

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - January, 2016
Newsletter for October, November, December, 2015
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Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

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.” This part of our Step 12 study is on “carrying the message to others.” What is the “message” that we want to carry to others - JUST the message of the Twelve Steps? No, we as Christians have a priority, given to us from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, to carry His Gospel (that means good news) to the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20). There are two basic types of witnessing or soul-winning: 1.) Friendship Witnessing, and 2.) Door-to-Door or Crowd Witnessing. The first type is to friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors that you see and talk to on a regular basis. The second is to strangers, people whom you may never see again, unless you lead them to the Lord and will see them in heaven. Our monthly outreach to Venice Beach utilizes the “crowd” method for the most part, although we do pray and talk to individuals while we are out on the Boardwalk. Also, since Step 12 is about giving back to others for what we’ve received, the beach outreach has been a perfect opportunity for those who are getting their lives back together to get out of their “comfort zone” a bit, and reach out to others in the name of Jesus.

Venice Beach Evangelistic Outreach

Saturday, October 3, 2015 - Saturday, our ministry team for the Venice Beach outreach was: Tom, me, Shami, Desiree, Keith, Nancy, Tony, Chris, Frank, Brian and Mitch. We had 143 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, and quite a few blankets to give out to the homeless. Each lunch contains a gospel tract, and we also handed out gospel tracts to all the people who are just down at the Venice Boardwalk for something to do on a Saturday morning. Tony had picked up a huge box of cookies, doughnuts, coffee cakes and apples from Smart & Final, and we gave those out after we ran out of the lunches, as well as giving an extra treat to some of the people who took a lunch. Two little old ladies were sitting on a bench near where we were handing out food to the homeless, and although we were pretty sure they weren’t homeless, they must have been low-income, because they asked for some of the food also. I started to open a container of cookies, but one lady just grabbed it and took the whole thing. We decided they might as well keep it, as we had plenty, and maybe they really were in need. Nancy and I saw one group of obviously homeless people, and offered them lunches and everything else. The young woman in the group thanked us and said that she was pregnant. Frank saw a young kid with two dogs and a backpack, and he offered him a lunch. He was extremely grateful to receive it. Frank said almost everyone he ministered to gave thanks to God for the food and other things we gave them. Brian saw a large group of people up on the grass, and a security guard nearby told him they were all homeless and could use the lunches. Mitch gave a lunch to one man who gobbled it down so fast, he thought he must be really hungry, so he gave him a second lunch. They also met a man who was just down at the Boardwalk visiting, as he said he used to be homeless, but just two weeks ago found a place to live. He said it was people like us who helped him make it while he was homeless. Desiree gave a lunch to a man who was deaf, so she couldn’t get his name, but she really felt the Lord moving on her heart to pray for him. Shami and Desiree also prayed for a man named Matthew, for healing for his leg. They prayed for a woman named Busari and a man named Thomas, just for safety and “for another day of life” out there on the streets. After we gave out all the food and other things, we continued to hand out tracts. All of us thought the people were very open to receive the gospel tracts, and we continue to pray for God to move

in their hearts and draw them to Jesus for salvation.

Saturday, November 7, 2015 - For our beach outreach, we had a good team of people show up to go out with us. We had Tom, me, Bob, Frank, Mitch, Ararat, Moses, Shami and Desiree. Not a big group, but enough to carry 151 lunches (yes, we made up more than usual, but it was by accident, not on purpose, but God knew we needed them), 20 blankets, lots of socks and toiletries, and a huge bag of used clothing that had been donated. All this was given out to the homeless people living down at Venice Beach and the Boardwalk. Shami also had a bag of candy left over from Halloween, and that was a big hit. Mitch said they found a large group on the grass, like a "tent city", and they totally wiped him out of food and clothing, so that he had to go back to their van and get some more. By the time we were through, we had given away every single thing we had brought with us, and it reminded me of where Jesus said, "The poor you will have with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good, but Me you do not have always." (Mark 14:7). There were many poor and needy there, and we were trying to "do them good" in the name of Jesus. Shami, Desiree and Moses talked and prayed with many of the homeless people, and Moses said it was such a blessing to just be there to listen to them, as well as giving them things for their physical needs. A woman named Thiyale told Desiree that she liked her sunglasses. Desiree prayed about it for a few minutes, and then gave them to Thiyale. She was so grateful, and there were even tears in her eyes, as she said her eyes had been hurting from being out in the sun so much. They also prayed for Julio, who had an injury to his hand, and for "Wolf", Keith and Theodore. Mitch saw a young man hungrily eating a small bag of potato chips, and he asked him if he would like a lunch. Mitch said it was his last lunch, and the young man dropped the bag of chips and gratefully took the lunch. Ararat saw Arthur, one of their regulars, and gave him a blanket and some food. His group also prayed for a lot of people, but he said he couldn't remember all their names. Frank said that everyone was very appreciative and grateful for all they received. Bob and I gave a New Testament to a man named John, who said he was a Christian. Mitch also gave a New Testament to a very young man who asked for one. Moses said some of the city workers who ride around in little carts told them there were some homeless people over in a different direction than where they were headed, so they gave them some to give to those people. All in all, we had a very blessed morning, and after giving everything out to the homeless, we continued walking up and down the Boardwalk giving out gospel booklets in English and Spanish, and even one in Chinese.

Saturday, December 12, 2015 - The people who made up our "God Squad" going down to the Venice Boardwalk were: Tom, Dottie, Shami, Desiree, Johnny, Tony, Mitch, Frank, Ararat and Justin. The weather was cold and windy, so we gave out seventeen blankets and one sleeping bag, as well as 149 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, T-shirts and some other clothing to the homeless. Tony was able to bring some extra pastries and doughnuts that he got from Smart & Final, and they were a big hit. Shami wore an extra jacket just to be able to give it away, and she gave it to Ricky, who along with Arthur, had lost all of their belongings the day before. They were also given blankets, food, and socks. I brought along an extra jacket, too (I got the idea from Shami), and gave it to a very young girl who was only wearing a light-weight sweatshirt, and she was very grateful to get a heavier jacket. I don't know if I can even describe the look on peoples' faces when they receive food and something to keep them warm, along with a kind word or a prayer. Mitch gave the sleeping bag to an old man (I think his name was John), and Mitch said his eyes got really big and just lit up when he saw how nice and warm it was. Shami, Desiree and Ararat prayed for a lot of people, and when they prayed for a very young man named Timothy, he gave Desiree a big hug. Johnny and I gave lunches to a couple, and the woman asked, "Can I give you a hug?" We met some other Christians down at the Boardwak, and one couple asked what group or church we were from, and I told them we have people in our group from about four different churches. Later, when Tony, Johnny and I were getting ready to leave, we saw a large group of people by our car getting ready to go out with carts full of bottled water, clothing, toiletries and blankets. We talked to them, and found out they were from a couple of different churches in the area. They didn't

seem to have food, but we told them the homeless people would be doubly blessed by getting the things they would be giving out. As always, we continued to go up the Boardwalk giving out gospel tracts, even after we ran out of the lunches. However, we had one lunch left, and when we got to the car, we realized there was one blanket left, so Johnny and I gave them to a man who was way over on the beach near a wall. He was extremely thankful to get them, and we told them they were our last ones.

PRISON MINISTRY

Our prison ministry reaches men and women in every state prison in California, some federal prisons around the country, and prisons in Oregon, Arizona, Missouri and Michigan. We have well over 400 people doing our Bible studies and 12-Step program by correspondence. They are growing in their faith, because God's word does not return void, but will accomplish His plan and purpose. Here are a few portions of letters we've received from inmates:

Nick Woodall, Pleasant Valley State Prison, Coalinga, CA - "God bless you! I can't thank you enough for giving yourselves to the Lord and running this ministry. It is a humongous blessing to us. Please find enclosed my completed lessons. It was great as usual! I love the pointed, in-depth questions which prompt deep thought and contemplation - there's no "fill in the blanks" on that. I appreciate everything you're doing to assist me in growing closer to Christ. Love in Christ, Nick Woodall"

Guadalupe Maldonado, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - "I wanted to thank you for the update with you both and the beach outreach. I have to admit I really enjoy reading how much people appreciate getting a meal and clothes from total strangers. I have a big smile on my face! You know, being a part of your program has really opened my eyes to a whole new way of looking at things. I guess when you're selfish like I used to be, you can't see beyond your own wants and needs. I do thank God and you two for allowing me to be a part of your lives. I've been praying to God for His help and guidance, as I get ready to begin a new phase in my life, both with God in my life and a chance to do something productive to help others. Love & Respect, Guadalupe"

Jason McCoy, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "Tom and Dottie, I really want to take this opportunity to thank you both for everything that you do for people like myself. You are truly doing the Lord's work and putting His words into action. I've been working on Steps 8 & 9, and your lessons and commentaries have helped in opening my eyes to the fact that the "Eye for an eye" way of thinking is completely counter-productive to the whole spirit of these Steps. As I've come to realize, Steps 8 & 9 are about my making amends and doing what's right from my end of the issue, and not about anything the other person does or doesn't do as a result. As I've gone through each Step, I've learned more about myself than I ever thought I would, and I can see why so many people I know are doing the Steps over again. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Christian 12-Steps and Bible studies this last year. Sincerely, Jason"

Ny Nourn, Central California Womens' Facility, Chowchilla, CA - "I had my initial parole hearing recently, but they did not find me suitable for parole yet. They rolled it over for three years. But whatever the outcome, I am already free on the inside, and it's just a matter of time when I'll be set free in this world. I never expected for five members of my victim's family to be at the hearing. At the end, David's mother and his sisters forgave me. Oh, my joyous heart is still singing! God is awesome, and he's letting me know that forgiveness comes first and that freedom will come second. Forgiveness from David's family is just as valuable as my freedom. To leave the hearing after receiving personal healing and hope couldn't be any better. Thank you again for being part of my support network. Yours truly, Ny Nourn"

Richard Gregg, Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CA - "Greetings in the most powerful name in the universe, Jesus Christ! I just wanted to say thank you for the support letter and being my sponsors. I am so blessed. I pray I'm able to get a date this time, but it's always in God's hands. Last year, when I was denied parole, not one part of me found fault with God, but the devil always throws dirt and sand at me to try to get my focus off the Lord. Please keep me in your prayers. Love, Richard Lee Gregg"

Kylie Apostle, California Institution for Women, Corona, CA - "Thank you so much for always sending me Bible study packets. I really do appreciate it. I would like for you to send me the 12-Steps once I am finished with the Romans study. Thank you! You two are a true blessing. Love, Kylie"

William Amaya, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - "I am very thankful to the Lord for your awesome ministry. Your letters are always a blessing to me. I also enjoy doing the lessons, and find them very helpful and encouraging. For example, I wasn't feeling like doing any kind of Bible study over the last couple of weeks, and by not doing so, I didn't feel any better; in fact, I felt worse. However, I knew I had to do your lessons, and once I got started, I got into it and felt better, especially after doing this Step 11 lesson on prayer and having a healthy relationship with the Lord. Praise God! Now I feel much better and can continue to grow in Christ. Like they say, 'Either the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.' God bless you and all you do. I love reading about your outreaches in Venice - I know that area quite well. In Christ, your friend William"

Adam Ranlett, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "I'm a part of a group here at Ironwood, A Yard, and we have been meeting in the yard at one of the tables on Monday mornings. We all Bible study together for about an hour before we even start the 12-Step recovery portion. Then, we share and discuss our answers and Scriptures that relate to our answers. Everyone who is doing your recovery program is overjoyed with it. The main chapel here on this yard is being used for storage, and the roof leaks, so we don't have chapel services right now. My brothers in Christ also all get together in the yard on Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings. We sing praises to God, and someone gives a message, so we continue our walk even without a chapel. A few of us also walk the track daily and stop and share the word with other inmates. Thanks for the gospel tracts you sent - we can always use them. Adam Ranlett"

Jose Delgado, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - "I have received the first lessons for Step One and the "Serenity Bible." This first lesson is an experience for me, because I'm expressing things about myself that I haven't shared with anybody. I'm opening my doors to get help to become a better person. I haven't been really involved with God too much, and I haven't really studied the Bible. This Serenity Bible is going to open a huge door for me to get involved with God a lot more and to get to know Him. It is going to be my guidance of what I have been searching for, the peace inside myself that is going to give control of my life to God, and to make better decisions and live a normal life with God. Sincerely, Jose Delgado"

Christopher Wedel, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "I just wanted to write a quick note to express my gratitude for the help you both are in my recovery. I am being honest when I say it is working. I am changing daily, growing in my faith, and am gaining insight into why I have done the things I have. Thank you for all your help. Truly, Chris"

Alfonza Calhoun, Soledad State Prison, Soledad, CA - "Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your reinforcing, enlightening Bible study courses. Your studies have strengthened my faith in God through Jesus Christ my personal savior. They have consolidated my moral outlook on others based on principles and values I have learned by studying God's word. In my past life, I have been responsible for much hurt and pain, due to my inability to accept reality, thus becoming a pawn manipulated by sin and

Satan. I have spent many years in prison fighting and clawing my way back through rehabilitation of my body and mind, and now the spiritual cleansing of turning my life over to God and placing my faith in Him and His will. I appreciate all that you do. Al”