

Problems in Prisons

Audio Blog by Gregg Harris, President – FEBC

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The recent case of a pregnant British woman being held in a jail in the country of Laos has very rightly attracted international attention. Twenty-year-old Samantha Orobator, has been in a prison in Laos since August of last year. For many weeks, she has had no legal representation. An international charity sent a lawyer to assist in her defense, and their representative was finally able to have a meeting with the young woman, albeit in the presence of prison and government officials. She was arrested in August and accused of smuggling drugs, which in Laos as in many Asian countries, carries the death penalty. She became pregnant while in prison and it is still uncertain whether or not she was sexually assaulted while in custody. The sad details of her case, highlights the plight of hundreds of thousands of people in prisons throughout Asia. Prison conditions in certain Asian countries can be appalling, with inmates having no rights of any kind.

But there is beacon of hope that God uses to shine into some of the darkest places on earth—Christian missionary radio. You see, radio has the power to penetrate prison walls and bring the healing hope of the Gospel into the hearts of those who often feel completely alone and cut off. FEBC and our World by Radio partners receive many reports of God’s activity in prisons around the world. Often, we have heard of churches being formed by prisoners who gather around a radio to receive spiritual encouragement.

In an Asian country that I will not name due to security reasons, there is a prison where God has been moving powerfully to change in-mates lives through radio broadcasts. After seeing many inmates coming to faith by listening to programs in their mother tongue, prison officials at this facility did something completely unexpected. They contacted the producer of the radio program and informed him that they were installing a water storage tank at the prison. The superintendent indicated that they were willing to allow the new water tank to be used for baptisms because so many prisoners were finding Christ as their Savior!

Many years ago, a notorious gang leader in the Philippines was sent to prison. During his early days in jail, he was given a portable radio. Since it was pre-tuned to a Christian radio station, he listened to the ministry’s broadcasts as he sat in his prison cell. The Bible stories, Christian songs, and messages of love and redemption so touched his heart that he eventually decided to put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Today, he has been released for prison and is serving the Lord by singing in concerts and giving his testimony throughout the Philippines.

These are just a few of the many stories of God’s powerful work in prisons through the medium of Christian radio. The needs are tremendous, and the opportunities are even greater. Hebrews 13:3 exhorts us to “Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” As you obey this command, you can be encouraged to know that God’s Word is being sent deep into the heart of many dark and hopeless prisons by Christian radio broadcasters around the world. In such remote and isolated settings, where many feel completely forgotten, a simple transistor radio can become a beacon of hope, bringing new spiritual life.

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