

Overcoming Idolatry

By Andrew Comiskey



Andrew Comiskey

“I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

“You will have no other gods before Me.”

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in heaven above or on earth below.” (Ex.20:2-4)

God created us to worship. If we as freed slaves do not give Him the first fruit of our devotion, we will naturally devote ourselves to idols, and become enslaved to them.

Who and what we worship is a matter of choice. Elijah challenged all who waver between the love of God and idols with an appeal to the will: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If Jahweh is God, follow Him; if Baal is God follow him...” (1 Kings 18:21)

God asked me the same question in my idolatry. “How long will you waver, Andy?”

Let me give you a little of my early religious history. Though raised Episcopalian, I devoted myself to sensual gods and goddesses. It was nothing short of a religion, its roots deep in pagan history where sex became a form of worshipping fertility gods. In these early cults, sensuality was mistaken for divine power, a means to heavenly pleasure.

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“How long will you waver between two opinions? If Jahweh is God, follow Him; if Baal is God follow him...”

1 Kings 18:21

Overcoming Idolatry

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I felt the same; my awkward, gender confused self stumbled upon pornography early on and felt strangely empowered, leading to worshipping not only images but real people, sexually-speaking.

The Bible references such devotion as pagan revelry, the frenzied sensuality of the idolaters who surrounded Israel and tempted her to prostitute herself. For example, the holy nation indulged in sexual immorality when she worshipped the Moabites' god, the Baal of Peor. Through sex, the pagans worshipped Baal: for Israel to join them spiritually meant to God that she prostituted herself in flesh and in spirit. (Num.25; 1Cor. 10:7)

God's judgment of the Israelites was harsh: 24,000 died as a result of such spiritual and sexual prostitution. Similarly, my idolatry occurred at the onset of the AIDS epidemic when friends began to die mysteriously, their bodies' natural defenses unable to ward off disease.

Friends and family prayed for me: God through His Spirit was kind and persuasive, imploring me as Paul did the Corinthians: "The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to participate with demons." (1Cor. 10:20)

My idolatry revealed its dead-end worship early on. Images of creatures or creatures themselves could not complete me! Into the broken ground of my sexuality, Jesus descended and made His Kingdom of grace and truth known. His Presence was not the agitated frenzy of the pagans, but a peaceful Presence that composed me.

When I really came to know this meek and yet Almighty God in Christ, He asked me: "How long will you waver, Andy, between two opinions?" I had to choose: who would master me—Jesus, or the sensual gods? I remember the night that I decided to close the door on homosexual options. I closed that door, not because God made it easy, but because He gave me the grace in my struggle to decide who was going to master me. That was a question of worship, a decision that only I could make.



"I had to choose who would master me—Jesus, or the sensual gods?... The decision was the foundation of my freedom."

I chose well. I chose Jesus! The boundary lines became really clear. In following Him, I determined that He alone would define my humanity and my destiny. I took that power out of the hands of my homosexual tendencies, and the demonized culture that wanted them, and put them under His authority.

The cross took on new and powerful meaning; it became my boundary, my defining reality, my reminder of His liberating power, as well as of the limits I had to live within in order to stay free.

He gave me power over the course of a long restoration process to emerge into sexual wholeness. Four amazing children later, and a still passionate marriage, He aligned the power of my sexuality unto high and deeply human purposes.

The decision about who I would worship was the foundation of such freedom. And this remains a crucial decision for us all in light of a world that has become the battle-

ground for the worship of God or idols.

Prepare for war, saints. Christians will be targeted by the enemy. If we can be enticed into worshipping at the altars of sensual gods and goddesses, we can lose our souls. Satan oversees the formation and seducing power of false gods. When we submit to them, he lays claim to the entirety of our lives. He wants our blood, and the blood of our offspring.

Consider the impact of idolatry upon us already. What used to make us flinch now barely registers as wrong on our moral radars.

Pornography beckons to us constantly on the Internet. How much more for a generation weaned on virtual realities? (My kids grew up on the computer; Nick's first email from a high school 'friend' involved a list of hot porn sites on the web.) A recent Canadian study revealed that one-third of 13-year-old boys have viewed Internet porn "too many times to count," and that their computer-illiterate parents have only the vaguest notions about it.

A whole new subculture of kids and porn is thriving, without caregivers having any understanding of its impact. Let's start with a sinister disconnect between reality and idolatrous fantasy that robs children of their capacity to relate to real people.

Some kids make themselves the idols for big bucks. Hooked up to web cameras, they become live sexual objects. And prey to predators. Web prostitution of minors adds big numbers to the \$20 billion porn industry.

Raunchy music does the same thing on audio levels. Men and women are equal opportunity sex addicts in much of popular music. This is distressing because music has a profound influence on the brain's impulse control center, a center under major construction during the teen years. A raunchy soundtrack impacts his or her desire and capacity to say 'yes' or 'no'.

You see and hear it then you do it.

Promiscuity flourishes among teens and young adults. By 18-years-old, 80% of women in the USA will lose their virginity. Your average college graduate had 10 partners during his or her four years. The triumph of

feminism, of equal opportunity fornicators, falls down quickly here. Research on women who hook up reveal: their loss of self-esteem, secret even obsessive longing for relationship with 'Mr. One-Night', and stunted emotional growth due to the loss of opportunity to build real relationships.

Not surprisingly, idolatry of self, or narcissism has reached an all-time high among college students. Most students rated above average on their perceived 'superiority' in relation to others. They are 30% more likely than students 25 years ago "to have short-lived relationships marked by infidelity, a lack of emotional warmth, game-playing, dishonesty, and violent behaviors. The credo of the narcissist: "I can live my life any way I want to."

How could such idolatry rise in our land?

Consider the free-love sixties: there, my generation successfully challenged the parameters of heterosexual marriage; we made sex our right. The freedom to abort our children followed. If our bodies were our property, then we could dispose of its fruit any way we wanted.

In the seventies, we challenged marital commitment itself. California introduced no-fault divorce—we introduced serial monogamy to the world. A new generation has inherited a questionable legacy of marriage, with over half ending in divorce, a number no different for evangelical Christians. Having invoked God's Name in our unions, we have defied Him, and sparked a crisis in commitment unparalleled on the earth.

On that shaky ground, we started the eighties by challenging gender order. If we could do what we wanted outside of marriage, then why should we limit the sexual possibilities to heterosexuality? How timely the words of Samuel to Saul and to us when the prophet defined "rebellion as the sin of divination, and arrogance as the sin of idolatry." (1 Sam 15:23)

In the nineties, idolatrous heterosexuality became the ground for the defense of homosexuality. (Sexual addict Bill Clinton was the first US president to champion gay rights as a national cause, invoking the precedent of

ethnic rights) Today homosexuality is a sacred civil right to be defended, not an area of brokenness to be healed, let alone a sin to be forgiven.

Gay activists and their sympathizers are ruthless in insisting that gay-affirming agendas be upheld at all levels of American life, beginning in kindergarten. A federal judge threw out two lawsuits filed by parents of a 5 and 7 year-old respectively whose elementary school teachers in Massachusetts read aloud story books to their kids on two princes who fell in love with each other and created a gay family.

On a bigger scale, a group of gay US millionaires are seeking to oust incumbents opposed to gay affirming measures in state races around the country; in 2006, they defeated 50 of the 70 targeted candidates. With billions in their bank, they are ramping up for many more victories in the changing face of today's political climate.

The face of homosexuality is hip, sexy, and nearly shame-free. This is reflected in one survey that revealed the unanimously enthusiastic responses teens received from peers when they came out. According to one activist, "This is the generation that gets homosexuality: we are going to win."

God asked me the same question in my idolatry.

"How long will you waver?"

New research from John Hopkins University cites the powerful influence this hip face of gay culture has on the formation of teen sexual identity. Their conclusion? Gay sex will become a normal part of teen experimentation; these researchers predict a day will come when one won't be able to distinguish between those who are gay or just trying out a new drug.

This idolatry comes wrapped in a social justice package but readily reveals its crass

consumerism. Oprah recently featured: "Lesbians at 30," a segment showcasing gorgeous women who had left their husbands for each other, supported by a daffy therapist and Oprah's 'Live Your Truth' credo. One woman called into say that though happily married to a man, she wanted to have 'animal' sex with a woman. All implored her to go for it. No-one dissented! We are all accomplices to this idolatry.

Another expression of perverted justice: the popular media is showcasing 'ex ex-gays' in an effort to dispel the power of the Gospel to transform lives. This involves disgruntled Christians, many formerly involved with our ministries, who have now determined to cast off restraint and revel in their homosexuality.

Secular journalists love this take on the 'failure' of faith and the triumph of idolatry in lives now basking in their 15 minutes of fame. At the end of one such article in Glamour magazine, the reporter asked the 'ex ex-gay' lesbian how much she loved gay sex. She squealed with delight. Fade to black.

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put and bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight" (Is. 5: 20, 21)

Gender deconstruction took a turn for the worse last fall when NYC passed a law to allow citizens to change their gender on driver licenses and birth certificates. Citing this law, a new group of educators are favoring full inclusion of cross-dressing children in pre-school and kindergarten. One silly gay educator implored: "First we made room for two mommies and two daddies; now its time to for kids in school who aren't gender typical..."

Do you see the progression? Now gender identification is subject to our whims, to whoever I want to be. I create myself in my own image and in so doing shake my fist at the Creator. This is idolatry of the highest order. Karl Barth was right when he said: "To flee from one's own gender is to flee from God."

A new low: romancing polygamy—"Big Love" a raunchy cable 'dramedy' about a man with three wives. The series was created by

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two gay men who sought to “create a non-judgmental portrait of plural marriage, one that will emphasize the emotional aspects of polygamy rather than the moral and ethical”.

And the newest low: romancing bestiality. “Zoo” a new film that premiered at Sundance this year, was deemed by critics as a lyrical even beautiful look at men who have sex with horses, one who in reality died after doing so. The director asserts: “we are going to revive the humanity of these people.” One woman claimed after seeing the film: “I am right on the edge of being able to understand it [bestiality]”.

Gender and boundary lines are breaking down fast. We are subject to levels of deception and enticement unprecedented on the face of the earth. Shane, the lesbian femme fatale on “The L Word,” cable’s lesbian soap opera, said it best: “Sexuality is fluid, whether gay or straight, married or single, [man or beast], you just go with the flow...”

That flow is nothing less than the riptide of idolatry growing more dangerous and alluring by the hour.

I am part of this culture. The dark river wants to suck me into its sewage. The gods and goddesses of this world beckon to me. None of us are unaffected: some at deeply personal levels, others interpersonally, through loved ones going under the dark waters. The boundary lines of committed heterosexual love have broken down, our most precious offerings scorched in the fires of idolatry. (Neh. 1:17)

Jesus initiates with us the creation of a temple, a sphere of true worship in which we can love Him and others with purity and freedom. Outside those walls, the altars to other gods are multiplying fast. The enemy’s design? To find the weak points in our temples and to entice us to worship idols as well. The sexual scandals of a Ted Haggard are but the beginning of sorrows for those not willing to answer Elijah’s question aright.

Precisely because I am a Christian the battle for my soul intensifies. Especially for those

“If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves whom you will serve... But for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

JOSHUA 24:2-14

of us familiar with the old paganism that puts on a new face for each generation. We must thus answer the Elijah’s challenge afresh: “How long will we waver between two opinions? If Jahweh is God, follow Him; if Baal is God, follow Him.”

This is a decision we must make as many times as we must, boldly and without threat to our religious self-image. Over the course of many years of ministry, I have had to make hard decisions about boundaries in light of my own brokenness. These decisions to line up with Jesus yet again has preserved the integrity of my identity and destiny as a Christian, one signed by the cross—the worship of the one true God.

Let’s look at Israel. God chose her out all the other nations on the earth to be holy, His treasured one, reserved for Him and Him alone, like a beautiful bride for her husband. (Deut. 7:5, 6) God set her apart for the high call of revealing His unflinching love for all the other nations on earth to see.

That had a lot to do with how the people lived, the integrity with which they kept their covenants with each other. Especially in the sexual realm; what the Israelites did with their bodies mattered to the Lord. Just as God called Israel to reserve faithful worship to Himself alone, so He commanded the people to manifest faithfulness to one another in monogamy.

One nation under one God sealed in one-spirit union; one woman for one man sealed in one-flesh union. Marital faithfulness revealed God’s faithful love to Israel. So the sexual integrity and purity of Israel mirrored her spiritual integrity and purity.

Sure enough: when Israel was faithful to her God, she lived within the boundaries of sexual purity. But when she strayed from Him, she defiled herself through the sexual practices demanded by the gods of other nations, like the Moabites and Canaanites.

These pagans worshipped the same unclean idols that enslaved me. Their gods and goddesses of fertility were mine; we worshipped them through sensual, gender-bending revelry.

Spiritual idolatry and sexual immorality are intrinsically linked. The prophets decried such a toxic mix by warning the Israelites: “You will soon prostitute yourselves to the foreign gods whose land you are entering...” (Deut. 31:16); “Don’t defile yourselves with them, because that is how the entire land became defiled.” (Lev. 18:24, 25).

The Israelites would not forsake Jahweh altogether, but would establish two sets of altars: “While serving the Lord, they continued to worship their idols.” (2Kings 17:41)

Are you making the connection between sexual immorality and idolatry? Israel, the Church, and the Christian individual can readily become a temple divided, worshipping the true God while bowing before idols too.

So the prophets warn us and implore us to make a decision. “Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you...when they prostitute themselves to their gods, they will invite you to do the same... Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Ashteroth poles. Do not worship any other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” (Ex. 34: 12-15)

Paul adds bite to this jealousy when he said: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons. Are you trying to arouse the Lord’s jealousy? Are you stronger than He?” (1Cor. 10:21, 22)

This jealous love is call to return to intimacy with the Father. The militant command to flee all sexual immorality is an invitation to return to the covering of peace, the protective Presence of the Bridegroom who is lovesick for His beloved ones, His bride. Although battered in our infidelities, we have never ceased to be beautiful in His eyes.

Hosea 2: 14-20 describes this tender ache of the Humble King for us; in these verses He promises that the Valley of Achor, a site of judgment and death for Israel’s immorality, would become for us a door of hope (v.15) Through that merciful door, He shall remove from us our idols (v. 17) and betroth us to the One now named “our husband” rather than “our master.” (vs.16, 19, 20)

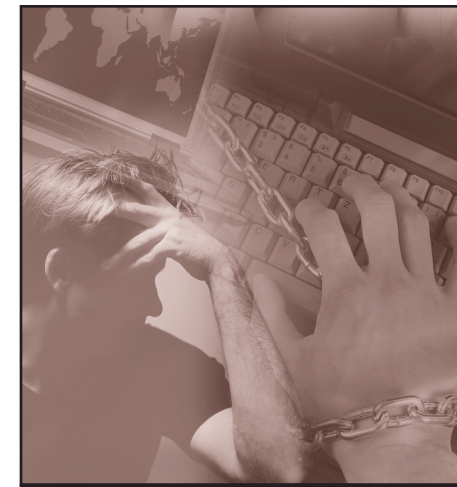
Similarly, God appeals to true spiritual communion with Himself when He implored the saints at Corinth to forsake their idols. These new converts had worshipped the goddess Aphrodite through temple prostitution most of their lives; Paul implores them to forsake such familiar religion in favor of the One who loves them most.

“What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? Come out from them and be separate. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters.” (2Cor. 6:16-18)

Idolatry ruptures intimacy with the Creator. And it devastates the value and dignity of His human creation. Paul implores Christians to flee sexual immorality so that “no-one should take advantage of his brother [or sister]”, meaning, don’t reduce and use someone as an object of your selfish lust.

The call to love as a Christian must trump the compulsive self-seeking of the idolater. Such idolatry does not stop at sensual devotion to Baal or Ashteroth; it ends in murder, disposing of children, the fruit of such revelry. Deut. 12:29 describes the practices of those idolaters who “burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.” Today’s abortion rights function similarly; those who participate in abortion are sacrificing real lives at the altars of selfishness and lust.

Lastly, we must step back and look at the impact that sexual idolatry has had on the



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body of Christ. Through a misbegotten and irrational view of ‘justice,’ much of the church has been deceived into believing that sexual brokenness in general and homosexuality in particular is normal and to be tolerated in the name of ‘love.’

The Episcopal Church is in shambles due to its pro-gay leadership majority; the Presbyterians just capitulated to gay activists and now allow local dioceses to determine gay marriage and ordination. New church movements, wanting to catch the tide of post-modern youth by not appearing ‘religious,’ are hesitant to address the issues at all. Mark my words: idolaters with an agenda will fill the void and destroy entire segments of the body of Christ.

A stronghold of rebellion and defilement seeks authority in the church. This is the same spirit Jesus addressed in the Church of Thyatira, described in Rev. 2: 20-29. There Jesus rebuked the entire congregation for tolerating a teacher, Jezebel, who led congregants into idolatry and sexual immorality.

That church was composed of former idolaters whose pagan feasts regularly digressed to orgies. Jezebel did not want to be heavy and religious, so she fashioned teachings to

accommodate sexually immoral practices. She was “seeker-sensitive” to a fault. She failed to repent and God judged her and her adherents with intense suffering and death.

Through that passage, we all stand warned. “How long will you waver between two opinions? If Jahweh is God, follow Him; if Baal is your god, follow him.”

Our action must be decisive. How far will you flee from your beloved idol? How long will you fight? Your decision will determine your identity and destiny. It is not about an absence of struggle, it is about the Spirit strengthening your will to fight. Do you want angels or demons? Heaven or hell? Peace or frenzied pleasure?

If you choose Jesus, take seriously Moses’ call in Deuteronomy 13 to renounce all vestiges of idolatry. If a prophet implores you to commit idolatry, refuse him; reject the family member who implores you to serve false gods; if an entire community implores you to commit idolatry, wipe the dust off your feet. God is serious about you and your allegiance to Him. He insists that the lines of devotion to Him be clear.

We cannot afford to mess around. The darkness is getting darker. “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. But he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matt. 24: 12, 13)

“If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15)

“Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. No, the Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in you heart so you may obey it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways...But if you are drawn away to bow down and worship other gods, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed... Now choose life, so that you and your children may live, and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your life...” (Deut. 30: 11-20) **DSM**

The Idol of SELF



By Dean Greer

As I have grown as a leader, God blessed me with favor through the many things He has entrusted to me. His blessings aside, I find

that remnants of childhood insecurities lead me to doubt Him. I am aware of a need to prove myself worthy, capable, approved. Rather than allowing Him to name and approve me, I find myself still grasping for the approval of man.

I was recently in the midst of teaching before approximately 150 people when I realized that my zipper was down. Horrified, I tried as well as I could to go on without drawing further attention to myself. The music stand I was using as a podium provided little to hide behind, so I stammered on, aware that the audience was as embarrassed for me as I was for myself. I segued into a break and ran off to repair the malfunction

only to discover that I had imagined the whole ordeal. I had actually been properly dressed the entire time!

He mercifully exposed my sin. “The authority I have given you is often distracted by your own self-concern. You are preoccupied with your image, which veils my intention for that image.” His words allowed me to see how the idol of my self-concern diminishes my real authority. That concern involves how people perceive me.

With the help of friends, I renounced the idol of myself; I am seeking anew to make more room for genuine worship of the One, taking my eyes off myself. In this right perspective, He is free to work through me: revealing His presence, His strength, His love.

I saw this worked out in the context of our recent leadership training. It is a hard call: God is asking me to lead our team of seasoned leaders while raising up a new generation of leaders. In that, I am likely to question my authority in a vain effort to prove myself qualified. My past experiences

were limited by this self-concern. This time, however, I stood repentant and clear, and was able to give Him His rightful place.

I took a decisive stand to worship Him. In right posture before Him, His authority was unleashed more fully and His purposes were fulfilled. I was able to say the hard word when needed, without fear of how it would be received. I was able to enter into the blessings he had purposed through me. How quickly His Spirit shows up when I get out of the way.

The thought patterns of my childhood make it necessary to practice His presence and not my own. I must turn from my tendency to doubt or minimize my authority and to faithfully do His will in my work. When necessary, I confess my need for man’s favor above His favor, receive forgiveness, and ask Him to guide me afresh.

“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought like a child, reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish things behind me.” (1Cor. 13:11) **DSM**

The Idol of LESBIANISM



By Rachel Scoggan

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.” Joel 2:13

The haze of same-sex attraction overwhelmed me at the age of nineteen. I felt like I was surrounded by an early morning fog where visibility is reduced to only seeing the headlights in front of you. I felt ill-prepared for life in general, not to mention my inner desires. Same-sex thoughts terrified and intrigued me. Who would I tell? And who was going to help me, without being freaked out?

This idol was powerful. Certain women pulled me in; they touched me deeply and I was torn. They promised me things I felt the Lord Himself couldn’t promise me. The idol of same-sex attraction did a dance before me, and by the age of twenty-one years I took her hand.

In partaking of her, I immediately felt dark. And so I ran, 1800 miles to be exact. I was glad to leave this woman and this powerful idol in California, but it showed up again in Tennessee. At a time of stress and rejection by men, the idol was more alluring than ever. It was now an image and voice that lived in my head. It had evolved. It told me this new woman was my life partner. It told me its path was superior to God. The idol assured me of its trustworthiness, and I was again transfixed.

I was scared so I sought counsel. But my heart balked and would only go so far. I moved again. For a decade, I managed the idol, and downplayed its influence. I was caught unaware when the idol made an appearance while I was leading a Christian ministry. And I fell.

The fall was brutal. Breaking the idol involved a heart-rending I had never encountered. But His profound love for me in my sin was more powerful than the idol. The fog began to lift. I now turn to trusted, safe friends when same-sex thoughts come. I confess my sin in prayer at the offices at DSM. I tell on myself over and over again. Her seductive voice is silenced in my confession. The distance between truth-telling and the lure of the idol becomes greater and greater all the time. **DSM**

Idolatry of THE INTERNET



By Eric Spady

Idolatry? Me? I don’t like that word. It sounds so foreign, so pagan, so Old Testament. Yet, it is the reality of today and of a secret part of my life.

Addicts or a sexually compulsive people know how to compartmentalize their lives really well. They know how to ‘fake’ it for others and live in an unreality. I should know. I compartmentalized my life really well. I was hooked on a form of porn that made me feel empowered as a man.

I knew I had a problem looking at Internet porn, but it really was not ‘that bad’. I did not ‘act out’ like other people I knew. I hid behind the computer screen

and got hooked. The hole in my heart needed something to numb the pain.

For me, the apostle Paul described it best in Romans 1:23 when he said “and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images....” (NIV). The Word of God makes it plain that I was guilty of idolatry. I had easily traded God for lesser things. I traded who He wants to be in my life for “images”. The snare of Internet porn captured me because it was secret, anonymous, and easy to access.

A few years ago, I attended a Living Waters program in Kansas City. I was challenged to be real, open, and honest with another person. This scared me to death. The thoughts of “what will they think of me” and what will happen when I am ‘exposed’ overwhelmed me. Yet, I knew I had to do it, I had to be clean.

I remember confessing to my small group, telling them piece by piece and wondering if I could trust them. Instead of shame and humiliation, I was met with love, care and real concern. I was not exposed, but covered. It was at the place of being open and truly vulnerable that God met me.

I had taken these hidden things to the cross for years, but was still hooked because of the power of silence. Now choosing Jesus meant choosing to be accountable with others.

I must admit, I still don’t like it, and would rather hide. I can easily think I can ‘handle it again’ and don’t need to tell, but I really cannot. Jesus is my freedom as I walk in the light as He is the light! **DSM**

OVERCOMING Romantic Idols



By Vivian Soo

“Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.” (Jonah 2:8)

When I heard the Living Water’s teaching on narcissism and relational idolatry, I didn’t think it applied to me. Though not obviously narcissistic, I as a single woman dreamt of an ideal romantic person who existed only to meet my needs and fulfill my dreams.

To break the power of relational idolatry, I confessed to others. God provided three or four people I could call every day to confess my idolatry. They prayed with me, spoke truth and encouraged me to live in reality. After three months of confessing, I asked: “What is the deeper issue?”

I sought counseling. Lacking satisfying friendships, I found it easy to isolate. With my counselor’s help, I began to reintegrate the dimensions of my life: spiritual, emotional, and intellectual. I discovered that I was actually afraid of real intimacy.

My ideal was unreal. He was a flat, two-dimensional being. I had to admit the idol of romance, the myth that another human being of mythic proportions was going to complete me.

These sensual, romantic feelings masked my horrible ones: loneliness, neediness, single-ness, not feeling loved or lovely.

I confessed the deception that fantasizing hurt no one. I confessed that I didn’t trust God to provide a future for me. I felt overwhelmed, frustrated, and disappointed with God; I was afraid of change. As my emotions thawed, I realized that God wanted me to

acknowledge these feelings to Him. I had to choose to live in truth.

I sensed the Lord telling me that if I held on to these idols, He could not let me have the life that He intended for me. The choice was to live fully as a single person with her own dreams, successes, and failures. The Lord revealed to me the characteristics that He wanted to develop in me. God was directly giving me more of Himself. He was building my identity and providing a hopeful future.

Currently, God is giving me the desires of my heart. I had to let go of my fantasies and plans and learn to trust Him. He is redeeming my desire for significance and purpose. He assures me that He is the source of my life and endows me with purpose, joy and peace. I am not alone, but am found in Him. **DSM**

Corporate Corner



By Annette Comiskey

This summer marks two years since our move to Missouri. While some things stay the same, many others have changed.

Annette Comiskey

The most noticeable change is our building. We moved here happy to be a part of the IHOP (International House of Prayer) campus. At the close of our first year here, the Lord opened the door for us to buy an office building.

One year later, we are now nearing the end of our office restoration. The result? An airy and elegant workspace. We will add some more furniture, redo one of the restrooms, and we will be done! None of this would have been possible without your generous support! Thanks to all who donated to the renovation of our building.

Our Desert Stream Leadership Trainings remains as dynamic and intensive as ever, although we now do both in Missouri. We have all been blessed by joining the “coasts” here in the Midwest.

One area of change has been the staff. We moved east with half the staff we had in California. Last summer, Ron Citlau felt the call to move on to work with a church in Indiana. This past May, Wayne Kiger-Rice acted upon the call to return to California. He and Carol will be working among the immigrant communities in San Diego County.

It is never easy to lose staff; we become family of a sort. Yet it is exciting to see those who move apply what they have learned in new settings.

We also gain new staff. Charlene Wells will assume the role of Ministry Administrator. Char has been involved in the leadership of CrossCurrent and attended here first training in April. We are excited about her becoming part of our ministry staff.

The Lord’s faithfulness and provision remains a wonder—the constant of our lives. Though the call to proclaim God’s healing to the sexually and relationally broken becomes more difficult as the days grow darker, He remains faithful to provide all that we need in order to stand. We thank you for standing with us as well. **DSM**



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DESERT STREAM MINISTRIES PUBLISHES THE FOLLOWING:

Newsletter (Spring and Fall)
Mid-Year Report (Summer)
Year-End Report (Winter)

Mission Statement

Based on the biblical foundations of compassion, integrity, and dependence on God, Desert Stream Ministries proclaims to the world the transforming power of Jesus Christ. We equip the body of Christ to minister healing to the sexually and relationally broken, through healing groups and leadership training for the local church.

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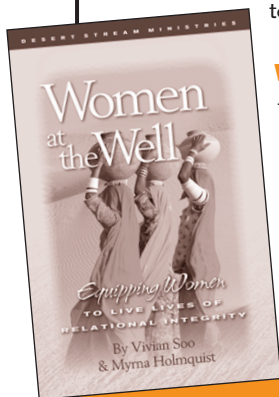
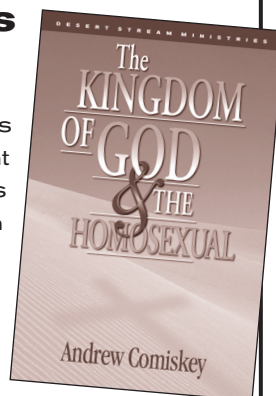
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NEW RELEASES

Introducing two new resources from Desert Stream Press!

Homosexuality and the Kingdom of God has been completely revised! This booklet is an excellent guide to help pastors and concerned Christians answer the complex questions facing the church today in regards to same-sex struggles.

Women at the Well is a concise guide for Christian women who face the struggle of living with integrity in their sexuality. It addresses the issues of idolatry, singleness, becoming secure in God’s love and much more. Insightful personal testimonies and study questions at the end of each chapter make the book ideal for individual or group study.



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P R E S S

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