



Changing Hearts, Transforming Lives, Impacting the World

Newsletter October 2019

From the Chair, Dr Vern Harvey

Dear supporters and volunteers

Praise God! we have just run a program in Grafton Prison in NSW following a nine year absence after the gaol was closed. This program, run in the old gaol, is a prelude to transferring to the new, large, nearby Clarence Correctional Centre when it opens in 2020.

Nine years absence in the region means rebuilding our volunteer base and preparing for exciting new times in the Region and is the first of a planned number of new programs in NSW under our challenging Five Year Plan. We call this Plan THE CHALLENGE which was the theme of our recent National Conference which is reported below.

Like many Christian ministries started over the last 20 years we find our volunteer and supporter base ageing and we need creative plans to ensure we are adjusting not just for next year but for the next decade. We are already underway with changes from the top (Board composition) down through our structures and policies to opening new Regions for the new gaols being built in NSW.

But some things will not change. While we prepare for the years ahead and plan for all our programs for men and women and youth our mission remains unchanged drawing its inspiration from Jesus' words in Matthew 25: 36 "I was in prison and you came to visit me." (NIV)

The mission of the Kairos Prison Ministry is to share the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to impact the hearts and lives of incarcerated men, women and youth, as well as their families, to become loving and productive citizens of their communities.

The testimonials offered in this Newsletter are just a part of the evidence that our programs change lives not only for individuals but for their families and others around them. We do our planning in the belief that when we are honoring God in the name of Jesus, He will honour our endeavors. As He has done in the past He will do into the future. We go forward eagerly in hope and trust.

Thank you for being a supporter. This newsletter will inform you of what we are doing and the impact we are making. If you are a regular supporter through donations this is the opportunity to do so again before Christmas. There is also an appeal to

contribute to the ongoing Challenge of growth to support the work of the Ministry Growth Group described below. Thank you again, we appreciate your prayers, your donations and your support. God bless

(Dr) Vern Harvey
Chair of the Board
KPMA



Work of the Ministry Growth Group

Prior to the release of the Five Year Plan in May this year the Board established a special Growth Group to help our Regions address their recruitment needs especially in rural NSW where the NSW Government is building new and refurbished gaols and are asking for programs there. In April we recruited Vicki Buchanan, a veteran traveler along with her husband Keith, to be the on-the-ground resource – a Regions Development Officer. Here is their mobile Office.



Being on the move for us they miss some fellowship. In early November they will be in Tamworth and then Grafton for the rest of the month; in December they will be in Cessnock. If you are in those areas why not invite them in for coffee or a meal? You can contact Vicki on regionaldev@kairos.org.au

The Priority prisons in NSW in 2019 and 2020 are the new Clarence Correctional Centre south of Grafton; Wellington Correctional Centre between Dubbo and Bathurst; Cessnock Correctional Centre – closed in 2014 with a new prison opening in 2020; and

(cont'd overleaf)

Work of the Ministry Growth Group (cont'd)

South Coast Correctional Centre outside Nowra, where we have not had a program before.

Recruitment starts in 2020.

In NSW alone we need to recruit over 150 new volunteers in regional areas over the next 24 months – a challenge greater than we have faced before.

Our fund raising appeal with the last Newsletter (The Challenge) was directed to meeting the cost of the Regional Development Officer and you will find an appeal letter with this newsletter.

Vern

The 2019 Conference

THE CHALLENGE

The 2019 Conference was the first occasion for the Ministry to discuss and endorse the Board's Five Year Plan 2019-2023 which was launched on 6 May 2019. The goal over five years is 'generational change in all aspects of the Ministry'. The representatives from most of our 35 Regions filled out a pre-conference survey:

80% were over 60 years of age (30% over 70years)
There's a Challenge!

33% have been volunteers for over 15 years

The main challenges they saw for the ministry were:

Gaining new, younger volunteers

Building public awareness of the ministry, and

Future funding needs.

Fortunately, the Plan already released, and the Conference agenda, set out to



address these issues and in our final session the representatives endorsed the plans and committed to work in their regions for the first year priorities:

Boosting our commitment to, and reliance on, God for all our needs in His ministry.

Supporting the work of our new Ministry Growth Group and

Building recruitment plans in each Region.

The post Conference survey was very positive and supportive of our ambitious plans.

Thank you, God

Vern

Kairos Outside for Women as well as for Men.

"After many years of sin I found myself in gaol. The worst 3 weeks of my life was waiting to be transferred when I often questioned God as to the whys and reasons. 50 years earlier I had accepted Jesus as my Saviour, so my experiences of Him were real.

At the end of the 3 week period, I asked Him something of His presence, to which I was advised that He had been here all the time ...waiting for me.

At that point **Inside Life** became bearable.

After 5 weeks I was sent to another gaol and worked in the laundry. I was invited to join a Bible Study by some men. They were encouraging and supportive to me and I praise God for those men who were used by Him to do this.

After 2 years I was released but I found **Outside Life** VERY VERY difficult. My marriage was difficult. Church life was a no, no! Rejection and disorientation were ever present. Too old to work and who wanted me anyway.

My wife was invited to a Kairos Outside Women weekend. WELL. What a transformation! But more! She brought back a Kairos Outside for Men brochure. Kairos Outside for Men had just permitted some ex-offenders to attend and I applied.

My life and living is now worthwhile and I thoroughly enjoy giving my time and energies to this very worthwhile and, I believe, essential Ministry to Men, especially those who are traumatized from Inside experience. I know what it is like! Someone has to love them. I feel I was loved by the Team that ministered to me. My prayer is that I will LOVE LOVE LISTEN LISTEN and contribute to the value and wellbeing of the lives of many more."

Testimony from a Kairos Outside Men Guest

I had a really good time at Kairos Outside Men #9. I learned a great deal that I am processing and also passing on to others as part of my ministry around forgiveness. You all did such a wonderful job in elucidating the centrality of forgiveness in tracking a different course going forward. Be assured of my prayers.

Miracles on a Kairos Inside Program

“The first miracle was witnessing inmates who you usually hear swearing or cursing now singing, with great voice, songs to the Lord

The second miracle was observing the impact the front line team had on the inmates as they lovingly ministered to and befriended them, and the way during the week they worked together smoothly as a team. A spirit of unity was evident as they interacted together, one sensed the spirit of God was with them; they were the pleasing aroma of Christ to us.

The third miracle was receiving letters from the team support crew; those we would never meet or be able to visit, and they would not be able to visit us, but they sat down to write a letter to me and others in green. To go back to your cell at night and read 70 odd letters to you is both mind blowing and chain breaking. Some guys don't get a letter from anybody so to have God seemingly personally communicating to them and speaking directly to them through letters was a big impact and it pierces the hardest heart.

The fourth miracle must be the biscuits. Just the fact they get into the place and get distributed without fights breaking out should be enough. But the main part of the miracle is telling inmates back in our cells at night who gave us the biscuits; that they were freely given; and they were for us to share with guys who could not get to the course.

Kairos Outside for Women guest reflects in a letter to a team member.

“The Kairos weekend was extremely powerful for me and I am forever grateful for the beautiful people who organised and supported us over our time on the weekend.

I would like to be involved in future programs in the hope other women feel as empowered and supported as I did.

I will pray the Kairos weekend goes well for all concerned.

May the Lord bless you all in the amazing support the helpers are to those who attend the weekend.”

The team member receiving the letter writes to her fellow team members ...

“I just had to share this wonderful encouragement with you all. Enjoy it. Oh, how our Lord blesses the efforts of each Team, as they give so much time, money and soul-searching-stories, for the benefit of our Guests. “

Kairos Outside Women Leader's report

We all shared, laughed, we cried, and we ate, enjoyed fellowship together and encouraged each other, on our formation weekends and our guest's weekend. Everyone on team worked so hard and I know we all went home worn out but so happy to have served our beautiful ladies.

When you get remarks from guests saying, “All my family/sisters had a most rewarding time on KOW13 full of surprises, full of laughter, full of sincerity, full of gratitude toward everyone and lots of positive feedback about wanting to be more involved” Now doesn't that make you feel that our LORD was present ALL weekend.

A new Kairos Inside team recruit reflects

“It was difficult to say Yes, when I was asked to be on team for Kairos because I didn't know what to expect. Going into prison was not on my agenda. But having done that and the eight weeks of team formation [training] that lead up to the actual Course in prison gave me a lot of time to meet other people from other denominations, people who had similar beliefs in many ways and different beliefs too. I got to know them and know that we were focused on bringing Christ to those in prison. In fact, not taking Christ into prison, because he is already there, but meeting him in the people that are already there.

Kairos Outside Women Guest then team member

I was invited to attend a Kairos Outside program. I had no idea what it was. I walked into this room full of women and they all hugged and kissed everyone. I thought OK., I will just sit in the corner.

A fortnight later I decided I liked what I saw so I went back and I totally became mega involved with Kairos both inside and outside. When I was released I continued to bring that with me.

I have now taken that to my church and am now very much involved in prison ministry.

I think we are all born for a reason and I think we all have a destiny in life. Mine was to go to jail, to learn about me, learn about life, learn about the Lord, and then continue to take it with me when I left. That's what I continue to do now, with my prison ministry and working with Kairos Outside.

'I was in prison and you came to visit me' Matthew 25:36

Comments from participants in a Kairos Inside Program

'For these days we weren't in Prison.'
 'You called me by my first name. That never happens in here.'
 'You treated us like we meant something.'
 'I came for the food but am leaving with much more.'
 'I came as Daoud (a Muslim name) but am leaving as David.'
 'If you want to know what the Holy Spirit is, just come to a Kairos weekend.'
 'You gave me a Bible and a Cross. But you gave me so much more.'
 'When I was young my heroes were sports figures. When I became a teenager they were pop singers; but now I have grown up I have only one hero.'

Prayer

While we need funds to help the people you want to help we also need your prayers and intercessions. Pray for us and the people we serve.



Upcoming Programs for Prayer and Support

Region	No	Pgm	State	Date_Start	Date_Finish
Wacol-Arthur Gorrie	18	KIM	QLD	14/10/2019	18/10/2019
New England	08	KOW	NSW	25/10/2019	27/10/2019
John Morony	04	KIM	NSW	28/10/2019	31/10/2019
Adelaide-Outside	31	KOW	SA	1/11/2019	3/11/2019
South East QLD	37	KOW	QLD	1/11/2019	3/11/2019
Riverina	13	KOW	NSW	8/11/2019	10/11/2019
Sydney	42	KOW	NSW	8/11/2019	10/11/2019
Parklea	11	KIM	NSW	11/11/2019	14/11/2019

An Amazing Prison Chaplain

In our work inside prisons we often meet other Christian workers sharing our desire to bring the Good News to those inside. We remember Sister Zita Barron who passed away to be with her Lord and Saviour on 18th May 2019, aged 95.

For many men who experienced life in Long Bay Correctional Centre in NSW, and for the Kairos community, it was her work in "retirement" that gained our respect and love. In 1996, when she was 70 years old, Sister Zita took up a chaplaincy at Long Bay CC. She saw every inmate as a son and treated them accordingly. As a loving "mother," she dispensed care, and also chastisement, when necessary. One of her "boys" said, "Sister Zita was no softy. She was a force to be reckoned with!"

She was highly respected by the inmates and the Officers. Sister Zita had no possessions. Her "treasures" were tenderly placed on her casket to accompany her mortal remains for burial. They were: The cross of her Brigidine Order,

A cross given to her by the children of the Cooma Catholic school,

A large album of greeting cards from inmates of Long Bay Correctional Centre.

She herself was one of God's 'treasures'. Kairos volunteers and ex-inmates were well represented at her funeral.

A Tribute to Brian Benson

Brian Benson was suddenly "called home" to be with his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Saturday 11th May, as a result of a ruptured aortic valve.

Brian had a heart for God, and a heart for the men in green in Long Bay Correctional Centre, and we know his life impacted many lives for eternity. At one point he organised for some of the inmates who had become believers through the Kairos ministry at Long Bay who wanted to be baptised, to be escorted by an officer to Hurstville Church of Christ where the baptism took place.

Brian was buried with his Kairos cross around his neck.

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. Building Christian Community.