

NARTH BULLETIN

Vol. 10, No. 3

National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (N.A.R.T.H.)

December 2001

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE

- 2 President's Column
- 3 Why A.M.A. Policy is Not in the Best Interest of Children or Families
- 6 Thought Police at Work
- 7 New Journal Article Makes the Case for Reorientation Therapy
- 8 The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Sexual Health
- 13 Sociopolitical Diversity in Psychology
- 15 Father Hunger
- 16 Can NARTH Be Denied the Right to Advertise in APA Publications?
- 17 Should Gay Activists be the APA's Gatekeepers?
- 18 In This Life, We Struggle
- 20 Book Review
- 23 New Film Portrays Pedophile in Sympathetic Light
- 23 Film Critiques Orthodox Jewish View of Sexuality
- 24 JONAH's Position is "Conspicuously Absent" From Film
- 26 NARTH Notes
- 30 Letters
- 34 APA Defends Scientific Freedom
- 35 Is Male Protectiveness Sexist?

Therapists, Ex-Gays Gather for Annual Conference

"Exciting!" "Educational." "Uplifting and inspiring." These are some of the comments made by participants in the 2001 NARTH Conference held November 17-18 at the landmark Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Psychotherapists, educators, clergy, parents and strugglers from around the world attended this important event. People came to learn, listen and share about their personal and professional experiences. "An individual may not choose his or her homosexual attractions, but there is choice in how one responds to those attractions," said Dr. Dean Byrd, Vice-President of NARTH. Dr. Byrd offered a lively and information-packed workshop, "When a Loved One Struggles: Homosexuality and Families."

On the first day, there was a wide variety of presentations—ranging from the origins of female homosexuality, to attitudes about gay issues within the schools and in the churches, and culture-changing laws recently instituted in several countries in Europe.

The day concluded with a powerful story of personal transformation by one brave man. Then on Sunday, attendees were treated to a rich offering of workshops by leading experts. The conference provided a format for both education and inspiration, uplifting spirits in a challenging new social era.

Cal Thomas, a leading syndicated columnist in America, gave the keynote address during the luncheon on Saturday. "I am delighted," Mr. Thomas stated, "to endorse the work NARTH." He spurred the attendees toward action by suggesting the following:

"Let's light some candles. First, support those in the media who agree with your position. Write letters to the editor and tell of your support. Tell them you like their column. Get to know the TV station managers and let them know you're available for interviews—that you're legitimate, educated specialists in a field that needs your point of view. Use the same language that others use – liberal, tolerance, and diversity.

"Second, write 500-word columns for your local newspapers. Be ready for the opposition. Write examples of people who have changed. Third, think small, not large."

Dr. Charles Socarides, past president and co-founder of NARTH, was honored for his lifetime achievements and important contributions to the understanding and treatment of homosexuality. Next, Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons was given the Sigmund Freud Award for his prolific writings and work in the field of reorientation therapy. Then author Dale O'Leary was given the Fellow Award for her effort in researching the current scientific literature on homosexuality.

NARTH Vice President Ben Kaufman opened the conference by describing the significant achievements of the organization during the nine years since its founding. He said,

"We now have over one thousand members from all over the world. NARTH has become a key player in the area of homosexuality in the political, educational, legal and therapeutic

continued, page 31

communities. Over thirty thousand people visit our web site monthly, with an average usage time of almost eleven minutes per visit. Our publications are used in schools. Those who oppose our work have tried to marginalize us as a 'hate' group, in order to silence us. Instead, after nine years of opposition and very limited funding, NARTH is still alive...and growing!"

After lunch, psychotherapist Janelle Hallman-Burleson described her clinical experience with women who have same-sex attractions. She identified the common factors in lesbianism as 1) a strained or disrupted attachment with mother, 2) a feeling of lack of respect and protection from men, or a fear of men, 3) a history of few close girlhood friendships, and 4) a sense of gender emptiness and identity emptiness. She said that treatment begins with the issue of therapist-client trust and moves through the subsequent stages of developmental issues, as identified by Erikson in his eight developmental stages.

Psychoanalyst Sander Breiner, M.D., a noted psychiatrist and prolific author of many books and journal articles, also presented on the treatment and etiology of female homosexuality. Using a developmental, psychodynamic approach, Dr. Breiner supported Ms. Hallman-Burleson's explanation about the roots of lesbianism as a disrupted or impaired attachment with the mother. When a lesbian client enters therapy in adulthood, it is often as a result of a traumatic relationship breakup. In their lesbian clients, therapists see more borderline personality disorder; a tendency to attach herself to men who appear impotent; and various compensatory behaviors to ameliorate depression. "Homosexuality is a complex condition," Dr. Breiner said. "Trying to take away homosexual behavior is contraindicated. We must provide some healthy alternative in its place."

Psychologist Mark Yarhouse spoke on "Obtaining Informed Consent for Treatment of Same-Sex Attractions and Behavior." Therapists should use a disclosure statement, he said, which clarifies that the American Psychological and Psychiatric Associations do not classify homosexuality as a mental illness, and which states that the client has decided that he would rather make changes in his same-sex attraction than accept the other therapeutic option available, which is to increase his comfort with those attractions. Dr. Yarhouse provided attendees with samples of the detailed Consent form that he believes is necessary to meet ethical requirements.

Attorney William Duncan of the Marriage and Law Project spoke about the homosexual issue as it applies to our legal system. Some legal trends he noted: parents who want help to modify their child's homosexual orientation are sometimes threatened with the accusation of "child abuse," and many gay activists charge that not even an adult client is capable of freely giving his informed consent to enter sexual-reorientation treatment. The legal rights of

those who seek change, he said, have been ignored. Mr. Duncan noted the importance of soliciting the help of a legal committee to protect the right of therapists who wish to help those who want to change.

After a sumptuous luncheon accompanied by Cal Thomas's rousing speech, Rev. Russ Waldrop of the Interfaith Committee on Theological Concerns made a presentation on homosexuality and the church. He described some recent incidents in which NARTH members' rights to publish and advertise in pastoral counseling journals has been jeopardized by gay-activist committees within those organizations, and detailed NARTH's response. He offered suggestions for local church involvement—pass out NARTH literature to church leaders and members, donate NARTH literature to the church library, and provide NARTH literature for schools.

Dr. Dick Carpenter, a former school principal and education policy analyst with Focus on the Family, told his audience about the alarming flood of pro-homosexual materials in schools today. Teachers and staff are adopting "Safe Schools" programs which teach that homosexuality is normal because they have been told that they have no other choice if they are to reduce student harassment. Many teachers disagree with school policy, yet are required to teach it nonetheless.

Dr. Carpenter described activists' strategies in the schools: 1) they equate "safety" with a requirement to accept homosexuality, 2) they work as volunteer counselors in schools, 3) they proclaim myths about homosexuality as if they were fact; 4) they encourage gay teachers to come out to their students as role models, and 5) they are working to introduce as many Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) into the schools as possible (there are now over 1,000 chapters nationwide).

Dr. Carpenter stated, "This shouldn't be a win-lose situation. No one should be harassed; we *do* want kids in a safe school environment. But there shouldn't be special policies for those students who are dealing with homosexuality."

Next we heard from pediatrician Dr. Christl von Holdt, a citizen of Germany who works for the German Institute for Youth and Society. Dr. von Holdt spoke about the European political situation. The mayor of Berlin is openly homosexual and there is much public support for him. Since August 1, 2001, German law has endorsed gay civil unions which are legally nearly equivalent to traditional man/woman marriage. Some churches also now say they will officially bless same-sex unions. Young people see this as a new model for relationships. There are 80 million citizens of Germany, and fewer than 2,000 are gay activists, yet those 2,000 activists were able to organize this stunning legal victory.

In the Netherlands, as of April 2001, there have been full

continued

marriage and adoption rights for homosexual couples. Several Scandinavian countries also have domestic partner rights. Currently in Austria, there is a legal battle underway by gay activists to lower the age-of-consent for homosexual acts down to 14 years of age.

A new study published by the University of Zurich, Dr. von Holdt said, forecasts that every fourth man who has same-sex sex will contract HIV and subsequently become infected with AIDS. Another study conducted by a gay group at the University of Munich, conducted with government funding, found that typical initiation into sexual activity for heterosexuals takes place between two inexperienced people, while typical homosexual initiation takes place between a young boy or teen and an older, sexually experienced man.

After Dr. von Holdt's presentation, Rich Wyler gave a powerful and moving story of his personal transformation in a talk entitled, "A Change of Heart." Rich is the inspirational founder and director of a website called peoplecanchange.com. Looking back, he noted that gay life had not been satisfying for many reasons. Besides the promiscuity and the conflict with his religious values, the dream of acceptance by the gay community had proven to be more of an illusion. "I found more rejection in the homosexual lifestyle than in the heterosexual lifestyle because I wasn't young enough, buff enough or good looking enough." He said he had used sex to fulfill basic masculine identity needs through anonymous sexual encounters, and to anesthetize himself against negative emotions.

After reading several books about the causes and treatment of homosexuality, including Joe Nicolosi's works, Mr. Wyler finally went into therapy. "At last, something made sense to me, and I received hope amidst a crisis. I learned to fulfill my needs in healthy relationships. I realized that I was looking at men through the eyes of my critical mother - 'don't trust them.' Finally, I could see men through my own eyes, and that was a huge turning point for me. I found lasting and meaningful friendships, and eventually I graduated from therapy."

Rich stated that an important issue for those who struggle with unwanted same-sex attractions is touch deprivation. He found many fulfilling, healthy relationships, as well as men who understood the healing importance of non-erotic touch and embrace, with the New Warrior Weekend and other support groups.

Dr. Dean Byrd concluded the day by describing Dr. Robert Spitzer's new study, and furthered Mr. Wyler's comment on the need for touch within the family. He stated, "A father asked me, 'Should I hug my son?' I told him, 'If you don't, someday another man will.'"

On Sunday, attorney Arthur Goldberg, co-founder and director of JONAH (Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality) moderated a panel discussion of those

who had lived in a gay lifestyle and now help others to make the change. The panel included Alan Medinger, author of *Growth Into Manhood: Resuming the Journey* and founder of Regeneration Ministries; Rich Wyler, founder of the website peoplecanchange.com; Martin Pressman, a volunteer support group leader with JONAH; and Richard Cohen, director of the International Healing Foundation. The panel addressed the questions about their healing and how to help others, the effectiveness of faith-based therapy, helpful tools for change, and directive vs. non-directive approaches to treatment. The panelists had many pearls of wisdom to share.

Regarding treatment, Richard Cohen said: "After twelve years of counseling others, I have learned people need ESP to the 'n'th degree. E = Encouragement: Four of the most important words that helped me heal were, 'I believe in you.' There were so many negative messages communicated to me while growing up and while trying to change. But 'I believe in you,' touched my soul and gave me fuel to continue. S = Support: Two are better than one. We need a net of support around us, experiencing healthy love and limits, bonding and boundaries. Healing is about getting legitimate needs met in honest and loving relationships. P = Plan: We need a systematic approach to grow and heal. N = Never Give Up: Whether you feel good or bad, keep 'showing up' in life. Get up when you fall down, brush yourself off, find others to affirm you, and learn new lessons and then carry on."

The day finished with three information-filled workshops. Dr. Joseph Nicolosi taught on "The Intensive Therapeutic Technique," outlining a method to expedite healing. "This technique focuses on the individual's feelings and impulses first, getting him to experience affective expansion. When the person is emotionally open, then intellectual insight is much more likely," he said. "By joining with the client's resistance, and entering into his personal experience of never having been genuinely 'seen' by others in his life, the therapist helps the individual break through the characterological armor to find release from the image of himself as unlovable and 'defective' which is preventing him from moving forward." Dr. Nicolosi also described his new book, *Preventing Homosexuality: A Parent's Guide*, to be released in 2001.

Dr. Dean Byrd's workshop, "When a Loved One Struggles: Homosexuality and Families" was filled with practical suggestions. Dr. Byrd advised parents as follows:

1) Moderate your reaction to the news of your loved one's homosexual struggles. This is still your son or daughter; fall apart in another room, not in front of him or her.

2) Become informed about the genesis and treatment of unwanted homosexual attractions. Read literature and find out what is helpful. Don't blame your child, yourself, or one another.

continued

3) Be prepared to talk about the choices available: an individual may not *choose* to have his or her homosexual attractions, but there *is* choice in how that individual *responds* to those attractions. Homosexual attractions can be diminished, and homosexual behaviors can be eliminated.

4) Reiterate your own value system, and allow your family member to explore his or her own value system. It is one thing to accept and love a person, but quite another to accept every choice that he or she makes. An individual is much more than his homosexual attractions. Practice using "homosexual" as a descriptive adjective, not as a noun that defines who the person is.

5) Encourage the individual to seek help, know where the good resources are, always stay involved and maintain contact.

6) Avoid the temptation to try to take control or fix the situation.

7) Avoid blame. Focus on solutions instead of problems.

8) Keep the communication lines open.

9) Be prepared for anger. Keep in mind that anger is better than depression. The former provides the opportunity to work on issues. The latter avoids issues. Underneath anger are pain, hurt and fear.

10) Seek the help of others such as ecclesiastical leaders and appropriate support groups.

11) Do not encourage heterosexual dating or marriage as a "cure" for unresolved homosexuality. This makes the situation worse.

12) Never give up!

Dr. Byrd asked several panel members to share their personal experiences with loved ones. One mother gave a moving account about reconciling with her son before his death of AIDS. "I blamed myself for his homosexuality after reading the literature. I went into depression. Then Dean helped me to deal with all these feelings. The isolation of a family dealing with this can be so great."

Arthur Goldberg concluded with comment which put NARTH's position in perspective: "This is not just a conservative issue. Liberals, too, believe in human rights. This is a broader human rights issue, because people have a choice - to stay in the homosexual lifestyle, or to change."

The 2001 NARTH conference offered a powerful platform for the possibility of change, and provided direction for those seeking to take the road less traveled. Later this Spring, the Collected Papers will be available from presenters at this year's conference. ■

—by Richard Cohen, M.A.
and Linda Ames Nicolosi

Former APA President Rebukes Psychology For Suppressing Reorientation Therapy

At the recent 2001 Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association, past presidents of the APA offered their prescriptions for change. One, Dr. Robert Perloff, made a startling denunciation of APA policy.

Dr. Perloff, 1985 President of the Association, said of reorientation therapy: "It is considered unethical...*That's all wrong.*

"First, the data is not fully in yet.

"Second, if the client wants to change, listen to the client.

"Third, you're barring research."

Another former APA President, George Albee, called on psychologists to help get rid of organized religion.

"It doesn't matter which religion, they are all patriarchal...Every major religion puts women down."

—"Same Office, Different Aspirations," *APA Monitor on Psychology*,
December 2001, P. 20.