

## C. W. Lowrimore: A Profile in Gratitude

C.W. Lowrimore was one of the most impressive men that I met while teaching in prison. Chaplain Perry Barnes introduced me to CW in 1987 at the Goree Unit near Huntsville, Texas. CW proudly wore the nickname, "Barnabas" given to him by Chaplain Barnes. (See Acts 13-15) I categorized CW as a friendly extrovert. There was no such thing as a stranger to CW.

CW served as Perry Barnes' assistant. He took the roll count in the three Sunday worship services. CW worked in the mess hall and laundry areas. He also kept a journal for Perry. He assisted with baptisms. Perry could easily have called CW the "Chaplain's Baptizer." In his full adult life as an educator, minister, and prison chaplain, Perry was a strong believer in baptism for the forgiveness of sins. In a 1999 letter to Bill Brewer, Perry mentioned having baptized over 30,000.

CW was a smooth con-artist by the time he went to prison the sixth time. He would say that he enjoyed taking *vacations* from prison. His criminal record was full of hot checks, selling magazine subscriptions illegally, etc. He took the orders and money for magazines but never ordered them.

CW told his story this way: "My release came in December 1989. In January of 1990, I went to see Eddy Ketchersid, the minister at the Farmers Branch Church of Christ. I told him I had started a delivery business and needed \$88 for a down payment on business insurance. *Minister K* asked, 'Is that all you need?' I said 'Yes' and *Brother K* immediately pulled out his personal check book and wrote me an \$88 check. He gave me complete trust. I cannot tell you how his trust in me encouraged me and made me feel so capable of being worthy. I felt my success was important to Brother Eddy. I felt he cared that I succeeded and stayed out of prison."

CW continued, "When I look back on my time at the Goree Prison Unit, Chaplain Barnes treated me the same way. I thought he cared if I would make it. He made me feel valuable. He made me feel that I would get released and not come back. He thought I was of value." I remember Freddie Anderson saying, "CW, you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free."

CW was one who wanted to stay in touch. No matter where he was, he would call on the phone and say, "Dr. Motsinger, guess where I am!" He might be in Texas, New England, or Florida. His enthusiasm was always the same. On February 10, 2001, I invited him to come and speak to our board of trustees. Again, his love of the Lord and gratitude for me and others, who ministered to him, came through without hesitation.

CW told me that I had taught him the "Love Principle." On July 25 (2016), he said, "HM, you taught me that we need to love ourselves because His Son loved us and died for us." CW went on to add, "You taught me that the best way to stay out of prison is to love self and do good for others. Other-wise prison will simply be a revolving door." He had experienced the *revolving door* enough to know.

CW continued, “After attending your NLB classes, I would lie awake thinking about getting out and staying out. Now that I am successful at staying out, I think back on being a six-time loser. Now my goal is to be a *seven-time winner* for Christ.”

One of the songs that we sang in prison was entitled, “A Wonderful Savior.” Fanny J. Crosby, a blind lady, wrote these powerful words. CW felt a connection to it and requested it often. The key words that struck CW are in its chorus, “He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock.”

One of the stories related to this song speaks of two men traveling on foot in the mountains. They find themselves in a heavy rainstorm. They began praying for a place of safety from the lightning and hailstones. With the next flash of lightning, they saw huge rocks. All at once they saw a big opening in one of the 30-foot rock formations. It looked as if someone had dug out a space in the rock large enough for two people to hide from the rain, wind, and hail. The two men took refuge in this dry cleft in the rock. CW identified this story with his search for a place where to hide from the temptation to con people. He would often tell me that our class was one of those “clefts” for him.

On his release, CW built a delivery business into a successful one-man enterprise. First, he delivered checks for doctors and hospital employees. Next, he built his trucking business (TEX-TENN TRANSPORTERS) by transporting items for Christians. Sam Gomez was one. He contracted with Sam to deliver items for years.

It is interesting how people are connected. Sam is a brother to Becky Gomez Almanza. Sam was baptized by Wes Whitt in the early 1980’s, while preaching at the Belt Line Road Church of Christ in Irving. Sam and I knew each other through prison ministry. Sam delivered a load of Bibles for me to a ministry south of Mexico City.

More recently, CW delivered jet engines, airplane wings, and other major items. On one trip he was transporting \$10 million worth of equipment for Sam. People had trust in CW and trust was very important to him.

At his home congregation in Farmers Branch, he helped ministers like he helped Chaplain Barnes in prison. He took the attendance count in two services. He picked up 25-50 boxes of doughnuts for the Sunday church snacks. He was extremely proud to be able to use his truck and two trailers to carry youth to retreats. He carried them not only around Dallas but to Tennessee, Colorado, and other distant locations. He felt loved, and trusted. He felt like he belonged. The church met more than CW’s *spiritual* needs. It also met his social needs. It was his family.

CW ended a conversation once saying, “Don’t hesitate to ask me to do something for your ministry. I will be happy to help out.” I sensed in CW that his joy was the result of fulfilling Acts 10:37 (“Going about doing good”). While traveling across the U.S., he often called to see if he could pick up something for me and bring it back to Dallas.

As I was writing some of this, CW called. He wanted me to include a key Scripture given him by Chaplain Barnes. It was Matthew 16:26-27 which says, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then He will reward each person according to what they have done." CW told me that when Chaplain Barnes gave him that Scripture, he knew how foolish CW had been in the past. CW made a vow then to do as much good as he had done wrong. His commitment was to do good so that what he had learned from all of us – Chaplain Barnes, Freddy Anderson, Eddy Ketchersid, and me – would not be in vain. Knowing CW now for over 35 years and witnessing his loyalty to Christ, I believe that CW is walking hand in hand with Christ. At approximately 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 23, 2021, Clinton Wallace Lowrimore entered his final "cleft" for eternity.

Thank you, CW. You truly lived out Acts 10:38 and went about "doing good."

HM Motsinger