

A brief testimonial of my experiences with Kairos

by Don Buckroyd

Prisoners in a maximum-security prison are the forgotten men of today's society. The typical inmate has at least a 30 year sentence, yet after five years receives no phone calls, no letters and no visitors. Even in unbroken families, relatives get on with their lives, and that frequently means living the inmate behind. The maximum-security prison where I volunteered was built in 1972 to house 2,500 but today houses 4,300. The average prisoner lives with a cellmate in a cell that is 10 ft. long, 7 ft. tall and 6 ft. wide. In order to offer each resident three meals a day, the first breakfast shift starts at 2 a.m. They have 7 and-a-half minutes to eat each of their three meals. It is a sterile, impersonal and sometimes hostile environment.

Understandably it is difficult to have a great deal of hope — especially if you have a life sentence. Yet that is exactly what Kairos brings! In the maximum-security prison it is not uncommon to find a waiting list for Kairos of five years. The reason is Christ and His GRACE. In an environment where everyone knows you, and everyone you encounter has done something pretty bad, it is only through Christ that these men have any chance. Every other religion preaches earning your way to salvation, but Christianity says it is not what we have done for God, but what Christ has done for us.

Paul tells us in Romans “that if you confess Jesus with your lips and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” He does not say everyone except murderers, prostitutes, adulterers, or child molesters, etc.; he says everyone. No wonder the word gospel in Greek means “good news”. Hired hit men are not known for their emotion, but I have seen such men, and men of many other sins fall down on their knees crying when they discover that because of God's forgiveness, they also may share in His kingdom.

I, like the average Episcopalian, find it hard to evangelize. But when I can find a group that is eager for me to bring the word of Christ to them, even I can evangelize. And when you see God at work in such a place, it cannot help but impact you and your own faith. Whoever would think you could find such faith in a Texas state prison.

And they are right in our own back yard. The nearest is 15 minutes from SMAA.



Don Buckroyd stands beside one of the two Kairos trailers. One of the trailers stores chairs, tables, altar and props. The other is refrigerated and stores food for the weekend that our outside team prepares to take inside the prison. Regular prison food is not the best. Together, these two trailers and their equipment cost just under \$50,000 — of which \$35,000 was contributed by SMAA parishioners.