

# A chat with Rosaria Butterfield

On repentance, speaking truth boldly, and a three-legged dog named Sully

by LYNN VINCENT

**UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN** hibernating in Antarctica, you've likely heard the name Rosaria Butterfield. She's been speaking Biblical truth about God's design for sexuality to some pretty tough crowds. I asked Butterfield what it's like to be hip-deep in a ministry that, had God not insisted, she'd have been only too happy to skip:

**It seems a great irony that being "outed" as gay used to be scandalous, but now being outed as ex-gay is even more scandalous. You've been both.**

**Which has been the greater challenge and why?** To be sure, it was not popular to be gay in mainstream America in the 1980s and 1990s, but I was in the academy, and feminism, which is the gateway to lesbianism, was popular and growing, and I was all-in. In some ways, being "outed" gave me a team and a cause. After my conversion to Jesus Christ in 1999, I understood my homosexuality through a Christian lens, and I learned—and am still learning—how to repent of an indwelling sin at the root. Looking at my homosexuality through a Christian lens means looking at it through the crosshairs, which is a good skill to hone. When my memoir, *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*, was published in 2012, I rejected the title that I was ex-gay, and I did so for several reasons. First, I wasn't converted out of homosexuality; I was converted out of unbelief. Second, I was never associated with Exodus International or other ex-gay organizations. But after *Obergefell* and the rise of the heretical "gay Christian" movement, I have come to embrace the idea that I am ex-gay.

**Do you ever regret having been so bold with your testimony? And, regarding your ongoing speaking and writing ministry, do you ever ask God, "Um, did we really have to go this route?"** Yes, absolutely. I often wish I had published



*Secret Thoughts* under a pseudonym or would have stopped writing after that first book's publication.

**What is the one thing written most often about you that isn't true?** I am regularly told that I either was never really a lesbian (or not lesbian enough) or that my current life as a heterosexually married woman is a sham, and I am just suffering under the delusion of internalized homophobia.

**You mentioned that you and Kent keep a "menagerie" at home. Who's on your pet**

**roster these days?** We have an enormous orange tabby cat, a flock of backyard chickens, a lovely corn snake, and a three-legged black mutt of mysterious origin—but with enough Gordon setter in him to make him plucky and fun at all times. Our children are the primary zookeepers.

**How does your family feel about the mission to which God has called you?** I would not have a calling outside of my domestic responsibilities if my husband, Kent, didn't support and encourage my writing. And if my books or speaking engagements caused stress or difficulty for my family, I would quit in a heartbeat and have no regrets. My husband is a pastor, and his job and calling is at the center of our mission as a family. My primary job is respecting and honoring my husband, nurturing my children and grandson, and helping to build the Church. Whatever work I do outside of this is secondary. Being a fairly traditional housewife and homeschool mom has been my secret weapon in the heat of the cultural battles I face. Because I work for Kent Butterfield, I don't have a job to lose. Because I am not a hireling, I can say the hard things without fear. And, if you think *I'm* bold, you should hear the preaching that feeds my soul. ■