

Division 2's Joe Brown Honored for Dedication to Prison Fellowship Ministry

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 15, 2003) When MTA's Joe Brown looks in the mirror, he sees a humble servant, a worker bee. He glances out the window and sees a world in need.

An assistant transportation manager at Crossroads Division 2, Brown is devoted to serving the needs of others by ministering to hardened yet lonely prison inmates by providing spiritual guidance and fellowship.

Brown's dedication to this calling has earned him the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year award from Prison Fellowship Ministry, a Christian outreach program for prisoners, victims and their families.

"The award was a surprise to me because all I did was give what I can to support the ministry and assist those in need," he says.

A friend at church introduced Brown to Prison Fellowship Ministry. "The ministry tickled my heart."

Ministering to prisoners

And soon afterward he was ministering to prisoners in Kern, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

"Flesh can be incarcerated but the spirit cannot," says Brown, who enjoys giving and receiving encouragement and fellowship from the inmates.

The prisoners Brown ministers to several weekends a month are glad they are not forgotten. They know he could be somewhere else, but he chooses to be with them.

On his most recent visit to Tehachapi Prison, two young inmates ran up to Brown and thanked him for the testimony he had shared with them. They said it had convinced them to accept God into their lives.

Planting the seed

"It's not me that caused their conversion," Brown says. "I plant the seed, and God does the watering, but it's nice to see a flower blooming."

His dedication to serving others extends beyond the prison walls and has aided him in serving as Division 2's assistant transportation manager. "Employees feel confident in sharing personal concerns about their lives with me, and we discuss the Word at times."

PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN



Division 2 Assistant Transportation Manager Joe Brown was awarded Outstanding Volunteer of the Year for his prison ministry.

Brown was born in Louisiana, and grew up with Christian parents who encouraged him to attend Sunday school and sing in the choir.

At home, Brown's family also is spiritual. His wife, Barbara, is very supportive of his prison ministry. They have two children, Paul and Brandi. Alvin, their middle child, died in March 2001.

"I'm willing to participate in Prison Fellowship Ministry as long as I am able to," Brown says. "That's the key, reaching out to people."

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