



Isaiah 61:1

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

The Lord has a plan for us all

In the past few months we have been able to put on concerts at both the women's prison at CIW and the men's prison CIM, both of them out in the Chino area.

The list of groups who came to CIW were the Christian rap group of Real Truz; The Brothers N Blues Band; the band Kings & Priests; the Gutierrez Brothers; Heather Henry Band and Gospel singer Takim Raye-Brown. A full lineup to be sure.

For the first time they let us bring in a stake bed truck to transport all the equipment and instruments. It turned out to be a double blessing because we also used it as the stage. It helped make everything much more organized.



The Gutierrez Brothers started the concert at the women's prison with a bang!

The concert was an all day program and there was worship for everyone's taste in music. And just like the music we had a diversified group of speakers. We had Frank Garcia from Calvary Chapel Abba House; LaRue Rodriguez (Chaplain at L.A. Juvenile Hall) who many years ago belonged to the Crips street gang. We also had a woman who wishes to keep her name unpublished, who gave the women a testimony of her life that

went from struggle to blessing within her life. The woman today works for several different TV networks as a producer. Her testimony really turned out to be an encouragement to many of the women.

It really was fun to watch some of the prisoners and volunteers alike getting up and dancing to some of the more lively tunes that were played.

There were hundreds of women who came and went during the day-long concert and yet there were some of the women who stayed there all day long in the hot sun. A few days after the concert

I was back in on the yard walking around with one of the administrators from the prison. Many women came up thanking me for bringing the concert in. And some told me it was well worth the sun burn they ended up getting.

A number of weeks later while at the LA County fair, I had a woman come up to me saying I looked really familiar. It took her a few moments and then the look of realization came on her face, it turns out she had just been recently paroled from CIW and she too had been at the concert.

She turned to tell her family all about it. She said it had meant a lot to many of the women and encouraged me to keep doing more concerts in the future.

Of course one of the things we do is use these concerts to promote the Bible studies our group does in there every other week. Well the week after the concert there were more women at the Friday night Bible study than ever before. I just wish we could get them to keep coming on a regular basis. That is a prayer concern I would like all of you reading this to keep in mind.

Just a few weeks later we held a concert at the men's prison but this time it was all together different. From the very beginning it was obviously going to be a very big spiritual battle! But then that was to be expected. Doing the women's prison first is what opened the door for us to be able to go to the men's prison. When the Warden and Captain at CIM heard from the Chaplain that we were doing one at the women's prison and that we wanted to do one there as well is when they gave their permission.

Ever since Officer Manuel Gonzalez was murdered at CIM in January 2005 there has not been any kind of program like this allowed. It is our prayer that this concert is first step that will open the door for much more in the future.



Honor Guard Memorial Service for
Officer Manuel A. Gonzalez, Jr.

The Lord has a plan for us all (continued)

One of the first things to indicate the spiritual battle was on is when the drummer from Kings & Priests, Ray Delgado was very seriously hurt at work just a few days before the concert. He is still in need of a lot of prayer, last update I had he was still in the hospital.



Out in the parking lot loading all the equipment we wondered what we have done if Kings & Priests hadn't had to cancel. We literally had not more room for one more thing on the truck.

The next phase of the battle came in the form of fog. They will not let the yard open if there is fog so instead of the first of the two scheduled concerts starting at 9:00 o'clock we didn't get started until after 10:30. Then right in the middle of evangelistic message there was some kind of "security incident" somewhere else in the prison; the alarm went off and that means every inmate had to get down on the ground. In the end we had to end right there without the chance to give anyone the opportunity to receive Christ into their lives.

I fell so privileged to be able to



Pastor Victor Alicea delivering a powerful message the enemy didn't want them to hear!



Brothers N Blues doing what they do so well



know so many talented people who are willing to share their gifts by lifting the Lord on high in worship and praise. Everyone of them who has helped in these many concerts we've done not only are good at music but they are also good at sharing their faith in God too! A message of hope is a power-filled thing!

The prison is split up into two sections, so we had to do two separate concerts. After the first concert started late and ended early we didn't know what to expect for the second concert. At least they were going to let it happen. They very well could have locked it down after what happened during the first but they didn't, Praise God!

We were about half way into the second concert and then the alarm sounded once again! I was sure we were going to get closed down. Some of the inmates that were on the ground started yelling back and forth to each other saying they needed to pray that they would let

the program go on. A number of us from our group got together and prayed too and a few minutes later the "all clear" was sounded and this time the announcement didn't come to clear the yard; they were going to let the concert go on!



Frank & Ann Garlatta better known as Chief & Biz of Real Truz

Real Truz with their Christian rap music got the men on the other yard coming up to the fence to listen. They talked with the men between songs and got "real" with them about what it was to have Jesus in their lives.

This time when the message was given it wasn't interrupted and there was about 20 decisions for the Lord.

As I said earlier in this report, we hoped that this would open more doors for further ministry in the future. It actually already has. The very next day after the concert we were able to go into Sycamore Hall in CIM Central to conduct weekly Bible studies on Sunday afternoons.

Sycamore Hall is where Officer Manual Gonzalez was murdered, To be able to go into the very place that really closed down so much of the ministry at the prison is a great step in turning things back around. Please pray for this new ministry at CIM; there is a lot of resistance to this going forward. But we trust God has a plan.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

Our Hope is in the Lord

These past few months have been filled with challenges. At first I joked about it and said it was to be expected to have the spiritual battles. But spiritual battles are nothing to joke about. And most importantly I have to always remember who it is that really fights the battle.

...but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles."

2 Chron 32:8

The start of this year was amazing with all the ministry opportunities. First, going to the prison in Tecate, Mexico where we brought down all the jackets and shoes. Then to Central America and with everything that happened while we were there. When you stop and think about it, its no wonder that the battles have come.

By the time summer got here our support donations were down to the lowest levels ever. At first I told myself it had to be because of the high gas prices and just the economy in general. But as the slump continued I began to wonder if the Lord was closing the door to this ministry?

Finally I went to the administrators at the jail to give my notice that I would be having to leave so that I could try to find work. They told me they were not going to accept my resignation and at most they would work with me on a leave of absence. It definitely made me feel good that they didn't want me to go but I didn't see how a leave of absence be enough to would work.

As time went on I became more and more depressed, nothing I tried to do seemed to help at all. If anything my talk about quitting was just making people upset with me. The

one who was most disappointed was my wife.

Looking back on it now I find a big irony in it. When the opportunity to first go into ministry presented itself, my wife was very reluctant to have me go into full time ministry and now she was really on my case because I was thinking about quitting.

My wife didn't make things easy for me. Didn't she realize I didn't really want to quit, I just didn't see any other answer.

She accused me of not even praying about it. Said that the Lord hadn't called me into this just to let it all come apart.

I guess that is why God gave us wives to shed light on things when we are too stubborn to look for it ourselves.

What my wife had helped to accomplish was make me start doubting my doubts.

Every day became a struggle for me. For the first time in seven years of being a Chaplain I found myself not wanting to go into the jail.

I really didn't want to give it up and I felt so guilty for even considering it. I was a big hypocrite going in there trying to give the prisoners hope.

There were a number of things that happened to make me finally come to my senses but if there is one main thing I can point to is what I am going to try and explain next.....

Over the past five plus years I have come to know a prisoner at my jail

very well. I have written about him a few times in the past. They call him Monster, a man I met over five years ago when he first came down from San Quentin's Death Row. He had won a retrial on appeal and was hopping to overturn the death sentence to one of life without parole.

From our first meeting, God used many things to finally draw Monster to Him. A long process that I watched as he became a new man in Christ.

I am not against the death penalty and yet as I came to get to know Monster I found myself hoping he would end up getting the life sentence. I felt sure that the Lord would use him in prison as a powerful testimony and just maybe he could be used to make a difference in some of the people he would come in contact with over the years

Many of the youngsters in the jail look up to him. The same would be true in prison,. I know there would be times where he could use that to become a positive influence in showing them the man God has helped him become.

His trial started right when I was in the middle of my own struggles about the ministry. And little did I realize that the Lord was going to use the trial to give me the right prospective in what was going on with me and my own trial.

In the start of any trial the first thing that happens is they question a pool of prospective jurors. During the questioning, both sides try to weed out ones that they feel would not rule the way they want.

One thing they were asked was if

their faith in God would keep them from ruling for the death penalty? Some made statements where they thought it was not Christian to kill but they would "ask God for forgiveness later"!

Monster said it really bothered him when he heard them say things like that. He felt like they were mocking God. I found it ironic that a convicted murder was concerned with how society was treating God.

Once the trial got under way I wasn't able to see Monster because he would be away at court every day and come back from court long after I had left to go home in the evening. Going to court is always an ordeal for the prisoners, they get up very early in the morning, many hours before court starts and they do not get back to their cells until late in the evening. Getting people to courts all over the county every day is a very large task for the Sheriff's Department and becomes very difficult for someone going to court day in day out.

I would try to keep up with whatever news I could from his friends on his row. It went on for weeks and one evening I decided I would stay later than usual so I might be able to talk to him. I wanted to be some kind of encouragement. I tried more than once and yet was never able to catch him. When I did finally hear some direct news of him it was from one of the Assistant Chaplains who did get to talk with him on the weekend.

Every day in court there were things brought up that were very hard for him to deal with. He felt like they were trying to push his button so he would blow up and make a scene in front of the jury as he had done during his first trial.

He didn't want to bring a Bible to court and "use" God that way "to make an appearance of being religious." Instead he took a paperback book I

had given him that was titled "Bible Promises", he left in the holding cell behind the court and when things really started closing in on him, he would pray and ask God to give him strength to hang on till he got back to the holding cell and read the different verses in the book. He later told me it helped to calm him down and give him the peace he needed to endure.

The Chaplain who gave me the update on Monster knew I had just given my notice on leaving the ministry and he used the news about Monster to really convict me.

He said the way Monster conducted himself during the trial was evidence of his changed life and fruit of what the Lord was doing there at the jail in the ministry.

Those words convicted even more than what my wife and others had been telling me. God was using all these things to show me what I needed to see. How could I ever give up on all of this?

The more I thought about it the more I was convinced I needed to continue in ministry and just trust that everything would be alright. And as soon as I had a change of heart things did start to get better.

The first thing that happened was we had the second annual Bel Air Presbyterian Church Bible drive. In the end there were enough funds raised for us to have a budget for Bibles well into the first ¼ of next year! There have been other donations coming in for Bibles like never before.

Then we started getting unexpected donations for general support from unusual sources that had never donated before. And I heard from some who had not contacted the ministry in a long time.

It really shouldn't have been a surprise to me, this isn't the first time this has happened. In fact I am very ashamed to say its happened many times over the years!

The reason I say I am ashamed is because you would think by now I would learn to have more faith than I do. It is really an example of what is meant in Proverbs 3:5 when it says we are not to look to our own understanding.

I know its true that the economy is bad and I have had long time donors contact me telling me they just can't afford to help right now. I can turn around and tell them not to worry about it, that God will provide. And yet I had been forgetting to remember it for myself.

What a hypocrite! I am so blessed that I have a wife and some other friends who are not there just to encourage me but also to talk bluntly to me when that is what I need to hear.

Since making the decision to keep on going it has revitalized me in many ways. I know this what I am supposed to be doing and that is what I am going to continue to do. The rest of it is not up to me.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.

For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

God, the just judge of the world

Before I go any farther I should also let you know what happened to Monster and his case. The trial itself went on for a number of weeks and then it came time for jury to decide his fate.

The jury was out for a very long time. And when they asked for something to be read from the record, it always seemed to be favorable subjects that seemed to indicate they were leaning towards him being given a life sentence. There was never any question on his guilt, only what his sentence would be.

With the change that had come about in his life, I was sure that God would somehow use him and his life in a power filled way. There was no way to bring back the lives of the people killed. But just maybe he can make a difference in someone's life he touches where they don't also have to become a Monster too.

In the end the jury was out 6 weeks and they were in hopeless deadlock because of one juror. It turns out she would not vote for the death penalty on "religious grounds". When she was brought in front of the judge and questioned about it, the judge ruled juror misconduct because she brought God into it. Simply for saying that she didn't believe that God would want us to kill him. Her stating that belief supposedly made some of the other people on the jury feel guilty. So because it made some of the jury feel bad it was juror misconduct.

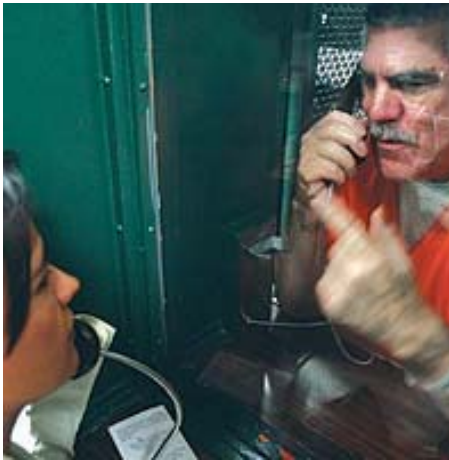
After an alternate juror was put on it took them just a few days to come down with the verdict, Death.

Later when I talked with him back

at his cell he said if she had just kept God out of her statement to the judge, the judge would have had to declare a hung jury and he would have automatically gotten life without.

What he said next I will never forget. "I am proud of her for not compromising but instead saying, what she believed and why. If I die for it I am just getting what I deserve to balance things out here on earth. Jesus has already paid it for me when it comes to after this life."

Soon after the verdict was in, a local newspaper had an interview with Mauricio (Monster's real name) He agreed to the interview because he wanted to get the message out to others, not to take the same path in life that he had traveled. I know after the article came out he was not very happy with it because he felt like they had left out his message and instead only sensationalized the crimes.



Mauricio being interviewed by Claudia Nunez from La Opinion Newspaper

He was asked if he now felt it was a waste of his time to spend the last five years in the country jail retrying his case to only end up with the same outcome. His answer was that he knew he had come down for a

reason and that reason was so that he could come to know Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior.

I just recently had to say my goodbyes to Monster because they have sent him back to Death Row. I've promised to stay in touch and to go see him when I can.

The hardest promise I'll have to keep is where he has asked me to be there with him if and when he is actually executed. That is a promise I hope I never have to keep.

Recently I was subpoenaed to court in another murder trial. The inmate's defense attorney wanted me to testify to conversations I had with his client that were privileged conversations. I did not want to go to court at all, I was convinced that it wasn't right for me to say anything at all. I was glad when soon after I took the stand the District Attorney had the same objection and the Judge agreed.

The whole thing would have been a complete waste of my time except for one thing..... When I stood in the witness stand and was asked if I would raise my right hand and solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth so help me God?

All I could think of as I automatically said "I do", this is the same court system who had kick a juror off Monster's jury for misconduct because of the beliefs concerning God and now they are asking me by that same God to swear to tell the truth. The system today wants it both ways.

"But no, you won't listen. So you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin. For there is going to come a day of judgment when God, the just judge of all the world, will judge all people according to what they have done." Romans 2:5-6

Send out laborers into His harvest

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Matthew 9:36-38

The nation's prison population continues to grow exponentially. At mid year 2006, United States prisons and jails held 2,245,189 prisoners, a 2.8% increase over the previous year, according to a Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report released in June 2007.

Putting it another way, on June 30, 2006, one in every one hundred thirty-three United States residents was behind bars. It is one of the highest incarceration rates in the world!

State and federal prisons accounted for 70% of the increase. On June 30, 2006; 1,556,528 people were imprisoned in these facilities. That increase of 34,500 prisoners was the largest since June 2000.

Local jail population also continued to grow, but at a slightly lower rate of 2.5% than the prison population. In actual numbers jails in the United States held 766,000 prisoners in June of 2006.

The two largest jail systems in the country are New York City and Los Angeles County. The population of Los Angeles County jail system is 23,000 by itself.

Four prison systems accounted for more than half (52%) of the nations prison population growth. The leading system was the federal Bureau of Prisons, followed by California, Texas and Florida.



The CDCR uses all available space and turns in into living quarters. They are literally packed in like sardines!

An even more telling statistic is that 700,000 prisoners per year are being released back into our communities. At the same time all our prisons are busting at the seams! Here in California the prisons we have are operating at 200% capacity for the intended population.

At a time when more and more people are continuing to go to prison there is overwhelming evidence that the system is a complete failure when it comes to rehabilitation.

Using the California prison system as an example of how the system isn't working...California's Inspector General Matthew Cate issued a scathing 52-page report in February 2007 which concluded that the \$1 billion that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has spent on prisoner drug treatment programs since 1989 was a complete waste of money. Cate determined that CDCR's in-prison substance abuse programs have had little or no impact on recidivism. One study showed that treated prisoners actually had a higher recidivism rate. Over twenty studies commissioned by CDCR since 1997, including one with the University of California at Los Angeles, reported that the programs were failing. Nonetheless, CDCR allegedly did nothing to fix the problems, but instead expanded the programs while funding yet more studies. With one in five CDCR prisoners serving time for a drug of-

fense, and over one-half of the state prisoners needing a drug treatment program, you would think the system would come up with a better way.

The study that really needs to be funded is a study that will never see a dime from the state. The study of God's word!

There are plenty of statistics out there that show that when a prisoner gets into a faith based program while they are incarcerated they are three times less likely to return to prison.

The way it is now the statistics for the California prison system states that the recidivism rate for prisoners is 82%.

But when those same prisoners get into faith programs while in prison have a recidivism rate of just 28%. The numbers are turned completely around!

With 700,000 prisoners being released back out into our communities which kind of prisoner would you rather have come into your community? The one who is going back into a life of crime with ever increasing seriousness or the one who has received the hope of the Gospel and become a new creation in Christ.

I have often wondered why it is that more churches don't get involved in some part of working within the jails and prisons. Matthew 25:36 makes it plain that that was Jesus' intent.

I don't mean just going into prisons, I know not everyone is called to go in or even to support the ones that do. But there are so many areas that need attention too. Especially in the area of after care, when the prisoner gets out. There is such a great need to help these people rebuild their lives. Help them get jobs, housing and most importantly to help get them plugged into a good, Bible believing, Bible teaching church.

Please keep the prisoners of this country in your prayers.

Going to Tecate Longo again



Heading in to Tecate Longo Men's Prison near Tecate Mexico

Its coming up on that time of year again. Temperatures are starting to drop. But when you think of Mexico you don't tend to think of it being very cold. That is not true when it comes to the region around Tecate. It gets very cold there.



Here is a picture of the van full of Tennis Shoes and jackets for our trip the last time

When I asked one of the guys who went last time if he was ready to go again, he said he didn't think so. I was shocked at his answer, it was so unexpected, he always wants to go usually. Then he explained how it was just too cold. So that is all the more reason why we need to go.

The prisoners there have little or nothing. What they do have comes from their families if they can afford to help at all.

We hope to raise enough funds to supply 200 prisoners with

Tennis shoes, Jacket, gloves and beanie. Also we hope to be able to bring food to feed them as well.

We will bring some Bibles and of course doing the outreach will include worship and a gospel message. Kind of an all in one kind of thing, feed, cloth and feed them spiritually too.



We haven't gotten the actual date of the trip set yet but we are hoping for the first part of February. We'll go down on a Friday afternoon and spend the night in Tijuana then leave early in the morning to get to the prison for the all day event and be back home by late Saturday evening. If any of you are interested in coming with us to Mexico, you must have a passport and we will need to know by the first part of January to be able to have you on the clearance list. Of course we need donations for everything we hope to bring so if you are interested in being a part of this in one way or the other contact the ministry and let us know.



It's a nice feeling to get warm after being so cold



One facing life behind bars and the other getting out to start a new life

For the second year in a row I have been able to go with a group of people and spend the afternoon with the kids at Sylmar Juvenile Hall. We go out there the Saturday before Thanksgiving and bring them in a meal. A sort of early Thanksgiving celebration. Its just a box lunch from KFC but they seem to really appreciate it.

Normally I am not real keen on working with the juveniles; they are too hard headed, thinking they know it all. They are too cool. Seems like most of us just have to learn the hard way and most of them haven't learned it yet and don't want to hear it from us.

We were assigned to the oldest kids, 15 through 18 years of age. A few of us got up to share. For the most part I gave a testimony and then talked to individual people.

This one kid who wanted to talk to me had just turned 17 and as he talked to me about what he was in there for his eyes started to tear up and yet he wanted to try to keep the tuff appearance as a show around the rest of the kids.

This guy claims he didn't do what he is being charged with, you always hear that but you never know

if its true or not. He said he used to be in a gang but had dropped out and wasn't into gangbanging any more. Well it looks like his past has caught up to him anyway. He is charged with murder and two attempted murders. Just turned 17 and he is facing 65 years in prison if convicted. All I could do was point him to Jesus but I don't think I left him feeling very encouraged that day. He appeared to just be a frightened young boy. It really stuck with me and bothered me as I was driving home, to think some one so young may never see freedom again.

Then I heard a report on the radio where two kids had crashed a party, started shooting and killed three people. One of the shooters was just 14 years old! This world is getting crazier all the time.

To end this on a brighter note, I just got a call from one of the guys I had gone to Central America with earlier this year. He had just come back from another trip down there to Central America.

He wanted to give me an update that is really encouraging. There was this man who is a very high ranking leader within the prison gangs from down there. The two main gangs are MS 13 and the 18th Street Gang;

they are rivals of each other.

This prison gang leader went against all the rules and renounced the gang and became a Christian while still in jail. Something that took a lot of courage. Now he is getting ready to get out of prison and he says he wants to go into a Christian men's home where he can be disciplined and he hopes to some day go back and minister to the gangs himself. What an encouragement! That is the kind of news you want to hear more often.



*Jesus is the Key
that set the captives free*

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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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