

# FREEDOM THROUGH TRUTH

MAY—JUNE 2007

## From the Pen of Chaplain Baggett

### An Exciting Year



This has been a really busy year, even more so than usual. It has also been a very productive year. In January we had 23 baptisms compared to 5 a year ago and year to date we have seen 72 precious souls buried with the Lord in baptism.

In February, the New Life Behavior Network of Alabama presented a week-end seminar at the Madison Church of Christ that surpassed our expectations. Over 150 people participated from 7 different states. Bro's. Griffith and Montsinger both presented training for New Life Behavior Certification.

Then the latter part of April, on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, Martha and I traveled with several of the Alabama New Life Behavior directors to help train and recruit workers for prisons in central and southern Alabama. We conducted training at three congregations during this period of time. It was great to share time with Ray Cox, the state director of New Life along with Bill Edwards and Chuck Spitzley during this week-end. These men, along with John Gallagher, Martel Pace, and Norman Newberry all serve as area directors for NewLife. We are grateful for the work that they do.

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Now, we're looking forward to our trip to Kansas City, Mo., to participate in the 34<sup>th</sup> annual National Jail/Prison Ministry Workshop. We are expecting a large group of participants from Alabama to take part in this year's activity. We appreciate so much our brothers and sisters of the Swope Parkway Church of Christ for sponsoring this great event.

So as you can see, with the year not even half over, we have seen a lot accomplished and look forward to even greater things in the second half of this year. We are so fortunate to have faithful Christians from all over the great state of Alabama participating in the work of taking the message of Sweet Jesus behind razor wire and concrete, to minister to the men and women in jails and prisons. We're looking forward to seeing everyone in Kansas City. *(Chaplain Charles E. Baggett)*

## A New Type of "Knocking Doors" Campaign ----- Knocking From Inside Prison

**M**any women may feel as if they can not be involved in personal evangelism. They have so many responsibilities, often trying to balance a career with family time. It may be nearly impossible to schedule a specific time each week for reaching out to those who need the Lord. An ideal solution for these women can be the correspondence ministry: teaching women who are in prison.



First, the women in prison who sign up for Bible study via correspondence are eager to learn more about the Bible as a source of God's will. They have realized that they need God's guidance in their lives, and they have signed up for a personal Bible study for help. Christian women who accept these "seekers" as students know that efforts to teach God's word will be welcomed.

Second, these women like the flexibility of reading the Bible and answering the questions that accompany each correspondence lesson on their own time. If they want to re-read the verses that pertain to a lesson before they decide on an answer, there are no time constraints. Likewise, the teacher can evaluate the student responses when she has some time that is not dedicated to family or work.

Third, women in prison often value what little privacy they have. For many of them, discussing topics of a spiritual nature might be embarrassing in a group setting. They are sensitive about revealing their lack of knowledge and ---especially--- their fears for future life, both physical and spiritual. The correspondence Bible study gives them an opportunity to reach out without drawing unwanted attention to themselves within the prison community.

Finally, communicating with a Bible teacher by correspondence allows a student to ask anything, to open her heart without fear of being judged. The correspondence teacher is faceless and ageless. A student can admit pain, acknowledge weakness, request prayers, and extend the hand of friendship, knowing that the teacher cares. The student's past is not an issue. The future is all that matters to both student and teacher.

Any Christian woman who wants to become a personal evangelist can help these women whose plea is so like David's in verse 7 of Psalms 142: "Set my soul free from prison that I may praise your name." Answering this "knocked door" can be such a blessing. *(Suzanne Walton, Madison Church of Christ)*

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## Austinville Church Expands Prison Ministry

The Austinville Church of Christ, already active in the ministry at Limestone, recognized a shortcoming and has done something about it. Jerry Hall, an elder in the Austinville Church has organized a group of church members with the objective of spiritually maturing those men who are baptized into Christ at Limestone Correctional Facility. The members of this group write a letter to every new Christian congratulating him on his decision and enclose the first lesson of a correspondence course aimed at building a strong spiritual foundation. The new Christian is encouraged to complete the lesson and subsequent lessons until the course is completed. These Christians at Austinville are commended for what they are doing for the cause of Christ.

## Frequently Asked Questions

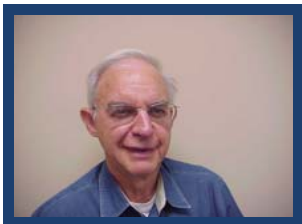
### How many inmates are incarcerated in Alabama?

As of March 31, 2007 there were a total of 28,338 inmates assigned to ADOC. 26,277 are male, 2,061 are female.

### How many prisons are there in Alabama?

The Alabama Dept. of Corrections operates 29 facilities within the state. Five are considered maximum security: Holman, Kilby, St. Clair, Donaldson and Tutwiler. Ten are considered medium security, four minimums, with a total of ten Work Release / Community Work Centers

## Martel Pace Is New Area Director



NLBNOA is very fortunate to have Martel Pace accept the job as Southeast Area Director. This area of the state is highly populated with DOC Facilities with limited church of Christ ministry. Martel is highly qualified and is experienced in prison ministry. Martel lives in Montgomery and is currently on the faculty at Faulkner University. He also serves as Involvement Minister for the University Church of Christ. He has authored several books

and his commentary on the Book of Hebrews is to be released soon as a part of the *Truth For Today* series of commentaries. He is supported by a strong group of experienced volunteers; we expect great things from this area of the state.

*Limestone's Total Baptisms  
to date for 2007: 72*

## NLBNOA Team Goes South

Even though the **NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama** is still in its infancy, significant progress has been made toward accomplishing one of its major objectives: that of promoting the use of NewLife Behavior curriculum in existing prison ministries throughout the state and encouraging congregations to begin ministries in correctional facilities where they do not now exist.

In a concerted effort to strengthen the prison ministry in South Alabama, Ray Cox, the Director of NLBNOA, two of his area directors and Chaplain Charles Baggett and his wife Martha visited congregations in Montgomery, Mobile and Atmore on 27-28 April 2007. We were greatly encouraged by the interest and enthusiasm of those attending the meetings. As a result of these meetings it seems certain that ministries will begin at Mobile Work Release and Fountain Correctional Facility soon and there are good prospects for ministries in the other facilities in the area. The southeastern area of the state has the highest concentration of correctional facilities and has least representation by the church of Christ. Opportunities truly abound in this area.

*[Pictured from left to right: Charles Spitzley (Roebuck Parkway), Ray Cox (Rainbow), Chaplain Charles and Martha Baggett (Beltline), Bill Edwards (Madison)]*



Another objective of this trip south was to qualify as many volunteers as possible to enter the prisons to teach. At each meeting Chaplain Baggett conducted training sessions on rules and regulations (required by DOC annually) as well as special training on the **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)** signed into law by President Bush in 2003.

For a more detailed account of the trip go to the NLBNOA web site ([www.alabamanlbnetwork.org](http://www.alabamanlbnetwork.org)) and click on the May issue of **The Network**.

(Bill Edwards, Volunteer Assistant Chaplain)

## JESUS AND THE CRUCIFIXION

(Luke 23:33-46)

Jeffrey Dahmer's trial began in July 1992. The judge found the notorious serial killer guilty and sane on 15 counts of murder. He sentenced Dahmer to 15 life terms, totally 943 years in prison, one of the harshest prison sentences ever imposed in Wisconsin's legal history. Dahmer was brutally killed by a fellow inmate at the Columbia Correctional Institute in Portage in November 1994.

Between his conviction and his death, Dahmer found forgiveness and life. Mary Mott, having heard Dahmer in a TV interview, sent him a Bible correspondence course. He completed the lessons and wanted to be baptized. Through her phone calls, she made the necessary arrangements. Roy Ratcliff immersed Dahmer in the prison whirlpool on May 10, 1994 for the forgiveness of his sins.

Such an outcome was possible only because at a place called "The Skull," Jesus the Savior was crucified. Both His words and His sacrifices pled, "Father, forgive them." He could not save both Himself and mankind, and so He died that we might live.

Beside Him was a thief, not too different from Jeffrey Dahmer. Guilty and condemned and seeing Jesus' innocence, he saw it was too late for him to undo his evil deeds. He could not ask for justice but only for mercy. The Lamb of God, in the midst of His own pain, granted that request. If only the other thief had asked as well.

You and I may not be murderers or thieves, but we are sinners saved by grace. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

*And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)*

[Gospel Advocate]

## Faith Based Honor Dorm Classes Delayed

Beginning date for second trimester classes has been delayed a month due to the requirement to train all inmates during the month of May on the ***Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)*** signed into law by President Bush in 2003. Honor Dorm classes are now scheduled to begin 5 June 2007. Following are classes taught by church of Christ volunteers:

CLASS	INSTRUCTOR(S)	CONGREGATION
NLB #2 A Sense of Family	J. Rhoden	Cox Blvd.
NLB #3 Parenting Matters	L. Smith, S. Drake	Madison
NLB #4 True Freedom	S. Drake	Madison
NLB #5 Christian Marriage Skills	C. Lamb, R. Peck	Madison
NLB #7 Attitudes and Behaviors	J. Hiley	Madison
NLB #7 Attitudes and Behaviors	M. Houts	Madison
NLB #7 Attitudes and Behaviors	S. Bill	Madison
NLB #8 C.A.S.A	B. Watkins, D. Wallace, B. Bryant	W. Fayetteville, Elkmont
NLB #10 Seeker Series	J. Rhoden, J. Hiley	Cox Blvd., Madison
NLB #11 Prisoners of Christ	J. Hiley	Madison
Parables of Jesus	J. Walton III, J. Walton IV	Madison
Studying the Scripture	B. Skipworth	West Huntsville
The Book of Romans	J. Hall	Austinville
The Book of Philippians	J. Dryden, R. Connolly	Shiloh, Limestone
Life Skills	T. Reynolds	Hartselle
Discipleship	L. Cockerham	Madison

## **DON'T LET ANOTHER WORKSHOP PASS YOU BY**

The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Church of Christ Jail/Prison Ministry Workshop is being hosted by the Swope Parkway Church of Christ in Kansas City, MO. The workshop will be held June 13-15, 2007 at the Hilton Garden Inn located in Independence, MO, a suburb of Kansas City. The theme of the workshop is “*Breaking The Bars of Iron*” (Psalm 107: 10-16). For more information you can contact the Swope Parkway Church at 816-444-9511.

*For you early workshop planners start thinking Cincinnati in  
2008*



# **FREEDOM THROUGH TRUTH**

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