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### Our Mission

We pledge to create just and safe environments within the Catholic Church and society in which the dignity and integrity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons and their families are recognized and affirmed.

### Our Contact Information

Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities  
2930 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55407-1420  
**Phone:** 612-201-4534  
**Website:** www.cpcsm.org  
**E-mail:** cpcsmmail@gmail.com

## Here Comes Everybody!



### The Second Annual Prayer Breakfast for Hope and Justice

CPCSM is honored to be leading the coalition of Catholic organizations that is hosting the Second Annual Prayer Breakfast for Hope and Justice. This year’s breakfast, entitled, *Here Comes Everybody: Democratizing Catholicism in Challenging Times*, will feature award-winning journalist and author Robert McClory. It will take place on the morning of Saturday, May 3, at the Metropolitan Ballroom in Golden Valley. (For more information, see newsletter insert or the CPCSM website: www.cpcsm.org.)

McClory’s life in the church has equipped him with great knowledge and insight on how it works, while his love of justice leads him to critique many of its inner workings. He is well known and respected for his writings on church history – especially as it relates to the role of the laity.

Here Comes Everybody continues on page 2.

## About CPCSM

Founded in 1980, the Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (CPCSM), is a non-profit (501(c)(3)), grassroots, and independent coalition. CPCSM is dedicated to promoting ministry to, with, and on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons and their families and friends – primarily those of a Catholic background.

An integral part of CPCSM's work is the belief that members of sexual minorities, by virtue of their struggle to maintain a sense of personal integrity and authenticity, have unique gifts to offer the Church and society. We function with the understanding that one's sexuality can and must be affirmed as a gift and as an essential element to be integrated holistically into one's faith life.

Through justice-making and educational initiatives, CPCSM seeks to awaken the hearts and attitudes of the public regarding not only the prejudice, discrimination, and violence faced by LGBT persons, but also the gifts these same people bring to both the Catholic community and society.

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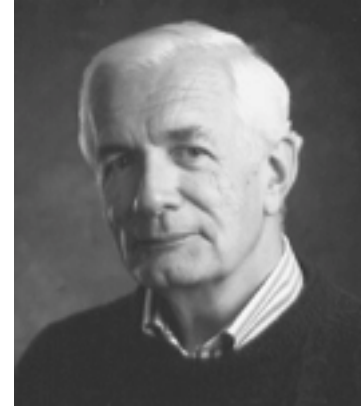
**Rob Peick**

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## Here Comes Everybody

(continued from page 1)

Many assume that the Catholic Church has always functioned with a top-down leadership model. Yet, as McClory notes in his latest book, *As It Was In the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church*, there have been long periods where lay people were consulted and had strong, leading voices. He also believes that a decentralized and democratized church is just around the corner – is, in fact, inevitable.



Robert McClory

On May 3, McClory will join with attendees at the Second Annual Prayer Breakfast for Hope and Justice in discussing how we can best embody, individually and communally, this democratization of our church.

Copies of *As It Was in the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church* will be available for purchase at this event.

**For more information about the Prayer Breakfast, including a registration form, see insert.**

**For an interview with Robert McClory, turn to page 9.**

## The Progressive Catholic Voice

**An independent and grassroots forum for reflection, dialogue, and the exchange of ideas within the Catholic community of Minnesota and beyond.**

[www.progressivecatholicvoice.org](http://www.progressivecatholicvoice.org)

# The “Underground Church”

*A four year-long study by Regis College professor Kathleen Kautzer reveals new insights into the “underground church” movement – a movement embodied by Eucharistic communities and parishes that have intentionally moved beyond the institutional structures of Rome so as to create and sustain Catholic communities of vibrancy and authenticity. Michael Bayly reports.*

In February, the LGBT-friendly Catholic church that I attend in South Minneapolis, St. Stephen’s, was told by the chancery of the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis that its liturgies must conform to the rubrics of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM).

This was a particularly difficult directive for the community that gathers each week for the 9:00 a.m. Sunday liturgy as, for the past 40 years, it has developed this liturgy in ways that reflect the presence of the Spirit as discerned in the unique gifts and needs of its members and their shared life together. These liturgical developments have been a very intentional and faith-filled embodiment of the Second Vatican Council’s call for “full and active participation” of the laity in “liturgical celebrations” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1963). Yet in one fell swoop, this embodiment – along with the Spirit that nurtured and inspired it – was discounted by the chancery by its demand that it be abandoned for the rubrics of GIRM.

After much prayer and conversation, the members of the “9:00 o’clock community” decided they could not abandon the style of worship that they have prayerfully discerned and developed over the past 40 years. A new worshiping space was secured a few blocks away at Park House (2120 Park Ave.), and on Sunday, March 2, close to 200 people walked from St. Stephen’s to this new location. Most of those who made the trek are now committed to worshiping at Park House as members of the parish of St. Stephen’s. I’m honored and happy to be worshiping with them.

## **An issue ecclesiological in nature**

According to Catholic theologian and author Richard McBrien, those ultimately responsible for demanding the type of Spirit-denying conformity that the community of St. Stephen’s has recently experienced, “comprise a small but determined group within the Vatican who have never accepted the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI.”

The resistance to these reforms by this small but powerful clique (and to subsequent Spirit-led innovations within Catholic parishes and communities) is, insists McBrien, “at root, ecclesiological in nature.” What they oppose is the “de-clericalization of the liturgy” and that “full and active participation” of the laity mandated by Vatican II.

In the minds of those resistant to such participation, writes McBrien, “the Church is identical with the hierarchy and the priests who serve under the bishops. The laity, on the other hand, are simply the beneficiaries of the sacramental ministrations of the clergy, in a process ultimately controlled by the Vatican. The problem for the resisters is not so much that the Mass was put into the vernacular, but that the laity could now fully understand it and actively participate in it. . . . It is [the] underlying ecclesiology [of Vatican II] that is rejected, and not simply the changes in language and rituals. What the resisters oppose is the very idea that the Church is the whole People of God, laity included, rather than the hierarchy and clergy alone.”

## **Inclusive, welcoming, and participatory liturgies, and democratic governance**

The recent efforts of the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis to enforce strict liturgical conformity – along with its promoting of the pseudo-science of NARTH, the National Association for Research and Treatment of Homosexuality (see page 10), its forbidding of dialogue within the pages of *The Catholic Spirit*, the official archdiocesan newspaper (see page 14), and its banning of certain speakers from speaking on Catholic property (see page 7) – have left many experiencing feelings of deep frustration, sadness, loss, and anger. Such responses, coupled with McBrien’s observations regarding the rejection by many in the Catholic hierarchy of Vatican II ecclesiology, bring to mind Kathleen Kautzer’s comprehensive study of the “underground church” movement, and specifically this movement’s efforts to move beyond the institutional structures of Rome so as to create and sustain Catholic communities of vibrancy and authenticity.

The “Underground Church” continues on page 6.

# My Journey with a Prophet:

## *Part III of David McCaffrey's reflection on the life and ministry of CPCSM co-founder, Bill Kummer.*



Bill Kummer (at right, holding Skipper) and Archbishop John Roach in 1998.

To better prepare for the listening session that Bill had arranged with Archbishop John Roach and six members of the local LGBT community in May of 1980, Bill enlisted the help of his friend, Sister Jan Mathison, OSF, who was then the head staff person for the Archdiocesan Urban Affairs Commission. As part of her job, Jan had met with the archbishop on numerous occasions; and Bill asked her if she would do a role play with us, playing the role of the archbishop, so that we could rehearse our meeting with him. The exercise was helpful not only in easing our anxiety but also by serving as a stimulus for strategizing about how to best proceed in the requests that we would make of the archbishop and in our follow up to his anticipated response to us.

I recall the details of only two other events that took place on the days following the role play, both on the eve of the listening session. After a dinner we shared that warm spring night at the 24-hour Embers restaurant in the Minneapolis Uptown neighborhood, Bill and I walked a few blocks to the small park to the west of the restaurant, about a block before Lake of the Isles. There we sat down and continued our dinner conversation about the upcoming meeting, speculating on its outcome. I recall that after we were all talked out we held hands and began quietly to put our hopes and fears into the form of shared prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to watch over our group at the meeting and to inspire us and the archbishop to discuss issues and agree upon actions that would be of the greatest benefit to the local gay and lesbian Catholic community and their families.

The second event that I clearly recall from the eve of our meeting was a mysterious phone call that I received at my home shortly after returning from my dinner with Bill. The unexpected call was from a high school classmate that I had not heard from since the day I had graduated 15 years earlier. Very intoxicated, the caller said that he had finally gotten up the courage to call me after many years of considering doing so. After high school, he had gotten married and had fathered two children. However, he had repressed his homosexuality, with the help of alcohol, during and after high school. He had hoped that marriage and having children would help him keep his secret more deeply buried. Eventually, however, his marriage had failed and his wife had recently left him.

Having heard about my work with Dignity, my former classmate also added that he was too alienated from the Church to seek help from any priests, other pastoral professionals, or any groups associated with the Church. That night he was feeling especially depressed and even suicidal. Having worked a few years earlier as a suicide prevention counselor, I felt confident that my former classmate would be okay for that night. I urged him to call me back again when he was not intoxicated so that I could assist him in finding help. (He did reconnect with me a few more times but each time was intoxicated so that I could not be of help to him. Apparently, after he realized that I would not deal with him while he was drunk, he stopped calling me and I have never heard from him again.)

My Journey with a Prophet continues on page 5.

## My Journey with a Prophet (continued from page 4)

The next day, as I shared the story of that unexpected late night with the archbishop, I realized that my former classmate's call had spoken volumes about why our listening session and a pastoral outreach program to LGBT Catholics was so crucially needed. His life's journey was a tragic example that reflected many of the problems that had resulted back then – and continue today as much as ever – from the Church's failure to deal honestly and sensitivity with the needs and special gifts of its LGBT members.

My former classmate had borne witness to the tragedies that are frequently experienced by gay and lesbian Catholics and their families when they follow the unhealthy and misguided pastoral advice that the hierarchy has always recommended for its gay and lesbian members – either to ignore their needs completely and remain “chaste” (by which they mean celibate) or to attempt to “cure” their same-sex orientation by marrying and having children. As it turned out, my former schoolmate had, in effect, unwittingly become the inaugural participant in CPCSM's Needs Assessment Study that would result from our meeting with the archbishop and would provide the impetus for most of the group's work over the next 15 years.

The other apparently providential events leading up to the listening session involved the pre-meeting correspondence between Bill and Archbishop Roach. A number of days after the meeting had occurred, Bill needed to do a follow-up call to one of the archbishop's secretaries. During their chat, the secretary had made reference to the letter that Roach had written in response to Bill's letter listing the meeting's participants and agenda. When Bill expressed his surprise to the secretary that he had never received Roach's reply letter, the secretary recalled an event that provided a plausible explanation for the lost letter. On the day that the letter was to be mailed out from the chancery, a large box or bag of outgoing mail had been stolen from the foyer of the chancery building where it was placed every day for pick-up by a mail carrier. However, the secretary did have a copy of the lost letter and immediately made a duplicate of it and mailed it to Bill.

On receiving the copy of Roach's lost letter, Bill, who was usually quite unflappable, was quite shocked as he read it. In his original letter, Bill had indicated that the agenda would include about at least five requests that our group would like to make of Roach at the meeting. *One by one, in his reply, Roach had adamantly refused to even discuss any of our requests.* After absorbing Roach's reply, the six of us all agreed that had we received the original reply prior to the listening session, the group's mood would have been much less upbeat and hopeful. Also, we most likely would not have discussed all of the intended issues, which had resulted in the positive outcome from the meeting. Finally, we also all concurred that our not having seen Roach's reply before the session had probably accounted for the archbishop's angry red face as we had addressed, one by one, the very topics that he had refused to discuss.

As I recall, the listening session had been scheduled for 1:00 p.m. in the large conference room in the chancery building, which stood across Summit Ave. from the Cathedral. Bill and I met at noon at the front doors of the Cathedral. We then decided to visit the small chapels behind the rear of the edifice's main sanctuary, six of which are dedicated to the patron saints of the European ethnic groups that had settled the area around St. Paul. Besides St. Therese of Lisieux, who was Bill's favorite saint, I do not recall from which of the patron saints there we had sought intercession.

I do recall, though, that once again we joined hands and quietly prayed aloud for the success of the meeting and for God's blessings upon the local Catholic gay and lesbian community and upon their families. In effect, we were laying claim to our LGBT community's status as another minority group that was seeking acceptance and support from the arms of the Church – the same security that Bill had first received from the CSJ sisters, as one of the local Church's last orphans, later as a child in one of their grade schools, and finally among the Benedictine monks in St. Louis.

The three lesbians from our group met us at the front of the Cathedral about 40 minutes later. After a bit of chatting and engaging in some “gallows humor,” we proceeded across the street for the long awaited meeting. One of the archbishop's secretaries met us at the chancery door and directed us to the large conference room. She asked us to take our seats around the huge, well polished hard wood table. Soon after we had been seated, the archbishop entered the room, accompanied by Father Robert Carlson, then the vicar general of the archdiocese (now the bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan).

After quickly shaking everyone's hand in a perfunctory manner and introducing the group to Father Carlson, Roach asked that all be seated. Noting that Herb Hayek of our group had not yet gotten to the meeting, he quipped, “Father Hayek can catch up when he gets here.” Then, in his customary firm and direct manner, the archbishop firmly slapped his hand on the table and—in an apparent reference to his reply letter that we had not yet seen—said in his gruff voice, “It is my understanding that the purpose of this meeting will be to discuss only issues of morality.” Then, he asked us to proceed with our statements.

My Journey with a Prophet continues on page 14.

## The “Underground Church” (continued from page 3)

Kautzer is an associate professor of sociology at Regis College, a predominately all-women’s Catholic college founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Weston, MA. She teaches courses in peace studies, women’s and children’s issues, social movements, and spirituality. For the past four years, Kautzer has traveled the country studying the Catholic reform movement and, in particular, the emergence and growth of Eucharistic communities and parishes that operate outside Vatican control. Her study, soon to be released as a book entitled *The Underground Church*, drew on theories of nonviolence and social movements to interpret and evaluate the Catholic reform movement.

Last November, Kautzer spoke at the annual Call to Action conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As part of her presentation, entitled “The Underground Church: Nonviolent Alternatives to Vatican Empire,” Kautzer shared photos and descriptions of “Vatican II-styled communities marked by inclusive welcoming, participatory liturgies, and democratic governance.” She noted that “some are within, others outside the institutional structures of the Roman Catholic Church.” Many of the Catholics that comprise these “resistance communities” no longer find dialogue with the hierarchy constructive. Accordingly, they are proactively creating, discovering, and employing “a range of nonviolent strategies to preserve or create vibrant communities that fit their vision of a just Church.”

Kautzer defines the “underground church” as the movement to reform the Church structurally. The term encompasses a range of Vatican II-styled parishes and reform groups, from Voice of the Faithful to Call to Action.

Generally, all such parishes and groups are working for four basic reforms:

- 1) A formal role for laity in decision-making.
- 2) Fiscal transparency and accountability (an important issue, says Kautzer, given that a recent study found 85% of the dioceses looked into had serious problems of embezzlement).
- 3) An inclusive priesthood - one welcoming of married clergy, women, and gays.
- 4) A commitment to renewing and expanding the direction of Vatican II.

Kautzer chose the term “underground church” in part because it parallels Elisie Boulding’s concept of the “underside of history,” which Kautzer explains is the idea that “in any society, even if the dominant culture is oppressive and hierarchical, there is always an underside

where people try and practice cooperation and nonviolence.”

Although the scope of Kautzer’s four-year study was limited to the U.S., she notes that there are similar “underground church” movements underway and flourishing in other parts of the world. Perhaps the most well known of these is represented by the liturgical reforms being carried out by the Dutch Dominicans.

### **Above-ground communities**

Kautzer organized the communities she studied according to the different forms of non-violent resistance they embody. Many Vatican II-styled parishes, for instance, along with the reform group Voice of the Faithful, comprise the “lightest form” of non-violent resistance. These “above-ground communities” often employ the “insider tactics” of “protest and persuasion.” They attempt to work “within the system” and, in the case of Voice of the Faithful, avoid “controversial” issues such as female ordination.

### **Borderline communities**

“Borderline communities,” says Kautzer, are those engaged in “a little stronger form of non-violent resistance” than the “above-ground communities.” They sometimes engage in the “insider tactics” of protest and persuasion, but more often than not engage in the “outsider tactic” of non-cooperation. Some examples of borderline communities include:

- 1) Convents in which Catholic nuns perform their own liturgies (including Eucharist) and new types of rituals.
- 2) Eucharistic communities that are at least tolerated by the hierarchy and rely on “insider priests” (i.e., priests recognized by the Vatican) but engage in church reform work..
- 3) Vigiling Parishes that are resisting closure orders and conducting their own rituals (e.g., St. James the Great in Wellesley, MA, which is part of the Council of Vigiling Parishes).

### **The underground church**

The “underground church” is defined as groups, parishes, or networks of parishes that operate outside of Vatican approval or control, and work for church reform. They tend to employ the “outsider tactics” of non-violent intervention and the creation of parallel institutions. Examples of the underground church include:

The “Underground Church” continues on page 7.

## The “Underground Church” (continued from page 6)

- 1) Catholic reform organizations such as Corpus, Women’s Ordination Conference, Roman Catholic Womenpriests, Catholics for a Free Choice, and Dignity, which, unlike the others, says Kautzer, “has no choice but to operate as an underground church because of the Church’s punitive policies towards homosexuals.” (In most dioceses, including the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, Dignity is banned from meeting on church property.)
- 2) Eucharistic communities that are not approved by the Vatican, rely primarily on lay persons or “outsider” priests (i.e., priests who have married, resigned, or been defrocked), and engage in church reform work. For example: Community of God’s Love in Lowell, MA.
- 3) Parishes that are not recognized by the Vatican, but retain the “Catholic” label and engage in church reform work. For example: Spiritus Christi in Rochester, NY, and St. Stanislaus Kostka in St. Louis, MO.
- 4) Communions and/or networks of parishes that are non-Roman yet identify and are recognized as Catholic, and provide governance structure and support services for “underground” parishes. For example: the Old Catholic Church, the Reformed Catholic Church, the National Catholic Church, and the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. This last group has developed a constitution based on the Association of the Rights of Catholic in the Church ([www.arcc-catholic-rights.org](http://www.arcc-catholic-rights.org)). Among other things, this constitution expresses welcome to all “regardless of race, national origin, religious affiliation, gender, or sexual orientation,” and mandates that people within parishes vote on policy and elect their priests.

### Disadvantages and Advantages

Kautzer acknowledges that the underground church communities are labeled “schismatic” by the Vatican. Others dismiss the movement as being like a modern-day Protestant Reformation. “It is in a way,” says Kautzer, “but the difference is that people aren’t creating new denominations. They’re saying, We are Catholic, but we’re just going to do it without Vatican approval.”

There are, of course, some potential pitfalls – including the ongoing struggle for funding and membership, and the potential for cult-like and/or unqualified leadership. However, it’s not as if qualified leadership is guaranteed by reliance on the Vatican, notes Kautzer. In addition, the Vatican itself encourages cult-like organizations, for example, Opus Dei. Many of these organizations, says Kautzer, are documented in Gordon Urquhart’s book, *The Pope’s Armada: Unlocking the Secrets of Mysterious and Powerful New Sects in the Church*.

The “Underground Church” continues on page 12.

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## Banned!



**Above (from left):** Rev. James Pennington, Carol Curoe, her father Robert, and CPCSM executive coordinator Michael Bayly at the House of the Beloved Disciple, Monday, October 22, 2007.

Carol and Robert Curoe, co-authors of the book, *Are There Closets in Heaven? A Catholic Father and Lesbian Daughter Share Their Story*, were the keynote speakers at CPCSM’s Second Annual Bill Kummer Forum.

This event was originally scheduled to take place at St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church, but after the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis intervened and prohibited the Curoes from speaking on Catholic property, it was relocated to the recently established House of the Beloved Disciple, a center for progressive Catholics dedicated to “preserving Catholicism in the spirit of Jesus.”

Mark your calendar!

# CPCSM Annual Community Meeting

featuring transgender educator and author

*Vanessa Sheridan*



*“Living Lives of Principle”*

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Monday, June 23, 2008

St Martin’s Table Restaurant and Bookstore  
(2001 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis)

Join us as Vanessa shares her inspiring story and invites us to consider what it means to live a life that is rooted in principle as opposed to convenience.

Vanessa will also share her perspective on how we can align our lives with our deepest spiritual realities, avoid hypocrisy, and model our faith so that we live of integrity.

*Light refreshments will be served and a free-will offering requested.*

# A Democratic Catholic Church

**An Interview with Robert McClory, author of  
*As It Was In the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church***

**By Michael Bayly**

Robert McClory is an award-winning journalist and author. His latest book is *As It Was In the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church*. On Saturday, May 3, McClory will be the keynote speaker at the Second Annual Prayer Breakfast for Hope and Justice, entitled “Here Comes Everybody: Democratizing Catholicism in Challenging Times.”

Recently, *Rainbow Spirit* editor Michael Bayly interviewed Robert McClory via e-mail about Catholicism and democracy, his new book, and the leadership style of Archbishop John Nienstedt.

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**Michael Bayly:** In talking to folks about the topic of your upcoming presentation, “Democratizing Catholicism in Challenging Times,” I often get responses of raised eyebrows and bemused looks. People seem to have difficulty putting Catholicism and democracy together. However, in your latest book, *As It Was In the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church*, you document how lay participation is a way of *honoring* Catholic tradition, not a *denial* of this tradition. Yet given the “tradition” of a papacy modeled on a feudal monarchical system, just how democratic can the Catholic church hope to get?

**Robert McClory:** Instead of looking bemused, people should read the book. My whole point is that the church was never intended to be a top-down, monarchical, authoritarian institution. Jesus made it very clear in the gospels that he wanted a community that went contrary to the accepted organizational styles of this world. And it did for a time, but was gradually hijacked, and the 2,000-year history of the church is the struggle to recover the gospel style. Chapter 9 in the book makes a case for the church as a democracy. I argue that now in the 21st century we are in an unprecedented position for the recovery to begin.

**Michael Bayly:** What compelled you to write *As It Was In the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church*? How has it been received by critics and lay people?

**Robert McClory:** The very widespread misunderstanding I just mentioned. Recovery from the hijackers is the goal and the time is at hand. I’m mostly preaching to Call To Action and other “choir” groups, so the book’s been well received. Time will tell when a responsible critic or opponent takes a look.

**Michael Bayly:** Your presentation in Minneapolis on May 3 coincides with John Nienstedt’s first day as archbishop of the St. Paul/Minneapolis Archdiocese. What are your thoughts on Nienstedt’s leadership style? What advice can you give to local Catholics who find themselves in disagreement with this style and who are, as you say in your book, “disturbed at the present direction of the institutional church . . . the growing centralization of its governance, the narrow, often literal interpretation of doctrine, the instinctive rejection of modern culture and the modern world, and the vigorous effort to promote outmoded forms of piety”?

**Robert McClory:** I did a story on Nienstedt in the *National Catholic Reporter* (May 4, 2004) when he banned a book by the late Bishop Lucker about two years ago. He was good enough to call me up and chat. My impression is that he is wedded to a narrow, almost fundamentalist (and wrong) interpretation of Roman Catholicism and not likely to entertain other views. I believe people who think otherwise should continually make their case in a respectful, well reasoned manner – through op eds in the media, letters to editors, public presentations when possible and efforts to make a case directly with those who think otherwise, including especially the bishop. Down deep, I believe, most of these bishops and clergy know better but have brainwashed themselves for the sake of their careers. ▼

***On Saturday, May 3, Robert McClory will be the keynote speaker at the Second Annual Prayer Breakfast for Hope and Justice, entitled “Here Comes Everybody: Democratizing Catholicism in Challenging Times.” For more information, see page 4.***

# Debunking the Pseudo-Science of NARTH

By Michael J. Bayly

On the evening of Tuesday, January 29, thirty-five people braved sub-zero temperatures to attend the CPCSM-sponsored program, “The Myth of ‘Conversion Therapy’ and the Pseudo-Science of NARTH,” at the House of the Beloved Disciple in Minneapolis.

One of the keynote speakers at this program was Jeffry G. Ford, MA, a licensed psychologist and psychotherapist. Interestingly, Jeff was formerly the executive director of OUTPOST, an “ex-gay” ministry located in Minneapolis. For ten years, Jeff claimed to be a “former homosexual,” and was a national speaker for Exodus International, the governing board and communication hub for most ex-gay ministries.

Today, however, Jeff identifies as a gay man and is a nationally known consultant and speaker on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues. He specializes in addressing the complexities involved with the anti-gay theory known both as “reparative therapy” and “sexual conversion therapy,” which purports to prevent and cure homosexuality. Jeff dedicates his time and energy to challenging the unethical and dangerous use of pseudo-scientific theories associated with the ex-gay movement, a movement that includes the National Association for Research and Treatment of Homosexuality (NARTH).

Jeff noted that in the ex-gay world, the expression of same-sex attraction is never talked about as an act of love. It’s only ever understood and talked about as an incarnation of evil. Furthermore, if you accept the “lie” about the normalcy of homosexuality then you forfeit your place in heaven.

Jeff’s questioning of this dogma against his inner sense and experience of being loved and accepted by God as a gay man was an experience of “deep grace and forgiveness.” It was a profoundly liberating experience for him.

Says Jeff: “The ex-gay movement tends to blame the parents and/or supposed experiences of childhood abuse for changing the direction of one’s natural (i.e., heterosexual) sexual orientation. If your unmet needs can be met in ‘healthy’ ways, i.e., in non-erotic same-sex friendships and relationships, then not only will your unmet needs be met, but your heterosexuality will bloom and blossom. That’s the hope and that’s what they promise. And some people will do almost anything to believe this – from years and years of counseling to prayers and exorcisms.



Jeffry Ford – January 29, 2008.

“The problem,” continues Jeff, “comes when people do all these things and yet continue to experience same-sex attractions. They feel like a failure, yet you’re not supposed to talk about such feelings of failure publicly – only in private with your counselor. There’s a lot of restraint on your personal freedom. The extent of this restraint depends on which ex-gay ministry you’re involved with. Some of them demand that you don’t listen to certain types of music, read certain types of books. You can’t be left alone with another person of the same gender. It’s very cult-like, very controlling.”

To be sure, Jeff has a powerful story to share, and he did so eloquently at the House of the Beloved Disciple on January 29. Without doubt, much of this power comes from the fact that Jeff speaks from experience. After all, he studied and practiced reparative therapies for years. Because of this personal and professional experience, he is now able to offer accurate answers and powerful insight into the workings and ideological underpinnings of the “ex-gay” movement.

Debunking NARTH continues on page 11.

## Debunking NARTH (continued from page 10)

Also, unlike many so-called “experts” in the pseudo-science of conversion and reparative therapies, Jeff’s writings have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Jeffrey also maintains a comprehensive website, *Reparative Therapy: A Pseudo Science* ([www.jgford.homestead.com](http://www.jgford.homestead.com)).

The second featured speaker at CPCSM’s January 29 program was John C. Gonsiorek, PhD, a fellow of American Psychological Association (APA) Division 9 (also called the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues), and Division 12 (the Society of Clinical Psychology).

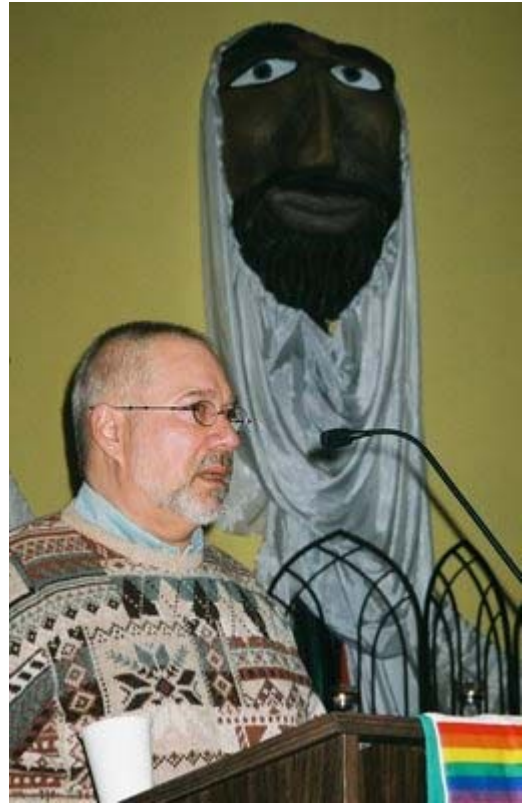
John is also a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Minnesota, and a Past-President of APA Division 44 – also known as the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues. For 25 years, he had an independent practice of clinical and forensic psychology in Minneapolis.

John has published widely in the areas of professional misconduct, sexual orientation and identity, and professional ethics. For many years, he provided expert witness evaluation and testimony regarding impaired clergy and professionals, standards of care, and psychological damages. He has also provided training and consultation to a variety of religious denominations and organizations.

Dr. Gonsiorek began his presentation with words of advice for Catholics troubled by the Archdiocese’s efforts to present NARTH as a legitimate scientific organization and to use its “findings” to validate Church teaching on the “disordered” nature of homosexuality.

“If you’re going to challenge the Archdiocese in its attempts to introduce what I consider to be a ‘fraudulent healthcare service,’” said Gonsiorek, “then you need to become educated about what the behavioral sciences say about sexual orientation. That has to be the base from which you operate as opposed to reacting to the ‘flakiness’ of organizations like NARTH.”

For the most up-to-date information regarding sexual orientation, Gonsiorek recommends the website of the American Psychological Association ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)), and in particular, this site’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns page, its Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients, and its Division 44, also known as the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues.



John Gonsiorek at the House of the Beloved Disciple  
– January 29, 2008.

Dr. Gonsiorek then proceeded to provide some insightful background information on the origins of NARTH – origins inseparable from the wider cultural debate on homosexuality and, specifically, the American Psychiatric Association’s 1973 decision to remove homosexuality from its official manual that lists mental and emotional disorders (followed two years later by the passage of a similar resolution of the American Psychological Association). This change in the diagnosis of homosexuality was the result of the wealth of research data gathered since the early 1950s that showed no difference between homosexual and heterosexual populations in terms of “adjustment.”

Gonsiorek also noted that a significant “sea change” took place in the early 1970s when biological psychiatry began taking over the field of behavioral science from the psychoanalytical establishment. Indeed, the change in the diagnosis of homosexuality, says Gonsiorek, was “essentially a run-up of a long-standing fight” between these two groups, and was an important moment for the biological psychiatrists, “not only because they had a strong data base to support such a change, but because the psychoanalysts had always considered human sexuality to be their domain.”

Debunking NARTH continues on page 12.

## Debunking NARTH (continued from page 11)

In time, the psychoanalytical establishment also changed in its understanding of homosexuality; it now has the same sets of policies and principles about sexual orientation as the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association. Yet there were “old guard” psychoanalysts who were disgruntled about being displaced and seeing their organization change its views on homosexuality. This disaffected group of psychoanalysts formed an alliance with conservatively- and religiously-oriented psychotherapists. It was from this alliance that NARTH was established.

Gonsiorek then outlined the problem with “conversion” or “reparative” therapy, the theory and practice that treats homosexuality as a pathology, as a disorder that can be “repaired” and changed. “It’s nonsensical to have a treatment for a diagnosis that doesn’t exist,” he says. “With homosexuality being de-pathologized in 1973, what exactly is being treated? There is no data to support that sexual orientation can be changed and there’s no reason to change it; there’s no impairment.”

So why do people subject themselves to such a “nonsensical” treatment? Gonsiorek notes that there can be a “a great deal of coercion, a great deal of social pressure in some families and communities for those struggling with homosexual feelings to submit to conversion therapy. If they don’t, they’ll be socially ostracized. In addition, some ex-gay therapists insist that in recommending and/or offering conversion or reparative therapy they are merely giving people a choice as consumers to meet their personal health goals. This argument, says Gonsiorek is “specious and borders on malpractice.” Healthcare providers, he insists, “should not just do what consumers want but offer services that are based on established standards of care. And if the consumer wants something that is flakey, the answer is ‘No.’ To give them what’s flakey is malpractice.

Gonsiorek noted that: “What often happens with people who are maneuvered into reparative therapy is that they’ve been trashed for years by churches and communities – even by their own families. As a result, they’re often depressed and anxious. *That’s* what the problem is, and *that’s* what requires treatment. So the reparative therapy is often done *instead of* what needs to be done – which is to undo the damage caused by harassment, ostracism, and disparagement.”

Gonsiorek concluded his talk by noting that “both the behavioral sciences and religion attempt to understand the human condition and to respond to problems within the human condition.” Yet he was adamant that science and religion are not the same, and that one cannot speak for the other. “For a church leader to tell you what is good behavioral science,” he said, “carries about as much weight as your Uncle Joe telling you.” Reflecting on the current situation in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Gonsiorek said: “As a psychologist, I find it almost fraudulent for someone who claims to be a moral authority to be grandly operating in an area in which they have no competence.” ▼

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## The “Underground Church” (continued from page 7)

Advantages of the underground church include not being restricted by Vatican pronouncements – many of which reflect a narrow and impoverished theology, especially around issues of gender and sexuality. As a result, the underground church, says Kautzer, “challenges dualistic categories that separate laity/clergy, men/women, celibate/married, the sacred and the profane, thereby embodying the notion of the priesthood of all believers and the sacred dimension of reality.”

As to why so many Church hierarchs are resistant to the type of change heralded by the underground church, Kautzer suggests that one factor is that many of them, especially those within the Vatican, “tend to be isolated and surrounded primarily by like-minded colleagues selected precisely because of their conformity and subservience.”

Drawing on the theories of human consciousness development pioneered by Ken Wilbur, Kautzer notes that the current pope, like his predecessor, operates primarily from a “traditionalist philosophical framework” – one that is highly authoritarian and dismissive of alternative perspectives and views. Most Catholics, Kautzer contends, operate from a “post-modern or even integralist framework” or worldview. Within Wilbur’s model of human consciousness development, these are two stages beyond where the vast majority of Vatican officials are. “This gap in worldviews,” says Kautzer, “makes it difficult for people to communicate.”

The “Underground Church” continues on page 13.

## The “Underground Church” (continued from page 12)

Kautzer also draws on the insights of psychotherapist Mary Gail Frawley-O’Dea, author of *Perversion of Power: Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church*, when she describes many Catholic hierarchs as “narcissistic,” a state that Frawley-O’Dea maintains is “reinforced by the highly deferential treatment of unchecked power.”

In light of all of this, Kautzer, paraphrasing Gandhi, insists that: “We must be the change we want to see in the Church.” “If ‘We are the Church,’” she says, “then we don’t have to sit back and wait for the hierarchs to make decisions.”

### Status and prospects of reform

The hierarchs, however, *are* making decisions – ones that many Catholics find, at the very least, problematic, and, at most, intolerable. It’s too early to say how my Catholic community or others within the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis will respond to the latest demands to conform. My sense is that the “insider tactics” that many have embraced for years are rapidly losing their appeal.

Perhaps the abandoning of such tactics is long overdue. After all, during her talk at the 2007 national Call to Action conference, Kautzer could give “no substantive examples” of successful insider strategies (i.e., of people working, protesting, and attempting to persuade authority figures within the system) bringing about reform. For substantive change to occur, she declared, outsider strategies must be employed.

“There’s a lot of exciting stuff going on in the underground church,” said Kautzer. But within reform groups focused on insider reform, great difficulties and obstacles – including financial – are being encountered. Voice of the Faithful, for instance, is experiencing a “funding crisis.” People seem to be giving up on insider reform, she said, and are “tired of having the iron thumb of the hierarchy on their back and saying that you can’t talk about this, or think that, or do this.”

“The prospects for reform are dim if we rely solely on insider tactics,” said Kautzer. This is especially true given that the new priests coming into the priesthood tend to be very conservative and authoritarian; that Vatican II priests, bishops, and cardinals are either “dying off or being forced out”; and that Pope Benedict XVI has stated publicly that he wants a smaller, purer Church, and that he wants reformers to leave unless they can support everything the hierarchy teaches. “[The pope] doesn’t care if you leave,” says Kautzer. “He’s happy to push you out the door.”

This isn’t true, however, of all cardinals and bishops, many of whom are not as isolated as the pope. They are acutely aware of what such an exodus would mean financially for the Church. Even some conservative Catholics are worried. Writing in the February 2008 issue of the Catholic World Report, Russell Shaw refers to David Carlin’s book, *The Decline and Fall of the Catholic Church in America*, and notes that: “Carlin concludes that the outcome of the crisis will probably be the de facto collapse of the Church in America and the retreat of Catholics into the status of a ‘minor and relatively insignificant sect.’ Traditionalists will have won the internal Catholic power struggle, mainly because the progressives will have drifted away. But in the end, the small band of traditionalists will find themselves isolated in ‘a new Catholic quasi-ghetto,’ with about as much influence on the culture as the Amish and Hasidic Jews have now.”

### Movement of the Spirit

I’m not interested in living in any type of ghetto, yet that’s what Pope Benedict XVI seems intent on creating for Catholics. I’m drawn to a Church open to the Spirit, a Church that recognizes and celebrates itself as the Risen Body of Christ, alive and afoot in the world; a Church unafraid of journeying and engagement, of growth and change. My sense is that the birthing and rising of the “underground church,” as described and documented by Kathleen Kautzer, is the movement of the Spirit, seeking and finding welcoming and fertile soil beyond the fortress-like walls of the Vatican’s current state of rigidity and its fearful retreat into conformity.

I cannot help but think that Kautzer’s study validates Rosemary Radford Ruether’s observation that the more the hierarchy stagnates and retreats, the more numerous and freewheeling the creative initiatives that spring up on the ground.

I do not believe that such initiatives herald the destruction of the Church or its collapse into insignificance. Rather, I believe that the initiatives that comprise the “underground church” are, in fact, the hope of the Church, and herald its transformation into the fullness of new life. ▼

**Michael Bayly is the executive coordinator of CPCSM and the editor of both the *Rainbow Spirit* and *The Progressive Catholic Voice* online journal. This article first appeared on his blog, *The Wild Reed* ([www.thewildreed.blogspot.com](http://www.thewildreed.blogspot.com)).**

# No Place for Dialogue in Archdiocesan Newspaper

In the November 1, 2007 issue of *The Catholic Spirit*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, editor Joe Towalski discussed what the Church “really teaches” about homosexuality. Towalski’s editorial was in response to the archdiocese’s October 22 decision to prohibit 82-year-old “cradle-Catholic” Robert Curoe and his lesbian daughter Carol from speaking at a CPSCM-sponsored event at St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church. (See page 7.)

Towalski’s editorial reiterates the official church teaching on the immorality of “homosexual activity,” and reaffirms the catechism’s call for homosexuals to be “accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity.” The editorial also directs people to the 1997 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ statement, *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers* – a statement that encourages parents to “accept and love” themselves and their gay son or daughter, and to do all that they can to “urge [their] son or daughter to stay joined to the Catholic faith community.”

Michael Bayly, executive coordinator of CPSCM), wrote and submitted a “counter-point commentary” to *The Catholic Spirit* in response to Towalski’s editorial, while *Progressive Catholic Voice* co-founder, Paula Ruddy, submitted a letter-to-the-editor. Neither was published in subsequent issues of the newspaper. Upon inquiring why this was the case, Michael and Paula were informed that it was not possible for *The Catholic Spirit* to serve as a forum for dialogue around church teachings.

## ***Following is Paula’s unpublished letter:***

In the November 1, 2007, issue, editor Joe Towalski does a good job of spelling out the “fullness” of the hierarchical teachings on homosexuality. By this he means that although the teaching is that homosexual activity is sinful, the teaching also states that homosexuals should be treated with love within the church.

Two points: First, the bishops’ moral teachings are not infallible and have changed significantly over the years. Unlike disciplinary rules, the bishops can’t just declare sexual relations to be sinful on their authority. They have to have reasons. Towalski does not go into the theory of human sexuality underlying the teaching. In *The Human Core of Spirituality*, (SUNY, 1996), Daniel Helminiak shows that reducing the purposes of sex to procreation robs it of its most human dimension, the spiritual. It would be wise of the bishops to enter into dialogue about human sexuality with the scientific and philosophical communities rather than to insist on a closed set of pronouncements.

Second, it doesn’t take a scientist or a philosopher to see the fallacy in calling the bishops’ teaching a loving one when people are denied participation in such a basic need of human life as sexual expression. Moreover, there is daily evidence of the suffering caused by the rejection of people in an essential aspect of their personhood. It is a violence to them.

For these two reasons many of the Catholic faithful reject the teaching of the hierarchy on this matter. We don’t believe that committed homosexual relationships are *per se* sinful. I admire the hierarchy’s determination to strengthen family life, but condemning committed relationships of homosexuals is counterproductive and cruel.

Paula Ruddy

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## My Journey with a Prophet (continued from page 5)

Being unprepared for the archbishop’s prefatory admonition, we launched into our presentations, as if we had not even heard what he had said. We proceeded just as we had rehearsed, telling the archbishop of our journeys of growing up within the Church as lesbians and gay men. We took turns sharing with him our pains as well as our joys of having grown up in the Church, our fears as well as our hopes. We reported to him what our experience of the Church’s ministry to GLBT persons, both to ourselves and to others, had been and described for him what we hoped it could become. As he listened to our stories, the vicar

general, Father Robert Carlson, sat at the far end of the table, taking notes.

We would learn later that the archbishop was at first not sure what to expect from our group with the memory of the pie-throwing episode of 1975 and its Dignity connection still fresh in his mind. He had wondered if our group would engage him in some kind of political confrontation. We also found out later that he had asked Father Carlson to be in the room more as a witness and to provide security should there be any problems.

My Journey with a Prophet continues on page 15.

## My Journey with a Prophet (continued from page 14)

However, once the archbishop realized that our purpose for meeting with him was primarily pastoral, rather than political – that we were there to share with him from our hearts – and once he realized how much we all loved the Church and wished to continue to serve God and its people, his tough exterior seemed to soften. His initial gruffness was replaced by more of a relaxed receptiveness to us, and he began to listen more carefully to our personal stories.

To the best of my recollection, following our personal story-telling, the requests that we made of the archbishop at the meeting (again, without knowing that he had written to us that he did not want to discuss any of them) and the outcome for each of them are as follows:

1) Would he appoint a liaison to meet with our group on a regular basis? (*He agreed to do so, requesting then auxiliary bishop John Kinney to do so, followed later, in chronological order, by Father Robert Carlson, Father Michael O’Connell, and Bishop Larry Welsh.*)

2) Having been recently appointed as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (then known as the NCCB, and more recently as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – the USCCB) would he use his influence to encourage his fellow US bishops to create pastoral outreach ministries to gay men and lesbians and their families in their respective dioceses? (*He said that he was not prepared to respond to this request at that time, and he never did respond to it. He held the position as president of the NCCB from 1980 to 1983.*)

3) Would he create such a pastoral ministry within the local archdiocese? (*He did not say he would not. Instead he said that he would let his various department heads know about us and that if they were willing to meet with us, we were free to contact them and explore how we might best educate the staff members in their respective departments about the pastoral needs and concerns of the local GLBT Catholic community. Every department head that we later approached was receptive to us and met with us. We used the results from CPCSM’s Needs Assessment Study, completed 4 years later, as a starting point for each of those meetings.*)

4) Would he issue a statement in the archdiocesan newspaper (then the *Catholic Bulletin*, now *The Catholic Spirit*) calling for pastoral sensitivity toward and ministry with families of gay men and lesbians within the archdiocese, if we would draft such a statement for him. (*He reluctantly said that we should go ahead and draft such a statement and that he would look it over and determine how he might use it. With encouragement from Bill, more than a year later, I did eventually draft the statement and mailed it to him. The archbishop did acknowledge, by letter, that he had received the draft, but*

*added that he did not recall why we had sent it and what he was to do with it. In spite of my reply to him to refresh his memory, the statement never appeared in the Catholic Bulletin—or elsewhere for that matter.*)

5) Would he allow us to provide an in-service about gay-lesbian pastoral sensitivity and ministry within the archdiocesan priestly and permanent diaconal formation programs? (*As he had said earlier about our work with other departments of the archdiocese, he would let the appropriate administrators know about our group and if they were willing to work with us, we could do so. We had productive meetings with the rector of the major seminary and the director of the diaconal formation program. We did make a few presentations to the major seminarians, but that was discontinued when the administration and climate at the seminary became more conservative. However, CPCSM did play an important role in the diaconal training program for a period of almost 20 years.*)

At the conclusion of the listening session, we informed the archbishop that there were literally thousands of other gay and lesbian persons like us living in the archdiocese – such as my former classmate who had unexpectedly called me the previous night – who would never be able to speak with him face-to-face about their needs and concerns. Therefore, as we were preparing to leave the meeting, we promised to come back at a later date with the results of a needs assessment survey that we would conduct with other archdiocesan area gay and lesbian persons from a Catholic background, as well as with local Catholic families who had a GLBT member, so that he could hear their stories and opinions as well. I recall that the archbishop simply nodded his approval to our final request. In doing so, he had set in motion CPCSM’s Pastoral Needs Assessment Study, which would be the first major project of the infant organization, following its inaugural board meeting four months later. ▼

***In the next Rainbow Spirit, David McCaffrey will recount the role Bill Kummer shared with him in putting together CPCSM’s initial board, in carrying out the group’s Needs Assessment Study and disseminating its results, and in developing and coordinating the Parish-Based Gay-Lesbian Ministry Project that emerged from the study’s results.***

Mark Your Calendar!

CPCSM Annual Community Meeting

with

Vanessa Sheridan

Monday, June 23, 2008

For more information, see page 8.

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## The Rainbow Spirit



**Catholic Pastoral Committee  
on Sexual Minorities**

2930 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407-1420

**Phone:** 612-201-4534

**E-mail:** [cpcsmmail@gmail.com](mailto:cpcsmmail@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.cpcsm.org](http://www.cpcsm.org)

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