‘Ex-Gay Therapy Ineffective, Spiritually Corrosive
Pastor Abandons Attempt to Turn Gay Christians ‘Straight’

VANCOUVER – After 14 years of pastoral work with people trying to change their homosexual orientation, the leader of an evangelical ‘ex-gay’ organization has given-up trying to reorient struggling gay Christians and now helps them integrate their faith and homosexuality.

“It has become quite obvious that the conservative Christian approach to homosexuality not only fails to produce the promised results, but it has a very destructive effect on the lives of many gay people and their families, and an extremely corrosive effect on their faith in Christ,” says Jeremy Marks, founder and director of Courage, a UK-based Christian organization. Marks will share the story of his group’s transition from being ‘ex-gay’ to ‘gay-affirming’ at a church in Vancouver’s West End on April 4th.

As Canadian society and churches become more accepting of gay and lesbian people, conservative religious organizations like Focus on the Family are stepping up their support for ‘ex-gay’ or ‘reparative therapy’ programs. According to a report released March 2nd by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, increasingly the conservatives’ media campaigns are targeting youth.

Though young people with unwanted homosexual feelings may put their hope in claims of orientational change, for members of Courage the promise of ‘healing’ not only rang hollow but proved psychologically and spiritually damaging.

“However repentant people were, and however much dedication and effort they put into seeking change, none were really ‘successful’ in the long term,” Marks says. “The traditional Christian view forces gay people either to agree that their natural desire for love and intimacy in committed relationship is fundamentally deviant and ungodly, simply because it is directed towards the same sex, or if they accept themselves as they are, to feel alienated, misunderstood, and rejected.”

Christian youth who accept their homosexual orientation are often marginalized by their churches and families, leading many to abandon their faith altogether.

Though members of Courage were frustrated in their 14-year search for orientational change, Marks says their faith was re-ignited by the realization that gay people who embrace the possibility of same-sex love often experience healing of another kind. “Gay relationships, entered into sincerely, with mutual commitment, provide value and a sense of belonging. And when Christ has a central place in that relationship, people’s morale – above all their hope in God – recovers.”

Jeremy Marks will be speaking about his experience in ex-gay ministry on Tuesday, April 4th, at 7:30 PM in the parish hall of St. Paul’s Anglican Church, 1130 Jervis Street, Vancouver. The event is sponsored by Integrity Vancouver, a support and advocacy group for gay and lesbian Anglicans.

Funny Quotes:

“Labels can also be misleading. I saw a news report about a lesbian protest march, and the reporter said, “Coming up next, a lesbian demonstration.” My first thought was, “Cool. I always wondered how those things work.”

New York-based Danny McWilliams, raised a Catholic in Queens: “A nun told me I was going to receive my Confirmation, so I must choose a Confirmation name, and it must be the name of a saint. So I chose Eva Marie.”

“I think gay people are like blondes -- there’re fewer of them, but they have more fun.” ~ Rita Mae Brown

“I think the only reason they don’t want gays in the military is that they’re afraid of a bunch of gay guys with M-16’s going, ‘Who’d you call a faggot?’” ~ Jon Stewart
Religious Students Help Erase Antigay Graffiti

Several students from Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn., on Friday helped scrub antigay graffiti from a bus ferrying gays and lesbians to religious schools across the country. The Equality Ride bus had been spray-painted in pink with the words “Fags-mobile” on Thursday while the 35 mostly college-age members of the Soulforce team were at a nearby hotel room, planning their visit to Lee. The bus’s driver reported witnessing a middle-aged woman and a teenager drive away from the scene. Cleveland police are currently investigating the crime.

“These wonderful students have done a great service by wiping away the stain of homophobia from our bus,” said Jacob Reitan, co-director for the Equality Ride. “Let’s hope they can go back to their school and wipe away the stain of antigay discrimination that still goes on every day at Lee.”

The second day of the Lee University stop of the Equality Ride ended with a prayer vigil and devotion from Lee University graduate the Reverend Scott Sanders. Students joined the riders in prayer and song for 30 minutes before university administrators asked the group to disperse.

In his devotion, Sanders shared the biblical story of Jesus multiplying loaves and fishes to feed 5,000, in reference to Lee University president Paul Conn’s statement to riders justifying Lee’s strict limitations on interaction with students that “half a loaf is better than no loaf at all.” In a symbolic gesture of thanks and hope that the dialogue that occurred with students would be multiplied and spread with others, Sanders broke a loaf of bread and passed it for the assembled students and Ride members to share.

Before the prayer vigil, Ride members walked the campus talking with students; other riders joined students in attending classes in which the Ride’s issues were discussed. The riders were not allowed, however, to make any formal presentations on the campus. “I cannot accept that we should be happy that we received a ‘half a loaf’ just because we are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender,” said Equality Ride codirector Haven Herrin to the Ride members. “But we are so thankful to those students who welcomed us on campus with open arms and truly listened to what we had to say.”

The riders formed close relationships with several students who were closeted, had been expelled from Lee because of their sexual orientation, or had come out after graduation. Among them was Matthew, a student who was expelled from Lee after administrators found a posting on MySpace.com that indicated his sexual orientation as gay. “I was planning to stay in the background during the Equality Ride visit,” said Matthew, who preferred that his last name not be used because he has not yet come out to his family. “But I have told my story to so many people in the last two days students, professors, administrators. I never would have done that if it wasn’t for the Equality Ride. I woke up this morning, and it just felt like a new day.”

Notre Dame OK’s Gay Film Festival

The Chicago Tribune reports that the president of Notre Dame University has approved future installments of a gay film festival on campus. This year’s annual festival, the third such event, took place in February and will now be able to continue after it was feared school leadership might cancel all future fests. In an announcement released Wednesday, the Reverend John Jenkins gave his OK to both the festival and to a production of Eve Ensler’s The Vagina Monologues but added the caveat that no fund-raising or other activities could imply endorsement by the university. “The challenge is not to do just one of these or even to do both of them in parallel but to promote academic freedom and affirm our Catholic character in a way that integrates the two and elevates both,” Jenkins said in a prepared statement. “This university was founded on the premise that these goals are compatible and can be mutually reinforcing.”

Kaitlyn Redfield, a student who helped organize a petition drive in support of both programs, told the Tribune she was “happily surprised” by Jenkins’s decision, adding, “I think it’s a good first step toward a more open discussion on sexuality and issues of Catholicism at Notre Dame.”
Oklahoma School Board Scraps Gay Protections in Wake of Equality Ride

Days after the Equality Ride bus toured the state of Oklahoma, with stops at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa and Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, the Oklahoma board of education struck the sexual orientation portion from its antidiscrimination policy. The change happened without notice last Thursday in Oklahoma City in response to a state representative's complaints about the Equality Ride, in which more than 30 young LGBT activists are attempting to meet with students at Christian universities across the country that prohibit the enrollment of gays.

Previously the school board's antidiscrimination policy covered sexual orientation as well as a student's family, social, and cultural background. Now those categories have been struck from the policy, which has reverted back to state and federal antidiscrimination laws protecting a student's race, for instance.

The action came at the request of Oklahoma representative Kevin Calvey, a Republican seeking election to the U.S. Congress. He said in a statement that "the board's new rule will protect public schools from having to allow homosexual rights organizations to hold meetings on school grounds."

Citing the recent Equality Ride protests at the two universities, where several Equality Riders were arrested, Calvey added, "This isn't really at the high school level yet, but I would expect it someday to be."

The head of an Oklahoma gay rights group said that the policy change is a part of wider political positioning by conservatives this election year. "It's just open season on GLBT people at the state legislature," Laura Belmonte, president of Tulsa Oklahomans for Human Rights, told Tulsaworld.com. "It is our belief that these conservative legislators are using these issues as a wedge issue to try to mobilize their base in an effort to take over the senate this year."

There was no comment from the school board's superintendent. (The Advocate)

‘Queer studies,’ Catholic Style – DePaul launches ‘LGBTQ’ minor

By Monta Monaco Hernon

CHICAGO (National Catholic Register) – It’s no secret that Catholic colleges and universities are under the microscope these days. Catholics, even those who don’t have children in (or bound for) college, want to know which campuses sponsor or allow activities, courses and events that fly in the face of Catholic doctrine and morality.

So it came as a shock to many when, in February, Chicago’s DePaul University announced a minor-studies program in “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer” studies.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered (No. 2357). The school’s decision raised red flags for Patrick Reilly, president of the Cardinal Newman Society. "At a minimum, the program undermines Catholic teaching by presenting the gay and lesbian subculture in a positive light," he said. “That culture in itself is conducive [to] and in many ways encourages sinful behavior.”

Father James Halstead, chairman of the school’s religious-studies department, said DePaul supports church teachings but also encourages critical, thoughtful learning about “any topic we can afford to teach.”

“Study is not the same thing as advocacy,” Father Halstead told the National Catholic Register. “In my classes, I have taught Karl Marx. That doesn’t mean I advocate his position, but it does mean that a liberally educated person ought to know it.”

He added that a university should not be an “indoctrination center.” Rather, students should have the opportunity to explore the “burning issues” of their time.

“[Homosexuality] has constitutional implications, political implications, personal implications for mothers, fathers and kids, and massive social implications,” he said. “Therefore, it ought to be studied with the full powers of the university.”

Reilly called the new minor a “faddish academic program” motivated by the administration’s desire to be seen as politically correct.

“If they are truly interested in delving into cultural studies, one would assume they would be looking at a whole variety of cultures and establishing minor programs to focus on [them],” added Reilly. “Under ‘sexual cultures,’ why not look at the whole problem of prostitution or sexual activity within marriage?”

Continued on Page 7
Good Soldiers

Texas A&M University follows the best military traditions in hosting dialogue with gay activists.

The best soldiers hone their judgment as they would a bayonet blade. Texas A&M University, which educates the most uniformed students outside U.S. military academies, strengthened that discipline last week, welcoming a group of young gay activists to campus.

The visitors, members of the Soulforce Equality Ride, are barnstorming the country by bus to talk to military institutions and Christian colleges about gay and lesbian issues. The tour is meant to acquaint students with the experience of gay Americans. Tour members also hold informal Bible study groups, discussing their belief that Scripture doesn't condemn homosexuality.

Arguably, the activists' most significant encounters might be among military cadets. Cadets prepare for a future in which they will serve beside, and die for, a cross section of America. They're directly affected by the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which bans gay personnel from revealing their orientation or engaging in homosexual activity.

Retired Lt. Gen. John Van Alstyne, the head of A&M's School of Military Science, served his cadets well when he welcomed Soulforce to campus. It's part of cadets' education, he told Chronicle reporter David Ellison, to see representative government at work and meet people with differing views. During last week's visit, Van Alstyne and other A&M administrators invited the activists for lunch and conversation at the cadets' dining hall.

The discussions were polite, and several students later told the Chronicle they wouldn't mind serving with openly gay soldiers. Nevertheless, they said, the presence of openly gay servicemen or -women might be distracting.

On their face, the conversations at A&M represented little more than a cultural exchange. But these conversations echo a larger conversation taking place in the military. Most personnel still support "don't ask, don't tell." But for the first time, some highly ranked officers are publicly criticizing it; one, the retired top judge advocate for the Navy, has called the rule "odious" and "virtually unworkable."

Younger personnel, too, show less support for the rule. A 2004 Annenburg Survey showed that, as with young civilians, slightly more than half of junior enlisted personnel favor gays and lesbians serving openly. Future soldiers have a special stake in the policy's effects.

Recruiting for all branches of the military is gruelling; luring top-flight, qualified applicants is harder still. Yet in the last decade, the military has fired more than 10,000 people due to the "don't ask, don't tell" rule. From 1994 to 2003, the armed forces fired 54 Arabic speakers—an urgently needed specialty because of the ban.

Throughout its history, the U.S. military has balked at including minorities, whether African-American, Irish or Asian. Once inclusion began, however, the military showed a genius for making soldiers of all backgrounds work together. Future soldiers need to know how national policy will affect their service. Texas A&M is arming them to make those judgments for themselves.

Scalia Visit Sparks Protests by Gays at University of Connecticut

A visit by conservative U.S. Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia to the University of Connecticut law school in Hartford on Wednesday sparked protests by gay students who set up tables—and a same-sex kissing booth—and passed out pamphlets on the lawn near the building where Scalia spoke. The students said they believe some of Scalia's opinions amount to attacks on gays, women, and other minorities.

"His visit opened a lot of conversation on this campus," said third-year law student Colby Smith, who was wearing an "I Kiss Boys" T-shirt. "We want to make sure people understand what the concerns are with him and why his views are particularly offensive."

Although Scalia did not address the protesters in his speech, he did have some advice for those who questioned his impartiality after he refused to rescue himself from a case involving his hunting buddy, Vice President Dick Cheney. "For Pete's sake, if you can't trust your Supreme Court justice more than that, get a life," Scalia said.

He said rescuing himself from the 2004 case, which focused on an energy task force that Cheney led, would only have given fuel to newspaper editorial writers and other detractors who have said he is too close to the vice president. "I think the proudest thing I have done on the bench is not allowed myself to be chased off that case," Scalia said.
In the past years, I've lost the ability to cry. Even when I stopped speaking to the girl I was in love with, I couldn't shed a tear. There are six billion people in this world. Why can't I just have one? I'm pathetic and starved for affection that the slightest wink from anyone sends me into a mad spiral? There are six billion people in this world. Why can't I just have one?

I just don't understand though. Was it really that I liked him? Or is it that I'm just so starved for affection that the slightest wink from anyone sends me into a mad spiral? There are six billion people in this world. Why can't I just have one? I'm pathetic and starved for affection that the slightest wink from anyone sends me into a mad spiral? There are six billion people in this world. Why can't I just have one?

Eventually I fell asleep smiling, with the image of his arm around me.

The next few days were some of the best in my life. I walked around with a spring in my step, everything was going right. I told my friend about him on the long drive to our home town. She mentioned how weird it was to see me like this, all gaga over someone. I'm usually a strong person. I'm quiet, never showing people my emotions, but this guy…

A few days later, I got a message on Facebook saying he wanted to add me as a friend. This seemed to confirm my hopes. It wasn't just all in my head. He did like me! It really was great to finally have someone who liked me back.

The knots in my stomach traveled up my body and strangled me. Of course he was in a relationship. How could I be so damn stupid? As if someone could fall in love with me. As if whatever god that runs this world could allow me to have one ounce of happiness in my life. Its God's sick cosmic joke. There's always a boyfriend. I know somewhere; some higher being is laughing his or her ass off at me.

I just don't understand though. Was it really that I liked him? Or is it that I'm just so pathetic and starved for affection that the slightest wink from anyone sends me into a mad love spiral? There are six billion people in this world. Why can't I just have one?

In the past years, I've lost the ability to cry. Even when I stopped speaking to the girl I was in love with from high school, I couldn't cry. Even when I could feel the cold steal around my neck of a noose made from chains, and all I wished for was death, the tears didn't come. But that day, I waited for my roommate to leave for work. I turned off the lights, laid down in bed, and cried till I fell asleep.
Continued from Page 4

The case in question involved Cheney's request to keep private the details of closed-door White House strategy sessions that produced the Administration's energy policy. The Administration fought a lawsuit brought by watchdog and environmental groups that contended that industry executives, including former Enron chairman Ken Lay, helped shape that policy. The Supreme Court upheld the Administration's position on a 7–2 vote.

Scalia, 70, was appointed in 1982 by President Reagan to the U.S. court of appeals for the District of Columbia circuit. Four years later Reagan nominated him to the U.S. Supreme Court, filling the opening that occurred when William Rehnquist became chief justice.

Scalia takes a very literal approach to the Constitution, telling the audience Wednesday that he strongly disputes the idea that the wording selected by the Constitution's framers should be viewed in light of society's evolving morals and political leanings. "You can't take the position that these words are expandable in one direction and not expandable in the other," he said. "They obviously meant to set some standards to control future generations." (AP)


In Tulsa, Equality Riders Arrested Again
Christopher Curtis, PlanetOut Network

Eight people were arrested Monday at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., during part of a national traveling campaign to highlight colleges that discriminate against LGBT students.

The protest was part of the Soulforce Equality Ride, comprised of 32 young people visiting 19 religious and military schools.

Before the riders got off their bus Monday, a member of the Oral Roberts University security force and an officer from the Tulsa Police Department entered the bus, and a university officer told the riders, "We love you all; do not come onto our campus."

The activists later stood off campus, hoping university administrators would change their minds, but when they attempted to enter the campus to have a conversation, six riders were handcuffed, along with two LGBT community members, according to an Equality Ride press release.

While police were making arrests, other riders held pictures of LGBT people who committed suicide or were killed because of hateful religious messages.

Before leading the riders onto campus, Equality Ride co-director Jacob Reitan said in a prepared statement, "Colleges teach history; it is time for them to start reflecting on what history has done to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. The time for this conversation has come. We have a group of people who care enough to at least try, and Oral Roberts does not want to welcome them."

Jessie Sullivan, one of the riders who was arrested, said, "I had seriously considered going to Oral Roberts for college; but when I came to campus to visit I did not feel welcome. It was that unease that made me feel as if I should make a statement about why colleges should be welcoming to everyone, because we are all one in Christ. God loves us wholly for who we are."

Richard Lindsay, a spokesman for the riders, who are in their late teens and early 20s, said attorneys are making sure riders who were arrested will not have to take time from the ride for court appearances.

According to Soulforce, the pro-gay religious group sponsoring the ride, several students from Oral Roberts University have contacted the riders to set up meetings.

Nathan Bengtson, one of the Riders in charge of the Oral Roberts University stop, says he is not deterred. "We've met obstacles at every school we've visited so far; and in every instance we have found ways to dialogue with students. It is time for this issue to be discussed."

Riders were arrested during previous stops at Regent and Liberty universities, both in Virginia. At Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn., students helped remove anti-gay graffiti painted on the Riders' bus.

The Equality Riders are scheduled to appear Thursday and Friday at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla.


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‘Special concern’

In a 1986 letter to bishops, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote of homosexuality: “[S]pecial concern and pastoral attention should be directed toward those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that the living out of this orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option.”

A specific collegiate program addressing the “culture” of homosexuality is “highly problematic and potentially scandalous,” Reilly added. “There is no indication as of yet that each of the courses will look at this issue from the Catholic perspective.”

DePaul, in fact, has offered many of the courses in question for more than a decade. They have been speckled throughout a number of different departments, including literature, modern languages, women and gender studies, and religious studies. Course titles have included “Lesbians, Gays and the Law” and “Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies.”

But it’s only with this latest development that such courses have been packaged as a minor in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The reason for the change is student demand, said Gary Cestaro, who teaches the intro course. “The courses are always filled,” he said, “and the evaluations ask for more.”

Father Halstead said the advantage to the school is that, now, college recruiters can advertise that DePaul offers Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer studies.

“This is all marketing,” he said. “You caught us.”

LGBTQ lobby?

A Catholic college offering such classes was problematic in and of itself. Joining them together as an official minor lends even more legitimacy to the lifestyles in question.

So says Karl Maurer, a DePaul alumnus and vice president of the Catholic Citizens of Illinois. “When you do a queer studies minor, you essentially provide cover for this behavior and in the process validate it,” he said.

“You give tacit approval to this lifestyle if not overt approval. If it was being taught as wrong behavior, that would be one thing. But it is not. These courses are intended to bring broader acceptance to this behavior in society.”

As for presentation of material, statements made by Cestaro and Father Halstead indicate that the church’s position will be presented alongside alternative viewpoints. Cestaro already allots time in his intro class for a discussion about Catholic teaching.

But, he said, “LGBTQ studies as a discipline believes in individual legitimacy and [sees] a certain amount of sexual variation as benign and normal.”

Love is truth

Father Halstead teaches a course under the umbrella of the religious-studies department called “The Body and Human Relationships: Divergent Meanings, Conflicting Values.” During the course of the semester, the church’s teaching on homosexuality is discussed. “It is presented clearly, thought about by students, affirmed by some, and known by all,” he said.

“Our students, who are very bright and who think clearly, will listen to religious perspectives all with a critical ear,” added Father Halstead. “To the extent that the Catholic position makes sense, students will believe it. To the degree it doesn’t make sense, students will critique it.”

Maurer, who long ago stopped giving money to his alma mater due to similar controversies, doesn’t see it that way. He said that, while all ideas and concepts should be subject to evaluation, administrators and faculty have a responsibility, spelled out in Ex Corde Ecclesiae (On the Catholic Identity of Catholic Universities), to maintain the Catholic culture on campus.

“If the purpose of dialogue is to identify what is true and what is not true, great,” said Maurer, whose group intends to write to DePaul’s president and board of trustees, requesting an abandonment of the program. “But here the purpose is to lead people into scandal and sin.

“The greatest act of scandal is to lead people away from the truth,” he concluded. “The greatest single act of charity is to bring people to the truth.”

Adapted From: http://www.catholic.org/national/national_story.php?id=19252
**Interns Wanted: the LGBT-A-Q Resource Center, Fall 2006**

Do you need credit for an Academic Internship?

Are you interested in furthering the rights for LGBT Folks at BGSU?

Are you interested in learning skills for your future career?

The LGBT-A-Q Resource center is currently looking for Interns for the Fall 2006 Semester. If you are interested, or have any questions, contact the resource center at nickyd@bgnet.bgsu.edu

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**A Couple of Guys**

He Hasn't Got a Prayer by Dave Brousseau


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**Resource List for you...**

**Athletics:**
- www.eqspn.com/forum
- www.gaygames.com/en
- www.outsports.com

**Financial Aid:**
- www.washburn.edu/sobu/broach/gltb-scholar.html
- www.peacockinthepark.org
- www.finaid.org/otheraid/gay.phtml
- www.home.comcast.net/threepenny
- www.league-att.org/foundation/index.html
- www.thepointfoundation.org

**Health:**
- www.metrokc.gov/health/glbt
- www.glbthealth.org/index.html

**LGBT Information:**
- www.lgbtcampus.org
- www.biresource.org
- www.hrc.org

**Jobs/Internships:**
- www.gaywork.com
- www.glpcareers.com

**Local:**
- www.equalitytoledo.org/main.htm
- www.toledoray.org

**Trans-identity:**
- www.ntac.org
- www.nclrights.org/projectstrans-genderproject.htm
- www.susans.org
- www.ren.org


We also have numerous literature and resource materials for research and your know knowledge growth.

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View BGSU’s LGBT-A-Q Resource Center’s Website for additional resources and websites.

http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/cmai/lgbtaq_resource_center/index.html

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BG SU’s LG BTA-Q Resource Center
404 Saddlemire rainbow@bgnet.bgsu.edu 419.372.3244