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**CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL  
ONTARIO REGIONAL PANEL**

CFYI-AM re *Focus on the Family*

(CBSC Decision 99/00-0724)

Decided June 28, 2001

R. Stanbury (Chair), M. Ziniak (Vice-Chair), R. Cohen (*ad hoc*),  
M. Oldfield, S. Whiting

Ontario Regional Panel Adjudicator R. Moss, who is employed by the same station group which owns CILQ-FM, did not sit on this adjudication.

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## **THE FACTS**

On July 7, 2000, CFYI-AM (Toronto, also known as TALK640) broadcast an episode of the American religious program *Focus on the Family*, a “paid program” (in broadcast industry terms), rather than original programming of the station itself. This episode was apparently the third and final instalment in a series entitled “Hope for the Homosexual” on the American-originating program. While the full transcript of the relevant portions of the July 7 program is provided in Appendix A hereto, certain excerpts which provide a sense of the issues about which the complaint was written are provided here. Others are provided in the context of the decision itself.

Question 4: [...] How can the Christian community be on guard against improper attitudes or responses to homosexuals because of the gay militant side of things where the Christian community is often times under attack? There’s a danger of some kind of response to that.

Dr. Nikolosi: Well, I think that the Christian community has traditionally been making two mistakes. Either they believe that there are gay Christians. I don’t believe ... I believe that gay and Christian is a contradiction in terms. It’s a philosophy, it leads to a gay anthropology which is to say that some of us are just born this way and that it’s totally against the natural law and biblical teachings. However, we have to .... Now, the other mistake is that we tend to be condemning and rejecting of people who have a homosexual condition. We have to walk that boundary between accepting gay and rejecting the person. Rather we accept the person, we are with you, you are part of our Church. However, your homosexuality is something to be worked on. It’s something that is not part of the Christian Church. And we support you in your attempts to diminish it.

Comment from Host: That's a chalk line some people have a hard time walking. Compulsions for the evils of that lifestyle which are just as wicked as heterosexual promiscuity. You know, from a moral point of view, the homosexual is in exactly the same situation from my view as the unmarried heterosexual. The Lord calls us to a life of morality and abstinence and it's tough for both. But that's ... I don't know how to change the scripture.

[...]

Question 10: [...] I have a friend who has been a homosexual and who is now completely recovered and healed by the grace of the Lord. Does Mr. Smith...would he think of himself still as a homosexual with no tendencies or would someone like that think of himself as "I was but by the grace of God I am no longer and that's just how I see myself"?

Alan Smith: I do not see myself as a homosexual any longer. I don't see myself as finished with what I am going through, meaning that if there are times where I'm going to feel inferior where I'm going to start being interested, I want to find out why. Once I find out why, I can put that in check. So, I'm not finished but I never really labelled myself a homosexual. When you put that label on yourself you're doing yourself a disservice. I see myself as a man with a homosexual condition or a man who had a homosexual condition and with the help of a great therapist worked his way out of it...and with the Lord, of course.

Comment from Host: Joe, would the analogy to an alcoholic fit here a little bit? That you'd always have a little predisposition there, you've got to recognise your weaknesses and stay away from it...not do things to put yourself at risk?

Dr. Nikolosi: Exactly. We have a man who did a very beautiful recovery and is now married and has two kids. And he was interviewed and I said to him "can you honestly say that you have no more homosexual feelings" and he said "when I have a homosexual feeling it tells me that I'm not taking care of myself." And it's exactly true for the alcoholic. Some kind of stress or tension or an emotional issue is not being addressed and the old tendency is to get gratification from homosexual fantasies.

On July 18, the complainant sent a letter to the CRTC regarding the episode that he had heard. That letter was subsequently forwarded to the CBSC. He said in part (the full text of the letter is reproduced in Appendix B):

Although I was only tuned into this broadcast for the final ten minutes, the hosts of the broadcast referred to homosexuality as a "problem".

I found this broadcast to be extremely offensive, prejudicial, and bigoted in their characterization of gays and lesbians. Contrary to their stereotypical views homosexuality is not the problem: homophobia is.

The broadcaster's Operations Manager replied on August 8. He said in part (the full text of his letter is included in Appendix B):

[T]his was part of a series dealing with homosexuality. It is our opinion that this programming presented a discussion about homosexuality. Dr. Dobson, who hosted the program interviewed homosexuals who had, in their opinion, converted to being heterosexuals. The program centred on the various possible reasons that determine whether someone is either heterosexual or homosexual.

It is our opinion that the broadcast was sensitive and non-confrontational. I do not believe that your comments that the broadcasts were extremely offensive, prejudicial and bigoted are true.

As you are probably aware, TALK640 is a talk, news-based, information station. Part of our local programming includes discussion amongst our announcers and listeners on many topical and controversial issues. We believe we do a very good job of providing balanced opportunity to present all sides of an issue, which will allow our audience to make up their own minds on the matters under discussion.

The complainant was not satisfied by this response and, on August 17, requested that the matter be sent to the Ontario Regional Panel for adjudication.

## **THE DECISION**

The CBSC's Ontario Regional Panel considered the complaint under the *Code of Ethics* of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB). The relevant clauses read in pertinent part as follows:

### *CAB Code of Ethics - Clause 2 (Human Rights)*

Recognizing that every person has a right to full and equal recognition and to enjoy certain fundamental rights and freedoms, broadcasters shall endeavour to ensure, to the best of their ability, that their programming contains no abusive or discriminatory material or comment which is based on matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, [sexual orientation], marital status or physical or mental handicap.

### *CAB Code of Ethics, Clause 6, Paragraph 3 (Full, fair and proper presentation)*

It is recognized that the full, fair and proper presentation of news, opinion, comment and editorial is the prime and fundamental responsibility of the broadcast publisher.

### *CAB Code of Ethics, Clause 7 (Controversial Public Issues)*

Recognizing in a democracy the necessity of presenting all sides of a public issue, it shall be the responsibility of member stations to treat fairly, all subjects of a controversial nature. Time shall be allotted with due regard to all the other elements of balanced program schedules, and to the degree of public interest in the questions presented. Recognizing that healthy controversy is essential to the maintenance of democratic institutions, the broadcast publisher will endeavour to encourage presentation of news and opinion on any controversy which contains an element of the public interest.

The Ontario Regional Panel listened to a tape of the broadcast and reviewed all of the correspondence. The Panel considers that the broadcast in question is not in breach of any of the foregoing provisions.

## Previous CBSC Decisions on Broadcast Treatment of Gay and Lesbian Issues

As long ago as the Prairie Regional Panel decision in *CHQR-AM re Forbes and Friends* (CBSC Decision 92/93-0187, August 8, 1994), protection against abusively or unduly discriminatory comment on the basis of sexual orientation has been read into the human rights provision in the *CAB Code of Ethics*. Since that time, though, the CBSC has been called upon on numerous occasions to determine which comments regarding gays and lesbians amounted to unacceptable comment under that provision and which did not. It should be remembered that gays and lesbians, like *all* other identifiable groups, are subject to commentary, observation and the expression of opinion which may not always feel entirely comfortable. When, however, a CBSC Panel considers that comments exceed those bounds, it draws a line which must for future broadcasts not be crossed. Since, on almost every occasion when such assessments must be made, the wording or circumstances of the broadcast will differ to *some* extent from previously considered programs, there are nuances to be considered.

In a previous decision involving *Focus on the Family*, namely, *CKRD-AM re Focus on the Family* (CBSC Decision 96/97-0155, December 16, 1997), the Prairie Regional Panel found that the show had treated all research supporting homosexuality as “flimsy” and ruled that the show had “attributed to the gay movement a malevolent, insidious and conspiratorial purpose, a so-called >agenda” and that this collectively constituted abusively discriminatory comment. In another decision dealing with commentary about gays and lesbians, *CFYI-AM and CJCH-AM re the Dr. Laura Schlessinger Show* (CBSC Decisions 99/00-0005 and 98/99-0808, 1003 and 1137, February 9 and 15, 2000), the Ontario and Atlantic Regional Panels jointly concluded that the talk show host’s consistent characterization of the sexual behaviour of gays and lesbians as “abnormal”, “aberrant”, “deviant”, “disordered”, “dysfunctional”, “an error” clearly exceeded the level of permissible comment under the human rights provision. Despite the host’s argument that she was not disparaging the *persons* but only their *sexuality*, the Panels characterized that reasoning as fatuous. They concluded that the sexual practices of gays and lesbians were “as much a part of their being as the colour of one’s skin or the gender, religion, age or ethnicity of an individual” and that the two could not be “surgically” separated so as to justify the host’s comments.

The foregoing being said, there have been statements made in other programs which CBSC Panels have not found to be abusively or unduly discriminatory. In *CHCH-TV re Life Today with James Robison* (CBSC Decision 95/96-0128, April 30, 1996), the Ontario Regional Panel did not find that simply describing “the gay lifestyle” as “sinful” breached the Codes. As the Panel said,

*Life Today* hosted by James Robison is a program which, by its very nature, involves the presentation of opinions and presupposes a moral bias. It does not purport to be objective, as is made clear by the introduction ... Accordingly, such a program should not, indeed, *cannot* be judged using the criteria of accuracy and fairness that would be applied to news or

public affairs programming. Rather, when dealing with the expression of opinions, the Council must merely determine whether these opinions are expressed in a manner that is abusive or discriminatory.

[...]

The host's message was that monogamous heterosexuality was the "right" lifestyle. He expressed the view that a proper interpretation of the Bible leads to the conclusion that homosexuality is an unacceptable lifestyle (as is also the case with adulterous heterosexuality, according to his interpretation). It is not the Council's mandate to determine the correctness of the views presented, but only whether the views were presented in a non-abusive, legitimate manner.

In a later decision relating to the Laura Schlessinger Show, *CJCH-AM re the Laura Schlessinger Show* (CBSC Decision 99/00-0652, February 14, 2001), the Atlantic Regional Panel found that the broadcaster could not be faulted for any of the comments made during the show episodes under consideration in that decision. For a start, the Panel found that the host's approach to the subject had changed radically.

The Panel has no doubt but that both the tone and tune of the host have changed. Perhaps as the result of the previous CBSC decision, perhaps as the result of other public commentary, perhaps on the basis of matured reflection alone, in the examples raised here, she is not as aggressive in dealing with the issues of deviancy as she had been. She is cautious, perhaps even defensive, but certainly quite limited and careful in dealing with that theme, an approach which the Atlantic Regional Panel applauds.

To be specific, the Panel reviewed the substance of the challenged remarks by the host on the various dates, occasionally referring back to the first CBSC decision relating to her program, on which it had not fared as well.

On June 13, the host's monologue was entirely dedicated to the reading of Michael Medved's article in *USA Today*. She was not making accusations. Nor was he. To the Panel, she seemed relieved that she had found such a well-known person writing a piece in what appeared to be her defence. ... In the end, though, Schlessinger is merely reviewing someone else's commentary and comparison on a controversial issue. Moreover, her comments are quite narrow and restricted. They relate solely to the biological issue of "relating normally to the opposite sex" and the discussion of the "religious notion that the most profound, timeless purpose for all sexuality is procreation." Citing Medved, she asks, "Is this line of argument so hateful and dangerous, that it can't even be discussed?"

Now, limited to this issue, the Panel finds nothing inappropriate in the broadcast of June 13. It is undeniable that she has said that "it's a biological error that inhibits you from relating normally to the opposite sex" and that "The error is in your inability to relate sexually, intimately, in a loving way to a member of the opposite sex." That point is immediately qualified by the next passage which she cites from the Medved article will relates that issue *solely* to procreation. The error, as established in the context of *that* broadcast, is *religious* and is limited to the inability to procreate by such sexual relations. In that limited sense, it may be seen to be assimilated to the Catholic view that contraception is immoral, wrong and against the precepts of the Church. It approaches the areas of concern previously underscored by the CBSC but walks the line without so falling over it that the Atlantic Regional Panel is unwilling to conclude that it constitutes abusively discriminatory comment.

If anything, it appears to the Panel that the host has gone out of her way to accommodate the concerns of the Atlantic and Ontario Regional Panels expressed in their previous decision.

On August 15, her discussion was again limited to the question of the “many forms of sexual behaviour that are unacceptable.” She gave examples of parents having sex with their kids or having sex “with your dad’s new wife.” She put homosexuality in the same category. Now, the question again is limited to that specific area of sexual activity which could be evaluated as a religious or moral matter, something which the CBSC has previously acknowledged as discussable within the bounds of the codified standards.

In the case at hand, it is the view of the Panel that the host has not gone too far, indeed, that she has not gone *nearly* as far as she had in the earlier CJCH decision referred to above. As she said at one point in her monologue here, “if you call me for a moral framework, I can only give you the ultimate moral framework, as best I understand it.” She elaborated, but carefully, and in a fashion limited to reproductive issues.

Human beings do it heterosexually. That’s how were geared. Eggs, sperm, penis, vagina. That’s just how the biology of it goes. What I did say is that when an individual is not so drawn to a member of the opposite sex, in biology, that is some kind of error because it doesn’t result in reproduction.

In that regard, the Panel considers that she is entitled to her opinion. She was quite careful to restrict her comments to that issue in a context which was not sweeping. It was more than the complainant wanted to hear, to be sure, but less, far less, than she had said before and not directed to the *group* of persons *on the basis of* their sexual orientation. There was no characterization of the group. There was no use of *any* of the offending adjectives: abnormal, aberrant, deviant, dysfunctional. Such limited opinion as was expressed here falls within the protected bounds established in the earlier decisions noted above. The broadcaster has done its job. There is no breach here.

Where, in other words, the challenged comments are “not directed to the *group* of persons *on the basis of* their sexual orientation,” where there is no offending characterization of the group, where the comments are limited to a moral or religious assessment of *practices* alone, the comments will be unlikely to be viewed as abusively or unduly discriminatory.

### **The Application of the Principles to the Matter at Hand**

The discussion in this episode of *Focus on the Family* never descends to the unacceptable levels of either the previous episode broadcast by CKRD-AM or the Laura Schlessinger shows broadcast by CFYI-AM and CJCH-AM. The remarks fall very much into the category of the broadcast commentary dealt with in *CHCH-TV re Life Today with James Robison* (CBSC Decision 95/96-0128, April 30, 1996). They go to “lifestyle” issues, “root causes of homosexuality”, the morality of single gender sexual relationships, the “distinction between homosexual and gay”, the raising of children in gay or lesbian households, the relationship between homosexuality and Christianity, and so on. There are also references to homosexuality as a “condition” but these, in a sense, fall into the unresolved debate about whether being gay or lesbian is innate or learned, which is not a matter of moment for this Panel. There are otherwise only two places in the entire program where the word

“problem” is even used in what appears to be a relevant context but these are so *incidental* to the entire issue and so far from the centre of any portion of the dialogue that they are, in terms of this decision, irrelevant. The only other *potentially* offensive statement in the entire program, involving the use of the words “agenda” and “disorder”, was made by one of the panellists, Dr. Nikolosi, who said

I do not want my child exposed to an agenda which teaches the child that homosexual relationships are *equal* to heterosexual relationships. I want to be able to preserve the right to see it as a disorder.

The Panel does not find the use of either of the two terms problematic in the context of this program. In the first place, as used here, “disorder” carries no cumulative weight, as it did in the Schlessinger show. It is used on a single occasion in the context of a rather clinical discussion and forms no part of an adjectival list of pejorative terminology. The Panel also considers the use of the term “agenda” to be far removed from the conspiratorial implications of the host and guest in the earlier *Focus on the Family* decision, which appeared to relate to the recruitment of new members to the gay movement. Here the meaning of the term, at worst, relates to gay teachings in school and can as reasonably be understood as referring to the *school’s* agenda as the gay movement.

In other words, at the end of the day, there is no place in this entire episode where discriminatory comments *about persons in a group identifiable on the basis of their sexual orientation* can be found. There is discussion about homosexuality but not about homosexuals and then it consists of legitimate points of discussion or debate. It was not, in the view of the Panel, “bigoted in its characterization of gays and lesbians,” as argued by the complainant. It did not even go there. It was not “hate propaganda”. It was a point of view on a lifestyle subject, not on its practitioners. It was a very conservative religious view. It was, it may fairly be observed on the basis of years of CBSC decisions, a view not shared by any Panel of the CBSC, but a view which its supporters were free to espouse in the terms in which they dealt with the issue. There is no breach of Clause 2 of the *CAB Code of Ethics* here.

## **Balance**

There is no doubt but that the challenged program has a point of view; specifically, it is partial to a conservative Christian world view. This does not, however, mean that it fails the balance test on that account since it is not necessary to have balance *within* a program. In *CTV re an episode of The Shirley Show* (CBSC Decision 93/94-0261, August 18, 1995), the Ontario Regional Panel referred to paragraph 3(1)(i) of the *Broadcasting Act*, which is often referred to by communications specialists as the “balance requirement”, and to the CRTC’s interpretation of this “requirement” in Public Notice CRTC 1988-213, *Policy regarding Open-Line Programming* (December 23, 1988).

Reflecting the CRTC’s policy, it has been the view of the CBSC that a program dealing with a

controversial issue need not have *built-in* balance. Broadcasters are entitled to balance biased programming by presenting the other side of the issue on other programs dealing with the same issue. If an individual program is not internally balanced, the Council may need to look at the overall programming provided by the broadcaster in order to see whether the broadcaster has met its responsibility pursuant to Clause 7 of the *Code of Ethics*.

[...]

In any event, the Council does not consider that a breach of Clause 7 occurs as soon as a host, commentator or moderator “shows his or her colours”. The Council notes in this regard that, in a June 12, 1989 letter to a complainant regarding the CBC program “Edmonton AM”, the CRTC stated that “the use of a commentator who is not totally impartial, ... is not something which is directly covered by the *Broadcasting Act* or the regulations. A licensee is free to use whomever he wishes, provided that the balance and equitable requirements are met.” While matters did not unfold precisely as the complainant would have preferred, the Council has no doubt that the host acquitted her responsibility regarding the presentation of a diversity of views on the complex subject of doctor-assisted suicide.

No suggestion has been made that, in the remainder of its programming, CFYI-AM does not offer the necessary balance to the conservative Christian perspective of *Focus on the Family* and *that* is the issue. The conservative expression should not be penalized but is equally part and parcel of presenting balanced points of view. Had the discussion become confrontational, abusive, or predatory, the Panel would likely have come to a different conclusion. It did not. There is no breach on this account.

### **Broadcaster Responsiveness**

In addition to assessing the relevance of the Codes to the complaint, the CBSC always assesses the *responsiveness* of the broadcaster to the substance of the complaint. In this case, the Council considers that the broadcaster’s initial response fully and fairly addressed the issues raised by the complainant. The broadcaster’s representative did not rely on a boiler-plate style of response; he specifically pointed to the non-confrontational nature of the program as well as to its contribution to a balanced presentation of all sides of the issue. Nothing more is required. Consequently, the broadcaster has not breached the Council’s standard of responsiveness.

*This decision is a public document upon its release by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. It may be reported, announced or read by the station against which the complaint had originally been made; however, in the case of a favourable decision, the station is under no obligation to announce the result.*



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**APPENDIX A**  
**TO CBSC DECISION 99/00-0724**  
*CFYI-AM re Focus on the Family*

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The following is a partial transcripts of the July 7, 2000 broadcast of the American religious program *Focus on the Family* on CFYI-AM.

**Host:** The topic of a recent conference hosted by *Focus on the Family*: Freedom from homosexuality is possible. It's not a genetic predisposition and it's not just a choice. As we've heard over the last couple of days, there is a combination of factors that lead people into homosexuality and today on our broadcast we'll continue our discussion about the root causes of homosexuality. Our host is psychologist and author Dr. James Dobson and I'm Mike Trout. Thank you for being with us and we're going to get into some fascinating material today. We have a studio audience here with us and they sat quietly for a couple of days and we're so anxious to ask questions, we've opened up the microphones and we'll share their questions and the responses of our guests during the next half hour. We have in the studio here with us Dr. Joseph Nikolosi the clinical director of NARTH, National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality of Southern California, and a man who has asked to remain anonymous. We are simply calling him Alan Smith. Let's get started with this first question.

**Question 1:** Hi ... this is really encouraging and I was wondering with therapy is there any kind of an ongoing support system? You talk a lot about support within the therapy but is there any ongoing support structure for people recovering from this?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Absolutely. There is something called the ex-gay ministry which is something you'll never read about in the papers or see on television but there is an incredible ex-gay ministry network. These are people who have come out of the gay lifestyle, they are committed to their Christianity and they are available to support men and women who are trying to change. It's out there but you have to know where to look.

**Question 2:** [...] What is the difference between being tempted to have sex with a man and being tempted to have an adulterous relationship? As an example, if I have feelings that I want to commit sex with a man what difference is that if I have feelings that I want to commit adultery with a woman. That doesn't make me an adulterer..so do the feelings of wanting to have sex with a man necessarily make me a homosexual?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** That is sort of a moral question and also psychological question. My own understanding of the morality of it is that sexual relationships with a person, male or female, outside of marriage is a sin. Period. However, if it happens to be with a man and you happen to have a sexual relationship with a man I would wonder what the motivations are and I would invite the person to look at the motivations.

**Question 3:** Joe, there are so many things that I know our listeners are wishing that we would ask one is: bisexuality as an experimental adventure, can that entice a question and lead them into a homosexual relationship?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** If they're very young I think it would be more critical and I would be more concerned. A certain amount of curiosity, especially today every time you turn on the television there's something gay on television so there's this whole promotion and I think a lot of young people are curious and will engage in homosexual behaviour out of curiosity but I think it will really stick with the person who has these unmet same sex emotional needs.

**Host:** You know that bisexuality on many high school campuses has become the thing to do!

**Dr. Nikolosi:** I don't believe in bisexuality by the way. I think bisexuality is a political manipulative term and I think it's a confusing concept. To me a bisexual is a person who to some extent has not resolved his homosexuality.

**Question 4:** [...] How can the Christian community be on guard against improper attitudes or responses to homosexuals because of the gay militant side of things where the Christian community is often times under attack? There's a danger of some kind of response to that.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Well, I think that the Christian community has traditionally been making two mistakes. Either they believe that there are gay Christians. I don't believe ... I believe that gay and Christian is a contradiction in terms. It's a philosophy, it leads to a gay anthropology which is to say that some of us are just born this way and that it's totally against the natural law and biblical teachings. However, we have to .... Now, the other mistake is that we tend to be condemning and rejecting of people who have a homosexual condition. We have to walk that boundary between accepting gay and rejecting the person. Rather we accept the person, we are with you, you are part of our Church. However, your homosexuality is something to be worked on. It's something that is not part of the Christian Church. And we support you in your attempts to diminish it.

**Comment from Host:** That's a chalk line some people have a hard time walking. Compulsions for the evils of that lifestyle which are just as wicked as heterosexual promiscuity. You know, from a moral point of view, the homosexual is in exactly the same situation from my view as the unmarried heterosexual. The Lord calls us to a life of morality and abstinence and it's tough for both. But that's ... I don't know how to change the scripture.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Well, people love to pounce on the gay issue as a way of not looking at other sins. I believe that homosexuals do not choose to be homosexual, but I believe that they can choose not to be. In other words, Alan didn't chose to be homosexual but he can choose ...

**Host:** That's a very good point because gays will say "we didn't choose this".

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Well, yes you didn't choose it but now that you know your condition, now that you understand yourself you can choose not to be, you can work on yourself.

**Host:** You would agree that some in their early adolescent period that do chose behaviours that lead them in that direction?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Yes I do, yes I do. I saw a boy this ...

**Host:** "I chose to participate in it."

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Absolutely and participation is going deep in your identification especially for the young adolescent. We define ourselves by what we do and if you engage in behaviour you can start to identify with the label.

**Question 5:** [...] I believe that there are many, many non-gay homosexuals, a hidden community to which the Church has not addressed itself, what would be your recommendations of how the Church can reach out to this hidden population?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** I think that to understand that it is a hidden population and not going to come forward. I think the most important thing for the Church to realise is the distinction between homosexual and gay. If a person wants to maintain their gay identity there's nothing we can do with them. If they want to really be behind it and live that gay lifestyle we can't do really anything with them but there are many people

who struggle with this homosexuality and we want to be able to provide ministry and support with a psychological understanding to help them diminish this condition and we have to see it as a condition.

**Host:** Now Alan you describe the low self-esteem, self-hatred and all that went with it. If a Church really wants to minister to you they've got to express love for you as an individual even though you've got a problem, right?

**Alan:** Absolutely, and the Church needs to know that this problem tears us apart. I want to emphasize that emotionally we don't know what to do because we are Christians and we know that we could never live this lifestyle but we have these thoughts these feelings and they're channelled in the wrong direction and when you don't know what to do you feel abandoned, you feel like the Church is not helping you.

**Host:** It's a terrible bind to be in! My heart goes out to those folks. It really does. And I think we need to be as compassionate as possible within the understanding that there's also a wickedness here that we have to deal with too.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** And to know that, not only with compassion but with understanding. You need male relationships, you need to bond, you have to have close male ... It's a very Christian therapy actually, you know, changing Eros to Philia: from erotic object to brotherly love.

**Question 6:** [...] I was wondering about children of homosexuals because more of them are having children by artificial insemination or adoption. Are these children .... Is there a chance for them to develop good sexual identities and what are the problems that you've seen?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** What I'd like to say is that one the most beautiful things about a democracy is that you have to ruin a generation and then the social scientists come in and they do all their studies and they say "you know, I think we did a mistake." (That's tragic!) You know, 30 years ago they said "Children don't suffer from divorce" and now the studies show that children do suffer from divorce and it has an impact on their own relationships. So right now there are no laws to prevent gays from adopting or having children so we have to wait and then social scientists will come in and do these studies. I would guess that there will be some kind of damage: not only in terms of sexual orientation but just in terms of their own sexuality. It's got to confuse a child who's living with two lesbians or two gay men. Some preliminary studies show that already these children raised in these fam ... I don't want to use the word 'families' ... in these "set ups", the environments ... that in early childhood they don't seem to notice a difference but when they become teenagers they become very embarrassed when their friends want to come over and they begin to realize that their other friends have mothers and fathers and they feel ... it's almost like the children have to bear the burden of these people who want to do a social experiment.

**Host:** It really doesn't take a \$10 million study to resolve that.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** But it's going to have to because it has been understood in culture for thousands of years. All of a sudden we begin to question it!

**Dr. Nikolosi:** My particular concern would be, of the four possibilities, which is two lesbians raising a boy or a girl or two gay men raising a boy or a girl, the one that I would have most concern with are two lesbians who raise a boy because I think as lesbians they would sabotage any masculine development.

**Question 7:** Joe, a comment on the literature that some school districts want to expose their young children to ... I'm talking kindergarten, first, second and third ... Heather has two mommies and that kind of stuff?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Well, this is where I think we're going as a nation, as a people. I believe that we're coming to the point where we can say I don't want this, I'm not homophobic, I do not want to take the rights of gay

people away. But I do not want my child exposed to an agenda which teaches the child that homosexual relationships are *equal* to heterosexual relationships. I want to be able to preserve the right to see it as a disorder. And I think parents need to have the courage to begin to say that.

**Question 8:** [...] For those of us that are perhaps involved in Church leadership, either ministers, pastors, priests or elders, what specifically could you say to listeners that they could do to show love and acceptance and support for these people?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** I think the best strategy is to provide an effective ministry for the non-gay homosexual. Have an active ministry where we are helpful to these people who do not want to be homosexual. That is the best, I think, response. Because people can begin to see "Oh, there are two kinds of people here". By not providing an active ministry, to the non-gay homosexual, the only homosexuals we do see are the gays, and we tend to think they represent all homosexuals so we need to be more active in spotlighting and highlighting our ministry to non-gay homosexuals.

**Question 9:** You know Joe, most Churches are not big enough to have the expertise to deal with this. What do you suggest to the Church that has no understanding really of its origin or its treatment, isn't aware of therapists like yourself?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Again, there is something called *Exodus International* which is a very large ex-gay ministry. It's Christian. They are around the country, they would be happy to become involved with any Church or any small religious denomination.

**Host:** Name some others.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Um, *Courage* is a Catholic. Actually, *Exodus* is an umbrella organization for maybe hundreds of ex-gay ministries, so *Exodus* would be the main number to contact.

**Host:** Mike, we need to put together a resource document that would allow people to make contact with these organizations.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** We're working on that.

**Question 10:** [...] I have a friend who has been a homosexual and who is now completely recovered and healed by the grace of the Lord. Does Mr. Smith ... would he think of himself still as a homosexual with no tendencies or would someone like that think of himself as "I was but by the grace of God I am no longer and that's just how I see myself"?

**Alan Smith:** I do not see myself as a homosexual any longer. I don't see myself as finished with what I am going through, meaning that if there are times where I'm going to feel inferior where I'm going to start being interested, I want to find out why. Once I find out why, I can put that in check. So, I'm not finished but I never really labelled myself a homosexual. When you put that label on yourself you're doing yourself a disservice. I see myself as a man with a homosexual condition or a man who had a homosexual condition and with the help of a great therapist worked his way out of it ... and with the Lord, of course.

**Question 11:** Joe, would the analogy to an alcoholic fit here a little bit? That you'd always have a little predisposition there, you've got to recognise your weaknesses and stay away from it ... not do things to put yourself at risk?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Exactly. We have a man who did a very beautiful recovery and is now married and has two kids. And he was interviewed and I said to him "can you honestly say that you have no more homosexual feelings" and he said "when I have a homosexual feeling it tells me that I'm not taking care of

myself.” And it’s exactly true for the alcoholic. Some kind of stress or tension or an emotional issue is not being addressed and the old tendency is to get gratification from homosexual fantasies.

**Question 12:** [...] Mr. Smith, has your view of Jesus changed in this transformation?

**Alan Smith:** Absolutely, before I used to look at Jesus as a man who expected so much and who was there to point out my weaknesses and I’ve been able to see Jesus as a very very loving forgiving and accepting man and of course, God. He has freed me of so much guilt. Men with this problem are very very embarrassed that they have the problem they even think that a *feeling* is sinful. Now, feelings are neither right nor wrong it’s what you do with them. A temptation is not a sin, it’s whether you carry it out. So yes indeed, I’ve been set free in my opinion.

**Question 13:** Alan, do you still feel like you have “feminite” tendencies or has that disappeared with the process?

**Alan Smith:** Sometimes I’m self-conscious and other men in this therapy are also. I had a man ask me if I thought he sounded or looked feminine. I said no not at all and I said, what about me? (*laughter*) In other words there are periods where I’m very self-conscious, where I’m afraid because I don’t ever want to regress back to that, you know? I am a man, I want to feel like a man.

**Host:** The doubt is still there, isn’t it?

**Alan Smith:** There’s no question

**Dr. Nikolosi:** But again if he finds the right woman that will amplify his masculinity. You see, a man can affirm masculinity and deepen the identification but if he meets the right woman who will not undermine his efforts, who will not try to diminish his masculinity it’ll be the amplification and, really, completion of his masculinity.

**Question 14:** [...] I have a 16 year old daughter who hears all this about the genetic tendencies of people who are homosexuals because of genetic reasons she buys this. She comes home and she tells me about bisexual girls that she’s talked to and this kind of thing and I’m sitting here storing up all kinds of information and thinking about you know what I can say to her, how I can discuss it with her and that kind of thing. Do you have any suggestions?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** My concern would be why is she so interested in this subject? And why is she gathering data to justify homosexuality or lesbianism? I would stay away from the politics and the intellectual debate. I mean I would handle it but that’s not where the focus should be. If you can try to get your daughter to talk about her feelings. Probably she’s wondering about her own sexual orientation and I think that if you are close to her and get her to express these anxieties and be reassuring of her and keep that emotional connection because now we’re talking about the mother/daughter situation here. And try to ... don’t get caught up in the intellectual debate, because that’s not where it’s at, where it’s at is really the emotional connection with her and try to get her to verbalize her doubts about herself and let her understand that a lot of those feelings are normal.

**Host:** Joe, many heterosexual males and females have doubts about their sexuality and fear in that area.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** And it needs to be said, young people are greatly relieved when they realize they’re not the only ones in the world who have these doubts and anxieties but that it’s a normal, natural set of questions but that at this point in their life they can chose what direction they want to go in.

**Host:** I think Freud even described that early adolescent period as a homosexual period but in fact it’s just a time when the object of sexual interest is just not yet fixed ... is just coming into understanding.

**Dr. Nikolosi:** And the challenges of getting out there and meeting a girl and asking her for a date ... it's so much easier to say "Okay, I'm gay! I don't have to deal with this entire issue!" for some certain individuals.

**Hosts:** If, as Alan said, many homosexuals are extremely dissatisfied with their lifestyle, how prevalent is suicide in the homosexual community?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** There are a number of studies that show that suicide is higher in the gay community than in the heterosexual community. But gays will use that statistical fact ...

**Host:** to say they've been oppressed ...

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Absolutely! In other words that homophobic society has driven them to the point of suicide when in fact, and what Alan has been saying today really supports that, that if there is a higher rate of suicide it's not because they are living in a homophobic society but because they are dealing not with just a sexual problem but with an identity problem. They came from a family background where their masculinity was not reinforced, their individuality, their sense of personal strength. Lots of deep identity issues are at the root of homosexuality and so you're gonna get more of this despair.

**Question 16:** [...] Mr. Smith, do you still stay in contact with any homosexuals and have you tried to minister them or kind of tell them about your change and if they can change as well?

**Alan Smith:** Yes, I make every effort in fact in the community where I live there are men who are clients of Dr. Nikolosi and you know those of us who have had this problem were deprived of affection and many of these men will call me and we'll maybe go out for dinner and after they'll say something like "you know, I just need a hug. I just need to know that somebody cares about me". And I'll do that and there's nothing sexual about it. I would like to say that our culture discourages normal affection between men, but I've told Dr. Nikolosi countless times, this was all I was looking for. All I was looking for was a hug. Another male to say "yes, you are as good as you are and I care about you and I want to help you". So myself I always make an effort, always to help any of Dr. Nikolosi's clients or other men to progress.

**Host:** Joe, you put them in touch with each other?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Yes, I do. I think it's an important part of the therapy. If they're interested to get together, we have group therapy ... I feel that they are living in this culture that says you can't change, a culture that doesn't respect change, so they need to be reinforced and supported by each other.

**Question 17:** Exactly how important are Christian organizations and movements like *Promise Keepers* in light of everything you said to try to give an alternative to men who are struggling with homosexual desires to ensure that they can have good Christian male bonding?

**Dr. Nikolosi:** Right. If the client is Christian then I would love to plug him into any kind of men's Christian organization, and I think *Promise Keepers* is one of them. Any organization which would affirm their Christian pursuits and their Christian value system and also have that masculine dimension. Very very important. It's real medicine for men in this therapy.

**Host:** I saw that up close in Boulder, Colorado and there was a very healthy thing going on there between men in their masculinity expressing their brotherhood and their fellowship for each other. That was a wonderful thing.

**Alan:** I just wanted to say that some Christians will try to help men with this problem and sometimes the man will say something like, "Do you want to go to a weight room and workout? Or would you like to play tennis?" And the homosexual man will say, "No, no. You know all those men there, I might get tempted". What the other person trying to help them should do is insist that they go. Dr. Nikolosi doesn't like to

hear "No I'm afraid. You know, I might be tempted". He wants to immerse you in that environment where there are other men. Okay, the first time you go you may really feel out of control, you may feel like you really do have this problem, but after time you will begin to feel just like those men. So that if you are a Christian man and you are trying to help a man with this problem, be demanding don't allow him to weasel his way out and remain where he is.

**Host:** What you really want to do is expose him to what masculinity is really all about ...

**Dr. Nikolosi:** And take the mystique away. And when you take the mystique away the erotic attraction diminishes.

**Host wrap up:** Well that is all we have time for today on *Focus on the Family*. We've come down to the end of three days of conversation on this very timely sensitive interesting worrisome conversation that we've called "Hope for the Homosexual". I'm Mike Trout our host is author and psychologist Dr. James Dobson. Our two specialists were Dr. Joseph Nikolosi who heads up an organization called NARTH and Alan Smith, a patient of Dr. Nikolosi's who has asked to remain anonymous so we have given him that pseudonym [*host lists various books, tapes, resources, etc. that audience can order to help those who want to get out of homosexuality. Also information on the upcoming "Love Won Out" conference*].

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**APPENDIX B**  
**TO CBSC DECISION 99/00-0724**  
***CFYI-AM re Focus on the Family***

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**I. The Complaint**

The complainant sent the following letter dated July 18, 2000 to the CRTC, which was then forwarded to the CBSC in due course:

Dear Secretary-General,

This letter is an official complaint against a radio station in Toronto that promotes itself as TALK 640, on the AM dial.

On Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup> from approximately 11:20 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. I tuned into the aforementioned radio station. The program that was being aired is a 'paid program' called Focus on the Family. This particular night was the third and final installment of a broadcast entitled Hope for the Homosexual. I do not know when the previous two episodes aired.

Although I was only tuned into this broadcast for the final ten minutes, the hosts of the broadcast referred to homosexuality as a "problem".

I found this broadcast to be extremely offensive, prejudicial, and bigoted in their characterization of gays and lesbians. Contrary to their stereotypical views homosexuality is not the problem: homophobia is.

The host of this program was also selling copies of this three part broadcast from their base in Colorado.

I believe that this program is propaganda and distribution of hate material. I hereby request a full review and investigation of the entire three part broadcast.

I look forward to your earliest reply.

**II. The Broadcaster's Response**



On August 8, 2000, the broadcaster sent the following response:

We have received your complaint to the CBSC dated July 18, 2000, which was forwarded to us for response on July 25, 2000.

Your complaint deals with the Focus on the Family program of July 7, 2000, running on TALK640. Specifically, you refer to a time period between 11:20 – 11:30 pm. We have reviewed the tape for this time period and noted that this is not Focus on the Family, but rather another program “People Helping People”. Further review of the programming tape of that evening has revealed that Focus on the Family actually ran at approximately 10:15 –10:30 pm.

You are correct in that this is paid programming and that this was part of a series dealing with homosexuality. It is our opinion that this programming presented a discussion about homosexuality. Dr. Dobson, who hosted the program interviewed homosexuals who had, in their opinion, converted to being heterosexuals. The program centred on the various possible reasons that determine whether someone is either heterosexual or homosexual.

It is our opinion that the broadcast was sensitive and non-confrontational. I do not believe that your comments that the broadcasts were extremely offensive, prejudicial and bigoted are true.

As you are probably aware, TALK640 is a talk, news-based, information station. Part of our local programming includes discussion amongst our announcers and listeners on many topical and controversial issues. We believe we do a very good job of providing balanced opportunity to present all sides of an issue, which will allow our audience to make up their own minds on the matters under discussion.

We regret that you were offended by these comments and we hope that you continue to listen to TALK640.

### **III. Additional Correspondence**

The complainant was unsatisfied with the broadcaster’s response and consequently, on August 17, 2000, requested that the matter be sent for adjudication.

