



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## With a Thankful and Heavy Heart *by Catherine Chapman*

*I'm not a big fan of goodbyes, but it feels like that is all I am saying lately. For those of you who do not know, I am leaving the staff of Portland Fellowship. It is hard to see those words in print. Making the decision to leave was extremely difficult.*

My heart is here. My friends and comrades are here on staff. The volunteer leadership team I have worked with are beautiful people with amazing hearts. The women I served have each grabbed my heart in unique ways. I feel that I leave a lot of me here, and that I carry a lot of you with me as I move forward. My heart is heavy with joy for all the Lord has done and continues to do, and heavy with sorrow at the thought of all I will miss as I leave.

Over the last three years, in addition to working at PF, I have also worked one day a week at Agape Youth and Family Ministries as a lay counselor. Working at both PF and Agape gave me the unique opportunity to explore many different aspects of ministry. I have found that my passions and God-given skills align when I am counseling women who have experienced childhood sexual trauma. So I am following that path by going to school full-time to complete my counseling degrees and by working more days at Agape. I am excited that the Lord has led me to work that I absolutely love -- not everyone gets that opportunity. But there is a cost to leaving someplace that feels like a second home, and for that reason I find myself grieving the loss of PF.

I would like to share my journey over the last few years at PF as well as give you an idea of where women's ministry is headed. There have been so many amazing moments of watching God at work, of knowing He is very real and present.

I began working as the Women's Ministry Director in March, 2004, and at first felt that I had been dropped in the deep end and needed to learn to swim fairly quickly. There is really nothing -- no job, no personal life experience -- that can fully prepare someone to work at PF. It is a unique, life-changing, profound, exhausting, beautiful, live-out-loud, unpredictable, vulnerable, challenging, humbling, passionate, 'hang on for the ride' kind of experience. And hang on I did! Self-reliance went out the door as I leaned heavily on the Lord to face the many challenges and decisions the position required. I wish I could say that, because I was listening to the Lord, I always knew what to do. I did not. My first year was full of ups and downs, of trial and error. Going into my second year, I began to relax more with a deeper understanding of God's presence in my life and in the lives of the women seeking help at PF. I am fully in His hands. They are fully in His hands. It is very freeing to leave work each day knowing that the Creator of the universe is paying attention to each individual's life. It is not up to me to save anyone.

Memories... There have been too many amazing moments and people to try to capture them all on this page, but here are a few of my favorites. The best part of working at PF is the amazing staff! Working with Jason, Drew, Steve, and Jim has been an incredible blessing in my life. With them I experienced a sense of community that I had never experienced in a work environment before. We took a number of trips together,



*Catherine sharing a moment with former intern Robyn Gates*

some work related, some specifically designed to enhance the strength of the team. During those times we shared our dreams with each other. We shared our hopes for each other. And we laughed a lot. I will miss those times the most.

The most profound ministry experiences consistently took place at the Taking Back Ground yearly retreat with the participants in our discipleship series. There are no words good enough to express how tangible the Lord becomes during this weekend at the coast. Men and women wrestle with the holy God to the point of giving Him those things that bind and bond them to their past. During the surrender service, the participants get real with God in the context of community, and we watch people transform before our eyes. I have never seen this level of authentic community created in any other context than at our yearly retreats. Having been a part of these weekends has changed my life and concept of how God lives on this earth.

Another highlight of ministry was my experience as a small group leader for the TBG series. Each Tuesday night, the last hour of the evening is spent in small groups. This is a time for the participants to be real about their lives, to encourage and confront each other, and to share life stories that many have never been willing or able to speak until being part of their group. Each week I was deeply moved by the women's willingness to be honest about what's going on in their head and heart; by their courage to continue forward in the face of extreme obstacles; and by their drive to work with the Lord to untangle the ties that have bound them in darkness. These beautiful women have strengthened my faith in our mighty God and I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to witness their journey toward wholeness.

Another unique aspect to the ministry of Portland Fellowship is our internship program. Men and women come from all over the states to live in the dorm above our offices. They spend time in weekly training in all aspects of ministry and join with staff members to experience and be mentored in hands-on ministry work. Since they live in the house we work in, these men and women add to the feeling of living and working in a community environment, and through sharing ministry with them I have grown, been challenged, and changed.

There are many people who have inspired me along the way, but Sue Platt stands out in my mind. When I began

working at PF Sue was a participant in our Taking Back Ground discipleship series. She was rebellious, angry, and riding the fence about her decision to follow the Lord or not. Once she made the decision to follow Him, she began to be transformed. Her church family supported her through thick and thin and today Sue is a changed woman - a beautiful, passionate, authentic, seeker of the Lord. After finishing the discipleship series, she became a small group leader. And now she is following the Lord into new areas of ministry including speaking opportunities and more responsibility in leadership. Sue's story was featured in our newsletter a few months back.

If you would like to be inspired again, go the PF website and look for her name in the "stories" page. There have been many times along the way when I have felt discouraged and wondered if God is paying attention. Then I am reminded of



*Catherine celebrating graduation night with TBG Leaders  
Sue Platt and Robyn Gates*

Sue's story of transformation and of God's power to save no matter what a person has experienced, and no matter how far they have wandered from Him. Thank you Sue for being an inspiration to me!

My time at Portland Fellowship will close in August and as of the writing of this newsletter, we have not hired someone new to fill the Women's Ministry Director position. The Lord has been consistently faithful to Portland Fellowship through the years and He will provide the right person at the right time. We are not interested in rushing ahead of Him to fill this position. While we wait on the Lord, two women from our TBG leadership, Sue Platt and Suzanne Berryessa, have stepped in as interim leaders for women's ministry. They have teamed up to offer the needed care and direction for the women seeking help at PF. We have full confidence in both of these women to continue providing encouragement, love, and hope to our female participants. Please pray for them as they take on these new responsibilities.

To each of you who have prayed for me, encouraged me, and supported me over the last few years, thank you. To each of you who have challenged my growth, thank you. I am forever changed by my experience serving at PF. With a thankful and heavy heart, I say goodbye...

## 2007-2008 interns announced

Each year, Portland Fellowship invites a number of men and women to participate in our *Upper Room Intern Program*. The interns work alongside staff and volunteer leaders learning to do ministry with the sexually broken. Each week they will spend six hours in classroom instruction, will co-lead *Taking Back Ground* groups with our volunteer leaders, engage in other ministry tasks, and receive weekly mentoring. Interns often spend the balance of their week in other educational pursuits, often at a local seminary, or are engaged in other employment.

This is the sixth year of the *Upper Room* program. Again this year, we have very talented persons coming from across the nation, called by God to hone their skills and prepare themselves for specialized ministry.



**Jason Bigelow** comes to us from Escanaba, Michigan. As preparation for his internship, Jason spent last year in Portland participating in our *Taking Back Ground* program. This past summer he spent directing a day camp for the Salvation Army, in which holds the rank of Soldier. Jason has had opportunities to speak to churches, lead worship services, and to write of his journey to healing and freedom from homosexuality. During his internship, he hopes to work toward completion of his degree in Psychology. As Jason tells his story, he “boasts” only of Christ Jesus, and his sufficient grace which is made perfect in weakness.

**Joshua Coy**'s most recent ministry has been working as the Technical Arts Coordinator for a church in Nashville, Tennessee. Prior to that, he worked with Campus Crusade doing program direction, writing, and other responsibilities. He writes, “My prayer is, ‘God, I feel like you’ve built me for full-time ministry. What do I do to move forward in that?’” Josh, as have interns in the past, will seek God’s will for his life in the midst of community activities, supervised ministry, and mentoring.



**Rick Reed** will be coming from Oklahoma City, where he currently works as a physical therapy technician. He is a teacher of Japanese, and was previously a teacher of English in Minto, Japan. Like many who come to be interns, Rick’s goals are both specific and general: “I want to learn how to reach out to those who seek help for any form of sexual addiction, with my main focus on those who struggle with homosexuality...I want to be more sound in God’s word and to be able to share more effectively...to be stronger in my faith.”

**Daniel Pullman** is well known to us at PF, having completed the two years of *Taking Back Ground*. Daniel lives and works in Tualatin, Oregon, where he is employed in electronic microscopy, a field in which he holds an Associate Degree and has received honors. Daniel found his experience at PF life-changing, and wants to explore ministry possibilities. He writes, “I feel that every Christ-follower is called to ministry....Paul says it so beautifully...his descriptions of the church are filled with love and compassion not only for the church body but also for the community surrounding them.”



On Labor Day, the interns will join Jim Thompson and Steve Baliko, co-leaders of the program at a picnic reception. From there, all of us will place ourselves at God’s disposal. We can predict what will be taught from the syllabus, but cannot predict how God will lead each of us, and all of us together, to a deeper level of obedience to Him. For that, all of us in the program ask your fervent prayer.

## new resource available for the Deaf Community: The Map Interpreted DVD



THE MAP, a DVD interpreted for the hearing-impaired is now available for purchase on the PF website! This product is an adaptation of The Map CD-Rom and has been enhanced with closed captioning and American Sign Language interpretation. THE MAP DVD includes: sixteen interactive questions answered by several people in a cool 50’s diner, and answers by top ex-gay youth workers including: Jason Thompson, Director of Portland Fellowship in Portland, Oregon, Alan Chambers of Exodus International, Florida. Mike Haley from Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, CO, Christine Sneeringer and Victor Bowers from Florida. Three young men and three young women share their personal stories. Each testimony is approx. 5 minutes in length and describes how God has helped them find freedom from their unwanted homosexuality. You watch their stories in a movie theater! This is a great resource for anyone struggling with homosexuality in the Deaf Community.

## september - october calendar & services

september 4, 11, 18, 25

### Leadership Training

Small group training for the leaders of the *Taking Back Ground* 2007-08 program. 7 p.m.

sept 6, 13, 20, 27

october 4, 11, 18, 25

### Upper Room Intern Program

These first two months of training will include: orientation, personality testing, basic counseling skills, and small group dynamics.

sept 21 & oct 19

### Family & Friends Group

For those who have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement and support. Join us the third Friday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

september 25

### Concordia University

Drew will be speaking to the Intro to Christian Ministry class and sharing about the work of Portland Fellowship.

october 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

### Taking Back Ground

Discipliship program for men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions.

october 15

### Christian Life Center - Yakima WA

Drew will be speaking and helping train church leaders to minister to the sexually broken.

### Are you interested?

If you are interested in having a staff member or intern speak at your church, youth group, college, or fellowship group contact the PF office.

### Additional updates:

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

### Counseling and youth support

Can be arranged through the office.

## a summer of discipline

The word “discipline” does not conjure up warm fuzzy feelings for most of us. It either involves the harshness of correction or the long arduous process of doing something (or more often, not doing something) that is supposed to be “good” for us. Eugene Peterson has a book entitled, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, and that is an apt description of what the spiritual disciplines equip us to accomplish over the length and breadth of our Christian walk. We walk toward Christ, “the author and finisher of our faith.” We weren’t able to initiate this life of salvation and we certainly can’t accomplish it without God’s help. The point of spiritual discipline is to put us in closer proximity of the help that is ours in abundance through Jesus.

During our Deeply Rooted Summer series, about 30 of us have been experiencing a pursuit of the tools that make the spiritual disciplines more of a delight, as well as more of an active, practical reality. Each week, a specific opportunity was given to practice the disciplines. Oftentimes this has involved giving up something in an act of self-control. For the Discipline of Simplicity, we were invited to comb through our possessions and bring ten items that we could get rid of and not replace with more stuff. Another week found us using only the words of the Psalms every time we went to pray. After each exercise, there was a follow-up discussion about what aspects went well and what common pitfalls were experienced as we attempted to implement that specific discipline in our lives. A chance to practice in the community of other people is of great value. Together, we have learned from each other as we encountered similar struggles to stay on track or common joys as we sensed a deepening relationship with God.

Thank you, God, for a wonderful summer of drawing closer to your heart. May you be with all of us as we daily live in the discipline of loving you and being loved by you.

## prayer requests

The staff and leadership team of Portland Fellowship are so grateful for those who partner with us in this work through faithful prayer. Please be in prayer...

...for those living with the reality of HIV/AIDS; and pray that the churches will respond with the love of Christ to those who have been isolated by this disease.

...for God’s continued protection of the staff’s hearts as we deal with the brokenness of those who come to this place.

...for strugglers who are seeking healing, but are confused and afraid, that they will find their way to help.

...for our interns, as they begin a year of learning, and deepening of faith.

...for those who are beginning *Taking Back Ground* this fall.



P O R T L A N D

f e l l o w s h i p

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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**Jim Thompson**  
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