

Looking Back Over 25 years at Prison Mission Association

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**PMA
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Sitting at my overflowing desk, with a cooling Chai Tea in my hand, I can't help but be amazed about how fast the past twenty-five years have flown by and how many changes have taken place within PMA during those years.

I started working in the PMA office when Pat Bigelow passed away. Vernon Bigelow was the director, and then Nathan Whitham took his place shortly after that. Now I am working with my fifth director. We kept records on handwritten 3X5 cards in shoeboxes. Of course, now everything is computerized on a fancy database.

Along with our national support base, back then, we had one community church in Port Orchard supporting our ministry; currently, we have added five more neighboring churches supplying workers and financial support. Several office workers have come and gone; one, Gladys Hanson, served over twenty-five years. Nine God promoted to glory. Now, we are losing another **faithful servant of twenty-four years**. It was a sad day when Celeste Wedding announced she is moving to Arizona. She has been a leading



Thank you, Celeste Wedding for 24 years!

processor on Tuesdays and Thursdays for a long time. On the other hand, we just added another corrector, Cheryl Shelton.

Through the years, we have added a lot of new reading materials to accompany our lessons. We have been blessed to partner with The Berean Searchlight, Our Daily Bread, Bible Doctrines to Live By, booklets by Gary & Linda Miller, and over 30 pamphlets written by Andy Hollier, missionary to Australia. Many churches send us their leftover bulletin inserts like *Have a Great Day* and *Power For Living*.

Changes in prison procedures have also caused changes at the office. No longer can our correctors use red ink; now, it's only black or blue. We can't send colored materials to many prisons, only black and white—no more labels on envelopes going into prisons. We have to print certificates on plain white paper, not the woven ivory we used to use. Some prisons have started using outside vendors for books which means we cannot send books to prisoners, and we have to send mail to Florida for prisoners in Pennsylvania.

Then there is the multitude of changes the post office makes regularly. Since we get the best price by automating our mail, we also have to abide by a notebook of rules and regulations that come with it.

One recent change has been a by-product of the COVID-19 virus. I've read there is a decline in church attendance, but for PMA, **we have had a significant increase in the number of prisoners doing lessons.**

It is with a great deal of emotion that I step away as Operations Manager of PMA. I love almost every part of this ministry and will miss my full-time role. But, I will be volunteering during the week, so I will still be around.

I've been praying for a person to take my place so I can retire, and I found her. Her name is Simone Montfort. I've known her from the Grace Bible Church in Port Orchard for many years, and we both share the same hobby of quilting.

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Simone comes with a variety of office experiences. She also loves the Lord and desires to serve Him. She will be a great Operations Manager for PMA. In working with her training for this job, she and I think a lot alike, and yet she can bring some new perspective to the job. I praise God and thank Him for bringing her to my mind. Please pray for her as there is a lot to learn about the office and the ministry.

Our Spanish ministry has changed a lot in the past twenty-five years too. We've had five different Spanish Directors, and now the ministry is being handled from the home office. But, even with all the changes, we've made great strides in improving it. Be-

fore, there was no rhyme or rhythm to the Spanish lessons' formatting; and some of them didn't have answer keys. I arranged them in good order and hope to add new studies we don't presently have. I'm still working on the answer keys with the help of Jenny Salomon and Cathy Hansen, missionary to Bolivia. We still need nineteen of our English lessons translated into Spanish.

I've always said the inmates and their needs take priority over everything else. So, reading their testimonies is always a highlight of my day. I picked one final one that is typical of what I get to read daily.

"Recognizing the dispensations is something new to me.

I never looked at the Bible in this way. Learning as I study your lesson is helping me understand the Bible more, I enjoy it, and I have enjoyed all of the lessons you have sent me. I thank you and everyone at PMA." Willie

Thank you to the many who have kept in touch over the years with inspiring cards and encouraging notes. I will miss your friendly comments. Thank you for following Karen's Korner for all these years and have prayed for me as God prompted your heart.

My prayer for all of us at PMA: I pray we would be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord, and as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we will become more and more like Him, 2 Corinthians 3:18. Blessings, Karen



Meet Simone Monfort New PMA Operations Manager

I grew up in a Christian home. Since my dad was in the Air Force, we moved around a lot. I graduated high school in Hawaii and college in California. I moved to Colorado Springs, where I renewed my relationship with Jesus. I planned on staying there, until I met my husband through a mutual friend.

We moved to Germany with the Air Force, where our daughter

Bethany was born. My husband got out of the Air Force and started working as a Safety Manager for a construction company, beginning in Los Angeles, where our son Ben was born. We moved around the country every few years with his job.

We moved to Washington in 2004 when my husband became disabled due to injuries sustained in the military and was no longer able to work. We chose Washington because my parents lived in Bremerton. Our children are now in their late 20's, and my parents have both passed, but we still love this area and plan to stay.

I have worked a variety of clerical jobs as we have moved around in many different fields. I feel so blessed that the Lord brought me to PMA. I feel like my work is important and meaningful. This is the first job that I have had where I look forward to coming to work. I love feeling like I have a purpose and can do something for God.

Praise and Prayer Points

Praise God for answers to Prayer:

- ◆ Praise the Lord for our new staff person, Simone, being trained to be our new Operations Manager at the PMA home office. Pray for Karen Bodeutsch who is planning to retire this year. **Thank YOU Karen for 25 years!!**
- ◆ Praise God for several new BCF hubs since our last newsletter. We have **over 30 BCF regional hubs now around the country and overseas**. The newest ones are in Uganda, Canada and Mozambique.
- ◆ Praise God for **new outreach through the Edovo digital tablets around the country that will offer PMA lessons and podcasts**, which will be on 20,000 tablets and possibly more by end of this year. www.edovo.com

Prayer

- ◆ Pray for our **bilingual volunteers**, Elsa Franco, correcting of the Spanish lessons. Also our other bilingual helpers: Jenny, Irma, Linda, and Cathy.
- ◆ For God to call key leaders within the prisons to help distribute/correct lessons and plant prison churches.