

Proclaiming God's Word

Mid-Evil Times

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A personal note from AIM President, Philip Paul Sacco

Where – *does* – the time go? It seems hardly a season has passed since the first Crusade in California was completed and the subsequent newsletter went out. Now, ten months later, I am sitting in front of my computer catching my breath after a whirlwind second Crusade to California this past January.

Coined the “Tri-State Crusade” and spanning over 3500 miles in 16 days, the second Crusade was filled with many blessings. I would like to discuss one of the Crusade themes to open this newsletter.

More information about the “Tri-State Crusade” will be covered in the second section: ‘What’s been Happening.’

Choices/Decisions/Actions Past/Present/Future

Among the venues I spoke in during the recent trip to California were Boot Camps, Youth Correction Facilities, Prisons, and High Schools. One of the reoccurring topics involved the choices, decisions, and actions we have contended with in the past, those we face today, and the ramifications of those decisions made and actions taken. ***It is the choices of the past and the decisions we made that have determined our present. The actions we have taken, be they past or in the present, then determine our future.***

Being confronted with particular choices may constitute the first challenge an individual has to contend with.

Some of us are fortunate to never have to face decisions such as whether to join a gang for protection or suffer the consequences of non-

affiliation. Yet, many are born into poverty and face choices much harsher than those of the more fortunate. For many in my January audiences, the choices they had been presented were just that severe.

Having recognized the situation of the at-risk youths and state wards of my audiences, I began by asking them to consider the choices, decisions and subsequent actions they had taken in the not so distant past. It was those decisions and actions that led to their present situation, be it court ordered participation in a state/county monitored program, or incarceration.

Whatever the situation that presented those choices, they can simply be put in this fashion: when it comes to making decisions and taking the subsequent action, one is most often given the choice between doing something morally right or wrong. The toughest decision is most often found in choosing to do the ‘right thing.’ The options presented in doing the ‘wrong thing’ quite often present more lucrative financial gain, comfort, or a position of some value. However, it is how we position ourselves in making the next step, the decision, which is most important. We may have no control over the choices presented us by our circumstances, but ultimately the decision of what to do next, rests solely with us, whatever the circumstance.

When making tough decisions, we draw upon the character reserves we have developed through our past decisions and actions. If our past decisions and actions have not developed good character, the traits we need to draw on are typically those we are least trained in. Yet exercising the training we do have is essential in making the tough choices. The choices of our past coupled with our subsequent decisions and actions, led us to a specific consequence. That consequence may now be in our past, be

responsible for our present, or have yet to be revealed.

This being the case, our circumstances in the future will be greatly determined by the decisions and actions in what is now our present. In other words: ***just as the actions of the past have led us to where we are today, the choices we have today, and the decisions we make concerning them and our subsequent actions, will determine where we will be in our future.***

Some of our decisions and actions take more time than others to manifest themselves, but manifest themselves they will. Think about those confusing times in your life when you looked around and wondered, "How did I get here...?" Taking time to consider it, a particular poor decision or choice of action made in the past can be identified as having led directly to the situation we have found ourselves in. This same process can be applied to take us into our future.

We have been given the Divine Right, the Power of Free Will, and it is ***powerful*** - powerful enough to change our future destiny.

In conclusion, I'd like to share a letter received regarding my presentation at Mule Creek State Prison. The letter is from Joni Rillos. She was the contact who got us into Mule Creek.

"Sometimes we can do everything we want to try to ignore things, but when God has a plan, it will go through.

My name is Joni Rillos and I am the Re-Entry teacher at Mule Creek State Prison. Ms. Walters provided me with a copy of Awaken the Warrior in the fall of 2005 and notified me that Mr. Sacco would be in California for a tour at the start of 2006. I was interested, but the reality was that I was afraid to request permission for a "Medieval Knight" to enter the grounds. I knew that the Administration would look at me while thinking "What in the world is she trying to do now?", "Has she really been working here 11 years?" and "Is she crazy?"

So I did what every dedicated person would do, I didn't respond and put the request to visit aside. The problem was that putting the request aside was simply moving it on my desk. And the fact that I was constantly checking the Warrior website and reading the book simply made the request more visible every workday.

I began the process for bringing in a guest 1 week before the visit. Bring in a guest is one thing, bringing in a Medieval Knight is another. I figured what do I have to lose? So I just happened

to throw in that the guest would like to wear full armor and I believe it is necessary to really make an impact on the topic. Amid all the laughter and "No way."(s), continued asking up the chain of command. Finally, one of the Associate Wardens' said 'NO!'. I responded, "No offense, this is not a personal issue, but I request to take this above you to the Warden's office for consideration." Well, she agreed and assisted by calling and informing the Wardens' office what I was requesting and that she was adamantly against it.

When God wants things to happen, doors open. The Chief Deputy Warden gave an ok, paperwork was submitted, security issues were resolved and custody escorts were found. Mr. Sacco and Ms. Walters arrived and the visits began.

The visits began on the Minimum Security Facility. Approximately 50 inmates were in attendance. As the "secular" presentation began, you could see the lights turn on. Suddenly smiles began to creep over the faces of individuals as the truth of message was realized. It was beautiful.

The second visit to Facility B (medium custody) was to allow Mr. Sacco to meet with members of Criminals and Gangs Anonymous (CGA), a 12 step program designed by an inmate to help inmates see that they are as addicted to criminal behavior as much as a drug addict or alcoholic is addicted. There were approximately 15 inmates in attendance. Mr. Sacco asked them to tell him about the program and the doors swung open. Immediately the Love of God was in the room and ministry was provided to everyone present. Tears flowed freely, positive encouragement filled the air and hearts were exposed and healing began.

I am so glad that God had a plan and made it impossible for me to ignore it. I know that Mr. Sacco, Ms. Walters and all in attendance at the presentations were touched by the presence of the Lord at Mule Creek State Prison on that day. Our Lord is amazing and nothing, nothing is impossible through Christ."

Joni Rillos
Re-Entry Teacher
Mule Creek State Prison

Thank-You Joni, for being obedient to the call of the Father. Interestingly, Joni was the winner of a seminar I offered on my website. I hope to have a follow up of that in my next newsletter.

...and so, you ask,
“What’s been Happening?”



For those with internet capability, a full schedule of events and activities can be found on the ‘Crusade and events’ page of the website www.awakenthewarrior.com.

Recapping the January Crusade: enough contacts and stir was made during the May ’05 Crusade to schedule a “Tri-State Crusade” covering parts of California, Oregon, and Washington. The Crusade lasted 16 days, covered more than 3500 miles and allowed me to make 19 special appearances. Two maximum-security prisons were among the venues, including CHAD, noted as the most violent youth prison in the United States. During the month prior to my visit, there were 80 assaults in the facility. A historic presentation was made at Mule Creek State Prison, with me having the opportunity to meet privately with 25 members of CGA (Criminals and Gang members anonymous). They introduced me to their 12-Step rehabilitation program, the first of its kind to be inaugurated in any facility in the country. At this particular facility, I also had the opportunity to meet with some 60-75 inmates participating in a pre-release program.

The County Dept. of Education got in on the action and had me visit 6 High Schools in Kings County. One of these resulted in a full school assembly for over 500 students.

Perhaps the most enjoyable presentation was for a Montessori School on Whidbey Island, Washington, where I met 28 children ages 3 ½ to 7 for a most blessed 2 hour engagement.

The Crusade was rounded out with the opportunity to share some great ‘down-time’ with some key individuals, and to share my private recipe for ‘Twice-Burn Chili’ with some friends.

In other news, contact has been re-established with Cathy Smith of ‘Weight Warriors,’ now in Las Vegas, and funding is being sought to establish a Warrior Center offering diet/weight control, fencing, leadership and character building seminars, workshops and retreats. The day I am writing this, I was contacted with an offer of donated land on beach-front property in California to build our center upon. Cathy is working currently with me to arrange a series of presentations in Las Vegas. We plan on following this up with a retreat sometime in June/July.

The website, www.awakenthewarrior.com, has been getting some interesting hits over the last few months. I have sent the **now completed workbook/study** guide for *Awaken the Warrior* to study groups and churches in Africa, Canada, California, Connecticut, England, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Ireland, New Jersey, New York, New Zealand, North Carolina, and Texas.

From this, I have had two invitations to speak with church groups in West/South Africa, one in Connecticut, and one in Illinois. Funding is being sought to make this a possibility.

The Yahoo Group is gaining steam and we have had our first online ‘church-chat’ and have been hosting regular weekly chat sessions covering a range of subjects of concern. Such topics as “Protecting Yourself while remaining Vulnerable,” and “When prayers go Unanswered,” have generated some exceptional conversations. The Yahoo Group URL is: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/awakenthewarrior/>

Last October, I attended and presented a book signing at the Georgia Highland Games at Stone Mountain Park, Atlanta, Georgia. At this event I met a woman by the name of Angela Davila by Divine Appointment. Seems Angela had been in a Jonah phase of her life and needed help getting to shore. When we met, she saw in me God’s paddle to take her to shore. Angela has been hosting a series of ‘Tea’s’ for some 100 women she calls her Prayer Warriors for a number of years. Our meeting led to her study of *Awaken the Warrior* with yours truly, and has resulted in my

being asked to speak/teach at her next 'Tea' on March 25th in Stone Mountain, Georgia. I have the distinction of being the first man to not only attend, but also speak at this, her sixth 'Tea.'

This coming May 18-26th, I have been invited to a 3 day conference in Texas and the opportunity to round out the week with a presentation at a prison, a church and possibly do a radio show. The scheduling for the appearances aren't completed yet, but I am assured it will be a busy week. This will also be my opportunity to visit the movers and shakers of the newly founded Match 2 Mentoring Outreach/Texas. I have accepted their invitation to become a member of their advisory board. This wonderful opportunity is being made possible by the generous support of Vicky Walters (just as the apostle Peter was supported by influential women, it seems I am also).

Most recently, contact has been established with the national director of the Knights of St. John, International, and I am working with them to found a commandarie in my parish. My application has been tendered and to expedite things, I am seeking investiture with a commandarie in Charlotte.

This is just the 'Cliff Notes' on what has been happening around here. For more information, I direct you to my website mentioned above.



Well, there you have it. A lot is happening with Accolade now, and I haven't said 'No' to any request I feel God has put before me.

This has not been without sacrifices on my part. It has effectively cost me my Dental Laboratory business to be available for the ministry. The lab has been my sole means of support, and over the last 7 years it has become increasingly difficult to juggle both the lab and the ministry. As the scripture says, no man can serve two masters. *Mt. 6:24, Lk. 16:13*. While I am seeking grant funding, none has turned up to date and going forward with the Warrior Center and staying on the road with the ministry will require financial support. If you like what you see this ministry doing, I would appreciate any support you can offer. God will honor you in your giving. *Mal. 3:7-12*.



In closing, please remember Nikki Moore, the young lady I met during the May Crusade while she was in the hospital undergoing treatment for cancer. A few weeks after my return from the January Crusade, Nikki was called home by the Father. Her memorial service was standing room only. Nikki fought the good fight, and I claim victory for and in her life! Her life counted for much as attested by the hundreds that bid her farewell. She will be missed and well remembered. I ask also that your prayer be with her mother, Lisa. Not only is she having to make it through this tough time of saying farewell to a beautiful child, but she herself is now battling cancer.

Peace and Joy be with you all~

In His service,

Philip Paul Sacco