



Nu 'Oli Mai Paahau

"Good News from Prison" Newsletter of the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry

SPRING 2011

Chaplain Dennis Yokota

Vol. 11

Issue 1

A Gift From God - Years In The Making



The Velez family knows well God's grace and love - and gives as they have been given.

In 2000, I was arrested on several charges and looking at some serious time. I was feeling lost and confused not knowing what to expect for I had never in my life gotten into trouble with the law.

At the time I was 29 years old, married, with 6 children and not even in their lives. So when I got in trouble I left the island and went to Ohio before I was sentenced thinking that I was going to get away. I was wrong!

Well, the law found me and brought me back to Hawaii. I was sentenced to 10 years on a burglary charge.. That's when they sent me to Halawa.

In there, there was nothing to do so to keep myself busy I decided to go to church. That's when I met Chaplain Dennis. One thing I know is he gave all of us inmates love. He didn't look at anyone in a wrong way and that's what I wanted. So I started to go to church and learn the word.

The Lord started to open doors for me and He moved me through the system pretty fast. Then, when I got to Laumaka I got a little too comfortable and started to slip back to my old ways. And I ended up smoking

and had a dirty U.A. so they sent me to the hole.

But before I went to the hole I met a wonderful person when I was in Laumaka. She showed me what love was about. I never had that in my life so we hooked up and she got pregnant.

When I went to the hole number 7 and still in jail – what a loser I felt like. I lost the faith and turned my back on God. But when you're in the hole there's nothing to do but read the Word. So I started again and started to open my heart to God all over again.

As time passed by in the hole (4 months), the Lord opened doors one more time. But it wasn't what I thought it was. He sent me to Arizona Prison. I was like, "Lord what's this all about?" Me not knowing, His plan was to teach me the Word of God.

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Annual Meatloaf Luncheon - March 19

"To-die-for" meatloaf, corn and whipping cream, homemade peach and chocolate cake plus testimonies and entertainment breathed by God are the reasons folks keep coming to our annual luncheon:

Kalihi Union Church
2214 North King Street
Saturday, March 19, 2011
11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Special guests at the luncheon will be Good News Jail & Prison Ministry President and CEO, Harry Greene, and Rick Sweeney, our Regional Director, both of whom have

until now only heard and dreamt about the meatloaf luncheon we'll be enjoying soon!

Tickets for the luncheon are \$10 and may be obtained by contacting any of the council members or by contacting:

Chaplain Dennis Yokota - 485-1884

A free will offering will be taken at this event which kicks off a string of fund-raising events for this special ministry to Hawaii's inmate population and their families.

Join us for great testimonies, fellowship, entertainment, and great food!



Dottie Chong's famous meatloaf awaits us at our annual luncheon. And that's just the starter!

Good News Ministry Leaders to Visit Hawaii

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volunteers, the Ministry has witnessed in 2010 alone:

- 68,233 professions of faith
- 54,341 recommitments to Christ

These were due in large to the ministry allowing God's voice to be heard through:

- 35,285 preaching services
- 61,800 Bible classes
- 312,335 Bible Lessons
- 132,860 Counseling & Visitations

All of us are well familiar with the wonderful work of our chaplains here in Hawaii, Dennis Yokota (Oahu) and Mike Sidman (Big Island). But the miracles of transformed lives in Hawaii are but a part of an even larger, much larger ministry that goes beyond our state and across the globe.

As an international ministry, Good News Jail & Prison Ministry ministers in 113 U.S. institutions in 21 states and also in the countries of Bolivia, Egypt, Estonia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malawi, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Ukraine, and Venezuela and one U. S. Territory, American Samoa. Through its 371 chaplains which the organization provides along with its

In March, we will have the pleasure of hosting Good News Jail & Prison Ministry president and CEO, Harry Greene, and regional director, Rick Sweenie. Both men themselves are testimonies to God's grace and gifting and we are truly grateful for their leadership and dedication to His ministry.

There may be opportunities for either gentleman speak at your church or group gathering and anyone interested should call Chaplain Dennis Yokota: 485-1884.

Nu 'Oli Mai Paahau is the Newsletter of the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry-Oahu President's Council which has as its parent organization the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry, a 501C(3) Non-Profit Organization, whose address is:

PO BOX 9760
Richmond, VA 23228-0760
Tel: 1-800-220-2202

The Oahu President's Council consists of a council of appointed volunteers who support a full-time chaplain that ministers to the inmates and adult corrections officers of Hawaii's correctional facilities and can be contacted below:

PO Box 31006
Honolulu, HI 96820
Tel: 808-485-1884

Harry and Rick will also be at our Annual Meatloaf Luncheon (see page 1) and look forward to meeting all of you who make the prison ministry here in Hawaii so successful. It will be a special time, indeed!

Praises and Prayers

On almost any evening one can find on the cable or regular network channels features on prison life - its challenges, the inmates, and the factors that seemed to lead individuals to the life they now face behind bars.

It's a view that few would find very encouraging - a view depicting not much more than lives ruined by mistakes, purposelessness, and hate and outlooks that at best match the dreary existence that is prison life. Extremely rare, and unfortunate, are stories of success, hope, and the excitement of transformation - that

often characterize the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry.

In 2010, the Hawaii ministry was blessed to witness the acceptance of Christ by 226 inmates and a total of 20,679 inmates attending Bible classes within their respective facilities. The magnitude of these numbers is nothing short of a miracle - except when you think of Him, who is behind it all.

And while these stories begin behind bars, the stories continue as many are released and go on to minister to their brothers and sisters both in prison and within the community as a whole.

Chaplain Dennis Yokota has struggled against program closures, resident factions

and reduced services to enable God's transforming grace upon the hundreds of inmates directly touched by the ministry.

We are grateful for the support from our brothers and sisters in Christ who have helped us to meet our budget in a tough economic climate and with God's continuing help we pray for your help in enabling the hiring of two additional chaplains in Hawaii. Please call us for information about how you or your church/organization can help answer these prayers.

The difference we make in our corrections facility is a difference we make in our community and in our individual lives by answering Jesus' call to be the good Samaritan.

Ways to Support the Ministry!

The Good News Jail & Prison Ministry is entirely supported through by individuals, churches and organizations who feel called to bring the Gospel into the prison community.

As the Ministry receives no federal or state support your gift, be it a single or recurring contribution, is vital to sustaining the efforts of our chaplains here in Hawaii.

Credit card and e-transfer options are available or you can mail in your donation using the form below. You may also consider sponsoring any of the following:

- “Nu ‘Oli Mai Paahau” Newsletter
- Golf Event Fees
- Banquet Tables & Guests
- Programs & Other Event Costs

For all financial support, you will receive a statement of your donation for tax purposes.

To learn more about the methods of supporting the Hawaii Ministry, contact Chaplain, Dennis Yokota:

Tel: 485-1884 or e-mail to: dennis.yokota@goodnewsjail.org

Events *Your* ministry?

The Oahu President’s Council looks forward to an exciting and memorable year with events to support our ministry. We cordially invite your involvement as a participant, volunteer, or donor.

Contact the chairs listed for each of our upcoming events and let us know how you’d like to get involved!

MEATLOAF LUNCHEON - 3/19/11
Warren Yamamoto - 732-5216

HALAWA CORRECTIONS FACILITY WORSHIP - 4/8/11
Chaplain Yokota - 485-1884

GOLF EVENT - 6/17/11
Ron Lee - 386-0953
Richard Young - 261-1888

CHAPLAIN’S WALK - 8/27/11
Dianne O’Steen 545-5272

34th ANNUAL BANQUET - 11/4/11
Dianne O’Steen 545-5272

VIDEO VISIT FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY - 12/10/11
Leona Ogi - 485-5246

Truly I tell you, just as you did to the least of these who are my family, you did to me. Matthew 25:40

Perhaps you’ve wanted to support the prison ministry but don’t feel that ministering inside prison walls is something you’re ready for at this time.

You and your church or organization can make a huge impact by helping to spread the word about the ministry by holding any of a number of fundraising activities with the help of the Ministry’s Oahu President’s Council.

Host an event-type fundraiser such as a luncheon, golf outing, walk-a-thon, or speaking engagement as you normally would and we’ll assist with manpower, testimonial speakers, and processing of donations and issuance of tax-deductible receipts.

The funds that you and your church or organization raise will go directly toward the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry’s efforts right here on Oahu.

For more information, please call Chaplain Dennis Yokota at 485-1884.

OAHU PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL

Co-chairs: Ron Lee, Richard Young

Financial Secretary: Warren Yamamoto

Tim Gruber • Jan Morita

Charles & Carol Noland

Leona Ogi • Reynold Saito

Dianne O’Steen • George Akahane

GOOD NEWS JAIL & PRISON MINISTRY - OAHU PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL

PLEASE MAIL YOUR GIFT TO: GNJ&P MINISTRY • PO BOX 31006 • HONOLULU, HI 96820

I’d like to further the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry here in Hawaii! Please find enclosed my tax deductible gift of:

- \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 _____
- Please contact me to discuss ways in which my church or organization can be a part of this ministry.

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____



It's not always easy to know what God is doing with your life... but Ronald Velez can tell you the benefits of listening and trying to notice what He's doing with our lives.

Continued from page 4 - "Gift"

So he put me in the Faith Pod. That was where I learned the Bible and, with the fel-

lowship of the brothers, I stayed there and graduated from the program. It was a turning point in my life.

The Lord told me to go home and be a disciple and a servant of His Word. So when I saw the board they told me that I was paroled. I came home in September and that's when my wife asked me if I wanted to volunteer at the Video Phone Visits - for families to visit with their loved ones in mainland prisons. I was hesitant at first, but I knew that was God.

Now I'm here helping out with the video visits. I'm going to a wonderful church and I have a wonderful family and a good paying job, thanks to my Lord and Savior.

So whoever reads this just remember: don't ever turn your back on God, stay tap in, and he will always open doors and bless you more than you can imagine!

Love you all,
Ronald Velez

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Honolulu, HI

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