

connections

Working Together to Grow the Kingdom

LEADERSHIP NETWORK®

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An Environment for Healing

HEALTHY BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

FEATURED CHURCH: Christ's Church of the Valley

LOCATION: San Dimas, California

ESTABLISHED: Approx. 1960s as West Covina Church of Christ

SERVICES: 8 weekend services

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE: 4,300

Uncertain economic times, substance abuse, trauma and divorce recovery—life's troubles do not stop at the sanctuary doors. People both inside and outside of the church encounter difficulties and benefit from basic Christ-centered principles to guide their recovery. Pastor of Encouragement, Ronald Hall, sees evidence of this daily, and he is committed to positioning Christ's Church of the Valley (CCV) in San Dimas, Calif., as a powerful avenue of help for hurting people from all walks of life.

Long-time minister, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and Professional Christian Counselor, Ron sees 12-step recovery, and practical and spiritual tools, as guides toward peace and healthful restoration.

"My passion is sanctification ministry—to bring people to Christ," Ron says. This calling was catalyzed through CCV's connection with Leadership Network's Recovery Ministry Churches Leadership Community.

CCV busily rearranged under a new senior pastor as weekly attendance swelled by leaps and bounds. Such growth emphasized the importance of pastoral care service within the church. With desires that the two recovery groups at that time would multiply to meet and exceed the church's new needs, CCV accepted the Community's invitation to join.

QUICK GROWTH

Within the church and around the community, participation has expanded and awareness of the church's offerings has broadened.

"It launched [Recovery] as a major ministry in the church," Ron says. "Leadership Network really helped us get things off the ground."

A "Solutions" group was launched as a broad-stroke initiative to present helpful information to



Attendance at Christ's Church of the Valley continues to grow under new Senior Pastor Jeff Vines.

the congregation in a non-intimidating setting. Roughly 60 people showed up to the very first meeting.

Senior Pastor Jeff Vines spoke to the group that day about transparency in life. Later, he expressed to Ron his cooperation with the budding program. Impressed by the peoples' attendance and openness, Jeff called the Solutions meeting "as close to the New Testament Church as [he'd] ever seen."

THE SALVATION LINK

Visitors to group meetings are never hounded for personal contact information or solicited for intimate prayer requests. Though the church is deeply interested in reaching out, the absence of solicitation is part of CCV's pressure-free group environment. Instead, visitors voluntarily mark if they'd like to accept Christ, have

'THE MESSAGE IS: YOU HAVE TO INTEGRATE CHRIST IN YOUR RECOVERY. IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK OTHERWISE.'

recently accepted Christ, or would like more information on salvation or volunteering.

"We've had four people accept Christ so far, and we were kind of shocked," Ron says. These exciting fruits are responses of attendees, apart from any overt attempts to bring visitors to salvation.

"The message is: you have to integrate Christ in your recovery. It's not going to work otherwise," Ron says. Additionally, the group has seen numerous baptisms and several interested volunteers develop in the same way.

A MATURED INITIATIVE

A look at the church's Web site, www.ccvnow.com, reveals just how recovery-minded this church has become. Three main pastoral care departments—Care, Compassion, and Counseling and Recovery—each have their own pastor.

WHAT LEADERSHIP NETWORK MEANS TO ME



"Not only has it been extremely helpful to see what other churches are doing and see the potential for growth in that area of healing, the speakers really got us to catch and share the vision. [Leadership Network] has benefited us not only with 12-step recovery and Solutions groups, but it's also been

great to see the bigger picture and the ways we can help people."

— Ron Hall, Pastor of Encouragement
Christ's Church of the Valley, San Dimas, California

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A LIFE CHANGED

One young man exemplifies recovery groups. A twenty-something was a slave to alcohol but found a mentor who was running one of the church's 12-step programs. Another group leader sponsored the young man's sobriety and "trained him in the biblical process," Ron says.



Attendees enjoy Solutions Group in the coffee-shop atmosphere of CCV's Fireside Cafe room.

Sober and stable, the young man attended Bible college for a career in ministry, later approaching Ron for a chance to help others as a volunteer recovery leader. Ron read the man's detailed vision statement and was so impressed by the report that he welcomed him onboard.

The same young man worked with Ron in summer 2008 as a full-time volunteer intern, and later assumed more responsibility in recovery ministry. He's since become engaged and moved on as God led, but the message is clear: recovery ministry changes lives.

The Care department addresses real physical need, supplementing public medical care, for example. The Compassion department handles bereavement care and holiday outreach, while Counseling and Recovery now includes marital counseling and certified life coaching. CCV also facilitates connections with professional counselors outside of the church who "truly integrate Christian theology into their practice," Ron says. Issue-based "community groups" continually form to address arising needs. Family issues, substance abuse and trauma recovery are among the 10 to 12 groups meeting in 2009.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

The Church's role is crucial. Ron says, "We've had so many people coming to us for help, it's everything we can do just to get people into specific ministries." But CCV leaders continue to progress and dream big—and then dream bigger!

As Pastor Vines gives the God-breathed vision for the church, subsequent ministries fall in line.

Future meetings may migrate to the 800-seat sanctuary, or CCV may house outsourced professional counselors in an on-site church counseling center. One thing is certain. However God chooses to shape this dynamic recovery ministry, CCV is ready. **LN**