

TO: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
FROM: The Rev. Mario Bergner, Redeemed Lives, Inc.
REGARDING: Intolerance and Discrimination Against Changing Unwanted Same-Sex Attractions.
DATE: 5 October, 2009

Working Session 10: Tolerance and non-discrimination II

In this Intervention I am specifically addressing the opposing viewpoints of self-emancipation for those who do *not want* their same-sex attractions and seek out change in contrast to those *who want* their same-sex attractions and self-identify as gay and lesbian. Support for the rights of the LGBT community is beginning to come at the cost of limiting the rights of men and women with unwanted same-sex attractions to seek change, or limit the rights of those who support them.

My request of the OSCE is for the recognition of four areas of intolerance and discrimination surrounding the issue of changing unwanted same-sex attractions.

- First, please recognize the thousands of men and women who, like myself, have been helped by pastoral care, reparative therapy and books showing the way of freedom from unwanted same-sex attractions.
- Second, please recognize that clergy have been accused of inciting hate speech against gays and lesbians for recommending books on changing unwanted same-sex attraction.
- Third, please recognize that some bookstores fear the accusation of promoting hate speech against gays and lesbians for stocking books about changing unwanted same-sex attractions.
- Fourth, please recognize that publishers that have produce works on changing unwanted same-sex attractions have been discriminated against, causing such books to go out of print.

In 1984, after six years of self-identifying as a gay man, I experienced a deepening of my Christian faith and sought out pastoral care to change my same-sex attractions. Of special help to me was a book on changing homosexuality entitled *The Broken Image* (Good News Publishers, 1981). For the twelve years that followed I lived in abstinence. Then in 1996 I married Nancy and we now have five children. In 1996, my book on overcoming unwanted same-sex attractions, *Setting Love In Order*, was published in the USA (Baker Books). It has since been translated and published into ten languages: French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Finnish, Russian, Portuguese, Latvian, Dutch and Chinese. Recently, I have become aware of a growing intolerance and discrimination surrounding the issue of changing unwanted same-sex attractions.

Overbroad hate speech laws are beginning to limit the right to speak out freely about changing unwanted same-sex attractions. Allow me to close with two examples. First, the Rev. Thomas Yap, a Church of England Priest and Chaplain at a British University, came under a formal accusation of inciting hate speech for displaying books on changing unwanted same-sex attractions on a book table outside the Chaplain's office. After Fr. Yap hired a solicitor (lawyer or barrister), all charges were dropped. There are other clergy in the UK who have suffered similar intolerance regarding this issue, including the Bishop of Chester, the Right Reverend Doctor Peter Forster who came under government investigation for stating that reparative therapy was a viable Christian option for men and women with homosexual attractions. Second, my French publisher, Editions Rafaél of Switzerland, informed me that my book in French, *Aimér En Verité*, would permanently be out of print. The reason given was because book stores across the Francophone world no longer want to carry books on changing unwanted same-sex attractions for fear of accusations of promoting hate speech. My French publisher also informed me that all books on changing unwanted same-sex attractions were kept under the counter at book stores and until now were available only upon request.