



*Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

*Romans 5:5*

*April 2008*

## No Longer Alone

by Leah Greene, Board Member

**Leiah Greene joined the Board of Mid-Valley Fellowship in February of 2008. We are excited about the addition of Leah's business experience and compassion for hurting people. This month, she shares a bit of her own story and awareness of homosexuality.**



For most people, June 3, 1992, was an ordinary pre-summer day in Oregon. Despite the beautiful sun breaks, that day was the darkest day of my life, even though I was just a senior in high school. As I laid on a gurney, a woman in scrubs asked me to gather my things and leave, as my crying was upsetting others. Her tone definitely wasn't one of love. I was physically able to leave, but emotionally I was a wreck. I tell you this story, not to get your imagination racing, but to tell you that I've made choices in my life that led me down a destructive path. I was there that day because I made choices against God's will for my life. The choices started out small and grew to larger ones. Every day I was given opportunities to choose. I just didn't have the skills or awareness to make healthy choices. I wasn't consciously making choices to destroy my life or anyone else's. In fact I was actually living my life quite UN-consciously. Finally the consequences of living in sin piled up, and I found myself in my darkest hour.

In thinking about the loneliness I experienced that day, I realize it wasn't just that day. The day I started making bad habits ... making wrong or self-destructive choices ... that's the day I began my journey alone. I didn't just end up alone. I had been alone for months, even years. And I didn't just "end up" anywhere, as if to suggest that it just happened to me. I made choices and kept secrets — secret feelings, desires, hurt.

Keeping secrets is what keeps you alone, at least emotionally. I was physically surrounded by people, but I was alone with my thoughts and in my heart.

So why did I keep secrets? I felt fear, shame, and didn't even have the words to express what I struggled with. There are so many people in church bodies who are struggling with issues that bring them shame, whether that's gossip, lying, adultery, homosexuality, or other sin. My struggle didn't happen to be homosexuality, but my private pain was devastating to me. At one point, I did confide in a person at my church. He didn't know what to say or how to respond. And the words he did find were condemning. My sins were just that to him — sin. And he was just as afraid of it as I was. I don't blame him for not knowing how to respond. But I did learn that day that my "real" struggle wasn't safe to talk about at church.

So back to my story ... I eventually got back on my feet after that day in June. I graduated from high school and left for college, but I continued my patterns of self-destruction for another year. I just hadn't realized yet that that's what I was doing. Then on the Fourth of July in 1993, the strangest thing happened. I was out with my friends, who didn't think my life was an issue. We had been down on the docks of the Columbia River all evening, and a friend was in charge of closing the Marina that night. He had cleared the docks and was finishing his job when I started walking up to the parking lot. Suddenly, out of a boat, a woman appeared in front of me. She was dressed head to toe in holiday colors with glitter and all. I stopped as she started a conversation with me. The woman gently touched my arm and looked me straight in my eyes. She said, "You don't need to follow this path. You don't need this relationship. This isn't God's will for your life. He has such bigger plans for you." Honestly, I think this woman was the first person to look me directly in the eyes in months, again, maybe even years at this point, and confront me in any way about how I was living my life. I know it sounds strange to people because I had no idea who this woman was. The significance of the experience was that someone SAW me and that moment stuck with me. Without even knowing me personally, she spoke to my heart.



**Leiah with her husband Sean**

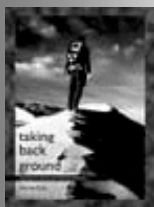
I'm recently studying *The Patriarchs* by Beth Moore. One of the most moving days for me was in Genesis when Sarai mistreats Hagar until she flees. She's wandering the desert, hurting and desperate. In Genesis 16, "the angel of the LORD found Hagar." And in 16:13 she responds, "You are the God who sees me ... I have now seen the One who sees me." I truly believe that day on the dock, God spoke to my heart. You can call this crazy woman on the dock a messenger, an angel, or a whack job, but I assure you that the ONE WHO SEES ... saw me that day. That day I knew my life had to change. I knew I was still living in sin. I was still in a community of sin, and I had to take action. I had to stand up for where my heart was meant to be. My heart did belong to God; I just hadn't had the courage to let go of my comfort zone. I wasn't even realizing the magnitude of pain these choices were bringing into my life daily. So I may not have been visited by a burning bush that day, but I truly believe that God uses others to express that HE sees us. Following that day, I started making significant changes in my life. Those changes included having to end several relationships, but the Lord brought new people into my life. Eventually, I met Sean, the first Christian male who hadn't rejected me because of my past. We're now married, 12 years and holding, with two beautiful daughters.

The first time I was personally impacted by homosexuality was when my cousin started living the lifestyle. After unhealthy relationships with her parents, a teen pregnancy, and abusive marriage, she found safety in a girlfriend — a relationship that ultimately became abusive as well. As a non-believer, she is in my heart and prayers. I realize that her feelings run deep and someday, when she is ready for help, I pray she will find a ministry like Mid-Valley Fellowship, that will see her as a child of God. Also, one of my college roommates, a believer, struggled with homosexual desires and co-dependant relationships. She was alone in her feelings for a long time, and finally she was able to share her struggle with others. What a healing experience for her to be seen as a child of God and not defined by her struggle.

As my daughters are growing, my time and my heart are allowing me to serve with others in ministry. This is where Mid-Valley Fellowship comes into my life. My heart's desire is to support a ministry that provides a safe place for people to discuss their struggle and to know that God loves them. I desire to support a ministry with people who are willing to SEE strugglers as God's children despite their choices. MVF helps strugglers learn new behaviors, learn new ways of living, and ultimately live the life God has planned for them.

**I hope that you too will offer compassion when opportunities arise. If you are struggling alone, I hope that you will seek help from MVF. There is hope and my life is proof that miracles can happen.**

## Taking Back Ground Resumes in April



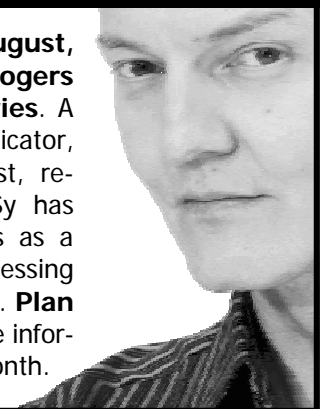
This discipleship program is designed for men and women seeking to heal from sexual and relational brokenness. The program includes worship, teaching, and small group participation.

- ✓ **Understanding Homosexuality**
- ✓ **Knowing God in the Struggle**
- ✓ **Walking Out the Process**

**Please Call or E-mail for More Information**

## Join Us This Summer

During **June, July, and August**, we will be presenting a **Sy Rogers video and discussion series**. A gifted international communicator, award-winning talk show host, recording artist, and pastor, Sy has served for over twenty years as a pastoral care specialist addressing sexuality and related concerns. **Plan ahead to join us now.** More information will be coming next month.



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## Prayer Requests

*Taking Back Ground  
Participants and Volunteers  
as the program resumes.*

*Additional Volunteers & Partners*