



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update February 2007

Millions of people saw through that car window on the evening news. They heard the television reporter getting an evasive answer from a pastor charged with sexual misconduct. They saw his wife and children in that car, looking frightened. They saw a shot of the church building. Before long, they were hearing church members being interviewed. They are angry, defensive, confused. Soon, the pastor resigns, and statements are issued by the pastor and the church.

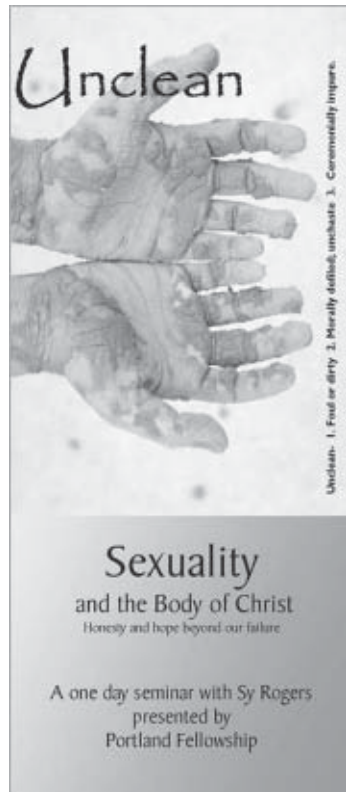
It doesn't always happen this way.

The fall of church leaders may make the local news program, or be only a story on page 2 of the newspaper. Most often, everything is handled quietly, perhaps by a special meeting of the church board and a dismissal of the pastor, youth leader, or church staff member.

We at PF are sometimes sought out by pastors and church workers who find themselves caught in a web of sexual misconduct. They feel like they are news stories waiting to happen. Jim, a retired pastor himself, understands the temptations – lonely hours alone in the church office, where the computer becomes a “friend”; needy church members all too willing to “understand” the church worker’s pain and frustration; huge pressures to stay energetic, creative, and available to so many people. So few people to turn to for help when things are going very badly.

The undeniable truth is that many of our pastors and church workers are addicted to internet pornography. Many are seeking solace in inappropriate sexual relationships. Countless men and women whom we look to for spiritual guidance and support feel themselves trapped in a lonely, hopeless place.

The fear faced by a pastor struggling with sexual brokenness is great. He could lose his job, his family – everything – and be left with a life of shame and disgrace. We sometimes talk with pastors who require the most confidential arrangements for a meeting.



There are several ingredients in this situation: first, we love to idolize our leaders. To idolize is different from holding to high standards. Scripture lays down great requirements of those who would lead or teach the church. They must live exemplary lives. They must live in sexual purity. But do they need to be super-human? Second, we all live in a hyper-sexualized society. Of course, all of us *are* that society. Our own tastes for constant stimulation and instant gratification, and our carelessness about spiritual discipline adds to this perilous environment. We are not in a position to throw stones.

And third, we are afraid to talk.

Sexual brokenness remains largely a taboo subject. The church is engaged in a spiritual battle that threatens the physical, emotional and spiritual health of all of us – our leaders, our friends, our children, ourselves, and we are often unwilling to talk about what is happening in the front lines. Too often we don't know what we need to win this battle. We would prefer not to know the dangers. Perhaps, we are afraid of what we will find in ourselves.

“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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How did sexuality, that beautiful gift of God by which man and woman love one another intimately, and by which we bring children into the world – becoming co-creators with God – how did a thing meant for life and goodness become so shameful? And why can't the church – God's instrument for healing and salvation deal openly with a direct assault upon its own health?

It's easy to ask the questions. But let's look for some answers.

Portland Fellowship offers a seminar each year to address issues of sexual redemption. Often we focus on homosexuality, our specific mission. But this year we want to broaden the conversation. Sy Rogers, an internationally acclaimed speaker, will be in Portland on March 31, 2007 to facilitate a conference titled "Unclean". Sy will address the situation in which we in the church find ourselves. From his broad experience, Sy will offer insights into our society's diseases, as well as into the very personal, painful struggle that the sexually broken face. But in the midst of all of this there is hope. I urge your attendance, and I ask you to help spread the word about this important event.

We have just concluded another calendar year, and all the bookkeeping that comes with that. This task makes me all the more mindful of the faithfulness of PF's supporters. I am personally grateful, but I cannot fail to express on behalf of the many men and women who come here for help their gratitude as well. Thank you as well for your prayers and words of support.

In His service,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director

retreat

Each year, participants of the Taking Back Ground program have the wonderful opportunity of a retreat in Gearhart, Oregon. This year's retreat will be March 9-11. If you are a participant or an alumnus of the *Taking Back Ground* program please consider joining us for a refreshing time with God, and a purposeful weekend of encouragement and rest. Please contact the office to register.

annual planning

The staff and Board met January 25th to recap 2006 and plan for the implementing of our vision for 2007 and beyond. We continue to find creative ways to reach the community with new resources and powerful programs. Thank you for being a partner in the work God is doing in and through Portland Fellowship.

coffee?

Do you have questions about Portland Fellowship or would you simply like to meet with Jason, PF's director? Please give us a call, and we would love to meet with you over coffee or tea.

prayer

for those who will be considering the Upper Room Intern Program this fall. Pray God's direction in their lives.

for the men, women, and youth around this state who do not have support available in their area. Specifically: calls and emails from The Dalles, Bend, and Medford. Pray the Lord will meet their needs.

for the Exodus office in Orlando Florida. Pray for God's wisdom, direction, and safety.

for the preparation of the March 31 conference "Unclean". Pray the local body of believers will attend and take an honest look at our failure and God's plan for sexual redemption and personal purity.

for those who are involved in each of our groups -*Taking Back Ground, Family and Friends, HIV/AIDS, Internship, personal mentoring and counseling.*

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

feb 6

National Leadership Teleconference
Jason hosts this monthly call

feb 6, 13, 20, 27

Taking Back Ground
Discipleship program for men, women, and wives impacted by same-sex attraction. 7 p.m.

feb 11

Portland Mennonite Church
Jason will be speaking: 9 am

feb 12-13

George Fox University.
Jason will be speaking in different academic settings.

feb 19

Family and Friends Group
For those who have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement and support.
Third Monday of each month: 7 p.m.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com