

How You Can Be a Part of Changing Prisoners' Lives Today

What if you could give prisoners hope, prevent them from committing suicide or even point them to a living relationship with the Lord? Prison Book Project offers a way to do all this and more for those in prison by supplying them with great Christian reading material. Since 1994, the ministry has been working with publishers and other donors who supply them with Christian books and other reading material to share with prisoners across the country.

The ministry's founder, Ray Hall, began Prison Book Outreach out of the deep need he saw for prisoners to have uplifting reading material. A friend had been unjustly accused of a crime, and his wife was trying to get a Bible to him as he waited in jail. In the process of helping her, Hall learned more about the needs of prisoners.

"Crime's just getting out of hand," Hall told God. "I don't know what to do about it."

God not only had an answer for him but also showed him a vision that led him to begin Prison Book Project, which today provides exclusively Christian books and Bibles to prisoners in more than 2,700 jails and prisons across the country. Hall has worked with many publishers through the years, including Charisma, which provide books at no charge, but the all-volunteer ministry still needs funds to cover shipping and warehouse costs.

Prison Book Project partners with chaplains in the correctional facilities, Hall says, except in the cases where he can't get chaplain cooperation. Because of this, he says, "We calculated each book was read by 30 different people. The

average reading time is eight hours; that's 240 man-hours of ministry. That's one preacher for a whole week in one book!"

And the ministry makes a difference. Hall says he receives about 15,000 letters a year from grateful prisoners. His wife, Joyce, who partners with him in the ministry, tells about a female prisoner who wrote Prison Book Project about her planned suicide. "She had it planned down," Joyce says. "She had the date set, and she went into the counselor's office, and she asked her about death ... and the counselor gave her a coloring book.

"And she said, 'I don't want a coloring book,'" Joyce explains. "She said, 'I'm going to die; I don't want to color.' But she said, 'I'll take it anyhow.'"

Joyce says the woman took the book and began coloring. "And there was a Scripture; it was a Christian coloring book that we had sent to them," she adds. "And in the top corner was a psalm of David crying out to the Lord to help him. And over the day, she kept reading that and coloring. The day that she had planned to commit suicide came and went, and she realized that she no longer wanted to commit suicide.

"And someone asked her one day, 'What was the turning point in your life?'" Joyce says. "And she said, 'The coloring book.'

"And it wasn't the coloring book. It was the Scripture," Joyce says. "She was reading that over and over."

I have a personal interest in this ministry because not only does our publishing house send books for the project—including Christian coloring books—but Charisma's nonprofit arm, Christian Life Missions, has now set a goal of raising \$20,000 for Prison Book Project. You can send your tax-deductible gift to Christian Life Missions, 600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, FL 32746 or give securely online at .

To learn more about Ray and Joyce Hall and the Prison Book

Project, listen to the entire *Strang Report* podcast [here](#). And be sure to share this article and podcast with others and pray about how God wants you to partner with us in taking the truth of the gospel inside prison walls. {eo}