

NOVEMBER 2023



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Dear Friends,

How can I forget NOVEMBER and all it means to our family!?! It was the month Gene entered the fortress they call the Federal Penitentiary in Springfield, Missouri, with a fifty-year prison sentence hanging over his head. It was the day he called out to the Lord from that “pit,” and the Lord answered him. And life changed in an instant of time and was never the same.

Gene experienced what Jesus tried to explain to Nicodemus, a Pharisee and devout teacher of the Jews:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (human birth) and the Spirit (God) he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

Most of you know the story of Gene’s release from the Eglin Federal Prison just two years later on November 23, 1973, the day after Thanksgiving. But one story you probably haven’t heard involves a guard there at Eglin.

A couple of months after Gene was sent to Eglin, a guard ambled in one morning, sat down beside Gene on his bunk, and struck up a conversation with him. They had a nice long talk, and after a while the guard left.

A few weeks later that same guard told Gene he also pastored a church, and the Prison Administration had sent him to find out if Gene’s Christianity was an “act” - carrying a Bible every where he went - or if he was “for real.”

“What did you tell them?” Gene asked.

“I told them,” the guard said, *“that if I hadn’t already been a Christian when I came in to talk to you that I would have been when I left.”*

Just retelling that story brings tears to my eyes. But there’s one more thing: that guard’s church was the first church Gene spoke in after his release!

“You will know them by their fruit.” Matthew 7:15-20

It’s not always what we say, but what we do that speaks loudest...

ST. FRANCIS of Assisi said, *“Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.”*

I suspect he was using a play on Matthew 5:16:

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

“One controlling, guiding, unifying Mind must have been operative through all the weary ages to produce out of such composite elements a result so wonderfully unique, uplifting and unfathomable as the BIBLE; and that Mind, in the nature of things, could not have been human.” --- William Gladstone, Prime Minister of the U.K.

Those words (quoted above) by the Prime Minister of the U.K. are of more worth than a thousand words of most men. How wonderful it is that you make it possible for the BIBLE - which comes from the very mind of God - to be given into the hands of any and all inmates who ask for one:

“. . . I am currently incarcerated. I recently got a new cell mate who has a bookmark of yours. It has the books of the bible on one side and Psalm 118 on the reverse side. At the bottom it invites prisoners to write you for free bibles and books. I would like to receive a bible and any book you are willing to send to me. I wish to deepen my relationship with God through your literature. Thank you for your time in reading this letter. . . . May God bless the Voice of Triumph!”

It is probably true that some of the men and women who write to us and who say, “please,” or “thank you,” or use words like “grateful” and “God bless you,” have never before requested anything with such humility. That’s how important God has become to them---

“I am writing to try and obtain good Christian books to read. I would like to learn about the bible and its teachings much more. Please, can you send me bible studies? It also would be great to have a good bible, if that is possible. Thank you. . . . I am grateful to you, to God and Christ!”

I’ve known the chaplain at this prison for a great many years. So it was no surprise to learn an inmate found our information

in their prison chapel:

“I came across your organization through our chapel. It said for books and bibles to write you, so here I am. I am interested in material to help me along my spiritual path. I am still learning and seeking my way along His way every day. I would like a good study Bible, and any spiritual books you can spare would be much appreciated. God bless you and the service you provide.”

He began writing to us years ago from another prison. Now he’s in San Quentin, (where over 500 executions have taken place). Thanks to many improvements, it’s a far better place to be than it once was--

“Hello there! Hope and pray all is ok and your day is going well! Rain and fog here already. Onward winter. Went to my “elderly” parole hearing. It was a no! So at 67 and over 20 years in prison, here I stay. So with a please and a thank you if you have any type of 2024 calendar you could send . . . (staples okay, no wire). A calendar is something I guess the “outs” take for granted, but are a big deal in here! . . . Take care for now and enjoy your day. In the love of our Lord Jesus, prayers coming your way.”

As you know, the letters we receive from women in prison keep multiplying:

“I am located at the Women’s Correction Center, and I am requesting a NKJ bible and books. . . . Please and thank you. And God bless you.”

“I am in jail and love Jesus and the Bible and any Godly information I can get! . . .”

▶ **SPANISH bibles that have been gathering dust on our shelves are finally being pulled out, dusted off, and sent on their way. Here's the first of a few letters we received this month - translated from Spanish to English with the help of the internet:**

"Hello, Can you send Christian books to learn about Word of Christ? I want to know more about God. I don't have a mother in this country or family. I am abandoned here in prison. I just want to overcome the loneliness and find the love of God so that it is in my soul. May He bless you and cover you with much love and light in your paths. Thank you. Juan"

Gene said his underground prison cell was lit 24 hours a day by a single 25 watt light bulb. But it is in the darkness that the Light of the world shines brightest:

"I'm currently incarcerated in the County Detention Center. I recently accepted Christ in my life and am looking for Bible correspondence studies. I also would like any material that would give me a better understanding of my everyday reading and prayers. May God bless everything in every way that you do."

"God created man for incorruption, in the image of His own eternity." WOS 2:23

He may be a "baby" in the faith, but he's eager to learn, and we're doing all we can to help:

"My name is Robert. I am a baby in the walk with our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . I am an indigent inmate without family or support and would be grateful for help with anything you can provide. Here are some books in which I am interested I am looking to really study and need help with as much as you can help with. . . . Please and thank you for your help and assistance. G-d bless."

This "letter" - such as it is - was a sad thing to see. Written on one-half of a piece of lined child's note paper, it had been torn in half (probably so they'd have another piece for a second letter) and written with a pencil:

"My name is M---. Me and P--- are in the same jail. We share a love for God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I am fairly new with the Bible. I've

"I hope that the day is near at hand when the advent of the great God will appear; for all things everywhere are boiling, burning, moving, falling, sinking, groaning." Martin Luther

been reading it off and on for two years. My favorite is the Women's Devotional. If you can gift me with one, and any God-related faith books, I'd be grateful. . . ."

There is no denying the so-called "romance" languages, such as French, and in this case Spanish (translated), often have a flowery beauty that isn't always present in our English:

"I would like a copy of the book I'm Gonna Bury You. I write in search of knowledge of God's Word in preparation for a new self And I thank you for reading this letter and for your work and consideration for us prisoners. May God bless you and fill you with grace and love for all your beautiful work for your brothers in Christ. Amen, amen, amen."

By some means, God led him to us:

"I'm writing to see about any free literature. My paper says write for the book I'm Gonna Bury You. I was also needing a bible and concordance today, and any other free literature, please. Thank you."

Don't worry that others will think you're either too religious or maybe not religious enough. Some people are never satisfied no matter how hard you try. Remember the leaders of Jesus' day hated Him - though He healed the blind, cleansed the lepers and raised the dead. I Peter 3:15

CHAPLAINS' CORNER

Halloween was only a day or two past, Thanksgiving was still on the way, when this chaplain not only happily thanked me for the boxes of books we sent, but also wished me seasons greeting through the end of the year: *"Yes, ma'm. . . . Thank you for sending the books. . . . Have a good day and a Merry Christmas!"*

This Chaplain was soft spoken and sounded really tired. And why wouldn't he be: *he's the only chaplain in a prison of well over 2,000 inmates - the second largest in his state!* I've never talked to him before, and he was reluctant to talk to me. Rules in some prisons about things coming in from outside are getting much stricter. Finally he told me, *"I'll tell you my name because we need bibles. But don't use it on the packages. Just address the boxes to the Office of the Chaplain. . . ."*

Some chaplains really love their jobs. They are the ones who know they have truly been called by the Lord. And as difficult as the job may sometimes be, they count the privilege of answering that call more important than the difficulties that come with it:

"Ms. Dorothy we need bibles for sure. . . . And even though we haven't met personally, I appreciate what you do. There's a big turnover here [it's a very large jail] and the inmates are allowed to take their books or bible home with them when they're released, which is good. But that means we can always use more. . . ."

I had the great pleasure of talking with a chaplain in Alaska this week. He arrived there a few years after Gene and I left. Led by the Lord, his ministry took him into the cities (few) and towns (many), and Eskimo villages. He traveled by canoe when he could in the spring and summer, and by dog sled in the winter. He started small churches and lent a helping hand when Teen Challenge (now Adult and Teen Challenge) got its beginnings. *"Wherever the Lord led me, He provided."* He told me. And now the Lord has him serving a far larger "congregation" as a prison chaplain. And yes - *God bless you* - he said he most definitely could use bibles and books!

Back here in the "lower 48," this East Coast chaplain wasted no time in responding to receipt of the boxes you sent. He emailed his thanks and this *not-so-subtle "hint"---*

"Dorothy, Thanks for everything! The NKJV Bibles are great! I will run through those in no time at all. If you receive more and are able to send them, I will gladly receive them. And the books have been a blessing too, along with all the rest. Thanks so much. I pray God's continued peace and grace upon you and your family and your ministry! . . ."

She's kind and genteel on the phone, but she's chaplain in a prison with 1,500 men! She must have a great love of the Lord and a back bone of steel. I liked her immediately. Three boxes of Bibles and books went out to her this week - thanks to you~!!!

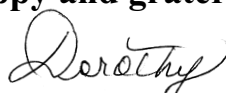
Once again, the Sergeant of this busy county jail in the Pacific NW welcomed another offer of bibles and books. He has a "tough" job. But he also leads a Sunday service in the jail! The Lord knows His people!

I trust your THANKSGIVING left you with grateful hearts for the many blessings we too often take for granted, not the least of which is that the Lord God of the universe calls us His own and waits for us with open arms just around the next bend in the road.

As we celebrated His goodness on that special day, we now look forward to celebrating a still greater day - the day Christ was born. For most of us that means family gathered together around a Christmas tree, and maybe a gift or two - or more if you're grandchildren. Smile. And that is fitting. But He wants us to also go to the world and spread the good news that the best Gift that has ever been given, and that though some 2,000 years ago, is still available – His love, even His life, for the hurting.

May His love overflow in an indescribable peace and joy in *YOUR* hearts this Christmas and on through all Eternity to come.

Happy and grateful,



The Neill Family

HERE ARE SOME OF THE PRISONS TO WHICH YOU HELPED US SEND BOOKS AND BIBLES AND RELATED MATERIALS AGAIN THIS MONTH:

- Shawnee Correctional Center, Vienna, ILLINOIS**
- High Desert State Prison, Indian Springs, NEVADA**
- Graceville Correctional Facility, Graceville, FLORIDA**
- Raymond Laborde Correctional Center, Cottonport, LOUISIANA**
- York County Prison, PENNSYLVANIA**
- Sampson County Detention Center, Clinton, NORTH CAROLINA**
- Indiana State Prison, Michigan City, INDIANA**
- Adult Correction Center, New Brunswick, NEW JERSEY**
- Robertson County Detention Facility, Springfield, TENNESSEE**
- Uvalde County Jail, Uvalde, TEXAS**
- Federal Correctional Center, Adelanto, CALIFORNIA**
- Suffolk County Correctional Facility, Riverhead, NEW YORK**
- York County Prison, Phoenix, MARYLAND**
- Southern Desert State Prison, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**
- Pulaski County Regional Jail, Little Rock, ARKANSAS**
- Hillsborough County Jail, Tampa, FLORIDA**
- Coyote Ridge Correctional Center, Connell, WASHINGTON**
- Pinellas County Jail, Pinellas, FLORIDA**
- Shelby County Jail, Memphis, TENNESSEE**
- Anchorage Correctional Complex, ALASKA**
- Beaver County Correctional Facility, PENNSYLVANIA**
- Broward Sheriff's Offices, Fort Lauderdale, FLORIDA**
- Allen Correctional Center, Kinder, LOUISIANA**



GENE NEILL
Founder

THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH

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- DATED MATERIAL -
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ONLY BELIEVE

“DO WHATEVER HE (Jesus) TELLS YOU,” Mary said to the servants at the wedding in Cana. ***(Good advice in every era.)*** They had run out of wine - a significant social faux pas in those days when the bridegroom was responsible for the costs of the wedding.

Although Jesus was there, His ministry had not yet formally begun. The next three years would be the most important years of human history. Responding to His mother’s request would make turning water into wine the first of His public miracles. And Jesus’ response seemed to indicate He felt her request was untimely, for He said to her, ***“What does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”*** Mary was probably unaware that the cross loomed on the horizon. But she had no doubts but that her son could rectify a potentially embarrassing social situation. Why it was so important to her personally that she brought it to his attention, we don’t know. Perhaps the bridegroom’s family and Mary’s were related. In any event, she knew what Jesus could do and sought His help.

Numerous and varied opinions can be found on the internet attempting to explain why Jesus did as His mother asked, even though His reply to her request makes it appear He was reluctant to do so.

The Bible simply says, ***this “sign [turning the water into wine] revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.”*** John 2:9-11

No further explanation is needed. ***Like His disciples, we need only to believe.***