

Ministry Update - 1st Quarter, 2008

Testimonies from Weekly Twelve Step Meetings

At the end of last year, when we were doing Step 12, we asked people to write out a little testimony of what they had learned from our group in the past year, or how they had grown in the Lord. These are two that we received:

Angela Robertson - What God Has Shown Me This Year - 2007: God has shown me how much He loves me and that He actually does want to heal me inside and out. God has shown me that my role is just to trust in Him and His faithfulness. God has shown me that I have so often tried to figure out what He wants me to do with my life. Yet, all I have to do is be diligent and to wait for Him. The Holy Spirit has shown me my own sinful thoughts and feelings and He removes my burden of anger and resentment once I confess it and give it over to Him. God is teaching me that I can have healthy reciprocal relationships with my sisters in Christ.

God is teaching me that the past is the past and that I am no longer bound by it nor am I the same person I was. The future is in His hands and I have but to dive into it with fearless abandon. God is teaching me to trust other people, and He is showing me that people are not always what I believe or expect them to be.

God is teaching me how to have proper boundaries with people, friends and family so that I will not take on a burden that does not belong to me. God has shown me how to stand up for myself when I need to, and to speak up or reach out when I need help or guidance. God has shown me that life isn't all about tribulation, work and service.... Life also includes fun, adventure, building and maintaining relationships and finding out what brings me joy. Most importantly, God has shown me who I am in Christ. He has shown me that I am special, unique, and made for a special purpose in His kingdom. It is God who made me the person that I am, and I want to use the gifts He has blessed me with to glorify Him and Him alone.

Amelia Olmos - Updated Testimony - Dec. 2007 - I want to thank our Heavenly Father and Lord Jesus for creating me. Without Him in my life, and friends like Tom and Dottie Hooper from Love Lifted Me, I would never be who I am in Christ now. I have been attending Love Lifted Me Recovery meetings for five years, and I know it wasn't a mistake, but God guided me to this place for a reason. I was completely broken and empty before LLMR. Every year through the teaching, Christ has been taking away something from my life that is not good, and replacing it with His good stuff. I relearn over and over again the 12-Steps, year after year, and it's amazing to see God's work in my life. I'm not the same person I was five years ago. Some of the things that are gone from me are: fear, anxiety, impatience, low self-esteem, and so on. God replaced it all with good stuff like confidence, reading His word (and trying to put it into practice as much as I can). Also, God gave me the desire to go on a missions trip to Africa in 2004 for three months, and then I came back in 2006 for 5 1/2 months. I had never had the experience of sharing Christ with others and teaching children's ministry until then. Now, I know I love to teach children and share His word with others. God has been giving me compassion to pray for others when they are in need. One of the things I have learned is to fellowship with the Holy Spirit every moment of every day. Also, my relationship with my mother is growing and growing, and is much better. Even though I've been coming to the recovery group for five years, I still enjoy going over the Steps and listening to Papa Tom preaching, and Dottie's leading worship - I'm learning something new all the time. I'm giving the glory and praise to GOD for his work in me during those years in my relationship with Him.

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, January 5, 2008 - It rained pretty hard most of the night, but by Saturday, it had stopped, so we went ahead and went out to the Boardwalk for our outreach. We told people

we would go out if there was a break between storms, but not very many people showed up to go out with us. Leigh-Anna came, with two kids she was taking care of, so we had Tom, me, Loren, Leigh-Anna, Nick (age 11) and Sarah (age 9). We had the usual 72 lunches, but weren't able to carry them all, due to fewer people in the group. So, we left several bags of lunches in the car, and on the way home stopped by the public library and park near our house, and gave them out to quite a few homeless people there huddled away from the cold. Leigh-Anna was also good at handing out the soaps, razors and shampoos that we still had left from last time. We ended up with three lunches left over, and Tom and I will hand them out during the week, if we see anyone who looks homeless. We found out that some of the homeless people had been able to go to shelters during the worst of the rain and wind the night before. They said a shuttle comes from Union Rescue Mission in downtown L.A. and picks up people when the weather is really bad like this was. As for handing out tracts, we gave out fewer than usual, but still quite a lot. By the time we were coming back down the Boardwalk, there were quite a few tourists, runners, bike-riders, and other Looky-Loos coming out, since they could see it hadn't been raining for a while. Lots of people took the gospel tracts, and we gave out many in Spanish, two in Korean, one in Chinese, and one in Hebrew. Because there were not quite as many tourists as in the nicer weather, I had more time to go up to the people setting up their shops, and ask them if they would like a booklet. Most of the people were glad to take one, especially those who got one in their native language. One store owner took a tract in English at first, but when I asked if he spoke another language, he had a look on his face as if he doubted I would have it. I asked if he spoke Chinese or Korean, and he said Korean. Then, a man came up from behind, and said, "I'll take Chinese."

Saturday, February 2, 2008 - Our team was Tom, me, Loren, Angela, John, and Leigh-Anna, our regulars, and then several new people: Daniel from church, Nick and Michael from our Monday group, and Clarence, who we used to write to when he was in Mule Creek Prison. We had the usual 72 lunches, but we had quite a few shampoos, razors, toothpastes, tooth brushes, and even some coats and blankets that Leigh-Anna brought. Leigh-Anna offered a blanket to one man, and he was so happy, because he said someone had just stolen his blanket the night before. She gave a toothpaste and toothbrush to one young girl, maybe 20 years old at the most, and she was very thankful. Several women and a few men took the shampoos that we had. We had one group of people who went along the beach, one group up the Boardwalk, and one group that went up the alleys. As usual, the homeless population of Venice Beach was all very grateful to get the lunches and other items. I saw one guy I recognized from before, and knew his name, so I said, "Hey, Steve! Do you need a lunch today?" He was all smiles as he took one. As for the tracts, we gave several hundred in English, many in Spanish, and two in French, and one in Hebrew. The Hebrew tract was given to a young man who had taken one before. I found a different Hebrew tract than the one we had given him before, and he took it gladly. It was a tract from Chick Publications called "Love the Jewish People". I offered tracts to some kids outside a tattoo parlor, and one kid took it, but the other one said he already had some. The other kid said, "Yeah! I read all of his - I like them!" There were lots of children out this time, and we gave them "Li'l Susy", "The Little Princess" and other tracts that are suitable for younger kids. We gave out tracts to the men at the Phoenix House again, and told them about our ministry. Clarence, Daniel, Nick and Michael, all first-timers for the outreach, all said they had a good time, and that this was a good way to do what the Lord tells us to do in getting His word out to people. Angela and Daniel especially like the tract called "Do Good People Go to Heaven?" It's a little short tract that shows how none of us are good enough to go to heaven on our own, and that we need Jesus.

Saturday, March 1, 2008 - It was a cold and gloomy day, but our beach outreach was a great success. Our team consisted of Tom, me, Leigh-Anna, Clarence, John, Yvonne, Catharine, and Daniel. Catharine was the only first-timer on this outreach, and she said she enjoyed it very much. We had lots of jackets, socks, even some new packages of underwear, and a ton of toiletry items, as well as the usual 72 lunches to give out. Our church, Sunrise Westside Community Church, had donated most of the jackets, other clothes and toiletries, and we thank each and every individual from Sunrise Church for their donations. Catharine said a homeless lady named Barbara had no teeth of her own, but took a tube of toothpaste, because she said it made her feel good to have something to give others. The socks were the

most welcome item of anything, next to the food, and we think we will try to bring packages of socks with us each time, as they are fairly easy to carry. The jackets were given out to those who really needed them, and Catharine had fun finding just the right man for a large camouflage jacket which seemed brand new. She found a man sitting over to the side of a large group, and when she gave him a T-shirt, she saw, as he put it on, that he didn't have much in the way of a warm jacket already. He was so happy to get that jacket. Leigh-Anna had a nice, warm wool jacket that we hadn't found the right person for last month, but she found a woman this time that was so happy to get it, and it fit her. Leigh-Anna talked to and prayed with a girl named Brandie for about 15 minutes, and said that Brandie is trying to get into a drug rehab place somewhere. There were some new people who had never seen our lunches. One young man ran up to another guy that we were giving a lunch to, and he said, "These are great! There's enough food to last you all day!" We said that we used to only put one can of Vienna sausages in each bag, but then went to two, because we thought people could save it for later. The young man said, "Yeah, and there's crackers and cookies and everything!" Daniel gave a lunch to one man whose eyes looked so bad, he said, as if he had been on alcohol or drugs for a long time, but the look on his face when he took the lunch was that of a grateful little child. Clarence said he really likes the joy he sees on peoples' faces when they see that someone cares enough to give them a little something to eat or help keep them warm. It gives us all a good feeling.

Our hands are always so loaded down with stuff on our way up the Boardwalk, we don't give out as many tracts as when we're on our way back down, but we ran out of lunches halfway up the Boardwalk this time. We promised a few people that we would try to find some others in our group (Daniel and Catharine had gone up the beach, but would catch up with the rest of us later). When we did finally see Catharine and Daniel, they had a few lunches left, so Clarence and I went back to the people we had told that to, and they were quite pleasantly surprised that we remembered them and came back. In giving out tracts, I like to catch the people in the shops, and we gave out a lot of Spanish tracts to employees setting up in the shops. I gave out one tract in Russian, and two in Chinese, as well as many in Spanish. I gave out tracts in two of the tattoo parlors. Three young men in one tattoo parlor said they liked our tracts, and saved them, and put them out for people to read! Praise the Lord! I did find a few that they didn't already have, and gave them to the guys.

Prison Ministry

Alice Conner, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla - "I just received my letter from you both. I look forward to them to spend time with you in your daily activity. I like hearing about your counseling of others and how you both put so much of yourselves out doing errands and helping others get themselves together and start living the way God wants them to. I'm so glad that I started this study with you. It's helped me get rid of a lot of garbage I was carrying, and that I've found myself again through God and you, that I'm able to be honest with myself about a lot of things. Most of all, I've got a better, stronger relationship with my Father in heaven, which is so very important. Again, I must say this is the best Bible study I've ever done, and you will know everywhere I am including where I live. I'm very excited about one day meeting you both. It would be a pleasure to meet the two people that helped me through this time I spent in prison."

David Walker, CRC, Norco, Calif. - "Tom & Dottie, Hi, I hope this letter finds you and your family in the very best of health. As for me I'm doing well as always. I have some good news. I passed my GED. Man, it's awesome! It feels really good. I just wanted to share that with you both. Doing the 12-Steps with you has helped me follow through with things in my life, and it's great. I have also been doing personal inventory of myself every day on paper, and off, and I have been promptly admitting it in every way I can. I do what works for me, sometimes it's very emotional sometimes. Thanks to Jesus our Lord for giving me you both as my teachers and brother and sister in Christ. I pray every night for the both of you and your family as well. Thank you again for your time and kindness always. With love and care, Dave"

Bruce Oakley, Federal Detention Center, Oakdale, Louisiana - "I'm feeling great today, actually for the last few days, and that's a rare stretch - and I got a feeling I'm gonna feel

good tomorrow, or at least I'm not tripping on it today. Enclosed is week #2 of Step 5. I talked with my wife last night on the phone, she asked how I was doing with my Steps. I don't know where the words came from, but I explained what Step 4 did, the effect it had on me. I just never thought about being able to express it, but the words flowed out of my mouth and I could tell by Linda's tone and voice that she found such encouragement. Anyway, thank you, thank you! Praise God! Love, Bruce"

Kenneth Stanley, Soledad State Prison - "Thank you, Tom & Dottie, for your ministry and messages. I am growing and learning so much from your ministry and I pray that your ministry flourishes and you touch more people as you have touched me. Thank you. Kenneth Stanley.

P.S. - I quit smoking!"

Donna Anderson, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla - "This 5th Step is excellent! The Holy Spirit has really ministered to me through your guidance - seeing all the Scriptures about putting away bitterness, malice, wrath, and filthy language from our heart. It is so true that regardless of what we think we are saying, others "hear" our heart, too. I never used to think I had these evil "roots" in my heart, but others were reacting to them. They were so suppressed I'm not sure they even knew what they were reacting to, and I always blamed others for why I had "bad relationships". Now that God has healed my heart, I see a complete change in how others relate to me! It's because they are relating to the "new woman in Christ" in me, and not the old Donna.

Mario Guerrero, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran - "I am thankful for everything God has done for me through His Son. There are so many traps in the world for those who want to follow the straight and narrow path that leads to life. I have been in prison since 1998, and locked up since 1996, and it seems that as time has gone by my relationships with family and others have become strained. I am 29 years old, but I feel I have only been alive for going on eight years now. The life I was living before I found God I can't even imagine how I went so long without knowing God. These eight years have been the best of my life. What could compare to an experience of finding God and knowing you are going to live forever? I just received the "Serenity" Bible you have sent. I came home from yard and the Bible was sitting on my bed. Thank you and thank all those who support your ministry and thank God. I want to end this note for now. Thanks for everything."

Alyson Griffiths, Skyway House, Oroville, CA - "I have a new roommate, she was very scared coming in. She's been doing meth since she was 5 years old - abused greatly. I asked her if she believed in God, and she is Wiccan - the occult, believing in a "goddess"! When she had not entered my room yet, I took some oil with another friend and we asked God to bless it, and anointed all the doors, my forehead, my pillow, and hers, and her bed. Was this the right thing to do? Write back soon! God bless you both - I'll pray for your 12-Step meetings. Alyson"

Krishneel Prasad, Soledad State Prison - "Because of my addictions I ended up in prison at a very young age. But everything happens for a reason. In prison, I found Jesus Christ! I lost my wife and daughter (getting a divorce at the age of 22 is stressful). I'm only 22 currently. I lost my house, cars, money, even faith until I came to Jesus.