



OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CANADA

April | 2019 Newsletter

President's Message

Spring is coming, no really or maybe where you are it has already arrived. For many of us in Canada the winter has been particularly arduous and long—the same may be said of our addictions. However just like winter this will come to an end and there will be a rebirth. Our rebirth comes when we turn our will over to our Higher Power Jesus Christ. Just like the coming of spring there can be a renewal of our spirits.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2, NJKV)

Therefore, as we grow and experience the goodness of God's plan for us, it is important to celebrate the success others in our Overcomers Outreach family are achieving through working the steps. If a new person were to come into one of our groups would they feel the warmth and fellowship of the group reflected in how we interact?

A book written by Zig Ziglar was entitled “Confessions of a Happy Christian”. The essence of the book asks if we have our salvation through Jesus and we are embodied with the joy of His spirit do we act that way? Do we act piously or judgmentally? Do we spend all the time during our sharing time to “live or re-live” the time of our addictions? It is important to be real and truthful and not ignore the very real pain that we or those in our groups are feeling. It is also important to let Jesus help us shake off the chains that bind us to bring us into His joy.

“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.” (Psalm 30:5, NLT)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13, NIV)

When we are delivered by God it is appropriate to celebrate and sing His praises as we see in this passage: “Jehoshaphat then led all the men of Judah and Jerusalem back to Jerusalem—an exuberant parade. **God had given them joyful relief from their enemies! They entered Jerusalem and came to the Temple of God with all the instruments of the band playing.**” (2 Chronicles 20:27-28, MSG)

I hope that you will be energized by the power that comes from Jesus this Spring and always.

Phil Van Bergen

Acting President- Overcomers Outreach of Canada

Hans' Testimony

My name is Hans F. I was born in 1956 in what was then West Germany. I remember my parents sending me twice to homes for children so that I would come out of my shell. In 1965 my parents, grandparents and I moved to Winnipeg. I felt shunned at school. I was "the enemy". The parents of the children had taught them all Germans were the enemy. This happened only 20 years after WWII. I was fortunate to make friends who shared my ancestry. I also made friends with Indigenous boys. I was bullied and picked on at school. I wanted to move back to Germany. To escape I "hid" in books. I remember that I was the last to be picked for team sport.

In 1977 at the age of 21, I moved out of my parents' house. I had been struggling with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) since I was eighteen. My struggle with OCD only worsened when I moved out on my own. I remember washing my hands in order for them to be clean so frequently that my knuckles would bleed. I finally saw a Psychiatrist in 1978. He put me on a drug to combat my OCD. I started to work in a factory. A few months later I followed bad advice to get off my meds. This resulted in me being fired for not being able to do my job properly.

I started to see a Psychologist in order to get help for my struggle with OCD. He had me admitted to the Psychiatric ward at the Victoria General Hospital. I was there for six weeks. Nothing really helped in overcoming my OCD. I then began to slip towards a nervous breakdown. I was unable to manage my life anymore. I attempted suicide in June of 1979 by sticking a knife in my belly. When my undershirt started to turn red from the blood I panicked and went to the local emergency department. I was fortunate that the knife blade only went in about a quarter of an inch. I was starting to lose my sanity. I finally had myself admitted to the psychiatric ward at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. The ward was on the sixth floor and called P.I.3. I was put on other meds. There were two more attempts at suicide before I was admitted to P.I.3. I stayed there for another six weeks.

I have been on medication for OCD and depression since then. I have been seeing a psychiatric nurse since then. I was still struggling to manage my life when a friend introduced me to the 12-Step program in 1986 in the form of Emotions Anonymous. I felt that I had come "home". I was not alone. Others struggled also with mental health problems. There was finally hope. I also became a Christian in 1986. I still carry a mental wound, having watched my mother attempt suicide on several occasions (before 1977). I got married in February of 1997. I lost my wife in October 2000 to cancer and congestive heart failure. I had to move to Beausejour in 2007 to help my parents who could no longer live independently in their home.

It was in Beausejour that I found the church that I still attend. By coincidence I found the 12-Step group of Overcomers Outreach that meets at this church. I have helped at this group by making coffee, being the group treasurer, and leading the group. The 12-Step program has saved my life and I recommend it to everyone, no matter what they are dealing with.

Step 12

STEP 12 Having had a Spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to all addicted people and all those who struggle with compulsive issues and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

So who is better equipped to tell the one who is still under the control of addictions, than someone who Jesus Christ has set free by His power. It is the sober ones, those who have given everything in their lives over to our Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Through working the steps from 1-11 they had dealt with all kinds of issues in their lives; for some the journey has been very painful dealing with coming from very dysfunctional families, for others it may have been a one-time event that caused untold trauma like sexual assault, for others the death of a loved one.

As the years have gone by in my life of sobriety (over 40 years now free from alcohol, drugs and sexual addictions and being free from all those horrible feelings of shame and guilt, fear, deep resentments and hopelessness) I think I have personally heard just about everything there is to hear that causes people to try and find false comfort from their inner pain from mood altering chemicals and things that bring false comfort like food, sex, materialism, video games, etc. The list is endless. So now for all of us in Overcomers Outreach who have been set free and been given a new life in Christ Jesus, we have this great opportunity to share our lives with all others who are still in a life of hopeless bondage.

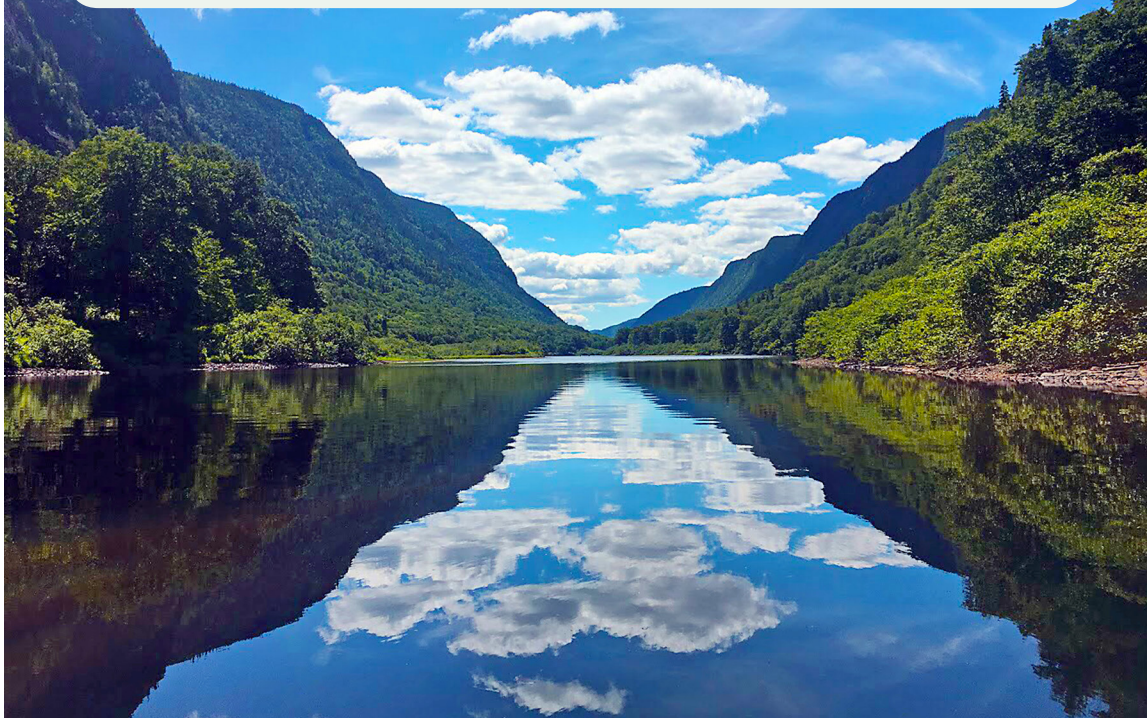
And in God's word we have this great command: *"Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, and do it in a gentle and respectful way."* (1 Peter 3:15, TLB) I hope all of you feel like I do—that we have been given a new lease on life and out of gratitude we want everyone in the world to have the peace and joy that God has given us. So therefore, you and I can take what God has given us and share it with those who are looking for answers to help themselves. We can quietly come along side of them, gently encouraging them to come to a meeting, offering a ride if needed or maybe meeting with them and sharing our story over a cup of coffee. Sometimes we can invite them to our home church to hear about our Jesus and how much He loves us and wants to have a personal relationship with us all. Let's remember what God told us in his word *"What a wonderful God we have—he is the Father of our lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy, and the one who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does he do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us."* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

All of us who have hit bottom and traveled the road out of our addictions and compulsions to freedom and victory by the power of Jesus Christ hold in our lives the very things that the still suffering needs to have. So, let us not waste the opportunity and great privilege to fulfill the message of the 12 steps.

Ken Sundelin

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“Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” Acts 14:17



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