

Jesus Is The Key
Ministries



Isaiah 61:1



Newsletter

Chaplain Ed Welsh

Volume 4, Issue 4

September 2004

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

Prison Crusade Blessings

I know I am long overdue to writing another newsletter and I have really meant to start one before now. Recently I received an e-mail saying they wondered if the ministry was still in operation; they hadn't received a newsletter "in a long, long time". It was then I knew I had better find the time no matter how busy I am.

It's been more than busy, it has been non-stop ever since the Billy Graham

prison outreaches have started. The effort has been more than worth it and I am so grateful that I have been able to be a part of it.

In the middle of June we started going to the prisons and jails doing the Billy Graham sponsored outreaches. To date we have gone into 22 facilities and have done a total 48 different services. In those outreaches we have had a combined attendance of nearly 4,300 men, women and youth. From the response cards that were filled out we have had 150 first time commitments and another 186 who have rededicated their lives to Him. There is no way of telling how many more were touched by the Lord and did not actually fill out a response card. Ultimately it is a personal thing for each of the 4,300 people who heard the gospel message.

As exciting all those numbers are there are more statistics that are a real blessing to me personally. That is the number of volunteers who ended up going into these different places with us. We have had close to 400 people go in to help us do these outreaches. Many of them

had never been in a place like that before.

One big advantage in working with Billy Graham's organization is their ability to bring together a very diverse group of churches for a common cause. We are one body in Christ and I've had the chance to see that a little more clearly these past few months. How I wish that spirit of unity within the church was as it should be; *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 13:35

Just some of the churches who were a part in these outreaches were; Bel Air Presbyterian Church, Faithful Central Bible Church, Church On The Way, Calvary Chapel, Lake Avenue Church, Rolling Hills Covenant Church and Victory Outreach. No matter if some were from a large church or from a very small church, they all gave of their time and talents to bring the gospel into the prisons.

One of the reasons for doing this is to try and encourage churches to get involved with this kind of ministry on an ongoing basis. I was very gratified to see the churches who had never done jail ministry before willing and eager to participate. The fruit of it is we already have some new opportunities to get these churches into ongoing ministries, especially within a number of the Juvenile Halls where there is a very real need for more churches to be involved.

This was all a learning experience for many of us. It goes without saying we went into this expecting to have spiritual battles. As I have said many times, all of these places are in the devil's domain and the enemy was hard at work trying to keep us out.

To get into some of these places and then organize the event was a real challenge. There were some of them who did not want us to come in to do anything. The ironic thing is those were the ones that turned out to be most fruitful once we did get in. Some of them now want us to come back.

The one thing that I really didn't expect was "where" some of the opposition came from. Of course it is to be expected from the institutions themselves. Coming from a worldly perspective all it means to them is extra work. What I wasn't prepared for was the opposition we received from a few of the chaplains. It became very obvious that for some it was not a calling nor a ministry but just a job. I understand one of them was quoted as saying that God had told him to do nothing for the inmates! I don't know what god he was listening to, well actually, I think I do. Really it is no different than some of these churches who say it is not their calling to minister to people in jail. When I hear that or see it demonstrated by their actions, it makes me wonder if they have ever read what the Lord said about it in Matthew 25? *"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the*

Prison Crusade Blessings (continued)

everlasting fire prepared for the devil Then He will answer them, saying, and his angels: for I was hungry and 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you did not do it to one of the least of you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger these, you did not do it to Me.' And and you did not take Me in, naked and these will go away into everlasting you did not clothe Me, sick and in punishment, but the righteous into prison and you did not visit Me.' "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

demonstrated in the recent outreaches. In the following few pages I want to share with you some of the things that happened at a few of the events that I was able to attend. We still have more of these outreaches scheduled over the next few months so please remember them in your prayers.

Fortunately, not everyone has that kind of attitude about ministering to the ones in jail. That was clearly

Ephesians 3:20

On July 10th we went into the minimum yard at the men's prison in Chino to do one the best yard outreaches I have ever participated in. Within the organizing of it, there were many obstacles to overcome and for a while it was doubtful we were going to be able to do it at all.

The day started out very early for some, the sound crew and setup team, who arrived at 6:00 o'clock in the morning. Once they and all the equipment were cleared to go in it was becoming doubtful that we would be able to start at the scheduled time of 9:00 o'clock. It had taken much longer than had been expected. Schedule is always important when it comes to anything you do in prisons. Things often starts late but can never go over because they have to get the men back to the living units in time for count and to feed them.

It came time for the rest of the group to be go through security to get into the prison. Of course nothing can go as planned and the next thing to happen was for some unknown reason the drummer for the Heather Henry Band was not on the clearance list. What were we going to do? We had to have a drummer! The administration was more than cooperative with us, even with it being a weekend, they went to the trouble to have him cleared while we waited. Normally that would have never happened.

Once we finally all got onto the yard and everything was set up, we were running behind so it would mean we would have to eliminate something from the program. At least that is what we first thought but instead the Captain for Minimum Yard came by to see how things were going and he gave permission to extend the time of our program; another thing that would normally never happen. It was

picture speak for itself how much the men got into it.

Heather and her band have been very faithful coming into many of the prisons with us. On August the 7th they went to another facility in the Chino complex, West yard. I was not able to attend that outreach myself but they did the worship for two services in West Yard Chapel where Pastor Jeff Stewart from Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley gave the messages. I have been told that some men were brought to tears during that outreach; another thing that very seldom happens within men's prisons. They never want to give the appearance of showing any emotion especially that of weakness.



The Heather Henry Band got things started

becoming more than apparent that the Lord was really blessing what was happening. After an opening prayer and introduction, the Heather Henry Band really got things going with some awesome worship. I'll let the

One the desired advantages of doing the outreach on the yard is that many will come to it that would never step foot in the Chapel.

We had the concert on a baseball field that could be closed off being surrounded by a chain link fence. Once the men came onto the yard they locked the gates. Only problem was that once the gates were closed no more could get in that wanted to come. That is until the Captain showed up, he not only let us extend the time of the program he also opened the gates for the second time and let more come in. All together it was estimated that there were between 600 to 700 inmates on the yard that day.



Those who seek Him will praise the LORD Psalms 22:26

Ephesians 3:20 (continued)



Two or More brought them to their feet!

Two or More does the kind of worship that was well appreciated by the men. They started to play just about the time the gates were reopened to let more in and I am sure their lively rock and roll style of worship helped encourage the men to come in and check it out. Just like any outreach anywhere, it is the worship that draws them in but it is the Gospel message that you really want to get out.

It is one of the things I have really come to appreciate about the different worship teams and their ministries. It is not just a ministry of good musicians, it is the witness they bring that is so powerful. They share their own testimonies and life experience between songs and it all prepares the inmates to hear the main gospel message.

For me personally it had been a blessing to doing ministry once again with what had been my home church. Nearly all who were there that day were from Calvary Chapel Chino Hills. Most of the prison ministry volunteer escorts were men who used to go in there with me when the ministry had first started. It really was a sort of homecoming for me. From the fact that I had paroled from that very yard over 24 years ago and that I was again, on that same yard, with the church I first started doing prison ministry with nearly ten years ago, shows me that

the Lord really brings everything full circle.

I was able to give a short testimony of my own and it was interesting to see the reaction, not from the inmates but from all the correctional officers that were there. Most of them that were there that day came up and thanked me for coming. I don't remember anything like that ever happening before. One officer said something that was a real blessing to me. He said that it was good to be reminded that there is hope for these guys. Most often it is their experience to see the men coming back over and over again. That hope the officer saw that day is the hope that Jesus gives us all. Without Him we are all in prisons of our own making.

It was Pastor Jack Hibbs who did the main message. In introducing him I was reminded of the very first outreach we had done together at Chuckawalla State prison in Blythe.



Introducing Pastor Jack

It was good to be doing another one together again.

The whole day had been blessed by the Lord and Pastor Jack's message was was also a blessing. He talked about being free whether you are in or out of jail. You could look across the yard and see that he had their attention. And from the reaction many of them wanted to know that freedom

for themselves.

What happened next was both funny and exciting at the same time. The men were standing there listening to the message when Pastor Jack asked them to bow their heads and if anyone wanted to ask Jesus into their lives, they were to raise their hands. So many raised their hands Jack did not



believe they understood his question. He stopped his prayer and asked them to all sit down. And then went on to explain that Christ died once and for all for our sins and that you only have to ask Him to be your Savior once. Jack started to pray and asked once more, "If you want to ask Jesus to be your Savior



then stand".

The picture says it all! When Jack had them pray with him, he asked the believers to pray with their new brothers. You could hear their prayer throughout the whole prison, so many men lifted their prayer to the Lord.

Changed Lives

During this lapse of time where I have not written a newsletter, there are other things happening that have nothing to do with the outreaches. I know I need to say something about what has been going on

within Men's Central Jail and of course, much goes on there on a continual basis.

Just this past week something happened

that once again reminded me of how much this ministry means to me.

I know I have said it before but for the sake of someone reading one of these for the first time, I'll mention it again. One of my duties as Chaplain is to give death notifications whenever someone from the inmate's family dies. It is by far the hardest part of ministry. I may have to do as many as 5 or 6 notifications each month. I can't imagine how hard it must be for Chaplains who work in hospitals that have to do that kind of thing day in and day out.

What helps add to the tragedy for an inmate is their inability to be part of the grieving process with the rest of their family. For most there is a lot of guilt for not being there and it can come out in some very destructive ways if they are not careful.

It's not at all uncommon for inmates to get themselves in trouble after learning about a loved one's death. They often strike out at others or set themselves up to be hurt out of their pain.

With all that is continually going on in the jail it is not a problem to find trouble if that is what you are looking for. The knowledge of that keeps me very aware of how important it is to try and comfort the inmate and be as sure as I can that they have the right kind of attitude by the time they leave my office.

One day last week started just like most others. After getting to the office and had sent out the passes for the men who would be counseled, while I was waiting for the first ones to arrive I answered my messages.

It was then that my day started to change. There was a message that I needed to call a man out to tell him that his infant son had died during birth. The message had said that they wanted me to also call the man's wife at the hospital so that they could talk.

As it turned out they had been married less than a year. Just the week before the man had been sentenced to state prison and now this.

It turned out that they were both believers and that one thing helped to make my job so much easier. After they finished their call I was able to spend time sharing with him on God's love and encouraging him to get into the Word to find his answers. We tried to reach his mother so he could talk to her, we had heard that she was pretty upset. Not contacting her, we had to settle for him just leaving a message for her. I gave him some things to read, prayed with him and sent him back to his cell hoping he would be alright.

No sooner did I think that I was going to get back to what I had started, I get a phone call from a deputy. She said there was a man up where she was working who had just found out over the phone that his mother had died, that he was not doing well with it all and needed someone to talk to. It doesn't happen this way very often but I was very pleased to see this deputy showing this kind of concern and compassion.

As soon as the man walked in I could see the deputy was right; this guy was not taking it well at all. He was not just

sad that his mother had passed away he was very angry with some of the people within his family. In what I have observed in the time since it looks like he had good reason to be angry. Like so often happens. It either brings the best or worst out in people when death comes to a family. It is amazing how greed and bitterness can surface so quickly in some.

That first afternoon I spent a long time talking to this man, trying to calm him down and get him to refocus on the one he loved who was gone rather than who he was so mad at. He was at my desk for so long he got to see first hand how busy and hectic it can get. I know it went a long way with him to see I wanted to stay with him as long as was needed no matter how many other things I needed to be doing.

We talked a long time, prayed and even did some laughing together, it was good to see the transformation in him where by the time he left to go back to his cell, I wasn't worried about what he was going to do.

I have called him out a couple times since then, just to see how he is doing and I have been really blessed to see how well he has done. We've had the chance to talk some more about forgiveness and I hope by the time he is with his family again there will be a different outcome than there might have been.

I could have called it a day after that but then I never got to the passes I had sent out at the start of the day. These guys had put the requests in and I thought I might as well stay awhile longer because if I didn't the requests would get backed up just that much more. When you get busy time has a way of getting away from you. Before I knew it, it was early

Changed Lives (continued)

evening and the worst time of day to try going anywhere on the freeways so I thought I would make better use of my time by trying to get caught up on my paperwork.

It was then I got another call, this time from the hospital area of the jail and another deputy wanting me to see a man who had just learned that his mother was dying. Three in one day, I can never think of any other day like this one.

It turned out this guy grew up not far from where I had, we knew some of the same people and on and on it went. There were enough similarities between us that we really hit it off.

We talked for so long that he didn't make it back to his cell before evening count when everyone is supposed to be in their cells. The deputies were very understanding and let it pass this one time. I need to be more careful in the future. I couldn't believe how late it was without me realizing it.

While talking to this last guy, I get a call, unusual for that time of night and this call turned out to be from the mother who's son had lost the baby that morning. She was returning the call and wanting to see if she could talk to her son. It was then I finally realized that everyone is supposed to be locked in their cell for the night.

When I explained to her she would not be able to talk to her son, she broke down and cried. She said not only was her son just sentenced to prison and she had lost her first grandson that morning but she also had a fifteen year old daughter who had been missing for over a week and of course in her imagination she was thinking the worst. She really did need to talk to her son and I really wished I could have helped her to do that. But there was nothing I could do. All I could do was try to comfort and encourage her

and asked her if I could pray with her. We did pray and then we talked some more. By the time we finished talking she seemed to feel better, at least I would like to think so.

I know we can't help fix everyone's troubles, most times I can't even fix my own but we can't be like Cain in saying we are not our brother's keeper either. We have to care about others, what does anything matter if we don't?

I recently met someone in the top ranks of the Sheriff's Department. Along with the Senior Chaplain from the Twin Towers we met with the man and discussed with him some of the continuing challenges we face in the Chaplain's program within the jail.

He was more than generous with his time and heard us out. He gave some suggestions and said he would help where he could. That in itself I would have considered a fruitful meeting but it went far beyond that.

While sharing with him, at one point he put his hand to his forehead and looked down at his desk. When he looked back up there were tears in his eyes and I could see he really cared. I am so used to people saying they care but to see it demonstrated like that and by someone in his position was really amazing to me.

That is what it really takes is for people to care enough to do something about it and not just say they care then do nothing.

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 1 John 3:17

Or

If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

That is one reason I like talking to those in law enforcement who are Christians. They understand the need to wage this spiritual war for those who are lost. It is the only thing that is going to make the difference.

This administrator within the department I assume came up through the ranks and in doing so has seen the devastation that sin is taking within our society. The lives that will be saved, the untold victims who will be spared if only people would care enough to do something about it.

The administrator from the department asked me a powerful question. He asked "don't the pastors in these churches understand the lives they could change if they would only get involved?" Unfortunately too many say it is not what they are called to do. Some feel they are just trying to protect their flock and that is a very legitimate concern. But there is one thing I find lacking in that excuse, where is there faith in what the Lord will do with anyone who is willing to be used? The Lord is faithful and I have to trust that He will protect. Jesus said we would be able to pick up venomous snakes and not be harmed. Of course I am not suggesting anyone go pick up a snake but I do think it suggests that if we are true to His call He will protect us.

We are heading into a new time down at the jail. New administrators taking over, new programs and new opportunities to meet the challenges ahead. I ask you continue to pray for us.

Message of Hope from Hands of Hope



A few years ago, while on a weekend trip to northern California, going into San Quentin and a number of other places, I meet a new Asst. Pastor at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. His name was Carlos Ayub. I liked his easy going down to earth ways. Over time I have gotten to know Carlos a little better and my affection and respect for him has only deepened.



(right to left)

- Pastor Bob Hoekstra
- Pastor Carlos Ayub
- Pastor Matthew Hoekstra
- Chaplain Ed Welsh
- Pastor Mike Sasso

That is why when someone from his office called me asking if I would like to take part in an upcoming seminar they were doing, I was both honored and glad to do it. The seminar was titled One Step Drug & Alcohol Recovery Seminar with the sub title Enough.

The idea is you don't need a 12 step program to get out of the bondage of

drugs and alcohol. And the Scripture used for the platform was.....

1 Peter 4:1-3

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

They have done this annually for a few years now. Last year I went to check it out. Pastor Jeff Johnson, Pastor Jim Orate and Carlos Ayub were the speakers. Little did I know I would be a part of it the following year.

It was both a blessing and scary at the same time. Even funny the first few times I had someone tell me they had heard my name on the Kwave commercial. It was definitely intimidating to think I would be standing behind Pastor Chuck's pulpit for any reason.

I was happy to have the chance to do this, especially where just a few months before, we had buried my youngest sister after her plus thirtyyear battle with drugs. At my work down at the county jail I see the destruction first hand everyday in the men who come for counseling. I knew I wouldn't have any problem finding something to share at the seminar.

On the drive down to Costa Mesa a truck kicked up a rock that broke our windshield. Instead of getting all bummed about it, I kind of laughed to myself. I said, "well Lord I know you

have to be in this, because the enemy sure is."

After arriving at the church, it wasn't long before I discovered that I had forgotten my reading glasses. Talk about attack, a panic attack! I'm blind without my reading glasses. How was I going to be able to read my notes? One of the brothers said they would probably be able to find me a large print Bible, I already use an extra large print Bible and I can't even see that without glasses.

Then someone came up with a good idea. To check in the church's lost and found and see if we could find something that would work for me.

As luck would have it the only thing we could find were a pair of women's glasses that I had to wear on the end of my nose. Talk about humbling, I don't think I am in a hurry to see that video anytime soon.

Actually when it came time for me to speak, I was able to make a joke about it and it just helped to make me feel more relaxed. The Lord really does use all things for good.

I understand there were somewhere around 700 people there that day. Judging from the response from all who came forward that day, there were many who the Lord ministered to that day. And it's a problem within the church that is far bigger anyone would think.

Check out Pastor Carlos's new website for the Hands of Hope Ministry at.....

www.handsofhopeministries.org and the link to One Step Drug & Alcohol Recovery. It can also be reached on the Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa home page.

For such a time as this

Over the past few years we have done a number of concerts at the women's prison CIW. Just last October we did an all day event where we brought in six different worship groups. The staff at CIW has always done their best to help make it a success.

So when I approached Chaplain Woodard on coming into do the Billy Graham outreach, I felt confident that it would work out well. Actually that turned out to be an understatement. Chaplain became one the members of our planning committee and it just helped to make everything go just that much more smoothly.

We had a program in the Chapel on a Friday night and then had the yard



Chaplain Woodard opening in prayer

concert the next morning. Our thinking was that the faithful believers would come on Friday night and we would encourage them to bring lots of unsaved women to the concert the following day.

Both the Friday night and the Saturday programs were a blessing. On Friday night one of the Pastors from Faithful Central Bible Church in Inglewood, Rev. Bryan Oakley not only gave a powerful message but also sang for us as well. It was a treat for all who were there that night. We also had the women's prison choir sing for us. They practice very hard every week wanting to praise the Lord in song.

Rounding out the worship for the night servicewas a man from Greg Laurie's church who also did some awesome worship.



When the worship had finished it was time for the message from Pastor Oakley. He gave the liveliest sermon on Esther I have ever heard and the women loved it. He encouraged



theladies to always remember that they too where Esthers and that the Lord has a plan for each and everyone of them. A moving message that brought more than a few of them to tears that night. Everything that first night was focused on having them bring their unsaved friends to the concert the following day. By the end of the evening there was little doubt that the women were fired up to do just that.



When we got there the next morning, the women were already hard at work getting everything ready.



Jean Luc and Yves from the Kry started things off with worship as only they can do. As with all the groups, it is such a blessing to have them give of their time and talents to make these outreaches possible.



There were also some ladies from CIW who did some worship in Spanish for us. There was a very strong atmosphere of unity, it really was all about being one body in Christ. Next came a husband and wife team that go to Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley, Frank & Ann Garlatta of Real Truz's who got down with some Christian Rap. I am not really into rap myself but as I listened to the lyrics I was getting into it as much as everyone else was.

Frank & Ann Garlatta of Real Truz's



There was a lady pastor from Morning Star Christian Church but unfortunately I didn't get her name. She was one of the main speakers and she connected well to the women.

They were called Praise Explosion and you can be sure that they did explode. But I have to say if there was a show stopper that day it was a group from Calvary Chapel Montebello by the name of Brothers N' Blues. They really rocked!



At one point Mark Sells from Brothers N' Blues got out among the women, dancing around, playing the guitar behind his head. And one woman come to us saying, that he was better than Jimmy Hendrix.

Pastor Jeff Stewart from Calvary Chapel Pomona Valley gave a message about the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years. A woman who was considered an outcast, unclean and how Jesus healed her.

I was struck by the choices both Pastor Oakley had used the night before from Esther and how Pastor Stewart spoke from the gospels. Both messages fit together so well to give a message of hope to those woman.



The most important part is when the women come forward for prayer. As seen in the picture below many did go forward.



Morning Star Christian Church brought their own worship team.



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 .

Phone: 909- 519-2216
Email:
ed@prisonkey.org
or
ejwelsh@lasd.org
Web Site
www.prisonkey.org



Tax Deductible Donations
can be made out to:
Jesus is the Key Ministries
32 33 Grand Avenue
Suite : N - 71
Chino Hills, California
91709