



Isaiah 61:1

Volume 8, Issue 1

May 2008

*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*

Update

This is the first newsletter for the year. It's not that there weren't things to write about, there never really is a shortage of things to say. Lately it just seems like I am always on the go and know I need to take the time to write but I keep putting it off till later. And there are times after all these years where it seems like that I am writing the same things over and over again.

In the last newsletter we had just done prison outreaches to both the Men's and Women's prison here in the Chino area. The Men's prison (CIM) wanted us to come back for an encore concert before Christmas. Really amazing when you realize that for years it was next to impossible to get in there at all.

We were not able to go back before the holidays, it was too difficult to get everything organized and approved in that short of time. But we did get to go in mid January.

This time it was Pastor Jack Hibbs from Calvary Chapel Chino Hills who would give the message. Many of the men later told me they listen to Jack's radio program and it really blessed them to put a face to the voice they listened to every day.

What set this concert apart from most that we have done over the years was that one of the groups who performed was the inmate worship team from the prison. Some of the men were getting out within a few weeks and it turned out to be a great send off for them.

Just the other day while driving to the jail I got a call from the worship leader

of the inmate band. He wanted to let me know he was out doing well and still going to church. Its was a real blessing to hear from him and just tonight while at the Chino prison for our monthly Bible study, I was able to announce to the men how well he is doing. Of course that was an encouragement to everyone.

Another thing that was talked about in the last newsletter was our fundraiser and outreach for the prison in Tecate, Mexico.

The fundraiser was far more successful than we could have ever imagined. We were able to get 200 heavy down jackets, 200 pairs a warm wool socks and 200 wool beanies. As well as 4 DVD video players for their school program. And most importantly 200 Bibles.



We were able to bring far more than we had even hoped for!

From past trips down there we were worried about being stopped at the border again and them not letting us bring the things into the country. We felt like we were smugglers as we drove through the check point and it

all seemed too easy as all three vehicles got the green light to pass.

Soon after crossing the border we heard from the ministry that helps us get into the Mexican prisons. They let us know we weren't going to be able to go into the prison after all. They were in the middle of transferring a very large number of prisoners from another prison and because of that the prison was on lockdown.

This was truly in God's hands and He was not caught by surprise as we were when this happened. He opened the door to be able to go somewhere else in its place.

It was arranged for us to go to another prison in Ensenada. We were able to leave the jackets and other things we had brought for Tecate with our friends and they had blankets that we were able to bring in and give to the prisoners in Ensenada. The prison in Ensenada doesn't have the cold climate Tecate has so everything worked out just as if it had all been planned that way

We already had the food we intended to take into the prisoners at Tecate so everything worked out as God intended.

Instead of just going to one prison, we were able to go to another we had never been to before and still able to arrange to go back to Tecate at a later date.

Update



Food being prepared to feed the men



Raised hands for the ones
Wanting a new life in Christ.



Opening up the Ensenada outreach
with prayer and worship



Giving the Gospel message

As you can see from the pictures we all had a very full day. We didn't go where we had planned to go but it all worked out for an even better end result.

Two weeks later we were able to go back to the prison at Tecate and have a personal tour with the director of the prison. And it was during that tour we were shown their school class rooms. It was then explained how they had a TV in each of the four classrooms and that is where the DVD players we had brought were going to go.

We were shown the kitchen area, the shops where some of the prisoners work and we were shown their hospital area. From that we learned of another need we hope to be of help with the next trip down.

They are in need of medical supplies, crutches, wheelchairs. And in just the way God works the day after

I got back from Mexico, I found out about an inexpensive wheelchair designed for missionary distribution. On our next trip down there we plan to buy some of these wheelchairs to bring with us.



At Men's Central Jail the former Captain (he was just promoted to Commander) found out about our trip to Tecate and wanted to go himself. He has an idea to do a program with them similar to what some cities do when they become "sister cities".

Once all the arrangements are made we will be going back again. This time the director of all the prisons will be there as well. It is my hope that this will open the doors for us to do much more with all the different prisons in Baja, California.



While we were on the tour of the prison, some of the guards had to check all of things we had brought in for the prisoners.

Hear from some who heard the call

In the past I have included things written by different volunteers who have come into the prisons and jails as part of this ministry. I have two such articles for this newsletter. The first is written by a man who has asked he remain nameless who comes into the jail a number of times each month. This is what he had to say:

It has been difficult for me to write down my experiences of coming into the Men's Central Jail because to truly tell the tale, I must remember a time 16 years ago when my Christian walk was all but non-existent to most who knew me.

In one evening, an impulsive act with a firearm found me charged with a 1st degree felony, my name on the evening news, and me sitting in county jail wondering how my life had ever gotten so turned upside down so fast.

I would love to tell you a tale of swift redemption that outlines my giving over the Lordship of my life and seeing the faithfulness of that decision bear fruit, but that process would be a decade in the making. The two things that are clear to me as I write this is that:

- 1) There are men sitting in jail tonight who are doing some deep soul searching and
- 2) That Christ can and will use ALL of the experiences we have for His good purposes if we allow him.

Today, I can see answers to long ago prayers for a family, children, and a purpose, being stacked overflowing one upon one another. But I see now that my obedience has played a bigger role in these blessings than I would have thought and can only wish I'd been more willing to take God at His Word sooner.

I've been coming in to the jail as a volunteer for three months now and can tell that God is using this experience to cause me to grow in ways I never imagined. The experience of standing before 70-80 inmates and preaching God's Word is not like most you will encounter.

The 1st thing that I realized was that I had no business standing up there. I'm not an ordained preacher or anything, just a guy who wants to be used by God. But as I began to simply tell of God's heart to free all of us held behind the bars of our sin & bad choices, I saw a look of recognition in their faces.

Many of the men look surprised to hear how applicable Paul's words on the subject of our old nature really are...

Romans 7:18-19 (NIV)

18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

The most amazing thing I get to do, whether in talking to them one on one or in a preached message, is to give the men news of the hope they can find in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NASB)

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not

counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

When I see the faces of the men who have been transformed by this truth and hear the stories they tell of nightly prayer meetings and changed lives, I begin to overflow with joy at God's ability to redeem circumstances regardless of location. I have come to regard my days spent at the jail as the highlight of my week.

By giving it away, I am challenged by God's Word to live out my faith in a way that I never have before. I sense God's presence in my daily life and have realized that to advance His kingdom every day will take a daily re-commitment to seek His word and power to reject this world's wisdom.

I am also learning that I am becoming a target of spiritual opposition. One of the most unusual ways he's attacked me is in my pride. I realized that I was taking pride in being known around my church for my visits to the jail.

To combat this, I've asked Chaplain Ed not to publish my name along with this article. He has paired me up with some amazing godly men to learn how best to minister the Gospel of Christ to the inmates at the Men's Central Jail.

When I look back, I can now see all the experiences that God allowed

me to go through that prepared me for this ministry. I can't wait to see what He does with tomorrow!

This second article is done by a brother who has come into many prisons with me and I will let his words speak for themselves.

My name is George Maldonado

"I Am so Blessed"

A few years after I became a Christian, the Lord put in my heart a desire to serve in the ministry. So I volunteered as an usher at our church (a nice noble job). I did this for years until one day I prayed to the Lord and asked him, "Lord please use me for your glory, do whatever you want or send me wherever you want.

Ha Ha

They say be careful what you pray, they are right!

A few weeks later, I was watching a special on 20/20 Channel 7, about a prison in Tijuana Mexico. They showed the terrible conditions and the injustices against the people in there (along with the hard core criminals). It was a very sobering and very scary experience.

The first thing I thought was "man for all the money in the world, I would never want to go there". Then I prayed "Lord, don't let me ever land in a place like that". (But little did I know what God had in store for me.)

Just a few weeks later, I met Chaplain Ed Welsh and found out about his prison ministry. I thought it was a very good thing for him but not for me, but I wanted to help his ministry somehow. I found out his car needed work so I asked him to bring it to the shop so my mechanic David (who happens to be a Christian brother) could take care of it.

When I told David that Chaplain Ed was a prison minister, he got very ex-

cited and said "All my life I have been looking to serve in a prison ministry and God has answered my prayers, I want to get involved with him". I introduced them and I thought they will live happily ever after and I was out of it (because I didn't want to have anything to do with prisons).

Two weeks later Chaplain Ed told David that in a month he was going to have an outreach at the Tijuana prison (the very same prison I saw on 20/20). He invited him to go and David accepted. I thought "man David is very brave or doesn't know what he is getting into", then Ed said to me "George you should pray about going with us, we can really use you".

My answer was yea sure, I will pray, but in my mind I was thinking no way man, I don't want to go to the very same place that scared me on TV. I completely dismissed it. But if you know Ed and his heart for the prison ministry, he wasn't going to let it go. Next time he saw me he said "George have you prayed about going to Tijuana prison next month? I replied "No but I will", he said ok because we could really use you, we need Spanish translators.

That day I went home and even as I had no desire to go to a prison, I prayed because Chaplain Ed made it a point to say that they needed Spanish translators and as I prayed, a funny thing began to happen. The Lord took the fear of going to the prison and replaced it with desire in my heart to go. That is how the Lord introduced me to prison ministry.

My first mission was only to translate the gospel message. I would repeat the message over and over, scripture by scripture, and I watched all these people coming to Christ. It was amazing (little did I know that the Lord wasn't only using me to translate but he was also burning these

scriptures into my heart). By the time we left the prison not only did I feel very blessed but I was full of the Holy Spirit to overflowing "I LOVED IT!"

As a result, not only did I discover the need in the prison ministry, but I became an evangelist, the gospel message became engraved in my heart.

God is an awesome God, all we need to do is ask Him to be used and He will do the rest. My biggest fear (if I was to think of missions) was to go to places like this, yet now it is my desire to go wherever the Lord sends me to minister the word of God.

I thank God for Chaplain Ed and his ministry, for bringing him into my life. I know it was Gods plan to use him to direct my path. I have been blessed and able to serve in several missions with Chaplain Ed, like Tijuana prison (men and women's), Tecate prison (maximum security), and Ensenada. (Locally in Chino prison.) I can't wait for Chaplain Ed to call me to tell me where we are going next.

I hope my story will encourage you to take a step (if you haven't already) and ask the Lord to use you for His glory.

God Bless

p.s. By the way, David (the mechanic) never went back to any prisons and lost all desire to go. However if he would have never said anything about it in the first place, I would have never thought of getting involved in the prison ministry. Obviously God also used him. Please keep David in your prayers.

Hear from two other who are in and looking upward

I thought where you have just heard from a couple of volunteers who go in to be a part of this ministry, I should also include some letters we have gotten from some of the prisoners too.

My name is John #97.....

Most of my life, since I was nine, I was an Odinst (a Pagan) I practiced / celebrated all of the occult ceremonies according to the rite of that holy day. In prison I mocked and persecuted Christians.

The important basis of this note to you is to inform you that since I have been hear at Men's Central Jail I have accepted Jesus as my Savior. I have become an avid child of Christ, studying the Word fervently, actively participating in Prayer Call and sharing scriptures with Brothers on the row.

My conversion happened as follows:

For over a year now I have been fighting a possible 143 years to life sentence in the trial I am in the middle of.

While going to court I had three days to contemplate whether or not I would accept a twenty-five year flat deal or I would start picking my jury. I had no idea what I was going to do. I'm fighting a case that is very complicated , as some, not all, accusations in my case did happen, but not how they are being alleged.

At any rate I was sitting in my cell wondering what I was going to do when this guy on the tier above me dropped a Bible down to me on a line. I did not ask for one but I fished it in to maintain respectability towards his generosity.

What happened next I swear hap-

pened, the Bible fell open to the book of Isaiah and I looked at the pages; my eyes fixed in on 41:9 and I read on as if I could not keep from reading on to verse 13.

Isa 41:9-13

9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth. And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: 10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' 11 "Behold, all those who were incensed against you Shall be ashamed and disgraced; They shall be as nothing, And those who strive with you shall perish. 12 You shall seek them and not find them — Those who contended with you. Those who war against you Shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing. 13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

As I read those words I felt alive, and immediately, the stress of not knowing what to do about court melted away.

I felt like I was being told to not take the deal, to instead trust in something I had never believed in before. And that is just what I did, I turned down the deal.

What happened next was unbelievable; the prosecutors witness go on the stand and told the jury the allegations were lies, the plots and schemes of the team against me basically hurt the case to the point where in the end I was given a mistrial. Everyone was shocked at the outcome, except for me.

So now we have started all over again, they have refiled the charges

and we are going forward with the second trial.

Ever since my hours have been spent studying the Word of the Lord. At prayer call one of the Brothers showed me the Nelson Study Bible they had got from you. Is there any way I can get one of them for myself? Thank you in advance for everything.

Here is another short note from a different inmate at Men's Central.

To the Protestant Chaplain, My name is Wayne #

I have just gotten a year sentence here in the county Jail.

I have been saved about 15 years now, Recently I found myself giving into sin and now I am here to pay the price for it.

This is God's chastisement (love) being poured out on me. I thank God for His unfailing love. I have failed him many times but His mercy is new every morning. I know God has called me and has a plan for my life.

I have been studying God's Word and I am in need of a Vine's Expository Dictionary of the Old & New Testament. I don't have any finances to pay for this but I so want to make this time count while I am in here.

Both these notes to me are unique and yet at the same time very similar to ones that come in all the time. Men looking for answers and looking for them in God's Word. This is why we are always looking for good Christian materials to hand out to these men so they can find the right answers.

Who Would Have Ever Thought

Many of you who receive this newsletter have been with me since the beginning. In just a few more months it will be nine years that I have been a Chaplain at the Men's Central Jail!

Ten years ago, if someone would have said I would be doing this today, I would have never believed it. Just goes to show, you never know what circumstances will come along to send your life on a particular course.

Some of you that have known me a long while know that for many years my wife was a stay at home mom who not only raised but also home schooled our seven kids.

We also had my Mother-in-law and Father-in-law living with us for a number of years. Back then little did we know what plan the Lord had in store for Allison.

In the end of 2002 my Mother-in-law passed away. Her husband followed her just a few months later. Their deaths would be the motivation for my wife to go back to school and become a nurse.

Upon graduating as a LVN she started working as a part time hospice nurse, while she continues to go to school for the next few years to eventually become an RN .

Some couldn't understand why she would want to work with the dying but it truly became a ministry for her. After all it was the experience of going through hospice

with her own parents that first had her wanting to become a nurse.

Her job gave her the chance to share her faith with some and always show her work ethic of doing it all unto the Lord.

She sometimes would call me in the middle of the night to come to where she was working to pray and minister to some family members of her patient.

I once heard her explain to someone why she liked working with the dying, she wanted to be there with the person as they prepared to pass through the veil to the other side. She said it helped her feel even that much closer to the Lord.

I mentioned all this to give background to what happened next that would radically change the ministry for both my wife and myself.

As our economy has gotten worse the donations for the ministry have gone down substantially. About six months ago I decided that I was going to give them notice at the jail. I was going find some kind of job and go back to work. I thought I could still come in as a volunteer and do some kind of ministry there at the jail, I would just have to find some way to work out both.

One of the higher ranking Administrators within the Sheriff's Department heard of me planning

to resign as Chaplain and asked me to come see him.

This particular man is a believer and supports what we do within the jail system to bring the Gospel to the prisoners. So when he heard about my planning to leave, he was not pleased.

I had no way of knowing how the Lord would intervene and so radically change things for us!

He wanted to know how he could help. He offered to go speak to churches on the ministry's behalf.

Then he asked about Allison, somehow already knowing that she was going to school for nursing. He said the jail was hiring nurses and that they had a schooling program. It all sounded fine but I knew my wife had already had her schooling planned out and I didn't think she would even consider what he was suggesting.

He told me to have her give him a call, then thought better of it and said to call her right then. He talked with her on the phone explained to her about working for the County and then to my amazement she was more than interested, she said yes!

My wife started working at Men's Central Jail the beginning of this year. As the donations have decreased because of the economy her salary from work has helped make up for some of it for us. The Lord continues to be faithful to take care of our needs. And as

Who Would Have Ever Thought

the economy continues to get worse, gas continues to go higher, it will all have further impact on future donations but I will trust in the Lord to provide some other way to work everything out.

As nice as its been to have some of the pressure taken off of our finances, its not as big a blessing as the fruit of her working at the jail with me has been.

What I mean by fruit is in a very real and tangible difference in what the ministry has become. You see I have gained another partner in ministry. God really does give you far more than you could ever think.

We get to spend more time together than we have in years. Driving in every day together, gives us the chance to pray about whatever comes our way that day. Then at the end of our work day we are able to share with each other what happened while we drive back home.

Its funny to see how it changed the attitudes of some of the staff as if they realize for the first time that I am there, ones who never used to greet me in hallways do now. Asking for Bibles and sometimes, spiritual advice.

The thing I have really been most blessed to see is how this has also become a ministry for Allison.

Every day she has had opportunities to share her faith in one way or the other. Since her arrival I have passed out more Bibles in

the hospital area of the jail than I ever did before.

I guess it is because she has had to put up with me all these years but whatever it is, she handles interacting with the prisoners very well. She does it all in a professional way, not letting them get away with anything but at the same time she treats them with courtesy and respect. It goes a long way for her being as effective as she is with them.

I have been very proud of my wife for all that she does, she has worked very hard to get to where she is. Watching her these past months establish herself there in the jail has just added to that pride.

The inmates have a way of giving the staff nicknames and I am sure you can understand many of those names are not very flattering. But some of them are. There is one nurse who has been there for many years and they call her "the Praying Nurse", the other day I heard what some are starting to call Allison, "the Godly Nurse". Its so cool! It chokes me up even now as I write this.

My wife has always been supportive, I couldn't have made it work without her support. Many times over the years, she has been the one to encourage me when things have been hard. She is now more supportive then ever because she sees both the need and the sometimes fruit of this ministry.

Nearly nine years ago the Lord opened the door for me to be

able to do this ministry and now He has blessed me again by letting my wife be a part of it with me.

Even my hours have changed. We carpool together, so if she is there, so am I. Just the other day we did our first double shift there. Sixteen hours is a long time to be there, I'm not so sure I can do too many more of them.

Where I come in the same hours as my wife, I now work the 2nd shift, that is from 2:30 till 10:30 in the evening. Working these hours I haven't been able to do as much individual counseling as I used to but I am now able to be there for much more of the evening services when most services are held. Its really a blessing to see all the ministry going on in the different parts of the jail.

While submitting the April monthly report for the ministry I realized that it was by far the best we had ever. Altogether there was 105 Protestant services where a total of 6,250 people got out for Chapel. Another 900 came into the different Chaplain's offices for individual counseling and 750 were seen at their cells when because of their security level they couldn't get out themselves.

When I take the time to stop and realize all the Lord has done and continues to do I am always so blessed. Its totally Him and that is what makes it so awesome.

Prayer Concerns

I have a few prayer requests to ask you all to pray about for us.

Many of you know about a man I wrote about over the years who was in Men's Central for five years. He was down from Death Row, on a new trial because of an appeal. Not too long ago he was re-sentenced to Death Row and is now back at San Quentin.

He had asked me if I would be there for him at the time of his execution as his Chaplain. I said I would but hope I never have to. I have no idea where he will now be on the list but it could be many years if ever before his time comes.

My problem is that I recently applied to be on his approved visiting list and because of my past they denied me. I find that really odd because I have gone up to San Quentin many times for different religious programs. I guess its just because it is something to do with Death Row.

Anyway I have resubmitted all the paperwork appealing their decision and the Captain from Men's Central sent an endorsement letter. Please pray that they allow me to be on his visitors list.

Another prayer request is that the administrator from the prison in Tecate Mexico and the people from Men's Central connect soon to follow up on what I hope will become a working relationship between the two jails. If this works out it could mean a greatly expanded ministry to the prisons of Mexico.

The one last thing I would like you all to pray about for us concerns our ability to continue to raise funds for the Bibles and other materials for the jail.

Last year more Bibles and other materials were handed out than in any other year of this ministry. So far this year very little has come in for Bibles and the need is so great for Bibles

Ps 119:9

**How can a young man
cleanse his way?**

**By taking heed according
to Your word.**

Rom 10:14

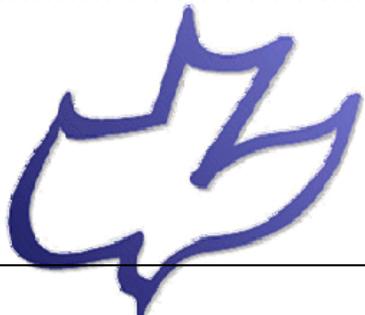
**How then shall they call
on Him in whom they have
not believed? And how
shall they believe in Him of
whom they have not
heard?**

Heb 11:6

**But without faith *it is im-
possible to please Him, for
he who comes to God must
believe that He is, and *that*
He is a rewarder of those
who diligently seek Him.***

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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 Depart-**
 : **ment 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. Our support comes solely from**
 : **donations made to send us as a missionary to the incarcerated .**
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