

## Abba's Delight Interview with The Leo

June 2013

### Take a Chance on Me: An “ex-gay” affiliate chats with LEO

In this week's LEO we spoke with Daniel Mingo, director of Abba's Delight, the ministry that helps homosexuals live their entire lives in forced chastity with the help of Jesus, just as he would have wanted. You know, instead of doing what is natural, perhaps even forming a lifelong bond with someone you love. Sounds so entirely healthy, no?

Since it's not every day that I get to speak to someone who uses The Lord to repress the natural sexual urges of the “sexually broken” — all out of the Christian goodness of their heart — we figured we'd post the entire interview here. Enjoy?

*LEO: What did you think of Exodus International's decision last week to shut down and offer an apology to the gay community?*

*Daniel Mingo: First, thank you, Joe, for taking an interest in this matter, and for contacting me for this interview. In the long run, I think the decision to shut down is for the best, going forward. But it is also bittersweet. Exodus has been a lifeboat for nearly four decades to thousands who have been helped to mature along their Christian journey, while others have been troubled by the organization's message. In today's culture, that dynamic is true of many churches and para-church organizations. Exodus will certainly be missed, but I do not see its closure as a defeat to its supporters, or a win for its detractors, but rather an end to a long road that leads to other possible avenues for the future of ministries who are available to those who seek their assistance. I believe there has been a definite need for an apology to the gay community, and since the Church unfortunately has been unable to find its way there, I'm glad the step was taken.*

*LEO: You noted that there was a need for an apology to the gay community, and that unfortunately the Church has not found their way there. What specifically — in your own words — is the apology for, and what specific actions should the church take to “find their way there”?*

*DM: In my opinion, and I am neither a pastor nor a scholar, the Church does not need to apologize for presenting the Truth of the Gospel: that everyone who has ever been born is a sinner, that we are all in need of a Savior to pay the ransom for those sins, and that Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior who, by His death and resurrection, paid the price for everyone*

*who has ever lived; when an individual accepts this Truth in his/her life, the salvation experience begins. This is the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What I believe the Church does need to apologize for is the methods some of its Christians have used to communicate that Good News. The gay community has been hurt by the Church-at-large, and I believe is due an apology for those hurts and those methods.*

*LEO: As an affiliate of Exodus, how will this decision affect Abba's Delight? Abba's Delight will continue in ministry as we have for several years. Though we have maintained an affiliation with Exodus, all of the Exodus ministries have operated autonomously.*

*LEO: Who and how many people do you serve at Abba's? What does this service consist of, specifically?*

*DM: Abba's Delight ministers to Christians who only initiate contact with us. We offer discipleship, support and training to those who see their lives incompatible with Biblical teaching on sexuality, and who desire to align themselves in Christ with God's created design for its expression. Also, we also offer encouragement and support to family members, loved ones, or spouses of someone who is gay or same-sex attracted, teaching them to love those individuals unconditionally without sacrificing Biblical truth. Additionally, we are equipped to work with Christian churches, coming alongside pastors and church staff, helping them to provide a safe and welcoming environment within their own congregations for those along this journey.*

*LEO: Are you the only group doing "ex-gay" therapy (if that's the right terminology) in Louisville/KY, or are there others?*

*DM: Abba's Delight is a discipleship-driven ministry, and there is no licensed professional counselor on staff. As such, it is not a substitute for psychiatric treatment, psychotherapy, therapeutic counseling or any other form of therapy, in general or otherwise. When the need arises, Abba's Delight does have referral resources available to those who participate in our ministry. As far as I know, Abba's Delight is the only ministry in the Louisville/So. IN area which offers what we do.*

*LEO: Can you give a rough estimate of the number of people you serve/minister to yearly? You mentioned that you only minister to those who contact you, but do parents ever send their child to you for ministry/service if he/she has same-sex attraction or behavior?*

*DM: Joe, I am going to decline to answer the first part of this question. Regarding parents sending their children to Abba's Delight for ministry, I have worked with teens over the years, but only those teens who themselves want assistance. When parents have brought children who are not interested in what Abba's Delight offers, I have recommended they not force the issue, and then have offered to serve the parents in helping them to communicate God's love to their children in ways the child can receive it.*

*LEO: As far as the techniques or goals for those you serve with same-sex attractions — Is the objective to prevent/discourage them from having same-sex attractions, or to prevent/discourage them from acting out on those attractions? Or both?*

*DM: The goal of Abba's Delight in ministry is to provide opportunities through a relationship with Jesus Christ for our ministry participants to grow in faith, in Biblical understanding of their heavenly Father's will for their lives, and in maturity as each one lives to become more perfectly conformed to the image of Jesus. While the main point of the person's initial contact is their request for us to address their homosexuality issues with them, we quickly let them know that we are not here to turn them from gay to straight, and not here to change their attractions. We tell them we are here to point them towards Jesus and to learn to live the Biblical standard of a sexually pure life whether they are married or single. We disciple the whole person. We tell the same things to loved ones who come, as well as to the parents/teens. We are intentional about not giving false hopes or expectations.*

*LEO: Have you experienced any pushback on the direction Exodus (and perhaps Abba's, too?) has taken over the last few years from Christians who prefer a more confrontational/combatative approach with homosexuality?*

*DM: No, we just don't hear from them.*

*LEO: Where did the name "Abba's Delight" come from?*

*DM: Glad you asked! During the time I was putting the ministry together, the main impression I had was that this was to be a ministry that conveys God the Father's love to everyone who comes to us. So, when it came time to address the name for the ministry, what came to me was the name "Abba's Delight." Abba means "Daddy." Daddy's Delight. Because many who have experienced same gender attractions have felt abandoned and hated by God, (partly, and sadly, due to the whole "God hates fags!" thing that an unfortunate faction of the Church has promoted) I was seeking a name that addressed that specific point. I believe Abba's Delight*

*perfectly fits the purpose, and ministry participants get it! God does not hate them. In fact, the Bible tells us that there is nothing in the world that can ever separate us from His love, and that He longs to be in relationship with each one of us.*

*LEO When did you get into this line of work? Did it begin with Abba's Delight in 2008, or had you done this work previously?*

*DM: 10 years ago, with another ministry based elsewhere.*

*LEO: Did your own views on this type of service/ministry/therapy for those with same sex attraction evolve in recent years (such as Exodus and Chambers have expressed publicly over the past few years), or have you always felt this way (as expressed in your answers)?*

*DM: My basic views have remained the same.*

*LEO: I spoke today with a young man from Louisville who says that as a teenager (2004-2009) he was subjected to porn and electroshock therapy (shocked while watching gay porn, not shocked while watching straight porn) as a way to cure him of same sex attraction. He says that the Church officials who subjected him to this were affiliated with Exodus (not you or Abba's Delight, which he has never heard of). I wonder what your thoughts are on that kind of treatment specifically, and if you've ever come across anyone who practices or advocates this?*

*DM: I do not practice any therapy, since I'm not a therapist, and I have never met anyone either who has practiced it or who has been the recipient of it.*