

Jesus Is The Key
Ministries



Newsletter

Chaplain Ed Welsh

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*

"10,000 heard a message of hope"

I know that I am way over due to write another newsletter. And I don't want to start this off with a lot of excuses as to why I haven't written one before now. It isn't that I do not have things to write about; there have been many exciting things happen to write about. The Lord continues to do amazing things all the time!

What has been the major thing keeping me from writing is just not making the time to do it. But in my defense it really has been the most busy of times in this ministry's history..

It started about this time last year when we headed off to Germany and it hasn't let up since. I praise God for all He has done and continues to do.

The Billy Graham Crusades were an experience that I will never forget. To just be a part of it was something I consider a real privilege. To see and do things I in no way would have imagined I would be doing.

What the enemy meant for evil the Lord used for His glory. When Dr. Graham fell and broke his pelvis the crusade had to be postponed and it enabled us to do so much more. The final outcome of the prison and

jail outreaches is we did about 70 different services at 35 separate facilities in the Southern California area. More than had ever been done in any other crusade before.

In total there were nearly 10,000 inmates who heard a message of hope, the gospel message of Jesus Christ. There is no real way of knowing how much of an impact it all really had. But I am convinced it represents many changed lives. And even more than that, it also represents the untold number of people who will no longer one day become a victim to the crimes these inmates **will not** now be committing when they get out of prison. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" 2 Cor 5:17

I enjoyed helping to organize and participate in the different outreaches. There was a lot of work involved but the end result was well worth it all.

There is something I learned from all of this experience and that is when the church body joins together to be about the Father's work there is no more powerful force here on earth.

To see different churches who would have never joined forces under any other circumstance, coming together to be a part of the crusade

was a very great thing. If only men could put their pride, bigotry and the belief that "their church" is the only one that has got it right! Just think of all that could be accomplished if Christians would join together more often. When it comes down to it we are all sinful people in need of a Savior.... Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!
Rom 7:24-25

There are many memories I will take away from the experience of working on the crusade committee. One being the time I was one of the people praying at a pre-crusade rally at the Rose Bowl. A few days before it was supposed to take place, I ran into Pastor Jeff Johnson from Calvary Chapel of Downey. He was also one who would be praying that day and he asked if I was. When I told him how nervous I was he asked why, I told him I had never spoken in front of a crowd bigger than about five hundred and I had heard there would be a few thousand. I was more than a little intimidated. Pastor Jeff tried to cheer me up by telling me there would be more like fifteen thousand

there that day!

As it turned out it was driz-

zling that day and only about ten thousand showed up.

One greatly cherished memory is one night a week before the crusade, my wife and I were invited to attend a reception being held for Dr. Graham. There were about a hundred people and most of them were some kind of leader within the community. At one point I leaned over to my wife and said to her, "who would have thought 22 years ago, with you on the back of my Harley, us going to our new believer's Bible studies that we would one day be in a small group of people like this, honoring Billy Graham and his life time achievements for the kingdom."

They gave him an award that night called The Prince of Peace Award; crediting him with preaching the gospel to more than 200,000,000 people in 55 years of crusades.

The most powerful memory I have from that night was after more than a few people had gotten up to praise all his accomplishments, he, at great physical expense, got up to say. "Guys there has been far too much about Billy and not enough about Jesus."

There were many awe-

"10,000 heard a message of hope" (continued)

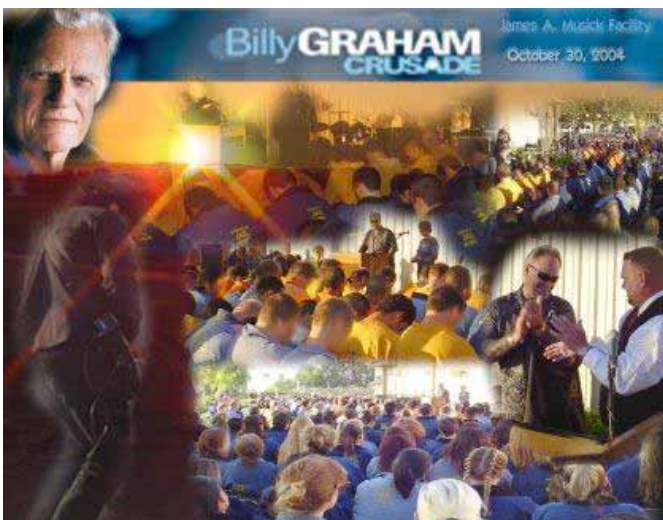
some things that happened with the crusade. One of the main objectives of doing the outreaches into the jails and prisons is to promote more churches getting involved in doing this kind of ministry in an ongoing basis. I am happy to report, that is already happening. As of this writing there are already two new churches going in with two more who are in the process of being cleared.

Then there are the prisons who are asking us to come back in to do more outreaches. That will take some time to put any more of them together. For now I want to redirect my main focus back to what is the main ministry for me and that is Men's Central Jail. To some degree I have neglected the jail with all that was happening in other areas. Now it's time to regain the momentum there.

As part of the crusade we were able to go into the facility where I work. I have tried for years to get some pictures of what its like in there and our outreach enabled me to finally get some of them. This is the 3,000 floor Chapel, one of two chapels at Men's Central where we conduct services.



Giving the men a message of hope. At the end of the service they were told to bow their heads and if any of them wanted to be forgiven of their sins, to ask Jesus be their Savior, they were to raise their hands. The pictures speak for themselves as to what happened from then.



Another outreach was to the James A. Musick Facility (a Orange County Jail) They had never done anything like that before and all felt it turned out very well; they want us to come back. Pastor John Milhouse of Calvary Chapel Moreno Valley gave the gospel message to a large and receptive group.

Watching lives change by Ernie Ureno

I have asked the volunteers from Jesus is the Key Ministries to pray about writing some of their experiences in this ministry. Here's what Ernie has to say.....Ed

Before I ever stepped foot inside the prison walls at the Chino Institute for Men, I believed in my heart that the Lord wanted me to be a part of what Jesus is the Key Ministries is a part of...preaching freedom (in Christ) to the captives... to present them with a hope.

Pastor Jeff Stewart (Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley) had asked the church to keep in prayer and see if the Lord would lay it on our hearts to be a part of the prison ministry. I prayed about it continuously and God opened the doors. I got cleared with the Chino prison system and I started going in about May 2004.

The very first time I went in I didn't know what to expect; after all, I had never been behind prison walls. I do remember feeling at peace and safe about going in because I knew the Lord was with us. That first night I was blessed beyond measure. While we were singing a few worship songs I remember feeling like I couldn't wait for the next time I would be able to come back. That's how much the Lord blessed me. The Lord showed me that night that He truly has no bounds. There were some guys in there that loved the Lord. The Spirit was definitely moving. Recently I had an especially blessed evening and I'd like to take this opportunity to share it with you.

A few months ago after we had finished service, this guy named David came forward wanting prayer. I don't remember specifically what he wanted prayer for, but it's very likely he wanted me to pray for his family, as a lot of inmates do. I somewhat recall he also wanted me to pray for him as well, and he looked very broken to say the least. I felt led by the Spirit to ask him if he knew for certain that if he were to die that night that he would be in heaven with God. He told me that he wasn't 100% sure but that he did want to go to heaven when he died. God opened the door wide open for me to share the gospel message with him and I asked him if he wanted to know what the Bible says about how we can know with certainty that when we died we would spend eternity with God. He told me yes and I went ahead and shared the gospel with him. By the time I was finished sharing with him, I asked him if he wanted to receive Christ in his heart that very moment and have the assurance of salvation. He said that he would and I led him through a prayer to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Last Sunday, February 13, 2005, we were in again at the yard where David is staying at and I was talking to another inmate before service started when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around and there stood David, radiating so much joy it brought an immediate smile to my face. We exchanged a warm embrace and he began to share with me how the last few months have been like no others in his life. He shared with me the peace and comfort that God had brought him and how he knows that one day he will be with Him forever. It was such a blessing to hear that. The last time I had seen David he was broken and unsaved from eternal separation from God and now he was healed and a new creation in Christ. That is the very reason why I continue to go in to prison, to be a part of God giving someone a new beginning, which ONLY comes

through being born again of the Holy Spirit. I prayed for David before we parted ways and he's scheduled to get out on the 5th of March. I don't know if I'll ever see David again on this earth but we both exchanged our confidence in God that one day we will both spend eternity together in heaven as brothers in Christ worshipping God forever and ever.

I thank God for the opportunity to be able to serve Him through this ministry and look forward to the nights we are scheduled to go in and to be a part of what the Lord might do on those particular nights. Please pray for those incarcerated that don't presently know God personally. Pray that God would use this ministry, born again Christians in prison, and any other means by which God desires to bring many more inmates like David to the saving knowledge that comes through personally receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Please keep Chaplain Ed in prayer that God would continue to bless him and to keep him faithful to the work the Lord has called him to, that God working through him many people would be able to spend eternity with their Creator. May the Lord richly bless you and I pray that you too, like David, would know Christ personally and have the assurance of spending eternity with Him. If you don't know with 100% certainty, "...ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened... If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11: 9-10, 13).

I was first saved at a Billy Graham Crusade in 1963. Once again the Lord has taken things full circle for me in being a part of the Crusade in the 2004 Rose Bowl Crusade. I was able to share some of that story in this article in the January issue of Decision Magazine.

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FINDING JESUS

'A Father Who Loves Me'

Senior Chaplain at Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles recalls the best News he ever heard

by ED WELSH

I grew up the oldest of three kids in a dysfunctional family. My dad came home drunk all the time and with a lot of anger. Often he would beat up my mother, and I would fistfight with him, trying to defend her. My dad was a big truck driver and a former boxer, so it wasn't a very even match.

When I was 14 years old, in 1963, a neighbor invited me to go to the Billy Graham Crusade in Los Angeles.

I remember Billy Graham saying that it doesn't matter what kind of a father you have here on earth—you have a heavenly Father who loves you. When you can fistfight at age 14 with your father and not cry over how much it hurts, you don't cry over many things. But I went down to the field in tears, crying freely because I wanted the kind of love and acceptance Billy Graham spoke of.

But after the Crusade I developed no strong roots, and I didn't get involved in a church. I got into trouble, ran away from home and soon found myself in juvenile hall. While I was there, my mother was in a serious car accident. I remember trying to make a deal with God, asking Him to save her, but she died about three days after the accident. I shook my fist at God, so to speak.

In 1973-75 I found myself in San Quentin Prison—at that time one of the worst prisons in the country. I had a lot of time on my hands, so I began reading the Bible. I didn't realize it then, but now I can see that God was still working in my life. In 1980, after spending about 15 years in and out of different facilities, I left prison for the last time. Two years later I married Allison, whom I had met when she came to the prison to visit her brother.

I now had a job and was doing well financially, but I was still living a godless life of drinking and drugs.

While Allison was pregnant with our first child, we took in our niece to live with us. We realized that we needed help to give the children a better life and that we should go to church. Watching my daughter's birth was a spiritual moment for me. I knew that I needed to steer a new course with Christ as my Lord. I was baptized two or three days



later, and since then it has been a whole new life for us.

I never dreamed I'd go back into a prison until my pastor asked me if I would pray about starting a prison ministry. I resisted at first, but in 1994 God led me to start such a ministry. It has been my passion ever since. I started by going back to San Quentin, and since then God has taken me into prisons all over the world.

Since 2000 I also have been the senior chaplain at Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles. Although much of my job is administrative, my main ministry is one-to-one counseling, and I see men accept Christ every day. I've seen that when they find Christ, they are new creations.

I wouldn't say that God "put me through" my childhood difficulties or my prison years, but He has used those times for His glory. I didn't have a loving earthly father, but God has filled that void in my life through a relationship with Him. ■ ©2004 BGEA

Brake down the stronghold !

Everything we do becomes a learning experience. For me the past six months have been a real time of learning. Like how much can be accomplished when the church comes together and really works collectively.

Of course the opposite is also true, that when we don't work together it is the enemy that wins. We are in a spiritual battle but so much of the time the church doesn't fight the battle with any kind of teamwork.

I have spent over four years now working full time in jail/prison ministry. I never expected to be doing something like this and now can't imagine doing anything else. I am passionate about it and of course believe both in the need for it and the good results that can come from it.

I understood from the beginning that it would be a constant battle with the administration because they really are not supportive of it. It is not politically correct.

There are plenty of studies that have proven the effectiveness of faith based programs in jails and prisons. When an inmate is involved with a faith based program while in custody, they are four times less likely to return once released. And of the ones that do return again many of them come back for far less serious crimes. Every prisoner who does not return to crime is one less burden to the tax payers, who pay an average of \$25,000.00 a year to keep someone in prison. It also represents untold people who do not become victims of crimes the inmates would have committed had they gone back to their old way of life.

But the system is not set up for the inmates to better their lives. Society

look at the guilt of the prisoner and wants punishment. That is totally understandable, but what makes more sense? To have the inmate come out to ever increasing serious crimes or someone with a changed heart?

Not all but most people who work in custody view religious programs as either a waste of time or that the inmate doesn't deserve it. I can understand that from custody personnel. They are dealing with the worst in society on a daily basis and unless they themselves have belief in God it is not at all hard to understand why they would have that kind of attitude. What I cannot understand is that so many churches and Christians have this same attitude!

Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 25 first with the parable of the talents with the unprofitable servants and especially in the warning about the separating of the sheep and the goats that we should take it seriously about seeking to save those who are lost. He said when you do this to the least of these you are doing it unto Him.

In trying to reach out to churches and help get them involved in going to jails and prisons, I have learned the hard way how few really want to have anything to do with this kind of ministry.

An example of what I am trying to explain is how there were about 1,500 churches directly involved with the Billy Graham Crusades. All of those churches were contacted and given the opportunity to be a part of the prison/jail outreaches. About 30 churches responded to the call.

Over the past four years I have contacted many churches trying to have them get involved in one way or another. There are few who respond.

To highlight the problem let me explain just some of what we face here

in California. • In the 132 years between 1852 and 1984, the state of California built twelve prisons. • In the eleven-year period between 1985 and 1996, the state built sixteen more. • By 2001 the Department of Corrections operated 33 prisons. • In 1977, California housed 19,600 inmates. A decade later in 1998, the inmate population had skyrocketed by an astronomical 811 percent to 159,000. By February 2000 that number had jumped to 161,000. • California now runs the largest prison system in the Western world. It houses more prisoners than do the countries of France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Singapore combined. • California has spent \$5.2 billion on new prisons since 1977, yet it still has the most overcrowded system in the United States. • Currently, the state of California incarcerates one out of every eight prisoners in the United States. • It is estimated that California will eventually need 30 to 50 new prisons to accommodate the influx of prisoners dictated by mandatory sentencing, stiffer enforcement of parole violations, and the three-strikes law.

Can there be any doubt of the evidence that what we are now doing as a society is not working? And can there be any doubt that the church needs to do much more than it is currently doing to reach those who are in darkness. And can there be any doubt that are few places that are more in darkness than the prisons and jails in this country. It is the devils domain and it is up to the church to help to break down these strongholds with the message of hope that the gospel gives.

We are all sinners saved by grace and the prisoner needs the opportunity to receive that same grace. Jesus died for everyone.

1. We just got a new team of volunteers going into CIW (California Institution for Women) It is a real blessing to see what is already happening.

Opening night 33 women showed up! And the volunteers are really blessed to see the excitement the inmates are showing. I think the Lord is going to do some great things at CIW.

Please keep the women in your prayers. Both the volunteers going in and the women from the prison. That they bond together and something grows strong and deep.

There is going to be an awesome opportunity for some meaningful relationships to develop from this and allow the volunteers to become mentors and friends to these women.

2. Two other churches are starting to go into another prison for the first time. It is a private prison that

contracts with the state for prisoners. Between the two churches they will be going into the prison every Saturday morning.

One of the groups was part of an outreach to this prison during the crusades and this is fruit of that outreach.

Please pray for them that they become effective and build meaningful relationships with the men at Adelanto Community Correctional Facility.

3. Another prayer concern I would ask you to lift up is, there may be another opportunity for me to be sponsored by some churches to go to another country later this year. I only want to go if this is the Lord's will. It is exciting to think there may be the prospect of going to prisons in yet another country. But only if I am suppose to go. So I would ask you to pray that I would have discernment in what to do when the times comes.

4. An upcoming event for Men's Central Jail is that the actor from the TV series Growing Pains and the two Left Behind movies, Kirk Cameron will be coming to do a service in our chapel.

The Lord opened the door for this in a really unexpected way. We have not been able to schedule it as of yet because of conflicts in both our schedules but Kirk Cameron is committed to come.

Right now he is in the middle of filming Left Behind 3 but hopefully within the next month or so he will be able to come in. I am sure it is going to be awesome and I am looking forward to seeing what the Lord is going to do with it.

Many of you tell me how you are praying for this ministry. I can't tell you how much that means.

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