

# Overcomers Outreach

## *“Bridging the Gap Between 12 Step Recovery Groups and Churches” Spring 2015 Newsletter*



**From the Director** – It is Spring! The season of new life, new growth, new beginnings. All of this “newness” inspires much hope for us all. It is a time of seeding, planting, and pruning, as we look forward to a plentiful harvest. But a good crop requires much labor, attention, and time. In the gospel of Mark, references to seed, soil and growth are made in three of the parables in Chapter 4. The first story talks of the results of where the seeds fall when sown, while the second hints at the mystery of why and how the seed may grow, and the last points to the smallest seed becoming the largest plant, with branches providing shelter even to the birds who would have swallowed up the seeds.

In our groups we often meet new people. Some come once or twice, and may or may not hear God's Word. Others come for a while, often participating, then seem to fade away, or move on to something else. Then there are those who join the group, get in service, and eagerly participate while learning, growing, and sharing. We don't know how or why they grow so well, but often we see them working with others, starting new meetings, serving community and church alike. As their “branches” provide shelter to many, they spread the good news to still others. Even some of those that didn't stay the first time around may start showing up again, perhaps a little more hurt, a little more humbled. They soon start bearing fruit as well, when we “water” with hope, support, and love.

This is what OO has been a part of for almost 30 years – planting seeds, watering, witness to growth, and spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Hope in Christ. May 9<sup>th</sup> of this year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ministry of Overcomers Outreach, Inc., and He is not done with us yet!

Jeff M.

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **National Day of Prayer**

May 1, 2015 - Wherever you are, please pray for the church, pray for our leaders, pray for the suffering.

#### **OO 30 year Anniversary**

May 9, 2015 - Have a celebration for all those who have been helped! Share the Good News - tell a friend “Jesus Loves You!”

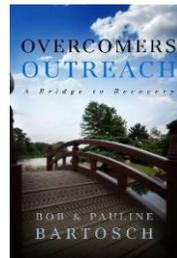
#### **6<sup>th</sup> Annual OO Campout**

Get ready! We are camping again! August 7-9, Morro Bay State Park, Morro Bay, CA. With shower facility, grill pits, and primarily tent-camping, this is a great spot. We will have a “pot-luck” night Friday, where everyone shares a dish, and a barbecue dinner Saturday night. Campfire meetings, day hikes, beach and even shopping downtown Morro Bay! Something for everyone, so bring



your s'mores and join us. Visit our [“Events”](#) page to register online or for more information.

We continue to share the story, and history of OO at meetings and in our book, “A Bridge to Recovery”. Our OO “big book is now *self-published*, which means we can offer the book to all at a much lower cost. The book can be used for a “book study” meeting. With guidelines, formats, 36 stories of recovery, this is a “must read” for everyone seeking recovery. New prices start at \$12 with volume discounts. Visit our [Books](#) page in our online shop, where we also offer the Life Recovery Bible in soft cover, large print, and Spanish editions, discounts by the case.



### **The Mailbox –**

#### **Oklahoma writes:**

Please add these times and days to our weekly meetings - Sunday's 5:00 pm; Mon, Thu, and Fri @ 7:00 pm. This program is changing lives. Thanks for allowing us to be part of the ministry.

- Pastor Ken K

#### **Palm Springs, CA writes:**

We had been providing an OO program to the Palm Springs area for years. We discontinued our program and tried Celebrate Recovery. We are pleased to announce that we are returning to Overcomers and feel that this program more than meets our needs. Please let me know what we need to do to get listed on your website. Blessings,

Pastor Don

#### **Gary writes:**

My life is a miracle. Born in Johannesburg, my youth was one of fear, anger and resentment. School was a place to dread, with only a few friends. Even the teachers were bullies. School sport was tedious and although I was good at some sports, my inability to fit in inevitably made me the victim of ridicule and the butt of the joke. I will never forget running a cross country event and some popular kid behind me asking if we had a drought on the farm because it looked like my calves were starving. My inability to deal with these comments made me vulnerable and my response was to go burn an open piece of land or build a chlorine bomb. I was always looking for somewhere to belong and never finding it. The adrenaline rush of cycling frantically away from a blazing hillside as the sirens got closer soon faded and I needed more. Drugs and alcohol filled my veins and senses and numbed the horrible world that existed around me, making it bearable, even likeable, but that was only for as long as the numbness lasted. For 16 years my life coasted along from town to town and drug to drug. Always working and always

earning made it easy to convince myself that everything was alright. But as the snare of addiction drew tighter and tighter there soon was no breathing room left. There is a memory of that time that I carry with me as a reminder, of a small, empty room with a bare mattress, and everything I owned sold for drugs. As I sat on that mattress, my heart and soul so very empty, I considered whether to take my last possession, my car, and trade it for drugs, or drive it off Chapmans peak. Yet in that dark and painful place God reached out and gave me hope. Then the hard work began.

Rehab gave me an opportunity to get real with myself and to do so from the safe confines of a controlled environment. The 12 step program taught me how to live life, one day at a time. My life blossomed. I attended NA meetings every day for the first two years of my recovery, I diligently worked the 12 step program, and every day I continue to wake to another miracle. Through the next 18 years, spiritual principles guided me, along with a good dose of self will, yet I did enough to keep from falling back to my old ways. But something was missing.

It happened so subtly, destruction loomed ominously in my life again. Everything so carefully built was crumbling, soon a second divorce was imminent and all my values of recovery were compromised. I was drinking, smoking pot and involved in a cyber-affair. This was where God stepped in and intervened in my life yet again. My wife who was going through her own hell as a result of my actions, mentioned an invite to a local church. At that point I was willing to try anything to fix what was broken, even though it went against all my carefully constructed instincts. That Sunday found me seated, with my family, in the place of my salvation. I gave my life to Jesus that day and Heaven opened and a chorus of angels sang at the return of the prodigal son, The Holy Spirit filled the room and my soul. For the first time in my life true peace swept over me and an undeniable knowledge that everything will be OK, because Jesus loves me, took hold of my heart. For

weeks after that my tears flowed, emotion welled up in me like never before. All the spiritual principles taught in recovery have now found a place in a truth that is becoming my life. Everything makes sense, the confusion caused by denial, swept away. My life belongs to Jesus, my sins repented and forgiven, the old me has been baptized into death with Jesus and born anew- the old Gary no longer exists. A new child of God has been born. Thank you Lord for never giving up on me.

In Jesus name, Amen

#### **Special Thanks:**

*I recently asked a few group leaders what they felt were the key reasons their groups keep going. Most have been meeting for over 20 years, and we want to thank these and all leaders for their faithfulness in being there for so many others. Here are some of the replies:*

Jeff

Our longevity is mainly due to the meeting always being there, open and held by the same leader while we share the scriptures and discern God's wisdom together.

- Dan, S. Lake Tahoe, CA

Thanks Jeff

God's grace has contributed to our group's longevity and the thing that has made us successful is consistency and having God as our main speaker every week. OO is a simple, effective format.

Linda C, Yorba Linda, CA

Jeff

I think one of the reasons that we have been able to keep going for so long is that Jimmy and I are always really active in AA and Al-Anon, and our members are pretty much in the secular programs as well. I really believe that OO is a Bridge and we encourage everyone to go to the meeting that applies to their particular problem. So, we mainly stick to doing the Steps over and over in the Christian perspective. And we also use the Big Book and AA 12 x12 as well as Bible etc., etc., etc. Discussion is always from the Christian viewpoint. Another thing we stress is that if you had to choose between AA, Al-Anon, etc. or Overcomers, we

say go to the other group. Really, our group is not just about stopping drinking (or whatever your problem). You probably won't stop with OO alone. It is not specific enough. Know what I mean? When we heard Bob and Pauline say they weren't changing the words of the steps, we were sold. We wanted to be in a group like that and since we couldn't talk anybody else into starting one, we did!

- Sue J, Greensboro, NC

Jeff

Longevity has been done by God, rotation of chairing meetings, and by following the exact format outlined in the Freed book. If it works don't try to fix it.

- Jim B, Tulsa, OK

*So the common factors are God, God's Wisdom, God's Grace, God's Word, and dedicated, faithful leaders. Special thanks go to you.*

#### **Welcome New Groups:**

Welcome to the new groups in Fort Myers, FL, Washington DC, Ellijay, GA, Port Vincent, LA, Poughkeepsie, NY, Buna, TX, and Pittsburgh, PA. We also have a new group in London, England, and have some links to our international groups on our "[Meetings](#)" page.

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#### **Coffee with God**

My 1st cup of coffee (I woke up feeling blue), I asked God to join me He said "I'm already here with you"

After sipping for a moment, still feeling a bit numb, I thanked Him for His blessings

He said "The best is yet to come"

I told Him I was anxious - He told me to be still - Would He care for my friends and family?

He said He does, and always will

I asked what He would have me do - He told me I would know

If I seek Him first and walk with Him, Because He loves us so.

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#### **Office News**

As we continue our directory update project, we have left a lot of messages, unanswered as of yet. But we have also received a lot of updates as well, so thank you all for keeping in touch.

Our website is averaging over 500 new visits a week, which is great. If you have not looked lately, we have a few new projects linked. Our new "[Online Workshop](#)" is available on the "[What's New](#)" page, and we also have a link to our "[Study Page](#)", which features step study, topic study, and "The Four Standards" studies, with some pamphlet material as well. Be sure to take a look and let us know how we can improve.

We are close to 500 "likes" on our [Face Book](#) page, but can't quite break that barrier. Visit the page for posts and devotionals, and be sure to share any group news or events you care to. Our blog site – [The Bridge](#) – is a place to share online and a good resource for some of our literature. Our [Group Network](#) link provides helpful information for starting, growing, and improving group attendance or outreach to the community. A discussion of our Group Traditions and helpful forms will be found on this site, too.

### Happy Birthday/Anniversary -

The following people have recently celebrated milestones in recovery:

John H, Cathedral City, CA – 34yrs, Dan B, S. Lake Tahoe, CA – 25yrs, Jack E – 6yrs, and Rita A – 26yrs, both from Burley, ID group, Kevin M, San Fernando, CA – 7yrs, Bob B, Lockport, IL – 13yrs, Ed J, San Juan Capistrano, CA – 27yrs, Elayne B, Tulsa, OK – 28yrs, and Don B, Sun City, AZ – 43yrs. They made donations (\$1 for each year of their recovery) to the Central Office to express their gratitude and help us "carry the message".

These groups had anniversaries this quarter: De Soto, KS – 2yrs, Rainier, WA – 3yrs, Pike's Peak Christian group, CO – 3yrs, Overland Park, KS – 4yrs, Baton Rouge, LA – 4yrs, Savannah, Grand Cayman – 4yrs, Pike's Peak Baptist group, CO – 7yrs, Lockport, IL – 14yrs, Spiritual Change group, Elizabeth, NJ – 18yrs, Ventura, CA – 20yrs, Lincoln, NE – 23yrs, S. Lake Tahoe, CA Tuesday night group – 25yrs, and Tulsa, OK – 27yrs. These groups make regular 7th tradition donations to the Central Office and continue, through their love and support, to help many people.

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.

### New and Revised Literature:

We are updating the "Marijuana Maze" pamphlet to include recent findings of studies on long term use, as well as current and likely future legal status and availability. Once again, this world has offered a shallow solution to spiritual malady, another "instant fix". As with alcohol, we do not take a position "for" or "against" the legal use of any substance, but we do offer the solution to the **abuse** of any substance or compulsive behavior, namely life abundant in Jesus Christ. The revised pamphlet should be available in June.

The latest project we are developing is a pamphlet/brochure about "The OO Group", with suggestions for starting, participating in, and growing groups. Outreach opportunities, ideas for public awareness and service to the community are some of the functions we hope to discuss. Input from both groups and individuals is welcome. Feel free to email, phone, or write the Central Office

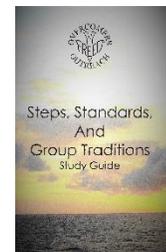
### Revisions to the **Steps, Standards, and Traditions Guide** study guide have been completed.

Added questions for personal inventory and relevant Bible passages for study serve to offer a Biblical approach to better understand and apply the 12 step program in daily life.

Literature sales help fund the Central Office. We are happy to help your group find the literature they want at a good price, and offer discount prices on some books and Bibles by the case.

We have [wall posters](#) - "OO 12 Steps with Scriptures" and "OO 12 Traditions".

They are 20" wide and 30" long, with dark green lettering on white vinyl, \$45 a set. Order by phone, email for further details, or order online from the link to our "Merchandise" page of the online shop.



### Amazon "Smile"

Overcomers Outreach is registered with Amazon Smile, which means that purchases made through Amazon smile pages result in a small donation to OO or any registered charity of your choice. If you are shopping on Amazon.com, please consider using a "smile" account. We have a [link](#) on our Online Shop Home page or go to <http://smile.amazon.com/> and get set up. There is no additional cost to the buyer and if there is enough participation, our financial situation may be improved.

### Board Members

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest member to the Board of Directors, Jeff M, currently residing in Ridgecrest, CA. Jeff has several years participation in 12 step recovery as well as OO, and a heart for helping others. We are blessed to have his help and support.

After 6 years of service as Treasurer, John H, from Cathedral City, CA, has resigned due to new responsibilities with a church startup. John helped start OO meetings in Lake Tahoe 25 years ago, and helped start groups in Cathedral City when he and his wife Judy moved there over 10 years ago. "Grateful John" just celebrated 34 years in recovery, and we wish him the best in his newest projects, but we are the grateful ones, John. God bless you in all you do.

Congratulations to our Chairperson, Bette K, on her recent marriage to Mike S. The couple reside in Simi Valley, CA.

### In Loving Memory

Earlier this year we lost a dear friend and faithful witness. Mark Luther is at peace with Jesus now after a long battle with serious health issues. He was with Overcomers in Lake Tahoe for many years, taking meetings into the county jail and bringing newcomers to church on Sundays. A gentle and kind soul, Mark always had a "good word" to share with new believers and seekers alike. His passion for sharing the gospel was often seen at the "Coffee and Prayer" pop-up tent seen all around the area. Job well done Mark, now rest in peace, and thank you.



## A Prayer for Hope

As we face our day, our week, or just the next few moments, we may often feel unsure, even afraid of what lies ahead.

*"Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how." - Mark 4:27*

We can always turn to God in confidence, and His word can comfort and reassure us that He cares for us, in and through all things. Let's turn to Him now:

**Heavenly Father – All glory and praise is yours, as we find ourselves in your caring hands. May we hold You first in our hearts as we are led in your ways We seek that our actions would honor You as we dwell in Your Grace, Your Love, and Your presence now and ever after. In Jesus name we pray.**

**Amen**

*If you would like to donate to Overcomers Outreach, Inc. to help defray the cost of this newsletter as well as other operating expenses, please visit our website [overcomersoutreach.org](http://overcomersoutreach.org) or send to Overcomers Outreach, 12828 Acheson Dr., Whittier, CA 90601. All donations are tax deductible. To be added to our mailing list, or removed from it, please so indicate, along with any comments or suggestions, or call us at (800)310-3001. You can also email us at [info@overcomersoutreach.org](mailto: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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