

## Outstanding Leader: Alan Sears

Alan Sears is the President, CEO, and General Counsel of the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), the largest religious liberty legal alliance in America.

Since its launch in 1994, Alan has led the strategy, training, funding, and subsequent litigation efforts of the ministry that have resulted in ADF's critical role in 33 victories at the U.S. Supreme Court and wins in 3 out of 4 of cases litigated to conclusion. Under his leadership, ADF has funded more than 2,000 grants and legal projects for allied lawyers and organizations and ADF attorneys have successfully defended marriage as the union between one man and one woman in over 35 cases nationwide.

Alan has provided strategic leadership in the training of over 1,200 lawyers through the ADF one of a kind National Litigation Academy. The NLA is designed to equip attorneys to more effectively defend religious freedom, the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family. Since 1997, these attorneys have reported more than \$90 million in pro-bono/dedicated time. Alan's visionary efforts have also resulted in the graduation of more than 700 outstanding law students, representing more than 130

universities, from the ADF Blackstone Legal Fellowship program. This in-depth summer leadership program helps equip these students to assume leadership positions to



shape the future of American law.

Alan has helped fashion the language for numerous state and federal laws and has testified before committees of the U.S. House and Senate, state legislatures, and many local governments and commissions. Legislators in twenty states adopted his legislative recommendations. He has also spoken before committees of the British Parliament and at the Vatican. He has trained hundreds of law enforcement officials from Australia to Scotland Yard, and

has lectured internationally on religious freedom. As a result of his impressive record, the American Bar Association's magazine, *Barrister*, recognized him as one of the outstanding young lawyers in America.

Alan also served in numerous positions within the United States Government, serving in the Department of Justice, under Attorneys General William French Smith and Edwin Meese III as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and Chief of the Criminal Section, and was appointed as the Director of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. He also was an Associate Solicitor in the Department of the Interior under Secretary Donald Hodel.

Alan has co-authored several books, including: *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today* (2003) and *The ACLU vs. America* (2005) both with Craig Osten.

A graduate of the University of Kentucky, with a Juris Doctor from Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, Alan completed his post-graduate/continuing education at Harvard Law School, Stanford University, and Pepperdine University. He is a member in

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good standing with the American, Arizona, California, District of Columbia, and Kentucky Bar Associations.

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### How does your faith shape your leadership?

The theme verse of the Alliance Defense Fund is John 15:5: “Without Christ, we can do nothing.” Those six short words pretty much sum how my faith impacts my leadership of ADF. Without this sure knowledge, that I am incapable of doing anything without Christ, I would not be able to get out of bed to face the burdens of the day. We cannot predict or see tomorrow, and if though we often try, we can’t even fully understand the past. But the one thing that we do know, is **who** God is and **what** He can do. If we are in complete dependence on him, if we stay on our knees, avoid temptation, and stay humble, I am fully confident that He will enable us to do all He calls us to do.

### What advice would you give leaders of other Christian organizations?

The late Larry Burkett, one of our founders, provided the core teaching that has helped keep the

ADF afloat, especially during economically challenging times like we are facing now. Larry emphasized that ADF must be a “no debt” ministry under guidance of a strong and wise Board of Directors. We should never take on financial obligations that God has not provided the funds for. The Lord has called us to be wise stewards of the funds He has provided through His people and that we are to have the highest possible standards of accountability to our ministry friends. This advice has helped ADF to continue to take back land “little by little”, even during the most difficult financial times and kept us focused on our mission and set guidelines on how we conducted our Capital Campaign for a new national headquarters that was essential. So, if I could give one piece of advice to leaders of Christian organizations, is to avoid temptation to spend beyond your means and expand, but to wait on the Lord to provide the funds to sustain and grow the ministry and follow your governing Board’s guidance and wisdom on such matters.

### Who did you look to as a model for your leadership style and why?

I have been blessed to have

several different (human) individuals serve as role models and mentors to me over the years. Here are just a few:

- Ronald Reagan – for his faith in the goodness of America and his quest for freedom
- Dwight Eisenhower – for his incredible life example of perseverance and faith
- Edwin Meese III – for his example of servant leadership to create a national movement
- Dr. Bill Bright – for teaching me the Great Commission can be fulfilled in this generation
- Larry Burkett – see above
- Dr. James Dobson – for showing us how to live boldly as a follower of Christ
- Dr. D. James Kennedy – for his courage to stand for America’s past as key to its future
- Marlin Maddoux – for his vision of what new mediums could mean to the Body of Christ
- And some key friends and my personal accountability partner for nearly 20 years...