

"Ex-gay" lies and God's love

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[http://www.advocate.com/exclusive\\_detail\\_ektid37175.asp](http://www.advocate.com/exclusive_detail_ektid37175.asp)

Like Kyle Rice ("I hate being gay"), this author grew up fundamentalist and gay. As a monitor of "ex-gay" ministries, he knows their lies. As a Christian, he knows God's acceptance.

By Timothy Kincaid

It saddened me to read in The Advocate the article penned by Kyle Rice, the young man who hates being gay. Not only because he is so unhappy, but because it reminded me of where I came from.

Like Kyle, I was raised conservative Christian. My father was, and still is, the pastor of a Pentecostal church. And like Kyle, I did not want to be gay.

I'm not going to try and change Kyle's mind about his faith. Nor am I going to try and convince him to embrace his sexual orientation or discourage his political activism. But I do want to caution Kyle about his decision to participate in an "ex-gay" ministry. I write at a Web site that is dedicated to monitoring these ministries and have become familiar with the methods, claims, and motivations of their movement. It is from this experience that I offer the following advice to Kyle:

Kyle, when you have been told that you can "change," they do not mean that you will change your attractions. The change spoken about is only a change in how you identify yourself. You will be encouraged to view yourself no longer as gay but as a nongay person who suffers from same-sex attractions.

The national leaders of the "ex-gay" movement don't often admit it to the press, but when asked they will acknowledge that they are still attracted to the same sex. Those few men who are married are not attracted to women in general but have developed an attraction to one specific woman, their wife. One leader recently told a workshop that he was unable to consummate his marriage during the first nine months.

Although a few of the most visible "ex-gays" are married, for the vast majority "change" means living a life of celibacy. This may at first seem acceptable to you. But remember, Kyle, this is not only giving up sex; it also means you will never hold hands, kiss, or cuddle in front of a fire.

And should you decide that you like a woman "enough" to marry her, please know that not only will you be giving her only a portion of yourself but you are interfering with her

ability to meet a man who can love her the way she deserves to be loved. Also, nearly all "ex-gay" marriages end in divorce-including the unions of many who were at one time leaders in the movement and held up as testimony.

I don't know if it is possible to change one's orientation. But I do know that the overwhelming majority of people who go through these ministries never succeed in doing so. I know people who have tried for decades without success, and I don't know any who entered an "ex-gay" program as fully homosexual and are now fully heterosexual. If this happens at all, it is very rare, and you should understand that it's really very unlikely that it will happen to you.

And finally, Kyle, the "ex-gay" ministries will tell you things that are not true. Perhaps they don't mean to lie, but the things you will be told about "the homosexual lifestyle" are not at all reflective of the lives that gay people lead.

You may be told that gays were all molested, will die by age 42, have hundreds of sex partners, don't establish lifelong relationships, or even that gays are not capable of love to the depth that straight people experience. Perhaps you will be told that gay people wish to destroy marriage, hate Christians, want to overthrow society, or seek to molest children. None of this is true. I think you know better, Kyle, but it can be very persuasive when all the people around you repeat these things.

But the most damaging and difficult lie of all is that you cannot be gay and Christian. I don't say that because I think Christians should never try to change their orientation.

I say that because the vast majority of people who do try will never experience such a change.

And when they finally give up their long, futile struggle, they often believe that this means they must also abandon their faith. I pray that when you discover you have not become straight you will not then believe that you must give up your relationship with God.

I know that you have a certain understanding of Scripture that tells you homosexuality is incompatible with God. But God also instructs us (in the King James translation) to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This means that we cannot rely solely on what our church has told us, or even on our understanding of the Bible, but we must listen to others and seek the truth from what different scholars have to say. And while some biblical scholars agree with the position your church teaches, others do not. I encourage you to read for yourself what they have to say.

My final advice to you, Kyle, is this: However it was that you came to be gay, God made you this way. And whatever you feel about what God wants you to do about it, we do know one thing: God doesn't want you to hate yourself. Nor does he want you to hate any part of the way he created you.

I wish Kyle happiness and peace. I hope he finds a way to reconcile his attractions with his faith. But most of all, I will pray that he learns to love himself.

I invite others of you who are people of faith to do the same.

Kincaid is a gay Christian and an author whose work can be found at [exgaywatch.com](http://exgaywatch.com), the largest and most comprehensive Web site dedicated to monitoring and commenting on the "ex-gay" movement. He can be reached at [timothydkinla@yahoo.com](mailto:timothydkinla@yahoo.com).