

Editorial (97)

In 2009, The American Psychological Association published a report which suggest insufficient evidence that sexual orientation change effort work. However, in 2005, Jones & Yarhouse suggest otherwise. Jones & Yarhouse hypothesizes that '(H1) sexual orientation is not changeable, and (H2) the attempt to change is likely harmful' (p.1). The study examined a group of women and men seeking sexual orientation change through religious ministry organization called Exodus. Using 72 men and 26 women, this study found no support for H1. It shows that 'change of sexual orientation occurred for some individuals through involvement in the religious-mediated change methods (i.e. 23% by self-categorization)' (p.7).

Using six categories of respondent's own judgement whether change had been successful will increase the accuracy of the outcomes. The categories are (p.7): (1) success conversion (i.e. subjects who reported change to be successful by experiencing substantial reductions in homosexual attraction); (2) success chastity (i.e. subjects who reported change homosexual attraction to be present only incidentally); (3) continuing (e.g. these persons may have experienced modest decreases in homosexual attraction); (4) non-response (i.e. these respondents had experienced no significant sexual orientation change); (5) failure (i.e. these respondents had experienced no significant sexual change); (6) failure gay identity (i.e. these persons had given up, no significant sexual orientation

change). They found evidence that change of sexual orientation occurred for some individuals through Exodus ministry. Those who report a sexual adjustment regard themselves as having changed their sexual orientation (p.7).

This finding contrast the previous finding that sexual orientation change effort is not possible. Furthermore, this study also found no-support for H2. The study found no evidence that the attempt to change sexual orientation was harmful on average. The respondents who are involved in the six to seven years or more showed modest gains in the diminishing of psychological distress (p.8).

These findings challenge APA's report on Social Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE). However, the use of sample from a religious organization posed a dilemma as argued by APA. The authors divulge several limitations on this study, with the main limitation that not everyone can change. Finally, the authors suggest that practitioners or researchers 'should respect the self-determination of individuals who because of their personal values, religious or not desire to seek change of their sexual orientation just as we respect those who desire to affirm and consolidate their sexual identity as gay' (p.9). I believe that this debate will continue, however this study offers some clarifications especially on the issue of safety for those who make SOCE.

The editor