WISCONSIN
LUTHERAN
INSTITUTIONAL
MINISTRIES

COMPASSION

Summer 2007

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GOD'S WORD MAKES DIFFERENCE IN JAIL

by Deaconess Sarah Owens

A lay volunteer and I study God's Word with women at the Milwaukee County Jail. Perhaps you have heard of "jailhouse religion," (the suggestion that people only study God's Word because they're locked up). I have often been asked, "Do you really believe people in jail can change?" Recently, something happened which showed me that women are making changes in their lives because of their study of God's inspired Word, the Bible.

I felt tension in the jail on a recent visit. I realize that having forty women "trapped" in a small area, even for Bible study, can breed frustrations, animosities and irritations. Tempers may flare at times. The obvious tension on this day made me wonder what might happen on this visit.

WE NEED TO TRUST IN FORGIVENESS

We discussed one of the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful." We considered that as children of Jesus, we want to be compassionate and loving to others. We need to trust in the forgiveness Jesus won for us on the cross and also then want to display forgiveness for each other. We then studied Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant to emphasize the Bible's message of forgiveness.

Some of the women seemed a little distracted and were smiling at one another. They knew something that I didn't. Finally, Jane, one of the inmates, explained why the smiles (and the tension I had felt earlier) as she applied the lesson to her "real life" in the jail. She explained, "Yesterday, I had a problem with this other lady on the pod. (A pod represents the unit of prison "housing" in which inmates are grouped.) She's here in Bible study and I know the others are wondering what might happen between us today, if there will be another outburst. I realize now that I acted in ways I shouldn't have yesterday and said words that were wrong."

Jane continued by asking forgiveness from the woman she had wronged. The woman forgave her, there in front of all of us.

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WARM WISHES AND WELCOMES

WLIM extends wishes for the Lord's richest blessings on Chaplains Ken Lenz and Dave Tetzlaff as they retire.

As of July 1, the following members of WLIM's staff will conduct ministry in the following institutions:

Chaplain Joe Radsek,
(262-227-6947, Radsek@wlim.net)
Kettle Moraine Correctional, Plymouth.

Chaplain Charlie Iles,
(920-262-0261, charliesiles@yahoo.com)
Dodge Correctional, Waupun Correctional and John C.Burke Correctional, all in Waupun; Fox Lake Correctional and Fox Lake Minimum Correctional, both in Fox Lake; Taycheedah Correctional, Fond du Lac and Oshkosh Correctional, Oshkosh.

Chaplain Dan Krause,
(920-203-7570, Krause@wilm.net)
Winnebago Mental Health, Winnebago Correctional Center; Wisconsin Resource Center and Drug Abuse Correctional Center, all in Winnebago; Green Bay Correctional, Green Bay and Sanger B. Powers Correctional, Oneida.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of these WLIM pastors with the names of both WELS and non-WELS individuals who are in these institutions.

If you are unsure about the current location of an individual who may or may not be in Wisconsin's correctional system, please contact Pastor Iles or call the WLIM office at 414-259-8122 or 888-214-6490.

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SEND YOUR CHOIR TO PRISON!

If I had to compile a short list of what I like the most about my ministry at WLIM, it would include leading worship services in jails and prisons. The Holy Spirit does some powerful things inside razor wire perimeters and it's very evident at the joyful, interactive worship services at incarceration facilities.

Often the prison chapel or gym is packed, and the music is led by an enthusiastic inmate choir backed up by a talented worship band. If there is no choir or band, some of the inmates will eagerly sing a solo or lead the congregation in singing.

I am reminded of the lepers in 2 Kings 7 who were helping themselves to the food and riches left behind by the fleeing Aramean army while the besieged city of Samaria starved. Finally, the lepers, "Said to each other, 'We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves.'" (2 Kings 7:9). I don't want to keep to myself the wonderful things the Holy Spirit is doing in the prisons. So, I have been inviting Milwaukee area choirs and worship bands to come with me to prison.

MUSIC REALLY DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One choir and one worship band have already come with me and each led about 400 enthusiastic and grateful inmates in worshiping the Savior who gives joy and freedom both inside and outside prison walls. I am flooded with comments in the weeks afterward like, "Tell those guys they really made a difference in my life."

Another worship band is planning on coming with me this fall. Does your church have a musical group who'd like to experience the privilege of joining a few hundred prison inmates before the throne of Jesus and praising him there? Let me know!

Chaplain Phil Merten

Chaplain Philip Merten spends the majority of his time working with people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction and runs "Grace Oasis," WLIM's Friday evening ministry to people recovering from addictions. He is also involved with jail and prison ministries.

GOD BE WITH YOU TILL WE MEET AGAIN

As I consider my retirement, I think of St. Paul's meeting with the elders in Ephesus to bid them farewell as recorded in Acts. It was an emotional farewell. I can relate to that now that the time of my full retirement has come. Farewells are not always happy, nor are they always sad. Someone may be glad to leave. Others may be happy to have that person leave. Sometimes farewells can be tearful, especially when it would seem certain that you will never see each other again in this life. As I close my institutional missionary ministry, I'm certain that many I have served I will not see again until we meet in heaven.

My grandfather, uncle and cousin were all funeral directors and owned funeral homes. When I entered Northwestern Prep in 1946 my uncle, who was a funeral director, said that if I didn't want to prepare for the holy ministry, I should study mortuary science and take over his funeral business. Finally, I thought that whether I was a pastor or a funeral director, I would still be one of the last persons to let you down.

CALLED INTO THE HOLY MINISTRY

The Lord led me to continue to study for the public ministry. I am most grateful to our dear Lord for calling me into the holy ministry and for the opportunities He has given me in my ministry to share the precious Gospel with many souls.

Perhaps the most different, challenging and "never know what to expect" situations were those I encountered in the mission fields of the adult correctional institutions. I am grateful that the Northern Wisconsin District (WELS) had called me to serve as an institutional missionary and to WLIM for having me on its staff. I pray that the Lord's blessings will continue to be showered upon WLIM and its staff to God's glory and to the building of His kingdom.

People have asked me what I am going to do in retirement. My wife, Donna, and I have quite a number of home projects. (Maybe I should say, Donna has quite a number of projects planned for us to do in our home.) Fellow members at St. Peter's in Fond du Lac wonder if we will leave now that both of us are retiring. The answer is: God willing, we both will leave feet first (an example of my heritage of undertaker humor). We both are involved and looking forward to the building of St. Peter's new church and school. Also, I'll have more time to continue to serve as the taste-tester in the various Fond du Lac bakeries. We are ready to follow wherever our Lord leads us for service in His kingdom.

GIVING THANKS FOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

There are some things that I will always cherish and remember. For example, I am so thankful for the WLIM Board of Directors and fellow WLIM co-workers as they serve the Lord in harmony and share Christian fellowship. I really have enjoyed the Christian friendship and the "prison" humor that I've experienced with those in my Bible study groups. Months ago the "girls" at Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI) heard that a volunteer chaplain had died and they thought it was me. They said they cried. But when I showed up the following Monday morning, a few cried again not because the rumor was untrue but because they were really glad that "the old guy" was still alive. One of the rules in all the prisons is not to have any physical contact with inmates other than shaking hands. One of the gals said; "I don't care if I get a ticket, I'm so glad to see you, I'm going to give you a hug," and she did. Thank God, no one on staff saw that! Chaplain Barwis at TCI had all the "girls" in my Bible study groups sign a retirement/farewell card. Our last classes were tearful for some and emotionally draining for myself.

It is spiritually strengthening for me to see how the Holy Spirit works in human hearts through the Word of God. How amazing to see the Holy Spirit changing the hardened hearts of men and women who have committed

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unimaginable crimes to repentance, forgiveness, trust and faith in our Lord Jesus. I am overjoyed at how many incarcerated women and men have grown in their knowledge of Scripture and faith in our Savior in spite of my simple efforts as a teacher and messenger of God's Law and Gospel.

TOUCHING GOODBYES

After my last Bible study at Green Bay Correctional, some of the twenty eight men who attend my Bible study gathered in the chapel. The Deputy Warden spoke and thanked me for my years of service. Chaplain Baker gave me a card signed by most of the men. The front of the card said, "HAPPY RETIREMENT from the whole group! And can we ask you to do one more little thing?" Inside the card in big letters it said: "TAKE US ALONG". I really had to laugh and then I told them, "Through faith in our Lord Jesus you are coming along with me to heaven!"

And now, to each of you: God be with you till we meet again in heaven.

Chaplain David "Digger" Tetzlaff

Chaplain Tetzlaff and his wife Donna will continue to live in Fond du Lac, WI in their retirement.

HELPING A LOVED ONE WITH GRIEF AND MOURNING

What do caregivers working with loved ones need to know? Not only do caregivers need to realize that grief is the hurt inside the heart and mourning is the way grief shows itself, often with words and actions, but caregivers must also realize that there are differences in the ways men, women, and children mourn.

BE UNDERSTANDING AND DO CARING THINGS TO SHOW CONCERN

Consider the case of Jimmy who died at the age of 4.
His parents will always wish for Jimmy to come back. As you, as a care giver, minister to help the family, the family does not want you to be afraid of talking about Jimmy even if speaking his name makes them cry. Though you may be inclined to avoid the topic, do not shy away from addressing the cause of the grief and mourning. Little things, like a phone call, a hug, a prayer, or a card of faith can help even months later. Do not expect the hurt to ever go away in the lives of the parents. Understand that always missing Jimmy will be a new part of daily living for the family. Be ready to excuse the parent who walks away not intending to be rude but who suddenly needs private time and space. Do not tell them, "Don't think about your loved one." They will, probably often. When they say that they are doing "okay," understand that they may not really feel okay. They are hurting and unless you have personally experienced a similar type of grief, you probably do not fully understand how great the hurt can be. Do not suggest, "I know how you feel." You probably do not.

CHILDREN MOURN TOO

Do not forget about the siblings. Jimmy's brother, Billy, is two years old. Some think that he is too young to grieve and mourn. But anyone old enough to love is old enough to grieve and mourn. Billy, even at the age of two, can sense the loss. He may want to get his favorite blanket and want to be held. Hug and play with Billy. He also grieves and mourns.

Jimmy's sister, Nicole is eight years old. At the funeral Nicole had trouble sitting still and did not cry like some of the adults. Yes, she cried, but it was in short doses. At the funeral there were times when she played with her cousins as if nothing had happened. Some adult relatives scolded her

for playing. They did not understand that a child mourns in measured doses, different from adults. Also, some of the adults thought she should not have any part of the funeral but she wanted to color a picture for her brother and put it into the casket. Some of the adults did not understand that mourning is not a one-time event but a process through which even children have to work. Aunt Molly meant well when she said that, "God needed a good little boy in heaven." However, she failed to realize what Nicole now concluded. Nicole thought that she better be bad and act out lest God would decide to also take her to heaven.

TEARS OF SORROW ARE A PART OF HEALING

Jimmy's brother, Brian is fourteen years old. Teen peer pressure urges him not to cry. He wants to appear normal and unemotional to his friends. His mother makes the mistake of not showing Brian her tears and runs into the bedroom to cry. Brian needs to see and learn that open crying is part of good mourning processes for everyone. It is ok, even good to cry. Brian is also angry. It shows in his words and his actions. Brian needs to be told that it is okay to be angry but then be assisted in turning his anger into something positive, perhaps by working or exercising hard. Uncle Harold meant well when he said that, "Now you have to be strong for your mother and father." But his words may have forced Brian's hurt deeper inside and may have slowed the healing process. Brian needs to openly mourn and may need to cry. Crying is the body's natural way of cleansing itself.

The numerous Bible stories which speak of difficult trials and God's undeserved love are healing stories for the whole family. The family needs to turn to God's Word together. The Holy Spirit will help the grieving family to look beyond themselves and trust in the Almighty God for His help and comfort.

Caregivers, seek God's help as you offer help and support to those who grieve. Use God's Word to strengthen your faith. Allow the Triune God to use you as His tool to help those who mourn.

Note: Chaplain Wenzel is available to make presentations about dealing with grief and mourning in children.

Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel

Chaplain Wenzel's primary ministry is conducted at the University Hospital and the Children's Hospital, as well as two other Madison, WI area hospitals. A 1973 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Chaplain Wenzel joined WLIM in 1997.

FORGIVE – CONTINUED FROM PG 1

AWESOME... NO MORE TENSION

This asking for and sharing of forgiveness was awesome. Not only was Jane able to confess her sin, not only were two women able to reconcile their differences through the power of the Holy Spirit, but the rest of the women in the group were able to observe how the Holy Spirit works. Awesome! What a wonderful day it turned out to be! There was no more tension. We ended our Bible study with a prayer of confession and an absolution, the reassurance that Jesus does forgive all of our sins.

POWER OF JESUS IN JAIL AND LATER ON

I have told the women that I, too, learn from the Bible studies and from my ministry to them. I know the volunteers who partner with me feel the same. I pray that the Holy Spirit, through our jail Bible studies, will regularly produce fruit in the women's lives, both in and later on, after release, outside of jail. Most inmates do not want to practice "jailhouse religion."

May we also not practice "Sunday morning religion." May our study of the Word and our worship in church on Sunday find application and fulfillment to our daily lives. That's exactly what is happening in the Milwaukee County Jail, thank God!

Deaconess Sarah Owens

Deaconess Owens works with children and teens in the Milwaukee County Children's Court Center, in the Behavioral Health Treatment Center and various other institutions throughout the state.

A WELCOME TO PASTOR KRAUSE

WLIM welcomes Pastor Dan Krause to our called worker staff. Chaplain Krause will be serving institutions in the Fox River Valley. He grew up in the Milwaukee area, son of a long-time principal of Wisconsin Lutheran High School. Chaplain Krause graduated from Northwestern College, Watertown, WI in 1981 and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1986. He has also earned a Master of Science in educational psychology and counseling from UW-Milwaukee in 1986.

Chaplain Krause's interest in education and travel have also lead him to study oversees in South Africa, Germany, Austria, China and Israel. His public ministry experiences have included a variety of teaching, missionary and pastor Calls in Dallas, TX; Brooklyn, NY; Durand, MI; Oshkosh, WI and Wisconsin Lutheran College. He enjoys a variety of outdoor activities and travel with his family in his free time.

Laury (Schumacher) met her husband-to-be in Brooklyn. Being from a military family she grew up in several places across the nation and even in Okinawa. Laury is a graduate of Milwaukee Lutheran High School and Dr. Martin Luther College. She has been an elementary and early childhood teacher in Kewaskum, WI; Brooklyn, NY; Durand, MI; and Oshkosh, WI. Laury currently works as a substitute teacher in both Lutheran and public schools.

Petra, their daughter, loves a variety of sports and drama. She is excited about starting high school in fall.

May we all keep Chaplain Krause and his family in our prayers as he begins his new work serving the Lord through Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries!

SHARING THE THREE CROWNS OF JESUS

You and I have done nothing to deserve the wearing of one crown let alone three. Jesus in his love and grace has made it possible for us to wear the crowns of everlasting life, righteousness and eternal glory.

CROWNS OF EVERLASTING LIFE

"Blessed are we who perseveres under the test of trials. We will receive the Crown of Life that God has promised to those who love him." James 1:12 "God will wipe away our tears; there will be no more death, sadness, crying or pain." Rev. 21:4 Death won't be a problem or a worry in heaven, and there will be no tragic accidents, no cancer, and no heart problems. To those who are faithful even unto death, God gives a Crown of Life.

CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Crown of Righteousness is prepared for those who are in a right relationship with their God. We already wear the robe of righteousness in this life since Jesus paid the price for our adoption as sons of God. When Jesus returns He will complete the work of making us His very own children in paradise. We will then be crowned with righteousness. Heaven will not only be free of death, it will be free of sin. No more broken hearts or broken lives or broken relationships.

CROWN OF GLORY

"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, we will receive the Crown of Glory that will never fade away." 1 Peter 5:4 Our lives are made up of "almosts" and "what ifs," but in heaven we will be praised and blessed by God. "God will praise each one of them." 1 Cor 4:5 We have God's promise of a Crown of Glory.

This is amazing, awesome, and hard to believe! What a message we as volunteers in WLIM's ministry carry out in Christ's name. We not only have three crowns, but we can share three crowns with those we serve in Jesus' name. What a blessing – for them and for us.

Lay Ministry Coordinator Franklin Gauger

Franklin Gauger recruits, trains, and communicates with lay ministry volunteers and leads Bible classes in area retirement and assisted living centers.

GRACE OASIS -
OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Shortly after WLIM began "Grace Oasis," WLIM's weekly support group meetings for persons in recovery, we read a request for help. Volunteers were being asked to visit Grace Oasis on Friday evenings to befriend those who would come to Salem Ev. Lutheran Church on the east side of Milwaukee for the Grace Oasis program. At first, this was out of our comfort zone, but we were willing to try to help. We were working full-time but were available on Friday evenings and we did not have to visit every week. Also, though we lived in a farming area over 50 miles from Milwaukee, we were willing to drive that distance into the city.

THE LORD WILL HELP AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE

We began by going one Friday night a month to spend an evening with the few people that showed up. (Attendance was low in the first months). We didn't really know what to expect since this was our first involvement with something like this. We were convinced that the Lord would provide help and guidance and that He wanted us to do this ministry. At first, before we became acquainted with those who attended, it was hard to know what to say and what questions to ask. We would pray during the hour-long drive that He would give us the right words to say. He always did. Many in attendance had and are living very difficult lives. We learned to do a lot of listening. The attendees needed someone with whom to share their losses and triumphs. We spent time with them, learned about their lives, played dominoes or other games, and joined in the Bible study and singing. We learned patience. Some stopped coming for a time but we would continue to pray for them and hoped that we would see them again. Some did return.

AFTER 10 YEARS WE HAVE A NEW COMFORT ZONE

As the program expanded, Pastor Phil Merten realized that there was a need to provide food for the body as well as food for the soul. An evening meal is now being served before the Bible study and singing. It's been over ten years since we've begun volunteering at Grace Oasis. We've become "regulars" and many of the attendees really look forward to our visits and enjoy the meals that we help to provide. We get a warm welcome as soon as we drive up. People usually stand outside, just waiting for us to arrive. Everyone is eager to help us unload our van. We are encouraged by those who are returning on a regular basis as we can see how their faith is growing and their lives are becoming more stable through the study study of God's Word. How we rejoice with them when they find and hold regular jobs. It's great to see how, as their lives become more stable, they are eager to help at Grace Oasis. They appreciate the help given to them and want to help others in return. We have told many about this ministry and some friends now join us on our treks down to Grace Oasis from "up north" or the "Mayville" group as our friends at Grace Oasis call us. Word has spread among congregations in our area and we get many inquiries as to what we need to continue the ministry. We have been blessed with cash contributions, food, clothing and, most of all, prayers.

BY HELPING OTHERS, OUR PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED

We continue to pray for jobs, for recovery from illnesses, and for housing for the friends we have made at Grace Oasis, but especially for growth in the knowledge of God's love, care and forgiveness. We rejoice with them as their prayers are answered. They also remember us on their prayer lists when we share personal troubles or illnesses. We began this ministry thinking that we could give of ourselves and our time to help with this program of recovery, but we have received blessings far greater than than the time and effort we have given. God has blessed us with many new friends, strengthened our faith, and shown us what great things He can accomplish. To Him be the glory!

Don and Diane Zastrow,
WLIM Lay Volunteers

(Don also serves on the WLIM Board of Directors.)

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WISCONSIN LUTHERAN INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES

OUR MISSION

"To share God's law and the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with all individuals who are or have been institutionalized, and their families."

WOW! WHAT A RIDE

"Wow, what a ride!" As I look back to July in 1971 when I was installed as a chaplain with WLIM, I can't help but look back and think "Wow, what a ride." How the Lord was with me as I traveled to hospitals, prisons, jails, detention centers, child and adolescent center, nursing homes, and retirement centers. I visited with so many who did not know Jesus or the message of forgiveness and salvation. As I met with the sick, the imprisoned, the young and the old, you can imagine the heartache, the depression, the loneliness and the despair. My visits had the goal of helping them learn salvation and the hope of heaven by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

I always knew the Lord was with me. By God's grace, I hope to see in heaven thousands to whom I was able to minister. I hope to see Hank. I knew Hank for the over 25 years he was in prison after his conviction for multiple murders. With great joy I confirmed him in the prison chapel after several years of careful instruction in God's Word and Lutheran doctrine. I saw tears of relief as he confessed Jesus as his Savior. Hank is still in prison and probably will die in prison. It will be a joyful reunion with him in heaven.

Now, in retirement, I hope to slow down but enjoy my hobby of making jewelry. Though I have certainly struggled and stumbled along the way and though I may be somewhat battered and wrinkled, I look back and say, "Wow, what ride!"

As I retire from WLIM, I extend my sincere thanks to the many fellow Christians who have served on the various WLIM boards, fellow staff members, hundreds of volunteers, many friends and my dear wife who were so helpful and encouraging all these years. I also include the unnumbered thousands I have been privileged to serve and to all of you who have prayed for me and have provided the financial support allowing WLIM's ministries to continue.

Above all I want to thank my gracious Lord and His guardian angels who have made all these years with WLIM possible. "Wow, what a ride!"

Chaplain Ken Lenz

Chaplain Lenz and his wife Adele will continue to live in Colgate, WI in their retirement.