

## A Concluding Personal Postscript: Idubin Vargas in his own words...

[Idubin is Mel's foster brother, and his life is a testimony of how the gospel, communicated in both word and deed, can change lives in Reading, PA, both now and for eternity.]

I was born in New York into a non-Christian family. My dad was an alcoholic and abusive toward my brother and sisters, but most of all to my mother. It got to the point where my mother couldn't take it anymore so that she decided to take us kids to Reading. I had the choice of staying with my mom or my dad, and at that point I wanted to be with my dad. But in the end, my dad decided it would be better for me to go with my mother. I am extremely glad it happened that way because it gave me the chance of enjoying life in Christ Jesus because of what happened to me in Reading, Pennsylvania.

When I was six, we moved to Reading into an apartment on Third Street. I started making friends and hanging out with the wrong crowd. I started getting into stealing in a row of stores on Penn St. and getting caught did not help with my relationship with my mom. My sisters, on the other hand, would stay out past curfew and the police would end up bringing them home, until social services found out that it had happened more than once and then they were taken into foster care.

We moved around a lot the next three years. The second to last time that my mom and brothers moved, we landed on 923 Franklin Street where a friend of mine introduced me to the Friday night kids' ministry in the apartment below. That's when I met a lot of great Christian people, including LaMarr and Naomi Sensenig. That Christmas was a big one in the years that I lived in Reading because the gift packages that were given by LaMarr and Naomi contained winter clothing that our family needed. A couple of months after that we moved again, but I continued to visit the ministry every Friday.

Then one day my older brother and I got into a big argument and he started throwing books at me. One of them caught me under my right eye. For the next week or two I had a black eye. And it happened that one of the days after that incident my sisters' social service caseworker stopped and he didn't like what he saw so he started to work on finding a foster home for me to live in. However, I asked if I could talk to some people I know and see if they would like to be the ones to take care of me. The next Friday that I saw LaMarr and Naomi I asked them and they said yes. Within two weeks I moved into the Sensenig household. Shortly after I moved in I became a Christian and got baptized at a local friend's pool – and almost met my Maker later that night while we were swimming! Thank God my brother dove in the pool after me because I couldn't swim well at all.

For the past 12 years I have been living with this wonderful family and growing as a Christian. Though the rest of the siblings of my Sensenig family have gotten married and moved out, I find myself being really blessed by my relationships with the Sensenig family and my real family whom I visit often in Reading. And that is something that I am most thankful for, because if God hadn't put LaMarr and Naomi in my life I probably would be following a much different (and worse) path, but because of their witness, I came to Christ, was saved, and am living for Jesus.

I am thankful that God brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to me in Reading and that He took me off the path that I would otherwise have gone down. I pray that God continues to send more messengers of the gospel into Reading.