

Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry Newsletter

Changing Lives from the Inside Out!

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seminars are

**available for local
churches.**

Happy New Year to you all!

What will you do differently from last year?

At the beginning of each year, I really pray I grow closer to Jesus as I continue to seek Him with my whole heart. Each year I try to add things to my morning devotions, prayer time, and daily activities in studying God's Word and developing Bible studies and messages I hope to share at a local church from time to time. It is always good to be ready. I remember visiting a church once, and I just happened to have a message I had been working on with me. The church I was visiting always wanted visiting ministers to sit up front. After being seated, the Pastor said perhaps Brother Ron would like to share a message with

us. I was very blessed that God had me prepared to have a message just in case.

So instead of making resolution which you might keep for a few months, why not look at ways to have a more intimate relationship with Jesus? What do you need to draw away from that takes time away from Jesus and time that would be better spent in the Word? I am not saying to spend every waking minute in the Word, but with the end so near, it would not be a bad idea to seek the most intimate

relationship with Jesus as possible. When I spend quality and quaintly time with Jesus, my days are always better and more rewarding. As time moves on and my health issues become more and more debilitating, I am more and more thankful for God intervening in my daily activities to compensate for age and health issues. To know God in an intimate way is to trust Him to always be there in all my situations. Praise the Lord!

We are still looking for pen pal volunteers!

Some of you might not know that most of the inmates now have a tablet and can receive e-mails. Some jails have Kiosk machines that the inmates can check into for their letters and e-mails. This will work for people who do not want to sit and write a letter, address an envelope, put a

stamp on it, and put it in the mailbox. The price to mail something from the jail depends on the number of what the jail calls "stamps" cost. The more stamps the inmate buys, the less it costs. Even if you just get one, each electronic message requires one stamp to send, and each

stamp costs around \$.40. The prices might vary slightly from place to place. Most incarcerated individuals receive their email within 24 to 48 hours. So if this sounds like it might work for you, let us know. We could use all of the volunteers we can get!

Notes about Dealing with Trials

Learning to lean on Jesus is not easy at times. When one is saved, many times the person leading them to Jesus leads them through the things to say, but they do not go far enough to explain that now Satan will come against them like never before. Instead they make a statement like “now everything is going to be alright” which is true for the long run, but they do not share Bible verses like Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” So when tribulation come, these people feel they were either lied to or they did something wrong.

Even after one figures this out, they still have to learn how to handle things like praying for an event to be over and it still continuing or having pain in their life, either mental or physical, while praying for relief with no relief in sight. Part of the learning process is how one handles these disappointing unanswered prayers when the circumstance continue like God is not listening or He is angry. I remember in the depth of some pain a while back, I was angry with God, arguing with Him that healing would make it easier for me to continue serving Him. This went on for too

long. I believe God was trying to show me that since He knew I loved Him, and I must not realize how much, He will show me how to continue to serve Him even in the most severe pain I was experiencing. Even when I cried out to Him and said I could not take the pain anymore and even begged Him if He was not going to heal me to please take me home, He waited. Even a week later, as I had maintained that level of pain, God showed me I could endure. His love for me was not shown in taking away the pain as much as it was helping me endure the pain and refuse Satan’s suggestion that God did not love me or He would heal me.

Later on when I was in a lot of pain but not as bad as the last time, I was asking for healing, and after a week of still hurting, it was like a still small voice showed that I was not responding in anger and this time I was not arguing with God or fussing

at Him for not healing me. It showed me I had grown in a way that was necessary for my spiritual growth to show others through patience how I respond to disappointment as they look on without me knowing it.

However, I still face one thing that sometimes comes across to others not like I intend it to. I always request prayer over and over for things in my life. Being someone who loves praying for others and seeing how prayer works, I expect the same respect from other Christians to mention my need to God. Sometimes people get a feeling I want them to feel sorry for me, or a certain group thinks I should speak and be healed if I am truly a man of God with enough faith. They say all I need to do is demand it from God and He has to do it since He promised it in his Word. Of course, neither of these are true. So I trust the prayers of the faithful mature Christians to pray earnestly and fervently for my needs. James 5: 16 “Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Blessings to you all!

Celebrating the Lord Should be an Every Day Thing

Make a list from memory of all of the things Jesus has done for you personally. Think about the time before you asked Jesus into your heart and how your life was going. Think about all of the times you failed to follow God’s direction and each time He forgave you and drew you back on the right path. After you are finished, praise God for each thing you remembered. The next day look at the list and see if you can think of anything you missed. Part of my morning devotional includes a time of praising God for His goodness to me. People need to remember during the day to praise God and be in a constant state of being thankful since God does things for us all day long that we overlook not knowing He was behind it such as getting green lights when in a hurry or getting a good

parking place instead of walking so far. Many credit those incidents to luck when God was behind it all. I for one do not believe in luck. I believe in the sovereign will of God. He promised to provide all of our needs through His riches in glory through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:19. It does not say just the large things are from Him. People who do not have a intimate relationship with Jesus think things like this just happen, but the closer I get to Jesus, the more I realize the many extra things He is doing for me. I forget a lot of things anymore, and I will be trying to think of something or remember something and after a time of waiting, I ask

God to show it to me. It does not always come immediately, but remember God is also teaching me to be patient. So even in my state of feeling my age both physically and mentally, I have so much to thank the Lord for. Something I want to do, but often forget, and there is no excuse for forgetting, is at the end of each day to spend time thanking and exalting Jesus for all of the blessings of the day. For some people these types of things seem too much or going over board, but not to those who are seeking God with all of their heart. Deut. 4:29 “But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him*

if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” So all I am saying is with time getting so short for the Lord’s return, and after all Jesus has done for you as an individual, how are you celebrating the Lord daily? Not just on Sundays or during special holidays or at a prayer meeting or weekly Bible study. Ps.118:24 “This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.”

Below is an article from the Mennonite Board of Missions in 1999



a Mennonite Board of Missions

Building and Connecting Worldwide Communities of Faith

Spirit of God moving at Dillwyn Correctional Center

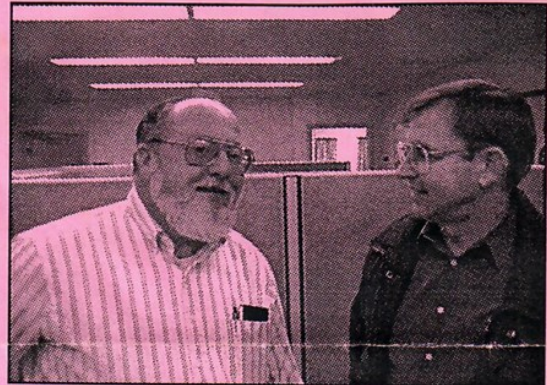
June, 1999

The Spirit of the Lord is moving in Dillwyn Correctional Center. We had the first Holy Communion there on Sunday, February 28, with 106 men present. I explained the purpose of communion on the Wednesday prior to the service, and then before the service I went over the information once again so the men were fully aware of what communion was all about and what we should know and do in order to be prepared to partake of the Lord's table:

I was so very thankful that I was blessed to give that first communion in three or more years that Dillwyn has been open to us. I spent those three years getting approval to come in as a volunteer, and then God verified His approval by blessing the ministry in this manner. I am continually grateful for God's guidance and love for those who are incarcerated.

We have been studying the attributes of God. Many of the men have a better understanding of who God is and how He works to accomplish His will in our lives.

Next we will study how to lead a non-believer through the steps of salvation. There are so many men who will not come



Ron Baker, left, VMBM's prison ministry representative, chats with Joe Bontrager, USA regional director.

to the worship services—just like people in our communities who will not come to church.

After the men go through the discipleship course, they go back to the dorms and share what they have learned and catch other fish for the Lord.

I would like to thank the administration at Dillwyn for all their kindness in allowing volunteers to bring in the Word of God. They have gone out of their way to assist us.

from

• **Ron Baker, serving as VMBM's chaplaincy consultant.**

The article above shows the early years of the ministry in VA prisons

Just a look back in time at the ministry that began as a dream while Ron was in prison and actually started in 1987 when he was released from Staunton Correctional Center. The article above is from the Mennonite Board of Missions sharing their connection with prison ministry through Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry. Ron was Pastor of Rehoboth

Mennonite Church after being involved in the prison ministry in the local jails while awaiting to be approved to go back into the state prison system. Being an ex-offender made it harder for him to be seen as someone who would be a benefit instead of a danger. Eventually through much training through Prison

Fellowship, two college courses at Liberty University, and years as a pastor, Ron was approved to come back into Staunton C.C. where he had been released from. After that it became easier to get into other VA prisons in the Central VA region. All of that was 39 years ago. Since then there have been many blessings

from our heavenly Father to inmates all over the world, as He uses this ministry for some of those blessings and as He blessed all of us involved in the ministry with sharing God's love with people society would just as soon forget in general. As I look back at the good times, I also look forward to even better times.

The Bible Readers Outreach Ministry for Sept/Oct

In Oct 2024 we mailed out 223 Bible lessons, enrolled 30 new students, mailed 7 Bibles cost of \$153.23, 7 Bible dictionaries/Concordances at \$103.98, 1 Old testament Vernon McGee concordances at \$14.67; Misc. office materials (paper, envelopes, ink, cardstock) \$659.33 and Stamps \$38.76 for a total of \$969.97

In Nov 2024 we mailed out 261 Bible lessons, enrolled 31 new students, mailed 8 Bibles cost of \$156.47, 7 Bible dictionaries/Concordances at \$100.65, 1 Old testament Vernon McGee concordances at \$17.70; Misc. office materials (paper, envelopes, ink, cardstock) \$40.99 and Stamps \$578.25 for a total of \$894.06

Rehoboth Jail & prison Pen Pal Outreach

In Oct. 2024 I wrote 146 in 2023 & in 2024 71 letter and received 41 new request in 2023 but in 2024 13 new request during that month for volunteer pen pal . New volunteers to write inmates. None

In Nov. 2024 I wrote 137 in 2023 but in 2024 63 letter and new letters received 39 in 2023 and 2024 18 new request during that month for volunteer pen pal . 1 New volunteers to write inmates.

We still need pen pal for women and men and we could us a couple volunteers for Hispanic inmates who do not read or write in English. I have to translate the letter into English and try to translate the return letter from English to Spanish. Keep us in your prayers.

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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Here are some Scriptures to Bless your Heart

Deut. 34:15-20 ¹⁵"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶"in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷"But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸"I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death,

blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰"that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Jer. 15:3"And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction," says the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. ⁴"I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

Romans 13:11-14 ¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

2 Pet 3 1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the

apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."

1 John 1-3 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.