

# Ministry Update - 4th Quarter, 2009

## Twelve Step Program

Our recovery meetings are going well, and we have our Monday meeting in our home now, ever since we added on to our livingroom and have more space. At this moment, we do not have a Wednesday meeting, but hope to start one up again, whenever the Lord leads us. In the meantime, we have a "movie night" once a month, where we show either a Christian movie or a Bible-teaching DVD, not necessarily related to the 12-Step program. Our other big news is that we are working on getting our 12-Step lessons translated into Spanish. Amelia Olmos, who has attended our meetings for many years, has had it on her heart for a long time to translate our lessons into Spanish. With the help of Juan Coropuna, an inmate at CMF, Vacaville who also desired to translate the lessons, she is working on the lessons and several Bible study papers that go along with the Steps. It's very time-consuming and a lot of hard work, so please keep Amelia and Juan in your prayers. As the lessons are completed, they will be posted on our website, also.

October, November, and December means we covered Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve in our meetings, and we start over at Step One every January. Our 12-Step program is not just about alcoholism and addictions, but about allowing the healing power of Almighty God to cleanse and free us from the bitterness and anger caused by family dysfunctions and garbage in our past. It is also about the power of God setting us free from bondage to worry, anxiety and fear. A lot of Christians are walking around, looking good on the outside, being good church-goers and law-abiding citizens, but having major damage inside, in mind, heart and emotions. Most of the time, the pastor's Sunday sermons (at whatever church they attend) do not touch on these problems. Or, if they touch on the problem of unforgiveness and other issues that are holding these people back from being what God wants them to be, the sermon may merely tell them what to do or not to do, and not actually go into the HOW of DOING it! In our meetings, Step materials, and other Bible studies, we try to make God's principles in His word very practical, and show broken people how to apply them in their lives for healing.

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Luke 4:18

### Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

**Saturday, October 3, 2009** - We had a great team today, as Tom, Dottie, Alycia, Gordon, Daniel, Shami, Catharine, Yvonne and James all participated in the beach outreach. We had the usual ninety lunches, plus socks, toiletry items, bottled water and some used clothing and shoes. We gave out every lunch, bottle of water, toothpaste and tooth brush, soap or shampoo, and item of clothing that we had, even to Shami giving up her own lip gloss from her purse to a woman who asked for one. The woman who asked for a lip gloss was a Cambodian woman with no hands, only stumps for arms, and she took a lunch, some toiletries, and socks, too. Catharine, Daniel and Gordon prayed with a man named Paul, and after talking to him for a while, he prayed to receive Christ. Another young man, who was dressed in the "punk" fashion with spikes and a purple Mohawk hairdo, refused a lunch at first, saying that he didn't need to eat. After talking to him for a few minutes, Daniel convinced him to take some socks and a lunch, and said the young man was close to tears. Perhaps he'd been trying to convince himself he didn't need to eat, because he had nothing, or was just too proud to accept help. Another young man named Chris said he'd been praying, and was so blessed to have us be the answer to his prayers. One young man, who took a lunch, some toiletries and socks, said, "It's almost like Christmas!" A man named Julio had no shirt and was barefooted, so he was very thankful to receive a shirt and some socks. We found many groups of people, but one large group up on the grass was mostly young people. We asked if anyone needed food, and they immediately said, "Yes, we're hungry!" I think they just about

cleared us out of the toiletries and socks, and one young man even took some underwear we had in our used clothing bag. As Alycia, Yvonne and I were heading back to the car, we saw a homeless man who goes by the name of "Bear". He asked for another lunch, saying he had given the first one we gave him to someone else. Whether that was true or not, Yvonne gave him her last lunch, and he gave us all a big hug. As rewarding as it is to give out the food and clothing, our most important reason for being down at the Boardwalk is to give out the gospel of Jesus Christ. We had quite a few people ask for more than one tract, we gave out several hundred in English, and many in Spanish. I gave a tract in English to one young man, and noticed that he spoke with an accent, so I asked him if he spoke another language. He said he spoke Turkish. Several times in the last few months I had to tell people I didn't have any Chick tracts in Turkish, but this time I had finally ordered some, and was able to give one to this young man. He had a rather surprised look on his face, probably because he didn't expect anyone to have something in his native language, but he took it and said he would also pass it around to his friends. All in all, we had a blessed time, and thought the people were very open to accept the tracts. There was a skateboarding competition going on down there, so we met a lot of people on skateboards. Many of them took a tract as they rode on by. Praise the Lord!

**Saturday, November 7, 2009** - Praise the Lord! We had a great time down at the beach again, with Tom, Dottie, Gordon, Daniel, Shami, Catharine, Alycia, Yvonne and Michael. What a blessing! We handed out God's word in the form of the usual several hundred gospel tracts, and gave out ninety lunches to the homeless and needy. We also had toiletries, socks, bottled water, and some other new and used clothing items, and a few blankets to give to the homeless. Those who received the blankets, sweaters and jackets were very thankful, and one man said, "It was really cold last night." Shami and Catharine brought some new sweatshirts, and when those were all gone, Shami even gave one woman the sweatshirt off her own back. Daniel, Catharine and Shami met a woman named Phyllis who said she had wrecked her car, and now she was stranded and living on the beach. They gave her a lunch, some socks, and then a tract entitled "Somebody Loves Me", and she burst into tears. They also met Loretta and Dom, who were out here from El Paso, and they were very thankful to get lunches and also some washcloths. A man and his four-or five-year-old son were singing with a microphone for tips, and we weren't sure if they were homeless, but the little boy came running after us asking for a lunch for himself and his father. Alycia met a man named Kent, who had just arrived from Savannah, and was fresh on the streets. He asked what church we went to, and said he would see us on Sunday. We told several of the people we met about the Bible Tabernacle, and gave them directions to go there if they needed a place to live. We had some pens that had been donated by Catharine's friend Nancy, and two men who were songwriters were very happy to get some pens. They were bluegrass musicians, and had been borrowing a pen from someone to write their music, but they immediately returned the borrowed pen when they got their own. They also got some new T-shirts, and said that was very much needed, because they had to look nice when they were singing their music. Alycia and I were handing out some of the clean, used clothing we had, and I asked one group if anyone needed a shirt or some underwear. Several people said the shirt was too big, or they didn't need underwear, but then one man came up and said he would like them. He had on a jacket, but no shirt underneath, and he said he could really use both the shirt and the clean underwear. One young man told us, "I haven't seen such kindness since I've been out here." Thank You, Jesus! As always, we continue to hand out the gospel tracts after all the lunches and clothing items are gone, and we had a blessed time giving out the word of God. Along with the English tracts, I gave out many in Spanish, and one in Arabic, one in Turkish, and one in Japanese. I enjoy seeing the look on peoples' faces when I can hand them a booklet in their own native language.

**Follow-Up on November Outreach** - Sunday, we had a really great day at church, because one of the guys we'd met on the Boardwalk on Saturday did show up for church. This was Kent, the guy Alycia had met, and he had just arrived from Savannah. We asked him if he would like to go to the Bible Tabernacle to live, and he said, "Yes! Being out there on the beach was a scary place to be." So, after church, we took him first to get his stuff he'd left down at the Boardwalk, and then over to the BT (Alycia came with us, as she felt she had a part in Kent's "rescue"), and asked if they could take him in, even though it was a Sunday,

and we didn't think they did intake on Sundays. Whether they did it just because it was us, I don't know, but they said he could stay there that night, and they would be going out to Canyon Country in a few days, and he would go out there then. As it turned out, he was able to stay in the Venice ministry for two months, and participated in our December and January beach outreach. Since then, he has moved out to Canyon Country, and we have been keeping in touch with him, and he's doing very well out there.

**Saturday, December 5, 2009** - Saturday, we had a great outreach, and those who showed up to help were Tom, Dottie, Alycia, Catharine, Shami, Jay, Joe, Daniel, Yvonne, Michael, and Kent. Kent is the guy we met down at the beach on our November outreach, and he's now living at the Bible Tabernacle, and doing very well. He was able to get permission to come on the outreach with us. So, it was Kent's first time actually going out with us on the outreach, and he loved it. I think it was Jay's first time, too, although he may have gone out with us years ago (my memory is bad at times), and it was Joe's second time to go out with us. All the others were veterans of many outreaches, and we were glad to have everyone there. We not only had the usual ninety lunches, bottled water that Alycia brings, and socks and toiletries donated by people at our church, but we had some new T-shirts, sweatshirts and blankets donated by different people. With the colder weather, the blankets and sweatshirts went very fast, although everything was appreciated by the homeless people we met and ministered to in the name of Jesus. I had one little knit cap left from last month, when we'd had some bags of donated clothes, and one young woman was so happy to get it. I asked if anyone could use a little knit cap, and she said, "Oh, yes! My head gets so cold!" She looked like her head was small enough to fit it, as well. We ran out of socks about halfway down the Boardwalk, and Joe saw a store that had a sign that said, "Socks - 5 for \$5.00". He went in and bought \$10-worth of socks. We went back to the group we'd just left, that had asked if we had any socks, and were able to bless them with the socks that Joe had bought. I told them, "Joe just bought you these socks, but they're really from Jesus." Joe was having a great time handing out the gospel tracts, as well, and said that he was much more bold in going up to people and giving them out than he'd been the first time he went on the outreach with us. Michael also said he was more confident in giving out the lunches, tracts, and other items, and felt really blessed by the peoples' response to what he gave them. Daniel, Shami and Catharine prayed with a few people, including Freddie and Frank. A man named Nathan took three tracts and a paper with directions to our church, and he seemed to be searching for God in his life. He was not homeless, but just one of the people down there enjoying the day at the beach. Nathan also asked us why we were doing what we were doing, and we told him it was the love of Christ that motivated us, and also that we had found something we wanted to share with other people: salvation through Jesus Christ. Alycia prayed with a woman named Shannon who said she did not like being down there on the beach, but didn't know where else to go. All in all, we had a great time down at the beach and Boardwalk, in spite of the colder weather, and handed out many tracts in English and Spanish, and a few in Chinese.

### **Prison Ministry**

**Bojour Smith, Los Angeles County Jail, Twin Towers** - "How have you all been doing? As for me, I'm doing just fine. I can't complain, just blessed to be alive another day. I got these two guys that are going through some problems right now, so I have been talking to them about God. I told them I got Jesus who can help them get through that, and it's up to them to accept Him. You two have helped me out a whole lot, so I will be getting a lot of people that want to get help, and sending you their names. Here are two more, and God bless you once again. Bojour Smith"

**Brandi Vater, Ellen Halbert Unit, Burnet, Texas** - "I am in recovery and I would like to have a "Serenity" Bible if possible. Also, I would like any kind of recovery materials related to the Steps. Another woman here gave me your name and information. I am working on the 12 Steps and on building a relationship with my Higher Power. Thank you for your time and attention concerning this matter. Sincerely, Brandi Vater"

**Victor Blank, Solano State Prison, Vacaville** - "I am an inmate here at CSP Solano in Vacaville, Calif. I am very interested in participating in the Solano Chapter of your 12-Step faith-based program. I am going to my first meeting this coming Saturday. I am very hopeful that you might send me any and all literature and maybe even a study book for the course. I have a feeling I'm being drawn into something special and also enlightening at the same time. Thank you for your time and may God bless both of you for being there to help so many in their times of need! Sincerely, Victor"

**Dewayne Wright, CMF, Vacaville** - "Well, I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirit with a smile on your face. Take care of your health and be safe out there. The devil is on the lookout for people to follow him. Every time I turn on the TV it's killing somewhere going on. So very sad! But in the word of God, He said that people will turn on each other, especially family. We are truly living in the Last Days! Much love and respect to you both. This Bible course has kept me busy and out of trouble, learning the word of God and seeing a lot of things more clearly. May God bless you and your family in every way now and forever. Love, Dewayne"

**Charissa Chotard, Valley State Prison for Women** - "I am a new participant of Love Lifted Me Recovery. I am experiencing a greater understanding of my spiritual journey through recovery. I just love how much you two put into making sure that people know God. All of your support is extremely appreciated. It seems that I am from the same area as you. I was wondering if, upon my completion of our studies and my release, if you would allow me to be a volunteer in your beach outreach program. Thank you for your dedication and sacrifice. Praise be to our Lord for His glorious works in your recovery program! Very truly, Charissa"

**Daniel Gonzalez, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe** - "Hello and greetings! I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to participate in your Christian based 12-Step study. My past testimony is a lifestyle of being a terrible alcoholic, drug user and gang member. In 1995, in Tehachapi Prison, I received and opened the door of my heart to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Nov, 12, 1995, I made a public statement and got baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I must say that I'm very grateful that the good Lord did not destroy me in my darkest hour. Now that God is molding me and shaping me to the godly man that He wants me to be, there has been a lot of challenges and heart aches. However, in my worst day I'm still on top of the devil! As I conclude this letter, I do hope to continue to fellowship with you all. I look forward to the next lesson. Sincerely, Brother in Christ, Daniel Gonzalez"