

Life Lines Ministry

By JOHN McLAUGHLIN

Tawana. Teresa. Two beautiful names – two sisters in Christ – two women sentenced to lives of physical imprisonment.

Tawana's cell is made of flesh and blood. Teresa's, the rock and steel of a prison cage.

Tawana and I have shared a most special and precious relationship for many years. Teresa is a sister I have only recently been blessed to meet through reading the letter she wrote to Life Lines.

The women do not know one another. Tawana lives a few miles down the road from me. Teresa resides thousands of miles away in Georgia. Both are locked away, and both are free in the truest definition.

Tawana is wrapped in the chains of quadriplegia; the result of a terrible accident that, she freely admits, was in large part brought about by the wild manner in which she had been living her young life.

One minute she was full of vim and vigor: the next she was lying in a ditch realizing that things would never again be the same. My dear sister was 20 years old the afternoon she lost it. She is now 35.

Teresa, on the other hand, is weighed down by the chains of a prison system that has been her home for 21 years. Only 19 when she landed on Death Row, Teresa's death sentence was commuted to life three years later. Now 40, she must do at least four more years before the possibility of her release is even brought up for consideration. No less than Tawana, Teresa – according to the way the secular world views things – is in a hopeless situation.

According to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, both sisters have a great deal more than mere hope going for them. In Him they have the way, the truth and the life that this crazy world can't touch. The hope that they and we have going for us is not of this world. This world is incapable of lending hope, peace and joy amid true challenge.

Tawana has long been a tremendous inspiration to me. When I am in her presence, I know a boundless joy and a mighty respect that is a direct result of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of a true believer. I do not pity sister Tawana: I admire and love her, and pray to God that I might one day attain an abode close to hers in His place of eternal peace.

I have no pity for Tawana simply because there is nothing to pity in a believer who, when asked, didn't hesitate to say her salvation came through the loss of her physical being – and that she wouldn't go back in time and trade in that salvation for anything. God has joined the two in my heart.

It is the strength of Christ Jesus at work in Tawana and Teresa that I am most in awe of. At first, I found myself full of sorrow for the years Teresa has spent behind bars. After all, 15 years of freedom has not in the least seen me forget what 25 years of incarcerated deadness is all about.

Teresa has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that I knew absolutely nothing about when doing that quarter of a century. Teresa has hope.

I didn't encounter hope until I heard the Lord speak to my heart 10 minutes after I left prison, while I was on my way to once again do the wrong thing.

So I was struck by certain similarities in the lives of our two sisters. When I phoned Tawana to share a bit of what I found pouring forth from Teresa, and made some aside concerning the fact that she, Tawana, was imprisoned for life, not because of a crime but because of an accident, she told me pointblank that there is absolutely no difference between what had taken place in their two lives. She said that Jesus Christ had simply employed different methods for getting their attention.

Tawana and Teresa have blessed me beyond measure and continue to do so. It is an honor to know them as my sisters. They both walk quite tall.

(Editor's Note: Life Lines is a Cave Junction-based prison ministry that each month sends hundreds of newsletters to prisoners nationwide. Life Lines can be reached at (541) 592-3643.)

Church News

St. Patrick of the Forest Catholic Church

Next Sunday we will light the third candle (rose) on the Advent Wreath, signifying joy.

The Gospel reading from Luke will remind us of how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by telling the people, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming ... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Those words must have been somewhat confusing for the people. For us, they are more comforting because we know the rest of the story -- that baptism brings us one giant step closer to oneness with the God who saves us.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Preparing for the birth of the Christ child. That is what our focus should be.

JoCo's Brock changes mind

Josephine County Commissioner Jim Brock said he will not relocate to California.

Brock, in Position 3, announced moving last month to be closer to family, but will serve the remainder of his term and wants to unseat Harold Haugen in Position 2 next year.

Piano Lessons
Ages 8 & Up
Carly Elmendorf
592-2940

IVHS School Menu - Sponsored by
SISKIYOU COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
319 Caves Hwy.
592-4111

THURSDAY, DEC. 11
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese or ham & cheese sandwich, chef, Mandarin chicken or garden salad, Hawaiian, cheese or pepperoni pizza, beef soft tacos
FRIDAY, DEC. 12
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese or Italian sandwich, chef, Mandarin chicken or chicken Caesar salad, vegetarian, supreme or sausage or pepperoni pizza, nachos supreme
MONDAY, DEC. 15
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese or ham & cheese sub, chef, Mandarin chicken or fiesta salad, vegetarian, sausage or pepperoni pizza, beef & bean burrito
TUESDAY, DEC. 16
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese or roast beef sub, chef, Mandarin chicken or garden salad, cheese, supreme or pepperoni pizza, Chicken fajita
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese or veggie sub, chef, Mandarin chicken or Antipasto salad, sausage, supreme or pepperoni pizza, Taco salad

It isn't the gifts, the tree, the meals, or the family get-togethers that should be the center of our attention this time of year. Preparing for Jesus' birth means preparing to accept Him as our Lord and Savior -- not just now, but forever.

Church activities include: Wednesday, Dec. 10, 6 p.m., potluck; 6:45 p.m., Bible study; Sunday, Dec. 14, 9 a.m., Sunday School Christmas Program; 10:15 a.m., Sunday School.

Lovejoy ...

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to Lovejoy -- which will go toward extending its hospice and bereavement services -- will be accepted, but are not mandatory.

Those who wish to submit names to be read during the ceremony can phone the Lovejoy office at (888) 758-8569 ahead of time or submit them before the ceremony begins that evening.

A Light Up A Life ceremony was held on Dec. 8 in Grants Pass.

"It's always good to remember the past," Shiery said.

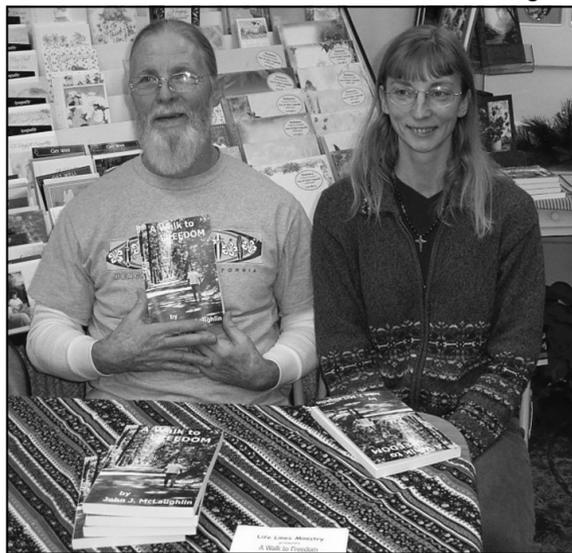
Blood ...

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allowed to donate every 56 days, about six times per year, according to Nicholls.

"The average donor only donates 1.4 times a year," she said.

For more information and to schedule a blood donation, phone (800) 826-5920.



'WALK TO FREEDOM' - Author John J. McLaughlin signed copies of his first book, 'A Walk to Freedom,' with friend Melanie Gayle at Treehouse Florist & Gifts in Cave Junction last week. His book covers his life 'as a man of violence,' who spent years in prison, and who was saved by the faith of Jesus Christ before disaster.

ILLINOIS RIVER ACUPUNCTURE and Chinese Herbs
592-5041
24563 Redwood Highway, Kerby
Jo Anne Stone, M.S., L. Ac.

Deb Murphy will autograph her books for kids at Child's Play during Art Walk
Deborah Murphy will be autographing her book for children at Child's Play, 140 S. Redwood Hwy. during the 2nd Friday Art Walk, Dec. 12, in Downtown Cave Junction. For more information phone 592-2866

Come One, Come All to the **Illinois Valley Golf Association's ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE**
Saturday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Redwood Hwy. & Laurel Road Cave Junction
Refreshments & Memberships available

I.V. Grange Breakfast
3763 Holland Loop
Donate a can of food to the I.V. Grange Food Bank and receive 50-cents off breakfast
Sunday, Dec. 7 8:30 a.m. to noon ALL YOU CAN EAT
Adults-\$5 Children under 11- \$2.50
Waffles, Pancakes, Biscuits & Gravy, Ham, Sausage, Eggs, Juice, Coffee, Tea or Milk

THE FLEA MARKET IS BACK!!! \$5 per table
Phone 592-4478 for tables & reservations

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