



A Lot is Happening. Where Do You Stand?

We are doing all we can to spread the word of freedom from homosexuality through Christ.

I just returned from trips to Chicago and Washington D.C. representing Hope for Wholeness at two conferences, while Marc Dilworth, our Counselor Coordinator, represented us at another in Florida.

Great things are happening! You don't want to miss anything, so be sure to go to our website to read the articles and blogs, to register for events, and to learn how to participate in what God is doing through this network. Considering the recent moves in our country with gay marriage, we are thankful to hear from Dennis Jernigan in this newsletter.

Redemption Challenge: We launched this project so people could tell their stories and to use it as a giving campaign. We will not have a fall banquet this year, as it is difficult to get people to attend, however we still need your support. We're asking people to share their stories of redemption (whether or not they have a past in homosexuality). In sharing their stories, we're also asking them to challenge others to do the same and to give a gift to help Hope for Wholeness.

Growing the Network:

Recently, someone said to me, "I'm sure having more affiliates or referral ministries gives more legitimacy to your organization for support." While this might be a true statement, it is NOT why we are urging ministry leaders, counselors, and churches to join. We have desperate people calling our offices every day from around the country who want and need help, and oftentimes we struggle to get them the support needed. There may be a ministry in their area, but if that ministry hasn't joined our network, it takes us more time to get them help. We are grateful that our network is growing so that we can assist more people.

Our Newsletter and Your Support: As I've stated before, this was a lean summer financially, and we need your support to operate. We added over 300 individuals and organizations to our mailing list when Exodus closed. **We need to hear from you that you want to stay on the mailing list and that you want to support this ministry.** The best way to do this is with a gift of any amount. We covet your prayers and support in this battle for those needing encouragement in their walk with the Lord.

The Church and Homosexuality by Dennis Jernigan

Jesus has been setting people free from homosexuality for over 2,000 years:

*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **Such were some of you;** but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

Corinthians 6:9-11 NASB

With the most recent decision of the Supreme Court on October 6, 2014, deciding not to rule on several cases concerning same-sex marriage forced up to 30 states to recognize same-sex marriage whether the people of those states want it or not, I feel it is quite past time for the Church to prepare for ministry to those who walk in a homosexual identity. What follows are some basic recommendations and some food for thought.

Personally, I used to believe I was born gay, but through my faith in Jesus Christ have discovered that this was not the case. I was born a sinner in need of a Savior. My particular sin took me down that road, but that road is no different than that of the addict, the abuser, the liar, the thief, the prideful, the 'you fill in the blank with your particular sin.' My personal journey began on November 7, 1981 when the Lord met me in the middle of my homosexual orientation and loved me right there in the midst of it...but loved me enough to not leave me there.

During that period in my life, a friend challenged me with these words. "I don't know how to help you but I know the Answer." He promised to walk relationally with me toward Jesus, shoulder to shoulder. He purposed to help me up every time I fell if I would let him. He became a shoulder to cry on and a sounding board for my frustration to be poured out upon. In a sense, I had to go **outside** of the Church to find someone who would love me **right where I was**...to love me like Jesus.

The Church, the body of Christ should be the **first** place a hurting soul

should be able to turn without fear of rejection or condemnation. We are commanded to love. Period. We do not have to agree with someone, but we do have to love them. If Jesus can do it, so can we as His people! Relationship gets messy, but God is wonderfully awesome at helping us clean up messes we make of our lives. Here's the best news of all: you are no one's Savior and you are no one's Redeemer! You are not responsible for the outcome of another person's life! Love lays down its life for those it desires relationship with.



The church is afraid to take a stand on the issue of homosexuality. It appears the church is being affected by the culture rather than the culture being affected by the church. We tend to fear what we do not understand. How do we gain understanding in this matter? We educate ourselves. Be ready with THE Answer:

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Timothy 4:1-2 NASB

In light of this verse, we are therefore charged in the love of God to help people find the kindness of God that leads them to a new life of repentance (Romans 2:4), because we, as the Church, sincerely love the person trapped in brokenness and sin.

What does God's Word say on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex attraction? On this behavior, it is very clear. Nowhere in scripture does it condone homosexuality, in any form. Scripture speaks of behavior, but not the temptation. I'm not held to a standard that is unrealistic or cruel. We are not condemned or judged for our temptations, but God does put limits on our actions **Cont. pg. 2**

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and behavior. However, this is for our good. His plan is for our best and not to steal us of joy and prosperity, quite the opposite. Just as Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10 NASB)."

The Church must be prepared to give an answer to the world that cries out 'mankind and his wisdom is the highest'. We must be prepared for hate and vitriol to be poured out on us. Why? Because **Truth is hate to those who hate truth**. We should expect the world to respond in this manner - because they do not understand or know **real** Love. Personally, I get attacked almost every day. I just choose to respond like Jesus Who said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing. (Luke 23:34 NASB)" What can man truly do to me that will change one iota of who I am or the level/state of my contentment? Nothing! I am convinced that God's Truth is the highest truth...and I am convinced He loves me.

Ever since I broke on the Christian music scene in the late '80s and early '90s the pressure from the music business was to get me to move on from my story. What did I hear? "Do you have to talk about your story everywhere you go?" and "We do not know how to market you" and my favorite "Can you lose the story? It's old news now." Why did I keep sharing? Because I remember being a boy and hoping someone would tell me freedom was possible - and no one ever did. I want to let it be known that freedom IS possible. Bottom line, the Church must SAY SO!

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary. Psalm 107:1-2 NASB

Honestly, I had no choice in determining what would tempt me, but that in no way negates my ability to choose how I would respond to that temptation! In fact, even Jesus did not get to choose what He was tempted by - and He was tempted in EVERY manner just as we are, yet without sin! We are either always creatures of choice or never creatures of choice. Our humanity has a conscience which gives us the power to choose. If we could not choose, every man would be a rapist. Every person would be obese. Every person would walk in constant anger. Every person would be hopelessly self-focused and full of pride. We **always** have a choice as to how we respond to a given situation. It just so happens that having a relationship with Christ gives us the power to overcome those temptations and to choose wisely much more easily than in our human strength!

How should the Church respond to same-sex couples who walk through the doors of our sanctuaries? Love them right where they are. Let them bathe in God's presence and be greeted with open arms of love right where they are - just as Jesus did for us! Be like Jesus, Church. Love people right where they are but love them enough to not leave them there. We have no right to speak into the life of someone we have not made an investment of relationship in. When we build relationships with same-sex couples, we - at some point - build up enough equity in that relationship to make a withdrawal on. It is much easier to hear words of truth from someone we **know** loves us. Church, are you laying down your life for the gay community?

What about gay marriage? Marriage must be seen through the filter of the One Who instituted it. It was intended for the purpose of perpetuating the human race. Those who support gay marriage say things like "People should be free to love they want." I find it curious that the pedophile community (yes, there is one) now uses that same argument. Did you see that coming? There is a reason God set boundaries for marriage that entails specifically a man and a woman. Think about it in this manner: Do the limits that a computer programmer sets in a program oppress it or free it to operate as intended? Limitations free us to be who we were intended to be. God's divine intent for marriage between one man and one woman in human sexual relations is out of His desire of love and protection for us. Think the Ten Commandments. Think protection. Think about the onslaught on

traditional marriage. Every church that believes and practices God's Word should have a written policy stating marriage is a Biblical institution - a covenant - between one man, one woman, and Christ-centered.

Should a gay person be allowed a place of leadership in a Christ-centered church? Let me put it this way. Should a practicing adulterer be allowed to lead the church? Should a known liar be allowed to govern the church? Should a person walking in willful disobedience lead the body? No! Read 1 Timothy 3 for more insight.

Should I attend my friend's gay wedding? Personally, I cannot because that would cause me to violate my conscience. Do not do anything to compromise who and Whose you are. I can love the married gay couple but I cannot bless their union as it is not sanctioned by God.

What if they say, "If you love me, you will attend my wedding." I would return the statement with, "If you love me, you will not ask me to violate my conscience or to compromise who and Whose I am." Remember, boundaries help us operate in true and real freedom and in our true nature as new creations.

Do not burn bridges if at all possible, Church...but remember, you are called to be salt and light. Salt brings cleansing and is a preservative... and adds flavor to life. Light exposes the lies of the enemy and expels darkness. Love is not just a feeling. Love is an action. When one of our children is headed for traffic, do we sit back and say, "Oh, they feel like playing in traffic. They LOVE the traffic. They'll be fine." No way! We do whatever it takes to stand between those we love and that which will bring destruction to them.

Parents, to the degree you have invested in your children, you have EVERY RIGHT to make withdrawals on that relationship. Your children are people of choice. They can choose to be angry with you when you speak the truth...but they cannot deny the fact that you love them if you have laid down your life for them, proving your love for them. Love is not afraid of a little friction!

People say change is not possible. Many who began the journey out of same-sex attraction as an identity have fallen back in...and say change is not possible. My life says something different. Ask my wife (a WOMAN!) of 31 years. Ask one of my 9 children. I decided a long time ago that freedom was worth whatever it cost me...and I'm so glad I kept getting back up any time I would fall. One of my personal rules is that I cannot call myself anything my Father does not call me. Just something to think about.

What is love? The world equates love with sexual expression. But what does God say about that? Define love according to God's Word. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13 NASB)." True love's highest expression is the laying down of life. Real love denies self for the greater good of the other. This is the love of God.

When a person comes to Jesus, that person must come in his/her entirety. Have you laid down your intellect at the feet of Him who gave it? How about your emotions? How about your body? How about your sexuality? Holiness is simply using the attributes of our humanity in the manner in which God intended them. Any other use is a perversion of those very gifts.

That being said, we can only help people who **want** help. But we must open the door to build relationships with those dying in their sin - regardless of what that sin might be. Remember, except for the grace of God, there go I.

Dennis Jernigan

To gain more knowledgeable information, visit our Hope for Wholeness bookstore.



Who do you know that may need our help? Give them this newsletter or tell them about our ministry.

Hope for Wholeness is a ministry of Truth Ministries, Inc. DBA Hope for Wholeness.
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