



God's Special Time

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Record Prison Population, Costs Proves Need For Kairos**

**ORLANDO, Fla.** – At the end of 2006, the United States Justice Department announced that the population of the nation's prisons and jails had reached an all time high at more than 2.2 million inmates. After sharp increases in the 1980s and 1990s, the incarceration rate has recently grown at a slower pace. Part of this slower paced trend could be the result in lower recidivism rates which is, in part, due to the effective ministering to the incarcerated by such programs as Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc.

Kairos is a prison ministry widely recognized for its success in changing attitudes and life-long behavior in men and women who are incarcerated in our nation's jails and prisons. Each year more than 25,000 highly trained volunteers facilitate weekend programs and follow-up care that to date has impacted more than 170,000 prisoners and their families.

"The benefits of the Kairos program show up in a safer prison environment and lowered recidivism rates," said John Thompson, Executive Director of Kairos. "Our program is a Christ-centered program made up of thousands of volunteers who commit to more than a year of training and involvement. The result is a program of reform that is totally free of cost to the criminal justice system."

Kairos is an outgrowth of the Christian renewal movement called Cursillo (Spanish for "little course."). The first prison Cursillo was held in Florida in 1976 at the Union Correctional Institution in Raiford. By 1979, Kairos became an independent, non-profit, ecumenical Christian

organization. Today Kairos is active in 31 states, United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Kairos leaders work with prison officials to identify key inmates, most often those considered leaders among their prison populations, to participate in a Kairos three-day weekend. The inmates work in small groups with trained Kairos volunteers participating in discussions, meditation and ministry education. After their weekend experience, Kairos participants receive on-site follow-up visits with Kairos volunteers. The Kairos participants also are encouraged to meet in small groups for continued growth and support on a more frequent basis.

In addition to its core program of prison ministry, Kairos offers programs for family members and loved ones of the incarcerated (Kairos Outside) and programs for youthful offenders (Kairos Torch).

The national headquarters for Kairos Prison Ministry are located in Winter Park, Fla. The full-time staff of nine, along with 25,000 plus volunteers, presents 500 to 600 weekends in prisons each year.

For more information on Kairos Prison Ministry, call (407) 629-4948 or visit the Kairos website at <http://www.kairosprisonministry.org>

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