

Newsletter

Chaplain Ed Welsh

Isaiah 61:1

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

Special Edition

Over two years ago when I first started writing these newsletters it was a way of informing this ministry's supporters of what was happening.

Today I am writing this particular newsletter solely for the purpose of dispelling some misconceptions circulating around the church body.

In the past few weeks it has been made very clear to me, I had better take the time to inform everyone of the changes that have recently come about. At the time of sending my last newsletter (Oct. 2002) I enclosed a letter to all who are on my mailing list. That list makes up the core support of this ministry, so I sometimes will put added information with the newsletter when needed. I am going to now paste in a copy of what I sent at that time for the purpose of giving some background for the things I hope to explain today.....

Dear Fellow Warriors of the King:

*Normally, the newsletter I send out every few months is to keep everyone up to date on what is happening in the ministry and to lift up needs and prayer concerns. I am writing this insert to be sent with the newsletters that go out in the mail. I view you as the core group of this ministry. What I want to talk about here is more personal, something I want to keep within the family. It goes without saying that when we are about the Father's business we are going to be in the middle of a spiritual battle. Surely, jails and prisons are one of Satan's strongholds! And I personally feel there are few places where the battle is more intense. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.** Eph 6:12*

In the past several months, I have felt the intensity of the battle as never before. There have been serious illnesses within my immediate family. My in-laws, who live with us and are both in their 80's, are having a real tough time of things. Of course that makes everything around the home just that much more hectic. Added to that we have six teenagers, all with their own set of issues. Need I say more? My wife's leadership role within our church's home school group adds still another dynamic to the on going battle.

*In all these areas the enemy would love nothing better than to bring us down. I have heard some say that maybe I should shrink back from the battle. I just do not see that as the Lord's will. **God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.** 2 Tim 1:7. So I am not shrinking away from the battle nor am I feeling overwhelmed by it all. I*

am trusting in the Lord to be my fortress and my d e f e n s e .

*I believe I am squarely in the midst of God's will for my life and these battles serve as evidence to that fact. With the Lord I am strong, so the enemy will try coming against me with other things. Things I have little or no control over, illnesses and family. A brother gave me this verse that has come to mean a lot to me; **"So if you are suffering according to God's will, keep on doing what is right and trust yourself to the God who made you, for he will never fail you."** 1 Peter 4:19 (Living Bible)*

*Knowing that it is not by my might, the battle truly is the Lord's and I do give it all to Him. But I also know that there is great power in prayer. **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.** James 5:16, and that is the sole purpose of this letter; to solicit the prayers of all of you for my*

family and myself.

Thank you for your continuing prayer support concerning this ministry, my family and the battles we encounter regularly.

I am going to now also paste in a recent announcement that Cindy McCabe did in the Chapel Creek Christian School newsletter that will help add a little more background to what I hope to clarify in this newsletter.....

“To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

God places seasons in our lives for many reasons. He allows us opportunity to serve and opportunity to rest. He brings circumstances into our lives to assist us in understanding His seasons. And nothing is ever wasted in God's economy.

With the recent passing of Allison's mother, the continuing care of her elderly step father, the daily nurture of seven children, as well as, the education of four of those children, the additional weight of responsibility for our school has grown too heavy.

God, in His wisdom, is permitting a season of rest for Allison. A time to step back and regroup. A time to devote to her most important ministry, that of mothering and educating her own children.

We are all grateful for the time God allowed Allison to serve as

leadership within Chapel Creek Christian School and we will miss her in that role, but God has another plan for now. Please be respectful of this opportunity by not calling 'Allison concerning school administrative matters.

Allison continues to be an awesome source of encouragement and counsel for home educating families. If you have counseled with her before, please continue to use the insight and wisdom God has given to her. She will be blessed by those opportunities.

Above all, please pray for the Welsh family. Pray for each and every aspect of their family. Most of all, please pray they would have rest during this season!

Reading between the lines of these things I have pasted in, it should give you a clear understanding that there has been an ongoing battle for some time now. And it has gotten to the point where actions needed to be taken. It is the actions that have been taken that I want to explain so that there are no misunderstandings.

Both my wife and I were in leadership rolls at the church. Allison in Chapel Creek Christian School and for me; the prison ministry. As long as we have been Christians I can't remember a time when we haven't been doing some kind of ministry.

Of course our biggest and longest running ministry is; our seven children ranging in age from twenty down to thirteen. One is working at Hume Lake Christian Center. The other six are home with us.

We also have had my mother-in-law and father-in-law living with us for about the past ten years. So we of course have a full house all the time. That isn't even counting all the other teenagers who are always hanging around.

This past December brought some big changes into our home. Edna, my mother-in-law went into the hospital and then on Christmas Eve went home to be with the Lord.

What an awesome celebration we had for her. It really was a neat testimony to see how many teenagers from our church were at the service who used to call Edna, Grandma!

Mario, Edna's husband has some very serious health issues that will demand a lot of care. So for Allison there was a clear choice she had to make and we both know she made the right one in deciding to step out of outside commitments at this time.

For me the decision wasn't much different. In Exodus 18:14 Jethro told his son in law to learn how to delegate responsibility. In overseeing the prison ministry I took Jethro's counsel to heart long ago. Especially since becoming a Chaplain I had to realize I couldn't do it all nor be there for all the times we go in. I never did do it all, it was always a team effort. Each prison we go into has leaders, most of whom have been with me from the beginning. In fact everyone that goes in is capable in what they do. I may have been the one to get the ministry going but it is totally God's ministry, not mine.

Don't get me wrong, it was very hard to step down. Especially right now, when so many new

doors were opening. And I love doing it, knowing that I am called by God to use my past for His glory.

In it all, I really have a peace in knowing that everything is God filtered and I really do want His will to be done within my life and within the ministry He has called me to.

That brings me to the misconceptions that seem to be going around the church right now about our ministry. We have had people who have moved out of the area, that still support our ministry, call to ask where to send support now that I am no longer at C.C.C.H.! Let me make this very clear,

I have not left our church and have no plans to do so.

Then I have had others who "had heard" I was no longer being sent as a missionary Chaplain to Men's Central Jail.

That couldn't be any further from the truth.

Now that I have stepped down from overseeing prison ministry, I am focusing all of my attention on my job at the jail. But at the same time have the ability and time to take care of the needs of my family for this season in our lives.

I hope I never have to walk away from being a Chaplain. Once I accepted the call, there was no turning back for me. I have no idea what the future holds but God does. With all we've been going through, I know He has something good in store.

The Bible says in **Proverbs 11:14** ***"Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety"***

Over the past several months I have spoken to a number of Godly men about where I should go from here. I mean just a little over two years ago I never would have thought I would ever be in full time ministry and now that is all I hope to do from here on out.

So what is the next logical step for me? Continuing to go to Bible college has got to be part of it of course. But beyond that where do I go from here? A lot more prayer has to go into that question. I know where my heart is leading me, I just have to be sure that is where God is wanting me to go.

A number of months ago I spoke to Pastor Jack about going out to speak to other churches regarding jail and prison ministry. To go out and try to replicate what we've done at C.C.C.H. in other churches around the country. I have spoken to a number of pastors who are interested, so we will have to see how the Lord leads.

The need has never been greater. More people are in prison today in this country than ever before. And what many people don't think about is 90% of the people who are in prison today, will be out again some day. When they get out, which would you rather they be, someone who has heard the gospel and done something with it or someone coming back out worse than when they went in?

Jesus said the Church has to be the one to make the difference. We are to be salt and light to a dying world. Where darker, than in the jails and prisons of this country?

The statistics are there, the recidivism rate with in two years or less after getting out is over 80%. But when inmates are involved in a faith based program while in prison, less than 25% of them return to custody after getting released. Just for the selfish reason of wanting less crime, society should care more about jail ministries. As for the church it should care more about it simply because Jesus mandated us to go.

Matthew 25:36 I was in prison, and you came to me.

Or another one I like is:

Hebrews 13:1-3 Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also.

Recently I was in my office at the jail, internally struggling with something I was reading. I was asking myself how things had gotten to this point, or more correctly I was questioning God on why. And at that moment a inmate stuck his head in the door and asked if he could talk to me. I said sure. He walked in asking the question "What must I do to be saved?" Just like out of the book of Acts! I knew right then the answer to my question to God of why. I never want to be doing anything else but what the Lord has called me to do!

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31

Back when this all first started, Pastor Jack published this flyer (below) to announce the beginning of this ministry. It was an outgrowth of the prison ministry but not connected to it. It is my prayer that no one ever confuses the two. And as always I want to thank all of you who have helped to make this ministry become what it has. Your prayers, encouragement and love have meant so very much.

the calvary extension

We're growing in many different ways
One of those ways is extending the love of God
to the world around us.

It is with a heartfelt excitement that we here at Calvary recognize God's call upon Ed Welsh to serve as Chaplain to the Los Angeles County Jail in the city of Los Angeles. Ed has been asked to manage the religious operations within the jail. The Los Angeles Jail is the largest jail in the world and the Lord has opened the door to Calvary Chapel Chino Hills to bring the Gospel to these inmates. As a result of Ed's faithful and committed service to our local prison ministry, the Lord has provided this extremely rare and unique opportunity for us to respond to this great social and spiritual need. I encourage you to pray now for Ed and his family of nine that through us, his spiritual and financial needs are met so that he might carry out his duty.

To accomplish this, he will be in need of our loving support. Paul the Apostle said, "For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.'"

Jesus Himself commanded us to visit those who are in prison and that means regardless of their errors. Let's come together and reach out to the world's largest prison system for Jesus Christ by sending Ed Welsh to the task, and together we can make a difference!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
-Jesus

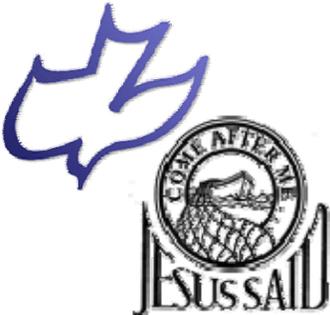
All communications, letters of encouragement,
and correspondence can be directed to:
Calvary Chapel Chino Hills/Ed Welsh
In care of:
Calvary Chapel Chino Hills
E-mail: ed@prisonkey.org/LOS ANGELES
3233 Grand Ave. (N box 381), Chino Hills, CA 91709

Thanking you for sharing in the vision,
Awaiting His Return!

Pastor Jack Hibbs

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: All Chaplains associated with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department jail system, work on a strictly volunteer basis. There is
: a complete adherence to the separation of Church and State. So as a form of disclaimer, I wish to clearly state this newsletter in no
: way represents the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. I work with the Sheriff's Department in the spirit of cooperation for
: the purpose of serving the men and women incarcerated in the Los Angeles County Jail system. The county in no way compensates
: us for what we do as Chaplains. My support comes solely from donations made to send me as a missionary to the incarcerated.
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