



Network News

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION ADVENTIST PRISON VOLUNTEER NETWORK

JANUARY 2006

Volume 7

*"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."*

- Opportunity is
missed by most
people because
it is dressed in
overalls and
looks like
work.—Thomas
A. Edison*

- We live by the
promises of God
– not by the
problems of life.
– Kate A.
Arnette*

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- **Sentenced To 65 Years – Locked Up 22 Years!**
- Toledo Correctional Institution Says "Yes" To Adventist.
- Little Flock Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Where? Prison!

FROM ELDER JOHNSON

Hello, Fellow Adventist Prison Volunteer Network Family! It is my privilege to affirm and thank you for all of the positive Ministering you did under the unction of The Holy Spirit in 2005. Our office prays upon you a blessed New Year!

2006 promises to be a "**Capitol**" year! One special spark will be the NAD Adult Ministries Festival Of The Laity – a time of special Training, Inspiration and Visioning for Prison Ministry, Sabbath School, and Personal Ministries volunteers – which will take place in the first half of October in lovely Orlando, Florida. Begin planning NOW for the **FESTIVAL!**

Every now and then you hear "one" that you just have to share. Such was the case as I recently listened to the Chaplain of my son's college present his 'Close of the Semester' encouragement sermon to the students.

Comforting them in the spirit of Matthew 11:28-30, and giving assurance that peace and power comes when we give our challenges to Jesus, he offered the following strategy:

1. Go "limp."
2. Say, "Jesus, I can't do it."
3. Say, "Jesus, I'm not willing to."
4. Stop trying.

This is a "surrender it" to Jesus method that will assist in carrying us through any crisis, because in employing it, we give FULL control to Jesus Christ – who knows "how to adjust everything perfectly!"

Use this strategy yourself. Share it with those with whom you interact.
MARANATHA!

JAJ II

MEET THE DIRECTORS

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

Zig Zaglar, in his book, *Great Quotes from Zig Zaglar*, wrote, "Ability can take you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there." This is a good description of Pastor Gerson Santos, a man of great ability and character.

Pastor Santos worked seven years in the Southern New England Conference, before coming to the Greater New York Conference, where he has served for the past five years. He is the director of Sabbath School, Personal, Prison and Children's Ministries. A lot could be said for each one of these departments, but this time he talked Prison Ministry.

Pastor Santos finds it to be a challenging ministry; not only to try and get volunteers to go on the "inside" but the System itself changes the inmates which makes ministry to the incarcerated difficult. He says his volunteers try to give the inmate a support base, but then the inmates get sentenced and are moved to another facility. The frequency breaks the chain. But there are some bright spots such as the letter he recently received from an inmate who's in for a long time. The inmate, a Seventh-day Adventist, has dedicated his life to Jesus; he's a minister, ministering to other inmates. He distributes materials, gives Bible studies, and gets decisions. Right now he's waiting for a pastor to come and baptize those who have accepted the Lord. This is all happening in Sing Sing, where there has been a Seventh-day Adventist Church for 16 years, and where the inmates are the church leaders, elders, deacons, and where every year there are baptisms.

Santos has a volunteer that visits an inmate way upstate New York at the Clinton Correctional Prison – almost on the border of Canada, to take him literature. One inmate! Other Prison Ministers correspond with the incarcerated. Even though one volunteer has health problems, restricting her going to the prison, it doesn't stop her from writing to more than 30 inmates. They are her family. She sends the inmates literature, remembers them on their birthdays and holidays. She also supports their families. "It seems so simple," said Pastor Santos, "but it's so important to the inmate."

Training the volunteers is important to Pastor Santos. He offers Prison Ministry training every year. Chaplain Cleveland Houser, the NAD Prison Ministry Consultant, came in for a weekend of training. Pastor Luc Homicile, of the Atlantic Union, organized a Union-wide training for Prison Ministers, where more than 56 people finished the entire training course for Prison Ministry. In those training sessions the volunteers received not only inspiration, but practical training on what to do when you go on the inside, and how to support the family and the inmate when he/she is paroled. Prison Ministers who completed the entire training were awarded a Certificate of Completion and a picture ID which gave credibility to their ministry.

In the future, Pastor Santos sees yearly training for Prison Ministers -- keeping them on the cutting edge. His plans are to promote this training Division-wide. He also plans to continue to support Prison Ministers by providing materials and literature to be taken inside the prison. At present, between 30 and 40 Sabbath School Lessons are being sent to the prisons in his area.

"I love Prison Ministry," says Pastor Santos. "It's a tremendous opportunity to minister to a specific group of people who are in desperate need. Most of the

inmates have a lot of time on their hands to listen to what we say or write to them, teaching them about Jesus. That's why I encourage church members to start writing to an inmate. Send Bible lessons. Send literature. Visit. It's a tremendous opportunity for church members to engage in Prison ministry.

"I believe we have people in the church who are willing to dedicate themselves to this ministry. We just have to find a way to reach them. It can be done through Prison Ministry."

Pastor Santos has presented the challenge – you're needed. Become a Prison Minister TODAY!

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



WHAT'S HOT!

The Festival Of The Laity Is Coming!

October, 2006 will find many people in Orlando, Florida, who will once again experience a Festival Of The Laity (FOL). Wheels are rapidly turning for this

exciting experience where there will be extensive training in Sabbath School, Personal Ministries and Prison Ministry for ALL God's "soldiers." Check our web site: nadadultministries.org for more information on The Festival Of The Laity! Now, That's HOT!

Another Hot! Mickel Jenkins, and the Toledo Correctional Institution.

I don't know if any of you know Mickel Jenkins. I just met him. He passed by the NAD *Adventist Prison Volunteer Network* booth at Evangelism Council in December at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama. What a fired up Prison Minister Mickel Jenkins is. Talk about excitement!! Wow! With the letter from the Toledo Correctional Institution Administration in hand, letting him know that all the paperwork was completed, he just had to put his "John Doe" on a few forms, Mickel had been granted permission to visit and minister to the inmates. This was something to "shout" about. Why? Because Mickel is the first Seventh-day Adventist to minister inside the Toledo Correctional Institution.

How did this all come about? Jenkins said he had been longing to go into Prison Ministry. He didn't know where or how to start. So he prayed. "Lord, I want to do Your will. I want to win souls for You. I want to do Prison Ministry."

Shrouded in mystery, a letter arrived at Mickel's home church, for Mickel, from an unknown inmate. No one knows where the inmate got the church's address, but it was addressed to "Rev." Jenkins. In part the inmate wrote, "Rev. Jenkins, I sincerely want and need you (a pastor) in my life to give me help and guidance and fellowship. I'm in need of some Adventist to talk to." The inmate even gave Jenkins instructions on how to go about getting a Request for Visitation processed.

Talking about God opening prison doors! The Lord answered the prayer of that inmate, plus He literally opened the prison doors to the Toledo Correctional Institution for "Seventh-day Adventist Prison Minister Mickel Jenkins" to minister; not only to the inmate who is calling for help, but to others who need to meet Jesus.

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Q & A

What are the Names of the State Courts and the Function of Each?

The United States has two court systems, Federal and State. They are similarly structured with one Supreme Court at the top, and a number of courts on the levels below.

Supreme Court – Hears appeals from lower courts. Cases involving a federal statute or constitutional law can be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Appellate Courts – (some states) – Review appeals from lower courts.

Trial Courts – Hear criminal and civil cases and may hear appeals from special courts. Also called Court of Common Pleas, Circuit, County, District, or Superior Court.

February Issue: Courts: Local, Traffic, Police, Magistrate, Justice, and Municipal.

VOLUNTEERS

Mamie Jean Norris is a Prison Minister. She's been in Prison Ministry for more than ten years and plans to "keep on going." Sister Norris is an active member of the Messenger of Hope Prison Ministry Team from the Bethany Seventh-day Adventist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

The Prison Ministry Teams goes to the Julia Tutwiller Prison for Women in Wetumpka, Alabama, which houses 932 inmates. There they minister to more than 300 women who join the team in singing songs of joy and hope, praising the Lord through testimonies and poems, and the study of the Word of God.

The beautiful part of ministering at Tutwiller is how good the staff and inmates are to the Prison Ministry Team. Even when an inmate is paroled, she is not forgotten by the team. Such was the case of a former inmate who Sister Norris met one day on the street. Recognizing Sister Norris, the former inmate stopped her and said, "I know you from somewhere. Do you sing real good?" (Her exact words.)

With a smile, Sister Norris admitted that she did sing well. She went on to tell the woman that she went to Tutwiller and at times sang and played the piano for the ladies. "That's where I know you from," the lady said excitedly. "I was paroled from Tutwiller, and I remember you came there."

She told Sister Norris that she had been unemployed since being paroled, but was praying to the Lord for a job. The Lord used Prison Minister Mamie Jean Norris to help the woman get a good job at a college cafeteria, where she's now gainfully employed, and joyously praising her Lord.

Between the Sabbath services and Tuesday night Bible study at Tutwiller, ten women have been baptized, and many more have been helped and encouraged.

Sister Norris believes in **T.E.A.M.** Together **E**ach **A**chieves **M**ore. She encourages all Prison Ministers to take her **T.E.A.M.** motto, adapt it to your Prison Ministry and run with it!

Remembering Prison Minister Volunteer Charlie Gordon.

Charlie Gordon died last year. Charlie Gordon had been a giant of a Prison Minister with the Messengers of Hope Prison Ministry Team, at the Bethany Seventh-day Adventist Church, Montgomery, Alabama.

He, along with the Prison Ministry Team, shared Jesus Christ with the inmates and watched with great excitement as the inmates learned about Christ and His

saving grace, and to see them accept Him as their personal Savior -- some even unto baptism.

At the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women, Charlie Gordon was a familiar face and a friend to the inmates. He leaves a legacy; and his motto: "Rain or Shine; Sleet or Snow; We have got to go," is still an encouragement to Prison Ministers. Charlie Gordon will be remembered.

"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: Chaplain Relations. In most prisons it is the Chaplain that you, the outsider, must go through to successfully get to the inmates. The Chaplain is the one who can get the door opened for Prison Ministry to take place. The Chaplain, more informally called "Chap," makes a lot of things happen. Inmates understand that "Chap" is important! "Chap" is needed! "Chap" is respected.

This Module provides the student with hands on opportunity to understand how Chaplains relate to prison personnel through personal interviews with prison staff and inmates.

This Module seeks to involve the student in understanding and developing clear concepts regarding the role and relationships of Chaplains in the work place, also affording the student the opportunity to understand the Chaplain's relationship with inmates. The student will gain a greater appreciation of the role of "Chap" – the prison Chaplain.

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 on to 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. **Stressed Out: Strategies for Living and Working in Corrections, 2nd Edition.** Gary F. Cornelius. **Stressed Out** offers guidance for dealing with the negative stress associated with the job. Cornelius identifies what stress is and teaches strategies to combat it on and off the job through such techniques as time management, relaxation, diet, and exercise. He describes how the offender and staff members cause stress. #257-BST5 – Nonmembers \$20.00 – ACA members \$16.00. Order online – www.aca.org. **Hostage Survival in Corrections Video.** Imagine what it would be like to lose control of events occurring around you. This is exactly what happens when you become a hostage. **Hostage Survival in Corrections** examines how to survive being taken hostage in a corrections setting. You will learn what to do before, during, and after the hostage situation occurs. #715-

BST5 - \$175.00. Order by fax – 301.918.1886. **TRY – Treatment Readiness For You: A Workbook for Youth at Risk.** Murray C. Cullen, Ph.D. & Susan O'Neill. The transition from being a child to a teenager is not any easy one. In some cases, these individuals make the wrong choices. Wrong choices lead to further wrong choices. This vicious cycle doesn't have to happen. **TRY – Youth at Risk** helps young adults to successfully make the transition from child to adult. Chapters include: Getting Ready for Change; Why Am I Here? What's Going On? #968-SF5 – Nonmembers \$15.00 – ACA Members \$12.00. Order by fax 301.918.1886. **The Holy Bible.** Good reading. Available at all book stores. Prices vary.



HAPPENINGS

His letter came to the office of Adult Ministries at the North American Division. He wrote, "I'm incarcerated. I want Bible Studies. I am an Adventist. I'm away from family and I'm alone."

In answering his letter, he was asked permission to send his name to a Prison Ministry Correspondence School. "Yes, please do." That's what he wanted.

Fast Forward. Right away, the Straight Answers Bible Correspondence School sent Lesson #1 (there are 10 Lessons) off to the State Prison in Frackville, Pennsylvania. Along with the lessons, Mr. Tavita (the inmate) received a letter of encouragement and an enrollment card. "If you enjoy the lessons, enroll someone else in Straight Answers."

Each time he returned his completed lesson, Tavita had enrolled another inmate. And so it went until there are now a total of 14 inmates studying God's Word, and accepting His Truths. The inmates have need of a Prison Minister to visit them – to take them to the next step, and perhaps baptism.

But the **Happenings** are still going on. Straight Answers has now entered a Women's Prison in Arizona. One inmate in Frackville sent an enrollment card to his friend who's incarcerated in Arizona, now she's studying God's Word. Who knows how many she will enroll.

Straight Answers is in many facilities across the United States. If you have someone in prison and would like for them to experience a better life and come to know Jesus Christ, Straight Answers is only a letter away.

It only takes a spark (an enrollment card) to get a fire (God's Truth – Straight Answers Lessons) going. Write to Straight Answers, P. O. Box 1734, Avon Park, Florida 33826.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Faithfully Attending to their 'Flock' Behind Prison Walls. That's what Pastor Christopher David and the members of the Burtonsville, Maryland Calvary Seventh-day Adventist Church are doing.

When Sadhana Jaladhi visited the Little Flock Seventh-day Adventist Church, she learned its Sabbath service was similar to that of her regular church. Congregants sang hymns of worship and hope, sometimes holding hands. The pastor spoke of sin, redemption and forgiveness by God. Church ushers welcomed visitors with handshakes and cups of water.

Amid the singing and hearty cries of "amen," it was easy to forget Little Flock is in a jail chapel, and its congregation consists mainly of prisoners in the Maryland House of Corrections in Jessup, Maryland.

Jaladhi's home church, Calvary Seventh-day Adventist Church, began making visits to the House of Corrections in 2004, going on the first Saturday of each month. Her husband had traveled with the church Prison ministry team and encouraged his wife to visit also. She made her first visit on December 3. When the services began, Jaladhi's anxieties disappeared.

For many inmates with no families, or whose families are estranged from them, church guests are the only outsiders who come. The Calvary Seventh-day Adventist Church has been visiting Little Flock for one year.

The Little Flock chapel is a warm place with maroon carpeting, white pews and wood-paneled walls. Beside the altar sit the musicians, complete with microphone system, drum set and electric keyboard. The music consists of hymns, as well as group performances.

Although the inmates' light-blue uniforms, marked "D.O.C.," easily distinguish them, the services make no distinction between prisoner and outsider. Members of Calvary and Little Flock churches hold hands to sing, and kneel side by side to pray at the altar. In the prison routine, inmates must use recreation time to attend services.

The inmates also make monetary contributions to church causes, drawing from their daily stipends of \$1 to \$3. Elder John Martin said, "Our men are not unwilling to give. They feel they have taken from society and now this is a chance to give back." Prison charity drives raised money for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts and funded Thanksgiving dinners for less fortunate families.

Each month on the first Sabbath, Pastor David brings volunteers from his congregation to attend a service at Little Flock. On the second Wednesday, he goes alone to attend a Bible study group. And on the third Sabbath, he goes to Bible study at the maximum-security ward, flanked at all times by a prison guard.

Little Flock Elder, Lide Owens: "Some people may think of prisoners as second- or third-class Christians. We're always very elated when outside guests come in. They show us they still remember us, and we show them we love them." (Reprinted from Burtonsville Gazette Community News.)

MINISTRY BLESSING/SUCCESS STORY

"My name is Steven Sanders. It's a blessing to be home!" These words were the beginning of a powerful testimony of one man who saw the hand of God in his life even when he didn't know Christ as his personal Savior.

Steven Sanders couldn't read or write. Steven Sanders had been sentenced to 65 years in prison. He spent 22 years locked up for a crime, he says, "I didn't commit." But God had Prison Minister Volunteer Leroy Neal, of the Baltimore Prison Ministry Team, in place to help Steven to meet Jesus. Steven sat in Brother Neal's Bible study classes at the prison, listening, not saying a thing because "I couldn't read or write."

One Saturday, while on his way to the movies, Steven saw John Martin in church. He was curious about those who attended church on Saturday. John saw Steven, stopped him and said, "Come on in. Don't go to the movies." But he didn't take him up on the invitation. Shortly after that encounter, Martin said to him, "Look, man, if you come in and you don't like it, you'll never have to return, and I will never question you again about coming to the service." Steven says, "I took his offer, and as long as I was there I attended church." He said he used that same line with other inmates. It worked and they too kept attending church.

Sanders said the thing that kept him coming was how everything spoken came from the Scriptures. It was all truth. That intrigued him. When the inmates had questions the Prison Ministry Team would answer them straight from the Bible – letting the Word answer all questions. It was a stepping stone for him.

While he was becoming acquainted with Jesus, Jesus was helping him to get an education. He learned to read and write. He received his GED. In 1990 he enrolled in Coppin State College where he received a bachelor of science degree in Business. He also received an associate degree in Biblical Studies from the Baltimore Bible Institute.

The Lord was using him to be a leader among the inmates. When John Martin left, the inmates asked Steven to be their next leader in the community. He said, "I was scared to death." He was voted in to be the chairman of the Seventh-day Adventist Community. "By that time," he says, "I had gotten my education. The Lord was using me greatly."

The prison church is called Little Flock. It will be 30 years since Little Flock has been a legal entity within the prison. The inmates wrote to the Conference asking to make it a legal entity within the correctional system. Starting the church without a name, they later chose the name Little Flock, which comes from Luke 12:32: *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

They were meeting in a little room on the lower level of the prison at the time Sanders came to prison and began attending services, because the Chaplains wouldn't allow them to go the Chapel. It's a different story now. (See the article Faithfully Attending to Their Flock Behind Prison Walls.)

When Steven left the Penitentiary in 1995, he went to the Penitentiary Annex in Jessup. There wasn't any Seventh-day Adventist service. In the two years he was there, the Lord used him to put together a proposal for a Church. The Church is still active today. He left the Annex and was sent to Cumberland.

Upon his arrival at Cumberland, he found a similar situation, only the inmates were worshiping on Saturday night. "This is not the Sabbath," Sanders told them. It was Saturday night; the Sabbath was over at sun down. Things worked out where the inmates now have their service on Sabbath afternoon.

In the Hagerstown, Maryland old jail, at the Seventh-day Adventist Church service, only 6 or 7 men attended. After some praying and witnessing more than 50 men now attend.

While in prison, Steven said he never once prayed asking the Lord to get him out. He knew that he wasn't going to be released until God said it was time. His prayer was, "God use me while I'm in prison." And God used him. During his years of incarceration, the Lord used Steven to plant three Little Flock Churches in three different facilities.

"When my lawyer told me I was going to court on December 8," Sanders says, "I knew I wasn't going to return to prison." He said goodbye to his friends "Oh, they were sad." That day in court, the Prosecutor told him that he'd be "home for Christmas." The Court suspended his 65 years, and gave him three years of unsupervised probation.

Thursday, December 8, 2005, after spending 22 years behind bars, Steven Sanders walked out of prison a free man, all in God's timing. Released on the 8th - the 10th - the Sabbath - Steven Sanders was in church. He said, "I couldn't wait to go to Berea Temple (Baltimore). That's where my church membership will be.

"I don't know what the Lord has planned for me," he says, "but I do know that Prison Ministry is a work ordained by God. When I look at my life and the lives of my other brothers and sisters still behind bars, who have given their lives to Christ, where we were once known as criminals, stuck in a criminal mentality, this can no longer be said about us. "We're now in a spiritual mentality because now, we're spokespersons for Jesus." Welcome Home, Steven Sanders!

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Essential Characteristics for Prison Ministers

- **Genuineness** – There must be no pretense in the lives of those who have so sacred and solemn a message to bear.
- **Empathy** – Have the ability to feel with people and put one's self in their place.
- **Love** – Have an outgrowth of unselfish concern for all persons involved.

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.

Last year – 2005 - is gone! It has faded into eternity! Never more to return! It had its ups and downs. But, by and large, if we would start counting last year's blessings, we would have to say, It was a good year! A lot of good things did take place.

And we thank all of you for helping us to have a good year at **Network News**. It's your ministries that keep the **Network News** interesting, and which keeps me interviewing and producing it. Thank you.

Now it's **2006!** New opportunities. New experiences. Everything new. Jesus says, I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen (Jeremiah 29:11, 12; Living Bible).

Let's enjoy those "plans for good" that God has for each of us during this brand new, spanking clean year – and try to count our blessings more in 2006.

I' m out of here. Until next month!

CB

We're still waiting to hear who is forwarding this great newsletter and to whom! Talk to me, people – carol.barron@nad.adventist.org.