



THE INNER COMMUNITY TIMES

A HEART FOR PRISON MINISTRY

The Church Behind the Prison Wall

Issue III - 2009

Whom Shall I Send?

By Carlos M.

Does God care about the condemned/prisoner? In Hebrews 13:3, *“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”* God’s

Word here states for believers to remember “them that are in bonds,” i.e. prisoners. Surely, God

must mean only those who are bound for the Gospel’s sake.

When I read this I felt it wasn’t meant for me, a man guilty and sent to prison. Aren’t we prisoners the last who deserve remembrance? Yet, all through God’s Word we read about prisoners, and one in particular sticks out. In II Chronicles 33:4-7, 10-18, we read about a king. This king did everything contrary to God’s Word and ways, from worship, to false gods, to child sacrifice. Every single abomination according

to God’s law, Manasseh did, and because of those acts he was bound. Put into prison. God sought him out, still, to save him. God did not let him die in his sin but led him bound so he might repent.



In Psalms 107:10-13, *“Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the*

counsel of the Most High. So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.”

Most of this Psalm reads like this and the reason for bonds is in verse 15, *“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”* This is stated best in II Peter 3:9, *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering*

to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Many of the Apostles went to prison, (Acts 5:18; 16:31); also we know the story of Joseph. These men were innocent, but did they keep their mouths shut? Did they not declare the Gospel in the dungeon? Was praise or prayer held from their lips? No! As a result convicts were saved. Read the story in Acts 16, when the earthquake hit, everybody’s chains were loosed and the cell doors opened, not only Paul’s and Silas’s, but all. Look what Paul says to the jailer in 16:28, *“do thyself no harm: for we are all here.”* Why was everyone still around? The Gospel’s sake, hope and freedom were there in prison.

Have you ever wondered why prisons exist? Sure, to protect law abiding citizens from perpetrators. Yet God allowed them for a different purpose as we read in Psalms 107, prisons, chains, being bound were and are given by the mercy of God. Given so that we wicked might confess, repent, and behave.

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The question I now ask for us who were godless and put away is how can we know what to believe? Romans 10:13-17 also puts forth this statement with an answer, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” It is one reason

A Brother in Christ at Salinas Valley State Prison-Soledad, California

Joseph, Peter, and Paul were locked away, to witness to the one true God.

So, now I present a

question to you; what are you doing? I have heard many a person say, “I have no calling.” Yet we sit in here every day calling out to you. Has God put us on your heart? Well then, you can do what God has called you to do in one of two ways. Go willing or go wailing! Either way you are going to go. You are very much needed and missed. God sent His most honored saints to us. This could be your honor also. You are the tool or vessel made of gold to pour out God’s love toward us, in John 13; 34, “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”, is the witness needed in a loveless, godless, hopeless environment. I know God cares for those of us who are convicted. Christ died for those who were convicted and condemned as in Luke 23: 39-43, “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don’t you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me

in paradise.’” Do you care for us?

In Luke 14:26-27, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” Also in Luke 6:40, “A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

Tell me, or rather, think honestly, do you believe anybody is not worthy of salvation? Christ didn’t. In fact the Lord Jesus’ first act of mercy and grace was when he took Barabbas’s cross (Luke 23:18, 25; Mark 15:15). Would you be willing to do that? We are in need of volunteers badly. How valuable is your time? To us it is immeasurable. How hard, strenuous, or life exerting is it to minister here in prison? Compare it to what Jesus has done for you. Are we second class Christians?

I leave you with Romans 10:9-18, saints, somebody bound is waiting for you to bring the Word to them. Pay attention to verse 14 of Romans 10. God has called you as He did in Isaiah 6:8, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here I am. Send me!’” I hope your response is the same that you tell God, “Here I am Lord, send me.” I close with one last thought, I Thessalonians 5:14-23, “And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That is all beloved, Peace be with you, Maranatha.

God and God Alone

By Brother Samie

Today I look toward heaven and shed tears sitting on my bed, as I look up and speak from my heart to God. I can't begin to even grasp the words which describe how grateful I am to my Heavenly Father because of how much He loves me. Even when society didn't love me, God did. Even when my so-called friends left me, God didn't. Even when a lot of my loved ones threw me under the rug, God didn't. God still loved me.

When I was lost, no one came to rescue me, but when I was lost, God came and found me. All because God loves me. One of life's most powerful stories to me personally is the story of trust. A story when Peter walked on water. This story can reflect our lives today, In Matthew 14:22-33, we see where Jesus walked on water and when He told the disciples not to be afraid, Peter said in Matthew 14, "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got

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down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus." So Peter walked on water because

he trusted the words of the Lord. And Peter acted on that word. Even though Peter walked on water, it was only when he looked at the storm when he began to sink. But notice the Lord caught him.

That is how our lives can be today. Too many times we allow the trials of life to stop us from trusting in the Lord. Instead of walking through the storm focused on the Lord, we cringe at the true fact of looking too much at the storm instead of the storm calmer, Jesus! How long will we keep going through life trusting more on self or other things instead of trusting in Jesus and His word? Where does life seem to be going? Life is a gift from God. Each and every day we get, we should never take for granted. If you have never realized this, think about this saying: We meet many people throughout life.

Some people treat us good, others treat us bad. Even with all the pain we may have gone through in life, some of those things made us stronger. Some things have wounded us.

No matter what we have gone through or how much we have suffered, I have some truth to tell you about. It is God's love that has kept us and continues to see us through. Don't ever think that all hope is gone; it is not and never will be gone. Your hope lies on God's unconditional love and his word. I want to talk to you about some hope.

I faced my first real pain in my younger years. While growing up, I faced all kinds of abuse, physical, mental, and emotional. It didn't come from my family, but other people around me. For many years I acted out because of this, not because I was a bad person. I lied to so many people because I never wanted anyone to know the truth about my pain. I was so scared to say anything about the abuse and pain that it started to stir anger in my heart.

I'm pretty sure many people can relate to that type of pain. Yeah, I understand you, I've been there. But that was the beginning. I still was carrying my childhood burdens right over into my youth. It was in my youth when I first got involved with drugs and alcohol. I used to steal cigarettes from people, I found myself getting involved with people I would never have been acquainted with if I had been well. I found myself staying out late and partying just to keep the pain away. Even though the pain was gone for a while, the next day it was back, but worse than the night before.

I didn't know what more to do. I was scared to talk to anyone. I learned one thing growing up, be careful who you trust, many people may say they love you but really don't. There were too many people that I trusted in life that hurt me a lot. I lost confidence in people and took out my frustration by playing baseball. It helped me to stay focused on the game instead of the pain. As I got older I started to distance myself from others. I asked for help from certain loved ones but was denied the help. It was

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that pain which overwhelmed me and landed me in jail, and later the Big House (prison). I was not in the right mindset when I got into trouble.

I know what pain can cause someone; it affects every area of a person’s life. I was arrested as a drug addict and a drunk. I was emotionally broken down and mentally stressed out. I felt hopeless, unwanted, and unloved. I wanted to die and even tried dying. I thought my life was over, that there was no hope. I thought no one loved me. If I had possessed a gun back then I would have ended my life because of the hurt, pain, and suffering.

Now I understand pain, what it can do to people, I say all this to let you know that even what I went through the day I fell on my knees and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior I felt that pain, suffering, and hurt lift away from me. God entered my life and He gave me a new beginning while removing the old. God is hope, God is love, God is true, and God is the one who changed my life. God removed all the pain and filled me with hope, love, joy, and a new life. If God did all this for me I know He can do this for you. I am a born-again Christian who is filled with God’s love. God knows your pain; He knows your every wound. God will never forget about you. God never gives up on us, even though people will, God won’t ever. I have found so much respect for people who are facing similar pain to what I went through. I don’t ever take for granted what kind of hurt one goes through; instead I open up to you.

I totally connect with you. But I want you to realize that you don’t have to keep going through it day in and day out, God is there for you. God is standing right where you are with open arms; all you have to do is pour out your heart to Him because He does care for you. Believe me, when you ask God for help, God will never fail you, and He will help you.

So if you are facing any type of hurt or pain, no matter what it is, God can lift those things off you. But you have to get with God and open up to Him, being honest with God. It starts by asking God to forgive you of your sins and asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior. Then you can pour out your heart to God and watch the love of God be demonstrated in your life as God did in my life.

Today, thirteen years later, I am a brand new person. God has made me into a godly man, one who is mature, who helps others, who serves God with all his heart. I’m a godly man who helps people from all types of backgrounds in all kinds of lifestyles seeking the truth about how God can change their lives. I’ve seen many men change, watching as God transforms them. Yeah, God did that, not man! God ultimately does the changing in men, we just plant the seed and God makes it grow.

I’m a true man of God who prays that whoever may read this; whatever you may be going through please don’t give up. Life is more precious than we can sometimes see or understand. You have hope, love, and everything else you are missing right there in God. God is the only one who completes us. God is the one who gives us real life, life that is truly eternal and forever. My gift from God is to help people see beyond what the natural eye sees and see from the spiritual eye.

If I can survive everything I went through, so can you. I’m living testimony of God’s love and so are you. Don’t let the devil or anyone else tell you any different. You, too, are God’s loving creation, and God’s love will see you through. His love is so amazing! I have a totally different outlook on life and I give God all the glory for my brand new life in Christ Jesus. Each day is better than the last one. I speak to everyone out there wondering if things will change or how they will get over the hurt, abuse, or pain. It is through God alone, the one and only true way.

Advancing the Word

By Tim May

The State of California is under great financial stress, affecting State funding for all programs, including those within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. I strongly believe the only true rehabilitation comes by changing the heart and mindset of incarcerated individuals. Unfortunately, many of these men and women are being released into our communities without that change.

The church, along with businesses and private individuals, has the opportunity to respond to its social responsibilities by partnering with ministries who bring faith-based programs to men and women in prison. The change these programs bring has the ability to effect the reduction in recidivism, which in turn may reduce the cost to California and its residents.

Ebenezer Outreach Ministry, along with other participating ministries, has the ability to provide rehabilitation through the Christian component of faith-based programs. We provide classes and counsel which changes the hearts and minds of hundreds of men with additional programs planned in the coming year starting January 2010. You can provide assistance with this program by sponsoring an inmate or a specific class/program by purchasing the workbooks utilized by the inmates. The cost of each workbook is approximately \$7 for each man, most programs average approximately 150 men and your help would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to make a contribution to this ministry to sponsor an inmate or help with the costs of class workbooks, please visit our website at <http://www.ebrock.org/donate.aspx> to make an online donation or you may contact us by phone, (707) 359-2130.

In addition to the current classes, in January we are beginning additional programs with a Biblical perspective on lifestyles, finances, mentoring, fatherhood classes, facilitator training of and by inmates, seminars, and outreaches.

Fourth Quarter Ministry Report

During the fourth quarter several programs at California State Prison-Solano (CSP-Solano) were completed. Two classes totaling 200 men attended Self Esteem by God's Design, instructed by Dr. Larry and Gail Day of **Imagebearers International**, <http://www.larrydayministries.com>. The class, Passport to Purpose (the Vessel), taught by Carol Davis ended with 206 men completing the requirements.

Comments from class participants may be viewed on her website, **Mission of Grace Foundation**,

<http://www.missionofgrace.org>. **HIRE**, a Prison Fellowship program which prepares men for release from prison,

was instructed by several volunteers from **2ndWind**, <http://secondwind1.web.officelive.com/default.aspx>. A special conference held at all four yards was presented by Pastor Melissa Scott, senior pastor of **Los Angeles University Cathedral**, <http://www.drgenescott.org>.

Programs for the Future

Transformational Project, a Prison Fellowship program, has begun the selection process for a program which will instruct forty men for eighteen months; these classes include Celebrate Recovery and mentoring for the candidates. Additional classes will include; Kingdom Inheritance, facilitated by John Haaf, ministry associate of **Freedom in Christ Ministries (FICM)**, <http://www.ficm.org/newsite/index/php>; the Purpose Driven Life, facilitated



Reverend Timothy and Katie May

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Count the Cost

By Mike D.

The sentence I have received will work if the punishment changes the person. I wanted to change but at what cost? The cost was dying to my old self and it was going to be very painful. The reason for this is that I had to separate my old life and start a new one. Most relationships that have to split up due to the destruction it causes are fearful. There is a sense of comfort in the relationship even though it is not healthy. We tend to get addicted to the pain and end up rehearsing it throughout the

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relationship to the point where it becomes normal.

I had done that for many years and to not have that relationship with my old life is so very nice. I gave my life to the Lord in 1999; I only did it in the hope that Jesus would one more time get me out from doing time. I went to prison for four years to get out and realize I was only seeking Jesus' hand, not His face. Jesus still loved me and gave me everything I asked for. The Lord had given me plenty of chances to get right with Him for who He was and not for what He could do for me.

Still thinking I was a Christian I justified being with an old girlfriend, I have to say I opened the door for the devil and my life took a turn for the worse. I discharged parole with no violations to find myself back in that bad relationship with my old lifestyle. Finding myself back in county jail facing a life sentence due to the three strikes I had with my last term. I took a thirteen year deal and was able to go home for two days to spend with my family before having to go to prison. I was given three conditions from the judge while I was out for the two days; if any condition was broken I was looking at thirty-eight years to life.

Well, I broke one by using cocaine and when I turned myself back in to the county jail I was drug tested. I was sentenced a month later and the judge gave me eight more years for my dirty test. I will be truthful and say it was very painful to hear my mother tell me my son wanted to know why his father loved drugs more than he loved him. But to me the pain was finally enough to get my attention, that Jesus wants all of me not just part of me. I was cheating on God and you can't serve two masters. I tried and it was very costly.

Romans 12:2, *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed*

by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." I did just that and realized I was in a bad relationship and I had to split up with the old self because it was very destructive. I guess you could say I didn't count the cost. Everything we do or choice we make in life will cost you something. What are you willing to give up in exchange for your soul? Remember, and don't forget to count the cost.

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Dirty Dozen

By Rick Mathes

If I were to get to know those who know you best and ask them all the questions I could think of about you, I would get to know you very well, wouldn't I? Well, then it stands to reason that if we get to know God's best friends real well, we will get to know a whole lot about God, won't we? Let's then make some observations of those that he used, each in a mighty way. I call them, "God's Dirty Dozen."

First, we have Abraham. His parents were idolaters and I'm sure as a young man, you could see him with his *Watchtower Magazine* under one arm and *Pearl of Great Price* under the other, being chauffeured in his stretch limo to the nearest name-it-claim-it, go-go cult of carnal hustlers in the name of Allah. And yet, God used him to emerge as the father of the chosen nation.

Now we know that Joseph didn't do it. Potipher's wife knows he didn't do it. God knows he didn't do it. And we all know he didn't do it. But when Joseph filled out the application to be Prime Minister of Egypt it read, "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" He was an ex-con with a record of being a sex offender and yet, God used him in a mighty way.

Let's also remember Moses. He looked both ways, killed the Egyptian with his bare hands and then had the audacity to dig a hole and bury him in broad daylight in front of witnesses. That is a classic, premeditated, first-

degree murder! If that happened today, he would be on death row awaiting execution. And yet, God used him in a mighty way.

And what about David? He didn't have the guts to assassinate so he ordered a hit man to knock off Bathsheba's husband so that they could keep their torrid love affair going. David should have had a jail cell next to Moses! And yet, God used him in a mighty way.

Do you really think the Priestess Rahab went around the temple genuflecting and lighting holy candles? Of course not! She was a temple prostitute that sold her body for dirty money just like any two-bit trash on the waterfront. And yet, God used her in a mighty way.

"If the children turn out bad, it must mean that the parents weren't any good!" It ain't necessarily so. There aren't any fathers that raised their sons worse than Eli and Samuel and yet, God used them both in a mighty way.

And have you ever heard the saying, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going?" Some Christians have turned tail and run when the Lord needed them the most. Just like Mark did, so quickly that he left his clothing in the clutches of a cop and escaped naked! And yet, God used him in a mighty way.

Can you imagine saying, "No, dammit! I have never known this criminal named Jesus!" God forbid it would never leave my

lips even in the torment of torture. But with the gentle pressure of a teenage servant girl, Peter the Rock, turned into a little pebble when he denied the Lord quicker than a New York heartbeat, not once but three times within a couple of hours. His eyes met those of his Lord and he realized the shallowness of his commitment. And yet, God used him in a mighty way.

I am blessed that Paul did not divulge to us the gruesome particulars of all the atrocities he inflicted on blameless Christians or I would be less given to read and study his Epistles. I suspect that I might forgive him but I would not forget. The captivity, injustice, and even annihilation of these gentle souls might possibly raise a doubt about Paul's conversion experience. Was he beyond being saved? And yet, God used him in a mighty way.

If you have been counting, that's just ten. Including you and me, it makes an even dozen. My life was so depraved that I cursed God, shook my fist at heaven and demanded that if He existed, to kill me to end the nightmare I was living. He saved me that night and I have been sharing the Gospel in jails and prisons ever since.

And what about you?

*Rick Mathes, founder of **Mission Gate Prison Ministry**, is also the author of *Allah or Jesus*; to learn more about this ministry please visit their website at: <http://www.charityadvantage.com/missiongateministry/HOME.asp>*

A study of the book of 1 Peter brings us face to face with the command to be holy. Peter's letter to the Christian Gentiles in Asia is not the first time that being holy is mentioned in the Bible.

Peter quotes directly from the Old Testament Book of Leviticus (11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7) to encourage his listeners using the authority of scripture. We likewise, are encouraged.

"...He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

(1 Peter 1:15, 16)

CALLED TO BE HOLY

I have chosen you,
 set you apart and called you
 holy and sanctified, ready
 for My purposes in the world.
 Do not say, "I am not worthy."
 I have made you worthy through
 My sacrifice for you.
 My word has made you clean.
 As I prepare you to go out in My name,
 receive all of Me, filled to overflowing
 to a world crying out in fear and trembling,
 to those who have forgotten Me,
 the source of Living Waters,
 who alone saves and makes new.
 Holy, I call you holy.

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 September 14, 2009

Godcares website: <http://www.Godcares.org>

Prior issues of Latest Word: <http://www.godcares.org/latestword/library>

Absence

By Antonio M.

After years of incarceration I began to feel as though my life had less and less meaning. This poem represents the condition of my life at that time. My contact with family became more infrequent and I began to live the lie that had been fabricated by my loneliness and guilt, I believed I was

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all alone in this. This was once my reality but in 2003, Christ made the difference. It was the death

of a family member in 2001, which shed light on my detachment. I felt nothing when I was told he passed. I didn't like that feeling but this is the direction one's life takes after years and years of nothing, a condition which can only be repaired by giving yourself to and receiving the unconditional and healing love that only comes through Jesus Christ.

Absence

Absence, does it really make the heart grow fonder
 and does time heal all wounds?

Are memories forever? How do we know what is
 true?

Can I ever be free, not from the imprisonment of
 locked doors, steel bunks, and concrete walls, but
 from the prison within me?

Walls built and constructed on years of sequestration.
 The memories of yesteryears eradicated in proportion
 and scattered abroad.

The emotional attachments that once breathed life
 into the fire, the drive, the desire to sustain life in
 me removed by the ABSENCE of seeing, giving,
 touching, holding, expressing, and receiving
 unconditional love has been replaced with vacuity,
 emptiness, and desolation.

I'm tired, tired, tired...my smile, a prevarication, a
 lie, and untrue presentation. I'm not happy inside; it is
 only to appease you.

That is what you have created. This is what you
 continue to create, a society of nothingness. I exist not
 only to live later.

Witnessing the Change

By Peggy Preece

This journey with Christ for the past forty-two years has been full of surprises and many blessings. I am amazed how He takes us to places you would never have believed you would go or become involved in. When I heard about One Voice Praise Choir, the music ministry sponsored by



Ebenezer Outreach Ministry, I was curious, I felt drawn to this type of music outreach. I have been in several choirs but this choir and the people involved have a different atmosphere around them. It is always a joy to sing for the Lord, musically telling Christ's story, I found this

experience of sharing Christ with the inmates very exciting and the blessings came to us.

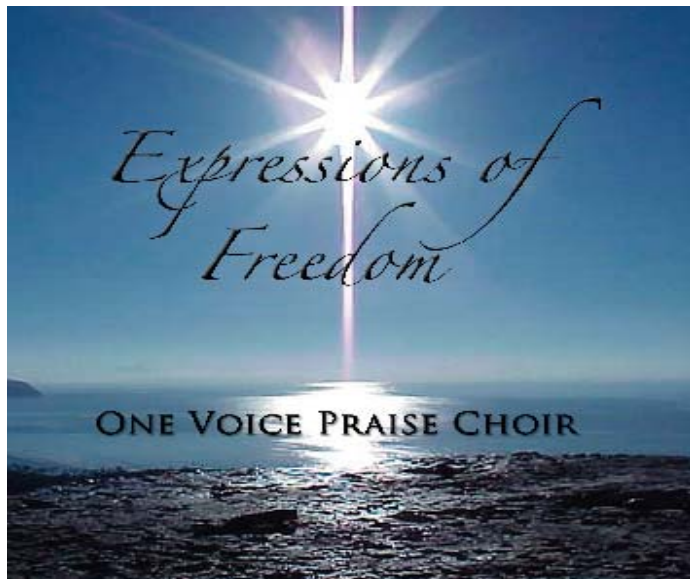
I have witnessed an atmosphere in the prison chapels with the inmates amazing. These brothers in Christ are so grateful and so appreciative of Christians who come from the outside, from their lives, to spend time with them and share their faith. Enjoying worshipping our God, praying, adoring, and singing with such joy. They are so grateful to God for His plan of salvation, so thankful to Him for giving them a chance at forgiveness and

redemption in spite of their past behavior.

These men are so thankful and they could show other Christians, on the outside, how to really worship with such passion. There is such innocence in their worship; it is very encouraging to witness. It proves to me how God's love is, as He touches the hearts of these men who once were so lost and hopeless. Some of their testimonies, so heart touching, proving once again how good God is.

Witnessing forgiveness in action with these men blessed me so much. You change inside when you witness changes in people who thought once they were beyond change. And I witnessed the reasons all the redeemed should be shouting with joy and dancing in excitement, because all of us have experienced that forgiveness, that redemption. Where is our passion and joy also? Each time I am so blessed and thankful to be part of this outreach.

Peggy has been is a member of One Voice Praise Choir since 2007; she attends The Mission in Vacaville, California.



This is the choir's first release; you may purchase a copy of this CD by sending a check or money order to:

Ebenezer Outreach Ministry,
3069 Alamo Drive, PMB 145,
Vacaville CA 95687-6344

or through our website:
<http://www.ebrock.org/shop.aspx>
using Google Checkout

Suggested donation
\$16.50 (plus shipping)

by Pastor Tim May, from **Ebenezer Outreach Ministry**, <http://www.ebrock.org>

One Voice Praise Choir—The Christmas Tour ministered to the men at all four yards of California State Prison-Solano; two services were held in the main chapel at Sierra Conservation Center-Jamestown; and the chapel at California State Prison-San Quentin. We had the opportunity to minister to approximately 1700 men at these facilities with 160 men dedicated or re-dedicating their lives to Christ.

Joyful Expressions—Ministered in song and Word to the men at California State Prison-Solano during the regular weekly ministry services in the chapel and the Joseph Project. On a monthly basis the Ebenezer team ministers to the young men at the Sacramento County Boys Ranch in Sacramento.

In addition to our musical component, Ebenezer Outreach Ministry provides weekly preaching, individual counseling, and assists with coordinating the CSP-Solano Demonstration Project as part of the Joseph Project featuring special rehabilitation teaching programs and guest speakers.

Production Team:

Pastor Kim Moreno, Choir Director; Jeanne Schultz Assistant Choir Director; Rudy Aguardo and David O’Guinn, Sound

One Voice Praise Choir and Joyful Expressions Members:

Carolina Aguardo, Galen Anderson, Nancy Anderson, Janet Hartwell-Brown, Paula Caddy, Gerald Dayce, Robert Ellison Jr., Sandy Evans, Lynne Gallaher, Judith Handa, Ron Handa, Quinton Kelley, Lisa Lamb, Tim May, Janell Michael, Judy Moran, Norbert Moreno, Peggy Preece, Verna Ringler, Carolyn Sheehan, De Val Smith, Tonya Stanton, and Daryl Stewart

Weekly Ministry and CSP-Solano Demonstration Project:

Pastor Richard Atchley, Michael Barrett, Brett Braidman, Pastor Russell Crooks, Carol Davis, Chris Davis, Pastor Alfred DeGree, Ernest Echelberger, Edward Fogle, Tom Forrester, Ervine Ray Fowler, Linda Fowler, Dan Gamel, Ernest Grasty, Jay Grover, Donna Haaf, John Haaf, Ron Handa, Sol Irving, Herman Littleton, Loraine Meek, Patrice MucCulan, David Michael, Ramon Molina, Roger Morgan, Christopher Mullen, Pastor Darren Paulson, Pastor Daniel Robertson, Robert Rogers, Serrita Santos, Pastor Sammie Shavers, Robert Silva, Arthuretta William-Smith, Pastor Eddie Thomas, Erik Trantum, Pastor Stuart Welch, and Pastor Christopher Willis

Churches Involved:

For a complete list of the churches involved with this ministry, please visit our website at: <http://www.ebrock.org/Links.aspx>

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“A Silver Lining”

by Rick Atchley

As 2009 comes to a close, many of us are loudly proclaiming, “Praise God!” It has indeed been a challenging year for almost everyone. Unemployment and overall financial pressures have significantly impacted individuals, families, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), and most certainly our entire nation. As a result, we can probably agree that the first decade of the 21st Century is ending in a very dark cloud.

Fortunately, our Lord Jesus Christ is all about pointing us toward “A Silver Lining.”

While I would argue that not every dark cloud has “A Silver Lining”, we are certainly finding great encouragement and hope at California State Prison-Solano in Vacaville, and throughout Northern California. Despite dark and gloomy forecasts for the foreseeable future, we are very excited about what God has on the horizon for



2010.

We are in the process of interviewing and selecting up to 40 men for our “Innerchange” Project at CSP-Solano. The “Innerchange” Project is a Re-Entry Pilot Program specifically designed to help men return

home from prison successfully. Our Re-Entry Pilot Program is a partnership between Prison Fellowship and our Second Wind Network.

The Second Wind Network includes Celebrate Recovery, Ebenezer Outreach Ministry, Bethesda Ministries, Mission of Grace, United Through Reading, and a number of Northern California churches, ministries, and other Re-Entry providers.

The “Innerchange” curriculum has been thoroughly tested and proven in many other prisons throughout the United States. Prison Fellowship’s IFI (Innerchange Freedom Initiative) Program has been operating for over 10 years in Texas. While nationwide the recidivism rate is typically close to 70 percent, IFI graduates have seen their

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recidivism rates drop as low as 10-15 percent. We are anticipating similar exciting results from our “Innerchange” Project at CSP-Solano.

The men selected for our “Innerchange” Project will be directly involved in developing their own personal Re-Entry plan. They are agreeing to be matched with a mentor from the county they are returning to in California. What’s more, they will participate in a 36 month program – 18 months inside CSP-Solano and 18 months in their Re-Entry community. They will go through a Re-Entry curriculum that is specifically designed to prepare each man to return home and stay home.

The “Innerchange” Curriculum will include classes on dealing with addictions (Celebrate Recovery), Fatherhood and Parenting (Inside Out Dads from the National Fatherhood Initiative), Financial Counseling (Crown Ministries), Self Esteem, and a number of additional classes—Purpose Driven Life, Passport to Purpose, Going For the Gold, etc.—designed to help men find their focus, purpose,

employment, and related Re-Entry resources. We will also be featuring quarterly seminars and special events designed to provide healing and restoration for all participants.

At a time when California and CDCR are severely cutting back most adult programming, we are thrilled to be able to offer this proven Re-Entry Program. While we have secured a strong core team of volunteers to provide instruction, lead small groups, and coordinate re-entry plans, we are inviting individuals, churches, and ministries to partner with Prison Fellowship and our Second Wind Network on this very unique and powerful opportunity.

We are confident that our “Innerchange” Program at CSP-Solano will provide the positive results we have already experienced in similar projects around the country. As a result, we will be able to prove to CDCR and the state of California that men who have been disciplined and prepared properly can return home successfully. Obviously, in this grave period of economic crisis, we will be able to save the state of California and its citizens

a great deal of money. More importantly, we will be involved in a program that restores families, heals marriages, and gives men the real tools they need to be the men of God they were created to be.

Hopefully, now you have a better idea why I feel so strongly that God is doing a new thing in Vacaville and throughout California. While we are in the midst of a storm that is destroying individuals and families and even ravaging our communities, we have also been given a clear vision that there is “A Silver Lining.” God tells us clearly in Jeremiah 29:11: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Please continue to pray for our Team and the men at CSP-Solano as we begin this Re-Entry adventure together. Our God has big plans to not only change the men at Solano, but He also wants to impact the church. If you would like additional information, please contact us at Prison Fellowship/Second Wind, Richard_Atchley@pfm.org

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