

Encourager MINISTRIES



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OCTOBER 2010—JANUARY 2011

From Mary Kay...



A Truth

By Bobby Lavender

I have a truth to tell you; our Savior is coming soon!

He said, "No man knows the hour;" it could be morning, night, or noon.

A second, a minute an hour, a week a month, a year;

the time is growing close, my friend, so let me have your ear.

He gave us a prayer to pray, "Our Father Who art in Heaven",

so don't get caught like the Pharisees in the parable of the leaven.

The time is now to forgive and love, to purify your heart and mind;

to be ready when He comes for His church and not be left behind.

CALENDAR:

Feb 13—Valentine's Day Dinner, Winfield AL

Feb 20—Gideon PAB, Lilburn GA

Feb 26—SC State Gideon Convention

Mar 4—VA State Gideon Convention

Mar 15—Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, Curry AL

Mar 18—Gideon PAB, Mobile AL

Mar 28, Gideon PAB, Sparta NC

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Last October I was privileged to spend over a week in the Topeka, KS area doing ministry work in the local prisons. While there, I also spoke in several area churches and ladies Bible study groups. I even went to a Pilates class where only the teacher was a Believer!

Ellsworth Prison in Ellsworth, KS is for men and I went there for a Saturday evening and all day Sunday seminar. The Kansas State Women's Prison in Topeka has two units—one pre-release and one maximum security—and I went to both.

In the women's pre-release center we had to move from a classroom to the gymnasium the first day; we went back on Saturday morning and it was full all day long.

In-prison seminars follow a pattern of a large group session about 30 minutes long with teaching on a topic followed by a small group session of about 45 minutes with a discussion sheet related to the topic. Attendees are evenly divided into groups in which they remain for the entire seminar.

As part of the discussion, inmates were given an opportunity to write and share their thoughts on the topic. Throughout this newsletter, you will see some of the results written by the inmates. I hope their thoughts and words will have as much of an impact on you as they did me.

CHOICES AND CHANGES.

CHANGES AND CHOICES. The words bounced around in my mind

for several days, and I remembered reading a book several years ago by Joni Eareckson Tada. As I re-read the book I was reminded that **CHANGES**

happen to all of us. We get older, our children grow up and leave home. We have grandchildren. Some of us become widows or widowers, our financial status changes. Our interests may change; our energy level and stamina certainly change, and we have very little control over these changes. Some of them we like, some we don't, but changes still happen. However, we also all have **CHOICES**, and particularly we choose how we will react to the changes. Will we resist and pretend nothing has changed? Do we grumble or whine and complain? Do we get mad at God and feel life is unfair? The end result of those choices is a great deal of unhappiness and possibly even physical illness.



Ellsworth Prison



Kansas State Women's Prison

(Continued from page 1)

OR do we choose to accept that God is God and we aren't. We can choose to believe that God is good all the time, and He has a plan that He is working out in us. We can accept that changes, whatever they are, are under His control. If He allows it, He has plans to change us. We can choose to trust Him to give us only that which will benefit us whether we understand it or not. What are some of the changes you have experienced? What are you choosing to do about them?

I know several things in my life have changed; this month marks the fifth anniversary since Don died. Since then we have buried two brothers-in-law and several friends. In October 2010, my brother died and the pain is still very present; I really wanted to spend more time with him. In December Ilene and Joey moved back to Missouri and took Meriah, the Border collie. I have since acquired 2 Pomeranians, Beau and Peaches. On Monday Peaches gave birth to 2 puppies. Last summer my house felt like a boarding house; at one time we had 7 people living in my little 3 bedroom home! Now all are gone but one. I like my dogs and the quietness of my house. And yet I miss Joey and Meriah and cooking for a large family. We discovered it would take 4 people to do Ilene's job, and I still miss talking to her daily.

BUT... God never changes. He loves me all the time. He forgives all my sins. He never leaves me. He always provides for me. This year I am expecting more changes, and I am praying God will help me make the right choices. I choose to be grateful. I choose to praise Him in all circumstances. I choose to love Him with my whole being and I choose to love my neighbors wherever I meet them. If you see me failing to do these things, will you please lovingly remind me and pray for me? May God be glorified in you and me as He changes us to be more like Jesus.

Group Poem from Women Inmates

One of the sessions at the Kansas State Women's Prison produced this group poem. The topic was "Things that contribute to the growth of bitterness." The Scripture on the discussion was 2 Samuel 12:1-8 (The story of Nathan's rebuke of David for his sin with Bathsheba.) The instruction: "Using the story of David and Nathan as a guide, write a song or poem about a similar situation.

Following are some responses from the women at Kansas State Prison for Women:

David was the King, he became full of lust.
 He saw a beautiful woman, to have her he must.
 He sent for this woman, Bathsheba was her name;
 She came into his chambers where emotions were inflamed.
 The result of this lust was sin
 There was a child conceived within.
 The King covered his wrongs by what he thought was right
 The only thing that was done
 Was bring his darkness to light.
 Then came Nathan to share a little story of a lamb.
 Who had his little lamb taken out of his hand?
 The man was poor, the taker was rich. The giver was poor.
 How would you handle this problem if it knocked at your door?
 And while you're at it don't act as if you had not sinned before.
 "For what you have lacked," says God, "I would have given you more."
 So look at your self in a glass before you judge another.
 You might have done the same things as your brother.



Mary Kay and Al Scott, Volunteer Coordinator of Prison Ministries in Topeka KS, present a plaque to Sandy Gates for her 18 years of service as Angel Tree Coordinator.

Gideon Wives' Auxiliary Touches Lives

The Gideons International, founded in 1899, serves as an extended missionary arm of the church and is the oldest association of Christian business and professional men in the United States of America. Bibles and New Testaments are printed for distribution by the Gideons in more than 90 languages and in more than 190 countries around the globe. Through God's grace and to His Glory, more than 1.6 billion Bibles and New Testaments have been placed by the Gideons, and the work continues.

(Continued on page 3)

A Poem by Melissa

When I don't forgive
I cannot fully live.
It causes my head to pound
And my stomach to feel wound.
My sanity is hanging by a thread
And sometimes all I can do is stay in bed.
But when I give it all to YOU,
My head, my heart, my body, too.
I feel like I am free at last
And all of my troubles are in the past.
So now I'll live my life anew
And Forever and Ever I'll worship YOU!

Melissa Gonzales said she had never written a poem in her life! She wrote this piece after participating in a session on the Physical Consequences of Unresolved Anger and Bitterness.

(Continued from page 2)

Wives of Gideons who meet the spiritual qualifications outlined by the governing body of the association are eligible to become members of The Auxiliary of The Gideons International. The Auxiliary – with over 102,000 members – is an integral component of The Gideons International. The singular objective of the ministry is to win others for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Auxiliary accomplishes this objective in three ways: through prayer, personal witnessing, and presenting God's Word to those in all approved medical facilities and venues, dental offices, nurse stations in industrial plants, female inmates in correctional facilities, residents of domestic violence shelters, and patients and staff of crisis pregnancy centers.

What are the results of the Auxiliary's efforts? The following story is just one example:

Two Auxiliary members were at a county detention center one Sunday afternoon and found a young woman waiting in the lobby for an officer to bring her some papers. The Auxiliary had come to visit with the female inmates, but felt led to offer this young lady a Testament. They showed her the section entitled "Where to Find Help" in the front and the plan of salvation in the back of the Testament. The young woman listened intently as they shared some of the Scriptures and explained the love of God to her. They asked if she had ever opened her heart to ask Jesus to be her Savior. She said "No, but I would like to." One of the Auxiliary members led this young woman in the sinner's prayer, and she received Christ as her Savior.

As the Auxiliary talked with her a little more, they discovered the young woman and her boyfriend had been attending a local church for a few weeks, but neither had received Christ ... that is until she was given the Testament and Christ was shared with her that day by two faithful Auxiliary members! Praise the Lord.

Testimonies like these are duplicated daily throughout the ministry ... and bear out the truth that God's Word does NOT return void!

In Loving Memory

On October 30 of last year, my brother, Tommy, passed away after fighting cancer for over a year. We miss him and are very grateful for the extra time his fight bought; we have some good memories of his final months.

Tommy donated his corneas for transplant and the following is a poem sent to his wife from Iowa Lions Eye Bank.

A GIFT

I leave to one – I know not who
The right to see and live anew
I will not need the sight I give
For I will have another place to live.
I cannot leave a thought, a dream –
Only the chance to see a beam
Of light that touches each new day
And a chance to find "a way."
I cannot help, or touch a hand,
Or point to wonders of this land,
I only leave a chance to see
Because I gave a part of me.
Know not the donor –nor the name—
It makes no difference whence it came.
Just use it well for all mankind,
For now you see, who once was blind.
And I shall watch from where I live
To see you use the gift I give
To fight for truth, defy the lies—
For no one really dies who gives his eyes!

Author: (Mrs.) Katherine Johns



Tommy Dean Petet

Angel Tree Story



Mary Kay with Todd, along with his wife, Sandra, and daughter, Emily.

The inmate pictured at left is at Ellsworth, and the Chaplain brought him to a church to speak about how Angel Tree has impacted his life.

His wife and daughter were also able to come; Emily is the youngest of their 6 children. She is 8 and when I asked Emily if she remembered what her dad gave her for last Christmas; she knew

immediately! This was in October. How many children remember the gifts they got after 11 months? It was a dollhouse that her mother said is still in their living room because Emily plays with it nearly every day.

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Mary Kay recently received this message about her biography; it is only one of many positive responses to Rogue Angel: "I gave a copy of your book to my grandson who is in jail in Murfreesboro, TN, on a 9 1/2 year sentence. It was used of God to turn his life around and he is now teaching Bible classes in jail. He has been made a trustee and now he has a parole hearing in March when his eligibility for parole was originally set for August of 2012. We are praying for his release, if that is God's will. Please pray for him. He has been tentatively accepted in a halfway house in Nashville."

Response Form

I am pleased to help the vital mission of Encourager Ministries and I enclose my contribution of:

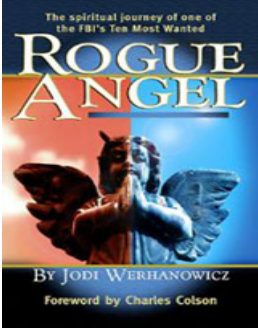
\$500 \$100 \$50 \$25 _____

I would like to give a gift in honor or memory of my loved one:

In _____ of _____

Given by: _____

Join Encourager Ministries, Inc. and Mary Kay Beard as she shares her ministry of love, redemption and encouragement.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Notes: _____