

September 2008

***Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.***

Romans 15:30-32

The Apostle Paul's ministry required much of him. Because of the resistance he encountered, he cried out to his friends and supporters in Rome for earnest prayer on his behalf. Beseech means to implore or to beg for. Brethren are those of like mind and faith. He wanted believers to assault Heaven on his behalf.

This scripture is a model for us to pray for our pastors and for those who are in spiritual authority over us. I earnestly request you consider praying for me, my family, the CPM staff and Board of Directors, our volunteers, and our partners after this manner.

Right now we are experiencing some intense spiritual warfare. God is moving our ministry into a position to duplicate our success in other communities.

“...that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;...”. The words ‘strive together’ are powerful in meaning. I am asking you to be my partner. I need you to make great effort in prayers for me. I am asking you to enter into intense agony for me, my helpers, and for those we serve. We are contending with a real enemy who wants to destroy our team.

I will draw much strength knowing you are praying for us. This fight is intense and righteous intercessors are desperately needed.

Jesus, Himself, asked Peter, James, and John to pray with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Just as Jesus and Paul requested prayer, so do I as I shepherd the staff, the volunteers, and the program participants.

At a recent ex-offender reentry conference in New Bern, NC, I met Joseph Williams. He is an ex-offender God is using nationwide to impact prisoner reentry efforts. He stated “This year, two significant events related to prisoner reentry have occurred. The first was the release of the Pew Center for the States’, One in One Hundred: Behind Bars in America 2008 Report. This report paints an extremely dim picture of the prison system in this county. According to the report, for the first time in history, one in one hundred Americans are behind bars. For African Americans the incarceration numbers are dimmer still. While one in 30 men between the ages of 20 and 34 are behind bars, for black males in that age group the figure is one in nine.

The second event was President Bush’s signing of the Second Chance Act on April 9th. I was blessed to be present at the White House for the signing of this historic and potentially pivotal piece of the legislation. According to a statement released from the White House, the Second Chance Act (H.R. 1593) will help transform lives and build safer communities by helping prisoners who are returning to society break cycles of crime and start new lives. The legislation is designed to help prisoners effectively reintegrate into the community. Additionally, the Second Chance Act enhances drug treatment, mentoring, and transitional services for former offenders through partnerships with local correction agencies and faith-based and community organizations.

Both the Pew Report and the Second Chance Act recognize the participation of faith-based prisoner reentry organizations as being essential for success.”

I serve as the Executive Director of Covenant Prison Ministries (CPM) and our vision is to build safer communities by transforming the lives of prisoners and ex-offenders. Our communities will be much safer when losers become winners, takers become givers, and tax liabilities become tax payers and law abiding citizens. Men and women, boys and girls can change but the results are usually temporary. However, when God transforms a life the change more often becomes permanent.

In the first six months of 2008 CPM has been working to make all of it’s programs transferable through the Second Chance Re-Entry Network (SCREEN) project.

These partners include Adept, DA Office in Union County, Chemical Dependency / Court Services, Christian Woman’s Job Corp, Covenant Prison Ministries, City of Monroe HR dept., House of Pearls, Daymark Recovery Services, Federal Probation & Parole, Monroe Police Violent Crime Task Force, NC DOC community Development Office, NC DOC Office of Transition, NC DOC Probation & Parole in Union County, NC DOC Union Correctional Center Prison, NC Employment Security / Job Link, Oakland Mentoring, Operation Reach Out, South Piedmont Community College, Restoration House, Union County (UC) Sherriff and UC Jail, UC Community Shelter, UC HR, United Way office in UC, Vocational Rehab.

Please pray for us as we build safer communities by impacting lives for Jesus Christ of Nazareth. What we have been doing for 23 years will now be made transferable for others to use. Praise God for what He is doing.

Thought conditioner: Father I desire to be a prayer warrior. Holy Spirit please join with me so that I may pray the prayers my Heavenly Father desires. I want my prayers to make a difference in the lives of my pastor and spiritual leaders. Equip me to contend with the evil forces who desire nothing less than to kill, to steal, and to destroy God’s Kingdom work in my area.

Visit our website at [www.covenantprisonministries.org](http://www.covenantprisonministries.org)