

Authentic Drivel



With grief I consider the irony of Exodus' response to John Paulk's immersion in gay culture (Exodus Blog, April 22; Paulk presided over Exodus in the nineties). Exodus used to focus on how Jesus leads persons out of homosexuality. Now Exodus appears to celebrate those who return to it.

Exodus VP Randy Thomas just wrote a glowing account of Paulk's renunciation of his 'ex-gay' status. In the spirit of Exodus new 'radical' grace message, Thomas 'agrees with 95%' of what Paulk confided in him, commends him to us as 'one pursuing the true meaning of grace', and describes John as 'a man without guile.'

Yet Thomas omits the fact that Paulk's choices violate his vows to his wife and three boys who as teenagers need their father more than ever. Exodus seems more concerned with John's authentic gay self than with the needs of his wife and kids.

If I was married to a SSA-struggler tied to Exodus, I would jump out of my skin. Dabbling in idolatry, even if married, now appears to be covered by Exodus' 'grace.'

Ironically, Thomas notes that Paulk 'got very emotional talking about young people.' Maybe father Paulk could stop grieving for gay teens and attend undividedly to the teens he sired. Maybe he could be encouraged to cry tears of repentance and return to them.

Perhaps John grieves for himself more than for anyone else. Such is the narcissism that drives any 'ex-gay superstar' as well as the 'ex-ex-gay' who cries victim rather than takes responsibility for his own bad choices.

The narcissist is usually winsome in his confession; Thomas sure seems taken by Paulk's. But confession, when not in the service of repentance, remains in the service of sin. What a novel idea:

that Exodus or any ministry claiming to be Christian might discern the difference between authentic drive and a heart turning back to Jesus.

Only repentance will do—the desperate ache for Jesus, and desperation to repair what one has destroyed. Only then can real grace meet real sin and overcome it.