PLUS: Making Church a Safe Place

Former homosexual Darryl Foster started a church in Atlanta that models loving ministry to those seeking freedom from homosexuality.

After suffering cruel molestation by a male teen in his church in the 1970s, followed by a violent rape at age 19 by a 200-pound homosexual man in 1981, Darryl Foster dove into homosexuality with a vengeance. But these horrific experiences were not the most difficult ordeals this young man would face. Some of the worst treatment he would endure would come from the church.

Foster knows all too well what it feels like to be called “faggot,” “sissy” or “punk” by Christians who blamed him for being sexually assaulted as a boy. He says the treatment he received from believers resulted in his rejecting the biblical teaching instilled in him by fellow congregants at the Pentecostal church he attended in Marlin, Texas, and his eventual plunge into homosexuality, which continued for 11 years.

But with every empty relationship, the God-shaped void in his heart grew larger, says Foster, who founded Witness Freedom Ministries in 1996 for people coming out of homosexuality. After years of loneliness and thoughts of suicide, Foster says he repented of his sins and received Christ back into his life.

But surprisingly, the church still rejected him. That is one of the reasons Foster and his wife, Dee, started Restoration Church Atlanta (RCA).

“The black church should respond to the homosexual struggler like it would to any other person seeking God,” says Foster, who recently shared his testimony during a singles event at T.D. Jakes’ Potter’s House Church in Dallas.

The 39-year-old pastor says he won’t skirt the issue in his church. He insists the underlying question for the African American church is: Does the black church treat every sinner the same? In his opinion, the answer is an emphatic “no.”

“When the church begins to pick and choose who is worthy to receive its compassion, understanding and acceptance, then we have corrupted the basic principles of the faith delivered to the body of Christ,” he explains.

Although RCA is not specifically geared toward people trapped in homosexuality, the ministry does strive to help those who come seeking a relationship with Christ through strong biblical teaching and godly accountability.

“We have to be very discerning,” says Dee Foster. “Not everyone wants to be delivered.”

Foster, the father of four children—Brittanie, 13; Philip, 7; Charles, 6; and Trinity, 2—also provides training to churches that desire to evangelize and disciple the gay community.

Whether he is challenging politically correct talk-show hosts or ministering to people on his Web site, Foster makes it clear that homosexuality is wrong and that gays need to submit to God’s standard of righteousness and not fall prey to “erroneous theological teaching” promoted by the so-called “gay Christian” movement.

“If we hold true to the biblical standard that homosexuality is sin, and if one practices but does not repent and forsake the lifestyle, it goes without question that you cannot be gay and a Christian,” he told Charisma.

While Dee ministers to wives of ex-gay men, providing sound teaching and support, Darryl spends much of his time educating the body of Christ on how to provide ministry to gays and lesbians. He insists that if believers would become less judgmental and more understanding, the Holy Spirit would help Christians lead gay men and women out of homosexuality’s trap and into the light of a loving Savior.

“I know for a fact that homosexuals can be delivered through the power of the Holy Spirit because God did it for me,” he says.