



Freedom Through Truth

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2010

From the Pen of Chaplain Baggett



These are exciting times for us here in the great state of Alabama. So much is going on throughout the state in jails and prisons, with so many new volunteers coming on board that it's hard to get to everyone and provide the training needed for them to be a religious volunteer in state prisons. Then, add to that, the Annual

Jail / Prison workshop coming up in June at the Madison Church of Christ, and you can see that our cup is full!

To accommodate all of this activity, we are trying to print this newsletter monthly, at least until that Workshop, June 9-11, 2010. We plan to feature articles by some of the speakers for that special event.

This newsletter has articles by Bro. Ron Goodman and Bro. Ronnie Crocker. Both men are well qualified to speak to the many issues that affect men and women who are incarcerated, and who are struggling with addictions of various kinds. It is a pleasure to call both of these men my friends. And both are men whose opinion I highly value. You will be blessed by the articles they have provided, and by hearing them at the annual workshop. *(Chaplain Baggett)*

Inside this issue:

An American Mission Field	2
Baptisms	3
Prison Ministry Seminar Contact Info	4

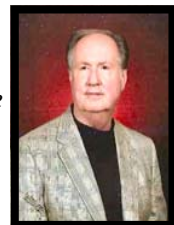
NATIONAL WORKSHOP - A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Among churches of Christ, Jail and Prison ministries have experienced a phenomenal increase and growth during the past three or more decades. When my work began almost 40 years ago, I literally could count on the fingers of one hand all the indi-

viduals and churches I could find who were involved. Since that time, there has been an explosion of activity all over the nation. In the last 17 years alone, individual workers among the churches of Christ have increased from 698 to 2029, and involved congregations from 481 to 939. Forty-seven states are now represented among the churches of Christ in this work. The Federal Prison Outreach Ministry, which began in 1984, has taken its Spiritual Renewal Seminars to 25 states, and ministered to prisoners from all 50 states and 90 foreign countries through almost 1,000 programs.

One of the main factors in the growth and influence of prison ministry has been the annual Jail/ Prison Worker's Workshop, which began in 1974, and has continued every year since that time. This year's program, which is being hosted by the Madison Church of Christ in Madison Alabama and the NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama, June 9-11, will be the 37th time workers have come together from 20 – 25 states for instruction, fellowship, encouragement and inspiration in this difficult but rewarding work. Both new and experienced workers greatly benefit from the insights and presentations made during the three day event, and leave better equipped to work with incarcerated men and women. Every Christian engaging in this ministry wholeheartedly believes that Jesus Christ really is the answer not only for the crime problem, but all of society's problems. In a day when we are experiencing "zero" growth in most of our churches, thousands are being baptized in penal institutions all over the country, making this the ripest mission field in the United States. For all of those involved in this work, and even those who aren't, this is a tremendously inspiring and encouraging program in which to be involved.

*Ron Goodman, Federal Director, Federal Prison Outreach Ministry,
Nashville, Tennessee*



AN AMERICAN MISSION FIELD

Under tragic circumstances, a teenager in the congregation dies. All the members gather round the family with fervent prayers, love and support. Calls, cards, and casseroles are present in abundance to help the family through a difficult time.

Under more tragic circumstances a teenager dies spiritually. He is drawn away

(Continued from page 2)

by drugs or alcohol. The members are visibly absent during this tragedy. There is no support to encourage a distraught family. In fact the family often hides the loss from caring friends because of embarrassment or feelings of their own failure. They carry the burden and suffer alone, often for long agonizing periods of time.

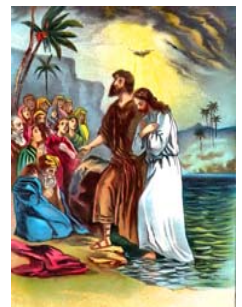
This situation has become so prevalent in our country, that we now define it as an American Mission Field. There is rarely a family that is untouched by the effects of this tragedy in our country. In addition to illegal drug use and alcoholism, the abuse of prescription drugs is now a problem of epic proportions. The horror of it all is increased by the package that comes along with the addiction itself. Most all of the basest sins of mankind are committed by the addict in the process of obtaining and abusing drugs. The effects are far reaching and heart breaking, destroying lives that are so full of promise and potential.

In the midst of this dark picture exists a wonderful opportunity for the church. In our generation, drug addiction presents the church with a way to connect with our country like never before. Addiction is a sin problem which makes it our territory. *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one ... bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Gal. 6:1,2).

Ronnie & Jeanie Crocker—Project Rescue Addiction Recovery Program



Baptisms
at Limestone
Correctional Facility
For 2009 — 106
For 2010 to date — 64



37th National Jail / Prison Ministry Workshop

THEME: *Freedom Through Truth*

PLACE: *Madison Church of Christ,*

DATE: June 9—11, 2010

For info contact Bill Edwards

E-mail : wcedwards@knology.net

*or phone: **256-772-8739** cell#:256-656-9751*

Visit the website @ alprisonworkshop.com



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