

# Heart to Heart

A quarterly newsletter of Open Hearts Ministry

## "SALTS MARANATHA - SPRING 2002"

by Sandy Burdick, Ministry Director

### Our Mission:

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

This report is really a response of praise to our Lord who did above and beyond what we could imagine. The seminar was very full. And we were full of anticipation of what the Lord would do that week. The 108 participants arrived, some having been invited at the last minute from our waiting list to take the place of someone who had family emergencies. Many of the 36 leaders had things happen in their families and personal life that caused them to wonder if they could come. There was obvious victory in just getting people to SALTS.

Leaders and participants worked hard all week telling stories, looking at damage in their lives, at ways they harm others and opening their hearts to the Lord and each other.

The closing session consisted of over two hours of testimonies from men and women who had not only discovered that the abuse was not their fault, but who were convicted of personal sin as they lived out the damage of all kinds of abuse in relationships. The Bible tells us there is joy in heaven when one person repents. We experienced that same joy as many testified of the changes in their lives.

The ripple effect of those lives is now being seen. In the few short weeks since the seminar registrations have poured in and we have filled our next SALTS in October. I believe that people got a taste of safe community and long for that in their communities and churches. I saw passion return to replace numbness, deadness and passivity. I saw people who were willing to celebrate life with each other in tears, laughter and holy hugs. I saw hope restored to those who were in the chains of legalism. I saw the healing effect of being embraced by grace in the midst of shame.

I remember God's words: "I will give dancing for mourning".

We sang a wonderful song about His breaking every chain that binds us and many responded by "dancing in a chain" around the room to express their celebration of joy.

The Lord sees the wounded, He hears their cry and He is willing to set the captives free. We were privileged to be in the midst of what He was doing. Many of these people will go home to start small groups and engage in more healthy ways of relating in their families and communities.

This was our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday party for SALTS. The best gift we were given was to see the Lord at work in lives. Thank you Lord Jesus.

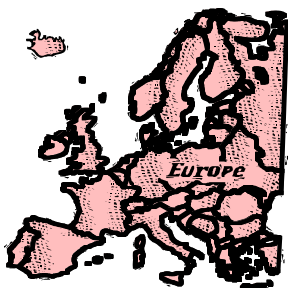


## Report from Austria

by Beth Domig, Austrian Ministry Coordinator

I thought that you might like to hear a short report about the time in Budapest at HOPE 21 a conference for Christian leaders from 36 countries in Europe. I was invited by the “Women in Leadership” tract to lead a seminar presenting our work with “Hope for the Wounded.” I took a very gifted young woman with me to help. Karin is a 24 year old university student and she was a great teammate! Karin was a participant in one of our groups 2 years ago. Then she took part in SALTS Mittersill last October. She will be helping lead a small group in Salzburg this coming fall. She is a very articulate young woman and it was a great asset to have her with me.

Our seminar was offered twice, and we only had an hour each time. I began by giving a definition of abuse, sharing some statistics, and giving some background information about how this work got started. Then Karin shared a bit of her personal story of being sexually abused as a child and the effects it had on her development, and how the course had helped her. It was very moving, and really showed people HOW the ministry can help survivors of abuse. Then I picked up again, explaining practical things about the course (process and content), and how people can “get connected” if they are interested.



The response was all that we hoped for and more! Several Eastern European countries are begging us to come help them set up a similar ministry, and many people took brochures and are interested in coming to SALTS Europe planned for summer 2003.

Larisa, the director of Women’s Ministry in the Belarus Union of Evangelical Christians, pleaded with us to please come to her country (Belarus/White Russia) to train leaders: “We do not have the money to send people to an international training seminar. You must come to us! We will do everything necessary to set up whatever you need.”

Here is an email I just received today:

*“It was so good to listen to your teaching in Budapest at the Hope 21 Conference. As I told you, I and my husband who is a pastor in the Czech Republic have to talk with people with various wounds and do our best to help them. I have very little information on what to do with abuse, and my husband has some information he got when studying at All Nation Christian College in England. But none of us went through any training like you talked about. And I see we really need to go into this. I realize this is going to be a painful ministry but we cannot avoid it.*”

*This is the reason why we want to apply to take part in SALTS Europe 2003. Please, let us know what we need to do. May God richly bless you in your ministry and thank you once again.”*

We heard the same thing from the women from Bulgaria. And let me tell you, these women are really organized and on top of things. They are “movers and shakers”! I have the feeling that they, and Larisa, and others that I met would really take the ball and run with it. We just need to help them get the training. Once they have at least 2 trained leaders, we can think about going to their countries and doing training there where they can then be the small group leaders.

The fields are white for harvest; may God grant us wisdom and strength to spread the good news of healing and hope!

### Feedback from Participants in SALTS

*“I learned more about people skills, love, leadership than I’ve learned in a lifetime of church.”*

*“SALTS changed my world so that I can truly be a ‘Tender Warrior’.”*

*“I personally feel like I experienced the first ‘dawning light’ of freedom and hope.”*

*“This ministry is a wonderful tool in finding freedom after years of bondage in lies!”*



Realizing the masks we each wear is part of the SALTS experience!

Not only is this a wonderful tool for ministry, but in our cases it’s a tool for healing and renewing of our marriage. We’re already beginning to see the positive results of those days spent with you in our personal relationship. And I, who came thinking I didn’t have much of a story learned that my father’s neglect, emotional abuse and perfectionist demands, had taken a toll that is affecting my family and professional life—I’ve always had a drive to succeed that has resulted in hard work and demands on myself that interfere with the kind of family relationships that my wife and kids would like to experience. So again, THANK YOU!

*“I would say SALTS is a great tenderizer even for a tough old bird!”*

*“I feel feminine. I danced barefoot on the beach and wept for joy. I feel worthy to be enjoyed.”*

*“I have become aware of a hug aching hole inside me that needs to be filled with love.”*

(continued on page 4)



**Thank you Avante Salon,  
for your contribution to our  
SALTS Scholarship Fund!**

**I want to thank you for the opportunity you gave me to attend SALTS.** I found a safe place to share my story of sexual abuse and receive help in processing the shame and guilt that has been a part of my life and relationships. Being with people who love and speak truth was awesome. I never felt so supported and loved. I have come to a new place in life and hope to help others better and love the people I am close to with greater capacity. My desire is to help others who have wounded in their lives.

*-from Michigan*

**I would like to thank everyone at Avante Salon** for the contribution to Open Hearts. I was sexually, verbally, and physically abused as a child. Because I have begun to experience some freedom from the pain and heartache of that abuse, I wanted to be well equipped to help others through their healing process. Your gift made my two-year dream to attend S.A.L.T.S. come true. Thanks to your open hearts not only was my life blessed abundantly, but you have also touched the lives and family members of each of the nine people waiting for the support group to begin in September.

*-from Mississippi*

**How can a stranger thank you for your gift?** I can only try. I came to SALTS at the request of my wife. She has seen the need of groups to address men's abuse issues and was looking for men to join in the work. It looks like we will be starting a group for men this fall.

The week was a powerful one, as I too had to deal with some abuse towards me as a child. Though the process wasn't pleasant, the results were more than encouraging. I find myself feeling more alive to life and to people. It is as though my capacity to feel has been broadened - both in terms of embracing sorrow (I haven't been known as the most compassionate man) and sheer joy.

Thank you Avante, you could well be angels walking this earth.

*-from California*

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## **What to do if...**

### **...we get caught by shame as a group leader?**

*by Mary Jane Hamilton, SALTS trainer and OHM mentor.*

Do you shut down and isolate, go into self-contempt or simply want to quit when you are caught by shame? Do you get angry, attack with sarcasm or bully others with other-centered contempt? All these work to hide/self-protect us from being known and receiving the goodness and grace of God. A shame-based person will think that keeping the rules is the answer to what they are feeling and who they are, but rule-keeping/legalism is a perversion of the Gospel. It blocks the grace we so desperately need from God and others. Shame is an identity issue. We don't want to act out our shame and become what shames us. For example, being called an angry person makes me feel shame, so I become angry, act on the shame and become what shamed me in the first place. When we allow shame to get a foothold in our identity, it begins to define who we are. We are not our shame! Nor the shame of our abuser! We can't change our story, but who we are in the story can change. Going to battle against shame is all out war. Are you up for the fight?

Here are a few suggestions to help you go to battle against shame: 1) Name it. What/Who shames you? Ask for help in processing your feelings from your group or a trusted friend. They can be instrumental in helping you address the ways you are acting out your shame and sorting through the truth/lies. 2) Pray. Shame begets shame, so don't be dumbfounded if more surfaces as you begin to talk about it. Moving out of shame will call out the man/woman in us who has been uniquely created by God. Scary thought if you are not willing to allow your reputation/identity to rest in Him. 3) Don't give into the lies. Hold you head high and continue to be a person of dignity who is at times acting out of depravity. Allow others you trust to help clothe you in truth and love. It is important for a person who is shamed to know that they are liked, enjoyed, and loved. 4) Probably the best advice I got after struggling with a shame issue for well over a year came from my husband. One day in passing (and I'm sure in his frustration of watching me wallow in my shame/self-contempt), he said simply, "Get over it!" Wow...could I make a choice here to get over it and move on? Yeah, I could and I did. Would I give that piece of advice to everyone in shame? Probably not, but having a choice is worth considering and then moving on...



People find their voices at SALTS.

*I learned that God hungers for our hearts even more than we hunger to give them. He will purify me through my pain, His name will be written on my hands the same way it was written on His, through the passion of suffering. That is what I long for, to know all of His passion. Sitting in the brokenness of life keeps my passion clean. SALTS (is where) I have most experienced God. And I will never be the same again.*

*“I will not carry guilt and shame from my abuse situation. I have come to accept the fact that it was not my fault.”*

*Thank you so much for starting SALTS. God profoundly touched my life as I experienced the process through which the Holy Spirit woos the heart. I was humbled as I watched my heart, and the hearts of others, being pierced through without removing our dignity and I came face-to-face with my depravity in ways I had never before known. I learned that being a broken cistern is enough.*

### Important Dates to Remember

Our **June 15 Walk-a-thon Fundraiser** has taken a new form. We need funds, but lack capacity to organize an extensive fundraiser. Your help is needed. Our project is to fund the Spanish translation of our small group manual (goal: \$5,000). We need just 25 people pledging \$10 a mile to reach this goal. Mark Bonham, our Executive Director, has promised to walk 20 miles on June 15 if OHM friends pledge. He needs the exercise so let's make him walk! Or get your friends to make you walk. Phone or email our office with your pledge(s) by June 12 and help us serve the wounded in the Hispanic and Latino community.

**July 13** - Area code for Open Hearts Ministry and Southwest Michigan changes from (616) to (269).

**August 10** – “Grace for the Wounded Workshop”  
Anchorage, AK.

**August 23,24** – Michigan area leader's retreat, Bridgman, MI.

**September 6-8** – Texas area leader's retreat, San Antonio, TX.

**September** - Small groups start all over the continent. Contact us for groups in your area.

**October 14-19** - SALTS Maranatha, Muskegon, MI.

**October 21-23** – Alaskan Federation of Natives Conference,  
Anchorage, AK.

**Coming in 2003** - SALTS in Alaska, Michigan (2) and Europe.