

Prison  
Ministry

# Freedom Through Truth

September—October 2009

## From the Pen of Chaplain Baggett



### A Great Opportunity

For over a quarter of a century Martha and I have been carrying the message of our Savior to men and women behind jail and prison walls. In the beginning, when we teamed up with Nell and Manuel Whistenant to go into the Cullman

County Jail, it often seemed we were out there by ourselves. We weren't aware that anyone in the church was doing anything in jails and prisons.

Eventually, while attending a prison seminar, we connected with John Ellis, an elder from Wetumpka congregation, that was involved in the work in several prisons in the Montgomery area. One of the prisons he was going into was Tutwiler. Martha and Nell had been working with a woman in the Cullman County jail who wanted to be baptized. We were not able to do this in Cullman, but when she was sent to Tutwiler, John made arrangements for her baptism. This taught us a valuable lesson about the advantage of networking.

Later, after we had moved to Decatur, we learned of a national prison ministry conference conducted by members of the Church of Christ that was going to be held in Nashville. This would open up a whole new door of opportunity. Not only did we hear great speakers that motivated us, but we heard from former inmates who had, through the power of the Gospel, turned their lives around. We were exposed to a huge array of material for use in prison minis-


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try that we didn't even know existed. The blessings just kept coming. It was a real let down when the three day event ended.

In the many years since that monumental event, Martha and I have tried to attend as many of the national workshops as possible. Every year we leave thinking that this year was the very best workshop yet. We have formed friendships that have enriched our lives, been exposed to material that has been a powerful addition to our teaching, and have heard stories that have reinforced our confidence in what we have been trying to do in jails and prisons.



Now this opportunity is coming to Alabama. I hope that you will write these dates down: June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Actually, men and women will begin arriving on Wednesday. Some of these men will be speaking at area churches on Wednesday night at the mid-week service. Others will stay over for services on Sunday morning. I hope you will make plans to attend all of these events. Activity will officially begin on Thursday morning at 8:00AM. I hope you will be there. I promise that it will be an experience that you will never forget.

*(Chaplain Charles E. Baggett)*



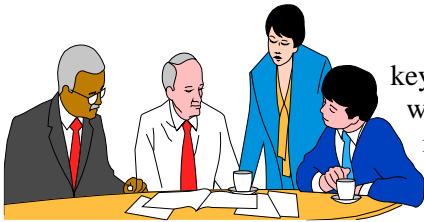
## Madison Church of Christ to be the Site of the National Jail/Prison Ministry Workshop

The Madison Church of Christ and the NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama (NLBNOA) will co-host the National Jail/Prison workshop on June 9-11, 2010. The theme will be **Freedom Through Truth** based on John 8:31-32. This workshop has been an annual event since its 1974 beginning in Grand Prairie, Texas with Buck Griffith and James Curry as co-directors. Traditionally the site of the workshop moves each year in order to expose more Christians to the needs and opportunities in prison ministry. The objective is to not hold it in the same state for two consecutive years. The workshop was last held in Alabama in 1987 at the West Huntsville Church of Christ.

Our goal is to make this one of the best and most meaningful workshops ever. The planning committee is hard at work to accomplish this goal. A major effort is being made to deter-

mine and define the needs within the ministry and establish a schedule that will satisfy those needs. The schedule provides for up to five separate classes during each training period. These five tracks include:

- **PM 101** – Primarily for those planning a ministry or have a ministry in its early development. Also for the new or less experienced ministry worker.
- **2. & 3. GENERAL** - Sessions include a wide range of subjects.
- **AFTER CARE** - Aimed at raising the awareness of the need for transition homes, how to establish a non-profit corporation, how to write and obtain grants, establishing a transition home, and much more.
- **WOMEN ONLY** – Provides for the unique needs of women as ministers and as encouragers to their husbands.



One of the highlights has always been the banquet and keynote speech. This year the “banquet” will be a BBQ dinner with all the trimmings and will be held on Thursday evening instead of Friday as has been the tradition. The keynote speaker will be Phillip Hines, better known as “Fireball” by the men in white. Once you hear him you will understand why. Phillip is the preacher at the Hartselle Church of Christ and has been heavily involved in jail and prison ministry for many years. His ministry doesn’t just take place within prison walls. He has helped many inmates in their spiritual development and reentry into society after release from prison. Other highlights include training and motivational sessions by nationally known speakers such as Dr. H.M. Motsinger, Buck Griffith, Ron Goodman, Chaplain Charles Baggett, Gary Wider, Dave and Marianne Olson, Ronnie Crocker plus many others.

We encourage you to talk with those in your congregation and others about attending. You can stay up to date on workshop developments by going to [www.alprisonworkshop.com](http://www.alprisonworkshop.com) and signing up to receive periodic reports. You will also find points of contact for any questions you might have. **PLEASE PLACE THIS EXCITING EVENT ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**

*(Volunteer Assistant Chaplain Bill Edwards, Madison Congregation)*

## Jesus Christ as Lord

Jesus is Better, always has been, and always will be. Even though he was beaten, spit upon, slapped, betrayed by a friend, and finally crucified, he never turned his back on the weak and struggling. But Jesus often unloaded on the wicked, and those who praised him with their mouth but whose hearts were far from him (*Matthew 15*) regardless of their position or power. He was not a politician. Jesus' birth was predicted hundreds of years before he was born, as were the events of his life and death

All Christian faith is grounded in the fact that Jesus Christ was the son of God. Jesus said in James 4:8 “*if you come near to me, I’ll come near to you*”. I’ve been attending the same Church for over 60 years now, and it never fails that our Church always has problems that crop up when we move away from God. The good part is that we are blessed when we move back closer to him. It’s the same way in our personal lives. When we began to focus on Jesus more ... He blesses us more!!! Just as David said in Psalm 37:4 “*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*”

It’s not a focus. It’s a move. A shift. It’s prayer and determination that our everyday actions are going to reflect the life of Jesus more and more. Paul gave us a good Christian direction when he said in 2 Corinthians 4, “*We do not preach ourselves...*” but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Paul’s ancestry could be traced back hundreds of years to the Mountain of God where the Law was given to Moses. And now with a misdirected, sincere heart he was determined to continue to enforce that law – and he did so until God had to strike him blind to get his attention and make him realize he had been wrong in his belief and determination to follow the old Law. God caused him to change his life, causing him to draw closer to God and become one of the greatest apostles the Lord had, as **Romans 1**, records in **v:1**.

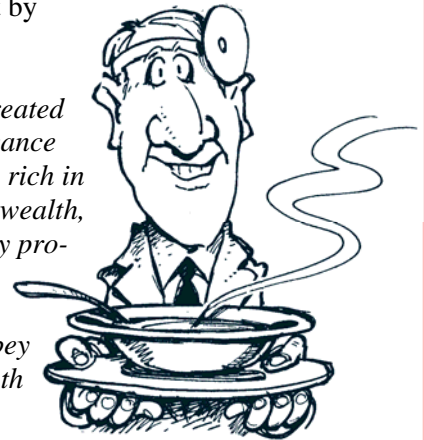
Will we have to have a traumatic event happen in our lives in order to draw closer to God? James 4 says anyone who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins. I have the unique opportunity to speak to many lost souls every week. A lot of them have never been inside a Church of Christ. The only good influence in their lives may have come from a loving godly grandparent, or maybe kinfolk who were **not** members of the Church of Christ. Have we just decided to condemn these folks to hell? Do we consider them a waste of time and hope we won’t be bothered by them even if through God’s judgment they make it to heaven someday?

2 Corinthians 4 “*Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not*

lose heart. <sup>2</sup>Rather we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Do we consider God's Words in 2 Peter 3:9 when he said "I would that none perish but that all come to repentance..." God says in **Luke 15** that he goes after, and even searches for, the lost sheep until he finds it: "<sup>3</sup>Then Jesus told them this parable: "<sup>4</sup>Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?" Sometimes in the Church we just say "good riddance". Like Paul, Jesus gave us an example to follow when he said in John 13, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you". It's our choice if we decide to follow his example or not. Our walk in life is **supposed** to be by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

**Ephesians 2:10** "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." **1 Timothy 6:17-18**: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>8</sup>Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share ..." **John 14:15**, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." **James 4:17** "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."



What are you going to do with Matthew 25? **Luke 5:31** "Jesus answered them, It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. have not come to call the righteous. but sinners to repentance." **Jesus is always better, always has been, always will be.** One final thought to consider: If drawing closer to Jesus makes you feel uncomfortable or gives you guilty feelings—or if you would rather hear about others' trials or troubles and testimonies in this life than Jesus and him crucified, consider where your priorities lie. The young ruler asked Jesus in Matthew 19:20 "What do I still lack?" Most of us know what Jesus would tell us, just as the young ruler knew what Jesus was going to tell him.... God Bless and keep you.

(Grant Azbell, Highland Park Church of Christ)

## THIRD TRIMESTER COURSES

Following is the list of courses offered in the Faith Based Honor Dorm at Limestone for the third trimester of 2009, along with those teaching, and their congregation affiliation:

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>INSTRUCTORS</b>	<b>Congregation</b>
NLB #1	<i>L. Barnard</i>	<i>Madison</i>
NLB #1	<i>J. Hiley</i>	<i>Madison</i>
NLB #1	<i>S. Paich</i>	<i>Hartselle</i>
NLB #3	<i>C. Lamb, L. Alford</i>	<i>Madison</i>
NLB #3	<i>S. Drake, L. Smith</i>	<i>Madison</i>
NLB #4	<i>B. Bryant, D. Wallace</i>	<i>West Fayetteville, Elkmont</i>
NLB #8	<i>Smith, Watkins, Williamson</i>	<i>West Fayetteville</i>
NLB #8	<i>S. Bill</i>	<i>Madison</i>
NLB #10	<i>J. Gray, G. Hamner, J. Pounders, J. Rhoden</i>	<i>Killen, Cox</i>
NLB #10	<i>G. Azbell, B. Dean, W. Gooch</i>	<i>Cox Blvd.</i>
NLB #12	<i>L. Alford, T. Learned</i>	<i>Madison</i>
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	<i>B. Bell</i>	<i>Madison</i>
<b>The Letters of Paul</b>	<i>R. Little</i>	<i>Shiloh</i>
<b>One God in an Atheistic World</b>	<i>M. Houts</i>	<i>Madison</i>
<b>Real Life Application (Parables Pt. 1)</b>	<i>J. Walton, D. Benton, B. Curty</i>	<i>Madison</i>
<b>Life Changing Skills</b>	<i>T. Reynolds</i>	<i>Hartselle</i>
<b>Computer Basics #1</b>	<i>L. Cockerham</i>	<i>Madison</i>
<b>Freedom Through Truth</b>	<i>Chaplain Baggett</i>	<i>Beltline</i>

**For Your Information:**



In our last Faith Based class trimester, (from 5-11-09 thru 8-28--09) we made 64, 855 copies! This has been a lot of wear and tear on our copiers. We appreciate the support of the religious volunteers who assist with the cost of keeping these NewLife Behavior classes going.

**Study Note:**

Answer keys are now available for the Rightly Dividing the Word Bible Studies we produce. Those needing or wanting them should contact us. We look forward to serving you in a greater way!

Also, please take advantage or our studies on Romans and Proverbs, which are the most recently developed studies we have available



Baptisms at  
Limestone Correctional Facility  
For 2009 to date — [70](#)



## Upcoming Events!!



Mark Your Calendar NOW ...

*9th -11th of June 2010*

### **NATIONAL PRISON MINISTRY WORKSHOP**

Hosted by

NewLife Behavior Network of  
Alabama & Madison Church of Christ

At

**MADISON CHURCH OF CHRIST**

*556 Hughes Road*

*Madison, Alabama.*

*(Contact and Registration info will be given in a later publication)*



# *Freedom Through Truth*

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