

Winter 2013



a restored hope network  
member ministry

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# Transformation of Persons with Same-Sex Attraction:

## *Becoming Who We Are*



**Introduction:** *Never in our history has the need been greater for the Church to stand strong on the Biblical Orthodox view of marriage, which is clearly one man and one woman. Never in our history has the Church been so lenient and passive concerning serial adultery with no fault divorce running rampant through her doors. In our Lord's words in Matthew 19:4 & 8 Jesus Christ made it clear that marriage has been "from the beginning" defined as one man and one woman. There must be a consistent call for the repentance of serial adultery for the Church to have moral authority in addressing the issue of gay marriage and the issue of transformation of such persons. Saint Paul's letter to the Romans calls for believers to dedicate their very bodies to God in holiness which is our reasonable form of service. Once we dedicate ourselves, we must stand in the gap to pray and weep as an offering before God. As Leonard Ravenhill often said: "The world has lost the power to blush over its vices; the Church has lost her power to weep over the vices." In this day of great need we must be prepared to give hope of change to those who are struggling with homosexual confusion and the false message of redefining the home outside of God's divine intent for marriage.*  
-- Stephen Black

*"So I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the merciful feelings of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your rational worship. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of the mind, in order that you may figure out what the will of God is, what is good and pleasing and perfect." (Rom. 12:1-2)*

Jesus Christ calls and unites broken humanity to the Father's good will for us. His invitation applies to any person with same-sex attraction (SSA). He seeks those who face many options as to how to resolve their homosexual tendencies. He offers Himself as the answer, the relationship through which the person with SSA becomes the man or woman of God's design.

The unique authority of Jesus Christ to restore persons with SSA lies in the belief that He is both Creator and Redeemer of that person's life (Col. 1: 15-20). He knows who (s)he is unlike any other. One with the Father, Jesus made him/her in His image as male and female. (Gen. 1:26, 27; Matt. 19:4-6) An essential component of such image-bearing involves

the freedom to become a good gift to the opposite gender, inclined to dignify and become fruitful with him or her.<sup>1</sup> RHN upholds that call as basic to all of humanity, including those with SSA.



Like other sinful tendencies in humanity, same-sex attraction reveals the person's need for Christ as Redeemer. Those who turn to Jesus Christ discover His cross as the locus of change. His crucifixion bears every burden that impedes who we in truth are. That requires a kind of death, or surrender, on the part of the person seeking transformation. RHN provides an oasis for those who courageously submit

their sexuality and humanity to Jesus Christ as Lord. Likewise, the biggest barrier to transformation is the refusal to surrender wholly to Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Christ Resurrected is the image of our new humanity. United with His new life, we look to Him as our path and walking partner to freedom. 'The resurrection of Christ is a sign of God's purpose and power to restore His creation to its full stature and integrity.'<sup>3</sup>

The blueprint of our true selves lies in Christ; He activates and restores the man or woman of His design. In that process we discover that there is no such thing as a homosexual per se, only men and women with certain wounds and deprivations who have yet to find their true selves in Him.<sup>4</sup> We who are united with Him become who we are as bearers of His image, male and female.

Transformation requires two things: the awareness that we in our distinct genders are a gift to our fellow humanity, and the willingness to grow into mature expressions of that gift.<sup>5</sup> Jesus enables us to resume the journey toward loving others well, and sustains us upon it.

Transformation is at times rigorous. Becoming who we are requires hard work. Insights from developmental psychologists can help the person with SSA to understand the needs underlying his/her experience of attraction and to tend to those needs maturely. A large body of literature details how same-sex attraction can result from

the frustration of normal needs for same-gender bonding and identification in childhood.<sup>6</sup>

Those disruptions impede normal development and can result in some children experiencing profound gender shame and SSA. The latter masks both the injury and the need for emotional identification with his/her gender. It takes courage to probe beneath what is obvious and face real needs and wounds.

The transformation from gender disintegration to wholeness requires Jesus' whole healing community. RHN encourages persons with SSA to take a multi-faceted approach to restoration. That includes skilled Christ-centered helpers who help the person with SSA to resolve hurtful events and to offer healthy alternatives to sexualizing the need for same-gender friendships.<sup>7</sup>

RHN also advocates for a variety of small groups and other pastoral care offerings that support the true man or woman as (s)he sorts through real wounds, sins, and needs. Three keys govern these offerings: sensitivity, compassion, and respect for the dignity of each person.<sup>8</sup>

At core, RHN urges persons with SSA to resume the journey to wholeness on which Christ calls all Christians. A secure sexual identity is a secure human identity, a transformation Jesus wills for everyone. We urge persons with SSA to partner with those who struggle differently en route to the same goal of loving others well. RHN values integration with the whole body of Christ as a central tenet of transformation.<sup>9</sup>

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“The cross remains the  
sign and seal of our  
transformation.”

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Transformation results in several significant changes for persons with SSA who have resumed the journey to wholeness. One takes his/her place as a part of God's whole creation: man for woman, woman for man, with same-gender friendships supporting the call to dignify this other.

Same-gender desires fluctuate but tend to decrease while many experience an increase, to varying degrees, of sexual desire for the other gender. Usually one member of the opposite gender will attract the majority of these feelings.<sup>10</sup> When that is the case, the community surrounding the two should exercise special discernment to ensure that both

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parties are ready to reckon with unique issues that can arise from one's history of same-gender attraction.<sup>11</sup>

Whether (s)he unites with a member of the opposite gender or lives as a single person, wholly for Christ, Jesus is in all and through all. He is the Source of transformation. He invites and enables us to live honest, humble, and generous lives. That means being authentic with others about our struggles and disciplined about tending to the needs for love that remain in us. At the same time, we seek Jesus to strengthen our love for others because they are worthy of love. In that way, we exercise the new creation and grow into maturity.

The cross remains the sign and seal of our transformation. Like all serious Christians, we must continually let go in order to take up. We let go of pretense, lust and selfishness; we endure suffering with Christ, take up forgiveness and extend it, and arise in our true selves. We become powerful in love.

Some wonder why this 'cross-walk' takes a lifetime. At times it may feel as if the depth of same-gender attraction supersedes the power of divine love. The truth is deeper still. Jesus is taking ground in our very depths, preparing for Himself a people who know Him in the very center of their thoughts, desires, and motives. Transformation means that the mystery of His redemption is overtaking the complexity of our sin (Rom. 6: 14). We are being made ready to see Him face-to-face (Titus 2: 11-14). We are becoming who we are, testifying to the truth that the transformation of the 'homosexual' is a witness of how God transforms us all.

1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III/1, The Doctrine of Creation (trans. J. W. Edwards et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), p.18.
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3. Alistair McGrath, What Was God Doing on the Cross? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) p. 73.
4. Leanne Payne, The Broken Image (Westchester: Crossways Books, 1981), pp. 63, 4.
5. John Paul II, The Theology of the Body (Boston: Pauline, 1997) theme
6. Janelle Hallman, The Heart of Same-Sex Attraction (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008); Elizabeth Moberly, Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic (Cambridge: John Clarke, 1983); Joseph Nicolosi, Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1991); Joseph Nicolosi, Shame and Attachment Loss (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005)
7. Concise definition of reparative treatment from Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, April 2013.
8. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Commission of Cardinals and Bishops, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition (Wash. DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000) #2358, p. 566.
9. Andrew Comiskey, 'Beyond the Ex-Gay Plateau,' Living Waters (Anaheim: DSP, 1996) pp. 256-58
10. James E. Phelan, Neil Whitehead, Philip M. Sutton, 'NARTH's Response to the APA Claims on Homosexuality', Journal of Sexuality Vol. 1 (2009), pp. 1:12-1:18.
11. Father John Harvey, Same-Sex Attraction: Catholic Teaching and Pastoral Practice (New Haven: Knights of Columbus, 2007) pp. 35, 36.

## Testimony of Transformation

by Tammie Erwin

For years I had walked a fine line between leading a ministry for sexual and relational brokenness, and getting help for myself. The more I stepped out into ministry, the more I became aware of my own need for ministry. The only trouble was, there were no other ministries close to where I lived.



The pressure of ministry and my own brokenness finally collided and I found myself dealing with a moral compromise. I had to choose between leaving ministry and seeking help. I chose restoration and moved 3 1/2 hours away, for 9 months.

Coming to Oklahoma City, to attend Living Waters, was truly a life changing event! Through LW, Jesus revealed areas of my life that He wanted to make whole. Some of these areas I had dealt with for years, yet others I didn't even know were broken. One of these unknown wounded places was revealed through a time of corporate prayer when Jesus allowed me to see that my ability to say "NO!" had been stolen from me through the abuse I had suffered in my childhood. I was an adult still operating with the emotional limitations of a child. Jesus used the LW team to lead me into a place to recapture my adult "NO!"

First Stone provided a safe place for me to grow and heal; outside the demands of ministry. I was able to rest and be refreshed knowing that the staff of FSM knew what I was going through.

After completing the LW term, I greatly desired to come back for another LW term as an assistant leader. God granted the desire of my heart and allowed me to return to OKC for another term. Once I arrived in OKC, I was offered an internship with FSM.

It is such an honor to serve with the men and women of FSM! It is awesome to observe how the ministry touches the lives of so many, including mine, by giving of their time and energy.

The things I am learning, while here at FSM, will greatly help me in my personal journey and in ministry. I am thankful for the chance to give back to the people who have loved me through some of my hardest days.

FSM has stood strong where others have faltered, and I am thankful that they have lived the truth before me and loved me without compromising the Word of God to do it.

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# Pornography Facts

*updated December 2013*

## A Generation Raised with Pornography

- Nearly 9 out of 10 (87%) of young men (age 18-26) reported using pornography.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly 1/3 (31%) of young women (age 18-26) reported using pornography.<sup>1</sup>
- Roughly 2/3 (67%) of young men and 1/2 (49%) of young women (age 18-26) agree that pornography use is an acceptable expression of sexuality.<sup>1</sup>
- Pornography acceptance and use among young adults (age 18-26) is scientifically linked with risky sexual attitudes and behaviors, as well as substance abuse.<sup>1</sup>
- 9 out of 10 boys were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.<sup>2</sup>



## Current Trends in Internet and Smartphones

- In 2013 there were well over 2 billion web searches for pornography.<sup>2</sup>
- 9 out of 10 internet porn users only access free material.<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 5 mobile searches are for pornography.<sup>2</sup>
- 24% of smartphone owners admit to having pornographic material on their handset.<sup>2</sup>
- By 2015, mobile adult content and services are expected to reach \$2.8 billion per year, mobile adult subscriptions will reach nearly \$1 billion, and mobile adult video consumption on tablets will triple.<sup>2</sup>

## Pastors and Pornography

- 37% of pastors said viewing pornography was “a current struggle”.<sup>2</sup>
- 75% of pastors said they do not make themselves accountable to anyone for their internet use.<sup>2</sup>

## Marriages and Pornography

- 68% of divorces involve one party meeting a new lover on the internet.<sup>2</sup>
- 56% of divorces involve one party having “an obsessive interest in pornographic websites”<sup>2</sup>

## Christians and Pornography

- 50% of Christian men are addicted to pornography<sup>3</sup>
- 20% of Christian women are struggling with pornography<sup>3</sup>
- 47% of Christians said that pornography is a major problem in their home.<sup>3</sup>
- 90% of the 500 men at a retreat admitted they were feeling disconnected from God because lust, porn, or fantasy had gained a foothold in their lives.<sup>2</sup>
- 34% of female readers of Today’s Christian Woman’s online newsletter admitted to intentionally accessing Internet porn<sup>4</sup>
- 70% of Christians admitted to struggling with porn in their daily lives (non-scientific poll taken by XXXChurch)<sup>4</sup>

## Help is Available

- Covenant Eyes provides filtering and internet accountability services for a low monthly cost. ([www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com))
- First Stone Ministries provides one-on-one discipleship and support group ministries for those struggling with pornography to find accountability, healing, and freedom through relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Freedom is not a method, but a person: Jesus Christ. He has been rescuing sexual addicts for thousands of years (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

### Sources:

1. “Generation XXX: Pornography Acceptance and Use Among Emerging Adults” <http://jar.sagepub.com/content/23/1/6.short>.
2. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/02/19/pornography-statistics/> (This site includes a free downloadable PDF with more statistics)
3. source: [purelifeministries.org](http://purelifeministries.org)
4. source: [www.blazinggrace.org/pornstatistics.htm](http://www.blazinggrace.org/pornstatistics.htm)


## End-of-Year Giving: Why Give?



This has been an unusual year of donations. The year started off much like other years in our history in receiving donations. However, after the summer our donations dropped. We have currently experienced about a 10% drop in donations. This has resulted in a need of \$20K; as we are below

this amount in comparing to the last 2 years.

I was recently asked: “why do you believe we should continue to financially support your ministry?” by a local church.

- 1) The need is growing. Unfortunately with the latest statistics of pornography use within church leadership and members is growing and the level of sexual brokenness and confusion is actually increasing in the church, especially among those who are 30 and younger.
- 2) Our expertise with over three decades of ministry experience as an organization gives us a compassionate yet cutting-edge offering of the TRUTH of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to help people overcome sexual and relational brokenness.
- 3) Our expenses have remained the same and in some ways increased, while our donations have actually decreased, as mentioned above.
- 4) We are in the process of asking more churches to join our support team, however we have not met the deficit need yet.
- 5) First Stone Ministries relies on the generous donations of churches, and the individuals we serve. Unfortunately many that we serve are in a low-to-medium income bracket and cannot contribute as much as is actually needed to support the operation/mission of First Stone.
- 6) We are a dedicated staff of people who have lived our lives by faith in God’s word, devoted to Christ to serve the State of Oklahoma, and the surrounding areas with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, specifically to the sexually and relationally wounded within the Church; and we are sincerely making a big difference.
- 7) We are sincerely grateful to the local church and to our individual supporters! Thank you! 


## Testimony of Transformation

by Verla-Marie Hull

I came to First Stone Ministries in 2003, desperate for breakthrough in various issues: anger, anxiety, depression, emotional dependence on men and deep fear of women. God began to meet me in my need as I sought out discipleship through First Stone and participated in the Living Waters program. There He began to unfold my heart of fear, anxiety and desperation for love and began to sing quietly over me. I found I could rest in the comfort of His love and beauty. He began to show me what it was to walk with Him in the garden in the cool of the day and what it was to be in the secret place with Him, and I began to become desperate for more of Him. He showed me that I was created for community. He showed me the value of His Bride and the fellowship and safety I could find there.



Although I did not have a relationship with Jesus growing up, I knew who God was and knew the power of prayer and the power of His voice. Like Samuel, I heard God speak to me as a child but did not know it was Him until I was told it was Him at 25 years of age. Since then, I have gotten to look back at how He stood beside me and gave me such wisdom as a little girl!

The day I met Jesus I was introduced fully into intercession, the power behind it, and the importance of prayer for the Body and for myself! I also said, “Jesus, I want to be like Anna the prophetess and spend my days in the Temple ministering to You!” I never thought this dream would happen. I have been called an intercessor of leaders and have spent these past 14 years with Jesus learning how to intercede well and learning how to hear His voice clearly. A few years ago, I began leading large groups in nights of prayer and leading weekly intercession for my church. I also began discipling others about prayer, intimacy, and hearing the voice of the Lord. In the spring of 2012, I was asked by FSM to lead a night of prayer for the ministry due to increased attack and the death of Stephen Black’s daughter. During the meeting, Stephen asked me if I wanted to come on staff as the Intercessor. My mouth literally dropped. I thought a dream like being a full time intercessor would never happen to someone like me! After a month of processing with the Lord and others in leadership over me, I knew that this was what God has always been preparing me for: to cover those in this ministry who are literally standing on the front lines of spiritual warfare! I came on staff in July 2012 and it has been a daily adventure of testing and joy! I stand on Isaiah 56:7, “...I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.” 

## Staff Information

See [www.firststone.org](http://www.firststone.org) for individual testimonies, enlightening articles and accompanying information.



Back row, L-R: Laura Leigh Stanlake, Tammie Erwin. Middle row, L-R: Joseph Thiessen, Stephen Black, Andrew Franklin. Front Row, L-R: Angie Morelock, Verla-Marie Hull.

All staff may be reached by phone at 405.236.4673 or email:

Stephen Black Executive Director:	<a href="mailto:stephen@firststone.org">stephen@firststone.org</a>
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## Support Group Information

See [www.firststone.org](http://www.firststone.org) for ONLINE Registrations and Information.

### NEW MAN GROUP: BEGINS JANUARY 27

First Stone's men's group helps those struggling with sexual addiction find lasting freedom. We will offer a New Man group beginning January 27, 2014, and running through May. The group will cost \$50, which includes the curriculum, "Falling Forward: The Pursuit of Sexual Purity" by Craig Lockwood. For more information contact Stephen Black ([stephen@firststone.org](mailto:stephen@firststone.org)) or 405.236.4673.



### PARENTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP:



First Stone hosts a group of parents and family members who meet together on a regular basis for support in loving their loved ones who are gay. If you find yourself needing the support of others dealing with this in their families, please consider the Parents, Family and Friends group. Meetings take place on the first and third Friday of each month, from 7-9:30pm. For more information contact Stephen Black ([stephen@firststone.org](mailto:stephen@firststone.org)) or 405.236.4673.

If you are interested in joining any of the support groups please contact our offices at 405-236-4673, or email: [support@firststone.org](mailto:support@firststone.org).



# 2013 Year-In-Review

## Discipleship at a glance:

- ◇ In 2013, First Stone staff spent more than **1,575** hours in well over **975** one-on-one discipleship sessions.
- ◇ First Stone hosted over **40** support groups involving over **100** people. These groups revolved around God's intent for relationships and sexual wholeness, groups for participants, wives, and parents.

## More First Stone Speaking Opportunities:

- ◇ Restored Hope Network National Conference
- ◇ Northwest Baptist Church
- ◇ Covenant Life Church
- ◇ Our Lord's Community Church
- ◇ Church That Matters (Sand Springs, OK)
- ◇ National Living Waters Training (Kansas City, MO)
- ◇ Gospel Mission Union (Spokane, WA)
- ◇ Westside Christian Church
- ◇ Redeemer Church (Utica, NY)
- ◇ Church at Edmond
- ◇ Oklahoma Baptist University
- ◇ Super Summer Camp
- ◇ New Church
- ◇ Cherokee Hills Baptist Church
- ◇ "Words to Live By" Radio and Internet Show
- ◇ Mid-America Christian University
- ◇ Antioch Community Church
- ◇ Fresh Start Community Church



**Thank you so much for all your prayers and gifts on behalf of First Stone Ministries.**

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*Address Service Requested*



First Stone Ministries wishes you:

# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



*May your holidays be filled with joyful celebration and reflection of the Glorious Birth of Christ. We pray for abundant blessing upon you and your family in 2014: spiritually, physically, financially, and relationally.*

***For donations to qualify for the 2013 tax-year, they must be postmarked by December 31, 2013.***