



## Influencers Newsletter

Take the Land

May 2016

Welcome to our Monthly Newsletter, where we will highlight what God is doing through our ministry and through YOU! God is doing some amazing things!

### NEW INFLUENCERS WEBSITE

[www.influencers.org](http://www.influencers.org)



The new Influencers Website is now complete. Check it out and you will find:

Map with Regional Cities and Emerging Cities

Regional Pages with Local information, links and calendars

Guide Videos

Social Media Interface

Easier to Use

New Shopping Cart

#### In This Issue

New Website

Influencers Prison Ministry

Global Journey Effort

Be a God Seeker

Influencers Development

Statement

Influencers Staff- Pete

McKenzie

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#### Meet the Staff



**Pete McKenzie**  
**Regional Director**  
**Influencers-West**  
**(Southern California)**

**Pete McKenzie grew up in Birmingham, AL and accepted Christ and was baptized at 8 years**

[CLICK HERE TO SEE NEW SITE](#)

## Setting Prisoners Free



Bill Kauble's wife, Debbie, came to him with a vision. "God wants you to take The Journey into Prisons!" Bill was taken back by her bold statement, but he knew

her enough to know that she had heard from the Lord. Bill admits that he was less than enthusiastic about his personal involvement in this vision, but Wayne Leffler, one of the Friday morning guys, had been going into Chino State Prison for years and he took the challenge.

Since that time, Influencers in Southern California have been going into Chino and leading Journey Groups.

Currently, they go on Fridays and Sundays.

Dennis Ruvolo has embraced this special expression of The Journey. He said they have 45 men on Sunday nights, who break out into 3 different Journey groups. He said one of the inmates, who leads them in worship, said there is something different about The Journey compared to the other groups and studies he's experienced. He feels like this is the real deal. One aspect that Dennis is most excited about is to see the life-change from The Journey sticking with guys, even after they are released.

He gets texts from released men, sending him scriptures and encouragement. His hope is to plug these men into Influencers groups so they can stay connected.

A few years ago, one of the Chaplains from Chino was moved to Cummins Prison in southern Arkansas. He got into contact with Rocky about bringing The Journey there.

Rocky asked Greg Huett, a businessman and Board member to make the 4-1/2 Hour drive down to see the Chaplain. Greg agreed to lead the first Journey group

old. However, it wasn't until he was 22 years old, playing baseball in the Minor Leagues, that God really grabbed hold of his life. He was reading a book by Bobby Richardson about being an "uncompromising Christian" while being a ball player, and he felt like a failure as a Christian. He fell on his knees and surrendered his entire life to Christ.

His girlfriend at the time, Suzan, whom he had dated for 4 years, saw the overwhelming transformation in his life, and they were married 5 weeks later! After 5 years in the Minor Leagues with Detroit, Minnesota and Oakland, Pete decided to retire. He joined the staff of a Christian school in Birmingham, where he became Principal, Athletic Director and a Coach.

He met Chuck

with the Chaplain. Though he says it was a little tough training the Chaplain about not "teaching" but just "guiding" the men, the group bore great fruit. Ten men out of the first group wanted to be Guides and new "inmate-led" groups were reproduced. Greg became a mentor to the Guides, driving down once a month to check on them and coach them. One of the inmates was transferred to Varner Prison and Journey groups started there, as well.

Greg said some of the distinctives he's seen in Prisons are:

- Men are coming to accept Christ for the first time.
- The men see The Journey as NOT just a Bible study, but a pathway to Intimacy with Christ.
- Whereas these men are prone to arguments and fighting even during Bible studies, The Journey has disarmed them and maintained peace.
- The men in prison "know they're prisoners", whereas the guys on the outside don't know it.

The Prison ministry of Influencers has found its way also into the county jail, where men who are awaiting trial or sentencing are going through the 6-Week study of The Journey to the Inner Chamber. Also, some Influencers in Tulsa are beginning Journey Groups in Oklahoma prisons.

Once again, the Holy Spirit has surprised us with how He wants to use The Journey. Praise Him!

## **Global Expansion Update**

**Singletary with The Navigators around this time and became very compelled toward discipleship and men's ministry. When Chuck moved to Southern California, he asked Pete and Suzan to move there to assist them in ministry with Navigators.**

**Pete accepted the call and began working with churches in the Southern California area. He became very involved with Chuck Swindoll's church, Evangelical Free Church. This desire to help churches spawned the formation of Church Resource Ministry (CRM), which is still thriving to this day.**

**In 1993, through some contacts with Campus Crusade, Pete found himself moving to Munich, Germany to be a missionary to Eastern European**



One of our Journey brothers in Sacramento recently finished a translation of the Journey Participant Manual into Russian. This was birthed out of a desire to take Russian-speaking Americans through The Journey.

Also, the Prayer Cottage in French has just been completed, and the Journey Manual is up next.

We would appreciate your financial help in seeding International opportunities like this and in funding Translation projects.

[CLICK HERE FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL PAGE](#)

### Be a God-Seeker



### Leadership is Lonely

Brothers, as I have led several Journey Groups, led men's ministry and now leading Influencers, I've noticed something. Many times, you feel like you are all alone.

You feel like you are the only one with the heart, vision and passion for your ministry. You feel like no one cares.

As I have talked to many Guides through the years, they often feel this way about their groups. They feel like quitting.

As I have pondered this dynamic, God reminded me of our forefathers of the faith and their times of loneliness. It seems ordained by God for us to find ourselves in those moments where it's just us and God.

countries for the next 3 years.

He returned to Irvine, CA and became the Men's Pastor and Couple's Pastor at South Coast Community Church.

Four years later, he planted a church, New Harvest Community Church.

While serving there, he heard about a new discipleship process created by his old friend, Rocky Fleming. Pete and Rocky had been best friends since their college days when Rocky played baseball at Ole Miss and Pete at Auburn. They had played on an SEC All-Star team together and formed a fast bond.

Pete asked Rocky to speak at his Sage Retreat, and Rocky brought some key men who had just completed the first Journey Groups in Northwest Arkansas. He taught the men about "Abiding in Christ" and he let the

**Moses-** As he lead the people out of Egypt, he was called to the mountaintop to be with the Lord while the people were complaining, sinning and hating him. He had to plead with God not to destroy them. **(Exodus 32)**

**Elijah-** He was on the run and afraid and felt like he was the only one left who worshiped the Lord. God refreshed him and reinstated him and encouraged him. **(1 Kings 19:9-10)**

**David-** When you read the Psalms, along with the accounts of David's life, you see a desperate, struggling leader. He cried out to God often and felt like his enemies would overtake him. **(Psalm 88, Psalm 109)**

**Daniel-** When everyone else was feasting at the King's table and praying to the king, Daniel stood alone and faithful.

**Jesus-** We read about Him in the desert, alone. for 40 days, being tempted and starved. We see Him withdraw to the mountain alone. We see Him suffering in Gethsemane alone, while His disciples slept. We see that no one understood His mission. Thankfully, He never gave up.

That's just a few examples. I could mention Jacob, Nehemiah, Joshua, Paul, John....so many more. Guys, as Influencers, as Men of God, we will have times where we must stand alone. BUT we must know, just like our brothers before us, WE ARE NEVER ALONE. Someone once told me, "One man and the Lord make a Majority."

If God is getting us alone, through whatever circumstances, we know He is refining us, strengthening us and preparing us for even greater battles. So, if you are feeling discouraged and lonely, take heart! You are not alone.

**Journey guys tell their stories. Each man said, "My life has changed and will never be the same!"**

**Soon after, 13 men from Southern California flew to NWA to be trained in how to lead Journey Groups. They started leading men in the Journey to Intimacy with Christ and Influencers West was birthed.**

**Influencers West hosts "Band of Brothers" meetings in Irvine and Fullerton, which they use as a gathering point to encourage men and foster Journey Groups. Their influence has spread to Long Beach, Bakersfield and to other churches in Southern California. 80-100 Churches are represented in their gatherings.**

**God has uniquely gifted Pete to speak to the heart of men. He regularly**



# Influencers Development Statement



***We believe God created Influencers and anointed us to Make Disciples. We believe He wants to take this Ministry and the Journey process to the ends of the earth so that His children will learn to Abide in Him and so that He can set them free to serve Him fully.***

***We believe He will fund the needs of this ministry so that we might fulfill His calling. We believe He will move the hearts of individuals who have the ability to donate passionately and generously to this Vision.***

***We will Abide in Him, we will pray fervently, we will follow His Spirit and we will Trust Him absolutely with the plans of this ministry. We will not limit God by our intellect, our experience or our expectations. We will share the blessings of this ministry by asking our participants to help meet the needs we encounter. We will live by Faith.***

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challenges men to be Men of God. And God gave him his best friend's curriculum to help show the men how to become that man.

We are blessed to have Pete leading the charge on the West Coast!

As Pete always says,  
"Give'm Heaven!"

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MISSION**

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