



Immersed

“...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2).



Marco Casanova

STEPPING INTO THESE SPIRIT-CHARGED WATERS WAS risky. I was nervous about the Living Waters Training. True confession: this Catholic seminarian was a little allergic to my Protestant kin. The allergy didn't stand a chance. I had risked much to sin; I needed to risk much to be healed.

There was freedom that week. I recognized it immediately. The simple acts of worship were redemptive for me. Offered countless times on the altars of pornography and homosexuality, my body was washed clean in these waters. It made perfect sense. Jesus was teaching me how to worship Him.

Jesus gives Himself to me with utter abandon. Therefore, He could demand everything from me. I wasn't afraid anymore to surrender to Him, even at the deepest level. It was the next step; He gave me faith that week to get immersed. Jesus imparted a Spirit-charged remedy to my sexuality; would I, could I, trust Him that intimately?

I had lived under the domination of homosexuality. Strangely, I held on to it as an unchanging attribute of Marco. Now I didn't want it anymore. I wanted Jesus to envision me for something greater. I had disqualified myself from so much because of same-sex attraction. I was finally filled to the brim with hope for my inheritance. I'm a man, made in God's image, created for life and love in this masculine body. God's vision for me broke the old vision. The Spirit, hovering over this week, immersed me in His power.

I always had a low-grade anxiety surrounding my gender inadequacy. Jesus broke it that week. He unleashed something that was mine by nature, but forbidden according to the enemy's schemes. Jesus unlocked a new horizon for my masculine gift. Why was I so fixed on being disqualified from man-woman romantic love? Jesus broke that domination, the silencing power of homosexuality — the domination that tried to deem me impotent and unwanted.

Jesus' Cross surely offers a better way. That week accessed it.

I had heard many Catholic speakers, none like Andrew Comiskey. In those sessions, Jesus was waging a war against the enemy of my soul. The power of Andrew's witness and his trust in Divine Mercy was a game-changer. Jesus wanted me to rise and take action in my own healing. He wanted me to set my hand to the plow. Since then, I haven't looked back. That week changed the trajectory of my life. I returned home with a plan to proceed onto wholeness. Jesus met me and called me. I'd have been a fool to not act immediately.

Jesus redeemed my history and reclaimed my future. No longer was I under the old regime. I had a life to live and a gift to give. No longer was my body ordained for “gay celibacy,” but for purposes crafted by the One who made me. Jesus wants me to fight with Him for my future. There could be a bride out there for me. Little Marquitos to be had. A family to protect. A message of liberation to proclaim. Count me in. **DSM**

my identity, my worth, my motherhood, and my hope for the future were restored.

Aly Marin

I never would have imagined that the Lord would take me to the places that He did. Through Living Waters, my identity, my worth, my

motherhood, and my hope for the future were restored. I found my place in confidence as a daughter of God. I was



able to break down so many overarching walls of shame that had kept me at arm's length from ever truly encountering Jesus.

The Spirit was so present—like nothing I've ever experienced or believed. I could not deny what the Lord had for me. He revealed truths about me that the devil so cleverly obstructed. He revealed to me places where I fell for the evil one's tricks and replaced the lies with my true identity in Him.

Living Waters may be labeled a “sexual healing” ministry—and it is! However, the Spirit is so heavily present that He will meet you in spaces where He knows best what to tend and mend for the sake of His relationship with us. Thanks to Living Waters, Jesus gave me answers, images, and confirmations that only He could give. Praying through this program was life changing. The Spirit is alive and real and He is here for you in ways I'm sure you can't even imagine! **DSM**

Andrew Franklin

When I surrendered my life to Jesus, I was gay-identified, sexually addicted, and desperately in need of someone to save me and bring stability.



When I cried out to Jesus for mercy, He met me powerfully, but I had no idea what my conversion would mean for my sexual identity and behavior. I wondered if I should surgically remove my sexual organs so that I could have a better chance

of living holy.

In the fog of my confusion, a friend invited me into a Living Waters group. After week one, I called my friend and said I was never going back! I was uncomfortable in a setting where people so freely shared their need for Jesus; I

was used to church community far removed from real-life problems. In the mirror of others' painful stories, I saw myself as an out-of-control freak.

I'm so glad I stayed! Week after week, Jesus revealed real wounds underneath my compulsivity. Rather than judgment, I received mercy. In place of confusion, I received a biblical view of my body, gender, and wounds, and a vision of what healthy, loving relationships could look like. Over time, I became a sober-minded follower of Jesus, a man who could offer pure-enough love, free from perversion, and walk out my vocations as husband, father and pastor. My spiritual life was formed well in Living Waters—a foundation on which I still stand and face the callings and challenges that real life asks of me. **DSM**

Bethany Allen

I can't begin to say what a gift it was to go to the Living Waters Training in PA. In my role as the Pastor



of Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development at Bridgetown Church Portland I am keenly aware of the profound need for healing that leads to an integrated life. At the LW Training, I was able to experience an integrated and unexpected healing on a deeply personal

level. Through the small group time, confession, the robust theological and practical content, and the gift of inner healing prayer I was able to enter into more of who it is that Jesus has both created and called me to be specifically as a woman in his Kingdom. In the Living Waters program there is an undeniable call to fidelity to Jesus at all costs and at the same time there is an abundance of grace for the brokenness that each of us carry. **DSM**

Loren Tran

Growing up in Vietnam, I was sexually abused as a child. I was labeled as being “effeminate.” This toxic



lie veiled my true identity. It made me feel inferior to men and insecure with women. When I allowed myself to have sexual relationship with other men as a young adult, I was acting out of this deep woundedness.

The cultural shame and fear over one's brokenness is over-bearing. One of the keys that I handed over to Jesus to unlock and heal my wounded

heart was in the form of therapy. It felt empowering to learn the language of my wounds: to name them as they are. My therapist recommended Living Waters. In the confidentiality of small groups, we confessed our brokenness and kept each other accountable daily. I discovered my father-wound as well.

Being known and loved by the Living Waters group has been extremely powerful and healing for me. I have emerged from the chaotic waters to discover my true identity as a beloved son of God the Father. How God sees me has set me free. That very truth has helped me to forgive my abusers and myself. This is key to my healing process because it gives God the space to fill my broken heart with His healing grace. All I needed to do was own and empty myself of rubbish—the anger, fear, shame, hatred, and lies acquired over all these years. **DSM**

Amber Wheeler

Ministers spend a lot of time giving out and denying real needs. I identified well with that for most of my life.



The more I gave to the church, the more responsibility I was given. It worked: I was rewarded for being helpful while my service freed me from exposing my brokenness. Coming from a background of sexual abuse, this had become habit for me. I had become accustomed to denying my own emotions, thoughts, and needs, and caring for others' needs above my own.

That looked good at face value and it also built up my church. Denying my brokenness divided my soul further. It also slowly poisoned my love for the church. I began to feel used there as I had in my abuse.

I found Living Waters at a desperate time in my life. In the first few weeks, I was given permission to have need, and given space by God to slow down and let Him and others know my needs and begin to meet them. Jesus showed me that He wanted me to grow dependent upon Him in all areas of my life!

Week after week, He revealed my needs—for security, value, healing, integration, community, honesty, and my need to stand back up in the authority He gives me. He opened me to mercy. Through Living Waters, I've found the One that can not only meet my need, but calls me to be needy. In helping me to accept my weaknesses, He continues to integrate me. He is making me a more authentic gift and better receiver of love—from Him and from others. **DSM**

Daniel Mattson

Several months into the year of lockdowns and quarantine, I headed from Michigan to Kansas on my first trip since March of 2020.



I was hoping to encounter Jesus at the Living Waters Training. The lockdown had been difficult; the isolation and loneliness fed historic triggers that tempted me to send my browser to places that I shouldn't go, causing me to feel even more lonely and isolated—a pattern decades old. I desperately wanted freedom.

My time in Kansas this past summer was life changing. I recall in particular the evening in which we placed our metaphorical burdens on the cross, in the form of red ribbons. It seemed like a child's Sunday school activity, but I did it anyway, trusting God and the Holy Spirit. Afterward, I began to pray before a painting of Jesus, representing His Divine Mercy, and began weeping profusely. My spiritual life is more cerebral than emotional—I'm not the sort of Christian who "likes" that sort of thing. Yet weeping there before Jesus was, I see now, a truly water shed moment, a moment of liberating Mercy. I realized Christ was asking me to give all to Him, and to trust Him to bring victory in His time and way.

I now have Covenant Eyes on my devices; I have daily accountability with a dear friend in Living Waters, and though the battle is not over, I can see victory is actually possible! **DSM**

*When I cried
out to Jesus for mercy,
He met me...*

Kate Marin

Jesus has done much work in my soul over the years and in each healing avenue He gifted me with something different. Most of my wounds—a deep sexual trauma



in my early years, date-rape by a trusted friend, illicit sexual encounters throughout my teens and twenties including a long-lasting same-sex relationship, years of drug and alcohol abuse, and all the other common wounds incurred by a fallen, hurting world—had been tended to mercifully by Jesus and were well-stitched up by the time I entered Living Waters.

I hoped for some residual healing, but mainly, I was there to learn how to better help others in their healing journeys. Always a scrupulous, despairing type, I've never been one to ask God for extravagance or abundance. I've always settled for just enough, quite able to ignore or abate my deeper hunger for more. In Living Waters, Jesus begged me to ask for more and to trust that He is faithful to answer. Jesus was ready to show me that He always intended to do far more than just stitch me up; He intended to go deep and made His promise clear to me that He will always go deeper still. He always has more for me because His promise to me is restoration and wholeness.

I now expect God's abundance and that is the most life-changing gift I received at Living Waters. I am getting married in June to a good man and I can see now how God has made me a pretty whole gift for him. And I will keep growing in the gift that I am as I respond to the more He offers. More mercy, more love, more breakthrough...always. **DSM**

Andrew Lewis

While Jesus invited me into many memorable healing moments throughout the past few years of Living Waters, the most impactful was the LW leadership week in



June 2020. Over the past 2 years, my wife and I have experienced the loss of 3 babies during pregnancy. The desire to have and bear children was the deepest desire of our hearts. While I had experienced the loss of our children, I had never been able to weep for them. I never experienced healing through crying: just a few tears here and there. I felt more anger than anything, and anger was a shield against my pain and vulnerability.

That pain was exacerbated by a secular world that said the unborn do not matter. I was angry that my beautiful wife had to experience 3 miscarriages, and I couldn't protect her from the loss. Why Lord?

At that training I brought all of this to the Cross and to my small group. With the help of my leader, I finally experienced my pain through tears and received the healing love of God the Father. I realized that I had been so angry that I could not receive the healing that I wanted. Maybe I didn't even know that I needed healing! Once I let go of the fear and anger, with the help of my group, the tears came, and with them the embrace of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It has been 9 months since that training. God has blessed us with our 4th pregnancy and as of today we are 28 weeks along and due 1 year to the day of that training. Praise the Lord for His perfect plan. Acquainted with grief, Jesus made a way for me to grieve; He allowed me to receive His gift of healing and redemption.

DSM



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Mission Statement

Based on Jesus' mercy and the dignity of men and women made in God's image, we equip Christians to gather in pursuit of radical wholeness.

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