

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - January, 2013
Newsletter for October, November, December, 2012
Pastors/Chaplains Tom & Dottie Hooper

Weekly Twelve Step Meetings

In October, November, and December, we cover Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve in our meetings, and we start over at Step One every January. Here are Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve, along with a Scripture passage that pertains to these Steps:

STEP 10 “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

Romans 12:3 “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

STEP 11 “Sought Through Prayer and Meditation to Improve Our Conscious Contact with God, Praying Only for Knowledge of His Will for Us and the Power to Carry That Out.”

Philippians 4:5-7 “Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be ANXIOUS for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with THANKSGIVING, let your request be made known to God. And the PEACE of GOD, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

STEP 12 “Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

We continue to have our monthly evangelistic outreach to the Venice Beach and Boardwalk area near us. We believe evangelism is important, so we give out hundreds of gospel tracts, and we also take sack lunches to the homeless community at the beach. Since Step 12 in our program is about getting the message of Jesus Christ out to others, these outreaches are good opportunities for those working on their own recovery to step out of their “comfort zone” and reach out to others in the name of Jesus. **Saturday, October 6, 2012** – This morning, we had a smaller group than usual, but still enough people to do the Venice Beach outreach. We had Tom, me, Frank, Mitch, Bobby, Catharine, Shami, Joe and Beth. We made 115 lunches, and had lots of socks, toiletries, some shirts, hats, and a pair of shoes to give to the homeless. We met some people who know us from previous months, and we saw lots of new faces, too. We came up to one young woman, and told her we had lunches, and she hollered at a group up on the grass, and we were all of a sudden swarmed with homeless people. We passed out lunches, socks, and the hygiene kits, and they were very grateful and happy to get them. When Frank was reaching into his bag to get a pair of socks for one man, the man saw that Frank had a hat, and asked for that, too. Catharine and Shami gave a nice warm jacket to a woman named Valerie, who had been sleeping in a sleeping bag along the wall by the beach. Mitch prayed for a man who asked, “Where’s your brother?” meaning Ararat, who wasn’t able to come this time. After Mitch prayed for him, he said, “Next time, you don’t have to bring a lunch or anything, just come and pray with me.” Shami and Catharine also prayed with quite a few

people who said they were Believers in Jesus Christ, but had ended up homeless on the beach because of their backslidden condition. Even so, they said they felt God's hedge of protection around them, and that God supplied their needs. Shami and Catharine spoke with a man who said his name was "Spanky" O'Malley O'Reilly, and he was also a backslidden Christian. Catharine told him he had a choice to turn away from the alcohol, and get his life right with the Lord, and he had tears in his eyes. Shami prayed for another group of homeless people, and almost everyone had tears in their eyes when she finished her prayer. As always, when we run out of lunches, we continue to hand out the gospel tracts. We gave out several hundred in English, some in Spanish, and one in Japanese. The Japanese couple refused a tract in English, but when I reached in my bag and pulled out one in Japanese, they took it. They were amazed, but even if they only read it out of curiosity, God can still work in their hearts with the message. On our way back to the car, one young man named Jake, who had received a lunch already, asked me, "What have you got there?" and pointed to the tracts in my hand. I started to give him one, and he said that was the same one he'd gotten in his lunch, and asked for some others. I ended up giving him about five or six different Chick tracts of various titles, and all with a good gospel message. Last of all, we met a man named Javier, who said he was a pastor of a small church in Santa Monica, and he wanted to know who we were. I showed him our ministry information on the back of the tract, and encouraged him to send any of his people our way if they needed a Christian 12-Step group.

Saturday, November 3, 2012 – This month's beach outreach was great. The people who showed up for the outreach other than Tom and me were: Bob, Keith, Frank, Shami, Greg, Josh, Ararat, Bobby and Mitch. We had a great time down at Venice Beach and the Boardwalk, although there weren't quite as many people there as there are in the summer months. We gave out 118 lunches to the homeless, along with many pairs of socks, and little bags of toiletries, and a few hats. Shami and Greg's group didn't find a lot of their usual people, and we thought maybe they had gone to shelters because of the colder weather. They did find one huge group of homeless people camping out on the grass, though, and were just about wiped out of their lunches all at one time. They always ask people if they would like prayer, and one man named Sebastian asked for prayer for healing of his neck. Ararat, Frank and Mitch's group also prayed for a lot of people. There were two guys they prayed for, and when they asked their names, one said his name was Julio, and he said the other guy's name was "Grumpy." I saw a woman by herself, and asked if she needed some food. She said she did, and when I offered her some toiletries, she said she needed those, too. I looked in my bag, and I didn't have any left, but later got some from Keith, and ran and caught up with her and gave them to her. She said her name was Lisa, and she was very grateful. After handing out all the food, socks, and toiletries, we continued to give out the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ in the form of little booklets from Chick Publications, which we call Chick tracts. Some people asked for several Chick tracts, so we gave out different titles, and I gave out a few in foreign languages. We always give out a lot of tracts in Spanish, but I also gave out one in Thai, and one in French. The man who took the one in Thai was absolutely flabbergasted that I had one in his language.

Saturday, December 1, 2012 – This time, our team for the beach outreach consisted of Tom, me, Shami, Bob, Frank, Mitch, Brian and Ararat. It was sprinkling a little as we were driving to the beach, but we prayed, and it stopped for the whole time we were out on the Boardwalk, and didn't start up again until we got home, and everyone had left. Praise the Lord! Because of the weather, there weren't as many tourists and people out and about on the Boardwalk as usual, but still quite a few, and almost everyone took a gospel tract that was offered to them. We had made up 115 lunches for the homeless, and each of the lunches had a gospel tract inside, too. We had wondered if there would be as many homeless people down at the Boardwalk, since it had been raining (they can go to shelters if they want to), but we had no problem finding people to give our lunches to. We had lots of

socks and toiletries, also. The first group of people Bob and I met nearly wiped us out of lunches, socks, and toiletries, as it was a huge group. One young woman said she hadn't eaten in three days. One woman, who said her name was Cranberry, was very thankful for what we gave her, and I told her we prayed that the rain would stop long enough for us to come out there that morning. Bob saw a man wearing a yellow rain slicker, and asked if he needed a lunch. He said he did, and later saw us up on the boardwalk, and thanked us again. Brian, Frank and Mitch's group started down at the other end of the Boardwalk, and at first didn't see any people. Then, Brian started singing : "Jesus Loves Me" and homeless people came from all over asking if they had food. Bob gave a little testimony to many of the homeless people, telling them he had been homeless less than two years ago, but that Jesus had helped him get his life back together (by way of the Bible Tabernacle, where he is living now). Shami and Ararat gave out all of their lunches, socks and toiletries, and also prayed for a lot of people. They prayed for Tina and David, and Tina said she had breast cancer. They prayed for Kevin, Eddie, Tyler and Joseph, who was an ex-Marine. They also prayed for Steve, who asked for strength. They saw Sebastian, and Shami said they had prayed for his healing last month. He said he was much better now. Frank saw a mother and her two children (around seven or eight years old) in an alley behind the Boardwalk, and when the children saw that they had lunches, they were so happy. Evidently, they were all homeless, too. As usual, we felt good being able to help meet peoples' physical needs, but especially in being able to give out the gospel of Jesus Christ to meet their spiritual needs.

Whether it is the prison ministry or the outreach to the homeless at Venice Beach, most of these people are not able to help support the ministry, so we appreciate our contributors all the more. Thank you all for your prayers, also.

"When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:12-14)

Prison Ministry

Gary Metoyer, Solano State Prison, Vacaville - "Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Regarding this last lesson, I've been able to identify a number of character defects that are responsible for where I am now - all resulting from abandonment and rejection issues which led to selfishness, self-centeredness, self-righteousness, greed, insecurity, and being quick to take offense (which I didn't know was a character defect until doing this lesson). However, these are a few I find responsible for the downward spiral, addiction and ultimately the life crime I committed. I've learned so much about myself, God and His will and His working in my life. I'm also uncovering some pretty good qualities, such as compassion, empathy, and a desire to help people. I am so thankful for this ministry, and it is helping me to develop my personal relationship with Jesus. Pain requires someone to talk to before it turns to resentment or depression, or feelings of being unloved and opening up old wounds that could lead to regression and relapse. Being clean causes one to experience many emotions that were once suppressed by drugs and alcohol. Today I work through it with the help of my Higher Power, sponsors and accountability partners. God bless your family and ministry, Gary"

Erica Olson, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla - "Thank you very much for your ministry. I appreciate all that you do for all of us. You make recovery "doable," if that makes any sense. Thank you and may God bless you. Erica"

Linda Elizabeth Ricchio, Valley State Prison for Women, Chowchilla - "I do appreciate your ministry and recognize the time and heartfelt effort you devote to me, and all of us who choose to partake in your resource. As you know, Valley State Prison for Women is in transition of becoming just Valley State Prison, a men's prison. I will soon be transferred to Central California Women's Facility. I love God and I am blessed that He has given me the opportunity to experience your ministry and friendship. This is a true spiritual reward and blessing for me. I am often alone in this "desert", so your letters reconnect me to another physical freedom I dearly miss. I hope to rejoin free society soon. I look forward to my next step and continued growth in my relationship with God. Sincerely, Linda"

Raymond Martinez, Mule Creek State Prison, Lone, CA - "May the God of our salvation bless you with all of the spiritual blessings that He promised to all those who are in Christ Jesus. Just wanted to thank you for all your hard work and labor of love for the recovery of those in bondage. And for making available to us (Believers) the 12-Step program, for as you teach and preach, true and whole recovery comes through Jesus Christ our Lord. Your ministry helps me to see the 12-Step program so much more hopefully, because the Scriptures are at its roots. Thank you and keep on, and may God's grace shine upon you tremendously! Your brother in Christ, Raymond"

Jeff White, R J. Donovan Correctional Facility, San Diego, CA - "God bless you and shower you with lots of blessings. Saturday, December 1st I received my "Serenity" Bible. What a beautiful great tool and absolutely beautiful book to help in my road to recovery! The best part is I will be soaking up God's powerful words of wisdom. I struggled in the past to get into God's word, but now I have the "crutch" to help me on my journey. Thank you and the rest of the Love Lifted Me Recovery Ministry family that prays for people like myself. I won't let you down - I truly believe I will finally conquer my demons. In our Savior's love, Jeff White"

Gerson Ortiz, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - "I want to thank you for all that you have shared with me and the great help you have been to me. I got the Certificate of Completion for the 12-Steps that you sent me. Thank you very much. It has been beautiful to have done the Steps with you - I really learned a lot. I would like to start with one of your other Bible studies, if possible. I don't know why it is so hard for me to write English, I guess I need to practice more. The good thing is that I understand everything that I read. God bless you brothers! Gerson"

Raul Garcia, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City, CA - "Thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in your 12-Step recovery ministries, and I really appreciate the "Serenity" Bible you sent me. All this is new to me - I've never done anything such as this before, so your patience and understanding is appreciated. I also want to thank you both for sharing your testimonies with me. I was truly touched and moved, and it gives me hope that God has something more planned for me. Most of my life has been spent incarcerated, since I was just a young man of 16 years old. Now here I sit 49 years old. It has been one heck of a journey, not an easy one, that's for sure. Yet one thing has been constant - I've never given up hope or lost faith that one day the good Lord will free me from these chains that have bound me. Completing this 12-Step program is just one step closer to becoming a better human being. I thank God for bringing Love Lifted Me Recovery into my life. Sincerely yours, Raul Garcia"

"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." Matthew 25:35-36

