

**A Poem from Inside  
ONCE I STOOD BEHIND A WALL**

Once I stood behind a wall;  
A wall of sin and shame.  
The wall was high and ugly,  
And each brick had a name.  
Bricks of hate and anger,  
Bricks of fear and doubt;  
Rebellion, pride and thousands more,  
That shut the sunlight out.

Then into that dark cell,  
This glorious message came;  
That Jesus really loved me,  
And died to bear my shame.  
The cruel nails that pierced Him,  
Each thorn that made His crown,  
Each lash He bore to save me  
And break the sin walls down.

He chased away the darkness;  
He cast out all my fears.  
With His gentle nail-scarred palms,  
He dried those bitter tears.  
There is no condemnation.  
He bought me with His blood;  
My sins are gone forever,  
Beneath, that crimson flood.

Each time I tried to scale it,  
To rid me of my fears,  
More bricks of disappointment,  
Dashed hopes and bitter tears.  
The walls closed in around me,  
And quickly became a prison cell -  
With lock and key.

I cried, "Dear Lord, forgive me.  
I give my heart to Thee.  
Oh, wash me, cleanse me, heal me.  
Set this prisoner, free".  
A radiant light from heaven,  
Broke thro' the prison wall.  
He snapped the chains and whispered,  
"I forgive you all".

Now different walls surround me,  
Of Holy Fire and Love.  
For Jesus is my fortress,  
He guards me from above.  
He is my sure foundation,  
My strong, chief cornerstone.  
His Light and Love will guide me,  
And lead me safely home.

by a woman prisoner in Christchurch

**Angel Tree Volunteer Facilitators required,**

Angel Tree facilitators are required for the Waikato and the Invercargill regions and also an assistant in the Wanganui area is also needed – If you could spare some time to work on this very rewarding program – please contact National Office on 0800 777 887.



**Finances**

We have husbanded our resources and with God's grace are 'in the black' but with new initiatives such as the nationwide implementation of Target Communities we will need additional staff to be able to adequately train church communities. This inevitably means more funds are required. Our present reserves are simply not sufficient to allow this to happen so we are praying and seeking funds for that in addition to our ongoing ministry in other areas.

If you feel led to contribute to this exciting and important work please use the form below or use our website [www.pfnz.org.nz](http://www.pfnz.org.nz)

Complete form and mail to:



Freepost Prison Fellowship New Zealand, Prison Fellowship New Zealand, PO Box 40657, Upper Hutt 5140

**Regular donation**

I would like to donate:

monthly  3 monthly  Annually   
(tick one)

The sum of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ commencing \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/ 2009  
by...

**(a) Direct Credit to:** Prison Fellowship New Zealand  
Account number 01 0242 0138571 00

I will set this up myself through my bank  
 Please send me an automatic payment form (tick one)

**(b) Direct debit my credit card**

Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa  MasterCard  (tick one)

**One time donation**

Yes, I'd like to help by giving \$ \_\_\_\_\_ right now.

**Online:** I will do this online at [www.pfnz.org.nz](http://www.pfnz.org.nz)

**Cheque:** I enclose my cheque

**Credit Card:** \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa  MasterCard  (tick one)

**Important: Please include: name, address, email, postcode and phone number details.**

I am not currently in a position to donate but I'd like to be kept in touch with what Prison Fellowship NZ is doing.

# INSIDE OUT



Newsletter of Prison Fellowship New Zealand

July 2009

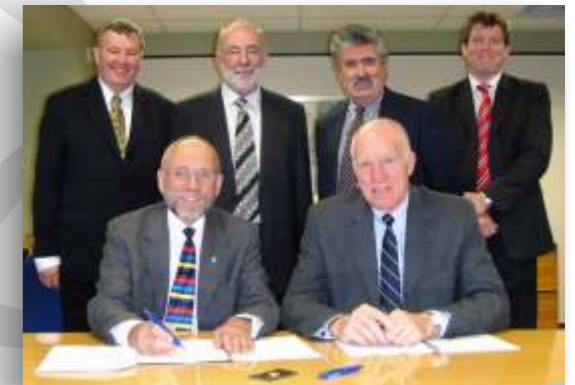
**A New National Director for PFNZ**



The Board of PFNZ is very pleased to announce the appointment of Robin Gunston as the new National Director. He started his new role on 24 June 09. Robin and his wife Maureen have two adult children and are active members of St Mary's Anglican Church in Whitby, Porirua. He comes to us with as a widely experienced business executive, board director, consultant and entrepreneur with proven expertise and visionary leadership in the strategic direction of business and not for profit entities. He is an international author, speaker and presenter on futures thinking and risk management. A futuristic thinker, he is able to get people to envision their preferred futures. He has stood for Parliament in the past two elections. PFNZ looks forward to an active, God directed future under Robin's leadership.

**Memorandum of Understanding with Corrections**

We are pleased to advise that a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Corrections and PFNZ was signed on 6 April 09 by Barry Matthews, CEO of Corrections and Basil Wakelin, the Interim National Director of PFNZ.



One of the Department's five strategic thrusts is strengthening partnerships and an essential element of that is forming strategic partnerships through memorandums of understanding with those who provide the Corrections Department with important assistance to achieve its' objectives.

The MOU recognises that PFNZ's commitment to Corrections reaches well beyond our activity as a provider of services and that our interest in criminal justice reaches deeper than the contractual relationship with a significant input by PFNZ of resources and time to innovation, program development and public education, in order to advance a social justice agenda.

The aim of the MOU is to acknowledge and promote the working relationships between PF staff and volunteers and Corrections staff and provide a platform for greater cooperation and the continuous improvement and expansion of the services we provide.

**Warmth in the Deep South  
As told by a PF volunteer from Southland.**

"Family support by PF has had a very really busy two months. 33 parcels have been handed out and the visits for those have all gone successfully. Had a lot of running around to do as people had shifted and numbers had changed but armed with phone books and prayer I managed to find most of them and they were delighted with the visits. The families I have visited have been warm and welcoming once they have worked out who I am. I have had to do some fast talking in some cases where they are very suspicious of who I am and what the motive is. I have been able to reassure all of them I am quite harmless and we are just reaching out a hand to care. One woman had never heard of us and rang the prison to see if there was such an organisation! I ended up explaining PF and what we do to most of them so they had a good grasp on things. Some families didn't even know how Angel tree worked and I had to explain this too.



## Warmth in the Deep South...continued

I think it is so cool that God used a gravy mix to open doors! One woman told her Family Start lady she had received a sachet past its best before date. On investigating this it was explained past best before dates are okay and shops were within their rights to sell them but not past expiry dates. The family start lady and the mother had a look in their own cupboards and found their own sachets were the same and were very happy. Through this all I ended up having to meet with them and they were quite interested in what PF does and thought it was just great. They too thought that sometimes they just need someone to have a chat to and just to know there is someone who cares and is thinking of them. They understand we are not counsellors. So we got well known in some important circles! The awesome thing about this is that God used a gravy mix to open a door and communication! He just turns up in the most unexpected ways!

I have been able to help families understand the prison procedures better and they seemed lighter and happier about the process by the time I left. One woman I visited said "So I guess you know what he's in for". I explained I had no idea what any of them were in for and it was not my business to know and I was just there to offer an ear to listen if they needed it. She then changed tack and asked if I seen all prisoners as sinners. I was extremely grateful at this stage I had prayed in earnest before I had attended this visit. I said "No, they've made some bad choices, but we all do that. Aye, none of us are perfect; we're all sinners at the end of the day. But I personally am grateful God doesn't focus on that when he looks at us." She nearly fell off her chair at this point and insisted I explain how I come to that conclusion. I felt led to tell her the story of the prodigal son and how I had felt welcomed into God's arms when I turned to Him and that was how God sees all of us including the prisoners. He's not looking at what we've done, he just sees the potential in us if we turn away from that, he's interested in our hearts, not in condemning us. She was very thoughtful and asked me just to sit with her awhile and so we did. She then stood up which I took as a cue to leave and as we got to the door she asked if she could have a hug and I just smiled and gave her one. She kept saying thank you over and over. Most visits are brief and quite simple, with just general chit chat but I notice we are being watched all the time and are grateful for God's presence with us in each visit. One person was evicted suddenly from their home and I was able to direct them to WINZ and a childcare facility to help them get back on their feet and they are happily shifted, children have settled and we were able to go back with a cake as a housewarming and drop a calendar off with encouraging scriptures for Mum. This woman texted me to say how she was having a tough day the

scripture came into her head and she just picked herself up and knew she could carry on! She had wondered if that was how this God spoke!

Another woman said she felt like a charity case and as we stood there listening to her let off steam I remembered feeling like that once when I had left my violent relationship and so I told her what I had been told. "God's blessings come in all forms and shapes and sizes, in people, a knock on the door, a church down the road, a song on the radio, a kiss on the head from our children and in I love you Mummy, and when we get them God wants us to receive the blessing and enjoy it, he just loves helping people. So don't see it as charity, you just got blessed". I think the huge smile on her face said it all. We had to visit one woman ten times before I found her home! She had no landline, did not answer texts or a note left in the mailbox and I found this very frustrating, but ultimately found out she did not have a clue who Prison Fellowship was and so did not want to know. I got to explain what we do and she was happy with it in the end. We delivered one parcel and was very surprised when the prisoner himself opened the door. Fortunately I managed to squeak a hello and smile which broke the ice! We had a lovely conversation and got to talk to him and his Mum about having a mentor which he is interested in, as he finds that the day to day pressures he faces when he gets out of prison are too much and he ends up back in there. So even though he had support he felt like he was doing it on his own. I would love to see Target Communities up and running in Southland for guys like this!! I have really enjoyed this opportunity and I thank God I have been able to be part of this ministry. I watch with excitement and anticipation to see what God will do next!"



"A Target Community is one that is a prepared community with the heart to minister to both those in prison and those being released from prison. This involves incorporating their families into the community with a view to both providing support and protection during their growth and with the goal of restoring them into full wider community participation."

For several years there has been an increasing awareness of the many difficulties faced by those leaving prison, particularly with trying to establish a normal life in a society that lacks understanding of their needs. The view of society is "Do the crime and pay the time!" but upon release nothing is further from the truth – when does a released man cease to become a "prisoner" within society?

The vital key to successful reintegration is community involvement and support. However the community, while willing to assist, is often uncertain how to proceed and yet still maintain community safety.

The Target Communities Project has been designed to

develop and implement a process, with supporting materials, to enable church and wider communities to be trained to accept, coach, encourage and hold accountable released prisoners. This includes supporting their families in a safe and sustainable way and bringing them all into fruitful community interaction.

It is envisaged that each released man or woman will gain a "circle of support" from within a trained community who will work with them to make the adjustments necessary to gain a meaningful life.

Barry Timms, Operations Manager for Prison Fellowship has been leading the development of this project over the last 2 years and has trained leaders to carry out its implementation. One of these leaders will be available to present the Target Community process in your area.

This presentation is particularly for all who are interested in the reintegration of prisoners into society including church leaders, prison volunteers, social workers and you!

Inquiries may be directed to one of the following:

Barry Timms, Project Manager  
Ph (04) 528 5419  
barry.timms@pfnz.org.nz

## All in God's Time

1 Peter 5:6 (New International Version)  
Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

In 2004, when the Faith Based Unit was in its' infancy, a man was released to the Wellington area accompanied by a church-based Operation Jericho mentor. Initially there was a time between the two men when the relationship was distant but as time passed he developed trust in his mentor. Importantly, the men went to a Wellington church and a men's group together.

Over the course of the next six months, preparations were made and eventually the man's family moved south to Wellington to join him. There were reservations from his wife who at first kept her house in her home area – in the event that she encountered difficulties in their relationship which could not be overcome. Ultimately she was reassured that her husband had made mighty changes to his life and all the couple's children moved to Wellington.

In the following two years the man successfully completed parole and changed jobs, he is currently employed in a responsible driving capacity. His wife came to faith in Jesus and the family moved both house and church into the Hutt Valley.

Recognising his past experiences as a prisoner and that by this time he was a transformed man, three years after the man's release he was encouraged by his friend and mentor to consider becoming a Prison

Fellowship mentor himself. The proposal was rejected at that time as he felt he had little to offer others.

Last month his attendance at a church Men's Camp changed this situation. He experienced a powerful encounter with Jesus which further liberated him from his "old self" and equipped him for his future. So after over five years as a free man he agreed that he now felt prepared for ministry and with God's help he could now return to the Faith Unit to tell his story as an encouragement to other men

We look forward keenly to hearing of further development of his ministry and as a support to ex-prisoners.

## Blessings from Across the World



In May Prison Fellowship had the blessing of several visits with Kay (pronounced Kai) and Hilde Aarskog who were in New Zealand with Youth with a Mission.

Kay Aarskog from Norway, is a former drug addict, gang leader and notorious criminal, an ex-prisoner who spent 8 years in rehabilitation. He shared the key principles he learned through his journey of rehabilitation.

Kay knows the inside story of how God transforms a life and shared his experience of a life turned around. Prison Fellowship captured on DVD four seminars three from Kay and one from Hilde's perspective.

1. The Identity
2. Time and Timing – healthy thinking and goal setting
3. Restoring Relationships – with community and family
4. Living in the fullness of life – session led by Hilde

This material is highly recommended for people in recovery from addictions or people who walk alongside ex-prisoners and will form part of the Target Community resources.

Kay also ran two successful interactive seminars with the men at the Faith Based Unit, many of whom were so impacted by his transparency that some want to continue to have contact with him by letter on his return to Norway.

Many thanks to Kay, Hilde and their 15 month old daughter Naomi for sharing their invaluable experience with Prison Fellowship in New Zealand.