

# Heart to Heart

A quarterly newsletter of Open Hearts Ministry

Spring 2002

## OHM Hosts Allender's Newest Seminar

by Mark Bonham, Executive Director

### Our Mission:

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

**F**ifteen years ago Dr. Dan Allender came to Kalamazoo to present a new seminar entitled "The Wounded Heart." This was the second time he had presented it, so it was still in its "pilot" phase. Little did he know that God would use this to launch a movement, not only with his own seminar and recovery ministry, but also in the equipping ministry of Open Hearts. A local small group ministry formed to respond to the needs of the wounded and this developed into a means for equipping small group leaders called SALTS (Survivors of Abuse Leadership Training Seminar). The first SALTS was held in 1993 in Muskegon, Michigan. Ten years later over 800 people have been through our six-day training program from far away places like Nagaland in India, Budapest, Hungary, Crikvenica, Croatia, and Riga, Latvia. Now new groups are springing up in Tyrol and Graz, Austria, in Serbia, in remote "fly in" areas of Canada, and all over the United States.



*Dr. Dan Allender*

At the core of our training is learning to share and respond to an individual's personal story. As we grapple with life experiences we wrestle with our understanding of God. We know that God is the author of all our stories. Yet there are parts of all our stories we wish were not there. Every page of our story connects with where and who we are today and what we are becoming tomorrow. There may be bad scenes in our stories, painful experiences that we have long kept hidden, places where we lost our innocence. We have tried to erase these episodes because they make no sense to us. Though God is not the cause of our suffering, He is very much involved in our story. Ultimately our story is about our journey home to the Father. The details are all significant and we must take a close look at them or the story makes no sense. It is the final chapter that solves the mystery of the purpose behind our life experiences, but we can gain much insight along the way. That insight is amplified when stories are shared in a safe group or community.

Because we have wrestled with our own stories we are willing to invest in wrestling with another's story. Because we have begun to embrace our own story we are willing to embrace the stories of others. As we have entered the stories of others we are often compelled to go back into our stories and search again for meaning. This way we continue to grow and change as people of grace and compassion, as well as people who long to know the truth.

**That is why we are excited to host the premier of Dan's latest seminar on March 9 entitled "Learning to Love the Story God is Telling Through You."** Pray with us that the impact of this seminar will be just as great as the first one, both in strengthening what exists and bringing into existence what is still needed in ministry to the abused and wounded.

# Happy 10th Birthday, Open Hearts!

by Sandy Burdick, Founder  
and Ministry Director

**O**ver the past 10 years we've had several different names, been to interesting and unusual places, and met a lot of people in this movement to train leaders of small groups. We started as a response to the need we observed from a "Wounded Heart Seminar" by Dr. Dan Allender in 1987 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Out of this a small group ministry developed in one local church where, eventually, we began to train leaders from those groups. We were challenged by Wes Roberts of Life Enrichment to teach others to do the same. Wes helped us plan the first S.A.L.T.S. in 1993 at Maranatha Bible Conference and there were 54 women present. (We date our organizational birth from this date, even though we incorporated in 1998.) Last year we filled Maranatha with 148 men and women.

In 1995 Mark Jevert, with Kalamazoo Youth for Christ, took a team of our local leaders to Croatia to teach missionaries and Croatians to work with the sexually abused. A fond memory of that experience is of a Bosnian Muslim doctor who came to help translate and received Christ the third day into the week.

In 1997 Donna Albinson, with International Teams (whom we met at the Croatian seminar), invited us to Hungary and there we trained women who began a small group ministry in Austria. We returned 2 years later to Austria and continued our training relationship with them. That ministry now has small groups all over Austria and last fall they were ready to conduct their own S.A.L.T.S. in German.

In 97 and 98 we were invited to Vancouver, B.C. to train missionaries with Native American Indian Missions. This helped launch us into a ministry with indigenous people that continues to grow to this day.

During these years I have had a burden for men in church leadership. My personal experience has been one of seeing pastors and men in leadership wound the church through both sexual and spiritual abuse. I had envisioned someone starting a separate ministry for men. I did not see how men and women could be trained together. My burden has now become part of this ministry. We have good men who lead and train and we have an executive director who is a man with a heart and a vision for the world.

I still have dreams for this ministry. I dream to be invited into seminaries to raise awareness for those in training for ministry, to be used to train missionaries who go around the world to know how to minister to the wounded and to continue to train men and women for ministry in local churches and communities where they live.

Over 800 leaders have been trained in the past 10 years and 24% of those were trained in the last year alone. I am thrilled that trained people go home, start groups and develop leaders themselves in the local setting. I hear from them over and over that this ministry brings results. They actually see people change in front of them. There is great personal joy for people who plunge into this battle and see the enemy's plans thwarted. It brings a



# Executive Director's Report

by Mark Bonham

**A**s we enter our tenth year of helping people minister to the abused we see much to celebrate. I am especially grateful for the progress we are making in vision of seeing "men and women from among the diverse people groups around the world equipped to walk with those wounded through abuse." Let me share some recent highlights:

In January we made a decision to pursue a Spanish translation of our small group participant's manual. One of our SALTS alumni, Susana Pacheco De Hollinger, has had a heart to see this material in the second language of our country, as well as useful in Central and South America. We believe this offers bilinguals a good reason to get SALTS training with us. Once trained, they will have a ready resource to use in their native language. We are very aware of the tremendous need in the Hispanic and Latin American community.



January also took us to Wisconsin where we met with representatives of LAMP and My People International. The focus was on how to contextualize our material for the Native American community. A committee is working on this with the goal that the reading level and illustrations be appropriate for the focus people of this mission.

At the same time "Living Waters" in Alaska contacted us about joining their effort to prepare for the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference. The desire is to have an "Awareness Workshop" in August, a conference speaker in October, and a SALTS seminar in Kenai, Alaska in January of 2003. They have reserved 48 spaces for SALTS in Michigan in hopes of getting many new small groups launched. If all this comes together, Alaska would be the state with the most SALTS trained people. Dr. Larry Severson writes, "We are seeking to offer help that is very broad in scope and pertinent for a wide variety of people, including abuse victims, offenders,

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# What to do when...

## Telling Your Story

by Mary Jane Hamilton, SALTS Trainer and Mentor



### Why and how we tell the “short story” in our group

#### Why:

It is important to get the short version of our story out so that everyone has put their “foot in the water” and has given a taste of who they are. We let our group members know that more of their story will come out later. This more often comes in much more depth than the first telling. As members hear one another’s stories they feel more connected and safer to tell about what is going on and about their past. The short story gives everyone a chance to be affirmed as to why they are there. Telling too much (the long story) can be traumatic for the person telling as well as for the group members who are listening. It is difficult to respond when leaders/members are overwhelmed with traumatic details. The long story can surface comparing with one another as the weeks go by and a few haven’t told their stories yet. Also, it is normal in our relationships to give of ourselves in layers as we deepen trust. In reality, the short story is easier to respond to and we want to respond to everyone in the first few weeks. We keep saying that we know there is more to their stories and when they are ready to talk we will enter.

#### How:

Leaders need to model to their group members the short version of their story. A good way to accomplish this is to tell your story by answering all or some of the “Questions to Consider” in lesson two of our manual. If a member has a hard time even reading those questions, ask permission to read a few of them out loud for them to answer back. Prepare your group members ahead of time to look over these questions. Bringing those questions to their attention during the first session can do this. Ask group members to limit their time to 7-10 minutes for their short story as well as permission to let them know when their time is up. This will require the group leaders to be sensitive to the timing. Remember: There is a sense of relief to get the short story out and members feel protected by leaders who will keep them within the time limit. We don’t want our group members leaving group feeling remorse or shame or regret because they told too much too soon.

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### Happy 10th Birthday, Open Hearts!, cont.

sense of knowing and experiencing the redemptive nature of pain.

What keeps me going? God has called me to this ministry. Thirty years ago, in the midst of a terrible struggle with the enemy, the Lord gave me comfort and direction from His Word: “Simon, Simon (Sandy, Sandy), behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Little did I know then the direction this would take, but I have sensed the Lord’s step by step leading. He has used His Word in my life and used good men and women who have caught the same vision, have walked with me in local ministry, pointed me in new directions, and are now leading and training others. The body of Christ has developed this vision and made it possible. That is why we place such great value on body ministry.

We hope you will celebrate our 10th birthday with us by praying for this work to continue to have strong impact in setting captives free.

### Executive Director’s Report, cont.

family members, pastors, the helping professions, social services, the legal system and law enforcement.”

Our friends in Austria are promoting the ministry in Europe and considering offering SALTS training in Germany. New local groups in Tyrol and Graz, Austria are helping to make it possible to have help available within driving distance of everyone in that country. We look forward to having Austrians joining us at SALTS in Michigan for further ministry development.

There is also progress being made by our friends in the Middle East. It will take patience and wisdom in how to move in a culture that is so unwilling to face the abuse that goes on within the family structure, yet is so much a part of creating a violent society. I am grateful for the effort these laborers are making in trying to establish safe communities to respond to abuse survivors.

We are a small organization, but we seeing impact far beyond our size. I think God delights in working through the small and seemingly insignificant. We know that the broken and wounded of all nations are very close to God’s heart, and we want to cooperate with what He is doing. We are grateful for your partnership in this work.



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## Opportunities to help

### Interested in helping this ministry breakthrough to Spanish speaking people?

The “Spanish Translation Project Fund” needs \$5000 to get a press ready copy of our participant’s manual ready to go. \$400 translates one of the 12 chapters. This will open the door toward the Hispanic population in the U.S. and toward Central and Latin America. We are also recruiting Spanish/English bilinguals for SALTS training. Your contribution can help us help so many others.

### Interested in helping train leaders at SALTS?

Requests are flowing in for financial assistance to attend SALTS in April. There is a need right now for \$3000 to get deserving potential leaders trained from the U.S. and overseas. One of them is a woman from war-torn Serbia who is very eager to get this training and be able to offer it in her country. \$25 buys a leader’s manual; \$125 covers the cost of a day of training; \$740 sponsors a full scholarship. Gifts of all sizes are needed. Designate your gift for “OHM Scholarship Fund.”

### OHM needs regular monthly donors as well as special gifts to continue to address abuse issues and offer hope to the wounded around the world.

Your partnership is a critical to this ministry. Send your gift today, payable to “Open Hearts Ministry,” 161 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 600, Kalamazoo, MI., 49007. We will respond with a thank you letter, a tax-deductible receipt, and a reply envelope for future correspondence.

## Important Dates to Remember

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|-----------------|--|
| April 29-May 4  | SALTS Maranatha in Muskegon, MI  |
| June 15         | Open Hearts Walk-a-thon Fundraiser                                     |
| August 3        | Awareness Workshop in Anchorage, Alaska                                |
| August 23-24    | Regional Leader’s Retreat in Bridgman, MI                              |
| September 6-8   | Regional Leader’s Retreat in San Antonio, TX                           |
| October 14-19   | SALTS Maranatha in Muskegon, MI  |
| October 21,22   | Workshop at Alaska Federation of Natives Conference, Anchorage, Alaska |
| Jan. 14-19, ‘03 | SALTS Alaska in Kenai, Alaska  |

Visit our website: [www.openheartsministry.org](http://www.openheartsministry.org)  
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