

# Ministry Update - 3rd Quarter, 2011

## Twelve Step Program

Our weekly 12-Step recovery meetings continue to bring healing and restoration to the lives of anyone who is diligent in applying God's principles to their lives. In July, August, and September, we studied and worked on Steps 7, 8 and 9, which are: Step 7 - "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings", Step 8 - "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all", and Step 9 - "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others". In some respects, we may work on these steps all our lives, but we try to remove as much "baggage" from our lives as we can for the present. These "Steps" as they are called, are really just biblical principles, and they are necessary for every Christian, not just those with problems of addiction. Every Christian MUST remove the weights and baggage from the past that tend to drag them down and make them less effective in serving the Lord Jesus. None of us can afford to let anger, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, or any "little sins" that we might call "shortcomings" crowd out the Holy Spirit and keep Him from working in our lives.

**Hebrews 12:1-2 "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every WEIGHT, and the SIN which so easily ENSNARES us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher (He's the Finish Line in the race!) of our faith....."**

**II Timothy 2:20-21 "But in a great house there are vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone CLEANSSES HIMSELF from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, SANCTIFIED and USEFUL for the Master, prepared for every good work."**

### Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

**Saturday, July 9, 2011** - This Saturday's Venice Beach outreach was excellent! Our team consisted of Tom (who stayed home and prayed for us all), me, Billy Counts, John, Catharine, and Daniel, and Frank, Brian, Jamison, Ararat and Bob from the Bible Tabernacle's witnessing team. We had made 114 lunches on Friday night, and we had donations of clothing, toiletries, and socks from Sunrise Westside Church in Venice and Church of the Canyons in Canyon Country. Daniel brought a huge bag of clothing and blankets, and he found homeless people who really needed those items. Sonny and Jill had no shelter at all, and were very thankful to get a comforter, along with the lunches and toiletries. Catharine, Daniel and John prayed with them for shelter, food, and a job. There was a huge group camped out on the grass, including Clifford, Hannah, Dino and Ralph, who also needed clothing and blankets, and they were all very grateful to receive the lunches and other items. Other homeless people that were prayed for were Kimberly, who is manic-depressive, Casey and Ray, and Frederick. We found out that Joe, who had prayed with Catharine and Daniel a few months ago to receive Christ, had recently died of a heart attack. Praise the Lord, he is safe with Jesus now! Frank and the guys from the Bible Tabernacle saw a couple of guys who used to live at the BT, but left (some people just like being "free spirits" out on the street - go figure!). Bob saw an old friend, Harry, and gave him the last lunch he had left. Brian gave out three New Testaments, and their group also had some donated T-shirts and underwear, which were a big hit. Billy and I started up at Rose Ave., and we gave out over 45 lunches between us, as there are always a lot of homeless people up at that end of the Boardwalk. We saw one young man, and didn't know if he was homeless, because he was eating something. When I asked him if he needed food, he said that what he'd been eating was out of a trash can, and he was very happy to take a lunch from us. Later, we gave a lunch to Danny, and he said he'd lost his reading glasses. Billy offered him his own glasses, but Danny said they were too strong, and he couldn't use them. We gave out several hundred gospel tracts, and the times that blessed me the most were when children and teenagers took the tracts. One young boy of about ten was

riding a bike alongside his mother. When I offered him a tract, at first his mother said, "No, thank you." But the boy wanted to take it, and she changed her mind. Praise Jesus!

**Saturday, August 6, 2011** - We had a great outreach today! Those who came out as laborers in the harvest were: Tom, Dottie, Shami, Catharine, Greg, Billy, Frank, Ararat, Bob, Jonathan and Mitch. We made up 114 lunches this time, and had lots of donations from several churches in the way of used clothing, new socks, underwear and T-shirts, and toiletries. The churches that helped us with donations this time were: Sunrise Westside Community Church in Venice, and Faith Community Church and Church of the Canyons in Canyon Country. Catharine and Shami prayed with two young men named Kevin and Kenny, and they were so thankful to get tooth brushes and toothpaste. Kenny had found an old toothbrush and was going to try to bleach it and use it, he was so desperate, before we gave him a brand new one. Mitch met a man who took a lunch, but he also asked if it were possible to get a cup of coffee, and Mitch bought him a cup of coffee. Bob was praying with one man, and another man, one of the vendors, came up to him afterwards and asked for prayer. Bob was very touched that this man came and asked for prayer, and as I've said before, this is one of the things that Tom prays for our group as we go out - for the Holy Spirit to move people to come to us. Catharine, Shami and Greg prayed for a lot of people, and some of their names are: Arthur, Carlos, Joe, Max, Fran, Veronica and Chad, Carl and Tammy Lynn, and Fernando. Max said he would be flying back home to France soon, but was afraid of flying. Shami shared with him an experience she had, and how the Lord spoke to her regarding fear of flying. She told him God was holding the plane in His hands, and He wouldn't let it crash. After we gave out all the food, clothing and toiletries to the homeless, we continued to give out gospel tracts to the tourists and Saturday beach-goers. Ararat was struck by the openness of the people, and by how many tracts we handed out. We gave out several hundred in English and Spanish, and I gave out two in French, and two in Turkish. One man named Derek came up to me and asked for several different tracts, and said he liked to read them.

**Saturday, September 3, 2011** - We had a great outreach today, with perfect weather - slightly overcast and not too hot. Our team that went out on the Boardwalk was: Dottie, Catharine, Shami, Daniel, Billy, Bob, Frank, Brian, Mitch and Greg. Tom stayed home and prayed for our protection and for the Holy Spirit to work in peoples' hearts to receive the gospel. We had made up 115 lunches, and had socks, toiletries, and some used clothing and shoes that had been donated from different churches. We gave out all the food and other items, and several hundred gospel tracts in English and Spanish. In giving out the food and clothing to the homeless, Daniel said they saw Arthur and Charles, who have been living down at the Boardwalk for a long time. They had prayed for Charles last month when he was in the hospital, and were glad to see him out of the hospital now. The sad thing is when the hospital authorities tried to get him into a convalescent home, he didn't want to go, because he still wants to be able to drink. Sadly, many of the people we see at Venice Beach and the Boardwalk are there because of their own addictions, and they don't want to go into any kind of shelter or ministry, because they would have to stop drinking or using drugs. Billy, Bob, Frank, Brian, and Mitch, who came out to join us from Canyon Country, tried to tell a lot of people about the Bible Tabernacle, and how they could go there, if they wanted help. We pray that at least some of them will try to find help there. Daniel, Shami, Catharine and Greg prayed for a lot of the homeless people they met, including a big group of men who asked especially for prayer for protection. Brian said he thought people were particularly open to accepting the tracts, and several of the people he prayed for were Mike, Paul and Phil. Mitch saw a young man wearing a blanket to keep warm. He offered him a lunch, and also a shirt and socks, and the young man was extremely grateful. All in all, it was a blessing to be able to help people with their physical needs, but especially their spiritual needs, as we gave them the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Matthew 25:35-36 "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to Me."**

## Prison Ministry

**Mario Giotta, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA** - "I am returning my completed Step 5 lessons. Step 5 has always been one of my favorites, because it is a liberating experience and process. Admitting my wrongs was difficult the first time that I did this Step, but the reward was well worth it. It felt as though a relief valve has been opened and I had a huge weight lifted off of me. I experienced a sense of forgiveness and acceptance. I can't say 'Thank you' enough times to express my gratitude to God that He has placed people like you in my life. God bless. Sincerely, Mario"

**Damon Mullin, Kern Valley State Prison, Delano, CA** - "In all truth, I initially wrote to you in an attempt to fulfill some Parole Board requirements. Now that I've been doing your program, I'm grateful for the course and I relish any opportunity to further my understanding of the word of God and the will of God. Some of your questions in Steps 4 and 5 were strange to me and to my sense of awareness of life. I say that only because I've been incarcerated my entire adult life. I've seen and have experienced in a myriad of ways the futility of ignorance and poverty, whether it be of spirit or in the material world. I have no excuse for my station in life. I don't come from a broken home - I was loved and taught right from wrong, yet I chose the path that results in failure. I've come to know that my will at the time was stronger than my intelligence, and that it's only by the grace of God that I'm able to see this and to be blessed to be alive. I know "All things work together for the good of those who love God." It's only been five or six years since I made the decision to immerse myself in the word of God, and to broaden my understanding of it. Thank you for taking the time to send me the letters and lessons - they are very much appreciated. May the Lord bless you both and bring to fruition all your endeavors in life and ministry. Sincerely, Damon"

**Marcus Suarez, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA** - "Greetings in the mighty and wonderful name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior! I would like to first and foremost tell you how much I highly appreciate everything you both are doing. Please keep doing God's work, and thank you again for everything, it is very encouraging to my soul. God bless you both. Your brother in Christ, Marcus"

**Marlene Miller, Valley State Prison for Women, Chowchilla, CA** - "Just wanted to send a quick note. Thank you so much for all you do. The Bible studies and help you offer to people in prison is wonderful. I have learned a lot. I always look forward to receiving your studies, and these lessons have been helping me a great deal. I'm preparing to go before the Parole Board. I was very nervous a few months ago, but I know God will be right there with me to see me through. I am putting Him in the driver's seat and allowing Him to drive this vehicle. I will let you know what happens at my hearing. Please say a prayer for me at that time. Love, Marlene"

**Karen Culuko, Valley State Prison for Women, Chowchilla, CA** - "God bless you both for who you are and what you do. I am so pleased to be a part of this 12-Step Bible study. I'm a 35-year-old who is doing a life sentence in Valley State Prison for Women, and I've been down fifteen years and eight months. I have a big problem with forgiveness. I don't even know where to begin to forgive myself, let alone my co-defendant. I'm tired of holding onto the hatred and unforgiveness. If there is anything you can do to help me find where to begin, I would truly appreciate it. Hope to hear from you soon. God bless, Karen"

**Thomas R. Cannon, R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility, San Diego** - "Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I received the Serenity book, the 12-Step/Bible study, the Noah and the Flood Bible study, "Dealing with Anger" and the most heart-felt letter that I think I've ever received. Your story about your every day life and how you still find the energy to reach out to people like myself is much appreciated. I thank you both, and know that you are in my prayers. I especially like what you do for the homeless on the beach. I was once a homeless person living in the bushes, and had to depend on special people like yourselves to feed me sometimes. I would like to help you out one day, if I am released from prison. I have about a year left now. It would be to return the blessing you have bestowed

upon me. I'm very grateful - thank you. I'm looking forward to your next letter and lessons. Your brother in Christ, Tom C."

**Dave Basile, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CA** - "In your newsletters, I enjoy hearing about the Venice Beach outreach, as well as the testimonies of my incarcerated brothers and sisters. If at all possible, I would like my testimony published as well. It is as follows: I was introduced to "Love Lifted Me Recovery Ministries" in 2000. My once miserable life has been renewed by my faith in Jesus Christ. Having abandonment issues to deal with made trust an important issue as well. Through your knowledge of the Lord's word and your never ending commitment in your belief, compassion and ministry, I have made the turn in my life to live according to God's word. But most importantly, through the last eleven years, you both have been like family members. Your 12-Step program and numerous Bible studies have kept me grounded in my faith and focused on giving all that I can back to the community of which I had victimized for some many years. You have lifted me up with your love. I hope what you have done for me can be shared with others. As you must know, I am very grateful for all you have done. I am now the secretary/treasurer of the Vietnam Veterans group. I'm very busy, but enjoying the challenge. I would never have been voted in if I carried myself the way I did ten years ago. Again, thanks to God for His word and allowing me to walk the path of the faithful. I love you both very much. Love, David"

**LeRoy Walker, Calif. Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA** - "I can't tell you the excitement I felt when I received your mail Friday. I had believed I would receive the "Serenity" Bible. This alone would have been a great fit, however I was completely jumping with joy when I received the Bible-based 12-Step materials. I'm in a substance abuse program currently, and it is awesome, but my heart knows the whole truth, and that is my issues, addictive behaviors, low self-esteem, fear, bitterness, compulsive desires and the deep emotional pain is something that I must work on with my Creator. So, I look very much forward to working with your ministry over the next several months. With love in Christ, LeRoy Walker"

**Joshua Price-Mahdi, Mule Creek State Prison, Ione, CA** - "I want to thank you for all the wonderful work you both are doing. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of your program. I am a "Lifer" prisoner who is up for parole this October. My father's health is very bad, but he's trying to hold on until I am able to make parole. With the Lord's grace, I hope and pray it happens. My family has been waiting fifteen years for this moment. Your friend in the Spirit, Joshua"