

renew

a publication by Brother Bryan Mission

September 2011

A Long Fall to Victory

Alvin Tucker's Story

A Long Fall to Victory

Growing up in Bessemer, as Alvin Tucker was exposed to the Gospel he was also exposed to drugs. When friends pushed the idea of cocaine on him, he gave in. It didn't take long for "coke" to undercut his values, his attitude and his relations. In time it became the dominant influence in his life.

After years of persistent use and abuse, amazingly it was in prison in 1998, that he found some freedom ...when he surrendered to Christ.

More Trouble

But upon release, in no time his defiant addiction was back. Rather than stay close to the Lord who had forgiven him and offered him a great new life - his addictions won out. In 2001, with reckless choices continuing, and his health was breaking down, he needed kidney dialysis. At least once while in a rehab program, he was in a physical altercation. In 2007-08 he ended up living on the streets.



Alvin with board member Susan Warnock.



Alvin helping at reception desk.

By 2009, feeling truly "at the bottom", he reached to Brother Bryan Mission for what he felt was his last chance. Over the next 12 months as this destitute and defeated man had more emergencies and major surgeries (6) than most face in a lifetime, staff members and others came alongside him with a care and love of Christ that he hadn't known. One of Alvin's legs was amputated, but out of what most would consider an awful situation, a new Alvin emerged.

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**NEW LIFE
RECOVERY PROGRAM**

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**SERVICES PROVIDED
SINCE JANUARY 1ST**

- Meals - 23,800
- Lodging Nights - 7,040
- Chapel Services - 243
- Group Bible Studies - 116
- Ongoing Christian Discipleship - too numerous to mention

 **Brother Bryan Mission**
OF BIRMINGHAM

Letter from Tom

***"Come to me, all who are weary and burdened ...
... and I will give you rest" Matt. 11:28***

It's great to be able to share Alvin's and Henri's stories of restored life ...stories of men who came here "weary and burdened" ...and discovered the peace and purpose of God for the rest of their lives.

Committed Staff and Volunteers – It's been a busy first few weeks for me, getting familiar with the many aspects and needs of Brother Bryan Mission, and working with staff and volunteers. While our staff is small for the enormous task, their heart and passion for this work is huge.

Why Me? - Upon retiring, after 29 years in Christian rescue ministry (22 as Mission Director), my wife and I returned to Birmingham to be near family. I kept involved in Rescue Ministry, by counseling Missions that were in need, and helping 2-days a week at a local mission. After it was suggested that I might assist Brother Bryan Mission in their search for a Director, as I met with the Board and we discussed needs, I realized I might be coming out of retirement. I had the experience and heart for it ...in my hometown ...and I was available.

It was through a Mission in Oregon ...a Mission much like Brother Bryan ...that my once-lost life was restored. But Oregon and Missions are a long way from where I began. My childhood was stable. I grew up in the Birmingham suburb of Homewood. I couldn't have imagined that one day I would need a Mission's help or a recovery program.

How could this be? - When I married in my 20's my life was pretty normal. But by 1977, because of my over-indulgent alcohol-ridden pursuits, I lost direction, lost my marriage, my business and my home. By 1980 as I continued my downfall, going through countless jobs, I had burned many bridges behind me. Eventually with no hope or will to go on, as I drank my days away, I slept outdoors and in warehouses in Salem, Oregon.

For such as me – After a stranger told me of a nearby Mission where I could get a meal and a night's rest, that night as I sat with 40 men in the Mission's chapel, listening to the Gospel that I had so often ignored, it was as if light came into my darkened heart. I knew with no doubt that what they were saying was true ...that God sent His Son ...for such as me.

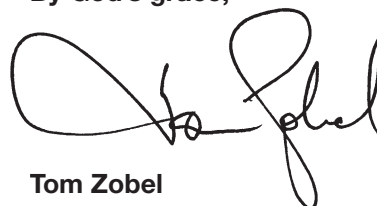
Within weeks I no longer drank and was involved in a church. After getting my first decent job in years, I began to go to the Mission to talk with men who may be as lost as I had been. Three and a half years later I was a Mission Director. Twenty nine years later in 2008 I retired (almost).

Today – Today more important than my past or this Mission's 70+ years, is the opportunity to reach and help restore weary and overwhelmed lives ...such as Alvin and Henri. As you see some on the street you may find yourself thinking, "how lost and hopeless he is". Some think that of themselves. It's how I felt. But I and my family ...and Alvin and Henri ...have learned that ..."Nothing is impossible with God".



Thank you for your help and care.

By God's grace,



Tom Zobel

**PS: Today ...your care and response really does matter.
To a lost person it can mean life.**

Victory Henry Milhomme's Story

Victory ... "you who were once far away have been brought near" (Eph 2:12).

One of the most dire times in a person's life is the moment they lose hope.

Henry Milhomme spent a lifetime in search of hope. The cloud of hopelessness overshadowing his life began in infancy, in an abusive, addictive home. "At home there was no God, love, hope or future. Abused physically, emotionally and sexually, we tried to fill the void of love and acceptance that wasn't given." Out of that, Henri's brother died with AIDS, and his sister was sentenced to life in prison. In darkness, at age 14, he began a lifelong descent into addiction, via alcohol and "pills".



Henry and Alvin.

After marrying at age 19, he would become a skilled carpenter. He loved his children but often sought the companionship of alcohol and drugs (to some degree mirroring his parents).

"...I couldn't forget the look on her face"

When multiple DUIs led to his spending 28 days in rehab, he told his family he was OK, but he actually had a new addiction; cocaine. "It was like a god ...more important to me than family or life itself. After my daughter saw me 'snorting a line', I wanted to bolt. I couldn't forget the look on her face." The words, "Daddy ...we love you, but we don't want you here", were too much.

From "Recovery" ...to Loss ... to The Pit

Unable to break the hold of drugs, addiction led him away. In Louisiana after another rehab program, he seemed to land on his feet, and for a few years enjoyed a tenuous recovery. But when he learned that his daughter died in a car crash, his fragile life shattered. Feeling hopeless, he returned to

alcohol and drugs to numb his senses ...and sank deeper into a pit.

In Birmingham he entered yet another rehab center. There with hopelessness and anger festering, he and another "recovering" addict (Alvin) had such animosity for each other that it led to an altercation with weapons. Once separated, they remained enemies.

Not seeking God ...but rather stability

Upon leaving there, the only housing he found was in an area of drug problems. Later, seeking a more stable place, he heard about "Brother Bryan". While he wasn't

seeking God, he did want stability. But what Henri saw as he entered this Mission gave him pause. The one who met him at the reception desk was Alvin, the man he had the altercation with in rehab. But he also couldn't help seeing how different Alvin was. His attitude now was one of serving and helpfulness. How did he change so much?

A once-darkened heart succumbs

Through the changed life of Alvin, Bible classes, chapel, Christian counsel and the encouragement of fellow BBM program members, Henri's once-darkened heart succumbed to the life-changing love of God's Son. He experienced the love and acceptance of not just a father ...but of God the Father.

Today if Henri weeps with joy, it's because he knows the acceptance and love of God. "Now in Christ, you who were once far away have been brought near". Henri, who wandered in darkness and hopelessness, now lives in victory. Thank You.

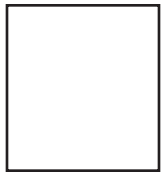
In Tribute...

Sometimes "the perfect gift" for someone special is elusive! You want to express your care and appreciation, but sometimes finding the best way to bless and encourage them isn't easy. Or perhaps there's someone you've known whose life truly impacted your life - and you want to remember them in a significant and enduring way.

A wonderful solution is to give a "Tribute Gift" in their honor or memory ...to Brother Bryan Mission.

Tribute gifts will be specifically identified as **"A gift in Honor of ..."** or **"...in Memory of"** the person or group you designate. As you honor the life or memory of someone special to you ... blessing them or their family ...your gift provides essential and life-changing help for those who come to us in so much need.

Your special gift will be acknowledged to the individuals or families you indicate ...and these names will appear in our newsletter. **Thank you ...**



Your **faithful support** means so much ...

God gave His best. Jesus, the son of God gave His best ...and said to all who would hear, **“follow me”**. To me that means that as I follow Him ...I will give my best.

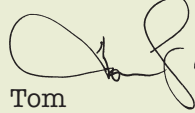
Brother Bryan Mission, a Christ-centered ministry, does not seek or receive any government funds. That means ...for the life-changing work of this vital ministry to be here ... and for us to obtain monthly supplies for hygiene and food ...to pay electric, gas, water, garbage, salaries and insurance (these bills come faithfully)...and to pay for repairs, maintenance, upkeep and cleaning supplies ...to acquire study materials, related training ...and all else that goes into ministering to 55 to 70 men

every day of the month ...it takes the response and support of someone like you and I.

As Brother Bryan Mission turns the page to develop programs and for much needed upgrades to our facilities, please prayerfully consider generously supporting a ministry that stretches every dollar we receive.

Finally ...Please know that I would never suggest or ask support for something that I myself didn't regularly give to.

Thank You Again,



Tom

Volunteer... we really need you

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Matt 25:40

I recently came across the following quote: **“No one is more cherished in this world than the one who lightens the burden of another.”**

We don't have to look far to see God's call and challenge to serve others... to serve them in a way that we would want to be treated. Jesus said that when we serve the **“least”** among us ...we are serving Him (Matt 25:40). There are many ways to lighten the burden of another.

Here are some ideas:

- **Volunteer half a day a week in our office (4 hours).**
- **Serve meals or sort clothes once or twice a month (1½ - 2 hours).**
- **Lead a chapel service once a month or once a quarter (2-3 people, for 1 to 1½ hours).**
- **Minor building or equipment repairs, upgrades, etc. (as needed).**
- **Barber once or twice a month (1½ - 2 hours).**

- **Prepare and serve one meal a month (2½ to 4 hours).**
- **Teach Bible class (and or meet with men one-on-one), once or twice a month (1 hour).**
- **Volunteer to be our “Volunteer Coordinator” (can work here and or from home).**

If you aren't able to commit to a set schedule, but you may be able to be on-call for special needs or projects... send us your name, a contact number and an e-mail address.

The smallest gesture, such as a kind word, or taking a few moments to listen, hear and care... can make an immeasurable difference to the one who is overwhelmed or has lost his way.

If interested in knowing more, please call 205 322-0092; or email alverdean@bbmission.com; or write us at Brother Bryan Mission, P.O. Box 11160 Birmingham, AL 35203.

Thank You for Responding.