

“Letter From M.O.M.”

The Bi-Monthly newsletter of **Moving On Ministry**

WWW.MovingOnMinistry.COM

Volume 11 - Sept 2005 / Oct. 2005

“I Can Only Imagine”

You will note the name change of the newsletter from **Free In Deed** to **Letter From M.O.M.** In this 11th **Volume** issue, we would like to again remind of some of the articles we have presented. Realize that the articles are sometimes reprinted in following volumes. We have started a web site to pull up past newsletters. There are also contacts for email. Two years of publishing now, and God continues to bless that which we had first avoided and said “No” to. Just a message to those with “No” as an answer – **When things start smelling “fishy” you may have said “No” just as Jonah had.**

Watch our website

www.MovingOnMinistry.com

Volume 1 – 7 pages

- Photo of Alcatraz Prison Cell
- Confessions of a Chaplain
- Testimonies of Fred and David
- Ron’s Story

Volume 2 – 7 pages

- Photo of Disciples Prison Cell
- Needs after Release
- Recommended Reading

Volume 3 – 8 pages

- Story of Iris and Dwayne Blue
- Review of previous articles

Volume 4 – 8 pages

- Guilty as Charged
- Am I Really Saved?
- Tools of Ministry – Boots and One-of-a-Kind Car
- Testimony of James

Volume 5 – 11 pages

- Tools of Ministry – Skydive and Rock Climb
- Power of Biblical Friendships
- Being a Man of Vision
- Excuses of Sin

Volume 6 – 11 pages

- Tools of Ministry – Rings
- Bamboo – Don’t Give Up
- Father, Son & Friend
- Too Blessed to be Stressed
- Vows of a Christian

Volume 7 – 9 pages

- Tools of Ministry – Goldfish
- Am I Really Saved? (repeat)
- The Law of the Harvest

Volume 8 – 13 pages

- List of **51** Supportive Churches
- Tools of Ministry - Music
- Who do You Belong to?
- Freedom from the Gangs Grip
- Slingshot Guilt
- Prison Life with Sheriff Joe

Volume 9 – 10 pages

- Thank You Poem
- Donuts
- The Cross
- Coalinga Road Camp – 1930s

Volume 10 – 14 pages

- The Path Inspired
- God’s Prisoner
- Second Chances
- High Road to Beginning Again
- Doing What God Has Called Us
- Pictures of 1930’s Holding Cells

Intentions & Wishes

The intentions of this newsletter are to allow an understanding of jail & prison ministries. It is our intentions to get input from those incarcerated as well as those “free” to visit. Life experiences of the faith and fellowship from those locked up in the facilities are always desired to let others know of the value of “visitation”. I am certain that each of us have many stories of the miracles God has done in our lives.

Our wishes are that we would have a list of supportive churches that individuals might look forward to attending once released.

A list of services, such as housing, employment, and counseling services, as well as some individuals available for friendly fellowship are also much needed items.

God’s Word says if a man stumbles, how can he continue lest there be another to help him up. **Ecc. 4:10** “For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up.” **Proverbs 24:17** “Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth.” **John 11:10** “But if a man walketh in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”

Please help us with input for this newsletter as we strive to serve God. We appreciate any articles or input.

Fellowship

We would like to keep a listing of locations for fellowship that welcomes previous incarcerated individuals. We previously listed 51 churches that are supportive. Please feel free to let us know of those available. **We also cherish letters from inmates or relatives to the churches to let us know how we are doing**

CHAINBREAKERS

Every Tuesday

Visalia First Assembly

3737 S. Akers

Visalia, CA.

Room 8 – 7:00 p.m.

733-9070 ext. 131

Calvary Chapel Visalia

11720 Avenue 264

Visalia, CA. 93277

687-0220

Gateway Church

1100 S. Sowell

Visalia, CA. 93277

732-4787

Church of the Nazarene

3333 W. Caldwell Avenue

Visalia, CA 93277

734-1117

Praise Center Church

503 N. Floral St.

Visalia, CA. 93291

733-2744

If you would like a church added, Please contact us.

Letters that Express it All

These are actual quotes from some of the different incarcerated individuals. The names have been removed. Our first newsletter went out October 2003.

These are reprints of many of the letters received. If one of these letters is yours, let us know how you are doing now.

A life Spared

“. . . I know without the Lord I probably wouldn't be alive right now. It is because of the great Lord that I have left the dope game. Because of God, I still have my loving family, and I have two years clean from drugs. I read my Bible every day, I study it, and now I'm not in the gang, my life is great, I've accepted Jesus in my life, and there is nothing better. Now I'm filled with joy and happiness all around me. Thank you Jesus – WOOOO!!! . . .”

Rededication to the Lord

“If I would not have ended up here, I never would have rededicated my life back to the Lord. There is one person I appreciated a lot. He has wrote to me, and keeps telling me to pray. He attends your church regularly. He is only 12 years or so, but I believe God used him to reach me, the lost. My whole mental aspect is different. I stay in the word daily and in here you see a lot of people that want to make sense of things. There are a couple of us now that help people get through their struggles. I do believe that God never gives you more than you can handle and he puts people in your path for you to help. I never feel alone anymore.”

Faithful and Honest

“I just want to say I am very thankful for your wisdom and inspiration to remain faithful and honest. My life cannot be any better under the circumstances. Things are moving along. Thank you Brother.” **DM**

True Inspiration

“. . . It is so true that we fail to see God's plan. It's like we put Him on the back burner a lot of times. When

actually He should be the front burner at all times. Heck, He's the flame for all the burners!” **BC**

Overcoming

“If it were not for good Christian people like yourself, many lonely prisoners like myself would have given up hope . . . “I am so happy now that someone truly cares for me. Right now I'm going through some anxiety and depression problems, but with the help of God, and people like yourself who are willing to take the time to pray for us and visit us, I can truly say that God and other Christians do care.”

Answers

“Just received your newsletter. It was very interesting. It also has a lot of answers to things I've often wondered but never asked. For instance, page #5 in the newsletter “Am I Really Saved”. This was good to receive this. It has answered my questions and I have Christ as my personal savior. I feel really good inside. The Holy Spirit is developing inside me . . .”

Tuning in on Him

“. . . I've been listening to your service on the radio about 2 or 3 months now. Every week I look so forward for it. Each week I take notes and do Bible studies on them, which are just so powerful to me. I have really grown in your studies and the Holy Spirit leading me. I now realize who I am in Christ and this world is just somewhere we are passing thru. That there is a bigger picture to everything, God's picture. Of course by now you know I'm currently in prison. But I would never change what God has allowed to happen. I put myself here but for God to allow this to happen, has turned to such a blessing. I now have salvation through Christ Jesus. I used to believe just being an OK person was good enough for God. But He desires so much more and gives so much more abundantly. I love God so much and God is so worthy to be praised.”

Planning on Serving Him

“. . . Guess what I preached at the chapel for the first time. It was such a great success thanks to the Holy Spirit who took control once I yielded and gave Him control. I spoke on Active Faith. . . “

As for me and my House . . .

"I was richly blessed this Sunday Morning by your sermon, and I've decided it is time for me to give God my all. The good and the bad, the past and the future, relationships, job, friends, attitude, I mean all. I realize my all isn't much, a big mess, but I am confident that if I seek God first and his righteousness, I'll be OK. It is important for me where my family and I spend eternity. I choose God, in Jesus, in Heaven."

Something Gets in the Way

". . . I'll do what you said about going to church. . . I would like to go to your church and take . . . I would really like that to happen, but its going to be hard cause I don't have a car and my drivers license is suspended cause of child support. You see ---, I want to be good. I've always tried to, but there's always something in the way to stop me from doing what I have to do that's right. Why?"

Translated from Spanish

"I am answering your letter as soon as I received it because I was so happy that you wrote to me. For me it was a blessing from God to receive a letter like the one you sent because frankly you lifted my spirits. . . . You know the other day that you came and you prayed for me and my wife ----- and my son ----- I stayed with an utmost peace. Thank you Lord."

Close, but . . .(honesty)

"I would like you to know that I did take the prayer on Monday night serious and that I do have good intentions of accepting the Lord as my savior. I know that I still haven't truly devoted my self to our Lord so I would be lying to you if I told you that I was. But I also know that it is what I want to do for my self cause I feel in my heart that if I follow the Lord that I will find a better life and happiness."

Not Gonna Quit

"I thank you for the Bill Glass Crusade program. It has showed me that I should not give up and I can only go forward from here, thanks to God! (and you). . . .

I have slowed down on reading my Bible, I'm getting discouraged, not with God, but with my

fellow man, the games I must go through. I feel like just giving up!

Then I think about you, Gene, and all the others who put in so much to show me to the Lord and it's what keeps me going! I'm not gonna quit or let Satan have his way, I'm gonna fight and win this fight, you gave me the tools, the strength and the will as well as the knowledge to defeat him again. Thank you!

You never gave up on me, so I cannot give up on myself!" SW

Changing Direction

". . . Yes I have accepted Christ as my savior. When we first met I was down in the dump of thinking '**what have I done wrong to be here**' and I thought '**What have I done to prevent from coming here? Nothing!**' I didn't hear anybody say '**Hey!! You are going the wrong way!**' because I didn't want to hear! Didn't see where I was going, didn't read the signs, but then day by day I could hear, could see, and then I thought it's too late. But wait a minute. I am not dead yet and I still got a lot to learn yet and all of my family and friends are helping and all I had to do was to remember that God was always there. Just read and you will find, ask and you will be told, want and it will be given to you. Thank you Jesus never leaving me and thank you for writing back." LV

Change of Cycle

". . . I've been in and out of prison since I was 18. Before I go any further I'd like to let you know that I am a Christian. I have studied God's Holy Word in and out of prison. And I know that when I'm in the Word, thing go good for me. I get a job and things just seem to go my way, but after a while I start feeling lonely in church and I feel out of place, like I don't belong there. It seems like I have no friends, so eventually I go out looking for my old friends, then stop going to church, then I start using drugs, then I end up in prison again. It is a cycle I would like for God to help me break out of, so maybe you can help me with a prayer.

I want change in my life. I know that God has helped 1000's of people to change. I have heard of heroin addicts that are now sober and drunks that are in their right mind because of God.

Well chaplain, I want that change in my life. I want God to help me think soberly and clearly. I want God to show me his mercy and loving kindness and help me to experience love in his life. I'm tired of

being locked up. I hate being caged up in a little cell like an animal. I want to be free, spiritually and physically, so can you please help me with a prayer?"
JU

Never Listened to Her

"... I am a first timer here in prison and I really don't like it. I am a Christian and I pray a lot and ask God to help me be more humble, gentle, and patient. I am tired of living a life of crime and drugs. My mother has been a Christian for about 6 years now and she has told me a lot about God, but I never listened to her. We have had our differences and at the moment I don't even have her address to write her. I only pray that she will write me. I would really like that." DM

God's Situational Control

"... I haven't wrote you cuz I thought I would catch you on the 28th. I had court that day. My case is still looking good says my lawyer. My next court date is on April 25th for pre-trial. So I will be here for quite sometime. This time I was not upset at all. There was absolutely no anger at All in me. I felt peaceful and even happy. God knows I am innocent and my life is in his hands. This whole situation has changed me a lot. But that's not all! My family and even my friends have had some spiritual healing. My dad stopped drinking and now goes to church every Sunday. My mom and brothers pray for me night and day. The thing that has shocked me the most is that my friends talk about how their faith in the Lord has grown. They say it's because of this whole situation and how they see how my life and spirits are so different now that I have accepted Jesus Christ. It touched my heart so much to hear that they have found the Lord because of me. It just shows how God has put me here for a reason. There are so many things that are better now because I have been put in this situation. PRAISE THE LORD!..." HG

Wondering the Wilderness

"... I have really been thinking of the day I get released which is in 2006. I'm kind of scared to be released from prison, maybe it's because now I have a place to stay and I get fed. I try not to think about it, but who wants to live on the streets and in orchards again. I feel safe in here; maybe I'm getting institutionalized. I don't know, but I'm happy in here. I know it sounds crazy, but it's true. I'm afraid of getting

out and of all the drugs out there. I don't want that life anymore, I'm exhausted. I hope you understand me, but I have no choice but to leave this wonderful place and into a drug-crazed world of misery. I hope you do not mind that I tell you these things, but I feel that I can tell you what I feel. You've been a great friend and I hope to see you and thank you when I get out. Please continue to write and send me the newsletters. ..."RG

Starting a Commitment

"... I have just recently accepted Jesus Christ into my heart (March 4). I am 20 years old and I am having a problem giving everything. I have been given back to my Father in Heaven. ---- has been helping me but I just cant let go and let God. I have a lot of fear a lot of anger and sadness bottled up inside of me. I know what I want and have to do but I'm scared. ..."

Start of returning to the Lord

"How goes it down there in your neck of the woods? I pray all is good with you and that your still spread'n that good seed! I know that you are cause you tossed a little my way while I was at Wileys. I really appreciate your kind and uplifting words to me. Thank you very much.

So how is ---- doing? Here's where I'm at for a little bit if he would like to drop me a line or two. Ya know ---, God put me and Dean together for a reason. He ended up being the best cellie I had there. Plus it got me back into reading my Bible and saying prayer again. Thanks a lot ---- and I still pray for you as well!!

Pastor --- I'm really trying to change my life. I've tried the party life, the life of crime, that side ya know and it hasn't worked. I know God is real. I just have questions, and have anger but I am seeking help and change.

Has my whole life been made on bad decision after another? We each make our own path in this world, and we choose what's right and what's wrong based on our beliefs. The good news is that everyday gives me a brand new start in my life and another chance to make the right decisions. I do thank God I didn't get life in prison. I'm just having a hard time accepting this 8 years. But if you ask Dean, I do try to keep a smile on my face and those around me. ..."BC

Value of Letters

"I was staying with my mother. She passed away XXX X, 2003. After she was gone, I lived in the streets, sometimes in orange orchards. I do have brothers and sisters, but I don't know their addresses. . . . I enjoy writing you because you send me those newsletters and because you write back. Everybody here writes their girlfriends or wives. At least I get mail from you. You seem to care enough about me and write me. That means so much to me. I thought I was alone, but someone cares. Thank you! I would appreciate if you can send the address to the mission in Visalia. I have about 1 year to look for shelter. I've lost all my possessions, but I'm not a materialistic person, I', just trying to survive, that's all. I'm so happy that you keep in contact with me. Thank you. Please send all Christian literature that may benefit me. I'm in a 6 X 9 cell 23 hours a day, but I got me a Bible and I read it daily, even at night. . . . I'm just grateful that I have someone to correspond with. Someone who gives me hope. The world needs more people like you Bob. It would be a much better place for all of us."

Recognize Me Now

". . . If you would have known the type of person I was just 4 months ago, you would have never thought I would some day soon would be reading the Bible / God's Word. . . .that God has not cast me from His presence or taken His Holy Spirit from me. I can talk to Him or Jesus in a good honest, truthful way and manner. . . . Yet sometimes Bob, I get really sad and feel all alone. I know that He's with me, and will not abandon me, or I Him. I believe this is the things, or better yet the people in the world I've left. See, for some of these people I would of gave my life for and they seemed to have been close friends and no one, not even my supposed to be girl ----- has gotten back to me. I ask myself how can this be. But I can not complain, I'm reaping what I sowed." **MG**

And the Answer to Prayer

". . . Thought I'd write back since I didn't have a chance to, reasons being . . . my mother never gave me (his) mail for a long time because she is very controlling over my life and kids. That's all over now, the babies and I are doing good and are very happy here with his mother . . . ---- thinks I abandoned him but the truth is they are trying to keep me away from him. I never forgot him one minute, and that is something so real my

heart knows it. I asked him to marry me and hopefully he'll accept . . . I've never loved anybody so much . . ." **LC**

NOTE From Bob; Let us each pray for God's glory in situations like these

Addresses to contact our Ministry Volunteers

Bob
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia, CA. 93290

Rick
3737 S. Akers
Visalia, CA. 93277

This space available
P.O. Box
Your Town,

This space available
P.O. Box
Your Town,

This space available
P.O. Box
Your Town,

NOTES and COMMENTS

When Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future.

God accepts you where you are, but loves you too much to leave you there.

Need for Change

. . . Keep doing what you have been doing, and you will get what you have been getting.

Conversion

Conversion is the wiping of the slate clean so a new process can “start.”

Replenishing

God’s Word promises to restore the years of the locust, or more simply the years previously lost.

Joel 2:25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

Witnessing in Song

The words from Glenn Kaiser’s song: “I’ve been hit and beaten down, but I’ve never taken my cross to town”

Bible Study Lessons

SET FREE PRISON MINISTRY
Of Northern California
401 MacArthur Boulevard
San Leandro, CA. 94577-9801

Recommended Reading

For the new Christian, or the individual desiring to know God, we would like to recommend the following reading:

The Gospel of John – This is a great introduction of Christ’s walk on Earth.

The Book of Romans – This gives an introduction of many of the Bible stories shared and helps build familiarity of Christ’s plan for our lives.

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren – 40 chapters will change your life in 40 days

Book of Proverbs – Read one chapter a day with the chapter read being the day of the month. This will allow the book to be read almost 12 times thru the year.

Ephesians 4 – 6 – This gives the pattern for life that we should live. All 7 S’s are displayed in these 3 chapters. We are given the purpose of the gifts, changing our character, husband/wife/family relationships, and the type of life we are to live and display.

Men’s Relational Toolbox – Another fine work by Gary Smalley with both of his sons adding to this book. This book avoids “male bashing” but rather teaches men to use and modify the inner tools they have to improve their relationships.

Prayer of Jabez – A truly fine first book from Bruce Wilkerson. This short book will change your mind about being disobedient to God by not taking care of people in need

Needs after Release

Individuals being released from incarceration have the same common needs of all individuals. There is a need of self-respect and self esteem. Many have a need of housing. Most are coming back looking for employment. Some are facing classes for AA, NA, or Domestic Violence. Some need to enroll in educational or vocational programs. Most would appreciate someone to just talk to or have a mentor. Fellowship with the right people is ALWAYS needed. For many these are totally new expectations and experiences.

One inmate expressed wonderfully the problem of being released. He stated that everything is slow to happen while incarcerated. It seems like an eternity as you wait for your next transfer or assignment. You feel like you are running at 5 miles per hour. Then, when released to the world, you are put into an environment that is running at 200 miles per hour. This drastic change of environments tends to overcome individuals and they have a hard time adapting. We hear of transitions from one area to another in each of our lives. Someone to just talk with about the feelings and changes the individuals are going thru is a great healer. The Bible says that each of us should be a "brother" to help the other one up when he falls. Other scripture talks about "sticking closer than a brother" we can often help with sharing life experiences or just listening to someone in need. We don't always have to solve the problems, but many times need to just "lend an ear" so that someone might share their needs or hurts with us. Many men have heard from their wives "I don't want you to fix it, just listen". We need to just listen.

Sharing Your Testimony

There are 4 parts to an individual's testimony;

1. What my life was like before I met Jesus
2. How I realized I needed Jesus
3. How I committed my life to Jesus
4. The difference Jesus has made in my life.

But in reality, those who believe in Jesus have the testimony of God in them; Each of us needs to periodically share our testimony with others. The importance is not what you have done, but what God is doing.

1. Your testimony;
2. Your life lessons
3. Your godly passions
4. the Good News

God will make all things new
What are some things I should finish once I start?

"For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ."

Hebrews 3:14

New life in Christ. We must maintain the confident faith we had when we first believed.

Scripture is from the New Living Translation (Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

Our testimony is to give hope to others; our fruit is to give proof to God.

Repentance means you change your mind so deeply that it changes you. It's not just that I changed how I thought—I am now changed.

Testimony

The following testimony was from an individual that talked to another individual I had talked with. We have to realize that as we plant seed, we never know where they will be carried.

The first letter was an introduction;

“I am becoming stronger and stronger every day. The Bible gives me strength and wisdom I need to deal with every day life. I am now realizing how much further I could go if only I give in and let God take over. Now that I have, I am looking forward to a happy peaceful life. As before my life has been filled with hurt and pain. I admit the devil has had a strong hand on me for the past eight years. Those years were the worst ever. Now as I move ahead at full steam, I prayed to God to let that past life be over with and to forgive me and let me move on. I realize I must have understanding and faith to the fullest, because things will always get worse before they get better. But having the faith makes me not worry any more.”

The 2nd letter stated the following;

“Well Bob, you asked for my testimony. Here it goes:

I started getting locked up about the age of 14. In and out of juvenile. In and out of group homes and the boy's ranch and finally C.Y.A. I have lived a hateful and non-trusting life style for some time. I have only recently, truly given my life to the Almighty God. And thank God for that. I truly feel honored and blessed. I see things a lot different now. Well after C.Y.A. I got involved with drugs and a lot of stuff I ain't too proud about. I've been living my life like this for about eight years and I honestly believe I hated every minute of it. From using drugs, to living at motels, to living on the streets. There were times I asked myself why I would put myself through all that. I honestly couldn't answer myself. I was stuck in a weird mode that till now I finally realize why. I didn't have the Lord Jesus Christ in my life and that explains it all.

Well Bob, thanks again for the inspiration and motivation to keep the faith.”

(Following is from David, an inmate that was at Delano State Prison)

I was in church when the preacher asked if there was anyone who wished to give a testimony of what Jesus had done for them?

I sat there and listened to brothers telling how Jesus had touched their lives. I even thought about standing myself to tell what Jesus' love meant to me.

But then Satan whispered in my ear “You can't do this yet. You are still in prison. You can't say you don't do drugs anymore. You can't say you don't steal anymore. You can't say you won't commit adultery anymore or any other sins of sexual immortality. Because your faith hasn't even been tested yet.

So I never stood up and I never said a word. But then God said to me “Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 for all of these things we once were.”

Satan is a liar and the father of lies. The world will tell you “You are a drug addict; for once an addict, always an addict.” Right? NO! Wrong. “The world says once a thief, always a thief.” Right? NO! Wrong again.

For the Word says I will put your sins as far from me as the East is from the West. The Word says that your sins were washed away by the blood of Christ.

The Word says your drug addiction was washed away by the blood of Christ. The Word says your sexual immorality was washed away by the blood of Christ. The Word says your lies were washed away by the blood of Christ. Jesus Christ said “I am the Word.” So ask yourself, is the world lying or is the Word lying?

Thank You Lord for the Word.

Just an Old Dog, But . . .

07/07/05 10:11PM

As I sit here typing past 10:00PM, I just received a phone call from Animal Control, that Rigger, one of my two dogs, had gotten out of the yard and was hit by a car and killed. This was a dog from the SPCA, as are all my dogs I get.

There is nothing I can do now to change the situation. We go through thoughts of *"I should have secured the gate better."* *"I should have been living somewhere that there was not so much traffic."* *"Did I show him that I loved him today?"* *"Did he leave the yard because he was unhappy?"* Yes, the questions never cease.

This situation brings to mind a true story I heard from an individual while we were participating in the Bill Glass Prison Crusade. I will try to repeat it to the best of my ability and memory.

The individual telling the story had raised dogs for the military and the police departments. He said that these large dogs scared him.

He was now part of a family high wire act traveling with the circus. He, his wife, and daughter were continually on the move. He decided that he would not have a large dog since he could not keep it in the house (a travel trailer actually). He also did not want one of the small dogs because he felt that it could not do any protection.

Well the daughter started asking him for a dog. He would tell her no. Then one day, his wife found a middle-sized dog that had been abused. The dog was undernourished, had fur missing, and needed a bath. The topside of his tail was bald. This was one of those dogs that as you looked at it, you would think to yourself, "stay away." The wife cleaned it up, fed it, and gave it loving care. The daughter fell in love with the dog.

However, the dog had one problem. Because of abuse in his past life, anytime he was cornered, he would growl and bite at whatever was cornering him, even family members.

One day the dog was in the trailer and under the small dining table. He refused to come out. The daughter decided to crawl under the table to get him out. The dog lunged and caught the girls face,

requiring about 30 stitches. The friends and relatives of the family said to destroy the dog. The father stated that the dog was known to do this type of action when cornered. The people continued to say the dog needed to be killed. The father said that he would not do it and would protect the dog from the friends and relatives. The relatives went further to say that the next time the father was out of town for a crusade or performance, they would dispose of the dog.

Well as time went on the family continued to love the dog, even the daughter as she stated that she understood the dog's actions. Then one-day the dog started to have seizures. They would start off with one every few days, then daily, and soon they were happening multiple times per day. The wife loving the dog, laid a blanket on the floor beside the dog's bed and placed the dog on it where she would curl up with the dog, petting it and trying to sooth it during it's time of seizures.

As the seizures got closer and closer together, soon the dog died. The friends and relatives of the family were relieved and rejoiced that finally the dog was dead. However, the family was filled with sadness. For you see, no mater what the dog had done, these people loved that dog as if it was a member of the family, and truly it was!

Now as we look at those individuals that are incarcerated, we often see them much as the friends and family saw the dog – worthless and needing to be disposed of. However, the family members had learned much from the dog in caring for it. They had gained much love in their lives from the dog being a part of the family. Worthless was a word that just did not fit in this family's vocabulary. We need to think of these individuals the same way as the family that loved the dog. We need to do it before we might come to that point in life that we ask questions such as *"Did I really present the plan of salvation to him?"*, *"Did I show him love?"*, *"Was he living his lifestyle because of past abuse or unhappiness?"*, and *"Was there something I could have done different?"*

Also realize that as we restrict these loved ones, they will desire "getting free", much as Rigger did. They do not understand the dangers out there and our trying to protect them.

What great advice! – On Stress

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The Absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it." "If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on. As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden."

"So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you are carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can. Relax; pick them up later after you've rested. Life is short. Enjoy it!"

And then he shared some ways of dealing with the burdens of life:

- Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- Never buy a car you can't push.
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- The second mouse gets the cheese.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
- A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

Lighter But Serious Side

A letter to Dear Abbey went something like the following;

I am a man that is dating two women and physically involved with both of them. Neither one of them knows about the other one. I realize that I must soon make a decision on which one I will continue dating and do not know how to make such a decision. I do not want any of that "moral issues" input. Could you please help me to know how to decide?

Abbey's answer follows;

Dear sir, you have a hard decision. However, I would not be qualified to answer you. Since morality issues are all that separates man from the animals, I suggest you call a veterinary.

I sometimes wonder how people would like being able to live in Heaven the same as they live in the house of the Lord (church). They attend only on Sunday, and then, missing a lot of those days.

Imagine if God was as complacent with us as we are with Him. He was going to get up and listen to your prayer but he slept in. He wanted to give you your daily bread, but he did not get around to it. He knows you will understand. He wanted to answer your prayers, but He was just so busy.

THE LORDS PRAYER --rather cleverly done. This is in two parts, the prayer (in blue type) and GOD (in red type) in response. It is very, very good.

Our Father Who Art In Heaven.

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.

But -- you called ME!

Called you? No, I didn't call you. I'm praying.

Our Father who art in Heaven.

There -- you did it again!

Did what?

Called ME You said, "Our Father who art in Heaven" Well, here I am. What's on your mind?

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was,

you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like fulfilling a duty.

Well, all right Go on.

Okay, Hallowed be thy name

Hold it right there. What do you mean by that?

By what?

By "Hallowed be thy name"?

It means, it means . . . good grief, I don't know what it means. How in the world should I know? It's just a part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

It means honored, holy, wonderful.

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before.

Thanks.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Do you really mean that?

Sure, why not?

What are you doing about it?

Doing? Why, nothing, I guess. I just think it would be kind of neat if you got control, of everything down here like you have up there. We're kinda in a mess down here you know.

Yes. I know; but, have I got control of you?

Well, I go to church.

That isn't what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money -- on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?

Now hold on just a minute! Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at church!

Excuse ME. I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you -- for example.

Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

So could I.

I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together -- You and ME. I'm proud of You.

Look, Lord, if you don't mind, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does. Give us this day, our daily bread.

You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.

Hey, wait a minute! What is this? Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

Praying is a dangerous thing. You just might get what you ask for. Remember, you called ME -- and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. (. . . pause . . .)Well, go on.

I'm scared to.

Scared? Of what?

I know what you'll say.

Try ME.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

What about Ann?

See? I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! Why, Lord, she's told lies about me, spread stories. She never paid back the money she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!

But -- your prayer --What about your prayer?

I didn't -- mean it.

Well, at least you're honest. But, it's quite a load carrying around all that bitterness and resentment isn't it?

Yes, but I'll feel better as soon as I get

even with her. Boy, have I got some plans for her. She'll wish she had never been born.

No, you won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. You know how unhappy you are -- Well, I can change that.

You can? How?

Forgive Ann. Then, I'll forgive you; And the hate and the sin, will be Ann's problem -- not yours. You will have settled the problem as far as you are concerned.

Oh, you know, you're right. You always are. And more than I want revenge, I want to be right with You . (sigh). All right . all right . I forgive her.

There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

Hmmmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all! In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll go to bed uptight tonight. I haven't been getting much rest, you know.

Yeah, I know. But, you're not through with your prayer are you? Go on.

Oh, all right. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

What do you mean by that?

You know what I mean.

Yeah. I know.

Okay. Go ahead. Finish your prayer.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Do you know what would bring me glory - -What would really make me happy?

No, but I'd like to know. I want to please you now. I've really made a mess of things. I want to truly follow you. I can see now how great that would be. So, tell me . . . how do I make you happy?

YOU just did.

Outreach – Prayer of Jabez

1 Chronicles 4:10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."

Four things Jabez prayed for.

1. That God would bless him indeed.

Spiritual blessings are the best blessings: God's blessings are real things, and produce real effects.

2. That He would enlarge his coast. That God would enlarge our hearts, and so enlarge our portion in himself, and in the heavenly Canaan, ought to be our desire and prayer.

3. That God's hand might be with him. God's hand with us, to lead us, protect us, strengthen us, and to work all our works in us and for us, is a hand all-sufficient for us.

4. That he would keep him from evil, the evil of sin, the evil of trouble, all the evil designs of his enemies, that they might not hurt, nor make him a Jabez indeed, a man of sorrow. God granted that which he requested. God is ever ready to hear prayer: his ear is not now heavy.

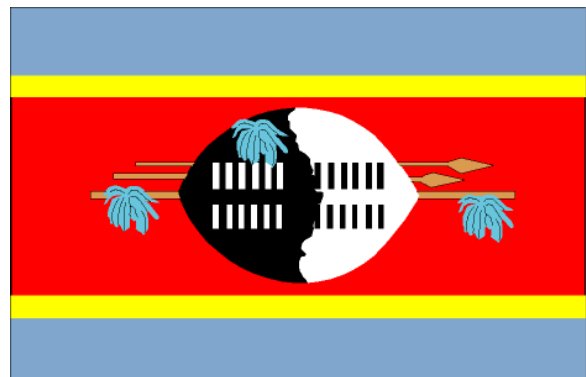
Here am I Lord, Send Me . . .

Many have read my testimony of "**God I accept you but . . .**" (Volume 10 - article on "The Path Inspired") and asked about where I am with my Africa trip. Well, Praise God, the wife and I will be going for 10 days the beginning of 2006. We have stepped out on faith and will be raising support for the trip. Destination is Swaziland near the southern tip of Africa. The thoughts are joy, fear, love, release, faith, unknown, newness, commitment, release, following, calling, and a million others. I think the wife and I may feel much like Jonah did when asked to go to Nineveh. We also know that the only answer you can give is "Yes Lord, here am I." Please pray that we raise support for our calling. We believe that "where God guides, He provides."

So, what is Swaziland like?

The time of year that we will be down there will be summer, with summer being November to March – opposite seasons with southern hemisphere. Also backwards from the northern hemisphere is that most rain falls in the summer months temperatures will be **HOT!!** This will be no vacation – we will be working in the hot sun for long extended days and hiking into the "bush" to reach remote huts and orphans.

The country (poorest in the world) consists of 6,641 sq. miles. This land is divided into 4 districts of (1) Hhohho, (2) Lubombo, (3) Manzini, and (4) Shiselweni. The population of 1,096,000 people speaks as their official languages Siswati and English. The general population is 45-85% H.I.V. positive. The main currency is the Lilangeni, but the African Rand is acceptable with a rate of exchange of \$1 USD = 6.64229 Rand.



People	
Population, total	1.1 million
Population growth (annual %)	1.6
Life expectancy (years)	42.5
Fertility rate (births per woman)	4.2
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	105.0
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 children)	153.0
Child immunization, measles (% of under 12 mos)	94.0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	38.8
Environment	
Surface area (sq. km)	17,360.0
Forests (1,000 sq. km)	..
Economy	
	1.5 billion
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	1,350.0
GDP (current \$)	1.8 billion
GDP growth (annual %)	2.2
GDP implicit price deflator (annual % growth)	9.0
Value added in agriculture (% of GDP)	12.2
Value added in industry (% of GDP)	51.5
Value added in services (% of GDP)	36.2
Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)	83.5
Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)	93.7
Gross capital formation (% of GDP)	19.4
Technology and infrastructure	
Fixed lines and mobile telephones (per 1,000 people)	128.5
Telephone average cost of local call (US\$ per three minutes)	0.1
Personal computers (per 1,000 people)	28.7
Internet users (per 1,000 people)	25.9
Trade and finance	
Trade in goods as a share of GDP (%)	104.9
Trade in goods as a share of goods GDP (%)	139.9
Foreign direct investment, net inflows in reporting country (current US\$)	43.5 million
Present value of debt (current US\$)	393.0 million
Total debt service (% of exports of goods and services)	1.6
Short-term debt outstanding (current US\$)	53.5 million
Aid per capita (current US\$)	24.5
Source: World Development Indicators database, April 2005	

Yes, we are going to Africa. This is an amazing opportunity to be part of the answer to devastating hunger among millions of people in Africa. My trip is with Bruce Wilkinson's faith based humanitarian organization called **Dream for Africa**. Our flight will be about 18 hours and then followed by a 5 hour bus trip to our destination in Swaziland. If you would like more specifics on what we will be doing during our 10 day trip please visit the **Dream for Africa** website at www.dreamforafrica.com

I would like to ask each of you to consider partnering with me by praying and giving. The total cost of the trip is \$3,395.00 each for the wife and me. This covers everything plane fare, food, lodging, in country travel, and gardening necessities. I would love for you to be part of my "prayer and giving" team during this trip.

Please keep in mind that donations must be received by November 30th. Your gift will be applied towards our trip and you will receive a tax receipt. Please use the following participant codes;

3228236 for Bob

3226677 for Linda

Donations can be given 3 ways:

(1) by calling 1-800-901-7585,

(2) mailing checks made out to

Dream For Africa

send to;

Dream for Africa,

PO Box 470650,

Tulsa OK. 74147-0650

(3) donating online at www.dreamforafrica.com

and applying to code;

3228236 for Bob

3226677 for Linda

Looking forward to sharing with each of you our adventure when we return. We will be taking lots of digital pictures and burning them to CD on a laptop we hope to take.

The Cost of Incarceration

The numbers and figures quoted will be for the **California** state prisons, the nation's largest state prison system only. Although California is #1 of the states in cost, realize that there are another 49 states with the same dilemma. The LA Times reported in March 13, 2005 that **"the number of men and women in state lockups soared to 165,000 – a record number that jammed prisons to twice their intended capacity."**

On February 23, 2005, the number of inmates was 162,276. At CSP Solano, a system designed for 2,600, was housing nearly 6,000. Mule Creek State Prison in Ion, California houses about 10,000 inmates.

July saw the opening in Kern County of prison #33, for the state of California with the dedication of Delano II, designed to house 5,000 inmates with a construction cost of \$380 million.

So, what makes up the residents of the nations largest prison system? Note the following figures

Sex

Males: 93%
Females: 7%

Race/ethnicity

Hispanics: 37%
Whites: 29%
Blacks: 29%
Other: 6%

Average age – 36

Average sentence – 53 months

Average time served – 26 months

And with these 165,000 +/- individuals, what is the real expense of their "stay?"

Annual Budget (2004-2005) **\$6.25 Billion**

Average yearly inmate cost - **\$30,929**

Number of State Prisons – **33**

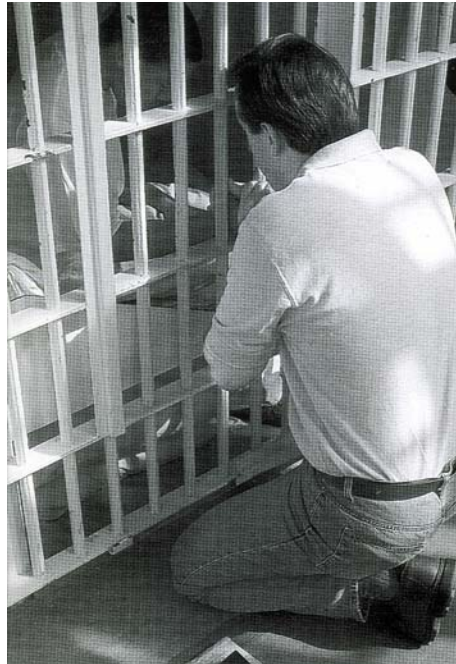
Number of firefighter camps – **40**

of community correction facilities – **12**

We would like to note that California's prison population is growing at a pace that could fill two new prisons every year. These prisons had a cost on an average of \$280 million to build and \$80 million a year to operate (Little Hoover Commission Report, Jan. 1998).

In June 1996, it was predicted that 17 new prisons will be needed by the year 2006 with the projected prison population growing to 240,000 inmates. Realize that the projected cost of incarcerating offenders with a minimum 20 year sentence is \$500,000. \$25,000 operational cost to house a prisoner in California for a year, not taking into account the fixed costs. A county jail bed costs \$19,700 per year. Elderly inmates typically cost up to \$65,000 annually, primarily because of their greater medical needs.

Cost of visitation of the inmates ?



This cost was paid by Jesus Christ and is continually carried by volunteers. Help curb these expenses by showing these individuals the Love of Christ.