



**PORTLAND**  
fellowship

**Dear Fellowship Partners,**

**update** april 2004

It was like Elijah's whirlwind... the mid-March visit of Sy Rogers to Portland Fellowship. The Family & Friends Group was already in session Friday evening when Sy, having been taken off the plane minutes earlier, arrived to share his story and to offer encouragement to the 59 people packed into the room. Sy engaged the crowd by providing hope and encouragement for those who have loved ones in the gay lifestyle. "Don't discount the importance of your prayers – especially you parents. God is waiting for these prayers." He told the story of his own grandmother who was in constant prayer for him, and was now "viewing his redemption from heaven." After the meeting, Sy was whisked away to join with the retreat in progress at Breakaway Lodge in Gearhart, Oregon.

The annual Fellowship Retreat was Sy's principal reason for coming. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, Sy had everyone's rapt attention as he provided practical help for those seeking healing. Many identified with Sy as he described his school experience as a "concentration camp." Despite his involvement in the gay lifestyle, he said, "I never quite bought into the kind of hope that pro-gay theology was trying to teach me." Later, after his conversion, Sy would say that he realized the "difference between everything I thought I knew about God and actually experiencing Him."

That experience, he said, was like "touching the ocean." He had grown up in a landlocked area, and had only read about the ocean. "When you touch it, you get a sense of the whole. No, you don't grasp the full immensity of the sea and its mysteries, but you are able to sample its character." Several of the participants later found that a walk on the beach provided them a time to sense God's presence and to hear his voice.

One participant wrote, "The retreat was an awesome experience on several levels. Throughout the entire weekend, there were opportunities to get to know people better and share our lives. Whether it was a late night walk on the beach with a group of guys, chatting over a meal about what we were learning, or playing a late night game of dominoes, the opportunities for true fellowship abounded."

The most intense part of the annual retreat is always the Saturday evening Surrender Ceremony. Participants usually bring some object to symbolize that which they are giving to the Lord in an act of repentance and trust. One participant described the evening as "sitting in an atomic explosion of love. I saw Christ sitting in every seat of that room." Following the acts of surrender, all received communion, which I was able to serve with my father, Jim (this being the first time the two of us, ordained in separate traditions, were able to serve communion together). Jim began by describing the Last Supper as the "first surrender ceremony." For, as Sy had said, "You're not surrendering to God; God gives all of himself to you."

One retreat participant made these notes: "So many times we have something in our lives that we battle with God over – that we do not want to surrender because it seems too hard or the



*52 people attended  
the Taking Back Ground  
annual retreat.  
March 12-14*

*"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

future is too unclear. However, when we finally surrender it, the battle is over and we can walk forward with God by our side.”

Following the retreat, Sy had one more speaking engagement – First Church of God in Vancouver where he offered additional teaching to a full church. Many of those who had met him at the Family and Friends group and the retreat were there, eager to learn more.

In one of his presentations, Sy gave a definition of graciousness: “an act of hospitality in which a person of lesser status, or a stranger, is valued, welcomed and provided for by a more powerful person.” We all felt that graciousness in the presence of this modern prophet.

What an extraordinary month this has been – the receiving of the M. J. Murdock Foundation grant towards the purchase of the house, the arrival of your matching gifts, the approval of the bank loan to make the purchase possible, the coming of this internationally-recognized speaker, and of course the week-by-week miracles of God’s healing and redemption. Thank you for being a part of this.

Serving Him,



Jason Thompson  
Executive Director

### ministry update

Having now received the J.M. Murdock grant of \$212,000, sufficient matching funds, and approval for a bank loan, the purchase of the Fellowship House is progressing well. PF is enormously grateful to the Murdock Foundation, as well as to Hinson Memorial Church for making the house an affordable purchase. Gifts continue to come in from our faithful donors, all of which will reduce the mortgage and release money for direct ministry.

.....

We have some small renovation projects underway: the carpeting of the offices, the creation of a resource library, and the renovation of a second-floor porch to be used as a prayer room, especially for the use of the Upper Room interns.

.....

A newcomer has arrived in the PF family - on Feb. 25, *Taking Back Ground* leader Tara Cooper gave birth to a son, Judah. Congratulations to Tara and Adam!

### thanks

A special thanks to Eric Ruppel for the new carpet in our offices. Eric supplied donated carpet and installed it as a gift to the ministry.

.....

- to Rosemary, a staff member at Breakaway Lodge for preparing our meals during the *Taking Back Ground* retreat.

.....

- to Richard, our neighbor and Kermit our tenant; for beautifying the yard.

.....

- to the intercessors for *Taking Back Ground* through whose prayers miracles have come.

### prayer

Please pray for Bill and Jody Dolan, for the safe arrival of their first child.

.....

Continue to pray for the men and women who will be attending the third section of the *Taking Back Ground* program. especially for those who are approaching graduation.

.....

Please pray for family members who are distressed by loved ones lost in confusion.

**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 1**  
*Greater Portland Bible MOPS program*  
Speaker: Jason Thompson

**april 5**  
*Monthly Board Meeting.*  
Board members and staff: 7 p.m.

**april 6, 13, 20, 27**  
*Taking Back Ground* section 3 Discipleship program for men and women seeking freedom from same-sex attractions.  
Tuesdays 7 p.m.

**april 7**  
*George Fox University*  
Speaker: Jason Thompson

**april 9**  
*Family and Friends Group*  
If you have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement and support, Evening presenter: Don McCleod on “How Healing Happens”.  
*Second Friday of each month: 7 p.m.*

*Check website for additional updates at [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com) Contact office to schedule a speaker or for a personal appointment.*