

God's Special Time

Kairos Prison Ministry

Quarterly Newsletter of Golden State Kairos

August, 2005

Calipatria State Prison
C.I.M. Chino
C.M.F. Vacaville
F.C.C. Victorville
F.C.I. Dublin
F.C.I. Terminal Island
F.P.C. Victorville
Ironwood State Prison
Kairos Outside Desert
Kairos Outside S.F. Bay Area
Kairos Outside Sacramento Valley
Kairos Outside San Diego
Kairos Outside South
R.J. Donovan State Prison
San Quentin State Prison
U.S.P. Lompoc
U.S.P. Victorville
Valley State Prison for Women

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Chino #20: To Share or Not To Share

Chino California state prison, March 2005, Kairos #20. Ned Webster was Rector, and I, Don Dunn, his advisor, and Zack Scoggin, Observer. The meeting was over and we were ready to go, and as so often does, things started to fall apart. Only four inmates had signed up for the weekend and two speakers could not make it to the weekend. Ned was ready to call off the whole thing and throw in the towel. WO! WO! WO! Quick telephone conferences and prayer. It's Tuesday, and Thursday is approaching fast. I took over the Action talk and Cliff made up for the other talk. Now what about the inmates? If we have fifteen or more it's a go. We should have set our number higher--we had a great turn out of plenty.

Preparing the action talk was simple enough, but at the end of the outline it says to share personally. My past flew up in my face, and I've learned many years ago not to say "No" to the Lord. I stammered and shuddered--I did not want to share these long hidden secrets. So finally, I wrote nothing down and just put "(Angel)". On the way to the prison Thursday afternoon, my talk was lying on the floor of the van. Our spiritual leader "Tom", sitting in the back seat, usually not nosey, said, "What's this?" "Oh, My Talk--want to critique it, go ahead read it". And he did. "What's this (Angel)?" I made a lame answer and changed the subject.

During my talk, this was still gnawing at me, and right in the middle of the talk everything stopped for out count. OK, OK! I'll do it. The count went well and fast, and I put my talk away and ad-libbed the final part of the talk and shared my past.

Some forty years past, I was a member of the "HELLS ANGELS". Very few people were aware of this, and something I am not proud of. And I am no longer one of the Devil's angels.

Turns out, one of the inmates there is a member of "The Club", and he sought counsel with me and wanted to know how to get out of this lifetime commitment. He gave his life over to Christ and is seeking a Christian Motorcycle club in Oregon.

We never know why we must share, but sometimes we find out and this was one of those times. My Life has been blessed so many times through weekends and people, and I just cannot list them all. This is just one of them.
Don Dunn

Kairos Outside, Southern California #31

As leader, this Kairos weekend was for me the greatest experience of my life, constantly feeling supported by a group of people with great attitude, enthusiasm, and above all a lot of love. I have grown in a leadership difficult to break away from the Lord's ways. During the weekend, I was blessed with a group of 19 guests. All of which had a great necessity to feel loved and accepted. This goal was reached with their own words apart from having learned to accept themselves and become women of dignity, no matter the condition of their lives. I had the opportunity to walk into their lives and have them demonstrate their appreciation and love to me in many ways. The demonstration that impacted me the most was when they left little notes and drawings for me, which hold a very special place in my heart. I don't have words to explain everything that this Kairos weekend meant to every one of us that worked, but according to many of them this weekend was a great blessing for each. Definitely, Kairos #31 was the Lord's special time and all the glory is for Him. I give thanks to each and every one in the group because they all did a truly amazing job. I give thanks to Margarita Mira for her great work with the guests and to my husband and kids for their help. I would like to thank the program of Kairos Outside for having given us the opportunity to come through with Kairos en Español.

God Bless, Rosy Vasquez

FCl, Terminal Island Kairos #26 - May 12-15, 2005

The Holy Spirit moved mightily in spite of our losing half of Saturday and half of Sunday due to heavy fog. Comments of touched hearts, particularly due to the letters and special prayers, were shared at the closing with the warden in attendance. Forty-three residents stated that they were counting on Christ, as the love of Christ had given them a new understanding that "God is real."

During the closing, the warden, Dr. Duke Terrell, shared that he is usually asked to share inspirational words. After hearing the personal sharing of those attending Kairos #26, Dr. Terrell stated that he was the one who was inspired. His simple request was that the residents take this to the yard for the other inmates and his staff. (continued on page 2)

Resident comments included:

- I lost my freedom and gained my salvation. I lost my family and gained an army.
- We leave bias in the dumpster as none was seen here. There is a burning in our hearts forever. (Tears were observed in the eyes of women attending the closing.)
- We are taking parts of our lives back.
- Showed me there are still people out there that care.
- I want to come back to serve on the outside Kairos team.
- We were not fully awake, asleep in guilt, but now we're taking the love of Christ in a humble way.
- The letters broke my heart. I wish my five daughters could see the difference in me and be proud of me now speaking in front of everyone.
- I would be arrested to attend.

The outside team consisted of 26 men, assisted by chaplains Father Mike Kirkness and Pastor Andy Richards. There was exceptional personal sharing by team members in the talks, meditations and table discussions which were a catalyst to the weekend. The early morning heavy fog which engulfed Terminal Island made for some real schedule challenges, but also provided an unexpected blessing. While the group photo is generally scheduled for early Friday morning (before things really get rolling), due to the schedule impacts it was not accomplished until late Saturday afternoon. It is a testament to the Lord's work because, rather than the hard, uncertain gaze of the residents we often see on the first morning of Kairos, the photograph revealed joyous, beaming men awash in the spirit - eyes smiling.

The support and love of the community across the country and the world really impacted the residents and team. While I once felt "obligated" to serve as Rector, that feeling turned to "anointed" when I served as Observing Rector, and I now realize I have experienced one of the greatest blessings from God of my entire life. I pray the body of Christ can continue to grow and thrive in Terminal Island and the other institutions Kairos serves.

In Christ, Dick Walker

Kairos Outside, Southern California #32

It's December. Thoughts and plans of Christmas are everywhere. The decorations and music fill our hearts and minds as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our savior. We have our home ready for family and friends and this leader is happily working on Kairos Outside # 32, which will be in May here in Southern California. I've got my theme YOU ARE NOT ALONE, scripture, John 10:14 I Am The Good Shepherd, I Know My Own Sheep and They Know Me, song - Lean On Me - my shield and core team. Yep, everything's going to be perfect. I have waited for this glorious opportunity for seven years and now it's here.

Wait a minute - what did my husband just tell me? We're moving - what do you mean we're moving in February? We can't move right in the middle of team formation! You've been in this house 30 years. How can we downsize to fit into a senior living apartment in two months while I'm busy with Kairos Outside weekend plans? Needless to say, I'm less than thrilled with my husband at this point - yes Satan is at work in our home. However, God is in control. February 4th we're in our new home and I'm back to my weekend plans. Easy - NO - but we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Uh-oh - some people had to drop off the team and I only have one

clergy now. I need another table leader and more help with agape and table decorations and the accountant at my job left and oh my gosh - this is not peachy. Dear God. Help. So for six months we all prayed and worked hard reaching out to the community for assistance and now it's Friday the 13th and our weekend begins at 5 PM. God has sent us another clergy to help out but someone else dropped off the team. My 1st Observing leader is sick and will be late, my head clergy is very sick and can't be here until Saturday morning, our computer Pudette suffered a fall and can't come at all and head facilities may not be here either. By Saturday morning the leader is also sick but we have 19 precious guests and Christ is in charge of His weekend and every team member is doing more than their share of work and double duty in some areas. I had no idea just how perfect the Theme - You Are Not Alone - would be for KO # 32. And the song - Lean On Me - well that's exactly what we all have had to do during these past months, lean on each other and Christ. Yes He is the Good Shepherd who knows everyone of us and we know His perfect and unconditional love.

The weekend of course, was awesome. Each team member gave 100% plus, and were blessed beyond belief. The entire weekend ran smoothly and any difficulties were quickly and efficiently handled. God enabled each of us who were ill to do what was required at the time. The decorations were so beautiful and filled the dining room, talk room and halls with God's love for all to share. The meals and snacks were fabulous and we were all entertained with the presentation of skits from our talented team and beautiful praise music filled the halls all weekend from our musicians.

The guests arrived with the normal amount of uncertainty - "Oh my, what have I gotten myself in to?" However, the love, the bonding and the miracles far surpassed our dreams as each and every guest got up to share at closing on Sunday. It was a long and rocky road to the closing of Kairos Outside # 32 but through this leader's tears it was the most blessed weekend ever and God truly showed You Are Not Alone. Thank you, Father, for letting me serve you and your precious children. Terri Tusa

Life on the Outside

In a word-wonderful! I am still getting used to certain changes that took place during the 22 years of my incarceration. Other things seem the same and I stepped into them without hesitation. First hurdle was my realization - I really was free. I could walk down the street and mingle with people. They smiled at me, exchanged greetings, or passed me by without acknowledging the stigma of my recent release. Wow!

Then there were the greetings from old friends and acquaintances. Not a single rejection to be found, but lots of hugs and "welcome backs" from every quarter. And they continue after five months. How super is that?

I am blessed to have a loving family. I share a rural parcel on the river with my brother and his family, have a place all to myself. It is old and needs work, but it has all the amenities and it is home. I share it only with the cats. I overlook the river and am surrounded by trees and hills. We sit back about a hundred yards from the country road, with a nice screen of trees to help isolate noise and the view of passing vehicles.

I do a lot of my own cooking, go fishing, cut firewood, clear brush, work on the garden/orchard and spend the evenings reading, visiting, watching an occasional video or catching up on my correspondence. I do not spend a lot of time in town except to help out family or friends

at work or with projects. I avoid town in the evenings, although on a couple of occasions I have taken a lady-friend out to dinner. Nope, night life holds no interest or allure.

All in all, I cannot think of a single thing I would want to change in my life, except to see my daughter and grandchild a little more frequently. They will be out in a couple of months, and having learned patience to the max while inside, I know that I will see them soon.

I pray for their well being as well as for that of my Kairos family each day. I carry the spiritual lessons and love I learned inside, never forgetting what I have to be thankful for. Barney McClendon

State Committee Meeting, Alameda

On a beautiful Saturday morning state reps and volunteers gathered at Sister Thomasine's in Alameda for our State Board meeting. Today's meeting was expected to be especially fruitful as we were hosting two guest speakers from Kairos National. John Thompson and Bill Rushing didn't disappoint us. They spoke on Advisory Council setup and operations, the summer conference and the Kairos ministry as a whole.

After opening music and devotions we enthusiastically listened to John and Bill speak on the basics, the ins and outs and the functions/operations of Advisory Councils. We were presented with tools to aid us, with our councils, including CD's and handouts. Stories were shared from both sides (national and local) on what has worked and what needed work. We even ventured out into deep water and discussed – the most sticky of issues – money/budgets, and still managed to come up smiling and hearing a few touching stories.

Like the evening John was working late, feeling a little down. Money was tight and he wasn't getting paid this pay period. Something we didn't know was that he believes that the guy at the top gets paid last. Anyway, there John was, thinking about the treasury, when he remembered the contribution envelopes that had been sent out in the 29,000 newsletters to our Kairos families. He thought, "if each one of us would just send in \$10.00 that would be ...\$290,000.00." Well, giving a sigh, he reached for a piece of paper-it turned out to be one of the envelopes. He opened it. What he found was not \$10.00, \$25.00, or even a \$100.00. What John found was far better. What he found brought tears to his eyes, and God's word to his heart (the widow giving all she had). There sitting at his desk, late at night, just he and God with only the light from his desk lamp shining, John saw \$2.00 dollars wrapped in Kleenex. It has been said that one can tell quite a bit about an organization by who's at the top. In Kairos, God is first and foremost. And we are His servants, from our Executive Director to the person who makes Agape to place with love on the barren prison walls. God surely is present. Sher Widger

Reflections from SQ Council Chair

During Easter week, a time for all Christians to celebrate the resurrection of our Christ, I thought back to the Easter Vigil at San Quentin when Bishop John Wester of San Francisco celebrated that evening with our brothers-in-blue. Three brothers, all of whom were recent graduates of Kairos, were confirmed, and one was baptized, confirmed and received Eucharist. You should have seen their faces! Bishop John's message to all the congregants that evening was very touching. "You may be behind these walls, but no one can ever take your freedom of spirit and self respect from you." He went on to say that all of us receive blessings. Some we recognize and others are in disguise. "The time you men spend here can be blessings when you

seek God in your lives."

And then, there was the passing of Pope John Paul II shortly thereafter. Again, certain thoughts come to mind just a few months back when our brothers-in-blue hosted a Saturday seminar called "Restorative Justice" with outside speakers. The idea was and is to create an environment in our society where those who commit crimes and those who are victims can learn to forgive and reconcile through a process of getting together, restoring each person's dignity and wholeness of self. When I watched TV clips of Pope John Paul's life, I saw the perfect example of that when the Pope visited his would-be assassin within weeks of the attempted murder - stating he forgave this man. Whew! Do we all have something to learn from that? How many times have we heard our brothers asking for forgiveness from victims' families and not receiving it?

And lastly, I had the privilege of serving on a Kairos Outside team. Women whose husbands, sons or relatives were in prison came together at Mercy High School in San Francisco over the weekend of April 1-3. These women, whose lives are stigmatized, who are embarrassed and often excommunicated from our society, walked in Friday night as broken and guilt-ridden outcasts to find kindness, compassion and spiritual nourishment they so badly needed. The love and understanding they received from women on the team was so deep it gave them a new meaning of hope for their loved ones. We cannot forget them.

Finally, my thoughts go to two brothers who had made Kairos in San Quentin while serving life sentences who have recently been released or have received dates for release. One brother who goes back to Kairos VI said, "My conversion to Christ started that weekend. It changed my life - it saved my life." The other brother recently stated, "If I had not this community (Kairos) to rely on, to talk to, to be with, I would never have had the strength to get through all these years."

What more can I say, and how many times have all of us said, we get so much more than we receive - these blessings in disguises.

Day after day we witness these personal epiphanies and recognize that through the surrender of self and renewal of knowledge that God is alive, these men are not forgotten. Thanks to all of you, my brothers and sisters, who have made Kairos possible for the men inside and the women outside.

Vic Perrella, Chair of the San Quentin Advisory Council

Report on the Summer Conference in Seattle

On Thursday, August 4, the International Board meeting's Finance/Treasurer/Audit Report indicated that Kairos Donor Software is being worked on. Discussion ensued on the Financial Accounting System which will be operational at the team, advisory council, area committee and state committee level. The Treasurer indicated that affiliation fees are up about \$30,000.

The Organizational/Volunteers Committee is putting together mentoring books for mentees and mentors specifically to meet the needs of those who invite non-Fourth Day Movement people to work on teams. This Committee continues to work on Advisory Council operating procedures.

In the area of Resource and Development, it was noted that there is a positive consistency in donations and it continues to gain momentum.

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From the international community, two countries made reports. Brixston Prison in the U.K. opened its door to Kairos in January of this year. They also did the Journey program there. The U.K. anticipates the start of Kairos in other prisons in the near future. Although the U.K. has done Kairos, due to government intervention weekends have been put on hold. Interest continues to grow in Ireland, and community development is building. Australia has six Kairos Insides, five Kairos Outsides and one Torch ministry in place. There will soon be two new Kairos Outside ministries. Australia does about 40 weekends a year.

Recently they received a large donation from a major corporation.

The Kairos Outside committee (generally one of the largest committees to meet) had a small turnout this time. Several ad hocs have started. West Virginia had a No. 1 weekend earlier this year. Two more states (Maryland and Kansas) will have No. 1 weekends before year's end which will bring Kairos Outside presence to 24 states. Kairos Outside will soon have 48 active communities. Texas anticipates starting two new ministries which will bring them to seven. The Committee is looking into creating a repository for commonly used forms.

In the area of Training, Kairos Inside has taken on several new trainers (two are from California) and will have a "train the trainer" confab in Orlando the last week of September. Kairos Outside has taken on two new trainers and will have their confab in California the third week in September.

The National Office has their first field rep in Georgia. A grant of \$15,000 was received to support this position.

Besides the Financial Accounting System, the Board also considered a minority inclusion policy. Beginning in January 2006, all new ad hocs are to have minority inclusion. The Board unanimously adopted a policy that provides beginning January 1, 2006, all new ministry start ups in any part of Kairos, Torch or Outside will include minority representation. A subcommittee (under the Organizational/Volunteers Committee) was subsequently formed to work on the Philosophy of Inclusiveness. One of the "Nine Old Men" is an active participant on this committee.

California had a nice representation. For some Californians it was their first time attending a summer conference and I think everyone came away enriched by the experience. I always do.

George Brown is in the thick of the the Audit Committee's activities. He works closely with Denny Fryman (Indiana) who is at the forefront of this mammoth project.

The 2006 Summer Conference will be hosted by New Mexico.

[Based on a report by Emma Jones]