



Prison
Ministry

Freedom Through Truth

December 2005

From the Pen of Chaplain Baggett

Will You Help?



Over the years that we have been involved in this work there have been many high points. Our first baptism, the year we baptized nearly 400 people at this camp, the development of the Freedom Through Truth books, Our first Honor Dorm, and the addition of New Life Behavior to our Honor Dorm Curriculum are just a few of these high points.

Another high point in this work has been the college program for the residents of our Honor Dorms. Many of the men that come into corrections do not have even a high school diploma. Calhoun College provides a GED program for those wishing to complete their high school requirements. However, up until recently, there was no opportunity for advanced education except through the trade school program. Beacon University would change that.

Actually, our first college courses were offered through Christian Life School of Theology (CLST), beginning in April, 2002. Sometime in 2005, CLST merged with Beacon University and this is the college through which our students participate. In November we had our first graduation exercise at Limestone with two receiving their Masters Degree, one receiving a Bachelors degree, two receiving

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Associate Degrees and several receiving certificates.

As excited as we are with this college program, we're disappointed that we have not been able to find a school among the brotherhood that is willing to work with us in providing material for our college program. We've talked to people at several schools and have found that either they're just not interested, or that the cost is so high it is beyond our reach. There are no funds provided by the State for such schooling.

The real purpose of this article is to encourage you to help us in the following ways:

- 1) Find a school(s) that has a long distance college program
- 2) One that will provide the material at a reduced, affordable cost; and,
- 3) Help us find individuals or groups that will be willing to sponsor students in this program.

If you can help us with the above request, we will try to find individuals that have studied with us regarding the truth of the scriptures, and men that we think will be good prospects for this type of study.

We hope that you will pray about this matter, and that you will help us achieve this goal.
(*Charles E. Baggett, Chaplain—Limestone Correctional Facility*)

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Mary died much too soon. Her parents died when she was young and she had to become the parent for her younger brother and sister. Long hard hours, too little sleep, constant financial struggles and improper nutrition took their toll. As she lay dying she moaned to her younger brother who was stroking her thin calloused hand, "What can I show my Lord for the life he has given me?" He said, "Show him your hands."

After his resurrection Jesus appeared to ten of his disciples in an upper room and Thomas was absent. When told of the appearance, Thomas said, "Unless I see his hands I won't

believe.” A week later Jesus appeared to the disciples with Thomas present and said to Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands” (John 20:27). Thomas answered, “My Lord and my God.”

Peter said of Jesus “he went about doing good” (Acts 10:39). His hands healed, his hands blessed, his hands lifted up others and his hands sacrificed for others. To be like Jesus we must reach out with our hands to serve others. It has been said, “Men do not care how much we know until they know how much we care.” The power of Jesus’ teaching was he backed it up with action. Luke said he had written of all that Jesus “began both to do and to teach” (Acts 1;1).

The most powerful lessons we teach are by our actions. A minister friend of mine told of being a boy in Germany after World War II. His family was starving and he went out each day in search of food. Someone told him he could go to the church of Christ and they would feed him without preaching to him. He wanted this because he was a skeptic. Each day he threw away the literature they gave him until one bitterly cold day he went in without any shoes except rags wrapped around his feet. Otis Gatewood the minister saw his feet, sat down, took off his shoes and gave them to Hans. Hans was then interested in what the minister had to say and was converted. He then gave his life to preaching the gospel.

Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46 gives us a preview scene of the Judgment. Sheep were placed on the right and goats on the left. The division was made on how they had “used their hands.” Read this passage slowly and insert after each “I was....” “Show me your hands.” “I was in prison [Show me your hands].” (*E.R. Brannon—Minister of Involvement, Madison Church of Christ*)

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33rd Annual Prison Ministry Workshop

June 14—16, 2006

Hosted by Midwest Church of Christ

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Baptisms for 2006 at Limestone Correctional Facility : 5

Our Conduct at the Cross

It's a somber scene. Nails the size of tent pegs bite into a wooden beam after piercing the soft flesh of God's Son. In moments the wood, along with the ground underneath it, is soaked red. Involuntary moans spray from the Master's mouth, bringing only shouts of derision from the mouths of the crowd surrounding Him. A few more smacks of the soldier's mallet and Jesus' feet are pinned, completing the bloody preparation. Next, the cross is erected and dropped into a hole—the impact tearing the already quivering muscle tissue of the crucified One. Again the crowd shouts, cheering on the execution.

I've watched this scene before—several times, in fact. Weekly, I linger on its painful memory and try to picture the murder that saved my soul. But just recently, while witnessing these proceedings in my imagination, I was struck with a question: Where is Peter?

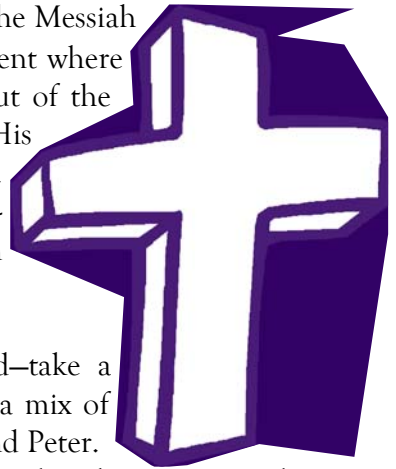
Rash, unpredictable, impulsive Peter—where is he? The Messiah is being raised up on a cross and *murdered*—this is the moment where you'd expect the brash fisherman from Galilee to jump out of the crowd, rush up to the cross and start pulling at the nails in His Master's feet, screaming for the Romans to let Jesus down. This is where I wait for Peter to do something stupid, something foolish, something motivated by a heart void of reason and full of love.

But he doesn't.

He doesn't act...because he isn't there. Go ahead—take a mini-census at this mega-moment. You'll find Mary, John, a mix of mourning friends and celebrating enemies, but you won't find Peter.

Where is he? No telling. Maybe he went fishing to clear his mind. Perhaps he's at home paying some bills. Of course, he might be in a dark Jerusalem alley staggering in a fog of shame and regret. Wherever he is, whatever he's doing, here's the point: Peter's not with Jesus.

This is Christ's darkest hour. This is the Teacher's most excruciating test. This is a time when the Mighty Counselor needs some serious comfort. And this is the moment when Peter walks away.



Disappointing? Yes. Unfortunate? Without a doubt. Tragic, even? Sure. But unfamiliar? Probably not.

Chances are, you and I have done exactly what Peter did—and we’ve done it more than once. Just like Peter, we’ve left our Lord alone—whether it was failing to defend Him at work, or failing to share Him at school, or failing to obey Him at home, we walked away when Jesus needed us.

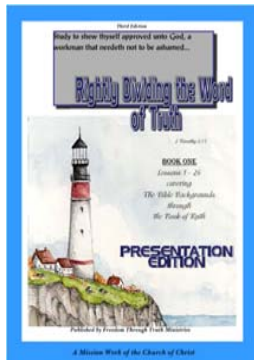
Thankfully, He’s a God of second chances. Just because we fail Him once doesn’t mean we’ve failed Him forever. Tomorrow comes and with it comes a dozen more chances to defend, share, and obey our Lord.

The newsletter you’re reading is one of those exact opportunities. The work going on at Limestone Prison is simply an effort to be where Jesus needs us. I’m convinced that any outsider would be amazed at the spiritual interest shown inside those walls. I’m amazed at the opportunity for kingdom work this ministry provides. And I’m confident that this outlet can give you the perfect “second chance” to stand with Jesus.

Support this ministry. Contribute funds, teach a class, mentor inmates—there are plenty of ways to support your Lord by supporting His work at Limestone. Next time you have the chance, do what Peter didn’t—break through the crowd, fall at the cross, and be there when Jesus needs you most. *(Justin Gerhardt—Preacher, Shiloh Church of Christ)*



*The Third Edition of **Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth** has been completed! There are Twelve quarter guides, Two Teacher’s Manuals, a Study on Islam, and Judges and Ruth. All of them are available on CD as well as in hard copy.*



New maps, charts, and graphics have been added to improve the quality. Additionally a new layout has been given to the whole series, to make it more readable and enjoyable. We think that they will greatly increase your enjoyment of the study of God’s Holy Word.

*The CD format is WORD 2000, and Adobe Reader. If you need these in Spanish—let us know—and we will gladly send you a CD in that language as well. Help us to serve you in whatever way that we can. We are **honored** by the opportunity.*

*There is **NO CHARGE** for these materials!*

The Church in Honor Dorm 16

Two years ago, the Madison Church of Christ started a congregation in Honor Dorm 16 shortly after assuming sponsorship of this faith-based honor dorm. The first congregation, serving the whole camp, continues to meet in the main chapel of the Limestone Correctional Facility. The Madison congregation is responsible for conducting the services on the first, third, and fifth Sundays. About six men from the Madison congregation alternate presenting the lessons. Each time we meet, we have at least three brothers from Madison present. The Hartselle congregation participates on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

Honor Dorm 16 has its own in-house chapel which holds 50-60 men. Attendance varies each Sunday, but regardless of this, all who are present are uplifted and encouraged. We meet from 2-3:30 in the afternoon with plenty of time for fellowship before and after each assembly. We have many brothers in Honor Dorm 16 even though several have been released or transferred to other facilities. Just as we have unfaithful members at Madison, we do have brothers in Dorm 16 who choose not to assemble with us regularly.

During this time of fellowship, we express our love and compassion to these brothers in Christ just as we would to any brother or sister at the Madison congregation. We do not see white uniforms, we simply see brothers in Christ.

We try to involve as many brothers from Dorm 16 as possible. Today, February 5, we had a very uplifting assembly. We had about 10 men take part by reading from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The brothers are always excited when participating in the services. Each Sunday, the Men in White serve the Lord's Supper. The singing is lead by one of the brothers and improves each time we meet.

During the week, our brothers are exposed to different religions and false doctrines, so through our New Life Behavior classes, personal studies, and Sunday services we try to present the truth directly from the Word of God. We place great emphasis on the faithful brothers going back into the dorm to live the Christian life and to teach others. They must strive to be great men of faith and integrity so that others will take them seriously and find them genuine as they share the good news of Christ. We encourage them to meet as brothers during the week to strengthen one another and bear each other's burdens. We urge them to bond and become a "Band of Brothers".

We have made many disciples. As hard as it is to get someone to the point of becoming a Child of God through the new birth, it is even more difficult to help them continue on the right path and remain faithful. New brothers are always coming to me telling me how thrilled they are to receive cards of encouragement from the members at Madison. I remind them often that they are in our public prayers. They are greatly encouraged by this. Please continue to remember all of the brothers in Dorm 16 through personal notes and prayers. They need to know that you think and care about them as brothers in Christ.

(Assistant Chaplain Siegfried Bill – Madison Church of Christ)

FAITH BASED HONOR DORM CLASSES FOR THE FIRST TRIMESTER OF 2006

Our First trimester of the year got off to a good start on January 10th. New Life Behavior continues to make up a large part of our curriculum; however we are continuing to emphasize spiritual growth of new Christians, and development of skills which help in transitioning to the “free world”. This schedule shows the wide variety of classes and the number of religious volunteers and congregations of the church participating in the Honor Dorm training program here at Limestone. It only represents a small portion of the volunteers that actually participate in the Limestone Ministry.

CLASS	TEACHER	CONGREGATION
NLB 1—A Sense of Self	Craig Lamb, Richard Peck	Madison
NLB 3—Parenting Matters	Larry Smith, Sam Drake	Madison
NLB 7 – Attitudes and Behaviors	Mike Houts	Madison
NLB 8—CASA	Siegfried Bill	Madison
NLB 8—CASA	Bill Bryant, Timothy Gafford	Elkmont
NLB 8—CASA	Don Wallace, Bert Watkins	West Fayetteville
NLB 10—The Seeker Series	Jesse James, Jim Hiley	Madison
Firmly Rooted in Truth #1	Sam Drake	Madison
Firmly Rooted in Truth #3	Sam Drake	Madison
Money Management	Bill Edwards	Madison
Sermon on the Mount	John Walton, John Walton IV	Madison
Studying the Scriptures	Bill Skipworth	West Huntsville
New Testament Study	Cecil Ensley	Russellville
Romans	Jay Dryden, Justin Gerhardt	Shiloh
Basic Computer Skills	Lynwood Cockerham	Madison
The Book of John	Daniel Gaines	Hartselle
Bible Study	Phillip Hines	Hartselle
Life Skills	Talmage Reynolds	Hartselle
Know Why You Believe	Lynnwood Cockerham	Madison

Chapel Runners

The men in white that work in my office are called “runners.” Each of these men are assigned specific areas of work in this office. These men have proven to be valuable allies in taking the message of Jesus to the men incarcerated here and at other camps, and indeed “*into all the world.*” We will be featuring one “*runner*” in each newsletter so that you might get to know them better (*Chaplain Baggett*)

Michael Hosea

Michael is the newest member of my staff but has proven himself in many different ways. He came to work in this office as a runner for Mr. Williams. He was so effective in this capacity that we soon asked if he could be in charge of our Honor Dorm classes and schedule. He has been diligent in this capacity, as well as assuming other responsibilities.

*As a Member of the Lord's Church I have really discovered that studying God's Holy Word plays a big part in our lives. Because His Word is our Last and Final Authority today. As a member of the Lord's Church here at Limestone I am so glad that God's Word is the Last and Final Authority – because you have so many different types of religions that teach everything totally against what the Bible says. And this is a true fact because the more you read the Bible the more **IT** becomes a big part of you. And as you study, you will begin to find out more and more that your understanding, and all the different types of religious teachings in the world today, totally contradicts itself compared to the Bible which is God's Holy and Divine Word that is true and still accurate today. So let us, as Member's of the Lord's Church, continue to study the scriptures continuously and always take him at his Word. Because as a members of His Church, **HIS** Word is the Last and Final Authority, and all we need to make us better servants for His service. (Bro. Michael)*



Freedom Through Truth

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