

# Heart to Heart

A quarterly newsletter of Open Hearts Ministry

Winter 2005

## Endings and Beginnings

by Mark Bonham, Executive Director

In the natural progression, things end and new things begin. Jobs also end. Children grow up, leave home, get married and start new families. Groups end and new groups are formed. Endings are hard, especially if the status quo seems safe and you don't know what the future holds.

women, focusing on sexual abuse. Today men are almost as likely to come as women, the average age of participants is increasingly younger, there is a growing racial and cultural diversity and we address a broad range of wounds. This is no longer your father's (or mother's) Oldsmobile.

We have been working on what we hope is an image that will carry us into the future. We began by taking an inward look. Who are we? What are our values? Where are we headed? Surveys were sent to over 100 people and a large number of people responded. We had a "creative think tank" of 15 people who worked through key questions. We summarized what we heard people saying and developed strategic criteria for what a new image would need to accomplish. We employed Angie Stewart, a graphic designer, to work with a smaller committee to develop this image.

Starting in January you will see our new look on everything we produce. The logo maintains the focus we have in this ministry – getting to the heart. But this heart speaks of the woundedness, the gaps and the holes that we all have. To this image we have added a person, male or female of any racial or cultural background, who is coming alive. The leaping figure with arms outstretched seems to dance in worship.

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\*Survivors of Abuse Leadership Training Seminar

It seems an appropriate time of the year to talk about "endings and beginnings". Fall groups have come to an end. Leaders are taking a break to enjoy the holidays with family and friends. Then things start up again in January. New groups form or existing groups reform. The time in between is a good time for reflection. What went well? What needs improvement? Who looks like a potential leader? What development do they need?

Here at Open Hearts Ministry we have been doing the same. One of the areas we have looked at is whether or not the image we have used over the past six years continues to represent the ministry God has given us today. In the beginning we ministered to middle aged



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Faintly in the background we sense a reflection of this journey as shown by movement toward the cross. The gold patina declares the value of each individual; the rust could represent the damage we work through. Our name is written in lower case letters. It is not about our glory, but His.

Now we are working corresponding changes through each piece of our material. We have simplified our mission statement so that it says what we are about in the fewest possible words: *Grace for the Wounded*. **A new participant's Journey Guide will replace our old manual.** In addition to reflecting our new image, the Journey Guide will invite people to read, study and journal. We are hoping that this tool will become an integral part of each participant's healing journey.

Next we will be working on a Leader's Guide that will truly assist leaders with ideas and process questions. Like a detailed roadmap, this guide will make sure that leaders know where they are going and help them be better guides on the journey. Leaders will want to reread the Journey Guide. Though the sites we visit have not changed, the order and the observations we make have. You will want to be fully acquainted with this material before guiding others through it.

By April the transition will hopefully be complete, as far as our basic materials go. But we are by no means finished. We anticipate creating a promotional DVD that will help those trained at our SALTS seminar communicate with others what the group experience is all about. Then we begin to develop material for a second 12 sessions that will take your group deeper into the healing journey.

God has blessed this ministry significantly this past year. In the past 12 months, nearly 500 men and women attended a week long training event (from Germany to Michigan to Alaska). Groups exist in South America and all over Europe and North America. We are very grateful for the way God has led us in the past and deeply appreciate those who have sacrificed so much to see us where we are today. Yes, the old image and materials are coming to an end. But they have paved the way for a bright future and we are filled with hope.

*"There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path." Proverbs 23:18-19*



### Website Updates:

- Visit the website to see what participants from SALTS have to say about their experience. Check out the pictures too!
- Order your materials for your small group right on the website.
- Starting a group in January? Check the "Locations" screen to see that you are listed and that your information is correct. Taking a sabbatical? Let us know so we can remove you from the website.

Website: [www.openheartsmministry.org](http://www.openheartsmministry.org)

### Ending Well Financially

Response to the OHM Scholarship Fund appeal has been fantastic this year. Over \$8,000 was provided to enable anyone with a need to attend SALTS training. This is a gift that keeps on giving. Those who were helped have been enabled to help others. As we ended the October SALTS with 10 new people served by scholarships, we also ended with a zero balance in the fund. Over the next 6-8 weeks we will again be receiving requests for help. Would you help us replenish the fund so that we can continue to be able to say to missionaries, pastors and laypeople desperate to come, yes – we can help make it possible? \$8,000 will likely be needed again in 2005.

Reworking all of our materials to make them more useful and inviting is the other major challenge as we end the year. This overhaul is long overdue. Perhaps you could help us sharpen the basic tools of this ministry. This is more than a face lift – it is an extreme makeover. To do a job we can all be proud of we need to raise \$9,500 to cover the cost of the graphic design and reformatting. These tools will serve both participants and leaders from around the world for many years to come.

A gift of \$50, \$100 or \$500 before December 31 would help us end 2004 well and begin on the right foot in 2005. Gifts can be designated to the project of your choice: the OHM Scholarship Fund or the Materials Makeover Project. A gift to either or both will pay dividends in the lives of the wounded in the year ahead. A postage paid giving envelop is included for your convenience.

Thank you for your partnership with Open Hearts Ministry! Together we are seeing extraordinary things happen as we serve those God loves deeply.

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## What to do As Group Ends and New Groups Begin...

by Mary Jane Hamilton, SALTS trainer and OHM mentor.

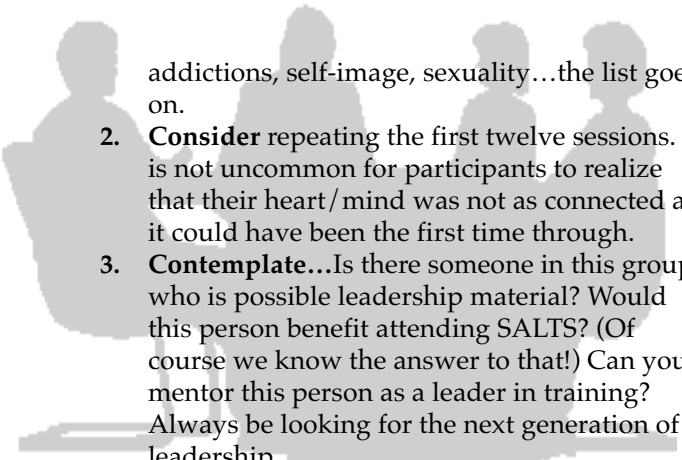
This time of the year many groups are ending the first twelve sessions. As leaders (and participants) you may wonder how to bring closure to this group and what comes next. It can be particularly difficult for leaders when there is a feeling of relief that the group is finished. Was it because it was a hard group to lead? Maybe...As leaders we want to recognize that ending a group can surface a mixture of emotions – both positive and negative.

Consider the following tips to bring your group to an ending that is affirming:

1. **Think** and talk with your co-leader about closure. Know that the last meeting is an opportunity to “set the table” for future goals with your participants.
2. **Speak** vision into the lives of your group members. Let them know the positive future you see for them as they continue to grow.
3. **Challenge** them to think about, “Who is the woman/man you want to become? This could be a great topic for those who journal and for those who don’t...to start!
4. **Invite** the participants to speak into the lives of one another with affirming/positive words. Make this an interactive time for everyone.
5. **Write** down what is said to each person. This can be done on note cards, pictures or objects such as rocks, driftwood, parchment or even rawhide. Be creative! The idea is to have something for them to keep as a reminder of their group experience.
6. **Give** from your heart to their heart not only words but possibly a small gift. Small hearts are available in a variety of stores/catalogs at a reasonable price. Again...a reminder of the heart-to-heart connection they experienced.
7. **Celebrate** the change you have seen in them. Sometimes we have to bring this into the open for them to recognize it for themselves. What a gift this is to each one!
8. **Look** at what a new beginning could be for each one.
9. **Pray** a prayer of blessing for each one. Ask permission to lay your hand(s) on their shoulder or to possibly hold their hand as you pray.

Here are some possible new beginnings for the group:

1. **Continue** with this group as you explore other topics, such as spiritual warfare,



addictions, self-image, sexuality...the list goes on.

2. **Consider** repeating the first twelve sessions. It is not uncommon for participants to realize that their heart/mind was not as connected as it could have been the first time through.
3. **Contemplate**...Is there someone in this group who is possible leadership material? Would this person benefit attending SALTS? (Of course we know the answer to that!) Can you mentor this person as a leader in training? Always be looking for the next generation of leadership.
4. **Offer** a totally new group for them to enter into. Some people like new experiences with new participants and different leadership. (Don’t take this personally. Most likely this is not about you.) Others want to stay bonded with their “tried and true” group. Be willing to consider the options.
5. **Respect** the decision that someone may want time away from the group process altogether. It is important that we honor what others decide for themselves. We cannot presume to know what is best for them. Regard their dignity as they make decisions after considering the options. Alas...Do you know how to suggest that one-to-one-counseling may be beneficial for them? Offer the option...Know the options for counseling in your area. And keep the door open for them to return.

Know, too, that you, as a leader, have some options as well...continue leading groups or take time off. It is not uncommon for leaders to take time off to work with a counselor on their issues that have gotten stirred-up. Some prefer to continue to lead. Others may simply want a break. As we enter into the New Year, let’s be available for the new beginning He has in store for each of us. Blessings and Happy New Year!

### **S.A.L.T.S. Alumni**

Develop your leadership skills at ALTS (Advanced Leadership Training Seminar). Get feedback from peers and input from experienced SALTS trainers. ALTS runs concurrently with SALTS training. You owe it to yourself and your group to keep your heart connected, your skills sharp, your understanding growing. Join us in April or October. Take advantage of the \$100 Alumni discount AND the \$100 early-bird registration discount!

## In this Issue:

### *Endings and Beginnings*

*May your holidays be blessed with joy and peace!*



#### Meijer Community Rewards Program

Thanks to your participation in the **Meijer Community Rewards Program**. In 2004 we have raised \$698.65. Please ask your friends and relatives to take the time to enroll and use your card at Meijers!

- Join Meijer Community Rewards by going to our website and clicking on the Meijer logo or pick up an application at your Meijer store.
- Use the OHM code: 378921.
- Swipe your card whenever you shop at Meijers.
- We receive a percentage of your purchase totals and these funds will be used for SALTS Scholarships.

#### Important Dates



**December 31, 2004** - Donations to OHM must be postmarked with this date to get a 2004 Tax Receipt.

**January 20-23, 2005** - Marriage Builders Retreat, Kalamazoo, MI.

**February 26, 2005** - Grace for the Wounded Workshop, Menasha, Wisconsin.

**March 19, 2005** - Grace for the Wounded Workshop, Greensboro, North Carolina

**April 25-30, 2005** - SALTS, Maranatha, Muskegon, MI.

**May 21, 2005** - Grace for the Wounded Workshop, Thunder Bay, Ontario, CANADA

**August 5-6, 2005** - California Leaders' Retreat, Bay Area.

**August 19-20, 2005** - Great Lakes Leaders' Retreat, Bridgman, MI.

**October 10-15, 2005** - SALTS, Maranatha, Muskegon, MI.

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