



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update april 2015

In recent weeks there has been a concerted effort by some in the gay community to make it illegal for minors desiring to change their sexual orientation to receive therapy. The bill, HB2307, is aimed at licensed therapists who practice sexual reorientation change efforts, known as 'reparative therapy' or 'conversion therapy', for minors in the state of Oregon. Similar laws have been passed in California, New Jersey and Washington D.C. Currently there are several other states considering similar legislation.

In February, 2015, a small group of people who are in favor of this bill testified before the Oregon House Committee in Salem. In the process, Portland Fellowship became identified as one of their targets, lumping us in with this type of therapy.

Several of our friends and supporters have asked how this bill will impact the ministry we do. This update is meant to help concisely answer that question.

Put simply, Portland Fellowship does not fit this bill. To start, with our staff and leadership team are not comprised of licensed therapists, but rather of laymen serving the Lord. More importantly, we do not practice reparative or conversion therapy. For clarification of definition, reparative therapy (RT) is a form of psychotherapy aimed at changing or minimizing a person's same-sex orientation. The efforts utilize talk therapy as well as various therapeutic exercises. RT's end goal is to diminish same-sex attractions and increase heterosexual potential.

The mission and purpose of Portland Fellowship differs from RT in both our stated goals and in our methodology. Although we do *not* oppose RT, our end-goal is not sexual reorientation, but rather wholeness and healing through Christ. A byproduct of this healing certainly can include awakened heterosexual desire, but it is not the primary focus. Portland Fellowship also differs from RT in the methods practiced. Sexual and relational healing through Portland Fellowship is centered in the Word of God and in the community of His believers. Our programs do not utilize therapeutic methods but rather personal discipleship, including (but not limited to) confession, surrender, accountability, forgiveness, renewing of the mind and restoring true identity in Christ.

As stated, Portland Fellowship does not practice RT, but we *are* opposed to this bill because it takes away the right of a minor to explore therapeutic understanding. For example, a child who has been sexually abused and now questions his or her sexuality deserves the right to sort through the confusion with the help of a therapist. With that said, I do believe that as pastoral care gives we should be concerned for minors who are being forced into reparative therapy. If you have a child who has embraced a gay or lesbian identity, forcing them into therapy to change their sexual orientation will only cause deeper pain and confusion. The direction we would encourage is to offer counseling for the various issues that may contribute to their sexuality. This could include abuse, neglect, emotional wounds, threats to their identity as a boy or a girl, loss of love relationship, depression, anxiety and the list goes on. Furthermore, our encouragement to parents is to seek support from others as you navigate through this difficulty. We offer an on-site support group for



"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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family and friends called the Hope Group, or if you are not in our area, we have a video series called Hope Group Online to help you grow in deeper understanding and trust in Christ: www.portlandfellowship.com/hope.

In the midst of this firestorm there will continue to be accusations and inaccurate reporting about the work of sexual and relational healing ministries like Portland Fellowship. One popular false claim is that we simply “pray away the gay”. The power of prayer is of extreme importance and the Lord uses it to touch the deepest needs of our soul, but as I shared recently in an Oregonian article, we can’t “pray away the gay”. The reason? *You can’t pray away a need.* God never intended that we pray away needs, but rather turn to the One who will meet our deepest needs. If you are physically thirsty, you cannot “pray away your thirst”. You must get a glass of water which will satisfy that need. Likewise, homosexuality is a relational issue and the solutions are relational. Through discipleship, surrender, prayer and obedience, God does His amazing work of restoring true identity and allowing many to experience newfound emotional and sexual wholeness.

As the world becomes more and more hostile to the redemptive work of Christ, we must remember that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). As the church, let us pray for God’s power to silence the lies and allow everyone--minors included--to seek and find the truth of God and His power to change lives.

Trusting In Him,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director



New Portland Fellowship Brochure: **An Updated Resource Collection**

We are excited to introduce our Portland Fellowship brochure in this month’s newsletter. This updated hand-out reviews the history and mission of Portland Fellowship, highlights our current discipleship programs and introduces our newest online resources.



This can be a powerful lifeline for people who are struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction, as well as a source of hope for family members, friends and church leaders who need to learn more about **discipleship** and encouraging people wrestling with homosexuality.

We have enclosed a brochure for you to consider sharing with someone who may not know about Portland Fellowship. The primary way men and women learn of this ministry is through God’s people sharing with others. Know that simply sharing about PF with someone can be a life-changing message for them. If you can use additional brochures, please call and we will send what you need. God bless!

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

tuesday evenings
TBG + Solid Ground
7 p.m.

wednesday evenings
Upper Room Community
Discipleship program

april 9
Jason will be speaking at
Concordia University

april 10
Hope Group + Wives Group
For Wives, Family and Friends
6:30 p.m.

april 24
Hope Home Groups
Opportunities to connect with
other family members for prayer
and support. Call office for info.

**Speakers, counseling, youth
support and personal support**
can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates
at www.portlandfellowship.com