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MERRY CHRISTMAS – AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO FRIENDS FAR AND NEAR!!!

You can undertake a lifelong spiritual journey to know God – to really get to know Him – but though you spend those years on no more than the first few verses of Genesis, you will never come to understand it all. He is beyond comprehension—so deep is the fathomless Fount of Knowledge and Wisdom that is our Creator. *Yet how wondrous the journey!*

The first page of my favorite Bible (Gen. 1:1-9) looks like a mad man was at work on it. And if you read all my scribbling, you'd probably be convinced that was the case. But oh, the beauty of delving into the mysterious Majesty that is God in Christ and the worlds that came into being through their Word and Work. Take just the first few words, *"In the beginning. . . ."*

"In the beginning God. . . . and darkness was upon the face of the deep; . . . And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." Genesis 1:3

John 1 adds to the mystery:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God all things were made through him. . . . In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

And then God made the firmament (v. 7) and separated the waters – creating a way for the world (the firmament) to exist. It reminds me of the parting of the Red Sea, where God made a path by which His people began the journey that would take them across the Jordan – a physical and spiritual journey from darkness into light.

Once again some glorious day the darkness that is in this world is going to give way to the true Light, and we will see *"the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. . . ."* (Rev. 21:9-27)

And *" . . . the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the city . . . and night shall be no more. . . ."* (Rev. 22:3-5)

WHEN Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the East journeyed some 800 miles to Jerusalem. They came asking, *"Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him."* It can take more than a little effort to truly *"find"* Jesus. *How much trouble are we willing to go to today for the wonder of it all?*

“The great cause of neglecting the Scriptures is not for want of time, but for want of heart—some idol taking the place of Christ.” Robert Chapman +++ We don’t have to worry about that in this ministry. The men and women who write to us are eager to have a bible!—

“Greetings, I hope this letter finds everyone in good health. I pray the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. I am writing this letter to you to ask for your assistance. I was hoping to receive a Bible and any reading material you can provide. . . . I am an Inmate. I also am homeless and destitute. I lost everything. But I fear not. Because I have faith our Lord Jesus shall provide. Any assistance you could help with a Bible and reading books would be a blessing. I pray for God to keep you in Jesus name. . . . Amen!”

This prisoner—a lady—writes from one of the many women’s prisons across America:

“. . . I am writing to see if you can provide any bibles, dictionaries, concordances, bible studies, Christian books, fiction or nonfiction, etc. If you do, then surprise me! Thank you!”

Over 190,000 women and young girls are in prison in the United States. That last prisoner is in eastern America. This next lady is in the west —

“Dear Sir, Please mail me a large print bible. A day by day devotional book and any book on prayer and fasting. Thank you. . . .”

As is often the case, we don’t really know how the prisoners found out about us; but praise the Lord, they do!! —

“Hi, I’m incarcerated. I came across your ministry through a prison resource letter. I see you offer free Christian literature. I’m on my journey with Christ and would truly love anything that helps me to draw even nearer to Him. Please send me some of your books. I’m very excited to be able to receive books of my own. I’ve included a few Christian subjects I’m interested in on the other side of this letter, but I will be extremely happy to receive anything the Lord has for me. Thank you. God bless you.”

Sometime ago we sent this prisoner’s chaplain several boxes of books. Like ripples in a stream, they’re keeping the Word going out --

“I’m in prison and saw one of your pamphlets in our Chapel and I grabbed one to read. I really liked it and I’m very interested in reading your book I’m Gonna Bury You. So please send

me a book. And I’m looking for a bible so I can study God’s Word while I’m in my walk with Christ. If you can help and send me them, I will really appreciate it. . . .”

Though America “crossed the Jordan” into the land God gave us to possess, we would do well to remember Moses’ warnings: “Lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the word of this law. For it is no trifle for you, but it is your life. . . .” Deut. 6:6-8, 32:45-47

“Something keeps pushing me,” he says, to read the bible. Now WHO could it be?

“I’m writing to ask about books and if possible a study bible. I’ve never really read the bible nor had one for that matter. But something keeps pushing me. Yet I’m not sure what. I’ve looked in catalogs and a nice bible is \$40-\$50. Then 2 days ago another inmate handed me this bookmark with your information on it. Along with the bible, I’m looking for any

GOD IS A CUSTOM DESIGNER FOR EACH OF US. WE ARE THAT IMPORTANT.
RUACH is the Hebrew word for both SPIRIT and WIND. Would it be too hard a thing to believe that every whisper in life is a Word from Him? Every gust of Wind is evidence of His presence. *Even that everything that happens in our life is designed for us personally.*

information on recovery as I am a recovering meth addict serving 13 years for dealing. Any and all help will be a blessing and greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time and God bless."

His is a second request for additional materials. Praise the Lord for those who continue to grow in His grace, especially when they still have 53 more years to serve in a prison with a scary history. . . .

"Hello! I am blessed and thank God for the blood of the Lamb. . . .I really enjoyed the books you sent me. I read them and passed them on to other inmates. Could you please send me a KJV study bible and some books. PLEASE. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. I will spend the rest of my life in prison as I am 58 and my out date is 2077."

God's Word promises He "will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is stayed on thee. . . ." Isa. 26:3 Think about that. With all that is happening in the world today, we should keep that posted somewhere in our home where we will see it regularly. It's tattered a bit from age, but a copy is firmly taped to the top of my desk where I can read it at a glance.

He's in a prison with some 2,000 other inmates and "new" to being a Christian. That can be an intimidating combination, and we're happy to help him grow:

"Hi . . . I'm interested in getting your book I'm Gonna Bury You and any other free Christian books you can send. I'm new to being a Christian. Please send to me at the following address . . . Thank you!"

Prison is one of the great missionary fields of the world. Sometimes those who have only months to serve can grit their teeth and make it through. But those with years to serve often turn to the Lord for help:

"Greetings my brothers and sisters. I have currently been reading the bible for 18 months every day. I can say it has changed my life! All glory to God and His only begotten Son Jesus! Amen. So I recently received a books of the Bible bookmark. It has your info about free books. I have a couple of Bibles that I read faithfully, but if you can send me any books concerning history, I would be vey grateful. Thank you and God bless you."

I was horrified (yes, that's the right word) when an internet article I came across recently suggested we give thanks for a new recipe, our beautiful floors or holiday decorations. With all of God's countless blessings, is that the best we have to offer up to Him? How about starting with the gift of Jesus this Christmas. . . . Hallelujah!

Some letters really jerk at my heart strings. Without God many don't stand a chance; but with Him, "all things ARE possible." —
" . . . I came across one of your little booklets, and as I was reading it I came to a place that said if I would like a free bible and a copy of I'm Gonna Bury You to write you. Well your little booklet was good, and it helped me out in many ways. I don't have a bible to read and would like to have one. So if you can help me with that it would be a blessing. I'm at a point in my life that I think it's time to better know the Man that died on a cross for our sins. I've read bits and pieces of the bible but never really understood it and the meaning behind it. Thank you and bless you all."

“The Bible is the only book in the world that predicts the future. The Bible is more modern than tomorrow morning’s newspaper.” Billy Graham (Note from Dorothy: If you don’t believe this, look back over some of the last few months’ predictions in the news.)

CHAPLAINS’ CORNER

How do you weigh the value of what you do when the chaplain of a maximum security prison—which not only has a library, but also a mental health section, and even a Hospice center—tells you —

“We received your four boxes of books and bibles, and it has really lifted the spirits of some of the people in here. They realize there are people out there who really want to help them. What you do is a little ray of sunshine to some. To others what you did will help deepen their commitment to Christ and encourage them to share Christ with other inmates. I have seen a man who will never go home, but whose life was changed in here and who was baptized. And I have seen another man who was about to be released, but said he was afraid he would never be able to stay away from drugs on the outside. But the man who was baptized told him about Jesus and told him, ‘I’m doing life in here. You need to go out and live your life for both of us, and be a little ray of sunshine to others.’ And he has. . . .”

Can you imagine? *This chaplain is the new chaplain of a women’s reception center, which has a fluctuating population of 1,350 women entering and leaving week by week! He said he could use bibles and books, but stressed what he really wanted was 30 composition books (the type children use to take notes in school) for use in his bible classes. And off they went after a trip to WalMart, which I knew from experience has the best price!*

It’s a large facility that holds over 1,300 men and women awaiting trial. I can’t imagine the burdens involved in trying to meet the spiritual needs of so many prisoners behind those revolving doors. The head chaplain there is a lady who writes . . .

“The Chaplains at Prison Ministry of America would like to thank you for being a faithful servant to the Lord. We greatly appreciate your donations. They have helped us share the Gospel of Christ with thousands that are incarcerated. We would like to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas. Thank you once again for all you do! Luke 2:11-14. . . .”

This Chaplain’s name and accent make it obvious he’s French, and he’s brand new at another of America’s growing prisons for women. He, too, asked for us to include composition books in what we sent—

“Good afternoon Ms. Neill, We here at the Chapel have the pleasure to inform you that your donation has been well received. Our hope is that the books, bibles, and your compositions wrapped in your generosity will make a difference in the lives of the ladies through reading, bible studies, and taking notes that may one day bring fruits back to communities. We appreciate your service.”

Another “Intake Facility” is in dire need of materials to meet their continuing influx of new inmates. Their Chaplain writes:

“Our facility takes in all new commitments to the State Dept. of Corrections at a rate of 150 - 400 weekly. During their stay here our Chaplaincy team goes through the barracks visiting with the inmates, and our team delivers bibles, devotionals and inspirational books spreading the word of God. We are

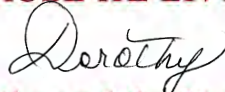
reaching out to you for donations of Holy Bibles, Bible Studies, Devotionals and Inspirational books spreading the Word of God. Any quantity you can send to our facility will be very graciously appreciated. Again, I would like to thank you for the incredible work you do and your support to spread the word of God."

The holidays slowed down some of our shipments. But I always call to make sure the boxes we send to each prison have arrived. This particular chaplain didn't answer, so I left a message. Not long afterward, he called me back. "Yes," he told me. "The bibles and books have not only arrived, but they are all gone." He then added, "Let me share a story with you. Around the time you called me I was with an inmate who belongs to a different faith group. He began sharing with me that he had been reading the bible and was impressed with the verse that says, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'" So the bibles and books you send are definitely making an impact on some of our inmates."

Lest we overlook or ignore someone who is teetering between heaven and hell, we should mark the powerful words of Charles Spurgeon, who said: "If sinners be damned, at least force them to leap to hell over our bodies. If perish they must, make them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees. Let no one go to hell unwarned and un-prayed for." Amen! With the help of the bibles and books you provide, no one who writes to us goes "unwarned or un-prayed for!" GOD BLESS YOU!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A NEW YEAR BLESSED WITH A CLOSER WALK WITH THE ONE TO WHOM WE OWE ALL THAT WE ARE OR EVER HOPE TO BE!

BECAUSE HE LIVES!



Dorothy and the Neill Family

HERE ARE SOME OF THE PRISONS AND JAILS YOU HELPED US SEND GOD'S HOPE, LOVE AND VICTORY TO AGAIN THIS MONTH:

**Kern County Jail, Bakersfield, CALIFORNIA
Carroll County Jail, Delphi, INDIANA
Arizona State Prison Eyman, Florence, ARIZONA
Calcasieu Sheriff's Prison, Lake Charles, LOUISIANA
Sevier County Jail, Sevier, TENNESSEE
Connally Unit, Kenedy, TEXAS
Bossier Maximum Security, Plain Dealing, LOUISIANA
Oshkosh Correctional Institution, WISCONSIN
Prince William-Manassas Regional ADC, VIRGINIA
Graceville Correctional Institution, FLORIDA
St. Tammany Parish Jail, Covington, LOUISIANA
McPherson Unit, Newport, ARKANSAS
Lunenburg Correctional Center, Victoria, VIRGINIA
FMWCC, Las Vegas, NEVADA
Ouachita River Correctional Unit, Malvern, ARKANSAS
Michael Unit, Tennessee Colony, TEXAS
Collins Correctional Center, NEW YORK**



GENE NEILL
Founder

THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH

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RETROACTIVE SALVATION—NOW *THAT'S* AMAZING GRACE!

CHRIST WAS BUSY during those three days between His crucifixion and resurrection! He was preaching to those who had been dead for 2,269 years!+- **“... Christ was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which ... eight persons were saved. . . .”** I Peter 3:18-20

“... THIS IS WHY the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does” I Peter 4:6.

Those spirits in prison to whom Jesus went and proclaimed salvation were those of Noah’s day who did not obey. Yet they did not disobey willfully. For having no understanding of righteousness, they had no consciousness of sin. “For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law” (Romans 5:13 ESV). But Christ was able to convey to them an awareness of sin, the righteousness of God, the penalty for unbelief, and His sacrifice for all of every generation.

Instead of claiming the heavenly throne that was now His, Christ descended into chaos, to the prisons of sheol (the dead), to make known the righteousness of God. “Therefore, it is said, ‘When he ascended on high, he led a crowd of captives. . . .’” Eph. 4:8,9

IF JESUS WENT even to those who had been dead for 2,269 years to tell them of sin and righteousness, how much more will He hear those who repent and call out to Him today!?