

Wolkomir on Gay and Ex-Gay Christian Men

Wolkomir studies “men whose gay sexuality brought them into ideological conflict with a fundamentalist Christian belief system. In this case, the men’s sexuality could not easily be harmonized with an ideology that they understood, initially, to damn them unequivocally as egregious sinners and discredit them as Christians.”

Wolkomir studied men in two groups: (1) “Accept,” (associated with the gay-friendly Metropolitan Community Churches) **and (2) “Expell”** (associated with Exodus International, which attempts to “cure” homosexuals).

The men were Christians first and then had a realization that they were gay, creating a feeling of inauthenticity, anxiety, shame & fear.

Both sets of men were doing “revisionist ideological work to alter the meaning of the identity ‘Christian.’”

They dismantled existing ideology, not by challenging the authority of the Bible, but by rejecting traditional interpretations.

Accept rejected interpretations that made homosexuality damning. Expell refashioned the meaning of sexual struggle and redefined homosexuality as a “sin no worse than any other.”

They constructed an affirming ideology by drawing on modern resources.

Accept used notions of social justice. Expell used self-help pop psychology to reframe homosexuality as an emotional disease.

They then linked their reconstructed ideology to the Bible to construct a Christian identity for themselves.

Accept aligned their Christian identity with inclusiveness. Expell aligned their Christian identity with struggling against temptation.

Both groups revised part of the dominant ideology without challenging it. They also expanded culture.