

## Medial Release 10.10.05

### Global Group for Gay Pentecostals Launched [www.freedom2b.org](http://www.freedom2b.org)

It seemed a small number to begin a global network (15 people in a lounge room in Surry Hills, Sydney) but Anthony Venn-Brown is optimistic growth will happen relatively quickly. Freedom 2 B(e) is a network that has been created to connect and support GLBTIQ people from Pentecostal and Charismatic backgrounds. The group was launched the previous weekend with 11 people in Brisbane. Already it seems there are many more interested in joining up. The network is giving these people a voice and taking them out of isolation.

Anthony Venn-Brown, once a popular leader within the Assemblies of God and a regular preacher in the Hillsong churches, hosted the first meetings. His autobiography 'A LIFE OF UNLEARNING Coming Out of the Church – One Man's Struggle' was awarded the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Business Associations Gay Book of the Year.

"Once my story was released it was like I'd pulled the cork on the bottle, Anthony Venn-Brown said. "Suddenly I was inundated with emails telling tragic stories of suicides, failed marriages, psychological damage and gay youth being rejected by their Christian parents. I know how difficult the journey to reconciliation can be. For 22 years I tried desperately to change my sexual orientation through psychiatric treatment, exorcisms and exgay programs. I was also married for 16 years and have two daughters, but eventually I had to admit that nothing had changed. I was still gay." Venn-Brown said. "Having come to a place of resolution myself, I can use my experience to help others. Over the last 12 months I know of at least 4 people who were seriously contemplating suicide but today, through reading my autobiography, are free of the torment. It's okay to provide an ambulance at the foot of the cliff but I'd like to build a safety fence at the top as well."

Freedom 2 B(e) is not unlike other denominational groups such as Acceptance, Integrity, Courage, Dignity, Kinship and Affirmation that have been created to help GLBTIQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, intersex and questioning) people resolve issues of faith and sexual orientation.

"We will be providing support, information and a safe place for people still in or who have left Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. This will be done through our website [www.freedom2b.org](http://www.freedom2b.org) and also regular meetings" added Venn-Brown.

#### More Media information available from:

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