

CAM UPDATE

Christian Aftercare Ministries for Ex-Offenders SEPTEMBER 2006

FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Paul Roussel

MY INVOLVEMENT WITH CAM

By Dave Rattigan
New CAM Board Member

ON 04/12/06, I had the opportunity to meet the new commissioner of corrections, Bill Wrenn. The visit went well as I shared with him what CAM does and how it ties in with his goal of reducing recidivism. Bill shared some of his thoughts about the importance of ex-offenders surrounding themselves with positive people. We had an excellent meeting.

AS WE serve in this ministry, the Lord overwhelms us with His hand of blessing in so many ways. In the lives of men and women in prison, the Lord's blessings come quickly. Lisa accepted Jesus as Savior, then shortly thereafter she went to court for sentencing and was sentenced 1-3 years. Within 48 hours, the judge had her back in court and he reduced her sentence dramatically.

Lisa told me this story, and said with a big smile, "Jesus did that!"

The Lord continues to bless CAM financially. We now have five supporting churches and approximately 10 individuals who contribute on a regular basis. We were able to help an ex-offender secure an excellent job this past month!

MONDAY morning visits at Valley Street Jail are on-going with many opportunities for CAM to share God's plan of salvation.

We are seeing many lives changed as they accept Jesus as Savior. There are now Bible studies in eight pods out of nine every week at Valley Street.

Mike Grady and I do weekly Bible studies at Calumet House in Manchester (prison halfway house) and Pastor Carlson, chaplain at Valley St., visits weekly there with some of the men.

IF MEN & WOMEN truly want to turn their lives around, the Lord has raised up many Christian volunteers to help them on this journey.

*"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations."
Psalm 89:1*

JESUS is the Power and the Truth that saved me and my family.

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is." Romans 12:2

For more than a year, the Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to help ex-offenders by gathering furniture and other items for CAM.

Every item I've picked up has come with a story, a testimony of (God's) power. Some of the donations I cannot explain or understand how they came about, so I just believe and don't try to do the math! From a roof rack blown off a vehicle with a new mattress and box spring attached, picked up by a guy who told me he doesn't know why he picked it up because he didn't need them; to a website link for a non-related item with the item I was looking for mistakenly left on it. **Jesus Christ is our savior and meets our needs in amazing ways. The Holy Spirit will guide us and anything is possible.**

"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer with thanksgiving (continued next page)

(Continued from page 1)

make your requests to God, and the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guide your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6, 7

Editors Note:

About 18 months ago, after I spoke at Bethany Covenant church about our ministry, Dave came up to me after the service and simply said, “I can get furniture if and when you need it.” It sounded good, but little did I know how the Lord would use Dave to bless our ministry and the men and women getting out of prison with much needed furniture, bicycles to get to work, etc.

Dave has been so effective at his word, I sometimes think I am calling a furniture store!

Dave has filled every request, delivered by him with his own truck.

So many that Dave has helped have called me to say *Thanks*. This CAM ministry also thanks the Lord for Dave and his faithfulness.

###

PRAISE:

For the privilege to serve the Lord here in the CAM ministry and for the opportunity to share the message of salvation with each one the Lord sends our way.

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

By Michael Cranford

I am not going to attempt to write some moving testimony full of flowery metaphors and such. Frankly my life before Christ was a self-made living Hell.

It started about age 11 when I was introduced to the world of sexual immorality. Over the next 26 years, my life was a total wreck; it focused on one thing and one thing only: sexual gratification. I used the same line of logic on myself that the serpent used on Eve and Adam: “Did God really say you must not...? You will not ...suffer any harm...in fact your eyes will be opened...-you’ll be wiser and better for it.” Just read Genesis 3:1-7, and you’ll see what I mean. Their “eyes” like mine were opened; opened to a world that neither I nor anyone else should have ever been introduced to. I pulled anyone I could into the current with me.

Although I was overwhelmed by my sin nature, I was also tortured inside because a part of me knew that I was wrong and out of control, and it was killing me inside. I hated myself for what I was doing and often took that hate out on myself, including suicide attempts.

The thought of talking to anyone about the life I was leading horrified me. For if people around me knew what kind of life I was leading, they would have more than likely rejected me completely, and the thought of being alone was very frightening.

I started going to church as a teen mainly because I felt accepted there. I made a feeble show of “accepting Christ as Savior” yet continued to live my double life. I was in a denomination that railed against sexual immorality, so it came across to me that all sins, except sexual ones were forgivable in the church’s eyes. Afraid to seek help from the church, I sank deeper into depravity and my double life. The “Mike” they saw was the “holy” caring Mike...a godly man. I was, in reality, far from it. According to I John, there was serious question whether or not I was saved at all. The scary part was that I convinced myself that I was (saved). I put on an act, because I felt accepted, while all the time I was fearful of discovery.

My self-delusion continued to such an extent that I even went to Bible School. There the torture continued as I tried to suppress the perversion without much success. Fantasy and perversion were my constant companions. The turmoil finally came to a head. God saw that this had gone on long enough. I was arrested and charged for my actions.

It was in the jail cell that I finally was able to stop long enough to take a real serious look at my life. The secret was out. Everybody knew. (But) there was something inside of me that said, “**Your prayers are finally being answered.**”

On a cold April morning I was reading an article in my cell about the fallen preacher, Jim Bakker. There was a quote that, when I read it, opened up a floodgate of emotion inside me. **Jim Bakker said, “I do not look at my imprisonment as God’s judgment...no, it was His mercy. He stopped me, I was on my way to hell, and He reached out and stopped me!”**

(Continued next page)

PRAYER REQUEST:

That the Lord will continue to guide and direct as we move forward with our Christian transitional housing vision.

THE LORD'S WORK INSIDE THE WALLS

By Paul Roussel

Many of you have heard the comment that it is far easier to be a Christian inside the walls than it is after you are released.

The concept of aftercare is to provide help, encouragement, and guidance when a person is released, but the Christian journey starts well before release.

The key to a successful Christian re-entry starts inside the walls, with individuals making a 100 % heart-changing commitment to walk with Jesus. That requires the individuals, after having been convicted by the Holy Spirit of their need to change, confess their sins and accept Jesus as Savior, they must then be overwhelmed by the Lord's wonderful mercy in transforming their lives. As they start to praise the Lord for blessing their lives, the journey to becoming a committed Christian starts. Their faith grows, they start reading the Bible, and they want to please Jesus. They quickly realize the importance of Christian fellowship provided by Bible studies, chapel services, Christian recovery programs and prayer time. How faithful they are in attending these opportunities for growth is a measure of their commitment to Jesus.

In New Hampshire, the Lord has provided doors open to the Gospel in all the jails and prisons in the state. Hundreds of Christian Volunteers who go in and do Bible studies, lead Christian programs like Alpha, and do weekend seminars (Prison Fellowship and Kairos). In addition to all this, the Christian inmates do their own Bible studies in the pods and in the process hold one another accountable for their walk.

As a ministry, our ongoing prayer is that the Lord will use all the Christians (inmates and volunteers) to share Jesus with every person incarcerated in New Hampshire.

My Personal Testimony, Continued from Page 2

I arrived at the Calumet Halfway house. I recall Mike Grady's Bible studies at the Halfway house, how on his wedding anniversary, he took time out of his day and drove me to the orientation classes for my new job. I smile when I remember the genuine concern and prayers of Paul Roussel and how he arranged for me to get a bike so I could get back and forth to work. The biggest blessing was when Christian Aftercare presented me with a donated vehicle.

I've been blessed with a wonderful job and God has seen it fit to allow me to be promoted to a management position in my company.

So, now when Paul Roussel or anyone else asks me how I am doing spiritually or otherwise, all I have to do is point to the donated car on which the license plates bear a single phrase: "**BLESSED.**" I think that pretty much says it all ... don't you?

CHRISTIAN AFTERCARE MINISTRIES

50 Lowell St., Manchester, NH 03101

Co-Laborers with the Church in ministry to ex-offenders

OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday
8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
603-669-5090

CAM MINISTRY URGENTLY NEEDS:
Men's jeans, sneakers, work boots, gloves,
clean shirts and jackets in good repair,
as well as...*YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT.*

CAM news: compiled by Editor, Paul Roussel, CAM director.
Prepared by Marjorie Frank.
Financed by your donations.
Mailed from Manchester, NH Post Office three times a year.

Tax deductible donations may be made payable to Christian Aftercare Ministries (CAM) and sent to:
50 Lowell St., Manchester, NH 03101

Thank you for helping to meet these on-going needs.

NOTICE: If you would like a CAM board member to visit your church or group to speak about this ministry? Please call Paul Roussel, director, to schedule a date. Phone: (603) 669-5090.

CAM UPDATE
Christian Aftercare Ministries
50 Lowell Street
Manchester, NH 03101

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Manchester, NH
Permit Number 434

TO: