



Network News

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION ADVENTIST PRISON VOLUNTEER NETWORK

FEBRUARY 2006

Volume 2

*"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."*

- Fact is the art of
making a point
without making
an enemy. –
Unknown*
- Reckless words
pierce like a
sword, but the
tongue of the
wise brings
healing.*

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- **Now I Have A Reason To Live! The Anthony Moore Story.**
- **Don't Follow Me! I've Walked That Way Before.**
- **Letters From Inmates.**

FROM ELDER JOHNSON

I continue to greet you, my Prison Ministering partners, in the name of Our Lord, as we continue this blessed journey through 2006. My prayer for you continues to center around the hope that you will keep on accessing the Baptism of The Holy Ghost on a daily basis for empowerment of your Spiritual Gifts so that you can (and your colleagues) may adequately minister to your assigned portion of the 2.1 million persons currently involved with the Criminal Justice Systems of our various nations.

With reference to the anticipated 2006 Division-wide centralized training opportunity, please know that we have heeded circumstances and counsel, and have now assigned the NAD Adult Ministries Festival Of The Laity to September 2007. Union and Conference training opportunities will continue. In addition, please look for our "Inmate Spiritual Counseling" curriculum through AdventSource in late spring.

In closing, I encourage you to keep on ministering faithfully as you go forward, not only realizing that you are dealing directly with Jesus (Matthew 25), but also, that you are functioning in the realm of the very last ministry area of Jesus prior to His death for our salvation.

MARANATHA!

JAJ II

MEET THE DIRECTORS

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

He's a Pastor. He's an Evangelist. He conducts crusades. He's a builder of churches. He's a husband, a Father, and a very proud Grandfather. He's my long time friend, and a dedicated worker for His Lord. He's Ward D. Sumpter, Executive Secretary for the Southern Union, Decatur, Georgia.

Elder Sumpter is no stranger to Prison Ministry. He still goes on the "inside" ministering to the incarcerated, and he gives seminars and training for those who want to do Prison Ministry.

He sees Prison Ministry as a vital part of the ministries, simply because there are former Seventh-day Adventists who wouldn't put their feet in the church again, unless the Lord allowed something to happen to them drastically, and as a result of being incarcerated, they seemed to have a Belshazzar experience, where they look and declare "there is a God in heaven." Never before having thought about their soul salvation, but now they are in jail where they have time to plan evil, study evil, or study the good and do good. They have a choice to make. If we (Prison Ministers) don't offer them the choice to know the good, then they will only do evil. We have an opportunity to give them a choice to do right.

Sumpter continues. There are people in our churches who believe that their special ministry is prison work. And they seem to mesh well with the inmates – male and female. For instance, there are those who have the courage to go behind bars and deal directly with the inmates. Courage? Yes, you must have to have special courage to walk behind those doors and have them locked behind you, and realize you are locked in, and could be overrun by inmates at any time. One or two guards are there, but you have to go in under the auspice of the Holy Spirit and with a prayerful heart. That's, courage, Holy Ghost Courage!

The church in Atlanta has always had a strong Prison Ministry program. While pasturing in Atlanta, I visited the Federal Penitentiary and the local jail almost weekly. I have a Chaplain friend who I would invite to speak at my church, and many times I'd go and visit with him at his office.

In Tampa, we had a group of lay members who wanted Prison Ministry, but they did not know how to get started, so we trained them. In that group was a gentleman on disability, who would go to the prison every day and work with the Chaplain. At Christmas time, we had a banquet for the inmates living in a Halfway House, along with their families. They enjoyed a Christmas dinner with all the delicious trimmings, and gifts. Well, this man who went every day to the prison ministering to the inmates, when the Chaplain was moved, he recommended that this man take his place. Even though he wasn't a minister, his relationship with the inmates had such a good impact on them, that the State appointed him the Chaplain.

A young boy in an Atlanta school was cutting class. His mother didn't know what to do. She talked to me about the situation, and we came up with a idea. "Keep him out of school one day," I told her, "and bring him to me and I'll take him on a "field trip." I told her what the "field trip" would be. She agreed. She brought the boy to me and we went on the "field trip" to Juvenile (Detention Center) where it was explained to him what Juvenile was all about. He saw it! He heard it! He smelled it! After spending the entire day at Juvenile, he said to me, "Elder Sumpter, you will **never** have to bring me back here again." He kept his word, and never played hooky from school again.

Elder Sumpter sees Prison Ministry growing by leaps and bounds in the future, and our churches becoming more involved. One sad reason being there are greater numbers of our young people are going to prison. "Unless we devise a program from the church," Sumpter says, "to take into the prisons, and minister to the incarcerated **before** they are paroled, many of them will be repeat offenders, and shortly **after** parole – and it's a guarantee -- back to jail they'll go. And the bottom line is, some men and women go to prison having never heard the name Jesus, until we, the Prison Ministers, take the name of Jesus to them."

Elder Sumpter told the exciting happening which some young Prison Ministers experienced last summer in Bass, Mississippi. These Seventh-day Adventist

young people were ministering to inmates at a certain prison - Sabbath after Sabbath - active Prison Ministry. One of the men who attended the services was the product of Seventh-day Adventist schools – from elementary to college. He had strayed from the teachings of Jesus, made some wrong choices and decisions along the way, and was now incarcerated.

As the Prison Ministry Team ministered to this young man, Sabbath after Sabbath, the Holy Spirit touched his heart, reigniting his whole spirit. He surrendered his life to the Lord. Once paroled, he faithfully attended the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Soon he wanted to be baptized, but he wanted to be baptized at the Camp Meeting in Huntsville, Alabama.

His conversion, his decision, his returning to the Lord, were all unknown to his father. When the son told his father he was going to Camp Meeting in Huntsville, his father, although happy to hear this news, couldn't understand why his son wanted to go all the way to Huntsville for Camp Meeting; until his son said, "I'm going to be baptized." Following the Prison Ministers who brought him Jesus Christ.

Camp Meeting Sabbath found the young man in Huntsville, Alabama. Now, unbeknown to the son, his father, full of joy, thankful to God for what had taken place with his son while in jail, got in his car at four o'clock Sabbath morning, drove straight through to Huntsville, arriving in time for his son's baptism.

When the father saw his son dressed in a white robe, prepared to go down in to the watery grave of baptism, he broke down and wept. He wept the entire time. Here was his Prodigal Son – who had come back home to Jesus, was being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. "When I was in prison, you visited me." Prison Ministry in action!

Sumpter concludes by saying, "Prison Ministry. It's not a glorified job or a glorified position. It's a ministry that is very much needed, and it comes with Heavenly Rewards."

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 Still Coming!

New Dates: September 26-29, 2007.

Sometimes change is good! Well, this is a good change. Although the date has been moved to next year – 2007, the wheels are still 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: www.nadadultministries.org for more information on The Festival Of The Laity - 2007! News that's still HOT!

DON'T FOLLOW ME! (DFM) is an anti-drug, alcohol, crime prevention and intervention organization. It is composed of men and women who have previously served time in the Tennessee Department of Corrections, and are now on parole.

DFM was founded and organized in 1988 by Dr. Cleveland Houser. Its reason for being was to help young people evade the entrapments of drugs, alcohol, and negative behavior that had proved to be detrimental to the participants of this

group. The group is made up of prison inmates who had been involved in all manners of wrong doings, except rape.

DFM educates young people in regards to the detriments of alcohol, drugs, and criminal behavior. It is dualistic in its purpose in that it serves as a Youth Support Group and a Community Support Organization.

The group's mission is to keep young people from walking in their footsteps. Consequently, Dr. Houser named the organization, *Don't Follow Me . . . I've Walked That Way Before*.

Chaplain Houser served sixteen years in the Tennessee Correctional System as a Psychiatric Chaplain. He's based in Goodlettsville, Tennessee.

Don't Follow Me! is an organization you'd want to know more about. E-mail the Chaplain at cleve.houser@comcast.net.

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Q & A

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

The Local Courts hears cases involving lesser criminal charges, such as creating a nuisance or violating a housing code, and claims for small sums of money. Names and functions of these courts vary from state to state.

Traffic Courts – Hear cases involving minor traffic violations.

Police Courts – Hear cases involving violations of local ordinances.

Magistrate's Courts – Hear cases involving traffic violations and other minor offenses.

Justice (Justice of the Peace) Courts - Similar to Magistrate's Courts.

Municipal (City) Courts – Hear minor criminal cases and lawsuits for small amounts.

March Issue: Special Courts: Probate (Surrogate), Juvenile (Family), Small Claims, Criminal, Courts of Claims.

VOLUNTEERS

A Prison Minister was the last thing I'd ever thought of being. For four years, my husband and I had been volunteer workers for the South New Zealand Conference, and had been caring for a small church, when the call came for my husband to enter "Prison Ministry." I breathed a sigh of relief; I'm not cut out to be a preacher's wife. I envisioned a new life where I would have plenty of time to do whatever I wanted and lots more time to visit with friends.

However, my dream was short-lived. Within days of the call, our conference president handed me a letter from an inmate of the local women's prison. The prisoner was requesting a visit from an Adventist minister. Prison Ministry – the very thought of it filled me with foreboding and brought up visions of dark corridors, clanging metal gates, and grim-faced guards!

I was reluctant and felt a little like Jonah must have felt. My constant prayer was, "Lord, if working in the prison is where You want me, and You have a work for me to do, then please give me a love for it."

I started visiting the women's prison one day a week – first befriending the women I met, then giving them Bible studies. Female prisons have a special need to confess everything to someone they can trust, so I learned the value of being a good listener. Although some of their crimes were horrific, I could not show disapproval or be judgmental. I would simply try to point them to God's love and forgiveness.

Twice a month, I would accompany my husband on his prison visits. I was very apprehensive at first, but the men were very grateful and said that they appreciated a mother's understanding.

Prisoners are often afraid of their families' reaction upon release, so we would often visit spouses to encourage reconciliation. Occasionally we provided clothing, household linens, and food. We always placed cards for Bible Correspondence Courses in those parcels. We often invited the family to a special church program, or the children to the nearest Sabbath School.

As well as caring for the physical and emotional needs of families, we have also, at times, been called on to speak before Parole Boards. We've had prisoners paroled into our care until we could find them suitable, alternative accommodations. When placing them in accommodations, we have always seen

that they had warm bedding, clothing, kitchen utensils, and a food parcel.

Not all our experiences have been success stories, though. I remember the hurt and disappointment when we returned home one day to find that a prisoner we had taken in and helped considerably, had returned and robbed us. However, the success stories of changed lives and commitments to Jesus Christ far outweigh the sad times. Despite my initial misgivings, I've received a lot of satisfaction and fulfillment from prison work.

Sylvia Ritani is a licensed volunteer missionary in New Zealand. Reprinted with permission from *The Journal*, a Shepherdess Resource for Ministry Spouses.

"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: Inmate Manipulation. Webster has a few meanings for the word (noun) *manipulation*; **a.** to manage or utilize skillfully; **b.** to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means, especially to one's own advantage. This Model will provide the student with insights into the manipulative mindset of manipulators behind prison bars.

These Modules examines the reasons why inmates manipulate. What's in it for them? Why is it necessary for them to be successful in mastering the art of manipulation? Students will also understand the tactics and the methods of inmate manipulators.

This Module will not only help to familiarize the student with the numerous ways that manipulators play manipulative games, but it will also help the student gain insight on how to deal with inmates and their manipulative skills, and know how to confront manipulative behavior.

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 Common Terms Used by Administration and Inmates, Handling Emergency Situations, Attitude of the Church Toward Inmates. Contact AdventSource, 800-328-0525. **Picking Up the Pieces: A Workbook for Incarcerated Women.** Beverly Welco, LAC. Pain and Loss are a fact of life. In some cases, individuals are unable to deal with these issues. As a result they make poor decisions that send their lives on a downward spiral. Until now, most resources were written to help men effectively overcome loss but very little attention was given to the needs of women. Chapters include: Issues of Grief, Pain Avoidance and Substance Abuse, Grief and Incarceration. #931-BST5 – Nonmembers \$20.00 – ACA members \$16.00. Order by phone 1-800-222-5646, ext. 1860. **Recess is Over: A Handbook for managing Youthful Offenders**

in Adult Systems. *Barry Glick, Ph.D., NCC & William Sturgeon, MA.* This resource provides those working in the field with a “blueprint” to best serve youthful offenders in adult correctional systems. It doesn’t focus on whether youthful offenders should serve time in adult systems, but rather how to best manage and care for these youths once in the facility. It is an excellent implementation guide to help administrators and their staff to handle these individuals and make a difference in their lives. #760-BST5 – Nonmembers \$15.00 – ACA members \$28.00. Order by phone 1-800-222-5646, ext.1860.

The Art of the Con: Avoiding Offender Manipulation. *Gary F. Cornelius.* In many instances, staff believes they are too smart to be manipulated by an offender. Accepting this possibility exists in the first step in avoiding it. This book provides the corrections professional with a better understanding of offenders and their characteristics, behavior and culture. It shows how staff and volunteers can maintain authority and control by resisting manipulation. The concepts in this book apply to anyone in the field, and show how manipulation can occur in prisons, jails or community supervision. #759-BST5 – Nonmembers \$20.00 – ACA members \$16.00. Order by phone 1-800-222-5646, ext. 1860.

The Holy Bible. Good reading. Available at all book stores. Prices vary.



HAPPENINGS

An active Prison Ministry in The Federal Medical Center in Rochester, Minnesota. It was started eight years ago by the former pastor, Casey Higgins.

Jim Ivy says, “Every Saturday afternoon there are about 8 to 10 Prison Ministers, who take turns, going in and conducting a chapel service with about 8 to 15 inmates. There have been several baptisms over the past several years.” Ivy also says they (the Prison Ministers) don’t forget the Seventh-day Adventists who are incarcerated there – they’re also being ministered to. Current pastor, Stan Wilkinson, helps with the services several times a month.

JAH Spanish Prison Ministries. This is a Seventh-day Adventist, non-profit community service organization begun in 1972. **JAH** was established to meet the needs of prison inmates and their families – who need more than a sermon. The ministry replies to more than 300 letters a month from 110 different State and Federal Prisons in the United States. **JAH** also sends Bibles, Bible Studies and Christian materials to these facilities.

JAH has 150 volunteers who make monthly visits to Calipatria State Prison; they hold weekly chapel religious services in Norco State Prison, TN Colony State Prison and Blythe State Prison. They offer services in all State and Federal Prisons in the United States. Arturo Talamante is the Director. Contact him at JahMinistry@aol.com.

Letters From Prison: “To: Reformation Prison Ministries (Teaneck, New Jersey). Hello, I will start off with thanks to God for sending such a committed people of God to us inmates in jail. When we first got here, a lot of us were sad. Some said that they were hopeless. They were depressed, and some suicidal. Now the ones that have come to know God in Jesus Christ, through Bible study, have a new lease on life. I say thanks, very much. Helen. P.S. Write me back, please!”

“Dear Sirs: My name is Kevin, I’m an inmate at the Downeast Correctional Facility (Maine). I’m interested in learning more about Seventh-day Adventists, the Sabbath and your Bible Study Program. Please send all information available.”

“Thanks for the Bible Course. Please enroll my family.” John, (Camden, N.J.).

"To Whom it May Concern: Hi! I'm at a Women's Camp and I am interested in obtaining information on how I may obtain your books and any Bible Study Course. I have a lot of unanswered questions, and I want to do better myself. So anything you can send me will be greatly appreciated." Kimberly.

"I desire baptism by immersion and the 5 Day Smoking Plan to overcome my smoking habit." Harvey, Frackville Correctional Institution.

These are just a few names of those who are studying God's Word. They may be incarcerated, but they are experiencing a freedom in Jesus Christ. If you have or know someone who is incarcerated and would like to know Jesus, and start experiencing a life change, contact **Straight Answers Bible Correspondence School**. Write to: Straight Answers, P. O. Box 1734, Avon Park, Florida 33826.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Michael Stango has a regular job, some weekends will find him preaching and ministering to the inmates at the Maryland Correctional Institution (MCI) in Jessup, Maryland. Mike loves Prison Ministry. He loves nothing better than to share the love of Jesus, and to go to those who are incarcerated and who have yet to meet Jesus.

Mike says, "We need to show those who are incarcerated that Jesus loves them. It may be by praying with them, or through song, or speaking from the Word of God. They must know that Jesus died for them. That He is their Savior, and their only Hope for a better life.

"Prison Ministry has been a great blessing for me. My first altar call was given at Jessup, and one person responded. It's a joy to see people respond to the Lord, and to see the change from criminal to Christian." So when Mike goes to Jessup, he knows that when he ministers to an inmate, he is ministering as unto Jesus.

Lois Bellis was introduced to Prison Ministry by Adam Clark, many years ago. She says that their church pastor encouraged Adam to attend prison services at Maryland Correctional Institution (MCI), Jessup, Maryland. Adam in turn asked Lois to attend. From that moment on, Lois said, "I was hooked."

Like many people, Lois never thought of inmates as people, they were criminals, until she met Inmate Wayne (now deceased) when she first began ministering to the inmates at MCI. Wayne was always devoted to Jesus. He would show a little frustration at times when the rules would run aground, but he would pray and be patient.

Wayne usually attended all the services, Monday night Bible study and Sabbath service. At times there would be a bit of turmoil in the services, Wayne would say, "Now Brothers, we are in the house of the Lord. Let us lay aside our thoughts and self-interests, and concentrate on the unity that God would like from us. None of us are perfect, but the God we worship is perfect. Let's give Him the homage He deserves." The men would listen, quiet down, and the service would go on smoothly.

Wayne developed health problems. Then he was transferred to the prison in Hagerstown, Maryland. But our letter writing continued. His letters were full of hope, faith and confidence. While at Hagerstown, he took charge of the Seventh-day Adventist Prison Ministry in that facility. He never entered the chapel without prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The last letter I received from Wayne, he wrote, Sister Lois, it does not matter whether I live or die. I know that God loves me." The next Sabbath he attended the church services. That evening he went to sleep and never woke up. Lois says, "I believe Wayne witnessed in a greater way on the "inside" than he could have witnessed if he had been on the "outside."

MINISTRY BLESSING/SUCCESS STORY

Anthony K. Moore has lived a life that many of us would not want to experience. As this young man quietly told me some of his life story, at times I fought back tears, some things were shocking, and others brought a smile.

As Anthony spoke, I was reassured of the fact that God never leaves you alone – no matter what you’ve done, and He will put people in your path to help to get you to Him. God had His people in place to help Anthony Moore get to Him; a career criminal, and a Prison Minister, Church Elder, William Slaten, of Conant Gardens Seventh-day Adventist Church in Detroit, Michigan.

Anthony’s Story. I was born in a home for unwed mothers, run by nuns. I was raised in prison. I did four prison terms. I’ve been in every old prison in Michigan. I served a total of 30 years. At the age of 17, with a football scholarship in hand, and plans for ROTC, I committed a crime and was sentenced to 5 to 16 years. I did three years and eight months.

When I came out at age 21, I was a confused and angry young man. Five months out of prison, I committed armed robbery. I wrote the Judge a letter trying to explain my life, and for some reason, which I don’t know why, the Judge gave me probation. I violated parole and was sent back to prison. I was sent to a prison farm where I walked away eight hours later.

In 1980, I was sent to Jackson Prison. Unknowing to me, God was getting ready to set me up with an inmate who would make a difference in my life. He was a career criminal – had been in prison all his life. He was quiet, he was a loner, but he taught me things as a friend.

When I met him, I was angry because another inmate had done something to me and I was going to get revenge. But this guy, his talk to me was, “God loves you. God bless you. God saved you.” Everything he said to me went in one ear and out the other. I had become a Muslim the first time I was in prison. Also, my mother had joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church before I was incarcerated, and she taught me some things, too. All I know is God took care of me, even in prison.

Once out of prison I tried to be a lot of things, a booster (a department store thief), a pusher, a pimp, a con man, you name it, I knew that life was wrong, but I was attracted to it. I wasn’t successful doing any of those things. I can only say God had His hand on me.

During the second time Anthony was incarcerated, his mom married William Slaten, an active Prison Minister. His mother and now stepfather would visit him. They would talk to him about Jesus, but he says, “I didn’t want to hear anything about religion.” But once out of prison, and after having surgery, Anthony went to live with his stepfather and mother. Once again God was guiding in his life.

His stepfather told him, “If you stay with us, you must go to church. Prayer Meeting and Sabbath.” Anthony went faithfully to Wednesday night Prayer Meeting, and to church every Sabbath. It was during that time that Elder Ralph Shelton, pastor of Conant Gardens, announced he would be holding a Revelation Seminar. Anthony told his stepfather he wanted to attend. Elder Slaten took him every night. After the Revelation Seminar ended, Moore asked Elder Shelton, “Can I be baptized?”

With a broad smile stretching across his face, Anthony Moore said, “I was baptized August 27, 2005 by Pastor Ralph Shelton at City Temple in Detroit, Michigan. Today, I’m a happy man for the first time in my life. I have a reason to live. I was homeless for six years (he now has his own place). I’ve been out of prison for seven years, and I’ve been clean from crack cocaine and alcohol. God moved in ways where I’ve completed the GED and a semester of college.

“When I think of the words *“that saved a wretch like me,”* from the song Amazing Grace, and I look back over my life, it gives me chills. Back then I didn’t know a

better way. Now, I do. Yes! Jesus saved a wretch – it was me!

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Anthony Moore's Counsel Young People.

- ***Always believe in God.***
- ***Honor your Father and your Mother as the Bible tells you to. It will save you from a lot of trouble.***
- ***Never be a follower. If you must be a follower – follow Christ – He's the best!***
- ***Do something positive with your life.***
- ***Get an education!***

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.

I visited with inmates in the Women's and Men's Prisons in Latvia. Speaking through an interpreter, I spoke to them about Sweet Jesus. Then I sang to them about Sweet Jesus. Smiles broke out on harden faces. Eyes began to sparkle as His name was spoken or sung. Glimmers of hope appeared. Jesus!

Let's speak the name of Jesus to the downcast - it will lift them up. Let's write the name of Jesus to the incarcerated – it will bring them joy. Let's read the name of Jesus to the hopeless - it will give them hope. As the song title says: Jesus is the sweetest name I know!

I' m out of here.

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.

