

Free Inside
A Christian Prison Ministry
A Partner with Vision New England Prison Ministries
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What a gift! Mike's testimony. (Edited for space considerations)

"My life was empty, it had no meaning, I lived for myself and for pleasure. I never cared for anyone or anything other than myself. I looked for comfort and pleasure through alcohol and drugs. I believed in Jesus, I attended Bible Studies and other religious programs in prison, such as Alpha. But it did not affect my life and attitude, until one day at the end of the Alpha sessions on the Holy Spirit, the Alpha volunteers prayed for me to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I experienced a turning point, I now have a new attitude and life.

I cannot describe in words what happened to me, all I know is that a gift was given to me, I repented and confessed my sins. The burden of my past life was lifted, I have a new beginning. I pray each day, asking that my heart mind and soul be opened and that He keeps on filling me with his Spirit. I now have a zest for life, I want to turn my heart and life to God, to do what he wants me to do. The more I give Him, the more He gives. It is exciting! It is only 2 months (May) since I had this turning point. What a gift! (from God) I know it is a gift because of how my old life was and now I am beginning a new life."

Vision New England Annual Report
Ministry highlights

Each of VNE's many ministries are permitted only 4 - 6 bulleted highlights for inclusion in the annual report. It was difficult for me to squeeze so much of what God has done into such a small space. Since it is summer, and you probably don't want to read a lot, I include this brief summary here.

- 14 full Alpha Courses each taking 12 – 15 weeks were given in 5 Connecticut prisons this past year.
- Attended by a total of 347 inmates or an average of 25 per course.
- Distributed 500 Bibles to inmates and Chaplains for use in their ministries.
- Free Inside now has 41 trained volunteers from 9 different denominations who lead Alpha BEHIND BARS in CT prisons.
- Presented Free Inside and Vision New England Prison ministries and the spiritual needs of prisoners in 8 churches during the year.

Obviously statistics are just cold facts, the story of the human lives behind these statistics is not visible. Statistics say nothing about the more than 40 faithful volunteers, who week by week serve Jesus by sharing His love with the lost, hurting and dejected men and women in our prisons, Men and women whom Jesus loves deeply and passionately.

Beth is one of our newest volunteers (Edited for space considerations)

"My name is Beth, I am an Alpha volunteer at Corrigan Correctional Institution. A frequent prayer of mine is; "what can I do to "give back" for all the blessings I have received." One morning in church, I heard about an Alpha informational meeting, I might have ignored it had it not been for this inner voice that said "Go to the meeting." "That can't be God." I thought, so I explained it away. During Lent I go to church daily, I heard the same thing the next day, "Go to the meeting." "OK, OK, I thought, but I am just going to the informational night." The meeting was on Friday and I would be at the church for stations of the cross anyway.

I listened to Rev. Peter Dewberry and to Sr. Patty Cook and it sounded like a good program. I did not commit to taking the training that night but decided to go to the first session. In prayer one night, following an Alpha training session, I remember asking, "Prison Lord? I am grateful for all I have but . . ." then I heard loud and clear, "Yes, Beth you are grateful and . . . I am in you and I go with you." After a big gulp and a tear, I knew I couldn't refuse. God was with me, if He wanted to go, then we would go.

Alpha is an opportunity for you to allow our Lord to work through you to minister to some of His lost sheep. In Alpha God goes to work – through us. He uses us to bring His love to the inmates. But there is more. We get back ten times more. It is wonderful to witness the way the Holy Spirit works in the inmate’s lives. It is like watching a seed grow into a plant and then seeing the first bud blossom.”

Chaplains of the DOC.

I am very grateful for the gracious help and encouragement that our Alpha volunteers receive from the Chaplains in the various facilities we go to, they do a vital work in a challenging situation. Everyone of them has the spiritual welfare of inmates at heart. Please pray for these men and women; Sister Cook; Deacon Dolan, Rev. Etter, Rev. Miralles, Rev Elder , Sister Mary Healey, Rev. Parker and Rev. Williams.

“The Purpose Driven Life”

Praise the Lord! and thank you all of you who donated toward the fund to purchase “The Purpose Driven Life” for distribution to inmates through our volunteers this coming Fall. Please pray that God will use the message of this book to change lives of inmates.

Give glory to God for the growth of the ministry

The growth of the ministry has been a wonderful thing to see. At the end of 2003 a handful of volunteers went into Gates C I. God has blessed us and we now have over 40 volunteers serving in 6 prisons. *“This is the Lord’s doing it is marvelous in our eyes”* Psalm 118: 23 *“Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory . . .”* Psalm 115: 1

Important events coming up.

Commissioning Service for our Volunteers. It is my desire to kick off the 2006 - 2007 ministry year with a public service of dedication and commissioning of our volunteers. I will be sending you an invitation as soon as the details have been worked out.

Annual Prison Ministry Conference (Caleb Connecticut)

The conference will be held at First Baptist Church in Manchester, CT on Sept 23. I am in the process of finalizing the details. A notice and invitations will be in the mail by the end of July. Mark the date in your diary.

Sincerely,

Peter
For Christ and His Kingdom