

WHAT GOD IS DOING...

Quarterly Newsletter

June 2017



GOD IS ON THE MOVE AND I'M SO EXCITED!!!

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen!" (Ephesians 3:20-21)

"Oh the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has been His counselor? Who has given to God that God should repay Him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen! (Romans 11:33-36)

...IN MY LIFE: So much great news! There is so much I want to share that I do not know where to start first. Let's start here... California voters passed a proposition allowing CDCR to shave time off inmate sentences and give incentives to give inmates more credit per day. I was sitting at a day room table during mail call when I got my notice – 4 months and 11 days taken off my sentence, Hallelujah! When I read the notice I cried, sobbing tears of great joy, not caring who saw or heard. That's 4 months, 11 days I do not have to be in these tombs. Many who have read this newsletter over the years have read me referring to prison facilities as tombs. Here's why: For the past 12 years, I've seen man after man come into these facilities and adopt the perspectives and attitudes of this community, losing all resemblance of their own character and personality, never to be seen again. I also have an opportunity to get 6 more months off my sentence after I obtain an AA Degree, that which the LORD has placed a hot pursuit in my heart to conquer. This brings me to the next praise report.

I finished my 1st semester of college courses – only by the strength, perseverance and endurance God instilled within my heart each day of the 3 ½ months of study. I started off with four courses but by mid-term I was failing Biology and had to drop it. (Can you name all the components of a living cell? Chuckle!) God has given me a character that deals with failure appropriately and I continued strong in my other classes. Though I have not received my official report card, yet I know I will be getting A's & B's in the other three courses I took. I received great grades on homework, along with special encouraging notes from the professors, and I sensed I really know the material on my exams. Through this God taught me that failure is not final, and to just keep going and do the next thing in front of you (me). The greatest lesson I learned was a deeper "Dependence" on Christ each day as I cried out each morning without hesitation or reservation, confessing I needed all God had for me in order to bring Him honor and glory through this challenge. His Name is "Faithful," and He was/is so in the last semester, and I know He will be until He allows me to get that AA. God gave me a fire of a desire for higher education long before Proposition 57 passed, but 6 more months off my time will be a great blessing. One last great lesson was in answered prayer. Past newsletters reported me praying that the LORD would open doors for an accredited program. I prayed for at least 1 ½ years. God had to bring me back to CA and a CDCR facility to do this, but again, HE IS FAITHFUL!

If you have archived these newsletters in the past you've read where I've been praying for a new knee, supernaturally installed. The one I have was reconstructed in 1993 and since 2009 has given me trouble from time to time; at times swelling up to the size of a cantaloupe. Well, CDCR recommends Orthodontic shoes to those with diabetes. I have been living with pain in my legs consistently for over a decade. I thought it was just old age and abuse. I stopped playing basketball and running multiple laps at one time, running only one lap at a time between calisthenics, and maxing out at three. I've been wearing these shoes for two months now and all the pain in my legs are "GONE!" Hallelujah and Thank You Jesus! My knee is also operating with greater stability and not tweaking like it was. I am back on the court and running multiple laps in a row. Proverbs 3:7-8 states, "Do not be wise in your own eyes but fear the LORD and shun evil. For this will bring health to your bodies and nourishment to your bones." I am so grateful for this renewed strength and endurance the LORD has opened for me.

It seems that this transition has caused a shortage of mail coming my way, so I was very glad to get the Easter Cards I did from my Sister Elisa, Rita Danilyan and my Brother Carlos. But it was my Brother Carlos' card the LORD used to speak to me the most clearly. On what most people call Easter Sunday (I call it Resurrection Day). I start early in the morning making comments to those I encounter saying, "He Is Risen!" The LORD has led me to this practice for years and has opened up some great opportunities to testify of His goodness and evangelize. Well, when I opened up the card Carlos sent me, in his own writing was a BIG "HE IS RISEN!" I am blasted away that the LORD would place the same acclamation in the hearts of my brother and I and speak so clearly to me through it.

Many of you have read in the last newsletter on how the LORD has chosen to provide for me through a laundry business He's led me to establish in the building of 200 men I am housed in. I must report of God's goodness, as He moves upon the hearts of many of my regular customers. I charge one Top Ramen Soup for each piece of clothing and offer a "special" – 3 pieces for two soups! The facility provides buckets and laundry soap can be purchased in the canteen. Often, I'm told by my customers they see how hard I work at the drop-sink in our restroom and then they add a soup or two. I also clean sport shoes and do tailor work if I get time. The LORD provides just enough work to get my needs met and a little extra so I can have some coffee and a few goodies to snack on in between meals. I'm so grateful for all God does to allow provision to come my way.

I received another package of writing supplies from Dr. Joe Morris this quarter. It included typewriter ribbon, envelopes, pens and erasure tape for the typewriter. I'm blown away by how God has allowed this precious Brother to come into my life (and his wife Sandi too, who writes me some great encouraging letters) and moved upon his heart to support the writing the LORD has laid upon my heart to do. I'm equally blown away at the sensitivity to hear God's voice and willingness to follow His leading that Brother Joe operates in. How many people would spend their hard-earned finances on an inmate they met at a prison facility they worked at who they barely knew? I truly thank God for Brother Joe.

In the last newsletter, I wrote of a Sister-in-Christ God has miraculously brought into my life in the last 1 ½ years, Jacquelin C. Harris. I requested you pray for her, as her last letter to me spoke of a vehicular accident and pending neck surgery. I finally received a letter from her, which she tells me she is well enough to write. Thank you for all your prayers for her. And as blessings go, a few days after her letter showed up, another envelope with, well, envelopes donated toward this work also showed up. Sister Jacquelin, so considerate and generous even while she is in recovery.

... THROUGH MY LIFE: When I arrived at this facility last August it was evident the church proper that existed amongst believers on this 600^{plus}-man yard was struggling with some very deep issues. Because of this, and because I was new, there was no real opportunity for me to be able to operate in the ministry of the Word. As January of this year came around the college load made it impossible for me to have time to develop teachings or sermons even if the door did open for me. In May, while in discussion with Brother Sean who oversees the building Bible Studies, we concluded it was time. The LORD has now opened the doors for me to operate in the Ministry of the Word on a regular basis. In 2015 the LORD impressed upon my heart to do in-depth studies in the 12 Minor Prophets of the Old Testament when 2016 came around. All but Zechariah are done. So, even if my college load gets heavy the research is already done and all that is necessary is prayer, meditation and review. After giving an exegetical verse by verse study from Romans 12:1-5, I will then go into the Minor Prophets. I'm positive that in reviewing these studies the LORD will give me even greater and deeper insights into these ancient writings, and for that I am excited! I have at least 3 years of quality studies to give as the schedule we use here goes. I could never understand why the LORD led me into these studies at the time He did. He is so wise and knows all things, even our future needs and sincere desire and heart to serve Him. After two studies, already the LORD has led numerous men to voluntarily give me some great positive and encouraging feedback. Please pray that God will work through me in this way. I'm also in Deacon Training, as they call it here and soon I will be given the opportunity to minister to the whole Body of Believers on this yard. Thank You Jesus for this opportunity.

An update in the Intercessory Prayer Ministry the LORD opened the door for me to oversee. The Body of Believers on this yard is about 40 strong. There is now an average of 10-12 men who participate in the weekly Prayer Warriors prayer meeting held on Sunday nights. This is up from 5-6. We continue to pray for the men in this facility, their families, this facility and world issues. The LORD is giving me ample opportunity to teach these men the work of Intercessory Prayer. The LORD led me to establish "The Weekly Prayer Focuses" where one "focus" is imparted to the Body on our Sunday Service. They are asked to keep this focus in their closets, prayer groups, and any other time they meet for prayer throughout the week. In March He impressed upon my heart to have this Body pray to have our Chapel open up in the evening for Christian Courses to be given. In May it did – Hallelujah! There are now 4 courses being taught each week in the evenings in the Chapel – Answer to prayer! The issue was always the Admin in this facility being willing to provide the security personnel to cover this area of the prison. Prayer focuses are developed by the 15th prior to the month in which they will be prayed for. By May 15th, it had already been established that between June 18th through the 24th this Body will focus on our military personnel. A week prior to these dates a military ship in the Sea of Japan was T-boned by a freighter, altering its course in order to be able to hit our destroyer. Seven men were killed in their births while sleeping during this event. It amazes me that a month before this event the LORD had placed this prayer focus upon my heart. The LORD has chosen this tragedy to manifest Himself, showing that He is using the prayers of those faithful men on this yard to do His work. Please continue to pray for those that occupied this ship and the families of those who perished at sea.

... AROUND MY LIFE: GREAT NEWS! I have reported in the past newsletters that Dr. Joe Morris (MS) intended on placing this newsletter on the internet somehow, some way. Well, THE DAY HAS COME! GLORY TO THE KING! On June 22nd, I received a note from him that included news that he had placed the newsletter on his website: Joeeddmorris.com, tab-Chavez newsletter. What an honor, what a privilege! This is HUGE for the newsletter that will now be accessible to the WORLD! Only God can move within the life of an incarcerated person, develop this work after being generated for 7 ½^{years}, and then allow these writings to influence a world audience – ONLY GOD! Please pray the LORD would place undeniable curiosity within the hearts of those who read the "tab" where the newsletter can be accessed so they can read about WHAT GOD IS DOING! Another tidbit in Dr. Joe's letter to me was that he is writing another fiction book called "The Prison." I'm sure I'll have more to write about this book in the future as this work progresses, but at this point he mentioned he would like me to review the manuscript and have the opportunity to give him feedback. What an honor to be able to participate in this work of God in this way, that too, will touch many lives around this globe.

Great news from Brother Ertis Johnson (7th DA Pastor – OK). Brother Ertis, the gentlest man I know, as I like to describe him, would come into North for Facility where CDCR housed me for 4 years. CDCR left that facility and it was re-opened by ODC. Soon after that, in one of his regular letters to me, Brother Ertis wrote that he was once again holding services at North Fork. A different dynamic has been added to the ministry God has given him. He is now a Chaplain's Assistant and goes into the Administrative

Segregation Unit (the hole) to minister to those men that few and are being held due to rule violations. If anyone can reach these men for Christ, it would be Brother Ertis. A couple of years ago Brother Ertis wrote me he would be backing out of Prison Ministry. As I prayed for him in this area, the LORD led me to write him a challenging word as to the contrary. I truly believe God had impressed upon my heart that Brother Ertis still had much to give men who are incarcerated. He himself let me know that the letter did influence his continuing in this ministry. Praise Jesus that he gave Brother Ertis the heart to continue and he is now exposing these hard hard-to-reach men in an area of the prison few get the chance to enter. Please pray God give Brother Ertis and effective work in this new area of ministry – AMEN!

This Body of Believers has 13 representatives from the 3 buildings on this yard, sacrificing time and energy to pray on the National Day of Prayer, May 5, 2017. It really touched my heart to see these men come and hear their selfless prayers for our government, world governments, universities, as well as children and schools, military, the U.S. budget and many other aspects of this country and the world. God is truly working amongst the Brethren here to impact this world through prayer.

What a tremendous experience that never ceases to amaze me, when a broken man who realizes he has entered the arena of incarceration, a dark and dismal place, and decides he wants out. Now Brother Ronnie accepted Christ into his heart as LORD and Savior a couple of weeks prior to this writing. He spoke to me of broken relationships and separation from his daughter. He also expressed concern for an aging Grandmother who needs care. Humbly he prayed and stepped out of darkness into Christ's marvelous light as he recognized the depravity of his own life. Please pray for our new Brother, as I can already see the enemy seeking to snatch the seed of faith from his heart. Please pray God will protect that seed and bring forth much fruit in his life.

Hallelujah! Another Baptism Service was held out of the Chapel on this yard. One great thing is that the portable baptismal tub is hauled out to the yard where the whole community can see men die to self and rise into a new life in Christ, as symbolized through Water Baptism, and men have now witnessed to the world a renunciation of old ways and a desire to live for Christ – Glory to the King! 7 NEW BROTHERS – HALLELUJAH!!

In the last issue, I requested prayer for this Body of Believers due to the turmoil existing within it. One aspect was one of our Deacons was sat down from ministry. I am glad to report that after a period of discipline, Brother Mike has been restored back to his place as Deacon. Public Ministry is always a target for the enemy and our own flesh does not desire to sacrifice that which is necessary for this work. Please pray for Brother Mike as he continues in this ministry.

I placed this last paragraph in this position for a specific reason. I was concerned that my sister, Lydia had not written me for a while except through some greeting cards and small notes. I wrote her a letter expressing my concerns and her response broke my heart. Lydia wrote me last year that she was diagnosed with RA, a very debilitating disease... I had not heard or read of a recent surgery and the numerous physical challenges she faces with balance and extreme pain and fatigue. Please, pray for my sister. She is only two years older than me and with her in-home child care business and the zest she has to live life to its fullest, I know she is being challenged beyond the physical. Lydia has never been known to me as anything but strong and very lively. Please pray she hears God's voice during this battle, that comforting voice, and that she would draw closer to Him who is able to heal all our infirmities (Isaiah 53:5).

BOOK REVIEW

I would like to connect the book reviews with the last newsletter. Brother Eric O. (Interstate Batteries) sent me two books from the Chaplain's Office of that organization. This company sponsors Joe Gibbs NASCAR Racing Team (yes, the famous Washington Redskins Coach). I am so grateful for the generosity of this organization and Brother Eric for these two books.

Knowledge of the Holy (A.W. Tozer): At times, a very original work comes out on systematic theology. I'm not sure if this was Brother Tozer's intention, but he gets very deep and inspirational as he teaches on God's most precious attributes. I have never read a book by A.W. Tozer that was not greatly motivating in developing a deeper/stronger relationship with Christ while teach how to do so. This book did not disappoint the anticipatory excitement I had before reading it. Yes – a recommended reading for every believer who desires a deeper understanding on how to reverence our Holy and Righteous God.

Game Plan for Life (Joe Gibbs): I've only known Joe Gibbs as a professional football coach. I never knew of him as a NASCAR Team Owner who has 3 championships in that arena. I've never heard or read of his personal faith, but by reading this book I'm totally convinced I will encounter him one day in eternity. This book was derived by a man's man on a biblical scale. Humbly and powerfully written, addressing issues that men in western society face. Brother Joe Gibbs introduces every chapter with how he encountered and learned to overcome some of life's most difficult challenges. Then he has recruited a team of experts in different fields who are his contemporaries. Men like Josh McDowell (validity of Scriptures), Ravi Zachariah (sin/addiction), Tony Evans (life's purpose), Don Meredith (sex/marriage), Ron Blue (money/management), and others. No sincere man seeking God's heart on these subjects will waste time reading this book. **Wives/Women** – a great gift for your husband/man friend.



PRAYER FOCUSES

- My sister, Lydia Hunter who is suffering from R.A. and recovering from surgery.
- Jacqueline C. Harris, continual recovery from neck surgery, and guidance in the area of vocation.
- Please say a prayer of THANKSGIVING to the LORD for the 4 months and 11 days I had shaved off my time of incarceration – Hallelujah!

QUOTE TO THINK ON



"I do not so much pray that my death will be without pain, but that it will be without doubt." Pastor John Piper

SPECIAL THANKS



- Rita Danilyan, for forty stamps and a special Easter Card (CA)
- Jacqueline C. Harris, for a supply of #10 envelopes (NC)
- Dr. Joe Morris for 2 of his books & writing supplies, typewriter ribbon, pens and envelopes (MS)
- Earline Kline for her new book – "The Ways of the Lord (featured in this newsletter in Fall 2016, review coming out in a year, it's a yearly devotional – Amazon.com (ID)
- My sister Elisa for 40 extra copies of the newsletter (CA)

MINISTRY NEEDS & HELPS (Phil 4:17)

- Stamps
- 8/12 x 11 lined paper note pads

MEDICINE FOR THE SOUL

I invited readers to send me "funnies" for this section. These next submissions are from my sister Elisa. So, if you smile, chuckle or laugh, thank God for her.

- God answers – "knee Mail!"
- Warning, exposure to the Son may prevent burning.
- Joke: One whale talking to another: Whale #1: Stomach ache? Whale #2: No, Jonah's renovating again!

SPECIAL NOTE: EVANGELISM CHALLENGE – I have included an evangelism book marker called "The Sinner's Friend." The challenge is for you to use it when you share the Gospel of Christ with someone. When you lead someone to the LORD write me a note of the account, place, occasion, and time. I would like to include these accounts in future newsletters, so get to telling others of the precious gift of Salvation Christ has for them. If you had the cure for cancer, would you keep it to yourself? If you struggle in this area here's a suggestion that always works for me: Pray and ask God for two things: to empower you through and by His Holy Spirit, and lead you to that specific person he desires you to speak to. I'll be praying for you all in this endeavor.

Well, that's it for now! Remember the prayer focuses while you are in your closet. I hope you enjoyed this reading! God Bless You!



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