On Aug. 5, Michigan resident Patrick McAlvey revealed in a Truth Wins Out video the bizarre "therapy" he received from Exodus International counselor Mike Jones, who runs the group's Lansing affiliate, Corduroy Stone.

More than a month later, Exodus continues to shelter and support Jones, while offering silence in the face of scandal. The group has made no effort to investigate McAlvey's charges, nor has it apologized for practicing touch therapy, a controversial practice it supposedly is against.

At the age of 19, McAlvey, who came from a religious background, was terrified that he might be gay. Feeling vulnerable and desperate to "change," he placed his trust in Jones. Michigan's GLBT newspaper, Between the Lines, interviewed McAlvey, now 24, where he elaborated on his therapy sessions with Jones in vivid detail.

"He asked how large my penis was," McAlvey explained. "He asked if I shave my pubic hair. He asked what type of underwear that I wore. He wanted me to describe my sexual fantasies to him and the type of men I'm attracted to. On one occasion, he asked me to take my shirt off and show him how many push-ups I could do, which I did not do."

Exodus may call this "therapy," but where I come from (the real world), this is called foreplay. This is just not acceptable behavior and is predatory when it comes from an authority figure.

In sessions, Jones would also have McAlvey lie in his arms for hour-long intervals - a technique known as "touch therapy." This method would be questionable in any circumstance, but even more so when the counselor who is caressing the client still admits to struggling with his
homosexuality.

On his Web site, Jones acknowledges that he is still having "areas of sexual temptations," is "sexually attracted to other men" and is "still not sexually attracted to women." If this is the case, how is he qualified to help other people change their sexual orientation? And, if Exodus' defines Jones as a success story, why would people waste their time and money on this failed program?

Most importantly, why is a sexually-repressed gay man allowed to place young men in his lap under the auspices of therapy? Imagine the uproar if an older heterosexual therapist was "helping" straight teenagers or young women with such exploitative and quack-like techniques!

Interestingly, Exodus International has a policy statement saying it "is opposed to the therapeutic practice commonly referred to as 'holding/touch therapy'" and that it "does not endorse any individual or organization that is known to use that method."

If this is the case, then why has Exodus failed to launch a probe or discipline Jones, an actual Exodus counselor facing a direct charge that he flagrantly violated the organization's policy?

I tried to get an explanation from Exodus' corporate headquarters in Orlando, Fla. but the group's President, Alan Chambers, and its Vice President, Randy Thomas, refused to return my e-mail or calls. I did reach Mike Jones on the telephone, but he bluntly said, "I really shouldn't be talking to you," and then he abruptly hung up.

Shamefully, Exodus has displayed the "Vatican values" of ignoring charges while keeping the alleged perpetrator in place to potentially do further damage. To this day, if parents in central Michigan want to "help" their teenager become straight, they will be put in contact with Jones. Isn't Exodus the slightest bit concerned that the charges are true and that they are potentially placing future clients in harms way?

It is also alarming that Jones, who works at Michigan State University, uses a school e-mail address, making it appear as if the college supports his counseling. Corduroy Stone's website even says it "focuses its efforts on those in the community of Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan, USA and includes faculty staff and students at Michigan State University."

Why haven't those on staff at the university who are involved with Jones's ministry spoken up and demanded an investigation? It seems that they are either sweeping this case under the carpet or they tacitly approve of Jones' counseling techniques.

This scandal takes on a special significance because Exodus is acquiring Focus on the Family's Love Won Out conferences, beginning in Birmingham, Ala. on Nov. 7. The fancy ex-gay road show caters to religious parents who have gay children. Literature at these events refers mothers and fathers to Exodus, where children might just end up in the hands of someone like Mike Jones.

Exodus may call what they do outreach, but parents should keep a wary eye and monitor where these counselors are actually reaching with their hands-on therapy. It seems that Exodus handles
its scandals much like its programs: it is all about superficial appearances with little interest in the well being of its clients.