

July 2015

Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

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Calvary Jail Ministry Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 1

Welcome to the first newsletter from Calvary Jail Ministries!!! Our goal is to create a newsletter that will increase the awareness of the ministry that God has laid on our hearts and ultimately give Him praise for what He has done for us through Jesus Christ.

With each newsletter, we hope to share with you various updates and we would welcome any updates that you would like passed along. In addition, there will be an article written by one of the board members from Calvary Jail Ministries. Dan Rodriguez, Chaplain for Jail Ministries, will also share what is on his heart. Prayer requests and other articles will be included too.

Currently, we are serving at Forsyth County Detention Center, Davie County Detention Center and the Davidson County jail. We'll share more information on these three sites in upcoming issues. We are also making plans to go into different jails in our surrounding area. We ask that you pray for God to open the doors where he wants us to go and for us to act accordingly.

In this edition, we have articles written by Dan Rodriguez, Ellen Duncan and Todd Matthews. We hope you enjoy and are inspired by them.

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²² The steadfast
love of the LORD
never ceases;
his mercies
never come to an
end;
²³ they are new
every morning;
great is your
faithfulness.
Lamentations
3:22-23 ESV

Ellen Duncan—Calvary Jail Ministry Board Member

I had just finished an evangelism class and my mentor of the class asked, “Now what are you going to do with this new found knowledge?” I said, “I am going to tell others about Christ!” The woman looked me square in my eyes and asked, “Have you thought about going to a jail and sharing about Jesus?” Her question shocked me! To the jail! No, that is not where I had thought I would go, but I told her I would pray about it. Not long afterwards I found myself going into my first jail.

I must say going in a jail for the first time is a bit scary! No personal possessions can go in with you. That meant giving up the security of my phone and purse. And then there are the steel doors that locked you in at each turn. BAM! Each door that closed reminded me that I was no longer free.

Once we were in the pod (where the group gathered we would be seeing) I felt even more strange. What would I say to a prisoner? How would they react to me? As we sat and waited for the women to come in, genuine smiles crossed most women’s faces. They were happy to see us! These were women that had volunteered to come to the Bible study and most had been several times before. They knew the “Good News” was going to be shared and with that many would hear about hope, peace and love. Many of these women had not heard this message before coming to jail.

I was hooked after the first jail visit! God had redirected my life in a way I would have NEVER thought of before. He has a plan for each life and I am very thankful I listened to the jail ministry calling! Ellen Duncan

(Ellen Duncan serves on the CJM Board as the secretary. She has been involved with the CJM over 15 years. Besides serving with the jail ministry she works at Calvary Baptist Day School as the bookkeeper. She has been married to her husband over 40 years and has two adult children and three grandchildren. She loves people, enjoys many activities, especially the ones that she can talk with others about Jesus.)



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Todd Matthews—A testimony to the Grace of God

¹⁸ The LORD is
near to the brokenhearted
and saves the
crushed in spirit.
Psalm 34:18 ESV

My autobiography: I was born to a 14-15 year old mom and a 16 year-old dad. I was told that my biological mother drank and did drugs while she was pregnant with me in which caused me to have to be weaned off of them when first born. Since my biological mother was so young when I was born, she decided to put me up for adoption rather than keep me. She felt that she couldn't adequately care for me as she should and thought that I would do better being adopted by somebody that could. To this day I have never talked to or met my biological mother or father. There's no doubt in my mind that God gave me favor in her heart to put me up for adoption rather than abort me, and for that I'm very thankful to the Lord.

I was adopted when I was 6 months old by the mother and father I now have. They have loved, cared for and provided for me all of my life. They are great parents and to me they will always be my mother and father. Having said that, my biological parents will always be my biological parents. I'm not mad at them nor do I hold grudges against them. Again, I'm very thankful they chose to give me up for adoption. I hope one day that I will be able to meet them, Lord willing.

I first got in trouble at the age of 11-12 as a juvenile. I was arrested for arson. I was put on probation for one year. At the ages of 14-15 I was sent to a private wilderness camp by my parents because of my rebellious attitude. I did approximately 15 months at what was known as "Cameron Boys' Camp." At the age of 16 I was sent prison for the first time for 5 counts of Breaking & Entering. I was sentenced to one year. I did 30 days. At the age of 18 I was sent to prison for the second time for 2 counts of Breaking & Entering. I was sentenced to 10 years. I did 2 1/2 years. At the age of 21 I was sent to prison for the third time for Armed Robbery. I was sentenced to 20 years. I did 7 years.

³ Call to me and I
will answer you,
and will tell you
great and hidden
things that you
have not known.
Jeremiah 33:3
ESV

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⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
John 14:6

Todd Matthews (continued)

You would think after all that I would've learned my lesson but I didn't. At the age of 28 I was sent to prison for the fourth time for 6 months for assault charges. At the age of 32-33 I was sentenced to prison for the fifth time for 2 years for 3 DUI's and multiple other misdemeanor charges. I did 16 months. At the age of 34 I was sentenced to prison for the sixth time for 5 years for Assault charges that occurred on a military base. I did almost 4 years. Then finally, at the age of 40-41 I was sentenced to prison for a seventh time for 21-24 months for another DUI and probation violation. I did 21 months.

If one noticed the underlined previous words they will see that I went to prison 7 different times. That's right, 7 different times. The first 5 times were in the N.C. State Prison system and the last 2 times were in the Federal Prison system. I was housed at 19 different state prisons and 2 different federal prisons. I've been in 8-10 different jails and 5 different drug rehabs. I've also been in 4 different car wrecks and gone through cancer twice. I always tell people that this is my resume.

This was a lot of my life when I was a sinner who didn't know Jesus Christ, and quite a bit is also my life as a born-again believer who does know Jesus Christ. God has been so faithful to me. He's loved and disciplined me, but He's never left or forsaken me. The second part of my resume looks like this and all because of "GOD'S GRACE."

Continued on next page...

⁷ When a man's ways please the LORD,
he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.
Proverbs 16:7
ESV

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²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

John 14:21

Todd Matthews (continued)

I've been out of prison for over 3 years. I've been sober for over 5 years. I've been self-employed for over 3 years. I've received my "Associates Degree in Biblical Studies," and am currently about 1 to 1 1/2 years away from having my "Bachelor's in Theology." I'm scheduled to also receive my "Master's in Theology," and my "Doctorate in Theology" within the next 4-7 years from Piedmont International University. I have taught Bible Fellowship at Calvary Baptist Church for the last 2 years, and I also have taught Bible studies and shared devotions at the Bethesda Homeless Shelter for the last 2 years, and given my testimony to several different groups for the last 3 years. Biggest thing of all, God blessed me to get married to a very beautiful and humble godly woman. We have been joyfully married for almost 2 years now.

God is in the business of taking broken, crushed, and down & out people and saving & restoring their lives. Just read Psalms 34:18/Joel 2:25 and you'll see. These are some of my favorite verses. I was broken and crushed and the Lord saved and restored me. I pray that this short autobiography will be an encouragement and blessing to whoever reads it, that no matter how bad it is for you, God can and will change you if you're willing to let Him (Isaiah 1:18-20/John 3:16). I encourage you to give your life to Him! May His great and glorious name forever be praised and glorified. Amen!

Todd Matthews



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Chaplain's Corrnar—Dan Rodriguez, Calvary Jail Ministry Chaplain

Greetings and blessings from our Lord Jesus Christ for all of you!

It is a wonderful privilege for me to be able to communicate with you through this newsletter, and to share with you what God is doing through our ministry!

First of all, this being our very first issue, I believe it to be proper to share with you a little bit about myself. My name is Dan Rodriguez. I was born in New York City and raised by my parents in the beautiful Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico. I received our Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior when I was just 20 years old, at First Baptist Church of Levittown Puerto Rico and I was also baptized at this Church by my very first pastor, Hernan Cortez. The experience of being born again and baptized is an event that one will never forget!

I am married to my awesome wife Iris, and I have 4 wonderful children that God has given me, and now a grandfather of 2. In 1997 our Lord called me to ministry and I served as an Elder for ten years of a Hispanic church in Hollywood Florida, and then as head pastor of a wonderful Hispanic church in Miami Florida until the year 2007, when our Lord brought me to North Carolina.

And now, here I am serving our Lord with you today as your Chaplain! And what an exciting time it is!

It is such an honor to serve! Christ called us to serve! We all know the verse...Mathew 28: 19-20... 19 "So wherever you go, make disciples of all nations: Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach them to do everything I have commanded you.

And remember that I am always with you until the end of time."

We Go to the jails! We go to the lost! To those that have a great need of Jesus, to receive His love, His forgiveness, His grace and His mercies! Yes Jesus came to save what was lost, us!

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20 ESV



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Chaplain's Corner (cont.) —Dan Rodriguez, Calvary Jail Ministry Chaplain

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20 ESV

So....we reach out to you , the Church of Christ. Will you join us? Is the Lord calling you to serve?

How... you may ask? You may join us and be a part of this ministry in a few different ways. You may join and become one of our volunteers; you may become a prayer warrior for our ministry or become a faithful supporter with your financial gifts. OR....you may do all this and more! We need to be faithful to Him. We will give an account to Him, and He is coming very soon!

We will do our best to keep you informed, to share with you testimonies and experiences from our volunteers and even from the inmates of the jails. We need you to be aware that our ministry is a thriving evangelistic mission in reaping souls for the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few, and time is of the essence. Our King is coming!

So, I encourage you. I challenge you. This ministry was born right here at Calvary Baptist Church over 40 years ago! And it is still being faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ today and will continue to be faithful, because He is faithful....Amen!

Until our next issue, I say may God bless you. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Pastor Dan Rodriguez
Chaplain



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⁶In all your ways
acknowledge
him,
and he will
make straight
your paths.

Proverbs 3:6

Conclusion

We are constantly getting feedback from prisoners that have been released stating what a blessing God and this ministry has been to them. For this, we give praise to our Lord for his awesome love and power.

We ask for your prayers for the inmates, their families, the employees at each jail/detention center, those that have been released from incarceration, and all workers that go out and share the love of Christ.

We also want to remember how thankful we should be that we live in a country where we can go out and share the gospel. Someday, this freedom might be taken away from us and we must not take it for granted.

Ultimately, we are thankful beyond words for the freedom we have in Christ. It is awesome what Jesus has done for us.

We hope you have enjoyed our first newsletter. We look forward to spreading more good news in the future!

Contact Information: WWW.CALVARYJAIL.COM

Mailing Address: Calvary Jail Ministries

P.O. Box 25123

Winston-Salem, NC 27114-5123

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