

Keeping in Touch

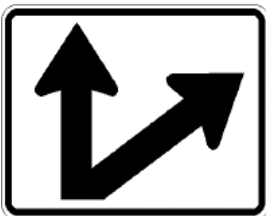
Southwest College of Biblical Studies

Bruce & Liz Leary – December 2004

LIZ'S JOB

As you might know, Liz was terminated from her employment on September 29, 2004. Her job provided the major portion of our household needs. The funds donated for our support are greatly appreciated, but they do not support us. After praying & seeking counsel, we feel we must appeal the termination; it was done improperly & without proper grounds. We have hired an attorney which is going to cost money out of our pocket. Pray that God's perfect plan will prevail here. Our heart's desire is that Liz will be reinstated & that her work history will be cleared. The labor board hearing was scheduled for December 21, but the attorneys were granted an extension until sometime after the holidays.

Needless to say, our personal finances are suffering at the moment. We will not have adequate income for December through possibly February. **Pray that God will provide sources of income & will lay it on the hearts of people to join our team financially.** Financial gifts for our personal support can be made out to MGF & sent to Missionary Gospel Fellowship, P.O. Box 1535, Turlock, CA 95381. Designate the gift to: Prison Bible College – Project 89.



It seems that often we have to evaluate the direction we are going in ministry to make sure we are on track. **Since 1993 we have been convinced & committed to the ministry of providing quality academic programming for prison inmates.** **The focus is two-fold: to offer college-level coursework to able students and to students**

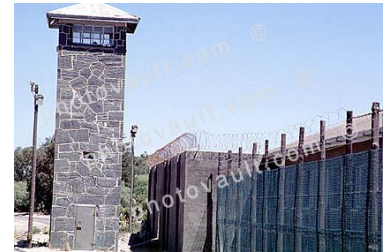
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who have had trouble with school through the years; and to provide relevant courses to include various Bible study methods courses, character development, and leadership skills. Though times are tough at the moment, our burden remains in tact: to educate & edify prisoners. I believe we do it well, and that we have relevant things to teach. We need the help of God's people through prayer & funds to keep going in this vital ministry.



Our college has students scattered all over California. Many were our students here in the San Diego area who have now transferred to other prisons. Many others we have never met. They were referred to us by our students, and they became excited about studying God's Word through the mail at a minimal cost (\$25 per course).

We would love to travel to the various prisons where our students are, but the travel costs & distances make that impossible. Another issue is that in recent times, prison life has become rather volatile. Due to violence & other unacceptable behaviors & circumstances, it has become more difficult to conduct on-site courses. It is rare to complete a 10-week course in 10 weeks. It often takes twice that long. It is sad because the men involved in our courses are seldom involved in violence, yet they must bear the consequences of "lockdowns" just like the rest of the population. The delays hinder continuity in the classroom setting and make it difficult to teach a cohesive course. I say all this to ask you to pray for peace & harmony in prison yards & in the hearts of some inmates who really have no goals except to cause trouble for others through their selfish pursuits & activities. Pray for us as we seek to remain faithful in the face of constant interruptions, and to maintain a contented attitude that we are guests in the prison system & have the privilege of teaching the relevant truths of God's Word to men who are hungry for it. Pray that we will demonstrate a spirit of trust in God & that



we will be glad for the times we get to teach inside the walls rather than mad at the times when we cannot teach.



The neat thing about this college programming & prison ministry is that we love these men. Even more rewarding is that they love us. It is a privilege to work side-by-side with the chaplain & the dedicated yard pastors to help build maturity & integrity in these men's lives. We see growth & we see vulnerability & remorse when things in their lives go "south". We hear prayers of repentance & commitments to honor God. It is an uphill battle for all of us but to hear the men express their failures out-loud to other men in a class session is a rich privilege. Pray for them as they "press on" despite the length of sentences, the guilt of their crimes, the troubles in their families, the inequities in the prison system; the list goes on. **Ask God to keep their hearts soft & tender to God's leading through His Word.**

A large part of this college ministry programming is the creation of course materials. I am always writing new things. Courses have to be updated, and new courses have to be developed. In addition, I have been working on some workshops. I have felt a great need to address the personal integrity of the men in the areas of moral purity. I have put together three workshops in that area. Another on "Dealing with Shame" is in progress, and I am planning another workshop on "What to do with Anger". Any Christian leader, whether in prison or not, must season his knowledge of God's Word with proper, mature, God-honoring behavior. In our teaching, we make every attempt to model that attitude. I am not always thrilled to have to share with the men that I struggle with wrong thoughts, angry outbursts, & improper attitudes. Pray that our course materials will contribute to meeting the needs of these men.



May God enrich your relationship with Him during this **Christmas** season.

Bruce & Liz Leary

