



Abomination: Homosexuality and the Ex-Gay Movement

Presented by: The Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists (AGLP)

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Co-Producer/Camera/Editor: Anat Salomon

DVD, 31 min

26min 46 sec version also available

NTSC REGION 0

SYNOPSIS

Again and again we see it in the news: evangelical ministers who preach against homosexuality and scandalizing themselves when their own homosexuality is revealed. Proponents of so-called "reparative therapy" know it doesn't work. Yet they persist with ever-greater fervor and insist that gay Christians try to change their sexual orientation.

"Abomination: Homosexuality and the Ex-Gay Movement" profiles the journeys of four gay Christians who did everything possible to become heterosexual by following the "treatment" protocols of the so-called ex-gay ministries.

At times heartbreaking, at other times hilarious, the approaches taken by these religious groups range from shock therapy and hypnosis to "gender coaching." Ultimately the "therapy" fails, even for the ministers in charge as they repeatedly scandalize themselves by "relapsing into gayness".

Some of "Abomination's" subjects spent decades in torment before they ultimately re-defined every aspect of their values, morals and beliefs to allow themselves to accept a gay and Christian identity. But self-acceptance eluded Mary Lou's daughter, Ana, who committed suicide. Her daughter's death causes a change of heart in this fundamentalist Christian mother who comes to realize that "Jesus Christ himself would not have treated her the way I did".

In the end, we must ask, is Homosexuality an "Abomination"? Or is the real "Abomination" how Gay Conservative Christians are summarily rejected by their families, their communities, their churches and who are told that they have forfeited both the promise of heaven and the love of God.

"Abomination" is a poignant testimony to the healing power of love on the road to self-acceptance. It is also a film about human rights and the fragility of our liberty in an increasingly fundamentalist America.



PRODUCTION NOTES/ DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Psychiatrists as Film-makers"

This film was created by a group of Psychiatrists who saw a need to counter an increasing wave of Fundamentalist Christian propaganda being put forth in the media. These groups have made it their mission to pathologize homosexuality for an increasingly political goal. Meanwhile these so called therapies leave devastated individuals and families in their wake.

The proponents of "conversion" therapies put forth junk science as "evidence" of highly questionable practices. Furthermore, when this "data" finds its way into either the court system or the court of public opinion, true science and human rights are both set back. The suffering that results winds up at the doorstep of psychiatrists like myself.

Despite having come out myself, I did not comprehend, until I made this film, the hurdles faced by conservative Christians. They are not simply *forced* to change by their community, they are encouraged to hate themselves and to believe that God hates them. They are bombarded with false statistics and propaganda, sheltered from mainstream and scientific thought, and then they are asked to undertake bizarre and unethical "treatments" that rarely works.

These small stories, these long and painful journeys, trace the process of losing one's *family* followed by creating a new sense of community; of losing one's *faith* until one reinterprets the meaning of the Bible; of losing but then insisting on *not* losing one's relationship with God; and of finally discovering the joy of becoming the person one was born to be.

As a psychiatrist, what touches me most about the people in this film is the way in which their lives were put completely on hold through the decades they were struggling to change. Yet when they finally redirected all that energy into living, into careers and relationships and creativity ...they blossomed in a way that any therapist would call a success. Theirs is a testimony to what we all can achieve when we listen closely to ourselves.



DIRECTOR BIO

Director/Producer Alicia Salzer MD is a practicing psychiatrist in NY and appears as the on-screen Trauma Expert and Director of Aftercare for The Montel Williams TV Show.

She has served on The Board of Directors of Dyke TV and produced the 3 part cable TV series "Lesbian Parenting". Her public service announcement "Reaching Towards Liberty", in support of gay marriage, won a people's choice award from GLAAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

Dr. Salzer has held several prestigious academic appointments including Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Faculty of Medicine, and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine in NY. Her work in trauma psychiatry spans from Emergency Room Psychiatry to Ground Zero Counselor. In addition to media work in front of and behind the camera, she is in private practice in NYC.