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

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Aan die publiek van Suid-Afrika:

Graag maak ek van die geleentheid gebruik om 'n pas-gestigte Christelike menseregte organisasie, *Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy* (VOTVA), aan u bekend te stel en ook van stapel te stuur. Gelei deur die Heilige Gees, is VOTVA in lyn met Spreuke 31:8 in die lewe geroep: *"Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless"* (Today's English Version). Die **Visie** is dat *Voormalige Homoseksuele persone* (of ex-gays) en ander seksuele minderheidsgroepe wat binne Bybelse waardes optree, hulleself vry en sonder vrees sal uitdruk. Dit sal bereik word deur ex-gays te bemagtig en hulle regte en vryhede te beskerm, te verdedig en te bevorder op sosiale, politieke, teologiese en regsvlakke. Die afgelope paar jaar is die politiek-korrekte, maar wetenskaplik ongegronde, narratiewe geskep dat 'n mens gay gebore word en nie kan verander nie. Dit het daartoe gelei dat ex-gays se stemme verdoof is en dat hulle bestaan as leuenagtig afgemaak word. Dié onhoudbare situasie het daartoe aanleiding gegee dat *Voice of the Voiceless* gestig is. Dit verleen aan ex-gays weer 'n stem. Dit stel ons in staat om die vooruitsig te hê dat ons ons waardes en geloofsoortuigings vry en sonder vrees kan uitleef. Hierdie stem verander die hele gay-debat, want dit is die bewys dat verandering moontlik is. Ons getalle groei daaglik, so ons verwelkom alle ex-gays om by die organisasie aan te sluit.

Dit is belangrik om daarop ag te slaan dat die *Suid-Afrikaanse Handves van Menseregte* nie net vir gays geldig is nie. Alle seksuele minderheidsgroepe is gelykwaardige regtedraers. Mense van alle seksuele oriëntasies word vry en gelyk in waardigheid en regte gebore, en het die reg om hulle regte en vryhede uit te leef. In beginsel is mense van alle seksuele oriëntasies geregtig op die gelyke beskerming van die reg, sonder diskriminasie. *Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy* beklemtoon daarom dat geeneen van die menseregte gereken kan word as net spesifiek vir, of uniek aan, een groep mense, terwyl ander uitgesluit/miskien word nie. Daar moet konsekwent omgegaan word met die menswaardigheid, regte en vryhede van alle seksuele minderheidsgroepe – wat tans nie die geval is nie.

Voorts wil ons 'n belangrike dilemma uitlig: die huidige toedrag van sake bring die publiek – en veral die kerk – voor 'n groot vraagstuk te staan. Daar sal herbesin moet word oor die gemoedelike aanvaarding van bv. 'n onberouvolle en dus onbekeerde homoseksuele persoon, en die afwys van 'n onberouvolle en dus onbekeerde homoseksuele pedofiel. Op watter redelike gronde kan daar teen laasgenoemde gediskrimineer word op grond van sy seksuele oriëntasie, deur nie aan hom/haar, in sy diversiteit as 'n randfiguur, dieselfde regte en vryhede toe te staan, waarvoor die gay-regte aktiviste hulle beywer nie? Die implikasie is dat dieselfde *liefde is liefde* beginsel bv. vir 'n homoseksuele pedofiel sal moet geld. Dieselfde waarde van *moet nie oordeel nie* sal moet toegepas word. Dieselfde interpretasie van die *liefdesgebod* sal moet gemaak word, en dieselfde Bybel-interpretasie sal moet toegepas word om alle seksuele oriëntasies te 'ontsondig'. Ons skep 'n baie netelige situasie. Dit bring onwillekeurig die begrip *Gay Christen* in fokus, aangesien 'n 'gay pedofiel' dan net so 'n Christen kan wees soos 'n 'gay teleiofiel' ('n persoon wat aangetrokke is tot 'n volwassene). Indien dit waar is, moet die gay pedofiel ook as 'n lidmaat in die kerk opgeneem kan word, die sakramente kan geniet, ampte kan beklee en as

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

***Proverbs: 31:8***

predikant kan studeer en gelegitimeer word. Dis inderdaad 'n selfgemaakte krisis vir beide die kerk en die samelewing in die breë. Deur die een goed te keer word jy by implikasie gedwing om die ander ook goed te keer.

Dis hoekom 'n belangrike seksuele minderheidsgroep soos ex-gays se stemme in berekening gebring moet word in die gay-debat. Uit ervaring kan ons dit duidelik stel dat 'vrywording' die klem op die regte plek plaas, naamlik die Bybelse onderskeid tussen seksuele reinheid en onreinheid. Dís wat ons aanbeveel en dit sal beslis help om 'n oplossing te vind vir die huidige dilemma, soos hierbo uitgelig.

Soos dit die geval is met enige ander seksuele oriëntasie, is om te identifiseer as 'n *Ex-gay* 'n daad van so 'n persoon se vryheid van keuse, vryheid van uitdrukking en sy vryheid van assosiasie. Dit gaan oor die persoon se vryheid om sy geloof en oortuigings te kies, en meer so die vryheid om te kan verander, wat integraal is aan 'n konstitusionele demokrasie wat diversiteit, vryheid en self-beskikking onderskryf.

Wetenskaplike bevindings dui daarop dat seksuele oriëntasie nie onveranderbaar en vooraf-bepaal is nie, soos die algemene politieke-korrekte opvatting dit wil hê nie. Die persoonlike getuienisse van ex-gays bevestig hierdie bevindings (sien as voorbeeld my verhaal wat direk na die brief op bl. 3 volg). Ons blote bestaan weerspreek die aanspraak dat oriëntasie onveranderbaar is. Daarom word ons in die huidige milieu gemarginaliseer en dikwels met onverdraagsaamheid, haat en minagting behandel. Pogings word aangewend om te verhinder dat ex-gays homoseksualiteit as sonde uitlig, en iets is waarvan 'n persoon hom/haarself moet bekeer. So word daar inbreuk gemaak op ons godsdienstvryheid en vryheid van spraak. *Voice of the Voiceless* neem 'n **standpunt** ten sterkste hierteen in. Ons is dié wat uit ondervinding praat, en daarom moet ons gehoor word – ten bate van die publiek.

Dis bejammerenswaardig en ironies dat die stand van sake juis aangevuur word deur dieselfde gay-regte groepe en individue wat self aanvaarding en respek eis vir hulle selfdegeslag-leefstyl en -huwelike. Die wat onderdruk was, het nou die onderdrukkers geword – selfs van dié wat soos hulle was. Verdraagsaamheid, respek en waardigheid is veronderstel om 'n tweerigting straat te wees. Die vra vir verdraagsaamheid deur een groep kan nooit die onverdraagsaamheid van 'n ander groep regverdig nie. 'n Aanhaling van Nelson Mandela is hier gepas:

*“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* is hier om te bly. Ons sien duidelik die gevaar in vir die publiek, wat die kerk insluit, as daar nie op ons waarskuwings en besorgdhede ag geslaan word nie. Sosiale strukture sal uitmekaar val as ons toelaat dat politieke-korrektheid die absolute standaard word. As ex-gays deel ons dieselfde stories – stories wat hoop bring vir die land! Ek vertrou dat hierdie skrywe nugtere denke met 'n oop gemoed onder ons almal sal bevorder.

Hartlike groete,

André Bekker

***Stigter van Voice of the Voiceless Advocacy***

## My Story

I, André Bekker, 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. Further more, I could also be classified as a 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 too 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 complaint 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 principals office, having been informed that the matter will be handed over too 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 wake up 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!"