

Touching Lives Behind Bars



Volume 3, Number 1

The Quarterly Publication of Prison Book Project

Summer 2007

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
- For an affordable replacement warehouse

THE POWER OF THE PRINTED WORD IN PRISON

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

There are 65 books per box (65 x 30=1950 people and 1950 x 8 = 15,600 man hours).

So just one \$25 box of books does the work of one person working fulltime, one-on-one for seven and a half years, without a vacation!

2007 Statistics Through May

736 boxes
 145 individual packages
 489,397 books
 45 states
 1,794 responses

FROM RAY

If you missed the spring edition of our newsletter, don't feel too bad; we missed it too.

Things have been really popping around here. Since the first of this year we've received about twenty-five tons of books. Since our warehouse space is limited, that means we have to get rid of books faster than they come in, and that has been a chore, a real chore.

Our active list has grown to 1300 plus. The waiting list continues to grow weekly and is currently over 900.

I received a letter from an inmate that contained the words "I have no one on the outside to help me." The thought occurred to me that about forty percent of our five thousand letters a year contain this phrase. An additional forty percent hint of writers at being in the same situation.

There is an old Spanish saying that "the offending man writes on sand, the offended writes on stone." Many times, these incarcerated people find it really hard to accept that they have hurt their families to the point where their offenses are written on stone. Love isn't dead, but self-preservation demands distance.

Some way, somehow, we must make these folks understand that undergoing punishment does not replace repentance. Until there is repentance punishment will continue. Only observable repentance will eventually chisel the offense from the stone.

Our heavenly Father waited for us, we can wait a while longer.

We could lose our current warehouse at any moment. The building owners have plans to level the building to make room for condominiums and a shopping center. When their plans are finalized, we will be asked to vacate. Without an affordable warehouse our work will be dramatically hindered. Join us in prayer for a better facility.

Letters From Prisoners

Dear Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., (forwarded to PBP)
I am currently enrolled in a faith-based substance abuse program, called Total Freedom in Central Florida.

My former roommate's parents purchased for him a Life Application Study Bible. As you already know, this is one of the world's best bibles. Unfortunately, I am currently in no position to make the purchase, nor do I have anyone in my family who would make such an investment in my spiritual growth.

This letter comes prayerfully requesting that your organization offer to me as a gift, your Study Bible #...
Prisoner - Ocoee, FL

To Whom it may Concern,

Hello my name is...I received your address from a friend of mine here, who I work with in the kitchen here at the Jail...

I've had the lord in my heart since 2000 where I've been very faithfull to him.

In 1999 I had written a check that was considered not good and received my first ever sentence, 3 years probation. In 2001 I met my beautiful wife... in 2004 she became very sick. The doctor told us it was colon cancer....I made the decision to be with her in her time of need because she needed me. But I did just forget about my last months of probation, knowing it was very wrong. Also knowing how much my wife depended on me. Now I'm faced with so much guilt, to the point of being inberable.

Will or has god forgiven me for not being there when she passed away? I pray so hard...I've done everything here possible to get time cuts here...

When I left home that day to go to work, I never knew I wouldn't return home, all over a broken taillight lens. I have no family, I've made one Christian friend here, ...

I'm trying to think positive thoughts here but it's very hard, but I keep hearing God is with me and all happens for a reason? What this would be I havn't a clue.

Prisoner - Connersville, IN

To whom it may concern:

...I am from Bogota, Colombia. I am right now been confined at ...because I was involved in a charge for money laundry. I recognize before I was here, I used to have a life of sinning, worldly pleasures and more; but after I started to read the Bible, and a very good book from John Piper (the Passion of Christ), I fell on my knees and ask for forgiveness to be saved.

Now I am in a new live, denying myself and giving myself to the Lord.

I saw the last page of the book and...

Prisoner - Sinton, TX

Dear Good News Publisher, (forwarded to PBP)

I am a new born again Child of God. I was a Muslim for ten years. I was raised Christian. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the Life! Praise GOD! I believe It too! I have a Drug and Alcohol Addiction. I struggle with everyday. Please, Please pray for me to rebuke these demons! I want to go to heaven. I fear eternal damnation. I Love Jesus! He's in my blood. I'm currently incarcerated at ...I need a Paperback Bible, some magazines and some lessons to do... PLeeease!!! I need to surround myself constantly in remembrance of the Lord and remain totally obedient to it too. After all, I've done everything Else to displease him. I owe GOD my Life! He's too GOOD and so worth. Will you help me?

Keep me in strong Prayer. I Have No family who loves me Only Jesus! Which is all I'll ever need. I'm Homeless and heartbroken. I lost all nine of my children to (DHS), Due to my Addiction... I want a new Life through Christ... ..

Prisoner - Philadelphia, PA

Dear Sirs,

I wanted to take a moment to thank your ministry for providing this prison with good Christian books. I started checking out books from the chapel library and began noticing several books with your stamp inside. I don't know if you provide books from other publishers, but all the books from Destiny Image have been truly a blessing. It seems sometimes whatever book I read of theirs was written just for me!

Being the first time in prison I was very fearful. But after reading the books supplied by your ministry along with Gods word I have a new sense of hope in Christ. God has shown me so much of his mercy and grace and I just wanted you all there to know that your ministry has played an important role in helping me to understand God still has a plan for my life. Now I have rest in my soul about my future. God has given me peace and through Destiny Image Books I realize that Gods full Gospel is available to me as I fear the Lord and understand the righteousness I have through Christ.

Prisoner - Avenal, CA

Dear Prison Book Project,

...I want to share this with you because I've been delighted to be able to read books you've donated to both Prisons. (Greenwood, SC and Atlanta, GA) So the reason I'm writing is to say thank you for the books. They've truly been an inspiration to my life + helping to grow to know God, better....

Prisoner - Greenwood, SC

Do you have a heart for the lost? We need your help. Each box of books costs about \$25 to mail. Please join our team and participate with us in this important work.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will sponsor _____ box(es) at \$25 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 _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 E-mail _____ Phone _____

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

Chaplain's Comments

November 20, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of information and recommendation for the Prison Book Project.

For the past two years I have served as the Lead Detention Counselor (Chaplain) for the Polk County Sheriff's Office. These two years have been filled with joy of seeing lives changed and never seeing many of these lives return to jail.

Inmates have a lot of time on their hands. One way to use that time usefully is to read. Their choices are few in the jail because we an only operate on a donation basis. The books given to us are often not truly desirable and do not in any way promote positive change for these inmates.

The Prison Book Project is helping to change lives by offering excellent reading material to our inmates. I have a personal library of over three hundred books and could only hope to own many of the books donated by the Prison Book Project. These book are doctrinally sound, written by known authors in the faith, and often would be very expensive if purchased off of the shelf.

I have had numerous comments made to me by inmates and former inmates that have said the books we hand out from the Prison Book Project are life-changing. This is evident as we see our recidivism rate lowering every year.

In short, we would like to thank the Prison Book Project for the wonderful donations through the years. Your faithfulness is making a difference in our inmates lives.

Sincerely;

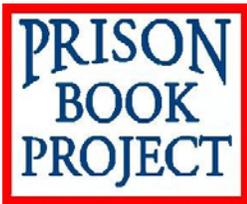
Dr. D. Lee Spell, Lead Detention Counselor – Polk County Jails, Bartow, FL

April 24, 2007

Dear Prison Book Project,

We would like to thank your ministry for being so faithful in sending us materials. We are one of the states biggest female prison institutions and we depend on free materials such as what you send. Thank you so much for all you do. God bless you!

Karen Kulp, Chaplain – Leath Correction Institution, Greenwood, SC



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Why Prisoners?

Around 2.5 million people are in American prisons and 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.

We are Grateful for...

The publishers who believe in us and trust us.

The Christian writers that send books to us from their personal supplies.

The volunteers who pick up the labor that permits us to go home at a reasonable time.

The wonderful folks at the Great Outdoors Church and IRC Methodist Church who labored throughout the winter stamping thousands of books for us.

Our Father, who supplies all of our needs.

