

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update february 2003



By the time this letter arrives in your box, we will have completed another annual planning meeting. This year marks the fifteenth year of ministry for PF. As we discuss what the future holds I am reminded of where we came from. Many of you may not know this, but I never wanted to be in Christian ministry. The chance to become tainted seemed too real and daunting. But I did want to help people find hope in Christ like myself. Today, I'm glad today God has used this experience to cause me to grow. In the begin, and still today, I have to be dependant on the Lord to teach me lessons of leadership. One story comes to mind about ministry that I often think about when it comes to planning.....



As a new believer, many areas in my life were in need of change. I was recovering from a nasty drug addiction and there was a need for wholesome living. One way to fill my time was gardening. I had always hated gardening, but as I read the scriptures I saw many examples of Jesus referring to gardening principles, so I thought that would be a great way to connect with what he was talking about. The first year I planted, among other things, tomatoes. They grew big and bushy, with lots of fruit, but as the tomatoes got larger they pulled the plant over and the fruit rested on the soil, which eventually cause brown rot. I was frustrated at my lack of skills in this area. The next year, forgetting the past experience, I ended up doing the same thing. I wasn't a very good gardener. The third year I got a word from the Lord. "Hey, (he might have added 'stupid') why don't

you stake up the plants as they grow, so you won't lose the tomatoes." God is always right, and so I did it. And as you probably can figure, the tomatoes grew big and unblemished. From this experience God began to speak to me about ministry. "Phil, ministering to people is like gardening. You sow seeds and watch them grow. But as people grow, like your tomatoes, they need some structure to support the fruit that I will bring in there lives. And ministry is like that. As you grow as an organization, you will need some structure to support what you are doing. Not too much, or it can overshadow the ministry, like too much support could stunt the growth of your tomatoes. The support serves the plant, not the plant serving the supports."

These words have guided me each time we sat down to organize and make planning decisions. What is 'just enough' support look like to enhance the work God is doing? And I am thankful for the lessons God has taught me over the years. No matter how silly they sound or how foolish I look; He is such a faithful teacher and companion.

We did it. Or should I say that you did it. We were able to catch up on our finances and begin this year in the black. We are thankful to all of you who gave sacrificially to help us get back on our feet. We are excited about the coming year. God has definitely placed a heart for reaching beyond our borders to different countries, such as within Latin America. This year we will be looking at practical ways that we can support the work of God to the homosexual struggles in these countries.

"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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One important project to that end is our Taking Back Ground workbook. As you know, our intern Lidia Gutierrez translated the workbook and the Interactive CD ROM curriculum on *The Map* into Spanish. We will be looking to have "*Recuperado Lo Que Nos Pertenece*" printed for distribution within the Latin community. Please pray with us as we seek funds to cover the cost of printing.

This year Jason will be focusing more attention on the ReachTruth project, our on-line ministry to teens. Given the success of *The Map*, we believe there are tens of thousands of teens across the world looking for help with sexual confusion. ReachTruth will offer them teaching and support to overcome homosexuality. Pray that God will provide the right partners to work alongside Jason in completing this project. We also will need to raise money for computer equipment as well as for the publication of "La Mapa", our Spanish edition of *The Map*.



Thanks for all the prayers, donations and words of encourage through the past year. God has sustained us and you are a great part of that provision. We count it a privilege to serve in this ministry. May you continually see His face as you seek Him!

In His service,

ministry update

We are excited to see the Taking Back Ground program utilized around the country. Not only are individuals walking through the series, but Exodus related ministries have begun using the material as well.

The following ministry groups are beginning the program this year:

- **Prodigal Ministries:** Ohio
- **Willow Creek Community Church:** Illinois,
- **In His Image Saginaw:** Michigan
- **Truth Ministry:** South Carolina

If you are interested in facilitating a group in your area, please give us a call and we will give you instructional materials to help make it happen. This program is an ideal resource for churches wanting to minister directly to those struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction.

"The title says it all. Anyone experiencing the struggle between godly desires and human limitations will find solid comfort and direction in 'Taking Back Ground'. This is the sort of tool I wish I'd been given when my own journey began." - **Joe Dallas**

thanks

To all donors who continue to give faithfully to Portland Fellowship. We are extremely grateful!

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We thank Cedar Mill Bible Church for providing the space at the Fairfield Inn for our annual planning meeting.

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Thank you John Shafe for the donation of the VCR and Wendell Stevens for the much needed chair.

prayer

The annual planning meeting brought to mind additional ministry needs. Pray for wisdom and direction as we continue to broaden our scope to help meet some of these needs.

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We continue to ask your prayers over the participants and the leaders of Portland Fellowship.

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.

february calender

february 10

Board Meeting

february 4, 11, 18, 25

Taking Back Ground

Discipleship support program for men and women seeking freedom from unwanted homosexuality.

Tuesday evenings: 7:00 p.m.

february 14

Family and Friends Group

If you have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want direction, encouragement and support, please join us.

Second Friday of each month: 7 p.m.

february 23

Vancouver First Church of God

Missions Fair

Staff and interns attending

february 26

Milwaukie Covenant Church

Junior High / High School

Speaker: Jason Thompson

Check website for additional updates throughout the month

www.portlandfellowship.com.