



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Lord, Did You Make a Mistake? by Don MacLeod

*For years I thought the Lord had made a big mistake. I felt deep down I was supposed to be a girl. Indeed, when I was born my parents were anticipating a girl - they already had a four-year-old son.*

To their disappointment, they got another boy. How does a newborn baby know that it is a disappointment or a mistake? I still don't know.

I tried my hardest not to disappoint my parents. Even as a preschooler I tried on my mother's shoes and played with her makeup. When I was four my parents bought me a bride doll for Christmas and a dollhouse with all the furniture. I probably asked for these gifts thinking it would please my parents. I remember my older brother looking at my gifts and giving me a very strange look. I didn't realize that I was being derailed from God's plan for me as a boy.

Once, I was taking a bath and playing with my toys when my father came in and saw that I had an erection. He made me feel that I was different than other boys because I got erections. Consequently, for many years I wondered if there were two different kinds of males—ones that didn't get erections and strange ones that did.

Like most five-year-olds, I knew nothing about sex and didn't understand the difference between the sexes. Unfortunately the ideas being placed in my mind about gender were not God's view on the matter. Throughout elementary school I was not interested in "guy things" and I enjoyed playing with girls. Not surprisingly, I was greatly ridiculed by my peers. I even remember looking into the mirror and wondering how anyone could love this ugly mistake. I wanted to change my sex to become a girl.

Then in junior high school I discovered what masturbation was all about when a friend came over to spend the night. It was something different, which I had never experienced before. I liked the idea I wasn't alone—there was someone experiencing the same thrill. While I wasn't looking for a homosexual relationship, I happened upon one innocently. That night, at age 13, something changed in me. I started a journey that lasted 13 years and included times of deep depression, self-hatred and loneliness. During this period, I tried to commit suicide—believing there was nobody else like me. I felt I had no place to turn and could not tell anyone about my struggles. I had faced so much rejection and I thought the church would not understand.

In short, I spent my junior high and high school years struggling academically and socially. I eventually dropped out of school in the eleventh grade and ran away to Germany to fulfill my passion of racing cars. I thought I could change my thought life by simply being in a different location was not true. But I was still the same person with the same struggles just living in a different country.

Upon my return to the States, I decided to get my high school diploma. I went to night school and was tutored by a lady in our church. After graduation I wanted to go on to college. She encouraged me to go to a small college where I could get more individual help. We chose Pasadena Nazarene College. While I was earning my high school diploma, I also co-led our church's high school group. It was there that the Lord prepared me to receive Him. One of the other leaders asked if we could meet regularly for prayer and Bible study. I never turned down anyone who took an interest in me, so I accepted. I started college in the fall and we continued to meet weekly.



Don MacLeod is a small group leader and teacher for the 2003-04 *Taking Back Ground* Program.

He and his wife, Mardie, have been married since 1970.

Pasadena Nazarene required all students to attend daily chapel. Through these times the Lord was drawing me to Himself and, on October 22, 1966, I gave my heart to the Lord during a school-wide revival. Shortly thereafter, I was introduced to the baptism of the Holy Spirit at my home group. From then on, the presence of the Lord surrounded me every time I returned to campus. It was like I was in a very protected environment. I loved the feeling. As a new believer God clearly covered me in a very special way—cradling me in His arms just like a father protecting his newborn. Jesus had opened a place in my heart for Himself and was making me into His new creation. I felt close to the Lord and grew to cherish John 13:23: *There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.* Knowing that Jesus was someone I could be intimate with was a new concept for me. This truth gave me confidence that healthy male relationships could be a reality.

I soon came to trust the people in my home group and shared my secret homosexual struggle. Their love and tenderness toward me increased and I felt no rejection at all. They prayed specifically for my homosexual past and God gave one of them a dream that He had healed me. It was through these home group meetings that God did a work of healing. Little did I know that Satan would try to steal God's healing from me. In short, I didn't know how to counteract temptations with Scripture as Jesus did, nor how to resist the enemy in the inevitable spiritual battles that followed. Had I understood my responsibility, I might not have experienced many more years with conflicting notions that I hadn't been healed.

During this time I became friends with a young lady from my home church. Mardie and I spent a lot of time together and I shared my homosexual past with her. Then I felt the Lord speak to me that she would be my wife. At this point I hadn't told anyone what the Lord had said—I wanted confirmation. Soon thereafter a dear friend who knew Mardie said to me, "I feel the Lord is doing something in your heart toward her. I believe He wants you to marry her". While I was shocked at this confirmation, I still wanted another one. Lovingly patient and persistent, God provided a second confirmation and I got on my knees and asked her to marry me. She accepted and we wed the next Monday—June 29, 1970. Then in November 1971, our first son was born and we moved to Oregon in April 1972.

We had been married several years when I realized that our marriage had not changed my same-sex desires or my strong emotions toward men. I didn't understand this because I had received prayer and was supposedly healed. I told my wife about my struggles and she concluded she was a failure as a wife and was not able to satisfy me. Even though I told her she wasn't a failure, I decided not to discuss this topic with her again because I didn't want her to feel guilty for what I was feeling. But with no one to talk to, I felt trapped. Not surprisingly, our

communication broke down and our relationship became distant. Indeed, by 1977 we had five children and I was overwhelmed. I kept my sexual "thought life" a secret. We continued this way for many years and I became depressed and confused. Even though I was not acting out homosexually, my mind worked overtime and I felt valueless. As an escape from feelings, depression was my plea for sympathy. I needed people but didn't know how to communicate and feared the possibility of inappropriate relationships.

In an answered prayer, I came upon an Exodus booth while attending Promise Keepers in Eugene in 1998. I had heard about Exodus but didn't know how to contact them. When I read the literature, I knew there could be help for me. Soon thereafter, I decided to contact Portland Fellowship and made a counseling appointment. It was there that I was able to freely talk about my thoughts and feelings. I decided to participate in the summer video series and start the *Taking Back Ground* program.

Through Portland Fellowship, I learned that I was not alone in my struggles. Being able to talk with other men in my small groups began to heal my fears about being different and alone. The Lord reaffirmed that it was His decision that I was a man and He encouraged me to believe that I was not a mistake. He repeatedly told me I was one of His beloved sons. This has given me great confidence and hope.

Indeed, I believe that I've been created for a purpose and though I departed from God's will for my life He uses my weakness for His glory. The confidence I have about myself and the healthy relationships I have developed with God's help are very meaningful to me. He has even given me the ability to encourage others and comfort them with the same comfort I have received from Him. My relationships with my wife and family have improved and I praise Him for the new man He is making me to be. Although my children haven't known the content of my struggle, they have seen the changes God has brought about in my life and our family.

Even though my parents were disappointed in my gender and I was convinced God had made a mistake, He has used my struggle to make me the man I am today. While there remain many weaknesses in my life, God encourages me with 2 Cor. 12:9: *And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

While being raised in a church environment taught me a lot about the Lord, a personal relationship came only as He drew me unto Himself. Although God is not finished with me yet, I continue to praise and trust Him more. I believe that when He calls me home to be with Him, I will then be like Him. This He promises us in Scripture and I know God doesn't make mistakes.



The MacLeod Family enjoying time together at Disneyland.

## Taking Back Ground Gets Underway

Portland Fellowship's discipleship program, *Taking Back Ground*, is the centerpiece and primary focus of our calling here in the Portland area. For fifteen years men and women struggling with unwanted homosexual feelings and behaviors have turned to Portland Fellowship for help and assistance. This year is no exception.

We launched the 2003-04 program on October 7. Jason said of this year's group, "It's so encouraging to see the Fellowship House full and brimming with activity. I feel privileged to be a part of a program where men and women have entrusted their sexual struggles to the Lord and are coming to us for assistance."

The complete *Taking Back Ground* program comprises two full years. Year One is designed for those who want to explore the roots causes and relational issues that may have led to their personal struggle with same-sex desires.

Year Two continues to deepen the healing and exploration begun during the first year. "When first starting *Taking Back Ground*, attendees undoubtedly feel nervous and unsure of what this program is all about. They may even wonder what they're doing here. But soon they find our ministry a place to feel safe, supported, and encouraged. In other words, a place to heal and grow in Jesus," Jason said.

Right now—including leaders—fifty men and women are involved with TBG. After a time of worship and teaching, these individuals meet in smaller groups, each with a leader. The small group setting is designed to foster intimacy and allows members time each week to talk and get to know one another. Jason said, "Not only am I honored to help these individuals, but am also proud of the leaders who have taken on the commitment to facilitate the small groups,"

TBG isn't only for homosexual strugglers, but

anyone who has been affected by their own or another's sexual brokenness.

Rebecca Wade, who directs ministry for women, has added a new facet to the program. "This year we've added a new component to *Taking Back Ground*," she said. "We've included a group of wives who are currently or formerly married to men dealing with same-sex attraction."



The year 2 workbook is headed toward printing later this year.

The wives are working through a curriculum called *Betrayed Heart*. This is a study designed for the woman who is facing the pain of betrayal and the consequences of living with a sexually addicted husband. Among other things, this study is beneficial in helping women work through a personal plan for restoration, learning to identify co-dependent behaviors, and setting healthy boundaries.

"Because our ministry deals with the issue of homosexuality," Rebecca said, "we believe it is important for spouses to have an understanding of this struggle and also God's message of hope. As such we have selected certain key lessons from the *Taking Back Ground* program that will be intermingled with the *Betrayed Heart* study over the course of the TBG year. We believe this approach will best equip these women to not only understand the issues that their spouses are dealing with, but also to help them work through their losses and regain a sense of personal safety in their lives. We look forward to God's blessing as we continue to refine our programs to meet the needs of those we minister to here at Portland Fellowship."

Year after year, TBG graduates remark that one of the most powerful aspects of meetings is the tremendous worship that takes place each Tuesday night. Bill Dolan, who has been a long-time friend of PF and a former staff member, is the worship leader.

We encourage you to please be in prayer for all TBG participants. If you'd like to receive information on *Taking Back Ground*, check our website at; [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com), or call our office at: 503-235-6364.

### Fun facts about this year's Taking Back Ground Program

Oldest participant:  
**80**

Youngest participant:  
**21**

Average age of participants:  
**36 years old**

Farthest weekly travel distance:  
**Seattle**

Farthest distance someone moved to join TBG:  
**Missouri**

Number of first year participants:  
**22**

Number of second year participants:  
**12**

Leadership Team Members:  
**16**

Number of prayer partners:  
**16**



## november-december calendar & services

november 4, 11, 18, 25

### Taking Back Ground

Discipleship group for men and women seeking freedom from unwanted same-sex attraction. Includes wives support group. 7 p.m.

november 14; december 12

### Family & Friends Group

Support for family and friends with loved ones struggling with homosexuality. 7 p.m.

november 13

### Cable Access TV

"Answers for a Thirsty World" Live call-in show. A PF representative will be sharing about the ministry. Check local listing for details.

november 6

### Cornerstone Fellowship

Speaker: TBG Small group leader Andrew Scott. 7 p.m.

november 6

### Cedar Mill Bible Church

Speaker: Rebecca Wade

november 16

### Greater Portland Bible Church Missions Sunday

PF will host a ministry table during both services.

november 16

### Cedar Mill Bible Church Missions Luncheon

Speaker: Jason Thompson

december 2, 9, 16

### Open Meetings

Open to anyone interested in learning more about Portland Fellowship and the *Taking Back Ground* program. 7 p.m.

### Additional updates:

[www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)

### Counseling, speaking, and youth support

Can be arranged through the office.

## Northwest Christian Community Foundation Aids in House Purchase

The campaign to purchase the Fellowship House is well under way. Recently, the *Northwest Christian Community Foundation* came on board as a major contributor to the "Fellowship House Fund." We express our gratitude to NCCF for their generous pledge of \$50,000 toward the purchase of the house.

In October, we launched our fundraising thermometer with the goal of raising \$100,000 above and beyond what has been pledged by NCCF. Currently we have \$7,175.00.

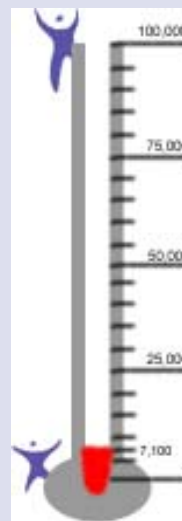
Several others who are current donors to Portland Fellowship, as well as new friends to the ministry, are making preparations to support this important strategic undertaking as well. God has been ever faithful to us over the years. As a staff, we continue to be honored and humbled as we see so many people partner with us in God's vision of sexual restoration for His children.

Please continue to ask the Lord if He would have you join the effort to purchase the ministry house and office space. Thank you.

## Desires in Conflict: Revised and Newly Released

You won't find any quick fixes in this book. What you will find, however, is effective help for restoring sexual wholeness and moving ahead in the Christian life. *Desires in Conflict* is important reading not only for those who struggle with their sexual identity, but for anyone who cares for a family member or friend struggling with homosexuality.

Joe Dallas, past president of Exodus International, lectures extensively at seminars and directs a biblical counseling practice in Tustin, California.



Current funds raised



PORTLAND

fellowship

The Fellowship Message is a monthly publication of The Portland fellowship, a ministry proclaiming freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ

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