



PROTESTANT CHAPLAINCY MINISTRY

Serving Orange County Probation Facilities since 1981

Winter 2018

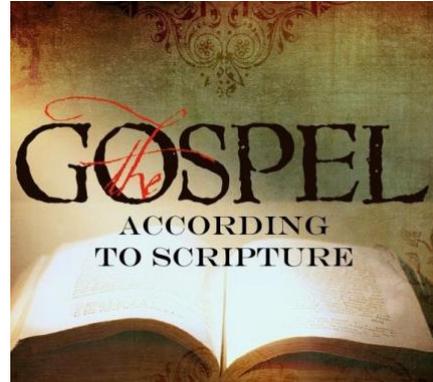
Thank you for reading my last newsletter for the year that contains a short overview of recent happenings, excerpts from some of the letters I have received from those in jail or prison, and several of the positive comments I have heard either in person, through a text message, or in a card or letter.



Erick Quezada was a released youth I worked with a few years ago and has been featured in other newsletters. I spent a lot of time preparing him for marriage but we never knew when that might happen. He met his bride several years ago when he attended Saddleback Church. Pictured above are his bride (Amanda), his mom (Lilia), and his best man (Jevon) who flew over from London to be at the wedding. A friend of our ministries gave me a \$240 love gift for Erick because she has been praying for him but didn't know at the time that he was getting married. I gave it to Erick a couple days before the wedding and he told me that he was down to a few dollars in his checking account. They got approved to rent an apartment near the church where Erick is on staff, three days before the wedding.



Chaplain Steve and I created another booklet that re-introduces the Protestant Chaplaincy Ministry to the staff within the Probation Facilities. Right now there are several newly hired staff and many current staff who don't really know who we are and what our role is within the department. Chaplain Steve wrote a history of the ministry dating back sixty-one years and mentioned the other locations Pacific Youth Correctional Ministries has chaplains. We had permission to place the booklets in staff mailboxes.



I get to present the gospel between 3-5 times every week and have done some training with our volunteers to help them have a consistent message each time they share. I don't like to use the same favorite verses each time, so over the years I have created a list of passages that can be used to communicate the gospel. Awhile back I noticed that there were at least 52 of them, all from the New Testament. Since I finished reading the Bible through at the end of October, I am now using my devotional time to create a booklet with 52 ten-minute gospel presentations. My goal is to have it completed by the end of the year and give our volunteers another tool to use with the youth they are working with.



Brian Davison (pictured above) came to our last Staff and Volunteer Training Night and shared something that normally doesn't happen. Brian is one of our mentors who gets to work with released youth. It is not easy to hang in with some of the guys who are struggling but Brian has gone the extra mile with six mentees for the past nine years.

One of his older mentees (Isaiah) is 23 and contacted Brian because he was back in Orange County. Brian went to the park early one morning and found the tent he was sleeping in and brought him to the nearby Starbucks to get some food and coffee. Isaiah has a serious drug addiction but kept resisting Brian's advice to get into a program. Isaiah excused himself to use the restroom while Brian sat frustrated with how the interaction was going. But then the manager came over to the table, handed Brian a \$50 gift card and said, "I want you to know that what you do is not going unnoticed, so don't give up."

Dear Rick

Thank you for sending me the bible! I hope you are still doing what you do best. I know you are. Thank you for being a part of my life. I will never forget you because God has placed you in my life for a reason. Please continue to send me all the literature you can so I can share it with others. We are just beginning a fellowship group and I would like to teach. Can you send me some of your lessons and one of your song sheets?

ST

Brother Rick

Thank you for writing back so promptly and sharing what has been going on. It's no surprise that you are busy. It's good to hear that less youth are being locked up. There is a lot of zeal here and it is awesome to be on a level four yard and see how big a part the church is playing in transforming so many lives. I changed about two years ago but before that I was pretty bad and picked up two new cases. My life was a mess but God in his mercy called me out. My life is different because I chose the Lord above the things of the world. Things are good for me now and I am in community college working towards my associates degree. I am also enrolled in Harvest Bible University and during the week facilitate a victim awareness class. I am really glad we are in communication again. Whether you know it or not, you have been a significant person in my life.

AR

Dear Rick

I just arrived in Wasco again and they have me in this cold, tiny, ugly cell all by myself. Being here alone has brought me to my knees. It has been a long, hard journey and I have been friends with many people. I have been thinking about how I could have been a better brother and friend. It's strange how after all these years God brought me to this point to see things clearly. You have been a good friend to me, Rick. My out date is 1-7-21 but I am still waiting for some time cuts.

AE

Chaplain Rick

I've been going to church twice a week and its amazing how many blessings God has put in front of me. People have been helping me with hygiene items. I went to church on Sunday and sat next to this old man who could barely walk. He told me to look up Psalm 37:4 about God giving us the desires of our heart and then asked me if there was something my heart desired. I didn't know what to say at first but then I said, "I want to be a better son." He looked at me and started crying. It made me sad to see him cry but it touched me at the same time. I told my mom what happened in a letter and when I spoke with her on the phone, she told me it made her day. I just wanted to share this with you.

BG

Dear Rick

I'm just here trying to stay focused. I will be graduating from the Defy Ventures Program in December. I had to write a eulogy for the class to think how I want to be remembered. I am grateful for this opportunity to be in the program. After this I want to get an AA degree in business so I can make money when I get out and stay on my feet. I have to have faith in God and in myself if I am going to reach these goals. There is a bible study course I am taking too through Crossroads Prison Ministry to help me grow spiritually. Going to church is not enough to stay dedicated. I hope someone from my family comes to my graduation.

CM

Dear Chaplain Rick

How was Durango? I kept wondering if you found the small town we buried my dad in. I finally got the chance to have a Christian as a cellmate. We are the only two Christians on the yard. I am reconsidering taking the Hepatitis C treatments. The nurse here talked me into it. Sorry I had to bug you to send me more paper. I have no one else to ask. Whenever you have time, please write back.

JO

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.
Proverbs 12:25

- Supporter**: "You do an amazing job of reaching out to help so many of those in need."
- Outreach Guest**: "Thank you very much for inviting me to serve alongside of you. I would love to go back in."
- Fellow Chaplain**: "I'm looking forward to using your workbook and really appreciate all the love and hard work you put into it."
- Pastor's School Graduate**: "Without your help I would not have made it to this point."
- Incarcerated Youth**: "You were the only Christian who called me after I was shot and I respect you for that."
- Retired Staff**: "Every time you came into the unit I knew the youth were going to hear what they needed."
- Former Probationer**: "You've made a difference in so many lives and these kids will remember you as long as they live."
- Current Disciple**: "I'm forever grateful for your love and care for me as a young man in the Lord. Thanks for being faithful."
- Incarcerated Youth**: "My mom asks every time I call if I am still meeting with you and likes to hear what I am learning."
- Ministry Partner**: "Thank you for being a part of the social enterprise task force. I appreciate your input."