

THE STORY OF CATHERINE

It was 8:00 o'clock at the end of a long day at the office and a Preventative Law presentation at Joy Junction. I had packed my materials and was headed home. I was almost out the door when Kate caught my attention. A shy slender, a woman in her 40s approached me and asked me to help her with a bench warrant resulting from her failure to appear at a hearing in a Texas court charging her with issuing worthless checks.

I was tempted to refer Kate to NMCLA's next regular interview session, but the sincerity of her request and the anxiety in her eyes caused me to stay. The problem was that she'd issued these checks for rent and food not knowing that her estranged serviceman husband had canceled their checking account. Released on her own recognizance, she missed the court hearing because her ill, pregnant daughter in Albuquerque needed her. She wanted to make restitution but had only recently obtained a job at the Owl Café and it would take time to earn enough money to do this. She also revealed that she'd been on meth but had been clean for a month.

After giving my recommendations, I asked her if she would like to review the four spiritual laws with me which are primarily excerpts of the Christian gospel message on how to receive Christ. As we reviewed these scriptures together, she broke into tears. She said she had previously accepted Christ in her life but had strayed far from her Christian faith. Only once before have I ever experienced such an immediate and dramatic response to the gospel message. Through her tears she prayed a fresh prayer of re-commitment of her life to Christ with a conviction and a joyful change in her countenance that I knew could only have come from God.

If I had not followed where the Holy Spirit led me, and walked out the door that night, I would have missed one of the most rewarding interview experiences I've have ever had.

NMCLA Volunteer Attorney

ANNOUNCEMENTS

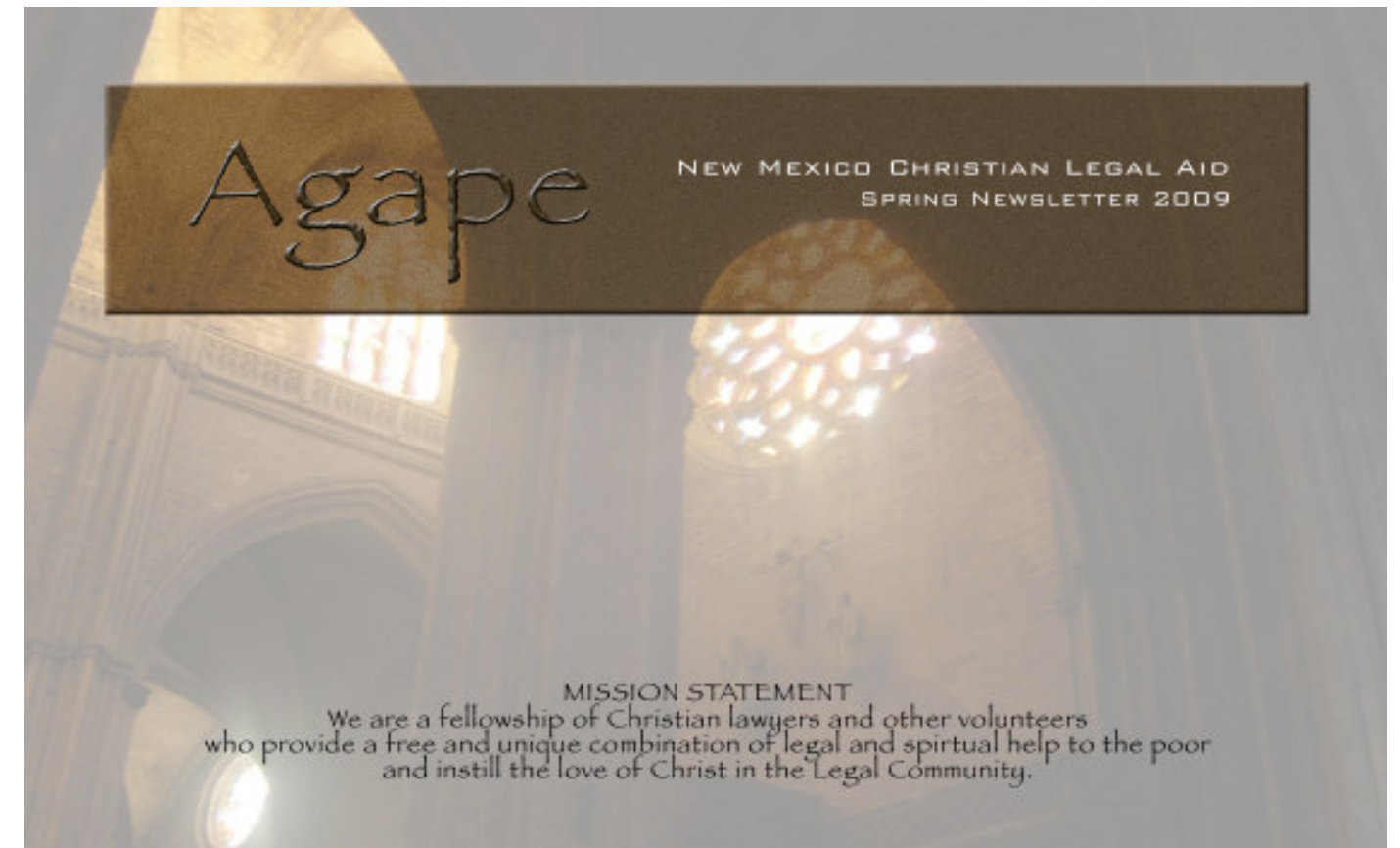
SHARE YOUR STORIES

Share your stories of successful service as a part of NMCLA's community of volunteers and supporters. E-mail your stories to nmcla.coordinator@yahoo.com, we'll publish your experiences and share how the love of Christ works through us to serve others. You can remain anonymous and the names of your clients can be changed to protect confidentiality.

NEW VOLUNTEER TRAINING

New and prospective volunteers, please mark your calendars for May 1, 2009. New Volunteer Training will take place at the State Bar Center from 11:00 – 5:00. An application for CLE credit has been submitted for review and approval. The workshop will likely provide 2.5-3.0 hours of CLE credit.

Current volunteers, if you know anyone who would make a great addition to our team of volunteers, please provide their name and contact information Jim Roach 243-4419, John Robb 768-7216, or e-mail the information to nmcla.coordinator@yahoo.com. Mr. Roach or Mr. Robb will call the prospective volunteer to provide information and an invitation to training.



NEW MEXICO CHRISTIAN LEGAL AID
300 CENTRAL SW, SUITE 1500-WEST
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87102

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

Mr. Brian Eagan, Assistant City Attorney, will be the featured speaker at the Fellowship Luncheon on April 17, 2009 at Le Peep Restaurant (I-40 and Louisiana) at 11:45. Come learn more about a program that is so vital to the needs of the population NMCLA serves.

Gala Dinner Celebrates Past and Future Service of New Mexico Christian Legal Aid

On January 24, 2009, NMCLA celebrated ten years of service to our community's poor and homeless with a spectacular gala held at Hotel Albuquerque. Over 140 guests attended the dinner and program recognizing the unique partnerships between NMCLA and Joy Junction, Albuquerque Rescue Mission and Noon Day Ministries.

Sam Casey of the Christian Legal Society and Advocates International of Washington, D.C. was the evening's featured speaker. Mr. Casey spoke of the local, national and international impact of these organizations to help the under privileged.

Mr. Casey recognized NMCLA's accomplishments and dynamic program and spoke of the genesis of NMCLA as CLS' first pilot program in the nation. New Mexico Christian Legal Aid was the first "new generation" of holistic programs which provided integrated legal and spiritual support. The audience was captivated by Mr. Casey's account of addressing the legal and spiritual issues in the life of a young

handicapped woman. Under God's direction Mr. Casey provided pro bono services that greatly impacted the life of this woman.

Another purpose for the gala was to thank Joy Junction, Albuquerque Rescue Mission, New Day Ministry, past and present NMCLA board members, and past and present Christian lawyers and law student volunteers for their pro bono services to approximately 7600 individuals and 52,000 immediate and extended family members over the past ten years. NMCLA recognizes that without the selfless service of these volunteers and partners, legal and spiritual support to Albuquerque's homeless and needy would not be possible.

Jim Roach, NMCLA President, recognized Ruthie Horn Robbins, Noon Day Board members and Executive Director Danny Whatley. Mr. Whatley presented gripping stories of clients helped by NMCLA volunteers.

The Albuquerque Rescue Mission was represented by board member Pastor Paul Collins who opened the evening with prayer. Pastors Larry Moss, Don Wilson and Marty Goehring and their spouses headed a large delegation from Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church, one of many churches represented at the dinner.

Joy Junction was represented by its founder Jeremy Raynolds and members of his staff. Mr. Raynolds closed the evening with prayer. Each of these groups received warm applause from the audience as they were invited by Jim Roach to stand and be recognized.

NMCLA Board members, Jim Roach, John Robb and Robyn Hoffman, presented stories about NMCLA volunteers in action, including accounts of faith sharing and clients helped by caring volunteers. Mr. Robb informed the group that the Preventative Law and Community Education program that began in 2006 has assisted more than 4400 of the poor and homeless. The program teaches the needy and homeless how to avoid and prevent issues with law enforcement and work through issues that have hindered or inadvertently trapped clients in poverty.

NMCLA's 10th Anniversary fund drive included gifts made prior to the gala and gifts received and pledged the night of the dinner. Your generosity and commitment to the program netted \$36,000. The funds will help NMCLA continue providing current services and expand to an interview site in the South Valley. \$10,000 was "repayment" to CLS for its previous grants to NMCLA. A big "thank you" to our numerous donors all of whom made substantial gifts including a number of very large gifts. You continue to make us financially viable.

Special thanks to Steve Stucker, prominent KOB-TV anchor who did an outstanding job as MC, Billy Isidoro who provided Christian guitar music and composed and performed an original song commemorating the historic event, Heather Roach for helping with registration, Shirley Roach, the official photographer who faithfully photographed the evening's events, and Roberta, NMCLA's Coordinator, for organizing the event.

A Soon to be Published Book on the History and Story of Christian Legal Aid

The Christian Legal Society in its Upcoming Issue of "The Christian Lawyer" announces the forthcoming publication of "Defending the Poor With the Love of God" which recites the history and stories of how God has enabled the near "miraculous" growth of 64 Christian Legal Aid programs in the United States and Africa.

The book is authored by John D. Robb, who served as National Director of CLS Christian Legal Aid programs and features Albuquerque as the first program to implement the concept of a fully integrated legal and spiritual service to the poor and homeless.

The book is filled with Mr. Robb's accounts of his own experiences; and those of many other lawyers in their struggle to begin, maintain and increase the quality and the quantity of services to so many of our nation's needy. **Publication is scheduled for late spring 2009.**



Left to Right: Steve and Robyn Hoffman, George and Lucille Stevens, Judge Stan Whitaker and his daughter, Jeremy Raynolds, Steve Stucker, Danny and Roberta Whatley, Judge John Romero and Amy Romero, Paul and Jeni Civerolo, Jerry and Debbie Dixon, Lisa Ford, Drew and Katy Lynch, Mike and Amanda Gallegos, Billy Isidoro, Sam Casey, John and Peggy Robb, and Judge Richard Puglisi, Anne Marie Puglisi, and Jim Roach