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PRISON EVANGELISM

Prison Evangelism's Inspiring Graphic-style Book Outreach Given National Spotlight

CBN broadcast spurs support for David Howell's mission to 'transform lives and close prisons;' produces tearful personal encounter

HOUSTON—A reformed businessman's ambitious plan to bring revival to America's prisons through a simple graphic-style book has been given a major boost with national exposure for his unusual outreach.

The success of David Howell's *How to Be a Child of God* publication in bringing those behind bars to Christ was recently spotlighted in a widely viewed 700 Club [report on CBN](#) (Christian Broadcasting Network). The network gained rare access when it visited Eastham Unit in Lovelady, Texas, to speak with prisoners impacted by Howell's Prison Evangelism ministry.

Over the past few years, Howell has mailed more than 110,000 copies of the 52-page book to prison chaplains across the country, receiving countless letters from prisoners who have prayed to receive Christ as a result and pledged to turn their lives around.

"We have received a lot of responses following the broadcast, from people saying how they are glad for what we are doing," said Howell. Among the emails was one from a wife of a prisoner interviewed by CBN, who wrote, "I just wanted to reach out to you and thank for your ministry... to tell you what a blessing you are."

Howell hopes the coverage will mean more support for his effort to distribute an additional 600,000 free copies of *How to Be a Child of God* nationwide. Prison Evangelism says that at just 54 cents a mailing, the book produces a 7,000-to-1 return on investment for prisoners who turn over a new leaf and don't return to prison. It costs an average \$31,000 a year to house and feed each offender.

"That book changed my life," inmate Keith Gilstrap told CBN at Eastham. "I wasn't a child of God until I read that book." When he returned home, it would be as a new man, he said.

Though Howell receives many letters from prisoners, the CBN report—for which he accompanied the network to Eastham—gave him the rare opportunity to meet face-to-face some of those impacted by his ministry.

"It was very moving," he said. "I teared up when one of them said how the book had helped him tell his story and witness to others—that's what it's all about, sharing the good news with others."

In his CBN interview, Howell noted that he shared a similar background to some of those he was now trying to reach. "The only difference is he's in prison, and I'm not," he said.

The owner of Houston-based pipeline appraisal specialists Pipeline Equities, Howell began working in the oil and gas industry as a 14-year-old roughneck. Before becoming a Christian in 1984, he was lost in alcohol and wayward living.

Prison Evangelism, Inc. (www.prison evangelism.com) — “changing hearts, transforming lives”—was founded in 2010 to distribute *How to Be a Child of God* and companion pieces *Seeking God Through Prayer & Meditation* and *Fully Alive and Finally Free*.

With Prison Evangelism research showing that one in 10 people who read the 52-page book makes a commitment to Christ, if the national campaign saw a similar response and those impacted did not return to prison, the Houston-based ministry calculates that annual savings to taxpayers would be \$2.1 billion. Additionally, the reduced inmate population would be equivalent to closing 60 prisons.

Now 77, Howell credits the impact of the publications, written at a sixth-grade reading level, to their simple language and the emphasis on being transformed by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

“These are people who have come to an end of themselves, and that is where all of us must come before we are willing to accept the need for a power greater than ourselves,” he said.

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Prison Evangelism (www.prison evangelism.com) is a faith-based nonprofit committed to transforming and rehabilitating offenders through the distribution of “How to Be a Child of God” and other evangelistic and discipleship materials designed to help prisoners find new purpose and power in life through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

PHOTO CUTLINE: Former Prison Evangelism “roughneck” David Howell [interviewed](#) by CBN reporter John Jessup about how Howell's *How to Be a Child of God* guidebook is “transforming lives and closing prisons.”

To schedule an interview with David Howell, contact:

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Link to CBN story: <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2017/august/from-crude-oil-and-crude-living-to-prison-evangelist>