

Ads Offer Hope to Homosexuals

Readers of the Cincinnati Enquirer might have spilled their coffee during breakfast after seeing the full-page ad in their July 8 newspaper addressed to the local homosexual community. The ad offered answers for homosexuals, and at the bottom of the page it said: "Change is possible. Discover how."

A similar ad showed up in the Los Angeles Times on July 23, and other ads are running in urban centers around the country.

The ads are sponsored by Exodus International, a 28-year-old Christian ministry that helps individuals overcome same-sex attractions. In fact, the organization refers to itself as the "world's leading resource on the topic of overcoming homosexuality." The \$200,000 campaign features four ads that are being run in numerous media outlets through the end of the year. "This is part of a new aggressive 'Question & Answer' campaign that 'is challenging mainstream America to question homosexuality and encouraging the Church to provide the answer,'" says Alan Chambers, president of Exodus.

The ad that ran in Cincinnati featured Chambers and his wife, Leslie. Another ad features Mike Haley, director of Gender Issues for Focus on the Family, and his wife, Angie. Both couples discuss their experiences leaving homosexuality and the importance of traditional marriage.

In a third ad, a large, handsome, head-and-shoulders shot of Randy Thomas, communication director at Exodus International, appears under a large headline that says, "I Questioned Homosexuality." A smaller subhead says, "And when I discovered a way out, I took it."

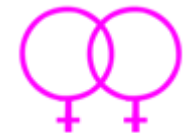
Thomas says in the ad:

"Like a lot of homosexual men, I grew up with an absentee father. He left me desperate for the physical touch only a father can give. *I also never heard nor knew his affirmation of me as a man.* That's why, when a male co-worker showed special interest in me as a teen I was like putty in his hands..." Randy goes on to discuss how the male attention he'd sought led to sex with older men, but how he was still hurt and broken inside. He mentions the gay club scene and the short relationships, until an old friend helped him answer who he truly was.

It continues: "Today I am an ex-gay. No, wait ... I don't define myself anymore with a sexual identity. I'm just ... Randy. Because I know that my homosexuality wasn't really a sex issue ... but a heart issue. And what once was broken as a child has now been made whole to the point I have hope one day for a wife, and children of my own."

The last paragraph mentions that Exodus has more than 120 local member chapters and is ready to answer questions – confidentially. The phone number – 1-888-264-0877 – and website – www.exodus.to are included.

As might be expected, some people took umbrage. Joan Garry, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), took the Times to task for running the Thomas ad. She accused the paper of opening "its pages to ads and groups promoting an agenda of fear and intolerance toward our community." Times columnist Steve Lopez wrote a column explaining that he was skeptical of Thomas' transition from gay to straight.



The disagreements illustrate how volatile the homosexual issue has become. In an article titled "Unraveling the Gay Deception" in the August/September issue of *Spirit Led Woman*, a Christian magazine, author Anne Paulk discusses the "gay agenda."

"Today, when we hear about homosexuality, we often hear the following words or phrases: tolerance vs. intolerance, homophobia vs. acceptance, bigotry and hatred, unchangeable vs. changeable, and our "American" right to sexual gratification. It was not always this way," writes Paulk, a former lesbian.

"About 20 years ago, homosexual activists set out to mold what Americans thought about homosexuality. Specifically, they desired to silence the moral voice of the church by minimizing those who spoke against homosexuality.

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Kingdom Briefs

The Passion of the Christ to Screen in Malaysia

Actor/director Mel Gibson's critically acclaimed movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, has been approved by censors for screening in Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim nation. However, the government has decreed that only Christians should watch it and it will be shown only at certain designated theaters. Posters and movie trailers are not allowed. (Source: Los Angeles Times)

Billionaire's Money Woes Revealed

Christian billionaire Philip Anschutz's desire to create movies that all the family can watch has not been deterred by his latest box-office flop, the remake of *Around the World in 80 Days*. The film, released in June, reportedly grossed only about \$23 million domestically, while costing about \$115 million, the Los Angeles Times estimates. It was the sixth movie the Anschutz Film Group has released. *Sahara*, a \$130-million-plus action adventure, will be released early next year. And Christmas 2005 will see another big-budget movie open. The title: *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by Christian writer C.S. Lewis.

On another front, Anschutz's Regal Entertainment Group is being sued for \$40 million by Mel Gibson's Icon Distribution, which claims the nation's largest movie chain withheld revenue from *The Passion of the Christ*. An Icon attorney said Regal agreed to pay Icon 55 percent of profits from the receipts but later offered only 34 percent. (Sources: Los Angeles Times, Charisma)

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Celibacy, Not Sex, in the City

If you have cable, you've more than likely been bombarded by commercials for the tawdry television program, *Sex in the City*. But there's a better lifestyle being promoted called *Celibate in the City*.

Celibate in the City is an organization founded in February by New Yorker Audrey Miller. Miller, a divorcee, accepted Jesus on the last day of the year 2001, but has been celibate for more than three and a half years. It was the television program by a similar name that got her creative juices flowing and ultimately sparked the organization. While women on *Sex in the City* seem to resolve their problems through sexual activity, women who become celibate find resolution through Jesus Christ, says Miller.



Miller is president and CEO of A.B. Miller Production Company in New York. She holds a master's degree in psychology from Columbia University's Teacher's College. An author and a filmmaker, she supports herself and the organization through her work as an administrative assistant for an insurance company.

Beside the New York chapter, there are chapters in Los Angeles and Dallas. Miller admits that *Celibate in the City* does not yet have nonprofit status.

Miller started *Celibate in the City* because she was "discouraged that a lot of the churches didn't address practical ways to maintain celibacy until marriage."

"There are a lot a lot of wonderful things about celibacy," she says. "Since I became celibate, I've been able to manage four or five projects simultaneously. All the energy that I would have put into maintaining a sexual relationship was re-channeled into different projects."

An excerpt from her website at www.celibateinthecity.com reads:

"Churches are filled with single Christian women who've made public proclamations to submit to God's authority but are privately engaging in pre-marital sex because they have not learned how to master their sexual urges. Most of these women are afraid to reveal their battles of the flesh to their sisters because the church views sexual arousal as sinful. The fundamental attitude of many churches is that sex within itself is evil, so they don't talk about it. While they remain silent, many women continue to hide their shame and feel crippled amidst their raging hormones.

"Celibateinthecity.com will provide an online open forum in a sisterly and supportive environment to discuss and exchange information to help us adhere to the biblical principle of remaining celibate until marriage.

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; (Ephesians 5:3 KJV)"

As far as dating is concerned, it's good, says Miller, who wears a silver chastity ring on her left hand engraved with the word *Kept*. "But you should first develop a strong relationship with Jesus. He is ultimately the first man you should please before you date. And you should know yourself pretty well and have strong boundaries."

Miller wrote an e-book that can be downloaded from her website, because she "wanted to address celibacy in a spiritual, practical, and humorous way. It forces the reader to be an active participant rather than a passive recipient," she says. She has also written a romantic comedy about a woman that is struggling with celibacy, and is currently doing a novelized version of that script. Miller plans to produce the movie herself, but is looking for investors.

As for what will happen when she gets married, Miller doesn't know. "I'm not ready for marriage right now," she says. "Once that happens we will be a nonprofit and I will have other members in place who can carry on."

For more information, visit www.celibateinthecity.com

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"Activist wanted to display those who spoke against homosexuality on television as ignorant or foolish. Attacking traditional views, the activists played the victim while acting seriously intolerant themselves."

The gay agenda strategy apparently worked. Homosexuals have gained much wider acceptance. The strategy has pervaded virtually every segment of American life, from the church to elementary school textbooks, from television to marriage. The issue is particularly relevant today as the Federal Marriage Amendment comes up for adoption, and many citizens are considering their vote on same-sex union initiatives in their states.

"Social battle lines are forming around us as we grapple with homosexual marriage or civil unions, gay ordination and homosexual theology," writes Paulk, who says she struggled with homosexual feelings and identity from childhood into her adult life. "Now I am a happily married wife and mother of three young sons. Because of Jesus, I am who I am today."

Leading the battle in defense of marriage is Dr. James Dobson, founder of the Colorado Springs-based Focus on the Family. In his new book, *Marriage Under Fire*, Dobson combats any attempt to debase traditional families. He is particularly critical of efforts to legalize gay marriage. In countries where this has been done – particularly Norway, Denmark and Sweden – the institution of marriage is rapidly dying, he says.

"To put it succinctly, the institution of marriage represents the very foundation of human social order," he writes. "Everything of value sits on that base. Institutions, governments, religious fervor, and the welfare of children are all dependent on its stability."

Dobson offers eleven reasons why the legalization of homosexual marriage will quickly destroy the traditional family in *Marriage Under Fire*.

"With marriage as we know it gone, everyone would enjoy all the legal benefits of marriage (custody rights, tax-free inheritance, joint ownership of property, health care and spousal citizenship, and much more) without limiting the number of partners or their gender. Nor would 'couples' be bound to each other in the eyes of the law. This is clearly where the movement is headed."

Paulk believes, as one tactic, the American church has generally avoided the issues of homosexuality, as well as such women issues as abortion, divorce, eating disorders and sexual abuse. Another tactic has been to condemn those "dealing with the effects of same-sex attraction."

"In the 1970s, the church had an incredible opportunity to show love through services and through 'speaking the truth in love' (Eph. 4:15, NIV) to those who were dying of AIDS. We were the bearers of the good news of lasting hope through Jesus. Instead of offering hope, some Christians responded by gleefully pointing out the fault of those dying. 'AIDS is God's judgment of homosexuals!' they said. Thankfully, not all Christians responded in this way."

In returning to Randy Thomas' Exodus ad, it concludes:

"This is my story and I'm living proof that change is possible. But there are tens of thousands of other men and women just like me who have also questioned their homosexuality. EXODUS was there to help with answers ...plus vital understanding and encouragement, and the tools for them to find their way out."

Barna Study Sheds Light on Ethnic Christianity

In a study titled "Ethnic Groups Differ Substantially on Matters of Faith," the Barna Group offers a penetrating look into the religious culture of America's four largest ethnic divisions – whites, Hispanics, African Americans and Asians. According to the study, African Americans have the most traditional Christian beliefs and practices of any of the groups while Asian Americans have the least.

The Barna survey examined eight elements of religious behavior and discovered that African Americans were at "the high end of religious activity" for such things as reading the Bible, praying to God, giving money to churches and watching Christian television. And, they were "notably less likely than others to be unchurched."

They also emerged as the segment most likely to parallel Christian or biblical teachings. They are the most likely to "contend that the Bible is accurate, that religious faith is very important in their life, that they have a personal responsibility to evangelize, that Jesus Christ lived a holy life, that divorce except in adultery is a sin, and to possess an orthodox biblical view of God."



Asians had the lowest scores in all eight activities that were measured. They were the least involved in attending church, reading the Bible, praying to God, attending Sunday school, participating in a small group for religious purposes, watching Christian television, and they gave the least average amount of money. They were also the group most likely to be unchurched. "Given the fact that two-thirds of Asians are either atheist/agnostic or aligned with a non-Christian faith, their distance from traditional Christian thought and behavior is explicable," the study pointed out.

Hispanics proved to be the most likely to share their faith in Christ with non-believers, but as a group they fell below average on most of the religious behaviors examined, especially regarding the amount of money they donate to churches. Though 85 percent define themselves as Christian, they were notably less likely to support such cultural experiences as posting the Ten Commandments in public buildings, retaining "In God We Trust" on currency and keeping the phrase "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Hispanics were also more likely than either Whites or African Americans to reject the idea of the Holy Spirit as a living presence.

Whites tested in the middle of the eight behaviors, never quite the highest and never quite the lowest in any category. They were "the racial group closest to Asians on two matters: rejecting the accuracy of the Bible and possessing an unorthodox or non-biblical understanding of the nature of God," according to the study.

To see the entire article by the Barna Group, [click here](#).

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Pasadena's Fuller Seminary Looking to Expand

Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, which is among the worlds largest, is planning a \$79-million expansion in effort to improve housing conditions for its students and their families, and to provide more space for teaching, study, worship and performing arts. Fuller presently has about 1,800 students from 70 nations on the campus. The scarcity of affordable housing in the city has, in part, made the expansion necessary, school officials say. The housing shortage has caused the loss of many qualified candidates, who might otherwise have chosen Fuller, they say. If the master plan is approved by the city, construction could start as soon as November. The plan calls for as many as 700 units of affordable housing, a worship center, with a 500-seat auditorium for performing arts, a prayer garden, and the doubling of the present library space. (Source: Los Angeles Times)

New Man Magazine's Top 10 Movies

The special ten-year anniversary issue of New Man magazine listed its reader's "Top 10 Movies of the Decade." They are:

- **60.6%** *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) directed by Mel Gibson
- **9.3%** *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003) directed by Peter Jackson
- **7.1%** *Forrest Gump* (1994) directed by Robert Zemeckis
- **3.7%** *Braveheart* (1995) directed by Mel Gibson
- **3.5%** *Titanic* (1997) directed by James Cameron
- **2.5%** *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002) directed by Peter Jackson
- **2.2%** *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings* (2001) directed by Peter Jackson
- **1.9%** *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) directed by Steven Spielberg
- **1.6%** *The Matrix* (1999) directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski
- **1.2%** *Gladiator* (2000) directed by Ridley Scott
- **5.7%** Others; including *Pearl Harbor* (2001) directed by Michael Bay; *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) directed by Frank Darabont; and a movie that did not make the decade cut-off line, *Schindler's List* (1993) directed by Steven Spielberg.

A Record Sign-Up to Oppose Gay Marriage

The highest number of signatures ever submitted for an initiative in Oregon's history was turned in by the Defense of Marriage Coalition, a group opposed to same-sex marriage. The Coalition amassed the record number of signatures in order to place a proposed constitutional amendment banning gay nuptials on the ballot, said officials in Salem. The 244,587 names was more than twice the necessary amount. (Source: Los Angeles Times)

Singing in the Rain

"Beacon of Hope" and "Sweetheart Cottage III," images by popular inspirational artist Thomas Kinkade, are now decorating umbrellas. Nearly 5,000 of the colorful umbrellas were sold within two weeks of hitting the market. (Source: Christian Retailing)

Last 'Left Behind' Book Not Left Behind

The final book of the "Left Behind" series, *Glorious Appearing*, debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times best-seller list in May and sold about a million copies in the first two weeks. The series itself, written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, has sold about 62 million copies worldwide and been translated into 34 languages. (Source: Christian Retailing)

On the Trail of Good News

Hey, we're gospel hounds sniffing around for news and other uplifting information that might appeal to our national audience. If you know of a unique Christian business, ministry or personality, or of something happening on the news front, give us a heads-up. You might want to send a clipping from your local newspaper or invite us to track down a story from the details you provide. Remember, all our stories are Christ-based and nationally oriented, though they may cut across entertainment, business, lifestyle, political or other lines. E-mail us at newsletter@tkog.biz or mail us your clippings at The Kingdom of God, P.O. Box 1147, Claremont, CA 91711.