

A Further Perspective on American Psychiatric Association's Rebuke of Reparative Therapy

NARTH officer Harold Voth, M.D. wrote the following letter to the American Psychiatric Association which offers further objections to the resolution:

In the January 15, 1999, issue of *Psychiatric News*, APA President Munos announced the decision made by the APA Board of Trustees, "That there is no scientific evidence that reparative or conversion therapy is effective in changing a person's sexual orientation." He adds, "There is, however, evidence that this kind of therapy can be destructive."

Having observed the effects of somatic therapies and psychotherapies, including psychoanalysis over a span of 49 years as a psychiatrist and 35 years as a psychoanalyst using formal research techniques and having made abundant clinical observations, I now state with complete confidence that there is *no* scientific evidence that *any* of our treatments have been effective. There is, however, ample clinical evidence that all of our treatments have been helpful and that *all* of our treatments have done damage, some of it very severe.

I have observed patients become zombies from drug therapy only to clear up when drugs were removed and for some, later expert psychotherapy helped them substantially. I have observed psychoanalyses and psychotherapy go on endlessly when ultimately, behavior therapy and drug therapy appeared to have been more helpful.

Psychoanalysis and psychotherapy can do great good, but I have seen these therapies do enormous harm by inducing self-destructive and destructive acting out, serious regressions, the eruption of depression, anxiety, and various symptoms. Counselors have given very good advice, but also very bad advice. Behavior therapy has failed to help patients when dynamic psychotherapy was successful, and vice-versa.

All mental health professionals have done great good, but

they have also inflicted damage. This includes physicians, psychologists, social workers and ministers.

Why then do the APA Trustees single out and condemn reparative therapy? Obviously they are politically motivated and have again come under the sway of the homosexual activist social movement. I doubt if the Trustees and Dr. Munos know how reparative therapy is conducted. In fact, like all therapies, there is the stamp of the individual doing the treatment. Furthermore, what data do they base their opinion on? And finally, what standard have they used as the basis for this sweeping, biased proclamation?

If the Trustees believe it is their duty to condemn reparative therapy and all therapies which endeavor to help homosexuals become heterosexual, how can they *not* condemn psychiatrists who give their blessings to the surgical mutilation of a person's genitalia for those who wish to assume the identity of the opposite sex?

How can they *not* condemn someone who believes a psychiatrist who converts a homosexual into a heterosexual has created psychopathology? Is heterosexuality *abnormal* in some people? Of course there are abnormal heterosexuals, but is that condition *itself* abnormal? Some gay activists believe children who exhibit gender disorders should not be treated. The Trustees have remained mute on these issues.

Why, then, should not a homosexual who wants to become heterosexual have the right to be treated without his treater being charged with malpractice? And when the person doing the treatment uses a technique—reparative therapy— which has produced good results?