

January 2, 2017



Dear Friends,

We trust this past Christmas Season has been a wonderful time of the year for you, remembering the birth of the King of the coming Kingdom of God, which could be this year. What a glorious anticipation we have as believers in Jesus Christ! Until then it's all about helping our King gather people to participate in His Eternal Kingdom.

For us one of the greatest ways to end 2016 was to be in prison again – in the Santa Rosalía State Prison, just three hours north of Loreto. 'Shoes for everyone' was the focus...

You will remember in June we shared with you that a friend who had been with us in this Prison before, bought 20 pairs of new shoes for some of the prisoners who had none – but the Director said that giving the men 'new' shoes might cause a riot, or they might be sold for drugs. So we exchanged the new ones for used ones and gave 28 men shoes...

When we got to San Diego this past summer we shared this news with Pastor Russ of the New Hope Community Church and together we devised a plan to share this need many of the men have in the Santa Rosalía prison... Over the summer this church and others, started collecting used men's tennis shoes, (along with some other shoes, sandals, and flip flops). By the end of November we had enough to plan a Special Christmas Event in the Santa Rosalía State Prison – that was last Thursday.

So I contacted Pastor Delmer in Santa Rosalía – he spent 17 years himself in this prison many years ago, and while there became a Christian... After his release he started both a church in Santa Rosalía and a ministry in the prison, and later a drug rehab center as well... We asked Pastor Delmer to join us for our Special Program last Thursday, and we also gave an invitation to a couple of other pastors who go regularly to minister in this prison. So there ended up being six of us: three Pastors, one of the Pastor's sons, and us (Lorraine and Don) to give these shoes to the inmates there...

Thursday, December 29: We filled our van with large boxes of footwear, and arrived at the Prison at 1:00 pm, then drove our van inside. We laid out all of the shoes on the tables in their dining room, (a concrete walled room, with chain link windows, concrete tables and concrete chairs). The guards brought in three groups of inmates – about 60 in each group. One of the men in the prison that we have come to know well, (who also has become a Christian while in this prison), speaks Spanish and English so he translated for me. We cannot 'preach' when all of the inmates are required to come to such events, however we can do so at smaller meetings when attendance is optional., but last Thursday every inmate in the Prison was required to attend...

So last Thursday afternoon I gave 'An Historical Presentation' entitled 'The Origin of Christmas & Why We Celebrate Christmas Today'. It began as follows: "Every holiday we celebrate is because something great happened in the past that has given us wonderful benefits today. The holiday of Christmas has come about because of this same thing..." I continued, "The story goes like this: everything started with God creating a 'perfect' world, then the first two people in the world listened to the Devil and so disobeyed God – this was the beginning of all the problems in the world that we have even today..."

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But then I said, "In this historical account to the meaning of Christmas, God said that He would one day change everything so that there would again be a 'perfect' new world. This new world would not have many countries in it, but instead there would be only one Kingdom – and because it would be a 'perfect' Kingdom, it would be called 'The Kingdom of God' – because God is 'perfect'; and of course there would be a 'perfect' King... Well one day this new King was born, and He announced to us that His new and perfect Kingdom was beginning. In His Kingdom there would be people of course, so He would next go about choosing who would be the participants in His Kingdom – to have a reservation to be a participant in His Kingdom all one had to do is believe that this story is true... Well the King would then leave the world for a time while people from all around the world and over many periods of time would choose to become participants in the new Kingdom of God. Then when as many people as the King wanted had made their decision to become participants in His new Kingdom, He would return to the earth – at which time there would then be a big war involving all the countries in the world. This Great New King would win that World War, and then His new 'Kingdom of God' would begin – and it would be an Eternal Kingdom, without end... Well, this is the origin of the 'Christmas Holiday' that we celebrate today – the King was born; His name was Jesus Christ; angels announced His birth and sang songs; and men from the east brought gifts to the New King. So today we sing carols and we give gifts, because of what happened just over 2,000 years ago."

I continued pointing at the tables, "these shoes are gifts for you today because people love you... But to have a pair of shoes you need to take a pair and then say 'thank you'. You may decide to leave your gift on the table – that is your choice... The same is true about this story of Christmas, only those who choose to participate in the Kingdom of God, and say 'thank you to Jesus' will receive their reservation to be included in His Eternal Kingdom. God loves you and wants you to be included in His Eternal Kingdom; you can read about it in that little blue book over there – if you'd like one then Delmer will be glad to give you a one, (a Gospel of John) – just say, 'please and thank you', and it's yours..."

The other Pastors gave a short greeting, helped giving out the shoes, etc... It was a Wonderful Day, to be in prison again..., encouraging these men to understand a little more about the love of Jesus and the message of salvation...! Making the most of every opportunity, and giving the message to these men several times, (and doing so in various ways), is what it takes. And praise the Lord, some of these men are becoming believers – becoming our brothers..., and becoming participants in the Kingdom of God! For sure, it was wonderful to be in prison again, last Thursday...

A special "Thank You!" to all of you who gave shoes, prayed for us, and have financially supported the various ministries we're involved in. If you'd like to help us do this again next Christmas, please send used men's tennis shoes, (any time before October 31), to Mexican Medical Ministries (Attn: Don & Lorraine Karsgaard). Again, "Thank you. May God bless you..."

*Don & Lorraine*

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