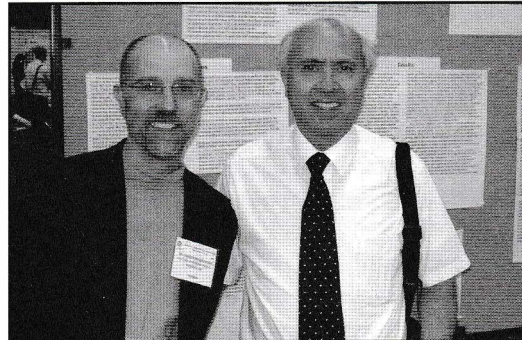
Utilizing Watson's Ideological Surround Model (Watson, et al., 2003) as a backdrop, my study examined the structural properties of Herek's (1998) well respected Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG-R) for a sample of 155 conservative Christian students. Ideological perceptions of the ATLG-R items were derived from a smaller (N =36) sample of students similar in demographic makeup and religious devotion. These students evaluated whether or not the ATLG-R scale items were consistent (pro-religious) or inconsistent (anti-religious) with their religious tradition.

#### Anti-Religious Test Bias

Factor analytic and ideological surround analyses indicated that the ATLG-R was disproportionately comprised of items perceived to be anti-religious, with the primary "Condemnation-Tolerance" component consisting exclusively of such items, the majority of which related directly to respondents' beliefs about the morality and naturalness of homosexuality.

Furthermore, respondents' degree of self-identification as Christian (i.e., agreement with the statement, "I am a Christian"), when factor analyzed as an additional item in the ATLG-R, loaded singularly and to a greater degree than over half of the items on the "Condemnation-Tolerance" component. This suggested that the so-called "condemnation" identified by the ATLG-R was central to the religious self-perception of these conservative Christian students.

Three multiple regression analyses then revealed that the associations between homo-negative attitudes and respondents' intrinsic religiousness, religious practice, and beliefs about the authority of the Bible were predicted only by the "Condemnation-Tolerance" component after accounting for gender, age and the remaining components of the ATLG-R. These findings suggest the possibility of an ideologically-based circularity in the relationship between conservative religion and the construct of homophobia as measured by the ATLG-R. Thus, for these



*Christopher Rosik, Ph.D. (left) and A. Dean Byrd, Ph.D. at APA poster session on homophobia.*

respondents the ATLG-R may function as an empirically packaged method of disparaging their religiously-based values concerning homosexuality.

It appears that the mantle of science is being utilized covertly to favor one side on an ideologically prescriptive, fundamentally non-empirical issue, i.e., the morality and naturalness of same-sex behavior.

I concluded that it is crucial for mental health professionals to cultivate greater sensitivity in the use of the terms homophobia and homo-negativity in relation to religious conservatives.

#### References

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*Dr. Christopher H. Rosik is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Oregon. He received his doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Fuller Graduate School of Psychology. Dr. Rosik is a licensed psychologist and director of research at the Link Care Center in Fresno, California, as well as a member of the clinical faculty at Fresno Pacific University.*