

SAVE ME

Directed by Robert Cary
Story by Craig Chester and Alan Hines
Screenplay by Robert Desiderio
Starring Chad Allen, Robert Gant, Judith Light

96 minutes, color, 2007



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SYNOPSIS 1

Save Me is a love story about Mark, a sex and drug addicted young man who after an accidental overdose finds he's been checked into a Christian retreat for 'Ex-Gays'. Gayle, the director of the ministry run together with her husband Ted, believes she can help cure young men of their 'gay affliction' through spiritual guidance. At first, Mark resists, but soon takes the message to heart. As Mark's fellowship with his fellow Ex-Gays grow stronger, however, he finds himself powerfully drawn to Scott, another young man battling family demons of his own. As their friendship begins to develop into romance, Mark and Scott are forced to confront the new attitudes they've begun to accept, and Gayle finds the values she holds as an absolute truth to be threatened.

A complex and deeply sympathetic look into both sides of one of the most polarizing religious and sexual debates in America.

SYNOPSIS 2

Though there is no sound scientific evidence that sexual orientation can be changed, the ex-gay movement has been at the polarizing center of religious and sexual debates in the U.S. since the 1970s.

In *Save Me*, an exceptionally layered, intelligent and sensitive drama brought to life by director Robert Cary, Mark (Chad Allen) a self-destructive addict hooked to anonymous sex and narcotics finally hits bottom. Concerned for his welfare, his brother checks him into Genesis House, an ex-gay Christian ministry located in the sandy landscape of New Mexico, and not coincidentally miles from anywhere. Overseen by a compassionate husband and wife team, ministry organizers Gayle (Judith Light) and Ted (Stephen Lang) have made it their life's mission to guide young gay men to convert to heterosexuality by offering spiritual guidance through a 12-step program.

Initially rebellious and suspicious of the ministry's work, Mark soon develops a close bond with some of the other residents, especially with Scott (Robert Gant), a Genesis resident and "level 5" mentor charged with guiding Mark through the steps. Protective of her role and nursing a painful secret, Gayle becomes increasingly wary of Scott's intentions as Mark and Scott's affinity for each other strengthens. Forced to confront values that she holds true, Gayle must finally face some truths about love.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I had a wonderful experience directing Judith Light in a romantic comedy called *Ira and Abby* at the end of 2005, so when her manager Herb Hamsher contacted me about a project he was producing called *Save Me* I was immediately intrigued. The subject matter couldn't have been further from the Manhattan neuroses and comic carbonation of *Ira and Abby*, plus Judith was attached to play a role which I found fascinating: an evangelical woman running a ministry to convert gay men to heterosexuality. My initial conversation with Herb was in March of 2006 and we were shooting by the first week of July, so it was a short, intense, and immensely rewarding journey.

I felt that the challenge in telling this story would be to resist the temptation to judge Judith's character – indeed, to judge any of the people who enter and work at this ministry – and to understand that the motives and mechanics of this movement cannot be reduced to generalities. In my research I was surprised to find that there are hundreds of ministries across the country devoted to this kind of work, and equally surprised to see that there is no form of official accreditation, nor any set way in which they carry out their "mission." So my collaborators and I set out to fashion a "Genesis House" which was not a scary or extreme environment, but rather one which operated on principles similar to those of any twelve-step program -- a place which, while rigorous and spare, was in many ways gentle and loving.

We shot *Save Me* in eighteen days, entirely in New Mexico. I was fortunate to have not only the talents of Judith, Chad Allen, Robert Gant, Stephen Lang and a generous and inventive ensemble of actors, but also the tremendous gifts of Rodney Taylor, who shot on anamorphic 35mm, Ray Kluga's production design, Lahly Poore's costumes and genuinely supportive producers and executive producers. I hope that *Save Me* can be a part of an ongoing discussion about fundamentalism, homosexuality, and the possibility of discovering one's own spiritual truth through the search to reconcile the two.

BACKGROUND ON THE EX-GAY MOVEMENT

In 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, religious leaders joined by a small group of mental health practitioners broke from the organization to continue treating gays and lesbians with "reparative" or "sexual conversion" therapy. Throughout the 70's, treatment centers began cropping up across the country being led by Frank Worthen's Love in Action centers, followed by Exodus International in 1976.

Over the next two decade, there was a marked increase in funding and support of Christian-run ministries, bolstered by support from Christian-right organizations like Focus on the Family among others. The movement became spearheaded by Exodus International, an umbrella organization that oversees hundreds of Christian-based ministries and is also expanding into non-Christian organizations like PFOX, Parents of Ex-gay People, and Jonah, a program for Jewish ex-gays. In 1992, they formed the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality in an attempt to legitimize the "clinical work" of such organizations. Since then the movement found new traction, bringing "ex-gay" centers solidly into the on-going debate over same-sex issues.

In 1998, many of the ex-gay groups and the religious right, led by Tony Perkins' Family Research Council, launched a massive newspaper campaign highlighting the work of the ex-gay ministries. The campaign even landed then Exodus International presidents John and Anne Paulk on the cover of *Newsweek*. But in 2000, John Paulk was photographed inside a Washington D.C. gay bar, forcing him to step down from Exodus and plunging the organization into public embarrassment.

After quietly existing in over a hundred centers across the country throughout the turn of the century, the number of "ex-gay" ministries began to increase due to an increase in funding around the 2000 elections. Focus on the Family began pouring money into the creation of additional sites bolstering their numbers to over 200 including sites in Canada and around the world and in 2003 Love in Action introduced the first structured program specifically for teenagers.

But in summer 2006, the national debate over "reparative" therapy, in particular the teen program, broke out again over the MySpace blogs of a teenager named "Zach". A 16 year-old boy in Memphis, Zach recently came out to his parents in the Spring to which they sent him against his will to Refuge, an intensive Love in Action program. Before leaving home, Zach detailed several of the rules for clients such as reporting sexual fantasies, no eye contact for the first three days and having their belongings searched every morning. Zach's entries quickly spread from friends, to filmmakers, to the media eventually leading to an investigation of Love in Action by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services.

In August 2006, the American Psychological Association issued another warning about the practices of such institutions:

"The APA's concern about the positions espoused by NARTH and so-called conversion therapy is that they are not supported by the science. There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that

sexual orientation can be changed. Our further concern is that the positions espoused by NARTH and Focus on the Family create an environment in which prejudice and discrimination can flourish.”

The American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Association of Social Workers all deny reparative therapy’s very premise. “We are finding that the number of people claiming to be harmed by reparative therapy are increasing, says Dr. Jack Drescher, chair of the American Psychiatric Association’s committee on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues. The APA even went as far as endorsing gay marriage to help reverse the gay stigma, citing evidence that stable, monogamous relationships are beneficial for mental health.

As recently as November 2006, President of the National Association of Evangelicals, Reverend Ted Haggard, was exposed by a male escort who went to the media detailing their sexual encounters, forcing Haggard to step down from both his church and position within NAE. He is now being guided through a sexual conversion therapy by religious leaders. And in December 2006, Rev. Paul Barnes, from the Grace Chapel, resigned from his post though a taped message to his congregation admitting to his long-standing “struggle with homosexuality”.

Following the disclosure of both Haggard and Barnes’ sexuality, *The New York Times* published a series of articles on sexuality and religion in December 2006. The first article (published December 12, 2006), entitled “Gay and Evangelical, Seeking Paths to Acceptance,” deals with the issues confronting gay Christians trying to find a place within both worlds, gay and Christian, seemingly intolerant of each other. The second article “Pastors’ Disclosures May Stir Empathy, Some Evangelicals Say”, published on December 13, 2006 looks at the response from other Christians as their associates fall from grace and the effect it might have on the church going forward. (Both articles are attached). See Oliver “Buzz” Thomas Opinion piece in *USA Today*, “When Religion Loses Its Credibility” for further debate on the subject (attached).

So as the country moves into the latter part of our decade, the debate over homosexuality and religion, from gay Episcopal bishops, to same-sex marriage and the “ex-gay” movement, wages on.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Peterson Toscano – “Doin Time in the Homo No Mo Halfway House”.
- Rev. Mel White. “What the Bible Does – and Doesn’t Say – About Homosexuality”
- Wayne Besen “Anything But Straight”
- Tanya Ezren “Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement”
- Gaychristian.net
- Christianlesbians.com

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The New York Times

Gay and Evangelical, Seeking Paths of Acceptance

By NEELA BANERJEE

Published: December 12, 2006

RALEIGH, N.C. — Justin Lee believes that the Virgin birth was real, that there is a heaven and a hell, that salvation comes through Christ alone and that he, the 29-year-old son of Southern Baptists, is an evangelical Christian.

Just as he is certain about the tenets of his faith, Mr. Lee also knows he is gay, that he did not choose it and cannot change it.

To many people, Mr. Lee is a walking contradiction, and most evangelicals and gay people alike consider Christians like him horribly deluded about their faith. “I’ve gotten hate mail from both sides,” said Mr. Lee, who runs gaychristian.net, a Web site with 4,700 registered users that mostly attracts gay evangelicals.

The difficulty some evangelicals have in coping with same-sex attraction was thrown into relief on Sunday when the pastor of a Denver megachurch, the Rev. Paul Barnes, resigned after confessing to having sex with men. Mr. Barnes said he had often cried himself to sleep, begging God to end his attraction to men.

His departure followed by only a few weeks that of the Rev. [Ted Haggard](#), then the president of the National Association of Evangelicals and the pastor of a Colorado Springs megachurch, after a male prostitute said Mr. Haggard had had a relationship with him for three years.

Though he did not publicly admit to the relationship, in a letter to his congregation, Mr. Haggard said that he was “guilty of sexual immorality” and that he had struggled all his life with impulses he called “repulsive and dark.”

While debates over homosexuality have upset many Christian and Jewish congregations, gay evangelicals come from a tradition whose leaders have led the fight against greater acceptance of homosexuals.

Gay evangelicals seem to have few paths carved out for them: they can leave religion behind; they can turn to theologically liberal congregations that often differ from the tradition they grew up in; or they can enter programs to try to change their behavior, even their orientation, through prayer and support.

But as gay men and lesbians grapple with their sexuality and an evangelical upbringing they cherish, some have come to accept both. And like other Christians who are trying to broaden the definition of evangelical to include other, though less charged, concerns like the environment and [AIDS](#), gay evangelicals are trying to expand the understanding of evangelical to include them, too.

“A lot of people are freaked out because their only exposure to evangelicalism was a bad one, and a lot ask, ‘Why would you want to be part of a group that doesn’t like you very much?’ ” Mr. Lee said. “But it’s not about membership in groups. It’s about what I believe. Just because some people who believe the same things I do aren’t very loving doesn’t mean I stop believing what I do.”

The most well-known gay evangelical may be the Rev. Mel White, a former seminary professor and ghostwriter for the Rev. [Jerry Falwell](#). Mr. White, who came out publicly in 1993, helped found Soulforce, a group that challenges Christian denominations and other institutions regarding their stance on homosexuality.

But over the last 30 years, rather than push for change, gay evangelicals have mostly created organizations where they are accepted.

Members of Evangelicals Concerned, founded in 1975 by a therapist from New York, Ralph Blair, worship in cities including Denver, New York and Seattle. Web sites have emerged, like Christianlesbians.com and Mr. Lee’s gaychristian.net, whose members include gay people struggling with

coming out, those who lead celibate lives and those in relationships.

Justin Cannon, 22, a seminarian who grew up in a conservative Episcopal parish in Michigan, started two Web sites, including an Internet dating site for gay Christians.

“About 90 percent of the profiles say ‘Looking for someone with whom I can share my faith and that it would be a central part of our relationship,’ ” Mr. Cannon said, “so not just a life partner but someone with whom they can connect spiritually.”

But for most evangelicals, gay men and lesbians cannot truly be considered Christian, let alone evangelical.

“If by gay evangelical is meant someone who claims both to abide by the authority of Scripture and to engage in a self-affirming manner in homosexual unions, then the concept gay evangelical is a contradiction,” Robert A. J. Gagnon, associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, said in an e-mail message.

“Scripture clearly, pervasively, strongly, absolutely and counterculturally opposes all homosexual practice,” Dr. Gagnon said. “I trust that gay evangelicals would argue otherwise, but Christian proponents of homosexual practice have not made their case from Scripture.”

In fact, both sides look to Scripture. The debate is largely over seven passages in the Bible about same-sex couplings. Mr. Gagnon and other traditionalists say those passages unequivocally condemn same-sex couplings.

Those who advocate acceptance of gay people assert that the passages have to do with acts in the context of idolatry, prostitution or violence. The Bible, they argue, says nothing about homosexuality as it is largely understood today as an enduring orientation, or about committed long-term, same-sex relationships.

For some gay evangelicals, their faith in God helped them override the biblical restrictions people preached to them. One lesbian who attends Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh said she grew up in a devout Southern Baptist family and still has what she calls the “faith of a child.” When she figured out at 13 that she was gay, she believed there must have been something wrong with the Bible for condemning her.

“I always knew my own heart: that I loved the Lord, I loved Jesus, loved the church and felt the Spirit move through me when we sang,” said the woman, who declined to be identified to protect her partner’s privacy. “I felt that if God created me, how is that wrong?”

But most evangelicals struggle profoundly with reconciling their faith and homosexuality, and they write to people like Mr. Lee.

There is the 65-year-old minister who is a married father and gay. There are the teenagers considering suicide because they have been taught that gay people are an abomination. There are those who have tried the evangelical “ex-gay” therapies and never became straight.

Mr. Lee said he and his family, who live in Raleigh, have been through almost all of it. His faith was

central to his life from an early age, he said. He got the nickname Godboy in high school. But because of his attraction to other boys, he wept at night and begged God to change him. He was certain God would, but when that did not happen, he said, it called everything into question.

He knew no one who was gay who could help, and he could not turn to his church. So for a year, Mr. Lee went to the library almost every day with a notebook and the bright blue leather-bound Bible his parents had given him. He set up his Web site to tell his friends what he was learning through his readings, but e-mail rolled in from strangers, because, he says, other gay evangelicals came to understand they were not alone.

“I told them I don’t have the answers,” Mr. Lee said, “but we can pray together and see where God takes us.”

But even when they accept themselves, gay evangelicals often have difficulty finding a community. They are too Christian for many gay people, with the evangelical rock they listen to and their talk of loving God. Mr. Lee plans to remain sexually abstinent until he is in a long-term, religiously blessed relationship, which would make him a curiosity in straight and gay circles alike.

Gay evangelicals seldom find churches that fit. Congregations and denominations that are open to gay people are often too liberal theologically for evangelicals. Yet those congregations whose preaching is familiar do not welcome gay members, those evangelicals said.

Clyde Zuber, 49, and Martin Fowler, 55, remember sitting on the curb outside Lakeview Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Tex., almost 20 years ago, Sunday after Sunday, reading the Bible together, after the pastor told them they were not welcome inside. The men met at a Dallas church and have been together 23 years. In Durham, N.C., they attend an Episcopal church and hold a Bible study for gay evangelicals every Friday night at their home.

“Our faith is the basis of our lives,” said Mr. Fowler, a soft-spoken professor of philosophy. “It means that Jesus is the Lord of our household, that we resolve differences peacefully and through love.”

Their lives seem a testament to all that is changing and all that holds fast among evangelicals. Their parents came to their commitment ceremony 20 years ago, their decision ultimately an act of loyalty to their sons, Mr. Zuber said.

But Mr. Zuber’s sister and brother-in-law in Virginia remain convinced that the couple is sinning. “They’re worried we’re going to hell,” Mr. Zuber said. “They say, ‘We love you, but we’re concerned.’ ”

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The New York Times

Pastors’ Disclosures May Stir Empathy, Some Evangelicals Say

By NEELA BANERJEE

Published: December 13, 2006

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12 — Confessions by two evangelical Christian ministers to having same-sex relationships could lead evangelicals to feel greater compassion toward gay men and lesbians, especially those in their congregations, some evangelical leaders said Tuesday.

But none expected a broader re-examination of the belief, widely held by evangelicals, that homosexuality is sinful.

On Sunday, the pastor of a suburban Denver church, the Rev. Paul Barnes, resigned after admitting to having had sex with men. Mr. Barnes said he had often cried himself to sleep, begging God to end his attraction to men.

Mr. Barnes's departure came just a few weeks after that of the Rev. Ted Haggard, who had been president of the National Association of Evangelicals and senior pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs. A male prostitute said Mr. Haggard had had a relationship with him for three years.

"I honestly don't think there is significant rethinking on evangelical positions on homosexuality, but I think there may be greater compassion," said the Rev. Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals and senior pastor of Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minn.

"Those who don't have homosexual inclinations can be judgmental towards those that do," Mr. Anderson said. "When you discover people you know and respect are struggling with homosexuality, suddenly you're more compassionate because they are real people who are around you, members of your church and community, and the compassion level rises. It should."

The Rev. Dr. Tony Campolo, an American Baptist minister and a professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University in Pennsylvania, said he was opposed to what he called "same-gender eroticism." Dr. Campolo said that many evangelicals, influenced by Christian radio, had come to believe that homosexuality was largely a choice and that homosexuals "choose to be evil."

Others, he said, subscribe to theories, now discredited by psychologists, that men become gay because they had a domineering mother or were victims of sexual abuse as children.

"People on Christian radio have portrayed gays as insatiable, promiscuous people, which they are not," Dr. Campolo said, "and they describe gay people as fungus on society that must be exterminated."

Given the sadness many evangelicals say they feel for the former pastors, he added, "what we're seeing here is a growing awareness among evangelicals that they have oversimplified, made false judgments and been very, very mean to the gay and lesbian community."

The Rev. H. B. London Jr., vice president for church and clergy at Focus on the Family, is part of the three-member team working with Mr. Haggard to restore the "health and wellness" of his family. Mr. London said he believed that homosexuality was a choice and that childhood trauma could make someone gay. But he urged that "we have to stop whatever gay bashing there is."

Mr. London said he feared that the resignations of the two pastors could make people suspect all senior clergy members. "When people see a priest or rabbi or pastor fail morally," he said, "they begin to wonder if their pastor has a fault or weakness that might be discovered."

Evangelical pastors said it was too early to predict whether other ministers or laypeople struggling with homosexuality might feel more free to come forward.

The Rev. Randy McCain, pastor of Open Door Community Church in Sherwood, Ark., a Little Rock

suburb, started his evangelical church as an openly gay man, and many of his 120 congregants are gay or relatives of gay men and lesbians. Mr. McCain said he hoped the disclosures would shake the certainty many evangelicals had about homosexuality.

But he said he doubted that other ministers would confess to same-sex attraction, because they could lose their churches and the lives they had built. He added that while leaders of large churches might hide their homosexuality, he had heard of many small churches like his where gay people were accepted, “a ministry under the surface, and not on the radar screen.”

“I think that’s the way God is moving, often under the radar,” Mr. McCain said. “It’s like finding a baby in a manger: you don’t expect to find God there. And it’s like that when, say, the parents of some of our members come to our church.”

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USA Today

When religion loses its credibility

Galileo was persecuted for revealing what we now know to be the truth regarding Earth’s place in our solar system. Today, the issue is homosexuality, and the persecution is not of one man but of millions. Will Christian leaders once again be on the wrong side of history?

By Oliver "Buzz" Thomas

What if Christian leaders are wrong about homosexuality? I suppose, much as a newspaper maintains its credibility by setting the record straight, church leaders would need to do the same:

Correction: Despite what you might have read, heard or been taught throughout your churchgoing life, homosexuality is, in fact, determined at birth and is not to be condemned by God's followers.

Based on a few recent headlines, we won't be seeing that admission anytime soon.

Last week, U.S. Roman Catholic bishops took the position that homosexual attractions are "disordered" and that gays should live closeted lives of chastity. At the same time, North Carolina's Baptist State Convention was preparing to investigate churches that are too gay-friendly. Even the more liberal Presbyterian Church (USA) had been planning to put a minister on trial for conducting a marriage ceremony for two women before the charges were dismissed on a technicality. All this brings me back to the question: What if we're wrong?

Religion's only real commodity, after all, is its moral authority. Lose that, and we lose our credibility. Lose credibility, and we might as well close up shop.

It's happened to Christianity before, most famously when we dug in our heels over Galileo's challenge to the biblical view that the Earth, rather than the sun, was at the center of our solar system. You know the story. Galileo was persecuted for what turned out to be incontrovertibly true. For many, especially in the scientific community, Christianity never recovered.

This time, Christianity is in danger of squandering its moral authority by continuing its pattern of discrimination against gays and lesbians in the face of mounting scientific evidence that sexual orientation has little or nothing to do with choice. To the contrary, whether sexual orientation arises as a result of the mother's hormones or the child's brain structure or DNA, it is almost certainly an accident of birth. The point is this: Without choice, there can be no moral culpability.

Answer in Scriptures

So, why are so many church leaders (not to mention Orthodox Jewish and Muslim leaders) persisting in their view that homosexuality is wrong despite a growing stream of scientific evidence that is likely to become a torrent in the coming years? The answer is found in Leviticus 18. "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination."

As a former "the Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it" kind of guy, I am sympathetic with any Christian who accepts the Bible at face value. But here's the catch. Leviticus is filled with laws imposing the death penalty for everything from eating catfish to sassing your parents. If you accept one as the absolute, unequivocal word of God, you must accept them all.

For many of gay America's loudest critics, the results are unthinkable. First, no more football. At least not without gloves. Handling a pig skin is an abomination. Second, no more Saturday games even if you can get a new ball. Violating the Sabbath is a capital offense according to Leviticus. For the over-40 crowd, approaching the altar of God with a defect in your sight is taboo, but you'll have plenty of company because those menstruating or with disabilities are also barred.

The truth is that mainstream religion has moved beyond animal sacrifice, slavery and the host of primitive rituals described in Leviticus centuries ago. Selectively hanging onto these ancient proscriptions for gays and lesbians exclusively is unfair according to anybody's standard of ethics. We lawyers call it "selective enforcement," and in civil affairs it's illegal.

A better reading of Scripture starts with the book of Genesis and the grand pronouncement about the world God created and all those who dwelled in it. "And, the Lord saw that it was good." If God created us and if everything he created is good, how can a gay person be guilty of being anything more than what God created him or her to be?

Turning to the New Testament, the writings of the Apostle Paul at first lend credence to the notion that homosexuality is a sin, until you consider that Paul most likely is referring to the Roman practice of pederasty, a form of pedophilia common in the ancient world. Successful older men often took boys into their homes as concubines, lovers or sexual slaves. Today, such sexual exploitation of minors is no longer tolerated. The point is that the sort of long-term, committed, same-sex relationships that are being debated today are not addressed in the New Testament. It distorts the biblical witness to apply verses written in one historical context (i.e. sexual exploitation of children) to contemporary situations between two monogamous partners of the same sex. Sexual promiscuity is condemned by the Bible whether it's between gays or straights. Sexual fidelity is not.

What would Jesus do?

For those who have lingering doubts, dust off your Bibles and take a few hours to reacquaint yourself with the teachings of Jesus. You won't find a single reference to homosexuality. There are teachings on money, lust, revenge, divorce, fasting and a thousand other subjects, but there is nothing on homosexuality. Strange, don't you think, if being gay were such a moral threat?

On the other hand, Jesus spent a lot of time talking about how we should treat others. First, he made clear it is not our role to judge. It is God's. ("Judge not lest you be judged." Matthew 7:1) And, second, he commanded us to love other people as we love ourselves.

So, I ask you. Would you want to be discriminated against? Would you want to lose your job, housing or benefits because of something over which you had no control? Better yet, would you like it if society told you that you couldn't visit your lifelong partner in the hospital or file a claim on his behalf if he were murdered?

The suffering that gay and lesbian people have endured at the hands of religion is incalculable, but they can look expectantly to the future for vindication. Scientific facts, after all, are a stubborn thing. Even our religious beliefs must finally yield to them as the church in its battle with Galileo ultimately realized. But for religion, the future might be ominous. Watching the growing conflict between medical science and religion over homosexuality is like watching a train wreck from a distance. You can see it coming for miles and sense the inevitable conclusion, but you're powerless to stop it. The more church leaders dig in their heels, the worse it's likely to be.

Oliver "Buzz" Thomas is a Baptist minister and author of an upcoming book, 10 Things Your Minister Wants to Tell You (But Can't Because He Needs the Job).

ABOUT THE CAST

Chad Allen (“Mark,” Producer)

Chad Allen began his professional acting career at the early age of five. After starring in hit television series such as “St. Elsewhere”, “My Two Dads”, “Our House”, and “Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman”, Chad made the move into producing and formed The Creative Outlet theater company. Together with Emmy-award-winning actress Heather Tom, the non-profit company took the LA theater scene by storm with their first production – the Neil Simon classic, Biloxi Blues.

Ignited by tremendous critical and audience response, Chad rode the momentum, presenting numerous productions and struck gold with the first-ever Los Angeles staging of Terence McNally’s Corpus Christie. Chad has continued his involvement in theater serving as a creative board member with New York’s Revelation Theater as well as a seat on the steering committee for the Gay and Lesbian Theater Alliance.

Continuing his work in television and film as well, Chad has done numerous guest roles on shows including the final season of “NYPD Blue”, “Cold Case”, “Criminal Minds”, and films like *Paris* which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, and a best supporting actor award from the New York Independent Film Festival for his work in the film, *Getting Out*. Chad was recently seen in the worldwide theatrical release *The End of the Spear* and is starring in HERE TV!’s “Donald Stratchey Mystery Series”, six feature films, the first two of which (“Third Man Out” and “Shock To the System”) have already been produced. His much anticipated feature film, *Downtown* is being released the coming spring nationwide.

In 2002, Chad founded Mythgarden, along with partners Christopher Racster and Robert Gant. Together these film and TV veterans hope to forever turn the page on gay and lesbian television and filmmaking by creating quality content that pushes the envelope of what’s been done before in the GLBT community and beyond. After their first feature, *Save Me*, produced with Tetrahedron Productions and Garbus Kroupa Entertainment, Mythgarden will also be joining actor David Duchovny and the HERE network to produce, “The Way Out”, a beautiful love story about two seniors’ who fall in love in a home for the aging, and “Elliot Loves”, a gritty Latino coming of age story set in East Los Angeles.

Chad put his body and ideals on the line this summer riding his bike six hundred miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles in the 5th annual AIDS/lifecycle. He is most proud to be working closely with SOULFORCE to fight the bigotry and harmful rhetoric of religious fundamentalism, having just marched in Colorado Springs to confront FOCUS ON THE FAMILY, and has just accepted a seat on the Honorary Board of the Matthew Shepard foundation.

Robert Gant
(“Scott,” Producer)

From 2001 to 2005, Robert Gant appeared on television screens across the nation as one of the stars of Showtime’s hit television series, “Queer as Folk.” Most recently, Robert inked a deal with Viacom-owned, MTV-run gay cable network, LOGO, to develop, star in, and executive produce a new, soon-to-be announced television show for the network.

In addition to QAF, he recurred as the eccentric principal, Calvin Krupps, on the WB’s “Popular” and as Caroline’s boyfriend, Trevor, on NBC’s “Caroline in the City.” Gant has had many notable guest spots on such TV hits as “Friends,” where he played one of two gorgeous men Phoebe was dating simultaneously, “Veronica’s Closet,” “Becker,” “Melrose Place,” “Ellen,” “Providence,” “Pepper Dennis,” and “The Closer.” He also appeared in the independent films “Live,” “The Contract,” “Fits and Starts” and “Marie and Bruce.”

Robert’s love of acting and performing began at an early age. He started doing television commercials and joined the Screen Actors Guild at the age of ten in his home state of Florida. He went on to attend undergrad at the University of Pennsylvania and law school at Georgetown University. While studying, he never gave up on his true passions and took part in numerous theatrical productions. Interestingly, it was his career as an attorney that brought him to Los Angeles when he accepted a position with the world’s largest law firm. In a twist of fate, the firm’s Los Angeles office was closed soon after. Taking that as an omen, he made the decision to focus all of his time on the entertainment business.

To that end, his time in Hollywood is not limited to performing. Along with producing partners Chad Allen, Christopher Racster, and Craig Dougherty, Robert is a producing partner in the film and television production company, Mythgarden. SAVE ME is a co-production of Mythgarden, Tetrahedron Productions and Garbus Kroupa Entertainment

While he gives time to a number of philanthropic and political causes, such as HRC (by which he was given their National Equality Award), GLAAD, and Lambda Legal, Robert’s “torch issue” is that of aging in the gay community. He supports such organizations as SAGE (Senior Advocacy for GLBT Elders), which named him their first Honorary Elder, and GLEH (Gay and Lesbian Elder Housing), on which he serves as Honorary Board Member.

Judith Light
(“Gayle,” Producer)

Judith Light has captivated audiences worldwide since her portrayal of Angela Bower on the hit comedy series “Who’s the Boss?”. Her award-winning career has spanned a diversity of roles in television, theater and film.

Judith’s television career began with her two-time Best Actress Emmy award winning turn as Karen Wolek on “One Life to Live”. She can currently be seen on the NBC hit series “Law & Order: Special Victim’s Unit” in the recurring role of Supreme Court Judge Elizabeth Donnelly and on the ABC series “Ugly Betty” in the recurring role of Claire Meade. She has also starred in “Phenom” (created by James Brooks), “The Stones” (created by Max Mutchnick, David Kohan and Jenji Kohan) and in over 15 television movies, including her role as Ryan’s mother, Jeanne, in “The Ryan White Story”.

A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University with a BFA, Judith worked in repertory theatres throughout the United States and Canada and did a USO Tour of Guys and Dolls with William Atherton and Paula Wagner throughout Europe. Judith’s Broadway debut was in A Doll’s House with Liv Ullmann and

followed with a season at the Eugene O’Neil Playwright’s conference. She returned to the New York theatre to do the Pulitzer Prize winning play, Wit for the MCC Theatre where her performance won her the Helen Hayes and Eliot Norton awards for best actress on the National Tour. Additionally Judith starred in Hedda Gabler directed by Michael Kahn, in Washington DC, for which she received a Helen Hayes Award nomination, Sorrows and Rejoicings, by Athol Fugard, in New York at the Second Stage, and in LA at The Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles Reprise! Broadways Best, Stephen Sondheim’s Company, and joined the Ojai Playwrights Conference for their 2004 season. She also appeared in MCC’s production of Colder Than Here with Brian Murray, Lily Rabe and Sarah Paulson, at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York for their 2005 season.

Judith recently starred in three independent films, *The Shoemaker* with Danny Aiello, *Ira & Abby* by Jennifer Westfeldt, with Robert Klein, Fred Willard, and Frances Conroy; and most recently, *Save Me*, produced under her own Tetrahedron Productions label in collaboration with Mythgarden and Garbus Kroupa Entertainment. Tetrahedron was formed in 1986, along with her husband, writer Robert Desiderio and her managers, Herb Hamsher and Jonathan Stoller. Tetrahedron has been responsible for several made-for-TV movies, the CBS series, “The Simple Life”, as well as independent features, THE GRAFITTI ARTIST and DREAMBOY.

Judith is a Board Member and advocate for many organizations and charities representing AIDS-related and Human Rights issues including; Broadway Cares: Equity Fights AIDS, Faith in America, Project Angel Food, The Matthew Shepard Foundation, The National Aids Memorial Grove, The Point Foundation, The Rome Chamber Music Festival, The Trevor Project.

Judith lives in Los Angeles with her husband, writer/actor, Robert Desiderio.

Stephen Lang (“Ted”)

Stephen Lang's films include *Last Exit To Brooklyn*, *Tombstone*, *Manhunter*, *Gettysburg*, *The Hard Way*, and a critically acclaimed performance as "Stonewall" Jackson in *Gods and Generals*. His work on television includes series regular roles in Michael Mann's “Crime Story” and as the "One-armed Man" in “The Fugitive.” His many telefilms include “Death of a Salesman,” “A Town Has Turned to Dust,” and the title role in “Babe Ruth.” His extensive work in the theatre includes world premieres of Aaron Sorkin's A Few Good Men; Arthur Miller's Finishing The Picture; Steve Tesich's The Speed Of Darkness; John Patrick Shanley's Defiance. Under the auspices of the NEA and DOD, he has toured his solo play, Beyond Glory, to military bases and ships across the globe, from Guam to Guantanamo and from the Korean DMZ to the Persian Gulf. Beyond Glory has also played extended runs at Chicago's Goodman Theatre and Arlington's Theatre at the Women in Military Service Memorial.

Nominations and awards include multiple Joseph Jefferson and Helen Hayes awards, as well as Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk and Tony nominations. A recipient of The Grace Prize, Mr. Lang is Co-Artistic Director of The Actors Studio.

He has just completed work on the indie film *From Mexico With Love* and *The Bronx Is Burning*, a mini-series for ESPN.

ABOUT THE CREW

Robert Cary (Director)

Robert Cary, a Los Angeles native, is the director of the feature film *Ira and Abby*, which received the Audience Favorite award following its premiere at the 2006 Los Angeles Film Festival and also received the Audience Award at the 2006 Boston Jewish Film Festival.

He is also the director and co-writer of *Anything But Love*, starring Andrew McCarthy, Isabel Rose and Eartha Kitt, released by Samuel Goldwyn. *Anything But Love* appeared in over a dozen film festivals internationally, and received numerous audience and jury awards. *Save Me* marks his third feature film as a director.

In addition to his film work, Robert is the lyricist and co-librettist of Palm Beach, produced in 2005 by the La Jolla Playhouse and directed by Des McAnuff; Palm Beach is slated for a pre-Broadway run in Toronto in the summer of 2007. Robert is also the co-librettist and lyricist of musical adaptations of The Thomas Crown Affair and Heartbreakers, both commissioned by MGM On Stage, and he is the co-author of the libretto for the upcoming Broadway adaptation of the film Flashdance. He is a graduate of Yale College and lives in New York and Los Angeles.

Craig Chester (Story)

A pioneering actor in the independent film world, Craig Chester scored an IFP Spirit Award nomination for his role in the landmark queer drama *Swoon*, and later appeared in Sundance favorites *Grief*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, *Frisk*, *Kiss Me Guido* and *The Misadventures of Margaret*. His television credits include *Sex and The City*, *Law & Order* and the ABC MOW *Out of Darkness*, with Diana Ross. Chester's forays into writing have proved fruitful as well. St. Martin's Press published his memoir, "Why The Long Face? The Adventures of a Truly Independent Actor" in 2003 and he recently completed Rosie O'Donnell's new series *The Big Gay Sketch Show*, debuting Spring 2007 on LOGO. His directorial debut, *Adam & Steve*, was released theatrically in April.

Alan Hines (Story)

Alan Hines wrote the screenplay adaptation of his novel, Square Dance, which starred Winona Ryder, Rob Lowe, Jane Alexander, and Jason Robards. Other feature film credits include: *A Stranger In The Kingdom*, *O'Keeffe and Stieglitz*, and upcoming *First Comes Love*. Hines has written many movies for television, including "Ambulance Girl" (Lifetime), which starred – and was directed by - Kathy Bates, "Guilt By Association" (Court TV), "In Sickness and In Health" (CBS), "Too Close to Home" (CBS), "Willing to Kill: The Texas Cheerleader Story" (ABC), and "Breaking the Surface: The Greg Louganis Story (USA)." "The Interrogation of Michael Crowe" (Court TV) received a Peabody Award in 2003. He is also the recipient of numerous awards for his fiction, including the D.H. Lawrence Fellowship.

Robert Desiderio (Screenwriter)

Robert started his career in radio and theatre in Boston. He met his wife, Judith Light, while working on the soap opera "One Life to Live". Soon after, Robert went to Los Angeles to star in a television movie, "Princess & the Cabbie" and a pilot "Moonlight", written by David Chase.

Robert and Judith subsequently moved to L.A where he starred in the first dramatic series for HBO, "Maximum Security", produced by Ron Howard, for which he was nominated as Best Actor for an Ace Award.

As well as starring in numerous Movies of the Week he has had featured roles in “Oh God, You Devil” and “Gross Anatomy”.

Robert also starred in the series “Heart of the City”, was a regular on “Knots Landing”, and appeared as the rival bar owner, Gary, on “Cheers”. Most recently Robert recurred on “The Sopranos”.

Currently Robert is focusing on writing and is developing a television series called, “Awakening.” Robert also works in voiceovers.

Herb Hamsher (Producer)

Herb Hamsher has had several careers over the years. After getting his Ph. D. in Clinical Psychology he became a professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Rochester. Three years later he moved to Temple University where he was an Associate Professor and Director of Clinical Services until 1980. At the time, professors were becoming unionized and the notion of potentially going on strike for a pay raise convinced him that it was time to leave the ivory tower.

During his tenure at the University Herb had an active private psychotherapy practice, conducted personal growth seminars, and consulted with business leaders and multinational corporations. It was also at this time that he worked with John Denver on his philanthropic activities, particularly assisting with John’s service on The President’s Commission on World Hunger as well as building The Windstar Foundation, his vehicle for impacting on national and world issues. It was through this relationship that Herb moved to Aspen, Colorado which still remains home-base, although his multitude of involvements keeps him away from there more than he is there.

For the last twenty years, Herb has also worked with the actress and AIDS/ Human Rights activist, Judith Light. With his partner, Jonathan, he has for a long time managed not only her career but also that of her husband, actor Robert Desiderio. The four of them have a production company, Tetrahedron Productions, Herb’s producing credits include numerous television movies, “Too Close to Home”, “A Husband, A Wife, and A Lover”, and “Murder At My Door”. He created and was a producer of the CBS series, “The Simple Life” starring Judith Light. Herb’s current producing talents have moved him from television to motion pictures. He was the executive producer of the internationally acclaimed featured film by James Bolton *The Graffiti Artist*. Currently he’s in the midst of producing two new independent feature films *Save Me* by Robert Cary, produced in association with Mythgarden and Garbus Kroupa Entertainment, and *Dreamboy*, by James Bolton, which is also a production of Garbus Kroupa Entertainment.

Herb is also instrumental in the creation of Indie-Pictures the newest Theatrical / DVD distribution company specifically designed to support the independent filmmaker. With his leadership and inspiration Indie-Pictures has become the newest art house label for Ryko Distribution of New York and Warner Music Group, with current releases of the GLADD nominated documentary *We are Dad* by Michel Horvat and future releases of two highly acclaimed features films in spring of 2007: *Idol* by Chris Long and Mike Heim and *Nick Name and The Normals* by Howie Skora.

Since AIDS began to decimate the Gay community, Herb has committed more of himself and his passion to fighting the pandemic, to confronting the realities uncovered by our experience with the disease, and with working to add to the strength, unity, and spiritual base of the Gay and Lesbian community. He is an advocate for many organizations and charities representing AIDS- related and Human Rights issues including; The Names Project, National AIDS Memorial Grove, Project Angel Food, The Trevor Project, Hollywood Health and Society and serves as a Director for The Point Foundation.

**Christopher Racster
(Producer)**

An award-winning Indie film producer and community activist, Racster is achieving a reputation as the “go-to-guy” for the production of quality Queer themed indie films, partnering with some of the best-known names in the arena.

In addition to *Save Me*, 2006 also saw the theatrical debut of his award-winning festival favorite film, *April's Shower*, with partners and out-celebrities, Honey Labrador (Queer Eye for the Straight Girl) and actress/director, Trish Doolan. This success was followed quickly by the theatrical release of his film, *Say Uncle*, from actor, writer, director Peter Paige of Queer as Folk fame.

On the small screen in 2006, LOGO acquired Racster's short film *Little Black Boot* (sponsored by Power-Up) where it zoomed to the top of their charts, eventually rated their top short film by audiences. *Little Black Boot*, debuted at Sundance and garnered numerous awards and attention from other festivals around the world, including PlanetOut's Best Short Film Award. Other notable film projects include the festival favorite shorts, *The Bug In My Ear* and *The Handkerchief*.

In October 2003, Racster paired with long time friends Robert Gant (“Queer as Folk”) and Chad Allen (“Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman”), to launch Mythgarden, a production company specializing in quality gay and lesbian content for television, stage and film. After *Save Me*, their first project completed with Tetrahedron Productions and Garbus Kroupa Entertainment, the team has surged forward and signed two new film deals. HERE! has partnered with Mythgarden and David Duchovny in the development and production of *The Way Out*, about the elder gay issue and Mythgarden has teamed with Funnyboy Films in the production of the feature film *Elliot Loves* about the loves of a young, gay, urban Latino.

Prior to moving into film, Racster was Senior Vice President of B|W|R Public Relations, a large Entertainment PR firm based in Los Angeles and New York. Racster handled branding, events and public relations for international corporations such as BMW, Qantas Airways, Ketel One Vodka, Nike's Brand Jordan and RealNetworks among others.

Racster came to BWR from his position at Spelling Entertainment website AsSeenIn.com where he was Executive Director of Marketing, PR and Advertising. A revolutionary infotainment platform, AsSeenIn.com served as a central fan site for dozens of productions such as “Charmed”, “That 70's Show” and “Sabrina, The Teenage Witch”. While at AsSeenIn, Racster began as the Executive Director of the Production Resources Department, where he added over 200 new vendors. This led to a new role overseeing that department and assuming additional duties as head of Marketing, PR and Advertising. In his term at AsSeenIn, Racster negotiated landmark joint-marketing plans with companies such as Ebay, AOL, Viacom and Carsey, Werner, Mandabach.

His career began in Hollywood as an event producer under his company, Archer Productions, building charity events such as Divine Design for Project Angel Food into a nationally recognized multimillion-dollar fundraiser. This led to long term contracts with GameWorks, opening their venues nationally, and MTV Networks, working on the live televised productions of the “MTV Music Awards” and productions of the “MTV Movie Awards”, “Rock-N-Jock”, Nickelodeon's “Big Help” and “Kid's Choice Awards” and “VH1's Fashion Awards”.

Over the years Racster has received numerous mentions and awards including listing in the International Who's Who directory and being named one of the 25 Most Influential People In California Fashion by California Apparel News. Community activities include membership in The Producers Guild, FIND, Power-Up and OUTFEST and past participation on the development committee for Project Angel Food.

James Garbus
(Executive Producer)

James Garbus is a New York City attorney whose practice has gained him extensive experience in making deals, particularly in corporate finance and mergers and acquisitions. Throughout his career, Garbus has formed relationships with some of the entertainment industry's major players extending from Los Angeles and New York to Toronto and abroad. In the last two years he has formed motion picture production companies and has been developing film projects. He joined forces with Chicago real estate developer, Robert Kroupa. . The two have come together to form Garbus Kroupa Entertainment an entertainment finance and production company.

The company has completed production on *Save Me* (produced with Mythgarden and Tetrahedron Productions) and *Dream Boy* and is currently in pre-production on *Brooklyn to Manhattan*. *Latin Lyrics* began pre-production in December 2006. It is a musically-charged drama about the conflict between three generations of a Latino family living in New York City.

Dream Boy is based on Jim Grimsley's award-winning novel of the same name and tells the story of the painful first love of two adolescent boys in the rural south. "Dream Boy" recently won Panavision's New Filmmaker Program Award.

Brooklyn to Manhattan is a high-intensity action film which takes place over and under New York City's underground.

Garbus Kroupa Entertainment is also serving as Executive Producers on Bobby Jones Comedy All Stars, a gospel comedy show performed live on June 11th in Atlanta, Georgia and will be available on DVD in Spring 2007.

Robert Kroupa
(Executive Producer)

Robert Kroupa is a successful Chicago real estate developer, opening a 400 unit conversion in February 2007, as well as published poet, author, inventor and, most recently, a film producer. In spring 2007, his new consumer packaged goods company, NewEra Brands, will be introducing a line of sugar-free mints with no artificial colors or flavors. He has also recently completed a children's book, Just Like You.

Garbus Kroupa Entertainment recently completed production on *Save Me* in association with Mythgarden and Tetrahedron Productions, and *Dream Boy* and is currently in pre-production on *Brooklyn to Manhattan* and *Latin Lyrics*.

SELECTED PRAISE

{Winner! Audience Award – Best Feature – Reel Affirmations Film Festival}

"It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that 'Save Me' is up there with 'Brokeback Mountain' as one of the most powerful gay dramas of recent years." –*Time Out London*

"Appealing, refreshing, wholly convincing...an articulate pocket portrait of genuinely difficult emotions." –Michael Koresky, *Reverse Shot* via *indieWIRE*

"Judith Light [gives] one of the year's best performances." –Chuck Wilson, *The Village Voice*

“A genuine and sympathetic illustration of the painful divide between Christians and gays. A thoughtful, nuanced drama!” –Rafer Guzman, *New York Newsday*

“Compelling, wide-ranging understanding ...ingeniously shows how oppression effects all sides of a familial rift...the actors are intensely committed.” –Armond White, *NY Press*

“Stealthily engaging, not least for being one gay-produced and targeted feature that doesn't condescend to or caricature conservatives. It nails them, though.” –Dennis Harvey, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

“Judith Light absolutely glows in *Save Me*.” –Stephen Schaefer, *Boston Herald*

“(Judith) Light makes Gayle's slow crumble a subtle but horrible thing to behold... (she) is devastatingly good.” –Ty Burr, *Boston Globe*

“The performances, especially those of Gant and Light, are immensely involving.” –Carrie Rickey, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Intelligent direction, admirable even-handedness. Cary's restraint reaps considerable rewards. Judith Light gives an impressive performance." –David Noh, *Film Journal International*

“Touching & Intriguing.” –Owen Gleiberman, *Entertainment Weekly*

“A solid performance by the often underrated Judith Light lends considerable weight ... John Cary's straightforward direction ...(is) never heavy handed.” –Ken Fox, *TV Guide*

“Gritty realism ... You leave thinking that any compassion shown for disturbed souls is better than none and that love can be communicated along with misinformation.” –Ruthe Stein, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“Surprisingly enjoyable ...Allen and Gant utilize a film actor's greatest asset, the ability to allow quiet moments and rigorous under-acting to convey depths of earned feeling that there are no words for.”
–David Lamble *East Bay Express*

“Moving! Cary did his job well ...sensitivity and sensibility come across in his storytelling, and that is a critical strength of this film.” –Gary M. Kramer, *Gay City News*

“Effectively dramatizes the issues without caricaturing or pillorizing either party.”
–Dennis Harvey, *Variety*

“SAVE ME shines a fascinating light of compassion and understanding into the controversial world of ex-gay ministries. Judith Light is an absolute revelation!”
–Dan Karlake, Director of *For The Bible Tells Me So*

“Beautiful simplicity...Remarkable performance.” –Mike Fleming, *Southern Voice*

"B+! First-rate performances and assured direction. Chad Allen is revelatory...Gant's quiet performance is his best screen work." –Dan Loughry, *IN Los Angeles Magazine*

“Moving performances.” –Ben Sher, *Backstage*

“Poignant drama.” –Rene Lynch, *Los Angeles Times*