

# Reclamation News

Reclamation News

Volume 9, Spring, 2009

## Prayer Requests

For those finishing our 36-week In His Image group. Pray for their protection and resolution to continue down the path they have chosen of freedom in Christ.



For the families and friends attending our Renewed Hope group as they learn how to love those caught up in homosexuality without compromising their values.



For those attending the Exodus Conference; that all will have safe travel and receive what God has in store for them.



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## Balancing Truth with Compassion

Larry Crabb observed, “In Martin Luther’s day, the central problem facing the church was a wrong understanding of justification. In ours, the big error has more to do with sanctification.

“Theologians and Bible teachers wonder what the Holy Spirit is supposed to do and how we are to find victory over sin and despair. Too often, they retreat into ivory towers and behind pulpits, where they don’t have to face that their ideas don’t really work. From their safe positions, they declare rather than dialogue, and externally rearrange lives according to accepted standards, rather than help people be transformed into passionate enticements for others to find God.

“Psychologists and counselors. . . are different than those theologians. They jump into the cesspool of life and do whatever it takes to improve the smell. Precise exegesis is jettisoned in favor of a passionate theology that reaches people where they live. . .”

Our hope at Reclamation is to bring these two groups together (and hope they realize that there is only one group when the Bible is approached properly). I would hope Bible students read the Bible to find God and listen to Him rather than organize Him. If counselors realize that the central dynamic behind every personal problem including homosexuality is a disrupted relationship with God that is always our fault (never God’s or our parents’), then they could value the insights of Biblical scholars. We try to live that balance at Reclamation.



The trademark of ministries such as ours is that we understand that real and lasting change from homosexual attractions can occur when a person allows God to heal the wounds of his or her life. We believe lasting change is not an event, it is a process. This change is not produced through a program or a system, it comes from a person—Jesus.

Reclamation Resource Center’s mission is to extend God’s love and grace by proclaiming to all who will listen that freedom from

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## Coming Events

June 7 - 11 Mike will be attending training for Redeemed Lives, Alive Again, and Returning Sons at Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry in Ambridge, PA. Completion of the week-long training will authorize us to start our own Returning Sons program, with the hope of starting a Redeemed Lives program in the future.



July 11 - 16 Pastoral Care Ministries will have their annual Healing Prayer seminar in Wheaton, IL



July 13 We will start the 10 week Returning Sons, a program of pastoral care and healing for men and women seeking wholeness in their sexuality.



July 20 - 24 Exodus will have their annual conference in Azusa, CA.



July 22 will begin our summer meetings of Broken Yoke. We will be meeting at Faith United Methodist Church in Neenah. This is a drop-in group for overcomers.



September 24 - 26 Exodus Regional, "Change My Heart: A Time of Healing" will be held at the Association retreat Center in Osceola, WI. For more information, check out our website: [www.reclamationrc.org](http://www.reclamationrc.org)

## Is Homosexuality Abnormal?

Considering the complexity of the issue and the many facets in which the issue presents itself, one can see why homosexuality can be difficult to overcome. One can also see why the issue of homosexuality and change is so debated in both Christian and secular realms. Many secular therapists will contend that homosexuality is not abnormal. If this is the case, they argue, it would not be ethical for them to help a coun-  
seelee seek change.

While no absolute standard exists for a concrete conclusion about whether homosexuality

is abnormal, there are four empirical criteria used to define abnormality. These four criteria are: statistical infrequency, personal distress, maladaptiveness, and deviation from societal norms.<sup>1</sup>

Lifelong homosexual orientation as exclusive or near-exclusive is not a common pattern, but it is not rare either. Kinsey found 4% of white males to be exclusively homosexual [all their lives] and a total of 10% to be exclusively homosexual during at least a 3-year period [of their lives].<sup>2</sup> Kinsey's data are generally believed to over-represent male homosexuality because of sampling biases; other estimates range from 1% - 4%.<sup>3</sup> There just doesn't

seem to be a definitive basis for deciding pathology by mere statistical frequency.

Does homosexuality inherently involve personal distress? Some researchers have conclusively documented higher rates of depression and loneliness, suicide attempts, and substance abuse in the homosexual population.<sup>4</sup> These responses, however, are likened by

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some to those of any persecuted minority. (Even though recent studies in Europe, where homosexuality is widely accepted, show the same results). While religious beliefs are often in conflict with

homosexuality, some claim there is no real evidence of any discomfort produced by the orientation itself.

When you consider maladaptiveness of homosexuality, you again come up with nothing conclusive. Homosexuality itself does not prevent a person from being a functional and productive member of society. Positively, there are homosexuals that have had contributions to society and culture: authors, artists, educators, etc.; but if it is a matter of association there are the negative aspects of the perverse acts of Jeffrey Dahmer and John Gacy.

Another issue of adaptiveness is

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## Classic Thoughts -

### *C. S. Lewis On Why God Doesn't Answer Our Prayers For Sexual Purity*

C.S. Lewis wrote about our efforts for sexual purity and God's seeming indifference to our prayers. In Mere Christianity, he writes:

"We may, indeed, be sure that perfect chastity—like perfect charity—will not be attained by any merely human efforts. You must ask for God's help. *Even when you have done so, it may seem to you for a long time that no help, or less help than you need, is being given. Never mind. After each failure ask forgiveness, pick yourself up, and try again.* . . . " [Emphasis is mine.]

He goes on to explain:

"Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue [sexual purity] itself but just this power of always trying again. For however important chastity (or courage, or truthfulness, or any other virtue) may be, this process trains us in habits of the soul which are more important still. It cures our illusions about ourselves and teaches us to depend on God. We learn, on the one hand, that we cannot trust ourselves even in our best moments; and, on the other, that we need not despair even in our worst, for our failures are forgiven. The only fatal thing is to sit down content with anything less than perfection."

## Balancing Truth with Compassion

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homosexuality is available through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. We do that through helping and encouraging men and women struggling to find freedom from homosexuality. We befriend them and point the way to change through our various ministries. We also motivate and train the body of Christ to meet the needs of those making such a life altering decision to pursue change. And finally we motivate and train the body of Christ to extend God's love and grace without compromising God's standards to those who have not made such a decision and/or have differing opinions.

## Eternally Optimistic

In 1914 the French never contemplated defeat at the hands of Germany. The essence of optimism over Germany's eventual defeat is revealed in an apocryphal report to General Joseph Joffre from General Ferdinand Foch: "My center is broken, my right retreats, the situation is excellent: I attack." That optimism brought Allied victory in 1918.

The first generation of church leaders expressed a similar buoyancy. They baptized every adversity, creating a grace from disgrace. They gladly accepted and gratefully endured all setbacks and attacks. Their unconquerable merriment fills the New Testament. Paul is in jail, but not the Word. Peter is on the run, but the Word still conquers human hearts. Christians lose their possessions, jobs, and lives, but others fill in the emptiness, unable to resist the sway of the Christ who uses even suffering to proclaim his conquest of Satan.

Whatever happened to that primal optimism in the Church with respect to homosexuality? Too many churches today are quick to avoid the mess and pain involved in helping people overcome unwanted desires. They quickly give up hope and buy into the lie that change is unrealistic. Other churches are quick to demand external compliance to their rules, without offering the freedom and hope of changed lives.

Did we lose our optimism in our haste to gain respect in a community of unbelievers, to safeguard our reputations, to ease the requirements for discipleship? If we have lost it, we had better find it again; if we never had it, we must pray to receive it.

## Reclamation News

Reclamation News is published quarterly by Reclamation Resource Center. Reproduction of material is prohibited without written permission from Reclamation Resource Center. Our mission is to help individuals seeking freedom from unwanted same sex attractions. We also desire to equip the Church to better understand the issue of homosexuality and thus minister to individuals affected by homosexuality.

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Reclamation Resource Center is a member of Exodus international, North America. We are an outreach of Christ The Rock Community Church, Menasha, WI. Doctrine and policy information available upon request.

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## Reclamation Resource Center

offers a variety of services including pastoral counseling, original tapes and brochures, speaking engagements, as well

as:

**Renewed Hope** An open drop-in group for families and friends of those involved in a gay or lesbian lifestyle.



**Broken Yoke** An open drop-in group for those with homosexual attractions who are curious about and/or pursuing change.



**In His Image** A closed group for individuals committed to pursuing change from unwanted homosexual attractions. (*Application required*).



**Reflecting the Truth in Love**  
 Our annual seminar on the issues of sexual brokenness, homosexuality, change and compassion.



**Reclamation News** A quarterly newsletter.

## Is Homosexuality Abnormal?

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relational stability. While lesbians seem to show a capacity for long-term relationships similar to heterosexuals, male homosexuals as a group have a greatly reduced capacity. Drs. Bell and Weinberg found that only 10% of male homosexual respondents could be classified as even “relatively monogamous” in their relationships. That same study reported 28% of white male homosexuals had 1,000 or more partners in their lifetime and only 17% had fewer than 50.<sup>5</sup>

Stability within monogamous relationships used to be a prominent feature in definitions of emotional health, but it is rarely emphasized today.<sup>6</sup> If the psychological community removes the emphasis of relational stability from its criteria for healthy emotional adjustment as the trend indicates, then the promiscuity of the male homosexual community does not fall into the class of maladjustment.

The issue of homosexuality violating societal norm is interesting. In 1974, when the American Psychiatric Association (APA) decided to remove homosexuality from the approved list of pathological psychiatric conditions, 73% of the general public viewed all instances of homosexual behavior as wrong. Recent studies show that the number is now 54%.<sup>7</sup> It seems that in this case, the psychological community is trying to change societal norms rather than reflect it.

So it seems there is no clear-cut distinction making homosexuality a mental illness like agoraphobia or schizophrenia. At the same time it doesn't appear to be a normal lifestyle variation like being an extrovert compared to being an introvert. Contemporary social science can only help us to understand this problematic sexual orientation, but cannot give us clear answers whether it is harmful or an innocent lifestyle variation. We must turn to the Bible for those answers. Next issue we will look at sexual orientation from a Biblical perspective.

### Endnotes

1. S.L. Jones, *The Crisis of Homosexuality*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990), p. 104
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3. Robert T. Michael, John H. Gagnon, Edward O. Laumann, Gina Bari Kolata, *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey*, (Warner Books, 1995)
4. G. Van den Aardweg, *Homosexuality and Hope: A Psychologist Talks About Treatment and Change*, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1986), pp. 105, 106.
5. A.P. Bell and M.S. Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1978), pp. 308, 346
6. Jones, p. 106.
7. James A. Davis and Tom W. Smith, NORC/University of Chicago and Peter V. Marsden, Harvard University, *General Social Survey*, 2002