

Encounter With an Angel in Prison?

By: George W. Dreachslin

I was a prisoner at one of Michigan's state prisons. It was July 2003. I had been locked up there for about six years at the time. I was a harmonica player with a Christian praise team for almost as long. Our group, called God's Country, would often meet on the yard to practice. We had a place in the grass that we would sit, but on this day in July, there was an open picnic table.

As the band was busy tuning our instruments, a younger inmate came up to the table and said to me, "I'd like to talk to you over here for a minute." He gestured to a place about 20 feet away where several of his buddies were mulling around. I told him that I would come over and talk as soon as I was tuned up. I had been a teacher's aide in the school for several years and thought that he might have a question having to do with the GED.

Upon finishing tuning a guitar that I left hanging around my neck but leaving my harmonicas and songbook on the picnic table, I walked over to talk with the young inmate. His friends had moved several feet away, except for one, and he was quickly pacing back and forth nearby. The young inmate said, "That table is ours," as he motioned toward the picnic table the praise team sat at. "We have something we need to do there," he went on to say. I told him that was fine and that they could have the table. My group heard what was said and was already moving from the table, going to the place in the grass where we usually sat. I walked back over to the table to get my harmonicas and songbook.

The young inmate and the man who had been pacing nearby followed me to the table. When we got to the table, the man who had been pacing asked, "Is this where you were sitting?" and he gestured to the place at the table where I had been. I answered, "Yes."

He said, "Take a seat. I'd like to talk with you for a minute." I sat down. The young man stood on my right, while the man who had been pacing stood in front of me. The rest of their group was standing nearby.

No sooner had I sat down and looked up at the man in front of me when his fist, with a heavy object wrapped in it, came down and hit me across the nose and forehead. At that same time, the younger inmate on my right hit me in the ear and the side of my head. I fell forward with enough force to crack the back of my guitar.

I started bleeding profusely from my nose, and I was furious. I looked up at the man in front of me and he began to rise from the table. It was in my mind to destroy him. In the past, I had a short temper and never backed down from a fight, but ... as I started to rise, I noticed that someone was sitting next to me on the picnic table. He was an old man with a long, gray-white beard. He put his hand on my shoulder, and with a slight push...sat me back on the table. An instant calm came over me, and as I looked over at him, he said, "No. Don't."

I'm not sure how long I sat there, but it couldn't have been too long. When I did look up again, the men who had hit me were no longer there. I looked over to where our band was sitting and I saw that the man who had hit me in the nose was squaring off with another member of our band. I jumped from the bench and ran to where they were. I pointed at the other band member and said, "No! Don't!" – the same words that were just said to me.

The band member immediately backed off, and the man who had hit me turned to face me, and said, "Do you want a piece of me now?!" I said, "No. I just want you to leave."

To my surprise, he and his group walked off. Some of the people who were there at the time got the numbers off from my attacker's clothes. It turned out that the numbers they were wearing were numbers of inmates that had left the facility long ago. The whole attack had been planned for some time.

I found out soon thereafter that no one else who was there saw the man with the gray-white beard sitting at the picnic table that told me not to fight back. I was also told by staff members that if I had fought back,

there would have been a riot on the yard. I was also told that it was believed that the group that attacked me was a prison militant group that doesn't like Christians.

I was taken by guards to health care and was given medical attention. I was put into segregation and six days later was transferred to another facility. I did not receive any tickets, because for the first time in my life, I had done the right thing. I know that the person, or personage, who talked to me...who calmed me down at that picnic table...was sent by God.

Although I was saved at the time, this incident brought me closer to God than I had ever been before. I even seem to now have a better understanding of scripture every time I read it. That day in July 2003 truly impacted my life, to the glory of God!

(See: Hebrews 13:2-3.)

George can be contacted by writing:

George Dreachslin

4218 Maple Street

P.O. Box 276

Brown City, MI 48416