

Summer 2012

**better together**

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The Prison Fellowship magazine

**“It is not what we do that matters, but  
what a sovereign God chooses to do  
through us.**

**God doesn't want our success;  
He wants us.**

**He doesn't demand our achievements;  
He demands our obedience...**

**Victory comes through defeat;  
Healing through brokenness;  
Finding self through losing self.”**

**Chuck Colson**

**conn**

# Welcome

Even though he was often afraid for his own life during his time in prison, Chuck Colson really connected with people there. It's something he kept doing after his release – I've seen so many pictures of him hugging this man or that woman on his visits to prisons throughout the world. And Chuck connected them with society, with those on the outside who would not have thought about, or even noticed those in prison without his invitation.

This edition is all about connecting - connecting with each other, connecting PF groups with each other and, of course, connecting with our God who is transforming lives in prison.

You will also find articles on how, through Angel Tree, we connect those in prison with their children, at Christmas and also on Mothers' Day.

We have also been connecting with what is happening in prisons the world over (see page 16). At Chuck's memorial Jonathan Aitken shared a moving anecdote about visiting the church on Clapham Common where William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect used to meet, you probably know it.

Apparently Chuck was very put out that there was no memorial or statue of the great man, just a small yellowing leaflet. As he walked back over the Common he said to Jonathan that, in a sense, it was entirely fitting that there was no memorial to Wilberforce, since it was all around them, in the form of the men and women walking free. And so it is with Chuck's legacy around the world.

The Rector of that church on Clapham Common has been in his job for 16 years, and as he showed me round I noticed how alive and relevant he made the work of his church feel, so I asked him how he stays fresh in the job. His answer was so clear and immediate: "Four things," he said, with some emotion, "God loves me, He cares for me, He has a plan, and I can trust Him. And if it is true for me, it is for you too, so I need to let you know." Sounds the same as ours, as together we are that expression of God's love to those in prison.

It's all about connecting.

Natalie

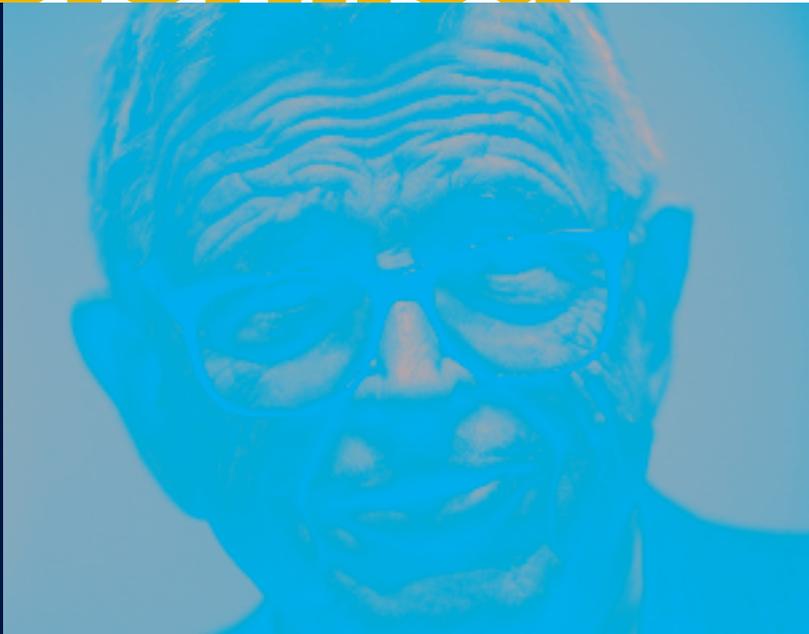
Natalie Cronin, Chief Executive, Prison Fellowship



**Chuck Colson** by Ronald Nikkel

# LIFE TRANSformed

**“...all my achievements meant nothing in God’s economy. No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure— that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation – being sent to prison – was the beginning of God’s greatest use of my life...”**



**Chuck Colson, Prison Fellowship’s founder and global ambassador, passed away in April this year. Here his friend Ronald W. Nikkel reflects on a life finished well and on discovering Jesus Christ anew in a man who expressed God’s love for the broken and imprisoned.**

*“...all my achievements meant nothing in God’s economy. No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure – that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation – being sent to prison – was the beginning of God’s greatest use of my life... only when I lost everything I thought made Chuck Colson a great guy had I found the true self God*

*intended me to be and the true purpose of my life. It is not what we do that matters, but what a sovereign God chooses to do through us. God doesn’t want our success; He wants us. He doesn’t demand our achievements; He demands our obedience... Victory comes through defeat; Healing through brokenness; Finding self through losing self.” [a]*

Redemption – it is an old word that harkens back to a time when slaves could be bought by benefactors to be granted freedom; and when poor prisoners languishing helplessly in decrepit

debtor's jails could be released, free and clear by someone gratuitously paying off their debts. Nowadays we tend to think of redemption as something we can do for ourselves, as in compensating for our failures by becoming more successful; or by overcoming our weaknesses through continuous self-improvement and self-control.

Over the years, I've met a lot of people around the world who saw in Chuck Colson a man who redeemed himself from the Watergate scandal by doing good for others. It took many of those people a few years to come to such a conclusion because they viewed his "jailhouse religion" as a gimmick that would not last very long. Admittedly, when I first heard Chuck Colson tell the story of his newfound faith I was among the sceptics. Yet there was something very compelling about his upside down view of God working more poignantly through human brokenness and weakness than through power and achievement. I soon realised that Chuck's story was not that of a man trying to clamber and claw his way back into respectability and success. It was instead a provocative story that saw him returning to the places of his own brokenness and humiliation – prison. A year after meeting Chuck I was given the opportunity to work with him through Prison Fellowship International.

For fifteen years Chuck and I travelled around the world, meeting with prisoners, presidents, and parliamentarians. The authenticity and power of Chuck's story and message resonated as much among the powerful in palaces of government as among the powerless in crowded filthy prisons. I had been a Christian involved in Christian work for a few years by that time, but it wasn't until I went into the prisons with Chuck that I really began to know who Jesus is – Jesus Christ, the prisoner, the embodiment of God's love for the down and out as much as for the up and out. I met Jesus, as if for the first time, when I saw His love expressed through Chuck, embracing suffering, sweaty inmates in the depths of their failure; when I saw one man's story of redemption and friendship with Jesus igniting hope among desolate and forgotten prisoners.

My eyes and mind and heart were opened as I began to understand the significance of Chuck's story and message, which was all about God's

love embracing a broken world in the person of Jesus, the Christ. "[Our] faith rests not merely upon great teachings or philosophies, not upon the charisma of a leader, not upon the success in raising moral values, not upon the skill or eloquence of good works ... if it did, it would have no more claim to authority than the sayings of Confucius or Mao or Buddha ... or any of a thousand cults. Christianity rests on historic truth. Jesus lived, died, and rose from the dead to be Lord of all – not just in theory or fable, but in fact." [b]

This week Chuck Colson passed from this life to reach the destination of his faith, to be embraced by Jesus who redeemed him from pride and prejudice and the pit of prison. He will be greatly missed, I will miss him. And yet the legacy of Chuck Colson is not about Chuck, but about Jesus who continues to embrace politicians and prisoners; rich and poor; liberals and conservatives; Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians; unbelievers, believers, and atheists; straights and gays and in-betweeners; you and me and every human being with His irresistible and redemptive love.

Thank you Chuck for showing me and thousands of people around the world what friendship with Jesus looks like in the depths of human failure and imprisonment. Farewell my faithful friend and brother.

*"Even there, in the mines, underground, I may find a human heart in another convict and murderer by my side, and I may make friends with him, for even there one may live and love and suffer. One may thaw and revive a frozen heart in that convict, one may wait upon him for years, and at last bring up from the dark depths a lofty soul, a feeling, suffering creature; one may bring forth an angel, create a hero! There are so many of them, hundreds of them, and we are all to blame for them. If [the powers that be] drive God from the earth, we shall shelter Him underground."* [c]

[a] Chuck Colson in "Loving God" (1987, Zondervan; page 25)

[b] Ibid, page 40

[c] Fyodor Dostoyevsky in "The Brothers Karamazov" (Bantam Classics, New York, 1984)

With thanks to Prison Fellowship International.

# *Getting to know you,*

Tony Watson is Prison Fellowship's newest trustee, who joined the team early in 2012. Having worked for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) for 22 years before retiring, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role. As a trustee Tony is legally responsible for PF's compliance to charitable rules and is also pioneering a new project to improve, develop and better connect our local groups and to improve their support. He's a great public speaker and enjoys languages, including French, German and Latin.

**Q: How long did you work for NOMS?**

A: I worked for the Prison Service/NOMS for 22 years, as part of a 37-year career in the Home Office and Ministry of Justice.

**Q: What inspired you to join PF as a trustee?**

A: Having already been involved with PF as a volunteer, and found it exciting and inspiring, prison ministry was therefore my first thought of what to do in my retirement. Having spoken to Howard and Natalie, it seemed that becoming a trustee was the way my gifts could best be used.

**Q: How long have you been a PF volunteer?**

A: Five years now – I am continuing as a volunteer facilitator on Sycamore Tree and I am planning to do the PTLSD (tutor qualification) this summer.

**Q: What inspired you to join PF as a volunteer?**

A: Not so much what but who - it was all Shawn Verhey's fault! When I worked for NOMS, I was asked to chair a board recruiting prison chaplains and Shawn was one of the candidates. As usual he was passionate about Sycamore Tree and I knew it was something I wanted to get involved in.

**Q: How long have you been involved in the church?**

A: I went to church from childhood and started Sunday School teaching in my teens. Eventually I married the minister's daughter! We moved to our current church when we got married in 1981 and have both been actively involved ever since.

**Q: What did you want to do when you left school?**

A: Get a job and earn some money! I sort of drifted into the Civil Service but always enjoyed it.

**Q: What was your job role with NOMS?**

A: My final role was Head of Prisoners Rights and Responsibilities. I headed the team that determined policy on issues such as discipline, complaints, letters, telephone calls, visits, prisoner property and so on. I enjoyed working there and have a lot of respect for them – they're good people who really want to make a difference.

**Q: What is your ultimate goal?**

A: To see Jesus touching individual's lives, and to see my two-week-old granddaughter follow her parents and grandparents in the Christian faith.



# GOCONNECT

## *getting to know all about you...*

**Q: How do you motivate people?**

A: Show appreciation; make sure they know I am there to support them, but also trust them to do a good job.

**Q: Aside from PF how else are you spending your retirement?**

A: I actually seem to have less time than when I was working full time. I thought I was going to have time to get a job for a couple of days a week, but with all my new found or re-established hobbies and a beautiful new granddaughter I won't be considering this for a while.

**Q: I hear you might be bringing cakes with you for your next office visit. Is this true?**

A: Yes! Well, I was a bit of a stranger to the kitchen until I retired. Microwave meals were my only culinary expertise. I discovered some of my mother's old recipes after she'd died - and the tins she used for baking. I remember the large oven being on once a week and the smell of baking filling the house. My mother always had three types of cakes in the cupboard at any one time, so there was always something for visitors. I'll make sure I bring in a sponge cake for my next meeting.

**Q: How do you like to spend time with your family?**

A: Now that I'm a doting granddad I love spending time with my first beautiful granddaughter and look forward to taking her to the park and the local children's farm when she gets older. She is a delicate little girl with long elegant fingers and might follow in the footsteps of the previous generation who played the guitar and piano. My grown up children are both very artistic. Our home has currently been turned into a public gallery showing my daughter's paintings - her amazing acrylics specialise in animals, spiritual and still life themes. I'm very proud of my family.

**Q: How are you involved with your local church?**

A: I've most recently got involved in a Job Club. It's been a privilege to use some of my experience, and a listening ear, to help grow the group from small beginnings to where we now help about 6 people a week. The club is there not only on a practical level, to help unemployed people get jobs, but also on an emotional level, helping them build their self esteem, self worth and their relationships with others.

**Q: And in your spare time?!**

A: When I'm not busy with Prison Fellowship, cooking, helping at the local church or spending valuable time with my wife and family you will find me in the garden tending to my vegetable plot.

## → **Ministry of Justice**

One of our most significant connections in recent years has been with the Ministry of Justice and with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in particular. NOMS was created as an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice in July 2008. Their job is to protect the public and reduce reoffending by delivering the punishments and orders of the courts, helping offenders to reform their lives and in doing so prevent future victims of crime.

The scale of the task is daunting: NOMS specifies and commissions offender management services; directly manages 120 public sector prisons (and a directly employed workforce of c48,000); contract manages 14 private sector prisons and a range of system-wide contracts (such as Prisoner Escort Service, electronic monitoring and bail accommodation); contract manages 35 probation trusts and Third Sector providers; and manages system-wide service delivery.



**We remember Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship International who died this year.**

**Last Christmas, thanks to the efforts of PF members, we were able to send 5,041 gifts to children on behalf of 2,632 prisoners – the most we have ever sent!**



# CELEBRA

**PF members delivered 643 vouchers and gifts to the mothers of young offenders on Mothers' Day this year – up 343 from last year.**





8 volunteers received an outstanding volunteer award at this year's conference (nominated by their fellow volunteers), including Ruth Manwaring - who is 89!



**Volunteer numbers have grown 25% in the last 2 years. We now have over 1,600 volunteer members!**

**We now have new PF groups in Kingsbridge, Rochester, Wrexham, Derby, Torquay and Paignton - welcome!**

**Sunday's coming**

We've received so many positive comments following Paul Foster's moving talk at the Prison Fellowship Conference that we thought you might like to have an abridged copy of the sermon (originally retold by Tony Campolo) that inspired him, and us:

It's Friday. Jesus is arrested in the garden where He was praying. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. The disciples are hiding and Peter's denying that he knows the Lord. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. Jesus is standing before the high priest of Israel, silent as a lamb before the slaughter. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. Jesus is beaten, mocked, and spit upon. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. Those Roman soldiers are flogging our Lord with a leather scourge that has bits of bones and glass and metal, tearing at his flesh. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. The Son of Man stands firm as they press the crown of thorns down into his brow. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. See Him walking to Calvary, the blood dripping from His body. See the cross crashing down on His back as He stumbles beneath the load. It's Friday; but **Sunday's** a coming.

It's Friday. See those Roman soldiers driving the nails into the feet and hands of my Lord. Hear my Jesus cry, "Father, forgive them." It's Friday; but **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. Jesus is hanging on the cross, bloody and dying. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. The sky grows dark, the earth begins to tremble, and He who knew no sin became sin for us. Holy God who will not abide with sin pours out His wrath on that perfect sacrificial lamb who cries out, "My God, My God. Why hast thou forsaken me?" What a horrible cry. But **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. And at the moment of Jesus' death, the veil of the Temple that separates sinful man from Holy God was **torn from the top to the bottom** because **Sunday's** coming.

It's Friday. Jesus is hanging on the cross, heaven is weeping and hell is partying. But that's because it's Friday, and they don't know it, but **Sunday's** a coming.

And on that horrible day 2000 years ago, Jesus the Christ, the Lord of glory, the only begotten Son of God, the only perfect man died on the cross of Calvary. Satan thought that he had won the victory. Surely he had destroyed the Son of God. Finally he had disproved the prophecy God had uttered in the Garden and the one who was to crush his head had been destroyed. But that was Friday.

Now it's **Sunday**. And just about dawn on that first day of the week, there was a great earthquake.

But that wasn't the only thing that was shaking because now it's **Sunday**. And the angel of the Lord is coming down out of heaven and rolling the stone away from the door of the tomb. Yes, it's **Sunday**, and the angel of the Lord is sitting on that stone and the guards posted at the tomb to keep the body from disappearing are shaking in their boots because it's **Sunday**, and the lamb that was silent before the slaughter is now the resurrected lion from the tribe of Judah, for He is not here, the angel says. He is risen indeed.

It's **Sunday**, and the crucified and resurrected Christ has defeated death, hell, sin and the grave. It's **Sunday**. And now everything has changed. It's the age of grace, God's grace poured out on all who would look to that crucified lamb of Calvary. Grace freely given to all who would believe that Jesus Christ, who died on the cross of Calvary was buried and rose again. All because it's **Sunday**.

# the pf perspective

# he

“The Sycamore Tree course was not only the most relevant and important part of my rehabilitation; it was, without a doubt, the vital step on my journey towards Jesus. My life was an emotionless, asocial, dark tale of criminality, heroin addiction and prison. I never concerned myself with the consequences of my lifestyle; my victims were faceless and without feelings. I failed to acknowledge their existence; they became mere objects to be ignored or perhaps hated. Before Jesus, I never experienced love.

“My childhood was one of poverty, violence and drug abuse. My mother was too busy battling her own demons to worry too much about me or my sisters. I quickly learned that I was better off alone. I isolated myself and soon found the warm intimacy of heroin addiction. I was totally addicted by the time I was 12.

“I quickly climbed the criminal ladder and am now serving an IPP for robbing a security van. Although I had spent 10 years in various prisons, I never contemplated a normal lifestyle. I had done a number of offending behaviour courses, but they had no real impact on me. Human logic is no match for Satan, and he had me firmly in a mentality of bitterness and hatred.

“The seed of the Sycamore Tree course took a while to germinate, but it flourished quickly. There was a lovely courageous woman who suffered from cerebral palsy. I experienced real compassion for this woman when she described the ordeal of being burgled. That could have been me. I could have caused all that pain, made this amazing woman cry like that. Suddenly the full weight of my sin and its consequences came crashing down on top of me. She became all my victims, all the people I have burgled, the guy that got pistol-whipped, his mother, his children. They all suddenly became real people and they all condemned me for all I had put them through. The Sycamore Tree course brought into vivid reality the impact of my crimes and my addiction, and it nearly broke me.

# sam's story



“With that self-awareness came self-hatred and a realisation of the person I had become, and I knew I could not continue like that. The Sycamore Tree course showed me that I needed to think and act in new ways. The facilitators of Sycamore Tree are always in my prayers. I will never forget the people I met there as they have changed my life. Thank you.”

**We'd like to add our thanks for the time and effort given by our volunteers, which enabled us to run more than 100 Sycamore Tree courses in prisons across the country during the last year. So from all of us at Prison Fellowship, and the 2,000 learners like Sam that you've helped - thank you.**

## Being better connected

As you will see from this issue of CELLout, the priority for the year ahead is to connect better. We need to connect better with churches, our members, and ourselves as an organisation. We will also continue to work hard at connecting with other organisations that can help us achieve our aim of showing Christ's love to prisoners by coming alongside them, praying for them, and helping them to change. You will see in these pages some of the exciting partnerships we are building with NOMS, Reflex and CFEQ.

# www.thinking8

One of the ways we need to connect better is with our members and supporters, who feel disconnected from PF - on the margins of it, interested but not sure. Connecting better means enabling our PF groups to connect more easily with each other, and it also means connecting better with each other to build one team, strong in its unity. Tony Watson, our newest trustee, will be continuing his work on supporting and equipping our PF groups and group leaders.

We will also be improving the quality of our materials for those of you who support our work through prayer and giving to our work financially. We hope to have a new website up and running in time for Prisons Week, and have a great forum for telling work through engaging and informative way what PF does, and have a great forum for telling the amazing stories that our team bring out from our prisons.

I hope you will have already seen the excellent Sycamore Tree DVD that was shown at the conference and which is now on our website. This is a great way to get the message of Sycamore Tree out, and we also hope to have at our disposal by November a short promotional DVD that tells the general story of PF and will be a great way to get PF known in as many places as possible.

This year we will be working hard to engage with more churches and we have created a new role to help us to connect better with churches, so that we can recruit more volunteers, and encourage churches to support us financially and in prayer. This promises to be an exciting year of connection and I look forward to getting to know you all better.

In order to connect better with those in prison we will need your help. This year we need to recruit volunteers to do the following:

- Act as Angel Tree coordinators for a local prison - 28 roles
- Train to become Sycamore Tree Tutors
- Support chaplaincy work including pastoral work and administration
- Develop new work preparing prisoners for release
- Speak about PF's work in churches - 40 roles

# hooked

## REFLEX

Youth reoffending continues to be a massive problem in the UK. According to the Government's most recent research, 75% of young people sentenced to youth custody reoffend within one year, as do 68% on community sentences. These figures are staggering and shocking, and ought to bring us to our knees in prayer for young people in custody.

Aware of the complex and growing needs of young people, Prison Fellowship have **connected with** Reflex, who specialise in working with young offenders and young people at risk of offending. Head of Reflex, Darren Richards describes the problem:

*"When young people lose hope, they feel they have 'nothing to lose' - in other words, they have no reason to desist from offending or to respect their community. Reflex exists to break the cycle of offending and reoffending amongst young people, by helping them find their direction and instilling confidence for a hope-filled future - a positive destination, away from crime."*

Reflex works predominantly in Young Offender Institutions nationwide. However, at the height of last year's riots, Reflex were asked to run a summer school for young offenders in Manchester. Each morning the young people would arrive and show the Reflex workers mobile text messages inviting them to join in with the rioting. These seasoned young offenders were proud to say that they were enjoying their time with Reflex so much that they simply ignored the temptation. Being involved in a three week rap music and street theatre course helped build up their personal resilience - it gave them a new destination and helped them reflect upon, and verbalise in song, their hopes for the future.

The weeks were not without outbursts, tantrums and incidents, but the young people were filled with gratitude for the opportunity they had been given. The final result? A fantastic music video called "In Control" and the young people received an Arts Award. The chorus the young people composed captures beautifully their determination to change:

*"Nothing's gonna stop me, no. 'Cause now I'm in control, and now I see my goal.  
Look back upon my past, don't worry the hurt won't last. Now I know I'm in control."*

Most young offenders are trapped in an endless cycle of offending; they must not only convince others to give them a second chance, but they must also overcome their own internal struggles, insecurities and addictions: 1 in 4 have suffered abuse, 1 in 4 have learning difficulties and 70% grow up without a father-figure.

In 11 prisons, across 5 regions, Reflex are equipping young people with the skills, confidence and opportunities to realise their full potential. They partner with churches and charities to place professional youth workers, called 'Outreach Workers', in YOI's across the country - they are specialists in helping young people move forward with their lives. An independent evaluation recently verified that Reflex's approach leads to a reduction in offending, by raising self-esteem and achievement levels and offering credible alternatives to criminal behaviour.

Like us, Reflex believe that every young person has potential, every young person has the power to change, and every young person can make a difference. In the lyrics of one young man in prison, on a Reflex music course:

*"I know I've had a bad past, but I can still change. 21, that's when my life starts again with a good start. We fall down, but we get back up again."*

To find out more about Reflex, visit [www.reflex.org](http://www.reflex.org)

# CARING FOR EX-OFFENDERS

Prison Fellowship have **connected with** Caring for Ex-Offenders to help reduce reoffending by reintegrating ex-offenders (of any faith or none) into society through the local church. Through training and advice, CFEO equips churches and enables them to support ex-offenders to live changed lives. We believe that by breaking the cycle of crime, individuals, families and neighbourhoods can be transformed.

Caring for Ex-Offenders was launched back in 2005 as a result of the success of Alpha for Prisons. Many have come to faith inside and want to continue their faith journey outside amongst a supportive church community. Others need the church's help in effective resettlement, whether this be help finding work or accommodation, help with addiction problems, or simply having a friendly and welcoming community around them that is committed to their wellbeing.

Caring for Ex-Offenders trains local churches to be able to mentor and support ex-offenders effectively and then arranges a link between someone coming out of prison and a local church community, in order to better assist that person's successful resettlement and abstinence from reoffending.

**CARING FOR  
EX-OFFENDERS**

Reintegrating individuals into the community

## How You Can Help:

As a Prison Fellowship volunteer you will build relationships with individuals who may appreciate the support a church can give upon their release from prison. If this is the case then all you will need to do is fill out one of our Initial Contact Forms with the individual concerned; the form includes all the relevant information we need in order to start the linking process. Once this is complete please send it to our central office at the address above and we'll take it from there. If you have any further questions about what we do or would like to know of other opportunities to get involved with the work of CFEO then please do get in touch.

To find out more about CFEO, visit [www.caringforexoffenders.org](http://www.caringforexoffenders.org)



## Child and Caregiver Support Services (Freedom Project)

As we consider ways in which we can connect with PF ministries around the world, we take a look at this moving story that has come out of PF Cambodia and remind ourselves of the amazing work that God is doing through His family:

# *The Koh Koh Kids Cambodia*

# pfabroad

Over the period of a month, our social work staff struggled to rescue four children aged 4 – 14 from an unacceptable situation. Dad was in prison for another offence, and the mother had just been arrested for a serious crime. The children were left scattered in various situations in a distant province where they were experiencing exploitation (being used to make money for others benefit), abuse and neglect. We were asked to intervene by various agencies.

Unfortunately, we faced many bureaucratic hurdles, and the delays meant greater and greater risk. Eventually, after one month and many trips to the province, we were able to bring the children into our short-term emergency care centre. They were provided with good food, clothing, medical care, schooling, and enjoyed a safe and secure environment.

From there began the journey of finding a long-term, family-based care option for them. The eldest girl vaguely remembered an uncle somewhere and gave us an even more vague idea of where he was. Miraculously, the social work staff were able to locate the man and he was willing to take the children into his family - if Prison Fellowship Cambodia was able to help him generate a bit more income. One problem was that he was also caring for his mentally unwell sister who could cause issues. In order to create a safe environment for the children to come into, the Prison Fellowship Cambodia team helped the woman to obtain mental health treatment through a local agency. She became quite well and was able to move to another location and earn an income. We provided support to the uncle to help him raise chickens near his home.

Finally, after three months, we were able to transfer the children into his care. But tragedy struck. First, his prize pig died shortly after the children arrived. A deeply superstitious man, he suspected the children were the cause of the bad luck. The real tragedy was still to come however. We received a call to say that while the uncle's son and the children were playing near a pond, his son fell in and drowned. Distraught, he told us to come and take the children away as quickly as possible. We had no choice.

Despite the tragedy, there was good news. During the month in which the children had been with the uncle, we had been forming a partnership with Children in Families (CIF), an organisation committed to developing sound long-term foster care options to keep children out of orphanages and in families. CIF was able to locate a family willing to take all four children immediately and they remain there to this day, enjoying a safe and healthy family environment. The children still get to see their parents because of our child/parent visitation programme, so the connections can remain in place.

With thanks to PF Cambodia.

# the engine room

**2nd July – Angel Tree.** Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, we were able to send 5,041 gifts to children on behalf of 2,632 prisoners last Christmas – a record number. We also sent 643 vouchers and gifts to the mothers of young offenders on Mother's Day, expanding from 3 prisons in 2011 to 9 this year. Pray for the recruitment of another 28 Angel Tree Coordinators this year; that the right people would step forward and for enough prisons to sign up so that we can provide the programme to as many prisoners as want it.

**9th July – PFI.** PF Cambodia helps enrich the lives of over 2,000 inmates. With the help of devoted volunteers, education, job training and re-entry programmes are provided to prisoners in 15 prisons. Pray for the recently created Michael's House, a centre for children who are at immediate risk of exploitation or neglect; that they would have adequate resources to meet the needs of these children. Pray also for a new partnership with Hagar International – 'Fresh Start' – that this will be able to offer many exciting opportunities for women in prison.

**16th July – CJS.** This week we think of all those who work in the Criminal Justice System. The job of administering justice is one that requires a balance between the needs of victim and offender to make sure that justice is done but also to ensure that those in prison are helped onto a path of rehabilitation. Pray for wisdom and guidance for all those in the CJS who have to make complex decisions that balance the needs of justice and rehabilitation.

**23rd July – Partnerships.** We can't meet the need of those in prison on our own. We are delighted to be working with partner organisations that bring their skills and expertise together so that we can do more. Pray for our partnership with Reflex, that together we would be able to extend our Sycamore Tree programme into more Young Offenders Institutes and juvenile establishments. Pray also for our continued work with CFEO - so that the work of our members supporting prisoners can be carried on once they are released.

**30th July – Juveniles and YOI.** We pray Lord for all the young people in prison at a time when the population has grown to capacity due to social problems and the riots in August 2011. Lord, please remember those who have arrived in prison and are unable to cope because of their complex physical, mental and social needs. We ask God to inspire the prison staff to give these people role models who will provide support and discipline to enable them to reintegrate into society. Please remember the 16-24 year olds who are also more likely to become a victim of crime. Please give these young people the strength to be involved in the restorative justice process and find closure and comfort while meeting the perpetrators of crime.

**6th August - Chaplaincy and Prison Staff.** Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for blessing us all with gifts that respond to the precious calling of your ministry. We pray for all chaplains and prison staff who work tirelessly for those in confinement. We pray for all staff who make sacrifices to help prisoners in their every day routines; those who help to ease the prison loneliness and distress and to connect with prisoners who have led marginalised, dispossessed lives. We praise all prison staff for the invaluable work that they do. May you revive them every morning and comfort them every night and bless them with peaceful sleep as they continue to work in difficult and hostile environments.

**13th August – Women.** There are approx 4,200 women in prison in England & Wales, which represents about 5% of the prison population. In the last decade, the women's population has increased by 12% and in 2012, about 20% are held over 100 miles away from home. Pray for the families and children of these women for the strength and determination to visit them and keep up the family ties. Pray for the women in prison, over 50% of whom have suffered domestic violence and 33% experience sexual abuse, to gain self-esteem and find the support required to avoid reoffending on release.

**20th August – Older Prisoners.** The fastest growing age group in the prison estate is now aged 60+. This is due to harsher sentencing policies and effective use of old evidence. Older prisoners are now classed as aged 50+ and they make up nearly 10% of the prison population. Pray that the prison service develop a national strategy for these prisoners to be implemented in all prisons so that they receive the health care they need which is presently not catered for. Also pray for support from their friends and family and for other support networks to visit them as they are a very vulnerable group in the prison system.

**27th August – Fundraising.** At a time in the public and private sectors when cutbacks are affecting many organisations, Lord, we ask for your strength and perseverance. We thank you for those who continue to support us - please give us renewed inspiration to find additional resources. Let us think 'outside the box' and touch new hearts to support the work we are doing. We pray for the recruitment of a new Church Engagement officer, that the right candidate is sent to us with the understanding and foresight we need to develop our ministry further.

**3rd September – South East.** Thank you Father for all the opportunities made available to us in our area. We recognise the huge demand on us but we are so thrilled to be able to be of service to you to fulfill your plan. We pray for more volunteers to come forward to help us in our tasks, to see Your Kingdom come in the prisons as it is in Heaven. Please give us a fresh outpouring of your Spirit to enable us to impart your love and your heart to those we meet.

**10th September – East Area.** The region has seen an ongoing demand for Sycamore Tree and a steady growth in volunteer numbers, and with more training needed to deliver ST, please pray for volunteer teams, and especially ST tutors, so that we can run courses in HMPs Norwich, Blundeston and Warren Hill - a YOI unit in Suffolk. Pray also for all those who have started training as tutors, for courage and joy as they step out in faith and for the Lord's anointing on their gifting to tutor; and for all the new volunteers who are training as Group Facilitators, that their roles will develop well and the teams will work really effectively together.

**17th September – Midlands.** Please pray for ST with new courses starting at HMP Gartree, especially for those new to the roles of Group Facilitator and Tutor. Please pray for the men who are all lifers, as they will be dealing with some huge issues. Give thanks for answered prayer for more ST courses to be run at HMP Woodhill and for the opportunity to work in Juvenile Prisons. Please pray for and be encouraged by new PF groups (or re-started) in Coventry, Leicester, Derby and Rugby and for the newly opened HMP Oakwood, near Cannock, and the new chaplain, David Weller.

**24th September – North East.** After just over a year as Regional Coordinator for the North East, there is a lot to give thanks to God for, and yet more that we can cover in prayer. Please pray for ST in HMPs Full Sutton, Wealstun and Wolds, giving thanks for the teams and pray also for new volunteers to get involved. There are a number of prisons in the North East being 'market tested', pray for staff and prisoners in this unsettling time and pray for those in a position of decision making, that God would give them wisdom.

**1st October - North West.** 'He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Luke 10v2. Pray that more people will be called to join us in our work, especially with the delivery of the programmes we run in the prisons, and pray also for more churches to support this vital ministry whether it is financially or in prayer. We thank God for His provision and we need more.

**8th October – South West/Wales.** The South West/Wales region is a vast area that is slowly building pace with the growth of prayer groups and supporters. Pray that, through the rapidly expanding use of social media and the Internet, God's wisdom will inspire Christians to use this technology to increase the amount of volunteers in these regions. Pray also that more local churches and ministries will be set up and developed - welcoming new enthusiastic people and expanding the support, that like-minded people join the team of PF volunteers and encourage and inspire the growth that is needed in this area.

**15th October – London.** Heavenly Father, we want to thank you for answering our prayers and giving us the ability to run more ST courses in the London area, especially at this difficult economic time. We give thanks and praise for the opportunity to be involved in your work in restorative justice. We pray now for more ST volunteers as we have lost some valued tutors due to retirement and life changes. We give thanks for the dedication of all our tutors and facilitators and pray that we attract equally dedicated people who will inspire and develop our future courses and see more lives transformed in prison.

**22nd October – Sycamore Tree.** As 'restorative justice' has become a buzzword in the media, we pray that the general public will understand the concept and support pioneering programmes such as Sycamore Tree. We pray that victims finally find peace in their lives and that offenders see the ripple effect their crimes have on more than just the direct victims. We pray that this process is increasingly used in schools, workplaces and other situations as well as in the criminal justice system.

**29th October – Solitary Confinement.** Dear Lord, let the light of your presence guide us in the darkest of places. We pray for all those prisoners in solitary confinement, the most isolated of places in the human heart. Dear Lord, be with them, comfort them and visit them in their hour of need. Show them your heavenly arms and where Heaven and Earth meet in glory, in the briefest of moments, the longest of days. You are always there, your generous presence filling all with joy and peace. Grant these gifts in the silence that should never threaten but which blesses each prisoner with the opportunity to meet with you, to be cradled by you, for we are always free in your love.

**5th November – Letter Writing.** Gracious Lord, we thank you for the gift of reading and writing which we can all learn to share with one another, from a parent reading to his child, to the schooling we are blessed to receive and for those who come to this art late in life. Thank you for the transformation that it brings to prisoners who, without it, feel even more isolated. Lord, bless all the volunteers who respond to this calling and this powerful ministry that blesses so many of the prisoners' lives. We lift up every single letter writing experience to you with gratitude for the solace it brings, and the light and love that it spreads.

**12th November – Out of the Gate.** Lord we pray for the families and friends of those who are coming out of prison, to give them strength and support as their lives change again with the homecoming of a loved one. Although they have been looking forward to this wonderful event, this can be a very challenging time where there will be obstacles, weakness, and fear. Let the power of your Spirit fill them with love, understanding and healing and help them find a way to move forward in peace.



**14th July: Volunteers' Day**  
Blisworth Baptist Church,  
Northamptonshire, NN7 3BU  
10.30am-4.00pm

**21st July: Sycamore Tree training for group facilitators**  
HMP The Mount Training Centre,  
Molyneux Avenue, Bovingdon,  
Hemel Hempstead,  
Hertfordshire, HP3 0NZ  
9.30am-3.00pm

**27th July: Sycamore Tree training for group facilitators**  
Sandbach Baptist Church,  
36 Green Street, Sandbach, CW11 1GX  
10.00am-4.00pm

**7th August: Angel Tree training**  
HMP Thorn Cross, Arley Road,  
Appleton Thorn, Warrington,  
Cheshire, WA4 4RL  
9.30am-12.00 noon, followed by lunch

**15th September: I.M.P.A.C.T.**  
Bridge Chapel, Heath Road, Liverpool, L19 4XR  
1.00pm-4.00pm

**29th September: Prison Fellowship Stand**  
Visit us at the LIFE CALL event, Liverpool Cathedral

**19th October: Prison Ministry Conference**  
Holy Trinity Brompton,  
Brompton Road,  
London, SW7 1JA  
9.00am-5.00pm

**20th October: Volunteers' Day**  
Boley Park Community Hall,  
7 Ryknild Street, Lichfield,  
Staffordshire, WS14 9XU  
10.30am-3.30pm

**PRISONS WEEK 2012**  
18-24 NOVEMBER [prisonswalk.org](http://prisonswalk.org)

**21st November: Chester Diocese Criminal Justice Board, Prisons Week Event**  
St Michael's Church, 198 Ford Lane,  
Coppenhall, Crewe, CW11 3TN  
7.30pm

**24th November: Prison Fellowship Rally**  
St Paul's Kersal Moor, Salford, Manchester, M7 3WX

Please visit the regional pages on our website and/or see your copy of VOICES for news of more events and to get up to date information, as some of the above are occasionally subject to change.

## The Fight by Luke Wordley

This wonderfully written, high paced and emotional story follows the life of Sam Pennington after his life appears to have fallen apart. Sam's father has died, his mother has become an alcoholic and he has lost his home and moved to an estate with intimidating gangs and filthy stairwells, and he is now in danger of being expelled from his third school in three years. This is a far cry from the comfortable farm he lived on with his mother and father, attending a private boarding school where he was a keen rugby player and a 'grade A' student.

Jerry Ambrose has come from a life very similar to the life Sam is now following, getting into fights and always in trouble. But he found his faith, which helped him change the direction of his life and marry a strong and inspirational lady called Gloria. Their paths cross when Sam has a street fight and is sent to Jerry's Boxing Club to try to focus his anger and great ability in a positive way. Jerry's faith and support help save Sam from a life with a potential prison sentence or possibly death and gives him the love and understanding he needed from a father figure. But in the process Jerry finds Sam's amazing talent for boxing is drawing him away from his faith and awakens an ambition, which could tear them both apart. This is a powerfully written Christian book that follows a teenager's journey towards God in the face of adversity, set in East London in the 1990s.

## Out of the Ashes by Peter Gladwin

Peter Gladwin's autobiography is an amazing story of triumph over adversity. This book is written about a man who should be angry at the world and his family. Peter was only a baby when he was burned and left partially disabled and badly scarred in a domestic house fire. His rough upbringing in a troubled council estate was the start of Peter always being in trouble, spending time on the streets, in and out of care and eventually losing himself in gambling, drink and drugs. It wasn't until he contemplated suicide and had a frank conversation with his older sister that Peter's life took a new direction and this was the start of a profound transformation.

Today Peter's life is happy and healthy with a loving family. He radiates hope from every pore. This book will leave you full of hope and encouragement as you follow Peter's journey of discovery, turning from a past of despair into a future of hope, love and joy.

For information on any of these events please contact  
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# EVENTS

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Registered Charity No. 1102254

Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5003795

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CELLout designed by Helen Pooley

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