

# Ministry Update - 2nd Quarter, 2006

## Twelve Step Recovery Meetings

Every newsletter, we tell you something about what we are studying in our weekly meetings. This time, we're just letting you read a testimony, showing the results of God's word bringing healing and recovery to one of His children.

### Testimony of Angela Robertson - June, 2006:

I was first introduced to Love Lifted Me Recovery Ministry in March of 2005 by my friend Amelia Olmos. I was struggling through my first of two physical breakdowns between 2005 and 2006, when Amelia started dropping by my house and explaining to me about this group. At first, I was skeptical about attending a "12-step" group, because I was not suffering from an alcohol or drug addiction. But Amelia explained that this was a recovery group for not only those with addictions, but also those suffering from compulsive behaviors (which I had), anger, fear, anxiety, and those who needed healing and forgiveness. I was still skeptical, but I went with her one Monday night. I have attended the group regularly ever since. Love Lifted Me Recovery group blesses every attendee with the Lord's precious word. In doing so, His word takes root in your heart and begins to change you from the inside out. Tom and Dottie combine God's word with practical application to what we deal with every day: frustration, anger, guilt, pain.....SIN! Their materials, as well as the free Serenity Bible, provide the tools for living God's way in this dead and fallen world. Praise God for His word!

Back to my story: In 2005 I had my first physical breakdown. I had to leave work for about 6 weeks to rest my body and my soul. I had been "running" the race of life for some time. I believe it started after college and never really stopped until my body couldn't take it any more. I believe it was God trying to get my attention that this wasn't the way I was supposed to live any more. You see, I was a "people-pleaser". I would break my neck in order to make others happy. If I could make them happy and give them what they want (to my detriment, I might add), then I was happy and I felt accepted. I didn't ever want anyone to think poorly of me or think negatively of me. In my mind, if I continued to "please" through work, giving money, doing things for people, then I would keep everyone happy with me. It worked for a while.... until I physically couldn't do it any more. Along with this damaging behavior, I also had a wounded heart that needed some real healing. I carried the burden of my hurt and pain with me for most of my life and it was slowly KILLING me. In fact, it was most likely the driver for my compulsive behavior. My second and much more debilitating physical and emotional breakdown occurred in January, 2006. I had to quit my job and just rest. I knew this time that God was forcing me to let Him work in me. The only way was to finally break me down so that He could then begin to build me up again.

At this time, I was beginning my second trip through the 12-step program. To my amazement, the things I learned at the meetings the previous year had much greater meaning for me the second time around. I realized that it wasn't about completing the program one time and "all will be healed". The learning process continues through life until we finally see our Lord's face. By the GRACE OF GOD I was brought in contact with Tom and Dottie and their blessed and wonderful ministry. I thank God for their good work and their faithfulness. It is because of their service to the Lord that I have been able to receive FREEDOM from my compulsive behaviors, FREEDOM from my anxieties, FREEDOM from my fear and doubt, and HEALING from the hurt and pain of my past life that I lived WITHOUT MY LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST! By attending these meetings, I have experienced Acceptance, Grace and Love. I praise God for this precious gift.

## Evangelistic Outreach

### Amelia Olmos writes from Uganda:

Amelia is a "graduate" of Love Lifted Me Recovery, and we also have supported her missions trip and given her several hundred gospel tracts to take with her. Here's a recent e-mail from Amelia who is serving the Lord on a five-and-a-half-month missions trip in Uganda: "Dear Family, Two days ago, I came back safe from the north of Uganda - PRAISE GOD! Thank you so much for all your prayers. I was in a place called Lira for 9 days, working in a Refugee camp where thousands and thousands of people live there because of the war between the LRA and the government. This war has been at the north of Uganda for more than 15 years, and the ones who suffer most are the children. The condition of living is very bad, because people don't have anything. I was teaching a tailoring class (this wasn't in my plan, but I believed that it was GOD's plan). It happened because I visited this camp a couple of weeks ago with a few friends, and as we walked around the place, a lot of children followed us. One of them his shorts were very dirty and falling apart, and when I saw these kids like that, I was sad. But thank GOD that he guided me in the right direction where a couple of sewing machines were set up (someone donated 5 machines a couple months ago, and taught sewing for a few weeks, but they didn't finish the class). I asked someone for a piece a fabric and I made a new pair of shorts for this little boy. After that, my friend asked me if I can teach them tailoring and I said yes, I will come back and teach. The first day I had 30 women, and I taught them from the beginning (using the pedal and so on). Last Tuesday I finished the class with 50 women. I went back to Kampala last Wed., and my body was really exhausted and tired. Please pray for strength and protection, as I will be going back the first week of June by bus. I don't drive for now, because my back started hurting. Pray for me to do GOD's WILL, because these people need to know JESUS! Pray for opportunities to me to share Christ with them. There is a lot work to do in the camps, also I will be teaching in Kampala, my schedule is busy for next month. I will be here in Kampala until June 4th resting a little bit and go to the students dorm around the university to evangelize. Receive a huge hug and many kisses. GOD BLESS YOU TO ALL OF YOU I LOVE YOU Amelia

#### **Saturday, April 1, 2006 -**

It rained all of Friday night, but we prayed for good weather on Saturday morning for our Venice Beach outreach. We had a great team at our house Friday night to make up the lunches: Adam and his son Johnnie, and Johnnie's friend, Parker, Sheila B., Sheila S., and Catherine. We put Johnnie and Parker to work stamping the backs of the tracts with our ministry stamp. Some of the people who can't come on Saturday like to come on Friday night to help with the lunches. Our team on Saturday consisted of Tom, Dottie, Lorén, Petra, Gary, Ivette, Awilda and Jessica. We gave out 54 lunches to the homeless, and they were out in good numbers despite the rain the night before. However, it was a little light on the sightseers and others down at the Boardwalk, so I would say we handed out fewer tracts than our normal outreaches have been. We know God had the people He wanted to be there, though, and we were faithful to give out His word to whoever would take it. One of the homeless guys asked for more of the Chick tracts, and we gave him several different titles. Ivette said there was a teenage boy that looked desperate, forlorn, or just "lost". She offered him a tract, and he took it, saying, "Yeah, okay, I guess so." She's going to continue to pray for him, as she felt he might have been taking it as a last chance, what-have-I-got-to-lose kind of thing. We probably won't know until we get to heaven whether the Lord reached this young man at a desperate or confused moment in his life.

#### **Saturday, May 6, 2006 -**

Saturday morning, only two people showed up to go out on the Boardwalk: Adam and Gordon. Tom was in a lot of pain, and stayed home to pray for us, as Lorén, Adam and Gordon and I went down to the Venice Boardwalk, trusting God. It would be easy to be discouraged that no one else showed up, although we did know there were some other things going on that Saturday morning involving some of our people, so we thought maybe some of them went to these other things. There had been a lot of prayer going up for this outreach, so we believed God rather than get discouraged, and God answered our prayers and sent "laborers into the harvest" when we got down to the Boardwalk. Adam ran into two teenage boys from the youth group at his church, and they helped us in carrying the lunch bags and also in passing out the

tracts. We did have to make one trip back to the cars to get more lunches, but all in all, it was a very successful outreach, and we went out rejoicing as the Lord blessed us in spite of the obstacles. One of the very first homeless people we encountered was such a blessing. He had two other people with him, and he was so grateful for the food, saying, "We couldn't make it out here without people like you." He also asked for a hug as we left, so we all gave him a hug. Then, I saw a man in a wheelchair who looked homeless, and as I followed him, trying to catch up with him, I saw he stopped at a food concession and was taking the little mustard and catsup packets from the dispenser. I offered him a lunch, figuring he was hungry if he was desperate enough to eat mustard and catsup by themselves. He gave me such a look of gratitude and thanked us. That was pretty much the attitude of everyone to whom we gave the 53 lunches, except for one woman who was out of her head. She was either drunk or crazy and said she didn't want anything unless it was a beer! We handed out a lot of tracts, and Tom and Corey, the two guys from Adam's church, handed out at least a hundred tracts themselves. Adam also ran into a guy he recognized from when he was in prison. This guy, Walter, is not a Christian, but Adam gave him a tract and talked to him for a while. Adam said, "Do you remember what I was doing back at Susanville, how I was serving the Lord and living for Christ in there? Well, I'm doing the same thing out here! That's the only way to go!" We had some other good encounters, including one man who was sitting on a bench and playing his violin, who got up and came over to us to see what we were handing out. He took three different Chick tracts. Lots of young people were down on the Boardwalk, and almost every one of them took a tract. In one group, the adult man said, "Does that have to do with Christianity?", and when we said it did, he didn't want one, but the two young men with him each took one. We gave out one tract in Italian, and another man said he spoke Hungarian, but when I offered him some tracts in Hungarian, he didn't take them because he saw they were about Jesus. You know, we don't get discouraged when anyone refuses a tract. Jesus Himself said that the sower of the word of God would encounter all different types of "ground", and that many of the seeds would never sprout and bring forth a harvest. But, He said that the ones that would fall on "good ground" would bring a harvest of good fruit for the Kingdom of God.

**Luke 8:12-15** "Now the parable is this: **The SEED is the WORD of GOD.** Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their HEARTS, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation (testing) fall away. And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. **But the ones that fell on the GOOD GROUND are those who, having heard the word with a NOBLE and GOOD HEART, keep it and bear fruit with patience.**"

**Saturday, June 3, 2006 -**

Friday evening, we had a few people come over to help with bagging the lunches: Gordon, Sheila, Tom, Lorén and myself. It's always a good time of fellowship, as well as "many hands make light work." Saturday, the hot weather started for the summer! We went out on the Boardwalk, and it was a beautiful warm California day, but after you've trudged up and down the length of the Boardwalk from Venice Blvd. to Rose Avenue, you get pretty hot and sweaty. Our team consisted of Tom, me, Lorén, Petra, Gloria and Judy. We handed out 54 lunches to the homeless, and Gloria and Judy stopped to talk and pray with quite a few of the people. Judy said her heart was touched by a couple of young men who seemed so down and out. She prayed with them and invited them to her church. As Lorén, Petra and I were handing out lunches to one particular group of people, even going up on the grassy area to where some were sleeping, a man was watching us. After watching us and smiling at us for a few minutes, he gave me \$10.00 as a donation. I gave him one of our fliers to show him who we were. Two other men said they were already Christians, but one man asked me for some tracts that he could hand out, and the other man said he used to pass out Chick tracts, and he really loved them. Who knows? Maybe we'll encourage some other Christians to get out in their neighborhoods, wherever they are from, and do something like this? When Petra, Lorén and I

caught up with Gloria and Judy, they were out of lunches, and there were still some people that needed them. We went up into the group that didn't get any, and they were so happy to see us coming with more lunches. We gave one to a man sleeping on the grass, and he woke up long enough to take the bag, and put it under the blanket with him as he went back to sleep. As always, we handed out several hundred gospel tracts, and we returned home hot and sweaty, but very happy, blessed and glad we could be of some service to God and our fellow man.

### **Prison Ministry**

Latest news on our prison ministry is that we now have eighteen women inmates at two different women's prisons: Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, and Leo Chesney Correctional Facility in Live Oak, California. We continue to get new men inmates from Avenal State Prison, Corcoran State Prison, Solano State Prison, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, and others.

#### **Chan S. Park, Avenal Prison, From a letter dated March 30, 2006 -**

"I wanted to share with you that it very much affects me when I read of your mission work on the Venice Boardwalk. It reminds me that people of good will remain in the outside world, and that the selfishness which I am often surrounded by is not the "truth" of our existence. Thank you for this. I think such a thing will leave a lasting impression upon Lorén and Kaylah, and they will probably look back many years from now as adults, and be filled with many fond memories. God bless you both for this. I only wish I had had better instruction in such selflessness when I was a child."

#### **Don Johnson, Solano State Prison, letter dated April 3, 2006 -**

"I got your certificate and want to thank you from my heart. I can't tell you what it means to me. You see, I think I'm pretty lucky I found your program, I mean when someone gave me your address. I went to court not for drugs, but the result of drugs. Well, I'm 39 years old and I guess the judge figured there was no hope for me, so there was no order to go to AA or even counseling, and I believe that was the best thing he could of did because I had reached a place in my life where I could go no lower, to a point where most people don't come back from. I'd been to a few AA groups, no NA though, was even in AA group counseling for over a year, but till Feb. 2005 I hadn't or wouldn't let Jesus into my life. Well, He's there now and He is going to stay there. See, with His help and I truly believe only with His help could I rebuild or begin to rebuild my life and my family's as well. You will never know how grateful I am to you as people, friends, servants of God, because I consider you all three. I owe you a debt I can never repay and only time will tell if I can undo all of the damage that drinking, drugs, anger and depression have caused. But I let them in my life, and they became friends. These friends I never wanted, but always depended on, and they always led me down the same path, the one of destruction. Well, not any longer. I've made a new friend, the only one I ever truly needed, Jesus.

Because of your program and putting faith in the Lord I'm able to deal with issues now, talk about problems, and I have also been taken off all meds now. Life still has its ups and downs, but they're getting better. I get depressed, but I'm able to work it out by reading the Bible or doing your Bible study lessons. Your program and my faith in Jesus has helped me in a lot of ways. Thank you. Yours truly, Don"

#### **Clarence A. Barnes, Mule Creek Prison, 5/7/06 -**

"I am truly grateful for the time that you have shown me in the past few months. I will continue to send you guys sections of my Fourth Step Inventory, because it is helping a lot. I've been doing what you told me to do, in me casting all my cares upon Jesus Christ! And it

has helped me to accept what Christ is allowing me to remember about my past, and put all down on paper. I do mean it when I tell you that I'm grateful for God bringing you two into my life, because I'm receiving all good..... You know, it's a real good feeling when you know in your heart that you've been delivered from the life of that old man. Because for so many years, I have denied the spirit-man the right to run my life towards the will of Christ. I'm just grateful, Tom & Dottie, that I've come to that point of complete surrender in Christ! And for the first time ever, I am allowing Him the full reign of my life."

**Donald O'Brien, Pleasant Valley State Prison, 5/30/06 -**

"Thank you very much for the Bible studies, they're helping me out a lot. I've come a long way, and I am still wanting to learn more - it's like an addiction of some sort, but a good addiction (smile). It feels good to have the Holy Spirit upon you - I feel as if I can go out into the world and save all the lost souls, and tell them about our loving Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord! Even though I may be in prison, my spirits are very high indeed. Jesus brings me happiness and joy into my heart every single day. It just goes to prove that no matter where you might be, Jesus is able to bring you out of your slump and bring you peace and happiness. I love our Lord Jesus Christ, and from this day forward, I am going to live for Jesus and tell everyone I come into contact with how great He is!"