



# The Insider

Summer 2022

*A quarterly publication from The Saints Prison Ministry*

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## We Just Never Know

By Brian Morrison, coach of the WV Saints softball team

\*Editor's Note - the West Virginia softball team is our newest team, playing their inaugural season this summer. On June 18th, they visited Noble Correctional Institution in Caldwell, Ohio. This is one story from that visit, a day when 34 men made the decision to follow Christ!

There was one man who stood out during our visit in June, for several reasons. Eric is a large man; maybe only 6'1" or so, but wide shoulders and a very muscular build. He was one of the prison team captains, and certainly seemed to hold his team's attention and respect. Always a smile on his face, he played first base and when a Saint reached base, Eric would congratulate the hit, even add a little bit of small talk between batters.

After the first game, I handed out Gospels to the opposing team by their dugout. Eric filled out a response card indicating he wasn't ready yet to accept Christ, and he listed no prayer request. In the second game, he was an extra hitter, allowing another man to play first. I played catcher the last half of the second game, so I was able to continue to talk to him and the other inmates as they stepped up to the plate.

After our second game the teams gathered in the center of the field, as we always do. We presented the MVPs with the FCA New Testament and additional award books to the umpires and scorekeepers. I had the blessing of sharing a closing remark to end our day. I asked the inmates, "if the State allowed me to take their place, would they want that?" While only one man raised his hand, I "guessed" there were several who would. I shared a thought from the thief on the cross in Luke 23; how Jesus promised eternal life in Heaven to that one who acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. This criminal - a man within hours of his death for his crimes - was still saved by Jesus. I then explained that, while you are never too old to accept Jesus as your Savior, it can be

too late, for once you take that last breath, your chance for salvation is over.

I then offered one last opportunity for anyone who hadn't filled out a response card - or who had filled one out and wanted a "do over" - to do so before we left. We had two men accept the offer; the first had not filled out a card at all and now he wanted more information. The other was Eric, who followed one of the Saints to our bench, where we retrieved a new Response Card for him, and he filled it out.

As Eric walked away, Chris Atkins, one of my teammates, took the card from Eric, looked at it, and looked at me... "Eric just accepted Christ!" As the inmates were heading back to their dorms for head count, I caught up to Eric and walked with him for a few feet. I urged him to read the Gospel of John several times, and understand that Jesus died for Him, just as He did for me. Although Eric was the last man in the yard, he still had to make his way back to the dorms, so I wasn't able to spend time with him in prayer. I parted by telling him we will pray for him. We did - I hope you will too!

## Would you like to serve?

This trip was exciting but we still have multiple possibilities for any Christian softball player to become a missionary-athlete!

Consider these missions trips if you are, or know someone, who is seeking to use their athletic talents to serve the Lord!

August 16-21: Colorado  
October 5-9: Wisconsin

Review the Saints Prison Ministry's Crusades website for more details on these opportunities!

<https://spmcrusades.wixsite.com/2022>

## The Inside Story

### A God of Miracles!!!

By Frank Zeidler, Executive Director

By my own admission, the headline is eye-catching but deceptive. "Miracles" might be a little strong, but it is a title we've all come to appreciate as students of Scripture. If you would rather I started by saying God of Divine Intervention or The Master Planner, I'm okay with that. The important thing is that you read on!

The America's Heartland Crusade is now complete, and I hope you were praying for that team. But this message isn't about the crusade; it's about God leading the way... again!

You know crusades are planned months in advance, and you also know that we see our share of hiccups, wrinkles, hurdles, and blatant obstacles in the way. Our staff is used to dealing with most of these, but sometimes the obstacle can only be described as God-sized!

On Monday, two days before the team was flying to Indiana, I opened my computer to an email from the only prison we are scheduled to visit on Thursday of the crusade week. The email stated, "we regret to inform you we have to cancel this visit due to expected elevated temperatures that day." Like most prison systems, there are policies that address the circumstances around inmate recreation, and one of them is to close the recreation yard if the temperatures pose a danger to inmate health. After a brief discussion with prison administration, it was clear this was a final decision.

We now had a hole in the schedule - a full day of no activity. With only 72 hours advance notice, scheduling a new prison seemed like a long shot at best... a God-sized ob-

stacle to be sure!

Since we always make the effort, I reviewed past crusades to IN and I remembered a specific prison that we had found to be especially cooperative in 2018. In desperation, I called the contact person we have on file. Post-pandemic, would he still be there? Will he laugh aloud at my request?

Mr. Kitchen was still at the prison, and in the same capacity he had been in 2018. Not only did he not laugh at my request; he offered to go to the administration and see what they might be willing to do on short notice. I sent him all the paperwork we had - including the gate memo from the since-cancelled prison showing our men were all cleared.

On Tuesday he sent me an email... with the new gate memo already written, admitting our team just two days later, to play in the morning and afternoon against two distinct groups of the population!

I would normally say "that doesn't happen" ...but it just did!

At Westville CF on that Thursday, four men made a decision to turn their lives over to Jesus Christ! That is why we go, of course, however my takeaway from the experience is more philosophical than that; it is just one more shining example of Isaiah 55:8,9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Just wanted to make sure everybody knows who is really in charge!

## 2022 America's Heartland Crusade Recap

Heat notwithstanding, God did so many things on this trip that trying to cram it all into one short recap might prove to be futile, so let's get right to it. To start out, just three days before the crusade was about to begin, our Thursday visit canceled on us due to the forecasted high heat and for the protection of the inmates, so what were we to do? We NEVER get into a facility on such short notice, not even places we have close relationships with. It just doesn't happen...but then God. Frank reached out to one of his contacts from a previous crusade and God turned what was only going to be a half-day event at Putnamville CF to a full day event at Westville CF! He opens doors no man can close and closes doors no man can open.

God continued to bless us as the weather ended up not being near as bad as we thought. It was still very hot on

Wednesday, but Thursday thru Sunday was magnificent! This allowed for more inmates to be present, with great weather, to hear the gospel preached boldly to all who wanted to hear. Our journey took us to Plainfield CF, Westville CF, Pendleton CF, Correctional Industrial Facility, New Castle CF and Heritage Trail CF. We played in front of 377 prisoners, of which 372 stayed to listen to the gospel. We handed out over 350 copies of the gospel of John and were blessed to witness 53 men indicate they asked Christ to be their Lord and Savior for the first time!

This trip was a very clear reminder of how God can use a willing heart, how He can create life changing moments by simply stepping out in faithful service, and your prayers and support played a huge part in the Lord's success. You gave and prayed, to send 12 men from around the country to Indiana who gave of their time, talents and treasures to see that men behind bars heard the beautiful gospel story! Thank you for praying and sending!

*See photos on page 5*



# FROM THE INSIDE OUT

*Correspondence from behind the walls*

I greatly appreciate the love each year that y'all show me. I know that due to the Covid, it's a really hard time in the world. I still battle through my demons and the ups & downs of living life, so it's tough. For the lack of love and support I don't receive from family, I cannot thank y'all enough for what you do for me. I hope that we get to meet again and start a new chapter in our relationship.

- Willie B., SCI Rockview, PA

I would like to thank you for all the cards you have sent me over the years, they were very uplifting. I have received good news... I've been granted parole! I still have to wait 120 days for the process and approval from the higher-ups, but I'm going home! I still can't believe that after being locked up for 41 years, I am going to be free. But I put my faith in God a long time ago and let Him handle it and He did! Once again, thank you for always being there for me.

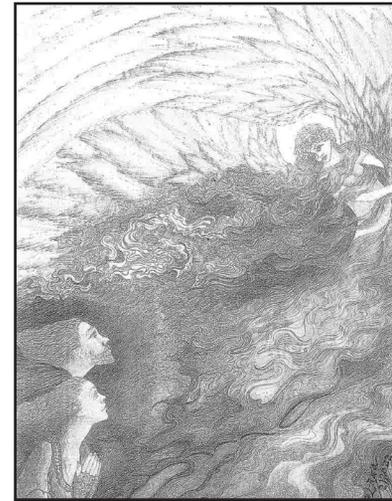
- Markham A., CA Institute for Men, CA



by Alejandro S.

My name is Lance and I have always meant to say "thank you" for your cards, visits, and work. A long time ago I prayed really hard, reciting the 35th Psalm beforehand, I can honestly say God spoke back to me and I received the miracle of salvation. I've since lost everything these 16 years in prison. I know I'm on a list, but even so you remembered my birthday. When NO ONE was left to say anything encouraging to me, you guys did. Thank you.

- Lance B., Eastern CI, MD



by Scott L.

Just a short note to say Thank You for the cards I've received. It's always nice to be remembered, especially by Christian brothers and sisters. I'm doing pretty well on my end. I got involved with a logistics class and I get a certification for completing it. The certification is good for 5 years and I get out before then, so it should help me get a job (or better job) faster than many ex-cons I've heard from. Thank you for thinking of me, my friends. Take care of yourself and be blessed.

- Dale G., USP Terre Haute, IN

I am respectfully writing, in the name of Jesus and His love. Your ministry has sent me several birthday cards, but I have never written back until now. But God intends His people to team up to encourage each other as well. The apostle Paul urged the Thessalonians to encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thess 5:11). God has put us - ministries like yours and people like me - into each other's lives for support; we need each other to keep walking the path of life in Jesus. So, on behalf of all the many men and women behind bars, fences, and walls today...THANK YOU for your prayers, visits, services, and support. We don't always acknowledge your thoughtfulness as we should, however I know many who deeply appreciate your genuine love in Christ.

- Jimmy A., DeSoto CI, Florida



Unknown





# A Great Celebration!

On June 4th, on the grounds of Easton Bible Church in NJ, a group of almost 100 people came together to celebrate 35 years of God's blessing on this ministry. The local Saints family enjoyed fantastic weather, tasty food, and catching up with some familiar faces from the past. One of the lasting images from the day was three long-time veterans from our basketball team together, as Bob Newcomb, Kevin Harvey, and Bob Hellyer compared war stories!

We enjoyed hearing Bob chronicle what it has meant to him to see the ministry grow since his initial involvement in 1988. Executive Director Frank Zeidler shared key components of future ministry opportunities, particularly the growth of the Church-Crusade partnerships and the relationship forged with the Geo Group. In between, the Saints family was blessed by Kevin Harvey, Director of South Jersey FCA, sharing how much the Saints Prison Ministry meant to his spiritual walk, along with a challenge from God's Word.

Praise God for His providence and sustaining work over 35 years - His power reflected in His ministry!





# Inside the Mind of Gibby

## Supply Chain Blues

By Tom Gibson, IL Saints Softball Coach

Here's the deal: when there is a nationwide shortage on random supplies, it is bound to catch up with everyone eventually. Despite the stockpile of toilet paper and ranch dressing that we have here in the Mind of Gibby headquarters, we find ourselves short overall on a few critical things. So, grab your Sam's Club card and let's go hunting for some much needed - and hard to find - things for our ministry!

**Pencils** - Ok, you didn't expect to see this one, did you? We use pencils to have the men and women we visit fill out response cards, which in turn generates follow up packets, birthday cards and a newsletter. If we don't have those graphite sticks, it is hard to capture that information. Are we low on pencils? Not yet, but at the rate they get left in hotels and vans, we should start looking now! That leads us to our next item...

**Patience** - I've been on several trips and have managed to test the patience of pretty much everyone I've come in contact with. Let's face it, 2022 is a year that we will really need some patience. Maybe you have a rookie on the team who doesn't pay attention to the 3rd base coach. You will need patience. Maybe your Crusade roommate snores like a Caterpillar D10 bulldozer. You need patience... and earplugs! Maybe you are the editor for the newsletter and the one guy who has a consistent column is three weeks

overdue for his 500-word article. Let's hope that guy has some patience!

**Cattle** - This item actually has us really nervous. We are an athletic ministry that refills our hungry missionary athletes on mostly cheeseburgers. If we can't find cattle, we won't have cheese or burgers! However, the most unnerving cattle shortage issue of all is having to explain to Butch Smith that we might not have ice cream on Crusades!

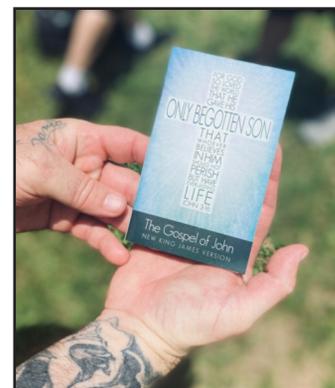
**Honey Mustard Pringles** - This isn't ministry related, but I can't find them on the shelves here. If you find some, please mail them to the Mind of Gibby office located at 2200 W Nebraska Ave, Peoria, IL 61604.

**Rest on Crusades** - I just came off an intense trip to Indiana. We were a little short on ballplayers so all of us who went got to play... a lot! By the end of the trip, we were all a little banged up and could have all used a little more rest. Thankfully, there isn't anything to do in Indiana in the evenings, so we did manage to get some sleep!

**A Few Good Men** - Some of us, including me, are starting down the slippery slope we like to call "being over the hill." We could use some fresh new legs to join the ministry to help us out on the long prison visits. Just in case you were wondering, we could use some mid-twenties athletes, in a size Mike Trout or Joel Embiid.

I'm not sure what the rest of 2022 will hold but if you happen to see any of these things while you are out and about, let us know!

## 2022 America's Heartland Crusade Photos





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## Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



We are proud to announce that ECFA has renewed our membership for the 25th consecutive year! After a comprehensive review of our audited financial reports, our 990 tax return, and current financial statements, they found that we meet the standards for integrity, reliability, and fiscal trustworthiness.

As an organization, we have always made it a point to do things "decently and in order," and the renewal of our membership in this highly respected watchdog organization is a testament to that philosophy.

## Pen Pals Needed

You can fill a volunteer need right from the comfort of your home!

Right now we have more than 100 men and women on our waiting list - many of whom write to us just to remind us to keep them on the list! Please do not make them wait any longer!

For more information, including the Pen Pal guidelines and expectations, please contact the Saints office at 609-845-3197 or [office@saintsprisonministry.org](mailto:office@saintsprisonministry.org)

## THE SAINTS PRISON MINISTRY STAFF

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