



FREE THOUGHTS - Newsletter

Edition 4 v.1

WINTER 2016

Mark your Calendars:

January 19 - Executive Director speaks at Success College to the Correctional Worker and Policing Foundations Class

February 20 - Pathways Annual General Meeting, All welcome - 105 Highfield Park Drive, Dartmouth

March 18 - 20 - Booth at Jesus to the Nations, Mount Saint Vincent University

April 19, 20th - Pastors & Leaders Prayer Summit - Atlantica Oak Island, Western Shore, NS

TBA - PTFM Stepping into Spring Breakfast - Location TBA - please check our website for more details



From the Editors Pen

Winter has come to the Maritimes and looks like it will stay for the duration. Travel is tricky and we all spend lots of time either preparing for a storm or cleaning up from the storm. In that train of thought, it makes me wonder, do we prepare for the spiritual storms in our lives? Once the storm passes and the one who created us carries us through, do we give HIM thanks? Do we give back by helping others that are in a storm or are trying to clean up their lives after such a "storm"? These thoughts came to me as I cleaned up from yet another winter storm. We have so much to be thankful for, our storms in life are mild compared to the storms that our clients inside have faced or are facing.

I think of the men and women we serve, they did not intentionally prepare to end up incarcerated, in conflict with the law and society. Most times in the midst of yet another crises (storm) they end up despite good intentions behind bars. No one as a child growing up decides, I will be a drug addict, an alcoholic, a thief to support the aforementioned addictions or a dangerous person out to hurt others. No, for some the decision is made before birth by the circumstances of their birth. For some it slowly creeps up on them as they experiment with something and then that something becomes an addiction. For others it starts as rebellion and goes to a place from which they have no return. Then there are those that have mental illness where there is no help or the help comes too late. Institutions overflow with people who have mental illness that need to receive a profound healing from their creator.

Once a person is inside that is when they can finally examine where they are and how they got there. I pray that sometimes they may say thank you for the storm because now they can institute change in their lives. They can focus on the author and finisher of their faith. They can call out to Him who has the power to change them. The storm got them there but that is not the end. This is just the beginning where our Pathways volunteers can make a difference. When people are isolated and alone, that is when our mentors help to shine Jesus light in their lives. We can help them examine things, be there as a supportive ear, pray for them to have a real change in their lives. To help them to make the switch to the one who saves. We can walk with them as they come back to society. They will not be alone as their father sent someone to be his hands and feet.

God has not given up on them, just as the father welcomes the prodigal, our heavenly father welcomes those that were lost but now are found. Thank God for the storm but thank Him more that he can reach them in their darkest place.

In Christ,
Nancy Hynes, Founder and Newsletter Editor



Year Ended December 31, 2015

CLIENT STATS

ACTIVE CLIENTS	9
WAITING MATCH	3
AWAITING INTAKE	6

VOLUNTEER STATS

Letter writers	4
Volunteers fully cleared	8
Mentors waiting clearances	1
Volunteers partially cleared	4
Volunteers with travel concerns	1
Potential Volunteers	2

NOTABLE QUOTES:

“We know only too well that what we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But if the drop were not there, the ocean would be missing something.”

Mother Theresa,

Date unknown

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Greetings in the name of our Most Precious Lord! Happy New Year to you and yours, I pray that this will be a year filled with promise, good health, and prosperity. We get a clean slate, a blank canvas, to chart the course of our lives for another year.

The year 2015 was a busy one for us at PTFM. The vision before us for 2016 and beyond is great, with lofty goals that we in His strength move forward. The vision will require great strategy and sacrifice, but most importantly the vision must be drenched in prayer and financial support. The needs are great and without HIM nothing is possible, but as we seek HIS face to make meaningful change for those we serve He will bless all that we put our hands to.

This year will see us launch a new promo video, increase and strengthen our social media presence, launch the Houses of Healing program, and strategically leverage ideas for new revenue streams. This will be an exciting year, and it is our desire the Lord will call more people to serve, whether it be on our executive council, a committee, or as a mentor. This is a year where I, as the leader of this ministry will speak out in boldness and with a prophetic word over this ministry. It is no less than God would call me to do for the work for which he has called us.

Stay tuned to our future newsletters, and more importantly <http://pathwaystofreedom.ca> for all upcoming news & events. I hope to see you at our AGM on Saturday Feb 20th, 10 am at the Dartmouth North Community Centre.

Blessings!
Rev. Bob George
Executive Director, Pathways to Freedom

***A CLIENT SPEAKS OUT:**

GODS HEALING POWER

My name is Joe C. I lived most of my life in Nova Scotia without a father. I felt different; scared; I had little attachment to my feelings; I always felt lost on the road of life. People tried to love me, but I always ran because I was scared to love in return. My heart was numb going as far back as I can remember.

I was raised Catholic; I went to church and was a member of our youth group. Early in my teens, I turned my back on God. The only thing I cared about was feeding my growing hunger for alcohol. Alcohol felt like the magic potion that fixed any problem I had no matter how big or small. I always tried to escape reality searching for that piece missing within my heart. All I ever found was darkness. The darker my life got the more addictions I picked up along the way. Booze, drugs, pills and sex all wanted to be my best friend.

I decided to move to Western Canada in my mid-twenties to get a fresh start and get out of the fog that was my everyday life. I got a high paying job in the oilfield. My thought was money might be that missing piece to my heart. As it turns out it wasn't, and my addictions came out to Alberta with me and my fiancée. I tried so hard to become a better man but I was getting worse, and my job in the oil patch made it easy to feed my addictions and to live a double life. There were so many unhealthy relationships as I kept cheating on my fiancée. Telling lies was the end game to getting what I wanted.

The time came that I hit rock bottom, I was a wreck and I didn't feel a thing. The downward spiral of addiction caused me to hurt another human being. There was no excuse for this, and I ended up doing time in prison. I lost all that I had. Friends, family, my job, possessions and most of all-my freedom; all of it was gone. My life got even darker, as I began waiting for trial in an Alberta Remand Centre. Those days were the darkest of dark. I was feeling lonely, depressed with a host of other emotions and didn't have my alcohol crutch to deal with them. I had to face all of this in a sober condition. All I could do to cope was try to force down food, sleep, read and write poetry.

March 3, 2014 at my trial I was sentenced to 3 years in a federal prison. I had never been to prison before, the unknowns scared me but at least it wasn't as bad as the Remand Centre. I kept to myself and had a lot of cell time alone with the fog of my mind. After ten months of incarceration; I was transferred out from medium security to a minimum-security annex. I never really searched for God but while in minimum security, HE found me. My heart began to feel warm, and I finally began to feel free from the hold of my addictions, which I thought I would never be able to escape. God was that missing piece in my heart for which I had been searching. Even though I was incarcerated, I had found a happiness and freedom that I had never known. To this day, I am still unable to put into words the feelings I felt when I began to trust Jesus and gave Him complete control over my life.

It was months later that I would do paperwork to allow me to be granted day parole in Alberta. I was still somewhat confused about my future so I decided to do a 60 hour fast to pray and seek answers from God. This fast led me to fill in paperwork again for my day parole, this time for release to Halifax. I began to work with Chaplain Don early in 2015 to build a positive support structure for release to Halifax. One day the Chaplain asked, "What if you get denied for your day parole, and don't get to go to a halfway house in Halifax?" We started working on a plan B. that was when we made contact with Pastor Bob at Pathways to Freedom. Pastor Bob and I wrote letters back and forth while I was waiting for my parole hearing. On October 21st I was denied day parole. I had support from everyone in my case management team, except the Parole Board of Canada. My mind had been prepared either way, for I knew in my spirit that God had a purpose and that He needed more time to get things ready in Halifax.

While I waited for my statutory release date of December 14, 2015, I never got much sleep. I was going to be released out to the street with no food, shelter, or money once I got off the plane in Halifax. However, God had a plan! On Sunday Dec 13th I spoke with Pastor Bob on the telephone for the first time, and my prayers were about to be answered.

Bob and his wife met me at the Halifax airport, not even knowing my background let alone what I looked like. They saved me from falling back into the darkness. I have been shown so much love, and they have given me more than I could ever have imagined. They have also placed me in the path of other great people who do truly care for me. God has directed me to PTFM and it has been such a great blessing. Asking for help was never something I could do as it made me feel like less of a man. They have been able to show me that asking for help was the best decision I have ever made in my entire life. We all need help at one time or another no matter how old we are and we should never be afraid to ask. I want to take this opportunity to thank Pathways to Freedom Ministries with all my heart for giving and showing me strength, hope, love and joy.

God Bless

Joe C.

*Editor's Note: This article has been edited

Our Executive Director is available for presentations at churches or other speaking events. Sharing stories of redemption and the work of this ministry, contact the email below for more information.

SAVE THE DATES 2016

**MONTHLY PRAYER FOR
PATHWAYS**

January 23rd

February 27th

March 19th

April 23rd

May 21st

June 18th

Do you want to get involved in mentoring or letter writing?

Email bob@pathwaystofreedom.ca or

Call 902-441-5019 today

God is doing something BIG, be a part of God's Greatness

You won't pour out as much as gets poured in to you!

Editors Forward to Article "Letter Writing":

God continuously amazes me, the following letter was submitted in December by the letter writing coordinator for this issue. The purpose is to encourage letter writers, and give an example of how to write like this to their pen-pals. What amazed me is that I never read this article before I started to work on this edition. I actually wrote my "From the Editors Pen" before I read this submission. Once I started typing, my amazement grew. Sherri and I both used the word "storms" to reflect the trouble we go through in our lives.

It is very obvious to me that the Holy Spirit is alive and well and at work in this ministry and in our lives, how encouraging.

***LETTERWRITING:**

Psalm 130:6 "My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning."

As you may know, there is no hiding from God. He hears...No matter how deep the depths are, God is close and his hearing is perfect. I can tell you that each time I have pulled away from God, He has never left me or forsaken me, he tells us this in His word. However, when storms come and blow us around the firm foundation we stand on sometimes doesn't hold. It is sad to say, we are the ones that think, "Oh, I can handle this". Then if you are anything like me you take a good look back and can't blame anyone else other than yourself for dropping off the firm foundation and walking on your own path. It's always good to take a look back so you can see where He's brought you from but also where He's leading you to.

Our God, I have realized is so interested in me, He loves to see His children succeed. We have to make a conscious choice to move with the cloud or stay with the crowd. I chose to move with the cloud. God's path is so much better, peaceful, and full of hope than we could ever come up with or imagine.

Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances that we know are desperate. Neglect and negativity always lead to drifting questions.

- 1) How do I break out of this downward cycle?
- 2) How can you keep from drifting away when the storms of life come?

Life tests us every day; maybe you are there now, look for God as the watchmen looks for the morning. The watchmen know the sun will rise, there is no question in their mind. He may not like the dark but he knows it will end. God will rise on your behalf at the appointed hour. Like the watchmen you can wait for him with the security of HOPE!

I encourage you to read all of Psalm 130. Then after, when you pray it can be with absolute certainty that He hears you, He loves us, and the morning is coming.

"His mercies are new every morning; great is His faithfulness unto you".

In His Service
Sherri George,
Letter writing co-ordinator.

*Editor's Note: This article has been edited.

Keep an eye out for upcoming events and ways to support this ministry

[@www.pathwaystofreedom.ca](http://www.pathwaystofreedom.ca)