

Thought Police At Work in The *Journal of Pastoral Care*?

—Reorientation-Therapy Article Called “Inappropriate”

by Linda A. Nicolosi

A well-documented and informative article recently appeared in the *Journal of Pastoral Care* (Spring 2001) making a scholarly and measured case for the ethics of reorientation therapy. Entitled, “Conversion Therapy: Parameters and Rationale for Ethical Care,” by Christopher Rosik, the piece was fair-minded and moderate in tone, and supported its thesis with meticulous documentation.

However, Dr. Rosik’s article (which is now available on the NARTH website) immediately prompted a complaint at the journal’s Board meeting.

At the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education’s (ACPE) Board meeting for Spring 2001, a motion was passed which judged the article “disrespectful” of gays and lesbians. It also called into question the editorial judgment of the journal’s editor, Rev. Dr. Orlo Strunk, for having accepted the article.

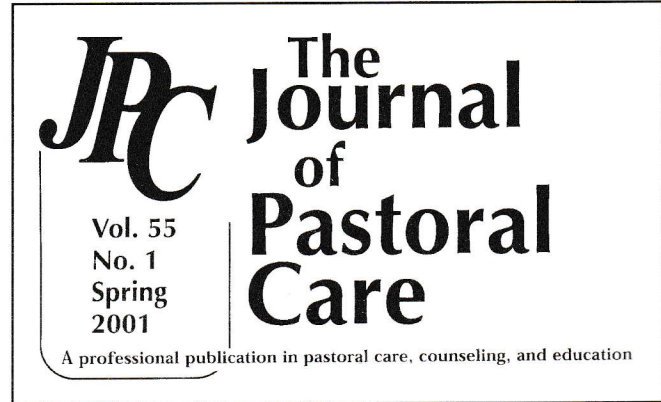
The ACPE’s board statement reads, in part,

“...the Board of Representatives is highly concerned about a recent JPC article entitled, “Conversion Therapy Revisited: Parameters and Rationale for Ethical Care,” by Christopher Rosik (vol. 55, no. 1, Spring 2001). This article appeared disrespectful of the worth and dignity of lesbian/gay persons.

“If the *Journal* chooses to publish such an article, which is both highly questionable in its premises and intimations, and is highly offensive to our constituency, we strongly recommend publishing it within a symposium to include other points of view.

“Furthermore, the Board seeks to engage the *Journal*’s editor, and/or a member of the Editorial Board of JPC, in conversation to assure that such inappropriate articles will not be published without balancing voices in future editions.”

NARTH’s Chairperson of the Committee on Interfaith Concerns, Russell Waldrop, immediately contacted the journal’s Board to express our concern about this restraint on the free communication of ideas and its apparent intent to suppress similar articles. The Board agreed to discuss the matter at their next meeting.



NARTH Ad Dropped

At about the same time the Board issued that statement, NARTH decided to place advertising insert in the *Journal of Pastoral Care*’s upcoming Fall issue. We asked our printer to lay out a tasteful ad which would announce hope for change, and make pastoral counselors aware of NARTH’s existence as a scientific support group.

Several months went by as we waited for the advertisement to appear in the Fall issue of the *Journal of Pastoral Care*, as scheduled.

Quite unexpectedly, we then received an e-mail from the journal’s advertising contact person saying that our ad would *not* run in the fall after all. It would have to be reconsidered by the Board—which subsequently voted not to accept NARTH advertising.

The return of our advertisement was followed by another phone call from the journal. Who, they asked, had given NARTH permission to reprint Dr. Rosik’s article on our website? Could we *prove* that we’d been granted permission? We could, but they wanted documentation and a copy of our e-mail correspondence.

These events—which seriously threaten the right of reorientation therapists to speak and advertise in a public forum—are especially ironic. Would not people or traditional faith be the most likely to seek therapy that supported their value system? Why should a religious journal exclude such information from pastoral counselors?

As of this writing, NARTH continues to attempt to **resolve** the above matters. ■