

Wellspring

February – May 2009

Isaiah 58.6

All things are possible with God

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



Let's Talk

By Bob Van Domelen

¹² *For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. (Psalm 72:12)*

In 1985, I was introduced to the writing of Leanne Payne whose book, "Broken Image", I threw across the room when it was given to me by a friend. The words of this book were at first alien and even a little frightening. Only by God's grace was I eventually able to read and reread this life-changing work.

Not too long after that, someone sent me a copy of "Homosexuality: An Open Door?" by Colin Cook. It was more of a booklet than a book and I read it several times. What made his booklet perhaps more personal for me was the fact that Cook had claimed freedom from homosexual behavior for a period of eight years. That astonished me because I had never heard of *anyone* claiming such a thing before.

Sadly, he did have a relapse and his fall brought me a considerable amount of stress and anxiety—most of which I directed at God. Why, I mentally shouted, did God place this kind of hope in front of me like a dangling carrot and then pull it away? The answer put on my heart was God's and not mine. To rely on man (others) was to put faith in the wrong place. To rely on God was to have faith; it was to trust that things would work out even when they appeared hopeless.

The first time I attended a Broken Yoke support group meeting, I sat with 15-20 other men of varying ages listening to Bill Windel, the director of the ministry, speak on homosexuality and God's word. Our time together included praise and worship as well as small group sharing. Though I had to drive 65 miles one way, those weekly meetings were filled with meaningful encouragement.

A year or so later, I attended a Leanne Payne Pastoral Care Ministries School at Wheaton College. It was an incredible experience to sit down in a room with 750-800 others, listening hour by hour to Leanne and the members of her team share of God's life-changing miracles.

Her lectures were frequently interrupted by moments of the Holy Spirit, times when everything stopped and we knew that the presence of God was clearly moving among us.

I attended my first Exodus International conference at the Point Loma Nazarene College in San Diego. The man assigned as my room mate was a gentle man with gaping holes in his socks and a hand painted tie given him by his children for Father's Day. He directed a ministry similar to

Broken Yoke Ministries and over the course that week I found him a wonderful listener and a witness of God's love.

That first conference was filled with workshops on things related to the issues of homosexuality and lesbianism. The volume of praise during our worship times rose to levels that I had not heard before—an example, I think, of what the time of praise and worship in every church should be.

Over the years, I have been to Exodus conferences around the country, have presented workshops on various topics, and have gained much from the experiences others shared during those gatherings.

There is a reason that I have shared this brief history with you. All of these experiences were occasions when men and women *talked openly with one another about their struggles, believing in the changes that were and are possible!*

People have a tendency to shy away from such conversations, especially if one party is a struggler and the other is not. This is understandable on a number of levels. Not many people really understand homosexuality or lesbianism in any other format other than the kind of jokes sometimes heard growing up or the kind of current media representations where one is either gay or straight—both are equal choices.

The needy who cry out

Because one often hears or reads about gay rights and issues, it might be expected that those who seek freedom from same-gender attraction and behavior would have an equal public platform. Such is not the case. If anything, some are made to feel that their story of freedom is little more than an attempt to bash those who have accepted their homosexuality or, at best, is evidence of confusion.

In all the years I have been associated with Exodus International ministries, I have never heard any ministry director offer a word of hate against gay people or organizations. Nor have I, to the best of my knowledge, done so personally. To do otherwise would be, in my opinion, to forget that most of us in this kind of ministry have chosen to step away from our own involvement as same-gender attracted individuals in a gay culture.

One characteristic frequently mentioned by those sharing their struggle is the wall of secrecy they have erected as a form of protection. Coming out to family and friends takes considerable courage, and definitely carries the implied question. "Do you still love me even after what I have told you?"

I hear from parents of teens announcing their attraction issues and the first thing parents want to know is “How can we fix this? How can we make our child normal?” I often share that by the time their child declares this attraction, a decision has already been made. The attractions are sometimes contradictory (pleasure versus the morality of the behaviors) but to at least some degree, the attractions have become an identity. “I am gay.” “I am a lesbian.”

More often than not, parents tell me that their child has looked them in the eye and declared, “If I could be straight, I would be. I was born this way because who in their right mind would choose all the conflict facing gays today?”

I won't pretend that this kind of situation is easy on parent or child, but I will offer that communication is critical. There is an attitude, I think, that proclaims “Success in life is to be conflict-free.” Along the same line, “Every issue has a solution; every solution is clearly seen as a healthy and desirable solution; and any solution worth following results in feelings of contentment and the absence of tension.”

I will admit that life outside of attending conferences and support group meetings, can feel like a letdown in some ways. Maybe that's because those occasions give a glimpse of healing and living that rings true in the heart of a struggler whereas daily life does not. Sadly, however, those feeling a conflict with same-gender attraction are not hearing the message of freedom in one place where it should be trumpeted—the church.

Twenty-four years ago, I made a decision to believe that my brokenness could be healed. That decision demanded surrender and as much as I would have preferred, the decision did not erase the attractions from my brain. Over the years, however, I have decided that the occasional attraction was just that, an occasional attraction.

God gave me the courage to be open about the issues in my life but more importantly, day by day He reminds me of His presence and His love. My saying no to me is not the end of my world. My saying no to me turns my mind in other directions and to possibilities I would not have otherwise seen.

Change is definitely possible but it is made more difficult if the desire for change is kept in an emotional closet. Coming out of that closet does not have to be the announcement “I am gay. Deal with it!” Coming out of that closet can be an invitation to talk. So let's talk! □

Reminder: The next *Wellspring* will be published June and then again in October.

Broken Yoke Ministries is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) corporation and operates solely on the contributions of people such as you. All donations to this ministry are tax deductible and will be recognized. While there is no charge for this newsletter, it can only be published if there are funds available to make that possible.

**Send your donations to:
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Wisconsin Ministry Locations

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Meetings in Pewaukee:

Support Group (weekly)

Tuesday, 7:00PM

Website:

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

Newsletter:

Wellspring

Note: This newsletter and some back issues are available in pdf format on our website. If you don't have Adobe Acrobat Reader, there are links that allow you to download that program free.



Redeemed Ministries

A support system for women
Support Group (bi-weekly)
Call 414-607-1935 for info

Reclamation Resources

P.O. Box 1062
Oshkosh, WI 54902
920-303-1041
<http://www.reclamationrc.org>

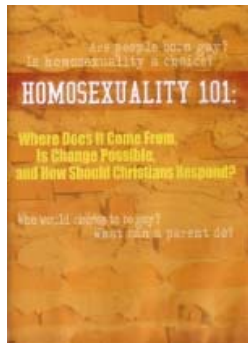
Our Prayer Corner



*Because we care about one another,
we pray . . .*

- For all those who struggle with same-gender attractions, that they accept the identity God had in mind for them from the beginning.
- For those looking for help in southeastern Wisconsin, that they will consider contacting this ministry and its support groups.
- For those wanting to experience an Exodus International Freedom Conference in 2009, that they visit the Exodus website (www.exodus.to) for more information.
- For those wanting to break the silence of their struggle, that they will consider contacting an Exodus ministry closest to them.
- For pastors and church leaders, that they are seen as approachable and that they offer encouragement that is useful and real.
- For the youth of our society, that they are able to see the conflict in the message they hear about the positive side of gay.
- For parents dealing with a child that struggles or has endorsed the gay life, that their love remains constant without sacrificing their beliefs.
- For those seeking a supportive church to help them in their struggle, that clear signs will be given them in affirmation of the goals they have set.
- For the facilitators of our support group meetings, that they feel God's blessings for their efforts.

- For our sister ministry, Redeemed, that women seeking help continue to find this ministry a place of refuge and hope.
- For the ongoing financial support of this ministry, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.



Homosexuality 101

A DVD listing from the Exodus International Resource page available for \$15

Homosexuality is an issue which has been largely misunderstood by much of society, including Christian society. This lack of understanding has led many Christians to mishandle this issue, thus responding ineffectively. Educating Christians on this very important topic will help them become equipped to respond more effectively.

Homosexuality 101 is an educational DVD which provides this much needed information, including a description of the factors that contribute to the development of homosexuality in the life of a child, testimonies by two former homosexuals, a testimony from a parent of a homosexual, and a discussion on how Christians should respond to this issue.

Details

Total Length: 50 minutes (approx)

Presenters: Alan Chambers, Julie Harren, Mike Ensley, Christine Sneeringer (member ministry director), Jack Harren (ministry leader, parent).

Producer: Dr Julie Harren is a licensed professional therapist and professor at Palm Beach Atlantic.

Portions of the Film:

- Roots of homosexuality, development & factors that contribute (20 min)
- Male Testimony (<7 min)
- Female testimony (<10 min)
- Parent's testimony (10 min)
- How the church/Christians should respond (5 min)



2009 International Freedom Conference

Wheaton College
Wheaton, IL
July 14-18, 2009

The following information is taken from the Exodus International website and is found by clicking on the Events tab. As more details become available, you will be able to get specific information at this website but you are able to register online now. (www.exodus.to)

Note: Because Wellspring will not be published again until June, I felt it a good idea to include this information now rather than miss the chance to share it with you. Bob

If you've never attended an Exodus International Freedom Conference, it is the largest gathering in the world for those struggling with or impacted by homosexuality.

For 34 years now, Exodus Freedom Conferences continue to serve as a life changing event for individuals seeking real answers, hope, and freedom. Every year, approximately a thousand people gather together for a week packed with incredible worship, teaching, life stories, and ministry support. The International Freedom Conference attendees include men, women, parents, spouses, and students (ages 18 - 25) from all over the world, including a growing number of pastors, counselors, and other ministry leaders who are committed to becoming better equipped in ministering grace and truth to a world impacted by homosexuality.

Each day of the conference includes talks and testimonies given by the world's leading experts on homosexuality. Over 50 workshops provide opportunities to address the specific family, personal, and ministry issues you're facing. Many social times and small groups are also available for learning from each other.

Special tracks include:

- xScape - daily programs for college-age and younger
- Parents Hospitality - encouragement for parents and families
- ExodusMen- evening times for men who struggle
- Women's Oasis - evening times for women who struggle
- Steadfast - a special one-day program and evening times for married couples

Exodus Freedom Conferences are amazing places to find real answers, hope, direction, and purpose. We hope that you are able to join us as we experience together all that the Lord has for us. Each year promises to be a unique experience as we journey together toward wholeness and holiness.

Remember:

All things are possible with God!

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Dated Material

A Little Humor. . .

Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly Mother. The first said, "I built a big house for our Mother." The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. You remember how Mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can't see very well any more. I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible.



Soon thereafter, Mom sent out her letters of thanks: "Milton," she wrote one son, "the house you built is so huge. I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house." "Gerald," she wrote to another, "I am too old to travel any more. My eyesight isn't what it used to be. I stay most of the time at home, so I rarely use the Mercedes. And the driver is so rude!" "Dearest Donald," she wrote to her third son, "you have the good sense to know what your Mother likes. The chicken was delicious!"