



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update april 2003

I was privileged when Jason asked me to write this month's letter to all of you, the faithful supporters of Portland Fellowship. I have had a long relationship with PF. In many ways it is home to me. It is always a pleasure for me to share with anyone who will listen how much I love this ministry and the faithful who have given their money, time, and in some cases their whole selves to see this ministry thrive.

As some of you know, this has been a difficult month for those of us most closely involved with the day-to-day operations of the ministry. After 15 years of tireless service, our faithful founder needs time to refuel. As so often the case with ministers, he has been focused on his task and not well aware of his own legitimate needs. As a consequence, he found himself involved in an unhealthy emotionally entangled relationship. Paul related to this state of being in Romans 7:15-17:

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

I know I speak for us all when I say that we will deeply miss Phil during his absence. Mostly we will miss his pastoral care and encouragement to all of us. Please join me in praying for his swift healing, restoration and return to the ministry he has so faithfully loved.

I am deeply gratified and thankful to God for his many blessings to Portland Fellowship. One blessing that I am most aware of now is its stability. During the many years I observed the building of PF, I often felt its fragility. For many years I have worked as a therapist helping people overcome same-sex attraction. I know how difficult it is to work in this field. I have no question about God's ability to heal people in this way. I have personally witnessed deep and permanent healing in so many people that I could never again doubt. At the same time, I know how difficult it often is for people to proclaim their testimony. After many years of struggle, most are happy to be better and want to move on with their lives. Who could blame them? In addition, sexual problems can be embarrassing and few people want to disclose this very private sin.

Working in this field is also difficult because it is socially and professionally unpopular. Leadership is constantly devalued and harassed as being judgmental, unloving, homophobic, intolerant, and ignorant. Although our leaders are very strong and committed men and women, I know personally how this kind of harassment takes its toll.

Another factor making this work difficult is failure. In any kind of ministry helping people deal with sexual issues, there may be many failures and ensuing discouragement. Our Accuser constantly waits at the door telling us healing is a lie. Praise God, we know that Satan is a liar and the father of lies.

Over the years I have prayed that God would rise up financial support and capable leadership. That prayer has been answered. Portland Fellowship is in capable hands. I am especially impressed with Jason Thompson (Director) and Rebecca Wade (Director of Women's Ministries). During this time of crisis they have proven rock solid in wisdom, knowledge, and dedication. I am also grateful to a wise, humble, and capable board of directors. Their clear-headed leadership is abundantly evident. What's more, it is clear to me that the real director of PF is God Himself. All decisions are made prayerfully in submission to the will of our Father in heaven. All praise be to Him.

We need your continued support now more than ever. The reason? God's word is being proclaimed. It seems ironic to me that at a point in history when we have a better understanding of the causes and cures of

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

ISAIAH 61 : 1

post office box 14841
portland, oregon 97293
telephone 503_235_6364
fax 503_235_3896
e-mail pf@portlandfellowship.com
portlandfellowship.com

homosexuality than at any time previous, our society is under a strong delusion. Even some Christians in our society believe that people are born gay and that attempts to alter their sexual impulses are not only useless but could be harmful. These lies are supported by professional organizations like the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the National Association of Social Workers and the American Pediatric Association to name only a few. There is strong pressure in state legislatures to promote adoption to gay couples, robbing children of the value of both a father and a mother. When Christ said, "You are the salt of the earth," He was speaking to those who would hold the line against the strong lies of Satan.

Clearly, I am very proud of the work being accomplished at Portland Fellowship. The word is getting out. We now have *published* material to help people heal from same-sex attraction both in English and in Spanish. Jason Thompson has been a creative genius in getting the word out to youth in media formats they understand such as the Internet and computer CD's. We now have the facilities to train ministers on-site to go out and create similar ministries all over the world. All of this has been accomplished while continuing to create a safe place for those who struggle locally. It continues to be a place be heard, encouraged, and helped.

I have been involved with this issue on a national level for a number of years. There are only a few key organizations that have had an impact in holding the line against the formidable and well-funded gay advocacy movement. The lie that people who struggle with homosexuality cannot change has not taken root because of ministries like ours. Thankfully, Portland Fellowship has become one of the finest of these organizations. I am proud to be associated with them. Please join me in prayer and with your finances in supporting this vital and worthy organization.

Sincerely,

Steven Donaldson, M.A.
*Licensed Professional Counselor
Portland Fellowship Board Member*

ministry update

This month begins the third section of the *Taking Back Ground* program. It has been a phenomenal year of growth and change in the lives of those who have been a part of the program. Next month we hope to have a few individuals share about the things God is doing in their lives.

Jason Thompson will be presenting a 2-hour workshop on suicide prevention on April 17 during the lunch hour. If you are interested learning more about this important area please contact the office.

Each summer, Exodus hosts the largest national conference on recovery from homosexuality. The conference is designed not only for those who are struggling with sexual issues, but for married couples, parents, families and ministry leaders. This year's conference will be held in beautiful downtown Orlando, Florida - July 21-26, 2003

If you would like to attend this conference, you may register on-line at: www.exodus-international.org

thanks

So many have been a blessing to us during this time of transition. Thank you for your continued support and prayers on behalf of Portland Fellowship. You truly are a blessing!

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Special thanks to those who helped make the Portland Fellowship annual retreat a wonderful success. *We will share more about the great things that happened in next month's newsletter.*

prayer

We ask for your prayers for Phil and his family as he takes a leave of absence from the ministry. Pray for refreshment, direction, and encouragement.

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Please pray for Jason Thompson and Rebecca Wade as they continue the awesome work God is doing at PF.

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.

april calender

april 2

*George Fox University
Speaker: Jason Thompson*

april 6

Board Meeting

april 10

*Concordia College
Speaker: Jason Thompson*

april 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Taking Back Ground
Discipleship support program for men and women seeking freedom from unwanted homosexuality.
Tuesday evenings: 7:00 p.m.

april 11

Family and Friends Group
If you have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want direction, encouragement and support,
Second Friday of each month: 7 p.m.

april 17

Suicide Prevention workshop
Please call the office for details.

Check website for additional updates throughout the month

www.portlandfellowship.com