



"An Inside Look"

Our Father's Persistent Love Ministries, Inc. • P.O. Box 871, Oakhurst, New Jersey 07755

A Prison Ministry

Spring 2012

"New Eyes"

Hi, my name is Jefferson Cepeda and I am from Colombia. Even though my life was not so hectic, I would like to share a little bit of my testimony about Jesus Christ with you.

Before I knew the ways of God, I thought I was living a tranquil life. I was raised in a family where I was taught good manners and habits, away from drugs and alcohol. Even though I used drugs, I did not like them. I had some friends and family members who were involved in drugs so I dabbled and dabbed.

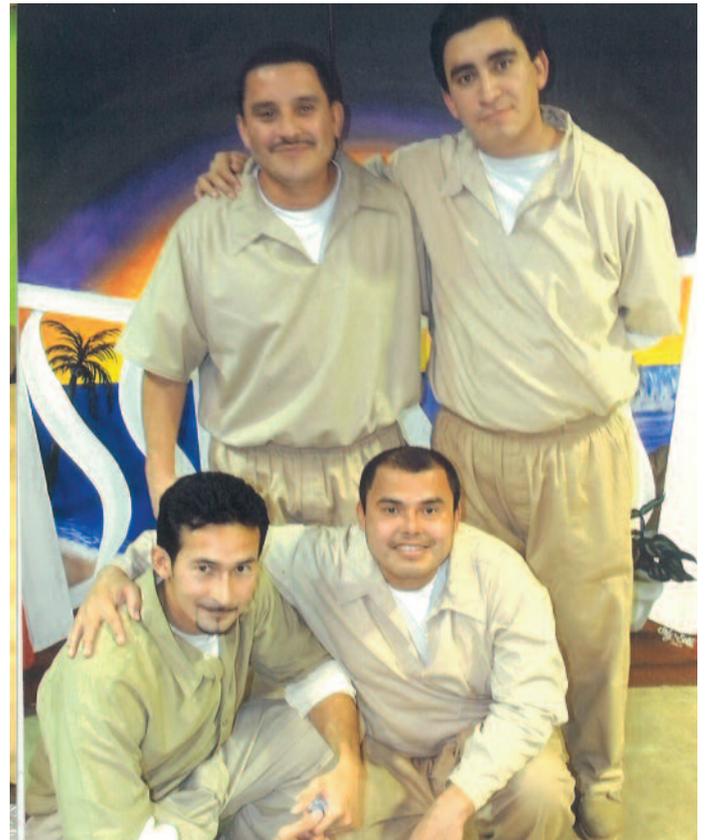
Because of my mother's teaching that the streets did not bring or offer anything good, I was a person who liked to stay at home. I was raised as a person who people would say wouldn't ever harmed anyone. I thought I was a man with a good heart who loved to help others. The truth is, I was blind!

When I gave my life to Christ, I realized that I was doing things that I should not have been doing, such as lying and not keeping my promises. I stole from my parents; I even coveted what belonged to my neighbors.

When I arrived in this country, I began to work. I had a beautiful family. I had my own business in the construction industry, but not everything went the way I wanted. One night, like any other night, in a simple discussion that got out of control, something happened that I thought could have never happened. I hurt two very important people in my life whom I loved with all my heart. I also hurt other people emotionally.

Now I find myself in here, serving time. Even though it might sound crazy, I want to do this time because I deserve it. Due to the harm I've done, I have left a little one without a mother and a father. That little one is my daughter, who I miss with all my heart, but I have the faith and hope in God that one day I will see her again.

I give thanks to my Lord Jesus Christ, who rescued me and opened my eyes to make me see that I was living a worldly



Jefferson Cepeda (back right) with Christian Brothers

life which I thought was good. I am very thankful to Jesus and my Heavenly Father who gives me the strength to continue moving forward on this path I'm following. I am also thankful to God for showing me the path I am walking on now.

I have known a good family who gives much support and a marvelous church that helps so many. Even though I am going through many trials, I will not give up. I continue to labor for God, serving in the music ministry with all my heart because, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me". (Philippians 4:13)

"I once was blind, but now I see." (Jn. 9:25)

"By Grace—A Second Chance"

My name is Carlos. I am 29-years old, and I am from Guatemala. First of all, I give thanks to God for giving me this precious opportunity to share my testimony. I also want to thank this Ministry for making it possible for us to share our testimonies. God bless you all!

I was raised in a Christian family. My parents taught me good moral values and the straight path, but when I grew up I made my own destiny. Unfortunately, I choose the beaten road and did contrary to what my parents had taught me. I became rebellious and stubborn; I was unreasonable and wouldn't listen to any one.

Lost in sin, I became an alcoholic and a drug user until I ended up in the dumpster of life. I hurt many people and loved ones. When I realized that I had defrauded them over and over again, anguish took a hold on me; I cried bitterly. In my journey, I only found beatings, pain, anguish, and loneliness.

Even when I was living in sin, the Lord rescued me from many dangers. I had fallen into many difficult situations but never into the one like I'm in now. I fled from the Lord for many years. Christ had tried to call me many times, but I didn't listen. When I found myself behind four walls, I thought that my life had ended and my mind became troubled. I thought that God would forget me.

Then, I remembered what my parents had taught me...God is merciful and compassionate, just as His Word says, "When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them" (Deut. 4:30-31).

Falling to my knees in my cell, I asked God for forgiveness. In my prayer I said, "Lord Jehovah, forgive my sins. Have mercy on me and rescue me. I am tired of living my own way. I need You today!" The Lord heard my prayer, and He sent one of His servants to talk to me about His Word. When I accepted Jesus as my only and sufficient Savior; He forgave me.



Carlos Bolvito (center) with brothers

Now I'm serving Him with all my heart. This has been the best decision I have made in my entire life. God has opened up my eyes, and I have recognized the severity of my sins, of which I am ashamed. I give God the honor and glory for rescuing me and for giving me a second chance. Though I'm locked up in the flesh, I'm spiritually free! Even if I'm not with my family, I know that I am not alone because God is with me. He is the One who guides my steps every day.

God has also blessed me tremendously. He put me in a place where there's a beautiful family of brothers who love and serve Him. I am a member of the choir in the Spanish community. I thank Christ for the sacrifice He did on the cross for me.

My dear friend I just want you to know that God loves you and only He can change your life and blot out your sins. His Word says, "'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool'" (Is. 1:18). Do not wait until tomorrow or until you come to prison. Seek the LORD today! It is written, "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near" (Is. 55:6). Then you'll find out and know the difference between serving God and the world...the difference between the right path and the wrong path. Only in Christ can you live assured.

"The Calling Of An Evangelist"

My name is Arron H. Velez. I am a 33-year-old Puerto Rican, and by God's grace, I am still alive!

As we all were before Jesus Christ saved us, I was lost. I went astray and was immersed in a world of drugs and gangs. Even though I feared God, I never gave Him access to my heart.

Before coming to the U.S., I was imprisoned in Puerto Rico for 7 years. I was introduced to the second biggest jailhouse gang on the Island, of which, I earned the trust of the leaders. Where there was no voice of leadership, I was going to have a voice. I was an immature man, yet I was the head of over a thousand men. I used to recruit men of all ages. I lived unjustly and did many things against my will; this was all done for what "gangs" call LOYALTY.

As soon as I got out of jail, with suitcases in hand and the same bad habits inside them, I set course to the United States. I came to New Jersey in 2007 seeking a better life. Not much time went by before I began to behave badly again. I decided to go to church with a young woman by the name of Cynthia. I desired to marry her, but instead of me submitting to God, I fell into bondage to drugs. But God says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Friends, God already had plans for this soul who was about to perish. On November 4, 2008, I committed 1st degree robbery and was sentenced to 12 years. At that time, it hurt me because everyone forgot about me, but God made me see my own faults. I understood the scripture from Lamentations 3:22-23, "Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." Amen!

Today I am alive! I still have the support of my family in Puerto Rico. I am free of drugs and gangs. Today my leader is Christ who gave His life for me. Not one of those who used to give me guns and drugs could lift me up, but the One who died to reconcile me to Himself was raised up to guarantee me eternal life. While friends abandoned me, God told me, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One Who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). While my thoughts were negative towards everybody, God has planted in my heart, "...You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39b).



Arrón Velez

In the past, I did not care about anyone's spiritual condition, but now by the love of God, I recruit souls for Christ with these beautiful words, "...Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned."(Mark 16:15-16)

Friend, I give thanks to God who saved me! Even though I'm locked up, I'm free in Jesus because of this promise, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Today I live in confidence and I am active in the ministry at East Jersey State Prison and receive much support from our beautiful family in the faith. Day by day I am discovering the gifts that God has placed in me. Also, even though my voice is not the most beautiful amongst the brothers, I sing in an awesome choir with gratitude for my salvation.

God has blessed me and restored me back to my family in Puerto Rico. He has blessed me with a great earthly family (the Sanchez's) and more so the heavenly family of Jesus' servants. Therefore, if you have not taken that step, do not delay any longer because you are in great danger without Jesus as your Lord and Savior. With these words, I exhort you to unite yourself to the Royal family of my Jesus. (Isaiah 54: 6-7) Amen!

"I am the way, the truth, and the life..."

"Jesus---The Only Way!"

My name is David Bueso, and I am 34-years old. I'm from Honduras, and have been locked up for 3 years. I am also the father of 3 children who still live in Honduras.

I come from a humble, yet strong and united family. I grew up under the watchful eye of my parents along with my 3 sisters. We were raised strict with good morals and the fear of God. Nine years ago, I decided to come to the U.S. with the sole purpose to give my children a better future. I was just going to be here for two years.

As soon as I arrived, God blessed me with a great job in construction. I learned the trade well, and I began to make good money. I sent some money to my parents and to my wife for the education and betterment of my children.

When I had been here for two years, I received a phone call from Honduras. It was my mother, telling me that my wife had left me for another man. After this, I began to visit bars and nightclubs, wasting money on alcohol and women.

One day, I got tired of living this life. I met a woman by the name Martha, and I decided to settle down. Through her, I began hanging around with people who appeared to be as good as Martha. I wasn't wise in choosing my relations, therefore, I got locked up.

In prison, I accepted the Lord. I took for granted that because I had a high paying lawyer I would win my case. I trusted that the Lord would give me the victory, but I also had half of my trust in my lawyer. Just as I had my trust divided in two places, so it happened in my case. I had six charges, and I won 3 and lost 3.

I was sentenced to 15-years (with 85%). After sentencing, I was devastated, with no strength to continue on. I asked God to help me understand why everything went the way it did. In that moment I needed to talk to someone, so I tried to speak to Martha, but she would never accept my calls. The last day I saw her was when I got sentenced and that hurt me. I did not understand why she was acting like that.

Crying on my knees, I asked the Lord to send His angels to comfort me. I was expecting to see supernatural beings flying around in my cell. One day, an officer told me to get ready because I had a visit although I wasn't expecting anybody! When I went on my visit, I did not recognize anyone. Suddenly, a couple waved at me and asked me if my name was David. They said someone told them that I was struggling and that's why they had come. I began to cry, as I thanked the Lord for sending His angels just as I had prayed. (Heb.13:2)

This couple was involved in prison ministry. Through them, the Lord opened up my eyes to many things. He showed me why He separated me from Martha, who I worshipped and from my old friends.

I thank God for putting me in this place at the right time. Now that I have the Lord in my heart, I am a new man. I don't feel like I'm locked up, but that I am in a place of restoration. The day that I am ready to go out, the Lord will open the doors of this place. Always remember never to put people or things before God, He should always have first place because God is a jealous God. (Ex. 24:14)



David (center) with family

"...no one comes to the Father but through Me." (Jn.14:6)

"A New Start!"

Hello, my name is Jose. I can't remember how I got into many of the situations that I've put myself into. I have had many life changing experiences, but I do remember the painful mess I have left behind. Many lives were affected by my poor judgment, rebellious ways, and self-destructive way of living.

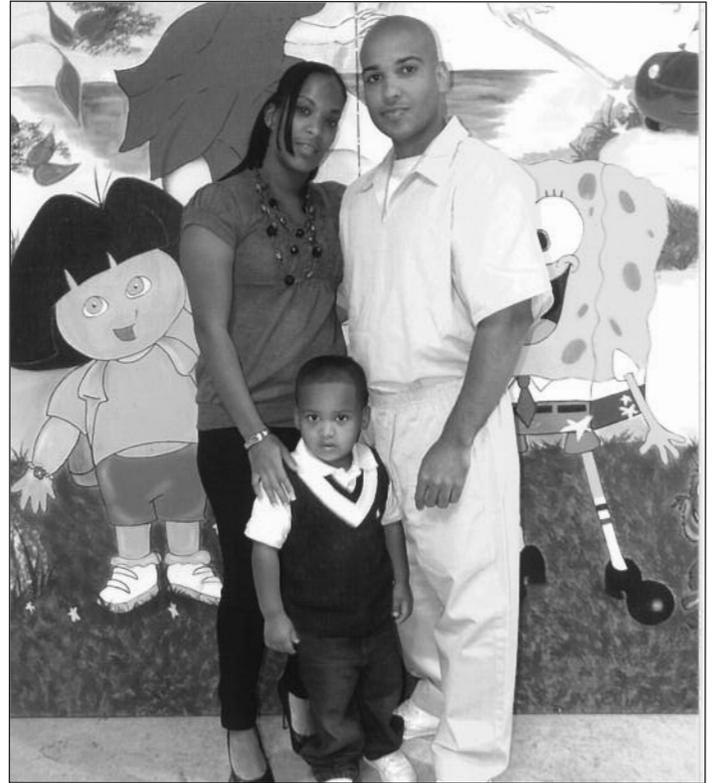
It all began with a broken home which included no attention, no affection, no support, betrayal, always being blamed for being a father's son, and ultimately cast out. My life was filled with disappointments, discontentment, resentment, confusion, failures and eventually imprisonment which seemed to be all the right materials in building a weak foundation. I found myself hurting all those who wanted to love me because of the mistrust that was built up in me. That sent me to search for answers in all the wrong places.

I can honestly say that we can go through all the bad experiences of life and still know right from wrong. We can accomplish good things and put ourselves in positions of great opportunity, and still choose to live unwisely in misery and darkness. When I was a teenager I ended up moving to New Jersey and as many young people, I was just looking for direction while finding none. I really just wanted to fit in.

I started selling drugs and living in a disorderly manner, after all, I didn't have any parental supervision. There was something in me though that didn't allow me to be content with that lifestyle, so I kept going to school until I graduated. I had a couple of scholarship proposals but I decided to go into the military instead. I figured that if any conflict should happen I would die a hero and not a failure. I hated my life, but I did not have the courage to end it because I knew that there was a God. I feared that I would go to hell if there was one, but nevertheless, I wanted my life to end.

I got involved in a life where there's no loyalty, no love and no friends. I was always looking over my shoulder and running fast even though I wasn't being pursued. My ways got me trapped and deceived into thinking there was no way out. I finally took the life of someone close to me. No matter the reasons, I killed a man and it was all my fault. I lived a life that put my loved ones in a position where I had to protect them from harm, hurt, and danger. I risked my life doing it, and now I'm paying the price for living a sinful life. Now I'm missing out on all the things I used to take for granted.

But by the grace of God, the Lord reached out to me in that midnight hour of my life! He pulled me out of the quicksand of sin that I was spiritually in. I ended up in solitary confinement; there I had an encounter with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I surrendered my life to Jesus in that lonely cell in December of 2007. Since then I have not looked back. I am determined to keep on going in this difficult race with my eyes on the prize. What men meant for bad, God meant for good! God has blessed me with a close relationship with Himself and also with my family and loved ones. Through my testimony, they are being saved. Now the Lord has put me in a position where I can share what I have learned by His grace. He put me in ministry to give Him glory and honor. When I was in the world, I swore allegiance to men that betrayed and let me down, but now I have pledged alliance to the Creator of the universe! The One, who instead of taking my life, gave me His life at Calvary! I now have life, and that, more abundantly. Yes, I may be behind bars now, but I am spiritually free which is something I never experienced when I was in the world. Now I have a new hope for the future in Christ Jesus, and a family that is giving all their emotional, spiritual, and moral support, and are waiting for me with open arms just like my Lord Jesus did when I was dead in my trespasses and sins.



José with wife and son

"A New Hope!"

My name is Jose N. Bonilla. I was born and raised in a humble household and family in a ghetto called Pueblo Nuevo, El Salvador.

My childhood was very tough. I went through many attacks by Satan. At 8 years old I lost my father. It was a very devastating time for me, but I had to continue fighting for my brothers and Mom. My mother was a very strong person during that time of sorrow. With the little bit she had, she always made a way for us to keep pushing forward.

As time went on, my older brother went to the United States and with the little bit of money he had, he would help us. Just like that we were growing up, and at 17 years old, I remember telling my mom that I wanted to go to the USA. It was agreed upon with my brother and sister who were already living here. So arrangements were made for me to come. I am very thankful to them all. My sister has been like a parent to me.

Once I was in the USA the attacks of Satan began--the same attacks that tormented me for a long time in my country. The greatest attack of the enemy was for me to take my own life...I wasn't worth anything. I went through this for quite a long time to the point that I was in an insane asylum in the town of Mt. Holly, New Jersey. I was there for treatment.

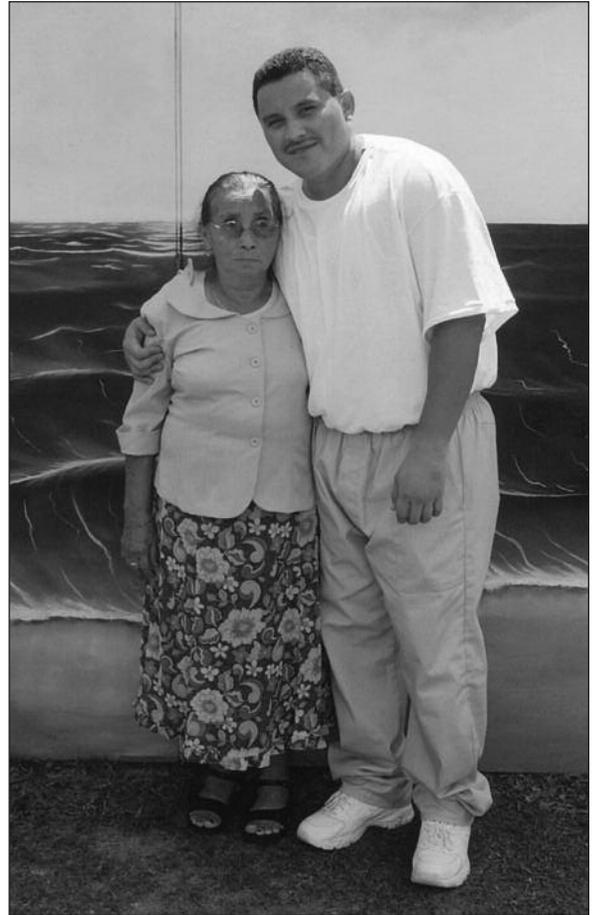
I want to tell you something very important that happened in my life. One day as I was working, there was this certain "brother" who was listening to a worship song on a radio. The title of it was "What would've become of Me?" Right in that moment God began to work in my life; I understood the love of God towards me.

John 3:16-18 speaks very clearly that God loves us so much that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Also, the Word speaks that God sent His Son into the world to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10).

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, our communion with God was broken. There was no more hope but God already had a plan and that plan was Jesus Christ. He came to set free all of those who were captive to sin. In John 8:32 the Bible says, "And you should know the truth and the truth should set you free." That truth is called Jesus Christ. He came to set us free from the prison of sin! Are you in the prison of sin?

The Psalmist said, "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Your name..." (Psalm 142:7). When someone is living in sin, he or she cannot praise God. The very same sin holds you captive and it does not let you worship God. But God, Who is rich in mercy, has forgiven us from our sins (Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13), and because of that forgiveness I can now say that I am free (John 3:36). Even though I am in prison paying a sentence of 12 years, I am free in Jesus Christ.

This is just a small part of my testimony. Now I would like to make the invitation for you to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Invite Him to enter your heart (Revelation 3:20). Tell Him, "Lord Jesus, I want you to enter my heart and make me yours. Write my name in your book of Life. Amen!"



José N. Bonilla with mother

"I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Matt. 25:36b)

"Philip's Heart"

As always, I greet you in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want to thank the Lord for another opportunity to speak on behalf of the men in this 2012 spring issue of the "Inside Look".

It is written, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

That word "nations" means ethnic group. So, the command in modern vernacular is "Go and share Christ with every ethnic group!"

Later in Revelation 7, we see the finished product of the Lord's command to go. We see "a great multitude, which no man could number, from all nations..." We see the future as God is glorified in Heaven, and His unity is expressed through diversity in Christ Jesus the Lord!

Today, I present to you the "Hispanic Brethren" from our community here at Rahway State Prison. These are very faithful men of God that serve heart-to-heart with Carlos Turis, the son of my heart. Carlos was the one who put all these testimonies together and did all the work involved.

For the last fourteen years, I have poured into Carlos all that I am in Christ. I have watched him become a man of God, even a servant of whom I am most proud. The Lord is calling him to Pastor and preach, but he is having difficulty accepting his call. Many of you know him well, so please pray with me that Carlos would embrace all that the Lord would yet do through him. It is written, "For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable." (Rm. 11:29)

Join with me in prayer for all these brothers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Joyfully in Jesus,

Philip



Carlos (left) & Philip (back left) on a ministry visit



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"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners." (Heb.13:3)



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“Mission Purpose”

Our Father's Persistent Love Ministries, Inc.
is a non-profit organization whose goal is to achieve
reconciliation in the lives of incarcerated men and women.

We believe, according to this scripture verse, that

**“If anyone is in Christ,
He is a new creation, the old has gone and the
new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled
us to himself through Christ and gave us the
ministry of reconciliation.” - II Corth. 5:17, 18**

*Reconciliation in the lives of incarcerated men and women;
first with God through Christ , second with their families, and third with society . . .*

Statement of Faith Available
