



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 21, 2013

## Prominent Ministry to Homosexuals Folds; Leader Apologizes to Gays

Exodus International, the prominent Christian ministry which for the past 37 years has helped men and women leave the homosexual lifestyle, announced June 19 that it is closing its doors. The organization's president, Alan Chambers (shown), also issued an apology to the homosexual community, telling the [Associated Press](#) that the organization had inflicted "years of undue suffering" on homosexuals it had reached out to. "The church has waged the culture war, and it's time to put the weapons down," Chambers said after announcing at the annual conference of Exodus that the group would cease operation. "While there has been so much good at Exodus, there has also been bad. We've hurt people."



Chambers also appeared June 20 on a special edition of the Oprah Winfrey Network show [Our America With Lisa Ling](#), where he apologized to homosexual men and women who claimed they had been harmed by Exodus International's ministry.

In announcing the decision to close Exodus, which the organization said in a [press release](#) had been under consideration over the past year, Chamber insisted that he still holds "to a biblical view that the original intent for sexuality was designed for heterosexual marriage. Yet I realize there are a lot of people who fall outside of that, gay and straight.... It's time to find out how we can pursue the common good."

Chambers said he and others from Exodus would form a new "ministry," called Reduce Fear, which, he told AP, would seek to dialogue with those who embrace the homosexual lifestyle, and partner with churches to provide "welcoming, and mutually transforming" communities. "We want to see bridges built, we want peace to be at the forefront of anything we do in the future," Chambers said.

In Exodus International's official statement, Chambers said that over the years the group had "ceased to be a living, breathing organism. For quite some time we've been imprisoned in a worldview that's neither honoring toward our fellow human beings, nor biblical." In justifying the group's decision to stop its original mission of helping people overcome homosexuality, Chamber said that from "a Judeo-Christian perspective, gay, straight or otherwise, we're all prodigal sons and daughters. Exodus International is the prodigal's older brother, trying to impose its will on God's promises, and make judgments on who's worthy of His Kingdom. God is calling us to ... welcome everyone, to love unhindered."

In a personal blog post entitled "[I Am Sorry](#)," Chambers explained that "my desire is to completely align with Christ, his Good News for all and his offer of peace amidst the storms of life. My wife Leslie and



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my beliefs center around grace, the finished work of Christ on the cross and his offer of eternal relationship to any and all that believe. Our beliefs do not center on 'sin' because 'sin' isn't at the center of our faith. Our journey hasn't been about denying the power of Christ to do anything — obviously he is God and can do anything."

While apologizing for causing pain to homosexuals and their families, Chambers emphasized: "I cannot apologize for my deeply held biblical beliefs about the boundaries I see in scripture surrounding sex, but I will exercise my beliefs with great care and respect for those who do not share them. I cannot apologize for my beliefs about marriage. But I do not have any desire to fight you on your beliefs or the rights that you seek. My beliefs about these things will never again interfere with God's command to love my neighbor as I love myself."

Predictably, homosexual activist groups applauded the decision by Chambers and Exodus to stop trying to help people who wanted to leave the homosexual lifestyle. "This is a welcome first step in honestly addressing the harm the organization and its leaders have caused," stated Sharon Groves of the radical Human Rights Campaign. "Now we need them to take the next step of leadership and persuade all other religious-based institutions that they got it wrong."

Another homosexual group, Truth Wins Out, that for years has been openly antagonistic toward Exodus' ministry, appeared relieved by Chambers' apology and announcement. "It takes a real man to publicly confront the people whose lives were destroyed by his organization's work," said the group's associate director Evan Hurst. "We look forward to a day when we can truly consider Alan to be an ally."

But many individuals and groups who have successfully helped people deal with unwanted same-sex attraction questioned the motives of Chambers and the other Exodus officials. "We do not owe an apology to the gay community," said Regina Griggs of [Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays](#), an organization that supports those leaving homosexuality. "Nobody's ever forced to change. That's an individual's right."

[Janet Boynes](#), a former lesbian who now uses her Christian faith to help people leave homosexuality, recalled how in 2010 she appeared with Chambers on *Our America With Lisa Ling*, where "we were able to share how our behavior had changed and how we were no longer living the homosexual lifestyle. But just three years later, here we are again, and the message Alan Chambers has for those struggling with same-sex attraction is very different."

At the time Chambers declared: "Change is possible. I stand by that phrase, and I live by it. The opposite of homosexuality isn't heterosexuality; it's holiness."

Boynes said she was puzzled by what message Chambers could offer homosexuals if not that they need to abandon their lifestyle. "I know many men and women who, with the help of different ministries, have walked away from homosexuality, and their freedom has always come through the truth of God's Word," she said. She conceded that leaving homosexuality is not easy, but through faith in God it is possible. "For me, coming out of homosexuality did not happen overnight," she recalled. "It was a long process, during which I increasingly chose to let go of everything that had the slightest power to drag me back into a lesbian lifestyle. It took the work of a dedicated team that included God (the most important one), the many wonderful people He put in my life, and me as a willing participant. You see, each of us is given a free will, and it is ultimately up to us to decide how we will live our lives."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told [Baptist Press News](#) that Chambers' apology and the decision to shut down Exodus International appeared to be "a



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capitulation” rather than a “course correction.” Mohler said the organization’s statement indicated that Chambers and others at Exodus had “lost confidence in both the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The normalization of homosexuality contradicts the Bible’s consistent condemnation of all same-sex sexuality as sin. The rejection of the hope for change for homosexuals ... indicates a tragic loss of confidence in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Mohler added that “while Alan Chambers is right when he insists that our beliefs do not center on ‘sin’ because ‘sin’ isn’t at the center of our faith, he seems to have lost sight of the fact that Christ came to save us from our sin. Thus, sin is inseparable from our story of salvation in Christ.”

The Baptist leader expressed deep concern that the ministry’s closing will send the wrong signal to those struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction. “The greatest tragedy” about the closure “is that persons experiencing same-sex attractions or involved in same-sex sexuality will be further confused by the capitulation of Exodus International,” Mohler said.

With the closure of Exodus International, some Christian leaders are recommending a new organization, [Restored Hope Network](#), which formed last year to offer help to those wishing to leave homosexuality. Among those [recommending the new ministry](#) were Matthew Barber, president of Liberty Counsel; Dr. Juan Martinez of Fuller Theological Seminary; Dr. Joseph Nicolosi of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality; and Janet Parshall, a conservative commentator and host of the radio talk show *In The Market*.

*Photo of Alan Chambers: AP Images*



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