

Greetings

This is our premier issue of the **Prison Book Project** newsletter. We hope to keep you informed on our status, major events, and needs in this, the team effort toward *Touching Lives Behind Bars*. May the information we share in this newsletter be an inspiration and encouragement to all.

Our Mission

"I was in prison and you came to Me. Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

Matthew 25: 36

We desire to introduce prisoners to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, help them build a firm foundation of faith and equip them to minister to others whether they remain in prison or are released.

Prayer Needs

- For the prisoners who read
- For the chaplains
- Ray's energy and wisdom
- Kazuko's health care needs
- New warehouse facility
- Finances
- New copy machine
- Volunteers

FROM RAY

Prison Book Project has come a long way since 1994, but we're really just getting started. There have been good lessons, valuable experiences, relationships built, and a foundation laid. Because I heard God's voice one day in 1994, I started supplying books to one local jail. It was pretty much a one-man operation, but one dedicated man got a lot done.

In 1997 I began shipping nationwide. By 2001, my wife and I, and many volunteers prompted by God to get involved, were serving more than 750 facilities and missionaries in six countries. Now, in 2005, 11 years since we started, we are supplying 1,100 facilities in 50 states and have sent books to over 25 countries via missionaries.

Our purpose is to provide material that will result in reflection, self-inspection and changed lives. In most cases, incarceration is a traumatic and devastating experience, tearing up a person's entire life and self-image. Since God planned that seeds should grow better when the ground has been plowed, we are taking the opportunity to plant good seed into these plowed lives.

It is amazing that we have been able to do all this with an office of 1,000 square feet and a storage facility without electrical power. God has provided. With this newsletter, we have embarked upon a new level of commitment. We will no longer be satisfied with the restrictions of the past. We would like to be able to send reading material to the men and women of our current 1,100 prisons four times a year. To do that, we need a facility of 5,000 square feet with air conditioning (books deteriorate rapidly in Florida's humidity), electricity, and three fulltime people sending out 55 boxes a day.

In addition to that, we want to serve the 1,300 other prisons that have asked and are waiting for help for their prisoners, too. That's about 1,690,000 prisoners (going by the average prison population)--one million, six hundred and ninety thousand men and women who want to read Christian material but can't get it because we don't have the space or money to prepare and send it. To reach all of these, we need a building with 10,000 square feet, electricity, air conditioning, three or four networked computers and six fulltime workers.

That is the dream. And the dream must be getting near: our current leaky storage facility could be scheduled for demolition with only one month's notice to make room for a condominium and shopping complex. We don't know where we would move from there. But God has provided talented and skilled volunteers to catapult the work to new and exciting levels. The talents and skills that I do not have, but have found in these new volunteers, will help to reduce this gigantic mountain-sized task into tiny molehills. Publishers, authors, chaplains, inmates, and some plain old (or not so old ☺) folks in the hand of God are participants in the planting, watering, fertilizing and harvesting in the prisons. God has always provided what we have needed before, and we trust that He is preparing all that we need to keep the work going.

Perhaps God is prompting you to help. If so, say Yes, pray, send support and ask your church to support us as a mission. You can contact us at 321-269-4100, or P.O. Box 1146, Sharpes, FL, 32959 or prisonbookproject@earthlink.net.

Letters

“Fine Print”

*Pastor A. (Sandy) Robertson
New Covenant Fellowship*

...Thank you for the Books I Received some time Last year...On July 12,2005 In my cell while I was Reading T. D .Jake’s WOMAN THOU ART LOOSED! I gave my self to God. I accepted Jesus as my Savior. I cried + felt good. It’s was like a heavy burden being lifted off of me. I was Baptist in 1996 But I was still living in sin. Now I feel so wonderful....

Prisoner - CT

...I picked up one of your books (Disciples are Made not Born) I myself have just picked up the Bible, as well (6 weeks) I gave myself to the Lord. I found your book helped me along my way. I have many troubles in my life (mothers sickness, trials, etc.) which I need help with. I believe with all my soul, mind, body and heart. I feel for once I’ve found true love, everlasting love..., if possible please send me more to help me along my new paved rd....The Lord doesn’t stop with just a book, for me. I plan to follow him.

Prisoner - FL

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you so very much for the recent book donation to the Chapel Library here at ... facility with about 2100 inmates. Many of them are searching for a better way of life and good quality Christian reading material is one of the best ways for them to do so. ...In the last few days we have received four boxes of material and for the Chapel clerks it’s almost like opening Christmas presents – they are overjoyed. Many will pick up a book and say, “ole Joe needs this book because he has a certain problem.” Many times the material you send is in answer to a specific prayer & I just want to say thank you for your gift of Christian material to the Chapel.

Chaplain - OK

...now that I live my life for Jesus I love read Christian books and that all I read. ...am eager to read more and then I will pass them on to other Christian brothers that are here. God Bless. Thank U

Prisoner - OR

Thank you for giving people like me hope.

Prisoner - TX

...Some one gave me a easy to read Bible a few months back, and I started reading it full time now. I have finish reading it for the 1st time. Now for some reason I now hunger for More teaching on God, and spiritual power, and the power of Faith, and the power of prayer, I’m looking for more health Books for the soul. I’m looking for books on spirit Wisdom... My Bible said if I want wisdom just ask....My Bible all so said if I hunger ask and I shall have. ...So I’m asking you ...

Prisoner - WA

A father sent his young son off to college, but before doing so, he made the boy promise that he would continue to read his Bible every day. The son said that he would, and off he went. Not too many months passed before the son was on the phone, asking his dad for money.

“Why aren’t you reading your Bible?” the father demanded to know.

The son replied, “Dad, I said I’m broke. Why are you asking me about my Bible reading?”

“Because I put a hundred dollar bill in your Bible!”

The Word of God really is powerful (Heb. 4:12) and valuable to read daily and systematically. This has been my own practice for the thirty-seven years that I have been a Christian. The Victory Bible Reading Plan that I use can be ordered from Omega Publications (1-800-343-1111). Countless times the Lord has breathed across His Word and made It alive to me personally. What God spoke to me through His written Word was often exactly what I needed to hear at that point in my life. We are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 that God’s Word is profitable; perhaps not monetarily like in our story, but it certainly will be beneficial to your spiritual life.

Let’s consider another source of profitable reading - Christian books. Paul wrote to Timothy, while in prison on trial for his life, to make the request, “... when you come, bring the books ...” (II Tim.4:13). In the darkest hour of his life, locked in a cold prison cell, he was asking for books! That should tell us something. Books are a powerful source of hope and encouragement.

Years ago, I had the privilege of meeting Elizabeth Elliot at a meeting in Toronto, Canada. She was the wife of Jim Elliot, the young missionary who was martyred in Ecuador while trying to take the gospel to the Auca Indians. His story is told in her book, *Shadow of the Almighty*. I said to Elizabeth, “Outside of the Scriptures, that book has impacted my life more than any other that I have ever read.” She told me that I was not the first to say such a thing.

In my ministry, I have sought to help people grow in their faith by encouraging them to read the Scriptures and Christian literature. I believe we have a God-given mandate to get Bibles and books into people’s hands, especially to those less fortunate than ourselves. And that’s what Prison Book Project is all about ...delivering powerful words to those who need it most. To me, that’s a gift of **“fine print.”**

<p>2005 STATISTICS TO DATE (ESTIMATED) 960 boxes 173 individual packages 44,200 books 45 states 2400 responses</p>

Do you have a heart for the lost? We need your help. Each box of books costs about \$15 to mail. Please join our team and participate with us in this important work.

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will sponsor _____ box(es) at \$15 each. | <input type="checkbox"/> Please continue to send the newsletter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will commit to pray daily for P.B.P. | <input type="checkbox"/> Please send _____ brochures. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will give a monthly gift of \$ _____. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in hosting a presentation. |

Name _____

Address _____

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E-mail _____ Phone _____

Send checks or money orders to Prison Book Project (501-c-3 tax-exempt organization)

The Heart That Is Touching Lives Behind Bars: Ray Hall

“What I really wanted to do was go fishing! Eleven years later, I still want to go fishing, but when the Lord speaks, you better listen!”



“ I am a certified hillbilly from eastern Kentucky, according to my Air Force discharge papers. I was an Air policeman during part of my tour of duty. I helped in the administration of the stockade, so I became familiar with some of the mood swings that prisoners go through while being incarcerated. It was there that I learned how important it was to get the right message to the prisoners during their first three or four days of

confinement – when they are the most miserable, and the most receptive.”

Discharged from the Air Force on a twenty-percent disability with a bad back, Ray came home married to a “pretty little girl” from Japan, and worked 15 more years as an aerospace electronics technician at Cape Canaveral. At retirement, he thought he was ready to go pull some of those big bass from the ponds in and around Port St. John. But God had other ideas.

Ray had been counseling prisoners at the Brevard Correctional Institution and mulling over what could be done, with crime just getting worse. “It just didn’t seem that my small efforts were making much of a difference. And then one day in 1994, while I was standing outside on my patio, I heard a clear voice say ‘*clean Westerns.*’ After arguing with God over it, I began to understand. In clean Westerns, the good guy always wins and the bad guy ends up either gut-shot or hung.” God uses parables in the Bible and it seemed that the message of parable-like Westerns would impact people. Deciding to find all the “clean Westerns” he could, and distribute them to local institutions, Ray became a well-known figure at flea markets and garage sales in 1994.

In the process of looking and asking for help, the name *Prison Book Project* was born -- and the books went over so well at the jail that it became Ray’s mission in life. With Ray’s finds and local donations, he exceeded his two-year goal of 1,000 books for the jail by 38,000! In 1997 there were enough for some Florida State facilities which were interested. Using his talent for relating, Ray began to ask publishers to donate books to the Project. He told them that “if a prisoner reads one of your books and recommends it to another prisoner...and they recommend it to their family members...you will have a lot of people reading your books.” They donated, and the rest is history. Two years later, in 1999 Ray and the Project had gone beyond Florida and into the rest of the nation. After two more years, in 2001, he was venturing into other countries through missionaries.

Beyond anyone’s expectations, the ministry has grown to be one of the most successful prison ministries in the country, and it’s struggling to grow even now. Until this year Ray could treat this work as a fulltime occupation but his “sweet little wife” has been diagnosed with cancer and needs his help. He still pours as much of his stretched time and money into the project as he can, thinking of all those needing to hear of Jesus. He continues to reflect on the fact that Jesus will one day say to him, “*I was in prison and you came to Me. Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*”

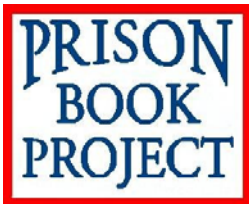
P.S. His back hasn’t hurt since this all started, and “the fish can wait!”

THE POWER OF THE PRINTED WORD IN PRISON

A single book takes about 8 hours to read and is read by 30 people (=240 hours).

There are 45 books per box (=1350 people and 10,800 hours).

So just one \$15 box of books does the work of one person working full time for five years, without a vacation!



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Why Prisoners?

Around 2.1 million people are in American prisons. An estimated 8.5 million more are in county and city jails. Prisoners are not all the same and come from many different backgrounds. Some are scared, some are confused, and some are just plain evil. Some may never change but some will. Sinners can be changed -just look at me (or you).

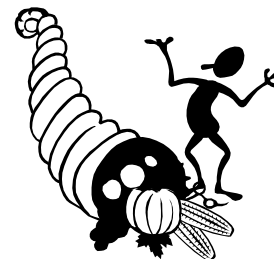
Nothing society can do will be 100% effective in eliminating unlawful behavior, but we can offer hope through our Lord Jesus Christ because prisoners read! As one chaplain put it, "they will read anything, the Bible, a Playboy magazine, or the label from a soup can." In fact, 90% of new Muslim recruits in the U.S. are largely a result of aggressive Islamic recruitment and literature dissemination within the prison system. The inmates have lots of free time, and many prefer reading to squabbling over what to watch on T.V.

Consequently, our goal is to reach the prisoners who can be impacted with God's gift of salvation by offering literature that can change their lives forever. More than 95% of inmates will be released eventually to be our neighbors!!!. The re-incarceration rate after two years for the general prison or jail population is 85%. However, where Christian material is available, the rate of re-incarceration drops to 17%.

Even one soul is worth our effort. May God raise up serious workers for the harvest.

Grateful

Those of you who pray, volunteer manpower, contribute to the project financially and give books are greatly appreciated. We, a team working with God as our Head, are reaching through the prison fences, walls and bars in more than 1,100 facilities with wholesome reading material. We thank you all. We can't name all of you; however, our special thanks this quarter go to Joel Shealy, Destiny Image, Crossway Books and Tyndale House..



Our director's wife, Kazuko continues her courageous battle against cancer. She has begun rehab and is regaining strength.

The 2004 hurricanes did not shut us down. The distribution center/office was repaired and available for use before our wonderful Florida summer heat and another hurricane season blew in! Additionally, our computers were upgraded in the process of being evaluated for hurricane damage.