

Overcomers Outreach

*“Bridging the Gap Between 12 Step Recovery Groups and Churches”
March 2012 Newsletter*

From the Director –



As Easter approaches, we can look forward to sharing with others the fellowship we have in Christ. When asked by Thomas, “how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

During his trial before Felix, Paul said: “I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way.” Acts 24:14

Our 5th Group Tradition States: “*The primary purpose of each group is to serve as a Bridge between traditional 12 Step groups and the church. We carry the message of Christ’s delivering power to individuals and family members both within and without the church who still suffer.*”

An OO group can serve as a way to Jesus for suffering individuals, whether they are in church seeking His healing power, or in 12 step groups seeking a “Higher Power”. The group offers the same message to all, namely deliverance through Christ, and carries that message to congregations and other groups alike.

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

Romans 10:14-15

Articles from both Bob and Pauline, one about outreach to the church, the other about attendance at 12 Step groups, “happened to show up” as I prayed about this newsletter. So I think we should talk about types of groups and how we can “carry the message” – that is, how we can help others find “The Way” that we have been shown. Some of the many ways we can share our blessings follow.

Jeff

Book Studies – OO Style

My name is Bill - I am an alcoholic and sinner saved by grace, and also a member of Overcomers Outreach. I attend a group on Monday nights, and I visit other OO groups in the area as well, to get an idea of what goes on in other meetings. My first visit to a group meeting on Thursday nights was exciting for me. This small group was reading through the AA Big Book, one I have read often in AA groups and on my own. This was the first time I was to read the Big Book with a group of Christians. On my next visit I left a copy of “OO - A Bridge to Recovery” for the group to consider reading.

After awhile, I went back to find the group was reading the OO book. My emotions were stirred up as we read through Bob’s Story. When it was my turn to read page 25, I got a bit choked up. To be reminded how the Lord used a plain old-fashioned alcoholic to start Christian Recovery (OO and other groups that followed) generated a type of joy that I forgot existed. I had to hold back the tears. If you have not had an opportunity to do so, you must give this a try.

Roger H in Fresno also writes:

We have a new woman in our OO meeting [3 weeks]. She has really been impacted by stories from Bridge to Recovery the last two weeks. Thanks for all your efforts to get this book out.

And a few groups are studying the Group Traditions one night a month, and report that it is a good way to learn and practice the principles of the traditions in our relationships with friends and families, as well as co-workers. “*All the believers were one in heart and mind...*” Acts 4:32

Telephone Meetings -

Something brand new in Christian recovery (in fact, the first of its kind!) is starting the 1st week of March – a meeting as a “conference call”. Just

dial the number at the designated time, enter the access code for the group, and listen in or participate as you like. It is free (toll charges may apply, depending on your phone plan) and confidential. The call is “hosted” by a person serving as the meeting secretary. Once a week they hold the meeting. This allows those who cannot otherwise attend a group to “be” at a meeting. Also, as more meetings are started, there will be more opportunity to “get to” a meeting. The phone numbers are local to the area where the account is opened, so our first meetings are local to the Reno/Carson City area, as “Reno Linda” has started this up. One may call from anywhere to listen or participate. For more information, see our website “[Meetings](#)” page, or just call the Central Office. This may prove to be a blessing to those who do not live near an OO group, and to us all. Thank you Reno Linda!

Events -

2012 Morro Bay Campout

August 3rd-5th, Morro Bay State Park, Morro Bay, CA. Registration includes campsite for Friday and Saturday nights, plus Barbeque dinner Saturday night. All speaker meetings, talks, and workshops are free to everyone. We have sites reserved to accommodate 32 campers, and we have sold out every year, so register early. Sites are for tent camping and have restrooms and showers. We have space for up to 4 RV’s or trailers. For more details, call us toll-free (800)310-3001 and come camping with us!



Last year’s group

We had 27 campers last year and another 10 participants who chose not to “rough it”.

The Mailbox -

The Overcomers group that started in **Baton Rouge, LA** is alive and well and celebrated our one year anniversary on Feb 1. Started with 6 attendees and grew to an average of 13, then 16, then 25. We have hit 30 twice and 37 once. God is working wonders in existing AA's and some water testers from local churches. We re-committed to praying for members (on the spot) and we have seen multiple back aches disappear, a couple of jobs have been offered soon after group prayer, and family situations have improved in response to specific prayer. Recently two people asked to receive the forgiveness and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

We keep hoping for some seasoned Al-Anons who are believers to join our group. That is where we are lacking, in help and encouragement from family members of addicts and alcoholics.

I thank God for what he is doing and for the ministry of OO.

Sincerely, Jack C

Email

We started meeting at The Summit Church, 720 Summit Avenue, **Hackensack, NJ** 07601, on Fridays at 7:00pm. Cristal

I am involved in starting an Overcomers Outreach Program at our church, which is The House of Restoration Ebininezer, 167 Hudson St., **Hackensack, NJ** 07061. If possible I would very much like it to be listed. We will have our 1st meeting April 5th, 2012. I have 26 years free of drugs & alcohol, but want to offer this to any addictions through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jim S

We want to start this program in our church. I am a recovering alcoholic. I have been clean since 3/2011. God used this program to free me at a church in the **Knoxville, TN**, area, where a great need for this wonderful biblically based recovery program where I moved to. We have a group leader ready to start this. Please help.

Timothy

My name is Marilyn, mom of a 24 yr old daughter. We recently found out that she is addicted to alcohol (and not sure of drugs). I ask support in praying to precious almighty Lord that He delivers my child from alcohol & drugs. I have always been a single mom; the dad doesn't want anything to do with her so she doesn't feel loved. And now it's escalated in sex, drugs & alcohol. I think when she passes out she doesn't even know what she is doing. PLEASE help my one & only child that I got from our Lord. Thank you so much in advance for your special prayer!

Posted on Face Book:

Overcomers Outreach tonight! I can't wait; last week we did the hokey pokey afterwards...lol...who says you can't have fun at meetings!

Dawn P

Please send me your little book. I'm going to start a Skype meeting with a friend once a week with it. I'm in CA and my friend is in Canada. Thank you!

Donna

Safety in Church

By Bob Bartosch (1927-2006)



(Article discovered by Pauline in some of Bob's files)

I am sure we would all agree that the Church should be a safe place to be. The very word "safety" can bring up different images in our minds. What I have referred to as "safety" has nothing to do with bricks or mortar or other building materials that comprise the house of worship you attend.

The kind of "safety" I am referring to is the safety of being able to share a problem or concern with someone knowing that they would 1) keep your words confidential 2) be understanding and non-judgmental and 3) perhaps even know of some resources that might be helpful. I hope this type of "safety" is present in the church you attend. If it is, you are indeed fortunate because in far too many instances the "church" is still a place where we shoot the

wounded. Therefore, many of us "hide" our problems behind pleasant smiles.

The "early church" consisted of three main points: the first was Koininea (fellowship); the second was Confession; the third was Making Amends. Many of our churches today are great on Koininea but we seem to have gotten away from the other two ingredients that made the "early church" so vibrant and powerful!

For many of us (particularly those of us in Protestant churches) the act of confessing our sins or shortcomings to one another is just not something we do--and yet the book of James admonishes us to "confess our faults one to another so that we may be healed." As far as "making amends" this is also foreign to many of us. I can remember that in my own case the words "I'm wrong" or "I'm sorry" were just not part of my vocabulary before I got into recovery in a 12 Step group. It was there that I was taught that in order to stay sober it was important that I do several things, one of which was to make a list of people I had harmed and become "willing to make amends to them all." All I can say is what a "freeing" experience!

Can we learn something from the "early church"? Maybe as individuals in churches become more open and honest, others will see this as a "freeing" experience--something that can make the church a healthier place to be. Since none of us has the power to change other people, let alone change the local church, we can start with changing ourselves. Let the process begin!



Still Going To Meetings

By Pauline Bartosch

When God opened the door for Bob & I to start the first OO support group at our church in 1977, to our utter surprise it seemed to complete the picture of linking the 12 Steps of AA with their original Scriptures. Not only that, the group provided the freedom to name our Lord Jesus as our "higher power." Even today, what a blessing it is to see alcoholics,

addicts and family members grow together in the Lord as we study the Scriptures along with the 12 Steps in an OO group!

While Bob was still here, he would say: "I go to meetings to see what happens to people who don't going to meetings!" Sure enough, he would roll out of bed at 5 a.m. and head for his local AA meeting, and come home with a spring in his step! I never dreamed he would celebrate 34 years of sobriety before going to heaven!

Besides my OO group, I continue to attend the traditional 12-Step groups in my community. I've been showing up at my Al-Anon group for 39 years now (known as an "old timer.") I often visit AA "open meetings" as well. OO wouldn't even be in existence without God's intervention with Bill W. and Dr. Bob!

Even with all the effective and life-changing 12-Step programs offered, there are still countless individuals and families in the church HIDING their problems of addiction! I was one of them for many years! I had an endless list of excuses for my husband and his bizarre behavior. (He just *couldn't* be one of those alcoholics!) But he WAS! Hitting bottom and finally becoming willing to seek the help of the 12-Step programs totally (and unexpectedly) turned our lives around!

I still know people in the church who are reluctant to reach out for help for themselves or other family members. God works in so many different ways. OO provides a life-changing, Christ-centered program. It doesn't make sense to continue to suffer when God has provided specialized help!

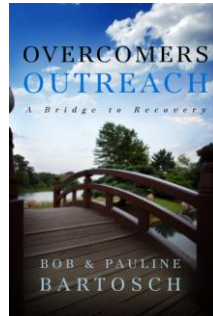
There is HOPE! If you have concerns about a family member or friend, (or yourself!) pick up the phone and call Jeff here at the office! (1-800-310-3001) or go to OO's website: overcomersoutreach.org. Do it TODAY!

Office News

More new groups have started in Concord, NC, Hackensack, NJ, Eugene, OR, and in Southern CA. If your group is not listed online, but

would like to be, just call the office or email the Information to us and we will post it as soon as we can. It costs nothing and allows us to direct people calling from your area to your group.

Our website has been "enhanced" a bit more, and continues to be a work in progress. It is a little faster to load and easier to navigate. We hope you will visit the website soon. Just click overcomersoutreach.org



Our "big book" *A Bridge to Recovery*, 3rd Edition

Literature

The new "Appendix" to the FREED booklet is available for download and copying from the website, or by request to the Office. The pages can be inserted just after the "Serenity Prayer" on page 49. New topics and scriptures (along with additional scriptures for existing topics) have been added. All references to page numbers stay the same, and the insert is easy to add to the booklet if desired. All new yellow FREED books ordered are printed with the insert included.

We are now working on scriptures pertinent to our Traditions, to expand and improve the Group Tradition study guides. As with the FREED book project, we welcome any input and suggested verses you may have to contribute. We will offer a similar "appendix" to the Group Tradition Study Guides as well, and hope to have additions made in the next few months

Happy Birthday/Anniversary -

The following people have recently celebrated milestones in recovery: Peggy M, 3 yrs., Frank R, 21 years, Ed J, 24 yrs, and Don B, 40 yrs. They have made a donation (\$1 for each year of their recovery) to the Central Office to express their gratitude.

These groups are celebrating anniversaries so far this year: Baton Rouge, LA, 1 yr, Lockport, IL, 10 yrs, "Spiritual Awareness Group", NJ, 15 yrs, Lincoln, NE, 20 yrs, S. Lake Tahoe (Tuesday night), 22 yrs, and Skelley Dr. Church Group, Tulsa, 24 yrs.

If you or your group would like to be added to our list, please visit our [Birthday Page](#) or call the Central Office for details.

J. Keith Miller – In Memoriam

We received word that dear friend and author, Dr. J. Keith Miller, went to be with Jesus on January 22, 2012. He authored many outstanding books, including *Taste of New Wine*, *Sin--Overcoming the Ultimate Deadly Addiction*, and many more. Keith was OO's featured speaker at four different Christian Recovery conferences --1989 and 1990 in Fullerton, CA, plus two gigantic OO conferences held at the Crystal Cathedral in 1992 and 1994. Because he cared so deeply about OO's ministry, Keith gave an entire Saturday with the OO Board of Directors, offering suggestions and guidelines for the ministry. During his trips to CA he was our house guest, giving us the privilege of getting to know him as a dear personal friend and staunch supporter of Overcomers Outreach. He will be sorely missed!

Carry the Message Groups -

Members of different groups get together once a month to have a potluck and also to exchange and discuss ideas to grow OO meetings. Some insights from the last meeting:

Candy shared that she was afraid, almost discouraged, to come to a meeting, while Hugo shared that after being advised by his pastor to go, he was amazed and inspired by the fact that there are others just like him who feel as he does. Debbie said hearing the humbleness of others may bring comfort to those hurting in secret.

Working together, we can make a difference in the lives of others. We hope other CTM groups will start up to carry our message of hope and healing through faith in Jesus Christ.

A Prayer for Direction

The way to the Kingdom of God is Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent "to reconcile to himself all things". We must turn from our "selves" and to Jesus – from this world to His Kingdom. That is the direction to follow, and scripture tells us that we will receive guidance- "*I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.*" (Isaiah 48:17) and "*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'.*" (Isaiah 30:21) But the Bible also warns "*There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*" (Proverbs 14:12) That "way" is through self fulfillment, pride, and spiritual arrogance – in other words, sin.

As Overcomers, we learn to use the 12 Steps to come to the foot of the cross, and to lead others there as well. From there, our direction is clear, as we look to Jesus and walk with Him.

Father God, we pray for open eyes to see the need for our Salvation, open ears to hear the wisdom of Your Word, open hearts to receive Your guidance through the Holy Spirit, and open hands to share the love we have received in Christ with others. We ask, as we travel the Way, that our feet remain on the path of righteousness so that You will be glorified in all we do. All honor and glory is to you, Father God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

If you would like to make a donation to Overcomers Outreach, Inc. to help defray the cost of this newsletter as well as other operating expenses, please visit our website or 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, along 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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