



freedom

December 2008

KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY AUSTRALIA



Kairos Giving the Gift of Comfort and Hope at Christmas

For most Australians, Christmas Day means a sizzling BBQ, kids playing with new toys and lively family coming and going. Yet a cloud can hang over a sunny Christmas Day if there's a family member in prison. What does the hope of rebirth, renewal and new life of Christmas mean to someone who is locked away?

Through your support, Kairos is able to be there to help bring comfort and hope, both for those in prison, and for their relatives.

Meet "Deanna" who will be in prison this Christmas. She was searching for love but her search took her across the world and back, before finding true love with God. Here's her story in her own words...

[In] April 2007 I started exploring the internet, and I discovered a chat room... and started chatting to

people all round the world, it felt good. Then I met him... His name was Emmanuel, he was Nigerian, I was smitten, we chatted for hours. I could not stop, like an addiction. He was a businessman he said. A few weeks later he had talked me [into going] to China to visit, meet him. I could get a job easy, I was English. I worked harder and saved my cash.

"I always believed in God, but I was so lost. My heart was hollow and empty...")

In July 2007 I told my family, "I'm off to China". They tried to stop me but I had to do it... I went and it was great, we really got on well. Six weeks later he changed and things got scary. I was trapped, I was in danger, and in September I was sexually assaulted by him and his friends, used as a drug mule

and here I am in jail. A mess, I was even suicidal. I always believed in God, but I was so lost. My heart was hollow empty and sad because I need love so bad. I had been controlled, all I had was

continued on page 2...

Highlights

Kairos Program Cares for Inmates Inside and Outside Prison / Maree's Story / Finding Freedom in Prison

continued from page 1...

taken and I was left broken with a bad set of memories.

In jail, Everyone talked about Kairos, so I put my name down... and on the second day of Kairos I was called up to the Journey. I was so happy I smiled for four days and God's love filled my heart... Now my heart is full of contentment. I know God is with me as when I pray I feel a warm radiance in my heart. I have found God in my heart.

|| Now my heart is full of contentment. I know God is with me as when I pray I feel a warm radiance in my heart. ||

So many people like Deanna have experienced a life-changing connection with God as His Spirit ministered to them through Kairos. Thank you on their behalf for all the practical support that you have generously provided.

And please continue to pray and intercede with us as we stand by those who are reclaiming their right to the fullness of life!

Kairos Program Cares for Inmates Inside and Outside Prison

Kairos is only one part of God's plan to invite everyone to rebuild their lives. We are now linked to other organisations through a collaboration called the Through Care Jigsaw Group that is bringing together an increasing number of volunteer organisations that assist people in finding new life.

The Through Care Jigsaw Group is a combined initiative between Kairos, Mission Australia, Hillsong 'City Care', Anglicare, Prison Fellowship, Alpha for Prisons, Prisoner and After Care Support Services, Unchained Ministries and DCS Chaplaincy in NSW. Each group can now stand alongside another organisationally, specialising

in what it does best, but with the ability to refer clients to a safe place where their specific needs can be addressed. And the group is growing following signing of the MOU on November 12 this year.

|| Through Care Jigsaw Group combines our 'talents' to bring about a holistic ministry to people in prison and those affected by it. ||

Through this collaboration, people in prison and their families can be offered connections to organisations that specialise in addressing a wide range of needs.

The title 'Jigsaw' depicts the group completely, because Jigsaw puts together many pieces of the rehabilitation

puzzle – creating better avenues of mutual referral and co-operation. Thus the overall effectiveness of each of the various services is enhanced.

For example, "Corey" wrote to us in the Kairos office, saying, 'I have recently been released after

Maree's Story

Dear Kairos,

I am sending this e-mail to say thank-you on behalf of my partner, "Anton". He was at a Correctional Centre and thoroughly enjoyed your program. Your prayers and kindness lifted his spirit immensely.

'I felt the need to thank-you all for your prayers and thoughts for him and our family. We have been having so much trouble since he has been gone and we really hit a low. Just to know that he had someone to ease his ache was uplifting for us also.'

Thank you,

Maree

What a privilege to be able to offer Jesus' comfort, hope and renewal in Spirit in the midst of heartache and difficulty – even to those we never meet. So often the renewal and freedom go far beyond our horizons.

Because "Maree" wrote to us, we have been able to offer her a place on the next Kairos Outside program in her area, and have asked that her partner may be able to attend the Journey program where he is now located.

This story... which is repeated in so many different lives and places... is the fellowship that Jesus was talking about (1 John 1-7).



9 years in prison. I was active in Kairos. Back in town now. Feeling lost.'

A couple of days after receiving his message, we were able to put Corey in contact with a local Pastor. Later on, Corey wrote to the pastor and said, 'Thank you for taking the time to help me. I greatly enjoyed our conversation over a cup of coffee this afternoon.'

Also, John, now the pastor at Unchained Ministries, shares how a pastor made the difference for him: 'Though on the surface we had nothing in common, it was [his] willingness to love and support me as I found my feet as a Christian that made all the difference and inspired my determination to not give up – to go on with Jesus into a transformed life.'

The Through Care Jigsaw Group combines our 'talents' to bring about a holistic ministry to people in prison and those affected by it.

Rebirth, Ren



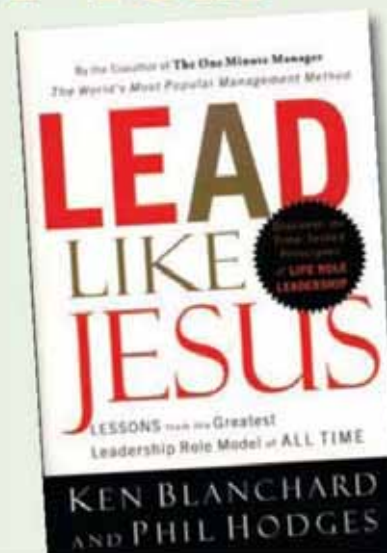
A Great Resource for You!

Go to any book store today, and you'll see shelves and shelves of books about leadership. But how many of the authors would you employ as consultants to your organisation or family?

The way the world defines leadership is vastly different from how Christ demonstrated it. What was so good and lasting about Jesus' approach to the people around him? His vision? His values? How did He influence you, and do you lead (influence) others as He did?

In the challenging book, "Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time", Ken and Phil offer a biblical model of positive, constructive and healthy alternatives to many whose experience of leadership has been mostly negative, fragmented and destructive. They also offer many insights into a world driven by fear and EGO (Edging God Out), and reflect on the power and sustainability or personal transformation.

Here is a great resource for the 'Action – Reflection' growth model that can be used in your small prayer and share groups or accountability partnerships.



"Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time"

Kairos Launches Program Support and Development Group

Kairos has now formed the Program Support and Development Group as a centre for learning and improving what we do.

Launched on 29 November at the Forum of Regional Committee representatives, the group will provide a national focus on improving the way things are done in all arms of Kairos. This includes a regular review of Kairos' processes and content, with a focus on growing effectiveness.

At Kairos our experience shows the importance of constantly being on a path of advancement in every area. This is critical to achieving accountability to God and to the people whom we serve!

Renewal, and Commitment

Do you know any New Christians? Do you remember when you were a New Christian? Let me refresh you. You'd just gone through a life-changing experience. God had given you a personal revelation of Himself and His incredible love for you. You were as high as a kite. You could not understand why others could be so complacent, even indifferent, to your wonderful experience. You were so excited about Jesus you wanted to rush about and tell the world the good news. Well, I did anyway! And as for that, I'm still excited by and about Jesus.

The New Christian's experience is one of rebirth, the birth that comes "from above" that Jesus explains to Nicodemus in John's Gospel (3:1-15). It is, quite simply, the experience of being led by the Holy Spirit into the Kingdom of God. It is essential for every true child of God:

"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5 NIV).

Rebirth is exciting. But, just as natural birth is the beginning of a process of learning life skills, so our rebirth is the start of a spiritual journey in God. We learn, and in some cases relearn, the elements of true Christian living. We have been saved and we embark on a life-long process of

sanctification which leads, ultimately, to the completion (fullness) of our salvation. Paul succinctly captures the essence of this journey in his encouragement to the Roman church, and to us, to:

"...offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:1, 2).

Jesus says to us, "Come, follow me". Renewal is the process of following Jesus, of growing more Christlike as we give ourselves, daily, to be His true disciples, willing to let Him have His way in who we are and in everything that we do.

We will not achieve the renewal that is so necessary after rebirth without commitment. Commitment is most simply expressed and demonstrated by Isaiah, with his words, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isa 6:8).

In Kairos we are sent, by God, into places of incarceration to "set the prisoners (spiritually) free". Our hope is to see them experience rebirth, renewal and commitment. Pray to God that we may lead them in this, not by talking or preaching, but by our own life example.

God Bless, Peter Francis

Finding Freedom in Prison

By Susan Blackburn

Recently I had the privilege of taking a servant role at a Kairos Short Course for women in Berrima Correctional Centre in NSW to see how it could be implemented in Western Australia.

It was a non-stop week where the volunteers willingly and wholeheartedly sacrificed their own comforts to focus on the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the women participants. With great compassion and understanding they walked alongside the inmates, listening to their stories, tending their wounds, and speaking the new life offered by Christ. The volunteers and the inmates creatively explored the message of God's universal love and forgiveness for all. It was a time of personal testimonies and fellowship that broke down social barriers.

It is somewhat ironic that in this physical prison, God's hand of regeneration and renewal swept freely through iron bars and steel doors. He dashed away chains that held people prisoner to mistaken preconceptions about the Christian faith. New beginnings opened to true freedom – freedom from guilt, anxiety, wrongdoing, wounding, abuse and so much more.

These were real people facing the reality of lives torn apart, of families separated and of relationships broken. How much did we

yearn to offer the hand of Christ? It was not just our desire, it felt imperative! God was at work in our hearts as much as in theirs.

And what joy at the end of the course as the women expressed the new insights they had discovered and their astonishment at being so very, very loved.

As a volunteer on Kairos, one hopes and prays for spiritual transformation to take place in the hearts of all the women; what is perhaps less anticipated is the transformation that takes place in your own spirit as you discover the joy of being a true servant.

As we prepare for the approach of Christmas and the new life offered through the birth of Jesus, let us consider that new life growing now in our prisons through Kairos.

Pray for inmates that they might explore Christmas with new eyes;

eyes that see not the tired image of commercial gain and frozen clichéd landscapes, but a Christmas that was given by God just for them over 2,000 years ago. Pray that they might feel the light of Christ burning bright and new in their hearts.

Susan Blackburn is a former journalist on a journey toward ministry who spends one day a week as a volunteer chaplain at a Western Australian men's prison.

"God dashed away chains that held people prisoner to mistaken preconceptions about the Christian faith."

Is God Primary in Your Life?

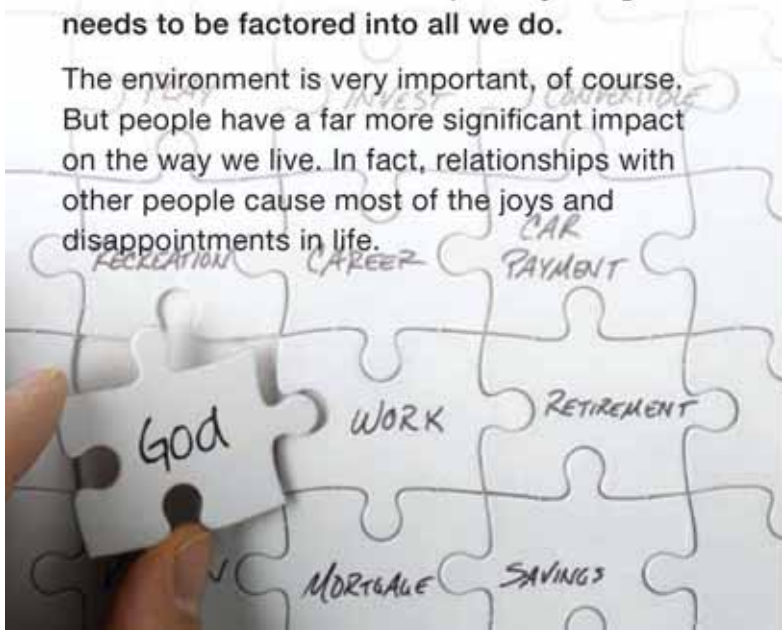
At a recent lecture, a prominent environmentalist urged us to remember that "E = 1", meaning that the environment is the primary thing and it needs to be factored into all we do.

The environment is very important, of course. But people have a far more significant impact on the way we live. In fact, relationships with other people cause most of the joys and disappointments in life.

The human race is definitely degrading its own eco-system, but how much more do we create difficult relationships between nations, states, communities, organisations, neighbours and family members?

Jesus went straight to the heart of the problem when He invited us into His kingdom. "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these (other) things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33). We seem to be experiencing the opposite. By ignoring this invitation, all the 'other things' have been progressively becoming unavailable to us.

In other words, if "G = 1", meaning that God is primary, we find that relationships are repaired, renewed and enhanced in fellowship, and we will all care for our bit of the eco-system because of its affect on others.





Tony Carter

Letter from Tony

Dear Friend of Kairos,

At Christmas many of us would not naturally think about people in prison. But life in prison, and for relatives outside, is a very intense time of the year as the harsh reality of imprisonment is exposed and raw.

Deep within themselves Kairos people are leaders – people completely dependent on God, but people who also take one step after another, walking with, and building others up.

This is the fellowship that I want to be in, selfless individuals who are committed to seeing every life transformed through Christ! Your support is making such a difference in the lives of so many inmates, former inmates and their families... some of whom we have highlighted in this newsletter.

On behalf of all of those like Maree who are experiencing new spiritual freedom, I would like to offer you my heartfelt thanks for supporting God's work in Kairos through your gifts of time, prayer and finances during 2008. I look forward to seeing how He uses our partnership to transform even more lives in 2009.

Thank you again, and Merry Christmas!

Tony Carter
CEO

P.S. We would love for you to share this newsletter with the wider Kairos family and those who have supported this ministry. If someone who has supported you would like to receive the Freedom newsletter, let us know and we will keep them up to date with what God is doing in and through their support.



Tell Us
Your
Story

Do you have a story about how Kairos has brought God's healing and salvation to you or someone you know? We want to hear from you!

The things you share with us will help to encourage our teams and supporters as we see how the power of God touches and comforts inmates and their families. Like you, we know how tough it is to take on this journey. And we want more people to be able to say, "I know where I am going, and I'm on the way."

So please share your story of life-transformation, use the enclosed reply envelope or send it by email. And thank you for the encouragement your story will bring to those we serve!



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