

A Biblical Response to the Gay Affirming Church – Dan Hitz



Love Won Out, Canton, Michigan. April 26, 2003.

As we look at the issue of homosexuality and Christianity, we must realize that not all people who identify themselves as Christians see the Bible as the divinely inspired writing of God's unchanging Word which is our final authority on all matters of faith and conduct. Many see it as good principles which have evolved over time, and may not have taken into account certain new understandings about cultural issues including homosexuality or homosexual orientation. Others will attempt to interpret it in a way that still gives the Bible authority as God's Word, but also allows them to embrace homosexuality. We as Christians must have a specific, unchanging standard to base our beliefs on and hold fast to the true meaning of Scripture.

Many in the gay community will say that homosexuality is acceptable because Jesus said nothing to condemn homosexuality in the Bible. However, Jesus also said nothing about pedophilia or bestiality, which most non-Christians would strongly condemn. Jesus did specifically outline God's intent for marriage from the beginning of creation. When the Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus with their questions about divorce, Jesus replied in *Mark 10:6-9 [NIV]* *"But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.*" Jesus gave a direct reference to the creation account in Genesis 2:18-24 when God formed Eve out of Adam as a helper suitable for him.

Many Christians will point out that God specifically condemned homosexual behavior in the Old Testament in Leviticus Chapters 18 and 20. Those in the gay affirming churches will ask them why they are holding to the Old Testament laws against homosexuality when they stop at McDonalds and eat a ham, egg, and cheese McMuffin. As many of us are responding with a blank stare, they will go on to reference Acts 10:9-48 where the Lord commissioned Peter to speak to Cornelius by showing him the sheet of animals and commanding him to eat. In Acts 10:15 the Lord tells Peter, *"Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."* They will draw a parallel between God calling the Gentiles – a formerly rejected people group – clean with God also calling those in the homosexual community clean. Our response to this can be to cite the decisions of the counsel in Jerusalem as detailed in Acts 15:1-31. At this counsel, the church leaders gathered in Jerusalem to determine if the new Gentile believers were required to keep the law of Moses. There was no question that the offer of salvation was opened to all who accepted it. The question was one of law and behavior. The counsel reached the decision that the Gentiles were responsible to keep only four behavioral laws, one of them was specifically to refrain from sexual immorality. Many of these laws are clearly stated both in the old and new testaments. Those who struggle with homosexuality are welcomed into the Kingdom of God, however they are expected to refrain from sexual immorality and repent of their sin of homosexuality just as we would also expect those struggling with heterosexual sin to repent of their sin as well.

Many well meaning Christians have used Romans 1:25-29 to thunder their opposition to homosexuality loudly to those who embrace it. Unfortunately, they have also triggered many defenses to this section of Scripture. When we're talking to someone who believes that homosexuality is acceptable, we must remember to speak the truth graciously and realize that this passage may very well bring up some strong emotions. Those who accept homosexuality often say that same sex encounters are natural for persons who are born homosexual, and that this section of scripture refers to persons who are born heterosexual who have abandoned their heterosexuality for homosexuality. We can respond that our sinful desires always feel natural to us. When I embraced my homosexual feelings and attractions, it felt very natural to me to act upon them. When I embraced bulimia, it felt natural to me to eat five times the amount of food that would make a non-bulimic feel stuffed. The truth is, bulimia is not an acceptable behavior in God's sight. As natural as it felt, I was not born a bulimic. In the same way, homosexuality is not an acceptable behavior in God's sight. Both are damaging and self destructive. There are many secular studies that indicate increased rates of illness,

depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence among homosexuals compared to heterosexuals. These increased risks also occur in countries and cultures that are more accepting of homosexuality than the US. [Secular studies will be addressed in a future newsletter, and some references will be given at the end of this newsletter.]

Many in the homosexual community also believe that David and Jonathan, and Ruth and Naomi were homosexual partners. They may quote 1 Samuel 18:1-3 [KJV] which reads, *"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul."* It is easy for me to see how broken people can confuse love with a sexual relationship. They are not the same. You can have a deep love for someone without having a sexual relationship. You can also have a sexual relationship with someone without love. David and Jonathan truly had a deep love for each other, but it was not a sexualized love. God is not bashful about sex. There are many details of sexual relationships in Scripture including The Song of Solomon and David's sin with Bathsheba. If David and Jonathan would have had a sexual relationship, and that relationship was acceptable in God's sight, he most likely would have included at least one reference to their union in Scripture. Yes, David and Jonathan made a covenant, but so did Abraham and the Lord in Genesis 15. According to Thayer's Bible Dictionary, the same Hebrew word is used for both covenants. God's covenant with Abraham was not sexual. Neither was David and Jonathan's.

Those who believe that Ruth and Naomi had a homosexual partnership will quote Ruth's response to Naomi when Naomi told Ruth to stay in her homeland and with her people when Naomi returned to Israel. This familiar section of Scripture is even quoted at weddings as couple exchange their vows. *"...Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. I will go wherever you go and live wherever you live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. I will die where you die and will be buried there. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!"* Ruth 1:16-17 [NLT] This obviously shows a deep committed love between Ruth and Naomi, but it does not imply a sexual or lesbian bond. In fact, Naomi helps Ruth get married to a man named Boaz in Chapter 3 of Ruth and tells Ruth how to win Boaz' heart.

This newsletter is intended to introduce you to some of the doctrinal positions held by members of the gay affirming church. Future newsletters will explore some of the secular research that shows the pain and destruction involved in a homosexual life. I encourage you to share your heart in mercy, and not in anger. As a former homosexual, I can understand the immense power of same sex attraction and the deep inner battle to reconcile such feelings within the context of a God who has a strong moral code. Inside, guilt dwells with passion. Our own desires are confronted by God. I remember hearing about one of the few gay affirming churches in the 1980's. Even though I was far from God, something deep within me hoped that I could have both God and homosexuality. I never did make the connection. I knew deep inside that the two were irreconcilable. Now, some twenty years later, I am glad that they are. I came to the Lord broken and bruised, yearning for acceptance. It has been a long journey, but I continue walking in the emotional and spiritual healing that Jesus Christ has to offer. I no longer try to fill the deep voids inside my heart with fantasy or unions with other men. I can now live as an emotionally healthy heterosexual man, husband, and father. Only Jesus Christ can heal the wounds and fill the voids. It took being confronted with the truth by loving Christians and a loving God to bring the healing that I needed. When you meet those who believe that embracing homosexuality and following Christ are compatible, remember to speak to them in mercy. You are Christ's ambassador for healing and reconciliation.

If you would like more information on this subject...

A Strong Delusion, Joe Dallas. Harvest House Publishers, 1996
Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth, Jeffrey Satinover, M.D. Baker Books, 1996.
Restored Hope Network at www.restoredhopenetwork.org.
National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality at www.narth.com
Focus on the Family at www.family.org.
Homosexuality Statement, Christian Medical and Dental Associations at
<http://www.cmdahome.org/index.cgi?BISKIT=2302340612&CONTEXT=art&art=2554>.



Dan Hitz & Carlton Quattlebaum
address the American Friends Service
Committee, June 4, 2003.