EXODUS INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Freedom from Homosexuality Through the Power of Jesus Christ

March 1997

Opposition To Exodus Heats Up

Former counselees join with pro-gay Christian groups to counter message that change is possible

An "exposé" on ex-gay ministry was the cover story in a weekly Florida newspaper.

Men and women critical of Exodus have existed since the ministry's inception, but in recent months, there have been a growing number of newspaper articles and other reports critical of the "ex-gay" movement.

One new source of opposition is the Internet, where sites are multiplying which provide such resources as "ex-ex-gay" testimonies of former Exodus members who have returned to active homosexuality. Another recent development is reporters posing as counselees in order to gain access to an "inside" view of the individual counseling and group support sessions in an Exodus ministry. After several weeks or months of involvement, the reporter writes a lengthy "exposé" on the ministry for a local newspaper.

Mike Caven of *Resurrection Life Ministries* in Atlanta knew something suspicious was happening when he spotted a member of his ministry's support group at a gay pride parade where several leaders of *Resurrection Life* had gone to pray and lead a silent protest with banners. The counselee ducked into the crowd when he realized that Mike was looking in his direction. Later, when Mike confronted him, the man confessed he was a reporter for *Out*, one of the largest gay magazines in America.

"I was angry," Mike said. "We base our groups on integrity and trust, and he violated those [standards]." Apparently, however, the man was impacted by his involvement. After being asked to leave the ministry, he confessed in his article, "Surprisingly, I felt like I had lost something. ...[These men] had become, if not family, then friends. I wanted to see them again."

Mike noted that the reporter couldn't find much to criticize in the ministry. "He got me for being a raving charismatic, but that's about it," he said with a laugh.

More recently, a reporter went "underground" to report on *Prodigal Ministries* in Cincinnati (see last month's *Update*). His front-cover story appeared in the weekly newspaper, *Everybody's News*. Director Jerry Armelli was surprised to discover the man's identity as a reporter. But, looking back, Jerry had suspected something was not right from the beginning.

"I felt he was hiding something; that he wasn't telling the whole truth," Jerry said. The reporter came for two private counseling sessions; he didn't participate in the group meetings, which are screened. Each group participant must sign an agreement which lays out the rules for group participation.