

Editors: Rob Kay
& Dr. Mark Yarhouse

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Mission

To further our understanding of sexual identity, it's development and synthesis, and to be a resource to students in training and those in the community who are stakeholders in these discussions. We do this through research, training and clinical services/consultations.

Meet the Team

- Mark Yarhouse, PsyD (Dir)
- Elisabeth Suarez, PhD
- Jill Kays (TA)
- Rob Kay (RA)
- Heidi Jo Erickson (GA)
- Katie Maslowe (Outreach)
- Audrey Atkinson
- Ryan Calhoun
- Kathy Chisholm
- David Collpits
- Veronica Johnson
- Heather Kemp
- Deborah Mangum
- Alicia Tomasulo
- Mary Zahar

ISSI Web Site:

www.sexualidentityinstitute.org

Note from the Director

This has been an eventful summer for ISSI. In August I attended the American Psychological Association's (APA) annual conference in Toronto and presented (with Dr. Stanton Jones) the 6-year longitudinal study of attempted change of orientation through religious ministries.

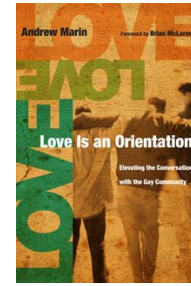
It was at this same conference that we saw the new APA task force background report presented on appropriate therapeutic responses to sexual orientation. Although the task force did not directly review our study (discussing it only briefly in a footnote), they did cite many other studies conducted through ISSI. In particular, the task force is promoting more client-centered and identity-focused approaches to working with conventionally religious individuals who are conflicted by their experience of same-sex attraction. One such approach is Sexual Identity Therapy (SIT), a model of therapy we have been developing and studying. For those interested in discussing this approach, please join us through the SIT Framework listserv at: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/sexualidentitytherapy/>. Resources and related presentations on SIT are available at www.sitframework.com.



Dr. Mark Yarhouse

Upcoming Events

- ◆ Dr. Mark Yarhouse and Jill Kays will present a workshop titled "Working with Mixed Sexual Orientation Couples" at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Opryland Hotel and Conference Center in Nashville, Tennessee, September 16-19, 2009.
- ◆ Dr. Mark Yarhouse and Dr. Erica S. N. Tan will speak at the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology Colloquia Series at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, September 25, 2009. Their talk is titled "Ex-Gays? Clinical Applications of Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation."
- ◆ Dr. Stanton Jones, Dr. Robert Gagnon, Dr. Mark Yarhouse and many other scholars will come together for a conference titled *Marriage, Homosexuality and the Church* at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, October 15-17, 2009. Information on the conference is available here: <http://www.andrews.edu/mhconference/index.html>



Book Review: *Love is an Orientation: Elevating the Conversation with the Gay Community*

Reviewed by: Robert L. Kay

Andrew Marin's *Love is an Orientation* opens with a salient account of the personal relevance that the polarized issue of sexual orientation and Christianity has for him. Largely uninterested in the gay community early on in his career, Marin categorized himself as a "straight, white, conservative, Bible-believing, evangelical male" from the Midwest (p. 16). His life was forever changed when three of his closest friends disclosed their same-sex preferences to him within a three-month period. Since then, Marin has developed a significant compassion for the GLBT population and devotes his life to establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with those who identify as being gay.

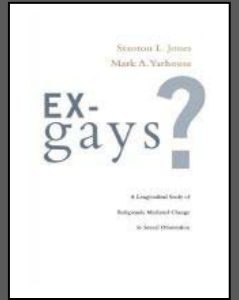
Love is an Orientation offers a realistic, ground zero approach to the issue at hand. Choosing to immerse himself and his family into a predominantly gay community in Chicago, Marin has a genuine perspective of, and feeling for, the pulse of the gay community that many in the Christian community may never come to fully understand. He utilizes the stories of individuals that he has encountered throughout his time there to outline the ineffective and sometimes-harmful nature of the traditional methods used by Christians to reach the gay community. In doing so he highlights the need for an authentic, relationship-driven approach designed to love instead of isolate and condemn.

Marin's message is not one of shame towards Christians and their history of outreach towards gay persons, but rather a pragmatic appraisal of the results and a call to relational reformation. His approach to working with the gay community can be summed up in a quote that he offers by the Reverend Billy Graham: "It is the Holy Spirit's job to convict, God's job to judge, and my job to love" (p. 108). Marin's hope is that the Christian community will cease being the judge, jury, and executioner of gay persons and fulfill their biblical call to love instead. Within *Love is an Orientation*, Marin lays the foundation for Christians to better understand the worldview of the gay community, ranging from their perceptions of Christians in general to an excellent and concise account of gay apologetics. The information he provides is essential for Christians in beginning to formulate sincerity in their efforts to build collaborative relationships with the GLBT community.

Marin closes his text with 16 essential "commitments" that Christians can accept to effectively relate to the GLBT community. The commitments are not radically new concepts that represent a departure from traditionally understood Christian principles, but rather serve as a map that delineates a return to the biblical nature of Christ and the relational model he exemplified to all persons as illustrated in the New Testament. In Marin's eyes, the gay community deserves nothing less than godly love.

Andrew Marin's *Love is an Orientation* is a necessary and highly relevant assessment of the current state of relationship between the gay and Christian communities. His daily, collaborative work with gay persons affords him a unique understanding of, and compassion for, this severely underserved population. He offers his perspective in hopes that both communities can begin to turn towards each other instead of furthering the divide between them. Marin's work continues to pave the way for a critical Christian understanding of the nature of the issue, and is a significant step forward in building a humble, sincere, and meaningful bridge into the heart of the GLBT population.

Featured Resource:



Ex-Gays? A Longitudinal Study of Religiously-Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation

by Stanton L. Jones & Mark A. Yarhouse

"This study is a groundbreaking classic—scientifically erudite and clearly presented. It shares irrefutable data gained over time that serve to explode arguments based on ideology and anecdotes. Its irenic and thoughtful discussion invites an open forum where scientific evidence and rational thinking are allowed to dominate discussion of the subject."

—Merton P. Strommen, Ph.D.,
Founder of Search Institute
and Fellow in the American
Psychological Association

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If you would like to support the work of ISSI, checks may be made payable to "Regent University" and sent to:
School of Psychology and Counseling, CRB
161, 1000 Regent University Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23464
attn: Mark Yarhouse
memo line: ISSI