

*From the desk of*

**Jay Bakker**  
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January 17th, 2008

Rev. Joel Osteen  
Lakewood Church  
3700 Southwest Freeway  
Houston, TX 77027

**Subject: The American Family Outing**

Dear Rev. Osteen and the congregation of Lakewood Church,

My name is Jay Bakker. I am pastor of Revolution Church in Brooklyn, New York. You may know me as the son of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker.

As you might have heard, I lost my mother this year after a long battle with cancer. This has led me to reflect on the importance of family, as well as the lessons my mother taught me regarding the unconditional love of God. It is in her memory that I write you this letter today.

As a child growing up, I saw a side of the church that to me did not always reflect God's grace. This experience has led me to be concerned for our brothers and sisters in Christ who sometimes may feel rejected and left out of the church.

It is for these reasons that I have decided to be a part of a plan to bring dozens of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender families from around the country, as well as heterosexual families that support them, to visit your congregation on Mother's Day Weekend (Saturday May 10 and Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008) to create meaningful dialogue about homosexuality and Christianity.

This visit is part of the ***American Family Outing***, a collaborative project between Soulforce, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, the National Black Justice Coalition, and COLAGE. It is my understanding that the Executive Director of Soulforce, Jeff Lutes, sent you an initial letter, dated December 3, 2007.

I wanted to follow-up to let you know of my involvement in this important effort to bring true hope and prosperity to all God's children.

So many look to you for leadership, and therefore you and your congregation have an exceptional opportunity to advance respectful and Christ-centered conversation on a topic that too often divides our families and our nation. As Jeff expressed in his letter, we hope that you will collaborate with us in structuring our time together at your church. I invite you to match the families I bring, with a roughly equal number of families from your congregation, and ask that we arrange to share a meal together on Saturday, May 10th or Sunday, May 11th, followed by structured and educational conversation. We are also planning to attend your worship service on Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Together, we can make this an experience that will bless the lives of so many. Please contact me or Jeff Lutes so that we can work together on planning the details.

In John 13:35, Jesus said that your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. I invite you to reflect Christ's unconditional love and participate with us in this event.

In Grace and Hope,

Jay Bakker  
Pastor  
Revolution NYC  
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cc: Victoria Osteen, Paul Osteen, M.D., Dodie Osteen, Kevin Comes, Lisa Comes, Duncan Dodds, Marcos Witt.