



Karen Booth
Director of Transforming
Congregations

Dear Supporters of Transforming Congregations,

Recently, my husband Randy and I led a group to Israel to “walk in the footsteps of Jesus.” The devotional I used there is *Going Places with God* by Wayne Stiles, a large portion of which focuses on the desert terrain surrounding Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Stiles argues persuasively that sojourns there in the wilderness — whether physical or spiritual — have the greatest potential to mold us into the people God desires us to be.

In the Introduction, he writes:

So God takes us places. He takes us places we cannot control. He puts us in settings we don't understand, places that compel us to trust Him. In these sacred places, He reveals the weakness of our hearts so that we learn not to depend on ourselves. As our weak grip gives way, we discover the joy of our weakness in His strength — which carried us all along.

It's in this “sacred wilderness” that God's people learn first-hand about His provision, protection and providence. Hopefully, they also discover that He shaped their circumstances to foster growth and maturity and to draw them close to Him. As Stiles

concludes, “God takes us places we would never choose in order to give us what we could never receive anywhere else — Himself.”

As I read Stiles, I wondered about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. As they crossed the barren hillsides outside David's city, did they reflect on their own personal journeys through God's “sacred wilderness?” Did they ponder again the challenges of Mary's unexpected pregnancy or experience any remaining twinges of Joseph's initial doubt and fear? Or did they ultimately realize that their deep and unshakeable trust in God had made all the difference?

I also thought about those of us who care about sanctified sexuality. Whether we ourselves struggle with unwanted attractions or whether we love someone in our church or family who does, God often calls us to places we don't understand, cannot control, or don't want to be. One of the messages of Christmas is to simply trust Him — in the midst of our uncertainty and questioning ... among people who may not welcome us ... and with our labors of love.

May our incarnate Lord bless you and yours this Christmas season!



P.S. Please see note on the back about future letters and updates.

Transforming Congregations Ministry Update

Fall was a busy season of travel and training. TC Director Karen Booth spoke with several dozen United Methodist seminarians at a Wesley Table Luncheon at Dubuque Seminary. She shared information about TC and Exodus, answered their many questions, and encouraged them to initiate redemptive ministries for sexual strugglers in their churches and communities. The message was well received and Karen hopes to be invited back again in 2010.

Karen and Exodus Church Equipping Director, Jeff Buchanan, addressed the fall meeting of the Association for Church Renewal (ACR), a national fellowship of Mainline renewal leaders. Karen joined their planning team for a summer 2010 event called “Answering the Call: New Life in the Mainline Church.” Hoping to reach a new generation of ECOT (evangelical, conservative, orthodox, traditional) students, it will encourage them to develop the skills and knowledge they need for effective leadership in the Mainline. More information is available at associationforchurchrenewal.com/?p=217.

Exodus Member Ministry Leaders in the North Central Tier participated in TC's “Foundations for Ministry” workshop during Leader's Day at their regional conference. Many of them have strong partnerships with their sponsoring congregations, but Karen also prompted them to “think outside the box” to better educate, equip and encourage their local church leaders.

Staff of the Exodus Church Equipping Division (Jeff, Karen, and Kristin Tremba, Director of PCUSA's OnebyOne) are working together to continue to develop local church resources. Current projects include a monthly eNewsletter and a member handbook for the Exodus Church Association (ECA). See the reverse side for more information about how to join the ECA.

Exodus Church Equipping Events and Love Won Out conferences are also being scheduled for 2010. The first two are January 27 and March 6 at Skyline Church in San Diego. Both are open to pastors, ministry leaders, counselors, seminary students and anyone within the Body of Christ who wants to be better equipped to minister to those affected by homosexuality. See www.exodusinternational.org/events for more information. Or contact Jeff Buchanan (jbuchanan@exodusinternational.org) to discuss scheduling an event in your area.

YES! I want to help Exodus continue offering hope and healing to those seeking freedom from homosexuality.

Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500
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Thank you for partnering with us!

I have made changes to my mailing address below.

Checks should be made out to **Exodus International**. To designate the gift towards the work of Transforming Congregations, please write **Transforming Congregations** in the **memo** of your check. General gifts will go where most needed.

- Please designate my gift to Transforming Congregations.
 Please charge to my credit card (use form on back).
 Please sign me up to receive the monthly electronic Exodus newsletter

My e-mail address: _____

- Please delete me from your mailing list. [Note: You may receive additional issues of the Impact due to the timing of our mailing cycles.]

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Projects & Giving Opportunities

Workshops and Speaking Engagements

We will be visiting various churches, conferences and seminaries this year to bring the Biblical message of how churches can minister truth and freedom to the sexually confused, broken and sinful. We'll also continue to present our workshop "Foundations for Ministry" at local church events and conferences. Speakers will teach, answer questions, and share helpful resources. If you'd like to schedule a speaker or workshop, please contact us!

Developing Resources for Churches and Ministry Leaders

Directors of Transforming Congregations, OnebyOne, and Exodus' Church Equipping Division will be developing a comprehensive package of resources for local churches, pastors, ministry leaders, and students. We get many requests for such resources, and they are vital to the Church's education and training efforts.

Reaching Our Youth

Exodus International is the only ministry that has materials, videos, and a website for teenagers and young adults who struggle with unwanted same-sex attraction. We want to help promote these resources to our churches.

Networking and Advocacy

TC will continue to network with renewal and reform groups within The United Methodist Church (UMC) and in the Mainline to advocate for traditional policies and teaching about marriage and human sexuality. As a member of the UMC Renewal Coalition, we will continue to strategize toward General Conference 2012 and will help create legislation to present there and on the Annual Conference level.

Exodus Freedom Conference '10

TC, OnebyOne and Exodus' Church Equipping Division will be encouraging and training pastors, ministry leaders, and church members at the Exodus Freedom Conference, June 22-26 in Irvine, CA. Each year hundreds of men and women who have chosen to surrender their sexuality to God have experienced God's healing presence in their lives through fellowship, worship, and teaching. This year there will be a special program for church leadership on Friday evening and a unique workshop track on Saturday. Why not plan now to attend this life-changing gathering!



What is the Exodus Church Association?

The Exodus Church Association is a referral network of caring communities sharing a common cause. These churches share a redemptive biblical worldview on the issue of homosexuality and are committed to being safe places of worship for those dealing with unwanted same-sex attractions.

Your partnership with Exodus International is essential to our mission to mobilize the Body of Christ to minister grace and truth to a world impacted by homosexuality. To learn more about becoming a part of the ECA, visit our website at www.ExodusChurchAssociation.org.

around the church

In November, twelve evangelical renewal leaders within the UMC met with the Bishop's Unity Task Force to share their perspectives and concerns about the human sexuality issues that so deeply divide the denomination. TC was represented by Rev. Tom Lambrecht, who serves on our Advisory Council. Tom reports that the in depth conversation was honest and respectful, with hope that fruitful discussion will continue in the future.

Karen Booth was invited to submit material to the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The UMC, which is considering global restructuring. She noted the potential for pro-gay activists to exploit a weakened connection by undermining traditional sexuality teaching overseas, and she explained how liberalized teachings could jeopardize evangelical outreach in Moslem majority countries. Karen's letter and the report from the Unity Task Force meeting are on our website - www.transcong.org/Bishops.pdf.

The Episcopal Church (TEC) has elected Mary Glasspool as the first openly lesbian Assistant Bishop of the Los Angeles Diocese. Her election is expected to be approved by the majority of TEC national leaders and to further fracture the worldwide Anglican Communion. Earlier this year, several conservative churches and regions in the United States broke off from TEC to form a rival church body - the Anglican Church in North America. (www.anglicanchurch-na.org)



Future Updates and Newsletters. You will continue to receive letters from Karen and you will be added to the Exodus monthly *Impact* newsletter as well.

Exodus also offers an electronic newsletter, the *e-Impact*, that can be sent to your e-mail address. Please sign up on the contributor card by giving us your e-mail address so we can add you to those monthly updates.

Contacting Karen Booth and Transforming Congregations. Karen can be reached directly at (608) 325-5712 or by e-mail at kbooth@exodusinternational.org.

Partnering Financially with Exodus International. Exodus International is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Our membership is an outward expression of our inner resolve to represent the truth and integrity in all aspects of our ministry. All donations to Exodus are tax deductible. We offer convenient and secure methods for supporting our ministry. You may donate through the card you received with this edition of the Impact Partner Letter, or online through the ExodusBooks.org website. Please contact us about monthly donations, or donations of assets at (407)599-6872.

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Dear Transforming Congregations and Exodus,

Please pray for: _____
