



# IPM News



Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivendanta Swami Prabhupada

**JANUARY 2010** ISKCON Prison Ministry Newsletter

**Changing Lives From the Inside Out!**

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## Overview of the year 2009 at IPM

by Bhakti-lata Dasi

Another year has passed, during which the prison ministry consistently nurtured the devotion of hundreds of inmates. New inmates were introduced to Krsna consciousness, taking to the chanting of the holy name seriously, while more established inmate bhaktas deepened their commitment by chanting and studying more seriously, and by giving Krsna consciousness to other inmates.

Candramauli Swami has compiled a book about ISKCON Prison Ministry. This book, entitled, *Holy Jail*, is due to come out for Nityananda's appearance day. Stay tuned!

**NEW ADDITION!** We have a new fund-raising website for IPM at: <http://ipm.bbnow.org/>

This small website will give you basic information about our program and it makes it very easy for you to give a donation either through PayPal or credit card. Please take the time to visit this link and to share it with your friends. We are planning to set up a more extensive IPM website in the year 2010.

Last June, I revived the **Freedom Newsletter** which had been discontinued for over a year, as the volunteer in charge of it couldn't continue his service. This newsletter is distributed to the inmates, who very much appreciate it. One inmate remarked, "*This newsletter is like a mini BTG!*" Our dear Bhavananda Dasa, an IPM volunteer based in Arkansas, is now in charge of this very important newsletter, and Candramauli Swami and Candrasekhara are helping with the editing process.

Also last June, alongside the *Freedom Newsletter*, I launched this monthly **IPM NEWS**, so that the community of devotees can share in the prison preaching bliss.

2009, however, had its share of heartache, as one of the pillars of the ministry, Shyama Priya Dasi, left her body in April, albeit under the most auspicious circumstances. She has left a lifelong impression in the hearts of

devotees, inmates and chaplains as well. To this day, inmates regularly refer to her influence in their life. In a letter I received last week, an inmate wrote:

*“Recently, I have spent some time preaching and giving many BTGs out. So if you wish, you may send small books that I will be more than glad to give out. And upon my release, I want to be a part of the prison ministry. I feel this is my duty, because I was actually raised by Mother Shyama Priya, who is our mother, and Mukta Kesa Dasa, who always encouraged me to become more purified for my future work in Krsna consciousness. Surely, I have never once forgotten the instructions of either of them.”*

**Kevin L. Brown**  
**Jackson, GA**

And Chaplain Hendricks, from Graceville, Florida, just wrote me, *“Shyama Priya was always very helpful to us in obtaining printed materials for our inmates who practice the Hare Krsna faith.”*

In keeping with her spirit, volunteers have pushed on with the prison preaching, sending hundreds of books, beads and CDs to inmates. New volunteers have also stepped up to correspond with inmates.

The prison ministry preaching is ever expanding, as inmates give books to their prison neighbors and word of mouth carries Prabhupada’s message to many more. Each book sent, each inmate touched, has a ripple effect, the magnitude of which only Lord Caitanya can fully understand. IPM volunteers can never say, at the end of the day, “my work is done”; there is always more letters coming in, more questions to be answered, more realizations to marvel at, and more material to send. Everyday feels like Christmas, as we share Prabhupada’s **matchless gifts** with everyone!

IPM is an infinite well of preaching opportunities! Not a dull day at IPM!

We pray that Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya bless IPM to continue to grow and expand, transforming the lives of hundred more inmates during the year 2010, making the unfortunate fortunate.



An historical landmark; the storefront where Prabhupada started his movement, giving everyone the matchless gifts of Krsna consciousness

# Keeping inmates' spiritual life alive through correspondence

By Candrasekhara Dasa

It was 1970 and Srila Prabhupada wrote the devotees in Florida to help Mr. Fugate, who lived some distance away from the temple. The devotees were to keep his Krsna consciousness alive, teaching through correspondence.

There are many activities In Lord Caitanya's sankirtan movement and prison preaching has its own flavor, its own particular sweetness. As I write to an inmate, I feel I am sitting, talking to a friend. It is a spiritual counseling as I guide and encourage, giving light and direction.

In Mayapura, Srila Prabhupada said, "*Ustāḍī bocā: although your eyes were blind, you are now the coach.*" As I teach, I learn; as I learn, I act in knowledge. This, then, is Vaisnava love- we share our hearts and realizations. We help each other grow closer to Krsna. Acting as siksa guru, we give inspiration and receive inspiration in return, from exceptional bhaktas.

There may be many occupations within this world, but there is no higher vocation than being a teacher of Krsna consciousness.

*"For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear."* Bhagavad-Gita, chapter 18, verses 68-69

Srila Prabhupada is maha-patita-pavana-deva. He sees the best in the worst.

If the Wiccans, Mayavadis, Christians, and Saivaites have prison ministries, shouldn't the compassionate Vaisnavas? Shouldn't the para-upakara bhaktas establish prison ministries in every country of the world?

Prabhupada said it takes gallons of blood to make one devotee. In that spirit, Shyama Priya told me in the past, "Be very careful what you say. This could be this living entitie's one chance at self-realization in a very long time." Volunteers at IPM are therefore very careful in their dealing with the inmates, treating them with respect, compassion, and genuine care. Srutadeva Dasa, an IPM volunteer, told me he now prays before each letter he writes; this preaching program is a perfect opportunity to model Vaisnava qualities.

Let us help keep the spiritual lives of our IPM inmate yogis energized by Vaisnava sanga and Krsna katha.

Maha patita-pavana deva Srila Prabhupada, ki jaya!



## Prison Ministry Program Outside USA

Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2009, for the first time in the history of Spain's prisons, and may be in Europe, the prisoners as well their guards ate a full classic prasadam lunch meal.

Krishna Kripa Dasa and his wife Radhapriya Dasi, with the help of a team of prisoners, cooked and served prasadam to 400 people. Inmates as well their guards, the prison's director, other authorities and some reporters really appreciated the prasadam and there were no leftovers!

The director also received Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita, and others authorities were given The Science of Self-realization. The program was well covered by local and national newspapers, printing full pages and pictures.



To read the full article and see more pictures, go to:  
<http://www.dandavats.com/?p=7940>

## A Big Thank You to Our Donors!

We are very grateful for the following devotees for their support:

Sashi Raina; Bhavananda Dasa; Linda, Radha and Mickey Singer; Bhakta Gary Griffin; Kanva Dasa; Katrin Banks; Candra Dasa, Indumati Dasi and Ekanatha Dasa.

We also want to thank *Sacred Threads* for shipping boxes for IPM, and Kapilasva Dasa, Dwarkadisa Dasa and Jita Shakti Dasi for donating books.

Special thanks to **Bhakta Gary Griffin**, who so very much appreciates all of what IPM is giving him. He says:

***"I know it's a pittance compared to all you've done for me, but my glamorous prison job only pays two dollars a day. It's actually taken me several months to save that hundred bucks."***

This testifies, beyond the shadow of a doubt, to the value IPM has in the inmates' lives. Please join forces with us and support this great preaching mission of Lord Caitanya and help spread His mercy to the unfortunate souls! Please contact Mukunda Dasa or Bhakti-lata Dasi at:

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## What inmates have to say

“Hey, I am on a constant roll of chanting a full 2 hours a day. ☺ It’s fun to chant and I totally enjoy it. I can’t get enough of this chanting. When I don’t chant I pick up the Gita and read the nectar. I am going through the Gita page by page and I’ve gone through it twice already; I am now on my third cycle. My first time through, I just read the texts and the second time, only the purports. Now I am reading both text and purports. Next I am going to pick a random chapter, dissect it and pull all the nectar out of it.”

**Justin Houghtaling**  
Woodstock, IL

“The many books from ISKCON are the bread and butter for my conditioned soul. I owe every level of gratitude to the best writer of Vedic truth, to our holy spiritual master, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. In 1990, I made Krsna (God, at the time) a promise to never stop praying each and every day to the best of my ability, trusting in his love no matter what. All I wish to tell you is that when you desire the Lord even a little, He will cause you to taste more of His love. Today I am proud to say that in my heart is the Vishnu form, directing and keeping up with love I have to give the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, as I pray each day to Him.”

**Richard E. Trice**  
Jesup, Georgia

“Yes, I keep Krishna on my mind daily. I choose the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Through my devotional service, Krsna has revealed to me wonderful things. He has showed me the doors, or gates, to the spiritual world. I have learned and seen so much in the last 30 months. I have a Srimad-Bhagavatam and I love the pastime stories of Krsna. The transcendental bliss I get from reading and chanting is indescribable. I will be waiting for the books and BTGs; I appreciate them highly.”

**Farrat Garnett**  
Delano, Georgia



“The association and support that the ministry provides is deeply appreciated I assure you.

I am re-reading *Memories* vol. 1. Having never had the opportunity for any vapu association with Srila Prabhupada, it is wonderful to get his vani association from those who did. When I read it, I sometimes laugh and sometimes cry. I feel like I know him a little bit from having read the *Memories* books.”

**Bhakta Carl Sheppard**  
Chipley, Florida

“My Krsna consciousness has been just a joy in recent weeks in spite (almost) of the situations I’ve found myself in. As for sharing insights, I can see where for so long I’ve been running from Krsna and now feel a pull toward Him.

Thanks so much for the *Nectar of Devotion*. I got it and have been devouring it ever since.”

**Jerry Moffit**

“It’ll be wonderful when Daru and Nimai visit. I’ve never before met a free-world devotee. It’ll be very exciting.

We’re putting more variety and entertainment into our Monday morning sessions because it’s popular with those not yet surrendered to Krsna. Being non-sectarian, we try to appeal to all people to induce them to love God, and to always think of God. For those lacking knowledge, we offer a simple formula attainable by anyone in Kali-yuga and tell them: chant Hare Krsna and your life will be sublime! Haribol!”

**Gerald Niles**  
Graceville, Florida

# December 2009 Preaching Report !



Maha-Big: 34  
Big hardbound: 15  
Big softbound: 24  
Medium: 57  
Small: 78  
Magazines: 10  
**TOTAL: 218**

**BTGs: 322**  
**BOOKS written by devotees other  
than Srila Prabhupada: 33**

**Other Material:**  
164 pamphlets  
83 BBT Calendars 2010  
6x Japa beads  
4 bead bags  
6 altar pictures  
2 counter beads  
Neck bead  
Audio CD

This is the activity report of, Candra Dasa, Candrasekhara Dasa, Bhakti-lata Dasi, Bhakta David, and Bhakta Jonathan.

**Want to help?** ISKCON Prison Ministry has a variety of needs you can help with:

1) We need enthusiastic **pen-pal preachers**. You can write one or more inmates: if you are interested, please contact us and we will discuss it with you!

2) You can become part of our *Adopt-an-Inmate* program by:

- becoming a regular IPM monthly donor.
- Giving an occasional or even a one-time donation (every dollar makes a difference in an inmate's life).
- sponsoring the postage for the *Freedom Newsletter*: \$100 a month

3) Have a little bit of time and know how to type? Please contact us: we have a lot of quotes from inmate letters that need typing.

4) Donate:

- **BOOKS:**  
All books are welcome. At this moment, we especially need:  
Bhagavad-Gita; Krsna Book; Nectar of Devotion; Nectar of Instruction; Science of Self-Realization; Krsna Book
- Krsna conscious **CDs and DVDs**: give the gift of transcendental sound!
- Krsna conscious **pictures**. Most of us have more devotional pictures than we really need; send them to us so inmates can look through these windows to the spiritual world.

If you are inspired by this preaching program and desire to help in any way, please contact Mukunda Dasa or Bhakti-lata Dasi at: **ISKCON Prison Ministry**, PO Box 2676, Alachua, FL 32616-2676

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