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FRIENDS IN CHRIST -

As Jesus ascended back into Heaven to the Father, He told His disciples, “Stay in the city until you are clothed with POWER from on high.” (Acts 1:8).

The disciples weren’t awaiting a permission slip to go and preach the gospel. They were waiting for a *mysterious as yet unknown Power* that would descend on them from God. You can have permission to swim a river or to pick up a boulder, but if you can’t swim or if the boulder weighs a ton or two, then “permission” will do you no good. You will need *Power* outside yourself.

Jesus made the intriguing – somewhat mysterious – statement four times in John 10:16-18 *that he had the Power to lay down His life, as well as the Power to take it up again.* Think about it: at no time did men have the “power” to take Jesus’ life. It was a matter of the Savior’s choice. He voluntarily gave up His life for you and me.

When Jesus was being arrested, His disciples sought to prevent it. But Jesus intervened: “*Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father; and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?*” (Matt. 26:53)

Even at that moment, *it was Christ’s personal decision* to accept, even embrace, the Cross. Not because a weak Pilate or a bunch of jealous Jewish religious leaders wanted Him out of the way; but because it was His Father’s will.

And it was *Christ’s Power of choice to die*, as well as His *Power to take up His life again* that purchased our eternal destiny: “*Because I live, you will live also.*” (John 14:19)

For “. . . to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...” (John 1:12,13).

It is that Power which even the Apostle Paul sought when he cried out from the depths of his soul —

WHATEVER IT TAKES

“. . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

Phil. 3:10,11

Any which way we can: a surprise email arrived a few days ago from Barry, an old acquaintance in Louisiana. Barry met Gene when he spoke at several meetings in New Orleans years ago, and he had just come across Gene’s testimony on a *cassette* tape from one of those meetings. Now he wanted permission to load the cassette on his current ministry website which reaches out to local business men for Christ. We were happy to send a better *CD* of Gene’s testimony, plus a few books, to help spread the “Good News.”

And always remember: if you know anyone, in or out of prison, who needs Christ, we will happily send you a free copy of *I’m Gonna Bury You* so you can “pass it on.” Or, we’ll even mail it directly to them (without your name attached) so that they may have the opportunity to know Him. And we won’t bombard” them with more literature unless they ask. :)

“Who would guess,” as the saying goes. But a few years ago I wrote a very small tract entitled “*Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh*” to put in our Christmas newsletters to you. Possibly, you may remember receiving it, “back when.” But this Christmas I put a few of the ones we have left in a box of books to a Chaplain. And it unexpectedly bore “fruit. . . .”

“Hello, I recently read a pamphlet I received through the Chaplain here called Gold Frankincense and Myrrh. The last paragraph gives your address and offers a free copy of ‘I’m Gonna Bury You!’ - the story of Gene Neill and how he met Christ while in prison. I would like to request a copy of his story. We’re only allowed paperback books. Hopefully this is not an issue.”

Even a calendar—as you know—can be a special “gift” in prison. Those who have hope of a release date—and those who don’t—but have a friend or relative coming to visit them will gather around it from day to day waiting for the time to pass. For literally years this inmate has requested a large “colorful” new calendar in January—knowing that with it will also come a book:

“01-07-2022 Friday - Happy New Year! Thank you for the great pretty calendar! Very kind of you . . . Looks good on my cell wall to give it some “color”! Smile. Something the outs take for granted. A big issue in here!!! Onward 2022 . . . Take care and enjoy your day! Prayers coming your way CS, San Quentin”

He asked for a very large hardbound book which his institution does not allow him to receive. However, we compromised with three books which we know he’ll enjoy and find useful in his research:

“Dear Publisher, I am hereby writing you in hopes of obtaining a Strong’s large print Exhaustive Concordance. I am a student of many, many important Christian centered programs. This is a new chapter in my life. I am depending on it to help rebuild a once bright future. . . . I understand asking for tools is the answer I am seeking to my many questions. Would you please consider this and provide me with this awesome tool. . . .”

We love “repeat customers!” —

“I know it’s been over 4 months since I last wrote to you. So MERRY CHRISTMAS to all of you that help us inmates with books to study with. Thanks and may God pour out His blessings on you. I have four books in mind: A good spiritual book; poetry; addiction recovery; self help. Again, thanks and may God’s peace bless you all. . . . In the beautiful Name of Jesus. Praise Him.”

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.” Psalm 27:1

Christ lives on and His Kingdom increases in and through what you do:

“I am writing concerning the possibility of receiving some publications from you. Another inmate has a Strong’s Concordance donated by your ministry and that is where I got your mailing information. I have been walking with Jesus three years now. In my last prison I had access to multiple references and received my Bachelor of Arts in Ministry. It was so much joy being able to study God’s word and grow in the knowledge of Him and His ways. . . . My request is, can I receive any reference books from you so I can restart my studies? It would mean so much to me and I will be forever grateful. . . .”

He has his Strong’s now, plus two other books—thanks to you.

Ask a theologian the meaning of a Scripture, and you may get a book. Ask a child the same question and you’re more likely to get a line or two. We overthink God; His wisdom is beyond us. *But we saw Him in His Son.* And He is all we need. This convict’s letter was simplistic – like a child’s faith. It touched me. . .

“My name is Michael. Right now I am incarcerated. I am a Christian. I received the Lord as a child. I do love to read Christian stuff. I would like to request any kind of literatures you have. And I do thank the Lord for dying on the cross for my sins. I do love the Lord with all of my heart and soul. I do still have a lot to learn about being a Christian. . . . I want to thank you for your time.”

A “lead”!!! By this time tomorrow, God willing, you and I will have bibles going into this next prison:

“I know I have written a couple times, but I can’t get over the I’m Gonna Bury You book and wondered if you had any more books I could get to read, and also a bible. Our chapel ran out, so I don’t have one. I’d appreciate it on both accounts. Also, if you know of any other places that prisoners can get books, that would help. Thank you. . . .”

I had to smile at this inmate’s request; what he wanted doesn’t exist, but we did our best:

*“I recently came to prison and am reading everything I can when it comes to the Lord. I was hoping to get your book I’m Gonna Bury You and anything else you can spare. I am also looking for a **small large print Bible** and a calendar. Thank you so much. . . .”*

There is no end to the needs:

“Recently I accepted Christ as my Savior, and I’m wanting as much knowledge as I can get. I want to live my life right from here on out! Can you send me your book and whatever else you offer? . . .”

“. . . Can you send me your book and others you think I would like. I have turned my life over to God and want to be like Jesus. . . .”

“The paper I have says you give free books, I’m Gonna Bury You being one. Any books you send will be utilized here. Thank you for helping inmates. I am in great need. . . .”

“. . . I am thirsty for His Word! Thank you! . . .”

“The righteous are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bring forth fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” Psalms 92:12-15

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:

Over 3,500 men, women and youths are housed within the 150 acres that make up the confines of this particular prison. It's a small city within walls. We've sent materials there in the past. And when I called the Chaplaincy Department, the Chaplain—who remembered your last donation—graciously responded to my offer of more materials:

“Yes, ma'am! We can make use of everything you can send. But the hardbacks, no. . . .”

But when I added that the hardbacks were beautiful new *large print reference books*, his negative quickly changed to, *“Send them! Large print is always helpful. . . I'll put them with my personal copies.”* The chaplain doesn't need large print, so he'll obviously be loaning them out to sincere inmates. *Bless him!*

This Reception Center with 1,500 inmates—and an adjoining overflow unit for another 1,400 men—is one of those “revolving doors” where prisoners stay just long enough to be classified. When I asked him what he could use, he said,

“Pretty much anything. Hardback and softback are both just fine. And you've got my name and address?”

I was touched when he called me back the next day to verify when the boxes would be mailed. (They have been.)

Divided into minimum, medium and maximum security sections, this western prison is the largest by capacity in the state. I've yet to meet a chaplain in America with enough large print bibles. In fact, I don't recall meeting even one who has any large print copies on hand. And this chaplain was no exception. He happily accepted several along with a number of “regular” Bibles, New Testaments and other Christian books.

This next prison is a maximum security prison. It houses nearly 2,000 inmates who are overseen by a staff of almost 700 men and women! Along with all the Christian books, Bibles and New Testaments, he said he was delighted to accept one of the large hardback concordances we have on hand: *“I have an area where it can be stored and made available to inmates.”*

The prison population here finally outgrew the facility's ability to house them all. So half of the men were moved to another institution. Gene spoke in both at one time or another:

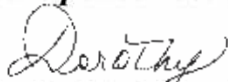
“We can always use books! We have a good turn over. We're allowed to distribute hardbacks to the main population; but only softbacks in lock down. We could also use a few Spanish New Testaments if you have them.”

It's night time across America as I finish the last of this newsletter. But some jails and prisons are noisy places even in the middle of the night. And it's almost certain that there are convicts out there right now who can't sleep—either because of the noise around them, or the “noise” within them. Most of us have experienced that inner



noise at one time or another in our lives. And those of us who have, know the noise within us can be the loudest of all. I cannot help but believe that among the sleepless right now are men and women in jail and prison cells who are sitting on their bunk, reading some of the materials we've sent to them. God has a way of directing searchers to just the place in His Word that will feed their souls and quiet their Spirits. I know. Because countless are the times He's done it for me.

God's peace rest on you—



The NEILL Family

MARK 4:35-40—THINK about it: “. . . *Leaving the crowd . . . They took Jesus with them in the boat. . . And a great storm arose. . . Jesus was asleep in the stern; they woke him. . . And he said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And there was a great calm. . . Having spoken to the storm, Jesus asked those in the boat, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”*

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE PRISONS AND JAILS INTO WHICH YOU HELPED US TAKE THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE AND JOY THIS MONTH—

Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, WASHINGTON
Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, Pearl, MISSISSIPPI
Central Florida Reception Center, Orlando, FLORIDA
Potosi Correctional Center, Mineral Point, MISSOURI
Wallace Unit, Colorado City, TEXAS
SWVRJA- HAYSI Facility, Haysi, VIRGINIA
Gulf Correctional Center, Wewahitchka, FLORIDA
Ocean County Jail, Toms River, NEW JERSEY
United States Penitentiary, Adelanto, CALIFORNIA
Dona Ana County Detention Center, Las Cruces, NEW MEXICO
Mike Durfee State Prison, Springfield, SOUTH DAKOTA
Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center, Mauston, WISCONSIN
Sussex Correctional Institution, Georgetown, DELAWARE
San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CALIFORNIA
Eastern Correctional Center, Westover, MARYLAND
Central Florida Reception and Classification Center, Orlando, FLORIDA
Labette County Jail, Oswego, KANSAS
California State Prison, Norco, CALIFORNIA
Lafayette County Detention Center, Oxford, MISSISSIPPI
Central Mississippi Correctional Center, Pearl, MISSISSIPPI
Manatee County Jail, Palmetto, FLORIDA
Monroe Detention Center, Woodland, CALIFORNIA
Marquette Branch Prison, Marquette, MICHIGAN
St. Tammany Parish Jail, Covington, LOUISIANA
Florida State Prison, Raiford, FLORIDA
Red Rock Correctional Center, Eloy, ARIZONA
Piedmont Correctional Institution, Salisbury, NORTH CAROLINA



GENE NEILL
Founder

THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH

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~ DATED MATERIAL ~
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ONCE UPON A FLYING SAUCER PSALM 139:7-10

LONG BEFORE we knew the Lord was waiting “patiently” for us, Gene and I were on one of our sailing trips around the Bahamas. This particular evening we were on the return leg from Nassau to Miami. It was early night; Gene slept below while I listened to the news and “manned the tiller,” aiming at the glow of Miami. *“The three-month dry spell shows no signs of lifting,” the newsman intoned. But as I watched the horizon, what seemed like a star lifted up over enormous but shallow (730 sq miles, 9’ deep) Lake Okeechobee north of Miami. “Odd.” I thought. “It almost appears to be moving our direction.” “GENE—COME OUT HERE!”* My tone must have suggested an impending disaster, because moments later Gene bounded thru the hatchway. *“Look!”* I pointed at the sky.

“A star.” Gene said with a glance as he turned to go below again. *“Gene, it’s moving! Fast!”* My tone regained his attention. *And as we watched, seconds later the “star” finished covering the 90 miles from “Lake O”. And halfway across the Gulf now, at a slight angle not too far above our heads, it stopped. I mean, dead still in the sky.* Gene was on his feet, waving madly. *“What are you doing!?? I demanded, yanking on his arm to sit down. “Whatever it is,” he said, “I want to take a ride in it!”* (At this point, our “discussion” is off the record, but what I said did make him sit back down!) The more or less egg-shaped object was the same shape at both ends. It was entirely encircled with “windows”, all blinking with lights, and was rotating (360 degrees) at almost a “walking” speed. Suddenly it accelerated. And in seconds it had disappeared out toward the Bahamas. *What was it?* Another mystery in the infinite universe of an even more infinite GOD.