

Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry

Sept / Oct 2024

Changing Lives From The Inside Out

The headline for this month;
The Day of Jubilee

Here are pictures of some of those who attended last year.

This year's Jubilee will be held September 28th at Living Word Christian Fellowship Church at 5150 Lowesville Road, Arrington VA 22922. The event will start at 10:30 as we mentioned in the last newsletter. Please feel free to invite anyone who might be interested in anything to do with prison ministry. You can see at the lower right side of this page the areas this ministry tries to be involved in. There will be time to discuss facets of the outreaches and reports from volunteers and ex-inmates alike, who have been affected through the Word of God being spread throughout the jails and prisons.

Last year some of the ex-offenders who had been out of prison for several years shared how the Lord is now using them in His work in the jails and prisons. These kinds of testimonies counter act all of the reports about men and women re-offending and returning to prison. You rarely hear of the ones who stay out and do a lot of good, who have been changed through the Word of God shared with them while they were incarcerated. I have multitudes of such testimonies shared with me all of the time. Hopefully you will hear more when attending the Jubilee. I hear most every year that the testimonies are the best part of the gathering, even though we always have a wonderful meal. Some of the testimonies come from those blessed

by the pen pal ministry outreach, both by the volunteers who write those incarcerated and those who are blessed by letters at mail call, when they had not been getting any mail before this volunteer came on board.

We also hear of the blessings from people who have been trained in the Word by the Bible lessons we mail out through The Bible Readers Outreach Ministry with Mrs. Barbara Holmes and her volunteers. Mrs. Holmes and her daughter Beke also receive lots of blessings from notes when the inmates send their studies back to be graded thanking them for all of their hard work and blessings they bring to the inmates. They mail birthday cards to those who are allowed cards along with cards for other holidays.

It is always a blessing to have the editors ready and able to edit these newsletters and any other mail going out to places other than the letters I write to the men and women. They are a great help and blessing. Of course it would be very hard for them to edit all of the letters I write each day to pen pals and still be able to get the letter out the same day I get them or mail them the following day, which I try very hard to do.

So come to the Jubilee and enjoy a time of praising God and being blessed as we show thanksgiving to Him.

These are just a few of the people and things you will see at this year's jubilee.



Board Chairman:
Jon Freivald
Secretary/Treasurer:
Lisa Miller
Other Board Members
Tim Miller
Joe Faus
Colin Whitehouse
Ronald R. Baker
Founder/Chaplain
Executive Director
Non- Board
Members Editors:
Lindsey Wydner
Phoebe King
Web administrator:
Mike King

Ministry Outreaches Available:

In-Prison Ministry
After Care
Support Groups
Pen Pal
(Letter Writing)
Mentoring
Family Ministry
Youth Ministry
Bible Courses

Ministry training seminars are available for local churches.

Pray For Those Who Society Has Forgotten!

There are many criminals in prison who will be there the rest of their lives. They have done terrible things, and their family gave up on them and so has anyone who knew them on the street. Spending many years in prison or facing a life sentence with no chance of parole seems to be sufficient punishment for any crime, still leaving a chance for the inmate to accept Jesus. Christians who were bound for hell before God called them to salvation should not turn their back on the lost who got caught by the law in their sin. Who knows what God can do to a terribly lost soul (like Paul) when they are shown the love of God from a stranger who does this act in writing and encouraging them as commanded by the Lord.

"I was in prison and you visited me," in the way of an encouraging letter sharing the good news of Jesus. I have shared stories of men and women who society gave up on and who after a Christian pen pal and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, turned a life around. That person will still spend the rest of their life in prison, but they share that they are freer now than they have ever been.

I knew a Muslim who was on death row in VA many years ago. He converted to Christianity and prayed while on death row, turning his life over to Jesus still figuring he would die in prison. Then VA abolished the death penalty and commuted those on death row to life. This inmate was now eligible

for parole after 15 years. He served many years both on and off of death row. I knew this man personally and experienced his story personally. Eventually he was granted parole, and I saw this born again Christian go home from death row to eternal life.

I knew another man who died this year who was convicted of murdering his wife and sentenced to life. He always insisted he was innocent, however, the court convicted him with DNA evidence found at the scene of the crime. This man served the Lord during his entire incarceration. I served time with him, and we were friends. After I was released, I was able to go into the prison and share the Word with him.

He and I served in the Christian Fellowship group as leaders while at Staunton Correctional Center. Back in September 2004, Mark Warner, then Virginia's Governor, ordered a random audit of a number of old criminal cases after a vast trove of biological evidence was discovered lying around in old case files saved by state forensic serologists. When the DNA evidence of this man was checked with the evidence that convicted him, it was found not to be his. He had spent 38 years in prison serving the Lord. This man was married in prison, and he and his wife served the Lord until God took them both home.

Corruption in the Criminal Justice System is Getting Worse

While I understand the need for a death sentence, I have a big problem with the corrupt and perverted criminal justice system and many of the judges who preside over many serious cases. All we have to do is look around at some of the trials going on in our nation today to know this is not something new, it is just more televised. When God sentences one to death, I have absolutely no problem with that, but man is not God, so one has to be careful with how such authority is given to our human judges. We as Christians cannot stand by thinking "these people are criminals, so they are getting what they deserve." In many cases that is true, terrible people are being removed from society so they can no longer bring harm on innocent people. However, there has to be some kind of accountability to those people dealing out what they call justice.

If we look around at some of the trials recently that seem to be political and how we can see the bias so clearly, how can we not imagine that when someone is on trial for what is a terrible crime and society, without any proof of this persons guilt, cry out in public for the harshest sentence putting pressure on a judge to perhaps, not judge on the evidence presented which shows real doubt as to this persons guilt, but instead being swayed by social pressure to convict when the evidence in just not there.

It reminds me of a trial many years ago when the judge persisted in saying he found no reason to find this person guilty over and over, but because of the pressure, this judge still turned this innocent person over to the crowd. Even though this was destined to happen, it does not nullify the guilt of the judge in Jesus' case.

Things are not going to get any better with our government or the criminal justice system, or the prison system if Christians just sit by and do nothing. "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." It's a quote routinely attributed to Edmund Burke. Are Christians guilty of this today thinking that is none of my business. If evil and injustice is happening to anyone, no matter who or how unpopular that person might be, it is all of our business.

We are in the last days. If we do not do all we can do to make these last days better, it could be our last chance to do anything to help America and the world to be a little better before the end. I would hate to think I could have prayed more fervently for the things I see that are not in God's will. I would hate to think I could have helped

someone lost, who needed Jesus. I would hate to think I judged someone not thinking he or she deserved salvation, especially looking back at my own past.

People prayed for me, and God changed my life. That is how God works. Jesus said: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Luke 5:32 So all of those who think they are so good that they do not need a savior and continue in that frame of mind might just need our prayers for God to show them how their goodness compares to the perfect God we serve.

So maybe we need to broaden our prayers to include things and people outside our regular prayer routine. Let's start today!

Prison Ministry Diminishing in Importance Over the Years Because of the DOC Policies

Years ago in the 70s and 80s, I remember having a Bible study from outside church volunteers bringing the Word of God to us. Speaking of just true Christians groups, not counting the cults, we had a service every evening. We had a church service Sunday morning, and we even had a church service on Sunday evening. All of these were from various church groups. These services seemed to be encouraged by many of those in authority. Not anymore!

Since the pandemic and the constant lockdowns, whether there was a lot of COVID cases or not, most programs were being canceled— even family visitation.

However, even before the pandemic when we were going into Buckingham and Dillwyn prisons, the VA DOC made a decision to make the men chose to either attend a Bible study once a week or a church service. Before the men were having Bible studies several week nights and attending church on Sundays. Now they must choose between church or Bible study. Of course this affected volunteers also. Even though I was able to keep an

evening service at each prison, with the men having to make a choice, many chose Sunday worship and the number of men attending Bible study went from over 60 to 8 at Buckingham and 4 at Dillwyn. Many volunteers lost the spot completely after years of service to the DOC. They just cut them out of the work the Lord had called them to do. We worked hard to keep our nights

Soon after, the VA DOC changed the church services on Sunday with some being held on Thursday evenings or during the week, and it was called the Protestant services. Each Bible study group had to specify a denomination for their group, such as Baptist, Methodist, and so on. Since I had always gone in as non-denominational, just teaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, I was in a dilemma. The institution named my night the Mennonite service. I explained that many inmates would not know what the Mennonites taught and that I was teaching the Bible. I had to end up taking that name, since I could not call it non-denominational, and the other names were already chosen. This decreased all of the

evening Bible study attendance, not only mine.

Through the years I saw an increased lack of interest in religious services from the administration as well as other programs. I remember driving 60 miles in bad weather just to be told there was no program that night. I would call before I left home, but the day shift was still on duty, and even if they said as far as they were concerned services were a go, when the night shift came on they might say, “No service.” After complaining enough about that, the program coordinator was supposed to call the volunteers if there was a lockdown, but we still had the same problem since she would actually be gone when the night shift came on. Now the staff or someone in charge can shut down all movement for weeks or months because one person tests positive for COVID. At first, they were checking the officers every couple days and testing all volunteers every time they came in. Later they stopped testing the staff unless they said they felt ill. Some of the inmates who wrote me told me their cell area would be COVID free

only to have the institution move an infected positive case into their dorm. I know that is hard to believe, but I have heard it enough and from men I trust that I fully believe it. I believe it is cruel and unusual punishment to give the men a week of freedom and then take it away for a month or more. They are not being allowed to go to the commissary to get writing supplies or hygiene items for long periods of time. One of the worst situations that came about was with family visitation being denied for long periods of time. When the family *is* allowed to visit, the wife was not allowed to hug her spouse and the inmate was not allowed to hug his children. That has finally changed. How do you explain to your little child, “Daddy is not allowed to hug you?” I fully understand the precautions being taken; however, if the family is tested and comes up negative, why not allow a hug when the staff was not even being tested anymore? There are many truly born-again Christians in prisons. Should they be forgotten because they made a mistake? I say God forbid!

What are You Going to Say to Jesus When You Stand Before Him?

What can you say that you did to further the kingdom of God when you see Jesus face to face? Who did you share the gospel with in order to see them drawn to Jesus? You might say I am not a preacher, what can I do? You might say I am home bound, and I am not able to travel to foreign countries as a missionary. What would you say if I told you that you could be a missionary without leaving

your house? Sitting at your table or desk or at your computer you can make the life of someone incarcerated brighter by sharing God’s Word and His love through a letter. This only takes a short time. You do not have to leave home to do it. Although snail mail or letters might not be as popular today; when you are away from home and never hear your name called at mail call, it is one of the brightest

spots in your day. Think of those Jesus reached out to. ³² “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Luke 5:32 If these people do not hear about God from some place, how will they ever be saved? ¹⁴ “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: Romans 10:14-15 These people have to hear about God when He might be the last person on their mind. Jesus shares “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” Matthew 25:40

Serve the Lord in a loving way as a pen pal.

This is the update for Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry and Bible Readers Outreach Ministry for the months of Non/Dec 2024

Bible Readers Outreach Ministries:

In June 2024 we mailed out 242 Bible lessons, enrolled 28 new students, mailed 7 Bibles at \$161.68 for starting Old Testament , 5 Bible dictionaries/concordances at \$102.61. Old testament Vernon Magee concordances 2 @ \$62.17 Misc. office materials (paper, envelopes, ink, cardstock) \$200.00, Stamps \$988.25 for a total of \$1514.71 (The stocked up on stamps before the raise the price.) In July 2024 we mailed out 258 Bible lessons enrolled 21 new students, mailed 9 Bibles cost of \$263.86, 5 Bible dictionaries/Concordances at \$79.66 Old testament Vernon Magee concordances O Misc. office materials (paper, envelopes, ink, cardstock) \$0 Stamps \$1465.34 for a total of \$ 1808.86.

Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry Pen Pal Outreach:

In June. 2024 I wrote 59 letter and received 12 new request during that month for volunteer pen pal . New volunteers to write inmates. None

In July 2024 I wrote 80 letter and received 15 new request during that month for volunteer pen pal . New volunteers to write inmates. None

I also received 1 letter written in Spanish which I could not read. I have no Hispanic volunteers to respond to these request. I have the letter translater and I use Google translator to change my English to Spanish to write back. I need a couple Hispanic volunteers

Please keep both divisions of this ministry in your prayers. Since I send the letter to be edited and give the editors time to edit I go back a few months so we can get an accurate count and not have to wait until the last day to add the month before the newsletter goes out.

Prayer Requests for Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry

Pray that God will fulfill the dream of Restoration House where men can be paroled upon release in the future.

Pray for the board members & volunteers of Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry who sacrifice their time and hold the ministry accountable.

Pray that the D.O.C. reduces the burden on volunteers and pen pals and not make it so hard to bring in the Word and write letters to inmates.

Pray that restrictions which make it more difficult to minister are reduced or elimi-

nated.

Pray for Ron's health so he can continue to do his part organizing the services, getting new volunteers, contacting the administration about difficulties and forwarding information on lockdown so volunteers do not make the trip to the prisons for nothing.

Give thanks for the individuals and church who pray for and financially support this ministry monthly.

Prayer for the editors and the Web administrator who help with newsletters and

getting the Web page kept updated.

Praise God for the 39 years of God's blessings on this ministry and pray for it to continue as long as God is satisfied with our serving Him.

Pray for the Jubilees attendance to include strong testimonies for both ex-inmates and volunteers who can explain how prison ministry has blessed their lives and brought them closer to Jesus.

Pray for the pen pal ministry to continue with many more volunteers.

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. Donations will be used to further the Jail & Prison Ministry. Checks should be made payable to

Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry and mailed to:

Ronald R. Baker, Chaplain

6166 Helens Way, Schuyler, VA 22969-9607

Website www.jailandprisonministries.org (434) 831-2593

For gifts for The Bible Reading Outreach Ministry, checks should be made payable to **The Bible Reading Outreach Ministry** and mailed to:

Barbara Holmes

3152 Glenn Husky Rd, Sevierville, TN 37862