



Network News

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION ADVENTIST PRISON VOLUNTEER NETWORK

SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

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*"Verily I say
unto you,
Inasmuch as
ye have done
it unto one of
the least of
these my
brethren, ye
have done it
unto me."*

- Snowflakes are
some of
nature's most
fragile things –
but look what
they can do
when they stick
together.*
- I do not pray for
success. I pray
for faithfulness.
---Mother
Teresa*

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Baptized Jewish Inmate Writing Bible Lessons for Jewish People.**
- Retired Missionary, Lt. Colonel Burton Wright, given the keys and told to "unlock the prison chapel" – a first.
- "Nothing Stops A Bullet Like A Job." L.A. group helps former gang members get jobs – and hope.

FROM ELDER JOHNSON

"The Network At Work"

The very recent launching of our *Adventist Prison Volunteer Network*, and the reality of our monthly growth, indicates the appropriateness of an occasional stating of the purpose of this initiative. For short, we refer to ourselves as *The Network*, and I will close this greeting with a "live" (current) illustration of the power of our purpose.

On June 1, 2005, we were approved by the North American Division Committee to be the Division-wide facilitator, in harmony with Local Conference/Union Prison Ministry Directors, of support services to our Prison Volunteers. Thus our motto, "*Serving Those Who Serve.*"

We are encouraged, focused, and assisted with long range planning by our NAD *Adventist Prison Volunteer Network Advisory Committee*, a combination of Prison Volunteers and Local Conference/Union Prison Ministry Directors and Church Administrators, chaired by our NAD Vice President, Mrs. Debra Brill.

Our communication with Network members is primarily e-mail based. A Primary Member Benefit is receipt of this monthly newsletter which is designed to profile Leaders, Volunteers and their ministries, offer "Best Practice Tips," provide Questions and Answers, offer Training, announce Ministry Events, and introduce Resources. We also maintain a Membership Directory (office use only) for assisting with referral requests.

You can assist us in reaching our goal of 10,000 members (an average of two per congregation in the Division) by having your friends join (membership is open to all AND THERE IS NO COST!) by signing on at www.nadadultministries.org. Click *Prison Volunteer Network!* That's all it takes!

Now about **The Network At Work!** I attended the baptism of a former inmate one year ago. That New Church Member (That Sounds Great!) recently returned to her native country. She learned of a friend who is incarcerated in the same region covered by Prison Volunteers that led her to Christ and The Church. The

New Church Member contacted the leader of that group of Prison Volunteers (who is a member of our *Network Advisory Committee*). Now that inmate is being ministered to by NAD *Adventist Prison Volunteer Network* members – who are looking forward to the same result! This story reveals a major reason for, and the power of, *The Network!*

May the Anointing of The Holy Ghost be upon everything you attempt in His Name!

JAJ II

MEET THE DIRECTORS

Each issue of *Network News* will feature a Local Conference or Union Prison Ministry Director.

“I’ve been working in the Michigan Conference for 28 years, but I’ve only been at the Conference Office for 12 years.” Those are the words of Elder Royce Snyman, who is Michigan Conference’s Personal Ministries Director, its Associate Ministerial Director for Evangelism, and its Disaster Response Coordinator. Plus, Elder Snyman says, “Prison Ministry came under the umbrella.”

Even though his exposure to prison ministry has been somewhat limited, Elder Snyman recalls a few years ago, when there was an auxiliary organization where prison ministry was being built up and the organization was working to get things going in the ministry. “At that time, we were doing training in prison ministry. Even now, local churches invest their time and monies in prison ministry and we try to support them.”

Reflecting for a moment when he was pastoring and had to visit and minister to members who were incarcerated, Elder Snyman found his experience to be quite challenging. As a pastor he was use to going anywhere he felt and needed to go, even going into the operating room during a surgery, but when it came to prison, it was a revelation to him. Here was a closed down place, you couldn’t just walk in – there were doors opening, doors shutting and doors locking behind him, and then Elder Snyman says, “How to share with those in prison didn’t (and still doesn’t) come easy”.

“Truth is,” said Elder Snyman, “prison ministry has lots of potential. We’ve had many inmates, after studying, make the decision to follow Christ and be baptized. In the Upper Peninsular of Michigan, we have one pastor who has baptized eight or more inmates. From our office, when requests come in for literature from inmates, we try our best to fulfill those requests.”

I asked Royce Snyman, if he had the time, would he go back in the prisons and share the love of Jesus. Without any hesitation on his part, he gave a resounding, “Absolutely! There are lots of needs and you have to **not** read Matthew 25 to know that that’s one of the places that Christ identified. We as Christian pastors have an obligation and an opportunity to go where the people are, and who are in a position to listen to the Gospel, where they wouldn’t do so if they were on the outside.

“At the January 2005 Ministries Convention in Orlando, Florida, I was glad to see the direction that prison ministry was going, and we will do our best to support prison ministry in the Michigan Conference.” Thanks Elder Snyman – we appreciate your support to Prison Ministry.

Who will be next? Directors, look for your personal call from the editor, it’s coming!



WHAT'S HOT!

Homeboy Industries Goes Gang-busters! According to USA Today, Monday, July 11, 2005, this L.A., group helps former gang members get jobs—and hope.

“When I got that first paycheck, it made me feel good,” says Gabriel Flores, 25, a former gang member who works at Homebody Industries’ silk-screen business. “I didn’t go steal a car or sell drugs for money. I worked for it.”

On the mean streets from East L.A., to South-Central L.A., gang members are leaving the thug life and trying to make it in a 60-person business called Homeboy Industries. They come from all the region’s most notorious gangs and housing projects. But they’ve chosen to leave their crews and take up honest, blue-collar trades that often resurrect their lives. Their slogans say what they are about “Jobs, Not Jails” and “Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job.”

Gregory Boyle, a priest known to “homies” as “G-Dog” or “Father Greg,” began Homeboy Industries in 1992 as a job-training program to salvage the futures of gang members. Raised in the Los Angeles suburbs, Boyle, a third-generation Irish-American, landed in East L.A., as a young pastor at Dolores Mission Church 20 years ago. His job-referral program quickly grew and his trustworthy reputation spread among gang members. Viola! Homeboy Industries.

At Homeboy Industries, young men learn how to control their anger and to treat women respectfully. They learn basic responsibilities, from getting to work on time to answering the telephone professionally. Thousands have had their tattoos removed by laser devices at Homeboy Industries’ office. Job counselors coach the youths, helping them write their résumés, prepare for job interviews and fit into the business culture.

There are many opportunities through Homeboy. **Business.** Homeboy Maintenance (landscaping and maintenance), Homegirl Café and Catering. **Job placement.** Places 300 youths and young adults a year in jobs. **Counseling.** General and mental health counseling for former gang members and those on probation. **Prison Release/Transition.** Helps recently released inmates find housing, enroll in school, attend drug-treatment and anger-management classes. **Curriculum.** Classes in business and workplace skills, math and reading, parenting and household skills. (Source: Homeboy Industries.)

Log on to their Web site www.homeboy-industries.org and see for yourself – this is a serious industry. Greg Boyle (he calls me “C” and I address him as “G”) and I have been “talking” via e-mail. “G” invited me to visit the bakery when I’m in LA – I’ll have to take him up on his offer, one day. But in the meantime, someone who’s reading this article and lives in and around the LA area, go, check it out for me. Taste those Homeboy pies. Taste that Homeboy bread, and give me a call. Thanks, “homies.”

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Q & A

How involved should volunteers get in legal issues with inmates?

Be cautious about getting involved in legal issues with inmates. Only get involved when you have established a relationship over a period of time where you feel comfortable with assisting him/her with their legal concerns. Stay clear of investing money in cases. Provide counsel and connections with attorneys or other legal officials who might provide the greatest benefit to the inmates.

Each Correctional Facility has a Law Library second to none for the inmate to research his/her case. Also, each Correctional Institution has law clerks and jailhouse lawyers that are very proficient in law, filing briefs and submitting cases to the court system.

Occasionally, the inmate may hit a snag in his/her pursuits. At this point, if you feel impressed to assist them, let your conscience be guided by the Holy Spirit to render whatever assistance you are impressed to give.

VOLUNTEERS

There's a prison ministry Volunteer down in Central Florida, born 78 years ago in Union Springs, New York, was a missionary in Africa for 17 years, served as pastor/teacher/principal, returned to the United States where he pastored congregations from Bowling Brook and Joliet, Illinois (our own Marty Feldbush, Director of Chaplaincy, was one of his members) to the sunny land of Florida.

Elder Burton Wright, a retired ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor, a chaplain in the Civil Air Patrol, an auxiliary of the Air Force, since 1992, and a retired Lt. Colonel, is a prison minister volunteer that loves some "prison ministry."

When I talked with him just the day before, he had gone into Hardy Correctional Institution, in Florida, a difficult Institution to get in to have services for the inmates. Now this is the same hard institution where the Chaplain handed him the keys to the Chapel and said, "You go open the Chapel for me." A first! The Chaplain has asked Elder Wright to also meet each Monday afternoon and study with some of the men.

The Walker Memorial Church Prison Ministry Volunteers (WMCPMV) are seeing the results of sowing the seeds of truth. A young Jewish man has been baptized and he is now writing Bible studies for the Jewish people. About four weeks ago another man was baptized at the Avon Park Correctional where the Chaplain is Russell Bates. The men love to study the Bible. One man comes to the study, he goes and tells another man, that man tells a few other men and before you know it, a Bible study group has been formed. The WMCPMV team takes in Sabbath School Quarterlies, Ellen G. White books, and videos of Doug Bachelor and C. D. Brooks.

The Network believes in Prison Ministry Volunteers. Without the Volunteers, many of the incarcerated would not get a visit, or hear the good news of Salvation. We take our hats off to the faithfulness of Eben Aguirre, Burton Wright, Marian and Dick Atwell, Chalmer and Joyce Pifer, Eleanor Cox, Al Black, Mae Kemink, and Bob and Edith Fessler. Keep up the good work! God bless.

"INMATE SPIRITUAL COUNSELING" Curriculum Segments

"Inmate Spiritual Counseling" with an emphasis on Volunteer Prison Chaplaincy, is the new training curriculum for those who are very serious about updating their

prison ministry skills. The 46-hour course is offered by the North American Division Academy of Continuing Education, and will be conducted in association with the International Institute of Christian Ministry of the General Conference Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department, which has a direct relationship with Griggs University. Continuing Education Credit is a possibility for college credit in the future.

Curriculum Segment Highlights: Principles of Personal Christian Witness. Witness? Me? You're asking me to witness? No way! Witnessing can be very scary for some people. The major theme of this Module is personal Christian witnessing. The aim of this Module is to liberate you from anxiety that prohibits you from witnessing, and to instill within you the joy that Jesus gives when you are connected to Him.

There will be How-to Listen and How-to Detect the needs and desire of others, along with How-to Win the confidence of those that you engage in while witnessing. The student will be acquainted with personal witnessing decision making techniques and will gain knowledge of Christ's method of personal witnessing, along with concepts in leading individuals to Christ.

The comprehensive hope of this Module is to totally immobilize any concerns, apprehensions and personal witnessing obstacles from your life. After this course your witnessing skills will be sharper and whatever anxieties you had will dissipate.

Each issue of **Network News** will feature a segment from this 17 Module Curriculum. We, at the North American Division Adult Ministries Academy of Continuing Education, encourage our readers to enroll. Call Carol at 301.680.6430 or click www.adventsource.org for registration information.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Prison Ministry Handbook, prepared by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division, is a complete guide for Prison Ministry Coordinators and Directors. Helpful information on How to Work with Security, How to Work with Inmates, How to Communication with Inmates, How to Organize Your Prison Ministry, and so much more. Contact AdventSource, 800-328-0525. **Reuniting: Money, Family and You – A Guide for Women Leaving Prison.** Many of the women who are incarcerated are also mothers. They must cope with being away from their children for an extended period of time and prepare themselves for their return to their families. Chapters include: While You are Still in Prison, Re-entering the Community, Finding and Keeping a Job; Locating Affordable Housing, Getting Legal Help. Free (A \$1.00 per copy shipping charges applies – 70 pages.) Order by Fax 301.918.1886. **DeathDance: A True Story of Drug Addiction and Redemption.** By Clifford Harris as told to Patrice Thomas Conwell. For twenty years Cliff Harris danced with death – unable to snap the chains of drug addiction that imprisoned him. Twenty years of servitude to the inner demons that drove him from his home, his family, and himself. Miraculously it doesn't stop there. DeathDance is the ultimate rags-to-riches story – not about money! It's about living! It's about the ultimate transforming power of Jesus Christ. Order by phone 1-909-783-1094. **Women in Prison: Ministry Handbook** by Sunny M. Lockwood. When people think of prison ministry they often think of Bible studies and worship services. These are important, but women in prison need more. They need emotional support, life skills training, reading instruction, or just toiletries. Based on real-life experiences, *Women in Prison* is a practical "How-to" guide to ministering to women living their lives behind bars. Order from

AdventSource: 800-328-0525, catalog #425616, \$5.95 or
www.adventsource.org.



HAPPENINGS

The Adventist Prison Volunteer Network brought the jail to the 135th American Correctional Association Congress of Correction, August 6-11, 2005 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland.

Booth 734 will remain in the memory of the attendees for a long time. *The Network* display was an accurately made free standing jail cell. Imagine you are at ACA Congress and you pass Booth 734. The jail door is ajar. You peer inside and right there at eye level, hanging on the wall is a picture of Christ, with a penitent man kneeling at His side. Three lights, sitting on top of the jail are focused on Christ. What a sight! What a statement! Jesus, Inside the Jail with the Inmate. Powerful!

Here are some comments made by those passing the display: "This is what prison ministry is about." "It's not about computers and internet." "This is deep!"

There were lots of giveaway items at the "Jail." *The Marked Bible, How to Survive in the 21st Century, Resources (Catalog) for Prison Ministries*, videos, Prison Volunteer Network brochures. Everything went like hotcakes.

Our appreciation to Chaplain Cleveland and Joyce Houser for manning our booth the entire time of the Congress. Our thanks, also, to United Prison Ministries International and the Review and Herald Publishing Association, for donating books and videos.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

My name is Carlos Gomez. I am a member of the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germantown, Maryland. I've been working in prison ministry for the past ten years. I am a prisoner of Jesus', just like Paul was.

I believe in prison ministry. In 1988, I was sent to the James River Prison in Richmond, Virginia, on drug charges. The judge gave me 25 years! He suspended ten of those years, but it wasn't him—I know it was God - He had a plan for my life. God was preparing the way to get me to where I am today. I could hardly speak English, much less understand it, and when I was sentenced, I didn't even understand what I was being sentenced for. I spent 2 ½ years in prison and 3 months in immigration. They wanted to deport me to my country, Columbia. God intervened. I stayed in the United States.

Let me tell you, prison, drug programs or anything else did not help me to be a better person. I know these programs help, if you want them to, but the only "Person" that changed my life was Jesus Christ. I understood that if He wanted to change my life, He also wanted to use me for His glory.

I have taken prison ministry training, and now, I train the Hispanic Churches in the Potomac Conference on how to start and run a prison ministry in their church; instructing them on what to do and what not to do when they visit a prison. You may think you are helping those behind bars, but actually, you're the one being helped, because when you serve the Lord and do the things for those who are in pain and suffering, you are strengthened doing the work of Jesus. Any time I go visit a prison, I'm going to see Jesus—that's how I see it. Those who are incarcerated need to know that Jesus loves them and that He has a better life for them. I think we have to pay for our mistakes, but we cannot forget that the love

of Jesus is working on those who are behind bars, as well.

I have been a volunteer for more than nine years at the Minimum Security Prison at Jessup, Maryland. I was once a prisoner - incarcerated; now I'm a preacher - preaching to the incarcerated. Remember I said, when I was in jail I could barely speak English? Now every two months on Sabbath, I take a group of eight people into Jessup for worship services in Spanish and English - bilingual service, speaking both languages for the glory of God. It's great!

We have a Seventh-day Adventist Church inside of Jessup where we praise and worship our Creator. We instruct the brothers on how to be free from sin and pain even though they are behind bars. And when they are released we help them to be good citizens of our community. Last year eight men gave their lives to Christ and were baptized; now they are a part of this great Family of God.

This year we have Bible studies every Monday night - 7:30 to 9:30; the studies are in Spanish and English. Our team volunteers bring a lot of life to the Bible study with their singing, preaching or just visiting the inmates. I give thanks to God and to the volunteers for doing such a tremendous work.

Prison Ministry has helped me to grow in my Christian life. When we serve others who are in pain (not only those behind bars), it makes you thankful because you were chosen to be a part of the Great Commission—"Go ye!" I thank God for Prison Ministry and for Him guiding me.

Let's not forget there is hope for those who are walking in darkness just as I once walked in darkness. Just as I was once hopeless and locked behind prison bars, there is hope for those locked behind prison bars. There is hope because Jesus is alive. Jesus wants them to walk in the light; we must go and share the Light - Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer.

If you want to hear more, Carlos wouldn't mind you contacting him. Perhaps you would like for him to come and share his testimony. E-mail Carlos at flako_us@yahoo.com.

MINISTRY BLESSING/SUCCESS STORY

Judith and Job Miranda, a husband and wife team are totally on fire for the Lord! They have a "preventative ministry" in that they give Bible studies, preventing those who Satan would love to see incarcerated, from being incarcerated. Bible studies are conducted on the phone. Bible studies are conducted in the home. Bible studies are conducted anywhere the Lord leads these two hot people for Jesus to conduct them.

So far, two doctors have come to the Lord, one doctor has been baptized, the other doctor, a cardiologist, will be baptized soon. Judith says her biggest challenge is with three Jewish men she's studying with, especially with one who is 'begging' for baptism, but needs to study a wee bit more. Baptism will come! What a ministry! Keep up the good work!

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

- Pray to God for guidance in your desire to work as a prison volunteer.
- Get good training in prison ministry.
- Work with someone who is in prison ministry.
- Be kind and courteous when speaking with an inmate.
- Always, always represent Jesus.

HELP THE NETWORK GROW

Calling all our readers! Please ask your friends to sign on to *The Network*. Feel free to forward the newsletters to people on your e-mail list. The newsletters are archived on our Web site www.nadadultministries.org - just keep us posted on how many people you forward **Network News** to. Thanks for keeping *The Network* growing!

EDITOR'S P.S.

The Network (NAD) salutes Elder E. Wayne Shepperd, Vice President, Pacific Union Conference, for his years of dedication and ministry. We, Elder J Alfred Johnson II and I, hesitate to say "farewell" to our long time friend, colleague, and faithful supporter of Prison Ministry who has decided to retire. Enjoy your retirement "E. Wayne" - we shall remember you in the Adult Ministries Department! God's richest blessings upon you and your wife, Joyce.

This issue touches many emotions. Thrills! Tears! Smiles! My! Great! WOW! Speaking with different people while putting this issue together, I felt these emotions. There are some good, dedicated people out there involved in some fantastic, exciting ministries for an Awesome God. You keep reading - we'll keep introducing.

Time for me to lay my pen down or stop typing - whatever. I leave you with the words of some great unknown wise person who had it together when he/she said, "Meeting people halfway is the most significant trip we can take. We don't work for each other, we work with each other." That sort of sums up what *The Network* is all about - "Serving Those Who Serve."

I' m out of here. Until next month!

CB