



*Ministering Hope, Healing and Wholeness
to the Relationally & Sexually Wounded
Through the Power of the Cross!*

WE NEED THE BODY OF CHRIST!

Hearing God loves us in the midst of our struggles is almost unbelievable; however, it is true for all men and women. He promises that He is always waiting just as the story of the prodigal son illustrates in Luke 15. He desires to show us His unconditional love, acceptance, and freedom; and all we have to do to receive, is turn to Him.

There are so many who are hurting, angry, lonely, and tired and really want to come home but are uncertain of how you, as the body of Christ will respond to them. We need each other to walk through the challenges that life takes us through, and that means that we must be willing to look past the circumstances and see who and what Jesus sees. We read in *Matt. 25:40* "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" So I want to encourage the body of Christ to reach out to the person sitting next to you in church; you never know: it may be Jesus.

I consistently challenge individuals that I meet with to find someone within the body of Christ to be vulnerable with

and to share their faults with. I ask every person that I meet with the same question: "Who knows you well enough, has been given permission and is willing to speak the truth into your life?" We must all be willing to apply the word found in *James 5:16* "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

I believe that as long as we are willing to confess our struggles with one another, it will keep us humble and will not allow the enemy to have a foothold in our lives. For this to take place, the body of Christ must be a sanctuary to all who come. I have heard it said on more than one occasion that it would be great if the church was more like a bar. When a person goes to a bar, he or she can be real and does not have to try to hide who he or she really is. Should we not be the place that people can come and feel safe and know that they will be loved no matter what they confess? The body of Christ needs to be our refuge here on earth to share our faults and receive God's unconditional love.

I know this can happen as we each seek to view others as God sees them and not through our own eyes. Remember what Jesus said in *John 8:7* "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." We have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory but He has washed us, He has sanctified us, He has justified all of us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

We need each other, so please be willing to open your hearts and minister to those who need us?

Support the Ministry!

If you are in the real estate market to buy or sell, please call Theresa Ruth with Cornerstone Real Estate. She will give a 10% offering to Exchange Ministries over her tithe in accordance with Malachi 3:10, "Bring the whole tithe into the store house, that there may be food in my house." Theresa has worked in real estate for seven years and conducts her business with honesty and integrity. Be a blessing to Exchange Ministries and give Theresa Ruth a call. (407) 619-2089

Financial News

Operating Expenses January 01, 2005 thru March 31, 2005		
Income:	Designated	\$ 7,717.00
	Donations	\$ 5,299.00
	Groups	<u>\$ 2,278.00</u>
	Total Income:	\$15,294.00
Budget:		\$17,310.00
\$ Over Budget		\$ -2,016.00
Total Operating Expense:		\$14,448.51

Ministry Needs!

New Office Printer	\$750.00
Office Furniture	\$400.00
Exodus Scholarships	
<i>Ps. 37:28 For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. NJV</i>	

What's Ahead!

Exodus Freedom Conference
"30 Years of Freedom"
Asheville, NC July 19-23, 2005
www.exodus2005.org

Desert Stream Leadership Conference
"Preparing the Bride"
Kansas City, MO August 4-6, 2005

Ministry Movie Nights ...
Watch for details

When I was asked to write out my testimony, I have to admit I was a bit nervous. Granted, I'm all about being the center of attention, so the thoughts of having something I had written put in a national newsletter was awesome. It was my time to shine. Then reality sunk in. I actually have to tell the world about my issues, my struggles, and my weaknesses. A ton of people will soon know that I, Amy Turner, used to be gay. But you see, that's the beauty of it. It's all in the past.

I'm 29 years old and have been brought up in church my whole life. I grew up knowing right and wrong, but I also grew up being sexually abused by boys and men, especially in the church. My abuse started at around six years old. Unfortunately, I was too afraid to tell my parents. My abusers warned me to keep silent.

Living a very promiscuous life, I strived for acceptance and love. By age seventeen, I was introduced to the homosexual lifestyle in my local church. Ashamed and confused, I told my youth pastors what was going on. To my dismay, they said they didn't know how to help. They referred me to a Bible college student that had "supposedly" come out of lesbianism. The day of the meeting, my youth pastor forgot and didn't attend. Thus began a four-year lesbian relationship with a girl who attended, and then graduated from one of the most prestigious Bible schools in the United States.

My relationships with women didn't end there. You see, my homosexual relationships were built in the church. I never went to bars or clubs to get with women. I didn't have to. They sat next to me with their husbands and children on Sunday morning. They were coaches or teachers at Christian schools. I had no need to go looking for women of the world. They were all part of the local church.

But, like human nature, I wanted more. I was tired of the double life I was living. I had this bright idea that getting married would straighten me out. I thought a good man would be the answer to all my problems. Talk about adding fuel to a fire! It blew up in my face. We both brought so much baggage into our marriage. It was a disaster from the beginning. Feeling like a failure and on the brink of suicide, I couldn't take it anymore. My marriage was ending.

I had tried so hard to do the right thing, but for some reason I didn't make it. I was so angry. All I wanted was to be normal. I wanted to have a family and kids and live happily ever after. I wanted the fairy tale to come true in my life. I just wanted to be like every other girl and not have to deal with all these unnecessary issues. The homosexual lifestyle is one big roller coaster. The ride doesn't end until you decide it's over!

I hated God, and I hated the church. To me, the church wasn't safe. No one there understood me or my "issues," and most of my wounding had been done by so-called Christians. I didn't trust anyone enough to bare my soul to them. As far as I was concerned, I would attend church on Sundays, but I would never be a member of a church again and I'd never let any women of the church get close to me.

Then, my girlfriend told me about Exodus. I checked them out on the computer and was disheartened that the closest facility was over an hour away. I knew I wanted help, but I didn't want to actually have to go out of my way. I wanted the easy way out. I was at the end of my rope and knew it was time to sink or swim. This marked the beginning of my journey.

Exchange Ministry provided me a safe

place to work through my problems. It has taught me that we are all the same at the foot of the cross. My sin is no different from yours. God is the only one who can restore my life. But what I had to realize is that I couldn't just show up every Monday to our meetings and think it would be enough to get me through the week. We have to get to a place where we allow others to speak into our lives and be able to be real and vulnerable with them. You must have a strong support system.

Walking out of the lifestyle isn't an easy process. It takes lots of determination and faith. I had to be willing to walk away from a lot of unhealthy people and stand in faith knowing God would supply my needs. In time, he sent healthy friends my way. I just had to be willing to do what was asked, even when it hurt and didn't make sense.

So, where does that leave me? The exact opposite of everything I anticipated. As of this summer I joined the leadership team at Exchange Ministries. I'm helping to give back to others the freedom that God has so graciously given to me. I have also joined a local church in my community where I'm involved in several aspects the church, including even being a part of the Women's Ministry. The Pastor's wife and daughter are two of my closest friends. I am surrounded by safe and encouraging women who love me and are teaching me to be a strong woman of God.

My story is far from over. I'm just getting started! I hope that in another three years I will be writing to you again to tell about my new husband and kids. But today, I write to tell you, there is HOPE. You don't have to live a defeated life. Jesus already won the battle; you just have to decide to join His team.

Amy



Yes, I want to help **Exchange** continue to minister to the sexually and relationally wounded.

Here is my gift of: One Time Monthly
 \$30 \$50 \$100 \$_____ Other

Designation: General Fund Staff Support _____

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