

“Free In Deed”

The **Bi-Monthly** newsletter of Central California Jail/Prison Ministry
Volume 9— May 2005 / June. 2005

“I Can Only Imagine”

In this **Volume 9** issue, we would like to continue thinking of the suffering an individual goes thru whether in or out of prison. Does the term prisoner have a connotation tied with it? What about the terms convict or inmate? Do we really know how these individuals feel? Look at the 1930's picture of the inmates sleeping at [the Coalinga, CA. Road Camp.](#)

Intentions & Wishes

We have gone to Bi-Monthly because there is too much to share.

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



You can express the love for these individuals, as Christ showed for us by simply being willing to write one of them.

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 (**51 listed in last issue**). Write for addresses if needed.

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 with this newsletter as we strive to serve God. We appreciate any articles, testimonies, or input.

Letters that Express it All

These are actual quotes from some of the different incarcerated individuals. The names have been removed

"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."

Please pray for individuals like this, that the Lord will lead them to a true commitment.

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,

Bible Study Lessons

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

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.

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.

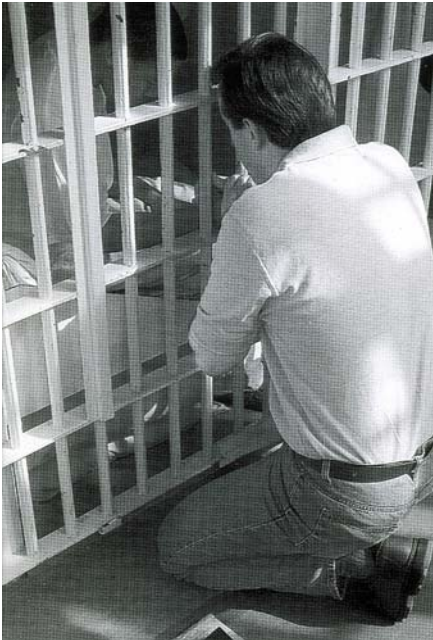
Ephesians 4 – 6 – This gives the pattern for life that we should live. All 7 S's are displayed in these 3 chapters. We are given the purpose of the gifts, changing our character, husband/wife/family relationships, and the type of life we are to live and display.

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.

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.

Selected Letters and Writings #1



Thank You

Thank you,
For I know not how I lived a single day
Without you in my heart.
Nor how I faced this troubled world
Or even had the will to start.

Now, I draw my strength from you
In everything I do,
Life had nothing to offer me
Until I accepted you.

For when my life got harder
and seemed to turn cold,
You gave me the courage to endure,
For I know your hand was holding mine.

You have given my life new meaning
For when worries and sorrows came my way
You were there to give me wisdom
To make it through another day.

Yes, my life was harder, yesterday,
Before I let you in.
Now you live in my heart
And I'm safe and filled
With a peace that lasts

Thank You God



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! . . . “

Selected Letters and Writings #2

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. . . .”

Note from Bob:

Many times we get so set in our “protected ways” that we do not want to follow thru the “wilderness.” The children of Israel wanted to go back to being slaves in Egypt instead of following Moses and the Lord’s guidance. God promised a land of “milk and Honey” but the children had to go thru the trials.

Worthy of Pay - Trivia

I recently saw this list of “Top-Earning Fictional Characters in 2003.” It made me think of all the individuals that complain about supporting a pastor, a church, or even God’s ministry. Look how well we support “Fictional Characters.”

Mickey Mouse & Friends **\$5.8 Billion**

Winnie the Pooh & Friends **\$5.6 Billion**

Frodo Baggins **\$2.9 Billion**

Harry Potter **\$2.8 Billion**

Nemo **\$2 Billion**

Yu-gi-oh **\$1.6 Billion**

Spongebob SquarePants **\$1.5 Billion**

Spider-Man **\$1.3 Billion**

Wolverine (X-Men) **\$900 Million**

Pokemon **\$825 Million**

Donuts

There was a boy by the name of Steve who was attending school in Utah.

Brother Christianson taught at this particular school. He had an open-door policy and would take in any student that had been thrown out of another class as long as they would abide by his rules. Steve had been kicked out of his sixth period and no other teacher wanted him, so he went into Brother Christianson's class.

Steve was told that he could not be late, so he arrived just seconds before the bell rang and he would sit in the very back of the room. He would also be the first to leave after the class was over.

One day, Brother Christianson asked Steve to stay after class so he could talk with him. After class, Bro. Christianson pulled Steve aside and said, "You think you're pretty tough, don't you?"

Steve's answer was, "Yeah, I do." Then Brother Christianson asked, "How many push-ups can you do?"

Steve said, "I do about 200 every night."

"200?
That's pretty good, Steve," Brother

Christianson said. "Do you think you could do 300?"

Steve replied, "I don't know... I've never done 300 at a time."

"Do you think you could?" Again asked Brother Christianson.

"Well, I can try," said Steve.

"Can you do 300 in sets of 10? I need you to do 300 in sets of ten for this to work. Can you do it? I need you to tell me you can do it," Brother Christianson said.

Steve said, "Well... I think I can... yeah, I can do it."

Brother Christianson said, "Good! I need you to do this on Friday."

Friday came and Steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room. When class started, Brother Christianson pulled out a big box of donuts. Now these weren't the normal kinds of donuts, they were the extra fancy BIG kind, with cream centers and frosting swirls. Everyone was pretty excited - it was Friday, the last class of the day, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend.

Bro. Christianson went to the first girl

in the first row and asked,
"Cynthia, do you want a donut?"

Cynthia said, "Yes."

Bro. Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Cynthia can have a donut?"

Steve said, "Sure," and jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. Then Steve again sat in his desk. Bro. Christianson put a donut on Cynthia's desk.

Bro. Christianson then went to Joe, the next person, and asked, "Joe do you want a donut?"

Joe said, "Yes."

Bro. Christianson asked, "Steve would you do ten push-ups so Joe can have a donut?"

Steve did ten push-ups, Joe got a donut.

And so it went, down the first aisle, Steve did ten pushups for every person before they got their donut. And down the second aisle, till Bro. Christianson came to Scott.

Scott was captain of the football

team and center of the basketball team. He was very popular and never lacking for female companionship.

When Bro. Christianson asked, "Scott do you want a donut?"

Scott's reply was, "Well, can I do my own pushups?"

Bro. Christianson said, "No, Steve has to do them."

Then Scott said, "Well, I don't want one then."

Bro. Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so Scott can have a donut he doesn't want?" Steve started to do ten pushups. Scott said, "HEY! I said I didn't want one!"

Bro. Christianson said, "Look, this is my classroom, my class, my desks, and my donuts. Just leave it on the desk if you don't want it." And he put a donut on Scott's desk.

Now by this time, Steve had begun to slow down a little. He just stayed on the floor between sets because it took too much effort to be getting up and down. You could start to see a little perspiration coming out around his brow. Bro. Christianson started down the third

row. Now the students were beginning to get a little angry.

Bro. Christianson asked Jenny, "Jenny, do you want a donut?"

Jenny said, "No."

Then Bro. Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so Jenny can have a donut that she doesn't want?" Steve did ten, Jenny got a donut.

By now, the students were beginning to say "No" and there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks. Steve was also having to really put forth a lot of effort to get these pushups done for each donut. There began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face, his arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort involved.

Bro. Christianson asked Robert to watch Steve to make sure he did ten pushups in a set because he couldn't bear to watch all of Steve's work for all of those uneaten donuts. So Robert began to watch Steve closely.

Bro. Christianson started down the fourth row. During his class, however, some students had wandered in and sat along the heaters along the sides of the room. When Bro.

Christianson realized this; he did a quick count and saw 34 students in the room. He started to worry if Steve would be able to make it.

Bo. Christianson went on to the next person and the next and the next. Near the end of that row, Steve was really having a rough time. He was taking a lot more time to complete each set.

Steve asked Bro. Christianson, "Do I have to make my nose touch on each one?"

Bro. Christianson thought for a moment, "Well, they're your pushups. You can do them any way that you want." And Bro. Christianson went on.

A few moments later, Jason came to the room and was about to come in when all the students yelled, "NO! Don't come in! Stay out!"

Jason didn't know what was going on. Steve picked up his head and said, "No, let him come."

Bro. Christianson said, "You realize that if Jason comes in you will have to do ten pushups for him."

Steve said, "Yes, let him come in."

Bro. Christianson said, "Okay, I'll let

you get Jason's out of the way right now. Jason, do you want a donut?" "Yes."

"Steve, will you do ten pushups so that Jason can have a donut?"

Steve did ten pushups very slowly and with great effort. Jason, bewildered, was handed a donut and sat down.

Bro. Christianson finished the fourth row, then started on those seated on the heaters. Steve's arms were now shaking with each pushup in a struggle to lift himself against the force of gravity. Sweat was dropping off of his face and, by this time, there was not a dry eye in the room.

The very last two girls in the room were cheerleaders and very popular. Bro. Christianson went to Linda, the second to last, and asked, "Linda, do you want a doughnut?"

Linda said, very sadly, "No thank you."

Bro. Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so that Linda can have a donut she doesn't want?"

Grunting from the effort, Steve did ten very slow pushups for Linda.

Then Bro. Christianson turned to the

last girl, Susan. "Susan, do you want a donut?"

Susan, with tears flowing down her face, asked, "Bro. Christianson, can I help him?"

Bro. Christianson, with tears of his own, said, "No, he has to do it alone. Steve, would you do ten pushups so Susan can have a donut?"

As Steve very slowly finished his last pushup, with the understanding that he had accomplished all that was required of him, having done 350

pushups, his arms buckled beneath him and he fell to the floor.

Brother Christianson turned to the room and said. "And so it was, that our Savior, Jesus Christ, plead to the Father, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." With the understanding that He had done everything

that was required of Him, he collapsed on the cross and died. And like

some of those in this room, many of us leave the gift on the desk, uneaten."

The Cross

A young man
Was at the end of his rope,
Seeing no way out, he dropped to
his knees In prayer

"Lord, I can't go on," he said.
"I have too heavy a cross to bear."

The Lord replied,

"My son,
If you can't bear its weight,
Just place your cross
Inside This room.

Then, open that other door
And pick out any cross you wish."

The man was filled with relief and
said,
"Thank you Lord," and he did
As he was told.

Upon entering the
Other room, he saw many crosses;
Some so large the tops were not
visible.
Then, he spotted a tiny cross
Leaning Against a far wall.

"I'd like that one, Lord," he
whispered.

The Lord replied,
"My son, that is the cross you just
brought in."

When life's problems seem
overwhelming,
It helps
To look around and see
What other people are coping with.

You may consider yourself
Far more fortunate than you
imagined.

YOUR CROSS

Whatever your cross
Whatever your pain
There will always be sunshine
After the rain

Perhaps you may stumble
Perhaps even fall
But God's always there
To help you through it all