

Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry Newsletter March/April 2021

Changing Lives From the Inside Out!

This month starts the 34th year for Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry!

What can I say except, "Praise The Lord!" and thanks to all of the many churches and individuals who made this work possible. I also thank the thousands of inmates who have made the pen pal outreach so successful, and also the volunteers who are writing many inmates taking a lot of the burden off of me. I really consider it an honor, not a burden, since I hear stories that need to be told and see growth in inmates who surpass me in their understand of Scripture after years of studying. Some have life without parole, but in Christ they still have hope. Some are on death row, but their hope is in God, either in this life or the one they will enter into after their

execution.

We were unable to have the Day of Jubilee because of the restrictions on social gatherings and serving of food. It was a very sad decision made with much prayer.

We cannot say enough wonderful things about "The Bible Readers Outreach ministry"

They have added so much to this ministry in the time we have been unable to go into the prisons. We have still been about to provide Bible studies, not only in Virginia, but all over, even in Thailand. Mrs. Holmes and her daughter, Beke, have added so much to this ministry to help us do much more to reach the sometimes forgotten peo-

ple of society, and we cannot thank them and the Lord for all they do to make this ministry better and larger.

Even with some churches being closed and some people out of work God has provided for us and we've set a reasonable budget for 2021. We are thankful so we can continue to write the hundreds of letters each month and provide the office supplies to continue to mail out this newsletter by monthly. We once again want to thank all of you who pray for us. I hear from many of the pen pals daily how they are praying for my health and for the ministry and for the board members, who I also want to thank for helping me in the hard decisions

Just a short message to say because of the governor's restrictions we will not have the Banquet this month.

We waited until the last moment hoping the governor would lighten restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people in any place at a time. Although we had volunteers to provide the meal and people willing to speak and share, the board decided we need to, of course, abide by the

governor's restrictions and be safe rather than taking a chance of this ministry's gathering to spread the virus. Now we will be praying for the restrictions to be lifted before September so we can have the Day of Jubilee the first Saturday of September at Living Word Christian Fellowship

if all works out. We will of course give notice ahead of time especially if it is a go. Since churches are not having fellowship meals because of the restrictions and the meal is a big part of the Jubilee for fellowship we ask for your prayers for us to be able to hold it.

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Ministry training seminars are available for local churches.

Please join all of the prisons' ministries in this prayer!

I have been involved in prison ministry over 33 years and I often hear from prisons and jails all over of the poor quality of help they get for the bare necessities needed to exist in the prison system. Let's look at the mail room. Many of the C.O.s who work in the mail room either do not know the institutional policy for what mail is acceptable for the inmates, or they just do not care. Sometimes the inmates' mail will take several weeks to be delivered even though the mail got to the institution in a few days, or mail being sent back for wrong reasons. When we looked into it the mail should have been delivered to the inmate. There is much more, but that is just one instance of what goes on with the mail. My pet peeve is the staff counselors who do little or nothing for the men assigned to their case load. I know a man who had been in one prison over two years and never even met his counselor. One counselor held an inmate's parole turn-down for 6 months because she misplaced it and when the man kept asking her to see why he had not got an answer, she did not even respond to him, until finally she found the response. It was dated so she could not lie her way out of explaining why it took so long. I know inmates who have served over 40 years and I tried to help a couple to find a home plan because their counselor said there was nothing they could do. Then the institution notified me that I could not do

that, but after we had a long talk I was allowed to go ahead and help. Men put in a simple request to speak to their counselor and it might take weeks to get a response back with a reason the appointment needed to be postponed. If you talk to a counselor they are always busy, but they are actually busy doing institutional work, which is not related to the work with the inmates on their list. When the inmates send in grievances for this, of course there is nothing done since the counselors are doing just what the institution wants them to do. Now you must understand there are good C.O.s, mail clerks, and counselors, but they are few and far between.

Don't get me started with the food and medical care. The prisons are using the virus situation as a reason not to send the inmates to the hospitals for cancer treatment, and other very serious treatments they are supposed to have. Inmates are locked down 24/7, others maybe 23/7 with one hour to shower, use the phone, and be out of the cell. During the first part of this quarantine many jails, and even some prisons, closed the kitchens since the inmates who worked in the kitchen could not leave their cells, so in many places the inmates got sandwiches three meals a day. No hot meal at all for a long period of week or months! Things have opened up some lately and some prisons have allowed the kitchen workers to go back to work so the inmates are getting three

hot meals a day, but the amount of food is not enough to truly be filling and of course the quality of the food is very poor since the budget for the kitchen is kept at a bare minimum. I have been told that officials at some of the institutions know the kitchen supervisors would love to cook better meals if only the food was there for them to cook. I was also recently told that, even though the counselors are not seeing the inmates as much, their paperwork is still behind. That makes me wonder, "Why?" The institution is not having to deal with visitation, which many hate since it takes the C.O.s out of their comfort zone.

Another thing they would rather do away with is programming such as Bible studies and Sunday church services. Although many jails and prisons have restarted allowing religious programs, Virginia has said visitation will not open back up until January 15, and at my last request about programs, both prisons said they had no idea when things might open back up.

Please do not get me wrong: there are many good people working for the DOC, but it also seems to be a place that hires the lazy. There does not seem to be any accountability. It appears there are many people there who go to work for a pay check, and do as little as possible to earn that pay. You might say, "Well, those people do not

The fool has said in his heart there is no God! Ps. 14:1

When I think of April first, I cannot help thinking of people who do not believe in God, and who look all around them and believe in evolution rather than a master creator. They try to prove evolution, which in my mind is much harder to believe in than creation by God. There is so much evidence in things *not* happening by accident but created just the way God wanted them to be. Science has discredited the Bible over and over saying there was no ar-

cheological evidence of certain facts from the Bible, only to later find the proof, which they still tried to ignore. There is a Christian program at night called "I do not have enough faith to be an atheist." It is so interesting and it shows Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Certainly it would take great faith in a lie for someone to deny creation and accept evolution since the evidence of evolution

remains unseen. So as we enter into April I hope all the unbelievers enjoy their special holiday until they can believe the truth and it can make them free. I do pray for all of the lost souls since I was once one myself. So let us seek out the Lost and have them celebrate the holidays we Christians hold dear, like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and of course Easter. Let's celebrate Jesus every day of our life!

What does Easter mean to you?

How should we approach our celebration of Easter? Are we really thinking of the importance of that day in light of our salvation? Do we teach our children to corrupt the day with pagan rituals to entertain them, which actually takes part of the idea of the celebration away from Jesus. The Bible mentions God is a Jealous God in many places, and He does not appreciate sharing His glory with the Easter bunny or at Christmas sharing His glory with Santa. If you celebrate these holidays mixed with these other events, that is your privilege just like it is my right to share how I feel God might see this as polluting His special days by taking our eyes off of their importance and focusing on things

other than Jesus. You might say, "We can do both! We can celebrate and honor Jesus and still entertain our children with another type of celebration, without diminishing our worship of Jesus." You have to decide for yourself. I was a terrible man in my early life. The Bible speaks that those who have been forgiven much, love much, and I certainly have been forgiven much. I do not expect everyone to agree with me on these items especially those with children. It does surprise me at the way many churches institute the other celebrations in the actual church and the pastors go along with it. I know I seem old fashioned now, but I used to agree with mixing these celebrations. What changed my

mind was not because I am an old grump. I might be, but that is not what changed my mind about celebrations for God being mixed with the world in any way, since I see the pollution of the church and preaching of the Word becoming more and more evident. As loving children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus, can't we spend these Christian holidays strictly dedicated to God the Father and Jesus the Son who suffered and actually died for our sins without adding to or taking away from the true meaning of these days? I share this thought not to condemn or judge anyone who differs with me, but to give what I feel is a better way to celebrate. You can pray about it or discard it. What does Easter

Good Friday: What's so good about it?

As an early Christian I use to wonder why the day Jesus was crucified was called Good Friday. It did not take long for me to see how good it was for those who would be saved, to know God allowed my sin to be covered by the blood of His Son, as unworthy as I am. God chose me before the foundation of the world, knowing everything about me before that choice was made. God loved mankind so much knowing man would sin from the very beginning and continue to disappoint God.

The Bible says the wages of my sin are death (Rom 6:23). Someone had to pay for my sin. That payment is two part: eternal separation from the Father and eternal punishment in the lake of fire. In the very beginning God decided to make a way for some to be saved by accepting Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. In order for them to not face this payment for sin, God substituted His loving Son in my place. I read of Jesus' life, the love He showed for sinners, His refusal to submit to His humanity, and then how he

suffered rejection in His life even up to His unspeakable beating and embarrassment and death on the cross all of this for those who would be saved. I see that Friday was good because it fulfilled God's promise. (John 4:42) "Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed **the Christ, the Savior of the world.**" That is what is so Good about that Friday.

Pen pals need to follow the brochure guidelines for Pen Pals!

I recently heard from a disheartened volunteer pen pal. He had been writing an inmate and the inmate had him looking up legal cases on the Internet, writing his attorney, and writing letters for him to various people to help him get out. This man had supposedly read the guidelines for volunteers, as well as the inmate had been told by me we did not do those things. After writing me for a few months I got him a pen pal and right away the inmate requested things we do not allow. For some reason even though the volunteer did what was asked and

wrote the inmate as to the responses somehow the inmate's mail got misplaced or held up and so he wrote an angry letter to the volunteer because he had not gotten the answers to his questions. So the volunteer wrote several more letters to the inmate but received no responses for over months and many letters in that time. So the volunteer called the jail and found that the inmate had gotten one of the last letters from the volunteer, but after two weeks had still not responded. The volunteer called me and wondered what he should do. This

was the second time he called. I explained to let it go and get another pen pal until that man responds to the letters he had already written. My point, which I explained to the volunteer, is he would not be so burned out with this inmate if he had followed the pen pal guidelines and just reminded the inmate what we do and do not do. Now the volunteer does not want to write inmates any more. All of that could have been avoided if he would have followed the guidelines. The guidelines are for the volunteers' protection.

MARCH 2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--------------------|-----|-----|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 Daylight saving | 15 | 16 | 17 St. Patrick's Day | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

APRIL 2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|------------------|---------------|-----|
| | | | | 1 Athest holiday | 2 Good Friday | 3 |
| 4 Easter | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 30 | |

Red numbers on Mondays and Wednesdays evenings I minister at Dillwyn and Buckingham prisons. The blue numbers are the days I preach at a local church.

Mission Statement

To establish and strengthen the Christian life of inmates and their families by providing opportunities for worship, instruction, nurturing of children, fellowship, service, mutual aid, brotherly counsel, and to establish and strengthen the Christian life of evangelism. To bring the Gospel to the unsaved and to lead them to faith in Christ followed by membership in the body of Christ.

"All donations of any kind are tax deductible under United States Code Section 170(c)(2). All giving constitutes your express agreement to relinquish control in accordance with IRS regulation."

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Inmate corner quizzes and answers and poems from inmates

Answers to Jan/Feb questions

- Gold, silver, copper, bag, extra tunic/shirt, sandals, staff (Matt. 10:9-10)
- Shake the dust off their feet (Matt. 10:14)
- Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10:15)
- A snake (Matt. 10:16)
- A dove (Matt. 10:16)
- Synagogues (Matt. 10:17)
- The Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:20)
- The soul (Matt. 10:28)
- Two (Matt. 10:29)
- The hairs on our head (Matt. 10:30)

Questions for March/April

- Jesus said He did not come to bring peace, but what?
- What four family members did Jesus say we could not love more than Him?
- What did Jesus tell followers to take up and follow

Him?

- Jesus said someone will not lose their reward if they give what to one of those little one?
- Jesus asked the people if they went out into the desert to see what being swayed by the wind?
- In Matthew 11, what did Jesus say they saw in the wilderness?
- What Old Testament book did Jesus quote as prophetic proof about John the Baptist?
- Who did Jesus say was the Elijah to come?
- Because Jesus feasted and drank, what did He say people called Him?
- What two cities did Jesus say were worse than Tyre and Sidon?

Roller coaster of life.

The roller coaster of life we all must ride, without no choice of

our own we get on with the first breath of life, it starts off slow but as it rounds the first turn, you begin up hill, that's when things start to get real, your pride starts to swell up from deep down inside, like you got this, and as you get to the top, you think you're above it all, you don't need anybody, including god, you can do this all, all on your own, then all of a sudden it feels like the bottom has fell out, you're going down so fast you have no time to cry out, the devil has you now but you realize it not, because of all the booz, drugs, and fleshy pleasures, he keeps you blinded to what's really going on in your life, as he pulls you down deeper through every twist and turn, before you know it the fun is all gone, soon you begin to get sick you just want to slow down, you just want to stop, but with all the booz, drugs, and fleshy pleasures, you've become addicted to this ride, then you start to feel lonely and empty inside, you don't know what to do, you have become sick of this ride, so you try

to get off but it's going too fast, round and round you go, through every twist and turn, over and over, again and again, up and down, through every heartache you've endured, your emotions are running wild, and that's when you begin to pray, dear lord I'm sorry I can't do this the devil is too strong, my burdens of sin are so heavy, my knees are buckling under the pressure, I'm so shameful, lonely and alone, I need you Jesus, please forgive me and hear me, I was so very wrong, and with those few words, the ride starts to slow, as you get on your knees, lord take it please, I surrender it all and give it to you, you're now in control, and just like that, the ride, it now stops, then Jesus reaches down and lifts you up out of that roller coaster ride that has made you bound for so long, no more up and down, no more round and round, the ride is now over as he places you on solid ground.

One of my inmate pen pals.