

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update August 2007



PORTLAND
fellowship

Last month, I attended my ninth Annual Exodus Conference in Irvine, California. Each year the conference proves to be a great time of connecting with other leaders who work in similar ministries from all around the world. This year was no different, but started out a bit interesting.

The day I arrived, I learned that some of the students from the multicultural class on campus got drunk the night before, vandalized some of the Exodus material, and wrote provocative things in chalk on the sidewalk outside the leaders' rooms indicating, of course, that we were not welcome. I also was aware that two miles away, a group of people who were at odds with the mission of Exodus were holding their own conference titled, "Beyond Ex-gay: A survivor's Conference." And to top it off the media was having a field day after cornering Alan Chambers, President of Exodus, on the issue of "change" questioning whether people actually experience it 100%. I knew I was in for a fascinating week.

Being someone who is not afraid of confrontation, I went that evening to the dorm quad that housed the 30 or so summer school students. They were again involved in drinking but invited me in. My first question to some of the slightly inebriated guys was, "So out of curiosity, who was it that vandalized our stuff, and more importantly, why?" At first everyone denied any involvement, and then one guy slipped a confession: "Because you guys are homophobes and try to change gays and that is wrong." I was grateful for his honesty. Within a matter a minutes several people were huddled around with their cheap beers in hand listening to my story of how God transformed my life from one of bondage of unwanted sexual desires to a life of freedom and peace. All week long I would see these students on campus and it was evident that they had a different perspective on the core message of the conference.

The evening before the Ex-ex-gay conference started, several of us went to their campus to pray. (If you are a little confused, "ex-ex-gays" are men and women who sought change but then found the journey to be too painful and now are content being gay as well as speaking out against the message of freedom). All sorts of prayers were prayed that night, and the prayer of my heart was that the Lord would minister to these men and women and would forgive us if we, in any way, had contributed to their wounds.

The day of their conference I went with two other leaders to visit them. They were grateful we stopped by. A great sadness and a measure of confusion came over me. What happened to these men and women? In what ways do our ministries contribute to their pain? What are we saying or not saying, doing, or not doing that we can learn to do differently. Obviously, our foundational understanding of God's truth is different than theirs and these differences can never be reconciled. At the same time, we in Exodus ministries don't always do everything right. There is room for us to learn.

Alan Chamber's comments on CNN and in the *Los Angeles Times* were an example of our need to learn how better to communicate the powerful transforming work of Christ. How can we adequately share this amazing process to a world that doesn't know Jesus? How do we talk about the work of sanctification, struggles, freedom from bondage, and temptation to a world (and even many in the church) that doubts that change is even possible?

Many don't find my answer satisfactory. My answer is simply to live my life and boldly share how God is at work in and through me. He continues to refine me and will do so until I die. Homosexual desires have no power over my life. Not for a moment have I considered leaving my wife and children



Over 850 people attended this years Freedom Conference.

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

ISAIAH 61 : 1

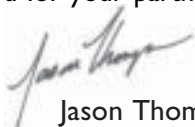
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and entering into a relationship with a man. Twenty years ago, that was much of what I desired. Am I a changed man? What if, as some do, I am tempted to abandon my life of obedience for the old life I once found temporarily satisfying, but in the end still choose obedience? Would I be a changed man? You decide.

How did all this “change” happen? Do you have a few hours? I’d be happy to talk about God’s love and concern for me. I would be pleased to share with you how he rebuked me, how he disciplined me, how his spiritual arms of love held me in times of weakness, and how he provided relationships in my life that blessed me. And that’s only the beginning.

Please join me in praying for the students in the multicultural class and for the countless others that are misinformed - that they would hear the truth of God. Let that truth be proclaimed in the church, on the television, and even in the dorm rooms – if need be over cheap beer. I also pray for all who serve at Portland Fellowship that we will be humble enough to receive correction and encouragement in the work God calls us to do. And for those who have been wounded by the church and by our ministries - that they would find healing in the Lord. And lastly, pray for Exodus and all of us as we communicate God’s transformational power.

Thank you for your partnership,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director



Jason with fellow ministry director Christine Snerring of Florida.

the map - interpreted for the deaf

THE MAP is an interactive CD ROM designed for youth, and helpful for anyone who struggles with homosexual feelings or attractions. This valuable resource includes, video testimonies, Q&A, and 20 lessons that will lead a person to understand God’s will for their life.

We are excited to share that this program will be available for the Deaf Community later this month.

Bob Ayres, founder of Deaf Youth Ministries/DTQuest took on the project of importing actual people into each scene to interpret using American Sign Language. They also added closed caption to all the dialogue making it accessible to everyone.

We have lowered the price of the Map CD as well as the interpreted version on DVD, making it more affordable. Youth may purchase these products for half the normal price. For ordering information contact us through the web or by phone.

prayer

for Jeremy and Jimmy (former interns) and Jason as they travel to Ecuador and share of God’s power and grace. Pray for safety as they travel and for clarity as they communicate.

for the leaders of the *Taking Back Ground* program this fall, that they would return from their summer break refreshed and ready for this next year.

for Jason and his wife Amy as they prepare for the birth of a son in September.

for the staff of PF as we head into the fall, that the Lord would give us wisdom and strength as we enter into this busy season.

for our new Upper Room Interns - as they prepare for 9 months of growth, service and learning in community.

for the new and returning participants of *Taking Back Ground*, that they would press into all that God is wanting to do in their lives.

for provision for this ministry, that the Lord would bring new ongoing financial partners to 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.

events calender

august 3

Big World Bigger God: Youth Camp
Drew will be speaking in a morning chapel service

august 4

Love Won Out

Focus on the Family’s Love Won Out ministry exhorts and equips the church to respond in a Christ-like way to the issue of homosexuality.

august 6-18

Jason will be traveling to Ecuador, speaking at conferences and helping train leaders for our sister ministry *Camino de Salida*.

august 17

Family and Friends Group

For those who have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement, and support. 7p.m.

august 29-31

Staff Retreat

The staff of Portland Fellowship will be taking a few days to plan, pray and fellowship..

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com