



# Heart to Heart

A quarterly newsletter of Open Hearts Ministry

Spring 2001

## Have you heard of the Jabez prayer?

Sandy Burdick, Ministry Director

*Our Mission:  
"Ministering  
to the  
abused  
through the  
love of Christ  
and  
equipping  
others to do  
the same."*

Since this fall it has been my prayer. It's found in the book, "The Prayer of Jabez" by Bruce Wilkinson, and is taken from I Chronicles 4:10: "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain."

Our local church and the Maranatha Bible Conference people are all praying this way. I want to share with you how I see the Lord answering this prayer in our ministry here at Open Hearts.

God is in the process of expanding our local ministry. We've been seeing the necessity to decentralize our large Kalamazoo ministry and the Lord has been showing us how He will use that. A young man from InterVarsity on campus at Western Michigan University called to say that there were a number of students who had acknowledged sexual abuse and he did not know what to do. Could we help? Now six of our leaders are on campus every Tuesday night holding three groups for twenty men and women in the university gospel choir. We have longed to reach into the African American culture and equip people to minister in their own communities. What an answer to prayer!

Some of our leaders and local group participants have burdens to go to their local churches and start groups. Two of our former Kalamazoo leaders are leading a group in Grand Rapids this year. We also have three groups in Kalamazoo. Things may well look different next year in the Kalamazoo ministry.

As you know we have had a burden for wounded men. The numbers of men have grown each year at SALTS. So far this year we have more men registered than woman. What a thrill! Oh, Lord, let *men* be leaders in the war against abuse.

Some of the men who lead with us in Kalamazoo have had a burden for co-ed groups. They want to learn from women. I have been saying, "Not yet, we're not ready, women need more safety." As Mark will report to you, we had 15 groups at the seminar this past weekend and **all** were co-ed. I'm at last convinced that we're ready to offer the same this May. Thus this year we're giving men and women the option of being in a co-ed small group at SALTS.

The SALTS experience will be May 1-6. If you haven't received a brochure, please call or email the Open Hearts Ministry office for information for yourself or others for whom you have a burden. (Or you can download a registration form from our web site. You'll want to register soon. I have the sense that the Lord is going to "enlarge our territory." We are grateful that some of the leaders in Austria who have been trained at SALTS and are now running their own ministry, will be able to come and lead groups with us this spring at Maranatha.

Our ministry team has a vision for the world. I urge you to pray the Jabez prayer for yourself and for our ministry to the wounded. *This is about God and His heart of compassion for those damaged by abuse. He wants to set His people free.* And I, for one, want to be in on what He is doing!

# Pursuing the Hidden Heart

Mark Bonham, Executive Director

Here are some quotes from Gene McConnell at our “Pursuing the Hidden Heart” workshop that are worth contemplating and remembering:

“Shame is our biggest problem, not our addictions. Addictions are symptoms of shame. I can never work my way out of shame. The only thing that erases shame is grace (not grace preached, but grace lived).”

“Church often perpetuates shame by not letting me talk about it. Seems like you rarely hear what you are (in Christ) — you more often hear what you are not...no amount of *doing* can compensate for *being*.”

“Shame is a belief in my failure of being, and the great fear behind shame is the fear of abandonment.”

“The enemy’s goal is disconnection, to cause us to hide and leave us alone and isolated. God’s goal is connection, to draw us into relationship. The number one ingredient necessary for this to happen is *trust*.”

“Our greatest need is to be known and not be afraid. The most powerful tool for healing shame is a group focused on authentic relationships.”

One hundred forty people gathered for one Saturday day in February to learn how to deal with the shame that keeps our hearts hidden from God, ourselves, and one another. Five hours of this day were spent in small groups (there were 15 groups) and the time literally flew by. Leaders learned two tools that help people bring



*drawing the “trauma egg”*

their stories to light in a safe way.

One tool is found in the book “Parables for Personal Growth” by Melinda Reinicke (self published). The story of a princess — living in a castle where she had locked the gates and banished everyone —

confronted us with our own inner child, the child the princess finds imprisoned in the dungeon. The child trusts, but the princess doesn’t. She has been deeply hurt and will not be vulnerable again. But gradually she embraces the child and learns to begin to trust safe people.

After some small group discussion of this parable, we took some time to draw our own “castle.” The parable helped us bridge the gap to our own story.

I am forever convinced of the power of *story* in the restoration process. In the wisdom of God a large part of scripture is communicated in story form. We can relate to David, to Ruth, to Job. Story bridges cultural, gender, generational, and historical gaps. Story builds community. That’s why we’re so into story as part of the healing process.

The second tool we used was called the “Trauma Egg.” Drawn on poster paper, this large oval lists the people and events that have influenced our lives on the outside and uses pictures and symbols to tell the big traumas, the small traumas, the boundary violations, and the messages we carried from these. Because it’s drawn by each person and it’s visual, it is a great aid to sharing our story. Themes stand out. Connections can be made. And a picture is worth a thousand words.

We also experienced the value of co-ed groups. Interestingly, this was a highlight for many people. We all long to be



*Gene McConnell*

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# What to do if...



## ...someone has to miss the first group meeting.

When adding a person (or persons) after the first week, be sure to inform the established group that someone will be coming the following week. Have the new one(s) read the first lesson as a way to catch up, and inform all members that you want them to be ready to share something from their story on the second week. If your members know this ahead of time they will be more inclined to comply. Inform the group that membership will be closed after week two. Have the new person read the confidentiality form prior to the meeting and inform all members that the form has been signed by all.

### Question:

Do you ever decide to permanently co-lead with the same person because you make a good team? No. Why not? Having new co-leaders increases our opportunity to learn. We'll learn more about ourself and others when we are exposed to different relational styles and strengths. It has been our experience that in most (not all) cases that when good friends lead together over a long period of time, it gets harder to be honest with each other about weaknesses. We have a tendency to either overlook them or compensate in ways that could hinder growth. Leading with someone new will definitely stretch you in a good way.

### What about processing?

It's good to process each week. When? The time for processing can be decided by you and your co-leader. Sometimes right after the meeting is good, yet sometimes you or your co-leader might wait overnight or a day to reflect on what happened. Try to set a reasonable boundary, time-wise, for your processing. I have noticed that when groups first get started that the processing time takes longer than when we become more familiar with our members. Even so I would try to limit processing to 30 minutes or less. If you find that you're hashing group out for hours, then you're probably too enmeshed or trying to figure things out too much. Do what you can do and leave the rest to God. Remember, you have a life outside the group....live it and enjoy!

Keep those emails and questions coming.... I'll be glad to see you face to face at SALTS!!! (Send your questions to me, Mary Jane, [openhearts@wmis.net](mailto:openhearts@wmis.net).)

— Mary Jane Hamilton

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## Pursuing the Hidden Heart, cont.

in a safe relationship with one another. Men who have women or mother issues, or women who have been hurt by men or fathers need a healthy response from the other gender. In group after group we saw the powerful effect of a woman speaking into a man's life, or a man into a woman's life. I am convinced that this is also something that we must offer on the journey to wholeness. We desire that people be able to connect with the whole community, and we believe that being in such community is a necessary part of the restoration process.

Here are some of the participant's comments:

"I got so much in one day!"

"I am delighted with this experience."

"These are tools I will use in my small group ministry."

"The co-ed experience was so helpful; not having it perpetuates victimization."

"More than I hoped for."

"Thank you for the opportunity to share the truth and be real. I hope that I would be able to help others with their shame."

"What you do and how you do it warms my heart and gives me hope. I would love to help do that too!"

"Stories heal."

"Keep up the good work. It must continue."

**Yes, it must continue.**



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## Can you help?

**T**here are dozens of people who desperately want to participate in our intensive leadership training seminar for survivors of abuse (S.A.L.T.S.) but who can't. Some are university students with limited resources. Some are overseas missionaries working with indigenous people. Some are Native Americans, Hispanics, African and Asian Americans. All are people with a longing for personal restoration. And most are people with a heart to help others — the very people around which Open Heart's vision was formed:

*"To see men and women from among the diverse people groups around the world, equipped to walk with those wounded through abuse; introducing them to the Wounded Healer and providing a safe place for recovery on the journey to a restored relationship with God, self, and others."*

Many of these people need help covering the cost of our training. Some need help with the cost of getting to our seminar location. We have leaders working with prison inmates and with those in shelters — people who can't afford \$15 for our training manual.

We work hard at keeping the cost of our training affordable. But the need is so great among those lacking the means that we have determined to make their need known.

**Would you consider covering the cost of one or more training manuals (\$15 each), the price of airline ticket (\$250-300), or the cost of one week of training (\$690) for one or more people?** This is an investment with a great return. People you help are equipped to help others where they live. Helping one person can multiply help to ten, fifty, or a hundred other people as small groups are formed. What people learn can help break the chain of generational abuse as well as minister to its victims.

If you can help, use the enclosed reply envelope and designate your gift as "The Scholarship Fund." 100% of your gift will be used to equip deserving people to minister. And your gift is tax deductible. In return, we'll let you know just how your gift helped to meet a pressing need.

## Important Dates to Remember

- ◆ **SALTS, Muskegon, MI.,**  
May 1 – 6, 2001
- ◆ **SALTS, Comfort, TX.,**  
October 1 – 6, 2001
- ◆ **SALTS, Mittersill, Austria,**  
October 30 –  
November 4, 2001

Visit our website:

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