

# Changing Our Mind

(a summary by Pat Evert)

Chapter 1 - Live from New York: Many are leaving the church, or at least Evangelicalism over the LGBT issue. My mind has changed especially due to the transformative encounters I have been blessed to have with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Christians over the last decade.

Chapter 2 - Our moment; a church with a problem: Much of the church is unwilling or unable to change its sexual ethic and this has evoked enormous hostility from cultural leaders and millions of regular folks who feel they or their loved ones have been hurt by the church. I am asking whether the church should change our mind and our practices in relation to Christian LGBT people and their relationships. **The collective mind of the church universal can and ought to change.** We need to think seriously about whether the church's own marginalized sexual minorities will be treated unequivocally as sisters and brothers in Christ.



Chapter 3 - Starting a conversation: Every generation has its hot-button issue. For us, it's the LGBT issue.

Chapter 4 - What exactly is the issue? Two things have happened to reevaluate this issue today. One, the total failure of the ex-gay movement. And two, many are coming to accept that human sexual-orientation diversity is a fact.

Chapter 5 - Change we can all support: People are starting to recognize that gay people exist.

Chapter 6 - Gay Christians exist: I hope you will agree that all Christians ought to be eager to offer well-informed understanding and hospitality to people of non-heterosexual orientation and identity in our families and churches. Anything short of that is not consistent with the requirements of the gospel.

Chapter 7 - Six options for the churches: What is the posture that forgiven sinners in the church should have toward other forgiven sinners?

Chapter 8 - If this is where you get off the bus: Seven things all of us can do.

Chapter 9 - Biblical inspiration, human interpretation: When taking Biblical inspiration and authority seriously, we need also humbly acknowledge a long history of Christian fights over "what the Bible says."

Chapter 10 - How traditionalists connect the Biblical dots: We should not argue over these passages or refer to them as clobber passages. There is a difference between argue and discuss. With patient kindness we need see each other's view.

Chapter 11 - The sins of Sodom and Gibeah: This is about the attempted gang rape of men, because they are strangers, because they are vulnerable, and because they are a juicy target for humiliation and violation.

Chapter 12 - Leviticus, abomination and Jesus: We hardly go to Leviticus for anything except these two verses on same-sex sex, ignoring the other abominations listed. This is a very complex issue, not easily deciphered.

Chapter 13 - Two odd little words: Malakoi and arsenokoitai are only used in 1 Cor. 6:19 and 1Tim 1:10, passages of damnation. These words have a very high level of uncertainty as to their meaning.

Chapter 14 - God made them male and female: It is appropriate to wonder whether what Paul is so harshly condemning in Romans 1 has much if anything to do with that devout lesbian couple who have been together for 20 years and who sit in the third row at church.

Chapter 15 - Creation, sexual orientation and God's will: I am suggesting that in Genesis 3 perspective, no one's sexuality is innocent. Everyone's sexuality is broken in ways known quite well to each of us. Meanwhile, basic standards of Christian humility direct our attention to our own issues, rather than to those of others.

Chapter 16 - Toward covenant: The Christian covenant all-marital ethic recognizes those desires for sex, and the capacity for love, and the need for fidelity. And this demands such relationships take the form of marriage and that for a lifetime. This is the highest expression of Christian sexual ethics. Why wouldn't we want this for our gay brethren? This is far superior to the mutual-consent ethic or the loving-relationship ethic.

Chapter 17 - Transformative encounters and paradigm leaps: God has to give us permission through a transforming encounter with Himself, with it comes a paradigm shift. This is very similar to past events like the acceptance of the Gentiles into the church, etc.

Chapter 18 - a dual narrative tour: Many see Christianity in its moral decline succumbing to our culture. This is seen as our last stance before we lose Christian dominance in culture, against theological liberalism and deteriorating sexual ethics.

Chapter 19 - How I got here: I learned how many very dear, deeply-hurt-by-the-church-but-still-committed-to-Jesus gay Christians there are. I began to see that Jesus was more likely to be found among these gentle, hurting gay and lesbian Christians than among their adversaries. I needed to wrestle with these issues in the community of the bullied rather than the community of the bullies.

Chapter 20 - Ending the teaching on contempt: From the time of Christ through the 1950's the church has oppressed the Jews. Then it was the blacks, the women and now the gays. It's almost as if we need someone to look down on, to make us feel good about ourselves. But, the time of **teaching contempt needs to stop**. We, the church, have been wrong so many times in interpreting the Bible. To be wrong again is but one more opportunity to repent and find more mercy.