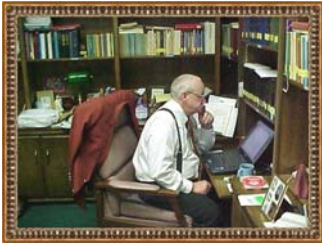


# FREEDOM THROUGH TRUTH

July - August 2007

## From the Pen of Chaplain Baggett



### *DOC Changes and Challenges*

Nearly every time we pick up a news paper or turn on the radio or the TV, we become aware of the many changes taking place in the Department of Corrections in the state of Alabama. We're seeing everything from the sale of DOC land to moving the inmates back from out of state. We hear about new programs, old programs being resurrected and some being eliminated and some existing programs being modified to make them more effective.

For the religious volunteer, many of these changes will provide new opportunities. We have encouraged our volunteers for several years to develop new programs that will help the incarcerated to change the direction of their lives. It is certain that there is a place for "Salvation sermons," but we need to also look at programs that will help the men and women in white to learn new habits and develop new skills that will help to insure their success in the free world.

One thing that we can count on as we see these changes developing is that corrections will continue to grow in numbers. To accommodate these ever increasing numbers, new ways must be developed to get the incarcerated out of the prisons quicker. New programs are needed to work with these men and women as they are released. This affords the volunteer a great opportunity to work with the inmates while they are inside the prison, and to continue that work once they are released.


#### Inside this issue:

Partners in Prison Ministry	2
West Fayetteville Church of Christ	3
Meanest Man in Texas Book Review	4
National Workshop	6
Mark Your Calendars	8

(Continued on page 2)

As space becomes even tighter, we're going to be looking for religious volunteers that want to be a part of helping to develop and administer these programs. We desperately need a new, free standing chapel. Our need for class-rooms is immediate. The current chapel is much too small for this camp and our population. We're looking for volunteers who want to help with this chapel.

Every religious volunteer is asked to examine your work, and ask yourself frankly, are you helping to resolve the problem, or, are you a part of the problem. We're looking for problem solvers and hope that you will see what adjustments you might make in your program to make our work at Limestone more effective. Above all, we're asking that you pray about the work at Limestone that God will be glorified and His cause will be advanced. God bless you for all you do in His service. (*Chaplain Charles E. Baggett*)



## *Partners in Prison Ministry*

**W**hat a blessing to attend the National Prison Ministry Workshop in Kansas City in June! This was my first national workshop, and I wasn't sure what topics would apply to me since I don't actually go into the prison to teach. However, as the wife of a prison ministry worker, I learned a great deal about prison ministry itself and what a blessing it is to all involved. I look forward to going to the workshop again!

Since my husband is involved in prison ministry (as a teacher and volunteer assistant chaplain) and our congregation sponsors one of the faith-based honor dorms at Limestone Correctional Facility, I have participated in family nights for the honor dorm, written cards to inmates, and attended gospel meetings at the prison. After attending the national workshop, I am convinced that not only are these things important, but that like Barnabas, one of my most important roles is that of being an encourager to my husband in this work. A supportive spouse is an important key to the success of prison ministry and to the spiritual and emotional balance of the worker.

It takes courage and faith for Christian men (and women) to make the decision to actually go into the prison to teach on a regular basis. Until you actually go into a jail or prison as a religious volunteer, the questions and ideas you may have about the environment and the people can make it difficult to understand what is involved and to accept the true need for this ministry and the blessings it brings. My support and love for prison ministry was not instantaneous, but it took time and understanding for it to become a partnership with my husband.

When he first began teaching in the honor dorm on a weekly basis, I thought it was a good activity, but I wasn't completely ready to "give him up" to the time and emotional effort

that was involved. It took me a while to get used to the fact that just because the class ended at 7:00 P.M. didn't mean he would be home in the exact time it took to drive back. Knowledge and patience with the operations of the prison itself is very important to the success of the prison ministry and to the endurance of the teachers and workers. When I truly realized how important the work was to my husband and how much the men in white needed him, it became just as important to me.

If your husband participates in prison or jail ministry, allowing your husband to do so without complaint from you and WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT is by far the best tool you can give to him. If we cannot go in ourselves, we can certainly make sure that we are not a stumbling block to those who go. Don't make your husband feel guilty for taking time away from you, but let him feel strengthened through your interest and concern for the work. Consideration, respect, and encouragement for the workers in prison ministry will carry over to the men in white and God will receive the glory. Let's build up all who are involved in this great work! (*Patti Bill, Madison (AL) Church of Christ*)

---

## *West Fayetteville Church Of Christ Begins NLB Classes In Lincoln County Jail*

On May 22 the West Fayetteville Church of Christ began teaching the NewLife Behavior Course, Christians Against Substance Abuse, or CASA, in the Lincoln County Jail. Many meetings with the Lincoln County jail officials were held in order to accomplish this goal. The involvement and interest of one of the elders contributed greatly to its successful beginning.

The Limestone prison religious volunteers program had a major impact on getting the program started. For over fifteen years the West Fayetteville congregation has been involved in the jail ministry. The Sheriff of Lincoln County, Tennessee contacted some religious volunteers about a program to help inmates do more than just serve their time. He desired a program that would help the inmates who were involved in chemical abuse not to return to jail after they were released.

The training and teaching received through the NewLife Behavior Courses at the Limestone Correctional Facility enabled the West Fayetteville teachers to describe the CASA course to the Lincoln County Sheriff. Information received at the regional workshop at the Madison (AL) Church of Christ was also used to explain this course to the Sheriff. Materials such as THE NETWORK NEWSLETTER, the "Introduction to NewLife Behavior Ministries" DVD, and other information helped greatly.

The Sheriff referred us to the Chief Jailor who asked for a program not just for male inmates, but the female inmates also. The inmates that were presently in the Lincoln County Jail were informed of the program and forty-nine signed up for it. Nineteen out of twenty-five female inmates also signed up for the course. The Chief Jailor limited each class of males and females to twenty. He said other classes would follow the initial one.

The West Fayetteville congregation has supported this very important work well. When asked for volunteers to help in this ministry more than enough volunteered. Eight women and four men were selected. Of the women, four teach and the others help in making copies, labels, and maintaining records. Four men teach the men's class rotating each week.

That this program has been accepted with great enthusiasm is evidenced by the rapt attention, questions and comments by the inmates. Some of the men have already obeyed the gospel. As far as we know this is the first time this type of program has been presented in the Lincoln County Jail. We thank God for this great opportunity to serve these men and women and help them to overcome chemical abuse in their lives. (*Bert Watkins, West Fayetteville (TN)*)

---

## **THE MEANEST MAN IN TEXAS by Don Umphrey**

### **A Book Review**

**C**lyde Thompson was seventeen years old when he was found guilty of the murder of two brothers and sentenced to death. On death row, he repented and was baptized for the remission of his sins. The night before his scheduled execution, he received a stay of execution.

He had prepared himself to die and doubted the advantage of ninety more days. Faith in God, guilt, need for punishment, and desire for freedom warred in his mind. He prayed even as he feigned insanity in hopes of avoiding execution. His death sentence was commuted to life in prison. and he was taken to the unit known as "crazy row."

He returned to the general population with an "us versus them" attitude. Influenced more by other prisoners than by God's Word, he lost his faith and trusted in being tough. He killed two other prisoners and became known as The Meanest Man in Texas.

After ten years in prison, Clyde was ushered, naked, into a concrete building that had previously served as the prison morgue. It was now to be used as a special solitary confinement cell for him. For thirty days his only food was a daily glass of water and a piece of bread. He felt hatred, fear, isolation, hunger, thirst, and weakness. Loneliness caused him to consider suicide.

After the first month in the morgue, conditions improved infinitesimally. He began studying the Bible, not because of a desire to learn about God, but to show that the Bible was full of contradictions and to show the church-going Bible believers what fools they really were.

Over the next few months, he eliminated his long list of places where the Bible seemed to contradict itself. His thinking began to change. He remembered his many close brushes with death; his close escape from the electric chair; two more life sentences, when he could easily have been executed; and wondered why he was alive in the morgue reading the Bible. He began to wonder, “Is there a God, after all?” He thought about Jesus’ getting what he, Clyde, should have gotten. Jesus didn’t deserve what He got; Clyde deserved what he got — and worse! He quit blaming everyone else for his troubles and started taking responsibility for his own behavior.

Clyde started to regard God as his heavenly Father who wanted nothing but good for him. He started his Bible study as a con job, but when his belief in God outweighed his doubts, he decided he could ask for and accept forgiveness from God without having to be baptized again.

His attitudes and goals changed. He was gradually granted more privileges, including being allowed to talk with other prisoners. He discussed his faith in God with them. He began writing articles for religious newspapers and corresponding with ministers.

Clyde understood why his old reputation continued to prevail over his new life. Prison officials had seen many prisoners “get religion” and soon revert to their old ways. He couldn’t blame them for having doubts about him. He told one prisoner, “I’d like you to know that I wouldn’t leave here illegally now if the walls fell down and all the guards disappeared ... I’m a slave to this state because I deserve it. And the Bible teaches even slaves should be as obedient to their masters as they can.”

After having spent five and a half years in solitary confinement in the morgue, Clyde was transferred to a new isolation unit where fellow prisoners could be heard but not seen. During two years there, Clyde converted twenty-seven men through his Bible studies.

A false accusation resulted in Clyde’s being returned to the old morgue. Bitterness filled him and he asked, “Why me, God? I’ve been trying to do Your will for a long time now, and I end up in exactly the same place as when they thought I was the meanest man in Texas. What’s the point of all this?” However, after praying, he vowed to show prison officials that he wasn’t the same man they had first put in the old morgue nearly eight years ago. After a week in solitary, he was moved to another new isolation unit at another prison.

After nearly thirteen years of close confinement, Clyde was sent to a prison farm. The conditions had greatly improved since his difficult days at another farm early in his prison experience. The best thing was that it made him eligible for a parole.

Parole was denied every two years for six more years. He dealt with disappointment by concentrating on the things he had for which to be grateful and continued preaching and teaching. The Biblical Joseph inspired Clyde. “Because Joseph hadn’t lost faith in God during low periods in his life, he was able to accomplish great things. Perhaps the same might be true

for Clyde. He renewed a vow to trust that God was running his life and doing what was best for him, and he prayed for forgiveness of his doubts.”

After the third denial of parole, he was disappointed but not crushed. “He had made up his mind not to let his happiness be contingent on the actions of the parole board, something over which he had no control. He had decided to do the best he could each day, whether he was in prison or on the outside.” Soon the board agreed to consider his case again in three months — instead of two years. His changed behavior (transformation) finally convinced the board of pardons and paroles that he was fit to reenter society, that he no longer deserved the title, The Meanest Man in Texas. He was granted a conditional pardon on October 23, 1955, after more than 28 years in prison!

He sought freedom from prison, but he found freedom through Christ long before he was released. Clyde taught the gospel to many men while he was in prison and continued teaching prisoners, ministering to them and working on their behalf after he was pardoned. Texas Governor John Connally granted him a full pardon in 1963. (*Barbara Edwards, Madison (AL) Church of Christ*)

---

## *LCF Well Represented At National Workshop*

**T**he Annual National Jail/Prison Ministry is always a highlight for religious volunteers all over the nation, and this year was no exception. Nine Limestone workers, including Chaplain Baggett and three assistant chaplains, attended the 34<sup>th</sup> annual workshop in Kansas City, Missouri 13-15 June 2007. Outstanding displays were exhibited by the NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama, the Freedom Through Truth Ministry at LCF and the prison ministry correspondence program at the Rainbow Church of Christ in Gadsden, AL. The displays included free helpful information for all to take. These workshops provide spiritual edification, education, encouragement, entertainment and fellowship with brothers and sisters of like mind from throughout the nation. If you have never attended one you are definitely encouraged to take advantage of your next opportunity. You will not be disappointed.

The Swope Parkway Church of Christ in Kansas City did an outstanding job hosting the workshop. It was conveniently located in one of the local hotels with all sessions



and meals on site. The agenda provided a wide variety of subject matter with six separate sessions conducted each period. This gave everyone the opportunity to select the material that best suited his needs. There was a good mix of subjects dealing with those incarcerated in both jails and prisons as well as subjects dealing with ministering to both men and women.

The presenters and speakers were outstanding and included such men and women as:

- Charles Baggett, the Chaplain at Limestone Correctional Facility, who has devoted more than 20 years to jail and prison ministry.
- Helen Cox who has been serving in jails and prisons throughout the nation since 1963.
- William Crossman, an ex-felon who has been a prison evangelist for 32 years.
- Ron Goodman who has been preaching for 47 years – of which 37 have been in prison ministry. Much of his work is with the Federal Prison Outreach Ministry.
- Buck Griffith who has been involved in jail and prison ministries for 30 years. He is President of NewLife Behavior Ministries and has written much material for use in jail and prison ministries.
- Dr. Hillery Motsinger who founded and was the first president of NewLife Behavior Ministries. He developed many of the NLB courses and now coordinates all NLB efforts outside the United States.
- Gary Wider who has been the full time prison evangelist for the Church of Christ in Lake Butler, Florida since 1982.

These are only a few of the thirty-eight speakers and presenters participating. This gives you an idea of the knowledge and experience represented at one of these events. These workshops provide opportunities to fellowship and network with some of the “giants” in jail and prison ministry, benefits which can’t be bought and don’t exist anywhere else. This should motivate everyone to make every effort to attend workshops of this type. Your next opportunity to attend a meeting of this type will be the NewLife Behavior International Conference in Dallas, Texas on Friday and Saturday, October 12-13, 2007. More information is provided on this conference elsewhere in this newsletter. (*Bill Edwards, Assistant Chaplain, Limestone Correctional Facility*)

## Baptisms to date at Limestone Correctional Facility for 2007

89

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- The *NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama* will hold its annual meeting on **Saturday, 18 August 2007, from 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.** at the University Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama. This is a very important meeting and all jail/prison ministry workers within the state are urged to attend.
- The *NewLife Behavior International Conference* will be held in Dallas, Texas on **Friday and Saturday, 12-13 October 2007**. The conference will be honoring Buck Griffith for his 36 years of service in the jails and prisons. Plan to be there and celebrate with us. More information on the conference will be provided as it becomes available.
- The Beltline Church of Christ in Decatur, Alabama will host the annual *South-eastern Regional Jail/Prison Ministry Workshop* in **February, 2008**. The workshop is sponsored by the NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama. Plan for this extraordinary weekend.



# FREEDOM THROUGH TRUTH

P.O. Box 1271  
Hartselle, Al. 35640  
Bus. (256) 773-8417