CAN *Homosexuality* BE HEALED?

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INTRODUCTION

I am writing this little book simply because there seem to be so many ordinary people—non-Christian as well as Christian—who intuitively, instinctively feel that homosexual activity is wrong, but are confused because the culture, and even some church leaders, approve of such activity.

These ordinary people do not want to be labeled as prejudiced or bigoted. They want to be loving, compassionate human beings, but at the same time do not feel right about approving homosexual activity. Unable to articulate their reasons for opposing the gay agenda, they are confused when they get into a discussion on the controversial subject of homosexuality. They do not have time to read a long book about homosexuality, yet they want to learn more about the topic. Perhaps they are gun-shy because at some point they spoke out in favor of traditional morality but then were treated as if they were ignorant or prejudiced. Perhaps they were labeled as homophobic and unloving—even un-Christian. Understandably they are confused. Eventually they just learn to avoid the topic and keep quiet.

Is it possible to be loving and compassionate while upholding the traditional Christian position? I think it is, and that is why I am writing this little book.

Beyond the confusion many individuals experience, entire denominations, such as the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, are being threatened with schism because of the conflict over whether to jettison traditional sexual morality by ordaining practicing homosexuals and marrying (or blessing) committed homosexual couples. Even the Roman Catholic Church, while strongly maintaining her traditional position that homosexual activity is sinful, faces the situation in which perhaps 50 percent of current seminarians and 40 percent of priests in the United States are homosexual in orientation.[1] If this trend continues, pressure may well develop to lead the Roman Catholic Church to become more accepting of homosexual activity—although the Vatican recently came out with a strong policy statement to the effect that, from now on, no seminarians will be accepted who have a recent history of homosexual activity.

My experience, and that of many others, has been that homosexuality can be healed through prayer. This represents a third position that we believe

incorporates what is true in (1) the traditional position (that homosexual acts are sinful); and (2) the deepest needs of the homosexual[2] to be accepted as a human being and not to be condemned for his or her sexual orientation. Most Christians do not know about this third possibility, which is that Jesus Christ can transform the homosexual's orientation so that he or she can become heterosexual.

It seems tragic that most bishops, priests and ministers are not even aware of the possibility of homosexuals changing. They do not know there is a bridge between the two conflicting positions tearing apart their churches. Father Peter Liuzzi, for example, director of the lesbian and gay outreach ministry in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, is quoted as saying that "the church believes that homosexuality is an inherent trait." In his view, to support gay men and lesbians who want to transform themselves into heterosexuals is to encourage a delusion.[3]

Yet just yesterday I spoke with the director of a large, nationwide ministry to homosexuals who says he knows hundreds of homosexuals who have come out of their former lifestyle. Unfortunately the major denominations do not seem to be in communication with organizations like his.

The situation is made worse because homosexuals often react strongly to the very suggestion of the possibility of their being healed: "You imply that I am sick, and I resent that. I am tired of being shamed by the Church. I've had a long, hard struggle to accept myself as I am. But I am a homosexual. I have finally learned to accept that this is who I am. Not only that, but I'm proud of it!" All of us can sympathize with the gay community's anger at traditionalists who preach against homosexual activity without offering any practical help. Just using willpower and deciding to become heterosexual does not work. No wonder they are angry!

But when I say that homosexuality can be healed, I am not simply espousing a theory; I have actually seen homosexuals who have been healed. *Healing* means not only that the homosexual abstains from homosexual acts but that his sexual orientation is transformed. He becomes heterosexual.

Please note that the specific focus of this book is male homosexuality. There are significant differences between male homosexuality and lesbianism, but I believe that much of what I write is relevant to lesbian issues. At the end of the book you will find an appendix titled "Can Lesbians Also Change in Sexual Orientation?"

1

EMPATHIZING WITH HOMOSEXUALS

Many homosexuals feel they have been singled out for unjust treatment and persecution by the Church. Heterosexuals need to have compassion and be able to understand homosexuals' point of view. They need to appreciate how viciously homosexuals have been singled out for foul invective, torture and even murder.

This was not the situation only in the Middle Ages. Simply watching the news today, we see how hatefully many homosexuals are still being treated. We see protesters carrying placards that proclaim God Hates Faggots! Homosexuals are still being beaten up and even killed. When I lived in a religious community, I remember one of the priests habitually referring to homosexuals as faggots. (The term *faggot* goes back to the days when homosexuals were burned at the stake.) Homophobia—hatred and fear of homosexuals— is very real, and any homosexual coming out of the closet has to struggle with fear and shame because of the hateful reactions he expects to face, especially from some Christians.

Take a fairly recent example. A Roman Catholic diocesan paper, *The Southern Nebraska Register*, wrote about Sister Jeannine Gramick, who has been ministering to homosexuals and has come under scrutiny by the Vatican for appearing too accepting of homosexuality. Here is what the paper wrote about her:

> In a failed attempt to infect decent people with their ideological pathologies, the anti-Catholic sect *Call to Action*[1] has recently reached into a theological sewer and brought to Nebraska Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND , an apostle of sexual perversion. . . . Condemned by the Holy See for her false and immoral doctrines, Sister Gramick is a sorry and tragic figure who needs prayer and pity for her sordid mind.[2]

Clearly a traditional Catholic's opposition to homosexual activity has taken a mean turn by using words like *sewer* and *sordid* in talking about a woman who is

probably a wonderful, dedicated and compassionate person. We should be able to disagree without becoming hateful ourselves.

These strong, angry feelings against homosexuals can spill over onto those who reach out in love to the homosexual community. The Roman Catholic bishop in the city where I live, for example, celebrated a Mass for the homosexuals here,[3] and the response from traditionalists was to send picketers to march in protest in front of the church.

I think we can understand the anger of the homosexual community at the hateful way it has been treated over the centuries and its strong determination to overcome the shame that has been heaped upon it, so it can finally gain acceptance in society and in the Church.

The hate directed against homosexuals helps explain why gay activists, in turn, tend to be a very angry group. I have run into this anger myself. Once, while speaking to a Roman Catholic group, I simply mentioned in passing, almost as a footnote, that homosexual orientation can be healed. Two members of the local gay and lesbian task force wrote to the local bishop's chancery office to complain about my talk. Another time an historic Episcopal church in New England canceled our speaking engagement when the pastor found out that my wife, Judith, and I believe that homosexuality can be healed—even though we were not going to speak on that subject at all. (That particular local bishop was openly gay.)

Whichever stand you take publicly in regard to homosexuality, you are likely to be met with anger. In today's churches the polarization between those who are regarded as liberals and those who are regarded as conservatives is great, and the heat is focused in particular on the issue of homosexuality.

The question at the heart of this book is, Can homosexuals change?

2

IS CHANGE POSSIBLE?

The treatment of homosexuals seems unfair not just because some heterosexuals have acted hatefully, but because most homosexuals did not choose to have a same-sex attraction. To them it is a given. How can heterosexuals demand that homosexuals repent over a matter in which there seems to be no choice whatsoever? We can repent only when we have a choice, so it seems harsh and wrong to demand that homosexuals repent since they never chose in the first place.

"This is the way I am," they say. "I can't change, and I don't want to." For most homosexuals this seems to be true. Their homosexual orientation goes back as far as they can remember. Homosexuality seems to be not a choice but a given.

And if this is true, doesn't it seem cruel to blame and heap shame on the homosexual for what seems to be deep within his or her very nature? "If I have been created this way, then God created me this way, and I should accept my orientation as God's gift. And you should accept it, too. Not only accept it, but *celebrate* it, precisely because it is God's gift."

In asking homosexuals to change, aren't we asking the impossible? That is why psychiatrists first began to question whether homosexuality really was a disorder: because so many of their homosexual patients did not change.

Members of homosexual activist groups will tell you about leaders in their organizations who converted to Christianity, testifying proudly as to how they had abandoned homosexuality, then later slipped back into the gay lifestyle. They can and do name these leaders. So they conclude, "You see, it doesn't work; we can't change. And you're wrong to say we should."

Without realizing it, the new Roman Catholic catechism (which upholds the traditional point of view) backs the homosexual claim that homosexuality cannot be changed when it urges homosexuals to remain celibate and abstain from sex throughout their lives. This official catechism implicitly agrees with the

homosexuals' position by assuming that their orientation is a given that does not change and that they will never become heterosexual and marry. To a homosexual, this conservative teaching appears unduly harsh and unrealistic because it cuts off any outlet for his or her sexual drives. Celibacy is a gift given to a few individuals, but the sincere and religious homosexual asks, "How can you demand celibacy of homosexuals who don't have that gift? Even some priests who have chosen celibacy aren't able to live chastely, so how can you demand it of us who didn't choose it?"

Here is how the new catechism affirms the traditional position:

> 2357: Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. . . . Under no circumstances can they be approved.

Having condemned the sexual activity, the catechism goes on to present a more conciliatory attitude toward the homosexual person ("Hate the sin but love the sinner"):

> 2358: They do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.

But then comes the call to what must appear to many homosexuals as a nearly impossible ideal:

> 2359: Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.[1]

Yet for some this ideal does prove possible. David Morrison, a former gay activist (from the age of 21 to 28), is now living according to the ideal of the Church. He wrote in a letter:

> Chaste love can be difficult at times, but so can all living in truth. I give thanks to God that the Catholic Church understands this well enough to teach it, and I am grateful for an organization called Courage, which exists to help homosexuals live out this teaching. Over the course of my years in Courage, I have made more and deeper friendships than I ever did in all my time actively gay.

Nevertheless we can appreciate how difficult it must be for many homosexuals to read that the Church assumes they probably cannot change, that they will stay the way they are, but that they must deny part of their humanity—their sexuality—for the rest of their lives.

I received a poignant letter recently from a homosexual in his sixties who wrote:

> The loneliness that I feel in my life is overwhelming. When I gave my life to the Lord, I gave up all my friends who were in the gay lifestyle and left it completely. I sit and pray and end up crying . . . but every day I wake up and it is still there. . . . I know that my walk with Jesus is very good and that He is always with me, but the discouragement and loneliness are unbearable at times.

This man's life has been characterized by an admirable desire to serve the Lord and bear his cross. For years he has lived a chaste life, according to the biblical ideal. But he is unhappy. What needs to be said to this suffering man, and to the Church at large, is that there is hope that the homosexual orientation can be changed. Most Church leaders seem unaware of this possibility of transformation. But I believe that profound, in-depth prayer for inner healing would free this man of his unhappiness and transform his life—not without some trials and struggles, no doubt—into one of deep happiness and peace.

Some Christians do know about the possibility of change. There are psychiatrists like Dr. Jeffrey Satinover and prayer ministers like Leanne Payne and Father Mario Bergner and John and Paula Sandford. But these are lonely voices as far as their influence on mainline churches. Although their teachings have had a great influence on some smaller networks of churches (like the Vineyard and the Toronto Airport Fellowship) and on evangelical groups (such as Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family), they have had only limited impact on the major mainline leaders (even though Leanne Payne and Father Mario Bergner are Episcopalians).

The mainline churches commission gay and lesbian task forces that often stress the *acceptance* of homosexuals but, for the most part, have little or nothing to say about the possibility of *transformation*. (A few groups, like the Roman Catholic group Courage, encourage chastity and abstinence; but the larger Roman Catholic group, Dignity, stresses acceptance.) This acceptance of homosexual persons is very needed. The difficulty comes when mainline churches implicitly accept the homosexual lifestyle itself, including sexual activity.

In contrast to official church groups, there are numbers of extraordinarily effective independent Christian groups working to transform the lives of homosexuals. Exodus,[2] for one, is headed by Alan Chambers, a former homosexual (as most of the group members are). Then there is Regeneration,[3] headed by Alan Medinger, another former homosexual, and Desert Stream,[4] associated with the Vineyard churches. All of them put out books, pamphlets and CDs. When I was privileged to speak at the annual convention of Exodus, I was surprised to find six hundred participants, almost all of them "coming out of the lifestyle" (the phrase they use for the change). The entire group was full of life and enthusiasm, quite different from the pained and struggling audience I expected to find.

These groups have a wealth of experience, wisdom and energy that would be a marvelous reservoir of help for any church wishing to utilize their assistance in ministering to homosexuals. Unfortunately the reality is like the proverbial two ships passing in the night. When I have asked bishops and pastors in the mainline churches what they know about Exodus or Desert Stream, most of them say they have never even heard about these organizations. Instead, these leaders are surrounded by advocates calling for the acceptance of gay marriages and gay clergy. Church leaders who still believe in traditional sexual values can profit greatly by checking out the resources these organizations have to offer.

Unless we can offer some hope of transformation, we can appreciate the anger the homosexual community feels toward those Christians who maintain the traditional condemnation of homosexual activity.

1. First, some traditionalists seem to demand the impossible by asking homosexuals to *repent* and *change* their orientation, as if it were a matter of choice.
2. If these Christians and churches recognize that homosexuals cannot change their orientation by a simple act of the will, then they demand heroic *abstinence*.
3. In addition, some heterosexual Christians *condemn homosexuals*, call them names or otherwise look down upon them—judging them for simply being the way they are.

If we have judged harshly and condemned homosexuals, then we ourselves need to repent. The motivation behind what some mainline churches are doing, on the other hand, is compassion. They are trying to embrace the homosexual

community in love. The sad thing is, when they reach out with a loving welcome, the traditionalists get angry because they are afraid a church or ministry is condoning active homosexuality. Their fear, in fact, seems to be justified: Some churches *are* moving in that direction.

How do we respond?

3

THE TRADITIONAL MORAL POSITION

Although we can understand that a homosexual's same-sex orientation is largely a given, and that a traditionalist is acting harshly in blaming him or her for it, the question remains as to whether we should accept homosexual *sexual activity*. We can accept the homosexual, but that does not mean we need to approve of his or her sexual activity, just as we can sympathize with a heterosexual male who falls in love with a married woman but we need not approve of his having an affair with her.

Homosexual Acts Violate Scripture

According to traditional Christian understanding, there are two main objections to homosexual acts. The first is that they are contrary to scriptural norms. As Judeo-Christians we need to consider seriously the condemnation of homosexual acts in Scripture.

Essentially we find two contemporary points of view. One position states that the Bible *condemns* homosexual activity.[1] The best-known passage in this regard is Romans 1:26–27:

> That is why God has abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have turned from natural intercourse to unnatural practices and why their menfolk have given up natural intercourse to be consumed with passion for each other, men doing shameless things with men and getting an appropriate reward for their perversion.

Here Paul is simply reinforcing the strong denunciation of homosexual practices that we find in the Torah: "You must not lie with a man as with a woman. This is a hateful thing" (Leviticus 18:22) and "The man who lies with a man in the same way as with a woman: they have done a hateful thing together; they must die, their blood shall be on their own heads" (Leviticus 20:13).

The second point of view is either that (a) the Bible is condemning only pagan

homosexual prostitution, which was connected with idolatry; or (b) the out- look in Paul's day was very different from ours, and Paul's condemnation, which was appropriate for that time in history, did not take into account the nature of true homosexual love and its goodness, in contrast to loveless acts committed by male prostitutes. In other words, Paul's condemnations do not apply to our time.[2]

Entire books have been written to better interpret these two very different understandings of Scripture, but I think it is fair to say that the texts themselves as we have them will admit only to the traditional understanding that homosexual acts are wrong. The more recent interpretations are not found in the texts themselves but are a reinterpretation of morality based on the homosexual experience, not on the texts.

As a help in interpreting the scriptural texts, we can look to Orthodox Judaism, which has maintained a constant moral tradition guided by the Talmud (the oral law) as well as the Torah (the written law, which Christians study in the Old Testament):

> Rabbinic discussions of homosexuality begin with the fact of its sinfulness and moral unacceptability but quickly make two important points. First, as in all matters pertaining to human failings, a strict distinction must be maintained between the sin and the person. Although homosexual behavior is to be condemned, homosexual persons are as beloved of God as everyone else; they are to be treated with no less dignity than we want for ourselves. This is, of course, no different than what the Christian position is, ideally—hating the sin but loving the sinner.[3]

Although Paul (who was a Talmudic scholar) broke with Orthodox Judaism on issues like the law and circumcision, he retained the Jewish stance on morality. And that interpretation is, not surprisingly, the same as the traditional Christian position.

We can also see that homosexuality is implicitly yet clearly disallowed as part of the created order in Genesis 1–2 (see especially Genesis 2:24, affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19:4–6 and Paul in Ephesians 5:31–33).

Since gay activists promote the idea that gay marriages are similar to heterosexual marriages and celebrate the "goodness" of homosexual love that gay men and women have discovered but that was simply not understood in Paul's day, we need to point out that, in many ways, homosexual marriages are not equivalent to heterosexual marriages.

In the first place, in regard to commitment, monogamous relationships in the

homosexual community are rare. One homosexual couple researched and wrote a book describing the 156 male homosexual couples that they studied. Among those 156 couples, 100 had lived together for more than five years, and none had remained faithful. Of the 56 couples who had been together for less than five years, only seven had stayed faithful. These researchers reported that "the expectation for outside sexual activity was the rule for male couples and the exception for heterosexuals."[4] At a time when some churches are actually performing gay marriages, the different understanding about fidelity in the homosexual community represents a significant difference in the understanding of marriage. Norma Dearing, a prayer minister who served on our staff at Christian Healing Ministries for thirteen years, has ministered to many homosexuals, and she told me (to my surprise at the time) that none of the gay couples she knew, male or female, expected fidelity in their relationships.

It seems, then, that (a) only about 2 percent of the male homosexual population want to be in monogamous relationships; and (b) even then, most of that small percentage of homosexuals who seek "marriage" do not share the same ideal of a committed sexual relationship as do traditional Christian and Jewish heterosexuals who get married.

I do not want to imply that there are no committed, faithful relationships among homosexuals—only that they seem to be rare. For those who "marry," it is often like being good roommates while their sexual relationships are free of any limiting restrictions. (As I note in the appendix on page 91, "Can Lesbians Also Change in Sexual Orientation?", lesbians tend to be more committed to exclusive relationships than homosexual men.)

Homosexual Acts Are Unnatural

The second main reason that homosexual acts are wrong, according to traditional Christian understanding, is that homosexual acts are "unnatural," and this can be understood even without accepting anything the Bible has to say in condemning the acts. The verses I quoted earlier from Romans, in which Paul condemns what he terms "unnatural practices," come in the middle of the section where he talks about pagans knowing, even without God's revelation, that their behavior is degrading (see Romans 1:18–32).

Homosexual acts can be seen as unnatural in two ways. The first is frequently mentioned and is more philosophical: We simply observe that men's and women's bodies are meant to fit with each other in order to produce the next

generation. Their bodies are a perfect fit. According to this traditional argument, men having sexual relations with each other, and women with each other, does not accord with the purpose for which God planned our bodies. Whether or not we accept this argument, we can readily understand it.

The second reason homosexual acts are contrary to nature is not at all easy to talk about. Perhaps this is because we are too genteel and polite, but we do not ordinarily talk about the *kind* of sexual activity that most male homosexuals practice when we debate about whether or not we should accept homosexual practices. “Gay activists deliberately paint a picture of homosexual life, especially among men, that is the counterpart of heterosexual life.”5 One gay activist warns his fellows: “The masses must not be repulsed by premature exposure to homosexual behavior itself.”6

Just what is the homosexual behavior that “the masses” should not be exposed to for fear they would be “repulsed”? The main homosexual activity that repulses ordinary people, and that I have never heard a priest or minister discuss (although I have been a part of many discussions and meetings with clergy), is *anal intercourse*. In polite society, of course, this is not a subject you would bring up. But in this context of determining whether homosexual activity is to be embraced by the Church, it is precisely the point and must be discussed, especially by pastors, priests, bishops and other church leaders.

If anal intercourse were a rare feature of homosexual behavior (and it should be noted that anal sex is also a reality for some heterosexuals), we could pass over it; but it is a common practice. “The typical homosexual (needless to say, there are exceptions) is a man who has frequent episodes of anal intercourse with other men, often with many different men.”7

A rigorous study of nearly five thousand homosexual men reported that a significant majority had had fifty or more lifetime sexual partners, and more than 80 percent had engaged in receptive anal intercourse with at least some of their partners in the previous two years.8 Although it is unfair to stigmatize all sexually active male homosexuals as engaging in anal sex, still, when 80 percent of homosexuals are involved, Dr. Satinover concludes that “in general, male homosexuality and anal intercourse are inexorably intertwined.”9

More surprising is the finding that among those who practice sodomy, the bottom position, the receptive, is usually the favored position (according to their own literature).10 A more extreme variant of anal sex is the practice known as “fisting.”

Most ordinary people, I think, find these practices “repulsive,” as the gay activist quoted admitted earlier. Since anal intercourse is repulsive to most people, they simply do not want to discuss, much less describe, the kind of sex that is commonly practiced in the homosexual community. When entire church bodies, general councils or synods vote on whether to ordain practicing homosexuals, do they discuss what it is that homosexuals are actually “practicing”? This is a question that has to be asked, even though it is a topic we avoid, because it really is *the* question.

Homosexual Acts Are a Major Health Hazard

In addition to the scriptural condemnation and the moral sense that homosexual sex is unnatural, a third reason for not approving of active homosexuality involves its serious health hazards. We all know about the health hazard posed by AIDS, especially as related to the homosexual community. But aside from AIDS, most people do not realize that the homosexual lifestyle provides a further health problem, and this additional risk is a major one.

A common misunderstanding is that condoms provide safe sex for homosexuals by protecting them from AIDS. What is not commonly known is that condoms provide *safer* sex but not *safe* sex, simply because anal intercourse results in tearing the anal tissue, regardless of whether a condom is used. These tears often result in disease because fecal matter in the rectum can get lodged in these tears and will infect, as well as scar, the body. AIDS is not the only health problem, then, connected with homosexual practices: Among others are infectious hepatitis, which increases the risk of liver cancer; rectal cancer, which is often fatal; and a number of bowel problems, as well as other infectious diseases. None of these is eliminated by using condoms.

A retired proctologist told me that, increasingly, his patients were homosexuals whose rectal areas had been torn up by their sexual activities, and there was no way he could repair the damage. What he saw in these patients so discouraged him that he eagerly sought early retirement.

But even safer sex has its problems, since 40 percent of the homosexual population refuses to use condoms,[11] and in the San Francisco area the number of nonmonogamous individuals using condoms actually declined from 1984 to 1988, despite all the warnings about danger.[12] Their perception is that condoms cut down on pleasure; and they enjoy the thrill of risk taking, a sign that their practices have become an addiction.

All these medical factors run counter to the perception that the use of condoms will result in safe sex for the homosexual population. Safer, yes, but safe, no. These practices, overall, result in extreme health risks for the homosexual population, even leaving AIDS out of the equation.

So how can churches put their blessing on homosexuality as if it were medically as well as morally healthy?

Medically the life expectancy of a sexually active homosexual male is 25 to 30 years less than that of the average American male, compared to a 5- to 10-year decrease in life expectancy for an alcoholic. Some but not all of this early death toll results from AIDS, as research scientists estimate that 30 percent of all twenty-year-old homosexual males will be HIV-positive or dead of AIDS by the time they are thirty.13 Since our American society is concerned about alcoholics' health and sets up treatment centers to change their destructive lifestyle, it is inconsistent for us to accept the homosexual lifestyle, or to applaud it—or even to celebrate it in sacramental marriage! The homosexual lifestyle represents a critical risk factor directly leading to many life-threatening illnesses.

4

TWO COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS

In order to gain acceptance for the homosexual lifestyle, gay activists foster two common misperceptions that add to the difficulty of talking accurately about homosexuality.

1. "Homosexuality Is Genetic"

If homosexuality is genetic, then a homosexual can readily say, "It's in my very nature to be homosexual. I cannot change; this is the way God made me. And if you honor God's creation, as you say you do, you must accept me as I am. I have had a hard time surviving your shaming condemnations, but I have finally learned to accept myself as I am—as God made me—and to be proud of my orientation!"

A number of studies by scientists, many of them homosexuals, have attempted to prove that there is a "gay gene." Usually, when the study comes out, the media eagerly publicize the finding: Gay Gene Finally Discovered! Having been involved myself in scientific studies trying to show the effectiveness of prayer for healing, I know how sensitive the scientific community is to sensationalizing or promoting one point of view until the study is published and accepted.

But with studies attempting to show that homosexuality is genetic, we sometimes find not objective science but strong advocacy. Clearly, finding a genetic source for the homosexual orientation would be a great advantage for the gay community. Yet one article in a psychiatric journal in which 135 research studies on genetic factors causing homosexuality were evaluated concluded that there is no evidence at present to substantiate a genetic theory.[1]

The simplest indication that there is no gay gene comes from the studies of identical twins, in whom all the genes are identical. If there were a gay gene, both twins would necessarily be either heterosexual or homosexual. Most of the researchers who have studied identical twins in relation to homosexuality have

hoped to prove that sexual orientation is genetic. But the studies show a 50 percent concordance rate, at best, when both twins were raised at home. And with twins raised separately by different families, studies demonstrate a concordance rate of zero.2 This research indicates, then, that there is no gay gene, although there may be a partial genetic influence. Even so, gay activists have largely convinced church leaders and the public that homosexuals have been created with a same-sex orientation.

As Dr. Satinover concludes:

> Most studies to date have many flaws. Some are caused by the intrusion of political agendas into what should be objective research, and some are due to the complex nature of the subject. . . . It is premature (and will almost certainly prove to be incorrect) simply to state that homosexuality "is" or "is not" genetic, innate, psychological, chosen or social.3

The agenda of gay activists has been to convince the public that homosexuality is a genetic fact and that homosexual orientation is natural and cannot be changed. To date, scientific studies simply do not show this, although the studies on identical twins should, even to those who are not scientists.

2. "Homosexuality Is Unchangeable"

After trying to persuade the public that homosexuality is genetic, gay activists next try to convince us that their orientation, being a given, cannot be changed. This seems to be the point of view advanced by many gay and lesbian task forces that try, first of all, to influence the mainline churches into accepting them as homosexuals and as persons—a legitimate goal. But they go further, trying to convince church leaders to accept the gay lifestyle. They then go still further by proposing to sacramentalize homosexual unions with the equivalent of a marriage ceremony for gay couples. If homosexuality is based on genetics and cannot be changed, then anyone who opposes the gay agenda can be portrayed as an irrational bigot.

As evidence refuting this theory, we have the testimony of thousands of former homosexuals who belong to organizations like Exodus, Regeneration and Desert Stream and who have come out of homosexuality. Many have changed in their sexual orientation and are now heterosexual in their lifestyle.

Supporting the possibility of change, many research studies show that even secular psychotherapy can help homosexual patients change their sexual

orientation. At the present time few scientists are undertaking such studies since it is a taboo subject, given the strong pressure applied by gay activists.

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) struck homosexuality from its list of disorders and illnesses. This dramatic change resulted from intense pressure—the kind of pressure foreign to the academic community—exerted by gay activists. In 1971, for example, one activist seized the microphone from a speaker at a psychiatric convention and yelled, "Psychiatry is the enemy incarnate. Psychiatry has waged a relentless war of extermination against us. You may take this as a declaration of war against you!"[4] The pressure was so strong that the APA caved in, even at a time when 69 percent of psychiatrists disagreed with the vote and still considered homosexuality a disorder. The APA's capitulation was followed two years later by that of the American Psychological Association.

These changes of direction in the scientific community are especially relevant to churches and Christian counselors because the same kind of well-organized pressure tactics are now being applied to churches, and anyone who opposes the gay activists risks being labeled homophobic. A gay activist can now ask a national church convention, "If scientists consider homosexuality normal, why do you stubbornly remain in your ignorance?"

As an example of things to come, in 1994 a prominent leader in the APA proposed a change in its code of ethics that would make it a violation of professional conduct for a psychiatrist to help a homosexual patient become heterosexual, *even at the patient's request*.[5] Since this prospective prohibition against helping homosexuals change their orientation contradicted another point of ethics—that the psychiatrist needs to accept a client's own goals—the proposal was voted down after a fierce dispute. Yet the homosexual condition is becoming more and more accepted by our culture and promoted by the media, so it is increasingly difficult to speak in favor of the traditional position without appearing prejudiced.

It is fascinating to observe that, prior to the APA's decision in 1973 to remove homosexuality from its list of psychiatric disorders, there were 1,021 articles in journals on the treatment of homosexuality, many of which reported significant success in changing sexual orientation.[6] Since then the number of studies has dropped drastically. Such undertakings are no longer considered politically correct, and psychologists are not eager to engage in controversy and be labeled as bigots.

Nevertheless, Houston MacIntosh, M.D., sent out a survey to which 285 psychoanalysts responded, in relation to a total of 1,215 homosexual clients who sought help. Of these patients, 23 percent changed to become heterosexual and 84 percent changed to some extent through therapy.[7] These results are reported primarily from secular, nonreligious psychotherapists! A summary of scientific studies from 1930 to 1986 reveals a composite success rate of greater than 50 percent—*success* meaning anywhere from "considerable" to "complete" change.[8] In 1984 Masters and Johnson reported a five-year follow-up success rate of 65 percent.[9]

So we are faced with another myth, one that is vehemently defended by gay activists—that homosexuality is unchangeable.

Our Response as Christians

Once when I gave a talk on how I had seen Jesus heal homosexual orientation, and the talk was reprinted in a Christian magazine, there were several hot letters in response. One writer said he was praying that my wife, Judith, and I would become gay ourselves! He claimed it was just as insulting for us to pray for a homosexual to change as it would be for us to pray for a black person to become white—to become something he or she is not.

We can empathize with many advocates for the gay agenda whose orientation has been with them as far back as they can remember, who truly believe they were born homosexual. Some of them have tried to change, moreover, and have not succeeded. Their experience leads them to believe it is a given that their orientation cannot be changed. What needs to be added to the equation, however, is professional counseling and, even more important (as we shall see later), the power of healing prayer. Yet, sadly, most churches do not understand the power of the Holy Spirit, working through prayer, to transform our very human weaknesses.

A battalion of evidence contradicts the view that same-sex orientation is unchangeable and shows that secular psychotherapy has demonstrated excellent results in reversing the homosexual condition. Unfortunately, the political and social climate makes it unpopular for research scientists to perform studies that verify this success, and practicing psychotherapists who treat homosexuals who desire to change face intense criticism. So, in spite of the evidence, the socially acceptable treatment today is for counselors to urge homosexuals to accept their orientation.

This extreme gay-activist pressure has resulted in psychotherapists either caving in or resisting as best they can:

> My reaction to the gay activism that has spawned this massive debate—and here I find I am far from being alone—is entirely different from my reaction to people who happen to be homosexual. Gay politics arouses in me an exasperated, somewhat stifled, outrage—exasperated and stifled because of the tangle of conflicting emotions that arise when "political power" is joined to "victim" status; outrage because gay activism distorts the truth and harms not only society but homosexuals themselves, especially young people. . .
>
> We must decide how best to counter the tactics of intimidation and refute the false claims of a group that operates in the hostile mode of raw power politics. On the other hand, we must retain the profound compassion and fellow-feeling toward individual homosexuals. . . . We must respect as fellows the very individuals whom we may reject as claimants in the public square.[10]

Let me sum up. The current gay activist position proposes, first, that homosexual orientation is *genetic* (it's in the genes), and, second, that this orientation *cannot be changed*. Both of these positions are countered by scientific research as well as by my own experience as a minister of healing prayer. They simply are not true.

Unfortunately, most of the mainline churches have bought into the belief that homosexuality is a given that cannot be changed. As a result their response is one of the following:

1. The church can accept same-sex orientation as a given that cannot be changed, but nevertheless it affirms the tradition that holds that homosexual *acts* are sinful and that the homosexual should therefore remain celibate throughout life.
2. The church can not only accept the homosexuals' orientation but can also accept their sexual activity.
3. The church can go beyond acceptance and can celebrate homosexuality by ordaining practicing homosexuals and elevating the union of gay couples to the level of heterosexual marriage.

5

COMPLEX CAUSES AND HEALING STEPS

I believe and have seen that the homosexual can become heterosexual when we pray for transformation to take place. In this chapter we will look at some possible causes for this orientation, and then important considerations that may help in this transformation. But first a word to those who want to help.

Homosexual persons, like all of us, are wounded human beings created in the image of God. Unfortunately, many Christians, in their condemnation of homosexual acts, have come across as judgmental, harsh and cruel in their treatment of homosexual persons. We can easily see how a homosexual would distrust Christians, and even come to hate them, because of what they perceive as unfair treatment: "After all, I didn't choose to be homosexual. Why blame me? You claim to follow Jesus, whose law is to love people. Yet you seem to condemn and hate me. Besides, I have not seen the Church try to teach me any way of changing even if I wanted to. Please, either accept me as I am or leave me alone!"

In light of his own observations, well-known evangelist and sociologist Tony Campolo struggles with the way many Christians condemn homosexual orientation:

> During a particular research project, I interviewed more than 300 gay men and found not one who had *chosen* to be homosexual. . . . For the 300 men I interviewed, the imprinting of the orientation occurred so early in their psychosocial development that none could remember ever making a choice. Yet I often hear Christian preachers say that homosexuals have *decided* to be other than God intended them to be.[1]

To most homosexuals, same-sex attraction feels natural and is simply the way they are. If they did not consciously choose it—and we will look at causes in a moment—then how can we in good conscience condemn them? We cannot treat homosexual inclination as if it were a sin, as if those who exhibit it desired and chose it. If we have done so, if we have been unloving in our relationships with

homosexuals, if we have judged them and decided that all they need to do is repent, then, as I said earlier, we ourselves need to repent.

Parental Influence: A Basic Cause

This is not to say that homosexuality is primarily genetic. But it does seem to be caused by a complex variety of early influences, including hormonal influences in the mother's womb before birth, combined with other early environmental causes. The most important factor, however, seems to be the influence of the parents. Let's turn our attention to parental relationships with the young child.

Relating to the Same-Sex Parent

Most homosexuals experience a mismatch, spiritually and psychologically, with the parent of the same sex. Many male homosexuals, when they were little boys, were not able to bond with their fathers in the way that every son needs to do in his normal development. (For a discussion of common causes of lesbianism, see the appendix, "Can Lesbians Also Change in Sexual Orientation?") Sometimes this lack of male bonding occurs because the father is harsh, abusive, demanding. In other cases the father, a decent man, is simply absent emotionally and difficult to relate to.

The son is left longing for his father's love; and when he becomes old enough for his sexuality to emerge, his longing may become sexualized. During this vulnerable time, an older homosexual man may recognize the young man's longings for love and affection, sexualize them and draw him into a lifestyle of active homosexuality.

We need to make a very important distinction here: A boy's need for his father's love is normal. If this need for affection and love is not met in a nonsexual way (by his father or by another man), his human need will remain, no matter how old he is. The homosexual's need for a man's love is not (as many Christians see it) the problem. Instead it is part of the solution. Until that need for a man's love is met, a youth will experience perpetual longing for love and affirmation—part of the ordinary course of growing up. As Dr. Elizabeth Moberly says:

> From the present evidence it would seem clear that the homosexual condition does not involve abnormal needs, but normal needs that have, abnormally, been left unmet in the ordinary process

> of growth. The needs as such are normal; their lack of fulfillment, and the barrier to their fulfillment, is abnormal.[2]

Many homosexuals seem, knowingly or unknowingly, to be seeking a father's love. In the human order, that need is filled when a man finds true affection and affirmation from another man, which gradually fills in what has been missing. Dr. Moberly suggests that, ideally, older men who are heterosexual and unthreatened in their sexuality should befriend homosexuals so that, over a period of time, a measure of healing will take place.

WHY THIS NEED IS RARELY MET

Tragically, however, this rarely takes place. This is because the very ones who could help the homosexual find genuine love are usually afraid to do so. An ordinary adult heterosexual man, sensing that a homosexual is hurting and is regarding him with strong affection, may feel nervous and back away, fearing that the homosexual is coming on to him sexually.

Thus, the very men who ought to be able to help— Christian men who are well established in their male identity, who understand where the longing is coming from and who should be able to establish true friendship with men who suffer this deficit of love—are often the very ones who are frightened off. The local Christian church is an ideal place for the homosexual to establish strong bonds of masculine friendship and encouragement. But often those churches are the very places where a homosexual will feel least comfortable, because of heterosexual men's fears that a homosexual's desires will be directed toward them in a sexual way.

This is one of the reasons that, after a certain age, it is difficult for a man with a homosexual orientation, in need of another man's affection, to find it outside the homosexual community.

WHEN THIS NEED IS NOT MET

And this leads to the problem of sin. The need for identification with or affection from a strong male figure may easily translate into a youth's acting out sexually, especially if an experienced homosexual senses those needs in a youth or young man.

We need to make a very clear distinction between homosexual *orientation*, which is part of the solution to the condition, and homosexual *activity*, which may later become a problem. As Dr. Moberly states,

> An attachment to the same sex is not wrong, indeed it is precisely the right thing for meeting same-sex deficits. What is improper is the eroticization of the friendship. Such eroticization is secondary, and not essential to the homosexual condition as such.[3]

Relating to the Opposite-Sex Parent

Just as the lack of love the child experiences from the parent of the same sex is frequently the major factor contributing to homosexual orientation, so, too, an unhappy relationship with the parent of the opposite sex can lead to homosexuality. A boy may experience his mother as a controlling, smothering presence, and his overwhelming childhood response is to try to escape her presence whenever he can. His negative feelings toward her can extend to all women; he does not like them, does not trust them.

This mismatch with the parent of the opposite sex may not happen often, but it does seem to be the determining factor for some homosexuals.

Usually the sexual aspect of a homosexual's life is what attracts attention, but its root is much deeper. Somewhere there is a more basic cause of the orientation, which differs for each individual. He may have been a very shy, artistic child who never felt comfortable with the rough-and-tumble, macho attitude of other boys; or he may have experienced a lack of love from his father; or he may have felt an abhorrence toward his mother. Physical sex is only the surface problem. There are many possible factors that go into creating the same-sex orientation, which go much deeper than his sexual activity.

The Right Approach

The important thing to remember is that most homosexuals are being truthful when they say that their orientation seems to be a given and goes back as far as they can remember. I will say again that those Christians who judge them harshly, as if they selected their orientation and need to repent for it, are simply wrong. This lack of compassion makes the problem worse by cutting off the very love and companionship some homosexuals require to compensate for the affection they missed in childhood. The Christian's feeling of discomfort in the presence of a homosexual drives the needy person further away. Hurting people are being cut off from the help they need and driven into the arms of those who understand their needs and want to draw them into an active sexual lifestyle.

Our example must be Jesus, who always included the religious outcasts of His day at the dinner table— tax collectors, public sinners, prostitutes—while the "righteous" people of His day judged them and kept them at a distance.

The traditional Christian position should be

1. *To understand and accept the homosexual's orientation as a given condition.* Yet it should be seen as temporary, not permanent. To condemn the homosexual for his orientation is not Christian. We should be saddened when we see believers responding to homosexuals with hate and loathing. It is tragic to see crowds shouting slogans and carrying placards that proclaim Kill Faggots! as if these angry partisans are the ones who represent Christian values.

2. *To realize, on the other hand, that the sexual acting out of same-sex attraction is sinful, just as it is wrong for heterosexuals to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage.* Our compassion for the homosexual helps us to understand the sexual expression, but not to condone or praise it.

Healing Steps to Take

I have seen instant healings of homosexual orientation, but these have been relatively rare. The ordinary course of healing may take months—even years. Typically it involves counseling and discovering all the levels and roots of a particular person's orientation.

As I mentioned earlier, secular therapy, even without prayer, has achieved considerable success in transforming the sexual orientation of homosexuals who want to change. When we add the dimension of healing prayer, the change seems to take place even more quickly. Here are some principles that can help.

Repent for the Sexual Acts

As we all know, when we sin we need to repent and ask God for forgiveness. Like a heterosexual who has been sexually active for years, a sexually active homosexual will find it very difficult to change, and he may lapse from time to time; but the basic will to change must be present.

He will need to repent for the sexual acts but not for the same-sex orientation. This orientation is a given and part of the long-term solution—the fulfillment of the normal and universal need for a parent's love.[4] The thirst to be loved is not

shameful nor should it be suppressed, but is meant to be met by (a) healthy same-sex friendship and love (which is not sexualized), as well as by some kind of Christian community; and (b) prayer for inner healing, through which God provides in an amazing way for what has been missing and reorients the homosexual's desires until they are directed to the opposite sex.

Discover How Psychotherapy Can Help

Psychotherapists who believe in the transformation of a homosexual's orientation can be a great help, especially in discovering the deep and complex roots of the orientation. As I mentioned earlier, they have a good rate of success in helping homosexuals who want to change their orientation.

Seek Prayer for Inner Healing

Unfortunately, the cost of psychotherapy puts professional counseling beyond the financial reach of many people. The good news, though, is that prayer for inner healing, if it is done faithfully and over a period of time, leads to a very high rate of change. Theoretically it should be successful 100 percent of the time, but because of human ignorance and our limitations as prayer ministers, we will see apparent failures. In some ministries the percentage of homosexuals who change and become heterosexual is more than 80 percent, which is remarkable.

The late Reverend Tommy Tyson[5] told me that he had prayed over the years for five ministers who were homosexuals and four of them were healed—that is, became heterosexual. (The one who did not become heterosexual was not convinced that he really wanted to change.) And those changes have lasted.

Some homosexuals bridle at the very notion of healing because it implies that they are sick. They have encountered so much shaming that they naturally react toward one more effort, as they see it, to put them down. They will pick up any judgmental, self-righteous attitude on our parts as prayer ministers.

I see a parallel here with alcoholism. Some alcoholics I know are the people I admire the most— but not for their drinking problems. Here again we are dealing with shame, with a direction in people's lives that they cannot control without turning to "a higher power" and the support of friends and a loving community (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous). Unless I truly feel, "There but for the grace of God go I"—unless I really believe at the most basic level that this struggling person may be a far better person than I am—I will not be able to help him or her at all.

Seek Deliverance As Needed

The idea of harboring an evil spirit that influences us, or even has control over our lives, may not be familiar to you.[6] Yet my experience, as well as my understanding of the Bible, has led me to believe not only in the reality of the demonic realm but also in how commonly these evil spirits influence or control people's lives.

In her experience as a psychotherapist, Judith estimates that one-third of her clients needed deliverance. This does not necessarily mean they were "possessed" and needed an "exorcism" (more on that in a minute), but that evil spirits really were present and exerting a negative influence on their lives. Prayer was needed to release the clients to be freed from this oppression.

Without going into a lengthy explanation, let me say simply that I have encountered a spirit of homosexuality in some homosexuals, and that they were not free until it was cast out. In saying this, I am not implying that homosexual activity falls into a different dimension than the problems heterosexuals experience. Often, in fact, we find spirits of lust or pornography and various other spirits that do also influence or infest heterosexuals. Just as some heterosexuals may need deliverance from spirits that drive them toward promiscuous sexual activity, so likewise some homosexuals can benefit from deliverance prayer.

I remember praying once for a homosexual male who wanted to change his orientation, and as we started praying for his inner healing he suddenly began roaring and shouting in a threatening way. We were praying in a room in a Catholic retreat center at about eleven o'clock at night—during the time of silence. As a result, the next morning everyone wanted to know what all the uproar was about! It took about an hour of prayer to free him. What impressed me was how fierce this spirit was, not at all weak or effeminate. (The conclusion of this story: He married several years later.)

More and more psychiatrists and counselors are recognizing the reality of the demonic. The famous psychiatrist M. Scott Peck wrote,

> As a hard-headed scientist—which I assume myself to be—I can explain 95 percent of what went on in these two cases by traditional psychiatric dynamics. . . . But I am left with a critical 5 percent I cannot explain in such ways. I am left with the supernatural—or better yet, subnatural.[7]

Furthermore, Dr. Peck told a friend of mine that he regarded his book *People*

of the Lie as his most significant work—better even than his bestseller *The Road Less Traveled*, although it never achieved the same popular success. In *People of the Lie* Dr. Peck was arguing for a new category in psychological literature: a category of personal, demonic evil to explain behavior that could not be explained in ordinary psychological terms.

Consider Exorcism

In rare cases an actual exorcism may be in order. One such remarkable case, described in psychological literature, is that of a transsexual who had planned on having a sex-change operation. The man (whom the psychiatrists called John) had already chosen Judy as his new name, had his breasts enlarged through taking estrogen and had his facial hair removed. Somehow some Christian friends persuaded John to go through an exorcism, which lasted three hours. After this exorcism, during which 22 evil spirits were cast out, John reaffirmed his masculine identity and discarded his female clothing. The doctors tested John for the next two and a half years and were amazed to see a clear reversal of John's gender identity. They concluded,

> What cannot be denied . . . is that a patient who was very clearly a transsexual by the most conservative criteria assumed a long-lasting masculine gender identity in a remarkably short period of time following an apparent exorcism.[8]

Although homosexuals who adhere to Christianity advocate committed, monogamous, same-sex relationships, promiscuity is nevertheless common in the homosexual population. One study recruited five thousand homosexual men and found that a significant majority of these (69–83 percent) reported having fifty or more sexual partners in their lifetimes.[9] A 1978 study found that 43 percent of male homosexuals had relations with five hundred or more partners, and 28 percent had a thousand or more different partners, with 79 percent saying that more than half of their partners were strangers.[10] (Promiscuity among lesbians is much less common, as noted in the appendix of this book.)

When we find people compelled by such an incredibly strong drive toward promiscuous, risky sexual behavior—whether homosexual or heterosexual— we often find that they are driven by evil spirits of addiction and lust, filling them with an almost uncontrollable urge to have sex at any cost. If the addict tries to change simply by making a decision to have a fresh start, his or her effort of the will is usually not enough. Ordinarily he or she will need prayer for deliverance

from the compulsion of a real demon in order to be free to live a transformed life.

As you undoubtedly realize, the mainline churches do not ordinarily consider deliverance or exorcism from evil spirits as a possible solution to their present quandary. But I propose it as at least worthy of reasonable study. In charismatic and renewal circles there has been a reawakening of this ministry. For example, there has been a remarkable upsurge in the study of exorcism in the Roman Catholic Church in recent years. In Italy alone there are now three hundred exorcists, where there were only seven in 1993. And the official exorcist of Rome, Father Gabriele Amorth, has the boldness to state:

> I am convinced that allowing the ministry of exorcism to die is an unforgivable deficiency to be laid squarely at the door of bishops. . . . The Catholic hierarchy must say a forceful *mea culpa*. I am personally acquainted with many Italian bishops; I know of only a few who have ever practiced or who have assisted during an exorcism or who are adequately aware of the problem. I do not hesitate to repeat what I have written elsewhere: if a bishop, when faced with a valid request for an exorcism . . . does not address the problem, either personally or by delegating the task to a qualified priest, he is guilty of a most serious sin of omission.[11]

As I have written in my book *Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual*, possession is very rare, whereas a level of infestation—less than possession— is fairly common. For this kind of spiritual oppression, I have found that a prayer of deliverance to free the person from spiritual interference is very effective.

6

How to Pray for Healing for the Homosexual

Because the roots of homosexuality are complex, we make a mistake to suppose we could lay out one method that would be universally successful. Nevertheless here are some general guidelines that should help.[1]

First, anticipate that the chances of prayer changing the homosexual's orientation are extraordinarily good. I expect that, ideally, it should be close to 100 percent, although because of our human limitations, the results are not that perfect. Nevertheless you can expect wonderful things to happen.

Next, as I have said, the physical, sexual aspect on the surface of same-sex orientation stands in contrast to its complex roots. So you should expect that, ordinarily, change will take place gradually over a fair amount of time. How much time? An ideal situation would be to allow for talking and praying for an hour or more once a week until the change has taken place. This might take six months (more or less). With counseling but without healing prayer, the process may take three years (more or less).

Yet we do not want to rule out relatively instant change. Personally I know of several such cases. Often we have only a short time to pray with someone; in fact, that is the usual situation. Although this short time is not ideal, still, something seems to change every time we have the chance to pray.

Following are some practical observations.

About the Prayer Ministers Themselves

Since we have a human tendency to criticize most actions that fall outside the scope of our own desires and understanding, a heterosexual man might tend to feel uncomfortable with a man with a homosexual orientation, especially if he fears the homosexual might develop a sexual attraction if he becomes too friendly. Yet as a general rule, you cannot pray successfully with people unless

you have a real love for them. They will, moreover, sense any trace of a judgmental, harsh attitude in you. Anyone who ministers to homosexuals should therefore feel comfortable working with them.

Because what has often been missing in the homosexual's life has been the love and affection of his father, it is ideal if a man (or a man and woman together) can pray for the homosexual. A male healing minister can expect—and hope—that a healthy affection will develop in the relationship. (This is a common outcome of therapy that psychotherapists are trained to deal with: in psychological terms, *transference* and *countertransference*.) But the male healing minister does need to be secure enough in his own sexuality to ensure that he will not be embarrassed by any feelings of affection that may develop during the healing sessions, nor be tempted to sexualize any friendly relationship that develops over time.

Again it is ideal if there are two prayer ministers, male and female, rather than just one. This provides a kind of safety, in case the homosexual should develop sexual feelings toward the prayer minister. Such feelings, if they develop, are not to feel ashamed of but to be dealt with as an ordinary accompaniment of the ministry. They can be handled in the same way as feelings that might develop if an attractive female is ministering in prayer to a heterosexual male; they must not be allowed to grow into a sexual relationship. A team of two, therefore, male and female, provides protection and helps prevent an inappropriate relationship from developing.

Beyond this protection, there is another advantage if a team (ideally a married couple) ministers together. Occasionally it seems appropriate to embrace a man who remembers a painful time in his life and starts to cry. When this happens, holding the man can be very healing, and often I have heard him say, "It was as if God was holding me and filling me with the love I never experienced." In one-on-one ministry, this holding is usually inappropriate or awkward. But when a couple is present, for the husband to hold the client can be very healing, as if the inner child—the boy who once was—is being held by his father.

Conversely, as I mention in the appendix, a lesbian typically needs to feel her mother's love. The female member of the ministry team can therefore expect to be used by the Lord to fill this void.

Praying When Time Is Limited

How should we pray if we are limited to an hour— or even to ten minutes?

Agnes Sanford, a pioneer in the healing ministry, had remarkable success in praying for the healing of homosexuality in a single prayer session. Occasionally she had to pray again, but she claimed that usually once was enough. (I should mention that Agnes was a humble woman and not prone to exaggeration; this claim of success was true to her experience.)

Certainly the prayer minister should have expectant faith when praying for the redirection of a homosexual's sexual orientation. But I believe Agnes Sanford's remarkable gift of praying for healing in one prayer was unusual. The usual method is to pray over a period of time.

Yet I, too, have prayed for homosexuals with one brief prayer. On those occasions my prayer has been that the humanity of the risen Jesus Christ—which includes His sexuality (something we do not often think about)—enter the man for whom I am praying: his emotions, his mind, his body and his sexuality. Then I pray that Jesus' humanity will transform the man's sexuality and, without destroying or harming it in any way, reorient it toward the opposite sex.

Does He Want to Be Healed?

Often the person we are praying for will be ambivalent about whether he really wants to leave the homosexual lifestyle. This is to be expected, and we should realize that making such a decision is very difficult. Like St.Augustine, a homosexual may want to change, but not totally and not now. This is the life he has known, these are the best friends he has and he is troubled by the prospect of losing much that he has relied on. We can encourage change but should not pressure or push people into making decisions they do not want to make on their own.

It may be the case, too, that he has tried to change in the past and has not succeeded, or that Christians have prayed for him but that their prayers seem not to have worked, so naturally he is discouraged. As you will see in the testimony in the next chapter, the first step is to emphasize first things first: Help the person to know Jesus; help him to know God's love. Let Jesus work from the inside out, step by step. Usu- ally healing occurs in layers. Someone once compared it with peeling an onion, and often each new layer is accompanied by tears.

Ideally repentance comes first; and sometimes it does. But if the homosexual does not yet sense a need for change, or is ambivalent about it, we need to love

him and accept him where he is. This does not mean we accept the homosexual lifestyle, but there is a progression in time, and God respects the freedom of a person's conscience. So start by encouraging him to enter a deeper relationship with God and to deepen his life of prayer.

Healing through Friendship

The next great help toward healing happens when the homosexual or lesbian develops deep friendships that are affirming and that will help make up for those relationships that were missing early in life. Dr.Elizabeth Moberly has written about this need and how it might be fulfilled in a church or Christian community.2 Again, because of the rejection homosexuals have often received (except from the homosexual community), it is best if the initiative for a homosexual male is taken by an older man in the community who is secure in his sexual identity.

Here is where a group of recovering homosexuals, such as members of Exodus, can really help. If you are homosexual, phone or write Exodus and ask if they have a group near you. This is much like Alcoholics Anonymous (as I said in the last chapter), in which the recovering person turns to a group that has struggled with the same problem, has learned to turn to "a higher power" and can provide a sponsor who will help during the tough times that are sure to come. Exodus, Desert Stream and Regeneration (see p. 105) offer many resources of books, CDs and videos, together with the encouraging testimonies of homosexuals who now live transformed lives.

Praying Over an Extended Time

I have said that the ideal is to spend significant time in counseling and prayer, perhaps an hour or more a week for several months. Since the life history of each homosexual is different, it takes time simply to get to know the individual and discover the roots of his loneliness, of his longing for affection. A typical session might take an hour—forty minutes of talking and sharing followed by twenty minutes of prayer.

Since each person is so different, it is a mistake for us to create some formula of prayer as if it were suitable for everyone. Nevertheless the roots of homosexuality, as we have mentioned, are commonly related to

1. *A mismatch, somehow, with the parent of the same sex.* This can go all the way from a very abusive relationship to simply suffering the father's absence. We can suffer from a father's *emotional* distance, too, even when he is at home. The more sensitive the boy, the more likely he will be to experience rejection. Homosexuals as a group seem to be more sensitive, more artistic and more creative than the population as a whole.
2. *Hostility toward the parent of the opposite sex.* This root of homosexuality results in antipathy among some homosexuals, not just toward their mothers but directed toward women in general.

One simple, powerful prayer is to ask Jesus to go back to those times when the homosexual first experienced rejection, loss, ridicule or abuse, or was disappointed in seeking his father's or mother's love, or to any other time in childhood when there was a loss of love. After asking Jesus to go back to that time, we simply wait for awhile in silence. This may sound very simple—and it is. Yet it is amazing how often Jesus actually seems to appear and then do or say exactly what the person most needs.

If Jesus does not somehow make His presence felt, I ask for the Holy Spirit to give us guidance so we can find out how best to direct the prayer. Then I form a prayer, following whatever guidance the Spirit gives me. At times, as I mentioned, I may ask Jesus, by the power of His own sexual humanity (since He was a human being like us in everything except sin), to transfuse the sexuality of the man I am praying for and redirect and transform its energy.

As these sessions go on for a period of time, different for each person, each level of loss is healed; and gradually the natural need for same-sex love is fulfilled, giving way to an attraction to the opposite sex.

The most important thing to realize is that God can transform the wounds of our past when we pray for inner healing. This is an extraordinary secret that some Christians have discovered but that most have never even heard about. Sadder yet, the leaders of most mainline churches—bishops, district superintendents, moderators and the like—have not, for the most part, ever heard about the power of inner-healing prayer to transform our deepest wounds, the pains that shape our lives without our even knowing it.

In the simplest form of prayer for inner healing, we do two things:

1. We talk with the person who desires to be healed of the wounds of the past

that still influence the present. We ask him simply to share whatever he can remember about his childhood and about his relationship with his father and mother. What does he know about the circumstances of his birth? Did his parents want him or was he unplanned, a “mistake”? When did he first experience his homosexual orientation? What were his experiences then and later? How and when did sexual activity begin (if it did)? We can make the answer to each of these questions, and many others that the Spirit may prompt, into the subject of an entire prayer session.

2. We spend the last part of each session in prayer, asking our compassionate Lord and brother, Jesus, to go back to that time in the past and to transform it.

In the experience of the prayer ministers I have worked with, the homosexuality almost always changes. But it does take time. And it takes patience, because the real change comes at a very deep level as layer after layer of the personality becomes transformed. I recommend that you read one of the many excellent books on inner healing by authors such as John and Paula Sandford or Rita Bennett.[3]

I should mention here that some of these wounds go way back, even before birth. In her work as a psychotherapist, Judith prayed for one young man (I will call him John) who was homosexual and who also suffered from schizophrenia accompanied by overwhelming fear and insecurity. One of the keys to John’s healing was the information Judith received in prayer that his mother and father did not really want this child. They were devout Catholics who already had a large family they deeply loved. John was a “mistake,” coming along years after the other children, when his mother was in her forties and looking forward to some rest.

After John was born his parents tried to compensate. But somehow, even back in the womb, in that mysterious way by which an unborn baby can pick up on the parents’ attitudes,[4] John knew that he was unwanted. Later his loving but quiet father withdrew from him. This rejection became a void in the boy’s life that required healing. Judith counseled and prayed with John intermittently for several years. He is now healed of both the schizophrenia and the homosexuality, happily married and doing very well in his career.

There are so many possible sources of pain, rejection and conflict that a complete list would take pages. That is why it is important to spend time talking

and listening. Over time the individual you are praying for will be able to remember and share many memories, such as whether his parents wanted a girl instead of a boy or whether his mother dressed him up in girls' clothes.

The possibilities go on and on, but most of these confusing memories will come to light. The Holy Spirit sometimes helps the counselor, moreover, by revealing something about the homosexual's background that even he had forgotten, and this turns out to be the key for the prayer releasing inner healing and freedom.

Do We Pray for Deliverance?

Sometimes, as I have mentioned, there may be a need for us to pray for deliverance from evil spirits. If these spirits are present and we do not pray to eject them, they will tend to block any change. Usually we can simply concentrate on praying for healing, but there are spirits that affect some homosexuals, spirits that actually name themselves: spirits of *homosexuality*, *lust*, *pornography*, *sadism*, *addiction* and so on. (All of these, except the first, can also influence heterosexuals.) I realize many readers may not have experience with this kind of prayer, but if you pray for enough people, you are sure at some point to confront a need to study this subject.[5]

I first encountered demonic spirits when I was praying for healing and there was a sudden, dramatic manifestation in which the face of the individual I had been praying for became contorted, the voice changed and the person started to shout and threaten me.

The best way to pray, if this should ever happen, is, first, to command the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to stop attacking you; and, next, to look the person in the eye and say, quietly but with authority, "I command you, spirit of lust [or whatever else], in the name of Jesus Christ, to leave and go to Jesus Christ, and never again come back."

You will probably have to do this several times. If you are unfamiliar with these phenomena, you may decide the wisest thing to do is to command the spirits to stop manifesting themselves and then refer the person to someone you trust who has experience in the area of praying for deliverance.

Concluding Our Ministry

At the end of all our prayers, we want to be positive, leaving the person in

peace. I usually finish by asking Jesus Christ to fill up anything that has been left empty, and I pray for the individual to be filled with the positive virtues of Jesus' life. If the person has suffered rejection—which Jesus suffered, too— we can pray that Jesus will come and fill the person with His great love, draining away his rejection; that Jesus would truly be a friend and companion to him; that he might personally experience how much God loves him; that he would be like the apostle John, the beloved disciple.

I encourage the individual to read the Bible and books that stress the love of God—what the homosexual has been longing for all his life. The gospel of Luke, which stresses the compassion of Christ, makes especially good reading.

7

THE STORY OF A RECOVERING HOMOSEXUAL

The following is taken from an interview by Norma Dearing with Marlin Moore, who was once in the homosexual lifestyle but is now happily married. This interview took place while Norma served on our staff at Christian Healing Ministries.

Q. Marlin, I would like to ask you to tell us about your background and what God is doing in your life today.

A. I am glad to be here and be of any help I can. Homosexuality is a vast subject, a cutting-edge subject right now, in the Church and in the world.

I was the stereotypical homosexual type, as far as my family background. My father worked for the CIA and traveled extensively, while my mother stayed home with us. So emotionally, although my father provided for our physical needs, he was just not there. At a very young age I started to seek out other men for approval and affirmation, because my dad wasn't there.

Probably at five or six, I started noticing that I was more attracted to men or boys than to women or girls. I didn't know back then that I was just seeking affirmation, but I started craving attention.

I never felt that I fit in at school at all. Although I yearned for attention from my peers, I didn't get it. Then some men happened to come alongside me and get me to become their friend. That was the start of it; I craved the attention I never had from my dad. I started sexual activity at a very young age—I think I was about nine. At the age of fifteen I worked as a busboy; that's when I really got into it. An older man became my friend and seduced me slowly, and I thought, *Wow, somebody actually likes me for who I am.*

Q. So you felt different and separate from the other kids. You wanted male attention that you weren't getting from your dad.

A. Yes. I think all of us, in all walks of life, crave attention. We all need to be needed. When I added to that natural need the odd feeling of desiring a male rather than a female companion, I ran still further away from most

people. When they made fun of me in school, my peers made me feel even more as if I didn't fit in. I have since learned that those other kids were probably more insecure than I was; they were really just like me. The roots are all the same: shame, fear, rejection. I thought I was the only one with those kinds of problems; I just needed to have somebody. And when that person came along who showed me attention, I grabbed it and ran with it.

I was in the homosexual lifestyle full-scale for about ten years. You have all these men wanting each other because they have never had that kind of attention. And you have two very dysfunctional people craving each other, and, although it is not totally fulfilling, you settle for it. You know there is something missing but you still decide, *This is better than nothing.*

Q. What changed your life, Marlin? What brought you out of that lifestyle?

A. It is so ironic that the person God used was my best friend's wife. She asked me to go to a revival at her church, and I said yes. I was brought up with a Methodist background, so I had a seed planted in me at an early age that knew right from wrong. That was a big help. I cried out every night when I went to bed. So there was something drawing me.

I went with her to that revival the first night, and then I went back the second night and made my decision for Christ.

Q. How long did it take you to come out of the homosexual lifestyle?

A. It wasn't instantaneous. I battled for years and years with it, and went back and forth for quite a long time. It's been a long walk out. To me it's like being an alcoholic; it is a daily thing. I need to keep up my spiritual guard.

Q. Were you involved in other things that made it worse?

A. Pornography. I was heavy, heavy into pornography. My mind was steeped in it. I couldn't look at people without thinking of them sexually.

God told me one simple key; it was for me to speak Scripture out loud. The problem was that I was battling in my mind, and it was like a pingpong game, good thoughts battling back and forth with bad thoughts. But when I started speaking Scripture out loud, it really helped me. As we speak, we cannot easily be thinking about something else. So that is a big, big key for anybody. It cleared out my mind quickly.

Q. That's wonderful! What about praying in the Spirit?

A. Yes. I would get backed up against a wall when Satan was tempting me,

but when I prayed in tongues, the Holy Spirit would step in and take over. Also, when you pray in the Spirit [i.e., in tongues], you are building yourself up in the realm of the Spirit. So that is a big key.

Praise and worship and singing are also very powerful; they keep my mind focused on God.

Q. Marlin, do you think that churches are making mistakes in how they minister in this area?

A. I think they are making some drastic mistakes, but these result from an ignorance in how to deal with homosexuality. Churches need to learn that homosexuality is a learned behavior; it has been ingrained in us from an early age and we need inner healing—which God can do—and to make a decision to walk out of the lifestyle. One church found that it takes three years to walk out of the homosexual lifestyle, provided the homosexuals are given love and healing prayer. We have to learn how to pray, with the laying on of hands. And we need a lot of patience, because we are afraid to show ourselves as we are, because people judge us so quickly.

Q. Would you tell the story you told me about the woman who helped a lesbian change in her orientation?

A. That was very interesting. I met this young Baptist woman at an Exodus conference. She was asking God to show her something she could do that would be meaningful. Shortly afterward a lesbian started working beside her, who dressed like a man, acted like a man and talked like a man. I was amazed to hear the story of what happened in the span of two years. The young woman was praying for guidance in how to minister to the lesbian, and God directed her to invite the woman to her Bible study. She said, *God, I don't want to. This woman will never fit into the group.* God answered, *Well, ask her anyway.* So she did, and the woman agreed to come.

When the time for the study came, the lesbian woman arrived, accompanied by her lover. The Baptist, who had been brought up primly, thought, *This is unbelievable. What am I going to do?* God directed her simply, *You love her where she's at.*

That's exactly what she did. And the lesbian got saved in a few weeks' time! But she and her lover remained together. Still, for a year the Baptist ministered to this woman. She kept saying, *But God, it's wrong. They can't live together; they've got to separate.* God said, *Just leave it alone. In My*

time it will happen.

A year later the lesbian told her,"I really feel I need to be baptized." And by immersion! Then, within two days, she came to the Baptist and said,"You know, I've got to ask my lover to move out. God spoke to me." And during the following year her lover was baptized, too.

This is more than just a good story, because it teaches us that we can't just tell homosexuals, "You've got to do this or that." We tend to judge people, but God has taught me through a lot of experience that we've got to love people where they are and let God change them.

If the Baptist had said right off, "You've got to separate," that woman would never have had the word planted in her with the time to grow, and her lover would never have had a year to grow into understanding. This way, because of her patience, both of them came to know God.

Q. Marlin, what would you say to people who minister to hurting homosexual people?

A. I think—and I'm repeating the same thing— we need to love them where they are and not judge them. Loving them and seeing Jesus in them is healing, and will bring them through. We need to learn that we can't just lay hands on them and cast out a demon, and then they will be fine. Homosexual behavior is learned, and it takes time to unlearn the behavior.

Also, if you are going to walk out of the lifestyle, you need a place to go to. Churches and counselors need to know that a homosexual can't just walk out of the lifestyle and not have someplace to go. Can someone in our churches open a door and let them stay for a year so they can get the guidance and love they need? They need to learn that Christianity is a walk, and as the Holy Spirit reveals what must be done at certain times, God will give them what they need at that time, and the healing they need. But above all I would say, Love them where they are and don't judge them.

Q. You are familiar with Elizabeth Moberly's teachings about homosexual people needing to receive love and nurture from the parent of the same sex. What would you like to say to pastors and prayer ministers about this need?
A. It is vitally important for them to notice if there are young people like me who are not quite fitting in—just as the gay man noticed me and came alongside me and showed me attention. Where was the Christian man who could have come alongside me as my father, as a role model and mentor? I think that is lacking in churches. Youth pastors could start learning what to

look for—the shyness, the guys who do not quite fit. What about the little boy standing over in the corner by himself? Even Christian kids make fun. Watch out; be sensitive.

Q. You're saying, Marlin, that churches need to get involved and provide male mentoring, especially when many kids are being raised in single-parent homes. They need affirmation from Christian men at church.

A. Yes, I think it's the most important thing they can do in preventing homosexuality. I wish I had had that. Christian men and pastors need to get involved when the boys are around twelve, thirteen and fourteen—just hitting puberty—and guide them and lead them.[1] This would save a lot of heartache for many boys out there.

Q. You are married now and have children of your own. And you are not just talking about these problems; you are doing something about it. Can you tell us about that?

A. We are meeting with and supporting homosexuals who desire to come out of their lifestyle. We try to give them the love and guidance we have been talking about. And I accept speaking engagements to churches and groups to share what I have learned and to correct the ignorance that's out there, as well as to encourage homosexuals to change their lifestyle.

Please notice several key points that Marlin Moore is making here. The most remarkable is that he cautions against moving too fast in demanding immediate changes in another person's life. I am sure some Christians might consider this gradual approach as soft on sin. But his caution reminds me of something that happened many years ago when I lived in St. Louis, Missouri, and was part of the ministry at Merton House.

The Catholic sisters living there were ministering to a nurse living with her lesbian partner. These sisters did precisely what Marlin Moore suggests: They prayed with her and affirmed and loved her without making demands on her that she could not at that time accept. They simply led her to Christ and encouraged her to pray.

In a matter of months she received in prayer that she should leave the lesbian lifestyle, but she was afraid of the devastation this might cause her partner, whom she cared about deeply. So they stayed together as a couple while she kept on praying. Then one night, weeks later, Jesus appeared to her partner and told

her gently that she should give up the lesbian lifestyle. When she shared this with the nurse, she was surprised to find that the nurse had come to the same conclusion weeks before. So the lesbian relationship ended, two people were reconciled with God and parted from one another in peace.

I remember what my friend Tommy Tyson often said: “Christianity is an inside job.” The Holy Spirit works from inside us, rather than through an imposition of law from without.

Marlin Moore also emphasizes that this kind of healing usually takes much time and patience. The root causes of homosexuality are usually not simple, and each person’s counseling and prayer needs are unique. This leaves us with a further question: Where do we find people willing to spend time laying down their lives for the wounded, hurting people of the world?

When [Jesus] saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.”

Matthew 9:36–38

8

TO THE HOMOSEXUAL WHO WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE

I realize there is much more that needs to be said about how to go about praying if you have a homosexual orientation and are considering a life change. My purpose, as I said in the beginning, was not to write a complete book on this complex subject. But I can help start you on your way with several practical suggestions.

Find a Wise Counselor

If you can find a psychotherapist who believes in the possibility of change, this can be a great help. It will be even better if you can find a counselor who also prays with his or her clients for inner healing. I know one who prayed with as well as counseled her homosexual and lesbian clients. Out of a total of twenty such clients, all were eventually transformed in their orientation.

It is also ideal if you can find a priest or minister who will help you with spiritual direction, especially one who knows how to pray for inner healing.

Read Up

One way we can all learn more about the complex issue of homosexuality is by reading up on the subject. Some books treat the subject in a general way, such as Jeffrey Satinover's *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*. In this clear, persuasive presentation of the psychological, scientific and moral dimensions of homosexuality, Dr. Satinover tries to clear away many popular misunderstandings and downright falsehoods that cloud discussions on the topic.

If, on the other hand, you are trying to change your sexual lifestyle, you would do well to read one of the more practical guides that suggest various steps you need to take in coming out of homosexuality. Some of the best of these books have been written by men who have themselves lived through the entire process of transformation. Rather than overwhelming you with a long list, I will mention

just one, Alan Medinger's *Growth into Manhood*, as an excellent practical guide.[1]

Since Alan Medinger spent years in the homosexual lifestyle (he is now a happy husband and father), he writes with empathy about the steps and gradual process involved in changing. His book, subtitled *Resuming the Journey*, has chapter titles such as "The Way a Man Develops," "What Went Wrong in Our Lives?" and "Overcoming the Past," that give some idea of his gentle, step-by-step approach. This book is just one of many excellent books on the subject (see "Resources for Further Reading" on page 99); but since you need to start somewhere with a hopeful plan, this would be a good book to begin with.

You might also write, email or phone Exodus, Regeneration or Desert Stream and have them put you on the mailing list for their newsletters.

Find Support and Prayer

Key in your healing is for you to find the support of Christian friends who can understand, love and pray for you. Exodus, Regeneration and Desert Stream all have nationwide networks. If a local chapter of one of these groups (or another smaller group) is located in your area, be sure to get in touch with it. These wonderful organizations also have excellent publications available. Perhaps the largest organization is Exodus, which you can contact in order to find the closest group in your area for recovering homosexuals (see p. 105). Try to find the encouragement of a support group that meets within driving distance.

9

IN CONCLUSION

Let me sum up what this little book has tried to say about the transformation of homosexuality.

1. The homosexual's same-sex orientation usually seems like a given and is not a willed choice.
2. Yet the homosexual does not seem to be created with that orientation. As yet no gay gene has been discovered.
3. Same-sex orientation usually starts early in childhood. Most definitely the homosexual should not be blamed, as if he or she had chosen the orientation. Homosexuals are as worthy of love as anyone else.
4. The need for same-sex affection in a homosexual man should be met in some way, either through the deep friendship of another man or by God filling that need through healing prayer.
5. A lthough a homosexual did not choose a same-sex orientation, he or she is not to engage in sexual activity.
6. Prayer for inner healing, and occasionally for deliverance, can change a homosexual's orientation instantly.
7. Ordinarily inner-healing prayer, joined to counseling, is a process requiring patience and time.

The good news is that, for the homosexual who desires it, Jesus can transform his sexual orientation. As St. Irenaeus wrote, "The glory of God is a man fully alive!"

APPENDIX

CAN LESBIANS ALSO CHANGE IN SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

In many ways what we have said about male homosexuality is also true of lesbianism. Its causes are complex and no two people are alike. The roots go much deeper than the simple physical desire for sex; and a lesbian's attraction to other women is generally not the result of a conscious choice. Just as it is wrong to blame homosexuals for their sexual orientation, so it is wrong to blame lesbians for theirs. Their emotional attraction toward the same sex is not the problem, but is actually part of the solution, in that it points to a deep need to receive love and affirmation as part of the ordinary pattern of growing up and maturing.

Ordinarily the lesbian's need is to feel her mother's love. When that happens, the daughter grows to admire her mother and learns to take pride in her own identity as a woman. But if her need for her mother's love is unmet, it remains as a deep craving until it is filled. The lesbian is sensitive enough to feel this need in a very deep way. As with male homosexuals, the difficulty lies not in the need for same-sex love and affirmation but in the direction of this need toward sexual activity.

Lesbians differ from male homosexuals, however, in several important ways. One difference is simply that they make up a smaller part of the overall population, somewhere around 2 percent, compared to the estimates of the number of male homosexuals, which vary from around 3 to 6 percent. Perhaps this is because mothers are generally more bonded emotionally to their daughters than fathers are to their sons.

A more important difference, however, comes from the special gift women have in seeking relationships that are intimate and permanent, as opposed to men's strong sexual drive to find outlets for their physical appetites. One former lesbian, now married, writes that many lesbians read erotic, romantic novels. But she goes on to state,

> Contrast that with the behavior of some gay men engaging in anonymous sexual encounters with other males in a park, mall bathroom, or bathhouse without even knowing the others' names. I would speculate that most women would not even consider this form of sexual expression—even in the throes of addiction. No, bathhouses and lesbian sex clubs are still the minority of lesbian experience because of the remnant of our original design for relationship.[1]

Male homosexuals tend to be quite promiscuous, sometimes having hundreds of sexual partners. Lesbians, in contrast, tend to prefer fewer partners. Consequently, according to one survey, 78 percent had experienced long-time relationships, and 93 percent of these were exclusive. A lesbian clearly seeks intimate, settled friendship with another woman. Healthy friendship is vital. The problem arises when friendship becomes infatuation, and then, beyond that, physical.

Nevertheless, since the type of sex that lesbian partners engage in is ordinarily expressed by caressing and mutual masturbation, they avoid the major health problems that male homosexuals incur through anal intercourse.

Some daughters were sexually abused when they were young, and this abuse may have turned any natural attraction to men to aversion. Other daughters came to despise the submissiveness and weakness of their mothers and grew to admire the power and strength of their fathers. These different factors create two different types of lesbians. Those who admire the strength of men and model their identities on being strong tend to be the dominant partners when they pair off, while others, longing to be cherished, seek dominant women as partners who can act as their protectors. These two types have different deep needs, yet both require healing in accepting and appreciating their femininity.

Regardless of how same-sex attraction manifests itself, the basic human need for love and affirmation lies at the root of the healing that the lesbian instinctively seeks. Perhaps lesbians are closer to the heart of reality in intuitively rejecting a gross sexual solution to the emptiness of their lives—for example, promiscuity—and seeking instead a deeper, more permanent relationship.

Happily I have found by experience that lesbians as well as homosexuals can change in their orientation. Not that this is easy! Time and patience and the pain of sacrifice—all are required. But for the lesbian who wishes to change, everything I said about male homosexuals holds true. Judith counseled fourteen lesbians who desired to change. Their program included prayer for inner healing and took, on average, about six months. All fourteen were transformed in their sexual orientation.

“For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here” (2 Corinthians 5:17). My beliefs and experience have led me to the firm hope that homosexuals of both sexes who desire to change—not only their lifestyle but also their orientation—will find that they really can become the “new creation” St. Paul holds up as our ideal!

NOTES

Introduction

1 . The respected priest, Father Donald Cozzens, devotes an entire chapter in his book *The Changing Face of the Priesthood* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2000) to this issue of the increasing numbers of homosexuals among priests and seminarians.

2 . One can note the preference of either the word *homosexual* or the word *gay* within the two types of organizations that deal with the issue of homosexuality. Organizations (such as Exodus) that believe in *change* use the term *homosexual*, while those that lobby for *acceptance* of their sexual lifestyle tend to use the term *gay*, as in "Gay and Lesbian Task Force."

3 . Shawn Zeller's letter to the editor, *Commonweal*, 8 September 2000, 45.

Chapter 1: Empathizing with Homosexuals

1 . *Call to Action* is a Catholic group—not an "anti-Catholic sect"—that numbers several bishops in its membership. It espouses liberal causes in the Church, some of which are controversial.

2 . *Corpus Reports* 26, no. 4 (July-August 2000): 4.

3 . This took place ten years ago, and that bishop has since retired. Note that it would be assumed that the persons at the meeting were homosexual in orientation but were trying to remain chaste.

Chapter 2: Is Change Possible?

1 . *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Image Books, 1995), 625–26.

2 . Exodus International, North America; P.O. Box 540119, Orlando, FL 32854; (407) 599-6872; www.exodus.to.

3 . Regeneration, P.O. Box 9830, Baltimore, MD 21284-9830; (410) 661-0284; fax: (410) 882-6312; www.regenerationministries.org.

4 . Desert Stream, P.O. Box 9999, Kansas City, MO 64134; (866) 359-0500; www.desertstream.org.

Chapter 3: The Traditional Moral Position

1 . Among those books teaching that Scripture forbids homosexual acts, an excellent presentation is *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001) by Robert A. J. Gagnon.

2 . One of the best known of the theologians who argue for acceptance of a homosexual lifestyle is John J. McNeill, a psychotherapist who wrote *The Church and the Homosexual* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976, 1993). Because of his views he was asked to leave the Jesuit Order.

3 . Jeffrey Satinover, M.D., *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996), 218.

4 . D. McWhirter and A. Mattison, *The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 3.

5 . Satinover, 52.

6 . Marshall Kirk and Erastes Pill,“The Overhauling of Straight America,” *Guide*, November 1987, 24.

7 . Satinover, 55.

8 . R. A. Kaslow et al., “The Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study: Rationale, Organization and Selected Characteristics of the Participants,” *American Journal of Epidemiology* 126 (August 1987): 310–18.

9 . Satinover, 60.

10 . C. Silverstein and F. Picano, *The New Joy of Gay Sex* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 18.

11 . Satinover, 56.

12 . L. S. Doll et al., “Homosexual Men Who Engage in High Risk Sexual Behavior: A Multicenter Comparison,” *Journal of Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 18, no. 3 (1991): 170–75.

13 . Satinover, 51, 57.

Chapter 4: Two Common Misperceptions

1 . Byrne and Parsons, “Human Sexual Orientation: The Biologic Theories Reappraised,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 50, no. 3 (March 1993): 228–39.

2 . Satinover, Chapter 5, “Two of a Kind.”

3 . Ibid., 117.

4 . R. Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 105–6.

5 . Satinover, 36.

6 . Ibid., 169.

7 . Ibid., 181.

8 . Ibid., 186.

9 . Schwartz and Masters, “The Masters and Johnson Treatment Program for Dissatisfied Homosexual Men,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 141, no. 2 (February 1984): 173–81.

10 . Satinover, 20–21.

Chapter 5: Complex Causes and Healing Steps

1 . Tony and Peggy Campolo, “Holding It Together,” *Sojourners*, May-June 1999, 28, 30.

2 . Elizabeth R. Moberly, *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic* (Greenwood, S.C.: The Attic Press, 1983), 18.

3 . Ibid., 20.

4 . I have met some homosexuals who remember both parents as being very loving. If and when this is true, we should seek to find some other cause of the orientation.

5 . Tommy was a conference evangelist for the United Methodist Church. He founded the Aqueduct Conference Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

6 . If you want more information on this subject, you might read my book *Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Chosen Books, 1995).

7 . M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 195–96.

8 . Gene Abel, M.D., David Barlow, Ph.D., and Edward Blanchard, “Gender Identity Change in a Transsexual,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 6, no. 5 (1977), quoted in Conrad W. Baars, M.D., *Feeling and Healing Your Emotions: A Christian Psychiatrist Shows You How to Grow to Wholeness* (Plainfield N.J.: Logos International, 1979), 206.

9 . Kaslow et al., 310–18.

10 . Alan P. Bell and Martin S. Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 308–9.

11 . Gabriele Amorth, *An Exorcist Tells His Story* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 54–55.

Chapter 6: How to Pray for Healing for the Homosexual

1 . For those unfamiliar with the practice of praying for healing, there are many books to consult. One of them is my book *Healing* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 25th Anniversary Edition, 1999).

2 . See “Resources for Further Reading.”

3 . See “Resources for Further Reading.”

4 . In *Praying for Your Unborn Child* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988; New York: Doubleday, 1989), which Judith and I coauthored, we wrote extensively about the influence (for good and for ill) of the parents’ attitudes upon the unborn child. This book is available through the Christian Healing Ministries bookstore.

5 . I have written a book on this subject that should help if you are unfamiliar with deliverance: *Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Chosen Books, 1995). See www.christianhealingmin.org for more information.

Chapter 7: The Story of a Recovering Homosexual

1 . Regrettably, there have been many recent scandals regarding some youth leaders and pastors becoming sexually involved with young boys (pedophilia) or adolescents (ephebophilia) in their congregations. This abuse only calls attention to the underlying need to break this pattern that goes on from generation to generation, by having mature adults, with no underlying dysfunctional needs of their own, supply the affection and guidance our youth need.

Chapter 8: To the Homosexual Who Would Like to Change

1 . Alan Medinger, *Growth into Manhood: Resuming the Journey* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Waterbrook Press, 2000).

Appendix: Can Lesbians Also Change in Sexual Orientation?

1 . Anne Paulk, *Restoring Sexual Identity: Hope for Women Who Struggle with Same-Sex Identity* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 164.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

Bennett, Rita. *You Can Be Emotionally Free*. North Brunswick, N.J.: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1982.

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Worthen, Anita, and Bob Davies. *Someone I Love Is Gay*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

ORGANIZATIONS

For support within the Catholic Church, contact Courage, St. John the Baptist Church and Friary, 210 W. 31st St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 268-1010; fax: (212) 268-7150; email: NYCourage@ aol.com.

Desert Stream, P.O. Box 9999, Kansas City, MO 64134; (866) 359-0500; www.desertstream.org.

Exodus Global Alliance, P.O. Box 21039, Ajax, Ontario, Canada L1S 7H2; (416) 283-9797; www.exodusglobalalliance.org.

Exodus International, North America; P.O. Box 540119, Orlando, FL 32854; (407) 599-6872; www.exodus.to. Exodus International is a worldwide coalition of Christ-centered ministries to homosexual strugglers. The Exodus member list includes information on over one hundred ministries in the United States and Canada. Contact this organization for a referral list or other information.

For support within the Methodist Church, contact Transforming Congregations, P.O. Box 580, Millsboro, DE 19966; (215) 752-9655.

For support within the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), contact One-By-One, P.O. Box 10055, Rochester, NY 14610.

Regeneration, P.O. Box 9830, Baltimore, MD 21284-9830; (410) 661-0284; fax: (410) 882-6312; www.regenerationministries.org. *Regeneration News* is the monthly newsletter of Regeneration ministry. It offers meaningful and helpful articles for the man or woman overcoming homosexuality and for any Christian having an interest in the subject. *Regeneration News* reviews the latest Christian books on homosexuality.

Francis S. MacNutt was born in 1925. Ten days before entering medical school he was drafted into the army and served as a surgical technician during World War II. After receiving a B.A. from Harvard and an M.F.A. in Speech and Drama from the Catholic University of America, he entered the Dominican Order, studied to be a Roman Catholic priest and was ordained in 1956. He received a Ph.D. in theology from the Aquinas Institute of Theology, where he was then appointed to teach homiletics.

Francis experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1967 and learned about praying for healing from the Reverend Tommy Tyson and Agnes Sanford. He was one of the first Roman Catholics to be involved in the charismatic renewal. Entering the full-time preaching ministry, he began traveling all over the world and writing books on the subject of healing. His book *Healing* (Ave Maria Press) has sold more than a million copies in the United States alone. His five other books on healing include *Deliverance from Evil Spirits* (Chosen Books).

In 1975 Francis met Judith Sewell in Jerusalem, where she was a missionary. Five years later they married and settled in Clearwater, Florida. He and Judith, a psychotherapist, coauthored *Praying for Your Unborn Child* (Doubleday). Together they founded Christian Healing Ministries (CHM) and, taking their two children with them, traveled widely, speaking as a team. In 1987 they moved the ministry base to Jacksonville, Florida, invited there by the Episcopal Diocese of Florida. The teaching ministry is carried out through conferences, seminars, books, tapes and speaking engagements by the MacNutts and staff members as well as invited speakers.

In addition to praying and teaching, CHM has established relationships with other Christian ministries and counselors around the world for networking and referral purposes.

For more information, contact:

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