



PORTLAND  
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

I first learned about the ministry of Portland Fellowship in 1995 while working at the Starbucks on Hawthorne across the street from the Fellowship House. Jason, along with John Paulk (former staff member) and Phil Hobizal (ministry founder) used to come in for coffee on a regular basis. I don't recall our first conversation about PF, but over time I became intrigued enough about the ministry to want to learn more. Early on, I began my support of PF by giving them my weekly pound of coffee for their office, then I started making small, irregular donations.

Over the time that I worked at that location Jason and I became friends and through that relationship I learned more about the history and vision of the ministry. I was excited to hear about an organization that was reaching out to and supporting people struggling with homosexual feelings. Churches have come a long way, but for many years they haven't seemed to know how to support someone in their congregation struggling with this issue. I knew that I wanted to support a ministry that was providing a safe, Christ-centered solution to an issue that had so much controversy and stigma attached to it.

My wife Rachel and I attended one of PF's annual seminars where we learned about how broken family relationships so clearly contribute to the establishment of homosexual feelings. We listened to a professional counselor explain how a child's legitimate need for closeness with, and acceptance from their same-sex parent can become sexualized if they enter into adolescence with that need unfulfilled. And most significantly, we heard amazing testimonies of how God changed broken lives through the ministry of Portland Fellowship. We heard from young women who felt lost and rejected by God because of sexual feelings that they didn't ask for or want; and, from men who had felt the emptiness of pursuing a life given over to "sexual freedom." These same men and women now spoke of lives transformed and hope restored. They spoke of how God gently led, guided, or carried them into Portland Fellowship and how He faithfully walked with them as they began the hard work of surrendering themselves to Him daily. It was the testimonies that sold me on PF, because each person that shared confirmed that PF made room for God to do the work, and for Him to receive the glory.

Over the last fourteen years I've been a financial supporter of Portland Fellowship because I've seen the fruit of God's love and faithfulness in the testimonies of those who have gone through Taking Back Ground or who have attended the Wives' Support Group. I can't get enough of those stories. I read every issue of newsletter and am awed by the courage of the participants/authors and awed by the transforming power and love of Christ.

Besides Taking Back Ground and the other support groups at PF, I've been impressed with the creative resources they've developed to spread the ministry beyond the walls of The Fellowship House. Seven years ago they developed The Map, an interactive CD Rom that allows a young struggler to access materials similar to Taking Back Ground and go through it with a trusted mentor. Always looking for more opportunities to bring healing to strugglers, PF developed "reachtruth.com". Reachtruth is a web-based platform that updated The MAP for a wider audience with easier accessibility through the internet. It allows people to work through the materials with



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

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a mentor and provides increased interaction, weekly devotionals and feedback for each question they answer. Ground-breaking! Jason reported recently that there are now over 200 Reachtruth participants working through the material, each with a mentor! That is hundreds of people that may not have been able to find the kind of support PF offers where they live!

Let me tell you about one more thing I love about Portland Fellowship: they're frugal! What they can accomplish with the support they receive is amazing. Believe me, I'm on the Board of Directors and I get to see how they spend their money. There are over 50 participants that attend Taking Back Ground each Tuesday during the program year. Additional support is provided for wives, friends and family, men living with HIV/AIDS and weekly discipleship and training provided by the staff. Portland Fellowship now has sister ministries in Albany, OR, South Korea and Ecuador! The reach of Portland Fellowship is now literally global! Thanks to a wonderful group of committed volunteers, Portland Fellowship is able to accomplish this and more with only TWO AND A HALF paid positions!

A few years ago Jason asked me to join the Board of Directors. Since joining, I've had more opportunities to see PF in action and to hear more of the moving testimonies of how God has transformed lives, given hope, restored marriages, healed wounds, and ministered to brokenness. I enjoy feeling a part of God's work there through my participation on the board and through my financial support. I encourage you to find a way to be involved. It can be as simple as attending an Open Group night, or the graduation ceremony at the end of Taking Back Ground; or you can call the office and ask how you can volunteer. I know you will be blessed if you do. And please, continue to support Portland Fellowship financially. Your gift will continue to bear great fruit.

In Christ,



**Eric Murfitt, Board of Directors, Chair**

### **taking back ground sign-up**

October 6th may seem like a long time away but it will be here before you know it, and so will the beginning of another year of *tacking back ground*. If you are interested in going through this two-year discipleship program then please contact the office for more information about sign-up.

### **pray**

...for all those who will be returning for their second year of *taking back ground* and for all the men and women who God is prompting to take the brave step of committing to the program for the first time.

...for our leaders and their families to be well rested and refreshed as they prepare for leadership training this fall. Ask God to provide just the right leaders for the needs of those who are coming to PF for help.



### **introducing annie bella-rose baliko**

On Monday July 13th, Steve and Darla Baliko had their first baby. She was born at 12:17pm and weighed 9lbs 5oz, measuring 21 inches long. Momma and baby are doing great and Steve is a proud poppa who is widely proclaiming that Annie is the most beautiful baby in the world. "We are grateful to God for the miracle of her life and the great honor to love her as she grows into the woman God has made her to be."

**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 calendar**

#### **august 21**

*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.*

#### **august 7th**

*LivingWell HIV/AIDS Support Group*  
An evening of sharing life, prayer and encouragement for men who are HIV positive. Please call the office for more details if you are interested in attending.

#### **september 8, 15, 22, 29**

*Leadership Training*  
Month-long training for our *Taking Back Ground* leaders. Contact the office if you are interested in being a leader this fall. 7-9 pm

Check website for additional updates  
at [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)