

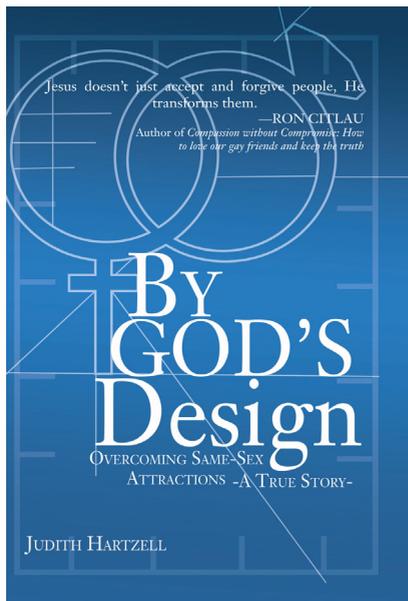


news release

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BOOK CHRONICLES LIFE AND IMPACT OF PROMINENT EX-GAY CHRISTIAN HOPE OFFERED FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTIONS



For immediate release: Alan Medinger's life was a wreck: his marriage and career were crumbling. He could no longer control his homosexual thoughts and tendencies. But in the middle of a church service on a November evening he surrendered his life and homosexuality to Jesus Christ and was miraculously healed of the sexual pull towards men he'd struggled with for 25 years. Medinger went on to become the Founder and Director of Regeneration Ministry in Baltimore and Northern Virginia and an officer of Exodus International, an organization for ex-gay Christians, in its early years. In *By God's Design: Overcoming Same Sex Attractions: A True Story* (Ambassador International; April 2015; \$15.99, paperback) Judith Hartzell recounts the striking journey of Alan and Willa Medinger to give hope to those struggling with same sex attractions and shed light on how the church can help with healing.

By God's Design strives to clarify through the exceptional experiences of Alan Medinger some of the confusion that surfaces when we are at odds with this issue. Hartzell describes how Alan's history with SSA impacted his and Willa's ability to raise a family, exacerbated their own insecurities in themselves, and even led to financial struggles after he lost a well-paying and respectable job. Through the Medingers' story we can find the strength to address our own fears and uncertainties about what to think and say about SSA in our culture.

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Hartzell depicts the Medingers' story as one of redemption and restoration which ultimately allows hope to flourish. Alan Medinger says, "We had the most hopeless marriage, and God has redeemed it. He has given us deeper love." The Medingers' relationship sets an example of how the church can respond healthily and helpfully to those struggling to overcome SSA.

By God's Design includes numerous accounts of the trials, victories, and changes made in the lives of practicing homosexuals and those who struggled with same sex attractions that the Medingers met through their ministries with Regeneration and Exodus International. One story includes Gene Chase, a former professor at Messiah University, who went on to found his own organization to help other men and women who struggle with SSA in Pennsylvania. Hartzell's book offers insight into how to approach this topic with respect.

About the Author: For twenty years Judith Hartzell studied Christians' experiences overcoming same-sex attractions, and for a decade she served on an ex-gay ministry board of directors, all of which resulted in this book, the life-story of Alan Medinger and his wife, Willa. Judith earned a B.A. from Cornell University and an M.A. from the University of Michigan and published two biographies of Mayo Clinic's founding family. The mother of three grown children, she lives in South Carolina with her husband, Tom, and their dog, Fergus.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER: Ambassador International was founded in 1980 in Belfast, Northern Ireland and expanded to Greenville, South Carolina in 1995. Ambassador International's books and materials have been distributed in dozens of countries and are sold worldwide. For more information visit www.ambassador-international.com. You can also follow @AmbassadorIntl on Twitter or check out Facebook.com/AmbassadorIntl.

Suggested Interview Questions for the author:

1. What inspired you to write *By God's Design*?
2. What was your relationship with the Medingers like?
3. What was your biggest challenge in writing *By God's Design*?
4. What are some contemporary challenges of those who struggle with SSA?
5. How can the church body respond to this divisive issue with love?
6. If Alan and Willa could send one message to today's church, what do you think they would tell us?
7. What encouragements can you give people who might feel like this kind of transformation is impossible for them?
8. How is reparative therapy different from the help offered by Regeneration?
9. What was your response to the ending of Exodus International?
10. What do you hope people learn from the Medingers' story?

Endorsements:

“Stalwart” is a word we shouldn't use lightly, but what better term describes Alan Medinger? For decades he was a consistent voice of integrity, and for many of us, a reliable co-laborer and friend. Reading Judith Hartzell's book had me laughing and crying, remembering the man she's so well profiled. Anyone interested in ministry to the same-sex attracted, or in the rigors of ministry in general, will enjoy this much-needed account of a big hearted pioneer.

—Joe Dallas, Author of *When Homosexuality Hits Home* and *The Gay Gospel? How Pro-Gay Advocates Misread the Bible*, Founder of Genesis Biblical Solutions

Alan Medinger's life story needs to be remembered simply because so many today are frantically trying to forget. His story remains a billboard of the power of Jesus to change a life. Many thanks to Judith Hartzell for writing a life history full of grace and truth.

—Peter Hubbard, Teaching pastor at North Hills Community Church and author of *Love Into Light: The Gospel, the Homosexual and the Church*

When asked to read “By God's Design” and offer my comments, I intended to read only a chapter daily as a part of my devotions. The book was so interesting that I often read two or three chapters, even when it put me behind on the rest of my day. Judith Hartzell recounts, with documentation, the planning by gay activists for “normalization” of homosexuality and how it shifted the culture of our country, juxtaposed with the early years and development of ministries to those same-sex attracted. Although both accounts are useful, the encouraging biography of Alan and Willa Medinger gives the book vitality: putting a human face on homosexual attraction and God's power to cleanse and heal. I know of no family that better typifies the growth process for manhood, how God can heal a wounded spouse and how God uses those healed to bring healing to so many others. Alan and Willa's conversion and multi-year struggles to live out God's design in their lives provides hope for all of us who struggle with life-dominating issues. These two finished well.

—Reid Lehman, President/CEO of Miracle Hill Ministries, Author of *God Wears His Own Watch*

For anyone who cares for the LGBT community, this is a must read. Alan's story of transformation and his decades of ministry to the sexually broken gives him unique authority to share the power available in the gospel of Jesus. This book is an important addition to the current conversation about homosexuality: Jesus doesn't just accept and forgive people, he transforms them.

—Ron Citlau, Senior Pastor of Calvary Church, IL, Author of *Compassion without Compromise: How to Love our Gay Friends and Keep the Truth*

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I am so thrilled to see the Medingers' story in print. Alan's testimony of transformation is amazing and genuine. I worked alongside him in ministry for years, and his Christian testimony was solid and enduring.

—Bob Davies, Past president of Exodus International, Co-author of *Coming Out of Homosexuality* with Lori Rentzel and of *Someone I Love Is Gay* with Anita Worthen

Willa and Alan Medinger were an inspiration of hope and encouragement to me in the beginning formation of Whosoever Will Ministry. Their quiet, patient encouragement in allowing God to lead by His Spirit is something I'll always treasure. We were taught to listen to God for ourselves, and to follow His direction.

—Penny Dalton, Co-founder Whosoever Will Ministry

I am excited that the life and work of Alan and Willa Medinger have been saved for history. I can think of few better than Judy Hartzell to catalogue their lives. This man, this couple, meant so much to so many. He poured into my life and helped shape me as a man and as a leader. His book *Growth Into Manhood* helped start me on my journey of growing as a man. At his death, I drove eleven hours with my son to his funeral, telling my son it was important to respect this man of honor with our attendance.

—McKrae Game, President, Hope for Wholeness

Alan and Willa Medinger provided inspiration and stability, as well as love and laughter, to generations of men and women seeking hope and healing. Judith Hartzell has captured the essence and beauty of their presence in all of our lives. Thank you, Judith, for such a vulnerable telling of the life story of our beloved friends and valued mentors. This book is a must have for all who knew the Medingers, as well as for those who desire to know what God can do in the area of same-sex attraction with lives that are fully surrendered to Him (and to the vital experience of the authority of scripture). Judith's account is not all "rosy" but it is true in its recounting of the pain, the beauty, and the ultimate powerful transformation of Alan and Willa as individuals and of their marriage!

—Jeanie Smith, Director of Set Free Ministry

It's wonderful that many will have the opportunity to read about Alan and Willa and the work they have done as pioneers of the ex-gay movement. Alan was true to who he was when speaking to a group, writing a book or just sharing with friends. He was all about shining a light on the path for other men to follow, men who were trapped in the bondage of the homosexual life. Willa was his colorful life companion who had the same burden for wives of those men. We miss you dear friends and thank Judith for her tireless journey in making this book available to all.

—Anita Worthen, co-author of *Someone I Love Is Gay*

I am so grateful that the lives of these two remarkable people will be remembered through the pages of this book. They were pioneers in a difficult and often unrewarding work that brought new life to so many people. Both were always honest and open about their journey through life, and this openness brought the right balance between hope and the reality that nothing seems to be easy in this life. Alan was a bright light lighting the path to other men trapped in the bondage of homosexuality. The love Alan and Willa shared for each other was a true love story. Willa was always there for Alan, his encourager and his defense, and his burden was her burden.

—Frank Worthen, Founder and Director of Love in Action in California and of New Hope Ministries; Author of *This Way Out* and *Destiny Bridge*, co-founder of Exodus International and past president of Exodus International

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JUDITH HARTZELL *Author of "By God's Design"*



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