



# UTPOST NEWS

Volume 24

Number 1

January 2000

Finding Hope Together in the Joyful Reality of God's Healing Embrace

## God's Heart Beat

It was Christmas time and every year my family celebrated Christmas at my grandmother's house in western Minnesota. I was 13 years old and that year was no different. Lots of relatives and a few friends were spending the night at Grandma's after a fun evening of food and gifts.

Two of my cousins invited friends to join us for the family Christmas celebration that year. One cousin, "Tom," invited a guy friend. Another cousin, "Suzy," invited a girl friend. Both spent the night with us all at Grandma's. It just so happened that Suzy's female friend was an ex-girlfriend of mine —well, as much an ex-girlfriend as you can have in Junior high. Both Suzy and her friend were about 12. Tom and

his friend had already graduated from high school, so they were 18.

Late into the night, as I was sleeping on the floor in the living room, I was awakened when I felt someone lay down beside me. There was a pause and the next thing I knew someone was kissing me. On the lips! I was startled, but immediately my mind turned to my ex-girlfriend who was obviously still interested in me. Or so I thought. That was when I felt something strange on my face. Whiskers. This could NOT be my ex-girlfriend; it had to be a man! I jumped out of my sleeping bag and, in a fit of rage, stomped around the living room and kitchen, knocking the garbage can over and kicking garbage all over the room.

I was intensely angry when I saw Tom's friend pretending to be asleep on the floor beside my sleeping bag. Lights came on and people came running into the room with confused looks on their faces. I was furious and embarrassed. I didn't know what to say so I just told them I had a bad dream and turned to clean up the mess.

In my family it was like "it" didn't happen. I didn't let them know that this man had made a pass at me during the night. They saw that I

was angry. But they didn't know that the anger was about HIM. I was so embarrassed that I didn't offer any more information. I basically stuffed my feelings and the whole thing eventually became a part of my system.

At some point during the next year we found out through the family gossip tree that my cousin Tom had come out as gay and that his friend

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*I realized that my attitude toward gays was not godly*

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at Christmas was more than just a friend. We didn't really ever talk directly about this (in our family, we didn't have sit down conversations at dinner). Mom just kind of threw it out there in passing.

I didn't really have a conscious motive on my part to keep the abuse incident secret, but it was never addressed within the family. No one ever asked me about it. I think now, however, that they must have known, but didn't want to bring it all up and cause uncomfortable feelings in the family.

A year or so later, I became a Christian at age 15. It was the summer before my freshman year. Up until that point I was freely

OUTPOST NEWS is a monthly publication of Outpost, Inc. and is sent free upon request. An annual donation of \$25 is appreciated to cover printing and postage costs.

PO Box 15263

Minneapolis, MN 55415-0263

Ph: (612) 904-5571 Fax: (612) 904-5570

[e-mail: hope@outpost-inc.com](mailto:hope@outpost-inc.com)

Dan Puumala, Editor

Outpost Ministries Executive Director:

Dan Puumala

Administrative Assistant:

Robert Tratz

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.

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willing to mock gays, make fun of them, say that it was "wrong," all those things. I wouldn't have directed it at any one person. In fact, my heart was soft enough that had I knowingly come in contact with a gay person (with a receptive personality), I would have been OK with him as a person. But the whole "gay thing" really bugged me. By this time, I had taken offense at gays

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*God was as concerned about their sin as He was with mine!*

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in general, and I was slowly becoming aware that I felt discomfort, but surely didn't know why. I didn't even realize it was really anger until about 2 years after I had become a Christian. I was 17. By that time I realized that my attitude of anger towards gays was not godly.

Several years later I was still dealing with my anger toward homosexuals. I wanted to believe my anger was okay, so I told myself that their sin was far worse than my own and that "they" deserved whatever punishment God would give them. One night, at a young adult Bible study, we studied the book of Jonah. We read how Jonah's hatred and disgust for the people of Nineveh almost kept him from following God's command. We also learned that his early disobedience to God was the reason he spent three days in the belly of a giant fish.

The thing we had discovered, was that Jonah's hatred of the Ninevites had gone beyond simple disobedience to God. It was prejudice. He was prejudiced because of his culture and some

personal things he had against the Ninevites. Then things surfaced in me, like memories of when I had made fun of homosexuals. God showed me that these were clear acts of prejudice on my part. The question was asked in the group, Who is your Nineveh? Who are you willing to NOT go to?

For me the strikingly obvious answer was the gay community. What drove me to the place of my conviction was that I didn't want to have to re-do "Jonah" just for the sake of learning. It wasn't even so much the avoidance of the belly-of-the-whale consequence. I just didn't want to be so resistant to God or "stiff-necked" that I would have to relearn Jonah's lesson. Some of the conviction had to do with pride, a sense of position—I felt better than them and that's why I was so ready to mock them or make fun of them. I didn't have their problem, therefore I was better.

After this in-depth discussion at the Bible study, we were given an opportunity to spend some time alone with God to deal personally with some of the questions which had come out of the study. I went to sit on the carpeted floor in the corner of the classroom in that church basement. There was kind of a light murmur in the room. I couldn't really understand what anyone was saying, but was aware of the low-level noise insulating me from everyone else.

It was just me and God and I was being confronted by him about my prejudice. I believe the Holy Spirit spoke to me very clearly that night, asking, "Chad, what if I were to call

you to minister to gay people?"

For the next twenty minutes, alone in the corner of that room, God dealt with me about the homosexual community. He broke my heart. He shared with me His deep heart of compassion and love for homosexual people. He told me how He desperately longed for Christians to take on that same heart. All the while I countered and questioned and rebelled and protested, "But God! What about their sin?!"

At some point the reality of my own sin helped me understand that what God was talking to me about was not a sin issue. Up until that point I had been seeing the whole issue of homosexuality only as a sin issue. But with my sin now in the picture, I now had to see them as a people whom God loved, just as I must see myself as one whom God loves.

He reassured me that, but that THAT was not the point! "How can you say that you love Me and yet hold such disdain and hatred for other members of the human race

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*I resolved to never stop loving, caring and reaching out*

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whom I created and love?" This was the question that echoed through the canyons of my heart. This was the conviction of *my* sin! Hate and disdain —they're not part of the kingdom of God. They ought to have no part in the life of a citizen of that kingdom. I was ready to confess and repent!

I felt scolded and indicted, but I yielded to the Spirit and admitted my sin-guilt. Broken and deeply changed, I emerged from the corner of that room that night a different

person. A new person, changed from the inside out. A person who was committed to taking on the heart of God for *all* people. I resolved to never stop loving, caring and reaching out—for this is the heart beat of God.

I have since gone into vocational ministry for my career. The gay community hasn't become a specified target of my ministry, *per se*. But, I have championed the cause—God loves gays, too! Because the question of the morality of homosexual activity comes up quite frequently, I say, "Yes, it is sinful. But only to the same degree as any other sexual sin." God doesn't see gays merely as unredeemable balls of sin walking around, but as ones he loves and died for. I have to accept them as persons created in the image of God. In as much as we Christians who have sinned heterosexually accept each other despite our sin, I believe we must see our homosexual counterparts in the same way.

In the Church these days, however, I think this position is weak. Leaders are too afraid to take the focus off the sin and focus on the person. They are afraid of the political consequences within their churches and among their friends, families and denominations. I am not saying that we should place outwardly disobedient people in leadership positions within the church, only that we should not attempt to withhold God's grace from them. My experience has also caused me to go beyond the issue of homosexuality to see all forms of "trapped people" differently. (We can see that they're trapped by the outward expression and repetition of sin in their lives). I see them I see them as myself. The apostle Paul said it this way, "I was once like

them." The reality of that is what is important. And it would be true of any addicted person, whether alcoholic, chemically dependent or sexually addicted.

I think God responds to the protests about their sin with, "That's not the point! And it's not your job. Let me deal with their sin!" My question and my challenge to the reader is this: What can we do to get to the point (and stay there) in regards to the way we think and feel about homosexual people? How can we express God's love to them and keep ourselves focussed on what really matters? I believe this is a noble goal and one that reflects the heart beat of God.

**OUTPOST is a Christian ministry formed to meet the needs of men and women who have made a decision to break away from gay life. OUTPOST strives to deal with individuals as whole people, not merely sexual beings, offering teaching, encouragement and support. OUTPOST emphasizes obedience to God's Word which begins the healing process. For information on counseling referrals, group meetings, literature or tapes, write: OUTPOST, INC., P.O. Box 15263, Minneapolis, MN 55415. Phone (612) 904-5571, fax: (612) 904-5570. E-mail: [hope@outpost-inc.com](mailto:hope@outpost-inc.com). Visit OUTPOST on the internet at [www.outpost-inc.com](http://www.outpost-inc.com).**

# First Annual Fund Raising Banquet

We are happy to announce our pledge drive banquet for April 28, 2000 at the Great Hall of North Heights Lutheran Church in Arden Hills, MN. Our special guest for the event is John Paulk, Board Chair for Exodus, International and also a specialist in public policy for Homosexuality and Gender at Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, CO. Also, for our master of ceremonies, we have invited Chuck Knapp of KTIS radio, here in the Twin Cities.

We are asking a suggested donation of \$40 per person for the six course meal, music, testimonies. We will hear an address from John Paulk and other nationally known speakers. We are also conducting a pledge drive for regular monthly support thereafter, in hopes of increasing our operating budget to include new staff and new ministries.

If you are interested in attending the banquet, or wish to sponsor a table or underwrite the cost of part or all of the event, please contact Robert at the Outpost office: (612) 904-5571.

Please pray that this event will draw new financial partners for us at Outpost.

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# NEWS FROM THE FRONT

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## A CALL TO PRAYER

- Pray for the financial condition of Outpost. Pray especially that God will direct new donors to Outpost, and give us wisdom in appropriating the monies we are entrusted with.
- Pray for the continuation of the project to publish Joe Hallett's writings into a book. The transcribed works are in the hands of a editor-volunteer. Thank you Chloe for taking on this worthy project!
- Pray about our Fund Raising Banquet in April. Pray that this event will bring glory to our Lord, and will honestly enlist the loving support of

several new friends of Outpost Ministries.

- Pray about the possibility of hiring new staff to work with young people struggling with homosexual feelings and sexual identity confusion. This is a growing concern as we struggle to address the social and educational pressures of the new century.

financial partners in order for us to do the things that God is calling us to do.

One concern I have is that too much talk about finances may turn people off to helping us. I try to merely state what our need is and ask humbly that you pray about your potential involvement with us.

We are also a member in good standing with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, a non-profit self monitoring Christian group, which seeks to ensure the reliability of charitable organizations.

## A WORD ABOUT FINANCES

As we begin the year 2000, we are operating on a bare-bones budget. This, of course, is nothing new at Outpost. We committed to not spending more money than we actually take in. While we are grateful for the many who support Outpost financially, we need the help of more

God bless you in your generosity of heart and finance as you consider partnering with us at Outpost!

Dan Puumala



Executive Director

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*Please cut along dotted line and enclose with your gift in the envelope provided.*

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