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A Story Worth Hearing

By Doug Metzger, Missionary-Athlete on the Angola Crusade

I spent considerable time yesterday with a 63-year-old man named Calvin, an inmate who was umpiring and keeping score for our softball games. He told one of the most amazing stories I have ever heard. Sadly, most will never hear it.

Calvin was born into poverty in swampy backwoods Louisiana. He was the youngest of 18 siblings, most of whom had different fathers. Calvin never knew his father. At the age of 8 he began running the streets of the nearest town. His mother was overwhelmed... by this time many of his older siblings were dropping off their kids for his mom (and Calvin) to take care of.

Calvin did the only things he could - or knew - to do to make money. He robbed his first home at the age of 9, stole his first car at 10, and was running moonshine and selling drugs at 12. All of his money went to his mom, who never asked, and probably didn't care, where it came from.

When Calvin was 13 one of his older brothers, who participated in the same illegal activities, was stabbed to death. Calvin was told who did it, found the man, and beat him to death with a wooden baseball bat.

Calvin was caught, charged, convicted, and sentenced to 50 years of time... again, at the age of 13. He got into trouble and was too wild and violent for the juvenile facility he was sent to, so at the age of 15 he was sent to serve the remainder of his time at maximum security Louisiana State Penitentiary, aka Angola, aka "the Alcatraz of the South" - known to be one of the bloodiest prisons in America.

Many years later, the brother of Calvin's victim was charged for some violent crimes in

Louisiana and sent to prison. He would change facilities a couple of times and eventually end up in Angola as well. Calvin knew their paths would cross and he was prepared for a fight, probably to the death. The day came when they were in the same camp and on the same yard. All inmate eyes were on them as they approached each other.

Calvin was expecting a fight, prison justice. What he got was a hug and a long embrace. He was expecting words of hate. What he got was words of compassion, love, and forgiveness.



You see, Calvin's victim's brother had been to a chapel service at one of his other prisons and had found and decided to follow Jesus. This Jesus-following convict told Calvin that the ONLY reason he could love and forgive Calvin was because God had loved and forgiven him.... that the ONLY reason they weren't

drawing each other's blood that day was because Jesus had shed His.

Many lives were changed in Angola that day as men witnessed what transpired on the yard, and in following days as word of the encounter spread throughout the other camps. This story has the power to change lives today.

Calvin's life was changed. He wanted what this man had and decided to accept and follow Jesus. He would tell you that he has not been the same since. He is a mentor to many and a "trustee" at the prison. He shares his story and his faith on a regular basis with his fellow inmates. He's just a nobody, trying to tell everybody, about Somebody who saved his soul. Friends, only God could do this!

That's only part one...it actually gets better. Calvin's mom has passed, as have most of his siblings. He gets ZERO visits from his remaining siblings, ZERO visits from the nieces and nephews that he robbed homes, stole cars, and

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The Inside Story

Change is in the Air!

For almost 15 years, since my wife and I left the familiarity of the northeast to relocate to Georgia, our method of tracking gifts has included a designation for NE and SE in most categories. There were good reasons for that method of bookkeeping at the time. For example, some faithful supporters wanted to be part of launching the new work in the south. Others wanted to ensure their gifts continued to support the ministry in NJ, with which they had a long relationship. In addition, the new missionary-athletes in the south were trying to raise support for a brand-new concept, so those donors wanted reassurance that their gifts were funding that new work.

But that was 15 years ago. Since that decision in 2009, we have launched multiple new teams and the organization has embraced a different mindset, as demonstrated by the tagline on our written materials and on our vehicles: *Multiple Teams...One Ministry...One Message*.

We began using that tagline a few years ago, but recently the Board of Trustees recognized that our internal systems didn't match our external message. To rectify this disconnect, effective October 1st, the Saints Prison

Ministry modified our method of allocating financial support. You may have already experienced this shift, as we transition both our system and our communication, but the language in this receipt reflects this change and will in the future. Missionary-athlete support will still fund those individuals and their teams, but general donations, special events, and similar gifts will no longer carry geographic designations. In addition, the website options have been modified to reflect this change in mindset as well. Every online option used prior to this is still available - minus the geographic indicators.

It is the desire of everyone involved that this message ring out loud and clear: we are one ministry which God is using in multiple locations to reach the lost behind prison fences.

Thank you for being part of this amazing work. It is your investment in Saints Prison Ministry that God uses every day to change lives!

A Story Worth Hearing

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sold drugs to take care of. The man that Calvin beat to death with a baseball bat at the age of 13 was an older fella with kids. The ONLY visits Calvin got for years are the children of the man that he killed

close to 50 years ago - and they still visit him to this day. They offer to send him commissary and cafeteria money all the time, which Calvin says he declines. They have paid off some of Calvin and his family's debts, so these things wouldn't be pressing and pressuring Calvin while he is locked up or upon his release. Calvin currently has a romantic interest / relationship with a woman in Georgia. Guess where that woman stays in Louisiana when she comes from Georgia to visit Calvin. That's right, she has a

place to stay any time she needs it... in the homes of the children of the man that Calvin killed.

Love, forgiveness, grace, mercy, and restoration. Only God can do this.

Here's the kicker. I told Calvin, "It sounds like this prison saved your life." "Brother," he said in his strong Cajun draw, "it saved it twice and in two different ways. I woulda been physically dead by the age of twenty with what I was wrapped up in. I was spiritually dead, and would be to this day, had I not been shown the love of God and led to Jesus by the man whose brother I killed."

And we know that all things work together for good...

Calvin will be released in 87 days, having served all of his original 50 years, to the day. He wants to share his story with troubled youth. I hope and pray he gets that opportunity.

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Correspondence from behind the walls

I just wanted to write to show you all my appreciation of you being there for me on my birthday. I now have been here for 15 years. I also remember the softball game. Time flies by. I just write to show my love for you all. A friend is always a friend. Tell everyone I say hello and give them my love. I will keep you all in my prayers and you'll keep me in your prayers too. God bless you all my friends.

- Dennis, SC

I pray and hope that when you receive this letter it may find you all filled with love, peace and health that comes from our Lord and Savior. I write because I just want to thank you guys for all you do for the prisons. I know that it's not easy leaving family members to go play softball with inmates and then when you get here, only two or three listen to your message. I want you guys to know that it matters. I've been a believer for 13 years now and anytime your softball team comes to visit, it's like a boost to my faith. I feel the love and the Spirit is alive. I also want to thank you because every year without fail, I get a birthday card. Everything you guys do means a lot not only to me but to friends that I have here as well. Thank you all for your service to the world. Thank you for shining your light in the darkest of places. My God bless your prison ministry with all that you ask of Him and more.

- Angel S., SCI Mahanoy, PA

Thank you so much for your correspondence and for the nice birthday wishes. I appreciate all of you. Thank you for thinking of me. Although I am imprisoned, I am full of courage. I hope to persevere to complete my sentence and

be finally free. I cannot wait to be with my family again. I give thanks to the Lord that my sentence has been reduced and I'll be able to leave prison soon. I also want to take this opportunity to let you know we are looking forward to hearing your message in prison. The Word of God is needed here. It refreshes our souls. Also, we cannot wait to play softball with you all. Maybe this time you'll win. In order to defeat us, you must come prepared to face a tough opponent. We have been training and we have a pretty strong team.

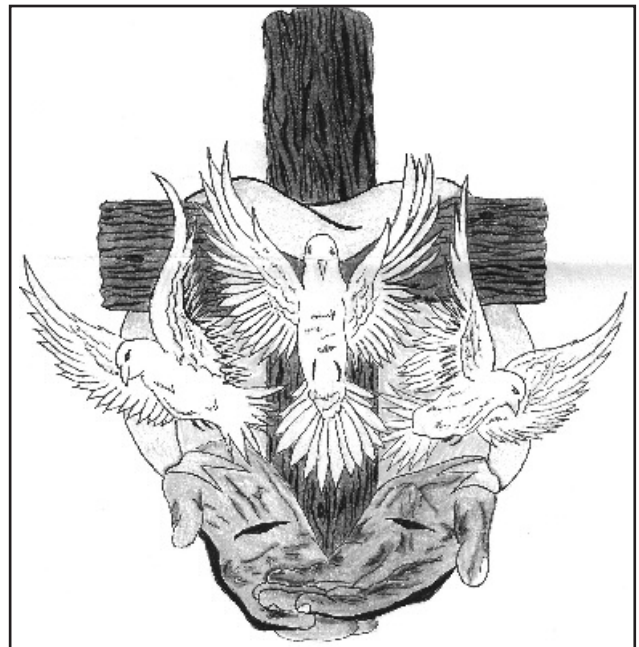
- Armando L., FCI Atlanta, GA

I just wanted to thank the ministry for the awesome birthday wishes sent to me here in prison. To God be the glory, I will be leaving at the end of the month! God has truly been in the midst over the past two years that I've been away from home but never ever too far to where His love can't reach me. God has shown me unmerited favor my entire bid [sentence] and I truly am thankful and grateful over the extra special ways He's taking care of me. God is so good. Please keep me in prayer as I prepare my heart, mind, body, soul, and most importantly my spirit as I become closer to walking out of the gates. God has amazing things in store for my life and I look forward to now living a bountiful life. As long as I keep my hand in the hand of the Lord, I can't go wrong. I will walk out of here knowing there is no condemnation. He has overcome sin on the cross. Thanks again and may God richly bless this ministry and all involved.

- Daniel M., SCI Laurel Highlands



by Tony W., Dooley SP, GA



by Carlos S., SCI Waymart, PA

Bringing your Kid on a Saints Crusade

By Tom Gibson, IL Saints Softball Coach

If you have seen the movie, "Field of Dreams," you understand the wonder and magic of uniting baseball with fathers and sons. Playing softball and ministering with the Saints with one of your sons is a pretty special thing. Certainly, way cooler than playing with a bunch of dead White Sox players in the middle of a cornfield in Iowa! On a side note, I'm also fairly sure the ghost White Sox would also beat the daylights out of the historically bad current White Sox but that is for a different article...

While there are plenty of special things about taking your kid on a trip, there are also some things to think through... but that's why I write these articles! Here are some of the pros and cons of taking your kid on a Crusade so eat your heart out Kevin Costner!

Pro- They get to do the heavy lifting on the trip

Does that mean that they get to carry the team on the field because they are younger and more athletic? Probably, but it also means that the veteran players can pull rank and make the young bucks carry around the heavy items like sound systems and boxes of literature!

Con- Losing playing time

What if they find out that my son is better than I am? What if this starts costing me some playing time on the trip? What if they just tell me to do the scorebook the entire day and I never see the field?

This is an important one to think through if you are considering bringing your kid on a trip. However, if you really need to stop and consider this, you are most likely that dad who insists on beating your kid's team in church picnic kickball game.

Pro- Having an Automatic Pinch-Runner

Once you hit my age, there are certain things that are inconvenient like mowing the grass, shoveling snow off of a sidewalk, and running the bases in a recreational softball game. Not only can they run the bases for you, but they can also push you around the airport in a wheelchair if and when you get hurt on the trip!

Con- Losing my nickname

Alright, as a dad I have paid for braces, tons of groceries, and a small fortune on car insurance. What if the Crusade team takes my nickname and gives it to my kid?

This has actually happened already. My oldest son is an emergency missionary athlete and is affectionately known as Gibby by his friends. Of course, I have to remind him

that Gibby is still my nickname, and he is only borrowing it!

Pro- Frank Zeidler or whoever is in charge of the trip is feeding them for a week

I have three boys who range between 17-22. Taking them all out to eat is a big financial decision nowadays. Economically speaking, you can't afford not to send your kid on one of these trips!

Pro- Your kid gets to sit through Crusade devotions

This is a special time to share with your son unless the devotion gets sidetracked into a full-blown dispensationalism vs covenant theology fight!

Con- Your son will complain about being bored once he finds out that phones, Tiktok, and Snapchat aren't allowed in prison

Ok boomer, your best option is not to drop this news on them until it's time to get out of the van. Just put on your best Dad face and say "What? No phones! Shocking!"

Now that you know what to expect, go out, have a catch, and get your young athletes signed up for the 2025 upcoming Saints crusades!

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