

# Wellspring

August – September 2008 Isaiah 58.6

*All things are possible with God*

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



## What I Have

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>6</sup>Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." <sup>7</sup>Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup>He jumped to his feet and began to walk. (Acts 3.6-8)

One of the cornerstones of homosexual struggle is isolation but not necessarily in the sense of always being alone or of hiding from others. In this case, isolation is usually the fear of having others know of same-gender attractions, especially those close to us. To be too open about such things is to risk rejection.

Ironically, coming out is celebrated by a growing number as finally embracing an identity over which there was little or no control in the first place. But such an announcement is also cause for great distress in families where biblical beliefs are in conflict with same-sex behaviors. In recent years, there has been something of a slide to one end or the other—celebrate/accept same-gender attractions or adamantly oppose/openly condemn both the condition and the individual.

Though there are support systems such as Exodus International where those who struggle with and reject the condition as incompatible with their beliefs can find help, these organizations are seen as out of touch with the times or worse, homophobic. Homophobic is, by the way, a word that is assigned to anyone not in the celebrate/accept camp despite the depth of its true meaning.

The other evening, our support group was discussing the whole issue of temptation, the frustration of falling short in thought or deed, and the desire to be completely free from *all* same-gender attractions. It all seems so difficult at times, especially in light of the popular pro-gay philosophy being shared in media, heralded in our educational institutions, designated through diversity training in the workplace, and preached from many pulpits. In the face of such overwhelming odds, I am not surprised when strugglers give in.

I am a ministry leader, a group facilitator, and a writer whose purpose is to encourage those who come to our ministry seeking help, who correspond with me on this issue, or who read this newsletter.

If I had somehow discovered the formula for a low-cost fuel, I'd be calling press conferences and my bank balance would be soaring. Because ministries such as this lack a sure-fire, works every time formula, our message is usually ignored or rejected.

I and others talk about the freedom one can have from same-sex behaviors, the joy of an identity as designed by God, and the ways in which each day is a day closer in that spiritual walk.

Although what we offer is good and, I believe, biblically correct, those who do not struggle with same-gender attractions want to measure our healing and change by the "I no longer have any temptation" yardstick. I know, I beat this drum in most of the letters or articles I write, so some of you might already be saying "Tell me something new."

### **Silver or gold I do not have**

The man had been crippled since birth and his station at the gate begging for alms represented his livelihood. Looking up at Peter with an outstretched hand, he either expected a coin or the kind of rejection more common to him than a donation.

Peter told the man had no money and from the crippled man's point of view, that might have been what we'd call "end of story." But it wasn't.

"Can you change me?" is a pretty common question heard by people in ministries like this one. Arrogance would, I think, be to say "Sure, come to the meetings. We'll make you straight." Such power and authority over the lives of others is not mine to proclaim.

### **But what I have I give you.**

#### **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!**

Peter had walked with Jesus, had seen the miracles, and had finally embraced an unreserved faith in the power of Jesus' name. He believed and was, I think, lead by the power of the Holy Spirit to say what he said to the cripple!

I ask myself, "What exactly do I have? What can I offer that makes a difference?" In a word, faith.

I believe in the man I am *becoming* not because of the absence of temptation but because of the presence of and belief in an identity that is mine in the name of the Lord.

### **Taking him by the right hand**

It is rather important, I think, to recognize that the cripple did not immediately respond to the command "Walk!" Had I been that cripple, my mouth would have hung open, my face would have been furrowed in confusion, and my internal defense mechanisms would have been on full alert. But Peter would have recognized this response, so he reached out and took the man's hand, the man's *right* hand, the hand seen as a potential defense against attack.

This is where the parallels I am trying to draw become more difficult—not in sharing them but in terms of what they mean, what they demand of us.

Is it enough for me to make the decision that same-sex behavior is incompatible with my beliefs and to feel the changes I have felt since starting on this journey or must I share these feelings and attitudes with others? I've learned that the notion that one can actually be free of same-sex behavior makes some very angry and others very uncomfortable.

#### He helped him up

The cripple was carried each day to the gate by family or friends. Light or heavy, his weight would have been born by those who carried him. Peter's hand was more than mere touch. It was an invitation the cripple had never received before. Relying on the strength of Peter's hand, the cripple stood.

The men and women who come to our support groups do so because they know others will listen without judgment and pray with and for them. They come to be encouraged. They come in faith. They come to see an extended hand of support.

#### Instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk around.

This crippled man had just experienced the kind of healing experienced by countless others at the hands of Jesus, only this was Peter speaking in the name of Jesus. The healing was, I believe, instantaneous yet there was a certain amount of learning how to walk, jump, and run that the former cripple would have to go through. We need to remember that he had been unable to walk from birth.

Something happens when we believe, when we *really* believe. It's that moment for the swimmer who stands at the edge of a diving platform, knees shaking and mind wondering what possessed this attempt. Eventually, though, the leap is made and, in that moment after resurfacing, all doubt disappears.

That initial and in some ways magnificent moment did not make the swimmer an accomplished diver, but it made future attempts and more complicated dives a possibility. So how do I sum all this up?

I believe that same-gender attractions happen and I believe that they can lead to same-sex behavior. I do not condemn myself for the attractions but believe that with time they can be minimized or even disappear. Even if they don't, same-sex behavior is not an alternative for that IS addressed in the Bible as wrong.

I believe that I am as responsible for supporting and encouraging those around me in their difficult times as I hope they are to me. Our struggles do not have to be the same and usually aren't, but there is a vulnerability and transparency necessary for our struggles to be seen in the first place. I am not required to understand, only to pray with and for others as I hope they are willing to pray for me.

Mine is to share what I have learned with those who seek that information. The world's view on homosexuality is far easier to adopt than what we read in God's word, but I must always be mindful that God's word is not a hammer. It is an invitation, an extended hand. Just as the cripple surrendered his right hand, his means of defense, I have to surrender and trust.

When push comes to shove, I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give to you! □

*All things are possible with God!*

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Send your donations to:

**Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc**

**PO Box 5824**

**De Pere, WI 54115-5824**

## Wisconsin Ministry Locations

### Broken Yoke

P.O. Box 5824

De Pere, WI 54115-5824

262-751-1128

Bob@brokenyoke.org

### Meetings in Pewaukee:

**Support Group** (weekly)

Tuesday, 7:00PM

**Website:**

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

**Newsletter:**

**Wellspring** (published bimonthly)

*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>

## BY Board Changes

At a recent meeting of the Broken Yoke Ministries Board of Directors, the resignation of Tom Pugh was received and accepted.

Tom has served as a board member since 1992 and as Secretary of the Board for most of those years. We will miss his presence and publicly want to thank Tom for being an integral part of this ministry. God's blessings on you, Tom!

At the same meeting, Kristen Moore was appointed as a new member of the Board of Directors. She brings enthusiasm and a desire to help continue growth in both women's ministry and ministry to family and friends. We welcome Kristen and look forward to serving with her.

One of the board decisions directly affecting the publication of this newsletter was to change the number of annual mailings from six to three as of 2009. Future editions will be available in February, June, and October. The decision was made due to the increasing costs associated with the newsletter balanced by the knowledge that other newsletters with the same focus are available.

## Our Prayer Corner



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

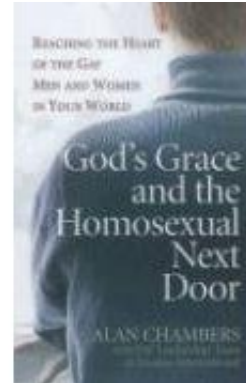
- For all those who struggle with same-gender attractions, that they accept the identity God had in mind for them from the beginning.
- For all who attended the Exodus International Freedom Conference, that the grace received will continue to be evident in their daily walk.
- For the leaders of the North Central Tier ministries, that preparations for our Regional Conference (October 23-26) will be productive and a source of encouragement.
- For church leaders, that they remain open to the Word of God when serving those who deal with same-gender attractions.
- For ministries seeking to serve those with same-gender attractions, that we continue to be willing to reach out with support in whatever ways God calls us to use.
- For families and friends of those who struggle, that they recognize that change is not a snap of the fingers but a process of loving renewal.
- For families and friends of those who have adopted a gay life with no desire to change, that they continue to love without reservation or stipulation. God is in charge.
- For Tom on his retirement from the board, that his life is blessed beyond measure as husband and father.
- For Kristen as she begins her service as a board member, that the enthusiasm and freshness of her ideas sparks our board to new levels of service.
- For Bob as he and Cathie walk in the springtime of retirement, that they find God's love and call in whatever they do.
- For the financial support of this ministry, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.

### **A Special Meeting Broken Yoke Ministries Lamb of God Lutheran Church Bluemound Rd - Pewaukee August 6, 2008 – 7:00 PM**

One suggestion coming from the "Putting a Face on Ministry to the Homosexual" workshop we offered was the desire to have a meeting where strugglers (male and female) and family and friends might spend time together in open and honest communication forged by praise and worship.

Members of the board have been working on making this meeting a reality and have chosen August 6 as our first gathering of this type. If you are interested and have questions, call 262-751-1128 or 414-607-1935 for more information.

## **God's Grace and the Homosexual Next Door: Reaching the Heart of the Gay Men and Women in Your World** *By Alan Chambers*



Author Alan Chambers, a former homosexual himself and Executive Director of Exodus International, and four of his colleagues at Exodus offer practical and biblical insights on how both individuals and churches can become a haven for homosexuals seeking freedom from same-sex attraction.

In this comprehensive guide to helping homosexuals, readers will learn about:

- The roots of homosexuality
  - God's radical grace for sexual sinners
  - Reaching youth both inside and outside the church
  - Dealing with fear and ignorance in the church
  - Leading gays to Christ
  - Mentoring homosexuals in the church
  - Three degrees of homosexuality: militant, moderate or repentant
  - Five things *not* to do in reaching out to gays
- and much more about this often perplexing subject.

This book is currently out of stock at the Exodus International online bookstore but can be purchased through Amazon as well as Barnes & Noble for \$13.99.

### **ANTHEM: Strategies for Fighting Lust** *by John Piper*

*This is an abbreviated form of an excellent article available at the website [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org) for those with internet access.*

- A -- Avoid** the sights and situations that arouse unfitting desire
- N - Say No** to every lustful thought within five seconds
- T -- Turn** the mind forcefully toward Christ as a superior satisfaction
- H – Hold** the promise and the pleasure of Christ firmly in your mind until it pushes the other images out.
- E – Enjoy** a superior satisfaction by cultivating the capacities for pleasure in Christ.
- M – Move** into a useful activity away from idleness and other vulnerable behaviors.

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**Dated Material**

### ***A Little Humor***

Two elderly women were out driving. Both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red but they just went on through. The woman in the passenger seat thought to herself, "I must be losing it. I could have sworn we just went through a red light."

A few minutes later they came to another intersection and the light was red again, and again they went right through. This time the woman in the passenger seat was almost sure the light had been red and was starting to get really concerned. She decided to pay very close attention to the road and especially the next intersection to see what was going on.

At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was definitely red and they went right through. She turned to the other woman and said "Mildred! Did you know we just ran through three red lights in a row! You could have killed us!" Mildred turned to her and said "Oh darn, am I driving?"

