

Ministry Update - 1st Quarter, 2005

Twelve Step Recovery Meetings and Materials: Our Monday and Wednesday recovery meetings continue to be blessed, and we are seeing God bring new people all the time. Current members are growing and maturing in the Lord. Jesus is still in the business of delivering and setting His people free!

We have had a request from Haydee in Miami, Florida, for 12-Step materials:

"Hi, Pastor Tom & Dottie. How are you doing? Thanks so much for keeping me informed and passing along precious materials/information to read and share with others. If you have step materials, homework, etc. that you can e-mail me, I would love to receive those. I am helping someone from my church that is struggling with cocaine addiction/gambling. I went with him to a step meeting (AA) since there is no 12-step Bible study nearby. I may be starting one with somebody else at my church - I still have a lot of sobriety materials from LLMR, 4th step inventory and stuff like that. Please e-mail me whatever documents of step work you may have available that may be used in a small group setting. Thanks so much.....Love , Haydee"

We told her she could go on our website and print out any materials there. She replied:

"WOW! THAT IS SO AWESOME!!!!.....What a blessing to have those resources so available to those that need them. I will go to the site and print all of them. THANK YOU, THANK YOU SO MUCH. HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH YOU AND TOM AND LLMR - I AM SURE THAT GOD IS BLESSING YOU ALL ABUNDANTLY. I WILL KEEP IN TOUCH AND LET YOU KNOW HOW WE ARE USING THE MATERIALS. LOVE, HAYDEE"

In March, we got a telephone call from Roger Castillo in Yreka, California, telling us he has been using our 12-Step materials, and is really blessed by being able to use them. He is starting a 12-Step and prison ministry. He was referred to us by Mrs. Pat Hilst, as Roger used to be at the Bible Tabernacle. Thank you, Pat!

Testimonies from Recovery Meetings:

Testimony of Tom McCauley:

My Background: There was a lot of abuse in my early life - mental, physical, emotional, and the biggest one of the spirit. The hardness started at a very young age with the separation of my parents. At five years old, I remember looking out to the driveway, with a lit cigarette in my hand, and wetting my pants, because I knew it was probably the last time I would see my father. There was child abuse from age 5 to 13, when I finally got tired of the closed fist from certain relatives. At age thirteen, I started to elevate my hardness to drugs and alcohol, and also as a way of numbness because of the pain and abuse. I had abusive relationships with the opposite sex all through high school, and my first marriage was at 22, in a totally drug-infested relationship. Years later, by the grace and mercy of God, through devoted men and women of God, like Tom and Dottie, our Lord and Savior has woken up this spirit forever.

Getting Saved: I had been on about a 3-day bender. I got home, and my brother Steve said, "Hey, walk up with me to this coffee shop up the street - I want you to meet someone." Well, here's this big dude with a beard, an old biker guy and his wife, Tom and Dottie, who run a 12-Step recovery ministry. So after the meeting I approached Tom and said, "I want to see God." That night it was crucifixion and resurrection of cleanness and purity for Tom McCauley. Thank You, Jesus! To give you some background, my mother first had come up to Tom and Dottie at church and asked for prayer for her unsaved son who was a crack cocaine addict (that was me). Several months later was when my brother Steve brought me to one of their "Love Lifted Me Recovery" meetings, and I had said that I wouldn't believe in God unless I

could see Him. Tom asked me to stay after the meeting that night, and he presented the gospel to me for over an hour, opening his Bible to verse after verse, and having me read them. We prayed, and I received Jesus Christ as my Savior that night, Sept. 12, 2000. In over four years of my walk with the Lord, I'm not perfect, and I backslid many times. I had to take a year's worth of court-ordered anger management classes because of some of the crazy things I'd done, and out-of-control anger. I had a lot of ups and downs in my addiction recovery, until at one point I needed a place to live, so Tom and Dottie helped get me into the Bible Tabernacle "New Life Institute" out in Canyon Country. I stayed seven months, and got really grounded in the word of God, and the Lord has been growing and maturing me in the years since. I didn't always live close enough to come to Tom and Dottie's meetings regularly, but Tom spent hours and hours with me in counseling and discipling either on the phone or in person.

The Best Part: I finally felt it was time to try to get back together with my wife, Priscilla (from my second marriage) and young son, Thomas, who had moved up to Oregon. It has been many months of adjustments in living together after a separation of several years (and both of us were unsaved when we were together before), and I made lots of calls down to California to Tom for counseling and prayer. We are beginning to experience peace and victory in our home, and God is putting together a marriage that was once questionable. Glory to God! I give thanks to my Father for putting the armor on me and my wife and family, through the tough times, and pulling all of us out of the storm. The biblically-based 12-Steps at Love Lifted Me Recovery, not only the teaching, but the one-on-one counseling with Tom, helped me with my bitter roots. With prayer and understanding of God's word, the long nights and days with Tom on the phone, not only do I have a walk with the Lord, but also two people who are my friends and a true brother and sister in Christ Jesus, who I love truthfully on this earth and in heaven forever. In Jesus' name, hallelujah! Tom McCauley

Leigh-Anna's Testimony: I met Jesus in my earliest years. I met him through my mom, before her fears overtook her. He was warm and protecting. Then mom changed and her heart escaped me, just about the time the molestations began. I was three. Alone with a memory of love, Jesus seemed to have left me too. I concluded in my child mind that I'd done something wrong to merit the abandonment of my mother, my Jesus, and love. Hiding was my refuge. Hiding my pain, fear, loss and humiliation. So like mom I turned to food for comfort and performance to attain love. I danced, sang, played sports, and did well in school. Years passed and I found myself in two separate worlds: truth and mendacity.

At 14, my brother died in a car accident, and once again I was alone and scared. I turned to drugs, and before I'd graduated high school, I was a heroin addict. I became homeless, desperate, and in trouble. Fortunately I received help at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission. I cleaned up, but within a few years I found alcohol and fell even deeper into addiction: alcoholism and my eating disorder.

It all came to a screeching halt at 24 when suicide seemed my only out. Yet God had another plan.

That was Summer 2002. Since then, I've given up my vices and begun to learn what love is. Therapy has helped me to find myself. Tom and Dottie Hooper have become the parents I've always wanted. My life with Jesus has now picked up again where it was left 23 years ago. There is now purpose, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and all the rest in my life. It's almost as if I get to start over again with Jesus as the author to my story.

Evangelistic Outreach: We have begun a new outreach to the Venice Beach area (or wherever the Lord may lead us), to hand out gospel tracts and fliers for our ministry (with meeting times, locations, etc.), along with sack lunches for the homeless. This way it's sort of a three-pronged assault, as the military folks call it, as we get out the gospel of Jesus Christ, feed the body, and advertise our meetings so that anyone who is interested will know where to get help. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and

glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Our first outreach to Venice Beach on Saturday, March 19th was a success, in spite of several attacks from the enemy. I got sick the day before, some other things happened, and also it rained. We had Angela, Denise, Vince and Youbert go out with us, plus Tom and myself. Some others had wanted to come, but either had to work or were out of town. We prayed before going out, and showed everyone the lunch bags we had made up for any homeless people we might encounter along the way, and then set out to go down to the beach. As soon as we walked out the door, it started raining. It was a miserable, heavy, steady drizzle, and I was just about ready to cancel, but I saw that Vince and Youbert were not letting it stop them! So, we grabbed umbrellas, and off we went. We went straight down Venice Blvd., and up to the area around Windward Ave. We were amazed to see how many people were out and about the Boardwalk area, despite the rain. We began to hand out tracts to anyone and everyone who would take them, and to look for homeless people in sheltered areas. Some people shook their heads and refused to take a tract, but most people took them. There was a tract in each lunch bag for the homeless, so they got them whether they wanted them or not, and we told them we were giving these lunches out in the name of Jesus. The rain let up a little towards the end of our time down there, but mostly it was wet and miserable. We hoped there was a reason for the Lord wanting us to go down there even though it was raining. Maybe to show someone that we thought it was important to get the message of Jesus out, no matter what? Only God knows. We handed out 27 sack lunches, and probably over 300 tracts, most of which were in English, but maybe 50 or 60 in Spanish. The sack lunches contained quite a lot of food items, all in individual-serving, pop-top cans or packages. Nothing to spoil or go bad. At one point, Denise, Angela and I were walking on the bike path, and we saw a bundle of blankets and rags on the sand, and didn't know if it was just a pile of trash, or if there were a person underneath it. Angela went across the sand and found out it was a homeless person, huddled up and covered up to keep the rain off, and she offered him a lunch bag. Everyone who received a lunch bag seemed very grateful, and many of them said, "God bless you!" to us. We invited several people to come to our church, and gave them directions, as some claimed to be Christians. All in all, we had a blessed time, and felt it was worth getting soaked in the rain for Jesus.

We went out again on Tuesday, March 29th to the Venice Boardwalk to hand out gospel tracts, with John and Amanda, recently-returned short-term missionaries from the "Youth With A Mission" team to India. They both just got back from a missions trip to India, so how hard could the Venice Boardwalk be? We warned John (he's never been to L.A.) that there would be a lot of weirdos, psychics, and just plain evil stuff down there, but after we got back, he said it was nothing compared to Amsterdam! You see, they had a nine-hour layover in Amsterdam (Holland) on their way to India, and they got to "see the town." Amsterdam is pretty much the drug capitol of Europe, plus prostitution is everywhere, right out in the open, so there was nothing that out-in-the-open on the Venice Boardwalk. Venice Beach does have its psychics and fortune-tellers, tattoo parlors, vendors selling Buddha statues, New Age trinkets and other weird objects, T-shirts and other souvenirs with sexually-oriented messages, and other raunchy (and blasphemous) stuff. Most of the store and street vendors are probably hardened to the gospel, because they know they are making a living from selling ungodly stuff (I think most of them know that), and few of them took our tracts. However, there were a lot of people down there even for a weekday, because it was quarter break for UCLA, and spring break (used to be called Easter Vacation) for a lot of schools, plus just plain old out-of-town tourists. The people down there walking around were tourists, walkers and gawkers, and teenagers just hangin' out, and most of them took our tracts. We didn't have time to do the sack lunches for the homeless this time, but LLMR will go out again in a few weeks to do that, too. We handed out probably 250 to 300 tracts, mostly English (in fact, we ran out of English before we came home), with 40 to 50 Spanish, three in Japanese, and one in Italian. The lady who said she spoke Italian was a tourist from Tunisia, in north Africa. John enjoys engaging people in witnessing conversations, so we left him several times in deep conversation with individuals, while we went on passing out tracts right and left. We were truly blessed in the couple of hours we spent down there, and are trusting the Lord to work on the hearts of the ones who received the tracts. Jesus tells us in His parable about the sower in Matthew chapter 13 that we were sowing the seed, which is the word of God! God promises in Isaiah 55:10-11

that His word will not return void, but will accomplish that which He desires, and will succeed in the purpose for which He sent it.

Prison Ministry: Testimony and Request from Gerald Procella, Corcoran State Prison. "I'm a 41-year-old who is born again by the Spirit of God, heading toward a state of growth. I really desire to live a life for the Lord, and enjoy a blessed Spirit-filled life. I'm tired of the devil robbing me of my happiness and blessings from God! In 1990, I lost my leg in a motorcycle accident. I was hit by a drunk driver, as he came over in my lane and almost killed me. They took my leg off about three months later. What an ordeal! All those operations only to lose it anyway. It was at this point that I started to abuse alcohol. I went back home to Texas to recover, but my mom and step-dad had their own problems, and just weren't ready for that. I've never really had much family support from them anyway. I was raised by my grandparents, and went in the Army at 17 years old with a parents' consent form, and off I went. I was trying to get away from an alcoholic grandfather and all that is associated with that. Even though I went to Catholic schools, and had material things while growing up, it was still madness. Well, it was shortly after getting out of the Army that I came to California. I had been here about two years when the drunk driver hit me. You know, someone asked me once if I held God responsible? I told him that it was not God's doing or that He was just looking the other way one day, and Satan pulled a fast one. No, none of that, not by any means whatsoever! I was living apart from God's protection, and His will, even though I knew better. It was my own fault for living in the enemy's camp! No body armor, no weapons, no plan of action, just my butt in the wind (please excuse the expression). That is when I went back home to recover from the accident, and that is also when my alcohol abuse started. It was pretty bad for a while. Over the years, the knocks got pretty hard, so I stopped drugs years ago, and slowed way down on drinking, but still consider myself an alcoholic. I need to stop completely for good, and I will do it with God's help. My artificial leg has been broken since July. They sent me to this leg fitter contracted by the prison, and he told me outright that he could not get shoes I needed, because the prison only approves these boots with low heels. My foot was made to use a Nike Air Walker, that I had made at the V.A. through a fitter. I can't afford shoes from the package list, and my mom can't afford to send me any, as she is barely making it in Texas. Tom and Dottie, at the risk of being way too forward for my liking, and asking for a handout, I would ask if maybe you guys could ask your church if they could take an offering for me so as to get a pair of shoes for my artificial leg."

We were able to send Gerald the special shoes he needed, and he was very thankful. Praise God!

The Moment

*Behold, I come before You, Lord with my heart between my hands,
Your will is mine to carry out, and I will place no demands.
My depth of love is dimensionless, to You, my life I give,
You are The Way, The Truth, The Life, my Lord,
This is how I choose to live.
Your Spirit defines hereafter, and please Lord, let me say
That I feel Your love inside my soul each and every day.
Each day, I'm blessed to wake up as I look towards the sky
I know that my home awaits me, Lord
The moment my body dies.*

Poem by Wayne Green, Soledad Prison, January, 2005