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→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

David Nichols — President (405) 613-3120
Dondino Melchorie — V.P. (702) 688-3165
Ron Minnick — Sec. Treasurer (405) 473-2378

UPDATE

How great is God's mercy and grace! God always provides more than we deserve, and has made us heirs of His riches in glory. His love surpasses our ability to comprehend, and our imagination cannot fathom His greatness and glory. Nor can it understand the depth of His love for us.

But we understand by His Word that we are being changed every day into His likeness bit by bit. Men get to see His love in action when they come to Hand Up. His love provides them with everything they need, (not want), and a hope that they can hold on to. Instead of a, "I'll pray for you", they are given a bed, food, clothing, transportation, a job, and whatever else they need to succeed. But the biggest thing we give is family, and a hope for tomorrow. On top of everything, individuals of the family share their personal items because they are brothers in Christ. Every way they turn, they encounter God's love. No wonder why Hand Up has such a high success rate. They have God on their side.

We are thankful and very pleased to now have 23 men at our Chandler location. We will have to

do some building to add more. Thank God we have 7 acres there which makes it possible to do so. We also plan to add some chickens and other animals. All the men there are SSI or SSDI but healing can begin and they can contribute to society. In God's kingdom they are not worthless or useless. God, we welcome your presence at Chandler.

We continue to plow ahead at our HUM I (SE 59th Location). As soon as refinancing is finished, we will be able to build a maintenance building and add more beds. It costs us about \$5,000 to \$6,000 a bed (including kitchen and bathroom). That also includes labor. If you are not a donor to Hand Up, please consider doing so. One hundred percent (100%) of your money goes to helping a new man getting out of prison getting established in life. The men already working pay the cost of the program. No State or Federal money is involved. And we cut crime to almost zero (0) percent. Every man we help establish puts many more dollars into the economy. It also saves many dollars in theft and makes our city safer. For the taxpayer, it also saves \$50,000.00 a year for each man we keep from going back to prison. That's just the natural side. On the spiritual side, all I can say is WOW! Unlimited possibilities would perhaps describe it.

HUM II (Shields park) is continuing to improve. We have 5 mobile homes to remodel and one we are almost finished with. That one is for our office manager (Bobby Miller), who is getting married April 9th. Also due to city harassment, we are having to finish the outside of the block building and other things. Other than taking money needed for other things, we are happy to do it. We love to take the degraded, deteriorated, unusable; and make it beautiful, usable, respectable; both in things and in men and women.

The shop is doing very well. It is well on the way to becoming a success. Mowing season is here and we are ready. Four locations keeps our crew busy. We could pick up some extra mowing though, if you have a need.— *David Nichols*

TESTIMONY

My name is Elzie Gene Collins. I was born in a small town in Eastern Kentucky, October 1960. I quit high school in my 3rd year and went to work for the Ky. Power Co. After four years I made lineman. Then my crew was laid off and I started drinking and doing drugs.

In 1981 I moved to Florida, where I stayed until 1991 and then I moved to Tulsa, OK where I got a job doing highway traffic control

On Oct, 3rd 2002 I was sent to prison for five (5) years “85%”. In

2005, I discharged my sentence and went back to Tulsa and was sent back to prison for failure to register because I was homeless.

May 5th 2008, I discharged and was sent to Hand Up Ministries in OKC. I had never been to OKC.

After I got here I started going to services and G-one meetings. I pray daily and I’m finally beginning to see that through God all things are possible. God is really helping to turn my life around.

It’s hasn’t been easy living here but day by day, my faith in God is growing. I’m not much for words but I would like to say thank God and Hand up Ministries for believing in me, and having patience in me. — *Elzie Gene Collins*

TESTIMONY

I was a member of a church but everything started going down when I got into drugs. I was selling pot to pay my rent, put gas in my tank. All I wanted was to either smoke a joint or a bong. Then I got back with my church family and they helped me open my eyes and I feel much better going back to the Lord. I’m like a better person. I was just throwing all that money away.

Getting with Christian brothers helps me stay in the right way. — *Bob Maddux*

TESTIMONY

Before I came to Christ I was smoking weed and hanging out with the wrong crowd. Going to strip bars, drinking, watching the wrong kind of movies (X Rated), spying on women in the wrong way.

I met a friend that told me about

Christ. He took me to church every Sunday. Then one Sunday, I realized I needed God. After the altar call was given, I went up to give my life to the Lord. The preacher ask, if I needed prayer and healing. I ask for healing and to be saved.

Now I hang with a good crowd of people. I don't look at women as I used to. I now have respect for women. Hand Up provided a place to stay. They helped me to find a job, gave me clothing, food, and they helped me to relate to people. Also I'm looking for a better job. I've been going to G-1 each week. They help me with prayer and with issues and it's a place where I can talk about what's going on in my life, right here where I live. — *Joseph Sims*

TESTIMONY

I was raised in a divorced family. Both my parents were there for me. We were not church going people. My Grandmother was the one that would take me to church and I was an active member growing up. Most of my friends were from church through my younger days and looking back it was one of the happiest times of my life.

I married in my early 20s, had two (2) daughters and was divorced within 7 yrs. This period of my life was without church and talking to God. After my marriage, I became a daily drinker and lived with different women. The whole time working a job I held for 12 years.

I was introduced to meth on my job and I liked it. I ended up losing my job over it and became homeless. While living on the streets, I met a lady 25 years older than me and she took me in. I didn't work. All I did was get high and started her on meth. She was

raising her granddaughter who was 25 years younger than me. I began a relationship with this young girl that became sexual. She became pregnant and I was arrested for 1st degree rape which was later changed to 2nd degree rape.

The first day I was in jail I made God a promise that from this day on I would do his work. From that day I've been the happiest I've been since I was that little boy going to church with my Grandmother. I've surrounded myself with men of God and we take care of each other. Hand Up is a place of God and the only place I want to be and this is the only way I will live the rest of my life. — *Randy Ingram*

HOPE IS REAL

I saw these words written on a sign at a church. It said, "Hope Is Real." I thought about it and (needless to say) agreed with the statement. But as I pondered the simple little phrase, I realized that for many people hope is not real. I believe that is one of the most important gifts we can give to another person, the gift of hope.

You see, someone who is hopeless and alone usually cannot help themselves out of their situations. They have a great sense of loss and helplessness. We must come alongside and bring the good news of Jesus Christ and all that He has to offer.

One definition for hope is: To look forward to with confidence or expectation. We must bring the Word of God with all its hope to someone who does not know it is real. When we bring hope, we bring life. It is life changing to finally believe again. It is more than just asking God for something we so

badly need; we must expect our miracle. Somewhere in the midst of asking, believing, and expecting God to answer, we will find what we are looking for.

I have felt for a long time that the biggest problem we have in the world today is there are so many people who have lost hope. There seems to be so many hurts, problems, sicknesses, troubles, financial woes, family problems, world issues, political concerns, etc. It seems the world has no hope. Apart from God, it is an awful, hopeless place. But with God's help, we can make it. I want you to know that whatever situation you find yourself in at this moment, there is hope. You may not be able to see or feel the hope, but it is there for you. How do we find the hope? There is only one place where hope can be found, and that is in Jesus Christ.

I did a word search in the Bible for the word 'hope' and found many wonderful passages. They were mostly in Psalms and Proverbs of course. David found himself in situations many times and had to remind himself that Hope is Real. It comes from God.

Trust God. He wants you to trust Him. You need to agree with God about your situation. What does God say about who you are and what His will is for your life? Don't go by your feelings. Instead we should remind ourselves that God only has plans for us that are good. Jeremiah helps us remember what God has to say about us. *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."* **Jeremiah 29:11 NLT**

We do not need to be disappointed and feel alone. We can have hope! God's love in our hearts will ignite the

flames of hope we have buried deep inside our hearts. God's Word can encourage us as we read it with great anticipation and faith. Paul writes in Romans these words of encouragement:

Romans 5:5 NIV *"And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."*

Romans 15:4 NIV *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*

There are many key scriptures that help us to understand what we need to do. Words like "be strong, take courage, wait, reverently and worshipfully fear God, tarry for the hope, wait patiently for it, and be joyful in hope. They are all action words we need to work on. Read these scriptures out loud during your prayer times. Watch how hope will come alive in your heart as you speak the Word of God over yourself and your situation.

What is your need today? Is it for a financial blessing, healing in your body, a new job, a house or car, etc.? Whatever it is, take it to Jesus today. Is there someone in your life today that needs encouraging? Speak the Words of hope that bring life. Hope Is Real, just try it.— *Jeff Wendel*

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