

# Jesus Is The Key Ministries



Isaiah 61:1

Volume 10, Issue 2

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# 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*

## Past and Present Events

### 10.10.10 Jesus is the Key Gala

Its only been six months from my last newsletter. I am getting better; just not good enough.

Well is wasn't from lack of things to write about that is for sure. There have been many ministry opportunities as well as many challenges.

In the last newsletter I talked about our upcoming event at CIW in June. A concert for the women for Mother's Day. It turned out to be a great success, with many women coming. There is no way of being certain about it but we think nearly half the prison population came throughout the day to hear at least part of the program, Many women who had never been inside the chapel or to any of the regularly offered programs.

It has given us some great new fruit with the building being full every month; many times where some have to sit on the floor! We have a number of new volunteers signed up to go in with us and we are trying to get at least one more night a month to go into the prison. I will speak more on this later within this issue.

We had another recent event,

and judging by all the feedback I have received, was a wonderful success. It was our first ever fundraising banquet. Our 10.10.10 Gala held at the New York Grill in Ontario.

Dennis Fitzpatrick and all his staff at The New York Grill did an incredible job of providing amazing food and great service the whole day.

We had hoped to provide a atmosphere that was like a church pot-luck that was both personal and informative. I think we accomplished that, for many there were already asking when would we be having our next one. What a blessing it turned out to be.

There were a number of jail chaplains who attended both from the state prison system and from the Los Angeles jail system too. I think there were close to 15 altogether.

Wonderful singing from both Heather Henry and from "Lil' Willie G" . If you know who Willie is you just might be dating yourself a little.

Sandra Evans the Senior Chaplain for the women's jail in LA, shared as well as someone who is fruit of her ministry. She gave a touch of humor when she told us she had been in jail for

fraud and identity theft and now works for a well known pastor who is on the radio. She is in charge of marketing and their internet site.

Also, one of the women who goes in regularly to CIW read a letter sent to us from a woman serving time there. I intend to share that letter later in this issue.

Everyone was amazing. So many worked hard to make it happen. From the people who did all the organizing, to those who donated the items for the silent auction, to the announcer who helped to promote and auction the items. I really am grateful to all of you and praise the Lord for what He accomplished that day.

One of the guests who attended was someone who had recently been an inmate at Men's Central Jail. I was both surprised and happy to see him when he came up to me at the restaurant and introduced his sister to me.

I told the audience that he was there without letting them know who he was to protect his privacy. He had been assigned to our protective custody area of our jail because he is a famous person within the music community. I had never

heard of him but when I came home and asked my sons, both knew who he was.

He had never been in jail before and he said I had been a help to him adjusting to what he had to deal with while in there.

It was funny later when I heard that everyone was trying to figure out who it was that was there.

What blessed me was when he told me he took the things I had given him to read home with him, most importantly a Bible. He said it is the first one he has ever had in his home. I pray that he continues to read it now that he is back outside.

The last event I want to mention briefly now and ask for your prayers is, on November 13th with Bel Air Presbyterian Church we are putting on a BBQ for all the staff at Men's Central Jail. It is my prayer that it will help bridge the gap that is there between custody staff and the religious programs where we can work together more as a team of professionals rather than being as divided as we now are.

### Pictures from the 10.10.10 Gala

They say that a picture is worth a 1,000 words so I will now use this page to post some from the 10.10.10 Gala event.



Lil' Willie G



Heather Henry



Tony Smith as our announcer conducting the silent auctions.



50/50 Ticket anyone?



Chaplain Sandra Evans



## God is Faithful to complete what He starts

Pam one of the women who comes into CIW as one of our Brown Card leaders read a letter from an inmate named Sheri who recently paroled. We had hoped that Sheri would be able to come to our Gala but it didn't work out.



***Directly as a result of the concert we did for Mother's Day we have been having large numbers of women come to the monthly studies at CIW. It was there I first met Sheri and I want to include her letters to us because of the power filled testimony that it is. I am going to include two letters she sent.***

1st received letter:

Dear Ed,

I've never spoken to you when you come here to CIW, except a quick hello coming in the door; and yet I felt the Lord prompting me to write this letter especially because of your upcoming event.

Let me start by saying that this prison sentence saved my life. I am not what you would consider a typical inmate. I come from a wonderful family. I grew up in church and came to accept the Lord at the age of 5. My parents sacrificed to send me to Christian high school and college. When I graduated, I served the Lord teaching kindergarten at a Christian elementary school.

Somewhere along the way, I began

to turn from the Lord. Looking back, it was such a slow gradual process. I cannot pinpoint one specific event in my life that caused the change. It was little things at first: being too busy to seek time with God, and not having my priorities in order. Later on, I began to skip church altogether, always rationalizing my actions. We are to be known for the fruit in our lives. Suddenly there was no fruit in my life at all. That still wasn't enough to change my hard heart.

After a series of surgeries, I became addicted to prescription pain pills. I abused them and lost all perspective of what I had known was right or wrong in my whole life. Then last July I found myself a guest of the CDC for the next year.

I don't know if I'm so hard headed because of my Irish background, but I still couldn't give it to God. The hold Satan had on me was amazing!

A lot of people have the excuse of being ignorant or immature in their faith. But I cannot use that excuse. I knew better and still continued to sin and dishonor the Lord. I allowed myself to fill my days with anything/everything except God.

All this time there were many people faithfully praying for me. My father is a pastor and his entire congregation was praying, along with other family and friends. Thank God for the prayers of His people!

In January I got deathly ill. An ulcer blew a huge hole in my stomach and caused my body to go septic. When I finally was rushed to the hospital 12 days later I was suddenly facing emergency surgery. I lay on that gurney... waiting. It was the night before my son's 18th birthday. I knew he would think I forgot about him, because I couldn't call home. I was

about to have major surgery and no one I loved had any idea what was going on with me.

At that moment, it was like blinders came off my eyes and I could see all the effects of my slow determined decision to walk away from God. I was so ashamed of my thoughts and actions. Thankfully we serve a merciful forgiving God!

I woke up in I.C.U. The doctor informed me that if I had two more days, the sepsis would have been irreversible.

I thank God every day for delivering me, not just from my health issues but the bondage of sin that had enslaved my life.

I spent the next 3 months in the hospital on a feeding tube. It was the best 3 months of my life! I had my own room and a Bible. I got reacquainted with the Lord I choose to serve.

All the promises He gives us began to come back to me. Scriptures I had known my whole life came back to me. I had them hidden in my heart all along—they were just buried under so much baggage that I forgot them.

This chapter of my life does have a happy ending. God has not only renewed my faith, but He's allowed it to grow abundantly. I realize now how I had "tuned out" the prompting that came from the Holy Spirit. Now I not only pay attention, but I welcome those promptings.

Chapel services here at C.I.W. have helped me further my walk. Your ministry helps so many people, regardless of their background. You said it perfectly the other night: "Sin is Sin". The devil does not discriminate. He'll use whatever hole we'll

leave him.

Thank you for your time, your efforts and your prayers. As I parole later this month I'll be going home knowing that God is faithful to supply all my needs.

I just wanted you to know how your ministry has helped change my life. If you ever need another voice to help keep this vital ministry running, don't hesitate to get in contact with me.

Our churches need to be aware of how fundamental this ministry is. You are changing lives—even ones as old and stubborn as mine!

Please know that even after I leave here, your organization will remain in my prayers. Blessings on you as you continue to serve the Lord at C.I W.

Sincerely,  
Sheri .....

***I was really blessed on a number of different levels when I received this letter from Sheri. It shows how people, good people, with wholesome upbringings, even ones brought up in the church can fall away. We truly are all sinners saved by grace!***

***The second letter I got from Sheri was written after a night when we went into to do a service and she came up to introduce herself to me, saying she had written a letter to me and wanted to know if I had gotten it. I told her I not only got it but that I would love to have her come as my guest to our banquet where she could share her story with everyone. Well she wasn't able to come but her story still needs to be told.***

2nd letter  
Dear Ed,

It was a pleasure to meet you last night. I almost didn't walk up and introduce myself, but I felt prompted to do so, and since I'm working on obedience, I felt it time. Now I understand the reason why. It makes me wonder how many opportunities I've missed, simply by tuning out the Holy Spirit.

I was honored and humbled that you would ask me to participate in the event on 10/10/10. I'll be here, most likely, for a little over 2 weeks. I passed board last month which means I must be released within 30 days.

I will be going to a program, but there are no beds available at the moment. In the meantime, I marvel each day at the faithfulness of God and the work He is accomplishing here through ministries like yours.

I have been on several mission fields during my lifetime, and I have to say, God is working in the lives of the women here in ways I've only witnessed in 3rd world countries.

There were 6 women in your service last night who've never set foot in a service here, and those are just the women I know personally in my dorm. People are searching and questioning as you would expect, considering the environment we live in, but it doesn't stop there. Because God is evident in the lives of some women here, others want what's lacking in their own lives. So they come to church, hear the gospel and are making the decision to commit their lives to the Lord. Its happening continually at this institution—one women at a time!

Then there are others who aren't quite ready at this point and yet they seek out believers to pray for them. When they get bad news from home, or are going through some sort of adversity.

Just two nights ago a woman sought me out to pray for her Mom, who had been rushed to the hospital for an unknown reason. We grabbed a couple of other Christians to join us and as we began to pray this woman bowed her head and reached out to grab our hands. There we were joined together in a circle praying for her Mom and I was struck by the awesomeness of God—that He would use us to minister to a woman here, a woman who had never wanted anything to do with church or religion previously. She was one of the women in your service last night! I am confident that she will be back in church on a regular basis.

The Great Commission talked about in Matthew is still happening today, even in prison.

I feel so blessed to have been part of His work even in a little way. In ministering to others, God continues to strengthen my faith—what an amazing God we serve. He certainly doesn't make mistakes.

I am unable to express in words the extent of how my life has been changed due to ministries such as yours. What you do here is absolutely essential—you are helping women discover the peace that comes from being a child of God, if they will put their hope in Christ and accept His saving grace.

Specifically, I'm praying that God would provide another day each month for your ministry. More often than not we have no services on Monday evenings, so I'm praying for Mondays.

You can reach me here for about 2 more weeks, if there's anything I need to know regarding 10/10/10.

My family is already contacting my program and parole in order to get permission to travel to Ontario in

October.

Thank you again for all you do at C.I.W. I pray God will richly bless your entire team as you continue to serve Him.

"For I am confident of this very thing: He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

Because of Him,  
Sheri .....

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***I have not included these letters from Sheri because she praises the ministry the way she does. I am under no illusion as to Who it is that is doing all the work. It is all about the Lord and what He is doing.***

***I have been told by many of you who read these newsletter that you like when I write about things and people to give you insight into what it is like on the inside. I think her letters explain what it means to them to have groups like ours come in and share with them. To show them that someone cares, to help them understand there is hope within the gospel message and most importantly show them God's love for them.***

***Recently I went to C.I.W. and the message I chose to teach on was God's love for us. About half way through the message a woman started to cry loudly enough that everyone could hear her. It made me stop and apologize for making her cry and I said to them all that I had intended on it being a message of encouragement, not a message that would bring sadness. As I looked out in the room I saw that many of the women had tears in their eyes.***

***After the service was over the***

***woman who had been openly crying came up to me and told me I hadn't needed to apologize, she wasn't sorry for her tears at all.***

***More than once I have been asked why it was I started going into the women's prison. I admit that when I first went to a women's prison I was very intimidated by the whole thing.***

***I have walked on prison yards in many parts of the world where some think I am crazy to go. I can talk the talk, been there and done that, no problem. But to talk and share to a bunch of women, now that is completely a different story.***

***There is a very real reason I love going into the women's prison. I don't talk too much about my youth and growing up but I grew up in a very "dysfunctional family", yea I know only too well; every family has its dysfunctional side. Mine sure did, I had too younger sisters, I say had because both have been dead for years now. Each died too young, after living very tragic lives.***

***My youngest sister came home from high school one day to find two dead bodies, our father and the woman he killed. My kid sister spent about the next 30 years in drug abuse and was a graduate of C.I.W. herself. She finally died from all the poison she had put into herself over the years, leaving a lot of pain and heartbreak for her own children's legacy.***

***The other sister had an equally unhappy life, full of abuse and tragedy where in the end she died alone. So alone that they didn't find her body at her place till many days later because the mailman wondered why her mail had piled up to the extent it had.***

***You see when I go into the women's prison to speak to them and I look out at their faces, I see my own sisters there looking for something to fill their emptiness.***

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***I wanted to include some criminal justice statistics I came across that shows some of the deep seated problems with the "system" and the challenge the church faces in ministering to these needs.***

#### Female Prison Population

- There are now almost eight times the number of women in prison than there were just 30 years ago (*HARD HIT: The Growth in the Imprisonment of Women, 1977-2004*, Institute on Women & Criminal Justice, 2006).
- Men still are roughly 10 times more likely to be in jail or prison, but the female population is growing at a far faster rate (Pew, 2008).
- The number of women prisoners is projected to grow by 16 percent by 2011, while the male population will increase 12 percent (*Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population*, Pew, 2007).

#### Children of Prisoners

- An estimated 7.3 million children have a parent in prison or under some form of state or federal supervision (*FAMILIES Left Behind: The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry*, The Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, June 2005).
- Some 10 million young people in the United States have had a mother or father - or both - spend time behind bars at some point in their lives (*U.S. News & World Report*, April 2002).
- 54 percent of mothers in state

prison have *never* had a personal visit with their children during their imprisonment (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

- The average age of prison inmates' minor children is 8 years old. Black children are nearly nine times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children, while Hispanic children were three times more likely (*Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).
- While about 90 percent of incarcerated fathers report that their children live with their mothers, only 28 percent of female prisoners say their children's father is the child's caregiver (*Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

***In some studies I have seen when a prisoner gets into a faith based program while in jail they are 5 times less likely to come back to prison upon release. While the average prisoner returns to prison within 3 years of release 68 percent of the time, when faith based programs are involved that percentage has dropped to under 10 percent.***

***With the average cost per year per prison around \$25,000.00 just think of the college education that would pay for!***

***Some more numbers to think about:***

- The United States incarcerates

more people than any country in the world, including the far more populous nation of China (Pew, 2008).

- The U.S. prison population rose by more than 25,000 inmates in 2007 - a 1.6 percent rate of growth (Pew, 2008).
- If rates of first incarceration and mortality in 2001 remain unchanged, nearly 1 in 15 persons (6.6%) will serve time in a prison during their lifetime (*Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003).
- The U.S. incarceration rate has more than tripled since 1980 (*Correctional Populations in the United States*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996).
- More than one in every 100 adults in America is behind bars (Pew, 2008).
- One in every 53 people in their 20s is behind bars (Pew, 2008).
- Imprisonment levels are expected to keep rising in all but four states, reaching a national rate of 562 per 100,000, or one of every 178 Americans (*Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population*, Pew, 2007).
- By 2012, the nation's combined prison population will outnumber the residents of Atlanta, Baltimore and Denver combined (*Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population*, Pew, 2007).

***Won't you please pray about how you can help us to continue to try to change those numbers by changing lives with the gospel.***

***I have talked very little in this newsletter about our main ministry which is the Men's Central Jail in L.A. There are a lot of things going on there on many levels. With budgets being cut, facilities being closed and a very large turnover in custody personnel its become very hard to keep a consistent program going. Please pray that the Lord will continue to provide our needs, and protect us as we go forward.***

***I mentioned we are planning to do a BBQ for all the staff of M.C.J. this coming month. We have never done anything like this before but the idea is to try to help break down some of the barriers that exists; to send the message we are there to work with them, not against them,***

***Too many times we are seen as ones who make their jobs more difficult. Where the truth is we are often the peacemakers and help to bring a calming element within the jail.***

***For those of you who pray for us that's a good prayer to keep lifted up, peace within the jail.***

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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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