

Hope for Wholeness Testimony

I asked her to marry me and she said "YES," I was really going to be normal now. I knew I was still attracted to men, but I wanted to be married and have a family. I wanted to be normal and live the "American dream."

I knew that if I told her of my struggle with men, she would be gone. I promised God, "If you let me get married then I won't do this again, EVER!"

August of 2000, we were married and it was eight months before I acted out.

We wanted children and after two unsuccessful years, we started infertility treatments. I thought that our inability to have children was God's way of punishing me for the way I was living.

We finally did in-vitro fertilization and in 2003 our first child was born. Another promise was made to God; another promise broken.

I started college to become a nurse. Four months into the program we found out we were pregnant with our second child. Another promise was made to God; and another promise was broken.



After completing nursing school, I started working and maintained secret encounters, mostly with other married men because I knew I was safely hidden and no one would find out. Talk about living a double life!

My children and I were in church every Sunday. I was even involved in leadership.

We had another child, and I had everything that I had ever wanted in my life, but the mistakes I made were killing me. My homosexual struggles were eating away at my soul.

Our marriage went on like other marriages; we had our ups and downs but we got by. I was searching for sexual encounters anywhere that I could find them. There would be months, maybe even a year, without any physical contact with a man, but a lot of acting out on the internet.

One night in January, last year, my world was turned upside down. I had fallen asleep with my cell phone in the bed with me. My wife woke up, picked up my phone, and found text messages I had sent asking a guy to send pictures. I thought my life had hit rock bottom when I had to explain to her what was going on.

She was hurt, confused and angry. She asked me to leave. My beautiful daughters were crying and upset and didn't have a clue what was happening. No doubt, the worst day of my life.

The next week, my wife called to say she wanted us to work through our problems. Great news! I knew getting back together was going to take work, but I was willing to do my part because of how bad I had screwed up. I started seeing a Christian counselor to help me cope with all that was going on in my life.

On February 12, 2012, I re-dedicated my life to Jesus Christ, and my life-changing transformation began.

My wife found out Truth Ministry had an event coming up called "Hope for Wholeness." She thought that would be a great event for us to attend. I was excited and nervous at the same time; I just knew everyone would know why I was there! Still, we went to the event, and it was an awesome experience. My wife was uncomfortable, but I was thrilled. I was with people that were struggling with the same problems that I had! For a change, I wasn't going to be judged or ridiculed. I heard amazing testimonies of people that had overcome temptations with the help of the Lord and had experienced true life transformation, and were now sharing their stories of hope.

At the conference, I met McKrae, and I wanted to tell him my whole life story at that moment! How refreshing to talk with someone that knew what I was going through and the life that I had been secretly living!

We purchased the Hope for Wholeness curriculum, and I have worked through much of it. I highly recommend it to anyone that is struggling with this issue.

McKrae frequently says, "I left homosexuality, but it didn't leave me." I wish that it could leave me altogether, but who knows what other temptation or addiction I would struggle with.

Everything seemed to be going great; I have been faithful to my wife and haven't acted out. We were raising kids and doing what I thought we would do for the rest of our lives - watching our kids grow up, start their families, and growing old together.

However, a few months later, my wife shocked me with the news that our marriage was over and asked me to leave. I had done irreparable damage to our relationship and family.

McKrae was there for me that day with concern and prayer. Through all of this I can honestly say that I can feel God's presence and his Holy Spirit.

I still become depressed because I am not with my family. I live with the daily reminder that it's my fault that we are not together. God's helping me get through this extremely difficult time by giving me godly men that I reach out to and ask for prayer. One of those men is McKrae. There hasn't been a time that he hasn't responded to me reaching out.

Without God, McKrae and Truth Ministry, I honestly don't know what direction my life would take.

My prayer is that whoever reads this will be touched, will seek help, and let God take control.

In Christ,

Russell

"For I know the plans that I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you." Jeremiah 29:11

 the voice of
TRUTH

Healing from Homosexuality Through Jesus Christ

hope
for
wholeness
network

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Who do you know that may need help from Truth Ministry?

Give them this newsletter or tell them about our ministry.

Contact us for brochures on our ministry or church partnership.



Announcing The Hope For Wholeness Network

By McKrae Game

Almost two months ago, I saw the need for a new network of ministries. A number of ministries had left Exodus, due to a message and theology that they found great disagreement in. Some that left did not feel comfortable at the new network formed called Restored Hope. Our ministry was not planning to leave Exodus, because we wanted to be available for those that sought Exodus for help. We understood Alan's desire to speak truthfully and gracefully, however, we did not share his message and quite possibly his theology.

I wrote to Alan about our plans to create a new network. He quickly replied that this was an answer to prayer. He believed the Lord was saying that it was time to close Exodus. When he notified the leaders, he encouraged them to consider our new network. We hurriedly worked on the new website www.hopeforwholeness.org to include applications, beliefs, etc.

At the Exodus Conference, word got out that Truth Ministry was starting a new network. Many people had questions about the network and my beliefs on theological topics and how the new organization would be structured.

The day after the announcement, I invited members to join a secret Facebook group for the Hope for Wholeness Network to discuss ways we can work together and allow them to become familiar with our ministry. As of today, we have 90 leaders. A number of organizations are represented through these leaders. Our desire is to work with ministry leaders, churches, and counselors that have a heart for those affected by homosexuality to reach out with compassion and walk with them along their journey in Christ.

We are planning a fall conference for the Hope for Wholeness Network leaders and participants, ending in a celebration banquet for those attending and those considering financial partnership. At this time, Truth Ministry will govern the new network. Much remains to be done. An exciting time for us and a bit overwhelming. I believe that the Lord has set our hands to this mission and will bring the financial partners and laborers along side us to accomplish a great network.



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WELCOME TO THE HOPE FOR WHOLENESS NETWORK

"Freedom from Homosexuality through Jesus Christ"

hope for wholeness network

Our desire is to shed light on the complicated issues of sexual and relational brokenness with a special expertise on homosexuality. We hope that you will find comfort and guidance through this ministry by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and through godly love demonstrated by God's people. We have experienced freedom in Christ from homosexuality and other forms of bondage and share from this place.

LEARN ABOUT US

Executive Director's Update

Where do I begin? Wow! We did not produce a newsletter in June because there were so many things going on in our ministry, and we were swamped with projects. Now that those events have transpired, we have moved onto new preparations.

I hope you find that this newsletter brings clarity to the issues involving Truth Ministry, Hope for Wholeness Network, and Exodus International. I hope you hear my heart for those that struggle with homosexuality and their families. I hope you hear honesty, transparency, and the gospel message of Jesus Christ. I hope you hear our heart for those in the gay community.

I hope you see an organization that is committed to individuals and their journey with the Lord and a message of truth and grace to the gay community and to those who desire to live according to God's design.

I hope you see a ministry that you want to stand behind and financially support in this incredibly vital and volatile time, as we press onward and break new ground.

The History & Closing of Exodus International After 38 Years



Member ministries of Exodus have always been a very diverse group of individuals, ministries, churches and counselors. Many have been very zealous, some in good ways and some not so good. Many, such as Truth Ministry, have displayed a strong degree of professionalism, while others have gone in strange directions, with misguided goals, focusing on unethical methods to attempt to change a person's same-sex

attractions to opposite-sex attractions. Many report to being hurt by the efforts of these misguided individuals and ministries. "This was NOT the norm," Alan Chambers shared, "in every case," while he was president. "Exodus was quick to remove these misguided individuals from the network." However, these few, tainted the work of Exodus. Also, the use of the word "change" (a word repeatedly used within Exodus for 38 years) was never clarified to mean a change in Christ. Instead, it was allowed to be interpreted, over the years, as a change from same-sex attractions to opposite-sex attractions, which is not typically the case. I publicly share that I have a deep emotional and sexual fulfillment with my wife, though I continue to struggle with, same-sex attractions. I surrender these attractions in obedience to Christ. I humanize, rather than idolize individuals with whom I might be attracted to. This is something I am still strongly committed to, after following Christ for over 22 years.

Alan shared his own ongoing attractions and this history in his address and in an apology letter that he made public. What follows is some of that history:

January 2012, Alan Chambers spoke at the Gay Christian Network conference, where he shared a controversial message that many Christian leaders strongly disagreed with. (I've written about this in previous newsletters.)

Several Truth Ministry leaders attended the Exodus Leaders Conference in **February 2012**, along with approximately 100 leaders from across the country, where we discussed future changes in Exodus including closing the organization.

From **March 2012** until June 2013, many Exodus ministries one by one chose to leave, not agreeing with the new message. Out of this fallout, a new organization called the Restored Hope Network was formed. The remaining ministries were not necessarily all in agreement with Exodus's direction, but were also not in agreement with Restored Hope. During this time, I shared my own disagreements, with Alan, respectfully cautioning him about the direction Exodus was taking. I believed that the organization could not last under this new message.

November 2012, Alan Chambers was the speaker for our Hope for Wholeness conference in Spartanburg. Alan shared a message that we agreed with. However, Alan's direction was set on reaching individuals that call themselves "Gay Christians" with his message on God's grace. He was also reaching out to individuals known as "ex-gay survivors," many of whom, if not all, came through Exodus or Exodus-like organizations. These individuals say that they were harmed by the organization or its ministries through the promises, or perceived promises, to change one's attractions. They feel damaged by unmet expectations.

You may have read Alan Chambers' apology letter to the gay community. A few months ago, he gave the Exodus leaders a copy of that letter. Many leaders were angered by the content. Myself and others, strongly suggested edits, especially dropping the idea that same-sex parents are as "equally amazing" as a mother and a father. Some prominent leaders decided that their only option was to leave Exodus before this letter was published.

Just prior to this year's Exodus Freedom conference, Alan informed the Exodus affiliates that he believed it was time to close Exodus and this would be his recommendation to the board. Nothing was certain, but it seemed it was headed in this direction.

We knew that the Lisa Ling show, the apology letter, and Exodus closing were coming, but nothing was set in stone until we arrived at the Exodus conference. I decided to hold off making any of this public until after the fact.

On **June 19**, Exodus issued a press release around the apology letter. That night, Alan Chambers addressed conference attendees, where he shared his heart, the history of Exodus and, the board's unanimous decision that it was time to close Exodus and start a new organization. The new organization will not have a network or an annual conference. Alan wants to find points of agreement with the LGBT community while sharing the gospel message.

On **June 20**, the Lisa Ling show aired. Alan, his wife Leslie, and Exodus leader Julie Rogers, met with one of the founders of Exodus, Michael Bussee as well as group of 10-12 "ex-gay survivors." Alan read his apology letter and heard their emotion filled responses. Michael said that he believed Alan had experienced a change of heart and needed to transfer this to other Exodus ministries or "SHUT IT DOWN."

At the end of the Freedom conference, Alan told the participants and leaders present that "McKrae Game is launching a national work." In conjunction, he encouraged participants to get connected with their local ministries and churches.

The Defeat of DOMA & Proposition 8

Certainly, the Supreme Court handing down decisions that defeat DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) and Prop 8 in California changes this country. It is yet unknown how this will affect our culture and perhaps our economy. It appears that individuals who marry or have married in the 12 states plus D.C. must now be acknowledged by the Federal government. However, the 38 states that do not allow same-sex marriage remain unaffected at this point. I do not see that lasting in our current cultural climate.

I was recently included in a newspaper article, Reaction Mixed to Supreme Court DOMA Ruling by Trevor Anderson of Spartanburg Herald-Journal, June 26:

"A proponent of traditional marriage said he was disheartened, but not surprised. 'I would have been surprised if (the Supreme Court) would have upheld the DOMA provision, particularly when President Obama, Attorney General Eric Holder and former President Clinton all opposed it,' said McKrae Game, executive director of the new Spartanburg-based Hope for Wholeness Network. '(The rulings) are certainly a defeat against the traditional definition of marriage.



Plaintiff Edith Windsor celebrating the Supreme Court's decisions

Unfortunately, this is the direction our culture is going.' Game, who said he was formerly gay, said he doesn't fault supporters of same-sex marriage, but believes the "one man, one woman" definition to be the right one "according to God's design." ... 'You will never be able to have sexual freedom and religious freedom at the same time' said Game. 'The church has to get away from this us versus them attitude if we want to reach anyone for the Lord.'

Many see the sky as falling, while many others are now seeing it as opening. The reality is that this does not change the Gospel! Our message and our story of Christ's power to change a life have not changed. We need to be careful to not allow repugnance or anger over this issue to become a stumbling block that keeps men and women from coming to the Lord. We want to draw them in, not push them away. The church must remain a hospital for the hurting. While the gay community and their representatives and loved ones fight for their rights, we must fight for their souls. How do we fight? Not with words or tone. We fight with prayer and with love, against which there is no defense. John 13:35, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Having No Regrets.... By Cynthia Masters, Truth Ministry Wives' Leader

When I was 12, my mother died of cancer and was buried on Christmas Eve. I hated Christmas for years! I was thankful that a year earlier I asked Jesus into my heart. My mother loved children and as long as I could remember, she taught Sunday school in our church. She taught me a love for God, people and children. Growing up with two older brothers and two older sisters, I heard them say repeatedly, "I wished I had done ..." As I grew older, I lived my life in such a way as to have no regrets.

I have battled a weight problem since I was a child but I was very confident in who I was and who God made me. Several members of my family suffer with depression and panic attacks. They said because I "was religious," I "shouldn't suffer with depression." I enjoyed being single, but did have a desire to marry and have children. Furthermore, I wanted to marry a sold out follower of Jesus! I dated many guys but just didn't think that they could be the spiritual head of the home. I know that God put David and I together. It was an on again, off again relationship. We talked and talked and became best friends. We married in 1988, and fulfilled one of my dreams of my husband singing to me at my wedding. He chose the song, "Our Love in Christ."

We tried to have children but I could not. I prayed to God to heal my body and give me a child. God worked miracles, and we adopted our first son. God moved again, and we adopted a second son two years later. What a God! I had my dream, my wonderful husband and two precious sons.

Then life happened. I had a very demanding job that kept me late in the office. David starting exploring on the internet. We didn't argue; we just didn't talk. Finally I was at my breaking point. I went to church, where everyone would think my life was so perfect. Inside I was being torn apart. One day after church, I prayed for God to somehow let me get into David's email. I heard in my spirit, "type the word delivered." I was in. Oh the shock of what I read and saw! I confronted David. He told me that he had struggled with guys in high school and college. He said when he became a Christian he stopped acting out. I talked to one of the pastors at church; he called and helped me get connected with Truth Ministry. After much prayer,

David became involved in the men's group.

All the while, I battled with my weight, depression, and panic attacks. I love my sons dearly, but I prayed that God would let me die in my sleep. I couldn't imagine hurting any worse.

David stayed with Truth Ministry for a little over a year. He stopped going and joined a local (all gay) men's chorus. Now, what was I going to do? God had to do a work in me first. I had to learn that with or without David, God was the only One that could heal my broken heart. My life of no regrets was now full of regrets. We talked about divorce, and him moving out. Could my heart really take much more? I finally told God, "I GIVE UP!" When I gave up, God took over. He led me to 1 Peter 5:10, "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

I asked God, "As you are making me complete, what can I do?" I was listening to the radio at work and heard about the seminar, "Learning to Love" by Truth Ministry, held at Christian Assembly of God, in Greenville. This was the very place that David sang to me, "Our Love in Christ". I asked, "God, I have been so hurt by this! Am I to love what has tried to destroy me?" I attended, and experienced a flood of wedding day memories. One of the speakers said, "You are going to redeem what the Devil meant to destroy." I was taken back to when I was by my mother's bed in the hospital when I told her that I wanted to love God and help people. I went to McKrae after the meeting and introduced myself. I told him that I would like to get involved in Truth Ministry.

David and I have not separated and are still committed to each other. I choose to love David and trust God. I did not know I would experience so much pain and suffering, but now I can say that it has been for my good. I know my Redeemer lives. I trust Him with my whole life.

