

Overcomers Outreach

*“Bridging the Gap Between 12 Step Recovery and Churches”
December 2009 Newsletter*

From the Director ...

The Holiday season is upon us and the New Year looms near. What a special time we have together. So many of us find ourselves wrestling with “old” behaviors and attitudes - it seems much easier to be sorry for what we don't have than it is to be happy with what we have. This can lead to depression and possibly to relapse. With increased shopping, planning, cooking and socializing comes increased stress as well. We have some ideas for coping with this inside.



The coming New Year marks 25 years of Overcomers Outreach, and we hope you will all join us as we express our gratitude to God for using each and every one of us to help others and glorify Him. The ministry was incorporated in May, 1985 and we are planning some events and functions to celebrate and praise God, including a nationwide “Birthday Party” where local groups can get together to celebrate with one another.

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Events ...

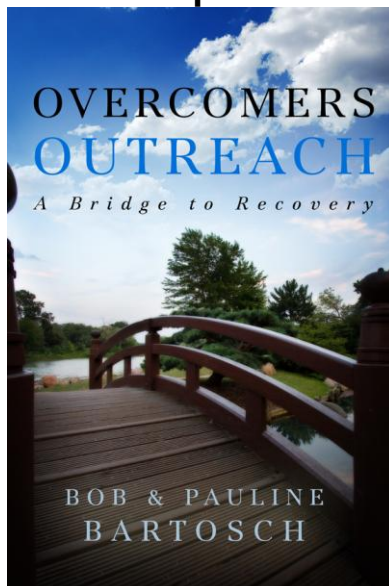
Thanksgiving Marathon

New opportunities to carry our message continue to come up. I am encouraged by the efforts put forth by groups across the nation and around the world to make known the true healing power of Jesus Christ, such as the recent Thanksgiving Marathon at the Union Baptist Church in Elizabeth, NJ. A free buffet and speaker meetings were offered to help others through a sometimes difficult time of year. By coming alongside each other in love and support, we fulfill God's commandment to love one another.

4th Annual Day of Prayer

On December 1st, Overcomers around the world participated in our annual day of prayer and fasting. This year we were asked to seek God's guidance to help all that we can wherever we can.

Literature Update



Just in time to celebrate 25 years of Overcomers, the 3rd edition of our “Big Book” *A Bridge to Recovery* is at the typesetters and will be ready in January 2010. We are accepting orders for presales on our website, or you may phone or write the office

to reserve your copy of the first printing.

The *Introduction* pamphlet is now available in Spanish, and *12 Steps with Scriptures* and *Working the Steps* translations will be available soon. We now have 11 revised and 5 new pamphlets to help groups get the message out to those still suffering. An “update kit” of 4 each (total of 60) is available for a donation of \$10. More than 20% of the Central Office operating costs were funded by literature sales last year.



Some Happy Campers!

The Mailbox ...

Australia Writes:

Great to see the growth and so much happening around the world. I would love to have a set of your brochures. I love the concept of OO. We say at our group that we identify in Jesus Christ as our higher power and that the particular 12step groups are where you'll find identification for your particular substance. Many of our newcomers, particularly the men folk that come have little bible literacy and so after next month's meeting I've found a couple of chaps to lead a men's group for me - kind of like a bible study but more fellowship - so that will meet each week in between our monthly meetings. Not sure what's planned to accommodate the girls yet but I'm praying on it .God is good...

Kenya Writes:

Thanks for the encouraging mail, I am happy to hear from you. Jeff pray with us here we are having a prayer time every Thursday and a Two week Fasting for the breakthrough in our ministry. Just last week we sent a proposal to a certain Organization to help Overcomers Malawi with financially and we are praying for God's hand and favor that we should be considered...Overcomers is going well here. Pray with us...

San Jose, CA Writes:

I would like to thank you for referring Justin's grandparents to our group for him. They are great people. We are having a Thanksgiving dinner on November 12th for our group I will send you pictures so you can see how God is working in our lives here at Crossroads. Also, as a group, we have decided to adopt two families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I think we will do it on a regular basis to continue to support them during the holidays (which is not limited - were talking Easter, etc.) Sending our Love and Blessings to everyone.

Making a Difference

By Pauline Bartosch

On Monday nights Jeff and I head for the City of Orange, CA to attend an Overcomers meeting at "American Family Living" - (a Christian counseling center). The OO group began with just a few people who were willing to share about their addictions or codependency, some for the very first time. It's been so exciting to see what God is doing in all of our lives from week to week.

One night, as I entered the room, I noticed an envelope perched on my chair. Since it wasn't my birthday, I couldn't help but wonder what it was. A contemporary Christian vocalist, artist, author and speaker, had just been interviewed on American Family Living's radio program, "Spread a Little Love Around" and discovered that our OO group met there. I was about to receive a special blessing, just because someone thought to take a moment

and write me a personal note—making a big difference in my life that evening!

As I opened the card, I realized that I didn't know this person at all. But evidently she knew me, because God used the story of my own codependency struggles a few years ago to make a difference in her life. Her words, (in part) "You don't know me, but you and Bob made a huge impact in my life. I read your testimony in Dr. Dobson's book, *Love Must Be Tough*. I was in an alcoholic marriage and suffering. Your testimony gave me the courage to go to Al-Anon. I also attended Overcomers for years. Today, my ex-husband is not drinking and we are friends. My mother drank also, and she's in recovery today. I pray that the Lord continues to bless you and the wonderful ministry you've had."

When we're struggling with an addiction—ours or our loved one's, Christ-centered Overcomers meetings can truly be life-changing! Plus, attendance at traditional 12 step groups like AA and Al-Anon, also provide practical tools that can make all the difference.



HIM Advances

Hospitals, Institutions, and Missions (HIM) is one of the many ways Overcomers is reaching out to those still suffering. Over the past few months we have had both new and renewed interest in our literature and meetings at Salvation Army ARC's in Southern California, East coast and the Great Lakes areas, while starting up county jail meetings in Nevada and California. The "Incarcerated Church" of San Quentin is still holding Overcomers meetings after 20 years. New

meetings in treatment centers and transitional living centers are starting in OK, CA, NE, and PA. Many of these meetings could use outside support with panel speakers or just attendance at the newer meetings to help get them up and running. Check with the local groups in your area if you would like to participate, and if there aren't any HIM groups near you, perhaps you might find yourself being called to start one. Visit the website "Group Coordinator Network" link or contact the Central Office for more information. And if you currently lead an HIM meeting, thank you - how can we help? Let the Central office know what you need or how it is going. Perhaps we can help you get help with your panels or attendance.

News from the Office ...

More new groups have started in Arkansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and four more in California. Updating our national meeting directory is on-going, and we thank you for your help so far. It has been invaluable. If you get a chance, please visit our website and click on "groups", then check the information for your listing. If there are any changes needed, please drop us an e-mail (you can do that right from the website under "contact us"). We have begun putting rough local schedules together to let others know where meetings are available. It is hoped that we will have started forming district service committees for our nationwide event to celebrate 25 years of Overcomers Outreach in the near future. The new link on our website "OO Media" features some speaker and topic meeting audios, as well as some photos of recent events (the campout). If you would like to post some photos of your group event, just email them to the Central Office. We have slide presentations for PI, HIM and how to start a meeting currently available for viewing and CDs can be mailed on request. These will hopefully increase interest in outreach participation as well as better explain

the ministry. And coming soon ... YouTube blogs. We would also be happy to post your upcoming event on the website, just email it to us a few days in advance.

Look for the new "Quick Links" feature on the upper left corner of the website, where a few handy "shortcuts" are now available, including a "what's new" link for the latest changes and updates.



"The Office"

Enemy Attack!

"The Holidays" seem to take their toll on many of us in recovery. We may get too busy for our regular meetings and daily devotions, with all the extra stress and distractions that come with shopping and planning for entertaining family and friends. "It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do ..." p.85, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

The season starts with a feast of gratitude and thanksgiving for God's plentiful bounty and His grace and blessings to us, then focuses on the greatest event (so far) – the coming of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. We are celebrating God's fulfillment of his promise of reconciliation to Him for all eternity. We gather with friends and family to praise God's love. True and perfect love abounds – what could possibly go wrong? Our problem centers in our minds, and it is there the battle is waged. But who are we fighting? - The devil, the flesh and this fallen world.

According to 1 Peter 5:8 "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." He is not only your enemy,

but God's as well, so when we celebrate God's love and show that love to others we are doubly offensive to him. He will plant every lie he can and make you think it is your idea. He will whisper of things you "should have" and point out what others have that you don't. He will show you much that you "lack" or have "lost". "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Cor 10:5 is saying to seek the truth in God's word and use that truth to destroy the lies of the enemy.

Your flesh is the part of you that was trained to live independently of God before you became a Christian. The old ways and habits we all had before we surrendered are still in our memories and can surface when we least expect them. When the attack of the enemy awakens old pain, so do thoughts of our old "remedies" awaken as well. "Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions." Eccl 7:10 tells us not to dwell in the past, as our memories are distorted anyway, and we need to recognize that we are where God wants us for our good and His good purpose.

We live in a fallen world for now. We hope for eternal life after this time in this world, but we are still influenced by this fallen world. All around us are claims of "instant gratification" and quick, easy "fixes" for whatever troubles us **in this world!** Mass media, world views and opinions, all pitch the very best this fallen world has to offer. We all face these temptations. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it". 1 Cor 10:13 tells us that everyone will be tempted, but God so loves us that He provides a way out for each of us. Can we avoid Holiday temptation? I welcome

it, since that means that I am offending the devil, or he would not be interested enough to tempt me, and I have the opportunity to study and apply God's word to defeat the devil, mortify the flesh, and overcome this fallen world, all through the power of Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas!



Don and Carla

With Gratitude

It is with a grateful heart that I think of people like Don and Carla, John and Judy, and so many others who have given so freely of their time and efforts to simply help others. Overcomers past, present and future share one thing in common – we have received the love of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. As He conforms us to His image, we get to walk through this life giving that same love away, sharing with still others, all to glorify Him. I have been and continue to be blessed with the witnessing of His healing power working through each and every one of you.

Over this past year it has been my privilege and honor to meet and be of service to many of you as you work to bring the light of God's Word to others, and I look forward to continuing in this. I pray that you would be blessed with the love that I feel for you all, and that you may find a way to share the joy of the coming of our Savior with friends, families, and strangers this season. Thank you all – your servant Jeff

A Prayer of Thanks

In the beginning You spoke and Creation was born.

Your Word became flesh and Jesus was born.

He walked the earth a man without sin, teaching us humility.

He took our sins to the Cross to show us the way of repentance.

He died and rose again, and our Eternal Salvation was born.

We sought to follow Him and our hope was born.

He used us to help each other and our Faith was born.

Now we gather as one Body united in and through Jesus Christ and celebrate the Blessings you pour upon us through Him, our Lord and Savior.

Thank you Jesus ... Thank you Lord.

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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