

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - April, 2020
Newsletter for January, February, March, 2020
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Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

“He will sit as a REFINER and PURIFIER of SILVER”

•**Malachi 3:2-3** “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap. And He will sit as a refiner (smelter) and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like silver and gold, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.”

Here is a short story (author unknown): “This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study. That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - **when I see my IMAGE in it.**"

•**Romans 8:29** “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, January 4, 2020 - Saturday was the day for our monthly outreach to Venice Beach. We weren't sure how many people could come this time, but we had a good ministry team with Tom, me, Stephani, Yasuko, Apple, Sheldon, Felipe, Ricardo, and Victor Flores (he came last month, and was in our program when he was in prison). We had 176 lunches, lots of knit hats and ear-warmers (knitted with love by Debbie in Phoenix) for the homeless. We had the usual socks and toiletry/hygiene packets, but at first we didn't have much clothing to give out. Then, when Apple arrived to help on the outreach, she brought a huge bag of nice, clean, used clothing, and we gave almost all of it out to the homeless. As always, each lunch contained a gospel tract, and we also gave out gospel tracts to the people who were just down at the beach and Venice Boardwalk enjoying the day. Sheldon said that when his group arrived at the Boardwalk, there was a large group of homeless people waiting for another organization that was supposed to be there giving out sandwiches. They hadn't arrived yet, but these people were very happy to see Sheldon, Yasuko and Apple, and they all received food, clothing and toiletries with a grateful attitude. Victor, Stephani and I started out at the other end of the Boardwalk, and made our way on down, finding individuals and small groups of homeless as we went. Victor said he had been down to the Boardwalk right after Christmas, and one of the homeless men recognized him from when he had

come on the outreach last month. We did see quite a few people we recognized, and who recognized us. A lady named Sunny remembered us from last time, and asked for a lunch for herself and her son, and we gave her clothing as well. Another lady named Shawn received food, toiletries, clothing, and was so happy and thankful. We really had a blessed time down there at the beach, and pray that everyone who received a gospel tract will have their hearts opened by the Lord to receive Jesus. To God be the glory!

“He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.” Deuteronomy 10:18

Saturday, February 1, 2020 - Even though it was February, we were having a warm spell, and it was a beautiful day for our outreach to Venice Beach. Besides Tom and me, our volunteers today were: Yasuko, Apple, Suchart, Sheldon, Felipe, Ricardo, Kaela and Jose (both Felipe and Jose had been in our 12-Step program when they were in prison). We had 177 lunches, lots of socks and toiletry/hygiene packets, knit hats and ear-warmers knitted by my friend Debbie, and lots and lots of clean, used clothing, and some shoes. All but a few items of the clothing was given away to the homeless, and everybody was very appreciative and thankful. We had some jeans in size 40 waist, and for most of the homeless, that was much too big, but we finally found Andre, and he said he was a 40 waist. He also said he really needed some pants, so we gave him three pair. As we were giving out the lunches, one man came up and kept complaining about his nose running. I happened to have a packet of clean cloth handkerchiefs, and he was so happy to get them. I had been asking people if they needed handkerchiefs, and nobody wanted them until this guy, so we told him they must've been meant for him. Two older ladies from the nearby senior/retirement residence saw us and asked if they could each have a lunch. They were not homeless, but they may be on a limited income, so we gave them each a lunch and some toiletries. I recognized their accent, and asked if they would like some Russian tracts. They each gladly took several gospel tracts in Russian. They couldn't speak much English, so I was glad I had some tracts in their native language. If you can't be a foreign missionary, just hang out in Los Angeles for a while, and people from all tribes, and tongues and nations, as the Bible calls them, will come walking by. Praise the Lord! We handed out lots of gospel tracts in English and Spanish also, and just had a great time down there on the Boardwalk.

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Revelation 7:9-10

Saturday, March 7, 2020 - The weather was kind of cold and overcast, but we were praying that it wouldn't rain. The volunteers who showed up to go out on the outreach with us, besides Tom and me, were: Kaela, Stephani, Yasuko, Sheldon, Keith, Felipe, Ricardo, Victor, Apple and Suchart. We had more lunches than usual, because the Sunday school kids at Sunrise Church made up some lunches, so our total was 188 lunches for the homeless people down at the Boardwalk. We had lots of used clothing, shoes, socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, knit hats, dog food for people's dogs, and one folding mattress. Almost everything was given out, and the few items of clothing that came back will be given out next month. Everyone was very grateful and thankful for what we gave them. One homeless guy on a bike was very happy to get food, socks and toiletries, and he told us there were not many people who had treated him so kindly. Kenny received some boots, socks, food and toiletries, and he was very grateful. He said he grew up in a Christian church, and he sang a little song for us that he still remembered from Sunday school years ago. One woman gladly received a lunch, and then she asked, “Who sent you?” I

answered and said, "Jesus sent us." She asked for more specifics, so I told her we were just Christians from several different churches, and she said, "I love Jesus!" Keith and Sheldon's group saw a man they'd seen many times before near the skateboard park. He came up to them and told them that he was no longer homeless, that he had found permanent housing now, and he was just down there to visit his old friends and encourage them. Victor gave a lunch to a young man he could tell used to be a gang member, and the guy could tell that Victor had been in a gang, too (by his tattoos). The guy just kept looking at Victor, and Victor said, "God bless you, brother" as he gave him the lunch. We will pray for him and hope that a seed was planted by the Lord from that encounter, and that man will be encouraged to try to get his life back together, since he could see that Victor had made it. Earlier in the week, I had prayed that we might find some men out in their yard at the Phoenix House and would be able to give them some gospel tracts. At first, the men said they weren't allowed to take them, but then one man said for me to ask their supervisor who was up at the other end of the yard, so I did. He not only said we could give the tracts to the men, but he took one himself. There must have been at least thirty-five men out in their yard, and every one took a tract, and one guy asked for several. We also told them a little about our prison ministry, as there are always some men there who are released from prison (the Phoenix House is a recovery/rehab-type place, or maybe you would call it a halfway house). We all continued to hand out gospel tracts to the other people down at the beach for the day, and each homeless person gets a tract in their lunch. Praise the Lord!

Prison Ministry

Our prison ministry reaches men and women in every state prison in California, some federal prisons around the country, and prisons and jails in Oregon, Arizona, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. 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:

Chris Kelly, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "May your ministry continue to reach the lost and be a blessing to those who need to be rescued by God. You have been a great blessing to me over the years. I remember how lost I was first time I took your 12-Step course, but it was in taking this course and doing the Steps that I've been able to get to this point in my life. I know it is only by God's amazing grace, and He is so great and loving to me, and I thank Him daily for His blessings, including such as you two kind people. May your lives be filled and complete in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Love, Chris Kelly"

Tim Risley, California State Prison LA County, Lancaster, CA - "Thanks for the information you sent me for my friend who just found out he has cancer. He was blaming God for giving him cancer, but I gave the Scriptures and booklet you sent to him and he cried. I don't think he was expecting anyone to care about him. He actually cried and asked me to pray for him and with him. It was so awesome seeing God work, and I can't lie, I also became emotional! I would never thought that Chris would ever say something like that to me or anyone else, but then again, my mistake was that I wasn't giving God any credit for His love and awesome power. I gave Chris a Bible and told him to pray before he reads it and ask God to open up his heart and to guide him. So far, he seems to be reading it, because he has a different question for me every day. He has even signed up to go to church services with me on Saturdays and Sundays. This experience is actually making my faith stronger. It is so awesome how God works, but I guess I don't have to tell you that, huh? Love, Tim"

Mark Campisi, Valley State Prison, Chowchilla, CA - "I'm writing to let you know how appreciative, thankful and grateful I am to you both for your fabulous ministry, love in Christ, and terrific Bible study course. You've blessed me and everyone who has chosen to participate in your program. The letter

you sent melted my heart, dear friends, especially reading about your ministry feeding the homeless, and how all of those helping you show the sincere love of Christ in taking their precious spare time to do this ministry. My sincere respects, your brother in Christ, Mark”

Frank McMurray, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - “I thank you both from the bottom of my heart for being such faithful servants. I am very sorry to hear that your 96-year-old father passed on, but we know he is with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and awaiting your arrival in heaven. He has to be a God-fearing man to have raised such a faithful servant of the Lord. You guys are making a huge impact on so many lives in here, and I’m sure he’s very proud of you. My condolences again to your family and may the Lord continue to bless you all. Sincerely, Frank McMurray”

Hugo Sosa, Sierra Conservation Center, Jamestown, CA - “As for me, I have to tell you that God is totally awesome! At first, I believed that being transferred to this camp was some kind of punishment, but God knows what He is doing. Just like that Scripture verse Jeremiah 29:11, God knew He was going to use me here. I have been blessed and God has permitted me to find grace with the staff here, and I have begun to facilitate the AA/NA and Anger Management meetings in Spanish. The need was great, and God opened the door, praise God Almighty! I’m so glad that I’m able to see God’s hand in this prison. Also, the Christian brothers here, we get together and study the papers you send, such as “The Thief on the Cross” and “Keys to the Victorious Christian Life”. The men here have a great difficulty forgiving themselves for being away from their loved ones and family, but these studies serve as comfort because now they understand that God wants to have a relationship with them and for them to renew their minds and grow in grace. Your brother in Christ Jesus, Hugo”

Kenny Lowary, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “First let me say that your Bible study is amazing! It is put together so thoughtful and with love. Who designed it? I’m excited to receive each lesson, as I learn more about God and what His plans are for me. Thank you again, and also for blessing me with the 12-Step program! The Lord knows I need every ounce of help I can get! The prison has AA and NA classes, but they are all full. Sincerely, Kenney Lowary”

Faustino Corona, R. J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - “I want to thank you first of all for your help in doing the 12-Steps, for your help in my recovery and helping me see the true path of forgiveness. In the past, I was hurt, so I began to hurt others. I am truly sorry. I had always felt I wasn’t worthy of someone to love me, which now I see it is not true. It made me have low self-esteem and anger, but it not only hurt me for what they told me, but most important for not telling me how much they loved me or share any other emotion. Now I am breaking the chain by telling my children how much I love them and how much I am proud of them. Thank you, and thank God. Sincerely, Faustino Corona”

Omar Hunter, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - “God is so good! I just finished your Step 3 lessons, and it convicted me and brought me to tears and repentance. Step 3 is about surrendering everything to God, and I had been trying to do things on my own. I need the Lord in every area of my life, and I feel so good right now and want to remain so. Please tell the brethren I send my love. Love, Omar”

Jeffrey Boatman, California Institute for Men, Chino, CA - “Wow! I was so surprised when I got an envelope from you, thinking it was my next lesson, but no, it was a support letter and a great one at that. All I wanted was a date when I started your program and you totally amazed me with your support letter. The second time I read it, I got teary-eyed, it really touched my heart. After reading the letter, my first thought was, ‘I’m doing the right program.’ I do not know the actual date of my parole hearing yet, but I’m praying I’ll be granted parole this time. Whenever I get out, my wife and I are planning to meet you both and help out any way we can. You are doing God’s work. Sincerely, Jeff Boatman”