



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update february 2015

I recently had the privilege of joining other board members of the Restored Hope Network for our annual retreat on the Oregon Coast, where we took time to pray and plan for the year ahead. As I sat in the beach house overlooking the majestic Pacific Ocean, I was once again reminded of how God's unmatched power and comforting peace is available to us in an increasingly confused world. These two attributes of God were a needed and timely reminder as various reports came to our attention.

It was not a surprise to us that the Gay Christian Network (GCN) was holding its annual conference in Portland the same weekend as our retreat. What we were not prepared for was the news that some of our friends and acquaintances were attending the event and were adopting a gay identity. At the same time, we also learned that the vice president of the now-defunct Exodus International had declared himself gay.

I can understand why there is an advancement of 'gay Christians' in our churches. The personal struggle can feel deeply overwhelming, and a sympathetic organization offering to meet a lonely person's legitimate need for community can be very appealing. The attempt to hold to their Christian faith while embracing their same-sex desires as natural and good makes this community—the GCN—very attractive. It is, however, a community counterfeit to God's plan and purpose.

When deception and distorted beliefs begin to take root, they produce false identities. The GCN uses the terms Side A and Side B: Side A believing that homosexual unions are blessed by God, and Side B believing that these unions are prohibited by God, but holding on to a gay identity. Both groups, it appears, allow their *feelings* to determine their identity, rather than God's Word.

Along with the expansion of the GCN, an increasing number of pastors, writers and teachers who—while teaching a biblical model of sexual conduct—are assenting to the concept of a “celibate gay” identity. This position indirectly communicates the impotence of God to change, restore and transform the person struggling with same-sex attraction. In previous newsletters, I have addressed why a “celibate gay Christian” identity is both problematic and unbiblical. More to the point, putting any worldly adjective before your identity in Christ places Christ second to one's self-perception. Can we speak of a “gluttonous Christian”, an “adulterous Christian” or a “gossiping Christian”? No! Our identity must be foremost in Christ who has the power to transform our lives to conform to His (2 Corinthians 3:18).

For the sake of clarification, Portland Fellowship subscribes to neither Side A nor Side B. The only label we need is that of a follower of Christ. Our identity is not found in our sexuality, emotions, temptations or failures. Our identity is found in our relationship with Jesus and our submission to Him.

As I shared in the opening of this letter, I am in need of God's power and peace more than ever. There can be a tremendous amount of discouragement for those seeking to surrender their sexuality and their identity to Christ, so we must remind one another to stand strong and faithful.



*RHN Board
Stephen Black, Anne Paulk,
Denise Shick, Jason
Thompson, Karen Booth
and Andrew Comiskey*

“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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I deeply appreciate what David wrote in Psalm 37 regarding our response to the world around us:

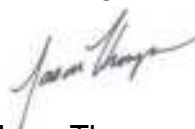
“Do not fret because of those who do evil or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. **Trust in the Lord** and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. **Take delight in the Lord**, and He will give you the desires of your heart. **Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him** and He will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. **Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; Do not fret** when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. **Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.”**

—Psalm 37:1-8 (NIV)

If you are not sure how to navigate these strange new waters, or you are disheartened and discouraged by the events of our times, reflect upon and live these words of the psalmist: fret not; trust in the Lord; delight in the Lord; commit your way to the Lord; refrain from anger; be still and wait patiently. And as the author of Hebrews shared, “Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

Portland Fellowship continues to be a light on the hill (Matthew 5:15), and we are deeply grateful that you stand with us in friendship, encouragement, prayers and support.

Serving Him,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director



Program Information

Home Groups

In January we launched three new Home Groups in Gaston, Tigard/Beaverton, and Oregon City/Milwaukie. These groups are a great way to connect with other friends and family who are processing through a loved one's same-sex attraction. If you would like to join a group near you, there's still room! Please sign up on our website or call the office.



Wives Group

If you or someone you know has a husband struggling with SSA, we offer a safe place to be known in your grief and encouraged in your walk with the Lord. Leaders Amy and Heidi will be leading the group through a powerful new book series called *Betrayal & Beyond*.

Taking Back Ground + Solid Ground

Our Tuesday night discipleship program combines TBG alumni and new participants. These brave men and women are pressing into the Lord and wrestling with the wounds, beliefs and behaviors which contribute to their unwanted same-sex attraction. Please pray for courage and strength for the participants--the journey is long and hard, but Christ is our prize.

events calendar

monday evenings

Living Waters

7 p.m.

tuesday evenings

TBG + Solid Ground

7 p.m.

wednesday evenings

Upper Room Community

Discipleship program

feb 9

Jason will be Skyping a Family & Friends group in California

feb 13

Hope Group + Wives Group

For Wives, Family and Friends

6:30 p.m.

feb 28

Jason will be speaking to the Pure Life Alliance team

Speakers, counseling, youth support and personal support:

can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com

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.