

Overcomers Outreach

“Bridging the Gap Between 12 Step Recovery and Churches”

March 2009 Newsletter



Jeff, Bob, and Ron

From the Director ...

Greetings from our new location in Whittier, CA, overlooking the greater Los Angeles basin. We are truly blessed to have this place, and I stand in awe of how God brought us to it. The blessings continue to pour from above as we move ahead to carry the message of Christ's healing to so many still suffering, for that is what we are all called to do, to comfort others as we have been comforted by knowing Him. Our new address is 12828 Acheson Dr., Whittier, CA 90601. The website is the same - www.overcomersoutreach.org and the toll free phone number is the same - (800)310-3001. Our new fax number is (562)698-2211 and our local number is (562)698-9000. We would love to hear from you.

There is a lot happening across the nation and around the world when it comes to Overcomers, and we have brought you just a few stories this issue, so here's the latest.

OO in Treatment Centers

21 years at Skelley Drive

Overcomers in Sweden

Getting Groups Together

Upcoming Events

New Websites

A Bright Future

How we got here ...

You're never going to believe this! God had some special surprises in store for Overcomers Outreach, and sometimes His gifts can be mind-blowing!



Part of the "Moving crew"-Thank You

OO's Central Office was considering the prospect of moving back to its roots in Whittier, CA, where the ministry was originally conceived. Our new director, Jeff MacLeod and I spent an afternoon searching for small office space in the historic area of Uptown Whittier. For some reason that day I decided to drive Jeff up an adjacent hill where our spiritual mentors, Sig & Evelyn Esselstrom had lived for years until they went to heaven.

The Esselstroms had been spiritual mentors to Bob & I, and were extremely instrumental in launching OO. They were founding board members who gave endless hours and energy to the ministry. I had never taken anyone up that hill before and hadn't been there myself in years.

In the meantime, another key OO founding board member, Marge Warren, passed away. The Esselstroms' only daughter "just happened" to see the death notice in a newspaper the morning of Marge's memorial service and showed up at the church. Following the service, I saw Lenore and ran to embrace her. She and I both burst into tears just talking about her parents and missing them so. I asked who was living in their home, and she replied "no

one." The house had been empty for nearly two years and she was just getting ready to decide what to do with it. She couldn't bring herself to sell or even lease their beautiful little home, but said she was thinking of perhaps renting it. I told Lenore about our search for office space in Uptown Whittier. Then for some reason I asked her if we could locate an office in Whittier, would it be possible for our director to occupy the house temporarily? She tearfully replied, "Yes--but nothing would make my parents happier than having Overcomers Outreach in their house!" And now, here we are, sitting on a sacred hilltop in Whittier—Sig & Evelyn's Esselstrom's home—overlooking a panoramic view to the sea and celebrating another one of God's miracles! If it hadn't been for those two beautiful angels, OO might have remained a distant dream. I've learned that every good gift and every perfect gift does come from above!

Pauline B.



Another Happy mover!

International News ...

Germany Writes:

I am Rolf, one of God's recovering alcoholics and addicted people He sent into the world to spread His Message of Hope, Forgiveness and Salvation --- **Only by His Grace and Only for His Glory!**

On March 7th we will celebrate our 10th birthday from what we thought to grow into German speaking OO groups here in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Like the bamboo in the

enclosed story we are far away of having grown to a greater plant but we try to do it as good and far as we are able to - one day one step at a time! Today we are a bunch of some friends connected by email, phone and VoIP meetings to grow together in His Time. Like the Bible says Jesus came and will come again at the 'FULLNESS of HIS TIME' we should be alert and ready to - so we try to do, too...

Pauline encouraged me to share this with you. Your new homepage is great!!! Our prayers and blessings with you all!!!

Hope we can stay in touch from time to time.

Greetings and Love in Christ

Rolf and Uta

Overcomers Outreach German

Speaking Groups

C12undC12 Netzwerk

www.C12undC12.net

Skype: rolf-dieter..paschen

Sweden Writes:

A few years ago we reported about our small group in Stockholm, Sweden. Nowadays, this group is still small but growing a little and we now have a simple website:

<http://www.overcomersoutreach.se/>

We are really happy with the program and like the idea of being able to recover ourselves and at the same time have the chance to reach out to other addicts that need recovery and need Jesus.

Thanks for your inspiration.

/Torbjörn

Liberia Writes:

Special greetings in Jesus name I got your contact from brother Bev Tyrrell Coordinator Overcomers Outreach Canada.

I am writing to express my desire to be a full part of the Overcomers Outreach and to start a chapter in Africa, and fight addiction on the African Continent.

Good bye for now as I look and pray to hear from you.

Pastor Nathan - Africa

Malawi Writes:

Henry Chikafa, as one of the leaders in the only Christian group in Malawi that has the special Ministry to addicted people, OVERCOMERS MINISTRY, would like to inform you all, my Friends, that The Ministry is going well and every week we are receiving people to be assisted especially the side of Drugs and Alcohol. People are dropping drunkenness and becoming Christians.

God is really on our side because we have a lot of testimonies to share about this. I want also to say thanks for support financially and materially, we are really thankful.

Lastly, let me inform you that due to the closure of ZION youth Center, we have MOVED from Zion to Capital City Baptist premises where our main office is. We hope God to give us another place that is convenient as Zion was. Very soon we will start our outreaches We hope you will join us in prayers, and participate. We also expect you to tell your friends who are addicted to Drugs and Alcohol, even Porno.

Get us at CAPITAL CITY BAPTIST CHURCH in area 14 along Presidential Way next to Red Cross and MASAF offices. or you can call us on +265 9 789 473. overcomersministries@live.com PLEASE TELL OTHERS ABOUT OVERCOMERS MINISTRIES. I wish you a blessed year of 2009.

Henry M. Chikafa
OVERCOMERS
Ministry Coordinator
Po Box 30485,
Lilongwe,
Malawi.



Step 11 Meeting Format

Simi Valley Group

This group started a "Meditation" meeting to both improve their conscious contact with God and to introduce new people to the practice of "sitting quietly before God". It is offered as a possible alternate format for other groups to use- maybe once a month. - Ed.

We are alternating the reading each week as follows:

"Twelve & Twelve" (Step 11)

Step 11 Devotional Reading in the Life Recovery Bible

Twelve Steps for Christians (Step 11)

Step 11 Devotional Reading in the Life Recovery Bible

We also increased the meditation time to 10 minutes.

In the future the meeting will be conducted with the preamble, steps and

scriptures, reading on step 11 (as per the above change), plus 10 minutes of complete silence for prayer and meditation and then open sharing.

I noticed a big change last week after the silent time. I think the increase in time made a positive difference because the participants were more relaxed and the Holy Spirit's presence seemed to be more present. The sharing portion of the meeting was quite powerful.

I love this format as it affords me often times the only chance I get at actually sitting down and being completely silent with the Lord. It's an extremely important meeting as it also gives us the opportunity to grow spiritually in a huge way. I will always believe that it was a meditation meeting that I was introduced to in my early days of sobriety that had a profound and deep impact on the success of my sobriety. Leena C

Food for Thought ...

A holy man was having a conversation with God one day and said, 'God, I would like to know what Heaven and Hell are like.' God led the holy man to two doors. He opened one of the doors and the holy man looked in. In the middle of the room was a large round table. In the middle of the table was a large pot of stew, which smelled delicious and made the holy man's mouth water. The people sitting around the table were thin and sickly. They appeared to be famished. They were holding spoons with very long handles, that were strapped to their arms and each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful. But because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths. The holy man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering. God said, 'You have seen Hell.' They went to the next room and opened the door. It was exactly the same as the first one. There was the large round table with the large pot of stew which made the holy man's mouth water. The people were equipped with the same long-handled spoons, but here the people were well nourished and plump, laughing and talking. The holy man said, 'I don't understand.' It is simple,' said God. 'It requires but one skill. You see they have learned to feed each other, while the greedy think only of themselves.'

Sober biker ...

I am 20 years sober 2/22/08 & it's nothing I was able to do on my own. God brought a hard core AA across my path who shared the 12 steps to recovery, his experience, friendship & continuing sponsorship. My key experiences that led to my sobriety are listed below:

1. I let go & let God @ my bottom & prayed the scripture below; the key word is COME which requires action; Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

11:30 for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

2. Started my 12 step program, AA meetings, new circle of friends & attending a Bible based church I learned it takes faith + action =

recovery (page 93 of the big book)

3. I started reading the Bible which reinforces & supports the spiritual 12 step program, giving it divine power

4. Got out of myself & doing for others; 12th stepping

Bottom line: Jesus is my higher power & I take my sobriety & program as serious as a heart attack.

I hope this epistle helps someone because it's helped me & as my ole sponsor says; you can make 'em thirsty & lead 'em to water but you can't make 'em drink! (of the living water) -- ed j.

Testimony

My name is Art, Alcoholic.

I was born in Kentucky in 1958 and am #6 of 8 children. My father bootlegged moonshine until his murder in 1960.

How does a person summarize 23 years of drinking and their associated problems? Simply put; 3 DUI, 2 drunk car accidents, 4 interventions, 3 rehabs, several suicide attempts, multiple marriages (one was gay – my surprise) and an enormous amount of legal problems.

I tried to work "my" program, but it didn't include God. After a 6 year stint of sobriety, I relapsed. The worst relapse of my life.

I finally gave up the fight with myself and took my last drink on August 31, 2002. I gave myself "TOTALLY" to God.

My relapse happened because I took my eyes off Christ and became too self confident. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

The Lord put it upon my heart to begin a Christian 12-Step group in 2004.

I also attend a Recovery Church Service every Saturday night, am in a small group Bible Study, a Stephen's Minister since 2003, co-facilitate "Celebrate Recovery", mentor through our County Court System, active in Emmaus, a member of Toastmasters, and enjoy riding my motorcycle!

OO in Treatment Centers ..

The groups in S. Lake Tahoe recently started an OO meeting at the local treatment center and, with a lot of support from the outside, have had a lot of positive impact on both the clients and staff. They now have a weekly open meeting and a monthly closed panel presentation, all to introduce the clients to the biblical roots of the 12 steps and, more importantly, to the precious healing found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The offer of our "faith based" recovery program was met with resistance at first, but it was presented to the faculty that an obligation existed to the clients to offer all avenues of recovery support, not just "traditional" 12 step programs. *"One plants, another waters, but God gives the increase"*

News from the Office ...

We want to welcome several new groups including Minden, NV, Tampa, FL, New Lenox, IL, San Jose, CA, Norfolk, VA, Pittsburg, PA, Puxatawny, PA, Birmingham, AL, Ft. Meyers, FL, Artesia, CA, Dallas, TX, Maryville, TN, and Beaverton, OR. These groups have started since December or are about to start soon. The enthusiasm of the new leaders has been great and we are encouraged to see so many new groups getting started. The office is here to help in any way we can, so call or email us with your questions. The San Antonio group ran a spot on a local radio station and the office got a lot of calls asking for more information about meetings. Good job, group leader! Remember that we are a non-profit organization – we measure success by changed lives, not money made. Groups are getting together to form districts, too. Some groups in PA and some in CA are

working together and establishing service committees, in the hope of helping more people through these fearful times. Our group in Tulsa just celebrated 21 years of meeting together! Several other groups are getting together to co-host pot luck dinners and speaker meetings. This is what fellowship is about – fun in recovery!

We have a campout event set for July 17-19th in Los Osos, CA and there is a lot of interest in that as well. Maybe yours and a neighboring group can have a bowling night, movie night, or just get together to break bread. We would be happy to post your event on the website, just email it in a few days in advance.

Phone calls from churches asking for a way to reach out to the community and 12 step resources have started to really increase. There is much to be done and it will take us working together to accomplish what God puts before us. The website is being visited from all over the world, and analytic data shows that visitors are reading several pages per view, which means they are interested.

We currently are averaging well over 1800 visitors per month, with many returning. This has all happened since the recent update to the website, which now features many useful tools for group leaders and other interested parties. Please consider visiting us at www.overcomersoutreach.org to see all the new features, including our online meeting.



"The Office"

What is Ahead ...

In the past few months we have seen several new meetings start and a few meetings close. The office has moved back to Whittier, where Overcomers first began, into a house, where Overcomers began. We are not moving backward, but rather, we are moving ahead. The risen Lord told the disciples to return to Galilee, where they had first begun to follow Jesus, and they would receive from the Father what was promised. They were to "go and make disciples of all nations .." from there. Since moving back, public interest in Overcomers Outreach has increased dramatically; opportunities for publicizing our purpose have opened up; meetings are starting all over the nation and the world. But the Office is not Overcomers – YOU are! You will accomplish all that God sends you out to do. "The fields are ripe but the workers are few" has never been more true than today. Now is the time to work together to show His healing power to the world, for we have been called to do this. Reach out to others who still suffer, and stand confident that He will equip you to carry out His good purpose for you and those around you.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for all you have done for us, our families, our neighbors, and we ask for your guidance and direction for our leaders. We also ask that you use us as we stand humbly before your infinite love and tender mercy as you have shown us through your Son, Jesus Christ, and that we may show that love in all we do. May we walk in His way, through obstacles and attacks, all to glorify You, Father God. In Jesus' precious name we pray for this, Amen.

If you would like to make a small donation to Overcomers Outreach, Inc. to help defray the cost of this newsletter as well as other operating expenses, please use the enclosed return envelope. All donations are tax deductible.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or removed from it, please so indicate with your donation, or call us at (800)310-3001, or email us at info@overcomersoutreach.org and we will be happy to accommodate your request.

We also welcome any news articles or testimonies you would care to submit for future newsletters.

God Bless

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