

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - October, 2013
Newsletter for July, August, September, 2013
Pastors/Chaplains Tom & Dottie Hooper
LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

STEPS 8 & 9 - Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

I know some of us have been on an emotional roller coaster since we started, and it has not been easy. But think for a minute, and only a minute, just how insecure you felt the first time you attended a meeting - the fear, the shame, the feeling of isolation and aloneness, the pain. Now think how you feel today in the group. Ninety-nine percent of us feel much safer, hopeful, confident and blessed. These are all signs of growth - praise God! Yes, and praise God we must - all the time! I know all too well that some of us have had to go through some real valleys during these steps, but be assured, if you know Jesus as Savior and Lord, you did not take one step alone. He has promised to take each step with you (Psalm 91:15). I know that reconciling with God has been tough, but I also know that doing the 9th Step and making amends to other human beings is even harder. Why, you might ask? Why is it harder to face a mortal sinner, whether saved or not, and be honest and forgiving, than to go to a sinless God who knows all about it anyway? God does not want any of His children to carry the burden of a fallen world on his or her shoulders. That is why He says for us to “cast all our burdens on Him” (Psalm 55:7, I Peter 5:7) and exchange our heavy burden for His light burden, and He will give us rest (Matt. 11:28-30). If we will but take His yoke upon ourselves, the weight will be light as we team up with Him.

In His love and victory, Pastor Tom

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, July 6, 2013 - What a blessed day! We had Tom, Dottie, Shami, Bob, Frank, Brian, Mitch, Brendan, Glen, and Ararat to make up our team. We had 121 lunches, as I had made up one extra, and kept it in my bag for that “last person” we always seem to run into who missed out on our giving out the lunches when we first get there. I even prayed about it, and the Lord gave us a man just as we were returning to the car, and I asked him if he had gotten one when we had passed them out before, and he said, “No.” He was so happy to get our last lunch. Everyone we met was very grateful for the lunches, toiletries/hygiene items, and socks we had this time. We saw a lot of the homeless people reading the tracts that came in their lunches, too. Brian saw someone digging in the trash, and he was able to offer that man a lunch. There was a man named Jim who had sores on his feet, and he was so thankful to get a pair of socks. We don’t usually offer lunches to the vendors who set up their tables to sell things on the Boardwalk, but this time, Bob and I had quite a few of them asking for lunches, and several of them said they were homeless, too. They’re just trying to sell a few handmade things to make a little money. Three of the psychics, at different times, asked Bob and me for a lunch, so we told them it was being given in the name of Jesus. One man said he was a Christian, but we told him the Bible forbids our doing any kind of divination or fortune-telling. Obviously, he doesn’t read his Bible much. I felt convicted to pray for one of the women who asked for a lunch and was doing fortune-telling. Bob and I walked along until we found a spot, and we stopped and prayed that she would not have any clients, and that she would read the gospel tract in her lunch, and the Lord would draw her to Jesus, instead of the

false gods she was serving. We all gave out gospel tracts during and after the handing out of the food and other stuff to the homeless. Lots of English tracts, some Spanish, and one in Russian this time. The man who took the Russian tract refused the one I offered in English, but as usually happens, when you give people something in their “heart language” it opens doors. I also impressed him with saying, “Hell, how are you?” in Russian, and he said my accent was very good. Ha! It’s been over forty years since I took Russian at UCLA. Anyway, at home, Ararat gave a little testimony of what happened to him as he was bending down to give a lunch to someone. His back went out, and he said it was very painful.

Shami immediately laid hands on him, they could both feel heat coming from the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and his back was healed. Brendan then asked her to pray for him for something, and he also felt the heat. Praise the Lord! We were happy to welcome Glen as a newcomer this time. He came with the group from Canyon Country, and he told us he recently got out of prison. Amazingly enough, not one of our guys, but he just “happened” to have a cell mate who had been at the BT once, and recommended it. All in all, we had a great time down at the beach, and peoples’ hearts were quite open to receiving the gospel tracts.

Saturday, August 3, 2013 - We had most of our usual “laborers to go out into the harvest”: Tom, Dottie, Angela, Daniel, Catharine, Brian, Frank, Ararat, Brendan and Mitch. Shami couldn’t be with us, because she and her family were on an evangelistic trip to the Fiji Islands. Praise the Lord! We had an evangelistic mini-trip to Venice Beach! In other words, we did full scale evangelism, but the trip was only a few blocks away. We encountered people of all walks of life and nationalities. Although we only gave out tracts in English and Spanish this time, we still gave out several hundred, and the Holy Spirit will be working on their hearts to bring many people to salvation through Jesus Christ. We also had 121 lunches for the homeless, along with lots of socks and T-shirts, some other clothing items, and little bags of toiletries/hygiene items. The homeless people we encountered were all very thankful to receive the food and other items. One man immediately put on his new pair of socks, and said, “They feel so good! I haven’t had socks in a long time.” Daniel and Catharine prayed for a lot of the homeless people to whom they ministered, including Ricky, Frankie, “King David”, Arthur, and Steve. Ararat and his group prayed for a man named Lee, and many others. Ararat said he saw a group of six men, and two of them were in wheelchairs. He gave them lunches, and they were all very grateful. Mitch went down the alley and saw a guy sniffing at something to see if it was okay to eat. He gave him a lunch, and said, “I guess the Lord didn’t want you to eat that other stuff.” Angela offered a gospel tract to a lady who asked, “What is it?” Angela said it was a book about Jesus, and the lady said, “Ooooh!” and she took it. Angela also talked to Edgar, who said he had come to Christ while in prison, and he asked if she could give him some of the tracts to hand out, too. He said his entire family had now come to Christ through the change in his life. Also, Ararat tried to give a tract to a lady who was working on a sand sculpture. She refused the tract, but he started talking to her, and asking her about the sculpture. After talking to her for a few minutes, she finally did accept a tract.

Oh, yes! In the evening, a horrible event happened down at the Venice Boardwalk, right in the same area where we had been in the morning for our outreach. Some crazy person drove his car deliberately down the Boardwalk, which is for foot traffic only, and killed one person and injured many more. Praise the Lord, it was not while we were down there, but I feel bad for the people who were hurt.

That place becomes dangerous later in the day and evening, for many reasons, as the devil is out on the prowl, but that’s one reason we do our beach outreach early in the morning. Anyway, we had several people calling to see if we were okay, because they weren’t sure when this incident had happened. It wasn’t until later that I realized there were extra demons around the Venice Boardwalk that day, because the Hare Krishnas were getting ready to have their parade (“Festival of the Chariots” they call it) on Sunday. That would be bringing a ton of extra demons to the Boardwalk, which is already a very spiritually dark place.

Saturday, September 7, 2013 - We had Tom, Dottie, Shami, Catharine, Bob, Keith, Frank, Brian, Ararat, Mitch, Robert, Manny and Brendan. We were in the middle of a hot spell, but managed to get out on the Boardwalk and distribute 121 lunches, lots of socks, toiletries, a few jackets and other items of clothing, and the word of God to the homeless community at Venice Beach. We also handed out gospel tracts to the tourists and others just down there for a Saturday morning outing. Bob and Keith came with me, and we parked at the parking lot up at Rose Ave. and immediately gave out lots of lunches to a group of homeless people at the picnic tables there. As we worked our way down the Boardwalk, we continued to give out lunches (each lunch contains a gospel tract), toiletries/hygiene items, and socks to the homeless people we met, and everyone was very grateful. We also passed out several hundred gospel tracts in English and Spanish. Shami prayed with a homeless woman named Danielle, who was on the beach. She received a lunch, socks and toiletries, and then Shami asked her if she would like them to pray for her. She asked for prayer for her bad sunburn, and was very touched that Catharine and Shami cared enough to come down there and minister to her. They also gave her a hat and some clothing, and the clothes were just the right size. Catharine and Shami also prayed for Allen, Arthur, and Heather, who asked for prayer for her boyfriend. Ararat and his group also prayed for Heather, and she told them her boyfriend's name was "Outlaw", and that he'd been hit by a car. Bob talked to a young homeless man named Michael, and gave him information on how to get to the Bible Tabernacle. Brendan gave out three Bibles to people who asked for them, including one man who said, "I remember you - you told me last time that you would bring me a Bible." We had a great time giving out the precious gospel of Jesus Christ, but Brian also had a somewhat hilarious moment with one homeless man. This man was wearing only a towel, and was periodically "flashing" his naked body to the public. Brian had one pair of new underwear, and offered them to the man. He took them and stopped "flashing" people. We always run into a few "crazies" down at the Boardwalk, but we don't let them hinder us from our main purpose of giving out the gospel to whomever will receive it from us.

Prison Ministry

We want to congratulate Anthony Anderson at CSP Solano for completing our 12-Step program for the third time, and for starting it for the fourth time! Wow! We've never had anyone doing the 12-Steps correspondence course for a fourth time. In our meetings here in Venice, we've had a few people who went through the entire 12-Steps three or four times, and people who came to meetings regularly for almost ten years, but no one doing the correspondence course has done it that many times. You can always learn something new from God's word, no matter how many times you read or study it. We included this announcement in one of our letters to the prisoners, and it sparked a lot of response. Many told us they now want to do the 12-Step program again, and that they didn't know they could do it more than once. Praise the Lord! Here are some comments from letters from some of our prisoners. We wish we could also share the beautiful artwork, drawings, cards and paintings, that many have sent us. These are all outpourings of their gratitude to the Lord for this ministry, and we couldn't do what we do without those who support us through prayer and finances. Thank you all!

Raymond Martinez, Mule Creek State Prison, Ione, CA - "Thank you again for the wonderful lesson of which I am gleaning so much, and for the Bible studies which remind me of God's grace daily. Also, for the personal photo of you both - it's nice to put faces to my brother and sister in Christ whom I owe so much gratitude towards. Thank you for your sacrifice of time, effort and money to help us in prison. God is glorified in all your good works in His name. I enjoy reading your long letters about your daily and weekly responsibilities and just the things that go on. I love hearing of all the lives that are touched and affected by your evangelistic efforts: passing out the tracts, lunches and toiletries. I think you guys are some awesome children of God, obeying God in visiting those in prison through your correspondence ministry, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, serving God! I showed the photos you sent of your

outreach to an unsaved person, and it caused her to cry. This lady has a big heart and does a lot of good towards the men who are considered less than others, but she saw the love of God demonstrated in these photos. Your brother in Christ, Raymond”

Mary Elizabeth Campbell, Calif. Institution for Women, Corona, CA - “I’m returning Step 2, and sorry it took so long. I will be more timely next time. I’ve been busy here, and I just got a new dog to train named Jackson. He’s a 5-year-old Labrador/Husky mix. Thank you both. Sincerely, Mary E. Campbell” (we wrote and asked her to send more information about the dog-training program they have there)

Lisa O’Connor, Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla, CA - “Thank you for helping me and praying with me to make it through my sobriety. This is a long journey, but I know that through God I’m going to make it. I’m glad I’m doing your 12-Step program to give me the tools I need to continue staying sober. By the grace of God and your program, I know I’m going to learn how to stay sober. I read in your letter that you have Bible studies, too. I’d love to learn more about my Father and be able to grow in my walk with the Lord. I will keep your ministry in my prayers. Love, your sister, Lisa”

Monique Lucero, Folsom Women’s Facility, Folsom, CA - “I just got your Bible study today, so I’m doing it and sending it right back. Thank you for both of your testimonies - it helps me a lot. But Tom’s testimony got me thinking of my kids’ dad, Cesar. We’ve been together for ten years, and I love him so much, but his thing was heroin for so many years. He is in Lancaster Prison now, and he is trying to look for God, but he just doesn’t know how to ask for help. Please write to him and send him your materials, it will really help! Love, Monique” (we did send him materials and an invitation to do our 12-Step program)

Jason Guinn, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - “Thank you for taking the time out of your lives to share the Word of God through your 12-Step ministry. There are many of us who are incarcerated that need to have this material and interaction with someone outside of these walls. Reading your letters about what goes on in your daily lives is a great reminder to me that there is some normalcy in the world, and keeps me from becoming cynical about being stuck in the cycle of prison life. Just the fact that you have taken the time to share what is going on out there in the free world, in your lives, means a lot to me. So, thank you! Your address was given to me by someone who was referred to you by their attorney who is representing them at the Parole Board hearing. Since then, I have heard several other guys talking about Love Lifted Me Recovery and how they are going to write and ask to participate in your program. The fact that we see people care about us enough to take the time to do what you do helps us put our best human foot forward in our own daily lives. At least it does for me. I know all the guys appreciate your efforts. God bless you and keep you safe..... Jason”

Eric Dodson, Valley State Prison, Chowchilla, CA - “I’m always extremely blessed when I hear from you. I now make it a point to surround myself with fellow believers and those who want to improve their lives with the help of Jesus. I enjoy doing the Step studies you send me. I’ve tried others, but don’t have the same good feeling that I get from working with you both! Thank you so much for your continued support and love! God bless you. Love, Eric”

Charles Williams, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - “You all are God sent. Thank you so much for answering the call of God upon your lives, and know that men are being changed behind these walls, and you’re increasing the kingdom of God. I’m really enjoying my Bible studies, and they are causing me to reflect on how out of control my life was, and how God had to get my attention and break me of my pride. God, who is rich in mercy and grace, has a plan for me. The Christian walk isn’t easy,

but I'm learning to depend on God for everything. Love you much, Brother Charles Williams”