

Book Review:

What Some of You Were, edited by Christopher Keene, Matthias Media, 2001

Reviewed by R. Joseph Heagany, LCSW

This slim volume is quite a book. Through first-person vignettes and factual essays, this Christian-oriented collection of articles describes homosexuality as an affliction and behavior pattern that can be changed.

The book opens with a tone-setting prelude that calls on the Christian church to repent of its self-righteousness; following that are six concise testimonials that describe homosexuality as a distortion of the creator's design.

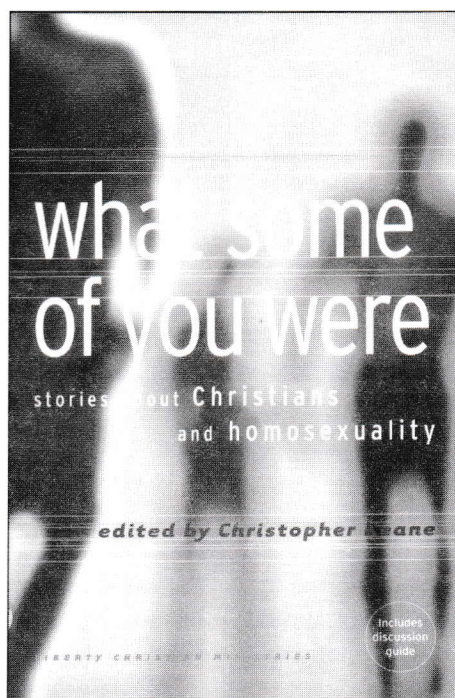
Throughout, the same message is distinctly clear: All mankind needs redemption; homosexuality is destructive and its behaviors sinful; homosexual sin, like all other sin, can be conquered through personal faith in Christ, along with repentance and unflinching hard work.

The hard work typically includes therapy, along with the study and employment of materials that present the development and the demise of homosexual problems in a direct, solution-oriented manner.

In the eyes of the contributors to this book, the struggle against homosexuality is the same struggle every Christian encounters during this mortal life against personal, moral problems. Demystifying such powerful sexual attractions and intra-psychic processes in this way may seem naïve and ineffectual. However if the reader's philosophy allows for such a perceptual shift, this new vantage point provides abundant hope and solace for those struggling with unwanted attractions.

The book also includes personal accounts from a mother, daughter, and wife relating their reactions to—respectively—a son choosing sex-change surgery, a father openly practicing homosexuality with young men, and a husband disclosing his physical attractions for other males.

Finally, four essays reviewing society's changing perception of homosexuality conclude the narrative section of the book. These are followed by a study guide for small groups to assist them in discussing topics raised by the essays and vignettes. The essays cite published research articles, and the testimonials quote noted therapists who have helped many of their clients eliminate homosexual problems.



A gay-affirming scientist would not take this type of book seriously; a scientist from the opposite camp would likewise find nothing new added to the debate. However, any Christian would benefit from reading it.

With a kindness often absent in the gay conflict, the author conveys the message that there is little difference between those struggling with homosexuality and those struggling with other problems.

There are heartbreaking passages that describe the wrenching effort to depart from a gay lifestyle—such as losing friends and feeling that one's young adulthood was, at best, wasted—which the authors relate with a calm honesty that engages the reader and penetrates to the heart, where it resonates with the reader's own losses.

The vignettes describe the problems characteristic to homosexuality with a personal poignancy that reveals the writers to be courageous, resilient, human, and fallible. In each case, without conveying any self-pity, these writers come to be seen by the reader as fellow members of the human family who have borne painful trials and experienced deep suffering.

The style of the personal stories is direct, informal, and extremely engaging. There is a story of one mother who struggles to stay close to her son, whose sex-change surgery has alienated him from almost all other family and friends. Though made physically ill by the impact of her son's transformation, she endured the revulsion and in time, effectively expressed her love to him. She said, "I discovered that in spite of my own difficulty in responding to him in a natural way, he was still my offspring and I was still his mother. And God and I both loved him."

What Some of You Were illustrates the faith-based approach—labeling homosexual behavior as wrong, while actively loving the one struggling with the behavior. To the Christian, this book brings the testimony of hope in redemption and love of God; thus to the believer, ultimate victory. ■