

# Keeping in Touch

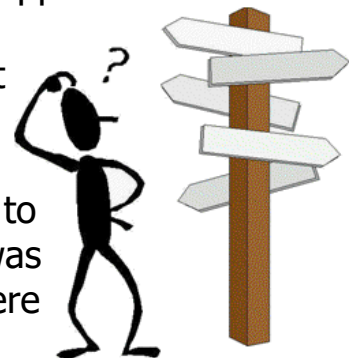
June 13, 2006

Bruce & Liz Leary



Twenty-two years ago late tonight is when our lives took a dramatic twist as consequences to poor choices turned everything completely upside down. Just like the roller coaster ride shown on the left, things began feeling very much out of control. However in God's plan, nothing is wasted. *Not one single thing.* We have seen in the years since that night how God in His great mercy has guided and directed our steps leading us to work with incarcerated men whose lives also abruptly changed as they hit the wall in their lives. Last summer another big twist happened. We came up to Turlock for four days in August to attend the MGF summer conference. We had previously discussed with you how our prison clearances were revoked for a set time due to a picture taking activity. While waiting for that time to end, there arose a critical need at the MGF headquarters; the financial integrity of the mission was breached due to a staff member embezzling money from the general fund. We thought we were just in Turlock for four days but we are still here! We were asked to stay & aid in the investigation before the case was turned over to the local police department. Bruce was asked to fill in and take over the bookkeeper's office & keep the financial operations of MGF going. Fifty missionary families were depending on all of us to continue processing their monthly donated income. We agreed to stay & were invited to live in the MGF mission residence as guests since we did not have housing in Turlock. In God's timing, a lovely house became available to us in April about half a mile from the mission office. We are renting it while the owners work a short term mission project in the Philippines.

To be candid, things happened so quickly that we did not have time to consult with anybody in the San Diego area. Furthermore, we were not allowed by the local police department here in Turlock to discuss the case; needless to say, **things were awkward for a while.** We knew God was leading us to join the MGF director in this project; we also were



torn because our Bible college ministry demanded our on-going attention. We considered it a privilege to service the needs of fifty missionary families working all over North America; however, it was a stretch to maintain a prison-inmate student body numbering close to 75 men at the same time. I (Bruce) was so exhausted at the end of a day I could hardly muster up enough energy to grade completed courses sent in from the inmates. Wearing two hats has been extremely difficult. However, even though one church dropped our support, we still had the strange assurance that we were in the right place, at the right time, doing God's appointed work.



When we decided to stay in Turlock after the trial period ending December 31, 2005, the MGF director asked Bruce to take the position of Office Manager of Missionary Gospel Fellowship. We accepted. We returned to San Diego, filled a van with college supplies, & then returned to Turlock to open a Bible college field office. Office space had been graciously provided. **Crossing this bridge** of ministry adjustment has added responsibility to our lives: the MGF office. We have not eliminated the Bible college ministry. We still maintain the students under our care in various prisons around California. As I mentioned, early on in this period, keeping up with all the work was almost impossible, but thankfully, the dust has begun to settle in managing the MGF office, and the Bible college processing of courses is current. Liz has received crisis counseling & chaplaincy training to be used in ministry with local law enforcement agencies or wherever else opportunities open up, and Bruce has very much enjoyed meeting monthly with many of the local pastors for breakfast and prayer.

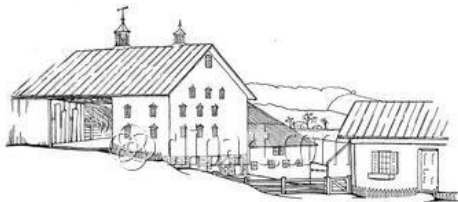
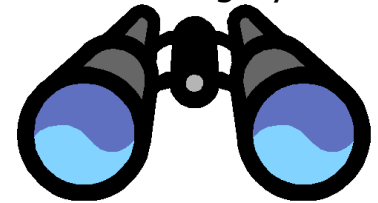
Bruce has still been able **to create, edit & rewrite college courses** during these past months. He completed the writing of "Dealing with Shame", part of our "Preparation for Leadership 2" course. He has rewritten "Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", "Doctrine of Christ", "Pentateuch Books 1", & "OT Historical Books 1". The course editing still in progress are for: "Pentateuch Books 2", & "OT Historical Books 2", "Doctrine of God", & "Doctrine of the Bible". Thank you for praying for us this past year. Only the power of God could have enabled both of us to carry on in ministry while stretched between Pine Valley & Turlock.



We have been teaching **two seminars** in a local church here in the Turlock area: "What is God Like" (a mini-course on the doctrine of God), & "Opening the Mail:

Philippians” (a mini-course on Bible study methods in Philippians). These seminars have been taught Sunday nights, and have afforded us two opportunities: to teach believers how to study God’s Word using relevant Bible study tools, and to communicate to church people about the ministry of Southwest College of Biblical Studies to prison inmates students. We have plans to communicate with more churches in the months to come. Pray that we will have open doors to share the needs of educating inmates to study God’s Word & to pursue lives of integrity.

There are some **future opportunities** on the horizon for us that will definitely be challenging. The first is a new seminar entitled “How to Encourage Each Other”; the second is to continue in the management of the MGF headquarters office in Turlock which includes updating procedures, record-keeping, & communication. The third is the creation of a Sex-Offender ranch for parolees.



### **Sex Offender Ranch**

Here is a project that only God can accomplish. We have been ministering to many sex offenders through the years inside the prisons. However, there isn’t much for **paroled** sex offenders. The State of California does not know what to do with these men. The current & pending laws prohibit placement of sex offenders within 1/2 mile of any establishment remotely related to the presence of children. This makes placement or rehabilitation of sex offenders almost impossible. Communities need protection from these offenders & these offenders need a place to go for housing & *effective* corrective programming. We have seen that only changed hearts & minds brought about from a personal encounter with Jesus Christ & God’s Word appropriately applied to everyday life, will help these men have long-term success. We are willing to pour our lives into this work and are asking the Lord for secluded property, for recognition by state & federal agencies, and for financial partners. The Christian community has an opportunity here to minister to a part of society that very few others want to provide services for. It’s an uphill pursuit, but we believe God cares about this problem and deeply cares about these men. We want to be a part of the solution. Please pray about how you can join us in meeting this great need.

You have heard our hearts. Together as we partner in God’s work, people will see how much a loving God cares. Thank you for being there! **Bruce & Liz**