



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

Have you ever had the experience of feeling trapped, of feeling all alone and without hope, and then – unexpectedly – you find yourself in the presence of people who understand exactly how you feel, and show you a way out of your misery? Have you ever had that experience? I have.

I will never forget the day I found Portland Fellowship. For the first time, I felt like there was hope for my seemingly hopeless situation. There were people here who could identify with me, who could understand me. And I could trust them. I immediately recognized that they too loved God and desired righteousness, that they too had felt trapped by their homosexual attractions, but they could show me a way forward.

For many years since that first day, I have had a deep desire to see other men and women share that same experience. Not the same experience in a physical sense; that's not possible. The door I walked through over twenty years ago was in a different building. PF was smaller, less structured, and somewhat casual. The building has changed, the music has changed, all the people have changed – but God's message of hope has not changed at all!

Over the past 20 years, Portland Fellowship has worked hard to do just that: offer people hope. One of the greatest privileges in our office is being the person who happens to pick up the phone when someone is calling for the first time. You can *feel* them receive the hope you are giving.

If you were present as we were taking one of those calls, you'd hear statements like: "Sure, all of us are people who have struggled with same sex attractions." "Yes, we know what you mean." "Gotta' warn you, it's not easy, but it's *absolutely possible* for you to get out of this misery. I've done it – many have." "Of course, we'd love to have you come in and talk more about where you're at and where you like to see changes happen in your life."

That's the ideal phone call. Many calls don't end that way – with the "come on down to the office" because the caller is too far from Portland, or any other Exodus ministry to be seen personally. The calls we receive give evidence that same-sex attraction is not just a city problem; men and women call us from rural and small town America, and even from foreign countries. I have shared before that I've always felt frustration when the call ends with "here's some books to read", or even "you can order a copy of the MAP (our CD-ROM guide to walking out of homosexuality). Why? People need someone to walk with them, and that person – even if a skilled pastor – needs the help of people who have been there.

In previous Updates, I've told you about www.reachtruth.com. We've been working on it for years, and finally got it up and running last spring. For those who are learning of the program for the first time, you can visit the "Travel Plan" which will describe the workings of this amazing program and give you a look inside how it works for mentors and those seeking mentoring.



"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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Through the work of **reachtruth.com** I am now seeing that hope come to people in those far-off places. Jim, one of our staff, serves as mentor for a man in Central Africa. This man writes,

I have just completed going over your responses. The programme is really providing me with what I needed so many years ago - a mentor to come alongside me and share with me the many hurtful and emotional experiences of my life. I think also in some way it gives me the attention and affirmation of another male in a healthy way which I have not experienced sufficiently. Yes... I am really touched with the time taken to go over my answers and to pray for me personally. Thanks

Another participant (in one of those small towns) reported a life-changing experience. His mentor was able to encourage him to trust God by attending a men's group for the first time. He found himself loved by them, and was able to confess his sins to them, receiving – for the first time – assurance of his salvation and tangible examples of God's grace.

A huge breakthrough – so much like what I experienced many years ago as I walked into this ministry – my first time. I am sure this is not the last you will hear of *Reach Truth*. Participation is growing exponentially – we now have over 100 participants and 66 mentors. We've got some growing pains (finding enough mentors to assist those who cannot find their own mentor), and we want to do some fine-tuning on the presentations. But it's happening – others are finding that same hope that I, and countless people, have encountered.

You know what I'm going to write next: *you* did this. You, who support us with your giving, your participation, your prayers – your love – *you* made possible this “programme” (as our African friend spells it) – this instrument of hope. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. When all things are revealed, men and women from across the globe will be thanking you for bringing them into God's freedom and joy.



Jason Thompson
Executive Director

Much of the volunteer work at Portland Fellowship requires significant commitments and training. Sometimes we have work that needs to be done, requiring less commitment or specialized skills, but is just as valuable and necessary. Currently we have two such opportunities:

House/porch repair crew- We need a person who has skills and tools to do some maintenance on our front stairs and porch. Flexible hours to work on a variety of projects.

Newsletter prep team- We need several people who can offer two to three hours monthly to label, sort, and stuff our newsletter. Flexible around your availability at the end of each month.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com

...pray for the ongoing work that the TBG participants are doing. We have seen God help people make significant steps of faith this session. Ask God to continue deepening the work he is doing in many lives.

...pray for the work God is doing in South Korea and Alaska. Join us in asking for protection and rest as Jason Thompson speaks in a wide range of venues over the next few weeks.

...pray for the courageous women in our Wives group. May God grant them strength and peace in the midst of confusing, painful and hopeful times. Thanksgiving for Heidi, Michelle and Karen who faithfully serve in this work.

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feb 1-9

Busan and Seoul
Jason Thompson will be traveling South Korea sharing the message of hope and freedom.

feb 3, 10, 17, 24

Taking Back Ground
Discipleship group for men and women struggling with same-sex attraction. Call office for details. 7 p.m.

feb 20

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

mar 6-8

Taking Back Ground Retreat
Retreat open to current and former TBG participants. Call office for details.

mar 10, 17, 24, 31

Open Group
The name says it all. Opportunities for anyone to come and participate in a group discussion about same-sex attraction and related topics. 7.p.m. (please note there will NOT be a meeting on March 3rd) .