



The Florida Prison Evangelist

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Off to the Cruise!

It was a mid-May morning when Christopher went to the Marion Correctional Institution to pick up our brother, Damien King. Christopher and Damien met about a year ago through another brother behind bars, James Painter. You might recall that we have written about James Painter before. He is what we would call an in-house prison minister. He is serving time and is a huge help bringing souls to Jesus, 24-7.

Damien took part in Christopher's "Christian Mentoring" group, which meets at Marion C.I. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. In addition, the pair met once a month for one-on-one counseling. Immediately upon walking out of the institution, Christopher had to take a second look, as it seemed someone was coming out of prison and heading on a cruise. Notice the pink Florida shorts and golf polo. It definitely brought smiles to both their faces. While Damien's appearance indicated he was off to the cruise, he actually was on his way to the Off the Chain transition house in Middleburg.



In Memory

Memorial Day is a time to remember the fallen heroes who served in the United States Armed Forces. Many of us get together with family and friends, filling our afternoon with grilled burgers and hot dogs. The Carters have been known to do the same with men from the transition house, and this past Memorial Day was no exception. Four of the program participants joined the Carters for some food and fellowship. While we honor those fallen for the country on this special day, let us keep in memory the one who fell for the world by living our lives in such a way to bring Him glory and honor every day!



Familiar Faces

It is always good to see a familiar face. This past May, we were visiting our brothers and sisters at the Pinellas Park and Spring Hill churches of Christ when we ran into a couple of men whom we once counseled in prison. The top picture is of Charlie Smith and Christopher at the Spring Hill congregation, where Charlie is a member. The bottom picture shows Christopher and Somphone Phosy enjoying a meal with the brethren at Pinellas Park. Christopher was surprised to see Somphone there during Bible class because even though he is a member of the body, sadly, he has forsaken the assembly. Do you think Christopher called out to the whole congregation during Bible class to encourage Somphone to keep coming back? You better believe it! Not every story is a success, but we continue to plant and water. Let's all keep Somphone in prayer for renewed faithfulness.



Prison Ministry Spotlight

Volunteers from the Lord's church who go into prison are what make this effort work. Florida houses approximately 80,000 inmates and is the third-largest prison system in the nation. The entire system comprises roughly 145 facilities, including smaller units such as annexes, work camps, and work release centers. The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) operates 50 major correctional institutions (state prisons) and 7 major private partner facilities. We simply cannot express our gratitude enough to all who are willing to serve in this capacity.

This quarter, we would like to introduce you to our newest volunteer, Pete Sziklai.

Pete lives in Ocala, Florida, and is a member of the Maricamp Road church of Christ, where he has worshipped faithfully since 1998. We first met Pete in 2025 while presenting reports on the prison ministry work. It is all too common for Christopher to ask for volunteers as he travels across Florida seeking to get more people involved. It is always such a delight when a brother or sister answers that call.

Pete says, "After Christopher visited, I went to the Lord in prayer. I became convinced that this was a ministry in which I could serve the Lord and the men in prison. After the lengthy application process, I became a volunteer in the Florida prison system. Since I began studying the Bible with these men, I have found that they are very positive and serious Bible students. It humbles me to think that I am playing a small part in helping these men draw closer to God in preparation for their return to society. I am blessed to be a part of this ministry." We feel the same way, Pete. We are thankful for your heart to serve.

After spending a few months shadowing Christopher and on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at Marion C.I., Pete will now go in solo on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at Marion C.I. Please keep Pete and all who serve in prison in your prayers.

Save the Date

On Thursday, September 17th, at 6:00 PM, at the University City church of Christ, we will host a Prison Ministry Appreciation and Fellowship Dinner. We would like to express our appreciation to those who hold this work close to their hearts. This will be a complimentary dinner, and it promises to be a wonderful evening of food and fellowship. Contributions are always welcome but are not required.

Go Into

We believe that when Jesus said, "Go into..." in the Great Commission, He included prisons. At times, we are asked how a person can support the work. First and foremost, pray! Please pray the Lord keeps blessing us with increase, for those to whom we minister, and for our ministers who "go into." Second, we are always looking for faithful men and women to volunteer to "go into" their local area. If you or anyone you know is interested, let us know. We are here to help! Lastly, financial support. Without the financial backing from individuals and congregations, we would not be able to operate at our current capacity. Whether you "go into" with us, make it possible for us to "go into" or pray for us as we do it, we are extremely grateful.

