**Personal testimonies**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is ------------. From the age of about 5 yrs old til 15 yrs old I suffered from what is now being called 'gender dysphoria'. During this 10 year span of my life I experienced tremendous depression, I was unable to socially fit in with the other boys and girls my age. I just new I was different and wasn't able to express why and I secretly carried this frustration til around the age of 15 yrs old when I discovered that my attraction to the same sex was not going to be solved by wishing and hoping that my body would magically change to male so that my attractions to girls would become socially acceptable. I discovered that perhaps I was a Lesbian. So at 15 yrs old I made up my mind and lived as a closeted lesbian until I was outed at age 21. I did not want to be outed but since I was forced out of the closet I thought maybe now I can be at peace with who I am. Unfortunately for me, that did not happen. I was independent, financially successful even though I was young, found an accepting and affirming community (the LGBTQ) and had even found the woman of my dreams. So why was I still so depressed and suicidal? Why did I feel trapped and filled with anxiety?

It would not be til about the age of 25 that I discovered that what I was told all throughout college by the LGBTQ was actually a lie. I was told that we are born gay and that trying to seek help to change ones sexual preference resulted in depression and eventually suicide. I know that many men and women have killed themselves and I understand the deep depression that they suffer. It seems to be without end. It did for me and I wanted out. I wanted to escape. I secretly wanted to just be straight, get married to a man who'd love me, have a family and live out some normal, conventional life. I saw my friends from high school all get married and start having babies and my heart broke because I wanted those things too. I was tired of the LGBTQ scene and the numerous women who broke my heart.

When I was able to be honest with my deep feelings of discontent, you could say a miracle happened. I discovered a group of people just like me, some who'd identified as LGBTQ for even longer than I was alive, had somehow escaped. They were able to change their sexual desire. Some had even gone on to happy marriages and had children. I discovered books and listened to their personal testimonies. They were so genuine and open and unashamed to expose themselves on this very controversial topic. Id found genuine hope that if they could do this, then so could I.

A long story short, three years fly by. and at age 28, I got married to quite literally the man of my dreams. We are now happily married 10 yrs with 2 little boys and a baby girl on the way. Needless to say, I am no longer attracted to women or gender dysphoric. I do not suffer from anxiety or depression. I do not long for some other life and dream of death to escape a deep pain that feels like no one can understand. Today I am living my best version of me. Something I never thought possible.

The reason I am writing you today, is to tell you that if it were not for the help I was able to seek out and find through books and Church ministries, conventions and Bible studies, I would not be alive today. That term "Conversion Therapy" has taken on a very broad definition. It has a very negative connotation and I completely get why. If some form of therapy is ever coerced and uses methods of torture in attempt to bring about change, then yes, this is a human rights violation and it must stopped and condemned. But what about those of us who desperately do want change? Should we be denied the right to peruse our version of happiness? Should resources be cut off because our feeling are not popular? Is it fair for people like me to be denied the help we so desperately wanted?

Please consider my plea and with much gratitude I thank you for taking up concerns for such a pressing global issue.

With Deep Sincerity,

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Dear Victor Madrigal-Borloz,

My name is ----------- and I used to identify as a gay man. I was fully attracted to men only and not to women. I found myself living an unhealthy and unhappy life and decided to seek change. I decided to start following my Christian faith again and to seek counsel and prayer ministry from pastors and ministry leaders. In this process I discovered who I truly was and I decided to let go of a gay identity. I found joy and peace in myself. I have even seen a change in my attractions and I have hope to be married to a woman one day and to have my own family. Prayer ministry, counsel from pastors and leaders, and religious freedom to pursue Jesus gave me the life that I wanted. I love who I am now and I am happy and thriving. No one forced me into anything I didn’t want. I chose this.

I respectfully ask that you do not take away the rights of individuals who are seeking to leave LGBTQ identities behind and that you allow these people to pursue sexual orientation change efforts and counseling/therapy. So called “conversion therapy” was not harmful to me and actually, I believe, saved my life.

Thank you for your consideration! God bless you!

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Dear Mr. Madrigal-Borloz,

My name is ------- ---- and I’d like to share my concern for therapy bans.

I would like to speak into this because I lived as a lesbian for 16 years and I was miserable.

My feelings for other women didn’t match up with my conscience or my faith, but during that time I had no where to turn for help.

I had no safe place to talk about it and I was falling apart. I thought living outwardly as a gay woman would bring freedom, but it only brought more pain and confusion.

Once I had enough of immersing myself in the gay lifestyle, hoping to find peace, I found a small group at a local church.

For the first time in my life I felt like I could share my pain with others.
This ministry was my place of healing. I was loved every step of the way. I had never felt so loved and accepted in this way.

The leaders listened to me, prayed for me and provided incredible resources such as books and counseling to help me understand why I had been struggling and I walked away from that life, authentically loving myself as a women and seeking a relationship with a man.

If the United Nations takes away these resources of prayer, ministry, or therapy to address unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion, we will see a world falling under greater confusion and destruction.

It’s like the government wants to control our thoughts, our free speech, our moral and religious convictions.

Please, please, please don’t take this avenue of hope away from others seeking help!

Thank you so much for your consideration,

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Good Day Mr. Victor Madrigal-Borloz,

My name is ------- ----. I lived as a gay Christian man until 26 years old. I was a suicidal gay man at the time decided to seek transformation over 24 years ago. At the time I didn't know if it was possible.

I am glad I sought out faith-based counselling. While it wasn't easy, it was more than worth it. I was never tortured or mistreated during this. Everything was voluntary and on my own accord.

I am married to my wife of 17 years; we have three children - two of which I fathered with her.

I had Christian faith-based counselling, inner healing prayer, and discipleship.

I humbly ask the United Nations protect the rights of people to seek counselling from unwanted same sex attraction and homosexuality if they so seek to change.

I ask that professionals' right to provide counselling upon request be protected; and that both faith-based and non-faith based counselling, prayer and help would be protected.

I am no longer suicidal.

I am sexually fulfilled.

I love my life.

Sincerely,

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Dear Victor Madrigal-Borloz,

My name is ------- ----

I had same sexual attraction all of my life and came out as a homosexual when I was seventeen years old. However, when I realized that my sexual orientation was not congruent with my religion I began to listen to stories of people who discontinued living homosexual lifestyles. I processed my homosexual feelings with a close friend and got prayer to help me be faithful to my NEW lifestyle. I also sought counselling for the sexual abuse and trauma I experienced in my childhood. My counsellor helped me process my pain.

The outcome of all this was a change in my sexual attractions, healing from PTSD, and a desire to live again.

Prayer, ministry, or talk therapy to address unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion were critical to my wholeness. I am asking that those practicing these things are not criminalized.

Thank you

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I lived the gay lifestyle for 13 years and i was in the gay adult film industry. 7 years ago i left the gay lifestyle and now i am married for 4 years and we have 2 kids. I have never been to therapy never went and talked to someone about what i was feeling or going thru when i left the gay lifestyle. The only thing i had Was God and a lot of faith and belief that God can do anything and He can. It was the blood of Jesus that washed my past away and made me new. I had great pastors that poured into me and churches that allowed me to come and share what God has done in my life. I feel that not allowing people to go and seek help about what they are feeling or struggling with doesn’t give them a chance to find out who they really are. We all go thru things especially when we are growing up. i was molested by a man close to our family at a young age and always was rejected by girls and i never really fit in anywhere. But i never had the opportunity to go and talk to someone about the feelings i was having and the thoughts because my way of thinking was screwed up because of the things that i went thru and because of that i lived many years in a dark place and lost. Now on the other side of where i use to be i now have the opportunity to go and share my story with other people and i feel that if you decide to ban "conversion therapy" which in my opinion is not real because nobody can change anyone. It will ban me and take my voice away. maybe that is what you want to do silence me and silence what i have been thru and diminish my struggle and my overcoming something that the world says can not be overcame. But if u are truly there in the UN to protect people and make sure they are heard then you must protect my voice and allow me to share so that if someone is going thru the same thing they can have hope. Now is my story the same as others no but some part of all of our stories blend. We all have been rejected, we all have been hurt, we all have had things happen to us that has made us who we are. But we don’t have to stay that way if we don’t want to be that’s why anyone should be able to seek help if they want to. People that leave the gay lifestyle are the smallest hated minority in the world we must be protected and our voice must be heard. Because if you won’t protect our right to get help when need to talk or protect our voice to share our stories then no one should be protected because we all matter. Please do not take away our choice to seek help. Thank you for listening.

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Hello,

My name is ------- ----. I lived with unwanted same-sex attraction for five years. Over that time period I discovered that my feelings of attraction were rooted in painful experiences from my past, not an identity that I benefited from. Resources that helped me process through that pain were prayer from church leaders and ministry school classes. Through processing the pain with those resources, I came to the conclusion that my feelings didn't define who I was and also weren't permanent; instead, I found that my feelings of attraction started to change, and I became attracted to men again.

Based on my positive experiences with said resources, I would like to ask that the United Nations not make negative declarations about the viability of prayer and ministry in regards to unwanted same-sex attraction. I understand the need to protect people who are forced into therapy who don't want it. However, there are those of us who intentionally choose guidance because we don't want the same-sex attraction and then benefit from it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Blessings,

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Hello Mr. Victor!

My name is ------- ---- and I’m 21 years old. I was gay for 5 years. I attended church during that entire time and faced shame for my sexuality. Within the past year weekly group sessions with other men Helped me with my sexual orientation. I began to realize my emotions were stuffed up inside and when I learned how to communicate my emotions and through other tools my sexual orientation began to change. I actually saw myself want to date women after a solid year of this group session. I believe conversion therapy is necessary to relieve people who are struggling with emotional and physical confusion to reveal the problem and grow as a healthy man or women.

Thank you for your consideration!

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I write this email to implore you not to take away the rights of individuals who desire help and support for unwanted same-sex attraction or unwanted feelings of gender dysphoria, and not to criminalize those who offer loving support.

I once lived as a gay man with exclusive same-sex attraction. However, over time I found that way of living and relating to be unsatisfying and taking me in a direction that I no longer wanted to go.

It was through a variety of supportive relationships, helpful programs, and exercising my right of self-determination that I was able to find and live out a new life pattern that has brought joy and peace.

My wife and I have been married for 12 years and there is no one I would rather be doing life with.

Our two boys are an incredible gift. I love the reality that we made these boys as a natural part of our marriage and covenant to one another.

None of these major life-changes would have been possible without the freedom to seek and receive support.

The “conversation therapy” ban being proposed and sought for does not just address some form/s of cruel mistreatment of LGBTQ people, which should never happen. Rather, it seeks to criminalize and punish even the most loving support that aligns with an individual’s right to seek the help they desire.

How can taking away a person’s right to find help and support be a good thing? I was suicidal for a time when I was living as a gay man, not for lack of acceptance, but because I thought there was no hope for change and I wanted something more, something different. This type of criminalization would have left me without hope or help to move in the direction I desperately desired.

I found what I was looking for. I found the meaning and purpose that was missing for me; I found it because competent and compassionate people could offer their support and were not under threat of criminal punishment.

I know hundreds of men and women who have chosen to walk away from homosexuality, and others who did not want to be at odds with their biology and found a different path than gender reassignment. With loving help and support they have found true peace and contentment that aligns with their biology.

Please do not take away our freedom of speech, our right to live our own lives according to our conscience, or our freedom to live and express our faith.

Sincerely,

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Dear Victor Madrigal-Borloz,

My name is ------- ----. I lived as an openly gay man for 7 years. Christian radio and Christian friends and family praying for me helped me meet Jesus. He changed my life. He showed me I was making a choice to live gay, and that I could choose to live as a heterosexual. Now I am married to a beautiful woman (10 years) and we have four beautiful children that would not exist otherwise. I do not want same-sex attraction and value prayer and resources to address it.

I request that you do not ban conversion therapy or make declarations about the viability or appropriateness of prayer, ministry, or therapy to address unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Sent from my iPhone

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I am a lesbian in the United States. When I was 16, I became convinced my distress around my body and how others treated me meant I was transgender. My parents sought professional support, who agreed with me. I was given transgender care according to the WPATH Standards of Care. I was evaluated by a therapist and cleared for HRT, then for mastectomy. I started testosterone at 16 and had a mastectomy at 17. I also received support in changing my legal name and sex before I turned 18. At age 20, I finally encountered coherent criticism of misogyny and lesbian-hating, and shortly after, I stopped my transition (or “detransitioned”). I learned countless gay and lesbian elders described feeling a strong drive to become the other sex (and/or a sense that they already were the other sex), and that this was relieved as they accepted their same-sex attraction and came into accepting communities. I returned to living as a lesbian woman, which was stressful in many ways but well worth it. I realized I had seen myself through woman-hating, lesbian-hating lens. I thought “woman” meant sexist stereotypes.

I am 24 now and I have much more insight than I had at 16. I didn’t realize someone born female- a woman- could be whoever she chose to be. I didn’t realize that many, many women had complicated feelings about being seen and treated “like a woman”- because women are treated badly in misogynistic cultures, and we do not enjoy being treated badly. Defining womanhood by identity rather than as my sex led to endorse sexist stereotypes instead of understanding the immense diversity of women, in terms of thought and behavior. I was particularly alienated as a teenage lesbian with ADHD. Having a neurological difference made it especially hard to understand and assimilate into sexist norms for women, which made me more vulnerable to seeing transition as my only option, because I didn’t realize women didn’t have to embody sexist norms. I have since met many other detransitioned women, and realized that virtually all of us are attention deficit and/or autistic and/or traumatized in ways that set us apart from peers.

The pain of being stigmatized as an unusual (i.e., ADHD and lesbian) woman is what motivated me to seek medical interventions that would make me resemble a man. As a teenage lesbian I wanted to be anyone but myself. I was caught up in the transgender idea that I could follow certain specific steps and at the end, I wouldn’t suffer from being female anymore. I didn’t fully understand that femaleness could be defined in a positive way, or that I could grow up to be a happy lesbian. I thought my pain could never go away without changing my own body, because it felt like the hateful world around me was unchangeable.

I empathize with the teenager I was, and with my parents for having faith in my own self-knowledge (though it turned out to be distorted thinking rooted in culturally learned self-hatred) and having faith that credentialed experts following international standards could help me. I do not empathize with the professionals who approved me for or administered me treatments that have never been evaluated (much less approved) by the FDA for cross-sex use (much less cross-sex use in minors!). I cannot understand why giving a teenage lesbian testosterone and a mastectomy was not obvious to them as what it is: a reckless expression of homophobia. For a professional to view substantially unstudied interventions like this as preferable to doing nothing, they must possess a frighteningly dim view of the prospects for children who seem extremely gay or lesbian. Testosterone use in females has been linked to mitochondrial damage, development of PCOS, and more. Puberty blockers (which I luckily was too old for) may wreck bone health for life. I am particularly disturbed by the actions of my surgeon, ------- ----, who happily accepted out-of-pocket funds to remove my healthy breast tissue, which was ultimately incinerated as medical waste.

On top of having nerve damage from surgery and having likely developed PCOS as a result of testosterone use, I am now traumatized by medical settings and avoid all but the most necessary medical care. It took me many years, a lot of personal strength, and a lot of external support to recognize the way transgender medicine harmed me. I know that other children and teenagers are out there being hurt right now, and that it will be years before they find their voices, if they ever do. It’s easier to pretend everything is fine, like I did for years, because the alternative is recognizing that you made a colossal mistake in trusting transgender health providers, and that you will forever live in a body marked by your mistakes and the incompetence of your providers.

I view WPATH as ultimately responsible for every way that transitional medicine harmed me. WPATH lent a veneer of credibility to interventions that I am confident will one day by rightly regarded as morally and scientifically equivalent to the lobotomy. I hope that the United Nations can formulate a response to the medical malpractice that WPATH members are committing daily against gay and lesbian (and otherwise nonconforming) youth, particularly those who have ADHD and/or are autistic and/or are traumatized.

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Greetings Victor,

My name is ------- ----. I once identified as homosexual for six years. On October 18th, 2009, I had a life-changing experience with the Lord Jesus Christ that changed my life. I was born again, according to Acts 2:38. I was compelled to lay down my identity as a gay man and sinful behaviors to follow Christ. This decision led to peace, healing and joy I hadn’t experienced as a gay man. Prayer, accountability with church leadership, literature and videos about Ex gay testimonies, church fellowship, and a relationship with Jesus Christ were all helpful tools in my transformation. Talking about the trauma and the brokenness I experienced as a minor brought a deeper degree of healing for me.

Today I no longer embrace an identity given to me through brokenness (sexual abuse). I am a happily married man to a woman, and the proud father to our son. God has pressed the reset button on my life. I have been on this journey for ten years and I have no regrets.

There are thousands of men and women who do not want same-sex attractions for various reasons, even those who identify as LGBT. Please let people make their own choices, as to whether or not they will seek therapy concerning their desire to change.

Thank you for your consideration,

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**Conversion Therapy in Indonesia**

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 On January 2016, LGBT suddenly became a hot issue when the Minister of Higher Education and Research issued a ministerial decree forbidding LGBTs from entering all state-owned universities. This was followed by a decree by several rectors of state universities that banned LGBT from registering there as students. A few weeks afterwards the Minister of Social Affair called for LGBT to be given treatment by “boiling” them in a hot water to heal them.

 Many Islamic religious leaders called for “ruqyah” treatment for LGBTs. They are supposed to be prayed on by using some mantras. Meanwhile, some Islamic groups such as AILA Indonesia are trying to lobby and push the parliament to pass a bill to give conversion therapy to LGBT, to “help them return to their *fitrah* (their tue self as God has meant them to be)” (see <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/08/30/commentary-why-aila-is-a-bigger-threat-to-freedom-than-the-fpi.html>). I asked my friend who graduated from ------- ---- and now is ------- ----, about her experience about conversion therapy. She told me that several of her LGBT clients came to her and shared their experience of having undergone conversion therapy, but they all told her that nothing happened.

 In the Christian circle there is YADA Institute that has been running seminars since 2015 in many churches and cities all over Indonesia, campaigning about the dangers of LGBT, the “true” purpose of sex and sexuality, and the therapy that needs to be done for LGBTs (see <http://www.xbtmovement.net/index.htm>). To me, their program seems to only create fears about LGBT and at the same time is a money-making project because they charge each participant Rp. 600,000 (about USD 45), for a three-day seminar, with a book and a DVD.

**A personal case**

 I personally had an experience of meeting a young man in my church. He was not our member, but he came to attend a small discussion about LGBT that I led for the youth group. I was surprised when I heard him talking and asking questions because he seemed to be very well-informed about the issue. He mentioned several books that spoke positively about LGBT.

 About a week after that I received a letter from him. It was a handwritten letter, 120 pages long. In the letter ------- ---- shared his experience and frustration as a gay man. He mentioned about his family problem, about his parents who had taken him 9 times to a mental hospital, about his intention of getting castrated because he felt so ashamed and sinful about his sexuality, and about the promises given by his spiritual counselor in his home church that he would be healed if only he would ask God, pray and fast, etc. He said he had already everything that his counselor told him to do, and yet he still felt the attraction to same sex people.

 Before I had the opportunity of replying to his letter, he sent me another letter, this time it was 90 pages long! I wrote back to him and told him that there was nothing wrong with him. He just happened to be going to a wrong church and met a wrong counselor. I suggested that he come to my church and get a better counseling. He never came.

 One day I was invited to preach at one of our sister’s church. Surprisingly, I met ------- ---- there. Apparently ------- ---- has been attending that church, but unfortunately I know that the pastor was not able to give him a good counseling either. I spoke to the pastor whom I knew quite well, telling him that I knew ------- ---- and I would like him to come to my church. The pastor knew ------- ---- and his condition. ------- ---- had shared his frustration with him, too. The pastor told me that ------- ---- had confessed to him that he was a gay man, but he never had sex. The only thing that he would do was masturbating, and after that he would be feeling deeply guilty and sinful. The pastor also told me that ------- ---- often had difficulties of sleeping, so his psychiatrist always gave him sleeping pills.

 I told the pastor about a program that I would be running, ------- ----. This camp is aimed at young people to understand what LGBT is all about and how to help their friends who are struggling with this issue. I wanted ------- ---- to participate in the camp. I told the pastor that I would help him pay for his participation.

 However, on that day, ------- ---- didn’t turn up. Later I found out that he overslept because of the medicines that he had been taking, and therefore could not participate in our program.

 A few years after that, I met again with the pastor and asked about ------- ----. He told me that ------- ---- had passed away. I was very sad for having failed to help him.

**Our response**

 ------- ---- has tried to run programs to counter those misleading and fear-mongering programs by running seminars and trainings. Starting last year we began to publish books. There are two books that we had published, ------- ----, a collection of articles written in both Bahasa Indonesia and English, and ------- ----.

 Last year we ran successfully three book launches and discussions on the book ------- ---- in three cities: ------- ----. We still have three more cities to run the seminar in January and February, namely ------- ----.

 This year (2020), we are planning to publish more books, run more seminars and trainings. We will also continue our annual international conference on theology and queer issues. At this point we are trying to raise our fund for those programs.

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Dear Victor Madrigal-Borloz

My name is ------- .

I struggled with my sexual identity since a very young aged and started to live a homosexual lifestyle when I was 21. I lived this lifestyle for about 18 years of my life. I was not able to live a homosexual lifestyle and follow Jesus whole heartedly. I walked away from the gay lifestyle in 2003. That did not mean my same-sex-attractions disappeared in a moment. I sought out healing ministries and prayer ministries, which not only brought to light the root of my same-sex-attractions, but I was able to cut those roots and receive a lot of healing and restoration in my life. Today my same-sex attractions is no longer existing thanks to all the help I received. Many people also prayed for me. I am so thankful for these ministries who were able to walk with me and walk me through my struggles. Today I have so much peace.

I request that the United Nations not go ahead with banning so called “conversion therapy” as it will shut down those ministries who helped me receive healing and total peace in my life.

Thank you for your consideration.

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my name is -------.

I am from Ukraine, Kiev

I am for conversion therapy, I have not seen a negative experience, only positive results in the lives of people with an attraction to their sex, and I am one of them, 5 years since I have a healthy attraction, heterosexual !!!