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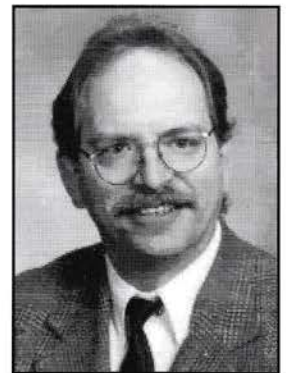
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Gay-To-Straight Research Published In APA Journal

An article by Dr. Warren Throckmorton, "Initial Empirical and Clinical Findings Concerning the Change Process for Ex-Gays," has been published in the June 2002 issue of the American Psychological Association's publication *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* (2002, Vol. 33, No. 3, 242-248).



Warren Throckmorton, Ph.D.

"I'm pleased that this research summary will reach an audience of psychologists and mental health professionals that may not be aware of ex-gay issues," says Dr. Throckmorton, the director of college counseling at Grove City College in Pennsylvania.

"My literature review contradicts the policies of major mental health organizations because it suggests that sexual orientation, once thought to be an unchanging sexual trait, is actually quite flexible for many people, changing as a result of therapy for some, ministry for others and spontaneously for still others."

In professional circles, the debate over the development of sexual orientation centers around two viewpoints. The more prevalent of these, known as the essentialist view, argues that sexual orientation is innate, "inborn," and therefore not subject to change. The APA has supported this view, and therefore has influenced the approach many mental-health practitioners currently take.

The second, and less accepted viewpoint, known as the constructionist perspective, posits that sexual orientation is a socially-constructed product of a client's life experiences and can therefore be modified. Dr. Throckmorton's research presents data consistent with this latter view.

"The APA's professionalism in handling this research is commendable and I think it demonstrates the APA's willingness to explore all sides of this important matter," Throckmorton said.

His analysis gathers previous studies of individuals who sought to change their sexual orientation. A majority of those responding to surveys of former gays indicate their experiences were positive and helpful.

This finding is in contrast to claims from some mental health professionals that efforts to change are always harmful.

Frequently religion played a major role in motivating a client to seek reorientation, Throckmorton notes, a fact that leads him to caution mental health professionals against assuming that the profession fully understands the potential and limitation for human change.

"For years, public and professional opinion of ex-gay ministries have been influenced by anecdotes from persons not helped by these ministries," he said. "Basing opinions on the

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Gay-to-Straight Research, continued from page 1

experience of only those who have not been helped gives an incomplete and therefore inaccurate picture of the potential for alteration of human sexual identity."

Dr. Throckmorton's article summarizes the experiences of thousands of individuals who believe their sexuality has changed as a result of reorientation ministries and counseling.

His article is a continuation of a paper presented at the American Psychological Association conference, Washington, DC, in August 2000 in a standing-room-only symposium, entitled "Gays, Ex-Gays and Ex-Ex Gays—Examining Key Religious Ethical and Diversity Issues." The article adds additional current research and recommendations for mental health professionals.

The final recommendation in Throckmorton's paper is that "Practitioners should not refuse service to clients who pursue an ex-gay course, but rather, should respect the diversity of choice and consider a referral to an ex-gay ministry or practitioner."

In addition to serving as Grove City College's director of college counseling, Dr. Throckmorton is an associate professor of psychology at the college. A past president of the American Mental Health Counselor's Association, he also holds membership on the Magellan Behavioral Healthcare's National Provider Advisory Board representing licensed professional counselors.

In 1998, he received the George E. Hill Distinguished Alumni Award from the faculty of Ohio University's Counselor Education Program. He earned a B.A. from Cedarville College, an M.A. from Central Michigan University and Ph.D. from Ohio University.

For more information, email [Dr. Warren Throckmorton](mailto:Dr. Warren Throckmorton@gcc.edu) at ewthrockmorton@gcc.edu.

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Other papers on sexual-reorientation therapy published in the same APA journal issue (some in opposition) are:

1. "An Inclusive Response to LGB and Conservative Religious Persons: The Case of Same-Sex Attraction and Behavior" by Mark A. Yarhouse and Lori A. Burkett
2. "Changing Sexual Orientation: A Consumers' Report" by Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder
3. "Gay Rights, Patient Rights: The Implications of Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy" by Douglas C. Haldeman
4. "Implementing the Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation: A Guide for the Perplexed" by Margaret S. Schneider, Laura S. Brown, and Judith M. Glassgold ■

**Attention Therapists:
See Article on Legal Issues
Related to Reorientation Therapy**

In the latest issue of the NARTH Collected Papers—just published—family law attorney William Duncan offers an excellent summary of the legal threats to reorientation therapy.

Be sure to order your copy of the 2001 Collected Papers, which also features articles by Mark Yarhouse, Sander Breiner, Russ Waldrop, Dick Carpenter, Rich Wyler, Arthur Goldberg, Cal Thomas, Janelle Hallman, Joseph Nicolosi, A. Dean Byrd, and Benjamin Kaufman.