CHRISTIANS IN RECOVERY

Good News Letter

If you want to backslide, that's your business. — If you want to stop, that's our business!

Who Loves God?

by Michael Premo

Some people really love God. Some people hate God.

All Christians believe in God, but most have a lukewarm love for Him. Their *first love* has been replaced by religious tradition and an unhealthy drive for the American prosperity dream. Most people (including Christians) love money and pleasures more than God.

Most people love their family more than God. Some cats and dogs are loved more than God.

How many love alcohol and drugs more than God? Some Christians don't love God enough to repent from smoking cigarettes.

Homosexuals, fornicators, and porn addicts love perversion and immoral sex more than God.

Jesus makes a serious connection between obedience and love.

Jesus said,

"If you [really] love Me you will keep (obey) My commands.

John 14

If you believe that Jesus is the Christ—that He is God's Son and your Savior—then you are a child of God. And all who love the Father love His children too. So you can find out how much you love God's children—your brothers and sisters in the Lord—by how much you love and obey God. Loving God means doing what He tells us to do... 1 John 5:1-3

We can evaluate how much we love God by how much we obey Him. Rebellion is the opposite of obedience.

Sometimes as Christians we allow our feelings to come before obedience to the Word of God. We don't feel like obeying, we don't feel like repenting. Where is our love (for God)?

Christians who radically love God, live by faith, not feelings. Faith that works by love, enables a lukewarm Christian to become a true disciple.

Those who love God are not ashamed of Him.

"So why do you call Me 'Lord' when you won't obey Me?" Luke 6:46

Who do we love? What do we love?

Where our treasure is, that is where our heart is!

How we spend our time, how we spend our money, reveals *who* and *what* we love.

Most of us love ourselves too much! That's why Jesus said to His disciples "You must deny yourself."

"Anyone who wants to be My follower must love Me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers or sisters—yes more than his own life—otherwise he cannot be My disciple." *Luke 14:26*

Who loves God?

"... but one who is forgiven little, shows little love." *Luke 7:47*

How much have we been forgiven?

Friday night 6:30

"Support Group"

Our "Higher Power" is Jesus Christ!

Understanding & Hope!

Meeting at

The Church By

The Side Of The Road

1 mile N. of the SeaTac Airport 148th & Pacific Hwy. S. Tukwila

(If you get lost, don't be shy! Pray and God will show the way.)

Friday Night Church 7:30

NO

PERFECT

CHRISTIANS

ALLOWED

LETTERS FROM THE HEART

Until reading "Backslider" I felt alone and worthless. I felt like discarded trash that was disposited in jail and forgotten. Your testimony has given me hope to keep seeking Jesus...maybe He can fix my messed up life. I wrote that to you 3 years ago. I've lost everything and gained what money can't purchase. Thank you for sound doctrine-spoken in love. **Miles**

Your newsletter gave me a positive outlook on things. We can change! It touched my heart in a way I cannot explain. I'm a 4 time loser and I'm tired of backsliding. Please continue to send your newsletters. **Bob**

The Lord layed it upon my heart to tithe to *Seattle Recovery Fellowship*. I get paid once a month, enclosed is my check for \$4.81. I want to be faithful and honest. **Karen, from "behind the wall."**

I just finished reading "Baskslider" for the second time. I'm fighting addictions with alcohol and drugs. I would like to change my life, but I need help. Can you help me? **Bill**

Someone showed me one of your *CIR* newsletters but I was only able to scan a couple of stories and write down your address. Currently I am locked up in the Pierce County Jail "God Pod". Could you please send me your newsletters and information about your discipleship houses. When I am released I would like to go into a discipleship house. Thank you. **Randy**

It has taken a while to admit my problem with alcohol and drugs. I would like to continue getting your newsletters and when I am released I hope I can move into one of your discipleship houses. **Ben**

I am guilty as sin. I do drugs, cigarettes and other ungodly acts and things. I want to change my life. I believe your ministry can help me. Please write. **Gil** I was put in jail in *Seattle* and my heart started to change when I met *Mike Sgobba* in the *R-unit* at the RJC. Then I was sent to the *Yakima CO. jail* where I did my time in the "*God Pod*" and I met *Chaplain Lopez*. That is when a major change took place in my heart. I believed in God all my life but now I know God. I'm not asking for a hand-out but rather a hand-up. When I am released I will be homeless and friendless. I am asking for an opporunity to stay at one of your discipleship houses. I'm looking forward to becoming a new member of *Christians In Recover*. **David**

As a new born again I was starting to experience my first backslide. I asked God for help and the mailman brought your encouraging letter and the *CIR* newsletter. Praise be to God! I am working at bringing my first brother to Christ. Please pray for me so that the Holy Spirit will bless me and give me ability to deliver the Word properly. I know this is my calling, to serve the Lord. I am interested in the *CIR* discipleship house. I don't get out until 07. Can preparations be made now? *Chief Praise The Lord*, I too will gladly sleep outside! Please continue to send newsletters. **Matthew**

For the past couple of months I have been prompted by the Holy Spirit to write a letter to *Christians In Recovery*. I believe I am called to serve you. It doesn't make sense considering where I am writing from. My desire is to follow the prompting from the Spirit to tell you that God loves you! Don't give up. This letter is a reminder to you from God through me. If I can be of any service to you please don't hesitate to ask. If it's in my power to do so I will. We were created for His purpose. Fear not and know that God is with you. Please accept my \$4.00 tithe. *From behind the wall*, **Jim**

When I received your letter I just wept because God answered my prayer. Sometimes I feel I have wasted my life. Your letter is the only mail I have received since being at this prison. **Steve**

Recover (Greek) To become sober again, regain (one's) senses; (Hebrew) To live, to revive, nourish up, preserve, quicken, repair, be whole.

Prison has been good for me. I have so much more to learn as I try to rebuild my life. The biggest obstacle I'm dealing with is wondering how I'm going to deal with the public scorn that is associated with my crime. I've never told you before or talked about it because shame and embarrasment. It's very difficult for me to admit to you that I'm a sexual offender. There I did it-now you know-I know that you can accept me in spite of my crime. I messed up-bigtime-Lord Jesus please help me. Please understand that it is not natural for me to share my weaknesses. I battle with my pride. My past has brought me to my knees. My heart has been broken. I want to be humble and teachable. I know my character is being refined. After reading your book for the second time I realize vou know something about how God humbles us. Thank you brother for allowing me to share my heart. I need to to start establishing trust with others and seek help and prayer about my life. I'm determined to stay focused on HIM. A thankful Christian in recovery.

I read "Backslider". Wow!!!! That is the most inspiring testimony I have ever heard. Just when I turn the page and think you got it together "Bam!!!" you backslide, as we all do. I just recently gave my life back to Christ. I know Jesus loves me. I'm locked up in the Pierce County Jail. Another inmate named Jon and I were hoping you come to the jail and share your story live. When I get out of jail I will be heading straight to your church. **Breon**

Your Letters From The

Heart remind us that we are doing the Fathers business!

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience, strength and hope.

Burdens and joys of life are real. God cares and so do we.

LETTERS FROM THE HEART

I have been a backslider for years. I have slapped my wife a couple of times and now she has left me. I have just finished your book on backsliding and your story is amazing. I am trying to walk with Christ. I need more insight. This is my first time in prison and I don't ever want to come back. **Daniel**

I am a first time convicted felon serving 42 months. Yet I am more free than at any time in my life, because I was recently *born again*. I have given my life completely over to Christ. If there is someone available that I could correspond with I would really appreciate it. **Matthew**

I got saved last Easter Sunday and I feel great. I got two other people saved. I got your newsletter at the church. I backslid twice but I got back on track. **Preacher D**

I want to be part of *Christians In Recovery* ministry when I am released in June of 2007. I was transferred to Lompoc. Please say "Hi" to Stan, Jeff and Chief. I will die serving the Lord. I am a Hebrew who believes in Jesus! **Victor**

I went to church a week ago and received a copy of the *CIR* newsletter. I loved it and read all the little stories mentioning "Backsliders". A couple of days later I walked out of my room and saw three different copies of your newsletter. I spent the whole day reading them. Could you please send info. on your recovery houses? **Dick**

I just read "Backslider". I found out that I am a backslider! **Ken**

I'm homeless but not hopeless. I just finished reading the Good News Letter and God opened my eyes & senses to an opportunity to go from darkness into the light. I feel like God sent an Angel to lay that CIR newsletter on the jail book store shelf, just for me. I love Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him even though I have have been struggling with alcoholism for

years. I'm getting released next week and I want to live like Jesus wants me to. Will you help me? If someone could meet me when I'm released that would be wonderful. I don't want to go back to my old way of life. **Doug**

Help, my forte is jails, prisons, missions and ghetto's. I don't know much about Jesus except sometimes we talk. I don't know the Bible, but I would like to be taught. I need encouragement and direction in my life.

Another inmate here at the SeaTac Federal Prison gave me a copy of one of your newsletters and it prompted me to read "Backslider". I was raised in the church but at the age of 15 I turned away from God, people and my problems. To bury my shame I have used alcohol, cocaine and meth. I have lost so much due to my not facing reality and God. I've tried to stop backsliding in the past, but I had a hard time finding fellowship. I am so thankful for your CIR Newsletter. I read an article on "pride" and it really fit my life. I appreciate the testimonies of those who have backslidden like me and are now living for God. I was scared to go to prison, but to my surprise I found a great Bible study group. When I am released I want to be part of *Christians In Re*covery. I also request your prayers.

Burnhardt

I am not a big backslider and yet I find myself sitting here in the Pierce County Jail. I was put in the "God Pod" with 31 other men. I have rededicated my life back to God and I can't say enough for the peace of mind I have found here in jail. Thank you for having your inspirational book available here at the jail. I passed it on to another inmate. James

I'm serving time in the King Co. Jail for robbery. I just read "Backslider" and it moved me very much. I have been on the wrong side way too long. Please pray for me. **Donna**

I recently found God in jail. I was reading my little Bible and I saw the word backslider and I asked the head of our Bible study group, "What is a backslider?" He told me that it is a Christian that once really loved God and now doesn't love Him as much. Anyway I really have fallen in love with the Lord and soon will be giving my first bible study. After reading your book on backsliding I have decided to do my first study on backsliding, because I don't ever want to backslide. Your book really had an effect on me. Here is some of my notes on my first bible study.

Backslider: To have faith and then fall away from following God. Those who are running from God. Backsliding is a human trait and it's been around since the beginning of time. King David backslid. If we backslide God will forgive us if we ask Him. To prevent backsliding we should guard our heart. Acknowledge our sin. Focus on God's Word. Do things that we know are right. Avoid temptation. King David was obedient and renewed his relationship with God.

I can't wait to begin my new journey on the outside. I know to much now to ever go back to where I was. I can't wipe this smile off my face. I'm expecting a revival like the one in the early 70's. **An excited Bro from RJC**

As a Christian in recovery, I must accept responsibility for my behavior—past, present, and future! I must be honest with myself! I must not blame my parents! I must not blame my spouse! I must not blame my friends! I must not blame the church! I must not blame my job! I must not blame society! I must not blame God! If I choose to be honest... If I choose to follow God... If I choose to humble myself... Then one day at a time—I will experience sobriety, serenity, and the satisfaction of recovery!

RESTORING FALLEN LEADERS

by Jim Feeney

First the bad news. Israel's King David fell into adultery with Bathsheba, had her husband killed, then took her as his wife. The apostle Peter denied Jesus, even to the point of calling curses upon himself and swearing, "I don't know the man!" John Mark, on a ministry trip with the apostles Paul and Barnabas, abandoned the ministry and his fellow ministers.

Now the good news. King David repented and acknowledged his sin and continued to serve in God's favor as Israel's king. To this day, David is considered by many to be Israel's greatest king. Peter repented, changed his ways, and served for years as a bold apostolic leader in the early church. John Mark came under the caring, restoring oversight of Barnabas and returned to effective ministry. And the Lord granted him the privilege of writing the Gospel of Mark.

Now the very good news. Three fallen leaders - an adulterous and violent King David, a Christ-denying apostle Peter, and a ministry-abandoning John Mark -- were all restored to places of fruitful ministry. If you are a fallen leader and desire to get back to the Lord and to His service, consider a three-step process drawn from the restoration of the fallen leaders David, Peter and John Mark.

1) Repentance. King David came to a place of godly sorrow and cried out to the Lord in sincere repentance for his sins: "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my

transgressions to the Lord' - and you forgave the guilt of my sin". If Jesus is touching your heart, pour out your sins to Him. He already knows all of them. But He wants you to ask Him for forgiveness - which He will be delighted to give you.

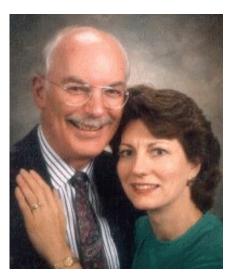
2) Turn back to Jesus. The Lord predicted in advance that Peter would deny Him. He also foretold Peter's recovery from that terrible fall - "When you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers." Peter did get his focus back on Jesus. He "turned to (Jesus) again," and the Lord restored Peter to an outstanding ministry.

3) Find a "Barnabas". In Acts 15:36-40 we read that the apostles Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement over unfaithful John Mark. Because Mark had deserted them in earlier ministry. Paul no longer wanted Mark to accompany him in ministry. Barnabas, though, was of a different persuasion, and he took Mark under his watchful and caring oversight. In the process of time, Mark was restored to effective ministry. Even the previously offended apostle Paul later said. "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11).

Are you a fallen leader? A fallen Christian? Are you a back-slider? There is great hope for you! Jesus Christ still has a great future for you. The process is simple. (1) Let godly sorrow bring you to a place of sincere repentance for your sins. Jesus will forgive! (2) Turn back to Jesus with all your heart. He will receive you!

(3) Find a "Barnabas" to help you. Ask a godly pastor or elder or mature Christian to help you through your time of recovery. The process will take time, commitment, and a willingness to be teachable and to be corrected. But God will use this biblical process to bring you back to a place of fruitful service to Him.

Don't wait another day! Let your heart be stirred by the Holy Spirit and then call somebody.



Pastor Feeney and his sweet, virtuous wife Mickey.

Jim and Mickey Feeney live in Phoenix, Oregon. He is the founding pastor of *South Valley Church*.

Jim has been in full-time ministry since 1975.

(Editors note)

In 1977 Jim Feeney traveled to Clearwater Beach, Florida in an attempt to minister restoration to me after I became a fallen (shattered) pastor.

Jim's character and compassion has left a mark in my life. With meekness he has helped in the recovery of this fallen leader.

Effectual Fervent Prayer

James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The **effectual fervent prayer** of a righteous man availeth much.

Effectual: (GK.) To be active, be mighty in, shew forth self, work. **Fervent:** (GK.) Heat, zeal. **Availeth:** (GK.) Force, be able,

Availeth: (GK.) Force, be able, can do, be good, might, prevail, be of strength. **Zeal:** (GK.) Heat, fervent mind, desire, covet.

Luke 22:44 And being in an agony **He prayed more earnestly**: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Jesus was effectual, fervent and zealous when He prayed. He knew why prayer was vital. His disciples, because of a lack of motivation, could not pray for one hour. They were "fleshly".

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, **and in prayers.**

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak the Word of God with freedom and boldness and courage.

Acts 6: 4 But we will continue to **devote ourselves steadfastly to prayer** and the ministry of the Word.

1 Thess. 5:16- Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.

What is the whole truth?

by Michael Premo

I was subpoened to be a witness this week in a trial of a brother who was in our discipleship program *for* a short stay.

I walked into the courtroom and stood before the judge. I was asked to raise my right hand and to **tell the whole truth.**

A jury of 12 men and women stared at me as I took my seat.

The defense lawyer asked "Pastor Premo could you please tell us about the church you pastor and your ministry to people in recovery." I briefly explained that we were a Christian, Bible believing church and that Jesus Christ is the answer for people in recovery.

The defense asked me several more questions dealing with the brother on trial about things that I knew and didn't know.

The prosecution was next and they also asked several questions, "Does the church that you pastor believe that homosexuallity is a sin?" I answered, "The bible clearly teaches that homsexuallity is a sin."

The prosecution continued, "Then do you also believe that the wages of sin is death?" I simply answered, "Yes!"

He continued, "Do you believe that homosexuals are basically evil?" Before I could answer, the defense objected and the judge agreed. I was not allowed to answer that question. But I was ready and my answer would have been something like this, "Yes homosexuals are evil, and so is everybody else in this courtroom. The Bible clearly teaches that there is none that is good, no not one. The heart of man is deceitfully wicked and who can know it?"

The brother on trial was caught. He took his eyes off Jesus and His sin found him out. The rest of us are guilty also, but we didn't get caught. "But for the grace of God, there go I."

That is the whole truth!

Why a Christian should not smoke!

1 Tim. 4:12 ...but be an example (pattern) for the believers, in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

Even non-Christians will admit that smoking is a bad example!

Recently one of the men in one of the *discipleship houses* made a visit to a *founder* of a prison ministry.

After they settled down for some good conversation the "leader" asked the new disciple if he would like a cigarette.

This ordained minister was going to satisfy his nicotine craving by inhaling some smoke into his lungs. Misery loves company and so why not tempt and stumble a new believer.

The new disciple was taught that his body is the Temple of God and that it is a bad testimony to smoke and praise the Lord at the same time or get drunk and start preaching or watch porno and act like God doesn't see you. Also he signed a piece of paper agreeing not to smoke, drink or do drugs while living in the *CIR House*.

The Prison minister knew about the NO smoking policy of *CIR* but he freely declared that he did not agree with putting a restriction like that on disciples of Jesus. Since he smoked, it would be a joke for him to try and establish some kind of self-discipline on the men in recovery when he is 75 pounds overweight and wastes Gods money on stinking cigarettes.

He doesn't seem to care what kind of example he is setting for the men coming out of prison.

There is a reason that we are warned on the cigarette pack that smoking IS bad for our health!

Bro, *if you don't* want to be a good example, then don't be a leader. Leaders must deny themselves!

Smoking is a terrible example!

REBELLION

1 Sam. 15:22- ...Obedience is far better than sacrifice. He is much more interested in your listening to Him than in your offering...For rebellion is as bad as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as bad as worshiping idols. And now because you have rejected the word of God, He has rejected you...

Rebellion is what we do when we reject the written Word of God.

Pride is the driving force behind rebellion. God resists the prideful. A rebellious Christian is fighting a losing battle against God.

God is extremely patient with His rebellious children. He comes to us with love and grace. Then He reveals His life changing truth to us. He hopes for a positive response. His truth sets us free, if we humble ourselves to receive it. But, If we rebel and become stubborn then God begins His chastening process in hopes that we will soften our heart and truly repent. To repent we must change our attitude and actions. The rebellious, the prideful do not change for God. They deceive themselves into believing that they are the exception "they're special" and they don't have to follow God's rule or fit into His divine order. They know God and they know His Word, but they refuse to humble themselves and conform to the Truth.

God is an expert at dealing with rebellious, prideful Christians. It's impossible to duel against God or His written Word and win.

The Holy Bible reveals to us the will of God. To know His will and then not submit to Him is rebellion!

God is the supreme authority. He has ordained delegated authority in the home, the church, the work place and the government. To rebel against God's delegated authority is to rebel against God. Many have tried, *ALL* have failed!

Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft!

Thus says the Lord:

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23-

2 Cor. 12:9- He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in **weakness**." I will all the more gladly boast of **my weaknesses**, that the power of Christ may rest upon me... for **when I am weak, then I am strong**.

1 Cor. 1:26- For you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and **God has chosen the weak** things of the world to confound the things which are mighty...that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Isaiah 40:6- "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surly the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

2 Tim. 3:2- For people will love only themselves and their money; they will be proud and boastful...and prefer good times to worshiping God.

Q & A with Michael Premo

(Q) Seventeen years have passed since you have drank or drugged why do you still confess that you are in recovery?

(A) My recovery began the day I was born again in 1971. It will be over when I die or Jesus returns. Recovery is not just about alcohol, drugs, gambling or other negative addictions. I'm weak, He's strong! I don't have all the answers, He does. He's perfect, I'm not. I have daily battles with my flesh and with my pride. I need help! That's why I'm still in recovery.

(Q) Do you believe that all Christians are in recovery?

(A) No, only the ones who know they are weak and willing to confess it. The other Christians are in *denial* about their needs and character flaws. Often we are guilty of just going through religious motion without dealing with reality. It is common for Christians to be deceived about their true spiritual condition.

(Q) What should be the daily attitude of a disciple of Jesus?

(A) Surrender to God and embrace the reality of personal weakness. Discipleship is different from modern Christianity. Recognizing pride is a major factor when deciding to become a disciple. A disciple confronts their pride on a daily basis. God resists pride, He honors humility. God chooses the weak to confound those who think they are wise, rich, strong, and super spiritual. In reality all of us are weak, and given to selfishness! Self denial and a personal cross is what a disciple of Jesus is daily presented with. That's why most Christians choose not to be disciples. It's all about putting God and others before our own personal desires. A disciple overcomes the Devil by the blood of the Lamb, the word of His testimony and theu love not their life unto the death.



In 1989 we published our first *recovery* newsletter. Over the years we have received thousands of letters from around the world in response to the testimony of God's faithfulness and grace, *His amazing grace*.

We don't have a political agenda! We believe Jesus is coming back, but we don't know when. We believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Every month we baptize new believers. We believe that *not* all Christians are New Testament disciples. We don't blame the Devil for personal character flaws and fleshly choices. We teach repentance. We believe in prayer. The Holy Bible is our absolute final authority on everything dealing with Christianity.

Worshipping God is our #1 priority. We believe the greatest is love!

We desire for God's will to be done in our personal life and this ministry. We desire to be a family. In our weakness we desire God to use us to bring glory to His holy name.

We are committed to the great commission, to reaching out to the lost, the weak, the poor, the broken hearted, the outcast, and the forgotten behind prison walls.

All Christians are in the process of recovery, some know it, some don't. All people are either lost sinners or saved sinners. We don't believe anybody is totally *together*.

Life has a purpose! To find our purpose we must we must devote our life to God. Daily we must deny and humble ourselves. Pride and selfishness is a reality in our life. The battle is between the flesh and the Spirit. The chief of sinners is the person that stares back at us when we look in the mirror.

The vision is to continue to run the race and finish the course. To get up, after we fall down. To be faithful in small things. To love God and to love one another. *One day at a time*.

Inmate Wins Bible

I am a rededicated backslider who is on fire for Jesus. I have wrestled the steering wheel out of God's hands so many times I can't count them. I have put Him in the passenger seat, the back seat, on the hood, in the trunk, left Him dangling on the bumper! No matter where I put Him He never left me. I just would not allow Him to be the driver. I read your last newsletter and an article about Evangelizing Behind The Wall cryed out to me. I spread the Good News as often as I can get someone to listen to me. (Which is surprisingly quite often). Recently I had a Satan worshipper listen as I talked to him about Jesus. Praise God!! Another inmate questioned me about his desire to become a true disciple. I told him that's what I want to be. (Brother **John H.** your new Bible is on the way. Your labor behind the wall is not in vain. Keep planting the seed. Honor God and He will honor you!)

23 members of *CIR* travel to Medford, Oregon for Conference

For 3 days we were fed *fresh bread*. Each speaker spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The theme was unified and prophetic. The word was penetrating and life changing.

CIR thanks Pastor James Feeney and the South Valley Church for your invitation to attend and their gracious hospitality and right hand of fellowship.

CIR thanks Patrick Low for His obedience to come all the way from Singapore, to minister the message of God and for the special blessing he generously gave to this fellowship.

This annual conference is sponsored by the local churches that are members of the *Heritage Fellowship*.

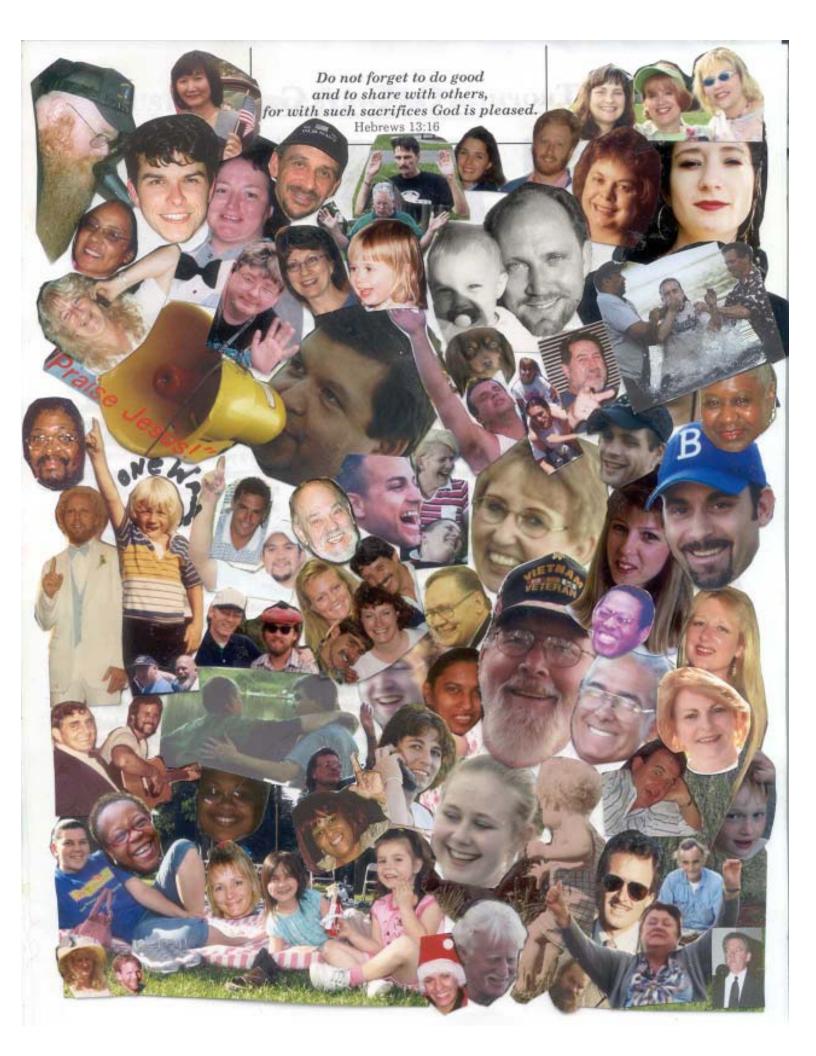
Letter's From The Heart

I'm crying so hard my eyes are swelling shut. I read your book, Mr. Premo and vou're a lucky man to have a woman like Sue Premo standing by your side. I keep hoping that I'm going to get a letter from my wife, I tell myself that she still cares. I keep dreaming that I will wake up and she will be by my side. I'm in prison for the first time. Recently I Lost control and started throwing books at the other inmates. The C. O.'s tackled me and took me to the hole. The next day I was allowed one book. I was given "Backslider" and after reading it I began to cry. It's hard for me to reach out. Thank you for writing your book, it reached me. Bill

Dear Sue, I'm still at the Federal Detention here is Seattle. I will be released in 2 months. I'm excited about living clean and sober and serving Jesus. God is sooo beautiful! So amazing. He saved me from destruction and delivered me from evil, again. I've never been this close to Jesus. My prison sentence started as punishment but God has used it for my salvation and His glory. I'm learning to praise God in the midst of storms. I realize the real test will come when I walk out of these prison doors and face the world and all of it's temptations. I don't want to backslide anymore. I don't want to live in darkness. I don't want to be a slave to Satan. I want to make God happy. I'm sick of being self centered. I'm tired of hurting my family. I'm going to need help when I get out. I'm going to need a church family. I will need accountability. I will need to surround my life with people who really love God. I look forward to fellowshipping at Christians In Recovery on Friday nights. I don't want to turn my back on Jesus anymore. Please thank the CIR prison team, we enjoy them so much and love them for coming and sharing Jesus with us. They brighten our lives with fellowship, music and prayer. James Tibbetts is an amazing story teller-he knows the Bible word for word. We are praying for his wife Cynthia for healing and peace. Kristi

I want to express my gratitude for your wonderful letter. I've read it over and over, sometimes 2 or 3 times a day. Your words reached my inner man, they were comforting to my soul and wisdom to my spirit. I have accepted your (His) challenge to push myself my last 2 years behind the walls. I memorized Cor. 13 and am ready for any & all new assignments as the Lord directs. **James**





TROPHIES OF GOD'S GRACE



Tom Russell

As a kid I was surrounded by alcohol, drugs and sexually immoral adults and criminals. I saw it all. By 13 I was on my own. I just followed the example of the adults.

When I was eighteen the judge said to me, "Prison or Vietnam?" I didn't want prison! I was sent to another part of the planet to ride a river boat and experience the devastation of a real war.

I came back from that war addicted to heroin. I got into a gun fight with a man and I killed him. I went to prison. After my release I joined the "Hell's Angels". I earned my patch by doing *dirty deeds*. I accumulated \$600,000. in cash and moved to Florida.

I got married and divorced. I got a topless dancer pregnant. After giving birth to my little girl the mother deserted us both when the baby was four days old. I did what I could to raise her.

In the spring of 2004 while talking to "Chief Praise The Lord" and Mike Premo I was made aware of my need to be born again. I got saved. I became a baby Christian and started to learn about the way God wants me to live.

Every Friday night I attend *CIR* and the *Seattle Recovery Fellowship* church service.

The church is my family now. I hang out with them all the time. Life is good!



Bob Thielke

I'm 68 years old and grew up in Las Vegas when things were much different.

After the age of 8 I was raised in a brothel by the prostitutes. I became their little mascot and of course I grew up fast.

I became a little hustler. I learned how to make a quick buck. As I learned the tricks of the trade I found myself getting deeper and deeper into the dark side of life. I learned how to be a world class card player. I was approached by a gangster to do a "hit' for him for a certain price and I said yes. I robbed a few banks and even held up an armored money truck.

As a teenage hood I lived in a suite on the top floor of a famous casino.

I met a good looking girl and she invited me to attend a Baptist revival. After a week of hearing about God and His love I broke down and cried. I accepted Jesus as my Savior and became a Christian. That good looking girl and I have now been married for 47 years.

I decided to follow Jesus. I haven't looked back. I'm a Christian businessman and serve as an elder at *Seattle Recovery Fellowship*. I love my wife and my intention is to serve God till I die.

Serving God keeps me feeling young. I'm addicted to the ministry of the saints. Let's have lunch.



Sue Steyh

I was raised Catholic and from a very young age wanted to have a close relationship with God.

I was a "good kid" until my senior year in high school. I got pregnant and eloped. The marriage lasted less than 2 years.

I found myself with a 17 month old child and nowhere to turn. I thought about killing myself. I realized that I had made a mess of my life. That night I gave myself totally to God and started going to a really good church.

I would like to say that things continued to be wonderful and that I remarried and lived happily ever after but that would not be the truth. Sin and selfishess messed things up again.

I did remarry but my husband was double-minded in his service to God and I was HURTING. My son and I had lost our closeness. I reached a point where I told God "I can't do this anymore."

An old friend felt led by God to drive 150 miles to pray for me and my family. The restoration of my family began with that effectual, fervent prayer.

My husband is now passionately seeking intimacy with God. Our relationship with our son is being healed. As a family God is showing us what our ministry and purpose is.

It feels good as a family to be living for God again.

Jesus said, "Love not the things of this world!"

1 Tim. 6:7-

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

2 Tim. 3:1-

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness...

2 Tim. 4:10

For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed...

Demas, forsook the responsibility of his ministry. He chose the things of this world. He backslid!

Judas, snitched on Jesus for the money of this world.

The young rich ruler chose the things of this world over the privilege of walking with Jesus.

Many have left their first love for God because they fell in love with things of this world.

Satan tempted Jesus with the things of this world. Jesus put His Fathers business first! Jesus denied Himself. He humbled Himself. He knew what His priority was.

Devoted Christian soldiers are few! The pursuit of getting things and building more barns has replaced the pursuit of doing God's will.

REBUKE, REPROVE and EXHORT

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.

Rebuke: Straightly charge, warn. To criticize or reprove sharply; reprimand.

Reprove: To expose, refute, show fault, to convince, convict. To voice or convey disapproval of; to find fault with.

Exhort: To ask, beg, plead, to comfort, encourage, urge, to call, invite, entreat. To urge by strong, often stirring argument, admonition, advice, or appeal.

Rev. 3:19 ... As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Titus 1:13 ...Wherefore **rebuke them sharply**, that they may be sound in the faith.

1 Tim. 5:19- Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin **rebuke before all**, that other may learn and fear.

Pro. 9:8 **Rebuke** a wise man, and he will love you.

Pro. 13:1 A wise son heeds his father's instruction, But **a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.**

Pro. 13:18 Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but **he who regards rebuke will be honored.**

Pro. 27:5 **Open rebuke is better** than love concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Pro. 23 **He who rebukes** a man will find more favor afterward than he who flatters with the tongue.

Ecc. 7:5 It **is better to hear the rebuke** of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Luke 9:54John said to Jesus, "Master, shall we order fire down from Heaven to burn them up?" But **Jesus turned and rebuked them?**

God believes in the ministry of rebuking, reproving and exhorting. Do you believe in it? Have you given a spiritual leader permission to speak into your life in this manner? Do you believe you need pastoral oversight and the truth spoken to you in love? Real disciples want the truth!

1 Timothy 3:15 ...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God...

JUST SHARING MY HEART

by Michael Premo Founder of *CIR*

The Bible says "You who are spiritual restore with meekness those who have fallen."

"Fallen" Christians have issues! Often they are not very approachable. They are dealing with denial, fear, and a whole lot of pain. To approach them is risky. The odds for success is slim.

I remember many years ago being on staff at a large church with a beautiful newly constructed recovery house, it was impressive.

Somehow I allowed my mind to tell me that my ministry was to the "established church" not those weak Christians in recovery.

I believed that my *superior spirituality and wisdom* would be best used toward the middle class and "upper echelon" Christians.

My heart and my treasure was not with the fallen. I wanted to associate with the "together" Christians. My "burden" was to minister to the mature who could appreciate "my gift". Obviously I did not spend much time at that recovery house with those needy men. I was blinded and self-righteous. I wanted a ministry to the "up and outers," the *good sinners*. My pride deceived me, I thought I was a *good sinner*.

Now most of my ministry is to the "down and outers" *the bad sinners*. It seems the more I associate with the obvious weak Christians the more the "established" Christians disassociate themselves from me.

Many elders, deacons and local church pastors know of our recovery houses. Yet the overwhelming majority of these "mature" Christians have made no effort to visit or mingle with these down and outers. Why? Maybe they don't care. If they cared they would have made some kind of encouraging gesture. Good samaitians are hard to find.

I confess sometimes I get discouraged. I realize it's part of the ministry and that I must understand rejection as Jesus did. I must deny myself and take up my cross *daily*.

I don't get discouraged with the fallen that stand-up and fall again, and again. They are trying. They are patients in the "hospital of restoration". I get sad about the "established" Christian who knows what we are attempting to do and yet they have never spoken an encouraging word, and another year passes.

We will keep plugging away. God is our strength and the encouraging letters we get from the "unestablished" will keep us motivated to carry on.

Recently I shared in a local church about what this ministry is about. A Deacon of that church who had been watching me from a *distance* for almost three years sat down with me and confessed, "It's regrettable that this church was not able to really hear about your ministry sooner, maybe we could have been more supportive." His words were sincere and encouraging.

The bottom line is a ministry like this needs encouragement and support. It takes humility to be kind, to speak encouragement, and to show genuine support.

For you that do encourage and support this ministry we give you a sincere, heartfelt *THANK YOU!*

If you would like to talk about becoming a volunteer I would love to sit down and talk about your ablities and how you could serve in some vital area of this ministry.

Jesus said, "The harvest is ready, but the laborers are few."

We have a great vision for the harvest and we are praying that the Lord of the harvest will send *you* to labor with us. Pray about it.

To share or not to share your testimony?

2 Timothy 1:7 (Amp.)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity—of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear—but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control. **Do not blush or be ashamed then to testify to and for our Lord...**

About a year ago I asked a child of God with a remarkable personal testimony to consider sharing with our Friday night group. This born again, beautiful Christian "just said NO".

Recently I felt led to ask that same person to stand up and proclaim the testimony of the Lord. Again, to my amazement "NO" was the answer. That Christian said "I'm not ready." At that moment I felt the Holy Spirit was grieved.

Is serving God about *being ready* or about *being willing?*

"I was blind and now I see, I was lost and now I'm found," how ready do we have to be to tell the truth? Do we need to go to Bible School before we're ready to share our testimony? Do we need to graduate from an evangelism course before we are ready.

To be able to share our testimony is a privilege and honor! *All* who are saved have a most powerful testimony.

God is pleased when we say "YES, YES, YES I will share my testimony!"

If we don't "feel" ready we need to humble ourselves, then God will honor us and make us ready.

It's not about being ready, it's about being willing.



I just finished reading an article in the *Seattle Times* about the amazing new popularity of a poker game called "Texas Hold'Em".

The article profiled a Seattle resident who was the winner of a local poker tournament. His prize was a trip to Las Vegas to play in the World Series of Poker. The article said this about the winner, "A 43 year-old man who remodels houses, officiates high-school basketball in his spare time and he used to teach Sunday School."

"He used to teach Sunday School," got my attention. Why doesn't he teach Sunday School anymore?

A friend of mine who has an established drug relapse problem told me about one of his latest backslides.

"I was invited to play in a weekly Texas Hold'Em game that was being hosted by a influential member of his local church." He said the pastor also enjoyed *the fellowship* of playing in their little card game.

"I won over \$100.00 that night and on the way home I was tempted to buy *a little Crack* cocaine. I rationalized that my wife would not know about this *easy* money. I spent it all on drugs and before the night was over I wasted our rent money on more drugs and a prostitute."

...Try instead to live in such a way that you will never make your brother stumble by letting him see you doing something he thinks is wrong. *Romans* 14:13

Is legalized gambling wrong? A lot of people think so, especially wives and children.

Will gambling fill the void in a Christian's heart when they are not satisfied or content with what God is trying to do in their life?

If you want to gamble, that's your freewill choice. If you want to stop, God has a ministry for you that will fill that void. *Ask Him about it*.

Conviction or Condemnation?

The Holy Spirit convicts us of the sin in our life. The *unholy* spirit (Satan) condemns us for the sin in our life. One gives hope, one gives death.

The fact is all Christians are sinners. To those Christians in *denial* about their personal sin this reality also includes you.

Christians who understand GRACE also understand condemnation. There is NO condemnation to those washed in the blood of Christ, but there is a lot of conviction.

Conviction for personal sin is a result of a sensitive relationship with the Holy Spirit. The purpose of conviction is to confess personal sin and then repent of it (stop it).

Christians who quench and grieve the Holy Spirit will rationalize and justify personal sin. Usually they will hang out with like-minded, liberal believers. This double-minded, unstable, wishy-washy style of following God is not found among the disciples in the New Testament.

To be convicted by the Holy Spirit is a blessing. To sense an awareness of sin indicates a healthy conscience.

A Christian can harden their heart to the conviction of God's Holy Spirit. It's possible for Christians to convince themselves that right is wrong and wrong is right or at least acceptable behavior.

Many Christians have no conviction about fornicating, getting drunk, using drugs, gluttony, cursing, watching porno, smoking, stealing, or a out of control anger.

God wants us to be honest about our on-going battle with sin. The deceitfulness of sin will blind a Christian from reality. It will stunt our growth and possibly take us into the wilderness for years.

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. He does not condemn us, He comforts us, He empowers us. He always leads us in the way of truth and love. He speaks reality about our sinful behavior.

ARE WE READY TO PROVE IT?

Dueteronomy 8:2 And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and **to prove you**, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not.

Heb. 3:9- But God was patient with them forty years, though they tried His patience sorely; He kept right on doing His mighty miracles for them to see. "But," God says, "I was angry with them, for their hearts were always looking somewhere else instead of up to Me, and they never found the paths I wanted them to follow.

Ps. 66:10 For you, O **God** have **proved us**; You have tried us, as silver is tried.

2 Cor. 13:5 (Amp.) Examine and test and evaluate your own selves, to see whether you are holding to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it. Test and **prove yourselves**. Do you not yourselves realize and know (thoroughly by an ever increasing experience) that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trail and rejected!

James 2:20 Dear foolish man! When will you ever learn that "believing" is useless without doing what God wants you to? Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.

God proves you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind.

Gal. 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

2 Cor. 8:3 ... They gave not only what they could afford, but far more; (VS 8) ... This is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond words.

More Letters From The Heart

Dear Sue Premo, This may seem like a random letter, and please forgive me for my scattered thoughts. I have never written anybody a letter, however, I felt compelled to write you. I have been attending my local church since Aug. 2000. It was not until Mothers Day, 2005 that I ever felt somebody saw me, or should I say maybe you saw my pain. I thank you for your kind words and prayers. I'm 25 years old. I grew up in a very loving home, but Christ was not part of my family's life. It was not until I was pregnant with my second daughter that I came to the Lord. Through a series of events the Lord opened my eyes and I felt true repentance for the first time. Two weeks before our wedding my husband's brother was murdered. His brother was 19 years old. Six months later my husband lost his job. He turned to alcohol (alot). He would be home maybe two nights a week. He spent his time drinking with his friends. He had no Christian friends. He was unemployed for one and a half years. It was a time of terrible hardships, many deaths and horrible financial stress. I left him for six months. I decided to move back in with him because I did not want to abandon my husband when he needed me. I have prayed a hundred prayers or more (probably thousands). I have become so discouraged, I feel drained. My husband no longer drinks and he has a stable job, however, I have so much anger. I pray for my husband to come to Christ and turn from his sinful ways. I cry so hard that there is nothing left. My tears are dry and my mouth is speechless. I feel lifeless. I had cervical cancer last April and I was in the hospital for 1 week. My husband spent that time with his friends. I laid in the hospital bed alone and crying everyday. It was then that the Lord told me He would always be by my side. I cling to that promise. I continue to pray. Sue, how did you do it for so long? Did you ever feel like running away from your husband? Did you ever just want to leave? I read your testimony and in your case it got better. But at what cost? I am sorry to ramble on but it feels rather nice to write this all down. I also have lots of joy in my life through my daughters. I hope they grow up to be very close to the Lord. To end

this rather lengthy letter I would like to truly thank you for making me feel loved, and for your kind heart. I will continue to pray and I know that things will look up eventually. The Lord proved that to me on Mother's Day when He allowed you to come into my life. **Sincerely**, **Another Christian in recovery**

Dear SuePremo. Just a reminder to let you know that you are loved and appreciated! The sisters in Christ all love you, the brothers in Christ all love you, vour family all loves you and most of all God loves you! Your suffering and labor is not in vain. The seeds of love you have planted have brought forth a great harvest. Your ministry has brought a smile to the faces of many. Your random acts of kindness are a direct result of your abiding in the Vine. The example you exhibit as a virtuous woman gives hope to the wives and husbands in the Church. Your sacrifice of service to Christ, your husband and the Church brings applause from a great cloud of witnesses who are watching. Be encouraged! Your decision to deny yourself and be a disciple of Jesus is of far greater worth than all the wealth of this world. You have been a doer of the Word. You have honored Christ by honoring His written Word. Many try to change the Word to conform to the traditions of religious men and an evil self-centered society. As you continue to honor God and His Word, God will continue to honor you. The future is filled with more daily choices. Your cross must be carried. You have everything you need to carry it. The Holy Spirit will comfort and teach you. The joy of the Lord will be vour strength. Even as Christ suffered so shall you suffer. Your life belongs to God. As His servant He has already ordered the steps that He would have you walk, but the choice is always yours. Let your great quest be to love God and as you do your purpose on earth will be satisfied. Pray for patience as you relate to your very imperfect husband. "He ain't what he ought to be, but thank God he ain't what he used to be." And last of all don't ever lose your sense of humor. Sincerely, a very thankful, and happily married man. Mike Premo

The last time I wrote it sounded as if I might be going to the penitentiary, but that same week my attorney called and said, the prosecution has messed up on your case so you might get a chance to start over. Isn't that great?!!! Thank you for all your wonderful encouragement. I also asked our chaplain if he could arrange for Mr. Premo to come to our jail and share his testimony. God bless you! **Breon**

Your newsletter fell into my hands and was a great encouragement to my already growing faith. I would greatly appreciate you sending the *CIR Newsletter* on a regular basis. I came to prison for divine discipline for my sins of robbery and murder. Now, my life is spent growing in His Word and leading others in it, and sharing my faith without shame. My desire is to magnify the Lord as I boldly share my faith in Christ. I recognized several brothers and sisters in the newsletter from when I was on the streets. It's great to know that they are serving God now. **Thorsten**

A fellow inmate shared his copy of the *CIR Newsletter*. I have struggled with alcohol all my life. I've been through treatment and have done the *AA* thing. I'm doing time for an old DUI warrant. I now feel that the only thing that will change me is God and joining a church. I feel desperate and do not want to live the way I was anymore. I would like information about becoming part of your ministry and moving into one of your discipleship houses. **Brian**

I am locked up in the King County Jail. I was reading the Bible and talking with another inmate and he handed me your Newsletter and told me to write you guys a letter. When I am released I will be homeless, no money, no job, only the clothes on my back, and I greatly desire to change my life. I am willing to work and contribute. **Edmund**

What are you waiting for?
We are your Christian family
and we want to hear from you.

J. D. E. Write, write, write!!

Christians In Recovery Good News Letter is published on a semi-regular basis and mailed as the Lord provides through His people.

This ministry operates on a shoestring budget. All staff and volunteers freely give of their talents and the finances to make this labor of love a reality. We are totally debt-free.

Of the many of hundreds of letters we receive, very seldom will a donation be included in the envelope. The majority of people we reach are broke and or in prison.

We need money for postage and printing. Any donation you can send will be much appreciated! We have a vision to send this newsletter to every prison on the West coast, including Alaska. See back page for free download location. Tell your loved ones, & friends. Thank you for your consideration.

Do you have a gift or ability that you would like to make available to this ministry?

- to write letters to prisoners
- counselors to help on phones
- prayer and praise warriors
- computer experts for web site
- administration & editing help
- a public relations person

This ministry is seeking
Worshippers-not performers,
Humble musicians
Servants-not stars

Do you like to sing and praise God? Can you play any music instrument?

Pray about it; then meet us at the Friday night Recovery Fellowship.

Christians in Recovery Prayer

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Psalm 51:1-13

Christians in Recovery - A not-for-profit Interdonominational Ministry. We are available night or day to help the Christian who is struggling. We offer Biblical counseling, support groups, hope and Christian fellowship. Our "Higher Power" is the Lord Jesus Christ!

Name	I would like the following names put on your Christians in Recovery prayer list:
Address	We will continue to reach out as God provides. Without your prayer and support this ministry would not be possible. THANK YOU!
Please send newsletter	I'd like to help!! Amount enclosed: \$ Send to:
	tians in Recovery PO BOX 98679 Seattle, WA 98198 infidential counseling is available by contacting our office (206) 242-2942



Meeting at the Church By The Side of The Road 3429 S. 148th St. Tukwila

Fridays at 7:30 PM (206) 242-2942 1 mile North of SeaTac Airport on Pacific HWY

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER available for free download @http://www.skybreeze.com/srf/news2.pdf

An imperfect local church. Every member is in recovery. The leaders are all the chief of sinners. A congregation that still needs amazing grace. Discipleship is about progress not perfection. The Holy Bible is our book of final authority. Spirit and truth worship is our goal.

The Holy Spirit is given freedom to lead. Love is the greatest.

The Lord Jesus Christ is Boss!

Christians In Recovery PO BOX 98679 Des Moines, WA 98198

