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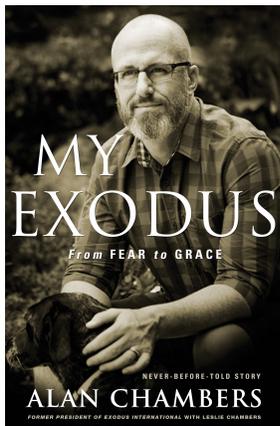
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Former Head of Exodus International – a Christian Ministry Dedicated to Helping Gay People Live Celibate or Heterosexual Lives – Pens Memoir on his Long-Time Struggles with Same-Sex Attraction, his Marriage and his Controversial Decision to Close the Ministry

Grand Rapids, Mich., September 1, 2015—When Alan Chambers dramatically announced he was shutting down Exodus International, the 37-year-old Christian ministry dedicated to helping gay and lesbian Christians live celibate or heterosexual lives, it made international headlines. Chambers was one of the ministry's greatest success stories, overcoming his struggle with same-sex attraction to marry his wife Leslie, but Chambers shut down the ministry in 2013 and apologized on national TV to the LGBT community and anyone hurt by Exodus International.



For Chambers, a man with same-sex attraction who has been happily married to his wife Leslie for 17 years, his personal life has always been deeply intertwined with his very public career. In *My Exodus: From Fear to Grace* (Zondervan, September 29, 2015), Alan, with Leslie, shares his paradigm-bending life story for the first time in such detail. The memoir takes readers from his childhood, living in a conservative Christian family in the South, to his days as a young man struggling to understand his sexuality – while never abandoning his Christian faith – to his marriage and career as an evangelical Christian leader, the culmination of which was being named head of Exodus International in 2001.

Leslie pens three chapters on meeting, falling in love with and marrying Alan and offers her unique perspective. Together, they honestly discuss the role same-sex attraction has played in their relationship.

While Chambers is an enigma to many – he's never disavowed his faith, nor will he say people in gay relationships can't have an equally vibrant relationship with Jesus – his career and personal life both seem, paradoxically, an open book. *My Exodus* often feels like mid-life assessment of what Chambers has learned, as well as an appeal to fellow Christians to choose grace over condemnation in their relationships with people who are gay. In fact, grace is the prevailing sentiment here, and the thing Alan and Leslie have given their lives to above all else as they reflect on their years spent at the frontlines of the debate over homosexuality.

"I'll be the first to admit: I have prayed one simple word a thousand times in recent months. 'Help.' Over the past few years Leslie and I have jumped off one cliff after another in a fight to

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be transparent and to continually experience and share God's grace," says Chambers. "We have lost friends and financial security. But not for a single split second do I regret my decision to close Exodus or the path I've taken since. I have experienced more personal growth in the past few years than ever in my life, and perhaps equally as important, I've been more honest than ever, too."

Ultimately, *My Exodus* equips us all to be better and do better in God-honoring ways. By embracing the idea of loving well because we want to and not because we have to, we will find hope for ourselves, for the Church, and for our world.

Alan Chambers is perhaps best known as the final President of Exodus International, a ministry he closed in 2013. He and his wife, Leslie, have been interviewed by nearly every major media outlet in the world because of that role and his story as a Christian with same-sex attractions. He has written three books centering on faith and sexuality and also writes for magazines, newspapers and online publications upon request. Alan's family and friends know him best as Leslie's husband, Isaac and Molly's daddy, for his great sense of humor and love of decorating (both homes and people). He lives with his family in his hometown of Winter Park, Florida, which he considers the greatest city in the world.

Leslie Chambers: To those who knew Leslie growing up, she was a swimmer. To those who knew her in her twenties, she was a nanny. In her thirties she became Alan's wife and in her forties she became Isaac and Molly's mom. One of Leslie's current goals is to love her children the way God loves his own and one of her longest standing goals is to lose a few pounds which proves difficult considering how much she loves Blue Bell Ice Cream.

<http://alanchambers.org/>
www.twitter.com/AlanMChambers
www.twitter.com/MyExodusBook
www.facebook.com/AlanManningChambers
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My Exodus

Alan & Leslie Chambers

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Paper

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Suggested Interview Questions for Alan Chambers

- 1) It feels as if you're both on a journey, trying to reconcile the past with new insights you've had on life, theology and the irresolvable complexities of human sexuality. Is that a fair assessment, and has this been a time of introspection?
- 2) What have you learned in this season of waiting, post-Exodus International? And why did you decide not to go ahead with starting another organization focused on gay Christians, which I understand you had originally planned to do?
- 3) People must inevitably want to know two things when they talk to you. Why, specifically, did you close Exodus International – that is, what was wrong, or irresolvable, about the mission or methods of Exodus?
- 4) Has it been difficult for both of you to have your personal lives so deeply intertwined with the advocacy work you've done over the years? How have you dealt with the stresses and pressures of this on you and your marriage?
- 5) What has the process been like, writing this book? Has it been healing?

Suggested Interview Questions for Leslie Chambers

- 6) Leslie, why is it important that you contributed your voice to the book?
- 7) At what point in your relationship did you realize you were in love? Was it at first sight or did it take a while?
- 8) You mention that a friend once described your relationship with Alan as him being the picture and you the frame. Is this description true? What does it mean?
- 9) You say that you don't think of Alan as gay or straight. How did you come to this understanding? Was it ever an issue for you?
- 10) Like any marriage, yours has been smooth with patches of rough and curvy road. What gets you through the hard times?

To schedule an interview with Alan and Leslie Chambers, contact Karen Campbell at 616-309-4390 or karen@karencampbellmedia.com

Excerpts from *My Exodus* by Alan and Leslie Chambers

(Alan Chambers) “And then, Matt finally spoke. “I’m never going to be like you.”

I was shocked. I swiveled my chair back to center and leaned my arms on my desk. “What do you mean?” I felt an emerging sense of dread. I knew where this was going.

“I’m never going to be *straight* like you. I’ll never have a wife and kids like you. I’ll never be healed like you.” Matt’s words were slow and calm. “Alan, how can I be like you?”

I’d been asked the question a thousand times before throughout my long career at Exodus International, and especially during my presidency. But it had always been indirect, couched in acceptable Christian terms, such as “is healing or freedom from homosexuality possible?” Anyone looking at me, a happily married, “formerly” gay man with two kids and a dog, listening to what I had to say, knowing anything about the organization I led, would assume my answer would be an unequivocal yes. And they were always right: I always said yes. But this time was different. Something about Matt’s vulnerability and the simplicity of his message—and something about the condition of my own heart in that moment—allowed his words to drive in.”

(Alan Chambers) “‘To struggle’ was the verb most commonly associated with homosexuality within the ex-gay subculture. To accept the gay label was to associate with a lifestyle God didn’t ordain and couldn’t bless, yet to adopt the label “straight” seemed pretentious and disingenuous. We felt that the word “struggle” communicated the truth of it all. I was, and we were, struggling between two worlds. Trying not to be gay was one big struggle—because it is impossible. Trying to be straight is equally impossible. Such attempts are pretty much always motivated by shame and fear—unfortunately sending too many gay Christians into dangerous and secretive lives that most openly gay people would never lead. The best thing I ever did was stop trying to be either/or. It was during this transition in my life from childhood to adulthood that I did attain a deepening level of acceptance for myself. I made a conscious decision to be celibate, which provided me a peaceful respite and sobriety, and to focus solely on knowing God, which was different than fearing God. I chose to follow God because I wanted to and could, not because I had to. And, I realized God loved me completely. Unconditionally. Always had. Always would...”

(Leslie Chambers) “Twenty years later, I still don’t think of Alan in terms of gay or straight. He is just my Alan. My husband. For a time, if pressed, I would have called him ex-gay, but that term always seemed to get caught in my throat. There’s freedom in not having to define him based on who he is or isn’t attracted to – other than, of course, the binding tie of “Yours” at the end of every note he’s ever left me. There’s freedom in loving him as he is and not wanting to change him. There’s freedom in understanding that it’s not my job to change anyone for that matter, let alone to declare that a gay person should change. God’s love transcends sexual orientation. God’s love transcends everything. My purpose in life: in our marriage, with our children and our neighbors, is to love.”

(Alan Chambers) “There were a lot of reasons we closed Exodus. But the single greatest reason was because of grace. In a world where people are clamoring for position and demanding clear declarations for or against all things gay, Leslie and I choose grace. We love God and we love people. We are joyfully immersed in life on Planet Earth with all its glory, destruction, and complexity...”