I know if Forgiven Ministry is in the center of God’s will that He will guide and provide for the work that God has called us to do. What does 2020 hold for each of us? We will have to trust Him each step of the way. Forgiven Ministry desires your prayers as we are in a time of transition. We have two new employees, Ashley and Ruth in the office whom you will love. Our Michigan Leader, Gary Mayhew, is stepping down after eleven years leading Michigan. In Louisiana, Marlene Cheatham and Jan Stevens are also stepping down from their roles after 15 years of leading the Louisiana camps, but again God is in control and will not allow a door to close without opening another door if we are in His will. Having said all this, we are moving forward in 2020 thanking God for all of our wonderful volunteers who will take this journey with us.

Daddy’s Coming Home

We were eager to arrive at Foothills Correctional One Day with God Camp. Nineteen fathers anxiously awaited the next day when they would spend time with their children. I noticed one of the fathers had the most unusual hairstyle I had ever seen having let his hair grow over ten years of his incarceration. When he took it down it touched his knees. I thought this was one of the most joyful fathers I have seen at a camp, and it did not take long to understand why as he shared with me that he was going home with his daughter. I quickly asked him, “Why did you stay for the camp when you could have left at 8:30am this morning?” With the most precious countenance he said, “I wanted to spend this day with Forgiven Ministry that has blessed my family so much and to spend it in God’s presence. How can I spend this day with my little girl any better than here?” He went on to tell me that she did not know he was going home and it would be a surprise. You can imagine how excited we all were at the end of the day when they hugged and said goodbye. He went back in the building and came back in street clothes with the tags hanging on the shirt. When his beautiful daughter saw him walk out with no prison clothes she said, “Daddy, what are you doing?” He said, “I am going home with you today.” Words can’t describe the scream and hug she gave her dad. Could this be how it will be when we go home to be with our Heavenly Father? We will lay down these earthly things and all things will become new.

Letter Written by an Inmate

“This letter is to thank all involved in this year’s ‘One Day with God’ program at Avery-Mitchell. The two-day event was phenomenal and left me awestruck; I forgot that I was even in prison during my time with you all.

My five-year-old daughter, Faith and I strengthened our bond and re-charged our batteries during this precious and much needed time. I am still not sure who benefited more, but I could argue it was me. My mother, Teri, and my wife, Shirley also very much enjoyed their day with the ministry. Joy and re-kindling of love was blessed upon my family beyond the imagination.
The Father’s Blessing & Father Daughter dance is something I will never forget; it’s hard not to cry, even now. The continuity re-established that Saturday with our Father in Heaven, for me & my little girl, will keep me focused on those promises that I have made. On that Friday, the ceremony with the symbolized blood of Jesus in the tank for forgiving & forgiveness was also very emotional & very much needed for me.

I could go on & on, but will close for now. Thank you for all the literature, gifts, crafts, food, time and un-conditional love. I would absolutely love to move from a green shirt to a blue shirt one day. (I have 17 months left & would love info on that). Faith & I enjoyed every event & are still talking about that special day together. Above all, Praise God for enabling this ministry & I pray that He continues to bless it & all who are involved!”

Sincerely,
F.C.

The Forgiven Ceremony

Forgiven Ministry believes that true forgiveness has to be part of an inmate’s life for change to take place. Our Savior loves us so much that He gives us the beautiful picture of forgiveness portrayed on the Cross of Calvary.

On Friday at the camp each inmate is given a small card that states:
"Today Lord, I give you the hidden things in my heart" - Psalms 86:5

The Ceremony: The inmate makes the decision to empty their hearts of so many hurts and hidden things as the Holy Spirit moves in their lives. They write on their cards whatever they need to release and bring it to a simple plastic tub filled with red water. The card is placed in the bucket of red water as an outward sign of emptying their hearts and seeking true forgiveness. The colored water is a picture of the blood of Jesus. There are roots of bitterness that entangle all of our lives and separate us from being who God intended us to be. We also give the gospel and do a father or mother’s blessing with the inmates on Friday that they share with their children Saturday.

Inmate Mothers’ Prayer Requests

During each camp, the inmates are provided time to write their prayers to God:

- “Help my family to love each other all the time and to be supportive of each other.”
- “Help my son with his anger and help him deal with me being gone.”
- “My family and their well-being. Pray for the family I hurt and allow me to be forgiven.”
- “I pray that my sons’ grandparents’ hearts will soften, and I will get to see my boys soon. It has been five years, and I need God to intervene and help me. I pray for my family’s health, friends and safety for them all.”
- “Lord, please heal my broken heart and all my loved ones’ hearts that I have broken.”
Alexander Inmate Receives Abundant Blessings

“I hope all is well for you and everyone there at the Ministry. For me I’m doing great. I’m serving the Lord the best I can. I’m writing you to let you know what all happen since that One Day with God. Well, you know I got saved that day and my dad gave his life to the Lord (his father attended our program for the families while the One Day with God camp was happening). My mom has gave her life to the Lord and my aunt and her old man has got saved. The Lord is really working in my family. It all started at the One Day with God. That day has really changed my life for the better. As for my son I talk to him everyday before he gets to school and after he gets out “LOL”. I told him I will keep up with him and his schoolwork. I get to see him every other week so that’s a blessing rite there. Thank you for what you are doing, I know it is really doing good things. May God bless you and everyone at Forgiven Ministry.”

Building Lasting Relationships

By Andrew Lackey

The One Day with God camp is about building relationships for a lifetime not just for one day. At a recent One Day with God camp, one of our fathers shared with us how the program is doing just that. “This was the second camp I’d attended. The first one was amazing and blew me away. I was on a high for weeks after the program thinking about the memories of that day. But this year’s camp was the one I really needed. You see, this past year has been hard for me. I needed this day with my daughters. Knowing what happened last time and knowing I would get to hold my girls again is what got me through the past few months. But the second time I went through the day was better than I could have asked for. The day started off with my princesses running and jumping in my arms. And I knew the first thing I wanted to say was “I Love You”. But to my surprise my littlest girl jumped in my arms and said, “I Love You Daddy”. This touched my heart more than you can imagine. You see the year before I told her that I loved her numerous times but she didn’t return the ‘I love you’. But this year she said it before I could get the words out. The whole day was amazing just being able to hold my beautiful daughters in my arms. This day will be something I will hold in my heart all year long. Thanks to each of you volunteers that serve, give and pray for Forgiven Ministry. These memories and relationships are what you are helping build in countless incarcerated parents’ and their children’s lives.”
A Sad Goodbye
By Scottie Barnes

Going back 15 years I remember Diane and I standing in the aisle of East Taylorsville Baptist Church and talking about her helping in ministry. God knew exactly what we needed and He had given her the skills and talents to help this ministry begin a work that has far exceeded our expectations. Isn’t it something that God had laid it all out and Diane was chosen to help put it in place? Some have come and gone but Diane has endured for fifteen years at Forgiven Ministry.

I will always remember how cramped we were and how volunteers either didn’t stay long or didn’t come back to the office. Diane’s heart for Forgiven Ministry was and has always been evident. There will be no replacing Diane as she retires, but my prayer is that God will send the help that will take us to the next step. I am sure He has that planned also.

My prayer for Diane is that she will find so much happiness in the days ahead and also find a place to serve the Lord. She has a heart for ministry and that heart can’t retire. We hope that she will be able to come by and volunteer with us in the days ahead.

NCCIW Ministry Takes Hope Behind Bars
by Mary Anne Rhyne

Forgiven Ministry is blessed to send volunteers into the maximum-security unit of the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women in Raleigh on Thursday nights. Several volunteers from different churches and towns (Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill) gather as “New Hope Bible Study.”

Each week we seek to remind these ladies who have just arrived at the prison that God still sees them, loves them and has a good plan for their future. For many of them, this is one of the lowest points in their lives. Emotions are as high as their worries about the future.

Up to 40 women from “Reception” are allowed to attend the one-hour session with us. They may stay at NCCIW only a week or two as they are evaluated, their paperwork processed and each is assigned a prison where they will serve their terms.

We take turns leading discussions about the most important and most basic ways to keep our focus on Jesus – prayer and the Bible. We are not allowed to give them any material so we aim to provide all the spiritual tools that we can. Every week we collect prayer requests and most nights we share favorite Bible verses and songs.

Inevitably there are tears. Ultimately, we hope there is a feeling of unconditional love, the kind that fuels hope, new beginnings and even more thanks to God.
Our Year in Highlights
Act Now to See Your Gift Doubled

If you’ve been thinking of donating to Forgiven Ministry, there is no better time than today! A donor who wishes to remain anonymous will match your gift, dollar for dollar, up to $10,000. This is a powerful way to maximize what Forgiven Ministry can do in 2020.

There’s no way to put a price tag on the results we see: lives dedicated to Christ, families reunited, fresh starts, energized caregivers and volunteers mobilized all to God’s glory.

There is a concrete cost to run the ministry and hold the camps. Consider that each camp costs $8,000-$10,000; there is travel to each camp in North Carolina, Texas, Ohio, Michigan, Louisiana, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. We have 5 employees to do the accounting, work with the prisons, process paperwork on volunteer and family participation, stock and pack gifts for the children and line up all camp details. We are blessed to have an office building and storage in Taylorsville, NC from which we work.

In 2020, we are considering requests for new camps including some in new states. We are praying for more land where we can expand our operations thus enabling us to have storage and office facilities at the same location.

Please help us access these funds with your matching gift today. You do not need to do anything special. Simply send in your gift before this year’s end or you can go online (https://forgivenministry.org/give/) if you prefer to contribute that way. The Ministry office will identify the gifts to be matched and we will notify this very special donor.

Whether you’re able to give or not, please continue to pray for the Ministry and for favor that we may continue to go behind bars sharing the love and light of Jesus Christ.

Ways You Can Give

- Credit Card
- PayPal/Giving Fund
- Edward Jones (stock donations)
- Check
- Amazon Smile

Go to smile.amazon.com

Every eligible purchase results in a 0.5% donation to Forgiven Ministry.

Scottie’s Memoirs

A look into Scottie’s life and the journey of Forgiven Ministry.

These can be purchased for $18.75 (shipping included), all money from purchase of book will be given to Forgiven Ministry.

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