

Gospel Gazette

Salt Lake City Mission P.O. Box 142 Salt Lake City, UT 84110 - Phone 801-355-6310

October 2009

Free at Last From "Dead Head" to "Alive to Thrive"

Originally printed October 2006

A few years ago, John was frustrated with the way his life was going. Since he was sixteen years old, John had little purpose or direction in his life. John was once known as a "Dead Head." In other words, John followed the rock and roll group, the "Grateful Dead" all over the country, smoking dope and partying with the other groupies who followed along.

John says, "I got drunk every night, following the band around and then, one day, Jerry Garcia (The founder of the Grateful Dead), died. I didn't know what to do anymore. I felt like I had no direction and no one to lead me." John says he wandered around aimlessly for a time until he decided to ask God for help.

"Next thing I knew, I was in Montana," says John. "I was sitting outside a smoke shop and a lady came up to me and told me Jesus loved me. I couldn't see her face because the sun was behind her head. Then, a few months later, I was working at an Arby's and a woman came in and asked for me by name. She left a message with someone at Arby's saying, 'He is waiting for you!'"

Once again, John ended up living with the wrong crowd and found himself in some difficult situations. He says he was staying with a married couple and the woman asked him to sleep with her. He told her no, so they kicked him out of the house. After that, John got on a bus with no idea of where to go. As the bus pulled into Salt Lake, John asked the bus driver if he knew of any place he could go to get help. The bus driver dropped him off right in front of the Salt Lake City Mission.

John says, "I hesitantly went into the building and met Pastor Wilson. He asked me what I believed in but all I knew was Jerry Garcia and nothing else. Wayne gave me a bible and I started to read it. "At first, I stayed at the Overflow shelter, but I always came to Bible Studies. There was a lady there named Sister Thomas who was teaching about Heaven and Hell. She told me the only way to get to heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ. She asked if anyone wanted to receive Jesus as their personal Savior so I went up quickly and was born again. I felt, for the first time in my life, that I had changed. I ran into the bathroom and I even looked different."

After receiving Jesus, John said he went back out and started using drugs and alcohol again until one night. "I was laying down," John says, "and I heard someone call my name. I thought it was my friends with some beer, so I went to



see who it was. There was no one there. I heard The voice again, so this time I said, 'Lord, what is it? I'll do whatever you tell me to do.' The Lord told me to go to the Mission and serve there."

Since that time, God has used John to bring many to the Lord to find rest for their soul's. One such person is Bill Collins, who is now a full time pastor at the Salt Lake City Mission. John is now excited about his life and is having a great time serving God and others. John says he could tell us of many more blessing God has given him but he said it would take a lifetime.

Jesus promises to never leave us, nor forsake us. In fact, He promises us security, provision and help in all that we do with and for Him. We are also promised that He will soon return to receive us and we will spend eternity with Him. This is the hope of every believer. These promises are not only for John, but all who take God at His word, and receive Him as their personal Savior.

Update John's Latest News

This article came out three years ago. I am glad to say John is doing well and continues to serve God in many ways. Mr. Conway now lives in Providence Rhode Island, near his family, where he serves as a minister in his church and works as a security guard for a large company.

As I look back over the years and see what God has done in John I am so grateful. In fact we have seen half a dozen men contact us in the last few months with good reports of God's grace and plan for them.

Doug came in last week with a young man that needed help to get his life on track. Doug was smiling from head to toe with excitement about helping others. Another Mission graduate, Dean, came in asking for prayer for his new job. This is significant because before Dean would not ask for wise counsel, be accountable to others or be humble enough to ask for prayer. Every day we see people seeking godly advice and prayer at the mission. God is awesome.

I've worked in secular programs before and I am thankful for all who have choose to serve others by counseling and supporting the addicted and destitute. What I love about the mission, is people don't need to be addicted to drugs or alcohol to get into God's plan. All God desires is a humble, willing and repentant heart open to His grace and mercy.

Let's face it, change is hard for all of us but faith gives us strength to embrace God's will which brings about His change.

All of us see a need and want change is some area of our lives but we struggle with change when we refuse to take our struggles completely to God. Many times I believe it is because we either rationalize our poor choices because "it really isn't that bad" or we just can't seem to conquer this giant.

David was able to defeat Goliath not because he realized he was stronger than the giant but because he seen Goliath was against God's will and perfect plan. It is freeing to know that the giants we face, i.e., depression, fear, anger, loneliness, pride, sorrow, etc. are set it opposition to God Himself. If we will humble ourselves before God He will exalt us in due time. Then we can take the enemy.

• **TRUST IN GOD ONLY!**

Dear Friends,

Salt Lake City Mission appreciates your part in supporting our mission to the least, the lost, and the lonely. Because we value your support, our goal is to ensure your contributions are beneficial to you as well. This is why we would like to share a few options for giving that provide advantages to you. By giving creatively, you can:

- Realize *larger tax savings*.
- Make a gift that costs you *nothing* during your lifetime.
- Increase *your income* for life.
- Avoid capital-gain tax.
- Preserve your estate for heirs while providing years of income to further God's Kingdom.
- Give your house, take a tax deduction now, and continue to live in it rent-free.
- Convert additional life insurance coverage into a gift.
- Achieve no-cost, worry-free asset management.

There is a section on our website designed specifically to help you plan your charitable gift. Check it out at www.saltlakecitymission.org and click on "Estate Planning". While you are there, sign up for a phone seminar and gain planned giving insight from estate specialists, at no cost. You can also try out the Estate Plan Organizer, a tutorial designed to walk you through the estate planning process.

Or, if you would prefer, you may dial 1-800-876-7958 and our friends at PhilanthroCorp, a Christ-centered charitable planned giving firm, would be glad to send you a paper version of the Estate Plan Organizer or inform you of upcoming phone seminar dates.

Learn how a gift Salt Lake City Mission can work for you and increase your retirement income, provide benefits to your family and loved ones, or realize additional tax savings.

Sincerely,

Philip
Arena
SLCM

Ways to Give

Did you know that there are several giving opportunities that not only benefit Salt Lake City Mission, but provide exceptional advantages to you? By giving creatively, you can:

- Reduce your income taxes
- Avoid capital-gain tax
- Increase your spendable income
- Retain payments for life
- Achieve no-cost, worry-free asset management

Types of Giving Include:

Gifts of Assets - Cash is the simplest way to give but gifts of assets also include stocks, bonds & property.

Gifts by Will - Through a bequest, you will know that your generosity will support us for years to come!

Gifts That Pay You Income - Life-income gifts provide an income stream, tax savings and the satisfaction of giving vital, long-term resources.

The Charitable Lead Trust - Transferring property can assist heirs and charity.

Gifts of Retirement Plan Benefits - The estate-and income-tax treatment of retirement plan benefits-make this a strategic gift to give charity.

To find out which giving opportunity is best for your situation, visit Salt Lake City Mission's website at www.saltlakecitymission.org and click on "Estate Planning."

Contact: Philip Arena
PO Box 142
Salt Lake City, UT 84110
Office: (801) 355.6310
Mobile: (801) 388.1968