



freedom

February 2009

A MINISTRY NEWSLETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF KAIROS

KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY AUSTRALIA

'Kairos Outside'

offering gift of hope to families of inmates

If you had asked Catherine a little over five years ago, she would have told you that life with her husband Nick was one you read about in fairytales.

They had met as teenagers, married early, and had three beautiful children. Life was good.

But that all came crashing down in January 2004 when Nick was sentenced to prison.

In his attempt to provide everything he could for his family, Nick had used unlawful means to attain funds. And Catherine and her children were faced with the excruciating prospect of living life without their beloved husband and father for the next nine years.

Thankfully, Nick's sentence was eventually reduced to five years with a three-year parole period. But that didn't make those long years away from Nick any easier for Catherine and her family.

As she says today, "From the moment Nick was sentenced... I struggled through the looks of shame and unkind

comments and ultimately felt isolated and rejected. The worst blow of rejection came from my own family."

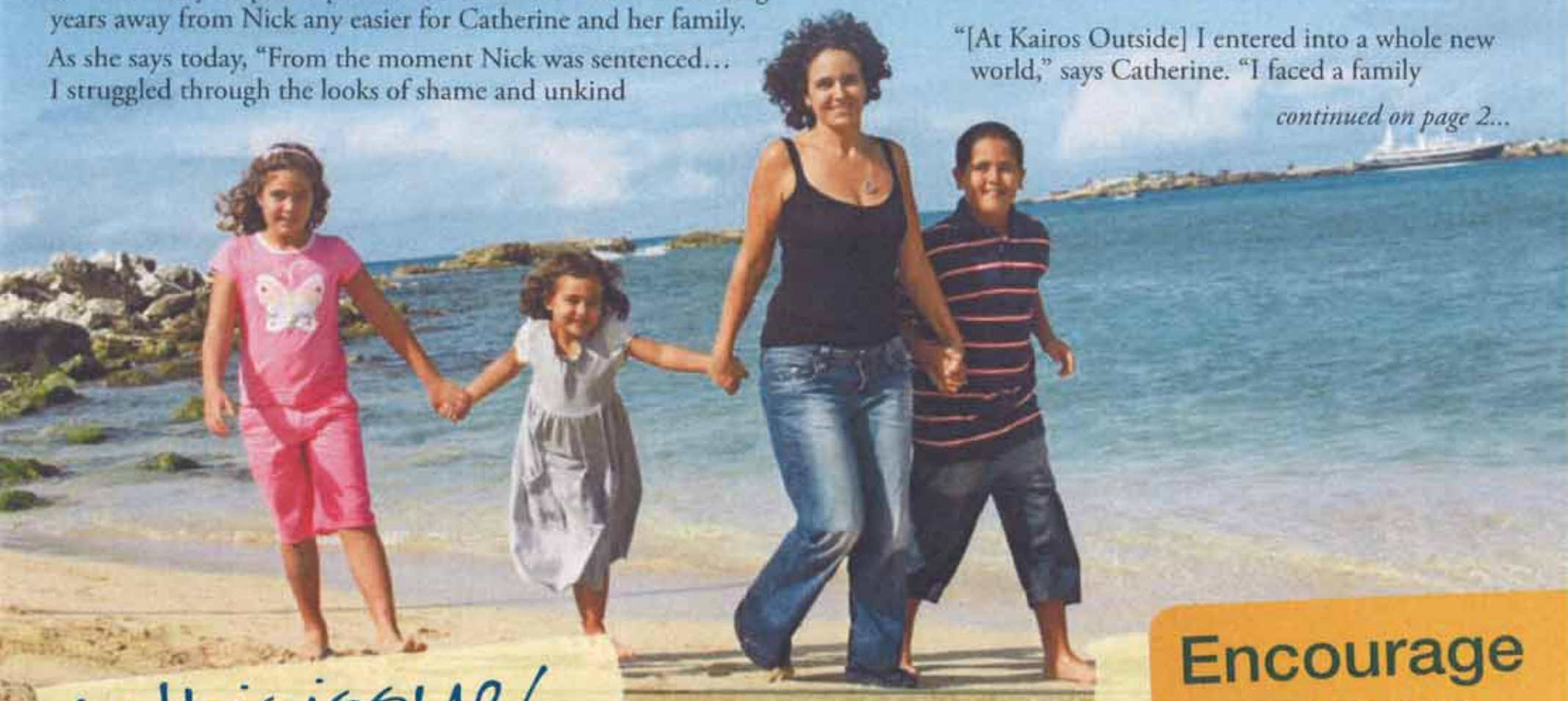
Catherine carried these feelings of shame and rejection with her until December 2007 when she was invited to attend 'Kairos Outside', a program for families who are left on the outside when their loved ones go to prison.

"At Kairos Outside I learnt that we were going to be okay and that the gift of hope was ours for the taking."

"Catherine", Kairos Outside guest and team member

"[At Kairos Outside] I entered into a whole new world," says Catherine. "I faced a family

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'Kairos Outside'

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of caring people who listened to my story and did not judge me. I felt care and love that I never knew existed. Kairos Outside raised me to a level of hope

!! I felt care and love that I never knew existed !!

that renewed my feeling for life [and it] made me smile from the inside again.

"At Kairos Outside I learnt that we were going to be okay and that the gift of hope was ours for the taking. When I returned

home, I shared my Kairos Outside experience with our children and they too realised that with God's love there is hope."

Since then, Catherine has been able to offer the same hope to other women in similar circumstances on subsequent weekends.

Catherine's family is one of many across Australia who have been given the gift of hope through Kairos Outside. Yet there are many more families who need the hope, support and freedom that this vital program offers!

So thank you for your ongoing support of Kairos, which helps us continue to provide programs like Kairos Outside to hurting families like Catherine's. Your gifts, prayers and commitment of time are having such an impact in the lives of so many!

'Kairos Outside' Families Blessed with Christmas Hampers and Gifts

This past Christmas, members of Kairos Outside (KO) Sydney were delighted to be able to assemble 60 hampers for their guests, thanks to generous donations from Aussie Helpers and the Campbelltown Inner Wheel Club. Thanks also go to Koorong who donated the carry bags for the hampers!

Kairos was also extremely blessed to receive and distribute eight very special hampers from the Kidsrock Group at the Living Waters Church at Ryde. The nine children there sacrificed the money that they normally received for their own Christmas presents to buy food and assemble the beautiful hampers.

"It was an enormous privilege, and very humbling, to distribute these hampers... and witness the response of the recipients to such amazing kindness," says Barbara Clancy of KO Sydney.

"The love with which they had been prepared flowed through to the recipients and brought the love of Jesus to many needy families this Christmas time. What a blessing it was to share His love with those in need of comforting words and deeds!"

Another special treat this year was the gift of 200

Operation Christmas Child boxes from Samaritan's Purse, which were given to the kids and grandkids of mothers and grandmothers in the Kairos Outside program.

One grandmother said, "My grandkids were awestruck! They loved the boxes and they were full of such amazing gifts". Another young mum emailed, "A big thank you for our surprise package."

!! What a blessing it was to share His love with those in need of comforting words and deeds!!

Kairos Outside would like to extend a warm thanks to Aussie Helpers, the Campbelltown Inner Wheel Club, Koorong, the kids at the Living Waters Church and Samaritan's Purse for their thoughtfulness and generosity this past Christmas.

And thank you for your support of Kairos, which helps us show the unconditional love of Christ to incarcerated individuals, their families and those who work with them at Christmas... and all year round!



New Wineskins from Old

a word of devotion from Peter Francis, Kairos Spiritual Director

"Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9.17)

These words from Jesus quite likely impacted His first listeners more immediately than they do us. In ancient times goatskins were used as wine containers. As the fresh grape juice fermented,

it expanded the wine and stretched the new wineskin. But an old wineskin had already been stretched and placing new wine in it would cause it to burst. The result would be twofold: not only would the new wine be lost, but the wineskin would be ruined.

I take heed and caution from the double warning I receive from this understanding. Firstly, I do not wish to waste or lose the spirit and power of the new wine, the fresh breath of the Spirit, that I sense God

Encourage Someone this Easter!

Catherine, whose story you can read about on page 1, spent five years at home with her children while her husband Nick was in prison.

During this time, one of the most important parts of Nick's rehabilitation was the communication he had with the outside world. As Catherine says, "I came to learn that communication was very important and very healthy for the person in prison."

This is why Kairos would like to invite you to write a Note of Encouragement to a prisoner this Easter. We have even enclosed a note for you to write and two spares to give to a friend or family member.

Thank you for helping share the hope and true freedom of Christ with an inmate this Easter season!



Kairos Part of a Wider Community to Help Transform Lives

Your support for the work of Kairos with incarcerated individuals and their families goes wider and deeper than you might imagine. Access to true and lasting spiritual freedom for prisoners and their families is magnified through our links to the much wider network in the Through Care Jigsaw Group.

The following story comes from one of our partner organisations that works with prisoners once they have been released- Alpha Caring for Ex-Offenders...

When I was in prison, I realised that I didn't want to be in the drug scene. I just realised it too late. But in one way prison was the best thing that could have happened.

When I got out, I came home and got my family back.

Later my wife left and stole the kids from me. I had nothing, just a mattress on the floor of my empty place. I was walking down Plantation Road when I saw the Corio Christian Community. I met the pastor, Doug, and... went to the Alpha Course at his church. Got off heroin, and I am slowly lowering my need for medication.

I believe in Jesus. I try to get to church as much as I can. If it wasn't for Doug and the church, I don't know where I would be.

-Danny



is pouring into the Body of Christ in this time. As well, I have no desire to end up as a 'ruined wineskin'.

So what might I do? Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

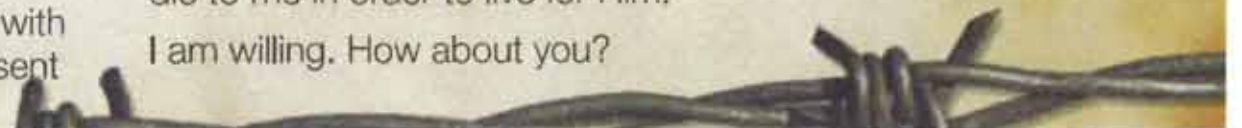
If I am to experience the fullness of the new wine I must release the old wineskin. I must come in complete surrender to Jesus. Indeed, I sense that Jesus may well be talking to me in words such as:

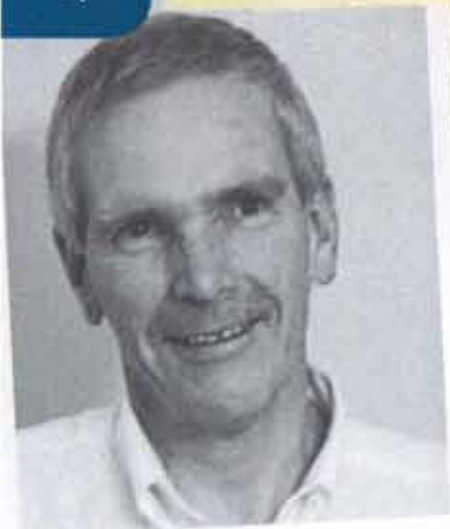
"I desire you to be as a new wineskin, ready to be filled with the new wine of the Holy Spirit and active in God's present

move on this earth. You can change from being an old wineskin by coming to Me and laying down whatever it is that caused you to be stretched. You must also let go of the old wine. Any perceptions and practices of old that hold you back from receiving Me afresh I instruct you to release. Let go of any hurt or stress from the past. Present yourself before Me, that I may make you new, and release you to receive new wine."

I realise I must let go of my ideas, even my agenda. I must die to me in order to live for Him.

I am willing. How about you?





Tony Carter



Letter from Tony

Dear Friend of Kairos,

Catherine... Nick...and Jim. These are all names of people you will read about in this month's edition of Freedom.

As you will see, each life was given the gift of hope... the gift of true freedom... through the ministry of Kairos – volunteers who are 'soldiers serving at their own expense'.

Yes, each story is different. And each person encountered Kairos at a different point in their life's journey. But each of these people has one thing in common. Each was able to recognise the grace and forgiveness of God and to begin a second chance at life because of the support and genuine care of friends like you.

Because, when you give a gift of support to Kairos... when you pray for the ministry... or when you give of your time as a volunteer... you are making what we do possible. Yes, God uses you to impact the lives of those we serve! And one of the most powerful testimonies to people in prison or who are isolated and rejected because of an imprisonment, is that there are many, many more people who care about them than the team members that they encounter.

Nothing else can do what the unconditional love of Christ can do in a person's life! Sometimes that comes directly, and sometimes through referral and the extension of the work of God's kingdom in transforming lives via the Through Care Jigsaw Group.

Danny's story is a testimony to the willingness of God's people to be there to accept, love, support and grow them through Christ.

Lastly, I hope you will take advantage of the opportunity this Easter season to write a Note of Encouragement to someone in prison. There's nothing quite like getting a hand-written letter, much less from someone who's giving words of life and encouragement!

So please jot a quick note to a prisoner on the enclosed card and return it to the Kairos National Office. And be sure to pass the spares to a friend or family member so that we can distribute them to as many prisons as possible

Thanks again for your support of what God is doing through Kairos, and may you be blessed as you continue to help Kairos share His unconditional love with those who are yet to find it!

In Christ,

Tony Carter

Tony Carter
CEO, Kairos Prison Ministry Australia

Jim was a participant in the Kairos program many years ago. It was through Kairos that he found freedom in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it was because of Kairos that Jim is now experiencing freedom for eternity with His Creator in heaven.

The following is part of a eulogy that Jim's sister gave at his funeral, a true testimony to the power of Christ working through Kairos to transform a life!

Kairos... was just so good for him, he really came to know the Christ he had heard about in his Sunday school days.

Those men and women were so wonderful to him. Because of that he pleaded with his wife and me to go on a Kairos Outside weekend (a ministry for relatives or friends supporting someone on the inside). That was the most wonderful weekend.... We have a new support family through Kairos and Kairos Outside, many of whom are here today.

[After prison], Jim was doing well and started going to Home for Good, a support group being set up in Newcastle. He had been helped and wanted to help others.

Jim's Story



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