
A Review of Peter Hubbard, *Love Into Light: The Gospel, The Homosexual, and the Church*.
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Peter Hubbard begins his book *Love Into Light: The Gospel, the Homosexual, and the Church* by asking an important question.

The first time I counseled a man struggling with same-sex attraction (SSA), I felt awkward. I didn't really know what to say. I wanted to help, but I wasn't sure how. He didn't really know what to say either. He felt defeated, yet addicted to homosexual porn and anonymous 'hookups.' He wanted help, but he was uncomfortable talking about such a personal area of his life. We seemed so different. How could a happily married pastor help a man struggling with homosexuality? (11)

Hubbard's earnest question set him on a course to study the issues and embrace a ministry to those struggling with SSA. Pastor Hubbard led his church to do the same and over the course of years, God has grown his ministry and the ministry of his church to embrace homosexuals with compassion, even as they have called them to abandon homosexuality for the greater pleasures of knowing Christ.

Love into Light is the fruit of Hubbard's commitment to biblical truth and compassion for sexual sinners. His book consists of nine chapters with an additional introduction and conclusion. While no immediate outline guides the reader, Hubbard progresses from the heart to the ministry of the church, from faith to practice, and from the specifics of the gospel to the way Christians must communicate the gospel to others.

As a book that stands on God's Word and

employs a model of biblical counseling that reaches the heart, *Love into Light* has a number of strengths. First, Pastor Hubbard is unashamed of the gospel. In his first chapter, simply entitled "Gospel," Hubbard gives a series of reasons why Christians have difficulty relating to homosexuals. He challenges Christians to consider the fundamental truths of the gospel, and how it applies to everyone.

Outlining the 'gospel story' in four points, he states that all men (1) are made in God's image and (2) have turned aside from righteousness. Likewise, no matter what their background, if they have trusted in Christ, all believers (3) find a new identity in Christ and (4) have the promise of becoming more like Christ. Christians who are skeptical of how to relate to someone "unlike" themselves will find great help for building bridges with the gospel.

Second, Hubbard explains the problem of sin as a matter of idolatry, not homosexuality. Affirming the vulnerability and culpability of the human heart, Hubbard locates change in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ: "The antidote for homosexuality is not heterosexuality. . . . Jesus is not our get-out-of-homosexuality plan, but 'the way and the truth and the life.' Real change is not simply a reaction to our latest problem, but a miraculous step toward our new eternal identity" (47).

With the skill of a master surgeon, Hubbard slices into the human heart with the scalpel of God's Word. What he finds there is that man's greatest problem is a rejection of God and the love of false idols. This illicit worship is what opens the heart to all other sins. Specifically, Hubbard points out that the description of homosexuality in Romans 1 is one of illustration not maximization. That is to

say, homosexuality is not the worst sin; it is simply one that has been recognized by the majority of civilizations to be out of step with nature. Paul uses homosexuality to show the sinfulness of humanity, but he does not single out this sin as categorically different than other sins.

Last, chapters seven, eight, and nine do a nice job helping churches put into practice a ministry to homosexuals. He speaks candidly about the unkindness that some gays and lesbians have faced in evangelical churches, and he gives suggestions on how your church can reach out to this group of people.

One of the most compelling features of *Love Into Light* is its tone. Pastor Hubbard's compassion comes across in his writing. Displaying a Christ-like demeanor, he writes to bind up the bruised reeds and fan into flame smoldering wicks (Isa 42:1-4). This is much needed. Christians need to learn how to speak to sexual sinners with care and biblical conviction. Therefore, in regard to personal evangelism, biblical counseling, and local church ministry, *Love into Light* provides a compelling guide for reaching the hearts of sinners.

Still, with that commendation in place, the spiritual warfare that is homosexuality must be engaged on multiple fronts. In other words, homosexuality is not only an issue that affects individuals; as a movement it also threatens to unravel the moral fiber of our country and the religious liberty needed for free proclamation of the gospel. For Christians who only engage in 'culture wars,' Hubbard's book provides a corrective. He shows evangelicals how to address individuals ensnared by the sin of homosexuality.

However, *Love into Light* does not cover every mode of discourse related to homosexuality. This, of course, is not a fault or critique; it is simply a note to the alert reader that Hubbard brings the right tone and content for addressing individuals, but there is also a need for helping Christians discourse on the ethical and political issues related to homosexuality, religious liberty, and public theology.

To say it differently, Christians must learn to articulate the indivisible message of grace and truth with language, accent, and posture that comports to the setting and makeup of the audience. Paul

wrote different letters with different 'tones' (compare Philippians to Galatians, for instance). With compassionate conviction, he addressed different audiences with the same gospel. Twenty-first century Christians must do the same, and *Love into Light* is an excellent resource for preparing Christians for the kind of conversation that takes place in personal evangelism, biblical counseling, and ongoing discipleship.

In the end, *Love Into Light* is a pastoral guide written from a gifted biblical counselor. It gives ministers of reconciliation—vocational and otherwise—the resources to engage men and women who need to be delivered from the sin of homosexuality. Peter Hubbard superbly addresses the human heart and shows individuals how they can engage their family and neighbors who experience SSA. It also spurs on churches to reach out to homosexuals, leading them by love into light. For these reasons and many others, I highly recommend this new book.