

The Changing Flavor of SALTS



Mark Bonham

In the beginning (OHM's that is) there was SALTS. The intent was to gather leaders to learn better ways of facilitating groups using OHM's basic curriculum. A

leader's manual gradually developed with more and more tips for leaders. Many of the early participants were active group leaders – and all were women. It was good, God blessed the ministry and it grew.

After a few years a man was allowed to come, observe and interact with the women who attended SALTS. John Hamilton believed that not only women, but men could greatly benefit from this ministry. So men's groups were added. It was better, God blessed the ministry and it grew more.

Someone suggested that we might try putting men and women in the same group. What a radical idea! Could men and women actually talk about their deep wounds in the presence of one another? Not only could they, but co-ed groups discovered deeper levels of healing in relationships with the opposite gender. It was better yet, God blessed the ministry and it really took off.

Participants started to come back to take the same training again – and again. Could alumni benefit from

being together with a focus on their leadership skills and additional time spent in facilitating and processing their experience? ALTS (Advanced Leadership Training Seminar) was born, and after a rocky start and some hard lessons learned, it became a significant part of the ongoing development of leaders. The ministry grew in depth as well as breadth and God brought pastors, missionaries and church leaders for training.

The manual was edited, renamed "The Journey Guide" and translated into Spanish. A translation booth was built, an interpreter recruited and Spanish were added. We launched the ministry not only to the southwestern states, but to Mexico, Argentina and eventually to Spain. Leaders from those places are taking the ministry to new places all the time. Could it get any better?

Yes. Change continues. Intensive Grace Groups (a SALTS type group experience without the expectation of leader training) are an increasingly popular way to offer a twelve week Grace Group in five days. Not only will intensives be offered in Argentina, Spain and Ireland this year, but we will also offer this option for participants at SALTS, beginning in October. This is ideal for church leaders who are not expecting to lead groups themselves, but want to experience the ministry for their own growth and healing. But that's not all.

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SALTS Couples 2008 (and beyond!)



Mary Jane Hamilton

"We are a work in process. We are a work in progress."

I believe these to be fair statements about the couples who are working diligently together to help launch the

first couple's groups at SALTS. It

is not an easy task. Yet we are committed to making this "maiden voyage" one that will be repeated in the future.

The leaders who are on-board for this are: Mick and Jan Kiss, Chris and Janet Stark, John and Mary Jane Hamilton.

We have been meeting since June to prepare ourselves as couples. Curt and Amy Anderson have been our "fearless" leaders. Why have we been meeting? Why did we start in June? It is because our small group time at SALTS is being fine tuned to offer something special for couples only. It will be quite different from what you have experienced in the past and we are experiencing/practicing/coaching one another as couples in all the hands-on exercises we will be doing in our groups. We are coming with new material and we want to be ready to give our best to the nine

couples that have committed to be a part of these first groups.

So what are we doing? Curt and Amy have led us through: Couple's Dialogue, Digging Deeper and Forgiveness. We've even been challenged to practice these at home. Surprisingly enough, we have! We live, we love, we laugh/cry and we return for more. September 19-20 has been set aside

for a mini-retreat to "seal the deal" of our commitment. We will be ready by October SALTS.

My vision is that these couples' groups will unite to strengthen, rekindle and solidify the foundation of

marriage. My hope is that couples will lean into each other's story with empathy, courage and understanding. I anticipate change for others and myself. And I look forward to the next round of couples who will journey with us in April 2009.



Looking ahead to April 2009, SALTS will be offering new training for alumni using My Journey Continues (the 2nd 12 weeks). Mark your calendar now for April 20-25, 2009 and plan to join us.