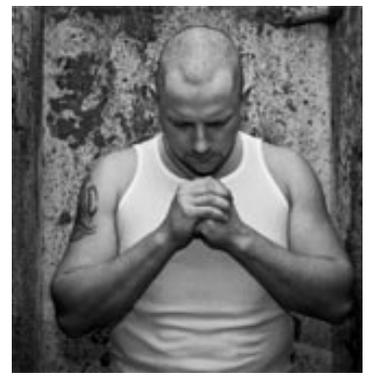




Kairos

PRISON MINISTRY AUSTRALIA

*releasing lives into the love
and forgiveness of Jesus*



Newsletter Spring 2011

Message from our CEO

Well, as they say "Time flies when you are enjoying yourself!" It certainly doesn't seem like 3 months since I was writing the first of these messages. However, looking back so much has happened.

At the National Workshop in July there were many new faces, and a few old ones. Representatives from every Regional Committee across Australia demonstrated the passion and conviction that drives so many volunteers to give generously of their time and resources. The discussions led to over 70 recommendations to the Board.

To encourage inclusiveness, the Board has invited volunteers with appropriate skills or interest in any specific topics to prayerfully consider contributing their time to resourcing and implementing these recommendations. This is a real opportunity to reinvigorate and redirect the future of Kairos. The recommendations have been sent to the Regional Committees and will also be made available on the website.

For those of you not in New South Wales, the NSW State government has significantly reduced the Corrective Services budget resulting in the Berrima Correctional Centre and The Parramatta Centre being closed and we remain uncertain about how or when this

will impact the Kairos Parramatta Office.

As New South Wales contracts, we have opportunities for expansion in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia for both Inside and Outside programs. We all need to pray that the right people will hear and respond to God's call into this incredible ministry. In particular, we need to pray that the Lord will provide people in Tasmania, and for access to be granted to facilities in Victoria.

It is a privilege to be a team member on Kairos Outside for Men NSW to be held in November. If you know of any potential KOMen guests, please contact us at 02 9683 6096 or operations@kairos.org.au.

And that is just some of the things happening!

I have to also admit to some disappointments. In particular, at the end of the financial year, when we traditionally see a significant peak in donations we saw less than half of our normal expected returns. Unfortunately, this reflects national trends for many charitable organisations in the current economic climate. Whilst Regional funds are generally healthy, so that the delivery of

courses and weekends are not yet affected, nationally organised activities, such as training and other support, will come under considerable pressure if this trend is not reversed. Please pray for adequate provision to properly guide, support and develop the ministry.

I hope to visit all regions over time, but as you can imagine, this is a big task. Shortly I will be attending South Australia's Mobilong Closing ceremony, where we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the start of the Mobilong Short Courses.

Meanwhile, thank you for your faithful support. I am constantly amazed and in awe of the dedicated, sacrificial, and grace-filled service that

Kairos volunteers give to the ministry. This gives me great confidence that in God's strength, and in His special time, we will successfully meet the continuing challenges of furthering this very special ministry.

God bless you and keep you all

*John Bignall
Chief Executive Officer*



Kairos Outside Women #12 Canberra - Monaro

At the beginning of 2011 it appeared that we could not run a Guest Weekend for this year. Without a Leader and women who were tired or committed in other areas, we were almost out of time. However, the Regional Committee gathered together to seek God, under the trusted spiritual direction of our long-serving Chaplain, Sister Barbara. Our prayer was, 'Lord, we want what you want!'... and through an amazing, totally unexpected and unanimous turn-around, we suddenly felt convinced the Lord wanted us to run a Weekend this year, and would provide for us as we trusted Him. We continued to pray, "Lord we want what you want!"

God absolutely amazed us - the Regional Committee, KOW#12 team, Guests, observers and staff at the Greenhills Conference Centre.

We watched Him work! The Weekend was led by a previous Guest -Sue, who chose Isaiah 40: 31 as a Scripture - 'when you wait upon the Lord, He will renew your strength. You will rise up with wings as eagles, you will run and not grow weary, you will walk and not be faint'.

Twenty-one Guests (the largest number ever!) from the Canberra /Monaro region were warmly welcomed, listened to and loved. The team worked together in love and unity. However, the major focus and "wow" factor

for our Guests was the Forgiveness service. Each Guest unburdened their heavy load as God honoured the process with his amazing love, healing - setting the women free.

The Reunion saw seventeen Guests give testimony to how God had made Isaiah 40:31 real in their own lives. What a receptive, enthusiastic, open and honest group they are! For most women it was "the best weekend they had ever had: they had never felt so loved, accepted and not judged". And wonderfully, sixteen Guests are keen to know more about Jesus.

As we rejoice in all that God has done, we keep praying: "Lord, we want what you want".

I was in prison and you visited me... Mt 25:36

Martha's Story

To share my story I need to condense my life journey, where I have come from, where I am today and how that change occurred.

My mother was barely 15 when I was born. Apparently this was not a consensual act. I was born before due date and final arrangements for my adoption were not in place – so they decided to keep me.

My early years were spent with my wider family - and I was usually in the care of a young uncle and his mates who bullied and abused me, sexually and physically. My cries and complaints to my family fell on deaf ears.

Over time I became everyone's child but nobody's responsibility. By the time I was in year 10, I was mature, independent and in a serious relationship with a drug dealer.

Looking back, despite many toxic relationships, I think our Heavenly Father was protecting me, without me realising it. I have walked away relatively unharmed - for which I am grateful.

Towards the end of high school, I had a nagging obsession to find my biological father. He lived in the city 700km away. Finally, I was able to contact him but he treated me like a stranger. The isolation and rejection I felt was acute. All I wanted was his acknowledgement.

I spoke to a Christian counsellor about this, who suggested that I can have a loving Heavenly Father. At the time I did not believe that. How could anyone understand the intense hunger I had to be loved and accepted for who I am? After completing high school I went to study in another city. I finally left my drug affected friends, but now I needed the drugs. Another possessive relationship

ended disastrously.

When I was not quite 21, without a word, my mum emigrated, leaving me behind. So I moved in with yet another aunty. This was a disaster as she joined a sect and my uncle was a recovering alcoholic.

Unexpectedly one day my aunt turfed me out. I had nowhere to go. I was literally on the street. I contacted my dad but that didn't work out, then I moved in with my cousin's friend and his mother.

The worst was the rejection I felt. My aunt refused to talk to me. My family saw evil in everything they heard of me. I was told that unless I repented they wanted nothing to do with me. I felt isolated and rejected, desperate, hurt, depressed and suicidal. I longed to feel part of the family - to feel loved. I prayed that God would let the truth be known.

But that did not happen...So where did that leave me? I have just shared most of my life journey with you, not for you to feel sorry for me but to give you hope. When I look back at my life I realize that I have felt rejected and isolated many times. I have been passed around, ignored when I cried for help, and seen to be the problem child. Although I was brought up as a Christian I did not feel the love of our Heavenly Father. As far as I was concerned, even He rejected me. I was not experiencing that love and acceptance I yearned for.

But it was partly my fault because I was very shy and avoided social interaction. I did not want people to know what I had been through and where I came from. I was too ashamed and scared that people would have

the wrong impression of me.

It is only in recent years that I have been able to share some of my story. Particularly through Kairos Outside, God sent Christians who became my family and showed me the love of our Heavenly Father. They taught me about forgiveness, acceptance and being part of the greater Christian family. It was God's family showing His love, with persistence, which gently shaped me from being broken to being whole.

I am plagued with the question: Why is my life so good? What makes me so special that I have not ended up like many others in my family and friends.

I cannot take the credit for the way my life turned out. I think, in my case, God persisted to work in me, through others: To heal, to restore and for me to realize that I am His child. I can now feel the love of our Heavenly Father. Forgiveness is powerful. I am at peace with most of my past. I still have a small way to go, and yes, each step has been painful - but the reward of healing has been greater.

In the big scheme of things, the painful years are but a fleeting moment compared to the abundant life I have in Christ. By His grace He has helped me to persevere with my Christian walk and grow in faith. I no longer have a need to isolate myself and I no longer allow myself to feel rejected. I am loved by my Christian family and just like each of you; I too, am special to our Heavenly Father. May I encourage you to accept the fellowship and support that Kairos or your chosen Christian family offers you, and someday, you too, may become the loving support for a hurting person in need.



Acacia #2

Following Kairos Short Course #2 at Acacia Prison in May this year permission was given for a monthly Journey Program. On the last Wednesday of each month the Kairos team are given free rein on the prison chapel for two hours. A team has readily come together with the "grey beards" outnumbering those still in the work force, though some do take time off work. There is quite a scramble to get picked to go on team for, as the prison guest numbers vary (due to release, transfer etc.) so the team numbers fluctuate. With about eight guests presently remaining the Kairos team numbers four. Visits are a real delight and are highly anticipated each month.

The chaplains are very supportive and with their help guest numbers have ranged from nearly 100% of those available to at least 50% turning up to each visit.

Much prayer and active guidance from the Holy Spirit goes into preparing the two hour programme resulting in the belief that we have been able to communicate effectively and make a difference. We are looking for answers to prayer and a miracle or two.

Maximum group participation is encouraged at all times; a lot of looking up scriptures, short simple talks –always with discussion and always ending with group prayer, are combined with coffee to start and coffee and biscuits half way through.

Negotiations are in progress for the next Short Course at Acacia, hopefully, during May 2012. The prison staff, including the Chaplains, have been beyond amazing in their support of Kairos. The Chaplains are extremely supportive as we demonstrate God's love to the guests by listening and loving.

Through Him all things are possible and this has certainly been the case with Acacia Prison. After seven years of prayer we are blessed to have held two Short Courses. There are other prisons around Perth that are starting to show interest and the State Council members are following this up.

Unless the Lord builds the house... they labour in vain who build it.. Psalm 127:1

Lacie's Story

It is special and thrilling to hear from the participants in any Kairos event (KI, KO, and Torch). We are especially privileged to share something of Lacie's time on a Kairos Inside short course.

It was God's intention as well as mine that I should experience the Kairos Short Course. While my name was shortlisted I hoped and prayed that I would be included. I was ecstatic when my acceptance came through.

On the Course itself, the powerful words of speakers and participants conveyed their battles with personal tragedy and unbearable pain together with their struggles with belief.



both physical and emotional pain.

As I reflected back on my life and the choices I had made, I realised I was not alone. On the second day a pathway opened up for me that would enable healing of

My father was an alcoholic who seemed to spend his life in a rage of anger. He abused us verbally and physically. He started a pattern that was to become a very unhealthy cycle in my life. My adult years involved one undesirable relationship after another. I found myself continually trapped in physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse. I turned to drugs as a means of coping. My life spiralled out of control leading me to depression, despair and thoughts of suicide. I was not there for others who needed me, my teenage son growing up without either parent, my estranged sister-in-law who was recently killed in a car accident. But a wise woman invited me to draw a timeline of my life, when I realised that, alongside the clear pattern of abuse emerged another pattern of God's involvement in my life. God was always there, even when I shunned Him.

Despite my history, my time in gaol has been extremely positive, productive and powerful. Kairos has been part of this, showing me methods of coping with bad situations and

providing a network of support that I will have forever. I have experienced unconditional love; I have felt safe. I don't have to cry alone. I now have direction and focus. I am confident, determined and motivated. Instead of being fearful of getting out of bed I now can't wait for each new day.

Living a Christian life within the system can involve pain and struggle. Although not perfect, I use my Christian values to express random acts of love and kindness.

I started to stress and panic when my release date approached. Then I stopped and handed myself and my concerns over to God. As I did, I became calm and received a sense of relief.

I have been blessed to undertake this journey with Kairos. I feel privileged to share these moments with you. In closing, I'll mention a few thoughts my mother sent to me:

*If God brings you to it,
He will bring you through it.
Happy moments praise God;
Difficult moments seek God;
Quiet moments worship God;
Painful moments trust God;
Every moment thank God.*

Arthur Gorrie #2

Kairos Short Course #2 at Arthur Gorrie was a wonderful experience. Due to unforeseen movement of personnel, the 23 enrolled participants were down to 8 for the first day but swelled to 11 on day two. All were blessed due in large part to the prayers offered by all, including two team members who set up a small but powerful prayer corner for the Short Course.

Four participants from Arthur Gorrie #1 helped serve refreshments to their fellow inmates and other team members, cooking the barbecue lunch each day, and willingly helping wherever needed. Their servant hearts brought tears to the eyes of the team.

The officer who attended AG#1 in 2010 was also there. This gracious man treated participants and team with courtesy and

respect. He gladly accepted – and wore – a Kairos cross. His presence and contribution greatly assisted in running the course. God's Spirit was mightily at work throughout the week, especially speaking through the talks and impacting the forgiveness activity. The Closing Ceremony, saw many official guests, including the prison General Manager, join in celebrating the wonderful work of God that had occurred throughout the week.

Our prayers are that the impact of that week will strengthen and grow as the participants continue their walk with Jesus. We pray also that God will continue to expand the ministry, blessing anticipated discussions with Management and Chaplains at other Correctional Centres in the near future.

What can I do?

- Volunteer for ongoing input to the National Workshop outcomes (contact John Bignall: johnbignall@kairos.org.au)
- Join the Kairos Prayer Network (email prayer@kairos.org.au)
- Consider a financial contribution to the end of year appeal.

Junee KI

The smooth-running KI#24 at Junee yielded two interesting aspects. Firstly, two Jewish men who came with open hearts shared their belief in Jesus as a prophet of God. After the Short Course and the love, kindness, caring, listening and understanding they experienced, they saw him as more than a prophet, saying Christianity needs a place in the world today.

Another guest was so filled with the Holy Spirit after the Short Course he spoke to his pod of approximately 200 men, one of whom he led to salvation, and gave him his Bible.

Pt Augusta

Over 40 people from the Pt Augusta area (including Pt Augusta, Whyalla, Pt Pirie, and Mid-North of SA generally), attended Mobilong closing, most travelling on a bus chartered by Kairos (leaving Whyalla at 9.30 am and not getting home until 3 am).

Kairos hopes to introduce the Kairos program into the Pt Augusta Prison next year, and those attending came to find out more about the program, and to hear of the impact of the program on the participants. Some were inspired by what they experienced to offer to be part of Kairos in the future. Kairos has had a dedicated committee and

team of speakers telling the Kairos story at many churches in the Pt Augusta area over the past few months; to have over 40 people interested to make the long trip to Mobilong was most encouraging. Praise God!

National Agape Co-ordinator

We thank Bronwyn Finlayson for her major contribution to the ministry over many years as National Agape Co-ordinator.

We congratulate Ross Lee (SA) on his appointment as the new National Agape Co-ordinator. Part of Ross' role involves liaising between Australian and overseas Kairos communities in the distribution of greetings posters. Email: agape@kairos.org.au.

Kairos Inside Mobilong SA

Kairos Mobilong #14 held at Mobilong Prison, Murray Bridge (about 80 km from Adelaide) 11th-14th October – 10th anniversary of Kairos at Mobilong and Kairos in SA.

About 150 visitors attended the Closing Ceremony (plus program participants (20), previous graduates (6), and Kairos team (~40))

Peter Severin, CEO Dept for Correctional Services attended the Closing Ceremony (for the first time). He spoke about how important hope is, and that programs such as Kairos help give inmates hope. He commended participants for attending the Kairos course and congratulated them on completing the course. He commended the Kairos team for their faithfulness in running the programs over 10 years, and for returning for the ongoing Journey Program each week, week

after week, to bring the gospel into prison. He spoke of the “second sentence” inmates face on release, as they try to cope outside, and the need for support - which the Christian community can give them.

Rev Ian Schneider, Principal Chaplain, Prison Chaplaincy Services & Dept for Correctional Service, spoke, encouraging participants to look for a church when they got out; but if the first church they went to didn't welcome them, not to give up but to try another.

Many of the program participants spoke:

- the program had shown them that they have choices in life, and the choices they make have implications for their lives and their future;
- he had been brought up in the church, but had given it away as a teenager; through

the Kairos program he had renewed his faith in God;

- thanks that he'd had the opportunity to hear about God's care and love even in prison;
- he had learnt about forgiveness, that God forgives, but he needs to forgive too;
- he had been sick and had a severe headache during the program, but nothing was going to stop him attending; some of the team prayed for him, and the headache was gone;
- thanked Peter Severin for allowing the Kairos program to be run at Mobilong – one of the best programs; then prayed for prison staff and fellow prisoners.



Torch Cavan #3

Torch Cavan #3 was held at Cavan Youth Training Centre in the northern suburbs of Adelaide 4th – 6th October. Cavan has only 36 boys so a small program is run: Nine participants. Hearing the responses from all the boys at the Closing Ceremony makes it

all worthwhile, including: “Now I know that there are people who love us”;

A boy who talked about wanting to be reconciled with his family;

A boy who spoke of experiencing “family” in the Torch program.

Kairos Prison Ministry Australia is an interdenominational Christian ministry reaching out to incarcerated individuals, their families and those who work with them; to bring sustainable meaning and hope in the place of loneliness, isolation and despair.

Course	Program	Contact Address	Leader
Kairos Outside Weekends for Women			
Nov 4-6	SE Qld #22	PO Box 88, Morningside 4170	Annie Bashford
Nov 4-6	Riverina #5	PO Box 189, Junee, 2663	Karen Wilson
Nov 18-20	Sydney #26	PO Box 2178 Normanhurst 2076	Cindy Kingdom
May 18-20	SE Qld # 23	PO Box 88, Morningside 4170	Lunda Dudman
May	Sydney #27	PO Box 2178 Normanhurst 2076	Sharyn Musgrove
May 25-27	Adelaide #16	PO Box 945, Adelaide SA 5001	Mary Howie
June 15-17	Melbourne	PO Box 1010 Mitcham North 3132	Julie Schafer
Kairos Outside Weekends for Men			
Nov 11-14	KO for Men	PO Box 73 Northmead NSW 2152	Greg Clarke
Kairos Inside Short Courses			
Oct 31 - Nov 4	Arthur Gorrie #3	97a Hillview Rd Mt. Cotton 4165	Bob Joyce
Nov 14-18	Grafton #21	PO Box 1816 Grafton 2460	Maurice Avellino
Nov 25-28	Canberra #2	PO Box 176 Deakin West 2600	Trevor Bail
Mar 15	Goulburn #17	PO Box 637, Goulburn, 2580	David Browning
Apr 16-19	Mobilong #15	PO Box 242, Highgate, SA 5063	Greg Thompson-Austring
April 30-May 4	Emu Plains #19	PO Box 60, Emu Plains, 2750	Fay Camplin
May 1-4	Fulham #13	9 Gordon Street, Heyfield 3858	Mick Piening
May 7-11	Mid North Coast \$4	PO Box 2604 Pt Macquarrie 2444	Eddy Merzlhoff
May	Acacia #3	PO Box 435, Bentley, 6892	Charles Smith
May	Dillwynia #12	PO Box 3102, Rouse Hill 2155	Maureen Fenwick
May 22-25	Mannus #8	8 Vista Ave Batlow 2730	Garry Van Emmerik

**Kairos Prison Ministry Australia. PO Box PO Box 73, Northmead NSW 2152 Australia
Phone (02) 9683 6096 Email: info@kairos.org.au www.kairos.org.au ABN 55 081 496 175**