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Why the big smile Frank?

Frank's reply: "*M* one of the women in my small group gave her life to Jesus this evening." There is no joy like the joy of being an instrument in God's hands to lead someone to trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Furthermore, "*T*here is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15: 10.

When **S** first came to Alpha, she was angry and highly volatile emotionally alternating between tears and emotional outbursts, which she struggled to control. Her life is a sad but rather typical story of most women in prison, a story of physical and sexual abuse as a child and as a teenager. Her personal suffering lead to attempts to deaden her pain with drugs and alcohol.

Angry and emotionally unstable

The first question we usually ask in the small groups is "*W*hat did you think of the video, how did it make you feel?" This question usually gets the discussion going. During the session "*H*ow and why should I tell others about Jesus?" I asked a follow up question; "*D*o you have a story to tell of what God has done in you life?" **S** was one of the first to jump in, she asked the group; "*D*o you remember the evening when I spent almost the whole session in tears?" Another woman replied; "*H*ow could we forget, you used up yards of roller towel from the bathroom."

"A turning point in my life"

S went on to say that on that night on the topic, "*H*ow does God guide us?", became a turning point in her life, she knew that God was leading her to make a very difficult decision about a relationship which she knew was wrong. Once she made the decision to follow God on that matter, she was able to turn unreservedly to Jesus as Lord and Savior. She then went on to describe how her deep-seated anger often turned into violence. She had a reputation among inmates and among staff for being violent and almost uncontrollable. She spent a lot of her time in the segregation unit for violence against other inmates. Late last year she was on the verge of being transferred to a prison in Maine because she had attacked and injured 2 prison officers.

"I really feel free, for once in my life."

She asked God not to let the transfer go through and to help her with her anger. God answered her prayer and began to work in her life. By the she came to Alpha it was clear that God was at work in her life. Last night she told the group, "*A*lthough I still get frustrated and angry, I don't feel the urge to act out and hurt others. Jesus is giving me self-control. Others have noticed it, the staff who never spoke to me except to give orders are now starting to have little conversations with me. I really feel free for once in my life."

"I have been brought back to God"

J is a young man in one of our Alpha 2 sessions. He is quiet and sometimes has to be coaxed to contribute in the group. I realized that one reason for his reticence is that he has a stutter, I spoke to him one on one after a session and told him of my own struggles with stuttering. This

small piece of encouragement helped him to open up a bit. Like many young African American men J has a believing mother and grandmother, who pray for him. He says "Prison has brought me to my senses and back to God, Alpha and the kindness of the volunteers has been a very big part in all this"

Will you pray for M, S and J? They know that others are watching them to see if they will slip up. It isn't easy to live consistently for Christ in the prison.

Alpha New England, Free Inside and Vision New England in a new strategic partnership for evangelism.

At Congress 2007 in Boston; Vision New England announced the reaffirmation of its historic evangelistic mission, under the heading "*Intentional Evangelism in New England*" and summarized in the Congress 2007 theme "*Whatever it takes*" The vision is to build a culture of evangelism in the churches of New England with Alpha as a leading component in fulfilling this vision.

Free Inside is an integral part of this vision because ***Alpha Behind Bars*** is our chosen vehicle for prison outreach. In the four and a half years since our inception we have been in partnership with both Alpha New England and Vision New England. The Rev. Peter Dewberry, director of Free Inside and Alpha Behind Bars is the New England Alpha Prison Advisor and serves on the National board of Alpha Prison advisors. Free Inside, Vision New England and Alpha New England are committed to church based evangelism. Since our inception Free Inside has insisted that its volunteers be involved in their local church and have the support of the leadership.

Bibles and Literature.

The distribution of Bibles and good Christian literature is an important and growing part of the ministry. Our most frequently distributed titles are "*The Purpose Driven Life*" by Rick Warren, Nicky Gumbel's booklets "*Why Jesus?*" in both English and Spanish; "*Why does God allow suffering?*"; "*Is the Trinity unbiblical, unbelievable and irrelevant?*" and "*The Da Vinci Code - a response*" are in demand by inmates.

The Banner of Truth Trust

Many books published by The Banner of Truth Trust have been influential and formative in my own Christian life since about 1960 when I read "*The Sovereignty of God*" by A. W. Pink. I stopped at The Banner of Truth booth at Congress this year and spoke to their representative Steve Burlew. The result of that conversation was a very generous donation of books for the ministry. They gave most titles that I requested, many in English and Spanish including books that I have used evangelistically in the past; such as "*Right with God*" by John Blanchard. Praise God for these additional tools to reach men and women in prison.

Media Materials and other expenses

This donation from Banner of Truth is especially welcome since our bills for Videos, DVDs, Bibles and other Christian literature and tracts for our ministry climbed considerably due to the growth of the ministry. Last year we paid out nearly \$4500.00. In addition to these costs, we also paid out nearly \$2750.00 on paper, postage, printer ink, a new color printer to replace our old one that suddenly just stopped working, right in the middle of printing brochures and other promotional material for Congress in Boston and for the Iron Sharpens Iron conference in Bloomfield, CT. Included in the figure of \$2750.00 were booth rental fees for those two conferences.

“God has touched the hearts of some churches and many individuals who care enough for you” Sometimes inmates ask me “where does the money come from so that you can do this?” My answer is always “God has touched the hearts of a few churches and many individuals, who care enough for you to be able to hear about Jesus Christ and His love, that they give money to make our ministry possible.” If you are a church or an individual your faithful and regular in giving and praying for the ministry of Free Inside you are very greatly appreciated by me, the volunteers and especially the inmates.

Will you help us restock our outreach materials for our next round of courses?

It would be a tremendous help if you would prayerfully consider helping us to restock our supply of the materials we are going to need, as we prepare for our next series of in-prison Alpha sessions. If you are able to help by sending a one time donation for books, Bibles and media materials, please make your tax-deductible check out to:

Free Inside (*write Books/Bibles etc. on the memo line*) and mail to P O Box 341, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

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