



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update october 2019

Last month, McKrae Game, the former leader of Hope for Wholeness, made national news when he chose to embrace a gay identity and retract his once-held belief that God heals and restores those struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions (SSA). Before this news, another public figure, Joshua Harris, author of *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, also made headlines when he renounced his faith as a Christian, and Marty Sampson, a songwriter for Hillsong Worship, felt compelled to share on social media that he was “losing his faith.”

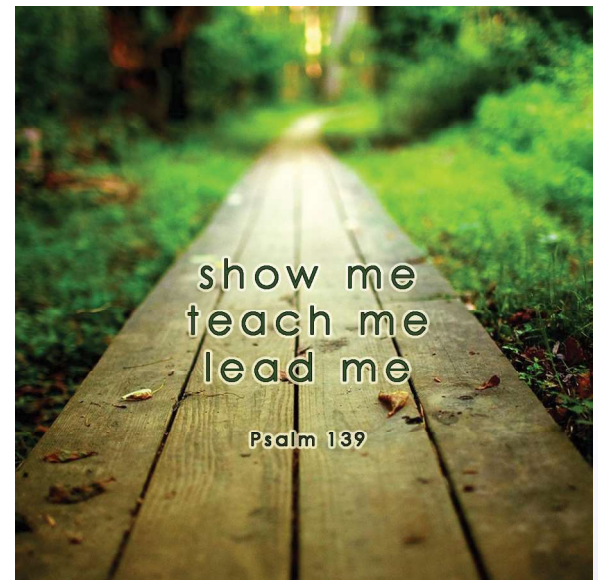
Watching fellow believers, especially leaders, walk away from their faith and turn from the truth of God is one of the Church’s most disheartening realities. Time and again, God warns us that this “falling away” is possible for all believers, and therefore we are to be on guard by remembering who He is and what He has done for us.

“Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.” —Deut. 8:1-2 (emphasis added)

I take the responsibility of leading the ministry of Portland Fellowship very seriously and care deeply for all who are seeking freedom. It troubles me to watch fellow believers fall away, and admittedly, I’m curious as to why this happens. More often than not, when leaders fall away there is usually a noticeable reason (such as pride, narcissism and/or control). McKrae publicly reported that he never turned his heart away from pornography, nor did he surrender the lust in his heart for men. In essence, he never allowed God to heal him because he never surrendered his gods. Leaders who lead out of brokenness not only hurt themselves, but also those they lead.

My purpose in sharing this news is less about those particular individuals who have lost their way, and more about clarifying our purpose, remaining grounded in the truth and leading others into genuine wholeness. Caring for hurting people requires extra caution and deep dependence on the Lord. This reality should cause all of us to pause, reevaluate and pray about how we should disciple the sexually and relationally-fractured person: *What are we doing well, or not so well? Are we holding to biblical instruction, or falling short? What blesses our participants, and what could potentially cause harm? What continued areas of our hearts need healing?*

Over the years, redemptive ministries have been falsely accused of destructive practices, like electroshock therapy, or strange behavioral modification techniques. The current charge against us, even from former leaders, is that our ministry practices “conversion therapy”, a made-up term asserting that people endure shame and fear in the efforts of becoming straight. In this crazy world, I suppose there may be some that operate from that premise, but in my almost thirty years of leadership, I do not know anyone that purposely practices or believes in shame-based counseling or support.



“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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Throughout my service in redemptive ministry, however, I have known a few pastors and leaders that have missed the mark in their efforts to help. Their intention was not to purposely shame, manipulate or create legalistic structures in an attempt to curb bad behavior, but in the end, they fell short in their attempts to help.

Most leaders I know are mature, spiritually grounded and do not have former participants reporting a negative experience. However, anyone, including myself, can unintentionally miss the mark, which is why we need to seek feedback from others, reevaluate our ministry programs, review how we prepare leaders for ministry and examine how we care for our participants. Most importantly, we need to take time and assess our hearts, our motives and our walk with the Lord as we continue serving. As I reflect on this, I realize that if my heart and my leading are not surrendered to and centered on Jesus, both my life and this ministry would be in deep jeopardy. This is true for all of us.

My hope is that all our efforts would result in leading people to Jesus rather than any other focused outcome. Our focus then is not on sexual reorientation, but rather on becoming mature in Jesus. This maturing will change hearts, minds and, yes, even desires. Our focus then is not on behaving better, or simply removing shame when we fall short of God's intention, but rather on experiencing the grace and love of Christ that propels us to choose obedience and trust in Him.

At PF, our programs (Summer Series, Upper Room Community, family and friends Hope Group, Reach Truth online youth support and Taking Back Ground two-year discipleship process) are all about pointing the sexually and relationally-broken person to the One who heals the heart, mind and soul. We do this by inviting the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and heal our wounds, which will then lead us into wholeness.

Would you join us in prayer for all those who have fallen away, that they would seek the will of God and return to His covering? Would you please pray for each participant, and our leaders, that we would never lose sight of the truth and hope found in Christ? And let us all pray that we would be reminded of His goodness and faithfulness as we grow in the knowledge and love of our Lord each day.

In Him,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director

Conference: *Betrayal Redeemed*

Tuff Stuff Ministries is hosting the 2019 *Betrayal Redeemed Conference: A Journey from Hurt to Hope*, October 12th at Mountain Park Church in Lake Oswego, OR. This gathering is for women who have been impacted by the pain of infidelity, and will include worship, workshops and practical teachings on how God can work through your pain to redeem and restore. To register, call Georgia Miller at 503-380-5264, email cobigram@gmail.com or sign up online at www.tuffstuffministries.com.

BETRAYAL REDEEMED

CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN



"From Hurt to Hope!"

events calendar

october 11

Hope Group

For Family and friends of gay or trans-identified loved ones. Dinner will be provided.
6:30 pm at the PF house.

october 12

Betrayal Redeemed

Women's conference at Mountain Park Church in Lake Oswego, OR.
9:00 am-4:30 pm

tuesdays in october

Taking Back Ground

Group for those struggling with unwanted SSA. Also group for wives.
7-9:30 pm

Speakers, counseling, youth support and personal support

can be arranged through the office: 503-235-6364.

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Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com