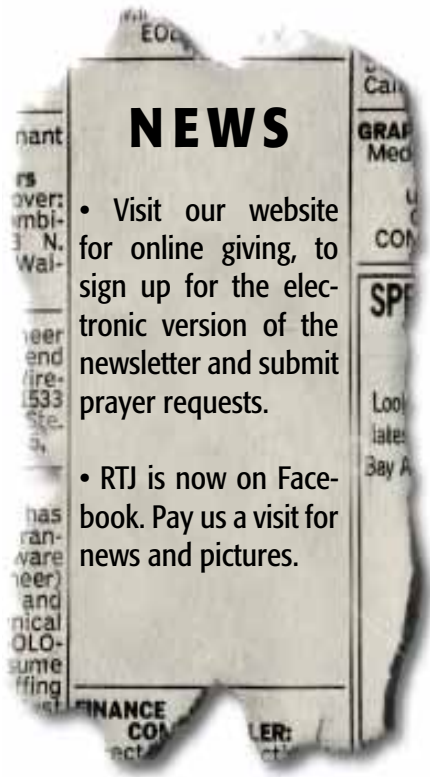


Release Through Jesus Prison Ministry

RTJ NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO. 15
March 2010



Dear RTJ Partner,

Another great month to share with you what RTJ is doing. Bible Studies are going well. There is such a hunger in the men and women's hearts. We are scheduling churches to share our testimony in and there are many opportunities for ministry.

We have also been working on the banquet details. We have such a great committee. At our last meeting Scott Bowers of Dynagraphics Printing had our tickets and sponsor books ready for use. I have also talked to Frank Bower, our guest speaker. He is very excited about coming.

Frank has a powerful testimony. I can't even begin to share with you what God has done in his life. We will publish part of his testimony as time goes by. I'm sure you remember John Gotti, the mobster that was arrested a few years ago and then died in Marion Federal Prison. Frank was Gotti's enforcer and bodyguard.

Tickets for the banquet are now available by calling Tammie at 217-433-8139. If you need additional info you can call 217-728-8775. As time gets closer this will be in the newspapers and on the radio. We will have a dinner, special music, silent auction and Frank's story. I hope to see many of you there!

Thank you for your prayerful support of RTJ. Working together we can help change the lives of the incarcerated of Illinois.

Jim Helton
Founder RTJ

New Volunteers



We welcome Barb McClanahan to our ministry. She will be helping with the administrative duties. She has been an active member of the church for over 40 years and is presently attending Open Arms Fellowship Church.

Barb is a graduate of Purdue University, with a BS in Marketing and several Associates Degrees. Born and raised in Butler, Illinois and living in Indiana for most of her adult life, she returned to this area in 2004 to care for her elderly mother. She holds a license as a substitute teacher for the Hillsboro Community School District and is currently employed by Casey's General Stores in Irving, Illinois, as the manager. We are excited to have Barb join the team!



Southern IL

We are ministering to an enthusiastic class of men at both Centralia Correctional Center and Big Muddy Correctional Center. We have been teaching from John Bever's *Under Cover Series* at both facilities. At Centralia, we have completed the series, and at Big Muddy we are midway.

We have also been doing a chapel service at Lawrence Correctional Center. Many have come forward for prayer, salvation and deliverance.

Jerry F. Van Houtin, Sr

Decatur CC

In January Praise Front Worship team brought us right into the presence of God during our church service. Having a 6 person live band sure brings out the girls for church! They so look forward to every 3 months for Praise Front's return.

Eric Cobb (drummer) preached the word, talking about being adopted into the family of God. Referencing John 17:21-24 Eric spoke of us knowing that we are in Jesus as God and Jesus are one, and that we are loved as God loves Jesus. God is a God that does not separate us from His love and keeps no record of wrong when we are in Him. As our relationship with Him grows then the good deeds will flow.

There was a word for the girls from Rhonda as six girls came forward to the altar for prayer with one coming for salvation. Thank you Praise Front for your faithfulness each time you minister. God is so good!

In His service,
Kim Shealey

Bereavement



Dwight Wright

RTJ Prison Ministry mourns the loss of one of our volunteers, Dwight Wright, who passed away Feb. 2, 2010. Dwight went into Graham Correctional Center with Andy Ritchie two years ago but became ill with cancer about a year and a half ago. Although he stopped going into the prison, he kept his heart for the men in Graham and the men prayed for him in his illness. Dwight was employed by the Department of Corrections in Vandalia and Hillsboro before he retired. The family requested memorials be sent to RTJ and we are so grateful. Please remember his family in prayer.

Did you know... ?

On average, 47 percent of offenders released from custody each year serve six months or less in the state prison system and 69 percent of all inmates are in prison for non-violent crime. (from IDOC's website)

Graham CC

Bill Purcell and I are drawing to the end of John Bevere's class *Under Cover* in Graham Correctional Center. The men have learned huge scriptural lessons in determining what the Bible says about handling situations of conflict. This month, we've been blessed with over 25 men in our classes and this leads to great questions. We always answer, "What does the Bible say?" and then go to the Word for an inductive study to find the answers. Sometimes we do a word study. Having the men read the answer to their own questions in their own Bibles leads them to an "Ah-Ha!" moment that will stay with them for a long time. God does reward those who seek His word!

I was privileged to give a message in Graham in January. We began a journey to learn the names of the LORD. Why? God said, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is

safe."(Pro 18:10). The incarcerated can surely use a strong tower into which they can run to be safe. What's in His name? It's the character of God described in His own words.

We had an inductive study on Adonai, which means, Lord, Master, Owner. We saw that we are created by the same sovereign God who owns us and therefore protects us and provides for our needs. It is so much better to be a bond servant to a loving master than a mercenary for hire. After we saw what surrendering yourself completely to a Lord and Master, means more than 20 men stood to publicly profess their acceptance of Jesus as Lord, Master, and Owner. God is working mightily in Graham Correctional Center.

Andy Ritchie

Letters From Prisoners

"HELLO SAINTS,

LET ME START OFF BY SAYING THAT I AM TRULY BLESSED TO BE SURROUNDED BY SUCH WONDERFUL PEOPLE AT THIS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY CHURCH. I JUST WANT TO SAY THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR TIME TO US BECAUSE I WAS HAVING PROBLEMS WITH MY HAND AND YOU GUYS PRAYED FOR IT AND I AM BLESSED TO SAY IT'S BEEN BETTER ALREADY! AMEN."



"YOUR PRAYERS WERE VERY COMFORTING AND I FELT BLESSED. IT CHANGED MY LIFE COMPLETELY. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP. GOD BLESS YOU."



"SUNDAY I CAME TO THE SERVICE EXPECTING TO RECEIVE SOMETHING FROM GOD. IT WAS SUCH A BLESSING TO HEAR A WORD FROM GOD AND I REDEDICATED MY LIFE WITH TOTAL SURRENDER THIS TIME AND WAS SERIOUS WITH GOD."



We have been telling you about the service held at the Edgar County Jail Christmas Eve. Matt & Carrie Veach (on the left) and Paul Guthridge shown here holding a box of the gift bags and pamphlets with Jim's testimony that were distributed to the prisoners.



Terry, one of the corrections officers, was very helpful. We believe that the seeds of the Gospel were planted as they showed the love of Christ in this tangible way.

Taylorville CC

Greetings and Blessings to all,

Well it happened again; I go to minister to the prisoners and they minister to me. I have people ask me why I "do" prison ministry. I usually tell them I feel it's my calling or I am just trying to serve the Lord, but I heard a story in there last night that gave me a new answer.

We were talking about how life can be a test when one man told us that his younger brother was shot by a gangbanger and lay dead on the sidewalk for a few hours before someone called anybody. People were walking around the body and just going about their business.

I don't want to be the one who walks around and ignores a situation where there is a need. So I applaud all of our support-

ers who also do not walk around but bless with their time, prayers and finances. As Jesus said in the book of Matthew chapter 25 (and I really like The Message version) vs. 37 - 40 "Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'"

God Bless
Skip Renfro

NEWS:

Fundraiser Banquet

Tickets are now available for the Fundraising Dinner May 14th at the Palace Dining Hall across from Richland Community College in Decatur, IL. The dinner will begin at 6:30. Tickets are \$25. There are also sponsorship booklets being printed to advertise your business or ministry. You will need to contact Tammie at 217-433-8139 or you may contact the RTJ office at 217-728-8775.

Prayer Warriors Needed

We are continuing to put together a team of prayer warriors for RTJ. People send in requests to us in addition to needing prayer for our volunteers on the "front lines" of ministry. Will you join our army and pray for these needs? Please contact Tami Banchy at 217-521-5863.

PLEASE CUT ALONG LINE AND MAIL TO RTJ

AREAS OF INTEREST:

- JAIL/PRISON OUTREACH
- ADD TO MAILING LIST
- OFFICE VOLUNTEER
- OTHER _____

LOVE OFFERING:

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____
 STATE & ZIP _____

PRAYER REQUESTS

You can also e-mail your prayer requests to tamibanchy@yahoo.com

Release Through Jesus Prison Ministry
P.O. Box 103
Sullivan, IL 61951-1348

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Decatur, IL
Permit No. 30

Return Service Requested



SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

3/7/10 Pana Nazarene

3/14/10 Fairview Heights Nazarene

3/28/10 New Hope Baptist Sumner, IL

4/11/10 Nameoki Methodist

Office: 217.728.8775
Mobile: 217.855.7799
e-mail: rtiprisonministry@yahoo.com
Web: www.releasethroughjesus.org



RTJ - Taking Prisoners for Christ!

Release Through Jesus Prison Ministry enters all levels of confinement facilities to help men



and women to know Jesus and lead them to salvation, to teach the men and women to hide the Word of God in their hearts so that they might sin no more, and to regularly visit churches of all Christian denominations to spread the good news of God's work with the incarcerated.

PRISON SERVICES

1st Sunday

Vandalia
Taylorville
Centralia NEW!

2nd Saturday

Big Muddy

2nd Sunday

Graham

Every Monday

Lawrence

4th Sunday

Decatur
Taylorville

Feb. 21

Lincoln CC

Friday Evenings

Big Muddy

PRISON BIBLE STUDIES

Monday

Decatur
Graham
Taylorville
Big Muddy

Tuesday

Big Muddy

Thursday

Centralia
Taylorville

Saturday

Decatur Work Release