



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update June 2007

The question is often asked, "Does everyone who serves at Portland Fellowship struggle with same-sex desires?" The answer is no. We are blessed to have men and women who have never personally dealt with this struggle, but have a heart for those who do. These men and women come to serve as volunteer group leaders, or to be interns, or to come alongside us in other ways.

Often, perhaps in Open Group, someone will sit listening to the conversation about sexual struggle, then say something like, "I felt a little funny coming here because I don't struggle with this. But I have my own struggle with sin. Let me tell you about it..." For our participants, these men and women are always a big encouragement. They come to realize that their struggle with sin doesn't separate them from other Christians; it actually unites them. We've had people pick up a copy of *Taking Back Ground*, thumb through the topics, then remark, "If you changed a few words, emphasized *my struggle*, this would be for me."

That's because we are a discipleship program. As we love to say, "It's not a journey from gay to straight; it's a journey from brokenness to holiness." God has given us the ability to speak into the lives of men and women affected by same-sex attraction, but the message is: put your faith in Jesus, surrender to God's will, allow him to guide you, heal you, sanctify you. By responding to God, you will find him meeting your most personal needs.

Many of the tools that we need in order to receive God's healing of our sexual brokenness are therefore the same that all Christians need: the ability to say "no" to our flesh, disciplines of Bible study, prayer, and time alone with God. Last summer, we used Tuesday nights in July and August to look closely at some of these disciplines in the context of sexual healing. We called the series, *Deeply Rooted*. We met for some teaching, then broke into small groups to discuss how we had learned to apply the previous week's lesson.

By popular demand, we will offer *Deeply Rooted* again this summer. Many of our participants will use these sessions as a way to stay in touch with PF during the summer recess, and also to acquire more skills for their walk with Jesus. This year, we are inviting persons other than those who have been in *Taking Back Ground* to join us for this program. Listen to one of our current participants: "...Last year, I wasn't sure about PF. I only knew that I wanted change and I wasn't sure that the PF ministry was the route to take. Then last year's summer session *Deeply Rooted* happened. I came away from that summer session with a better picture of how deep God's love truly is for me and how simple everyday activities can bring me into a more meaningful relationship with Christ and others around me."

The program is directed by staff member Steve Baliko, with other staff members assisting. Here are some of the topics we plan to cover:

- The Psalms** – how to use God's Word, to deepen our prayer life.
- Confession and Forgiveness** – making self-examination and letting go of things we are tempted to hold against others a regular part of our day.
- Simplicity** – looking at how our "stuff" can own us; traveling lighter so we can respond to God more easily.



"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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Solitude and Stillness – making space for God in our hurried lives; quieting our hearts and resting in God.

Self-Control – distinguishing between punishing ourselves and the practice of preferring the way of the Spirit instead of the demands of the flesh.

The final topic is **Innocence and Wonder**, which in the hands of the program's leader ought to be a time of real fun and delight.



Deeply Rooted will be offered Tuesday nights, 7 p.m. beginning July 10 and continuing through August 28. If you are interested, please call us (503-235-6364) to have a place reserved for you

As is our custom, Tuesday nights in June will be Open Group, also beginning at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome; no pre-registration is asked. The circle usually includes former participants, their friends (perhaps a pastor), and people who simply want to come and "test the water." This is another way to come alongside brothers and sisters who are seeking God in the context of sexual struggle.

Join us if you can. I know that this *Update* reaches some of you who are unable to be here in person, but who are still very much a part of our work through your prayers and gifts. Please know of our deep appreciation.

I am praying that God will bless your summer with many good things.

In His service,

Jason Thompson
Executive Director

a visit to ecuador

Last month we reported on the visit of Betty Van Engen from Quito, Ecuador. Their ministry, Camino de Salida, continues to grow as more leaders step up to assist the work. Now it's time to visit them.

Each year they offer a conference to educate and train those who serve and attend the ministry. This year they have asked Jason Thompson and former intern Jeremy Gordon-Smith to speak at both the conference and training following the conference.

If this sounds familiar, it's because Portland Fellowship's founder, Phil Hobizal went to Quito in the summer of 2002. He had an amazing experience teaching, training and encouraging the Ecuadorian people.

Would you be in prayer for this conference, for the travels and for the funding of this trip? If you have a desire to assist in the financial needs, please earmark any donations to Camino de Salida. The total cost of both flights will be \$1700.

We look forward to a wonderful report on the work being done in Quito, Ecuador.

thanks

...a special thanks to the men and women who served on the Taking Back Ground leadership team for 2006-2007. We were blessed to have a powerful worship team, faithful prayer partners, and outstanding small group leaders. Portland Fellowship would not be complete without your love, support and service.

...we thank Intown Presbyterian Church and Multnomah Bible College for inviting us to share in your services and classes.

prayer

...for the 17 men and women who are completing the two year Taking Back Ground program. Pray they will continue their walk with the Lord with protection and blessings.

...for preparations of the Deeply Rooted Summer series at Portland Fellowship

...for the hundreds of people who will be attending the Exodus Conference. Pray for vision, blessing, refreshment, and hope.

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events calender

june 2

Pure Life Alliance
Jason will be training leaders for this purity group.

june 12

National Leadership Teleconference
Jason hosts this monthly call

june 5, 12, 19, 26

Open Group
For questions about Portland Fellowship or to hear from men and women walking in freedom, please come and join us at 7:00 p.m. We especially extend an invitation to our local pastors.

june 15

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

june 26 - july 1

Exodus Annual Conference
Irvine, California. For more information contact www.exodus.to

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com