

Exodus: Letting Go, Hope Rising

Becoming mature requires letting go in order to take hold of what lies ahead.



Such is the case with the decision of Desert Stream Ministries to disassociate from Exodus International, an umbrella coalition for those who minister to the same-sex attracted.

Over the last couple of years, we have grown uncomfortable with Exodus' direction. After viewing President Alan Chambers' videotaped effort to assuage concerns of 'gay' Christians in his extensive interview with leaders of the 'Gay Christian Network', the Desert Stream Board voted unanimously to leave Exodus. All agreed that Exodus today no longer represented our beliefs.

Our understanding of the differences between DSM and Exodus include:

A different view of the consequences of sexual sin. Whereas Exodus believes that practicing 'gay' Christians may well inherit the Kingdom of heaven, we beg to differ. We believe that Christ followers must reckon with homosexual behavior as a serious betrayal of their humanity and spirituality, and repent of it in order to be assured of salvation.

A different expectation of change for same-sex strugglers. Though we agree with Exodus' desire to more accurately define 'change' for those with SSA, Exodus now appears tentative and unclear as to the degree to which the same-sex attracted will experience change at all in their sexuality. We believe that Jesus brings change to every Christian with SSA who seeks Him wholeheartedly. He cannot help it. Jesus is our Creator and Redeemer who made us to represent Him in our gender and sexual selves. He places such a high premium upon sexual integrity that He acts

incisively to redeem our sexual disintegration. Jesus frees every repentant heart to resume the journey toward wholeness.

A different theological anthropology. Desert Stream Ministries anchors our understanding of the 'new creation' in the truth that we are created in God's image as male and female. That means that every same-sex struggler who follows Jesus is reconciled to his/her capacity to be a good offering to the opposite gender. We recognize that each soul differs in how they will live out that calling. Yet differing levels of progression in mature heterosexual relating don't change one's capability in Christ to resume that journey. Exodus advocates the noble goal of holiness, yet offers insufficient clarity as to what sexual wholeness means for those with SSA.

A different reliance upon reparative psychology. Exodus recently broke ties with 'reparative therapy', a broad school of thought developed by theorists and therapists who view same-sex attraction as a symptom of the breakdown in whole gender development. While Desert Stream Ministries is founded on theological, not psychological values, we rely upon reparative insights to understand what is blocked or missing in our souls. These keys help guide our pursuit of Jesus and His community to secure what we need in order to proceed onto wholeness.

A different reliance upon moral effort in becoming whole. Exodus appears to hold a comparatively passive understanding of sanctification; we believe that hard moral effort, inspired by grace, is essential in progressing into maturity. Our morality becomes beautiful as we engage actively in the spiritual and psychological disciplines that enable us to become mature Christians.

A different approach to 'gay' Christians. Exodus seems intent on building bridges with practicing 'gay' Christians. We believe that God wants only the best for all people, including practicing homosexuals. In His love, we fight for their repentance. However, we disagree with making peace with Christians who advocate homosexual practice; to us, these are false teachers who are guilty of leading others into darkness, an offense worse than Christians caught in sin who know it.

Desert Stream Ministries is pleased to partner with like-minded ministries and individuals who are forming a new coalition entitled the Restored Hope Network. We urge any of you who are interested to join our first 'Restored Hope' gathering in Sacramento this September 21st and 22nd.

Please email: rhngathering@gmail.com for more information about the Restored Hope Network, doctrinal statements or the conference in September. To register for the conference please click the following link: <http://rhn2012.eventbrite.com>

Reaching forward requires letting go. We at Desert Stream Ministries are hopeful and expectant for a future of resuming the journey with you toward wholeness.

The Desert Stream Board of Directors: Mike Nobrega, Morgan Davis, Cindy Del Hierro, Bill Scholl, Annette Comiskey stand with me in this decision.