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# harvestusa

CARING FOR SEXUALLY-HURTING PEOPLE IN JESUS' NAME

FACING THE  
HARD QUESTIONS

David White

REAL LIFE  
CONVERSATIONS

John Freeman

**Voices that Confuse:**  
Reclaiming biblical truth from  
interpretative distortions

R. Nicholas Black





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HARVEST USA brings the truth and mercy of Jesus Christ by:

- Helping individuals and families affected by sexual struggles
- Providing resources that address biblical sexuality to individuals and churches

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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: THE PROBLEM BEHIND THE PROBLEM

You have to love the simplicity with which the Lord speaks. In Matthew 15:10-20, Jesus boldly and plainly tells his hearers that the reason they struggle with sin is not simply because they've failed to make right choices. Nor is it simply because the fleeting pleasures of sin are so enticing and seem to meet one's felt needs.

The reason they (and we) struggle with sin is because of a *heart* problem *behind* the *behavioral* problem of sin. He tells us in verse 18: "[W]hat comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person." Essentially what Jesus says is that our outward behavior is merely the fruit of the evil process going on beneath the surface, in our hearts. Sin is a behavioral problem, to be sure. But it is so much more than that. And, if we look only at the behavior—the fruit—we miss the point.

At HARVEST USA, we help sexual strugglers, and the people who disciple them, to grapple with this often overlooked, though crucial, part of repentance. The fact that the "problem behind the problem" often goes unaddressed is what may lead to men and women being locked into patterns of sexual sin, even after attempts at repentance. Through the process of submitting these underlying, often hidden, heart idols to the sovereignty of Christ, and the accountability of trusted Christian friends, we see men and women begin to experience real victory over sin. Not sinlessness, but growth in holiness.

This issue of the HARVEST USA Magazine speaks of flawed and unbiblical worldviews that shape the world's—and the Christian's—view of homosexuality. You and I have the unique opportunity to participate with the Lord in sanctifying his church and readying his bride for the wedding feast. How do we exercise this opportunity? Through walking through life, one-on-one, with other brothers or sisters, helping them to unravel and demystify their broken, worldly views of themselves, God and others—the worldviews which "proceed from the heart" and control perception and behavior.

This is HARVEST USA's mission, which we embrace in our direct ministry to those affected by sexual struggles, and which we communicate in all of our resources. Will you pray for the opportunity and the grace to walk alongside another? To help him or her to begin to see him or herself, God and others rightly—perhaps for the first time?

Please pray for us, as we continue to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to many thousands of Christians over the next few months. Pray that the Lord would make us effective in our ministry and teaching. And, please pray that the new line of video resources that we will begin to release later this year will be useful to show others what it means to walk alongside others in life-changing ways.

In the Lord,



**Tim Geiger**  
Executive Director



# VOICES THAT *Confuse*

RECLAIMING BIBLICAL TRUTH  
FROM INTERPRETATIVE DISTORTIONS

By R. Nicholas Black





The church is in confusion today. The voices advocating for the inclusion of same-sex relationships in the church have been loud enough to sow confusion even among ordinary church members in solid evangelical churches. The typical layperson's grasp of Scripture on the issue of homosexuality is weakening. Studying the Scriptures on the matter doesn't seem to help anymore. Why? Because these passages are increasingly undermined by strong, cultural worldviews that are driving alternative interpretations of Scripture.

Do you know what they are? These "background doctrines" are influencing how Scripture is being read today. Living our life before God, aligning our will with his, is the central objective of our Christian faith. It matters how we live, and on what basis we claim God's approval.

Here are just three of the worldviews we need to see operating in the background, along with ways we can respond to them with biblical faithfulness.

### One, personal stories drive biblical interpretation

In our culture, personal stories are how we discover "truth" today. The individual—me—is the primary point of meaning and fulfillment. We don't look outside of ourselves, to God, to find truth or meaning. We look inside, to our own experience.

We see this when we look at behavior. There are no longer any agreed-upon moral standards to determine what is right or wrong. I discover truth; this is "my truth." And no one has the right to say my truth is wrong. My story, the way I experience life, validates what is true.

Do not think this is merely a secular way of thinking. It is making headway into the church in subtle, but powerful ways.

For example, a video made several years ago, *For the Bible Tells Me So*, presents emotionally powerful stories of kids who grew up in the church, and who took their own lives because of the discrimination, abuse, depression and isolation they felt growing up gay. These are powerful stories and they should move us. But the objective behind telling these stories is to cause us to question why we should hold on to the traditional view of homosexuality in light of how painful—even life-threatening as the argument goes—that position is for people who live with same-sex attraction. The message? Holding on to the orthodox view hurts people. It's dangerous.

This illustrates how we decide what is right or wrong — how does it impact others; how does it impact me? Divine revelation, which is God's story, becomes secondary to my personal autobiography.

How do we respond to this cultural worldview, that our personal stories interpret God's will for us?

Personal stories illuminate,  
challenge us, help us apply  
the truth of Scripture to our lives.  
But they must be viewed  
in light of what Scripture  
teaches about life and God.

1. We do need to listen to people's stories. There are things we need to learn in all these stories of those living with same-sex attraction. Our hearts should be moved to compassion by stories of isolation, loneliness, abuse, rejection, fear.

But subjective experience can never be the basis for arriving at objective truth. Personal stories illuminate, challenge us, help us apply the truth of Scripture to our lives. But they must be viewed in the light of what Scripture teaches about life and God. We need an objective word outside us to fully understand ourselves.

2. We need to recognize that all our stories are broken. There is a hidden message inserted into these stories when they are presented in these ways, and it's not immediately evident. It's this: my sexuality, no matter how it presents itself, is essentially good. The reason I struggle here is because the traditional view of Scripture doesn't acknowledge the truth of my own experience.

I am not in need of rescue or redemption from myself—what I need is freedom to be what I believe I should be.

But the biblical view is that everything about us is broken by the Fall. When Jesus pursued society's outcasts (a major theme of pro-gay apologetics) he met them where they were—but he didn't

leave them there. He healed the lepers and he forgave the "sinners and prostitutes." When we truly meet Jesus, we are not affirmed in the direction we want in life—our life is turned upside down and redirected.

3. We need to give true compassion. Ultimately, to allow these stories to reshape God's word to approve what it does not, is to offer a false compassion. Our compassion must be God's compassion and not the world's. God's compassion comes to us in and through our suffering—and we recognize that sometimes God does not remove our "thorns in the flesh." We dare not think we can be more merciful than God by encouraging someone to live in ways that are incompatible with his calling.

### Two, modern culture is superior to ancient culture

This worldview doctrine goes like this: We moderns know more than people who lived long ago. They were ignorant. We're not. They didn't have the knowledge and data that we have today.

Now, this worldview centers on two arguments.

The first one is that sexual orientation is genetic and fixed. Same-sex attraction is part of God's design for sexuality, and is therefore natural and good. We know this from science. The second one is that the Bible's negative view on same-

sex relationships was because the biblical writers did not observe, in their culture, positive, monogamous same-sex relationships like we see today. They were concerned with promiscuity, exploitative sex like prostitution, and deviant sexual practices centered on cultic worship. So the Scriptures that prohibit homosexual behavior do not apply to loving, faithful same-sex relationships. It's time to bring the ancient Bible into our time now.

So, how do we respond to this cultural worldview, that modern trumps ancient?

1. Regarding the argument that being gay is genetic, and that orientation is immutable, we respectfully say that it has not been proved. Saying it is, is only a bare assertion. Right now the dominant evidence points not to nature, but to nurture—and maybe some sort of combination.

But, let's be careful and wise here. We should be open to whatever medical research is discovering. We should not close our minds to the possibility that homosexuality might have some genetic or biological component. The Fall has affected everything about us, even down to the smallest level of our biology. But the Bible's claim to be our guide to faith and life—in other words, how we ought to live—is not altered or threatened by this. Ultimately, science cannot make a moral judgement.

2. About same-sex relationships, when Paul wrote Romans, same-sex relationships, even long-term ones, were not uncommon. Paul traveled widely in the Greco-Roman world, he was a highly educated man, and it is safe to say that he would have been familiar with the varied sexuality embedded in Greco-Roman culture, just as anyone is today who has studied the classics. Paul is clearly saying that all homosexual behavior—not just promiscuous sexual behavior or sex connected with idolatry—is in need of redemption by the atonement of Jesus Christ.
3. We can agree that the Bible is not a science or medical textbook. But let's be clear on what it is: A book that is authoritative on the human condition. It makes that claim—it says what is wrong with humanity and how God is redeeming it. 2 Timothy 3:16 is one of a number of passages that assert the Bible's authority over how we ought to live.

One more thing: If Scripture is subordinate to whatever cultural perspective is current, then how can we believe anything God says? We will always throw out portions we don't agree with, if we see the Bible as merely being man's ancient attempt to understand God. Faith, then, will always default to what I want in life. As Tim Keller often says, if the Bible is an eternal word *from* God, then we should not be surprised that every generation and culture will be offended by something in Scripture. God's ways are not our ways.

### Three, doctrine is bad, love is good

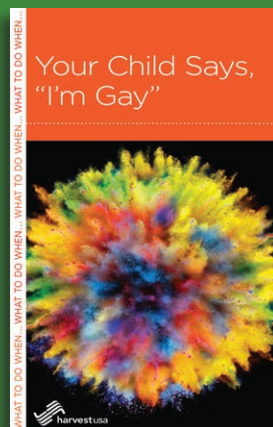
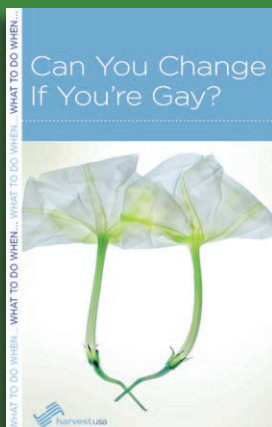
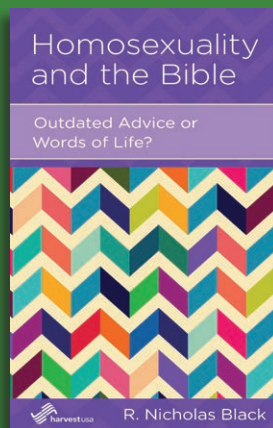
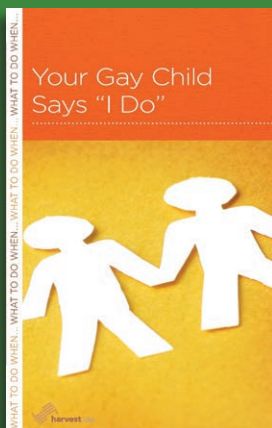
Doctrine kills the human spirit. Religious rules and propositions place burdens on people, robbing them of freedom. The Bible is about love, and that's what matters. Whatever is loving among people is to be celebrated, especially when it includes those who have been religiously excluded or mistreated. So, any passages that appear unloving to any group of people are reinterpreted or dismissed as not being authentically from God (or Jesus). This argument is being made forcefully today: How can loving relationships, regardless of sexual orientation, be wrong? That is a powerful argument. A powerful *emotional* argument.

Do we have a response here?

1. The biggest problem with this argument is that love needs an objective definition. Love is more than a desire that pulls me or a feeling that overwhelms. If the strength of my love for someone makes it right, then anything goes.

## MINI BOOKS THAT SAY MORE ON THIS ISSUE

To get these resources for you or your church, go to [www.harvest-usa-store.com](http://www.harvest-usa-store.com)





I can love whomever I want, in whatever way I want. The logical end of this worldview is a definition of love expressed by Woody Allen when he married his adopted step-daughter: "The heart wants what the heart wants."

But love without definition or boundaries is not harmless. The Fall has corrupted all good things. Without a moral standard, love is easily twisted into self-centered pleasure, vulnerable to abuse and power. That's not love. God's design for sex—and marriage—was originally good, and it remains so even today, in spite of our continual failing to faithfully live within its life-affirming boundaries. The transcendent meaning of sex and marriage is a vision we need to grasp anew.

Love needs definition—and it is found in the One who is Love himself. The foundation for loving others is first to love God and obey his commandments (1 John 5:1-3).

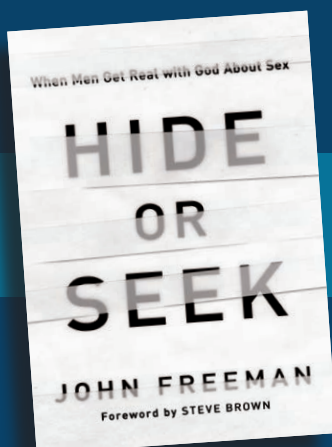
2. It is significant to note that Jesus always appealed to Scripture when addressing controversial issues. When he discussed sexual behavior with the Pharisees, in

the context of marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:3-6), he referred to God's creational order of male and female as affirming the only permissible boundaries for sexual expression. The so-called "silence" of Jesus on the issue of homosexuality is clearly dismissed by his recognition of God-ordained sexual boundaries.

3. There is another hidden message in this post-modern doctrine—that love *requires* sex. Intimacy is not possible without it. But intimacy is much richer and more varied than sexual expression. Intimate relationships—where vulnerability, transparency, companionship, selflessness, and a sharing of mutual interests and life-goals are lived out—happen in friendships, too. God cares deeply about our relationships. He knows that some will not marry or cannot marry, and that can be a significant loss to live with. He knows that. But he has placed us in a community of his Body, and deep, loving friendships should be the norm. We have lost that perspective today. C.S. Lewis said, in *The Four Loves*, "To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it."

Finally, how we live regarding all issues of life ultimately reveals our hearts toward God. "Thy will be done"—or my will be done—describes everyone's relationship with God. To possess a reliable compass to see if we are living for him or for our own desires, requires that we submit everything to God. Unless we work hard to discern our own personal or cultural "background" agendas, the temptation to merge God's will with our own will always remain deceptively strong.

*If you want to comment on this article, you will find it on our blog at [harvestusa.org](http://harvestusa.org). For a fuller discussion on how the Bible is used on this issue, see our mini book, **Homosexuality and the Bible: Outdated Advice or Words of Life?** available at [newgrowthpress.com](http://newgrowthpress.com).*



*"Freeman speaks to this issue with great clarity, passion, and a focus on providing the reader with sound biblical wisdom."*

*"This is the book I've been looking for!  
A great resource! Very biblically based."*

*"Profound in getting down to the root of the subject, this book will make an excellent discipleship tool for men in the church. I enthusiastically recommend!"*

John Freeman's book, *Hide or Seek: When Men Get Real with God About Sex* was named by Desiring God Ministry as one of their 20 Best Books of 2014



# ON THE ROAD: FACING THE HARD QUESTIONS

David White spoke for the second straight year at Cru's Regional Conference in Washington, D.C., where he gave a workshop on "Homosexuality and Christian Faith."

"How do you respond to all the kids that injure or even kill themselves because of this type of teaching?"

Having just finished my presentation on "Homosexuality and Christian Faith," I invited the sea of college students to ask questions or make comments, and immediately his hand shot up. Though asked respectfully, the question clearly had an edge. I responded as gently as possible, knowing that someone personally struggling with same-sex attraction (SSA) or has a close friend or family member who is, usually asks this question. It's not an easy answer to give in a few sentences.

I acknowledged that the Church has sometimes sent condemning messages—bereft of the hope of the gospel—to SSA strugglers that led to self-loathing and despair. Sadly, it's been communicated that people with SSA are "broken" sexually, but the rest of us are fine. (As if "straight" people don't have problems with sex!) I spoke about how SSA is just another manifestation of fallen sexuality—a reality that affects all of us, and is something Jesus went to the cross to redeem. And now he is bringing healing and renewal to everything affected by the curse, especially in the area of our sexuality. Speaking to this issue with empathy is critical, but it is also imperative to speak the truth.

I went on to say that because this is God's world and life only works well his way, telling anyone to live outside his bounds is *not* loving them or enabling them to flourish, but only ends in emptiness and death. I mentioned Proverbs 14:12-13, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief." The world tells us we find meaning through pursuing our desires (especially our sexual ones), and that we can do this with impunity. But Scripture makes clear this is folly. Living for self and following our desires actually leads to discontentment and even greater bondage.





There were many other questions—mostly seeking to understand and not challenge. One young woman asked a crucial clarifying question: in my talk I rejected the idea of being a “gay Christian,” so did that mean people with SSA temptations aren’t saved? Sadly, she didn’t get what I had been saying. Central to my talk was the idea that all Christians are in the midst of overcoming various struggles with the flesh, but that God is faithful to complete the work he’s begun, remaking us into new creatures while still living in a broken world. Jesus is now our core identity, and any self-identity label that “qualifies” who we are in Christ is not just inaccurate, it distorts that identity.

The inevitable “change” question arose and I talked about how a biblical definition of change is really focused on our hearts and submission to God, not becoming heterosexual for the person with SSA. (For a fuller discussion on this critical topic, check out my mini book: *Can You Change if You’re Gay?* Available from New Growth Press: [newgrowthpress.com](http://newgrowthpress.com).)

Students also wanted to know how to navigate their relationships with their LGBTQ friends and family without compromising their faith. We wrestled with some of the challenges confronting the American Church: if you welcome a gay couple to church and they come to faith, what do you do next? Do you force a “married” couple to divorce? What if there are kids involved? How do you handle church membership and the sacraments if they believe the gospel and understand their need for Christ, but haven’t yet come to the place of seeing homosexual behavior as sinful? These are all difficult and complicated questions in our post-Christian society.

With two minutes left I took a final question. Swallowing hard, I pointed to a young woman in the back. The hair, the clothes, the piercings...

what was I thinking?! I was exhausted from the talk and the questions, and the last thing I needed was another complex issue to sort through.

I had no idea what to expect, but as soon as she started speaking, it was clear the choice was Spirit-led. A fairly new Christian, she had come to faith within the last year after living as a lesbian throughout her youth. She talked about the heartache of her experience, and her lack of peace and joy. She described how God surrounded her with Christian friends whose lives looked so different. They had the contentment and *shalom* her life sorely lacked. Resonating with what I taught about

With two minutes left  
I took a final question.  
Swallowing hard, I pointed to  
a young woman in the back.

God’s design, she concluded with a profound point about our sexuality: because God is the life-giver, homosexual activity can’t fit his plan because it will never produce life.

I couldn’t have come up with a more powerful conclusion! She underscored that inviting people to embrace something as “good” that God calls sin is cheering them on to destruction. She talked about the important role of Christian community and humble witness in her conversion. And she wondrously articulated the difference that Jesus makes in her life. It was a beautiful demonstration of how I was describing “change” — it’s not

about becoming “straight,” but about loving God and submitting all of myself to his care.

I drove home praising God for his ability to end “my talk” perfectly! Please pray for this young woman as she continues to grow in her new-found faith, and for us — indeed, all believers in Christ — as we proclaim his Word in our increasingly broken and hostile culture.



# ONLINE TRAINING FOR MENTORS AND GROUP LEADERS

## What is it?

We're excited to offer a 6-week online mentoring and training experience for men and women interested in working with sexual strugglers. This online training will provide practical guidance on leading a support group using our *Sexual Sanity* workbooks. This is excellent training for small group leaders, mentors, counselors, and anyone interested in sexual brokenness ministry.



## Six 90-minute online sessions will include:

- Training by David White and Ellen Dykas, the authors of the workbooks
- A time for questions and discussion about dealing with group or individual situations
- Prayer

## What is discussed during the sessions?

- Session 1:** Intro to the *Sexual Sanity* workbooks and how to use them
- Session 2:** Developing a biblical model for understanding how sexual struggles develop, and how the gospel addresses these issues
- Session 3:** Using effective accountability — what works and what doesn't
- Session 4:** Understanding same-sex attraction issues and working with the SSA individual
- Session 5:** Starting the journey with a sexual struggler: the logistics of starting and running a group
- Session 6:** Understanding group dynamics: best practices, "red flags," starting and ending

## Interested in joining the next round of classes?

They are filling up fast!

Contact Brooke Delaney at [brooke@harvestusa.org](mailto:brooke@harvestusa.org)





# ONE TRAINING TWO LIVES CHANGED A CHURCH IMPACTED

She came into our first *Sexual Sanity for Women* (SSFW) gathering at our church, crushed, broken, and afraid. I welcomed her in, but felt like the smallest wrong word from me could send her quickly away. Her name was Becca (*name has been changed*), and she sat on the far edge of the couch, close to the door. It was obvious that if everything became too hard for her, she needed a quick escape.

I began the group by sharing my own painful testimony as a way to connect with the other women. I kept glancing over at Becca, continually praying for her, that God would give her courage to simply stay, for she was right where God wanted her to be. And she did. She stayed.

The second meeting was tougher. As the group members arrived, I could sense each woman laboring under the weight of her struggle. I began to feel my insecurity rise. Had I learned enough from my online group at HARVEST USA to really think I could do this? Then I looked again, and I didn't see Becca. I immediately thought her absence was due to something I said last week. I prayed, "Lord, please bring her back." As I was praying, someone in the group who knew Becca well called her. "I am coming to pick you up. You need to be here as much as I do. You are not alone. We can walk this journey together, okay?" She wouldn't take no for an answer, and she went and brought Becca in.

As we ended the lesson, everyone filed out the door except for Becca. She sat there, wanting to talk, but not sure where to start. I quietly sat down beside her, and reminded her that this was a safe, confidential place where she could experience grace and healing rather than judgment. Her eyes leveled on me as she decided if she could trust me. She took a deep breath, and then it all rushed out—her story of abuse and heartache, of sin and poor decisions, of guilt and shame, loneliness and despair. As her tears flowed, so did the words that she had trapped inside for so long. Words that she had been afraid to share for fear of judgment.

She felt that no one could understand a story like hers, and if her story ever got out, she would be looked down upon, ostracized. But the story **had** to come out. She was disappearing inside of herself as she fiercely closed off this part of her life. As she spoke I could see her visibly lighten as she threw off the weight of her silence.

As she ended, her eyes searched mine for some sort of response. Through my own tears, I thanked her for being courageous enough to open up. I told her that, yes, her story was one of sin and sorrow, but it was also one of redemption and change, and that God was already touching her heart, helping her to lay down her experiences at the foot of the cross. I also planted the seed that maybe, just maybe, God would bring her to a place where, one day, she could share with other women struggling in the darkness of their hidden shame.

Little did I know that God would open up that opportunity so soon.

A few days later I got a call. A woman in a small group that had been meeting for over a year had something to tell me. The group was stagnant, meeting more out of obligation than out of a desire to grow together. But something unexpected happened that breathed new life into the group. Becca, the quietest one there, told the group, men and women, that she felt she should share something with all of them. She felt moved to open up to them about portions of her past and present struggles in life.

Becca's courage to speak ignited an atmosphere of trust and safety in the group. It would never be the same. Over time, every person in the group opened up about their own struggles. And just like that, the group was transformed from a purposeless group of individuals to a close-knit body of believers, joined together to glorify God in the midst of their struggles.

Of course, there is still much healing to be accomplished in Becca's life. But she is an inspiration to us about the power of God to redeem and change broken people, which is all of us, if only we would be courageous enough to be honest with God and others.

*This testimony came from one of Ellen Dykas' participants in our online training for mentor and group leader classes. Contact Brooke Delaney, our Church Ministry Coordinator, at [brooke@harvestusa.org](mailto:brooke@harvestusa.org) to sign up for our next round of classes.*

I began to feel my insecurity rise.  
Had I learned enough from my  
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to really think I could do this?



In 2014, we conducted 117 separate equipping/educating events, which reached a total of 8,424 people

# REAL LIFE CONVERSATIONS:

## MINISTRY IS BECOMING MORE CHALLENGING AS MEN AND WOMEN IN CHURCHES COME OUT

I was just clearing my desk, getting ready to lock up the office, when the phone rang. I almost let it go to voicemail, but I decided to answer it.

It was a pastor of a reformed, evangelical church on the phone. Frantically, he shared his predicament. There was to be a receiving of new members into the church on Sunday. However, one situation now threatened to dampen the whole event and possibly cause confusion, disbelief, anger and hurt feelings all around.

He had, just an hour before, received a call from “Kevin,” one of the men becoming a member. After talking for about fifteen minutes about how happy he was to be joining the church, he dropped the news on the pastor. “I’m gay, you know. I’m a gay Christian.”

The pastor’s questions now came at me fast and furious. What was he going to do now, in the time between this phone call and Sunday? Why hadn’t Kevin told him this before? How could he have answered all the questions for membership in the affirmative? What about those in the church who had become Kevin’s friends? “You don’t understand, John,” the pastor told me, “This man is deeply cared for by many in the congregation. Active in the life of the church, he’s at every event—among the most faithful in serving. Everyone loves him. I thought we knew him.”

I offered the first thoughts that came to mind. “Looks like, between now and Sunday, you’re going to need to have a long conversation with Kevin, to better understand what he means.” The pastor seemed confused, “What do you mean? What kinds of things should I ask him?”

I told him that he should, right up front, admit to Kevin that this news shocked him, but still to encourage him that he really wanted to hear his story. Then he could ask some follow-up questions like: Why had he hidden this part of himself? Just what did he mean by saying he was gay? Was this merely a description of his sexual attractions, or was it a behavioral matter, or both? Were these things he

wrestled with—or was it a firm identity that he embraced? How did he see the Word of God governing his life in regard to this? Did he have any problem with what Scripture says about homosexuality? How and where did the cross, the work of Christ and union with Christ, enter into Kevin’s life regarding his sexuality? Was he open to the admonitions and instruction of Scripture, and to pastoral support and care, to help him from living in ways that Scripture says aren’t appropriate for followers of Jesus?

In other words, the objective of these questions was to get to the ruling passions of Kevin’s heart and see where his view of Scriptural authority was in his life. The pastor had to discern whether Kevin understood what walking in repentance and faith looked like for him, as a same-sex attracted man. It’s one thing to have this man active and involved in the church. We want our churches to have open doors to people hearing the gospel, and coming to faith. But it’s another thing to join the community of Christ’s body but then live in any way one wishes. Is Kevin willing to enter the community of faith as all must enter, denying himself, taking up his cross to follow Christ, no matter how uncomfortable, disturbing and disruptive that might be? Getting these answers and deciding what to do next, for this pastor, would be quite an undertaking!

Situations like this will only become more common in the future. Actually, the future is now! The gay Christian movement is growing. It’s the new “third way,” promoted by advocates like Matthew Vines, Justin Lee, Rachel Held Evans and others. Many are being persuaded by their false Scriptural arguments and emotional stories, made more powerful by an increasing lack of biblical knowledge and understanding on the part of our people.

How those holding to an historic interpretation of Scripture will ultimately respond to all this is still very much on the table. The pressure to conform to and embrace this new rendering of Christianity in the church and in families is huge. For those who stand firm on God’s Word, they will face the derision of those who label us as out of touch, mean-spirited and irrelevant. Yet the compassion of Christ is found in his understanding of and grace for all of our struggles, while he continues to call us to a holiness that reflects God’s character. Truth and mercy did not compromise at the Cross: they met—in the One whose life, death and resurrection continues to transform any who come to him.



**John Freeman**

President, HARVEST USA  
john@harvestusa.org



# STUDENT OUTREACH

Gospel Sexuality for Students

## A NEW MINISTRY OF HARVEST USA.

Churched kids struggle to reconcile the flood of sexual and relational misinformation that comes from the Internet and media with the eye-dropper drips they get of biblical teaching on sex and sexuality. The STUDENT OUTREACH is passionate about equipping youth leaders and parents to help youth grow in sexual integrity.

### The STUDENT OUTREACH has two day-long seminars:

#### Gospel Sexuality: Raising Sexually Healthy Kids for Parents

We know that it's tougher than ever to be a kid and a parent today! The world's culture is pushing an anything-goes sexuality on our children. We want to help parents learn to disciple their kids and nurture their faith as they grow up and face the sexual chaos of their world.



#### GOSPEL SEXUALITY: STUDENT MINISTRY TRAINING



#### Gospel Sexuality: Student Ministry Training for Student Ministry Workers (youth pastors, campus ministers, youth ministry volunteers, etc.)

Discipling students to follow Jesus in the area of sexuality is daunting! Students live in an aggressive culture that is twisting sexuality into ever-evolving forms, and it's no wonder they are confused and falling into sexual struggles and sin. We want to help those in student ministry ground their students in the Christian worldview of sexuality and learn to counter the postmodern arguments and messages that are so enticing to youth.

Each seminar seeks to communicate biblically rich, relevant, and practical materials in an engaging and fresh way.


In addition to these types of seminars, we will be producing relevant blogs, videos, mini books, and small group curricula to help disciple students to become young adults who follow Christ and learn to honor him with their sexuality.

Email **Dan Wilson**, Student Outreach Coordinator, to find out more or to schedule a seminar at your church:  
[dan@harvestusa.org](mailto:dan@harvestusa.org)



Get a free pdf copy of a great resource for parents and youth leaders:  
*Addressing the Elephant:  
Talking About Sexual  
Struggles with Students*  
by requesting it from us at  
[info@harvestusa.org](mailto:info@harvestusa.org)





# DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CONTRIBUTING TO HARVEST USA... VIA DONOR ADVISED FUNDS?

Donor advised funds are the fastest growing vehicle for charitable giving in the US. Individuals who have larger amounts of money to donate, who want to remain anonymous to the public, or those who want to give to multiple Christian charitable organizations through one source, have used this tool for years to minimize taxes while at the same time being somewhat anonymous in making charitable contributions.

## Description of Donor Advised Funds

Donor advised funds are charitable giving vehicles administered by a foundation, which distributes to a multitude of charitable organizations and ministries, on the donor's (organizations, families, or individuals, etc.) behalf. Some of the largest donor advised funds include Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, Schwab Charitable Fund, Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program, and the National Christian Foundation. You can also disburse donor advised charitable gifts through private or community foundations, like Capstone Legacy Foundation in Philadelphia, The Lancaster County Community Foundation in Lancaster, PA, and the PCA Foundation. Of course, many stock brokerage houses have donor advised funds, as well.

Donor advised funds are aptly named because you advise the Fund which charitable organizations you wish to support, how much and how often. They do the rest.

## Tax Advantages of Donor Advised Funds

In most cases, donor advised funds offer advantages over direct contributions to a charitable organization. The main advantages are timing of the tax deduction, anonymity to the public (if it is a larger gift) and anonymity to HARVEST USA, whether it is a single gift or a gift that extends over several years, according to your instructions.

Let's suppose that in 2015 you have a very good year and wish to make some charitable contributions. You open an account with a donor advised fund in 2015 and contribute a set amount to the fund. You will receive a charitable contribution receipt in 2015, from the fund. You can advise the fund to give the entire amount to the ministry at that time, or designate other amounts to be given over several years. You receive the maximum charitable deduction allowed by law in the year you give the gift to the





fund, perhaps when your income is highest and you need the tax deduction the most, not when the other sums are dispersed.

Additionally, donor advised funds can receive donations of marketable securities. If you have appreciated marketable securities, you may contribute the actual securities to the Fund, avoiding capital gains taxes and enjoying the contribution deduction based on the market value of the securities when contributed to the Fund.

### In a Nutshell

Please consider using all tax advantages available and open up an account with a donor advised fund and contribute appreciated marketable securities or cash. If you prefer to remain anonymous please consider a donor advised fund. This can be especially good for business or company owners, who want to give donations to us, via their company, but don't want anyone to know. (All anyone would know is that you donated to a charitable foundation or fund, not HARVEST USA itself.)

Finally, if you have any questions, please contact our President, **John Freeman**, at [john@harvestusa.org](mailto:john@harvestusa.org).



In 2014, HARVEST USA Staff were interviewed 11 separate times in magazines and on radio, which reached tens of thousands

## BE ONE OF THE 369 BECOME A HARVEST USA MINISTRY PARTNER

HARVEST USA, as you may know, is a faith-supported ministry. We depend almost entirely on the gifts of God's people to do this Gospel work. In 2014, only 2.4% of our income came from fees for training and equipping events. The other 97.6% came primarily from people—people like you—who understand that the work we do is Kingdom work, and essential to the process of building up God's people.

Would you prayerfully consider becoming a HARVEST USA Ministry Partner? HARVEST USA Ministry Partners help us accomplish our mission in three key ways:

1. They PRAY for the work of HARVEST USA (in this culture, we really need this!)
2. They GIVE regular gifts of support to HARVEST USA
3. They TELL other people about the work of HARVEST USA

About 8,000 of you will read this article. However, only about 18% of you are donors to HARVEST USA. (We had 1,475 donors in 2014.) If that number of active donors increased by 25% this year (that's only 369 new donors), and each donor made just a \$25 per month commitment, we would add \$110,000 to our budget in 2015. That's enough to fund a couple of new, sorely-needed part-time Ministry and Education Staff, or to create some of the many new resources that individuals and churches are desperate for.

How can you become a HARVEST USA Ministry Partner? Here are three easy ways you can do that, each in less than five minutes.

1. Complete and send in the response card in this magazine. You can send in a check for your first gift, or give us your credit card information. To set up an automatic, recurring monthly gift through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your checking account or credit card, simply complete that part of the response card.
2. Go to the Donate Page on our website, [harvestusa.org](http://harvestusa.org). You can make a first gift there with your credit card in less than three minutes, and you can set up an automatic, recurring gift as well, by checking the appropriate box.
3. Call our office at 215-482-0111 and let us know you'd like to make a gift and/or pledge of support. We can take your information over the phone, and process your first gift right away.

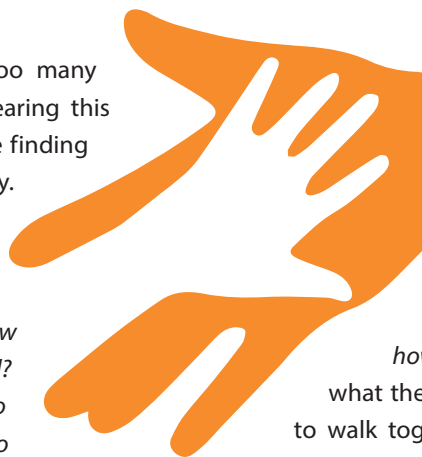
If you're interested in giving a gift of stock, a gift-in-kind of airline miles, or making HARVEST USA a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, will or retirement account, please call **Ed LeClair**, our Development Director, at **215-482-0111, extension 106**.

# HARVEST USA'S PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Chris Torchia, Men's Ministry Staff

"Mom, Dad... I'm gay." There are not too many other words a parent dreads more than hearing this from their son or daughter. But today we are finding this happening with greater frequency. BOOM! The bomb is dropped—followed by a tidal wave of emotions like shock, anger, fear, remorse, and shame. Then comes the second wave, the questions: *How do we make sense of this? Who can we tell? What will people think of our family? How do I love my son or daughter without agreeing to this? Where did we go wrong? How can I put a stop to this, now!*

Once a month I work with Christian parents who need help putting the pieces of their family back together after this happens. For more than a year, HARVEST USA has helped put together and run two Parent Support Groups for parents whose children have self-identified as gay. The pain that comes from their child's decision to identify as gay, and usually along with that the resulting pressure they feel (or receive) to affirm this decision, leaves many parents in desperate need of support. *How do I love my child?*



*And how do I remain faithful to what Scripture says?*

Working with the Parent Support Group has been some of the most humbling times of my ministry at HARVEST USA. The reality is that I can't say the words that a parent wants to hear: *this is how you can fix your kid*. But what I do, and what the other parents do for and with each other, is to walk together in understanding and compassion as each parent learns how to navigate this new journey. We talk often of how God has plans for us that we cannot see, and how he is always working behind the scenes when we think everything is hopeless. We believe that God is up to something good in all this (Romans 8:28). And we all learn, anew, to trust more deeply in a God who can be trusted, even and especially with the life of the child we deeply love.

*For more information on how this group in Philly (or another one in Lancaster, PA) might help you as a parent, send Chris an email: [chris@harvestusa.org](mailto:chris@harvestusa.org).*

# Read

THE MULTI-PART BLOG,  
"ALLAN'S STORY,"  
BY ALLAN EDWARDS,  
ON GROWING UP  
WITH SAME-SEX  
ATTRACTION AND  
LIVING FAITHFULLY



Read this and other informative and insightful blog posts at [www.harvestusa.org](http://www.harvestusa.org)