It may seem like an oxymoron to call addiction a “blessing” because so much heartache is caused to families as the result of addiction. Marriages are torn apart. Children are hurt and neglected by addictive parents. Parents lose addicted children to suicide and prison. The tragedy of addiction results in innumerable loses of health, employment, relationships and finances. I want in no way to downplay the negative aspects of this disease and its results.

However, it is also true that as the result of the recovery process, recovering addicts are brought to a relationship with Jesus that is most often deeper and more satisfying than ever before. The nature of fallen mankind leads us to try to control our lives as we deal daily with the effects of sin. Recovery forces us to acknowledge that we are powerless and that our best efforts to control our lives have resulted in the chaos of unmanageability. We are directed to turn in hope to a Power outside of ourselves that can restore us to sanity. Then we make a conscious decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of this God.

In this issue of Journey to Life you will be inspired by Carol Cannon’s article Recovery: Process or Event which distills her many years of experience into gems of wisdom for those of us on the journey of recovery. I know that you will be touched by Erin’s testimony and learn from Beverly’s Step 4 article.

We grow together in recovery as we share our journey into the heart of God with one another. We are looking for recent events, upcoming events, recovery testimonials, brief articles on how you are working the steps and other items of interest for the newsletter. Please feel free to e-mail them to me at the address below.

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ARMin Mission and Vision

Our Mission:
Promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.

Our Vision:
Healthy people growing in a relationship with Christ by using principles of God’s Word and choosing healthful practices aimed at finding freedom from harmful habits and addictive behaviors.

Potential Objectives/Goals:
- Promote healing (individually and corporately) utilizing the healthy, balanced principles of God’s Word
- Provide resources to churches and individuals in order to raise awareness and educate regarding the root of dysfunctions that create disunity within individuals, families, churches and communities through unresolved trials, troubles and tragedies
- Train individuals to facilitate ongoing support groups and mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment

We believe that as we heal from life’s trials, troubles and tragedies, we become inspired and committed to reach out to others as a result of gratitude for our personal healing; to care for others because our lives are so enriched by Christ’s forgiveness; and the blessing of the freedom we have experienced due to His unending grace and mercy.

“You have shown me the path of life.”
Psalms 16:11
The Healing Value of the 12 STEPS

**Step 4 — “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”**

**Biblical Comparison**

“O Lord, you have searched me and know me. You know when I sit and when I stand, and understand my deepest thoughts. You are familiar with everything I do.”

— Psalms 139:1-3

**Upcoming Events**

March 15-17, 2013 - Plan now to take the official NAD Adventist Recovery Ministries (ARMin) training at the next NAD Regional Health Summit in New York City on March 16-17 of 2013. To learn more and to register please go to www.NADHealthSummit.com and you will find info on how to register. This training will help leaders to understand principles of recovery how to use the new Journey to Wholeness resource for support groups at churches, schools, or other centers of influence.

12 STEPS to Recovery

**STEP #4**

This step is one of the most difficult for many who are working a program of recovery. Many fight against doing it or go to great lengths to avoid it because it is painful to see the truth about ourselves. At this point in our recovery we must face about ourselves that which much of our addictive energy has been trying to avoid: the guilt and pain connected with both how we hurt ourselves and others, and the original pain that contributed to our need to medicate ourselves.

Even though we don’t want to face these realities, God sees it all clearly. Hebrews 4:13 says that all things about us are open to Him. Romans 8:1 tells us that no matter what we have done, we are not condemned because we are in Christ Jesus. He is not a God who judges and condemns, but rather He bore our guilt in the person of Jesus Christ on the Cross. This miracle of grace gives us the courage to face the truth of the damage that we have caused through our addictions and then to release the guilt to Jesus.

Psalms 139 says: “O Lord, you have searched me and you know me…You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord” (v. 1-4). God knows the truth about the actions, attitudes, and words that each of us tries so hard to conceal. A searching and fearless moral inventory challenges us to look honestly at our greatest fears, our worst behaviors and the defenses we use to keep our addictions in place. Thank God that through the indwelling Christ, you will know and embrace the truth about yourself, and thereby find freedom (John 8:32).

**Testimonial**

**The Importance of Accountability**

My name is Erin and I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. For the past two years I have been participating in a Christ centered 12-step recovery step study that meets once a week. The study utilizes four workbooks with chapters that correspond to the twelve steps. During the week on our own time we answer the questions and then at the meeting we go around the circle and each person gets a chance to share their answers while the others listen. Initially, I began attending the step study because I’d been injuring myself on and off for a period of about two years and did not want to stop because it made me feel better and I used self-injury to cope with feelings of anger, sadness, powerlessness, anxiety, and guilt. I felt that I would not choose to stop on my own, so I figured attending the group might help me stop. Attending the recovery group has many benefits, but the top three for me have been: accountability, support, and a sense of community and acceptance.

Accountability has probably been the most important factor that has stopped me from injuring on all occasions, except for a few, since I’ve been in recovery. Every time I get an urge to cause myself pain to keep myself from crying or feeling an uncomfortable emotion, I think about afterwards when I’d feel I should tell my parents, sponsor, and core group that I injured (because I’m accountable to them now). Every time, but three, this has been enough to stop me from giving in to the urge and I either contact my sponsor or use other healthy coping skills I’ve learned instead. Before recovery I was accountable, in my own mind, to no one because it was my secret. I felt I wasn’t hurting anyone as long as they didn’t know. Now they do know and it is a good thing.

Support and the sense of community and acceptance I receive from the group have also been essential to my recovery. I am currently working the steps for the third time, each time God has revealed more to me about myself and how I relate to Him and others. The deeper I go the more I grow. I’m thankful to God for bringing me to this recovery group and for the freedom I’ve found through recovery.

Erin
Recovery: Process or Event?

A number of unique challenges face conservative Christians who are seeking recovery from their addictions and compulsions. It is one thing to turn down a bowl of rocky road ice cream, put the cork in the liquor bottle, or throw away a pack of cigarettes, swearing that we will never touch the evil substance or substances again. It’s another to be changed from the inside out.

A.A. wisdom suggests that mere abstinence is qualitatively different from genuine sobriety. The abstinent individual is considered to be a “dry drunk” (one who is restless, irritable, discontent, and difficult to get along with). A person with true sobriety ceases to fight his/her addiction OR the world and it is often-quite-wrong people. He or she enjoys genuine peace of mind and is relatively easy to get along with.

Many religiously-inclined people have assumptions about God and God’s expectations that delay or defy all attempts to “gain the victory” over addiction. Make no mistake: non-Christians struggling with addictive behavior have their own challenges. Christians are not unique in that sense. We dare not succumb to the notion that we are different. Our mental blocks may be unique, but we are not unique. Uniqueness is a terminal condition. We need a program of recovery as much as any other addict.

Here are some of the obstacles we face: (1) “If I were truly converted, I could gain the victory over besetting sin.” (2) “If I try hard enough and pray long enough, I can conquer my problem.” (3) “If I really wanted to quit, I could muster the willpower to do so.” (4) “If I accept Christ, I will be a new creature and will stop doing wrong.” (5) “If I get baptized or re-baptized, I will be delivered from the desire to drink or drug.”

Unfortunately, there are people around us who are willing to urge these misconceptions upon us if we don’t have them already. They insist that recovery is a natural byproduct of being born again and that we don’t need anything else. Many of Job’s comforters were (and are) highly codependent. If enabling is definable as “helping another person stay sick,” then they serve that purpose extremely well, in spite of their good intentions.

A young parochial school teacher who is addicted to marijuana refuses to admit that he has a problem or seek professional help. He believes that if he just gets closer to God, his cravings will go away. A middle-aged pastor who is addicted to pornography fasts and prays earnestly for healing to no avail. His guilt knows no bounds. A church elder with a secret smoking habit confides in another elder and asks to be anointed privately in order to break his habit. A teenager reared

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Aubrey, Stephanie and Gail preparing for the seminar

The Wimbush Seventh-day Adventist Church in Macon, GA hosted an awareness Sabbath on July 14, 2012. There were recovering addicts who gave testimony to Jesus being the great physician in their lives.

The afternoon session was attended by approximately twenty folks. Frank Sanchez was the speaker for the event. Aubrey Duncan is coordinating the formation of a group at the church.

Pastor Maurice is encouraging the group and we are all praying for the active participation of the church members and folks in the community. If you would like to host an awareness Sabbath in your church located in the Southern Region, please contact Frank Sanchez at 864-238-8602.

To contact an ARMin Coordinator in your area, please locate your area coordinator on the ARMin website: www.adventistrecovery.org

in an ultra-religious home sincerely seeks relief from his drug addiction by taking Bible studies and being re-baptized. When he gets high a week later, his shame drives him to commit suicide. I know all of these people personally, and hundreds more like them.

The Bible says that, in Christ, we are new creatures. As addicts, we must remind ourselves that transformation (sanctification) is the process of a lifetime. Recovery is a maturing process—not an event. Expecting our healing to be instant and miraculous can, at best, limit our recovery to mere abstinence as compared to genuine sobriety or, at worst, lead to discouragement, depression, or death—not to mention loss of self-respect, status, security, and valued relationships.

God has given us a remedial program of character development called the Twelve Steps. These simple, strategic, sequential steps are harmonious with Scripture. They guide us, over time, from justification to sanctification, from mere abstinence to genuine sobriety (social, emotional, and spiritual maturity). When these steps are practiced as a way of life, we are transformed by God’s grace into mature adults with a gentle spirit and a winsome Christian witness.

Gerald May once said that he was grateful for his addictions because they brought him to his knees. I echo that sentiment. My compulsions (inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil) brought me to my knees and led me to Alcoholics Anonymous (the meetings, steps, and sponsors that helped me discover who I am, what I do, and how I affect the people around me as well as who God is, what He does, and how He impacts my life and the lives of those I love). For this I am eternally grateful!

Director’s Message

Unhooked Series – Share your testimony

One of the current projects of Adventist Recovery Ministries (ARMin) is the production of a TV / video series called “Unhooked”. HOPE Channel is partnering with NAD ARMin to produce 26 programs that will highlight different types of dependencies, recovery steps, and a powerful story of someone’s journey of recovery.

Currently we are identifying testimonials and would be delighted to include your story or that of someone you know who might be willing to share their beautiful testimony in an effort to encourage others who might also be struggling with a similar issue and who is seeking deliverance in Christ.

We are particularly interested in stories focusing on a Christ centered approach for recovery, using either a Christ centered 12 step group, or another Christ centered intervention in line with evidence based information. We would like to feature people from different age groups and ethnic backgrounds as well.

Please contact us at the email below if you feel impressed by God to share your story or to connect us with someone you know is willing to share their story. Send us a brief summary of the journey to recovery and we will connect with you for more details.

We count on your prayers and support so this Unhooked series may be a blessing to many who are looking for hope and healing in this broken world.

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Health / ARMin Director

North American Division

Carol Cannon

Currently Retired, Carol is Founder and former Director of the Bridge to Recovery in Bowling Green Kentucky. She is the author of many books and articles on recovery.