



# OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CANADA

December | 2018 Newsletter

## President's Message

The Bible tells us that all human beings have come up short when it comes to God's standards.

*"Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins."*

(New International Version, Ecclesiastes 7:20)

## Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Even Jesus as part of the trinity needed to plug into the power of prayer, and these are a couple of verses that illustrate this:

- *"One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God."* (Luke 6:12) Not only did He set aside the time, He moved to a place where there were no outside distractions.
- When Jesus' disciples ask for guidance on how to pray He gives them guidance that we now call "The Lord's Prayer". In fact, two aspects that are integral to the twelve steps of recovery can be found in it. *"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."* (Luke 11:4) Not only must we confess and ask for forgiveness/extend forgiveness to those who have hurt us; we can also petition God to help us in the face of temptation.

## From Working the Steps

"In order to put God's power to work in our lives, we need to seek the Lord in regular prayer – also listening for His guidance day by day. Taking time to do this may be difficult to fit into our busy schedule, but being on good speaking terms with God can make all the difference in how our day goes! It can determine whether we will use or drink today! It may decide how we will react to the people we're worried about today. We may have long lists of "wants" but seeking His will for us, whatever that might be, is putting our lives in the palm of His almighty hand. Asking for power to carry out His will in our lives keeps us in tune with Him, and on track in this process of recovery."

From a physical standpoint it is wise not to become too tired, hungry, etc. From a spiritual standpoint it is important that we try to nourish our spirits as well. This means being vigilant on what we feed our spirits, and if we are feeling vulnerable seek help. The most important "Helper" we have is our Higher Power, Jesus Christ, whom we can reach out to in prayer.

If you have attended an Overcomers meeting you may have heard someone say, "Keep coming, it works". Our recovery is a process in which we need to take an active role. Overcomers can be one of the tools that we can use to attain victory over our compulsions.

## Phil Van Bergen

Acting President, Overcomers Outreach of Canada

## Earl's Testimony

My name is Earl Johnston. I was born and raised in Beausejour, Manitoba. Our family homestead was in Molson, Manitoba. My dad's reserve is Hollow Water, my mother's reserve is Little Black River. My Grandpa relocated his family, my aunts and uncles to escape the sixties scoop and the residential schools upon his kids, so we lived in Molson, where my Grandpa worked for CP rail in the community.

Growing up in Molson, I remember my Grandparents drinking, my parents and my uncles and aunties drinking, growing up around drinking parties was normal. I'd be playing while they would drink. After we lost my Grandma in a house fire, we all moved to the city and the alcohol and parties continued. Even though it was probably getting worse, it was all normal for me, being left at the babysitter's all over, fending for myself, then next thing I knew, I was the babysitter. I hated it, always watching my brothers and sisters, always cleaning, doing stuff my parents should have been doing, not being able to be a kid.

I started to take off as I got older, by this time I had already lost my Grandma and Auntie to alcohol and drugs overdose. When I started taking off from home I carried on the alcohol and drugs lifestyle, and to feed my habits I fell into a life of crime and acceptance. So I hung around a crew of friends from the neighbourhood, from there it spiraled out of control. I started out throwing rocks at cop cars for a rush, then alcohol, then weed, then shrooms, acid, cocaine, crack and for a very short time, pills, but all the other drugs I would do over and over. To obtain these drugs I would do break and enters on businesses, a lot of houses, stole a lot of vehicles. My crew was responsible for sixty percent of the cars being stolen in Winnipeg, we were taking them like candy from a store, did a lot of robberies, handful of home invasions, jackings of all sorts, jewelery, alcohol, gear, purses, wallets, robbing drug dealers. With this came the violence, and I loved violence and fighting. When I was young, 8 or 9, maybe 10, my dad would take me to parties and make me and my cousins fight for money and they would place bets to see who would win. Sometimes I won, sometimes I didn't. As I got older I loved to fight and everywhere I went it would end in a fight, every night at a bar would end in a fight. I fought regular joes, gang members, a few bikers and even a few cops in my time. But fist fights changed into knife fights, knife fights turned into gun fights. Don't get me wrong I've been beaten up a few times, one that stands out the most, was when I was jumped by six guys, battered, slashed, beaten and left for dead! And if it wasn't for my nieces begging and trying to get me up for a half hour, I would have bled out.

Through all that crap I was in and out of jail from fourteen till twenty-seven years old, a very short bit in 2011. For me I glorified jail life, I made it a goal to be in there when I was a young adult (18) and that went on for at least a decade, going to the remand once every week or two until I was 27. My last time I got out of jail in 2007 or 2008, I tried to heal myself my way, I went to my dad's reserve, didn't last long so I started selling drugs. I sold drugs for a long time, to the extreme, weed, crack, sometimes coke. With that came a lot of violence again, a lot of fighting, gun fights and by this time I was bringing it home with me, endangering my family, especially my kids. Everywhere I went and sold drugs the violence followed, so I started telling myself, getting tired of this lifestyle, it's got to stop, gonna die or even worse, lose one of my kids to my violence. This issue was on my mind a lot, but where do I start...

My partner and I were going through a separation or break up. I asked my mother to come get me and on the ride home, I had all these questions about God, so after our conversation I did it, and it came

pouring out, "I gave my life to God", I confessed, accepted God, and asked for forgiveness and cried all the way home. I was tired of the tough guy, crazy, thugged-out lifestyle and attitude. I threw it all out the window, and left it behind me literally, and that was May 16, 2015. I gave my life 100% to God and left it in His hands. I went to my mother's, detoxed myself for 2 months which wasn't easy, very excruciating pain and discomfort, prayed every day, did a handful of devotions daily. I read Joyce Meyer books, one that starts out "It is a battlefield of the mind", very good book, I recommend it. After two months of detoxing myself, and drying out, my mom introduced me to her friend Roseanne and they came up with the idea that this program "Overcomers" would be good for me. They took me to a meeting, and I started going as much as I can, with the help of Roseanne, cause my mother had a very busy schedule with CFS kids and her work. I would go with Roseanne and my mom as much as I could.

Then one day I went to a meeting with Roseanne, so I asked about her church and if I could join it, she said yes. My first time going to church I went and sat with Roseanne, I think the next few times, but I wanted to go regularly and living out of town with no ride was hard. So on my third month of drying out, I found a place in town. Then it was full steam ahead, went to meetings and church regularly on my own, as I was going to these Overcomers meetings, I started to get to know everyone, but this lil short fellow Ken Sundelin stood out to me, full of knowledge, wisdom, guidance, started helping me, made me feel more relaxed and comfortable, that there was someone like me in the group, our friendship grew and grew. Now I look to him as my mentor but most of all he's my "faith-father".

With giving my life over to God, I got my health back, minus my bad back due to my rough lifestyle, not God's and labeled me disabled but I don't let it stop me from enjoying life. God has blessed me with a roof over my head, food, money, I am raising one of my daughters, have visitation to my kids, a better and healthier relationship with my kids, they just love their new dad, they tell me all the time. Everything in my life is positive and keeps getting better. My kids love going to church when they come visit, I don't make them, they want to go, just from me setting a positive example and it allows the seed to be planted in my kids. My seventeen year old daughter is in Grade 11, has a job, involved in the church choir, goes to a youth group on Fridays, involved in the after school drama class, which they will be putting on a two hour play this past week, and they did that for the whole year with no credit involved. Now that's commitment and dedication with all the guidance of God in her life.

As for me, I go to Overcomers Outreach (OO) on Monday, 12 Step program on Tuesday, Wednesday Ken and I are in Fisher River for Overcomers, the other Wednesday we are in Sagkeeng Overcomers, Thursday in Selkirk Overcomers, Friday morning men's group, Saturday morning at our church I open the men's Overcomers group, chair it, then Sunday I go to church. I clean the church every third Thursday with two other church friends. And the last Saturday of each month we have a men's breakfast where I set up the tables for breakfast and I volunteer whenever our pastor needs help. I'm reading the Bible, halfway done, do my devotions daily, Ken has provided me with some good Godly literature. I help him with the Overcomers in Fisher River and Sagkeeng that he has started. I basically help Ken as much as I can when I can, and for that I get a lot of knowledge and wisdom and guidance in return.

I feel very happy and humbled by my new life God blessed me with, I feel like the richest guy around and through all this I never went to a treatment centre, I never went to A.A. meetings, I just gave my life to God, 100% of it and in return, He has truly blessed me. None of this would be possible without God and for that I am forever grateful, I am His soldier.

## Our Christmas Gift

It is a known fact that from December 15 to January 10, more people will go back to their old ways of addictions and life-destroying habits, some will even commit suicide, than at any other time of the year. So what has that got to do with Overcomers Outreach you might ask?

Step 12 says this “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to all addictive and hurting people, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” I am sure most people in our country will hear the story of the birth of Jesus and that God sent Him to save us and restore us to our Heavenly Father. So who then, can be better equipped to share the love of Jesus Christ with those who are still in the problem, than someone who has found sobriety and a new life in Jesus Christ.

### What the Bible says about Step Twelve

*“Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, and do it in a gentle and respectful way.”* (The Living Bible, 1 Peter 3:15)

If you are anything like me, after experiencing the freedom of sobriety and the new life that I found in the twelve steps by the power of Jesus Christ, we have a story to share. And as this newsletter will be coming to you just before December 1st, I thought maybe we all need a reminder that we can tie our story to the Christmas story. We don't need to hold street meetings and preach about our faith, although sometimes we would like to shout it from the roof tops! I have found most people who are hurting real bad can relate to someone who quietly and in a gentle way comes along side and just shares their life experiences and how God gave them the strength and hope to stay sober. Remember to always be respectful of others; we are free to share, but also to live and let live.

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted, to announce liberty to captives, and to open the eyes of the blind.”* (Isaiah 61:1)

I pray that we all can give the greatest gift of all this year, the hope of the love of Jesus Christ.

### **Ken Sundelin**

Addictions Consultant, Overcomers Outreach Canada



## Supporting Overcomers Outreach Canada Financially

We're a faith-based organization. We partner with supporters who understand the practical need to assist those who have been affected by addictions or compulsions. God has continued to open new doors for us to help additional groups. Please prayerfully consider if you could make a year end donation to ensure we can do the work God has entrusted to us in the New Year.

*"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)*

God Bless you in 2019

***Phil Van Bergen***

Donations may be made by cheque or online through Paypal. Just click on our Donate link on our Website. Please advise us of your mailing address; a receipt will be sent out early in the new year for donations made in this year.

Financial support can be designated to a specific ministry area:

- Program Consultant's salary and expenses (Ken S.)
- General operating expenses (telephone, website, office expenses)
- Or simply designated as "Wherever needed"

***Thank you for your support of this unique and important ministry!***



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Merry Christmas  
and many  
blessings in the  
New Year

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