

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” Ministry Update - October, 2014
Pastor Tom & Dottie Hooper
Newsletter Covering July, August, September, 2014

Twelve Step Program

Love Lifted Me Recovery Ministries exists that men and women will reach their full potential in Christ Jesus by studying and putting into practice the principles set forth in the Bible, God's word (II Timothy 2:15). Our goal is to put into practice a loving Father's guidelines for a complete and joyful life, as set forth in His word, the Bible. We must expose our individual problems and face them, and repent of the sin they may have caused, so we as a people may be productive and equipped to share the healing and forgiving truths that God has provided for us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We believe the Bible is God's word, inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20-21). We enlist the "12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous" because we believe they work, and because the originators first trusted in Jesus Christ as their Higher Power. We believe these steps were given to mankind that we may heal and aid in the healing of others. This healing is free to all who seek it, but it will take honesty and commitment to defeat the enemy. The word of God will be our text, Jesus Christ our foundation, and the Holy Spirit our motivator, strength and power. We seek to reach out to anyone who is willing to try to better their lives and become better equipped for service to the Lord and our fellow man.

Venice Beach Evangelistic Outreach

Saturday, July 5, 2014 - We had a great group of volunteers to go out on the Venice Boardwalk and beach with us today. Besides Tom and me, we had Catharine, Brendan, Ararat, Frank, David M., David B., and Brian (new guy, not the Brian who usually goes out with us). We had made 135 lunches, and had lots of socks, toiletries, and some other clothing. We found lots of homeless people, although it looked like maybe the police had been there and moved some of them off the Boardwalk (there were lots of police cars down there, maybe because of the Fourth of July holiday crowds from the day before). Anyway, we gave out all the clothing, and "Lone Wolf" was particularly happy to get a T-shirt in a 3X size. We actually had three lunches left over, but we knew we could find someone during the week to give them to, so we didn't worry. Catharine and Brendan went together and prayed for a lot of the homeless people they found, and Arthur, one of their regulars, asked for prayer for healing in his knees. Another man, Todd, asked for prayer for healing in his legs and knees, and Nick needed healing in his feet. Catharine and Brendan also helped a woman named Leah put up a lean-to for shade, as she needed to get out of the hot sun. Dave M. ran into a man he knew from a sober living place where they had lived, but he was back out on the streets. We gave out directions to the Bible Tabernacle to several people and pray that they will follow up and go there. Brian said he used to be homeless, and was seeing things from a different perspective this time. Ararat and I saw a man collecting cans for recycling, and we weren't sure if he was homeless or not. Later, we saw him again, and asked if he needed some food. His face brightened up and he was so thankful to get a lunch. Everyone was very grateful to get the food and other items, but one young girl named Lynn was especially thankful. She was tattooed and pierced and very young, and maybe new to being homeless. After giving out food and clothing to the homeless, we continued to give out gospel tracts to everyone down at the Boardwalk. Two young boys took tracts and asked for more, taking several different ones each. One boy said his favorite one was "Creator or Liar?" (That's the one that has our ministry information on the back, too).

Saturday, August 2, 2014 - Today's outreach was a big success, but it didn't start out that way. We usually start at 8:45, but by 9:00, no one had shown up. This has never happened before, so we prayed that we would get enough people to go on the outreach, and that maybe God had a reason for us going at

a later time. Finally, around 9:15, the van from Canyon Country showed up with a large group of guys, and by 9:30, two more arrived who had to come by bus, and had missed their first bus. The Lord worked it out, and we just left a little later than usual, that's all. We had Tom, me, Frank, Brian, Steve M., Steve B., Ararat, Carlos, Brendan, Vince and Johnabelle. We had 134 lunches, lots of clothes, socks, and toiletries, and some hats. Brendan and David M. took the regular route that Shami and Catharine usually go, because they couldn't be here this time. The rest of the Bible Tabernacle guys from Canyon Country started at Venice Blvd. and went up the Boardwalk, and Vince, Johnabelle and I started up at Rose Ave. Brendan said they prayed for some homeless people, Bruce and Darla, and gave them food, clothing and toiletries. They were so thankful, Bruce even had tears in his eyes. David M. said he saw a man who was fairly well-dressed (later found out his name was "Chicago"), but he was out there with his sleeping bag, homeless, and was very thankful to get some food. A man named Don talked to them about how the world is in such a horrible state, and they gave him food and other things, and agreed with him on the state of the world. Ararat said Kelly and David needed food and everything, and they said someone had set their mattress on fire, and it was no good anymore. Ararat and Carlos prayed for them and for their safety, and also prayed for Eric, and gave him information on how to get to the Bible Tabernacle. They also prayed for Johnny, who was in a wheelchair. Frank saw a man digging in the trash cans, and when he offered him a lunch, the man said, "Oh, thank God!" Then, his friend came up and when he got a lunch, he also said, "Thank God!" Vince saw a very young man sitting off to the side, and he went over to ask him if he needed any food. He was so thankful, he was almost in tears, and said, "We're starving! We haven't had anything to eat for a few days". I saw a woman pushing her bike, and it was loaded up with all her stuff. We came up to her and offered her a lunch, toiletries and socks, and she was very thankful. Her name was Dina, and she also took a small New Testament. After giving out all the food and clothing to the homeless, we all continued up and down the boardwalk handing out gospel tracts. We gave out several hundred in English, a few in Spanish, and one in Thai. All in all, it was a good day, and the Lord worked it all out for the best.

Saturday, September 6, 2014 - Our outreach team consisted of Tom, me, Shami, Catharine, Keith, Frank, Mitch, Brendan, David M., Justin, and Charles Turner and his wife, Vicki. We had 136 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, and two big bags of miscellaneous clothing. Included in the clothing were several pairs of men's boxer shorts, and they were a big hit. Starting next month, when the weather will be getting cooler, we will have knit hats, long-sleeved sweatshirts, and blankets to give out, also. These have all been donated by various people at our church, the Bible Tabernacle, or from other individuals. Catharine, Brendan and Shami had one small blanket, and they gave it to Arthur, who said his blanket had recently been stolen. Catharine, Brendan and Shami prayed with a lot of the homeless people they met, including many who remember them from previous times. Monica and her boyfriend, Tito, had asked them to pray for their dog Shady, who had cancer, a few months ago. They said the dog is healed and there is no sign of cancer now. Praise the Lord! They also prayed with a lady named Emilie, who said her identity had been stolen, and she asked for prayer to get that cleared up. When Catharine, Brendan and Shami finished praying for Emilie, a man named "Sidewinder" joined in and continued praying for her. Brendan prayed with Gabriel, who said he was getting a ticket from the St. Joseph's Center to go back home, and they prayed for a safe trip. "Lone Wolf" asked for prayer for everyone's safety down at the beach. Mitch and Charles met a man named Eddy, who wanted to argue with them, and said he was an atheist. Later, when they passed him again, he apologized and said he was really just a backslidden Christian. Vicki, Keith and I covered the "upper" portion of the Venice Boardwalk, and Vicki was a real powerhouse for passing out the gospel tracts. She said it was the answer to her prayers for something to do for the Lord. I enjoyed giving out tracts to some kids at an arcade, and they each took several different ones. On our way back to the car, a young man called out, "Thank you for the lunch!" I went over to talk to him, and he is a Believer, and I gave him some tracts to give to others. Another shirtless and barefoot young man was very grateful to get a lunch, but turned down the socks, saying, "I don't do socks." I asked him, "Do you do soap and shampoo?" and he said, "Yes", and took a little bag of toiletries.

Prison Ministry

The total number of inmates doing our 12-Step program and Bible studies is around 350-400. The women's prisons are: Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, Rainbow Conservation Camp in Fallbrook, CA, and California Institution for Women in Corona. The men's prisons are: San Quentin, Soledad State Prison, Salinas Valley State Prison, Avenal State Prison, Solano State Prison, California Medical Facility State Prison in Vacaville, CA, California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi, Calif. Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, Kern Valley State Prison, Chuckawalla Valley and Ironwood State Prisons in Blythe, CA, High Desert State Prison in Susanville, L.A. County State Prison in Lancaster, Mule Creek State Prison in Lone, Centinela State Prison in Imperial, Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, Oak Glen Conservation Camp in Yucaipa, Chino State Prison, Calipatria State Prison, RJ Donovan State Prison in San Diego, DVI in Tracy, CA, two prisons in Corcoran, Calif., Folsom State Prison in Represa, CA, Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, and Sierra Conservation Center in Jamestown, CA. We have men in two new prisons, which are: Calif. Health Care Facility in Stockton, CA, and CAC in California City, CA. We also have a few inmates scattered across the country in Federal prisons.

Not only are Christian inmates signing up to do our program, but we've had more non-Christians than ever before asking if they could do our 12-Step program. Several have already come to faith in Jesus Christ through the program (including one who said he was a Muslim when he started the program), and we're praying for the others to come to know Him, also. This first testimony below is from a man who at first didn't even want to do our program when he found out it was a Christian program. Then, he changed his mind, but he stated quite clearly in his first few lessons that he did not believe in Jesus as his Savior. Now, he has come to faith in Jesus Christ - praise the Lord!

Terry Lester, Calif. Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, CA - "I write today with a thankful heart for all things - even for prison. It may sound ridiculous, but it's true for me because God helped me to find a new heart in here. Several days ago someone asked me, "Where do you think you would be if you hadn't come to prison?" My immediate answer was, "Dead, because Satan had me on the doorstep of death, and there was nothing of myself I could've done to break that hold." Thankfully, because of God's grace, nothing is required other than to believe and turn away from our sinful lifestyles. I finally came to believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, that He died for our sins, and that there's no other way to the Father except through the Son. Love, Terry"

Darell Flowers, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CA - "Working these Steps from a Christian perspective has really helped me a lot. I attended AA and NA for many years, but I could never get too deep because of their understanding of God as just a Higher Power. I don't address God as a Higher Power, because I know who He is, Jesus Christ. Amen. I have a lot of pain and hurt that I still deal with through my childhood experiences, but God is slowly working things out for me. Accepting Jesus Christ in my life has been the best thing that ever happened to me. I have been a Christian since May, 2006, but it hasn't been an easy journey because the devil has really been at me, but by the grace of God I have been holding on. Amen. God has been working some things out for me, like restoring my relationship with those I hurt the most, my children. I know that God is going to give me another chance to come home. I made many bad choices in my life, and I hurt people who didn't deserve it. I know God has forgiven me for that, but there are still consequences for my actions that I must face, and even through that, God is merciful. Love, your brother in Christ, Darell, aka Brother Obadiah"

John Elmer, R.J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - "It has been real invigorating for me to re-do the 12-Steps with you and Tom now that I am a Christian. When I did them before with a sponsor from AA, I was focused on trying to make sense of what I thought was my life. Now I'm doing them with Christ

in my heart - what a difference! I really like the pictures you sent of your beach outreach. The pictures are so profound for me, because I spent so many years of my life being a taker, and I now am on the flip side of that. Maybe someday I can go with you all and take part in spreading the love. God bless!
Sincere love, John”

Timothy John Velasco, California Medical Facility State Prison in Vacaville, CA - “First of all I want you to know I am asking God to bless you for all the good you do. I am in prison, yet you make me feel special and important. I really enjoy your lengthy letters. I also enjoyed “Knowing Who You are in Christ - Part 2”. I have been in prison almost 24 years, but thanks be to Jesus, I am happy! My secret is I read the Bible every day. My life has changed dramatically since I started doing this. As Christians, we must feed the spirit. If we don't, it is simple, we will starve spiritually. Sincerely, Timothy”

Priscilla Ramirez, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla, Calif. - “I just wanted to write a quick note to thank you for this 12-Step study. At first when I started, I didn't know what I had got myself into, but now for about the last three lessons, I have been enjoying them very much. I just needed a little push. I am reading the Serenity Bible. I like it a lot, since I am a beginner with the Bible. Thank you and God bless you. Priscilla”

Kevin Dykes, R.J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - “I want to thank you guys for really helping me to understand more clear and easy how great God is and His word. I'm reading my Bible every day and I'm now praying for guidance before I start reading. God bless everybody who is helping you do God's work. Feeding the homeless must be a pure joy! I've never experienced a situation like that - helping people just to help them. I would really like to feel what that's like - helping God's children. If it's God's will, I will one day become a helper. May God continue to bless you both and I thank God I have you two to help me learn and grow in Christ. Love, Kevin”

Jason McCoy, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - “I wanted to thank you for all the letters you've written me, the lessons that you've sent, graded and taken the time to comment on and encourage me. At first, I was just taking your lessons to get a certificate for the Parole Board, but I can honestly say that has all changed. Now, I actually look forward to your 12-Step lessons. I'm learning so much and getting so much out of them. I can see why other people I know in here have decided to take your course a second or even a third time, and I'm sure they're able to learn even more about themselves each and every time. I'm also learning a lot about my own faith as I do each lesson. Reading your letters, I often envision myself out with you guys at Venice Beach, passing out food and socks to the needy. Sometimes, something as small as a small meal, a warm pair of socks, and a kind word can have a huge impact, even for someone like myself. Just hearing about it reminds me to be more kind, caring and thoughtful of the people in here around me. Love, Jason”

Terry Harrison, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla, Calif. - “I just finished my Step 4 inventory. This is all emotional and painful, but I will get through this. Each time I bring up this garbage something new comes out. Each time, I feel more free and light and at peace. I forgive them all. I think the hardest part is forgiving myself for all the pain and hurt and misery I've caused everyone else. I honestly need to do this so I can be cleansed and free of all the garbage. I love my Heavenly Father with all my heart, soul, body, mind and strength. He is my everything. You know, since I found my Lord Jesus Christ, I don't feel lonely anymore. I talk to Him all the time. Well, I will close for now. Thank you. Love, your sister in Christ Jesus, Terry”

Jerry Gallo, Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CA - “I just wanted to write and say how much I appreciate how you include a letter with each lesson. For many of the men who do your studies, or studies in general, this is the only mail that they get. To include a letter helps us to see that there is a life out there

beyond these walls. Your writings bring a slice of life to me, and I thank you for taking the effort to do all of this. In His name, Jerry Gallo”