

Jesus Loves Softball

Story by Lisa Knight
Photos by Tom Smedes



Left: Corey Morris pitches for his team.
Top: Team members wear Bible scriptures on the back of their uniforms.

Five years ago, 51-year-old Corey Morris was a man like any other until he had a near-death experience. Morris was struggling with feeling depressed and an abusive drinking problem until one night sitting in his broken-down trailer, he asked God for help. "I was in a very bad state of mind. I had been living alone for years and drinking heavily," Morris exclaimed. Though it is personally difficult for him to talk about at times, he does admit that God touched him during his out-of-body experience. After his experience, Morris wanted to find a way to repay God for saving his life, and he decided to do so with his softball team Revelation.

Revelation isn't a beer-drinking, showing up in your baggy shorts and swearing to your teammates, softball team. Revelation is a group of men who wear Bible scriptures on their backs to help others find the path to the Lord. One thing should be pointed out though, not all the men on Revelation are born-again, but Morris doesn't discriminate. As long as they agree to his "ground-rules" of no smoking, drinking, swearing, or yelling at the umpires or other teams while playing,

then anyone is allowed to be a member.

Morris has had to let some of the men know that he didn't think the team was right for them because they couldn't always abide by the rules. "With that being said, most people think because we're wearing Bible scriptures on our back that we should be perfect, but we're not," Morris said. (Some of the scriptures include Genesis 2:7, John 1:14 and Romans 10:13).

Morris decided to put the scriptures on the back of the cardinal red Revelation jerseys because they all point to Jesus. "He's the one that brought me back into the game of softball and gave me the will to do it," Morris said. He added that he hopes fans watching the softball games and tournaments will want to look up the scriptures to find out what they mean. Morris said he started picking scriptures by the very first passages in the Bible about how God created earth. He picked all of the specific scriptures like John 3:13 and Romans 10:13 because they point directly to Jesus. "It's all about Romans 10:13 (when you call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved)."

The printed scriptures on the backs of

members of Revelation and praying before games have actually been respected practices by opposing teams and fans. "We're pretty well received—at least publicly," said Morris. He said that his competitiveness is what actually gets other teams riled up and aggressive actions take place. But Morris' response to that is, "God has given us a gift to use our natural abilities. No matter what it is in life, God wants us to do the best we can."

Morris' competitive nature along with the rest of his team has actually made Revelation pretty successful this season. They started at the Sparks, Nevada men's "E" tournament level and were winning most of their games. The team then decided to move up to the "A" league (equivalent to "D" level). They lost their first game with such a drastic move in divisions and at the same time many of the guys on the team quit. Morris found new enthusiastic participants though, and everyone decided they weren't going to be seen as quitters.

Revelation took second in the Summer Slam co-ed tournament and third in the Curtis Lindsay "E" tournament. "I stuck it out and leaned on Jesus and we have 10 guys that go out there and play, knowing the competition is tough," Morris said. But it's that kind of teamwork and commitment that allows Revelation to have fun and maintain Morris' personal goal of repaying and doing what he can for the Lord. In regards to competition, Morris added this note, "The ministry is first and softball is second. I'm trying my hardest to win the game, but having people find Jesus is far

more important."

It's taken Morris five years to form a softball team that unites under the Lord. And he admits that he didn't know of God before his personal experience in February of 2003 and hadn't even played softball in 20 years. He calls himself a born-again believer and firmly believes that Jesus has guided him to form his softball team to hopefully tell everyone else that God is true. Morris knows this because after his out-of-body experience, he said that he felt really inspired to get a Bible. He was living in Orick, California at the time and drove to Brookings, Oregon where he found a Christian bookstore and bought a Bible and some CD's to follow along and listen. Within four months, he said that he had read it one and a half times with the aid of the CD's.

Before this, Morris said he had no church-going experience, but he suddenly had a desire to go and learn what it was all about. He attended Calvary Chapel in Arcadia, California for a year before moving to Reno, Nevada.

Revelation didn't really kick off until the end of last season, but Morris said, "My ultimate goal is to get a team of Christian softball players who have the same heart as I do, that we may be able to pray and play all over the country so that we can lead and encourage people to Jesus Christ."

Corey Morris would love to hear from the readers who have any questions about joining Revelation or about his personal experience. You can email him at corey-smorris@gmail.com.

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