

# PRISON MINISTRY

SHARING JESUS WITH PEOPLE IMPACTED BY INCARCERATION

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER



## BREATHLESS

*Pastor David Rosenbaum, Prison Ministry Committee member*

***"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)***

Those words summarize John's eyewitness testimony about the Messiah. He wanted every reader of his gospel to know and believe what he knew and believed about Jesus.

The apostle had just related the events of that most remarkable Sunday:

- Hearing Mary's breathless report that Jesus' tomb was empty.
- Arriving breathless at Joseph's garden, panting beside Peter, after sprinting there to verify Mary's account.
- Feeling the breath of their alive-again Master as he appeared to his stunned students behind locked doors.
- Becoming annoyed at Thomas' breathtaking refusal to accept their ten-fold testimony that "Jesus was just here, alive and breathing!"
- Breathing a sigh of relief one week later as Thomas touched the wounded Warrior and confessed, "My Lord and my God!"

Has John's intention--"that you may believe"—been realized in *your* heart? Did you enter church on Resurrection Day breathlessly eager to shout, "Christ

is risen! Alleluia!" Did you breathe in the scent of lilies and thank God for the Death Destroyer? Did you feel the breath of Jesus calming your guilt-gorged heart with four glorious words: "Peace be with you"?



The apostles declared and defended the truth to their last breath. As long as you have breath, you can tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love, of his resurrection and your restoration.

Now slip in behind some other locked doors, like the Breath of Life did as the sun set on the day the Son rose. These steel doors isolate law breakers from law keepers. Yet law breakers (that's all of us!) are not meant to be isolated from the one perfect Law Keeper.

Sit beside an incarcerated man or woman who has never known the true God, or his love for the fallen, or the true meaning of Easter. Listen to his breath pause as he reads, "Peace be with *you*." Feel her breath exhale in a rush of relief, then inhale the fresh air of forgiveness. "These are written that *you* may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing *you* may have life in his name."

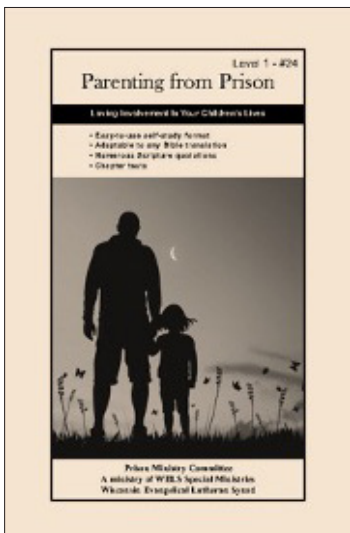
WELS Prison Ministry exists to breathe new life into dead souls, so that others may know and believe what you know and believe. Will you help us?

## INMATES' KIDS NEED CHRIST'S LOVE TOO

WELS Prison Ministry's mission statement is "sharing Jesus with people impacted by incarceration." The impact of incarceration goes well beyond the inmates. The most direct secondary impact is on their families, including their kids. Just as Christ heals our relationship with his Heavenly Father, he also heals the earthly parent-child relationships damaged by sin and bad decisions that result in incarceration.

To help inmates seek healing for themselves and their children, WELS Prison Ministry is publishing "Parenting from Prison," our 24th Level 1 self-study Bible correspondence course for inmates. In this new study, the author encourages and equips the inmates in four areas:

Separation, Decisions, Connection, and Reunion. Our first parents caused our separation from our Heavenly Father, and this sin is the root cause of all subsequent gaps in parent-child relationships. Our own bad decisions have contributed to the problem, but God decided to send his Son in grace to solve our biggest problem without our help. Since the problem of our sin and separation from God is gone, we use our connection to God's promises to enable us to live a new life, including our connection with our kids,



even when that connection is made more difficult by incarceration. Finally, while the reunion with kids and others may be looked forward to with joy, there will be challenges, too. Jesus gives us hope and strength to meet those challenges. That hope and strength comes through his Word, which reminds us that God has guaranteed a reunion of all his followers that will never end, thanks to Jesus' sacrificial love for us. That love moves inmates to do the actions of love needed to help their kids before and after release.

At press time, this new booklet is headed to the printer for the initial run of 10,000 copies. Your generous support provides the resources to develop and publish these new booklets. Thank you for helping us expand our library of resources to help God's lost, straying, and returning sheep.

## BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

Roger is an inmate who has something to share with the rest of us. He grew up in a Christian home and attended a WELS school as a child. But along the way he made some horrible choices and was convicted of a violent crime. Even though this man abandoned his Lord for a while, God never abandoned his baptized child. Roger's friends and family have reflected God's love to Roger, along with pastors and one of his former teachers. These brothers and sisters in Christ have continued to remind him of God's full and free forgiveness no matter what the offense.

Roger has been deeply touched by the support he has received over the years and has been moved to try and find a way to thank Jesus by serving others. He has worked to fulfill Paul's words: [God] comforts us in all our troubles. Now we can comfort others when they are in trouble. (2 Cor. 1:4; NIV1998) Roger's idea was to create word puzzles from Bible verses. He began this project several years ago with the assistance of former WELS PM administrator Dave Nack. Roger's effort over the years have generated well over 100 puzzles that WELS PM is seeking to make available to other inmates.

Please pray that this effort will successfully result in making the puzzles available to inmates, perhaps in booklet form, so they are encouraged by God's

Word in a fun way, even in difficult circumstances. We have included a sample for your encouragement and to show one of the many ways we share Jesus with people impacted by incarceration through your prayers, volunteer efforts, and financial support.

## BIBLE "CRYPTO" QUOTE — TOPIC: GRACE

— — — — — O — — — — —  
A X P A H W B W G H M

S — — — — — I — — — — — W — — — — —  
L I T K X A B L H P G

— — — — — ' — — — — — — — — — — —  
L H G U N M Z T O X

— — — — — U — — — — — — — — — — —  
A B F N I Y H K N L

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —  
T E E A H P P B E E

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —  
A X G H M T E L H '

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —  
T E H G Z P B M A A B F '

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —  
Z K T V B H N L E R Z B O X

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — ?  
N L T E E M A B G Z L

( — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — 8:32, NIV2011)  
K H F T G L

## PEN PAL PIPELINE

Thanks to our pen pals who do so much to lift inmates up spiritually. To ensure their continued ability to do so, our volunteer guidelines state: "DO NOT send money, stamps, personal items, or other items of earthly value to inmates." Because of their low-paying jobs and the cost of these items, inmates can make a convincing case that sending such items would be a big help. This may be true, but we advise our pen pals to resist the urge to help in this way. There are several reasons for this:

- Sending such items may be against facility regulations. Doing so could jeopardize your ability to continue encouraging your inmate, not to mention WELS Prison Ministry's ability to continue serving inmates in that facility with the gospel.
- Some inmates will ask for items even if they don't need them to use for trading with other inmates on the "black market" to get drugs or other contraband.
- We want inmates to look to their pen pals for spiritual and emotional support. Getting distracted by earthly wants can dilute this support.

If your inmate requests that you send items of value, tell him or her that you can only offer prayer, spiritual support, and friendship. You may also mention that doing so would violate your agreement with WELS Prison Ministry.

In rare instances there may be situations that warrant an exception. Please seek advice from our office before sending money or other items to your pen pal.

**"I WILL NEVER, EVER FORGET ALL THE YEARS THAT YOU ALL HAVE BEEN BY MY SIDE HELPING ME IN THIS VERY DIFFICULT TIME. I DON'T KNOW ANY OF YOU, BUT I CAN HONESTLY SAY THAT I LOVE YOU ALL! MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU ALL NOW AND FOREVER!"**  
— JOSÉ

**"THANK YOU FOR SERVING THE LORD! THANK YOU ESPECIALLY FOR THE EASTER CARD. LITTLE THINGS LIKE THAT MEAN THE WORLD TO US. THAT EXTRA STEP IN SHOWING GOD'S LOVE. BECAUSE WHY ELSE WOULD A STRANGER SEND ME A PERSONAL CARD? BECAUSE GOD LOVES ME AND IS USING YOU TO SHOW IT. OUR GOD IS AN AWESOME GOD! THANKS AGAIN." — MARK**

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

**CRYPTO QUOTE ANSWER:**

To get WELS Prison Ministry news and updates delivered straight to your inbox, subscribe at [wels.net/subscribe](https://wels.net/subscribe).

## THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR MINISTRY

- 1. Pray** – As God's redeemed children, our prayers are powerful and effective. Current prayer requests: Thanksgiving for the publication of our 24th Level 1 booklet; for continued improvement in the pandemic situation so that personal visits to correctional facilities become commonplace; for blessings on the soon-to-be-released mentor training; for continued designated gifts to fund all our ministry activities.
  - 2. Serve** – All our ministry efforts are driven by volunteers motivated by Christ's love. To volunteer as a pen pal or a test corrector, please contact us at [prisonministry@wels.net](mailto:prisonministry@wels.net) or 507-354-3130.  
To explore jail visitation or post-release mentoring opportunities, call 414-256-3243 or send an e-mail to [dave.hochmuth@wels.net](mailto:dave.hochmuth@wels.net).
  - 3. Give** – We thank our Lord and you for your helpful special offerings to Prison Ministry which support our efforts to share Jesus with people impacted by incarceration!
- To provide additional gifts for Christ's work through Prison Ministry:  
**WELS, Attn. Gift Processing  
N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive  
Waukesha, WI, 53188**  
*(Make checks payable to WELS and list Prison Ministry in the memo line.)*
  - Donate online at [wels.net/donate-prison-ministry](https://wels.net/donate-prison-ministry).
  - Give through your IRA charitable distribution, appreciated assets, or your will or estate plan. Contact WELS Ministry of Christian Giving at 800-827-5482 for assistance.
  - Direct your Thrivent Choice dollars (if you are a Thrivent member) to WELS Prison Ministry. Contact Thrivent Member Care Services at 800-847-4836 for assistance. Your 2021 designation is due by March 31, 2022.