

Ministry Update - 2nd Quarter, 2011

Twelve Step Program

In April and May, we always study Steps 4 and 5 in our recovery meetings. **STEP 4 says "We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves," and STEP 5 says "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."** This means a lot of looking back into the past, and analyzing how things affected us. Here are some of the kinds of things we discuss and deal with during these two Steps:

II Timothy 2:15 & 19 "Be diligent (study) to present yourself approved unto God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'"

This message from Second Timothy was written to Christians - "those who are His," and "who name the name of Christ." If **we belong to Jesus Christ**, there are some instructions here for our complete healing from the wreckage of the past. Most of us have SHAME issues, and some of us have spent most of our lives **looking for APPROVAL or LOVE** from someone, whether parents, teachers, husband or wife, "significant others" or whoever, and never finding it. The idea of being **"APPROVED unto God, a worker who does NOT need to be ASHAMED"** is almost more than we can understand or receive! But it is possible; it just takes some diligence on our part in two areas: 1.) Studying God's word, in order to rightly (correctly) understand it; and 2.) Departing from (leaving behind) iniquities (sins) and getting rid of the entanglements of the past.

What does it mean to **"depart from Iniquity"**? Iniquity is **"any violation of God's order or laws."** If you have personally violated some of God's laws, you must repent (depart, turn away from them), but you may also need **DELIVERANCE and CLEANSING from the EFFECTS or consequences** of having broken His laws. When God's laws are violated over a long period of time, **it produces BONDAGE or STRONGHOLDS in your life**. Maybe you were an innocent VICTIM, and someone else BROKE GOD'S LAWS and sinned against YOU in some way in your upbringing and childhood, or at any time in your past. If that is the case, you must **DEPART from the iniquity done TO you by FORGIVING the offender**, and giving them up to God. This is the only way to **NOT keep dragging all that old pain and garbage** with you through the rest of your Christian life here on earth. The iniquity done to you could be any number of things: physical or sexual abuse, verbal abuse (harsh words, condemnation), a parent you were never able to please, rejection or ridicule, or just lack of love. The resentment, bitterness and low self esteem resulting from these actions against you can and will **hold you back from being all that God wants you to be**, until you deal with them, and once and for all DEPART from them.

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 2, 2011 - Today, we had a great group for the outreach, including seven guys from the Bible Tabernacle. Billy Counts, Stanley Johnson, and Mark are all guys who found out about the Bible Tabernacle through us, although Billy is the only one who used to write to us and did our 12-Step program. The others from the BT's "Witnessing Team" were Frank, Jamison, Mitch and Ararat. We only had a few from our church or our usual team this time (several people called and said they had work or conflicting things going on), and those were Shami, Gordon, Shannon, Tom and me. We had made 108 lunches, and we had clothing, socks, and toiletries which had been donated by people at "Sonrise Church". We all had a great time, and Jamison said, "It really makes a difference when you have something to offer someone before giving them a tract." Of course, we did give out several hundred tracts to people that were not homeless, and that didn't get any food or other things, but the homeless are always grateful for what we have to give them. From the new people who went out with us for the first time, we got comments of, "This is so much fun!" and "What a blessing!" and "It

was joyful!" As we were passing out the gospel tracts, one lady name Marta came up and asked for Spanish tracts. I was able to give her four or five different ones, and she said she really liked them. Billy and Mitch went over to the skateboarding area and handed out tracts to the kids and young people hanging out there. Tom was at home, praying for us, and he said he was also praying that people would just come up to us and ask for a tract. That happened several times, and the overall receptiveness of the people was great. I think we gave out more tracts than usual this time, probably several hundred for sure, plus the 108 tracts inside the lunches.

Saturday, May 7, 2011 - We had so much fun doing our beach outreach today! I guess you could call it "the joy of the Lord" - we just had a great time. Our team members were Tom, Dottie, Shami, Catharine, Daniel, Tia, Mariah, Billy, Frank, Mitch, Alex, Brian, Gordon and Tikva. We had made 119 lunches, the most we'd ever made at one time. Brian noticed how grateful all the homeless people seemed to be for receiving the lunches, toiletries, socks, and clothing we had. He said one man was especially thankful, because he had just prayed that morning for a new pair of socks. Billy took a pair of shoes with him at the last minute, and he found just the right person who needed them, as one woman asked if he had any shoes. When she tried them on, they fit her perfectly! We all handed out a lot of gospel tracts, and Billy said this is the first time he ran out of Spanish tracts. I gave out two in Arabic, one in Chinese, and one to a man who said he spoke Thai. I could tell by the look on his face that he didn't expect me to have one in Thai, but I did, and he took it. The group I was in included Billy, Mitch, and Tikva. We got about halfway down the Boardwalk, and ran out of lunches when we came to one large group on the grassy area. We told them we would try to see if any of the others in our group still had lunches, and we would get back to them. A short time later, we ran into Daniel, Catharine and Shami's group, and they still had a lot of lunches, so Tikva and I ran back to the group we'd left, and they were so happy to see us come back with more food. One man asked for a lunch, and we said, "Didn't you already get one?" He said he did, but he was so hungry, because he hadn't eaten in several days. We don't usually do it, but we gave him a second lunch. Daniel, Catharine, Tia, Mariah and Shami's group stopped to pray with a lot of people this time, and had a number of people pray to receive Christ. Daniel said Tia and Mariah seemed especially gifted in praying with people to have them receive the Lord, and these are the ones who prayed with them for salvation: Armando, David, Don, Sergio, Paul, Robert, LeBar, Charles and Allen. They gave New Testaments to all of the new believers, and we thank Pastor Darrin for giving us those New Testaments this time. I had an interesting encounter with three teenage boys carrying skateboards. At first, they refused to take a tract, but then one boy saw the copy of "Bad Bob" I had in my hand, and he said, "I'll take that one." Well, that opened the way for his two friends to take tracts, also, and I rejoiced that the Lord had me take that "Bad Bob" tract out of my bag just minutes before. Tom was praying for us at home, and he prayed for people to not only receive the tracts, but for them to come up and ask for them. Daniel said that was exactly what happened to them, and people would come running up to them, asking for food, but also for the tracts. Our group had similar encounters, and some people asked for several different titles of the tracts, not just one.

Saturday, June 4, 2011 - We had a good group of people show up to go out on the Venice Beach and Boardwalk. We had Tom, me, Billy Counts, Catharine, John, Joe and Beth, and Frank, Ralph, Mitch, and Brian from the BT's "Witnessing Team" out in Canyon Country. Catharine and her group stopped and prayed with about eleven people, she said. Of them, the names she could remember were: Phillipe, Joe (a homeless man who had just gotten out of the hospital), Jamie, Amara, Josh, J.K. and Andrew. We gave away all of the 112 lunches we had made, a huge bag of toiletries, and lots of socks and other clothing items to as many homeless people as we could find. We all gave out a lot of gospel tracts, mostly in English, although Joe especially gave out a lot in Spanish. I gave out one in Russian, one in Portuguese, and one in Italian. John, Beth and Ralph were all first-timers for going on the outreach, and they all enjoyed themselves. John said the highlight of the whole time was seeing a young boy, maybe eight years old, reading the gospel tract we gave him. It is so precious to see the little children having an opportunity to learn about Jesus, because they're probably not getting it at home or at school. Other than that, it was the usual, and we all felt

people were open to receiving the tracts, and of course, the homeless people were all very grateful for what they received in the name of Jesus.

Prison Ministry

We are becoming well-known to the Board of Parole Hearings commissioners, who are commending our people for doing the "Love Lifted Me Recovery" program. We give God all the glory for that, and thank you for your prayers! Also, for those who can afford an attorney to help them with their parole hearing, we are getting people recommended from their attorneys, because they see the value of what doing our program, and receiving a support letter from us, can mean in the outcome of their hearing. We also recommend the Bible Tabernacle to those who need a place to live once they get out of prison, and we have several of our guys living at the BT in Canyon Country right now.

Chuck Cain, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - "It sounds from your letter that your lives are very busy. You do so much for so many people. I do hope that you get blessed along the way for the help - friendship - love - and the word of God that you have to offer. If I ever get out of prison, your life gives me encouragement to go out and help people in whatever way I can. Thank you for the message you put out in your fellowship. God bless! Chuck"

Donna Humphreys, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla - "Thank you for the nice letter, and literature, plus my Step studies. I do appreciate you very much. I want the both of you to know that you are a blessing to me, and it means a lot to me that I can be open, and honest with you without judgment. Anyway, I'm gonna get this in the mail to you now. Please take care, and many blessings and prayers to you. I hope you had a wonderful Easter. I did, because I know the true meaning of it today, and I am very grateful for Jesus' sacrifice, dying on the cross in my place so I can be forgiven! What a priceless gift! With love and respect, Donna"

Reginald Cooper, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "I want to thank you very much for the 12-Step recovery program, because it is helping me very much with opening up my emotions, and to be able to heal. I find that the more I open up and share of myself, the better I feel, and my self-worth and self-esteem is greatly improving. I want very much to continue to grow as a Christian and overcome my addiction and compulsive behavior. Sincerely, Reginald Cooper"

Ronnie Randon, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "I just wanted to let you know, or rather bring you up to date, with things with me. At the beginning of 2010, I started on a journey reading the entire Bible. Why? Because I had never read the entire Bible other than what my lessons would take me to and what the chaplain would use for services. It would leave me feeling like something was missing, and it was - the complete word. How could I say I'm "seeking God" without having read His word from Genesis to Revelation? Having done so has opened my eyes, heart to continue to seek more. God bless! Ronnie Randon"

Ernie Quillin, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility/Corcoran State Prison, Corcoran, CA - "I've been in prison for 30 years, and have been in AA for a lot of those years, but I have never really done the Steps. This is the first time I've actually done them. This Step 4 has really put me through the emotions: I've been sad, happy, and very angry, as I've dug up all the things I can remember about my childhood. I hope I can now forget them and go on with my life. I want to thank you for making this possible. Here is a book of stamps to help with the costs of postage. May God bless you both. Respectfully, Ernie"

Tony Saffold, Folsom State Prison, Represa, CA - "Well, this is just a short note to say thank you for your letter of support. It was great. Most of all I want to let you know I won't let you all down once I am paroled. I don't know when I'll be paroled, but I do know once God is

ready for me to come home, I'll be home. I put my faith in God, not the Board of Parole Hearings. We (I speak for all of us) really do appreciate all that you all do for us. It's nice to know that someone out there cares for us! We really can change with God's help, all things are possible. Thank you! Sincerely yours, Tony"

Joe Vialpando, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "My name is Joe, and I'm a lifer here at CSP Solano. I'm 40 years old, and have been in prison since 1991. I've been clean and sober since 2006, but prior to that my life was still filled with lots of hurt, sorrow, and shame. I've taken different self-help groups to help me peel back the layers of shame, anger and resentment from my past, but I'm still unsure exactly how I should do it, or if I'm doing it right. That was until my friend Quan told me about your program and showed me your in-depth Step 4 questionnaire. Not even my Celebrate Recovery 12-Step group or even Pathway to Sobriety, which I am currently enrolled in, are as in-depth as yours. I would like to take this course of yours if at all possible. Also, my bunkie, Randy Haro, speaks highly of you. I look forward to hearing from you. Until then may the Lord abide with you forever. Oh yeah, if you don't mind me asking, how did the two of you acquire such knowledge where recovery is concerned? Respectfully, Joe Vialpando"

Robert Gould, California Medical Facility State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "I would like to share with you something from my parole hearing, and that is the fact that one of the commissioners was very pleased with my participation in :Love Lifted Me Recovery"! She even went so far as to say, "I really love the work that Tom and Dottie are doing." We talked about my 12-Step course, and how you offered a phone sponsorship 24/7!!! I am extremely thankful for your faith, your ministry, your hearts, your support - everything you do and are! Also, I have made a recommendation to a really good guy, Sean. He really needs to understand the healing power of the Steps, the process of what it means to make amends in his own heart, as well as to others. I gave him your address because I truly believe he will work hard. May the good Lord continue to bless us! Great big hugs with love and respect."

Edmundo Escobar, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "I received the certificate for the 12-Step program, and I want to express my gratitude to you both for the time and Christian support you gave to me with love. You both don't know how this 12-Step program has helped me, when I was blind about all this. I can never repay you both for that. In 2013 I will have a parole hearing. I would truly appreciate it if you would write a support letter on my behalf to the Parole Commissioner Board, where you explain that I completed the 12-Step program by correspondence. God bless you!"