

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update april 2015



In recent weeks, some in the gay community have made a concerted effort to make it illegal for minors desiring to change their sexual orientation through therapy. The bill, HB2307, is aimed at licensed therapists who practice sexual reorientation change efforts, known as 'reparative therapy' or 'conversion therapy,' for minors in Oregon. Similar laws are now passed in California, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C.

In February 2015, a small group of people who favor this bill testified before the Oregon House Committee in Salem. In the process, Portland Fellowship became identified as one of their targets, lumping us in with this type of therapy.

Several of our friends and supporters have asked how this bill will impact the ministry we do. This update is to help answer that question.

Simply put, Portland Fellowship does not fit this bill. Our staff and leadership teams are men and women serving in a layman capacity, not as professional therapists. More importantly, we do not practice reparative therapy or what is now called 'conversion therapy.' Reparative therapy (RT) is a form of psychotherapy aimed at changing or minimizing a person's same-sex orientation. The efforts utilize talk therapy as well as various therapeutic exercises. RT's end goal is to diminish same-sex attractions and increase heterosexual potential.



The mission and purpose of Portland Fellowship differ from RT in both our stated goals and in our methodology. Although we do *not* oppose RT, our end goal is not sexual reorientation but rather wholeness and healing through Christ. A byproduct of this healing can include awakened heterosexual desire, but it is not the primary focus. Portland Fellowship also differs from RT in the methods practiced. Sexual and relational healing through Portland Fellowship centers on God's Word and His church community. Our programs do not utilize therapeutic techniques but rather personal discipleship, including (but not limited to) confession, surrender, accountability, forgiveness, renewing the mind, and restoring true identity in Christ.

As stated, Portland Fellowship does not practice RT, but we are opposed to this bill because it takes away the right of a minor to explore resolutions through therapy. For example, a girl who has been sexually abused and is questioning her sexuality deserves the right to sort through the confusion with the help of a therapist. With that said, it is important to add that we should be concerned for minors who are forced or manipulated into any therapy. If you have a child who has embraced a gay or lesbian identity, pushing them into therapy to change their sexual orientation will only cause more pain and confusion. The direction we would encourage is to offer counsel for the various issues teens may be wrestling with.

Furthermore, our encouragement to parents is to seek support from others as they navigate through this difficulty. We offer an on-site support group for family and friends called Hope Group. And if you are not in our area, we have a video series online to help you grow in deeper understanding and trust in Christ: [www.pfhope.com](http://www.pfhope.com).

"He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners."

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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Amid this firestorm, there will continue to be accusations and inaccurate reporting about the work of sexual and relational healing ministries like Portland Fellowship. One popular false claim is that we “pray away the gay.” To be sure, the power of prayer is critical, and the Lord hears our prayers and touches the deepest needs of our souls, but we can’t “pray away the gay.” The reason? You can’t pray away a need. Instead we turn to the One who will fulfill our unmet needs.

For example: If someone is thirsty, he cannot “pray away his thirst.” Instead, he drinks water thus fulfilling that need. Likewise, homosexuality is a relational issue; therefore, the solutions are relational. Through discipleship, surrender, prayer, and obedience, God does His work of restoring true identity, moving us toward emotional and sexual wholeness.

As the world becomes more hostile to the redemptive work of Christ, we must remember that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). Let us pray for God’s power to silence the lies and allow everyone--minors included--to seek and find the truth of God and His power to change lives.



Trusting In Him,

Jason Thompson  
Executive Director

### New Portland Fellowship Brochure: An Updated Resource Collection

We are excited to introduce our Portland Fellowship brochure in this month’s newsletter. This updated hand-out reviews the history and mission of Portland Fellowship, highlights our current discipleship programs and introduces our newest online resources.



This can be a powerful lifeline for people who are struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction, as well as a source of hope for family members, friends and church leaders who need to learn more about discipleship and encouraging people wrestling with homosexuality.

We have enclosed a brochure for you to consider sharing with someone who may not know about Portland Fellowship. The primary way men and women learn of this ministry is through God’s people sharing with others. Know that simply sharing about PF with someone can be a life-changing message for them. If you can use additional brochures, please call and we will send what you need. God bless!

**Portland Fellowship** is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 nondenominational organization. We are exclusively supported through private donations, support services and offerings. Thank you for your gifts.

### events calendar

**tuesday evenings**  
**TBG + Solid Ground**  
7 p.m.

**wednesday evenings**  
**Upper Room Community**  
Discipleship program

**april 9**  
Jason will be speaking at  
Concordia University

**april 10**  
**Hope Group + Wives Group**  
For Wives, Family and Friends  
6:30 p.m

**april 24**  
**Hope Home Groups**  
Opportunities to connect with  
other family members for prayer  
and support. Call office for info.

**Speakers, counseling, youth  
support and personal support**  
can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates  
at [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)