

Dear Friends,

update - august 2011

In 1983 I bought my first computer, a Commodore 64. This powerful state-of-the-art computer had a whopping 64 Megs of memory! It could load a game in only five minutes from a tape cassette and, with an external modem, I could actually log on to other computers around the world. I felt I could do anything on this sweet, technological wonder.

Recently, I bought another computer. The purchase was not as exciting as my Commodore 64, and yet this computer is 20 thousand times faster and capable of accomplishing more tasks than I will ever fully understand. Now, online, I have the ability to do almost anything and everything that my heart desires. If I need or want to know something, I simply go to 'Dr. Google' and I'll get information at light speed.

Although the modern day computer and access to the internet can be a blessing, they have also come with serious trappings for the human soul. As many of us know, the very instrument that can transmit prayer requests and cute photos of babies on Facebook can also be a pit of perversion and destructive lies. Without proactive safeguards, it is extremely easy for anyone to enter the informational superhighway unprepared and bound for trouble. And it's no longer just the computer in the home we must worry about, but the portable devices that go with us, since they can provide access to anything at anytime. Although anyone could struggle online, I have a deep concern for our youth, who are even less prepared to sift through all that it has to offer.



Picture this: You give your 16-year-old son a brand new Kawasaki Supersport Ninja Speed bike capable of going 140 miles per hour. You hand him the keys and say, "Be back by 10 PM, ok honey? I love you." Now it's all up to him. With no particular place to go, he's just going to cruise. The destinations are endless and the speed is exhilarating! There are no police anywhere to be found. The only moment of pause, may come at an occasional 'check point'. These adult 'check points' are at off-ramps to keep youth away. When a teen arrives at one of these, there is a person standing there who asks, "Are you over 18?" Good safeguard, right? Wrong. The guy asking the question is both blind and totally disinterested. If the teen tells him that he's over 18, then he is permitted access. Your son is very curious about this road – so he lies. He's got questions, curiosities and desires. What is down that road? His heart is racing with possibilities.

He has now taken this 'off ramp', which has his full attention. He slows way down. On this street there are images that are forbidden to the rest of his "permitted" world. In some strange way it feels good and freeing to be on this road, because he's already had curiosities in his mind. Yet, a part of him is anxious and troubled. He isn't sure how to feel or what to think. He wants to explore more but is freaked out about the possibility of being seen by someone while there. He can't bear the idea that someone would know he is curious about other men and the confusing desires for them. Yet, he spends many hours searching. Before he realizes it, it's very late and he's angry that the time went by so quickly. He flies home at full speed, jumps into bed just before you walk in. He lays there alone, pondering the images he saw. Although he feels uncomfortable and confused, he mentally plans his next trip as soon as possible.

Tim, a young man, recently shared that his first exposure to gay imagery was when he went online to explore what it meant to be "gay". That simple word typed into a search-engine became a living hell for him. It wasn't long before Tim was consumed with online porn. He felt so out of control and so full of shame over what he was viewing, but couldn't stop. The shame only intensified when his mom found the countless gay-oriented sites in the browser's history. With tears in his eyes, Tim said he lied to his parents. He said he stopped looking at porn, but in truth, his new iPhone was the new, portable, secret source of struggle. After a few meeting with Tim, he realized the power this little hand-held device had over him and eventually made the personal sacrifice of ridding himself of the phone. Mark 9:47: "And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell." Tim's sacrifice was difficult for him, but set him on a course for wholeness and healing.

Of course, the real problem isn't with the internet or the iPhone, but rather with the heart. For Tim, as well as for any one of us who have so many needs and questions, the internet can be the fuel that inflames the lies and deceptions. While there are effective resources to protect our children and ourselves from online defilement (i.e. www.xxxchurch.com and www.covenanteyes.com and iPhone Apps), I'm thankful that we don't just create safeguards, but seek to provide hope and healing resources online as well. The website www.reachtruth.com is a great example of this effort. With your love and support, we created this online program with youth in mind, although hundreds of adults utilized it. My prayer and hope is that when a young person, confused about his or her sexuality, begins typing in keywords to learn or explore, they will come across redemptive solutions and real hope.

Thank you for standing in the gap and participating in the work of God through Portland Fellowship. Thank you for helping to make a place for people like Tim, who need to heal and find freedom. Although this world (online and offline) is in opposition to Christ, and it can be greatly discouraging, we must remember that our Lord has overcome the world and in Him, we find our hope. Please share Portland Fellowship and www.reachtruth.com with your church, your family, and your friends and see lives changed!

In His Service,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director

fellowship house remodel

In the previous newsletter, we shared that we have an amazing opportunity to have our house painted and windows installed. The labor to paint is a free gift, but we need to come up with funds to pay for all of the materials. Also, once the outside is finished, we desire to use any additional funds to begin some internal remodeling to keep the Fellowship House safe and inviting.

We are excited to share with you that we have been given the opportunity to triple your financial gifts to the project. This means your gift of \$100 will become \$300 or \$1000 becomes \$3000. This will be matched up to the \$20,000 goal.

We are also continuing to pursue a grant from a foundation with the hope to match all that we raise. If you are able to help with a special gift from August until October, and would like your gift tripled, please memo "**Fellowship House**" on your gift. I'm excited for the amazing doors that continue to open up at PF and for your participation.

taking back ground

The 2011-2012 *Taking Back Ground* program starts again in October. If you or someone you know would like to join us, we are taking applications now. Enrollment is growing quickly, so submit your application soon.

apply online:
www.portlandfellowship.com

prayer requests

Please pray for our continued efforts to raise funds to restore the Fellowship House.

Please pray for all those who are currently signing up for the *Taking Back Ground* program. We already have more people signed up for next year's program than any other year at this time.

Please pray for our incoming interns as they prepare for the program: Brandon, Chris, Cody, Omar, and Paul.

Please pray for the loved ones of our Family and Friend's 'Hope Group'.

events calendar

"boundaries"

Tuesday evenings in August
Summer Series using the Cloud and Townsend material. Call for additional information.

aug 19 family and friend's 'hope group'

For those who have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement, and personal support.
Begins with a meal at 6:30 p.m.
3rd Friday of the month

aug 28 staff speaking Clackamas Bible Church Adult Education hour

sept 5

Upper Room Program begins

sept 6

Leadership Training begins

Check website for additional updates
at www.portlandfellowship.com

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