

PMA Newsletter
Director's Letter October 2001

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter. I praise the Lord for the opportunity to serve Him through Prison Mission Association as its executive director. I am excited about how God has worked through PMA's ministry over the past 46 years and I anticipate that he has even greater things ahead as we look to the future.

PMA's ministry has impacted the lives of untold thousands of individuals. Not only have the correspondence lessons been instrumental in changing lives in prisons they have reached all corners of the globe and been instrumental in started many missionary outreaches. While preparing to take over the ministry of PMA I have read a number of testimonies of prisoners, pastors, and missionaries that have seen how God has used PMA to proclaim the gospel of God's grace. I consider it a great privilege to be able to help that legacy continue

As I begin my responsibilities as the director of PMA I want to express my appreciation to all those that have brought the ministry to the point it is at now. First of all I want to acknowledge the work of Brother Joe Mason who had the original vision for a ministry that would bring the power of God's Word accurately and systematically taught behind prison walls. I also want to recognize the work of the subsequent directors, Vernon Bigelow, Nathan Whitham and Robert Bobo, all of whom made significant contributions to the growth and strength of PMA. Because of the commitment of these faithful servants of Christ PMA has been able to penetrate deep into Satan's territory and free thousands from the stranglehold of sin and hopelessness.

I also would like to recognize the invaluable work done by the PMA office staff that makes it possible for the correspondence lessons, Bibles and literature to make it in to the hands of the students in prisons and elsewhere. Karen Bodeutsch coordinates the correcting and mailing of lessons that come through our Port Orchard office. Faith Desmaraise volunteers her time to handle the finances and bookkeeping for the ministry. More than a dozen other individuals faithfully give of their time to correct lessons, prepare mailings, keep the office tidy and in order and a host of other important tasks. It is the commitment of our staff and volunteers that makes it possible for PMA to maintain its outreach.

There is much more however, that needs to be done. God has prepared PMA for greater outreach and impact. In the next issue of this newsletter I will outline the goals that PMA has set for itself as we seek God's will for the ministry.

During the next few months I hope to travel extensively to visit churches and friends in order to share the vision of PMA to reach the prisoners for Christ. I hope that at some time during my journeys I have a chance to personally greet everyone that is reading this letter.

In Christ's service,

Don

God's Perspective

(Starting with this issue we will include this short column to help our readers gain a better understanding of how God views prisons and prisoners.)

For most of us prisons are a part of the reality of life that we are happy to ignore. Most people's attitude is... "they deserve what they get, lock them up and throw away the key." We are happy to pay our tax dollars in order to be assured that these undesirable elements of society are kept far away from us. However, we must ask ourselves, "is this how God wants us to respond?"

The King James Version of the Bible refers to prisons and prisoners 115 times. Passages such as Psalm 69:33 tell us that God has not forsaken those that are in prison.

For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his **prisoners**.

Matthew 25:34-46 indicates that the attention given to prisoners will be a criterion by which those people that pass through the seven years of tribulation on earth will be judged worthy to enter the Millennial Kingdom.

- 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
- 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in **prison**, and ye came unto me.

Paul commends his friend Onesiphorus for not being ashamed of him when he was in prison.

2 Timothy 1:16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

These passages clearly show us that God has regard for those in prison. He does not ignore them and we can do no less. It is God's will that we give attention to those for whom Christ died that are locked behind bars. We may want to forget about them, but God will never allow us to do so.

In future issues we will look at some specific examples of how God has worked in prisons and through prisoners.