



GARY FIELD
ID # M05398
CENTURY C.I.
CENTURY, FL.
32535
EI-103

8/5/12

1-4

IN THE EPIC POEM, DANTE'S "INFERNO", THERE IS A SIGN ABOVE THE ENTRANCE TO HELL WHICH SAYS: "ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE." - IT'S BEEN SAID THAT WHEN YOU REMOVE HOPE FROM THE HEART OF MEN, WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT ARE BEASTS OF PREY.... I FIND IT INTERESTING THAT WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY DEFINES THE WORD "PREY": EITHER AS A "VICTIM, (WHEN USED AS A NOUN.)" OR A "PREDATOR" (WHEN USED AS A VERB.) BOTH SHARE THE HELL OF THOSE WHO HAVE ABANDONED HOPE - BOTH TYPES ARE AMONG THOSE WHO SHARE THE CONDITIONS OF "LIFE BEHIND THE WIRE."

BUT, PRAISE GOD, THERE ARE THOSE OF US WHO SHARE THE "HOPE OF OUR SALVATION," WHICH HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR FOR OUR SOUL.

WHEN I BEGAN THIS JOURNEY THROUGH "THE BELLY OF THE BEAST" - THE FL. DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS - I CHOSE NOT TO FOCUS ON THE PERSPECTIVE INVOKED BY DANTE'S SIGN, RATHER I WOULD TRY TO VIEW THIS EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF GOD'S WORD. "LIFT YOUR EYES, AND LOOK ON THE FIELDS; FOR

2-4

THEY ARE WHITE ALREADY TO HARVEST.
By doing so, RATHER THAN DEVELOPING
THE "HARDENED HEART" POINT IS FAR
TOO PREVALENT AMONG INMATES - I
WAS ABLE TO CULTIVATE A HEART
OF COMPASSION. POINT "PERSPECTIVE"
HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

AS I MADE MY WAY AROUND
THE COMPOUND, I SAW THE EYES OF
INMATES FOR WHOM "HOPE" WAS A
CANDLE THAT BLEW OUT LONG AGO.
AS I CONTINUED TO FIND STRENGTH
AND GUIDANCE WITHIN THE WORD OF
GOD, I BEGAN LOOKING FOR WAYS THAT
I COULD SHARE WHAT I HAD FOUND...
FOR THOSE WHO PERISH, A FOUNTAIN OF
LIVING WATER.

HOWEVER, WHAT I SOON LEARNED
WAS THAT IF I APPROACHED AN INMATE
IN THE "REC YARD", BIBLE IN HAND,
SAYING "BROTHER, LET ME TELL YOU
ABOUT JESUS." - I WOULD HAVE TO
FIND A WAY THROUGH THE LAYERS OF
PAIN AND REJECTION, IN ORDER TO
REACH A HEART THAT RESEMBLED A
CLENCHED FIST. - IF I WAS TO BECOME
A "FISHER OF MEN", IT WOULD NOT BE
BY CASUALLY DROPPING A LINE OFF THE
SIDE OF A PIER... THIS WOULD BE
DEEP SEA FISHING. ☺

3-4

My "Spoken Word Ministry" was born here in Century C.E. when I began trying to express a Biblical Principle, or Doctrine, through a poem. — For example, the poem "Christening" contains over 20 references to Scripture within its 11 stanzas. In the poem "The Promise", I tried to deliver a complete "sermon" on "Salvation by Grace" including an altar call! Instead of trying to "preach" to my brothers in blue — I could simply say "Hey, check out this poem." — I could then try to "plant the seed", pray the Holy Spirit might water, and then let God give the increase. (ref. 1 Cor 3:6)

The word "penitentiary" is based, of course, upon the word penitent. (Webster: feeling sorrow for sins or offenses — repentant.) However there is a tremendous difference between worldly sorrow, (regret over getting caught) and Godly sorrow (which works repentance.) It's that worldly sorrow which gives root to that "bitterness" by which many are defiled — it's that bitterness that chokes the spirit and takes hope from the hearts of men.

4-4

What an incredible blessing it has been, over the years, to see that "flicker of light" appear in the eyes of those for whom the word of God has taken root. - To quote one of my favorite Christian authors, A.W. TOZER, "Others before me have gone much farther into these holy mysteries than I have done, but if my fire is not large it is yet real, and there may be those who can light their candle at its flame."

Long before I am able to preach my first sermon "beyond the wire," I continue to pray that God may allow me to touch the hearts of men through my writing. "That I may find a way to comfort those who were feeling pain, and open eyes to the prize, for which the Lamb of God was slain. And, then when my pen falls silent, I if any man should tell my story - let this stand out, without a doubt, 'He wrote to bring God glory!'"

May God continue to make His
face to shine up you all
Bro. Gray

GARY FIEDL

BETWEEN THE BARS. ORG