



Isaiah 61:1

Volume 3, Issue 5

September 2003

Newsletter

Chaplain Ed Welsh

*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

He Who Begun A Good Work

It seems like the most popular topics for me to write about are when I tell personal stories of the men and women behind bars. I am often asked about a particular person I wrote about, on how they are doing or to just tell me they are praying for that person.

It is really a blessing when it's someone from the youth group who comes up and asks me those kind of things. ***Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.***

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16 To think that some of the youth are being helped to shape their opinion of say why are you messing others and to pray for them, with me? is just so awesome.

Well there is someone new I would like to tell you about and ask you to pray for. It is a man by the name of Dino.

I first met Dino under the worst of circumstances. He was sent to my office so that I could tell him that his mother had just unexpectedly died. As I have shared before in newsletters, it is by far the hardest part of the ministry, to have to give the death notifications. This particular time was exceptionally hard.

I never know what to expect when I send a pass to do a notification. Some hide their emotions behind a blank expression where you are really left wondering what they are thinking and feeling. Others drop all pretense of being the tuff guy and just break down. When Dino walked into my office I remember thinking to myself I hope he takes this well. Dino is a large, muscular man, shaved head and tattoos all over him.

As he walked in he didn't have a look of concern on his face as many often do when they are called to see the Chaplain unexpectedly. He had an angry look as if to say why are you messing with me?

Dino was in one of the state modules where you knew he had already done previous time and from the looks of him, many times in and out. He had been here this time for a number of months fighting a drug case that was going to send him back to the state with a strike this time. He was trying to play the system and get into a drug program and yet he wasn't holding out much hope for it to work out that way.

After spending a few minutes getting acquainted, I told him

what I had called him in for.

It was just another time where I was reminded once again to not judge a book by its cover. His reaction was one of complete despair. He broke down and just wept. I was watching the transformation with the outward veneer of a hard man become truly broken with grief. All pretext of the tuff guy was gone and what was left was a frightened man not knowing what to do.

Mom had always been there for him. Once he regained some control, his first words were "what will I do without her?" And then "I have let her down again, even in her death."

As often happens when I do these notifications, for a moment, I was brought back to an earlier time in my own life. At fourteen when I was in juvenile hall my mother was killed in a car wreck. I spent years feeling guilty for letting my mother down.

One of the first things I ask the inmate is if the deceased was a Christian. The second question would be to ask the inmate if they are a believer. If the answer is yes to both questions then the rest of the my task is made much simpler.

In Dino's case I was half way there, his mother was a Christian. He believed in God but that was as far as he would go.

I spent the next hour or so with him sharing the different scriptures that would give him comfort. In cases like this I usually challenge them to look to God not only for comfort but to live their lives from this point on, dedicated to the goal of one day seeing their loved one again in glory.

I gave him a New Believers New Testament and explained how to use it; prayed with him and then sent him back to his cell.

You never know how things are going to work out. You just have to be faithful in your part and then leave it up to the Lord to complete the work He has started. In this case I did all I knew to do and really didn't know what to think of how much really helped or not. I told him the same kind of things I have told many others before and since. Only God knows what will be the fruit or at least that is what I thought at the time.

I would never had dreamed what happened next!

He Who Begun A Good Work

(Continued)

(continued on next page)

About a week later Dino came back to my office on his own to see me. He had just come back from a day at court and had stopped at my office before going back to his module as he was supposed to do.

He wanted to let me know that back in his cell he had asked Jesus to come into his life and be his Savior! But he had more of a reason for coming by than to tell me just that. In court that day he had been able to lead someone else to the Lord and had given them his New Believer's New Testament. He almost sheepishly asked if he could have another one for himself. At that point I would have given him my own Bible if I didn't have anything else to give him!

Over the next three or four months I got the opportunity to get to know Dino. He became a regular at our different Bible studies we have in the Chapel. And whenever he could he would get to my office to ask for more Bibles to hand out.

Dino started his own Bible studies back in the module. First just in his cell, then next to the cells around his cell and then before long both the row above him and his were actively involved in Bible study. In one of the roughest modules in the jail they started having nightly "prayer calls" where they would pray for each other.

Now every time he came to my office, he was asking for handfuls of Bibles and other literature. It really became enjoyable to see him walk in my office, there were always new praise reports of what was going on.

Then one day he comes in my office and I could tell something was different right away. He had just got back from court and it didn't go well for him or at least not what he had hoped for in getting a drug program. Actually he did receive some grace, he did get sentenced to state prison but he did

not get a strike with it. So it means he will be spending the next two years in prison.

A few of the other Chaplains who do studies at the jail, teach the positive confession doctrine, something I think can be very damaging, especially to an inmate looking at doing many years in jail.

I recently had a deputy come to my office with a high security inmate who had just come back from court. Another large man, this one in the orange jumpsuit and waist chains. He was crying and asking for help. He had just been given a 50 year sentence and yet he couldn't understand how it could be. He had "claimed" he wasn't going to do time. He wasn't told things like he would reap what he had sown. Now that man may go on to wherever they send him believing that the gospel is a counterfeit message. All because he had been told that if he claimed it and had enough faith he would be delivered from his bondage.

Fortunately this wasn't going to be the outcome in Dino's case. I really loved his attitude about it. It was obvious that he was disappointed that he wasn't going to be able to get into a program. But as soon as he started talking to me about it, the first thing he said was that it just meant the Lord had other plans for him to continue using him in the prison the way He was already using him there at the jail. I was so blessed to see his heart. His face lit up as he talked about sharing the gospel in the prison.

A few days later he was back in my office again, on fire once again, saying time was now getting short, he needed more Bibles to pass out while he was still here. His enthusiasm was really blessing me. But what blessed me most of all happened just a few days before he was going to be leaving on the bus for the state prison.

He came in my office telling me how he had been studying 1 Timothy to help him to try and determine who he could turn over the leadership of the ministry! Without him even realizing it himself he had obtained the heart of a Pastor for his flock.

I have no idea what is in store for Dino while he is in prison but if what has happened in the past few months is any indication, I am sure that the Lord is going to use him in a powerful way.

He has only been gone a few weeks and I find myself missing him. It was kind of nice to see his excited face, all lit up, asking for more Bibles every time I saw him.

This scripture has taken on new meaning:

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; Phil 1:3-6

I hadn't told Dino anything different than I had shared with many others but in this case I was able to watch as the Lord that added to the increase. That is the best part, no matter how inadequate I may be, it is the Lord who is faithful to complete the work.

Please keep Dino and his new ministry in your prayers.

Unexpected Blessings

It usually takes some prodding for me to get going when it is time to start another newsletter. So once I finally do get going I don't like stopping, especially when I am in the middle of writing something. That is just what happened to me earlier today. I was in the middle of writing about Dino when I got a phone call. It was from Paula who oversees the prison ministry at the women's prison (CIW) for *Jesus is the Key*.

The Chaplain called and asked if we could come in for the night to give her a hand. I think the people who were supposed to go in couldn't for some reason. Normally I wouldn't have felt this way but I just didn't want to go. I was in the middle of doing the newsletter and had already had the mindset to try and get as much done as I could. Well it just wasn't in me to say no so I told Paula I would meet her there.

I am now so glad I did! The Lord just opened some awesome doors for us tonight. And at the same time gave me the chance to be used by him in unexpected ways. The next time you don't feel like doing something be sure it isn't the enemy trying to rob you of a blessing.

For as long as we have been going into CIW it has been a battle. The Bible studies we have on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month are at a time where we are in direct competition with the main services they have in the Chapel. So we have had a low number of women coming to our studies.

Well last night the Chaplain needed help with two different things going on at once. While Paula conducted the women's Bible study in the education building where we normally have our studies, I was to stay at the Chapel and oversee the choir practice. Instead of the eight or so women that usually show up for the study, Paula had eighty or so! It couldn't have been better timing because she is just starting a new series with a book from Kay Arthur and that night she brought in cases of the book.

She didn't know what she was going to do with so many books. We had talked about handing them out at the upcoming concert. Instead, she didn't have enough for everyone and will bring in more next week when she actually starts the new study. What an introduction to the series the Lord allowed Paula!

As I sat in the Chapel reading my Bible while the choir practiced, I asked "why am I having to be here?"

In walks a woman who had left Paula's study to come over for help. She had been witnessing to someone she worked with that was searching. She wanted help in leading her to the Lord. Only trouble was I was there to oversee the choir and I couldn't leave.

I encouraged her to go back over to the study and after the study to take the woman up to Paula and she would be able to answer her questions. No sooner did I get back to reading my Bible that the Lord impressed on me that I should have done more, something, anything to help equip this woman to lead her friend to the Lord.

A while later the woman comes back to the Chapel again saying her friend won't sit through the study, she wants answers, wants things explained to her. But I still can't leave the choir practice. So I ask her if she is comfortable with sharing the gospel, she said she would but didn't know if she could. That is when I remembered the copy of the Roman's Road I had in my Bible. I gave it to her and explained a few other things to her as quickly as I could.

Later I happened to look out a Chapel window and I could see the two of them together sitting on a wall reading. I can't explain it very well, I guess you just had to be there but it was really neat to see God at work that way. He loves us so much, He never gives up on us even when everyone else does.

By this time I was more than glad I had come. To think I would have missed all this if I had listened to my reluctant heart.

As the choir practice came to an end I talked to the ladies and asked if they would like to do some singing for us at the upcoming concert we are doing in October. Of course they were happy to be a part of it. And when I showed them a poster they saw Scarlet Hope and Ordinary People were coming back they became very excited about it. They promised to be our front line advertising and to be sure to get all their unsaved friends to come. I am really looking forward to it, this is by far the most ambitious one we have done so far. I feel confident that God is going to use it in a very powerful way.

The choir had left and I was getting ready to go over to the building where Paula was when two women walked in the Chapel wanting prayer. As it turned out it was a woman who had given birth while in custody and now a hearing was being held this coming week to decide if they were going to take the child from her completely. I can't imagine what it would be like for a mother to go through that but it has got to be awful. I do know what it was like in my own past, I explained to her how I didn't meet my oldest daughter till she was eighteen years old. Consequences to the choices I had made in life. I shared with her Joel 2:25 where it says God will give you back the years the locusts have eaten. Now I have a new family and a new life in Christ. After praying with her it was neat to see her walk out of the Chapel with a smile on her face.

I'm sure glad I went tonight!

Please keep the upcoming concert in you prayers

Jesus Is The Key Ministries and **CIW Yard Concert**

We had such an awesome time with you ladies last year! We are really looking forward to coming back this October 18th. Those who remember the last time , tell your friends and have them all come .

Featuring

- *The Heather Henry Band*
- *Ordinary People*
- *Scarlet Hope*
- *e-Tribe*
- *The Jim Bovee Band*
- *The Gutierrez Brothers*



With Special Guest Speakers:

- *Pastor Carlos Ayub of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa*
- *Pastor Jeff Stewart of Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley*
- *Paula Nafziger of Jesus is the Key Ministries*
- *Chaplain Ed Welsh, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Men's Central Jail*

Date: **Oct. 18, 2003**
 Where: **On the Yard**
 Time: **9:00 am till 4:00 pm**



Back to La Mesa Prison

In the last newsletter I wrote about going down to La Mesa prison in Mexico and that I hoped to go back down there with a couple pastors and show them to see for themselves.

Pastor Jeff Stewart from Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley and Pastor Jay Calisher from Calvary Chapel Santee, went down with me last month and we spent the day there. Over and over I heard them say things like "this is unbelievable."

Over the next few months I hope to be able to help generate some interest in someone doing something like getting Bibles and Bible studies in there.

While we were there another group came in from another Calvary Chapel who have been conducting studies and outreaches already. So it's not as if there is nothing happening there, it's

just that the need is so great.

At the end of September we are trying to get two more Calvary pastors to go down there with me to check it out. This time it will be Pastor Carlos Ayub from Calvary Costa Mesa and Pastor Frank Garcia. On this trip, I'll be the only one who will need a translator.

I also am having the woman missionary who brings us into La Mesa come up to my jail (Men Central) to do a service. We will take her over to see the women in Twin Towers and speak to them too. I guess you could say we are having a exchange program of sorts.

I met a teacher who works with the inmates from my jail and he is trying to get some outdated text books donated that we can give to La Mesa. They have a school of sorts at La

Mesa but have very little to work with.

It's not that I am trying to get another ministry going for myself; I've got more than enough to keep me busy at Men's Central Jail alone. But when I see a need I do want to do something about it and I think one gift I have is the gift of motivation, at least I've been told that. So if I can help motivate someone to fill that need then I feel I have helped too. I know the Word tells us we can do all things but that doesn't mean we have to do all things *ourselves*. That is why Jethro gave Moses counsel that he needed to delegate. I think the biggest mistake I have seen within ministries is leadership not taking that counsel often enough.

So here again I am asking for your prayers for the Lord to raise up someone to fill this need.

Anything is Possible

On my resent trip to Mexico, Pastor Jeff and I were talking on our drive back. He asked if I had the chance to go into a prison while I was over in Russia. As much as I would have liked to do that, it just wasn't in the Lord's plans on that trip nearly ten years ago.

Then three years ago, not long after becoming a Chaplain I got the opportunity to help arrange a tour of both Men's Central Jail and CIM in Chino for the head of the Russia prisons and the head of the juvenile detention centers. (see Volume 1, Issue 1) As a side note it really amazes me to realize this will be the 16th newsletter and we will be coming up on my 3rd anniversary of being in full time ministry at the end of this month. God is so good!

Anyway back at the time of the tour Colonel Shevnnin said that if I ever

made it back to Russia he would open the doors to the prisons over there.

I never dreamed I would ever get the chance to go over there again but there are many things I never dreamed I would be doing that have since become a reality.

Anyway Pastor Jeff said that some people from his church are going to be going over to Russia in March with Calvary Chapel Vista.

Ironically enough it will be ten years ago this coming March that I first went to Russia and in a round about way that was really the beginning of the life changing events that ended with me where I am today. The prison ministry was fruit of that mission trip.

I still didn't consider signing up to go on the Russia. I just didn't think it

would ever be possible. I feel very lucky to just make ends meet every month and couldn't see How that could ever be budgeted in.

Well my wife signed me up on the list anyway. So now I guess we will just have to wait and see what happens.

I am going to go ahead and renew my passport and go as far as to try to get hold of Colonel Shevnnin.

This past week I went to the Pastors devotional meeting at Calvary Downey and they had a missionary from Russia who did the devotion. Afterward we talked and he said it's very hard to get into the prisons; that if I can find a open door he wants to go too.

Who know, anything is possible?

Prayer Concerns

Page 6

It seems like every time I sit down to start another one of these newsletters there are new things coming about. One thing for sure, there is not a lot of idle time. Below I'll list some upcoming things that I am asking your prayers for:

1. Starting this month Jesus Is the Key Ministries will be bringing in a new prison ministry group to the CIM prison in Chino. So from now on we will be going in on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month, added to what we are already doing at CIW.

2. Hopefully we will still be doing something at some other places soon. There have been some recent inquires from some other churches interested in becoming involved and that is what it is all about.

3. One if the newest developments is that starting this month I will be teaching at the Bible College extension campus at Calvary Chapel Downey.

The Sheriff's Department has agreed to let us do a Chaplain's Internship program. So I will be teaching a class on Custody Chaplaincy. That is if anyone signs up to take the class.

It is exciting, the prospect of being able to tap into the resource of the

people who are going to school with the desire to want to serve in ministry. Beside the classroom work the Sheriff's Department is going to allow us to bring in up to 20 students to help us in the Chaplain's program within the L.A. County Jail system. Half will come over with me at Men's Central and the other half will go over to the Twin Towers and work with the Senior Chaplain over there. If we are lucky to have a few women sign up they will work over in the women's section of Twin Towers.

4. Another opportunity that has presented itself is where I am going to be taking from the example of the Apostle Paul and do some tent making.

Over the past several months it has been increasingly difficult to make ends meet. All ministries are having a tuff time, many large ones have had to cut back. Economy; it being the summer months; leaving a large church and relocating to a much smaller one, all of these things have their affect on it. But no matter what I am convinced that God called me to this and where He guides He does provide. And this time He may have provided in a different way.

Starting soon I will be able to work a couple nights a week at a rehab center as a family counselor. The good thing about it is I will be paid for doing it and yet it will still be ministry. At least I am

looking at it as an extension of the ministry I am already doing and at the same time supplementing my income to help provide for my family.

5. Lastly; along with some others who have been in prison ministry for a number of years, we are laying the groundwork for a new ministry. In the next few months I will be letting everyone know much more about it. For now just pray that the leadership of **Prison Ministry of America** receives God's a clear direction in the way that they should go, that the doors will be opened and that the church leadership gets behind this vision.



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 .

Phone: 909- 519-2216
Email:
ed@prisonkey.org
or
ejwelsh@lasd.org
Web Site
www.prisonkey.org



Tax Deductible Donations
can be made out to:
Jesus is the Key Ministries
32 33 Grand Avenue
Suite : N - 71
Chino Hills, California
91709
501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation