

Journey To



LIFE

"You have shown me the path of life."
Psalms 16:11



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THE NEWSLETTER OF ADVENTIST RECOVERY MINISTRIES, sponsored by NAD Health Ministries

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Editorial Perspective

Be Careful

Here in Berrien Springs, Michigan, as the Spring days grow longer and the sun gets warmer, the sun's ultraviolet rays become stronger. After a few minutes in the sun, when these UV rays are strongest, we need to be protected with clothing, a hat, or sun-block lotion. Without such protection the result will be a painful sunburn and potential skin cancer in the future.

It is so easy, when the warmth of the sun seems so pleasant, that the wise instruction of parents to their children - "be careful" - is often forgotten. Not just the young but those of us who are a little older need to remember this directive as well. I know that on many occasions in the past I was not careful. The pain of the sunburn only lasted for a short time. However, some of the results now show up as pre-cancerous skin spots that need periodic treatment by a dermatologist.

Paul writing to the early Christian church in Ephesus provides the same instruction to those who read his letter. He writes, "Be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise." Ephesians 5:15.

The painful and harmful consequences which happen as the result of not being careful to avoid addictive substances and behaviors are much more damaging than too much sun. As you read the testimony and the feature article in this issue of *The Journey to Life*, you will find stories of lives where the instruction to "be careful" was frequently forgotten and the resulting damage led to addiction, and family dysfunction.

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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.

The Healing Value of the 12 STEPS

Step 1—

“We admitted that we were powerless over our addictions, that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Biblical Comparison

“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but cannot carry it out.”

—Romans 7:18 (NIV)

Steps to Christ Chapter

God’s Love for Man,
The Sinners Need of Christ

Upcoming Events

March

National Problem Gambling Awareness Month

March 1-31, 2016

For more information:

www.npgaw.org

April

Alcohol Awareness Month

April 1-30, 2016

For more information:

www.ncadd.org

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 1-30, 2016

For more information:

www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

April 1-30, 2016

For more information:

www.rainn.org

Sexual Assault Awareness Month of Action

April 1-30, 2016

For more information:

www.nsvrc.org



12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #1

It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Job 14:4; Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. *Steps to Christ*, 18.

When we realize we are powerless to climb out of the hole into which we were, born, or discover ourselves in, as a result of our sins/addictions, there is only one way to free ourselves. As Ellen White wrote concerning our condition, “education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, . . . here they are powerless.” The way to be lifted from our sinful condition with its obsessive thoughts and compulsive harmful, addictive behaviors is Jesus Christ. In the next issue of *The Journey to Life* we will focus our attention on the power He offers us.

Editor

Testimony

I am 69-1/2 years old and will be celebrating 25 years clean and sober in Alcoholics Anonymous on June 16. I had met a non-practicing Catholic man who was to become my third husband, on March 29, 1991, Richard “Mick” Smith, at a Parents Without Partners (PWP) dance in Covina, California on a Friday night. I was doing several things that night on the Sabbath that a commandment keeping Seventh-day Adventist should not be doing—drinking alcohol, going to a dance to meet men, and then going home after the dance with the man I met, and definitely not going to church.

Sexual abuse by my father began when I was 2 years old. During the 1950’s the unspoken rule in the church was “don’t air your dirty laundry for everyone to see, “what happens in the family stays in the family,” “don’t tell a soul what Daddy has been doing to you.”

When I was 9 years old my mother was hospitalized for breast cancer surgery. After school one afternoon my father picked me up to go and visit Mama. As we were walking to the car I asked “So, how is Mama doing, Daddy?” He told me she was at death’s door. All I knew in my little 9 year old mind was that Mama was dying and Daddy was raping me. Daddy died when I was 12 and Mama passed away when I was 17-1/2.

The young man I was dating at Ozark Adventist Academy and who later became my first husband, Lonny Smith, came to my mother’s funeral and I couldn’t have made it without him there to help me with my older brother and sister who both had Muscular Dystrophy. Lonny asked me to marry him the night before my mother’s funeral. We married the following summer in 1966 and he

continued his ministerial studies at Union College in Lincoln, NE and then at the Seminary, Andrews University. We pastored churches for 10 years in Missouri. I had a nearly fatal head-on car accident on a snowy day in 1980. I had come to not trust God because a loving God surely would not have allowed such unspeakable things to happen to one of his loving little girls. So, I began to self-medicate with alcohol and later that year I had an affair. Lonny and I divorced after nearly 18 years of marriage. I later moved to California in the fall of 1984, leaving our three precious children who were then ages 10, 12, and 14 to live with their father.

I was rebaptized in Paw Paw, Michigan by Pastor Byron Hudson and my oldest son Jeff Smith (a Seventh-day Adventist pastor currently working at WAUS-FM) who was a Seminary student at the time, with all three of my children around me. In 1998 I had several heart attacks/congestive heart failure brought on by Thyroid Storm, a complication of undiagnosed Graves Disease hyperactive thyroid condition. Three years later I had ovarian cancer followed by a very aggressive course of chemotherapy. During both illnesses I prayed, “God, if this is all there is for me, that’s okay, but if there is something more you want me to do for You, if You restore my health and show me what it is, I will do it.” God spared my life 2 times as a result of that prayer.

Mick and I had a beautiful life together because we responded to the Judge of the Universe drawing our hearts to Him. We sponsored a lot of people in AA over the years and then in 2005 we were asked by the pastor of North Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Claremont, CA to lay the plans for starting the well-known and successful Celebrate Recovery program at our church, which is still going strong to this day. This is the crowning venture that my husband Mick was so happy to be a part of. He worked with the men’s group and I worked with the women’s group.

On 1/1/2012 I decided to begin praying for Mick in a new way—that the Holy Spirit would draw Mick to fall in love with Jesus. As a Catholic he had been taught to know about Jesus and to do confession and Mass every Sunday to avoid going to hell. A couple of years before, Mick had 6 stents placed in his heart and so was now living on very borrowed time. On 2/26/2012 Mick had a catastrophic stroke and survived as an invalid for 15-1/2 months. I cared for him in my home with the help of dedicated caregivers.

And I can say, it really was worth it all. I’m so glad that our Savior Jesus Christ decided so long ago that I was worth it all for Him to die the cruel death on the cross of Calvary for me. And during his long illness God did answer my prayer—Mick did fall in love with Jesus and accepted Jesus’ shed blood to cover his sins.

Now, here I am in Michigan—and I’ve prayed that prayer again—“God, I don’t know what You want me to do, but if You show me what it is and spare my life, I will do it.” I am looking forward to working for the Lord in this place and am eagerly awaiting His nudging. I am, after much prayer and thought, and with the Lord’s blessing, beginning to lay plans toward raising up a community of Seventh-day Adventist believers and others who want to be a part of an addiction, hurts, and hang-ups group such as Celebrate Recovery here in Berrien Springs and hopefully on the campus of Andrews University.

Harlene Smith



We are THAT Family.....

It's not fun to write this article. In fact, I would like nothing better than to be *unable* to have the expertise to share with you. I'm not going to tell you my name or where I live. I'm going to spare you some detail. Just know that I *do* know what I'm talking about. It's not a textbook theory, it's an every day 'real-life expose' of heartache – and *hope*. Both my spouse and myself work for the church. Both of us love Jesus. Both of us have no history of addiction. And both of us together share the pain of an alcoholic, addicted child.

This story *began* with joy! The entrance of this beautiful baby into our home filled our world with love and laughter and hopes and dreams. None of which included the slightest inkling that it could even be possible for our child to become...*that* child - The Addict. The Alcoholic. The Outcast. The Shunned. We had a great life with a lot of good things in it! Of course we had ups and downs as a family – just like every family! Of course, looking back, we wish we could parent better. I am here to testify: we honestly, prayerfully tried to do everything possible to assure that our children would have the best opportunity to choose Jesus. This beloved child grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. At their absolutely incredible baptism, this thoughtful, intuitive child wrote to all the people who had helped along their journey of falling in love with Jesus, and I'm telling you – everyone loved this child.

Until the day they didn't. Until...the day when our child left academy and then left home and went head first into the drug culture. Little by little, influences crept into this child's life through associations at our local Adventist school. And they were heartbreaking. In the course of eight weeks this child went from loving God, loving us, loving school, to hating school, hating us,

hating God. Somewhere a switch flipped. Somewhere a straw broke. Somewhere a demon laughed.

Of course you are filled with questions and assumptions as you read this. There was a time I would have been the same way. While you might say to me, "It's not your fault – at a certain point every child makes their own choice," at the same time you wonder, "What was their home like? They probably didn't spend much time with their child...And I wonder if..." On and on it goes. Because we know what should happen when we put the correct change into the vending machine of life.

One of things I have learned on this journey is that my clean, safe life could be (and was) ripped from me at a moment's notice, and sometimes there are simply no answers. And even if there are answers – they don't matter. All that matters is that one of God's beloved is out in the storm, and needs to be rescued by the Savior, and loved by the others still on the inside.

And because addiction affects the whole family, ours was no exception. We became the textbook example of a dysfunctional family. When this beloved child became an addict, we were still thinking/hoping/praying that a corner would be turned, a choice would be made, and behavior would be stopped...But it didn't happen that way. Thinking we were being wise parents, we tried to step up the control. Find stuff. Destroy it. Rein in curfew times. Be more observant, give wisdom. However, this was not what our addict wanted. Although honor and obedience had been a part of life, it was now set aside by this child.

We lived in unpredictability and fear. What would this beloved addict do or say today? Would our phone ring with news we did not want to hear? Of course this created intense conflict. We desperately tried to batten down the hatches of control, trying to save the ship

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Resources

Journey to Wholeness:



A series that can be used in support groups or small groups as a resource to facilitate recovery

of breaking away from harmful practices and strengthening an intimate relationship with God in the Journey to an abundant life. Facilitator guides and participant guides can be purchased in our online store at www.AdventistRecovery.org

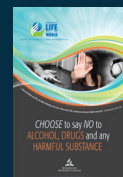
Journey to Life Newsletter:



This bi-monthly newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and soon in French as well. Print a free

pdf copy, download, or register to subscribe and receive it via email at www.AdventistRecovery.org

Choose Full Life Resources:



These are posters, calendars/bookmarks, booklets that can be used to share with others 10

Ways to Choose a Full Life embarking on a Journey to Recovery. For more information and to place an order please go to www.NADHealthMinistry.org and check out the online store. The Choose Full Life theme song is also available for download.

Unhooked:



This is a 28 part series produced by ARMin and Hope Channel,

highlighting different type of addictive behaviors, real stories, and experts comments on effective treatment. The ultimate goal is to bring hope for recovery in Christ. You can watch the series weekly Hope Channel or direct TV channel 368. The complete DVD with all episodes will be available for purchase in October. For previous episodes and more information go to: www.hopetv.org/unhooked or www.adventistrecovery.org

NEWS

NAD Welcomes new Health Ministries Director

On April 1, 2016, Dr. Angeline David will begin serving as the Health Ministries / Adventist Recovery Ministries Director for the North American Division. After earning a Doctorate in Public Health, Dr. David worked at the Adventist Guam Clinic as Wellness Director and Dietitian. She now returns to her home state of Maryland to serve in this role.



Recovery Ministry Training at Health Summit

Plan now to attend the NAD Regional Health Summit at Camp Hope, British Columbia, Canada, September 28 – October 2, 2016. Numerous training programs are provided, including how to run a Recovery group in your area. Visit www.nadhealthsummit.com for more information.



SEND US YOUR NEWS

Recovery related news, pictures (protect anonymity of individuals in meetings) and upcoming recovery and awareness events can be sent for future newsletters. Please send these to Ray Nelson, Journey to Life Editor – adventistrecovery@gmail.com and/or Katia Reinert, Adventist Recovery Ministries Director – recovery@nad.adventist.org.

Featured Article *continued from page 3*

from capsizing. Not only was there conflict with the addict, there was conflict in our marriage over how to best deal with the sinking ship. And we suffered abuse. It was excruciating to have our child become totally disrespectful, unkind, and even demeaning. This child, who had told another friend's mother that we, the parents, were best friends with this child and they could talk to us about anything.

And so we tried to do everything we thought we should be, to do everything we thought we should do, to no avail. Our beloved addict did not want to communicate with us, and when "communication" did happen, it was strained or totally dominated by the addict, including intense interruption, and twisting our words to make them say something we did not intend at all. Little by little, life centered around the addict. It was not pretty. It was not fun. Our ministry suffered. And we, who truly thought we had done everything possible to prevent anything like this from ever happening in our family, now lived in shame, guilt, disillusionment, and discouragement.

Finally, after nearly dying on more than one occasion, our beloved addict decided to accept help, and so we began the journey toward recovery. Not just the addict is in recovery, we are in recovery. Hard lessons have been learned. Setbacks have occurred. The road is not pothole-free, and we still ask ourselves, "How ever did we get here?" We see things we could've done differently. But this I know: **The story is not over!** The Redeemer is not finished! It is not easy to share the story. Things are fresh. Our addict deserves to share when they are ready to share, rather than to be an object lesson presented by us.

So here is my hope and dream for us, members of the Adventist church at large: **1)** We must love. We must never, ever allow a single person to believe they have no worth. Never. Ever. **2)** We must become better educated about addiction, and we must live, talk, and behave out of a grace-based, rather than shame-based mindset. **3)** We must change our paradigm on what happens when one of our own is tripped up by the enemy. Rather than pushing them away, we must somehow find ways to show them they still have a place in the family of God. **4)** We must find ways to keep our beloved addicts connected to us. Through the setbacks. Through relapse. Through pain. Through disappointment. Connection, compassion, grace. Who knows, maybe you can be the one to offer it to my beloved addict?

Anonymous

Director's Message



It happened again. She had tried so hard to escape that wretched life. But she was dragged back in. Of Mary Magdalene, the Bible says that Christ had rescued her from seven demons (see Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2). Speaking of her pitiful history, Ellen White elaborates that Christ delivered Mary from her life of sin seven times.

Have you considered how the Savior felt each time He came to her rescue? And how did Mary feel as One so holy reached out to her aid again and again? And her church community? What was their response?

Regardless of the emotional and physical rollercoaster ride, Christ came back again and again, until the victory was complete. He saw the pain, He felt the heartache, He read her need. And He didn't give up on her.

"When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature," *Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

There are many among us, even within the walls of our churches, who are struggling with an addiction. Perhaps they were forced into it by an abusive relationship. Perhaps it started as a seemingly innocent way of having fun. Perhaps stressful situations demanded some form of relief. Whatever their history, God wants for them, for all of us, a better life.

As we walk on this heavenward journey, let's remember that we are traveling an uneasy road. There are dangers seen and unseen. There are burdens that seem insurmountable. But let's also remember the "author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 11:2) who walked this road, and has promised a final and full recovery. And let us also remember, that we are to walk together.

Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up...Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, 12, NKJV

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