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Medial Release

### Is it the end for Ex-gay Therapies?

Alan Chambers, director of the global ex-gay ministry Exodus, sent shock waves through religious circles earlier this week, when he stated in an interview with the Los Angeles Times that, "By no means would we ever say change can be sudden or complete." The confession that Chambers and other ex-gays are not completely heterosexual will eat away at the credibility of groups that have claimed homosexuality can be cured, says Australia's leading ex-ex-gay, Anthony Venn-Brown. Venn-Brown will be attending an Ex-gay Survivors Conference in Los Angeles next week whilst Exodus is running a Freedom Conference in the same suburb proclaiming 'Freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ'.

Anthony Venn-Brown was a leader in the Assemblies of God and a regular preacher in the mega churches of Australia. Believing it was wrong to be gay, he tried for 22 years to change through Christian counselling, exorcisms, 40-day fasts; all suggested methods of transformation in ex-gay groups. "I actually spent 6 months in Australia's first live-in ex-gay program back in 1972, going through what is known as 'reparative' or 'conversion' therapy. It was one of the most traumatic experiences of my life that took me years to get over." Venn-Brown said. "Although claiming to be an ex-gay and happily married for 16 years with two daughters, eventually I had to admit that nothing had changed."

"Since the release of my autobiography '[A Life of Unlearning](#)', I have received hundreds of emails from people telling me their own horror stories in these programs. Whilst in the [Living Waters](#) ex-gay program here in Sydney, one person told me he attempted suicide three times, after his failed efforts to change kept him in depression. Since 2000, I've also moderated an [international support group](#) for survivors of exgay programs. Over the last 12 months I received testimonials from former leaders of Australia's ex-gay ministries admitting they were wrong and apologizing for the unnecessary suffering their previous beliefs had caused."

Venn-Brown says he has noticed a shift in the Australian ex-gay ministries over the last three years. "I think that the honesty of my story has helped bring some sanity into the debate. I spoke openly about the almost daily battle I went through trying to be heterosexual. In Australia, the most important shift has been in the language used. It's very rare for anyone from that movement these days to actually claim they are now heterosexual. They will be honest enough to admit their thought life still contains traces of gay and they have mechanisms and accountability in place to protect them from falling. The language recruiting others has also changed. They now use the term 'unwanted' same-sex-attraction as opposed to telling every gay person they should change. If people want to spend the rest of their lives 'struggling' with thoughts I guess it's their choice. We live in a free country. But I've found the most fulfilling life is to be authentic and have integrity, and I can do that as an openly gay man'. Venn-Brown added.

"Exgay programs have been operating for three decades now and have an horrific history of failure. The only evidence for their new found heterosexuality is that they are married and have children or that they no longer engage in same sex activity. In reality, they have not changed their orientation only their behaviour. Some live a secret life, having occasional encounters with people of the same sex but do not come out, as they have too much to lose, Venn-Brown concluded.

More Media information available from:

[Anthony Venn-Brown](#)

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**A Life of Unlearning - A Journey to Find the Truth** is Australia's Brokeback Mountain and Ted Haggard stories rolled into one. It's a behind the scenes look into the life of a high profile preacher who, believing being gay made him unacceptable to God and others, struggles to resolve his homosexuality and his Christian beliefs. Ultimately, this honest account is as story of resolution, the impact the author's courage has on others and what it means to live authentically.

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