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"IN A TIME OF UNIVERSAL DECEIT, TELLING THE TRUTH IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT" – GEORGE ORWELL

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To the public of South Africa:

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce and launch a newly formed Christian human rights organization, *Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy* (VOTVA). Led by the Holy Spirit, VOTVA was established in line with Proverbs 31: 8: *"Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless"* (Today's English Version). The **Vision** is that Former Homosexuals (or ex-gays) and other sexual minority groups acting within Biblical values will express themselves freely and without fear. This will be achieved by empowering ex-gays and protecting, defending and promoting their rights and freedoms at social, political, theological and legal levels. Over the past few years, the politically correct, but scientifically unfounded, narrative has been created that one is born gay and cannot change. As a result, ex-gays' voices are numb and their existence dismissed as lying. This untenable situation led to the establishment of *Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy*. It gives ex-gays a voice again. It enables us to have the prospect that we can live our values and beliefs freely and without fear. This voice changes the whole gay debate, because it is proof that change is possible. Our numbers are growing daily, so we welcome all ex-gays to join the organization.

It is important to note that the *South African Bill of Rights* is not only valid for gays. All sexual minority groups are equal rights bearers. People of all sexual orientations are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and have the right to exercise their rights and freedoms. In principle, people of all sexual orientations are entitled to equal protection of the law, without discrimination. *Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy* therefore emphasizes that none of the human rights can be regarded as specific to, or unique to, one group of people, while others are excluded /denied. The human dignity, rights and freedoms of all sexual minority groups must be dealt with consistently - which is not the case at present.

Furthermore, we want to highlight an important dilemma: the current state of affairs brings the public - and especially the church - to a major issue. There will have to be rethinking of the uncritical acceptance of e.g. an unrepentant and thus unconverted homosexual person, and the rejection of an unrepentant and thus unconverted homosexual pedophile. On what reasonable grounds can the latter be discriminated against on the basis of his or her sexual orientation, by not granting him/her, in his diversity as a marginalized person, the same rights and freedoms for which the gay rights activists strive? The implication is that the same *love is love* principle will have to apply to a homosexual pedophile. The same value of *don't judge* will have to be applied. The same interpretation of the *love commandment* will have to be made, and the same Bible interpretation will have to be applied to make all sexual orientations not to be sin. We create a very thorny situation. This involuntarily brings the concept of *Gay Christian* into focus, since a 'gay pedophile' can then be just as Christian as a 'gay teleophile' (a person attracted to an adult). If this is true, then the gay pedophile must also be able to be included in the church, enjoy the sacraments, hold office, and study and be ordained as a minister. It is indeed a self-made crisis for both the church and society at large. By accepting one, you are by implication forced to accept the other as well.

Directors: Prof Dr J Bosman PhD (NWU); JL Engelbrecht BA, LLB (RAU) A A ARB; EH Kimme BSc IT (Hons) (UFS); A Bekker BA (UP)

"Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless"

Proverbs: 31:8

That's why an important sexual minority group like ex-gays' voices should be taken into account in the gay debate. From experience we can make it clear that "to be freed" places the emphasis in the right place, namely the biblical distinction between sexual purity and impurity. That's what we recommend and it will certainly help to find a solution to the current dilemma, as highlighted above.

As is the case with any other sexual orientation, identifying as an Ex-gay is an act of such a person's freedom of choice, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. It is about the person's freedom to choose his beliefs and convictions, and more so the freedom to change, which is integral to a constitutional democracy that endorses diversity, freedom and self-determination.

Scientific findings indicate that sexual orientation is not unchangeable and predetermined, as the general politically correct view would like it to be. Ex-gays' personal testimonies confirm these findings (see, for example, my story at the end of this letter on p. 3). Our very existence contradicts the claim that orientation is unchangeable. That is why we are marginalized in the current environment and often treated with intolerance, hatred and contempt. Attempts are being made to prevent ex-gays from highlighting homosexuality as a sin, and is something a person must repent of. In this way, our religious freedom and freedom of speech are infringed. *Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy* takes a strong stance against this. We are the ones who speak from experience, and that is why we need to be heard - for the benefit of the public.

It is unfortunate and ironic that the state of affairs is fueled by the same gay rights groups and individuals who demand self-acceptance and respect for their same-sex lifestyle and marriage. Those who were oppressed now became the oppressors - even of those who were like them. Tolerance, respect and dignity are supposed to be a two-way street. Asking for tolerance by one group can never justify the intolerance of another group. A quote from Nelson Mandela is appropriate here:

"To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy is here to stay. We clearly see the danger to the public, including the church, if our warnings and concerns are not heeded. Social structures will fall apart if we allow political correctness to become the absolute standard. As ex-gays, we share the same stories - stories that bring hope to the country! I trust that this writing will promote sober thinking with an open mind among all of us.

Sincerely,

André Bekker

Founder of Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy

My Story

I, grew up in a home where my parents were devoted Christians who served the Lord whole heartedly. To the best of their ability they endeavoured to bring myself and my siblings up in the ways of the Lord. While this was the case, at a young age I noticed that I have an extraordinary interest in persons of the same sex. Even in my fantasies the persons I was involved with were younger boys. When I was about 12 years old, I befriended my younger brother's friends. He is three and a half years younger than I am. It did not take long for these friendships to have sexual undertones. Before long it started to develop into more than just feelings and desires. Although no one ever in any way hinted to me that what I involved myself with, was unnatural and wrong, I did know deep within me, to feel sexually attracted to a person of the same sex was wrong and unnatural.

As I got older I observed that other boys my age started feeling attracted to girls, but my attractions got stronger for boys. Big was my dismay when I started realizing that my orientation is to younger boys. I thought it would change by the time I left school just to find that I experience an aversion to older guys. The older they were the more aversion I felt. The age group I felt oriented too, has stagnated between the ages of 10 to 20. However, the older guys had to appear young and innocent.

It would be many years later that I have learned that to be attracted to a person of the same gender was a homosexual sexual gender orientation. I also learned that the gendered person to whom I was attracted to, had an age and, that it was called a sexual age orientation. This is called a chronophilia, a term coined by Money to refer to variations in sexual age interests. I learned that the male persons I was attracted to, could be divided in age categories with names attached to each of these categories. Because my sexual age orientation could be to guys as young as 10 years old (prepubescent children), I fitted into the category of a pedophile. But I could also have been classified as a hebephile, because my orientation was also to pubescent boys between the ages of 11 to 14. Furthermore, I could also be classified as an ephebophile, having been attracted to postpubescent guys who are not yet sexually mature, between the ages of 15 to 20.

If ever there was a person that could have been referred to as a marginal figure, it was me. It did not take me long to discover that homosexuality places a person on the fringe of society. Even more so if you have a sexual age orientation to young boys and teens. I discovered that most people having a young sexual age orientation, would never publicly admit their sexual age orientation. It was much safer to hide behind their sexual gender orientation.

God however, caused a turning point in my life, and I have all reason to believe it was because of the prayers of my mother. It was 10 September 2001 and I was 34 years of age, working as a skills trainer at a children's home. I never worked nightshift but because of a staff shortage I was requested to work nightshift that particular night. I finished my shift the next morning and as I got home I received a phone call from the children home's principal. He informed me that he wishes to pay me a visit and asked if he can come over. I agreed and on his arrival he informed me that one of the children complained that I have sexually molested him while I was on night duty. I was given notice that I am suspended while the matter is under investigation.

I was suspended for six weeks, when one day I was ordered to the principal's office, having been informed that the matter will be handed over to the police. I experienced in that moment my worst nightmare to come true. I always feared that I will one day have to face the law.

Having arrived at the principal's office I waited for two hours before the detective came from the principal's office and introduced himself to me. He then continued by telling me that the boy has confessed to them that he has lied and that I have never sexually molested him. I felt relieved and at the same time grateful because I

saw this event as a wakeup call for me to sort out my life, which at that stage was in shambles without purpose and no joy.

I looked for help in South Africa, but could not find any. Eventually, I contacted organizations in America of which one responded. It started an initial 4 year journey, receiving psychotherapeutic help while I also turned to God, were born again and through my relationship with Him experienced the Holy Spirit's powerful transforming, mind renewing power working in me, and things started to change.

Progressively shifts started to take place in my mind, emotional pain got healed and guilt and shame were dealt with. Big shifts took place in my identity while I found my identity more and more in Christ. In 2004 I met my wife and this year we are married for 15 years.

What is extraordinary is that my wife was a widow with two teenage boys. In all sincerity I asked God if He knew what He is doing to let me marry a woman with two boys. I asked God if He has forgotten from where I am coming from. It was in this that God showed Himself mighty. God's work in my life was such that not only did my exclusive gender homosexual orientation changed to where I started experiencing heterosexual attractions towards my wife, but also my exclusive sexual age orientation to young boys/teens changed to an adult woman. It meant so much to me that God have entrusted me with my two sons.

Activists, through science, psychology and psychiatry tries to convince the world that it is impossible to change sexual gender orientation and sexual age orientation, arguing that a person is born that way, but God, above all doubt proofed them wrong.

I am still in the furnace of my Master, to be formed daily more and more in the likeness of His image. Of this I am convinced: "When I look back and wonder how I ever made it this far, you would realize it is not that I have been clever, but God has been wise. Not that I have been strong, but God has been mighty. Not that I have been consistent, but God has been faithful. I call it GOD'S AMAZING GRACE!"