



"An Inside Look"

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

A Prison Ministry

Fall 2014

"On the Outside Looking In"

My name is Jimmie Lee Whitfield. I am a 40 year old native from Atlantic City, New Jersey. I was raised in a single parent household with my two sisters. My step-father died in 1988, and I grew instantly angry at life! Before he died, I grew up in a structured family home where the kids went to school, parents went to work, and love was always shared. I played sports and excelled in all of them. I credit my athletic life-style to my drug use and out-going personality.

When my step-dad died, I had a lot of expectations for myself and others. This drove me to want to be accepted by everyone. I started selling drugs in 1988 to support my family. I went to prison in 1993 and got released in 1995. After returning home from those two years in prison, my life had changed and somehow I became my best customer. My whole life became engulfed in drugs and the criminal lifestyle.

On July 17, 1997 I met a young lady who I eventually married and had a beautiful daughter with. Gwendolyn Davis, my wife's mother, immediately sensed my drug addiction and shared with me the love of Jesus Christ. Since I met her my life has not been the same. She gave me the first scripture God used towards my healing in His grace from II Cor. 5:17. On April 6, 1998 I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart as my Lord and Savior. Right now though, I'm sitting here in Rahway State Prison allowing God to purge me from my past life. (Phil. 1:6) I have been very disobedient since I asked Jesus to save me and am currently serving a lengthy sentence for attempted murder stemming from a drug related life-style!

Glory be to God for His love, grace, and mercy on my soul. Jesus loved me and loves me even while I was yet a sinner!

Today, I am living life in this prison totally dependant on Jesus Christ to supply my needs according to His riches in glory. Even though I'm a sinner by design, my desire today is not to sin, but to be obedient to Christ Jesus. As I continue to walk in faith, I rebuke the strongholds of the devil and I claim and speak victory into my life right now: "devil loose my family; because they are mine and I want them back." May the Lord bless you also...



"...If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

"Working for Christ"

Hello, my name is Kevin Maxwell Andrews, and I am not who I used to be! I grew-up in a family of 7. My mother passed away in 1979 when I was 11 years old, so my aunt and uncle became my legal guardians. I'm the oldest of 5 children. Being the oldest, I was always trying to be like an elder. Before my mother passed I had responsibilities like an elder such as, watching the kids, cooking, shopping, house cleaning, and working. I got my first job in 1975 when I was 7 years old; working for Cullucci Construction Company cleaning up.

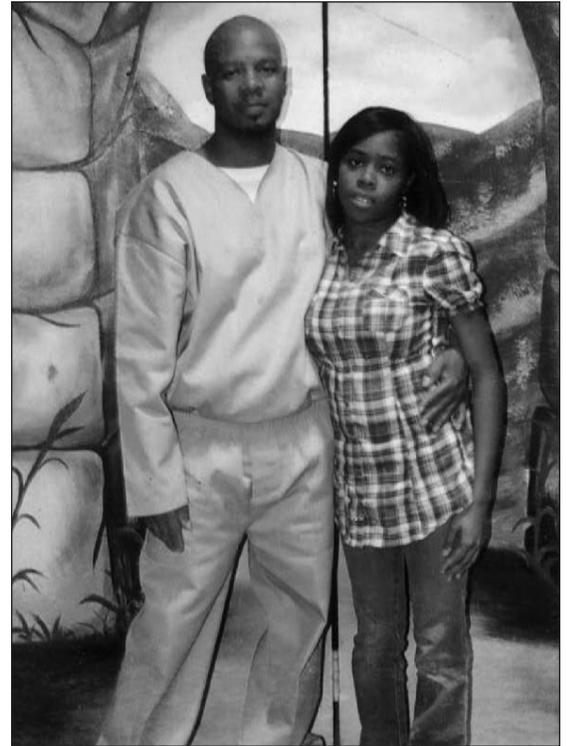
I was making \$8.00 dollars an hour under the table, and working with my uncle and the other men at this job which made me feel like a man. I was given a little beer at times that only set me up for what was to come. I would often sneak and drink beer on my own. When my mother passed away, my uncle got me a job working for Mr. McGowan. At age 11, I had a part time job during the school season, and then full time during summer break.

I liked school but going to work was my preference. I felt like a man when I was at work. I was taught how to drive just about everything by age 11; cars, trucks, bob-cats, dump trucks, tractors and learned how to even work power tools, both hand-powered and heavy duty. By age 16, I was down with the elders big time. I was now drinking beer like I was an elder. I guess I was trying to be grown up before I was really grown. I never had a spiritual life. Material things and people were my God. I worked to please myself and to buy material things, alcohol and drugs. In 1990, my daughter Lavonia was born and I was a full blown addict, hooked on crack cocaine. I ended up in jail in 1997 for drug possession. In the Union County Jail in September 1997, I attended a church service to get out of my cell. Listening to the preacher sounded interesting. I attended N/A & AA meetings. These were more interesting and I was able to relate.

It was at one of the church services that my heart was opened to Jesus. I'm 29 years old now with a new view on life. I'm saved! I was now attending church regularly and praying. I was clean and sober while living a healthy life style. In 1998 I was given custody of my daughter Lavonia. I was also given my position back at the company, New Jersey Hardwoods, and had keys to my own place to stay. My life was routine; work, meetings (AA), Lavonia, church—work, meetings, Lavonia, church. I felt like I was the man.

I went from being a drug addict and sleeping on the streets, to having my own place and raising Lavonia. Money was made at will with my job at the woodshop, and the multiple talents in the field. I felt on top of the world. Yes I was saved, but I thought that was all there was to it. Just accept Jesus, then go own with your life. Oh, how wrong I was! Truthfully, I was a lonely man and I worked to fill that void. Prayer, meetings and church became a burden. I felt work was more important. I now became in desperate need for a companion in my life. I wanted a wife. For nearly 7 years I was in and out of relationships and jail. I was married for 4 years from 2002 through 2006. I knew God was the answer to all of my struggles, but I chose work instead to find my peace and comfort.

My life then spiraled out of control again and I became a full blown addict again. In 2007, I committed a serious crime of attempted murder while trying to support my drug habit. In August 2008 I was sent to East Jersey State Prison to serve an 18 year sentence. I now have plenty of time to reflect on my past, work on my present, and prepare for my future. All my life I was free to do just about anything I wanted, and I did just that.. I was free yet locked-up within myself. Now I have the relationship I always needed. A relationship with Christ! I'm locked-up, but yet free. The ministry here has really been a blessing and I thank God for everyone!



Kevin with his daughter Lavonia

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation..."

"What A Great Miracle!"

Hi, my name is Alexander Lara. I want to share with you the testimony of my life. I grew up in a Christian church and was baptized at the age of twelve. I stayed in church until I turned 18 and up to that time I had been devoted to Christianity. I then started to depart from God's path. Since that happened I started to live a wild life without the Lord. I was drinking, fornicating, and living in complete disobedience to God.

At the age of 24, I migrated from my native country, the Dominican Republic, to the United States. The whole time I was living apart from God, but He was still calling me back. The Lord used other Christian brothers to invite me to church but I kept running from Him. Two months before I got arrested, God wanted to save me from prison and He sent a few people to me again who invited me to church. I started to attend the services and did so for about three weeks and then I stopped. On 5-31-2014 I got arrested.

This experience made me change my life. I have repented of what I have done and asked the Lord for His forgiveness and help. After about two weeks of being in jail, on a Sunday morning, the officer called out church services. I decided not to go and to stay in my cell. When the inmates came back from church, one of them gave me a Bible without me even asking. That very same day I began to read that Book again for the first time in ten years

Since I had departed from God in the year 2000, I hadn't read the Bible again until 2010 while in jail. The same week that I began to read the Bible, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ afresh and confessed Him as my Lord and Savior. I was developing a relationship with God that was making me feel like never before. I was reading the Bible everyday and praying constantly. I made God the center of my life and He became the most important thing to me. I was joyful because God forgave me of all my sins and gave me a new life. Even though I was physically locked-up, I knew I was spiritually free because Jesus Christ had made me free!

I had become the new creature that the Bible speaks of, "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Cor. 5:17) I then started to remember all the old songs that I used to sing in church when I was young and I began to sing them in my cell. About three months later, I was already obeying Jesus' commission that He told his disciples; "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things that I had commanded you." (Mt. 28:19-20) That was really a blessing from Heaven. The Lord was already working in my life using me to spread His word to the needy in jail. The State then sent me to Rahway Prison. Here I am doing my time with Christ. I am joyful because there's a big Chapel here where I can go to worship the Lord and fellowship with my brothers. I joined the choir also. Please pray for me that God will help me win the spiritual battles in my life!



...Behold, the old has gone and the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17)

"Once Lost—Now Found!"

Greetings beloved! My name is Jerry Ramos. When I was a child my family moved from New York to New Jersey. At the age of 12 I started stealing and using drugs. Shortly after that I became a car thief. I felt unstoppable until one day something told me not to go out. I then got arrested and put in jail for 6 months and came to the realization that the Lord was seeking after me. Salvation was mine now, but soon after my release date, I forgot all about Jesus. I soon moved back to NY and while there I got into worse crimes and drugs and found myself more lost than before. A friend of mine took me to Brooklyn Tabernacle Church and I attended there for 2 years. After getting married, we both moved back to NJ again, only to forget about our Savior.

Satan then took hold of my weaknesses to wreck my marriage. I had gone astray and was lost. (1 Peter 2:25) In 2006 I took a life and then tried to take my own and ended up getting 23 years in prison. Now I'm here in Rahway where I study God's Word everyday. For 4 years now I have been taught by Bro. Philip the milk and meat of God's Word. I also sing in both choirs, the Spanish and English, in our "Church of the Reconciled." When the Chapel doors are opened, I'm there because I love God's house along with my brothers who are the Body of Christ. Praise and prayer are now an essential part of my life and devotion to my Risen Savior.



Jerry with his parents

The meat of God's Word is my treasure and delight that satisfies me more than the lusts of the world. All my losses are garbage to me compared to the eternal things of Heaven. I now have joy, happiness, love, peace, liberty and salvation, I have been cleansed by Christ's blood! The best thing of all is that my past sins are buried in the bottom of the sea never to be remembered again by my God. Oh! My name is in the Book of Life in Heaven too! One day I will eat of the Tree of Life and see God as He is.

My biggest mistake after being saved was not to read the Bible. I've learned to never neglect God's Word ever again. Luke 15:4-10 says that, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents". That was me! For all that Satan has taken away from me, and now being divorced, I see being married to Christ is a far more satisfying life. I'm living the best years of my life. No matter my circumstances, I have become a servant of the Most High God Abba Father, and my Savior Jesus Christ, beats the darkness away that surrounds me.

The best choice I have ever made was to stop living for me and turn my whole life over to God. It is my delight to do God's will and to please Him! I'm not perfected yet, but I'm a work in progress. God didn't promise a perfect life without trials and temptations or pain and sicknesses, but He will pardon us when we repent of our sins. Perfection comes when Jesus takes us up in the clouds and transforms us just like Himself.

Beloved friend, seek the Lord while He may be found and call on Him while He is near. Tomorrow isn't promised to anyone and it may be too late. Jesus is now knocking on the door of your heart. Let Him in and repent of your sins and be saved. Jesus will forgive you of all your sin and give you the best gift ever, to live eternally with God in Heaven. Halleluyah!!! Make that choice today my friend.

"For it is by grace that you are saved..."

"Grace and Freedom"

Hello, my name is Tourrie Moses. It is written, "And Ezra said: O My God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to you, My God: for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens...and now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape...that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. For we were slaves, yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but he extended mercy to us..." (Ezra 9:6-9).

Which of us has not run from the Lord in some way? I did not grow up in a devoutly religious family, but I knew about God. When you're born into circumstances that have nothing to do with you, you're tempted to wonder if the knowledge of God even matters. My mom was a drug addict and my dad was in prison. God didn't seem interested in my circumstances, or so it seemed. With that attitude and no matter how many promptings, I chose not to interest myself with God. I made my own decisions even though He would put things in my life to "enlighten my eyes."

At thirteen, I joined a gang. As a direct result of that, six years later, I ended up in prison. I had no hope since I was thirteen. So when I heard a special person tell me to read the Bible and pray, it made me think that maybe hope could be found there. Life can be difficult and confusing sometimes, but when I opened up that Bible "with intent", I began to see that life didn't have to be that way—even in prison.

I got on my knees just wanting to talk to the Lord I had neglected for so long. Due to my past, I began to feel that I had no business coming to Him. I just wanted to give up, but at that very moment, He revived me and I was introduced to grace, the Lord Himself!

Since that experience of grace, I began to change as a person. Through Christ, I now live free. He blessed "even me" with the ability and opportunity to serve his people and with my service I give Him Glory. The Lord became the parents I needed and His mercy has brought me through the darkest times that incarceration has to offer. It is not always a smooth lifestyle that I have lived, but remaining faithful to Him is truly what makes me happy; He puts me at my best. One of the most important things to me is the opportunity to share what I know about the Lord to my family so that they too can be at their best. I want them to also experience true freedom in life through grace.

I spent a lot of my life depending on myself, but the Lord asks for our burdens and by handing them over to him, He has saved me from a lot of pain. I went from thinking He wasn't interested in me to knowing that He loves me and cares about my life (no matter what). You can find the word "Gift" many places in the New Testament and the fact is that God has given each of us one gift in particular. Why not put away the empty boxes we continue to receive from people, places, and things; and open up what the Lord offers? What He gave to someone like me was truly amazing, and I hope that everyone else will receive their gifts too. Blessings to you!



Tourrie reunited with his Mom!

...it is the gift of God, not by works..." (Eph. 2:8-9)

"Gratefully Redeemed"

May the Lord bless you and be glorified in this testimony that is my life. My name is Nelson Gonzalez Jr. and I've been in prison since the age of 17, due to a murder conviction. For many years I've walked with the burden of guilt; a constant reminder of the pain I have caused.

For a long time, I believed that redemption was beyond my reach. In prison, I was at the beginning of a 20 year sentence in a foreign world where fear was both unwelcome and most present. Showing fear meant that you were weak, and thus, preyed upon. The truth is I needed prayed for and not preyed on. Even the predators of this world are themselves afraid. They just mask it with a facade of indifference toward life. I quickly adapted and decided that I would hide away everything that could be seen as a weakness. My distorted perceptions of weak and strong led me to portray an image of violence and carelessness. This mind-set eventually led me to 6 years of 24/7 lock-down at a Northern State Prison Segregation Unit.



Nelson with his sister and Mom

During that time there came a point, while evaluating my life, that I thought to myself, "Is this all my life is?" Not long after that the Lord's love was revealed to me through Joseph Prince Ministries on T.V. This ministry of grace was poured into my heart, and I needed every bit of it. I followed Pastor Prince in prayer and accepted Christ into my heart. I begged Him to hear me, to accept me...to forgive me. (Jer. 33:3)

In hindsight, I see clearly and appreciate God's constant presence in my life (Heb. 13:5). Also, how He allowed me to get to such a low point that I had no place to look but up to Him (Jer. 24:67). I still had to shed my old habits though, but I was becoming more and more Christ conscious.

The Lord used wonderful people to slowly mold me into a vessel prepared to accept and execute His will. Through my experience with them, God has allowed me to understand Himself better. Through my fiancée and her daughters (whom I love as my own), and all the ups and downs of our relationships, God has given me a clearer understanding of His own love for me. I thank my friends Jan and Calvin, whose ministries and friendship have helped me through so much. Dr. Gabriel also, who the Lord used to help me face my past, understand it, and realize that it neither defines my future nor dictates who I am. I am grateful too for Rob and Anthony, who guided me through many of the hard Lessons of becoming a good leader. Finally, I thank Pastor Akins, Sammy, Philip and so many other brothers here in the "Church of the Reconciled." God's will for me was revealed through the hardest decision I've ever had to make, and that was leaving the affiliation I've loved and lived for so many years. While sparing the details, I will express that it was a simple truth revealed through Rev. Thompson that opened my eyes, "There is good and there is God." Being a "good person" with good intentions just wasn't "good" enough. God's will is a higher calling than my good will. (Phil. 4:13)

So despite whatever persecution I would face I declared my heart and life to Christ without reservations. I am not a changed man but a new man in Christ. (Rom. 7:6; Eph. 4:20-23) I have joined the Lord's army as we march on to victory! Glory to God!

"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 2014 Fall issue of the "Inside Look". It is written, **"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous."** (Psalm 146:8)

As always, I want to give honor to Debbie for all the loving work she does on our behalf and also for our wonderful Pastor, the Reverend Larry Akins. Under him, I watch the Lord working daily in the hearts of these men here in this prison. It never ceases to amaze me how gracious God is to sinners.

It is written, **"...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."** (Acts 17:6b)

What an awesome testimony! The gospel spreading with such love and fervency that it was thought to have turned the then world, "upside down!" Well, the Word of God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and for those who have eyes to see, the Lord is doing that very same thing here in Rahway Seminary today!

Our whole prison culture is being challenged by Truth and the move of God's Spirit. The Lord is saving men from every venue and moving in a mighty way in their hearts. Yes, men the world considers nothing but **"...lewd fellows of the baser sort..."** (Acts 17:5) I couldn't be more excited to be a part of it and I invite you to partner up with us in this move of God. The Lord always starts revival in the most unusual of places! You see, we know and admit we were sinners of the baser sort, that is the Truth and where Truth is, there is power! Believe that!

With that thought in mind I want to present to you these "saints" of the Most High God. Yes, blood-bought and washed by the Lord Jesus Christ. They are faithful men of God carrying the Banner of God's Love in the darkness of prison walls. Please join me in prayer for their growth and the restoration of their families.

Joyfully in Jesus,

Philip



*Deb, Philip, Bobby & Jane
(Philip's spiritual Mom), Ed & Marie*



**Our Father's
Persistent Love
Ministries, Inc.**

PO Box 871
Oakhurst, NJ 07755

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

*Your donation payable to OFPLM will be acknowledged with a tax deductible receipt. Please send any correspondence to the above address.

Yes! I (we) would like to participate in God's ministry of reconciliation in the following ways:

- I (we) will pray for you on a regular basis.
- I (we) will support you financially with a \$ _____ monthly gift.
- I (we) will give a one time gift of \$ _____
- I (we) can help with the Half-Way House.

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



**Our Father's
Persistent Love
Ministries, Inc.**
PO Box 871
Oakhurst, NJ 07755

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 148
LAKEWOOD, NJ 08701

“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
