

“Letter From M.O.M.”

The **Monthly** newsletter of **Moving On Ministry**

WWW.MovingOnMinistry.COM

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/MovingOn>

Volume 49 – July/Aug. 2009

“I Can Only Imagine”

It is hard to imagine that this ministry has been developing for over four years. New facilities have opened up to us, as well as getting correspondence from many states and foreign countries.

Watch our websites

www.MovingOnMinistry.com

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/MovingOn>

Addresses to contact our Ministry Volunteers

Moving On Ministry
Chaplain Bob
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia. CA. 93290

Moving On Ministry
Spanish Volunteer Linda
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia CA. 93290

Moving On Ministry
Volunteer Bryon
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia CA. 93290

Moving On Ministry
Jeanne (Mom of M.O.M.)
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia, CA 93290

Addresses to contact other Ministry Volunteers

Prison Pen Pals
P.O. Box 235
Berlin, PA 17216

Christian Pen Pals
PO Box 2112
Statesville, NC 28687

Cathy Jewell
P.O. Box 41272
Centerville, Ohio 45441

Pen Pals and Service
P.O. Box 4076
Amarillo, TX 79116-4076

Inmate Penpal Connection
Po Box 73
Syracuse, NY 13206-0073

Prisoner Support Network
Ministry
P.O. Box 4
Richmond, IL 60071

Jesus' Prayer Ministry
Sis Denise
P.O. Box 7925
Chula Vista, CA 91912

Intentions & Wishes

The intentions of this newsletter are to allow an understanding of jail & prison ministries. It is our intentions to get input from those incarcerated as well as those “free” to visit. Life experiences of the faith and fellowship from those locked up in the facilities are always desired to let others know of the value of “visitation”. I am certain that each of us have many stories of the miracles God has done in our lives.

Our wishes are that we would have a list of supportive churches that individuals might look forward to attending once released.

A list of services, such as housing, employment, and counseling services, as well as some individuals available for friendly fellowship are also much needed items.

God’s Word says if a man stumbles, how can he continue lest there be another to help him up. **Ecc. 4:10** **“For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up.”** **Proverbs 24:17** **“Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth.”** **John 11:10** **“But if a man walketh in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”**

Please help us with input for this newsletter as we strive to serve God. We appreciate any articles or input.

I want to extend special thanks to the following;
Mom of M.O.M. (Jeanne) – Support Lives given to Christ
Artists
Article writers
God’s healing

Fellowship

We would like to keep a listing of locations for fellowship that welcomes previous incarcerated individuals. We previously listed churches that are supportive in California, as well as some special articles on churches in other states. We would like follow up on these churches to see if they are supportive, as well as letting us know of others available. **We also cherish letters from inmates or relatives to the churches to let us know how we are doing**

If you would like a church added, or have concern on one that is not supportive, please contact us.

Dreams are real, as long as you have faith in Jesus Christ. “Mermaid”

Coming Up – September Issue
For those that are on our active mailing list (have filled out the information sheet), watch for the Volume 50 issue of “Letter From M.O.M.” This will be our 6th anniversary issue and contain some of the best past articles, as well as a listing of past volume articles.

Many have asked about Jeanne, the Mom of M.O.M., and we are happy to announce that she is doing quite well. God seems to have a purpose for her and wants to keep her around for His ministry. Her Birthday is July 13th, and she will be 78 years young.

Am I Really Saved?

Reprinted from Walk in the Word

Pastor James MacDonald

“The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” Romans 8:16

I’m kind of fired up because without a doubt, I have the most important subject in the universe to talk to you about today. If you have “it,” you have everything that you need. But without it, you don’t have anything—no matter how much you have. Many people think they have this but they don’t, and sadly many people who *do* have it, take it for granted. Recognized in all of its splendor you would die for it, but ironically unless you have it, you will die.

What is it that I’m talking about? It is the story of Scripture. It is the miracle of the age. It is the reason that Jesus came, died, and rose again. Sinners call it *conversion*; theologians call it *justification*. Children call it, *asking Jesus into their hearts*, and Jesus called it, *being born again*. Most frequently the Bible calls it **salvation**.

Rightly understood, salvation is the crown jewel of Christianity and the constant comfort of the Lord’s people. But it can also cause much confusion. In fact, surprisingly even in churches that preach the biblical message of salvation, a lot of people are confused about exactly what salvation is and how it works.

This week on the broadcast, I’ll clear up three crucial issues about salvation:

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1. How is a person saved? How does it happen?
2. How do you know if you’ve been saved?
3. Can you lose your salvation?

Right now, we’ll focus on the second issue, *how can you be absolutely sure that you’ve been saved?*

If you’re saved, you belong to God. God has made a mark on you. He has sealed you. What is that assurance that you belong to Him? Look at Ephesians 1:13: **“Having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit.”** So here it is—if you’ve been saved, you have the Holy Spirit. If you’re not saved, you don’t have the Holy Spirit. So the question then is, *how do I know if I have the Holy Spirit?*

We’re gonna get this settled right now. Are you saved? **If you’re saved, the Holy Spirit is doing these six things in your life.** There’s many more things we could have included on this list but I chose what I thought were the six main ones.

1. The Holy Spirit is growing you. (Galatians 5:22) If you’re saved, you’re more godly than you used to be. You’re changing. You might have symptoms of your old problems but you don’t give into them like you used to. You’re being set free from addictions. Your character is growing. When you are saved, the Spirit is developing in you “... love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, self-control”—fruit of His character.

I’ll use myself as an example here. I’ve got problems; I’m not perfect. But the people

who know me best, my family, my close friends, the people that I work with, all would say in unison, “James is not who he was five years ago. God’s growing and changing him.” Is God growing and changing you? That’s a work of His Spirit.

2. The Holy Spirit has gifted you. (1 Corinthians 12) When the Spirit of God comes into your life He gives you the desire and the ability to serve God. If you’re saved, He has gifted you with a specific way you can serve the body of Christ. You are prompted to get beyond selfish consumer Christianity and into the center of what He is doing to build His kingdom.

3. The Holy Spirit convicts you of sin. (John 16:8) You’re like, “It’s the craziest thing, man. Before I knew Christ I could lie, and steal, and be mean to my sister-in-law, but never even felt bad about it. Since I got saved, every time I do anything wrong this siren goes off inside me.” That’s the Spirit at work, convicting you of sin. If you can sin and not be grieved, ask yourself if you’re really saved.

4. Hunger for truth. (John 16:13) Was there a time when you couldn’t have cared less about the Bible? If somebody said to you, ‘Are you reading the Bible?’ you would have been, ‘No, I’m reading Louie L’Amour right now.’ But when you got saved, your desire to learn this book exploded in your heart. If that’s going on in your life, that’s a very good sign.

5. The Holy Spirit leads you. (Romans 8:14) What does *that* mean? God’s Spirit prompts you to make things

right with others, to respond to the message that you hear at church, to want to do the thing that honors Him. When you’re being led by the Spirit, you know there’s something going on in your heart. **“As many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the children of God.”**

6. The Holy Spirit comforts you. (John 14:16) Has there ever been a time in your life when you struggled with just about everything? But since you came to know Christ, things don’t bother you as much. The Spirit supplies strength that you didn’t have before and you’re now able to get through things that you couldn’t before. God Himself bears you along and helps you get through the tough stuff. That’s one of the things the Spirit of God does—He comforts us.

God wants you to know that you’re His child, and if you’re wondering about it, read Romans 8:16, **“the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”** If you’re wondering, *“God, am I your child?”* do this: get alone, read the Scriptures that I’ve mentioned above and pray, “God, do I really know you?” The Spirit Himself will either bear witness, “Yes” or “No.” You don’t have to wonder anymore.

Get this settled right now. If you have more questions, listen to this complete message online. No one should be confused about this issue. *Know* that you *know* that you *know*. It’s that important.

Tools of Ministry

Many of us ask ourselves, “What can I do in Ministry?” I don’t have the training or the tools of ministry.

The training is something that helps in some situations. But, there are lay ministers that lead souls to Christ just as effective as the pastor with a doctorate degree in theology. As we look at the disciples of Christ, we realize the training they had was that of fishing. But Christ stated to them that “I will make you fishers of men.” The disciples jumped in and started doing what needed to be done, instead of having some training program finished.

So what about the “tools of the trade?” Are they such items as the Bible, a concordance, a Bible dictionary, a pulpit, a baptismal? Let me explain some of the tools of the trade I have seen used or personally used.



Python Boots

Walking into a facility, my boots were noticed immediately by an inmate across the block. He called for me to come to his cell. When I got to his door, he said “Nice boots.” I said “Thank you. I am here to share the Word as a volunteer chaplain.” He again said, “Nice boots.” I said, “Thanks, you said that.” He then said, “You’re lucky

I’m not out on program.” I said, “You’d take my boots?” It was a nice time of talking and over the next 4 weeks of visiting sessions, we were able to talk and have a good time.



Car – Fierro 600

This car has a license plate saying “**NO LIE**” and that alone starts a conversation. The fact that it is the only one like it in the world gives the opportunity to witness to each individual, because everyone is in reality a “one of a kind.” The car was recently shown at the Association of Handcrafted Automobiles (AHA) car show at Knott’s Berry Farm in California. During the show many were attracted to the vehicle. My wife would tell the individuals that her husband used the car in his chaplain ministry. This allowed her to make “cold contacts” with strangers and start to witness to them. She even passed out a Bible to one family. Many individuals stated that they were regenerated with the desire to get back involved in church and their relationship with God.

How many other “tools” really are usable for ministry that God has entrusted us with? We will try to follow up with other examples in future newsletters.

Tools of Ministry (Con't) (Reprint From Vol. 5 – Sept. 2004)

So, what about other “tools of ministry?” We already decided that they are more than the items such as the Bible, a concordance, a Bible dictionary, a pulpit, and a baptismal. Let’s continue with some more tools of ministry I have seen used or personally used.

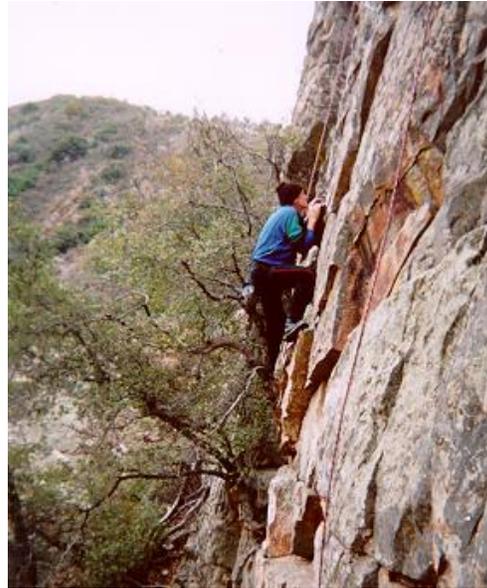


Skydiving Parachute

Many people ask, “Why would you want to jump out of perfectly good airplanes.” Well, there are no perfectly good airplanes, just as there is no perfectly good world.

You might ask what does skydiving have to do with ministry. First there is the necessity to learn what you are doing if you want to survive. There is also the “**fear of stepping out,**” though a little different than stepping out in ministry. There is often more fear in stepping out in ministry than there is fear of stepping out of the airplane.

There is also the **faith** (or trust as it is sometimes called) in the person that packed the chute. There is **faith** that the equipment will function proper. There is **faith** in knowing what to do. And there is **faith** in just trusting God is in control.



Rock Climb

We have heard it said that a person climbs a mountain “because it is there.” Most things that individuals get involved in are because of their love of it. However, this love for something is usually developed over time and becoming better at it. Think of how many testimonies we hear of a person that did not want to commit something to God, only to find them involved in it with an ever-growing passion. This individual is one who had said “NO” to jail ministry. He really missed out on a lot of blessings before. How many other “tools” really are useable for ministry that God has entrusted us with? We will try to follow up with other examples in future newsletters.

Sharing Your Testimony

There are 4 parts to an individual's testimony;

1. What my life was like before I met Jesus
2. How I realized I needed Jesus
3. How I committed my life to Jesus
4. The difference Jesus has made in my life.

1. Your testimony;
2. Your life lessons
3. Your godly passions
4. the Good News

But in reality, those who believe in Jesus have the testimony of God in them; Each of us needs to periodically share our testimony with others. The importance is not what you have done, but what God is doing.

**"For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ."
Hebrews 3:14**

God Handling Your Life and Case

Testimony: It happened on April 29, 2009. I was in court waiting to speak to my attorney. It was the day I was to be sentenced. My attorney came to me and said the DA is offering a four year deal in prison. I thought to myself 'okay, I can do this'. Then came the dreadful word "But" I need to let you know that I came across two other cases that the judge is not aware of and in those two cases you have a joint suspension for a term of six years and eight months. My first thought was oh my God! Then instantly I started to repeat "In the Name of Jesus, in the Name of Jesus." My attorney said, "Now you being the

defendant you may wish to not acknowledge these cases and perhaps maybe they'll not find them, although you could easily serve your four years then the courts could find these cases and you would have to serve the six years and eight months or they might never find it and you would do just the four. Me being your lawyer, I advise you to have the judge acknowledge it now. My mind was racing and my heart was aching. I kept thinking ten years eight months all together. WOW! I wanted to act like the cases didn't exist and take my chances, but, I couldn't handle serving four years and thinking the whole time

I'm gonna be out soon and then, Bam!, I'm going to be served with another six years and eight months. I could not think straight. I said to myself, In the Name of Jesus let it be your will. Help me. , and out of my mouth I said to my attorney "I want to have the Judge acknowledge the two cases. He said, "Are you sure?" I said, "I am." My attorney went to tell the court clerk to look up the cases for the court. I just kept on repeating, "In the Name of Jesus, In the Name of Jesus." I overheard my attorney tell the court clerk "Are you sure?", and my mind went a hundred different ways. I thought what now???????? I kept praying. My attorney walked up to me and said, "I'm glad you decided to acknowledge the two cases, but, I am even happier to tell you that the terms and conditions that go along with them have been terminated. I don't know how or when but they have." I told him, "I know how and I know when.", and out loud I said, "Thank you Jesus !!" There was a man sitting behind me who tapped my shoulder and said, "You were just been blessed!" and I smiled and said, "More than you know." Two days before this I was saved and brought into the light with the help of my new friend Linda. In the Name of Jesus I was blessed.

AMEN! Thank you Linda, you have made an impression in my life. I admire you greatly. You truly are a blessing. Take care. Keep in touch through God's will. We will all be blessed! AMEN!
LOVE, C.L. B.W.D.F.

(just a note from Linda, this is nothing of me only what we should all do and that is sharing hope and salvation through Jesus Christ) God's promises are true, 100%, you can be a new creature in Christ Jesus, the old is gone and the new is come !) Any encouraging words for her are welcomed. God bless you all.

[We know that those incarcerated love hearing of God's intervention. If you have an experience or testimony, please share it with us so we may print it.](#)

Chaplain Bob's Life

Many of those receiving this newsletter have asked for another printout of the testimony of Bob from past life to volunteer chaplain with jail and prison ministry and evangelism for church commitment.

I would like to share a story of the seeds planted in my life and the insight as I look back.

The greatest influence in my life I would have to say was my earthly father. This man would do what ever he could to provide for his family. The greatest reference of his nature was my mothers dearly love always for him.

When I was probably 8 to 12 years old, I had a Sunday school teacher named Malcolm that worked on planting Godly seed in my life. As I look back, I am sure there was the appearance of the seed going dormant, or even dying. As I entered middle school years, I bounced through a variety of churches because of going with friends and relatives. Still, any seed that may have been planted was basically "dead."

As I was finishing my high school years, I started a job in a restaurant where I met a black man, Otis, that was the dishwasher. He let me know that he was an ordained pastor. I thought I want nothing to do with this man. Otis would take the garbage out to the room to empty and would stay a little longer as he pulled his New Testament out of his pocket and read for his break. Then (the nerve of him) he would come back in and share with me about God's love for me and God's purpose for my life. I would tell Otis that I did not want to hear about it. I explained that my relatives would use the Bible and religion to tear apart and slay one another. I further explained that my

feelings were that he read the Bible in the garbage room and that was where it belonged. God should have taken my life for a statement like that. I now am thankful that God did not remove my life on earth, because I would not have been going to be in His Heavenly presence. But God had another plan and had not given up on me. I was accepted to California State University Humboldt and moved to Eureka, CA. I have to admit that this was really God's country, but I still did not have a personal relationship with Him. As I looked for work, I found an opening in the service department of Sears. I was hired to do television and stereo repairs. The manager of the shop came to me and let me know that he was a pastor of a local church. Again I thought "*I'll stay away from him*" but that was not God's plan. I began to think "*either this man has something real or he is totally nuts.*" I decided that I would ask some questions, and so we would spend lunch together in his Volkswagen and discuss Bible reality.

In January 1971, at the age of 23, I finally told Him, **God I accept you as Lord and Savior and want you in control of my life but (1) do not expect me to go to some God forsaken country like Africa as a missionary, (2) don't expect me to work with youth, and (3) never expect me to be involved with inmates, jail or prison ministry.**

As I went on in life, thinking I had cut the best deal I could with God, he started to reveal to me that he wanted me to release some of those things "I" was holding on to and fully submit my life to Him. This happened over an extended period of time and it seems God knew just the right timing and speed for me to grow (you might realize

because He is the creator/builder). As I released those fears I had and let God have control of those objects, there continually were burdens being lifted. I now tell people that while people were getting high on weed in Humboldt County, I was getting high on the Spirit.

I became involved in teaching youth and running a youth group. While dealing with the youth, I noticed one principle that can be applied with our relationship with God. I took a group of youth out gold panning. All day long I watched the young men panning the gold. At the end of the day, I noticed the young ladies had the bottles of gold going home with them. When I asked how that happens, the ladies said that the men did it because of love and labored for the ladies. We actually get to take home the “Gold” at the end of “our day” while God was the one laboring for us all those days.

I had a friend that invited me to do jail ministry with him. I told him that I had told God “no” and he said that was probably a good reason to do it. I have been involved in jail/prison ministry for about 3 ½ years now and can truly say it is my greatest blessing that was almost missed because of “trying” to say NO to God. Later in life, God revealed His progression pattern for me to follow;

1. **Sin**
2. **Salvation**
3. **Separation**
4. **Sanctification**
5. **Soul Winning**
6. **Stewardship**
7. **Service**

Many people try to separate from the temptations of the world before receiving salvation. Others try to receive all God’s blessings (sanctification) before they have separated from the sin of the world.

Read Ephesians 4 thru 6 and see if you can see this pattern revealed. Notice that 1 John displays the same progression, as does Colossians.

Now to get back to the “*but*” three exceptions I *had* to turning my life over to God. “*But #3*” was not doing Jail/prison ministry. Well, I have been blessed with over 7 years of involvement as a volunteer with what God has called me to do. “*But #2*” was to not be involved with youth ministry. I have volunteered as Sunday School teacher, Youth director, AWANA Club boys director at 2 different churches, and organizer for youth outings. The final one, “*But #1*” was to not go to some God forsaken country like Africa as a missionary. I had made this known to those around me and one Wednesday afternoon, I had a pastor tell me that he thought I would have my passport by then. I said “Oh, you read my testimony in the newsletter.” That evening at our church we had a guest speaker from Cameroon Africa. He then told of being involved with jail ministry too. As I went to talk with him after the service, he said he did not know why, but God told him to give me something – a snakeskin checkbook cover. Those that know me, know my snakeskin boots are a trademark. Four incidents in one day? “*OK, God, I will go.*” I said.

We then met **Bruce Wilkinson** in Tulare, CA, who had quit his ministry of **Walk Thru the Bible** and moved to Africa to start a ministry called **Dream For Africa**. We decided it was time to sign up

As you can see in the **Swaziland Special Edition**, we gave that “*but*” to God also, and were truly blessed by the experience. **Ask for the Swaziland Special Edition newsletter.**

Linda's Life



What a great God we serve!!

When my husband asked me to share my testimony I had a picture of my mother and father and the small towns of Fowler and Selma California in my mind. We lived in a three room house with only a light bulb hanging from the middle of the ceiling. There was no plumbing, no bathroom but we did have a woodstove. The outhouse was a distance from the house. We drew water from a well until we graduated to a pump. Years later my "daddy" and "mama" added pipes for a sink and we thought we were rich. We grew all of our own vegetables, had to go out to the henhouse to collect the eggs daily and took care of the Coolidge Ranch consisting of irrigating, pruning, picking grapes, driving tractor etc.... It was the neatest experience. It was survival.

We did not get into town very often so when we did it was a treat. We would visit my dad's family in Tulare and my mom's in Visalia California. If we went to church it was for a wedding, funeral, Easter or Christmas that I could remember.

The earliest experience of any prayer that I could remember was an elderly lady by the name of Nellie Metzler and her husband Henry. When the Wizard of Oz would come out on TV every year they would pick up all of us

kids and take us to their house. Nellie would pray for our delicious chocolate cake and glass of milk while we sat to watch the movie on this big blanket that was laid out for us in front of the "color" tv. Color TV! Wow! To see color for the first time and listen to Judy Garland sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." There is just something about that song that stayed with me. I could picture myself singing, seeking for answers that would lead to a beautiful new world where there was no tears and everyone was filled with a joy and love for each other.

I did not realize that "Nellie" was put in my path to pray for me until 1992. Thank God that she was a prayer warrior. She was also the person that gave me this book called "All About Trees" and told me to read and I could travel all over the world anytime. Yes, I do love to read and write and encourage others to do so.

My father was a very hardworking man. He was also an alcoholic which led to the abuse of my beautiful mother. In my teens, during their divorce I started hanging around with people who were eight to ten years older than me. WRONG!!

Selma When I was 12 or 13 years old I was brutally and violently raped by a relative whom I trusted. Being dragged down a dirt field by the hair is like those cartoons shown of cavemen dragging the female. With a can opener to my throat and after fighting for my life, I finally stopped when I felt this calm over me as if I was not to move anymore. (I am still alive. Thank you Lord!)

My heart was shattered, my mind was confused and the silent rage filled my being. Every person was a target of my fury. The twig of anger turned into a bush of bitterness. Finding myself "alone" in all of this ugliness I chose to "survive". I vowed that on one was ever going to hurt me again. I delved in new age not knowing that it

was leading to a nightmare of hell. I did not know any other way until the day I accepted Jesus Christ into my life in 1992. Praise the Lord!!

I did not care about anyone but myself. I wanted to belong somewhere so like a magnet all my friends were about in the same boat. I was living a wild and very dangerous and promiscuous lifestyle. Misery loves company. That is so sad that some people live life through a tunnel vision. They cannot see the whole picture.

I had my first child at 16, married at 18, had my second child, divorced by 22 and lived (not married) with my third child's father for another 7 years. During my first marriage I usually ended up by myself with my children. My husband at that time was a heroin addict of which I would go visit him in prisons all over dragging my children along with me.

I was at death's door at least 6 times either by being almost strangled, beatings, knifed, or shot, well, you name it. We lived in a little cabin in back of my in-laws. Actually it was my then husband's grandparents who raised him. Whenever Grandma would hear any screams he would try to cover my mouth so he did not have to confront any of them and yell back to her...."Nothing is going on. We are okay." [Liar, Liar pants on fire :>)]. I would get slapped across my face, onto the bed, his knees would be on my shoulders and I would get called every name in the book as he slapped me back and forth until I would get away which would land me next to the little frig, get slapped toward the stove then slapped to the floor. It was a never ending story. Usually happening on Friday or Saturday nights after he would come home and I would find matchbooks with from the Rainbow Ballroom or he would smell of perfume. It was always something. (That is if anyone remembers those "OLDIES DANCES".) There were always other

women in his life. I was no naive in what was going on all around me. One day I had just about enough and in self defense I grabbed the scissors where I had them up to neck and until I heard "Grandma's" voice then I pulled back and I was safe.....for one day.

Being in and out of prison is no life for children and thinking there was no way out I felt lost and hopeless. I did not go to church besides visit and never got connected. I finally chose to get divorced leading to dead end relationships that were like a revolving door, over and over again.

The relationship I had for seven years was a roller coaster of emotions. I carried all the excess baggage with me everywhere. This relationship was full of arguments, no trust and insecurity. I had one child from that relationship. My son was loved by everyone and was tragically killed with his best friends in a fiery auto accident. He was a marine and home for several weeks when this happened. It involved alcohol. The enemy never sleeps.
Kings James 1 Peter 5:8,
NIV version 1 Peter 5:8

If I had not known the Lord then, even the little that I knew at that time during my life, I shudder to think where I would have been now. I had two more children without their fathers in their lives.

During 1990 I moved to Visalia. The doors were opening in all areas of my life. I started working with the developmentally challenged, office, auto dismantlers and as a merchandiser working all over the valley. God sent several people in my path to encourage me. I was married in 1994, very involved in my church so when I was served with divorce papers it was as if I was going through the grieving stages of another death. I was devastated. In James 1:2-8 the scriptures speak of "when you face trials" not "if", for they will surely come. The only thing you have to rely on is to have faith and trust

in God. Like Jeremiah 29:11 and also Colossians 4:17 where Paul writes; Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

Well we have been given gifts, yes...You! You and I and we have to use them. It is like a nugget of gold. You use it to share the gospel and it increases in value everyday as you go out in obedience for His glory. It could be singing, using an instrument, reading to others, writing, sewing, painting, art, math, woodworking, ironwork, gardening...etc, etc, etc. Those skills are perfected and the giver of gifts will be well pleased..."he that is faithful in little will be faithful in much" What I am getting at is for you to look back at your childhood. What are your skills and gifts and how have you used them? What did you want to be when you grew up? Did you lose your dream? It has been said that the richest place in the world is the graveyard where people's hopes and dreams are buried along with them. The time is now! Do not wait a second longer. Pray for guidance in whatever you do. Maybe you will end up in Africa as my husband and I did. You do not know but I suggest you start getting prepared for this great adventure. If that train pulls up at your station I suggest you get on. Don't let that enemy put doubts in your head or allow him to set these words in your mind and heart like "I'll wait for the right time", "Maybe later", "I don't believe I am ready yet", or the classic:

"Look at you! Who is going to believe you, after what you have done!?" That dirty devil is the author of lies, deceit, confusion and the lord of the flies.

I am here today to write this because I know that we serve a great God and God loves me. As a young child I was robbed of my youth, joy and hope. When I realized that Jesus took it all for me I asked Him into my heart. He had to be the Lord of my life for the rest of my life. I asked for forgiveness and

gave up trying to carry that heavy load of guilt, anger, sadness and the pity parties that I was the host of and was the guest of honor. Like I said misery loves company. If you want to be a winner you have to hang around with winners. Think back at your life and ask God to guide you from this day forward. Allow your life to be filled with a joy that is so overwhelming that you cannot contain it and share it with everyone. You can have it now. Just ask Jesus in complete submission. (search your heart)

Lord, I am here today because I am a sinner. I repent of my sins and ask for forgiveness of _____ (tell Him now) I accept Jesus Christ as my savior and into my heart. I trust in you from this moment on. Give me a hunger for your word. Guide me in the gifts that you have given me so I may serve and share of You daily and whatever I do and say will be glorifying to You. Less of me, and more of You. I am a new creature in God's kingdom. I am royalty and will act upon it accordingly. May the words of my mouth encourage others, give me the wisdom to turn away from wrong and the strength to run the race and follow you all the days of my life.

AMEN. (There, was that so hard?)

December 15, 1992

Woodland Drive Baptist Church Office
Pastor Ernie and Margie Martinez

When I accepted Jesus Christ in my heart was the day that I said, "Lord, please take away this ugliness in my heart. I want to have joy and peace in my heart. I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. Then all of a sudden I said; (I was truly tired and desperate so I wanted to God to know that I meant business) " Lord if I ever see the person who hurt me I will tell him I forgive him and tell him of Your love." Then I said and if I ever see Nicky Cruz I will tell thank him for his book "Devil on the

Run". Margie gave that to me. The Bible is the living Word. It made this hard headed woman see the light. I got to see Nicky in Fresno and he prayed for me.

Years went by as I noticed so many changes in my life and saw how I viewed "things". My pastor Isidro and Cleo Carrasco said to get rid of things in my house that were not godly and if in doubt get rid of it. I did as instructed. My eyes were open to all of the stuff that I was allowing into my children's lives. I had to ask for forgiveness from my children. I then got rid of all kinds of items and broke them up (gods, idols) thousands of dollars of books and tore them up so no one would pick them up. If we give them to others or set them where another would pick them up and use then or read them, it is opening up the window to the darkness for them and we will be accountable.

Well, one day it happened. I was singing at a funeral and low and behold there he was right across from me. There was the man that had shredded my life into pieces. The first thought that came to me was "Okay Linda, finish singing and get out of here." I did get to see tears stream down his face under his sunglasses as I sang "Go Rest High Upon That Mountain" I started to leave when I heard a very clear voice tell me "What happened? I thought you were going to tell him about my love?"

???? Wow! I immediately asked for forgiveness and followed this person home and went up to him in front of all of his friends to ask him if I could speak to him

When he saw me it was as if he seen a giant with a facial expression that I will never forget. He walked around away from everyone and kept saying "please, don't look at me. I'm not worth the ground you spit on." I told him

that I thought about many ways to get revenge but that on December 15, 1992 when I asked Jesus into my life there was a heart change. I told him that I was there to tell him that I forgave him and wanted to be sure that I did not go to my grave or he did not go to his grave before I told him that I had repented of all anger and bitterness against him and wanted to be sure he knew Jesus too. He cried and said please don't tell me that. It burns like hot coals. He was like a crumpled, broken doll on his knees. I gently helped him up, hugged him and told him "I love you and now the ball is on your court. I serve an amazing God and I want you to know Him and let him be the Lord of your life too. Proverbs 25:22, Romans 12:20, NIV.

Romans 12:9-21

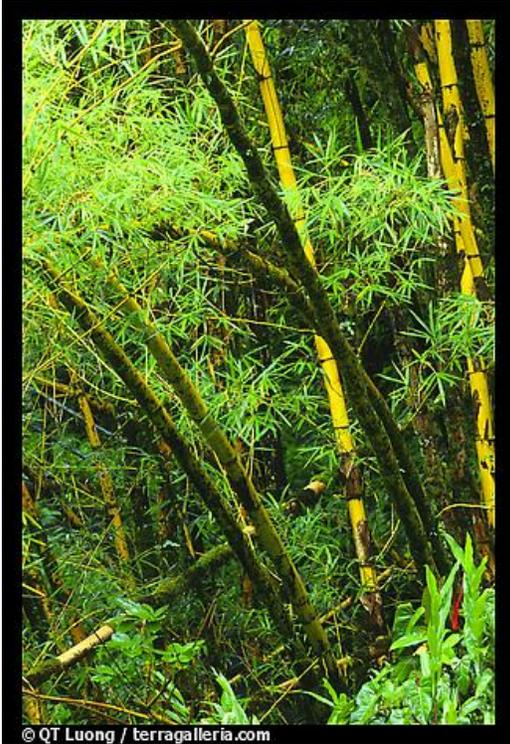
Asking for forgiveness does wonders and heals our heart wounds. It had to be real. It was life changing and the newness and the joy I knew at that moment I could not even describe. Psalm 18, Ephesians 6:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

My present husband, Bob and I are growing closer.....The truth isAt first it was a bit of a struggle for me. I would think "forget this" at times. When you are a Christian it doesn't mean that everything is "live happily ever after". It just means that we rely on God to guide us in our decisions especially when we "humans" get to a low point. When the storms come we are not alone, especially in blended families. There is so much more. I could go on and on about God's miracles in my life and the lives of others that I would love to share. You may write me. God Bless you all.

God is good all the time....All the time God is good.

In Christ Jesus, Linda.

Don't Give Up



We are often tempted to give up before we see the results we desire in our lives. The bamboo farmers of Malaysia could teach us a lesson. It takes great wisdom and patience to cultivate a particular strain of a very valuable bamboo. How do they do it? In the first year, they plant the seed, water, and fertilize it. Nothing visible happens.

In the second year, they continue to water and fertilize. Nothing visible happens in the second year either. In the third year, water and fertilizer are even more necessary, yet nothing happens. There is absolutely no visible growth. In the fourth year, they do it all again. And again, nothing happens. Then, in the fifth year, they diligently water and fertilize, and the bamboo grows 90 feet in 30 days - not 9 inches, but 90 feet. This plant grows from nothing to the height of a nine-story building. The lesson for us: Don't grow weary in well doing, for in the end, there will be a harvest. In the end, it will come to pass.



The Devil roams about seeking whom he may devour

Artwork by Johnny Tristan