



Isaiah 61:1

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Since September the 11th all our lives have been irreversibly changed. For many it really hasn't even sunk in yet. Still no matter what your personal take is, the truth is we live in both exciting and for many frightening times.

I was home that fateful morning when some one from church called to tell us to turn on our TV. They said that a plane had hit the Twin Towers. As unreal as it first sounded, I thought it still was possible, after all the jail isn't that far from LAX. You see when I heard Twin Towers I immediately thought they had meant the Twin Towers Jail right next to Men's Central Jail where I work.

My training as a Chaplain was done at the Twin Towers. I developed friendships, both staff and inmate while I was there. So of course my thoughts ran wild in those first few moments.

Of course as soon as we turned on the TV my first reaction was, that it wasn't the Twin Towers I thought it was. Those feelings were quickly replaced with horror as we watched the tragedy unfold before our eyes.

They locked the jail down for that day and I didn't get to go in. Honestly I was glad of that. I did feel the pull, the call of the ministry but my ministry that day was to be with my family. When I did go in the following day, my 12 year old didn't want me to leave. I was a little surprised when I stopped to talk to her about it. She wasn't fearful for herself she was afraid for me. So after I reassured her I would be alright I headed off to work that morning not knowing what to expect.

I walked a number of rows that morning and tried to answer all the questions. For the most part all they had to go on was word of mouth and whatever they were able to read in the newspaper. While the rest of the world was glued to their TV sets these guys were anxious for any news.

I was interested to see what their attitude was about it. First and foremost many were concerned for their families. They wanted to be out there to protect them. One guy told me he wished they

would send him to fight for our country. He said he hadn't done much to make his kids proud of him, if he had to die for it that would be OK with him if it would change his kids' opinion of him.

There were many who had very patriotic things to say. Some were very angry at what had happened and expressed the same things we were saying out here.

The Saturday before this had all happened I had been given the chance to come in and show the movie "Left Behind" the timing couldn't have been better.

I told them about 1st Thessalonians 4:17, Matthew 24 and Ezekiel 38 & 39. And after showing the movie I passed out about 50 New Testaments to them.

On the 12th another Chaplain and myself were going through the serving line in the Officers Dining Room. I was telling him how showing the movie had gone, when one of the inmates serving the food started telling me in a very excited voice that he had been at the movie and how the events of the day before were just like in the movie. As I sat down to eat I told the Chaplain with me that I know there were about 75 guys in there who really had been given something to think about. God allowed them to be able to see that movie just three days before the terrorist attacks.

One thing for sure, the 11th has given Christians everywhere the mandate to share the gospel like never before. I even got to share the gospel with a Buddhist Chaplain and they actually listened. We may not have any idea what tomorrow will bring but one thing it will give us is the chance to share the gospel with someone if we only look for that chance.

In a related story I came across on the internet was something that helps to show the inmates heart in this tragedy: California prison inmates doing their part to help

Pamela J. Podger, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer

Thursday, September 20, 2001

Matthew 25:36
*I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me;
I was in prison and you came to Me.*

We Are All In This Together

Despite severe restrictions on their resources and fund-raising abilities, an often-derided group of Californians is donating money to the East Coast relief efforts.

From Death Row inmates at San Quentin State Prison to minimum-security inmates fighting on fire lines, thousands of convicts at 10 of the state's 33 prisons are giving money to the American Red Cross and to funds established for the families of fallen police and firefighters.

Russ Heimerich, a spokesman for the Department of Corrections in Sacramento, said \$22,700 had been pledged so far. More is expected as the word spreads to other prisons.

Some inmates have tapped into their so-called trust funds, or prison bank accounts, where they deposit their wages from their prison jobs. The maximum pay is 37 cents per hour.

Others, who have received permission from prison wardens to hold fund-raisers, are planning portrait, candy and art sales. Permission is needed because prison policy doesn't allow inmates to run businesses from their cells.

Vernell Crittendon, a spokesman at San Quentin State Prison, said the artwork of some talented convicts would be photographed and sold on Ebay. One of the items to be auctioned is a wooden pinball machine, built by several prisoners who had it signed by sports and musical celebrities. There will also be wooden replicas of San Francisco's cable cars, rings and jewelry boxes.

Heimerich said women housed at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla usually do a portrait and See's Candy sale for local victims' services. This year, they will earmark all of the proceeds -- expected to be about \$16,000 -- for relief efforts of the terrorist attacks.

Prisoners at one of the fire camps have raised \$1,100, while a hat passed among prisoners at Wasco State Prison netted \$2,500.



Stand For What You Believe

In the last newsletter I told you about the Chapel Trustee named Joe, how the Lord had transformed him from a skeptic into someone committed to God.

Maybe I shouldn't have written anything about him because soon after the attacks sure came his way.

Actually the very next week he was accused of doing something I and all the other Chaplains are convinced he didn't do. But in custody issues what we think does not matter.

Joe lost his job as the Chapel Trustee and was "rolled up" to another module. He was put into a rough area where it is tough to be a Christian.

I called him over to the office to talk to him, thinking I would try to cheer him up on what had happened to him. Instead he was cheering me up.

The maturity he showed while still being a new Christian was really impressive. His attitude on what had happened was that God must be preparing him for when he gets out. He even was praying for the one who had falsely accused him!

Recently Joe was in my office again. He was sporting a black eye. They had a fight break out with a number of Hispanics and Blacks while they were on the roof for exercise. He didn't get his black eye then. In fact he got it for staying out of it.

In the jail there is a very real form of politics with its foundation being based on race. The Hispanics make up 45% of the population. Their direction comes from the Mexican Mafia and is carried out by a loose knit group of LA gangs that are referred to as the "Southsiders". Anyone who is on their hit list are called

"Greenlighters".

When the fight broke out on the roof Joe was expected to be with the Southsiders but Joe not only stayed out of it, he tried to keep a Black Christian brother from harms way.

Later when he was approached by some Southsiders and asked why he did what he did his only answer was that he was a Christian. Well that called for him to be "regulated" (beat up) and he tells me he put his hands at his side and told them to do what they got to do.

I told him that I could talk to custody and see if they will move him. But he refused to be put in protective custody which is a big stigma to them. His protection will come from the Lord.

Another inmate who I'll call Bill came in with a similar kind of story.

Bill comes into my office often. When he does, it is usually just to pray, to ask questions about something he had been reading in the Bible or to ask for some pocket Gideon Testaments that he can handout in his module. Just a little guy but a dynamo when it comes to sharing the Lord.

Recently Bill came to see me but this time it wasn't the usual visit. It was very obvious that he was upset. He told me how he had participated in "regulating" someone, not by choice but by peer pressure. Being a Christian he was very convicted. He knew he should have never gotten into the middle of the politics. When he confessed to me he couldn't look me in the eye. And when he finally did look me in the eye his eyes were full of tears, tears of shame.

He asked for prayer. He had decided to tell the Southsiders that he wasn't going to be a part of what they were doing anymore. He planned to tell them when they were out on the roof for exercise. Only problem was the leader didn't come out. So he was left with no other choice than to send a "kite" (a note) telling them of his decision.

He did that but the only problem was not being able to see them face to face he had no way of knowing what their reaction was. You see the Southsiders kind of have the same motto our President is using, either you are with us or you are against us. So now Bill has to wait and see if he will be "regulated" himself.

I went down to see Bill a couple days after he had come to my office. I was a little worried about him, just wanted to make sure he was alright. He was, so far they haven't said anything to him. Doesn't mean they won't but for now he is alright. He told me not to worry, God would take care of him. You could see very plainly in his face that he was concerned about it. And I couldn't help but admire his courage.

With both these men I have admired the way they have stood for what they believed in. They were willing to trust in God to be there for them and I am sure their witness will plant seeds with others. These are not isolated incidents, I have seen a number of men do these kind of things over the past year at the jail.



Prayers For a Home

There is a great need for Christian Rehabilitation Homes for inmates when they get out. It is one thing to plant the seed and nurture it while they are in custody, but when they get out and are faced with where they came from is when the real test starts.

There are a few Calvary Chapel homes in the southern California area. One is out in Perris, CA called U-Turn For Christ. They have both a men's home and a women's home. Unlike most, the women are able to bring their children with them if they have to. That does become necessary some times. Our church has sent people

there from time to time.

Calvary Chapel Downey have homes for both men and women. They are called House of Esther and House of Jeremiah. Our church has also sent people there as well.

I am more familiar with Calvary Downey's program. But I know that both programs have done a good job of helping people get their lives together.

There is a group of men at our church who have been praying weekly for over a year now about opening a home

within our body.

Finding resources, and even an area to put a home are monumental tasks. Then none in the group have ever done anything like this before, adding to the challenge. It is one of the things that makes it all more exciting, because if it ever happens, it will only be because it was God doing it.

I have not personally gotten too involved in what they are doing. I have met with them on a few occasions but I already have more than enough on my plate. But I do support the idea and would love to be able to someday

be able to refer someone to our own home.

Would you please keep these men and their dream in prayers. Who knows, maybe some reading this may be the answer to their prayers. One thing for sure: **Rom 8:31**
If God is for us, who can be against us?

Called According to His Purpose

We just recently had our men's retreat at Twin Peaks. It was great, I really enjoyed it. It gives a chance to meet people from the church, some of the closest friends I have at the church I first meet at a retreat.

One of the things that was emphasized was the need to get involved in ministry. I am going to continue that theme here but please before you skip over this article, hear what I have to say.

We have many dedicated volunteers in prison ministry. All together, counting people who are involved with worship when we do special programs, we have over 60 people who have come into prison with us.

Every time the Lord opens the door for new ministry, He provides the laborers. Sometimes from within our ranks, other times by bringing new people in.

Not all go in. There are people I met at the retreat who came up, introduced themselves to me, saying that their family was praying for us. Some have their own friends or rela-

tives who are or have been in prison.. They understand the need for this kind of ministry first hand. There is a reason why Jesus mentioned visiting prisons. Sin infects and affects us all. The church certainly is not immune.

We recently started going into the Youth Authority over on Euclid. This month Pastor Jack will be going in with *The Kry* to do a service. Bible studies are starting there. And in the near future there will be some more people who will be going in.

The door has finally opened wide at the women's prison. But I'll give a report in a separate article on that.

The point I am trying to get at in all this is that the Lord continues to give us new opportunities to minister to people in trouble. And now there has been yet even another door open for the Church.. This one may not end up under the prison ministry but instead be under women's ministry?

There is a woman at our church who has been going out to a girl's home in La Verne, The David & Margaret Home for Girls. She is volunteering

as a mentor for these girls. This place is so desperate for mentors that they have been advertising for them in the news papers. You can imagine the caliber of people applying.

Recently Scarlet Hope went out to do a concert for the girls. It gave me the chance to go see what they are doing and see for myself the great need there is.

Working with teenagers is not for everyone. Having six teenagers of my own, I understand that very well. Yet the need is there and I pray that some women who read this will have it laid on their hearts to step out in faith.

From what I understand this place has been there since the 1920's . It started out as a orphanage and evolved into the home for girls it is today.

There are girls from 12 to 18 years of age. Some have been sent there from the courts. They have gotten into trouble but are not to the point where the only thing left for them is Youth Authority. Others have ended up there after a series of failed foster homes.

The common thing with all these girls is they have come from broken homes, abuse and any number of other factors that have lead to their broken lives. Well Jesus came to mend broken lives. These girls need to learn of Him from some of you women at our church who are willing to take the time to care. Pray about going just once and then the Lord will lead you to continue going back.

Know that the Lord wants you ministering, find where that is and serve Him.

Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Luke 10:2



We finally made it! It only took six years but it really was worth the wait. We went to California Institution for Women and did a worship concert.

The groups included our worship team from church, *Scarlet Hope* and *Heather Henry*. For speakers we had Gil Baca, Judy McDaniels, Paula Nafziger and myself.

We did this concert in memory of Mary Ellen Baca. After all it was her who helped us get there in the first place. Actually many of the inmates in there knew Mary Ellen. She had worked there for 28 years. It was where her and Gil had first met, when he worked there too. I am sure it brought back many memories for Gil walking in there again. He really touched many in there when he

shared his heart.

As the worship and speaking progressed you sure could see that the women prisoners are a lot different than their male counterparts. They showed their feelings right from the start. Many times we would see women getting up and leaving. It was discouraging at first until we found out that they would leave crying, go outside to get their composure and then come back in.

Both Judy and Paula spoke heart to heart with women. It was very compelling and had a powerful effect.

I can't say enough about how the worship teams were awesome! And Pastor Bruce, with all his hard work! We would never get any of these concerts accomplished without him.

The prison just treated us fantastic. We were fed a very nice lunch. The whole experience was just the best yet!

It was very emotional for some of us as well. One women in our group was overcome with grief at the idea of so many women locked up. I remember her saying with tears in her eyes how

those women didn't belong in there, it just wasn't right.

Someone else was struck with how "normal" they all seemed. *"But for the grace of God, there go I."* More than one commented on this lady in the audience who looked like someone's grandmother.

I have often noticed how many pre-conceived ideas change once people go in and see for themselves. We are all sinners saved by grace.

I am told we had between 300 and 350 inmates in the auditorium. After the last song was played Pastor Bruce gave an alter call and somewhere between 30 to 40 women came forward! It was the best!!!

Many of the volunteers prayed with the women who came forward. I heard of one praise report of a woman that had been in the for the past 20 years who made her first time commitment to Christ.

I have received nothing but positive feedback since. I talked to the Warden the other day and they are already looking forward to us coming back again. He wasn't able to be there for

the concert so we promised to come again when he can be there. He just loves *Scarlet Hope*.

We have also talked about us coming in on a regular basis to do a women's Bible study. Similar in format to our own women's Bible study. Hopefully get a few teams of 2 or 3 women to go in every few weeks. Where friendships and mentoring can be developed.

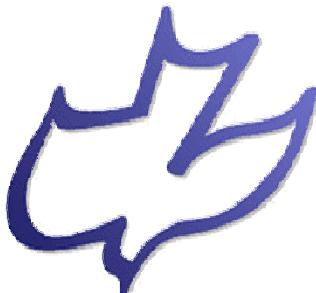
Another kind of Bible study I would like to see us get established is similar to the home Bible study groups we have at the church. Where 2 or 3 couples could go in there and model what a Christian marriage can be.

Most of these women come from very abusive pasts. To show them that all relationships don't have to be that way, helps to give them hope. If there are any ladies out there who may be interested please come up and talk to me about it.

They say a picture is worth a 1,000 words. Turn to the next page and see for yourself.



Phone: 909-465WORD
Fax: 909-464-1015
Email:
ed@prisonkey.org
Or
ejwelsh@asd.org
Web Site
www.prisonkey.org



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