

Missionary Evangelism to Corrections

Sharing the gospel & Christ's love with those in corrections since 1982
"I was in prison and you came to me" Matt. 25:36cESV



Suicide Prevention by Hope For the Heart Ministries

This is an article which we adapted and sent out to inmates this month because September is Suicide Prevention month. The number of inmates that are tempted to commit suicide is high and we want to help them know God's Word and His love.

If you struggle with suicidal thoughts, if you feel trapped in a storm and see no hope for a brighter tomorrow, know that God is extending you a lifeline of hope. He loves you. He cares about you. He wants to help you—and other people will too. God is full of grace and compassion for you. *"The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. When I was brought low, He saved me."* (Psalm 116:5-6)

God wants you to know that He is extending you a lifeline of hope.

God wants you to know:

- You are loved and valued. *"You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you."* (Isa. 43:4 NLT).
- You have purpose. *"The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands."* (Psalm 138:8 ESV).
- Your pain and suffering are not meaningless. *"We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead."* (2 Corinthians 1:8-9 NLT).

God wants you to:

- **Talk** to someone and find help if you're having suicidal thoughts. *"In an abundance of counselors there is safety."* (Proverbs 11:14 ESV)
- **Come** to Him for refuge and help. *"The Lord is a shelter, a refuge in times of trouble."* (Psalm 9:9 NLT).
- **Receive** His free gift of salvation. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever*



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September-October 15th 2021
MEC News

Spotlight: Robert Maho

TESTIMONY Native Perspective



When people ask me where I'm from I just tell them, "From all over". Since I have time, I will tell you. I was born on the Hopi Reservation in northern Arizona. That is my dad's homeland.

He speaks Tewa, Hopi and English. He was a traditional man. The Hopi ceremonies are ancient and intricate – centering around the seasons. They remind me of how hard life was traditionally.

When I was 5 my folks moved us to Chicago (North side) where Dad worked as a welder. We went to a Native school called O-Way-Ya-Wa, which means "place of learning" in Lakota. There we learned the history and traditions of Native Americans. When I was 12 my dad sent my brother and me back to Arizona to get initiated into the Kiva Society, which was a rite of passage and meant we could participate in the ceremonies. We did the Buffalo and Eagle Dance. At the age of thirteen we moved to my mom's homeland – the Menominee Indian Reservation in North Eastern Wisconsin. The Menominee live pretty much the same as the Ojibwe. I loved the woods where I hunted and fished. In 11th grade I went to Flandreau Indian School in South Dakota. That is a co-ed boarding school where 500 Native kids from tribes all over the United States go to be educated. I graduated in 1982.

I attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. There I attended sweats with a Lakota man, living among the Apache and Lakota. I have visited many reservations and still like to go to pow-wows.

My high school sweetheart is a traditional Lakota. We have 3 kids together. We moved to Minneapolis in 1984. That's when she started drinking and avoiding coming home – she became a "run around Sioux". Her actions caused a lot of strife in our relationship. I was frustrated, angry and depressed, wandering the country, suicidal, homeless, and in and out of jail. In Arizona I was at the edge of a mesa and looking at my kid's picture and crying from heartache. I prayed to God for the first time and told Him

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believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

God wants you to know:

- He will not reject you when you come to Him. *“Whoever comes to me [Jesus], I will never drive away.” (John 6:37).*
- He can heal your broken heart and the painful wounds of your past. *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” (Psalm 147:3).*

God wants you to:

- have hope and rest in safety and security. *“You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety.” (Job 11:18).*

Key Verses to Memorize:

“There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.” (Proverbs 23:18 NIV)

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for good and welfare - to prosper you and not to harm you or for disaster, plans to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11 combined versions)



Key Passage to Read: Lamentations 3:19–26 (combined versions)

“The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. Remember my affliction and my wanderings, my wormwood and my gall. I will never forget this awful time. My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. as I grieve over my loss.

Yet, I still dare to hope when I remember this: this I call to mind and therefore I have hope.

The steadfast faithful love of the LORD never ceases; it never comes to an end! Your mercies never cease.

Your mercies begin afresh; they are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.

The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” I say to myself, “The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!”

The LORD is good to those who depend on him, to those who wait for Him, to those who – to the soul who seeks and search(es) for Him/You.

So it is good to wait (that one should wait) quietly for salvation of/from the LORD.” (Combined versions)

My Personalized Plan:

When I feel hopeless and suicidal thoughts occur, it’s important to have a plan to find immediate help and ongoing support. I will remember that I am not alone. The Lord promises to be with me, to guide me, and to watch over me.

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.” (Psalm 32:8)

When I’m in despair and struggling with suicidal thoughts, I will:

Talk to someone:

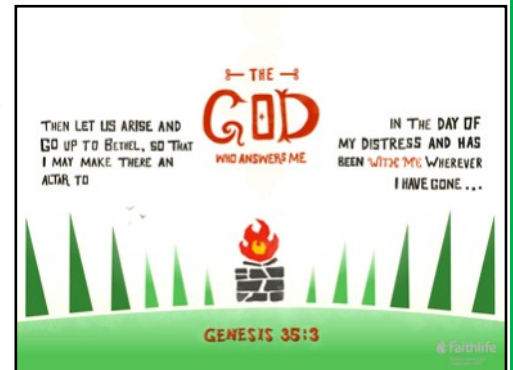
- I will reach out to a friend, family member, pastor, counselor, or someone I trust to be honest.
- I will call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, text the Crisis Text Line at 741741, or call 911 when I’m in danger of harming myself. *“In an abundance of counselors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14 ESV).*

Seek to be safe:

- I will remove any harmful or lethal objects from my possession and home.
- I will identify safe people and places I can go to when I’m struggling with thoughts of self-harm. *“But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge” (Psalm 73:28).*

Hold on to hope:

- I will try to put things in perspective and remember, no matter what I’m feeling or thinking, I can have hope.
- I will read God’s Word to find true, lasting hope and read stories of survivors to remind me that hope is a solid anchor. (Note: You can find “Stories of Hope and Recovery” on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/stories.) *“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” (Hebrews 6:19 NIV).*



Address physical issues:

- I will get a medical check-up and talk with a doctor to see if any physical issues may contribute to my suicidal thoughts (or depression) and consider any recommended treatments to help me.
- Take care of myself physically and try to live a healthy lifestyle by eating well, getting adequate sleep each night, exercising as able, avoiding harmful substances such as drugs and alcohol. *“I discipline my body and keep it under control.” (1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV).*

Take care of my emotional needs:

- I will avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms such as drinking alcohol, using drugs, or self-harming behaviors.
- I will consider new, healthy ways of managing my emotions such as talking with others, journaling, drawing/painting, praying, meditating, or exercising. *“In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help.” (Psalm 18:6 NIV).*

Replace negative thoughts:

- I will acknowledge negative thoughts and lies I believe about myself and my situation.
- I will replace negative thoughts by meditating on the truth of God’s Word. *“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, --if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, - think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8).*

Acknowledge that pain is temporary

- I will put my pain in perspective and acknowledge that the pain I feel is temporary—it won’t last forever.
- I will remember that God promises to one day put an end to all pain and suffering. *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” (Rev. 21:4 NLT)*

Find & Be in community:

- I will remember that I’m not alone,—that many other people have been in my place and found help.
- I will seek the support of others, and consider joining a community support group, a local church, or other helpful groups. *“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 NLT).*

Look to God for help:

- I will regularly pray and search God’s Word to find help, hope, strength, peace, and guidance.
- I will remember that God loves me, cares about me, and that He is always with me. *“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.” (Psalm 18:2 NLT).*

Stay connected:

- I will remember that even when I’m not in a crisis or having suicidal thoughts, it’s important to stay connected with others.
- I will regularly check in with others (counselor, doctor, pastor, trusted individual, etc.) to evaluate my suicide risk and get help as needed. *“Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another” (Hebrews 10:25 NLT).*



4 POINTS OF GOD’S PLAN for His Purpose, Our Sin, Surrender and Living in, with, and for Him are presented in the teaching article. Receiving “the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .” (2 Peter 1:3).* Jesus assures those who believe with these words: *“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” (John 5:24)*

Ministry Shout Out

This month’s Ministry Shout Out goes to:

The Dwelling Place

The Dwelling Place is a Christian ministry providing healing and hope to victims of domestic abuse through supportive services and a safe place to call home.

www.thedwellingplaceshelter.org



that if He got me and my son back together, I would do whatever He wanted.

While walking the streets of Los Angeles, a man at an intersection tried to tell me about Jesus. I didn't want to listen, until he told me they were having a chicken dinner at his church that night. I went and had what people call a born-again experience. I slept on the pews there for a month and learned the basics of the Bible. Javier, the man from the street corner, discipled me. I left and then wandered some more. Not following up on my new-found faith, but reverting to my old lifestyle - only it had gotten 7 times worse. ... drinking, drugs, sex, a bad attitude. When I was 24 my temper exploded and I ended up in Hennepin County Jail with a long prison sentence hanging over my head.

My girlfriend talked to a medicine man. He told her I needed to make peace with God. I remembered the God of the Bible who I learned about when I was in California. I recommitted my life to the Lord and started reading the Bible. After 10 months in County, my sentence was 13 & ½ years. I was sent to Oak Park Heights and introduced to the Native group right away. Out of fear and just wanting to fit in, I put the Bible on a shelf. I went to the sweat lodge, learned from the Ojibwe spiritual advisor and sought more knowledge through books about Native spirituality. I read about magic, which led me into sorcery. When I read about demon possession, I became concerned about the path I was on. Demons and evil spirits are actually fallen angels fighting against God and all that He stands for -- and the only power against such forces is Jesus. Realizing I was on the losing side, I rededicated my life again, studied the Bible and tried to witness to my Native brothers.

The chief sent someone to ask me some questions...and then kicked me out of the group in Oak Park for being a threat to the security of the group. Turning the other cheek, loving your enemies and being peaceful doesn't fit in prison culture. The chief in Stillwater Prison (a different prison near Oak Park) came to my cell a few times, probably to make sure I wasn't crazy. He put me in the group there, thinking I could be a positive influence. I led a lot of men to the Lord. I would pray every morning for

the opportunity to share the Gospel with at least one person that day. I probably have led hundreds to the Lord by now. Every time I led someone to the Lord, I sensed a surge of power flow through me. God would fill me with power and the Holy Spirit would give me an energy, He was showing me that this was part of my purpose.

I was transferred to medium security at Lino Lakes Prison, then to Red Wing even though I was supposed to do all of my time in maximum security. I was given special treatment because I was doing positive things with my time and they needed the bunk

space. After serving 9, I've now been out 23 years. Since then, I have married, volunteered with a street witnessing ministry, and was on the Board of Directors of Overcomers Outreach Ministry – a Native American outreach in Minneapolis. With my wife, I helped teach Sunday School at Little Earth Housing project. Among other church volunteering, we led a small group from our house.

As soon as I was able, I started going back into prison as a minister. Before Covid I used to go into prisons with 2 different ministries. I am on the Board of Directors with one of them. We put on weekend retreats in 3 different prisons each year. I preached and gave my testimony several times a year. The other ministry I go in with is to put on Chapel Services at Lino Lakes. I lead the service and preach a few times a year.

When I first got sent to prison, I told my ex not to wait for me because I knew she wouldn't. Throughout my time in prison, I got visits from my kids. And I tried to be a part of their lives. After my release I personally led each of my kids to the Lord through the Sinner's Prayer. I want to make sure they make it to heaven. I tell the men in prison that these are the secrets to my success. The Holy Spirit. The Word of God. My Wife. Serving and using my spiritual gifts.

My people don't understand how I could be a Christian because they are told that Christianity is the white man's religion. It's easy to go along with the peer pressure, but I know that Jesus was not a white man; He was a black-haired, brown-eyed man who lived under oppression – like my people did. Above and beyond that Jesus existed before the foundation of the world. He is God the Son – part of the Trinity. I considered all of the Native spiritual teachings and found that they are all very different. Many of the tribes have different beliefs and many of them have been lost. When the Holy Spirit made my spirit come alive, I knew that the God of the Bible was the true God.

This is ***Relationship, not religion.***

Robert Maho

To see an outline of the teaching Rob uses when he is in the prisons go to

http://www.mecjailministry.com/bible_studies/New_Creation_essentials.pdf

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Stillwater Prison
Photo Wikipedia



screenshot abc
Photo from Prison Academy Meeting