

## Help Is Available for Homosexuals

Having received help in her struggle with homosexuality, a Christian woman wrote me, “I know Aesthetic Realism is not a religious organization but, in a way, that’s what made it so encouraging to me. They didn’t say homosexuality is wrong because the Bible says so. But they gave really good explanations as to WHY it is wrong. Regardless of religion or AIDS or society’s view, homosexuality is just not a real way to find happiness.”

In a previous letter to me, Rachel (not her real name) in New England, had written in an informal manner about her desire for help, her failure to find it in her congregation, and the sensible help she found ultimately. With her permission, I share that letter below.

“Dear Mr. Hook, I received your package of back issues of “Freedom’s Ring” last night and I immediately looked up the topics in the index. Since I have struggled with homosexual thoughts a good portion of my life (though I have never acted them out), I skimmed over quickly the two articles on this subject. I appreciate that you stand against this activity and yet have compassion on the struggler. I also appreciate that you admit you don’t know a lot about this.

“Back in 1984, after I had been attending the C of C since 1978 and avoiding friendships with women to avoid these feelings, I forgot myself and became friends with someone in the church, and these feelings came back to me with a vengeance. When I told this to members of the church, the only help they could offer was to say, “The Bible says that’s wrong,” to which I responded, “Yeah, I know it’s wrong. That’s why I’m asking for help to overcome these thoughts.”

“Since I knew that the Bible says this is wrong and since nobody in the C of C could help me, I began doing phone consultations with a secular organization in New York which claims to help people change from those desires. When I told this to my C of C preacher, he said, “Just make sure what they tell you is scriptural.” I told him I did not like that because he could not help me and yet this organization has helped many people like me, so why should he exhibit an attitude like that?

“I am writing this in the event you would like to print it to inform other strugglers like me out there that there is hope to change if they so desire. I studied with the secular organization from 2/84 to 4/85. I learned much from this organization as to the WHY homosexuality is wrong and how it isn’t what we truly want deep down within us, and that is why God says it is wrong. He is not trying to deny us what we want but he knows that that is not what the “real us” TRULY wants.

“Also, for many years, I have been receiving literature from Homosexuals Anonymous out of Reading Pennsylvania which offers a 14-step program to work through in order to overcome this.

“I don’t know if you accept letters like this for publication, but I have received such tremendous help from your ministry and I have often wondered if God wants me to reach out to other strugglers to tell them that there is hope to change just as others have encouraged me in this way. I am always open to ways that God may want me to do this.”

We think it wise to withhold Rachel's name and address. She only wants to assure others that sensible help is available for those who truly want to change. She is not claiming that everyone will find easy relief, nor is she claiming to be the therapist herself. She has learned from these sources, however, that homosexuality often may be more a confusion than a desire in only one direction.

While I am glad to know of her sincere dedication in serving Christ, I am saddened that she has had such an overpowering inclination to deal with which has deprived her of much joy in life. I am proud of her for having the determination, courage, and patience to deal forthrightly with her problem. And I am very happy that she has found inward relief from her distressing desires, being enabled to refocus them in normal direction.

Articles by us preachers seem to bounce off, as some of them should. They tend to assign blame and condemnation without compassion for a condition the person did not consciously develop. Let me emphasize again that, in any area of life, temptation or desire is not a sin. It is the giving in to temptation that is evil and brings undesirable consequences. To avoid this pitfall, one may simply refuse to participate in unlawful sexual activity, whether it is heterosexual or homosexual, or one may deal with the underlying cause for the temptation. The latter course is more relieving and fulfilling whether it be approached from a religious perspective, a psychological viewpoint, or a matter of social adjustment. It is not a denial of sexual desires and normal sexual expression but it is a redirecting of those desires into proper fulfillment.

Another thing that impresses me about Rachel's attitude is that she does not seek to justify homosexual practices. She wrote, "Just this week, I received a newsletter from a (name) church I used to attend. They're having a study on homosexuality where they're going to look at the passages that deal with this topic in the Bible. I got the impression from the wording that it is to try to make the Bible say homosexuality is OK. I appreciate that those people don't want to condemn, but I believe that people think it is such an unconquerable feeling that God certainly wouldn't condemn it. For a study like that, I believe you have to know beyond the Bible what is wrong with homosexuality. Aesthetic Realism taught me that, and I am very grateful."

It is unlikely that many homosexual persons will be reading this, but some of you may wish to pass this information on to others who may be eager for help. Some may not want help, but for any who may yearn for change, these addresses taken from literature of the two groups are supplied.

Aesthetic Realism Foundation, 141 Greene Street, New York, NY 10012; (212)-777-4490. This is not a religious organization.

Homosexuals Anonymous Fellowship Services, P.O. Box 7881, Reading, PA 19603; (610)-376-1146. This group has chapters in various states. They can also point you to many helpful books. ~Cecil Hook (March 2001) []