

MID-VALLEY fellowship

releasing the power of hope

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

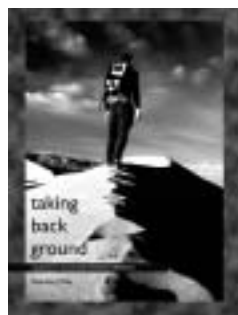
October 2008



Struggling with Homosexuality?

Taking Back Ground
(Discipleship & Support Program)

Begins
Tuesday, October 7th



Taking Back Ground is a two year discipleship and support program designed for people struggling with homosexuality. The name is not arbitrary. Many times in life, the ground we walk on seems uncertain. We have lost our bearings, perhaps feeling driven, lost, or on an uphill climb that never summits. We may be

walking where we were never intended to walk. Resting in Christ as our firm foundation is what we all long for. Yet the person struggling with homosexual desires has been told by the world at large that they must give in to those longings, that they will never be happy unless they do. Taking Back Ground creates an environment in which a person can step away from that lie and walk instead toward a redemptive God who will not reject them, no matter what the temptation. It allows them to "take back" their true identities in Christ as His sons and daughters.

Taking Back Ground Leaders



Duan

Shar

Angela

For More Information:

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Visit: www.midvalleyfellowship.org

Homosexuality & Worship

by Adam Hendrix, Board Member

Two hot topics. Homosexuality and Worship. Want to get people riled up? Start a conversation about homosexuality. But if you really want to get them going, tell them that you're taking the organ away and putting a drum set in it's place, or better yet, the other way around. Then you'll see some real passion. So why would someone want to talk about these things, let alone in the same sentence? They appear, at first glance, to be completely unrelated. However, they are connected, and not just in my life. I happen to be a worship director, and on the Board for Mid-Valley Fellowship, but this connection runs much deeper than me. The connection is a story.

I once learned from a great teacher that worship is to "do God's Story." And God's story is three parts. Creation. Incarnation. Re-creation. As creator, God forms the world in perfect order. He makes his creation and declares it good. He makes humanity in his own image. Then man comes along and messes up the whole business. He rebels from God and suffers the consequences. Sin enters the world, and with it death. Slavery to sin and death are passed on from generation to generation and the whole world experiences captivity to the power of sin and its partner, death. But God, in his great mercy, shows compassion and does not turn away from his creation. He sets about a rescue plan, not from a distance, but from within. And so Jesus, God incarnate, literally God in the flesh, comes to save us. His death was a sacrifice, an offering for the sin of the world. And His resurrection was a victory over the power of death. This began the re-creation chapter in God's story. He left the church with the responsibility to be his body on the earth, giving them his Spirit to empower them, his word to encourage and direct them, and his table to remind them of this grand story. This is worship, that we would accept the call to be the Body, to live out God's story. Creation, Incarnation, Re-creation.

So what does this have to do with homosexuality? I thought you'd never ask. Each of us, as God's original image bearers, has felt the shackles of sin digging into our wrists and ankles, as we struggle to break free. Maybe homosexuality isn't something you've struggled

with. It hasn't been one of my struggles, but that's not to say I've been free from the bondage and temptation of sin in my life. But for many, homosexuality is a shackle that weighs heavy, often carrying with it an extra measure of shame and guilt. This seems to be especially true for struggles of a sexual nature. For those struggling with homosexuality, there are loud voices, speaking words of condemnation and judgment. Sadly, these voices can even come from within the church. But if we want to take seriously the call to be Christ's Body, then the church needs to take a cue from Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and take an "incarnate" approach. We seem to think that God will heal our struggles, or other's struggles from a distance with a magic wand. Like, "Maybe if we just sing our songs on Sunday, give our offering, and preach an encouraging message, then people won't have homosexual desires anymore." We both know that this is ridiculous. We need to hear the Story in our worship. That God created, and in our foolishness that creation was destroyed. But God came personally to save us, and he is now, through us, wanting to restore all things.

This is what I love about Mid Valley Fellowship. And ultimately this is what made me want to be a part of it by serving on the Board. Mid-Valley Fellowship is made up of people who long to minister to this specific area of brokenness with the caring, personal touch that Jesus had in coming to us. And yet it so powerfully lives in the re-creation story, by offering people *HOPE*. That through the sacrifice, we have forgiveness, and through the resurrection, the power that sin holds in our lives has been broken. As we untangle this story, see it's size and scope, and enter it for ourselves, we realize that the story actually has taken hold of us, and is untangling us. This is what Homosexuality and Worship have to do with each other. If worship is "doing God's story," then we worship as we speak and live this story into lives that have been impacted by homosexuality. Ask anyone dealing with this issue, and they'll tell you that "it's a long process." But in this process is anticipation. The anticipation is hope, and with it faith that God is already going to untangle us, re-create us, and knowing that he plans to complete it. And Mid-Valley Fellowship plays an important role, as a portion of Christ's Body, believing that we are called to live out God's recreation story.

And so we come full circle. As we worship, we speak God's story and we live like we believe it. This is so pleasing to our heavenly Father. When faced with the struggle of sin, we turn to Christ, and there find hope that our Father in Heaven cares deeply for us, and will one day make all things new. I don't know about you, but I have certainly felt the call on my life to live out this story like I believe it. What does that mean? It means that we have eyes to see in everyone, though dimly at times, the image of Creator God. It means living incarnationally. It doesn't mean standing at a distance and waving a magic wand, throwing scripture their way. It means entering in, feeling what they feel. You care for them as a person, as a soul. And it means living lives of hope-filled expectancy. That God is in the process of restoring our lives, and he will finish it someday. Will you join us as we worship our creator, savior and redeemer, by acting out this great story?



Adam Hendrix joined the Mid-Valley Fellowship Board in February 2008. He serves as the Director of Worship for Willamette Community Church in Albany and brings a pastoral perspective to the ministry of Mid-Valley Fellowship. He and his wife Emily enjoy spending time with each other and their dog Alistair.



**Benefit Dinner
October 25, 2008**

**RSVP Deadline:
Friday, October 10th**

**Please Contact Us
for ways you can be a part**

Pray With Us

Father, as we begin another year supporting those struggling with homosexuality through Taking Back Ground, please give us strength and patience for the process and energy as we serve. May our minds and hearts be focused on You and what You have for us in this year. Please work in the lives of participants and leaders as we embark on this journey together.



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