

# OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CANADA INC.

## Newsletter - April 2012

### What to look for in a Christian 12-Step Recovery Group

I am sometimes asked what makes Overcomers different from the other Christian 12-Step groups.

I always begin my response by quite firmly stating that we don't view anyone as "competition". In fact, when it comes to people who are hurting there is "enough business" out there for everyone. Also, I point to our Overcomers Outreach "Freed" booklet where we state: "Attendance at additional 12-Step groups is encouraged".

What most Christian programs have in common is the use of the copyrighted 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous because these 12-Steps have more than 75 years of proven success. Christian programs recognize Jesus Christ as our higher power because Jesus has more than 2000 years of proven success!

Having said that ... one must look at the goals of each program. Is the goal *training* or *recovery*? Many groups that operate in churches are designed to follow the "church year", beginning in October and ending in May. These programs often wrap up their year with a graduation program. These groups are designed to train people in the philosophy and in the sound Scriptural basis of the 12-Steps of AA.

Training is good, but training alone will not heal an addict. Training needs to be supported by a recovery program.

Recovery groups need to run year-round. It is the rare addict that can be healed in an eight month window. I decided to begin my own recovery in November and, by May, was probably reaching my point of highest vulnerability. Even if healing was possible in eight months, what about the person who "hits bottom" in July? The option of waiting until the group begins in October is unrealistic.

The graduation ceremony itself is problematic for an addict. I have had addicts point out that "the pressure to get cleaned up by the last Sunday of May" is simply too much. Other addicts will point out that they will never "graduate" from recovery – it is a lifelong commitment.

Overcomers Outreach is not the only Christian 12-Step program out there. However, if your goal is recovery, not just training, ensure that the group runs 52 weeks per year and be sure that there is never a graduation ceremony.

Most important of all ... get on with it! Find a Bible-based group so that, in the words of James 5:16, you can "confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed!"

**Chris B.**  
**President**  
**Overcomers Outreach Canada**

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**F R E E D**

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## THANK GOD! IT HAS BEEN DONE BY CHRIST JESUS

### Romans 7:14-25 (NLT)

The last verse is the key for all O.O. ministry. “Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free.”

The challenge I face every day is this: how does one get people out of defeat in addictions to freedom in Jesus Christ? This past year I have been at every Promise Keepers event doing addiction workshops. We always have a great turnout, but afterwards we ask “now what”? The question to be asked, not only at Promise Keepers' events, but in every church in Canada is this: 'how do we best help hurting people?' They need ongoing help and support after they have come to a point of wanting to change. One solution has been our follow-up training workshops. Here we have an opportunity to train leaders for new groups. Eleven Overcomers groups started in 2011. These groups will provide the accountability and help that is needed on a regular, recurring basis. Follow-up phone calls and emails are also important. And thirdly, I spend much time in prayer for hurting people. Prayer provides real comfort in all of this.

The past year has been very hectic with much travel and preparation. I have built a good relationship with Rick V and the Promise Keepers staff. I have taken Rick's challenge to heart: 'whatever we do, make sure we do our very best.'

**“Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.”**

Romans 7:25 (NLT)

I think our call is to do all we can to really get the message out to all hurting people: that, in small groups under the power of

Jesus Christ, with the tools of our 12-Step program, we can find freedom. I think that we need to be at all P.K. events this year and next year. Having Alvin R. at these events is very helpful because he has the ability to connect with people and to meet them in their point of need. We have been sending out follow-up emails to all people who attend our training workshops to encourage them and to help them to deal with any problems they are having.

In closing, I thank the Board and all who help with Overcomers Outreach. Without you, nothing would be done.

Let's all pick up the challenge of Galatians 6:1-5 (NLT) “Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too

**\*SERENITY PRAYER: “GOD, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;**

important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct.”

**Ken S. - Executive Coordinator of Overcomers Outreach Canada**

**I had two nervous breakdowns and multiple suicide attempts, and I suffered from deep depression, plus endless days and months of black clouds. I had begun drinking at age 25, just so I could get some sleep. I became a weekend drunk.**

**With Pain Comes Growth and Eventually Victory**

*By Denyse C-P (Lazarus House)*

My parents were born just before the Great Depression of the 1930's. They had no education and life was hard. At 21, my mom got pregnant, and she put me up for adoption. Dad found out and married her. They had to go to court to get me back.

Dad was in the army and treated us like his own little soldiers. Living at home was like being in boot camp and prison all at once. We had no time off for good behavior. The mental and physical abuse was unbelievable. At 12 years old, my father began raping me. This lasted for 4 years. At 19, I got pregnant myself. I was alone with nowhere to go and on one to help. I felt cursed. I married the first man who asked! What I got was an insanely jealous, raving lunatic, who beat me constantly. I left with my two babies after four and a half years. The day after I left my first husband, I met my second. Was it love at first sight, or was I just too afraid to be alone? Fourteen years into that marriage, I found out that he had been sexually abusing my daughter! WHERE WAS I? Things didn't change but they remained the same: STILL CURSED! I stayed 5 more years and then I left. Still, during that marriage, he had to put up with a lot.

I had two nervous breakdowns and multiple suicide attempts, and I suffered from deep depression, plus endless days and months of black clouds. I had begun drinking at age 25, just so I could get some sleep. I became a weekend drunk.

A year-and-a-half after I left my second husband, I met a man who used me for my money and when it was all gone, so was he. Obviously, I wasn't learning anything from my mistakes and I was still cursed. Then one night, while watching Billy Graham on TV, I said THE SINNER'S PRAYER for the first time. I was born again, found a church, and was baptized. Life didn't get easy right away, but I found a job and worked for 4 years until I had another breakdown that lasted for 2 years. The Lord said that He would never leave me or forsake me, but still, when desperation hits you in the deepest recesses of your soul and you want to give up, you wonder where He is!

My parents are gone now, but, before he died, my father bought me a house as atonement for his sins (his words) He was the one who hurt me the most in life, and yet I loved him the most. I didn't have that love connection with my mom and that is sad.

**courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.” AMEN**

God took care of me. I am now married to a Christian man, and we lack for nothing. I have a better relationship with my children again. And it is all because of God's grace! We serve the Lord where we can; we have a great church and many friends. I am in the process of finishing a Bible study course and will be a lay minister when I'm done. The Lord is sending me to do mission work in BC, so I will be moving soon. My heart's passion is for street people and the ones ignored by our society.

Today my conscience is clear and my soul is at peace. I have come full circle from pain to bliss, and the curse is broken! James says it best in Chapter 1:2-4. "Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance; perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

I once believed that I was destined to be a bag lady, and die on the street alone. I came from nothing and was given much. PRAISE GOD! Please consider Jesus; you don't know what you are missing. I wish you love.

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4*

## **Union Gospel Mission Women**

**By Audrey J**

I really didn't discover Overcomers until well into my sobriety. I did the AA thing first, then was saved, and then found out about the Overcomers program with Scriptures and 12 steps from AA. Things made sense. I believed the steps came from the Bible, but AA was not to be considered a religious program.

The 12 steps did not tell me who God was. They suggested I needed God, that I claim it/Him as a Higher Power. That wasn't enough. When I tried to make up my own god, it didn't work for me, and just got me into trouble.

I had to find out who God was, and Jesus made sure I found out. There is a story to that. I made a decision only after I heard He loved me and went to the cross for me, because I would have gone to hell for the things I did. Then I was told I was forgiven. WOW! I believed God's message of love - I needed to know that I was forgiven. Forgiving myself wasn't enough. Then I committed my life to Jesus Christ and asked to be baptized. My life has never been the same. I am learning to repent of my sinful ways, which I will do until I see Jesus.

I believe in the 12 steps road to recovery. But we need to learn who God is, what He did for us and why. When we understand, we need to make a commitment to Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures are from the Bible, God's word, not from man. He offers a blessed way of life, and I want it for me. Today, God is letting me serve Him by working with women with addictions at the Union Gospel Mission's Charis Centre.

In His Grip,  
Audrey

## Testimony of Freedom

By Marc S, an Overcomer in Christ (Calvary Temple Group)

I was born and raised Roman Catholic in a small town just south of Winnipeg, and grew up in a very loving home where everything was provided for me. I even became an altar boy in my early life. Basically, I experienced an exterior relationship with God. I was going to church because I was told to, not because I wanted to. Therefore, it didn't do much good for all the sin I was putting into my system.

It says in the Gospel of Matthew 23:26. "First clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also."

I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus until I invited Him into my heart on October 10, 2000, while I was in the New Life Recovery program at Union Gospel Mission. But I continually failed to surrender my will to Him.

**"When the enemy has control of your life, he will make it miserable beyond description. I didn't want to be doing these things, but I had no power to overcome them in my own strength. That is why our Lord and Saviour had to come here and destroy the works of the enemy."**

This result was a terrible mess, just as it is described in Luke 11:24-26. "When an evil spirit leaves a person, he goes to the desert searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, I will return to the person I came from. So it returns and finds that its former home is all swept and cleaned. Then the spirit finds seven other spirits, more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before." This is what happened to me, and I became fully addicted to crack cocaine, alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, gambling, lustful behaviour, and gluttony.

Those were the seven evil spirits that entered my system, and I became sick and tired of being so sick and tired. I was in complete bondage to Lucifer's entrapments because of my foolish decisions in my sinful behaviour. Life became a living hell.

I went through detox 11 times, went to the St. Norbert Foundation for 17 weeks, through Headingly Correctional for a year, the AFM twice, Tamarak rehab twice, AIR rehab three times, and the Union Gospel Mission's men's resident program four different times.

When the enemy has control of your life, he will make it miserable beyond description. I didn't want to be doing these things, but I had no power to overcome them in my own strength. That is why our Lord and Saviour had to come here and destroy the works of the enemy.

It says in Philippians 2:7-8, "He made Himself nothing. He took the humble position of the slave and appeared in human form. And in human form He obediently humbled Himself even further by dying a criminal's death on the cross." This was the power and source needed in my life to overcome my addictions. You see, our human flesh was not designed to go up against the spiritual powers of the world.

In Ephesians 6:12, it says, "For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world. Against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms."

Once I made the decision to invite Jesus into my heart, He truly turned my life around. In Acts 2:38,

Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

My problem was not drugs and alcohol. My problem was my sinful behaviour. I was using these things to deal with the sin inside me, and this was like a roadblock, preventing God from healing me through the spirit of His son Jesus. We read in Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear."

But God, being so loving and forgiving, tells us in Romans 5:6; "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners." It says in Romans 5:11; "Now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God. All because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends with God." God took care of this sin problem by sacrificing His son for us. Whoever believes in Him and is willing to follow Him, God will empower with His Holy Spirit so that they can live according to the Lord's will in their life.

You see, He was not empowering me to continue in my sinful nature. He gives us a brand-new nature. In John 3:3; Jesus replied, "I assure you, unless you are born again you can never see the kingdom of God." He means the spiritual birth has to happen in order for the Scriptures to start making any sense.

It is also written in Romans 6:5-8: "Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the spirit. If your sinful nature controls your mind there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under control of the sinful nature can never please God."

So all those years of going in and out of rehab centers, I was still continually harboring sin. This resulted in relapse over and over, and because I continued to feed my sinful nature, it would overpower me every time.

The Lord came into my life in August 2006 and removed the obsession of drugs and alcohol completely. Now I have a personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He is the Overcomer, so if I continue to surrender my will on a daily basis, my new Christian life will continue to grow and I will become strong in the Lord. I have to continually discipline my old behaviour and patterns of doing things. In 1 John 1:8-9 it says, "If we say we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." My sinful nature was in control of me for a long time, so this resulted in death every time. What I mean is that every avenue of my addictions had to be fully exhausted and crushed beyond repair.

In Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; He rescues those who are crushed in spirit." Once the full surrender happens, He takes over with His new teachings in our system. In 2 Timothy 3:16, it says; "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right."

It came to the point where I could not trust myself at all. I have to trust and have faith that God will show me what to think, what to say and what to do. I learned that as long as I'm willing to learn how to live a Christ-like life, He will show me. The living word of God is so powerful. It can transform



the worst sinner into the finest saint. That's what it was designed to do. I was having a really hard time trying to figure out what the Scriptures meant until I started going to recovery meetings and began learning the 12 steps. At the Overcomers meetings, I was able to see the connection between the 12 Steps and the Scriptures that are associated with each Step, as explained in the FREED book.

**STEP 1:** We admitted we were powerless over addictions, that our lives had become unmanageable. 2 Corinthians 1:9; *"In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we learned not to rely on ourselves, but on God, who can raise the dead."* I understand now.



### **Report on New Groups in Overcomers**

Overcomers Outreach Canada continues to see new chapters come on board --- the bulk are from Manitoba. One of the latest to join the OO family is at the Lighthouse Mission in Winnipeg. Others up and running in the province are at Steinbach, Brandon (men's purity), and Morden.

In Ontario, a group has launched at Newmarket in the Toronto area. There is interest in Kenora where a Salvation Army pastor has shown a desire to start a group. And through our connection with Promise Keepers Canada, there are other individuals interested with men's purity groups seeming to be the main focus.

For information on all existing Overcomers groups go to our website [overcomersoutreach.ca](http://overcomersoutreach.ca)

**Bev T**



### **Report from Winter Roundup 2012**

On Saturday, February 25, approximately 55 people gathered at Wayside Gospel Chapel, Grand Marais, for the Overcomers Outreach Winter Roundup. People gathered to this event from all over Southern Manitoba.

This was a time for music, food and fellowship. Most importantly, we heard great testimonies about what God is doing in people's lives as they recover from various addictions and compulsions.

Significantly, three active church leaders shared their current recovery stories. Clearly, the disease of addiction can affect every Christian, regardless of the nature of their service to the Kingdom. Praise God for healing!

Thank you to Wayside for hosting the event. Thank you to the country gospel band that contributed their time to lead us in worship.

Yours very truly,

**Chris B.**

**An Overcomer in Christ, and  
President, Overcomers Outreach Canada**

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## Treasurer's Note

We thank the Lord for the many opportunities He is bringing to us at Overcomers Outreach Canada and for the way in which He also provides the resources for them. In 2011, we continued our partnership with Promise Keepers Canada, having a presence at all of their events across Canada, and we were able to hold follow-up workshops with interested people after most of those. This has resulted in more new Overcomers groups being started and there are some others that are in the formation stage. We are fortunate to have Ken Sundelin, our Executive Coordinator, on staff as he is the main one traveling across the country to represent us and to hold the workshops and group leader training events.

Understandably, being involved like this involves a lot of expense for traveling, lodging, meeting rooms, as well as for Ken's monthly salary. We are very thankful for the many individuals, churches and other organizations that have joined with us financially to make this possible. In 2011, we had \$46,924 of income and \$51,373 of expenses, which resulted in a bit of a shortfall. However, we had some funds carried over from the year before as we entered 2011, so our needs were met once again for another year. [Full financial statements are available on request]. Nevertheless, in order for this ministry to continue and to grow, we do rely on the support of God's people and we encourage all who have benefited from Overcomers and all who believe in this ministry to stand with us in 2012. Support can be designated to either:

1. Executive Coordinator's support (Ken Sundelin's salary and expense)
2. Travel and Conference expense (cross-Canada expansion)
3. General operating expenses (telephone, website, office, etc.)

Donations can be made by cheque, and some have supplied us with a series of monthly post-dated cheques. We are also able to take donations online through [PayPal](#) – just visit our website where there is a link to do that; please add a note to designate the area of ministry you wish to support and provide us with a mailing address for receipting purposes.

Thank you to all who have faithfully supported the ministry of Overcomers Outreach in Canada.

**Leo J.**  
**Treasurer**

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