



■ Rev. Peter Dewberry ■ PO Box 341 ■ Glastonbury, CT 06033 ■ (860) 633-4085 ■ e-mail: freeinside@cox.net ■

## Pentecost 2008

*“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. . . . All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit . . . Acts 2: 1 - 4*

Pentecost reminds us yet again, that without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, no ministry can, or will, have any lasting effects in the lives of people. It is easy for us to pay lip service to this fact, yet not offer fervent prayer for His presence and power in all we do. Please keep praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our ministry.



An African Pentecost (jesusmafa)

### A prayer to the Holy

#### Spirit for spiritual awakening

*“Holy Spirit, come like a mighty rushing wind and awaken us out of our complacency, our apathy, our indifference.*

*Disturb us, for we are too content to let things go on as they are, and to let people go on not knowing you. Penetrate the closed gates of our hearts and makes us live again.*

*O Holy Spirit, create among us a mighty Christian revolution and cast the fear of the unknown out of our lives.”* by Michael Hollings and Etta Gullick.

### Do numbers mean anything?

#### What about these ones?

**216, 46, 11, 7, 6, 4180, 1143, 5**

#### Numbers can tell a story

These tell us something of the story of our work during the first 4 months of this year. **216** individual incarcerated men and women, were reached by **46** faithful men and women serving on the **11** teams that go into **7** Connecticut prisons, with

the message of Jesus’ love, and the support and encouragement of **6** DOC chaplains.

**Numbers, of course can never** tell the whole story of what God is doing in the lives of men and women.

**Each of these 216** incarcerated men and women have their own personal stories to tell. Their stories are often of poverty, abuse, neglect, drug and alcohol addiction; and of course the crimes that have landed them in prison, sometimes repeatedly. Crimes committed out of rebellious self-will, greed, fear and often out of desperation.

**Their stories all** have recurring themes of personal despair, rejection, guilt and longing; a longing for a life with meaning and purpose.

### Only Jesus

**The goal** of the Free Inside team members is to share with them the great news that what they are longing and looking for can only be found in Jesus Christ. Only He can free them from sin.

### A few recent inmate comments.

*“Alpha is the best program in the prison.”* (we hear this repeatedly)  
*“It helped me see that I am a sinner and need God”* JD

Another said: *“Through Alpha I am leaning to walk with God, not away from Him, I see God at work in my life through the good messages about the Lord”* CJ

*“Through Alpha I am constantly changing to walk better with the Lord. This program is helping me so much.”*

### You have had an important role in what God is doing.

- ▶ **Through your prayers**, for inmates and for all, who like ourselves, endeavor to bring the love of Christ to them.
- ▶ **Through your encouragement**. Do you know someone who ministers in prison? Ask them how it is going. Ask them how you can pray for them.

### Retreat days on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit

These days are wonderful opportunities for inmates to experience what may still only be an intellectual grasp of the Gospel, deeper into their hearts and lives of these men and women. So far we have held 3 of these days and will be having 2 more.

**We arrive early on Saturday or Sunday morning**, to set up the room in time to receive the participants. After explaining the purpose of the day once again, we



**Alpha  
Behind Bars**

start the first of 3 teaching videos. If the chaplain has been able to arrange a meal to be brought to us, we break for lunch.

**Eating together** makes for a great time of relaxed fellowship and an opportunity to learn more about what is on the hearts of those to whom we minister. Our willingness to eat what they eat means a lot, it deepens the trust they have in us. This simple act is a practical way for us to show something of Christ's love for them.

**At the end of the third session** there is an opportunity for one on one prayer ministry. Many testify that it is often during these prayer times that God does a significant work in their lives.

#### **More numbers**

##### **4180**

Since the New Year, I travelled **4180** miles for the ministry an average of 1045 miles per month. In these days of high gas prices **4180** also represents a large proportion of our ministry budget. I cannot cut back on travel, so I would ask for prayer for God's provision. Perhaps some who read this will consider giving toward this need.

##### **1143**

Is the total number of Bibles and Christian books distributed so far this year. Other than the Bible the most requested book is "*The Purpose Driven Life*". We have given out Bibles and books in English, Spanish, and a few in Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Khmer. Inmates have plenty of time to read. One inmate recently said that he had never read a book in his life until prison.

• **Pray for the Holy Spirit** to open their hearts to Jesus Christ through reading the Bible, and other Christian

books. Ask Him to bring them to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

#### **5**

**Milestone 5.** Sheila and I never cease to be amazed that this ministry is already in its 5th year. Join us in praising God for His faithfulness. You, our faithful partners in prayer and financial support, have been used by God to bring us to this milestone.

*We thank God for you and pray His blessings on your lives.*

#### **Preaching**

Since leaving pastoral ministry, I miss regular preaching, so I am always glad to accept invitations to preach. In March I had the privilege of preaching at Collinsville Congregational Church.

#### **Massachusetts**

Just before Christmas I had the privilege of training a second team for Alpha in Prisons in Massachusetts. It was a great experience getting to know them and their team leader Jerry O'Neill. They began their first Alpha in *Old Colony Correctional Center~ OCCC* in March. Reports so far have been very encouraging attendance is at 22 each week.

#### **This just in - Update on OCCC Alpha from the team leader**

Alpha continues to be an amazing experience for the team presenting it at Old Colony Prison in Bridgewater, MA. Report from one of the team members "*The things which are happening at Old Colony are the things you read about, but never see, but now I am seeing them and I am amazed and rejoicing.*"

Included in this joy is the fact that several of the inmates accepted the reality of Jesus into their lives for the first time during the Holy Spirit weekend, and the power of the Holy

Spirit's loving embrace was obvious to all those attending.

**Finally "be sure your sin will find you out."** Numbers 32: 23

When David Horton decided to go to a Cincinnati Reds ball game with his girlfriend, he knew he was a wanted man. He had failed to appear in court for a drug charge.

During the game, the wanted man decided to give his girlfriend a smooch, and that kiss was displayed on the "*Kiss Cam*." Everyone at the Great American Ball Park saw the kiss, including his parole officer, who was at the same, May 7, 2003, game.

Before the night was out, the parole officer and a policeman arrested Horton, 24, in his front-row seat.

*"Out of all the coincidences, we had 20- or 30-thousand people at the ballpark, and who do they put on the 'Kiss Cam'? And then, who is there but his parole officer?"* said Richard Goldberg, Horton's attorney.

*Source: Associated Press (5-30-03), through CNEWS.*

#### **How to contact us**

P O Box 341  
Glastonbury  
CT 06033.

[freeinside@cox.net](mailto:freeinside@cox.net)  
[www.free-inside.com](http://www.free-inside.com)

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*All gifts to Free Inside are tax-deductible.*

*Without the Holy Spirit, Alpha is just Alpha. Pray that our ministry will always know the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.*