

Should Gay Activists Be the APA's Gatekeepers?

The following letter was sent by NARTH to the APA President after we received Clinton Anderson's letter (see previous page). Unfortunately, Dr. Johnson declined the proposed meeting with NARTH officers.

Norine Johnson, Ph.D.
President
American Psychological Association
750 First St., NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242

Dear Dr. Johnson:

This letter is written to request a brief amount of your time when you come to Salt Lake City on September 28th. We would like to discuss with you the concerns of a group of clients, particularly religious clients, who do not, at this time, receive representation or acknowledgment within A.P.A. discussion or debate.

In your capacity as A.P.A.'s president, you recently wrote an editorial calling for scientific freedom in research, debate and academia, regardless of the level of controversy involved. To quote you exactly:

"I am strongly supportive of open debate in the APA, regardless of the volume or intensity of the debate. Debate is healthy. Disagreement is healthy. ..

"The strength of psychology can be seen both in its support of colleagues, appreciation of their work, and the intensity of some of our debates."

In a recent letter to you, *we supported that call for open debate.*

In the interest of scientific freedom, we asked that NARTH therapists to be permitted to make a case in APA publications for therapy aimed at modifying unwanted homosexuality. We also requested that our meeting announcements be published—a right now freely granted to gay and lesbian groups—in the *Monitor*, and we also sought fair consideration our training courses for Continuing Education accreditation.

We received, however, a response not from you, but from Clinton Anderson, Officer of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual

Concerns.

Unfortunately, however, Dr. Anderson represents a different group of people—gays who are satisfied with their orientation—and not the dissatisfied homosexually oriented people which our organization represents.

Dr. Anderson is not the person who will relate sympathetically to our request. In fact, Dr. Anderson's political-philosophical convictions are *completely at odds with the convictions of the clients we represent*. His motivation is, we believe, to exclude reorientation therapists from the scientific debate, and to impede a client's right to find therapists who are supportive of the client's personal goals and his own deeply held personal values.

Scientific freedom and simple fairness, we believe, require the inclusion of those with different understandings of the meaning and significance of human sexuality. *We believe these clients have the same right to recognition of their goals and values as do satisfied gays and lesbians.*

If differing opinions had been excluded by A.P.A. thirty years ago, simply because they were at odds with the prevailing view, how would homosexuality ever have been removed from the DSM in 1973? A healthy scientific dialogue must not, *a priori*, exclude any group. As you have said:

"APA is committed to fostering a vigorous science of psychology through the open exchange of ideas and data. A productive and healthy science requires freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression."

As A.P.A.'s representative of *all psychologist-members*, we hope that you, as President, will give us a few minutes of your time to discuss these concerns. We ask for the opportunity to briefly make our case to you, at your convenience, during your upcoming Salt Lake trip.

Sincerely,

A. Dean Byrd, Ph.D.
Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D.

Keep Us Informed

NARTH members are respectfully requested to submit original articles for publication in the *Bulletin*, and also keep us informed by alerting us about relevant news items that would be of interest to our membership.

Thank you!