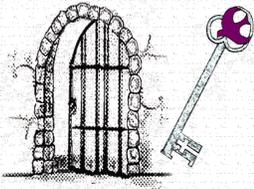


Jesus Is The Key
Ministries



Newsletter

Chaplain Ed Welsh

Isaiah 61:1

May 2004

Volume 4, Issue 3

*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*



Greater Los Angeles
Billy GRAHAM
CRUSADE
July 29 – August 1, 2004 • Rose Bowl

**Is also going to be doing outreaches in a number of
prisons and jails in the greater Los Angeles area**

Some of you may remember and for the others if you were to look back and read the newsletter from March 2003 (Volume 3 Issue 2) you would see where I was able to be a part of last years San Diego Billy Graham Crusade. At that time the organization was billing the crusade as possibly being the last crusade. I guess they have to bill it that way with his age and health conditions?

I had no idea at that time Billy Graham would be coming to Los Angeles just one year later. Dr. Graham seems to keep them all amazed because he just keeps on going. Who knows maybe, Lord willing, it will be like the gospel story in Luke, where it was revealed to Simeon he would not see death before he had seen the Savior.

Most people do not know that whenever Billy Graham does a crusade in a city they also do outreaches in the different jails and prisons within the area. I know Dr. Graham has a heart to minister to the prisoners and takes Matthew 25:36 very literally.

The first time I went up to San Quentin I noticed some old pictures they have hanging in a room within their chapel. One of them was of a young Billy Graham standing on a wooden platform preaching to the men in the prison yard. It also had a printed card posted there with the picture saying that Billy Graham had played a part in raising the funds to build the chapel there.

Last year in San Diego I got to participate in the planning committee for the prison outreaches that they had. I really enjoyed doing it and at the same time it help me to see how others did their outreaches. I had no idea that the Lord was preparing me for this.

A number of weeks ago I received a phone call from a pastor letting me know they were forming a prison planning committee for the upcoming events so I called the crusade office and let them know I would like to help anyway I could. I heard back from them a few days later and was more than blessed with how it all

turned out. They asked me to be chairman for the committee!

What makes all of it really special to me is that I first heard the Gospel and asked Jesus to be my personal Lord and Savior at the Los Angeles Coliseum during the 1963 Billy Graham Crusade.

It would be so awesome to some day be able to meet him and say thank you. But I will probably just have to wait in a very long line of people in heaven some day to be able to tell him then.

I am excited about these upcoming outreaches. We have identified about twenty-five different facilities we hope to go into. Five state prisons, two federal, a number of youth facilities and some county jails both in L.A. County and Orange County too.

Wherever possible we are going to try to put on yard concerts, much like the ones we have put on previously. But in the past we were putting one concert on in one facility. This time there could be as many as thirty-five to forty different outreaches if we get the approval

Billy Graham Crusades are coming to LA !! (Continued)

for all the places we hope to go into.

Having so many churches involved, a good group of people on the committee and the Billy Graham organization behind us it will make impossible things possible. But then all things are possible through Christ.

The main dates we have planned to do before the Rose Bowl Crusade are July 10th, 17th and the 24th. Then after the weekend of the crusade we will go for three more weekends of August 7th, 14th and the 21st.

Please keep this in your prayers. That we will be able to find all the needed worship groups and evangelistic speakers. Then that the Lord will bring many unsaved prisoners to hear the message and respond.

The spiritual battles have already started. In one of the state facilities we are planning to go to have already gotten back to us. They will not let us do a yard outreach and will only let us do a service in the chapel. That is better than nothing and yet it still really bothers me. In the chapel we will at the most be able to get about seventy-five inmates in there. We could reach hundreds if it were conducted on the yard. And that, it seems, is what the problem is.

That same prison is going to be allowing a famous rock and roll star come in and stage a yard concert in the next few weeks. When I asked what the difference was, I was told that it is because they have to be sensitive to the prisoners who did not want to hear about Jesus! Funny that never

seemed to cause a problem in any of the other concerts we have put on over the years. We certainly live in a time of political correctness. Especially when it is correct for the enemy!

We have to realize that it is all a spiritual battle and you have to choose your battles. Being able to go in the chapel is far better than not being able to go in at all.

One last thing I would like to ask you to keep in prayer is I am hoping these outreaches will open doors for the chance to bring more new church groups into the facilities throughout the area. I have had some churches express an interest in doing prison ministry and this may very well be the opportunity that will open those doors?

Never lean on your own understanding

My past came back to haunt me a few weeks ago. Something happened that made me stop and take stock of things on many levels.

In my family I am the oldest of three kids. I have two younger sisters or I should say "had"; my youngest sister Jackie just recently passed away.

Many years ago, about thirty or so, my sister became a drug addict and it now took her life. While Jackie laid in a bed in ICU, I did a lot of reflecting on the past. Regretted many things, dealt with the guilt of introducing her to that lifestyle and wished we could somehow go back in time.

In the past twenty-one years the Lord has given me the chance to share His love with many people. And now with my kid sister laying on her death bed I couldn't share it with her.

Over the years my wife and I have helped to raise three of Jackie's kids and four of her grandkids. With her life style she couldn't and didn't know how

to be a mother to them.

One thing it did do was cause a real division between her and I. The first day she was in the hospital she told me she hated me. She blamed me for stealing her kids from her and much more.

Laying there in her bed, you could see the thirty years of drug use had really taken its toll. Jackie looked like a holocaust victim. The only thing is with Jackie it was self inflicted.

I called the chaplain at the hospital and explained the situation and asked if he would go speak to her for me about the Lord. I was convinced she surely wouldn't receive it from me.

By this time she was on a breathing machine she couldn't answer other than nod her head when she felt like it. He did talk to her and later told me he couldn't say for sure if she had prayed with him or not.

Then one night I went out to see my sister and ended up being late for the

class I taught at the Bible College. I explained why I had been late and asked them to pray for her.

After class one of the students stayed and had coffee with me. While we were together talking the Lord used him to speak to me. I knew I had to talk to Jackie myself about the Lord and decided I would go out there the following morning.

To my amazement she was very alert and when I asked her if she wanted to pray with me her nod of yes brought tears of joy to my eyes. Years of separation melted away and I could feel at peace that Jackie had made her peace with the Lord.

God is always faithful, even when we are not! Once again I learned that leaning on my own understanding never works out right. If I had gone with my feelings I would have not had the peace I now have.

On another personal note

While I am on personal themes, I wanted announce something my wife and I are very excited about. Our baby girl will soon be getting married to a great guy. Actually she is not our baby, she is the oldest of our seven kids.

On June 27th our daughter Jessikah will become Mrs. Bill Voong at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills.

They have been courting for three years, saving and planning for this a

long while now. I never realized how much can go into a wedding and like everything else Jessikah knew just what she wanted and wouldn't settle for anything less. My wife and I couldn't give them the kind of wedding she wanted so she and Bill worked and saved for to make this special event everything they have hoped for.

I mention this in the newsletter first and foremost I guess because I am a proud father. Actually many of you who re-

ceive this newsletter watched her grow up at the church she will be married at. That was important to her to be married there and it blesses me to see that she has grown up to have the kind of values she has.

Allison and I would appreciate all of your prayers for Jessikah and Bill's upcoming marriage.

Create A New Heart

Just last week we went into the Chino prison for our Friday night service. We had an exceptionally good turn out that night, maybe the most ever?

We did something we don't normally do, all three of us on the team stood at the door and shook the hand of each man as they came into the chapel.

One man as he came in said to me it was his first time ever coming to a church service of any kind. He didn't really know why he came and said he was just gonna check it out. By the end of the service it was very apparent why he had come.

In the West Yard at CIM the inmates are not there for very long. They are all state prisoners who have returned on parole violation. To have them all of them out on the yard milling around helps to illustrate what a failure the parole program is.

Because they are parole violators and they are not there for very long, we don't have much of a chance to really get to know most of them. I really wish we had more time to disciple them.

We start the service by having one of the team get up and introduce everyone and then open up with prayer. Then we encourage one of the inmates to come up and lead all of us in some a cappella worship. Up until now we haven't had anyone on the team

who could play a guitar and lead worship so we've done the best we can. It usually turns out pretty good, the two main songs they seem to always pick to sing are *Amazing Grace* & *Create In Me A New Heart*.

It always blesses me to hear the men worship. In a room of sixty or so men with most of them singing, it can be heard well out into the yard. Kind of ironic how in many churches most won't sing at all and would rather be entertained by whoever is up front singing.

After the worship is over, who ever is going to teach that night will pray once again and then get into the teaching. It all depends on when we actually get there (we often have to wait for count to clear before we get in) but most teaching times are between thirty to forty-five minutes long.

Sometimes I get up there and say a few things too. If nothing else than to encourage them that they do not have to buy into the lie of the enemy that they can never get out of the revolving door of the system. So many of them have gone in and out over and over again, they are really feeling defeated being back on another violation.

What we try to always do is allow enough time at the end so that the men can come up and ask for prayer and then some of them just want to

talk to someone they know cares.

The other night when we were there the Spirit had really been at work. Many came up wanting to talk and be prayed with. We didn't even have enough time to pray with them all.

Many times its a request to pray with them for their family or something to do surrounding what they are there for. But then there are those who come wanting to rededicate or commit their life to the Lord.

That brings me back to where I started, the guy who said he didn't know why he was even there that night and had never been to a service before.

As we were all leaving, he was standing outside the door of the chapel talking to one of the team members. Tears were on his face and he said "I feel like I have missed out on something all my life and I want it now" We prayed with him and he asked Jesus into his life.

As one team member put it, "it doesn't get any better than that". He didn't understand why more people wouldn't want to do this ministry.

That is the exciting part of it for any Christian, to see God do His work in someone helps us remember He did that same work in us.

Now for some other things happening within the ministry. Thomas & Judith Brandt recently came from Germany for a vacation. And their idea of vacation is to visit as many Calvary Chapels as possible. I am not sure how many they went to but it was a number of them.

Thomas was one of our main translators while we were in Germany. He helped us so much in so many ways we all wanted to help make their time over here an enjoyable one.

The one contribution I was able to make was to arrange a tour for Judith and Thomas of the Twin Towers Jail and Men's Central.

I am not sure how well Judith enjoyed seeing the jails but I am sure that Thomas did. It is much different than the prisons he goes into with the Gefährdetenhilfe prison ministry in Germany.

As I write this I find myself missing not only the Brandt family but all the people I met while we were over there in Germany. I wish they were just in another town rather than another country so that it would be easier to go see them. Well hopefully someday I will go back for another visit.

Thomas also was able to come in with me to CIM for a service. He spoke to the inmates who thought it very special that he would take time out from his vacation to come see

them. Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley had a Missions Sunday service. The timing couldn't have been better, he was able to get up and share with everyone what it meant to have mission teams come over to his country. Please remember to keep Calvary Chapel Herborn in prayer.

Another thing that is happening is the ministry is growing at the women's prison. For some time now I had been concerned with the size of the group coming out. From the beginning it had been tough because our Bible study was at the same time as the chapel service so in a very real way we were in direct competition with one another.

Some of the women were getting close to being released and that meant the group was going to get even smaller very soon. It's not that we are into numbers, if even one comes that is the one we will share with. It just that the administration could drop our slot feeling there was no interest there.

Well, we serve a mighty God and He is the one in control. I am happy to say that recently the numbers have gone up considerably. In fact I think this is the largest group we have had in CIW.

Speaking about things growing. The team from CCPV going into CIM has now doubled in size and we have someone who plays guitar and can lead worship.

It has enabled us to expand the amount of times we go into CIM and

not only that but where we will be going in as well.

CCPV has been going into CIM West facility on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month. They will now be going into CIM Minimum on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and the possibility of another slot in there besides.

What makes that really nice is that the inmates at the Minimum facility are actually serving out their sentence there. So it will give the team the opportunity to develop some long term relationships with some of these guys.

If things go as I hope they will, one of the fruits of all the outreaches from the Bill Graham Crusades will be more churches going into more facilities doing the same thing. Its something to pray about.

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