

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15



NEWS
Regeneration
www.RegenerationMinistries.org

Peter's Testimony - Part 1

by Peter Mitchell, Men's Ministry Coordinator

Last fall, we enthusiastically welcomed Peter Mitchell to our staff in Northern Virginia. Both Bob Ragan and I knew Peter and we were thrilled to be able to invite such a high-caliber person to serve with us. This month, we want to introduce many of you to Peter through the first part of his written testimony. To read Part 2, we invite you to visit our web site at www.RegenerationMinistries.org.

Regeneration is committed to utilizing the medium of this newsletter to provide practical teaching and encouragement for men and women who struggle with sexual sin. We pray you will be encouraged by Peter's story and that the Lord will bring out those parts He intends specifically for you. Josh Glaser, Executive Director



What follows is a part of my life's story. Its importance lies in it's primal aspect and God's will to redeem it. Although there are other parts of my 43 year (and counting) story, none has yet been so instrumental in showing the significance of the whole or in imparting integrity to the man that I am becoming.

I came into the world to two delighted parents. My mother and father had beautiful daughters and now they welcomed a son. Dad named me Peter after the apostle who reminded him most of himself: bold and first. As a traveling evangelist, my father's faith in Christ was strong. For weeks at a time, Dad would be far from home preaching the Gospel. While he was away, I was surrounded by my mother and sisters who did everything but breath for me. My mother patiently taught me the Word of God and my sisters practiced their healing prayers by laying hands on me and commanding that I "rise and walk!"

The first five years of my life followed this simple pattern: Mom packing Dad's bags, Dad leaving to go do ministry (for what felt like forever to me), Dad coming home to a hero's welcome with presents for all, and then Dad leaving again. The pattern repeated itself over and over.

My father was a titan—bigger than "bigger than life." The gravitational pull of his personality on me was like the sun: irresistible. I was both enthralled by and afraid

of my father. Very early in my life I reckoned that I was not like him. Dad was strong and away on God's adventure. I was weak and at home with Mom and the girls. He spoke and people jumped to respond. I couldn't seem to find my voice. My father was a man of decisive action. I was a timid boy alone with my thoughts.

Somewhere in those first five years I failed to identify myself with my father. Yes, I knew we were both male. But I wasn't his kind of male—the kind that made things happen. In every way he remained wholly other to me. Although my father was very affectionate and could be tender, it always seemed to me I was on the outside of his life, trying to get in. But with Mom's life I was always "in." She was the one I seemed to favor. People even said I looked like her. I was receptive, responsive, compliant and soft; everything Dad was not.

By eight years of age I distinctly remember feelings of anger toward Dad. My mother seemed to do all the giving in my parents' relationship; she seemed walked-on in so many ways. I judged that my father was a selfish oppressor and the one who always got his way. When I vowed, "*I will never be like him,*" it seemed to me the easiest promise to keep because fundamentally I felt as though we were two different species. Throughout the remainder of my childhood and into adolescence and early adulthood, I would reaffirm that vow.

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Peter's Testimony

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As I grew, I became increasingly uncomfortable in my skin. I hated my body for its “baby fat” and I loathed my lack of confidence and shyness. I had a growing discomfort around other boys my age and I wanted what many of them seemed unconsciously to possess, especially the strong and sure ones. And I felt torn. On the one hand I yearned for the advocacy and blessing that these boys had with each other, their coaches and their fathers. On the other hand, I resented my own father, and I didn't think I had what it took to stand shameless and fearless among men.

Somewhere around 10 I began to retreat into myself—into books, good grades, drawing, and into the kitchen with Mom. I didn't have to retreat into the company of girls. In so many ways I'd never gotten out of it. Dad's avid deer hunting, building projects (dwellings, furniture or anything he put his mind to), and impressive displays in the pulpit all seemed to shout: “*See you're nothing like him.*” I remember around this time my father attempting to reach out to me, trying to get me to join him in his endeavors. But by then my heart was out of reach. I judged that he wasn't safe or trustworthy of my unguarded self.

As my resentment towards Dad increased, a cloud of confusion covered my sexuality. I felt alone and empty as an older boy, lacking any good vision of myself as male. All the

while shame was building as I realized I was interested in men's bodies and not girls or women. My observation of other boys my age told me I was off. The cloud of confusion became a storm when I was introduced to pornography at age 11. Rather than enticing me, the women portrayed made me sick to my stomach and confirmed what I feared: I wasn't attracted to women like other boys and men. It was the potency of men that called to me.

Boyhood surrendered to adolescence and with it came a deluge of homosexual feelings. All of my deep yearning for masculine strength and attention were eroticized in a moment. I remember the shock and sense of utter powerlessness as I stood before my sexual desires. There was no backing up, no undoing the hunger of my heart for masculine strength. The die was cast. From the onset of puberty until my 28th year, sexual desire and the hunger for masculine strength were so completely twisted together that it was impossible for me to tell one from the other.

I knew God's Law and its rebuke rang in my ears: “You're a sinner.” God's perfect Law condemned me for my secret fantasies and compulsions. I lamented. I had been such a good, obedient, Christian boy. How could I have come to this? Shame grew and self-contempt befriended me. I hated myself for being unacceptable and a slave to perversion.

More powerful still was God's grace. Jesus, the Savior, had come to me before I knew to call on Him. He was present to me as He always had been: loving me, helping me, speaking words of assurance and forgiveness. Now He bid me come. Until then I'd never considered that Jesus would want, that He could bear, this kind of darkness. My darkness. As a boy I had always worked so hard to please him and offer Him sweetness. But now what I had was rot and I knew it. So I cried out to the Lord in my despair, believing the words of the old hymn: *I will arise and go to Jesus. He will embrace me in His arms.* And He did. For all my bitterness and self-hatred, I knew Jesus loved me, and I trusted that somehow, someday, He would make me whole.

Wholeness, however, did not teach or study at my junior high school. The epithets I endured there had two opposing effects on me. First, the foul words found my soul's masculine question and answered it with lies. I didn't know that where my heart was empty it would sooner house a lie than stand hollow and unnamed. The names kept coming and with them more shame. Second, I kept running back to Jesus. It didn't take long before I realized that my sanity

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Please Pray With Us . . .

PRAY FOR:

- ◆ Regeneration's finances; as we approach the summer months, please pray for God's continued provision and for courage and faith for those He calls to give.
- ◆ The beginning of s.a.l.t. (*see page 4*), men who need this program would get involved.
- ◆ The men and woman who complete Living Waters this month and last. Pray for their transition as they leave behind what has been a major source of support.

WE THANK GOD FOR:

- ◆ His gracious work in the lives of the participants of Living Waters and Rescue.
- ◆ For the successful completion of both the Living Waters and Rescue programs.
- ◆ That so far the recession has not significantly impacted the day to day operations of the ministry.

**For more information or in-depth monthly prayer requests,
E-mail info@RegenerationMinistries.org.**

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and survival hung on God's love for me. Jesus would receive me again and again. I knew He saw straight through my good boy facade and loved me. Jesus would not let me go.

My teen years were marked by contradiction. Because of the presence of Christ and my parents' expectation that my life would matter, I believed good would come of me. I pressed ahead and made my high school's JV football team in 9th grade. Whereas I lived on the bench for football, 10th grade saw me on the field for every soccer game. In my senior year I was elected class president without any campaign. I always knew I'd eventually go off to college, and I wanted to get married and have children.

But all of this life and hope was pitted against my secret. I tried to help God through prayer, Bible reading, worship and fasting. None of it took away my same-sex attractions. For the life of me, I couldn't get the Lord to make me okay with myself. What I would have given for one day of not worrying about my troubled self! Needless to say, I wasn't a joyful young man. The burden of my wounds and my unforgiveness toward my father mired me in critical introspection, even as I looked hopefully on the future.

By the age of 17, I had dated all of one girl. Twice. A couple of weeks before my senior year of high school began, this young woman brought her new college roommate to a church meeting in my family's home. I was stunned. Amy was the happiest, friendliest person I had ever met. She was pretty too. Over the next four years we became friends, fell in love, stumbled through two engagements and were married in December of 1987.

One of my chief goals was to perform on the honeymoon. This would finally mend my sexual brokenness and I would, however late, enter the circle of men. No young bride was more aptly gifted with patience and humor than mine. Three days into the trip, heaven came down and our marriage was consummated. I half hoped that as we'd stepped onto the matrimonial estate, I could "forget" my homosexual baggage in the former land. But I was wrong. ■

(To read part 2 of Peter's testimony, visit us online at www.RegenerationMinistries.org/newsletters.)

Upcoming Opportunities with Regeneration

NORTHERN VIRGINIA PASTOR'S LUNCHEON

Enjoy good food, great fellowship, and a terrific speaker at the annual Northern Virginia Pastor's Luncheon on May 18, 2009. Bob Perdue from Life Now Ministries and President of the Board of Directors of Regeneration will be presenting. Please call the Northern Virginia office to register for this event. Phone: 703-591-4673.

INTERNATIONAL EXODUS FREEDOM CONFERENCE

Registration is still available for the 2009 Exodus Freedom Conference in Wheaton, Illinois from July 14 through July 18, 2009. Please don't miss this incredible opportunity to learn more about God's truth, grace, and justice towards a world impacted by homosexuality.

Discounts are available for married couples (each must register separately) and students. For more information or to register, visit www.exodusfreedom.org or call toll free 1-888-264-0877.



MINISTRY NEWS

LIVING WATERS

Anyone struggling to overcome relational or sexual issues, such as pornography, promiscuity, sexual addiction, homosexuality, codependency, and past sexual abuse is eligible to apply for the Living Waters program. Regeneration is now accepting applications for the 2009-2010 Living Waters season. Please contact the Baltimore office at 410-661-0284 or the Northern Virginia office at 703-591-HOPE (4673) for more information or to apply.

LW Baltimore begins October 8, 2009

LW Northern Virginia begins September 24, 2009

S.A.L.T. FOR MEN

S.A.L.T., a Christ-centered support group for all men (single or married) with habitual sexual sin struggles. The program will meet in Northern Virginia Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. from May 27 to September 9, 2009. To obtain the required application or additional information, please call the Northern Virginia office at 703-591-HOPE (4673).

PEPPER FOR WIVES

PEPPER, a support group for wives whose husbands are enrolled in s.a.l.t. will meet in Northern Virginia Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. from May 27 to September 9, 2009. Please call the Northern Virginia office at 703-591-HOPE (4673) for more information.

DC WOMEN'S GROUP

A women's support group for those struggling with unwanted lesbian attractions/behavior will be starting June 1 and running through the end of August 2009. If you are interested in joining, please contact the Northern Virginia office for more information. Phone: 703-591-HOPE (4673)

CROSS CURRENT

CrossCurrent, a Christ-centered support group for men who struggle with same-sex attraction, will meet on Monday evenings from 7:30pm to 9:30pm beginning April 20th and extending through June 15, 2009. Please call or e-mail Rev. Peter Mitchell at the Northern Virginia office for more information. Phone: 703-591-HOPE (4673) E-mail: Peter@regenerationministries.org

Thank You and
Congratulations!

Regeneration is grateful to **Stacey Feehley** for her two years of friendly and dedicated service to our ministry as Administrative Assistant.

Stacey has stepped down from her position at Regeneration to serve as a full-time mom to her first child, **Joey**, born in December. Please pray for wisdom and guidance as she adjusts to motherhood and also please pray for financial provision for her family.

Regeneration Is . . .

Staff Team

Joshua Glaser
Executive Director

Rev. Bob Ragan
Northern Virginia
Director

The Rev. Peter Mitchell
Coordinator of Men's Ministry
(NoVA)

Ann Cohrs
Ministry Associate (NoVA)

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Groups and Programs

Baltimore, MD

- Living Waters
- Rescue
(Sexual Purity Group)
- New Directions
- Just for Wives

Northern, VA

- Living Waters
- Women's Group
- Wives' Group
- Men's Group
- s.a.l.t.
(Sexual Addiction Group)