



INSIDE Journal

PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS

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Roy's Long Road to Paradise

by A.R. Quinn

HAWAII – Roy Yamamoto grew up in paradise, leaving his footprints on Oahu's pristine beaches and surfing its warm, turquoise waves.

But his life wasn't a picture-perfect postcard. "I had a very violent upbringing," he remembers during an interview with Inside Journal. Although the members of his family loved one another, the frequent abuse scarred him.

School offered no refuge, because Roy's learning disability made it hard for him to read and write. Still, the opportunity to participate in sports kept him from dropping out. He excelled as a lineman on the football team. After high school graduation, he planned to play football for Sacramento College.

But Roy started hanging out with the wrong crowd. Instead of training to make himself a better athlete, he partied – hard.

"My career in drugs became more important than my career in football," he recalls.

Roy's situation became even more complicated when his then-girlfriend became pregnant. Trying to be responsible, he married her and took a job as an iron worker, just like his father.

At work, Roy noticed that many of his friends did "ice," or crystal meth. He swore to himself that he would never become like them; their addictions were costing them their jobs and their families.

A Dead-End Path

But one fateful day, a co-worker asked Roy if he wanted to have just one hit of ice. Despite his hesitation, Roy felt curious. Could ice really be that good?

With one choice, Roy's life entered a rapid tailspin. His craving for crystal meth ballooned into a \$1,000-a-day habit that lasted 20 years. Along with the drugs came a life of crime. His wife, frightened by the rough

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Roy Yamamoto got hooked with just one hit of ice. His choices cost him his family and his freedom, but prison was just the beginning of his incredible story.

Photo by A.R. Quinn

Crime's Hidden Victims

by Ann Edenfield Sweet

When my husband ended up in federal prison, I was left with four boys to raise on \$800 a month. It was a bizarre, alienating experience; I felt like I had parachuted out of an airplane in the middle of the night, with no idea what country I had landed in, how to speak the language, what the customs were, or how to get home.

When my husband was released, I decided that I wanted to do something to help other prisoners' families. I founded Wings For LIFE International, which teaches family members how to cope with the legal system and how to interact with their incarcerated loved ones so when they come home from prison they can become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Working with many families over the years, I have learned that it is easy for many prisoners to lose sight of the struggles faced by their families on the outside. The purpose of this article is to help the readers of Inside Journal stand in their families' shoes, and do what they can to help ease the situation for their loved ones.

These are some of the difficulties your family may face while you serve your sentence:

- **Learning how to navigate the legal system and the prison system.** I have a college education, but my husband's arrest threw me into a world with a language that I did not understand. Prisoners' families often do not understand what is going to happen to their loved one next, where the prison is, who to contact if they have questions, or how to dress or behave when they

come visit.

- **Learning how to survive financially.** If the prisoner was a breadwinner, his or her family must now make do with much less. Even if the prison accommodations are nothing to write home about, the prisoner knows that he or she will be housed, clothed, and fed, and have access to some sort of medical care. A prisoner's family may be trying to figure out how to stay off the street, keep the lights on, and keep food on the table. My kids and I went six years without medical care because we could not afford it. Trying to afford transportation and lodging costs for a visit is an added burden.
- **Social exclusion.** When my husband went to prison, my children and I were ostracized by our neighbors, businesses, schools, and even by our church. When

my husband was released, the senior pastor of our new church told us we had to leave. Even though we had not committed the crime, we were stigmatized by association.

- **Exhaustion and stress.** When one parent goes to prison, the person who cares for his or her children becomes the 24-hour-a-day breadwinner, caretaker, chauffeur, tutor, disciplinarian, cook, etc. That is a lot of responsibility to fall on one person's shoulders, and there is usually no way to take a break – much less a vacation.

So, what can you do to make things easier?

- **Acknowledge and appreciate what they are going through.** If your family comes to visit, be grateful for their sacrifice. Don't complain if they are late or



Ann Edenfield Sweet

Photo courtesy of Ann Edenfield Sweet

- tired when they arrive.
- **Make the most of phone calls and visits.** Between calls and visits, make lists of questions you want to ask or issues you want to discuss. If you have more than one child, give each child a designated time to talk to you during a call or visit, so that everyone gets

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A Parent's Job

Guest Column:
Quovadis Marshall

When the doors of the prison closed behind me, the weight of my lengthy sentence overwhelmed my mind. Even heavier, however, was the thought that, like my father before me, I had abandoned my daughter, allowing her to become a statistic and a victim of her surroundings. After all, it was my job to provide for her, protect her, and point her in the right direction. What could I do now?

Quickly I took a lesson from Job. Job was a man in the Old Testament of the Bible who endured great suffering, pain, and loneliness. But he loved God, and he loved his children, and he is an example of how to endure and maintain hope even when we feel powerless to help our children.

One of the greatest things that we can do as parents is something we can do from far away: pray. Job did this. The Bible says that he "would rise early in the morning and offer

burnt offering according to the number [of his children]. For Job said, 'It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually." (Job 1:5)

There are three things from the life of Job that we can identify and imitate. (1) Job sacrificed time and resources for his children. I would encourage you to invest in stamps and envelopes to write to your children weekly. If that's not possible, I'd suggest you write to them in a journal. (2) Job was concerned about his children's spiritual welfare. If you have the chance, tell your children about Jesus or encourage them to attend a local church. (3) Job woke

early to pray for his children on a regular basis. Let us do the same.

For those who don't have children of their own, you're not alone. Jesus had no earthly children, and yet the Bible calls him the "Everlasting Father." (Isaiah 9:6) For those of you without children, our prisons are filled with young men and women who need positive leadership and guidance. I'd encourage you to make yourself available to them.

Quovadis Marshall is the national director of spiritual development for Prison Fellowship Ministries and a graduate of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative.

Subscription Info

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers – however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org. (The previous issue incorrectly listed the email address as inside_journal@pfm.org.)

Crime's Hidden Victims

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some one-on-one time. But children don't have to come to every visit. An occasional visit with just your spouse or significant other will allow you to have deeper, private conversations. Finally, when you are on the phone, don't ever, ever hang up in anger! Your family cannot call you back, and those hasty, angry words will just hang out there. If you need to discuss a touchy subject, save it for a letter or extended visiting hours.

- **Have an emergency plan.** If you get sick or injured, or if you are going to be sent to Ad-Seg, it helps to pick a person beforehand who can contact your family and let them know what happened. The prison probably will not let your loved ones know why you are suddenly out of touch.
- **Make the most of your talents.** A hand-drawn card from you, with a note inside describing how much your family means to you, might be-

come a treasured possession for your family – and it doesn't cost you anything but time!

- **Keep a record of when you send letters or cards.** Your children might be in a situation where they do not receive what you send to them. If you can, keep copies of the letters, or even just a single log with entries of everything you send, saying something like, "June 2014, sent card for Amanda's birthday. September 2014, sent letter for Jimmy's middle-school graduation." In the future, if your child says, "Why didn't I hear from you?" you'll have a record proving how much you cared.
- **Have a perfect record.** Make the most of every day in prison. Take every educational opportunity. The best thing you can do for your family is to get out, stay out, and be there for them.

God doesn't make junk. People make mistakes, but they can also change and become the people He intended them to be. By implementing some of these simple steps, you can help your family cope while you do your time. ■

Roy's Road to Paradise

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characters that now surrounded him, filed for divorce. Roy lost both her and his daughter.

Roy's criminal activities ran the gamut: assault, kidnapping, extortion, attempted murder, and second-degree robbery. When at last he hit rock-bottom, he sat in a four-by-eight prison cell, facing a conviction that carried a sentence of 80 years to life. Depression weighed on his soul. He thought of ending his life.



Children of Hawaiian prisoners pose on the beach at Camp Agape, a summer camp Roy founded after his release from prison.

cut Roy free from serving any additional time.

In gratitude, Roy began Camp Agape, a ministry to prisoners' children in Hawaii, which has been going strong for nine years. He runs it with the two judges who set him free. The judges, who are now Roy's dear friends and surfing buddies, also performed the ceremony for Roy and his bride when he re-married several years ago.

"Today," they said, "we're giving you a life sentence of marriage!"

Roy has re-united with his daughter. He and his wife, Charlotte, also have a son.

As the leader of Camp Agape and Prison Fellowship's field director in Hawaii, Roy wakes up every morning determined to help prisoners and their families experience true Paradise, knowing and loving the God who made him a new man. ■

"My lawyer can't help me out of this. You can't help me. Let's see what God can do for me."

'Tears of Joy'

Roy's cellmate was a follower of Jesus. He gave Roy his Bible and invited him to go to Bible study. With nothing to lose, Roy agreed to go.

As he walked to Bible study for the first time, some of his old friends confronted him and asked, "Where are you going with that Bible?"

Roy shrugged and said, "I don't know, but my lawyer can't help me out of this. You can't

help me. Let's see what God can do for me."

When Roy arrived at the Bible study, he noticed a different atmosphere. Everyone had a hopeful look in their eyes, and when the leader shared God's message of grace and truth with the group, he felt comforted for the first time since the prison doors slammed behind him. Roy prayed to ask Jesus to come into his heart and his life.

"There were uncontrollable tears coming out of my eyes, tears of joy, not tears of shame," Roy remembers with awe. "I was a new person when I said that prayer."

Finding Connection

Roy still had no contact with his daughter, who was then a young girl. But he decided to sign her up for Angel Tree, a Prison Fellowship program

launched in 1982 to help prisoners connect with their children at Christmas by sending them a gift and a personal message of love. A church bought and delivered a gift to Roy's daughter in his name.

Roy relished the brief connection that Angel Tree gave him and his daughter, but he wanted more. He craved a chance to introduce his family and his friends to the same hope that God had given him in prison. He began to pray that God would make a way for him to be released, despite the long sentence hanging over his head.

Through an amazing series of legal proceedings, a Christian judge saw potential in Roy and dropped the charge against him; he was released from prison in 1996. But in 1998, Roy's case was appealed again. He appeared in court and pled

guilty. But this time, Roy wasn't alone. Members of his church came to support him, testifying that he was a new person. The judge was so impressed that he

PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER

This season please join us in prayer for these concerns:

- That the Lord would continue to provide resources and volunteers to restore prisoners, families, and communities affected by crime to their full, God-given potential.
- That the Lord would heal the hearts of children and families of those who are currently incarcerated.
- That God would transform the hearts of men and women behind bars with His love, to radically change prisons and the entire culture.

Lift your voice with millions of other believers during Cry Out America, a national prayer movement, on September 11, 2014.

Lost Without a Trace

by A.R. Quinn

MALAYSIA – The world may never know what happened to Malaysia Airlines Flight 370.

The aircraft, a Boeing 777, left Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 12:41 a.m. local time, en route to Beijing, China, with 12 Malaysian crew members and 227 passengers representing 14 different countries. Within 20 minutes, the plane, traveling at 542 miles per hour, had reached its cruising altitude of 35,000 feet. Forty minutes into the flight, the plane's experienced captain, Zaharie Ahmad Shah, or perhaps the co-pilot, Fariq Abdul Hamid, said "good night" to the air traffic control crew.

Radar pings showed that afterward, the plane made an abrupt change in course over the Gulf of Thailand. After that, nothing is known for certain.

A Boeing 777 has a 200-foot wingspan. It is 209 feet long, and it can carry 45,000 gallons of fuel. It should not be easy to lose, but after its final radio communication, MH370 and the 239 souls aboard disappeared as if into thin air.

For weeks, a team of searchers from many countries spared no effort or expense to find the missing plane and its passengers. Searchers have used satellites, an American P-8 spy plane, additional aircraft, ships, and even a British submarine to try to locate the plane somewhere in the Indian Ocean, where it is believed the plane would have crashed.

The hunt for MH370 has reportedly turned into the largest search and rescue operation in history. A few satellite images showed debris that might possibly have come from the plane, but on the date this newspaper was published, nothing had been discovered. Without hard evidence,



A member of the U.S. military directs a plane helping with the search for a missing Malaysian Airlines flight.

some have speculated that the plane was hijacked – that it did not appear on radar because the supposed hijackers wanted to make it disappear by shutting off its communications systems.

A Hopeless Search

The Bible says that God has undertaken a similar search mission, looking for someone – anyone – who has a pure heart and does right. In Psalm 14, the writer says, "The Lord looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!" (Psalm 14:2-3, NLT)

Like the authorities searching for MH370, God combs the globe and finds nobody who meets His holy, perfect standard. Not you. Not me. Everyone – in prison or free – does plenty of wrong. We are all lost, adrift in the sea of our own sin, without a trace of hope.

But the Bible also says that God will never rest content until

He finds us. He does whatever it takes to rescue us, even when all hope seems lost. In chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells this story: "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the 99 others in the wilderness

and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'"

Search and Rescue

Our wandering and wrongdoing lead us far away from God, but He does not wait for us to somehow find our way back to Him, or do enough good deeds to make ourselves acceptable to Him. He shows us mercy. He goes out of His way to find us when we are unable to find our own way home. He only asks that we repent of, or turn our backs on, our sin, and believe in Jesus for forgiveness and new life. You can start right now by having a conversation with God. You can use words like the ones below. The important thing is to be sincere:

God, on my own I would be lost without a trace. I cannot save myself. Thank You for coming to find me. I want to turn my back on my old way of thinking and behaving. Forgive me for the wrong I've done. Make me a new person, and give me Your Holy Spirit to guide me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Being found by God is just the beginning of a lifelong journey of healing and restoration with Him.

If you've decided that you want to learn more about the first steps of that journey, Inside Journal wants to help. Write to "Search and Rescue," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. We'll connect you with a partner that provides a free correspondence Bible study and a Bible, if you don't already have access to one through your facility.

World News of Note

1 Sentencing Changes in Store?

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States Sentencing Commission, which advises federal judges on sentencing, voted to lower the sentencing guideline levels that apply to most federal drug trafficking offenders.

The drug guidelines under the amendment would remain linked to statutory mandatory minimum penalties. The Commission estimates that approximately 70 percent of federal drug trafficking defendants would qualify for the change, with their sentences decreasing an average of 11 months, or 17 percent, from 62 to 51 months on average.

In 2014 the Commission has

focused on bringing down federal prison costs and capacity with a continued commitment to public safety. The Commission estimates that the amendment reducing drug guidelines would reduce the federal prison population by more than 6,500 over five years, with an even bigger long-term impact.

The changes will be sent to Congress by May 1, 2014. If Congress does not oppose the changes, they will go into effect November 1, 2014.

2 Crisis in the Crimea

UKRAINE – A conflict with overtones of the Cold War is unfolding in Crimea, a peninsula in the Black Sea that is connected

to the Eastern European nation of Ukraine. Earlier this year, the allegedly corrupt, pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was forced out of office by protestors. He fled to neighboring Russia. In the chaotic aftermath of the revolution, Russia has seized military control of the Crimean region, where many people speak Russian and have a Russian cultural heritage.

In a referendum, Crimeans overwhelmingly voted to become part of Russia, and the Russian legislature has voted to annex, or accept, them. But the U.S. and the European Union say that the referendum and the annexation are illegal. The U.S. has imposed penalties on its former Cold War foe. Russia accuses the United States and other European countries of having funded and directed the Ukrainian revolution. Sporadic



violence and protests continue in Crimea, with no clear end to the conflict in sight.

3 UN Peacekeepers Sent to Protect Lives

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – On April 10, 2014, the United Nations Security Council voted to send 12,000 peacekeepers to protect the lives of people in the Central

Found at Last
Saul of Tarsus, another man we read about in the Bible, was one of those "lost sheep." He thought he was perfect, because he had a spotless family pedigree, he was well-educated, and he never broke the law. But his heart reeked of pride and hatred, until God found him. Saul became a new man with a new name: Paul. He realized that all his outward respectability was a meaningless front, and he left everything behind for what he called "the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." (Philippians 3:8, NLT) He became one of the leaders of the early Christian Church, and he wrote a large chunk of the New Testament.

God is a seeker. He wants to find you, wherever you are. He spared no expense – not even the life of His Son, Jesus – in order to find you. At every step in your life, He has been tracking your movement, whispering your name, waiting for the day you would turn around and see Him pursuing you so He can pour out His mercy, grace, peace, and hope on you. The only question is: Are you ready to be found? ■

Offscreen With “Papa Joe” Bradford

A Q&A with Papa Joe

by Zoe Erler

Joe Bradford is father to eight children, but he is “Papa” to hundreds. Brought into the spotlight by the film “Unconditional” (2012) that chronicles Bradford’s life from his childhood as one of the only black students in an integrated school to his time in prison for computer hacking to his decision to start Elijah’s Heart, an organization that ministers to underprivileged children in Nashville, Tenn., “Papa Joe” is now excited to share his message of hope with men behind bars. IJ spent a few minutes talking with Bradford about some of the most pivotal moments of his life and what he’s learned about fatherhood along the way.

IJ: Tell me about your childhood. Particularly, how did attending one of the first integrated schools affect you?

Bradford: I was born in 1961. I was in the third class to enter into integrated schools. Two buses came by where I lived: the white bus and the black bus. My mother wanted me to get “cultural training” and made me ride the white bus. That’s where

I met the little girl who plays the “Sam” character in the movie. Because she became my friend, she was bullied. I had to protect her honor, so I beat up the bully. Several times.

IJ: How did you get from beating up school bullies to hacking into computers?

Bradford: In high school, I thought maybe it would be good to make good grades, so I started hanging around nerds. I got straight As and ended up landing a scholarship to study engineering at the University of Tennessee. During that time, I discovered I had a knack for computers. By day, I tutored other students in programming languages. By night, I became one of the original computer hackers. On a dare, I decided to hack into an ATM system. Although I wasn’t caught during the actual hack, I was caught with a debit card that I used to prove the hack worked.

IJ: After that, you spent 18 months behind bars, a time that you consider one of the lowest points of your life. But something unexpected came out of it. Can you describe what happened?

Bradford: To get work release, I had to go to the notorious Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary. While there, I had a run in with another bully. This guy (known as “Big Mac” in the movie) was torturing my friend. I had the choice to walk away or defend my friend. I ended up in a big fight. Instead of going back to work release, they put me in solitary confinement for 40 days. That was a big turning point for me. I was a college student headed to a \$40,000 job and I found myself almost killing someone. I found myself with almost nothing. I didn’t know who I could trust. I didn’t know night from day. I was afraid I was going to die in prison. The only way to overcome this was to release all of me to God. I said, “Whatever you want of me, Lord, it’s yours.” I didn’t have anything, but the nothing I had I gave to Him.

IJ: But you didn’t die in prison. In fact, you were released not long afterward. What happened then?

Bradford: After being released back to Nashville, I met a woman named Denise. We became best friends and got married. But

not long afterward, we discovered I had a kidney disease which made it impossible for me to work. We had to move to the projects because we didn’t have any money. On the first day in the projects, a little deaf girl comes to our door. Denise gave her a piece of candy. But what happens when you give one kid candy? Before we knew it, we had 50 kids coming to our door. Denise is a music teacher, so we decided to start a children’s choir. Soon, we had parents dropping kids off at our house who didn’t even know us. We started working with these kids and it became a big giant family. And then it grew even bigger. We started asking for donations from local churches to feed these children and their families. Eventually we moved out of the projects, but the ministry to these children just grew. We recently did a giveaway for 800 families in one day.

IJ: Because of your perspective as a former prisoner and now as someone who ministers to children, what advice can you give parents who are in prison?

Bradford: It’s a misunderstanding in our country that male prisoners are all “deadbeat dads.” I

don’t believe that. When I was in jail, I met a lot of dads. One of the most common topics among them was their children. Communication is one of the biggest keys of love. Any opportunity to write a letter, I would do it, even if you don’t think the child will read it. Just the mere sight of a letter coming from dad, God can use that. Then pray for reconciliation with your child. And lastly, see what resources are available at your prison that you can take advantage of to improve yourself that will affect your child. ■



Photo courtesy of Joe Bradford

Connect With Your Child This Christmas!

What is Angel Tree?

Maybe you’ve heard of Prison Fellowship’s Angel Tree program, but you’re not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons in early June. You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). Your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree by the deadline. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child’s home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you – their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.

A Gift From Your Heart to Theirs ...

This summer is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. **Applications for Christmas 2014 must be postmarked by September 2, 2014.** Ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:

- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)’s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must **live in the United States.**
- 4) Your child(ren) must be **18 years old or younger.**
- 5) The form must be filled out completely and legibly.
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be **postmarked by September 2, 2014.**

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children’s caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.

If your facility is not signed up and has not received applications, your chaplain may contact **1-800-55-ANGEL** for more information on how to participate.

