

Ministry Update - 4th Quarter, 2008

Twelve Step Program

Our Twelve Step meetings in Santa Monica and Playa del Rey have been going well, except for a few weeks we had to cancel because of Tom being in the hospital. Some of the meetings were led by one of our members, Tom Taylor, and he did a great job, but Tom was greatly missed. We thank and praise our wonderful Lord that Tom is now back home and getting back in the routine of things, especially his counseling ministry. In fact, the last two weeks of his hospitalization, which was in a convalescent home for physical therapy, Tom even carried on ministry and counseling of people in the convalescent home.

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, October 4, 2008 - It rained in the morning! Alycia takes the bus from downtown L.A., and she called from Culver City asking, "Are we still going out if it's raining?" I had answered the phone, and I said, "Yes! We're going to pray that the rain stops in time for our outreach!" Praise the Lord, He stopped the rain, and we were all so blessed that we went ahead and did the outreach regardless of the weather. Our group this time consisted of Tom, Dottie, Alycia, Angela, Nick, Daniel, Shami, Catherine, and Yvonne. We took three cars to hold all the people and the 90 lunches we had, and we were also blessed by the parking being only \$4.00. It was a few minutes after 9:00, but they hadn't taken down the sign and put up the sign for day rates, so we got in on the night rate. Hallelujah! Alycia was running late, so Tom was waiting for her, and he took her in the truck and dropped her off at the Boardwalk, and she met up with part of our group right away. Daniel, Nick and Catherine were going down the alleys, looking for homeless people who might have been trying to find shelter from the rain, while the rest of us were going down the center of the Boardwalk. Daniel said some people said, "Oh! We've heard about you guys!" and "We were hoping you'd come today!" We were amazed to see how many homeless people were out there despite the rain, and as it cleared up, the usual amount of tourists and Saturday saunterers were there for us to give tracts to, also. We gave out all 90 lunches, plus two blankets, some socks, and lots of toiletry items. Alycia had bought two cases of bottled water, and all but two bottles of that was given away to the homeless, as well as the food in the lunch bags. The first group we found was huddled under a beach umbrella, but they were definitely homeless (they just weren't umbrella-less), and they were so grateful to receive the food and blankets. One man named Anton asked for prayer. I asked if it was prayer for anything specific, but he said he just needed prayer. I put my hand on his shoulder and prayed for him for several minutes in the name of Jesus, and all of his friends heard what I prayed. While we were giving out lunches to another large group of homeless people, one lady called to Angela and wanted her to come closer. She said, "I like your face! You have such a good face," and Angela said, "It must be the Holy Spirit." Then, Angela followed some footprints in the sand all the way out on the beach, and caught up with one homeless man. When she offered him a lunch, he was so amazed that anyone cared enough about him to come after him. He said, "Thank you! You just made my whole day!" Nick took off and found a little park on the next street over from the alleys, and he gave lunches to a few men there, and they were extremely grateful and thankful, even though they smelled like a brewery. We gave a lunch to one man who had no shoes, and he was so hungry, he was ripping open the bag before we could even get to the next person. Catherine and some others were giving out pens that were donated by her friend Nancy, and each pen had the words "God is good! Jesus is Lord! Have a great day!" on them. Some of the homeless took pens, but Catherine also wrapped tracts around the pens and handed them to people that way. Daniel went up to one woman to offer her a lunch and some soap, and she hugged and kissed him! She was so happy to receive what he had to give. Even one young man who claimed to be a Satanist was happy to receive a lunch. There is a gospel tract inside each lunch bag, so we pray that he'll read the message of freedom in Christ, and will receive the One who can "Deliver him from the power of darkness and translate him into the kingdom of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ." We ran out of lunches halfway up the Boardwalk, and were looking for the part of our group that had gone down the alleyways, hoping they would still

have some. As we kept walking, we saw many people already eating our lunches, so we knew they were up ahead of us somewhere. We finally met up with them, and took the last few lunches back to a group where a few people hadn't gotten one, because we had run out. We talked to a man named Derrick, who said he had blacked out from drinking the night before, and someone stole all his worldly belongings. He was devastated, and said he knew he needed to get help and to stop drinking. We gave him information about the Bible Tabernacle, which was not too far away for him to walk to, and pray that he will go there for help and a place to live. We told him he will need to make a six-month commitment, but if he's really and truly tired of this way of life, that's where he can get help. The ones who want to still have their "freedom" and continue to drink or use drugs (although we know it isn't freedom, it's bondage), won't go to a shelter or a place like the Bible Tabernacle, because they would have to obey the rules, and they couldn't keep doing their addiction. We pray that Derrick is truly one of the ones who wants to quit and will get help from our Lord at the Bible Tabernacle.

Saturday, November 1, 2008 - It was raining again, and maybe that was why we had fewer people show up, but also some of our regulars were out of town. We had Tom, me, Shami and John, and we took as many lunches as we could carry, but weren't able to take them all down to the Boardwalk. We still had quite a few left in the car afterwards, so we stopped by the Venice Public Library, and gave some out to the homeless people camped out in the park there. John had a great experience down at the Boardwalk, as he went up the alleys looking for homeless people. He lost track of where he was, and went up much farther than we usually go, and found a group of people at a park up there. He was able to talk with these men, and one of them asked John to pray for him. Shami and I ran out of lunches before we got to Rose Ave., and John still had lunches and was able to give them to the people we missed on his way back down. Because of the forecast of rain, and very cloudy skies, there weren't as many people there as usual, and even a lot of the shops hadn't opened up yet. By the time we left, around 11:30, the sun had come out and there were more people. We still handed out several hundred gospel tracts, and between the Boardwalk and the library, gave out all but six or eight of the 90 lunches. John took four of those to give to some homeless people he ministers to that live under the freeway overpass. Tom and I will look for homeless people as we drive around town during the month, and give out the rest of the lunches. We were blessed to go out and give out the word of God, even though there were fewer people. We had prayed before and during the outreach that the Lord would bring the ones He wanted to be there, and that they would receive the word of God, and the Holy Spirit would give them understanding of the message. God has promised that His word will not return void, and that it will accomplish the purpose which He has planned for it, and we trust that we were able to reach those certain people that the Lord wanted us to reach this day. It's all in His hands, anyway. We are just the earthen vessels (clay pots) that God uses to give out His word, God the Father must draw them to Jesus, and the Holy Spirit does the rest of the work on peoples' hearts, convicting them of their need for the Savior. Praise His holy name!

Saturday, December 6, 2008 - Today, the weather was absolutely beautiful! Sunny, clear skies, with just a hint of Fall crispness in the air. Our team consisted of Tom, me, Alycia, Yvonne, Daniel, Youbert, Vince and Johnabelle, Catharine, Amelia, Angela, Shami and John. Lots of people were out on the Boardwalk, and this was one of the best outreaches we've ever had. Alycia even said, "I had more fun this time than at any of the other outreaches. This was the best one ever!" We had the usual 90 lunches, but much more in the way of socks, shirts, sweatshirts, sweat pants, toiletry items, razors, and one blanket (many of these items were donated by people at our church). Alycia also brought several cases of bottled water, and they were a hit also. She said that some people would not take a lunch, but they would take a bottle of water, and that opened the way to give them a tract, as well. We tried something new this time, and like the way it worked out. Some of us went up to the top end of the Boardwalk, up at Rose Ave., and started from there. Others went along the beach, starting down at Venice Blvd. Angela, Yvonne and I started at Rose Ave., and we ran out of lunches pretty soon, because there are a lot of groups of homeless up near Rose. By starting up there, though, we had lunches to give them, whereas we many times would run out by the time we reached Rose Ave. One young man said he hadn't had any food in three days, and another woman, when we asked if they needed food, expressed her need by saying, "Oh, oh, oh! Yes, food, please!" Vince saw a young man, not badly dressed, who asked for a water only. Vince

asked him if he needed any food, and the young man said, "Oh, I found this pizza crust." Vince gave him a lunch bag, and he was very grateful. One man that Daniel, Shami and Catharine found was living out of his car, but was down on the Boardwalk. After they gave him a lunch, he was so thankful, he went back to his car and gave them a painting he had painted, and said it was for our ministry. People were very open to the gospel tracts, and we gave out several hundred in English, 75 to 100 in Spanish, one in Japanese, and several in Chinese. Many young kids were skateboarding, and all we had to do was hold out a tract, and they would grab it as they sped on by. One woman who had a table set out to sell things refused a tract. She had two small children with her, and I offered her the Chick tract "Best Friend", which is for children, and she refused that also, but both of the little boys asked if they could have it. They didn't look old enough to read, but we pray that they will pester their mom enough until she reads it to them. Amelia had a similar experience with a woman who refused a tract, but her son with her said, "Oh! I want one, please," and she let him take it. He was old enough to read it himself. "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 19:14).

Prison Ministry

Shane Doyle, Calipatria State Prison - "Happy New Years to you both! I thank you for your Christmas card you sent to me. I also received your letter, and first of all I'd like to wish Tom the very best and pray he gets better soon. Also, that god gives you, Dottie, the strength to do everything you need to do. I just wanted to write you and Tom to let you know I appreciate all you do for me and so many other people. You guys are way cool and awesome! Thank you, and may God bless you greatly. Yours in Christ, Shane"

James Harmon, Pelican Bay State Prison - "I thought I would share with you what happened after you last wrote to me. Yesterday morning, my neighbor asked me if gambling was a sin, and where it says it in the Bible. I wasn't really able to give him a good answer. I was reading your letter last night with the rest of the papers you sent me on top of my locker, when my neighbor walked by and said, "Oh! The answer to my question!" It was right in front of me on a page I hadn't read yet, and it was your Question & Answer paper called "Is Gambling a Sin?" I keep your ministry in my prayers. Thank you for everything and God bless you. Love, your brother in Christ, James"

Ricquel Welch, CCWF, Chowchilla - "Hello! Just a note to say I enjoyed the reality check in this Step (Steps 6 & 7). These are issues that I've been too prideful to look at, and now I see that I need a lot of help in this area. Thanks for all the support you give. In Christ, Ricquel"

Kristianne Clifford, Valley State Prison for Women, Chowchilla - "Happy New Year to the both of you. May God bless you and keep you. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity. I have just completed the First Step and I'm feeling joyful. This is what I needed. God has been leading me. He wants me to spend more time with Him. I'm listening to God and paying attention, and my heart is joyful spending time with Him and now the two of you. Thank you, you are angels. All my love, Kristianne"

Krishneel Prasad, Calipatria State Prison - "Greeting to you both in the name of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. I want to thank you for the letter of recommendation. I really humbly thank you and your ministry. God has revealed Himself to me by using "Love Lifted Me Recovery". I knew there was a God, but now I know for surely, God is all around me and He is in control. I came to know this by the 12-Step program I took through LLMR. I have only been in this country nine years, and I don't know all the professional words to write to you and say thanks. But I know of One who made ALL things. I know the Lord Jesus Christ. I have a court date coming up soon, and I will call you if I get out. Keep me in your prayers. A sinner saved by grace, Krishneel Prasad"

James Lowden, Soledad State Prison - "Thanks for the Serenity Bible - what a treasure! It was better than receiving a package at Christmas. Merry Christmas! May god bless you all!"

"Our Dearest Friend" by Frank Ramirez

How plentiful are Your gifts, Oh Lord, that You send to us each day
The loving peace and joy You give help us cope along the way.
A happy smile, a cheerful voice, and a heart so filled with love
Are just a few of Your blessings all sent from above.
May we forever thank You, Lord for the blessing you deem to send
But most of all we thank Thee for being our best and dearest Friend.

"Recovery" by Michael Hicks

When you feel death, you are all alone
Empty, timeless space, without knowing you have a home
Death's sting lies in part of your past memories
They make you want....yearn and search to be free
You reach for highs to escape the mud
Or you drown your sorrow or knock yourself out and sleep in the crud
Are you in darkness by living in yesterday?
If you live only for tomorrow, is that the way?
And what about the madness of "the deeper into death the better"?
Will it take away the torment of death by passing it on to others?

What is this word recovery?
It's a re-beginning of life, the essence of being free
Freedom isn't a place, or even a time
It's a place of knowing a resting of the mind
It isn't found in doing, for in "doing" we all fail
Nor is it found in determination of escaping our personal hell
Recovery..... is in God's breath
Recovery..... is the mere realization of death
Recovery..... is unity, for there is no alone
Recovery..... is the mindfulness that, with God, you are home.