

The third way

Debates today often assume that there are only two views that a Christian might hold on the subject of homosexuality. Either it is considered one of the worst sins acted out by reprobates who have chosen to live this way out of rebellion, or it is condoned since homosexuals can exist in loving, committed relationships. This second group usually believes that homosexuality is a product of nature rather than nurture and should therefore be at least tolerated and some would say applauded.

I hold to a third view – that a homosexual is not trapped in the lifestyle but can, with the power of God, change. I am a living example of this belief as are many others. I was once a confirmed lesbian and am now a confirmed disciple of Jesus Christ, living in a healthy married relationship.

Ex-homosexuals such as myself are the hidden evidence that is often hated and maligned by gay lobby groups, or said to not exist. Ignorance will often prefer to believe the world is flat, out of the human fear of falling off what we think are solid and firm positions. A person who presents as having been gay and then who has changed, is a threat to the premise that says a homosexual is born that way and cannot change. On the other hand, I do not hold to the common belief that some Christians declare, that homosexuals “choose” to be that way. No one in his or her right mind would chose a homosexual lifestyle out of some “whimsy” or a cool rational decision-making process.

I have read many arguments that seek to explain scripture and

remove the stigma of sin from some forms of homosexuality. Anything can be explained or explained away with clever reasoning. Doubt is cast by suggestion that Paul meant certain forms of abusive homosexuality, or that certain scriptures were written within cultural context. We have a choice when we read scripture to try to bend it to our own wills, or bend our wills to what we read. This is especially true if we do take these scriptures in context and consider the overall message that runs through the entire collection of books.

Either the Bible is the standard

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and what God has said is plain enough for the most simple to read and apply, or it is ambiguous and God has left us a debatable text that will one day judge us. This would make God cruel and unfair. Another intrinsic factor is the role of the Holy Spirit who takes the potentially dry letter of the word and makes it life and truth (2 Cor 3:6).

It was clear to me that if what I read was God’s feeling on any of the sins recorded, then he was well able to not only cleanse from these sins, but also change a person so that the sin no longer bound them. I then had a choice. I could make excuses and look for ways to justify my lifestyle, or choose for the first time to allow God to reorient my gender preference. In reality, my choice had little to do with a choice of homosexuality or heterosexuality,

but it was a choice to follow Jesus Christ and let him change what was necessary.

It was a slow process of healing and realigning my thoughts and almost as a byproduct of the process, I was able first to befriend, then to love a man. The sexual issues were of lesser importance, as I had to discard most of what I believed love was, in order to begin to understand what love genuinely is.

Some say that it is wrong to reject homosexual Christians and that they deserve to have full acceptance or they will feel hopeless. My hopelessness existed

because I fully believed the lie that a homosexual was unable to change. Even God was impotent to change such a person, while appearing to damn them. One form of comfort seeks to convince

of God’s acceptance of homosexuals, the other path that I took was to recognise that God did not accept homosexuality and was well able to change me. For the homosexual caught in the middle of these opinions, who can see that God does not condone homosexuality, but yet has no evidence that they can, or even want to change, there is true hopelessness.

My orientation was toward women. I could relate a history throughout childhood that confirmed my earliest inclinations, convincing me that I must have been “born this way”. In my attempt to reconcile my compulsion, I became convinced that I was a man trapped in a woman’s body. Somehow, God had made a mistake.

At the time I gave myself fully to

this lifestyle, homosexuality was illegal for men and was not the promoted and trendy lifestyle advertised today. One of my friends had received shock treatment in a hospital to attempt to “cure” her of the illness of homosexuality. This was appalling and at least time has proved this to be an inadequate response.

During my time in the lifestyle I did note some things that puzzled me. It was a personal quest to try to understand why I had been oriented the way I had. If I had been “born this way”, was it chemical or perhaps hormonal? I had tests but my hormones were normal and fully female.

There were few personality commonalities amongst my friends and as I met bi-sexual women and many different people living in a wide gamut of relational directions, I became interested in whether there were any social factors at play. It did interest me that many of my gay friends, both male and female, had come from backgrounds where they had been adopted. The percentage that had been adopted was above thirty percent of my close friends.

Among the women I knew, nearly all had a detachment from any fondness for their mothers, and sometimes disregard or hatred. Fathers had often been absent in their lives, or abusive. Their homes ranged over every social class but there were often stories of a sense of a lack of bonding, particularly to mothers. It had nothing to do with whether the mother was dominant or docile. Certainly these feelings of distance with my own parents had been evident in my own life and I could see where circumstances of my early childhood had meant a break in normal bonding with my mother. Of course this is not saying that every adopted child will have gender confusion but in some cases, especially if the adoption was at a later date, it may contribute to this sense of detachment.

It wasn't until recent years that I found some of my observations have been confirmed by Christian research. Dr Neil and Briar

Whitehead have been researching homosexuality for ten years. They have written an excellent book exploring some of these findings and dispelling many of the myths perpetrated by those with gay lobbying agendas.¹ Dr Elizabeth Moberly, psychologist and authority on homosexuality, defines homosexuality as “essentially a state of incomplete development or of unmet needs, rooted in same-sex psychological deficits, arising from difficulties in the parent-child relationship, especially in the earlier years of life”.²

Don Crossland and other researchers have defined the process of gender identification and the effects of family dysfunction on development in the early years.³ No gay or lesbian person has an identical life story or outcome, but there are identifiable traits throughout the nurture process. Obviously there are many events that can contribute to the process, sexual abuse, peer acceptance and subconscious desires of a parent for the child to have been the opposite sex can be included. Leanne Payne, author of “The Broken Image”, has done some very insightful work in these areas.⁴

Not every lesbian was a truck driver and many like myself worked in business. Most working in offices were not as indiscrete as I was, but I had so totally accepted my orientation that I saw no reason to hide it. Very few of my co-workers were intolerant and many were intrigued. It wasn't until I turned to Jesus that I found how intolerant people in society could become. They were far more willing to include me as a lesbian, than as a Christian.

Earlier, I tried to swim with society and in my younger years I had boyfriends, but once I had entered into my first relationship with another woman, it was as if I had found where I truly belonged. I lived a fully lesbian lifestyle for over eight years. I helped to run a club for lesbian women in New Zealand and then lived for some time in Sydney as a lesbian. The thought of a sexual relationship

with a man was abhorrent to me.

When I gave my life to Jesus Christ, I had become very weary of my old lifestyle and wanted desperately to be able to walk away from homosexuality. I knew that this was impossible simply by choice but I grasped onto the hope that through the power of God I could. There was no support group for me but my new primary allegiance was to Jesus. He led me through the process.

I was living in inner-city Auckland at the time and had made a conscious decision to walk away from my old lifestyle, which had meant cutting off nearly all my social life. I knew few Christians although I had begun to meet with a small group during the week. This meant I had a lot of time to read and search the Bible and to pray.

My relationship with Jesus became more important than any theory or philosophy. I read the scripture in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 where in amongst the list of sins that would keep me from the kingdom, it told me that homosexuality need not be something binding. I could recognise that this was something that I had “once been”, but was now “washed, sanctified and now was justified because of Jesus Christ”. It was now a past label that I no longer had to wear.

Truth sets us free. There can be nothing sadder to me than people who with all good intention want to perpetuate the falsehood that for a gay person to find peace, they must come to terms with their orientation. I know there are many who would argue with me and tell me that God himself has accepted them exactly this way and that the Almighty doesn't have a problem with them personally. I reserve judgement on any individual, as I am not the final judge. The Jesus I know has required of me to follow him and part of this was the cost of laying down my own opinions. According to him, it is his own words that will judge all of us in the end. When the wind of justice blows on that final day, I want to find my own roots deep on the rock.

That means more to me than anything temporal.

No one had to tell me that my lifestyle was slavery. 2 Peter 2:19 explains that whatever we are mastered by enslaves us. That was an apt description. So to hear people who have very loving and merciful intention try to help someone like me to just “accept my ‘slavery’ because it would appear that even God is unable to do anything about it”, is not helpful. I needed a God who was more powerful than that. Fortunately I have proved him over 20 years to be more than able.

Eighteen months after I walked away from lesbianism, I married a young man and have been married successfully for over twenty years now. I do not want to minimise the difficulty that I went through in changing, as it was a long and sometimes painful process. Yet many of my family relationships were healed along the way. My husband is a rare man who was willing to be part of my journey which included accepting many of my old friends and praying as I still do, that they would also come to know this powerful God.

I believe that we have come to an age where we are too soft on many things. Adultery, drunkenness and greed are included in the Bible list I have quoted, but few are prepared to picket a pub these days and some churches have camped their doctrine around thinly disguised greed. I don't agree with picketing gay events in any case, as we are called to reach every human with God's love. Angry Christians don't berate prostitutes in red light districts. We find mercy for adulterers and accept divorce as a natural part of life, even for ministers, although God plainly says that he “hates divorce” (Mal 2:16). There is nowhere that God states that he “hates homosexuality”. It is easier to be repulsed by homosexuality than by divorce.

It is considered normal today to indulge in what the Bible terms as immorality and because of this, we are now being bullied into submission, as much within the church as without, to accept many

different aberrations from Bible standards. It is difficult to reconcile these acts of Christian “mercy” with the demonstrated lives of people such as the apostle Paul, who appeared to be able to remain single without having to appease his male hormones. It is of note that of the other early leaders, there is nothing recorded of struggles against succumbing to human weakness in moral issues.

It is difficult to imagine any of the apostles dealing with the debates that disturb the church today. Perhaps they still had the words of Jesus ringing in their ears about the lack of importance that this world really holds and about how attaining the next requires adherence to a Lord who asks us to lay down our own lives and die to our carnal natures. Eternity is a long time.

There are many organisations now that help ex-homosexual people to work through issues and to find wholeness. Living Waters and Exodus⁵ could point to hundreds of testimonies of people successfully leaving the homosexual lifestyle as I have done. They talk of the need to cut off old relationships that are harmful by “radical amputation”. Those like myself who have done so can feel that it was at first like cutting off a “hand that offended us” or losing an “eye”. So I am often astonished at the blindness of so many who have never had to make such strong moves.

Many Christians go through their lives hating gays and seeing them as the enemies of God. One American Southern minister has a website called, “God hates fags”. He responded to my suggestion that Jesus called us to love even our enemies, by telling me that I was a “filthy sinner who had never repented”. Others spend their energy trying to convince themselves that God made them gay, or that we should accept gay people as valid humans who like anyone are capable of love and loyalty. The dispute biblically is not about whether people live in loyal committed relationships, but rather

whether they are prepared to trust God, whatever he requires.

People who hold opinions that give them the right to hate gays, or push for “PC” tolerance of gays, may have two eyes and hands to write their material, but to me are more blind and more crippled in their thinking than those of us who walk the third way. In accepting what Jesus said, and writers of both the Old Testament and New confirmed, I saw that I had to take what I felt was part of me and “radically amputate” my ingrained belief system, built up by popular culture and my life experience.

It isn't complicated. Otherwise non-theologians such as myself would be left at the mercy of priests who profess to interpret the mind of God, rather than being able to be led into truth by the Holy Spirit himself. Funny thing, but in applying these simple biblical concepts, I have been able to live a totally changed life.

Endnotes

1. Dr Neil Whitehead is a research scientist with a PhD in biochemistry, and Briar a researcher and writer. See Dr Neil Whitehead and Briar Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House, 1999); and Briar Whitehead, *Craving for Love* (UK: Angus-Hudson, 2002).
2. See New Direction for Life Ministries, *A Developmental View of Homosexuality* (1996). http://www.newdirection.ca/a_dev2.htm. [Accessed 13 May 2004]. See also Elizabeth R Moberly, *Psychogenesis* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 1983); and *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1988).
3. New Direction for Life Ministries, *A Developmental View of Homosexuality* (1996); Linda Stalley, *The Homosexual Lifestyle From A Christian Medical Perspective* (1997). <http://trushare.com/29OCT97/impestal.txt>. [Accessed 13 May 2004]
4. Leanne Payne, *The Broken Image* (Westchester, Ill: Crossway Books, 1981).
5. For Exodus home page see <http://www.exodus-international.org>. [Accessed 13 May 2004]

Anonymous (name withheld for family reasons).